



Review

Physical planning and the development of Dankande Rest Stop Area in Kaduna, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the history, formation and the development of Dankande Rest Stop Area on the Kaduna–Zaria–Kano highways. The examination relies on a set of data on the planning and development process; and the inherent challenges and potentials of the rest area. The analysis was carried out using the notions of rest area, physical planning and development. Based on the analysis, the paper concludes that development of rest areas on the highways enhanced the delivery of services to travellers but such development should be within the frame of physical planning provision and monitoring by relevant agencies. The physical planning interventions will necessarily include enforcement of planning principles, standards and criteria for the purposes of appropriate spatial organisation, and functionality of such areas as integral part of the wider spatial system.

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Introduction

The decision on what use to put a piece of land is largely determined by its location, economic considerations, ownership, and general conception of other land uses around it. The implications of such decisions manifest in the spatial pattern of land use in the wider urban and regional space. A piece of land is put to the best use when it yields optimum returns (economic, psychological, convenience among others) to users (Imimole, 2005, 11). Thus, physical planners' decisions to permit the use of land for a particular activity represent an effort to organise space for the satisfaction of human needs (Pacione, 2009, 409). Because of the implications of spatial allocation of land use, development of any space is viewed as a balance between benefits and costs or challenges to the salubrious state of the entire environment being developed. To mellow down the challenges, physical planning permits are required for all types of development activities.

Kaduna metropolis manifests numerous instances of dysfunctional land use that lead to conflicts between the spatial land use units, circulation, environmental quality, and socio-spatial chaos of shanty informal commercial and residential spatial formations. The crises are indicated by the mixture of traffic and socio-economic activities; poor traffic flow and formations of huge informal economic activities at various places that impede both vehicular and human circulation in the city. All these make Kaduna and other Nigerian cities unattractive to tourists. The unattractiveness is furthered by the lack of development of basic highway infrastructure that makes travelling a pleasure along with highways. A major infrastructure that is not developed along with the highways is the rest stop area. In this scenario, efforts that relieve the city of tension caused by absence of parking space and utter necessary facilities needed by short-time service users is a major feature and failure in the physical planning of Kaduna metropolis and other Nigerian cities. This problem needs to be examined so as to use this study as a possible and viable template for evaluating this nationwide problem in Nigeria. This is why this paper examines the planning and

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development of the rest stop area at Dankande Village, between 334101.99 E and 1179439.39 N, and at about 625 m above sea level at the edge of Kaduna metropolis. The goal of this paper is to unveil the physical planning, development process and the implications of the location of the rest stop area.

Rest stop areas development: An over view

The development of roads created new needs and demands for various services and facilities by travellers by these roads. The new needs and demands include a rest stop area. Rest areas are places where travellers stop to obtain services, information and even take a short sleep. In Japan, the road service stations or *michi-no-eki*, as rest stop areas are called, are designed and developed with host communities to provide business opportunity for local residents and as avenues for dissemination of information (Yokota, n.d.). The Japanese *michi-no-eki* are part of the regional development plans and projects in which the local authorities and road administrators play major roles in station designation and development process (Parker, 2010, 343).

Further to this, with respect to the Japanese *michi-no-eki*, Parker observed that the Japanese have standard road side and small shops, the *choku-bai-jo* that operate more informally, and the *michi-no-eki* is a formalisation and extension of those shops with basic facilities for travellers (Parker, 2010, 343). Also, in the United States, with the passage of the interstate Highway Act of 1956, Highway Beautification the Highways Trust Fund was established (State of Montana, 2004, 2). This marked the beginning of the development of rest areas in the United States. Agencies like the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) commissioned a study to “determine the extent of truck parking problem in the North Jersey Transport Planning Authority region” (North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, 2009, 4); and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) Office hosted a discussion on “the availability and safety of parking for commercial vehicles along the nation’s highways” (Federal Highway Administration, 1999, 1).

In Europe and the USA, the current focus is on the spatial organisation standards and governance of the rest stop areas as the travellers were noted to be worried about safety and cleanliness of the areas. Though the level of discourse of rest areas in Nigeria as part of highway and regional development issues, policies and programmes are yet to begin the existing unplanned-and-poorly developed slum-images-wearing rest stop areas, like those in Europe and the USA, deliver services to travellers along the roads.

On highway parking in Nigeria

Rest stop area formation dates back to the history of roads development and travelling in many countries. In Nigeria, “the national road network grew from its total length of 6,500 km in 1960 to 10,000 km in 1970, to 29,000 km in 1980 and is presently estimated at 200,000 km” (Abdulkareem & Adeoti, n.d., 2). The increased road length also increased demand for travels. All these created effective demand for services along the routes.

In Nigeria, various communities along highways responded by providing food, drinks and sometimes accommodation to travellers in poorly organised places as rest stop areas. This is similar to the circumstances that prompted the creation of picnic spots along highways in the 1950s; this creation led to the development of rest stop areas along highways (<http://www.bobperson.ne>) in the USA.

Most prominent are the truck overnight-on-road-parking at Ore and Ogere (Ogun State), Tafa, Pandogari and Maraban Jos (Kaduna State), Ubolo Afo (Enugu state), Tegin and Jebba (Niger state), NATACO (Kogi state), among several others that dot the highways. The on-road parking spots grew as a result of increasing demand for services of long distance motorists and endemic lack of designated rest-stop areas on the highways in Nigeria. The on-road parking of the vehicles promotes environmental chaos, hazards and automobile accidents at these spots. As disorganised and hazardous as these points are, the main attractions are food, rest from travelling fatigue, and overnight accommodation for travellers. At all these places, retail shops and restaurants have been set up to cater for the needs of stoppers. The over-night on-highway parking spots tend to locate in villages at the edges of towns and cities. At these places, drivers park on highways in a way that is “dangerous and precarious and indiscriminate” (Muhammad, 2010a: <http://weekly.dailytrust.com>).

In these situations, the government and its law enforcement agencies, including physical planning agencies, remain inactive in removing these corridors of death and environmental hazard (see Muhammad’s “I am Tafa: I dare you to rebrand me” and the follow up “Re: Tafa” <http://dailytrust.com>). In the midst of this lawlessness, environmental chaos, spatial disorganisation and other apparent dangers to all travellers on the road, the Dankande Rest Stop Area was initiated and developed.

A major point of departure is that the rest-stop area project is an individual initiative. With the Mosque as the nucleus, the rest-stop area currently caters for long distance travellers that arrive in cars, minibuses, jeeps, motorcycles with the exception of trucks. Currently, rest stop area development is part of highway design,

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