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State, urban space, race: late colonialism and segregation at the Ikoyi reservation in Lagos, Nigeria

Tim Livsey,
Northumbria University.

Abstract

This article studies the Ikoyi reservation in Lagos, Nigeria to assess changing relationships between the colonial state, urban space, and race between 1935 and 1955. Colonial authorities established reservations as special zones to house colonial officials and other white Westerners. The article shows that the Ikoyi reservation was a significant location where a wide range of actors contested relationships between statehood and race. These renegotiations contributed to making a late colonial state, a terminal form of colonial state in which explicitly racialised discourses of statehood and urban space were challenged while implicitly racialised standards and practices often persisted. Through a focus on Ikoyi, the article highlights the significant relationships between segregationist projects and late colonial statehood.

Keywords: Nigeria, West Africa, state, decolonisation, urban, spatial patterns

This article focuses on Ikoyi, a district of Lagos, to consider changing relationships between the colonial state, urban space, and race in Nigeria from 1935 to 1955. Ikoyi was a 'European reservation', a special zone constructed by colonial authorities to house white officials and representatives of Western companies (see Figure 1, below).[1] Urban spaces like the Ikoyi reservation formed an arena in which relationships between the state and race were contested.

[1] The term 'reservation' had different meanings in different colonial contexts. In British-controlled West Africa, colonial authorities used it to refer to distinct zones intended for European residence, unlike in some settler colonial situations, such as the United States, where it designated a zone allocated to indigenous peoples.

These debates helped to forge a *late* colonial state, a terminal form of colonial state that contained the seeds of its own destruction.

[Insert Figure 1 near here.]

Some scholars have seen African cities as places where colonial states' racialised power was exerted with particular intensity, for example through projects of segregation.[2] But the dense interrelationships between constructions of statehood, urban space, and race meant that cities were also strategic locations where colonial states' racialised policies could be challenged.[3] At Ikoyi, diverse people contested racial segregation, including educated elite

[2] For this view of African cities, see J. Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, 2014). On segregation in West Africa, see L. Bigon, *A History of Urban Planning in Two West African Colonial Capitals: Residential Segregation in British Lagos and French Dakar (1850–1930)* (Lewiston, 2009); J. W. Cell, 'Anglo-Indian medical theory and the origins of segregation in West Africa', *American Historical Review*, 91:2 (1986), 307–35; P. D. Curtin, 'Medical knowledge and urban planning in tropical Africa', *American Historical Review*, 90:3 (1985), 594–613; T. S. Gale, 'Segregation in British West Africa', *Cahiers d'Études africaines*, 20:80 (1980), 495–507; O. Goerg, 'From Hill Station (Freetown) to downtown Conakry (First Ward): comparing French and British approaches to segregation in colonial cities at the beginning of the twentieth century', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 32:1 (1998), 1–31; C. H. Nightingale, *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities* (Chicago, 2012), 172–90; A. J. Njoh, *Planning Power: Town Planning and Social Control in Colonial Africa* (Abingdon, 2007); A. J. Njoh, 'Colonial philosophies, urban space, and racial segregation in British and French colonial Africa', *Journal of Black Studies*, 38:4 (2008), 579–99; and A. Olukoju, 'The segregation of Europeans and Africans in colonial Nigeria', in L. Fourchard and I. O. Albert (eds.), *Security, Crime and Segregation in West African Cities since the Nineteenth Century* (Paris, 2003), 263–86.

[3] On the making of space, see H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991). A detailed consideration of the nature of 'race' lies beyond the scope of this article, but its approach to relationships between race and space has been informed by B. Neely and M. Samura, 'Social geographies of race: connecting race and space', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34:11 (2011), 1933–52; and N. Puwar, *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place* (Oxford, 2004). On the making of space in relation to statehood, see T. Mitchell, 'Society, economy, and the state effect', in G. Steinmetz (ed.), *State/Culture: State-Formation after the Cultural Turn* (Ithaca, NY, 1999), 77, 81. On urban space as an arena for challenges to colonial power, see R. Home and A. D. King, 'Urbanism and Master Planning: Configuring the Colonial City', in G. A. Bremner (ed.), *Architecture and Urbanism in the*

Nigerians, immigrants from the Eastern Mediterranean and India, British colonial officials, and Nigerian domestic servants. These groupings are problematic because they were partly produced by colonial-era classificatory projects. However, they remain analytically significant, because these efforts to classify affected individuals' experiences of the state, space, and race, as well as the strategies they employed to contest them.

These endeavours to reshape relationships between state, space, and race took a variety of forms, including street protests against segregationist policies, campaigning in the colonial Legislative Council and Nigerian-owned press, everyday practices at Ikoyi that defied racialised regulations, and bureaucratic disputes amongst colonial officials. Urban space thus formed an arena for negotiations which at once delineated the limits of state power, and contributed to making a late colonial state, distinguished by distinct relationships to space and race.

A central feature of the late colonial state that emerged in Nigeria from the 1930s to the 1950s was that state authorities were forced to abandon *explicitly* racialised discourses of statehood and urban space. British officials presented the late colonial state as a postracial institution that was paving the way towards self-government, having recognised that overtly racialised standards no longer legitimised colonial rule. The late colonial years seemed like an epochal shift, as Nigerians won access to state posts and spaces from which they had been excluded. However, continuing *implicitly* racialised state standards and practices meant that, even as late colonial state authorities abandoned overt racial discrimination, Nigerians continued to experience the state and space in racialised ways.[4] White British officials retained a leading role in setting standards rooted in their own tacitly racialised norms, and

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British Empire (Oxford, 2016), 51–6; and G. Myers, *Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa* (Syracuse, NY, 2003).

[4] On this point, see Ambe Njoh's argument about the tacit racialisation of 'culture' in French segregationist projects: Njoh, 'Colonial philosophies', 592.

the institutions and spaces bequeathed by the late colonial state to postcolonial Nigeria retained implicit associations with whiteness. The Nigerians and immigrants to Nigeria who successfully overcame overt racial exclusion struggled to challenge these implicitly racialised state standards in the same way.

These arguments address two key limitations of the existing literature on state, urban space, and race in West Africa. First, the literature on segregation has little to say about late colonialism. Much of the work on urban space and race during the colonial period has focused on the years from around 1900 to 1930, which has often been characterised as seeing especially intense racial segregation.[5] We know less about how relationships between states, urban space, and race changed in West Africa during the late colonial years from the 1930s to the 1950s, despite this being a crucial, transformative period. Segregation after 1930 has often been considered briefly and unpersuasively. Several scholars have advanced inadequate arguments proposing that visions and practices of segregation by race were largely replaced by projects of segregation by class.[6] These interpretations have overlooked the ways in which late colonial spaces often remained tacitly racialised. The periodisation for the decline of explicit racial segregation in colonial Africa has also remained unclear, with some scholars arguing for a turning point just after the First World War, some around 1930, and others around the time of the Second World War.[7] In Nigeria, however, explicit racial segregation

[5] Bigon, *A History*; Cell, 'Anglo-Indian medical theory'; Curtin, 'Medical knowledge'; Gale, 'Segregation'; Goerg, 'From Hill Station'; K. Ngalamulume, *Colonial Pathologies, Environment, and Western Medicine in Saint-Louis-du-Senegal, 1867-1920* (New York, 2012); Njoh, 'Colonial philosophies'.

[6] F. Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002), 121; Nightingale, *Segregation*, 188–9.

[7] For arguments focusing on the First World War, see Nightingale, *Segregation*, 185. For arguments stressing 1930, see Home and King, 'Urbanism', 81. For arguments stressing the Second World War, see R. Harris and S. Parnell, 'The turning point in urban policy for British colonial Africa, 1939–1945', in F. Demissie (ed.), *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories* (Farnham, 2012), 128, 145–6; and Olukoju, 'The segregation', 279.

declined from the later 1930s, and is best understood in relation to the wider emergence of a late colonial state as the country recovered from the Depression.

Second, the literature considering late colonialism as a distinct period in African history has had little to say about urban space and race, despite their importance to late colonial statehood. Exploring the spatial and racial aspects of late colonialism contributes to the conceptualisation of this important and increasingly widely used term. There have been surprisingly few attempts to define late colonialism. It has most frequently been deployed in scholarship on Africa as a loose form of periodisation, which has left unclear exactly what distinguished the late colonial years.[8] The rare work that has sought to conceptualise late colonialism has seen it as characterised by particular manifestations of statehood, including the rapid expansion of state institutions and more intrusive developmentalist policies, but has offered few glimpses of its important spatial and racial dimensions.[9]

Earlier research that emphasised the importance of bargaining, 'collaboration', and negotiation in colonial rule is helpful in exploring how a late colonial state was forged, in part, by challenges to racial segregation at particular urban locations.[10] Late colonialism in

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[8] Examples of the plentiful recent articles about 'late colonial' Africa include M. G. Stanard, 'Revisiting bula matari and the Congo crisis: successes and anxieties in Belgium's late colonial state', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 46:1 (2018), 144–68; C. Summers, 'Adolescence versus politics: metaphors in late colonial Uganda', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 78:1 (2017), 117–36; and J. Willis, G. Lynch, and N. Cheeseman, 'Voting, nationhood, and citizenship in late-colonial Africa', *The Historical Journal*, 61:4 (2018), 1113–35. Older works that invoked late colonialism without interrogating the concept include F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996), esp. 15–16, 319, 404, 464; M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, 1996), esp. 21, 32, 38.
[9] J. Darwin, 'What was the late colonial state?', *Itinerario*, 23:3/4 (1999), 73–82.
[10] For example, see C. J. Korieh, *Nigeria and World War II: Colonialism, Empire, and Global Conflict* (Cambridge, 2020), 19–21, 25–8; B. N. Lawrance, E. L. Osborn, and R .L. Roberts, 'Introduction: African intermediaries and the "bargain" of collaboration', in B. N. Lawrance, E. L. Osborn, and R. L. Roberts (eds.), *Intermediaries, Interpreters and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison, 2006), 3–34; R. Robinson, 'Non-European foundations of European imperialism: sketch for a theory of collaboration', in R. Owen and B. Sutcliffe (eds.), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London, 1972), 117–40.

Nigeria was not a generalised, ethereal condition. It was shaped by specific interactions between specific people in specific spaces, that forced a shift from explicitly to implicitly racialised state standards. Bridging the literatures on space and race, on the one hand, and late colonial statehood, on the other, promises to bring them into a mutually enriching dialogue.

A range of sources illuminate the emergence of late colonialism at Ikoyi. Colonial archives hold evidence of debates amongst British officials, as well as petitions from educated Nigerians and letters from Eastern Mediterranean and Indian immigrants, that afford insights into how they sought to remake relationships between state, space, and race. Nigerian servants, their families, and friends left little evidence of their own perspectives on life at Ikoyi, but reading colonial archives against the grain offers valuable, underexplored perspectives on how they sought to contest regulations at the reservation. Ikoyi was debated and represented in the Nigerian press and the colonial Legislative Council, and represented in novels, sources that elucidate the racialised — and gendered — construction of state and space at Ikoyi. Unfortunately, they have less to say about the politics of ethnicity, and, in consequence, so does the article.[11] Nevertheless, this evidence shows how debates about the spaces of Ikoyi reshaped broader understandings of statehood and race.

Lagos and Ikoyi

Ikoyi is an apt location to study the changing relationships between state, space, and race. British colonial authorities constructed the Ikoyi reservation from 1919 to house white officials and businessmen, excluding all Nigerians from residence except domestic servants. They intended reservations as racialised spaces that would facilitate circulations of white Westerners around the empire, protect them from tropical diseases, and uphold colonial-era

[11] Brief references suggest that many domestic servants at Ikoyi were Igbo. See P. H. Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change: The Politics of Lagos, 1917-1967* (Berkeley, 1974), 44; A. L. Mabogunje, *Urbanization in Nigeria* (London, 1968), 293–5.

racial hierarchies. The British only established reservations in colonies: senior civil servants in Britain itself did not live in special enclaves of state-owned housing.

Ikoyi was planned with large, widely spaced bungalows intended for white Europeans, much smaller quarters for Nigerian domestic servants, and extensive gardens. Like other reservations in British-controlled West Africa, Ikoyi was located on the outskirts of an existing town, and was separated from it by a 'building free zone' of 440 yards, which the British understood to be the flying range of malaria-carrying *anopheline* mosquitoes (see Figure 2, below).[12] Reservations were supplied with better access to utilities, including piped water, than neighbouring districts largely inhabited by Africans. Ikoyi included leisure facilities intended for white householders only, including a social club and golf course. Limited Nigerian state revenues were disproportionately focused on this small enclave, which allowed many British colonial officials to live in a grander style than if they had remained in Britain.[13]

[Insert Figure 2 near here.]

Ikoyi was part of a much older city. The growth of Lagos from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries was rooted in trade, including the trade in enslaved people.[14] Lagos comprised overlapping 'quarters' that were consolidated after the 1851 enforcement of a

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[12] Bigon, *A History*, 157–8; S. Newell, *Histories of Dirt: Media and Urban Life in Colonial and Postcolonial Lagos* (Durham, NC, 2020), 39–41.

[13] M. Gandy, 'Planning, anti-planning and the infrastructure crisis facing metropolitan Lagos', *Urban Studies*, 43:2 (2006), 375; U. Beier, 'In a colonial university', in U. Beier, *The Hunter Thinks the Monkey is Not Wise… The Monkey* Is *Wise, But He Has His Own Logic*, ed. W. Ogundele (Bayreuth, 2001), 205–6.

[14] K. Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760–1900* (Bloomington, IN, 2007), 23–50.

British consulate and the subsequent 1861 annexation.[15] Isale Eko, the oldest part of the city at the northwest of Lagos Island, was home to the oba's palace and major markets. By the 1840s, Afro-Brazilians, formerly enslaved Africans who returned from Latin America, came to Lagos in growing numbers, with many settling at the 'Portuguese Town' to the east.[16] The Saro, formerly enslaved Africans from Sierra Leone, increasingly moved to Lagos from the 1850s, and especially to Olowogbowo in the southwest of the island.[17] After the annexation, European merchants and British colonial officials dispossessed Africans to lay out the Marina along the south of Lagos Island from the 1860s.[18] Yet the relatively small size of the island, and the informal nature of the quarters, meant that long-established Lagosians, Afro-Brazilians, Saros, white Westerners, and Yoruba migrants from the hinterland often lived in close proximity.[19]

The British at first sought to govern Lagos through collaboration with Western educated African elites, and some Africans held senior posts within the colonial administration. This changed from the final decades of the nineteenth century, as British officials increasingly sought to exclude Africans from senior state positions and emphasised segregationist policies.[20] The construction of Ikoyi was the product of hardening ideologies of racial difference, which the British combined with new forms of knowledge about

[15] Overviews of the Lagos quarters include Baker, *Urbanization*, 24–31; Bigon, *A History*, 52–9; A. A. George, *Making Modern Girls: A History of Girlhood, Labor, and Social Development in Colonial Lagos* (Athens, OH, 2014), 22–5; Mabogunje, *Urbanization*, 240–4, 276, 280.
[16] L. E. Castillo, 'Mapping the nineteenth-century Brazilian returnee movement: demographics, life stories and the question of slavery', *Atlantic Studies*, 13:1 (2016), 35. I am grateful to Kirstin Mann for this reference.
[17] Bigon, *A History*, 55; J. H. Kopytoff, *A Preface to Modern Nigeria: The 'Sierra Leonians' in Yoruba, 1830–1890* (Madison, 1965), 65, 80.
[18] Baker, *Urbanization*, 29–30; Mabogunje, *Urbanization*, 280.
[19] A. Adelusi-Adeluyi, '"Africa for the Africans?" – mapmaking, Lagos, and the colonial archive', *History in Africa*, 47 (2020), 277–9.
[20] P. Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos* (Cambridge, 1975), 73–6; P. S. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville, 2000), 48–9, 56–8.

medicine and town planning.[21] From around the turn of the century, British authorities established reservations for white officials at centres of colonial administration across West Africa, drawing on the model of earlier reservations that the British had built in India.[22] In 1901, a reservation was established at Accra, the capital of Ghana (then known as the Gold Coast), and the 'Hill Station' at Freetown, Sierra Leone, was built from 1902. In Nigeria, reservations were established at Ibadan and Kaduna from around 1900.[23] From 1907, Lagosian educated elites challenged, with some success, a government plan to turn the area around the racecourse into an exclusive zone for Europeans.[24] But in 1919 the colonial governor, Sir Frederick Lugard, complained that at Lagos 'the residences of Europeans and natives are … hopelessly intermixed', and the construction of the Ikoyi reservation commenced that year.[25]

The Ikoyi plains in the east of Lagos Island were selected as the site because they were close to the city's administrative and commercial centre, and were seen as sparsely populated. Lagos elites contested the plans, though, and the colonial government's 1919 acquisition of the land proved controversial. The government rejected a claim by Chief Onikoyi to own the land. The government maintained that it had already acquired the area through the 1908 Ikoyi Lands Ordinance, which had required landowners to register ownership within a year or forfeit their land. The Onikoyi family unsuccessfully challenged this ruling in the courts during the 1920s, and eventually settled for token compensation. As the historian Patrick Cole observed, the case was 'a classic example of the government …

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[21] Home and King, 'Urbanism', 72–7.
[22] R. Home, 'From cantonments to townships: Lugard's influence upon British colonial urban governance in Africa', *Planning Perspectives*, 34:1 (2019), 44–7.
[23] For an overview, see Nightingale, *Segregation*, 173–80. On Freetown, see Goerg, 'From Hill Station', 8-11. On Ibadan, see A. L. Mabogunje, 'The growth of residential districts in Ibadan', *Geographical Review*, 52:1 (1962), 74.
[24] Curtin, 'Medical knowledge', 603.
[25] A. H. M. Kirk-Greene (ed.), *Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria: A Documentary Record* (London, 1968), 90. Also see Bigon, *A History*, 145.

taking advantage of the ignorance and illiteracy of the Idejo [land-owning] chiefs to appropriate large areas of land'.[26] The building of the reservation was also vigorously opposed by chiefs, newspaper editors, and other prominent Nigerians who signed a 1922 petition arguing that the government's construction of the Ikoyi reservation caused overcrowding elsewhere in Lagos, and contributed to an outbreak of the plague.[27] Nevertheless, the first colonial officials moved into the new reservation in 1923.[28]

The colonial state's claims to ownership of the land and housing, together with the reservation's particular forms of planning and infrastructure, made Ikoyi a distinct area of Lagos. At reservations, colonial authorities sought to classify people by race, assign them to specific hierarchical social and spatial locations, and regulate their activities. Ikoyi was also intended as gendered space. The vast majority of colonial officials were male. Few brought their families to Nigeria in the 1920s and 1930s, and regulations stipulated that all resident domestic servants at Ikoyi should be male.[29] At the same time, Ikoyi was never entirely separate from the rest of the city. Most colonial officials and Western businessmen who lived there worked in offices around the racecourse and Marina, and the Nigerian domestic staff often visited, and were visited by, friends and family resident in other parts of Lagos. Into the 1950s, the reservation only occupied part of Ikoyi, and was traversed by Nigerians travelling between villages in eastern Ikoyi and the rest of Lagos, to the chagrin of some British

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[26] Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites*, 233n144, also see 93–4; G. B. A. Coker, *Family Property Among the Yorubas* (London, 1966), 224. On the Idejo chiefs see Mann, *Slavery*, 28, 238–40.

[27] A. Olukoju, 'Population pressure, housing and sanitation in West Africa's premier port-city: Lagos, 1900-39', *The Great Circle*, 15:2 (1993), 96.

[28] Bigon, *A History*, 152.

[29] H. Callaway, *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria* (Basingstoke, 1987), 4–6, 18–20. Patterns of migration may have meant that Lagos as a whole at this time was also predominantly male. See Olukoju, 'Population pressure', 92.

officials.[30] In practice, colonial authorities often struggled to enforce policies of segregation at Ikoyi.

Reservations form useful barometers for the emergence of late colonial states from the 1930s to the 1950s. People experienced late colonialism in part through encounters with the changing geometry of state, space, and race at Ikoyi. More diverse people lived at reservations as late colonial states disavowed explicit racial discrimination. By the 1950s, bungalows at Ikoyi were occupied by Nigerians holding senior civil service jobs, and by Eastern Mediterranean and Indian immigrants to Nigeria, as well as by white Europeans. Nevertheless, as we will see, experiences of Ikoyi remained tacitly racialised. These patterns were mirrored elsewhere in late colonial West Africa, for example at reservations in Ghana.[31]

Late colonialism also involved the growth of the Ikoyi reservation. As late colonial states employed more officials to implement developmentalist projects, housing shortages at reservations and the construction of new housing followed. In Nigeria, this was underway from the later 1930s as the colonial state's revenues started to recover from the Depression.[32] Blocks of flats were built at Ikoyi for the first time to accommodate an influx of British staff.[33] During the war years, when Nigeria was a significant Allied logistics hub, and after 1945, as colonial development programmes accelerated, yet more British officials were stationed to Nigeria.[34] Building work and severe housing shortages were not unique to late

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[30] Mabogunje, *Urbanization*, 295; National Archives, Ibadan (NAI) CSO26 11136, W. Butler Lloyd to Chief Secretary, 30 Jun. 1933; Commissioner of Police, Colony to Inspector-General of Police, Lagos, 21 Jul. 1933.
[31] I. Acquah, *Accra Survey* (London, 1958), 45n1; The National Archives, London (TNA) CO96/774/11, O. Stanley to A. Burns, 31 Dec. 1942. More women also lived at late colonial Ikoyi, both in the bungalows and the servants' quarters, although most householders remained male. See Mabogunje, *Urbanization*, 293.
[32] TNA CO583/223/14, J. A. Maybin to W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, 4 Nov. 1937.
[33] Nigeria, *Legislative Council Debates: Seventeenth Session, 1939 (27th September 1939)* (Lagos, 1940), 19.
[34] Nigeria, *Legislative Council Debates: Twenty-First Session. 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 25th, 26th, and 27th March 1943* (Lagos, 1943), 5–6; NAI Comcol1 2892/S.3, Acting Commissioner of the Colony to Chief Secretary, 14 Sep. 1945.

colonial Ikoyi. Reservations were extended elsewhere in Nigeria, including at Ibadan and Kaduna.[35] New reservations, such as Ikeja in Lagos (established in 1946), were constructed.[36] Similar trends emerged elsewhere in British-controlled West Africa. At Freetown in Sierra Leone, the expansion of the Hill Station and planning of new residential areas for Europeans were underway from the later 1930s, as at Ikoyi.[37] In Ghana, postwar housing shortages affected reservations at Accra, Kumasi, and Koforidua.[38] Reservations were extended, and a new reservation established in Accra near the airport.[39] At Ikoyi and beyond, reservations were key sites in the emergence of late colonial states.

Educated Nigerians

When the first white officials moved into Ikoyi in 1923, Nigerians who had encountered 'Western' forms of education were barred from living there. The colonial government's 'indirect rule' alliance with Nigerian chiefs marginalised the educated elite, and offered them limited access to state posts and spaces.[40] During the late colonial years, educated Nigerians

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[35] NAI Comcol1 1834/S.2, P. V. Main circular, 17 Sep. 1948; TNA CO554/1029, B. Sharwood Smith to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 23 Dec. 1955.
[36] Nigeria, *Legislative Council Debates: Second Session. 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 23rd and 24th March, 1948. Volume I* (Lagos, 1948), 100; NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, Commissioner of the Colony to Chief Secretary, 10 Mar. 1950.
[37] TNA CO267/670/4, D. Jardine to M. MacDonald, 1 Jun. 1939; Sierra Leone Public Archives CSO2/2 box 623 folder 56, H. Blood minute, 22 Mar. 1938.
[38] Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) Accra RG5/1/62, 'Notes of a meeting held in the Secretariat', 23 Feb. 1950; PRAAD Kumasi ARG2/1/1, Assistant Commissioner of Lands, Kumasi to Chief Commissioner, Ashanti, 17 Sep. 1948; PRAAD Accra RG5/1/80, Regional Officer, Eastern Region to all Heads of Department, 12 Oct. 1956.
[39] PRAAD Accra RG5/1/181, ESL minute, 24 Nov. 1952; PRAAD Cape Coast RG1/7/82, District Valuer to Acting Commissioner of Lands, 16 Jul. 1956.
[40] 'Educated' is used here as a shorthand for Nigerians who had encountered forms of education with roots in the Western world. There were of course other forms of learning and education in Nigeria. See Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, 12–14, 82–6, 128–39. On British visions of indirect rule, see A. H. M. Kirk-Greene (ed.), *The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria: Selected Documents 1900-1947* (London, 1965). The so-called 'Colony of Lagos' was formally excluded from indirect rule, although in practice its effects on Lagosian educated elites were similar.

successfully protested against their racialised exclusion from reservations. Elites along the West African coast had called for improved access to colonial states' resources since the nineteenth century.[41] They were afforded new opportunities during the 1930s by British officials' inadequate response to the Depression, the ensuing protests across West Africa and the West Indies, and increasing international scrutiny of British colonial administration.[42] With British authorities on the back foot, educated Nigerians contested their exclusion from reservations using assets including their representation on the colonial Legislative Council and newspaper ownership. Educated Nigerians' campaigning for equal access to housing designed for white colonial officials discredited overtly racialised discourses of statehood and space, helping to forge a late colonial state, but focused less on implicitly racialised understandings. They won access to reservations, but at the cost of implying that they were a suitable institution for late colonial and postcolonial Nigeria.

During the 1930s, educated Nigerians' challenge to reservations adopted two strategies. One, more short lived, approach was to critique reservations' expense. Nigerian Legislative Council members pointedly enquired about reservations' cost. In 1937, for example, Dr C. C. Adeniyi-Jones, the Second Member for Lagos, asked about renovations to Ikoyi bungalows, noting that 'the taxpayers ... have to foot the bill at all times'.[43] This line of attack questioned the relevance of these expensive state spaces to a relatively poor country like Nigeria.

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[41] P. Nugent, *Boundaries, Communities and State-Making in West Africa: The Centrality of the Margins* (Cambridge, 2019), 102, 106–12, 527–8.
[42] For an overview, see T. Falola and M. M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge, 2008), 141–2; and J. M. Lee and M. Petter, *The Colonial Office, War and Development Policy: Organisation and the Planning of a Metropolitan Initiative, 1939–45* (London, 1982), 25–41.
[43] Nigeria, *Legislative Council Debates: Fifteenth Session, 1937 (22nd and 25th March, 1937)* (Lagos, 1937), 78. For another example, see Nigeria, *Legislative Council Debates: Sixteenth Session, 1938 (28th and 29th November, 1938)* (Lagos, 1939), 27–8.

Educated Nigerians' second strategy proved more enduring. This approach focused not on reservations' expense, but on educated Nigerians' racialised exclusion from these spaces. Senior civil service positions, known in the 1920s and early 1930s as 'European posts', entitled white British officials to housing at reservations. Of the hundreds of these jobs, Nigerians occupied only 15 in 1934, and they were barred from reservation housing.[44] Nigerian Legislative Council members and the Nigerian-owned press repeatedly raised the issue of access to these posts, and to reservations. In 1937 and 1938, for example, Adeniyi-Jones tabled Legislative Council questions about Nigerian civil servants' access to government housing; and the *West African Pilot* complained in 1937 that the appointment of Nigerians to senior posts was proceeding 'at a snail's pace', noting that the conditions of service, which included housing, were 'more favourable to the non-Africans'.[45]

Claiming equal access to reservation housing proved a successful tactic. From the later 1930s, colonial authorities started to abandon explicitly racialised discourses around reservations. At least one black African civil servant actually lived at a reservation from 1937. That year, one British official noted that an African medical officer at Makurdi 'lives in the European reservation with the full approval of the Europeans therein'.[46] In 1938, British officials replaced the official name 'European reservation' with the racially neutral term 'government residential area' (or 'GRA').[47] This shift recognised that at least one black African *already* lived in a reservation, and opened the way for more. Explicitly racialised discourses around reservations in Nigeria started to be abandoned from the later 1930s, and

[44] NAI CSO26 03142 vol. II, 'Leg. Co. meeting 12.6.34. Question No. 62'.
[45] Nigeria, *Legislative Council Debates: Fifteenth Session, 1937 (12th July 1937)* (Lagos, 1937), 24; Nigeria, *Legislative Council Debates: Sixteenth Session, 1938 (7th, 8th, 9th, and 12th March, 1938)* (Lagos, 1938), 42; 'Confidence begets confidence', *West African Pilot* (Lagos), 21 Dec. 1937.
[46] TNA CO583/233/10, Chief Commissioner, Northern Provinces, 'European Reservations', 14 Aug. 1937, 1.
[47] TNA CO583/233/10, Governor of Nigeria to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 26 Jan. 1938, 1.

educated Africans lived in reservations earlier than the dates proposed in the literature, which include 1944, 1947, and 1952.[48]

Awkward questions about the record of British colonial rule during the Depression made British administrators increasingly reluctant to defend explicitly racialised exclusion. Sir Bernard Bourdillon, the colonial governor of Nigeria, in 1936 announced a new policy of 'affording Africans wider opportunities for appointment', and the following year Dr Ladipo Oluwole 'made local medical history' when promoted to Medical Officer of Health.[49] Change was slow but steady: 54 Nigerians held senior posts by 1940, an increase of 39 over six years.[50] By the war years, Nigerian officials' residence at reservations was still unusual, but the principle had been established. As one British official wrote in 1944, 'Africans holding superior appointments living in Govt. quarters in a G.R.A. suitable to their status … has been decided in the affirmative and works quite all right'.[51] As the British sought to mobilise Nigerian support for the war against Nazism, many colonial officials were unwilling to uphold overt racial discrimination.[52]

During and after the war, educated Nigerians continued to attack their racialised exclusion from state housing. A 1943 Nigerian Civil Service Union petition, signed by over 2,000 members, demanded 'equal rights and privileges to African officers appointed to

[48] For 1944, see Olukoju, 'The segregation', 282. For 1947, see J. Flint, 'Scandal at the Bristol Hotel: some thoughts on racial discrimination in Britain and West Africa and its relationship to the planning of decolonisation, 1939–47', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 12:1 (1983), 88; and G. O. Olusanya, *The Evolution of the Nigerian Civil Service 1861–1960: The Problems of Nigerianization* (Lagos, 1975), 23. For 1952, see A. D. King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (New York, 1995), 219; Mabogunje, *Urbanization*, 300–1.
[49] NAI CSO26 03142/S.1, Acting Chief Secretary to Heads of Department, 30 Nov. 1936, 1; 'News from West Africa – Nigeria', *West Africa* (London), 20 Mar. 1937.
[50] Nigeria, *Legislative Council Debates: Eighteenth Session, 1940. (4th, 6th, 7th and 15th March, 1940)* (Lagos, 1942), 54–5. Some research has not acknowledged this pre-war change: for example, see Olusanya, *The Evolution*, 24.
[51] NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, M or G [?] minute, 21 Mar. 1944, 3.
[52] Korieh, *Nigeria*, 88; Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, 108–10.

executive posts', including 'accommodation in Government quarters befitting their official position, free of charge'.[53] Unlike their white British colleagues, the few Nigerian civil servants who lived at reservations had to pay rent. The hearings of the 1945–6 Commission on the Civil Services of British West Africa, overseen by the British judge Sir Walter Harragin, offered a new arena for educated Nigerians to renegotiate relationships between state, space, and race. The Supreme Council of Nigerian Workers, representing trade union members, demanded in 1946 that Africans in senior posts 'must maintain the same standard of living as the European with whom he is to rub shoulders', and noted that 'the African is not provided with free quarters'.[54] Now that the British had retreated from explicit racial exclusion at reservations, these were powerful arguments. Harragin agreed with them, and his 1947 report stated that African senior officials '*should be supplied with a house on the same terms as his European confrere*'.[55]

Educated Nigerians' responses to the notorious 1947 Bristol Hotel incident further discredited explicit racial exclusion. The incident saw the white European manager of the Bristol Hotel in Lagos deny residence to Ivor Cummings, a black British colonial official.[56] A subsequent mass meeting called for the government to ban 'all discriminations in public institutions' including 'residences', and especially at 'places which owe their establishments and maintenance from public funds'.[57] The Nigerian-owned press mobilised to condemn the

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[53] TNA CO583/255/7, 'Memorial submitted to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies praying for amelioration of salary and other service conditions of the African staff', 1 May 1943 (presented September 1943), 10. Also see J. A. Ojo, 'Short address by the President of the Nigeria Civil Service Union to the Right Honourable Colonel Oliver Stanley, M.P.', 12 Sep. 1943, 1.

[54] Note the gendered language: usually only men were appointed to senior civil service posts. TNA CO963/151, J. A. Ojo et al., 'Memorandum of the Supreme Council of Nigerian Workers on the revision of salaries etc', 31 Jan. 1946, 7, 16.

[55] Colonial Office, *Report of the Commission on the Civil Services of British West Africa 1945–46* Colonial No. 209 (Accra, 1947), 23. Emphasis in original.

[56] See Flint, 'Scandal', 86–9.

[57] 'United Front committee resolves against Jim-Crowism', *West African Pilot*, 6 Mar. 1947.

incident. This, together with angry street protests, elicited a 1947 government circular prohibiting the 'colour bar' and a public statement from the governor, Sir Arthur Richards, declaring that racial segregation was now 'an anachronism'.[58]

Educated Nigerians' concurrent campaigns for constitutional change also widened access to reservations. The new 1946 constitution expanded the Legislative Council to include more members from across Nigeria.[59] These Nigerian representatives in 1949 requested special housing for when the Council met in Lagos, specifying that it should be in Ikoyi, 'which is preferred to Lagos Island or the Mainland'.[60] The construction of 24 flats was duly ordered, together with around 8,500 items to furnish them, including fish knives and jam spoons.[61] Legislative Council members temporarily took over two existing blocks of Ikoyi flats while they were under construction. When a fire broke out during the evening of Sunday 20 November 1949, Mallam Muhammad, Wali of Bornu, left hurriedly and met outside '[t]he Sardauna of Sokoto and Mallam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa ... looking after their loads which were being taken out by their boys'.[62] The presence of these distinguished northern Nigerian politicians at Ikoyi would have been inconceivable a few years before, and testified to Nigerians' success in challenging overt racial exclusion from reservations. Nigerian politicians and civil servants were a common sight at Ikoyi by the mid-1950s. Chinua Achebe, for example, moved to Ikoyi in 1954 when he took up a post in the Nigerian Broadcasting Service.[63] Reservations showcased the increasing diversity of late colonial

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[58] 'Africans will be admitted into European Hospital', *West African Pilot*, 10 Mar. 1947.
[59] For an overview, see J.S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley, 1958), 271–92; and Falola and Heaton, *A History*, 148–54.
[60] NAI LAGPWD1/1 001150, S. Ade Ojo, T. A. J. Ogunbiyi, J. G. C. Allen, R. W. Taylor, and P. J. Rogers to Chairman, Standing Committee on Finance, 15 Mar. 1949, 1.
[61] NAI LAGPWD1/1 001150, 'Accommodation for members of Leg. Co. — suggested schedule of furnishings', n.d. [1949]; Director of Public Works to Chief Secretary, 25 Aug. 1949.
[62] Note the derogatory term for domestic servants used here. NAI LAGPWD1/1 001150, Wali of Bornu to Yard Superintendent, n.d. [1950].
[63] Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe: A Biography* (Oxford, 1997), 57–8, 85.

officialdom, exemplifying how educated Nigerians successfully challenged explicit racialised exclusion and in the process forged a distinctively late colonial state.

However, late colonial experiences of Ikoyi remained tacitly racialised. Nigerian householders could unsurprisingly feel uncomfortable in spaces designed by and for, and still largely inhabited by, white British officials. This was addressed in novels of the time written by authors who themselves lived at reservations, including Achebe and T. M. Aluko. These works often depict reservations' new Nigerian residents as isolated and unsettled. For Achebe's protagonist Obi Okonkwo, a young civil servant in *No Longer at Ease* (1960), 'Ikoyi was like a graveyard. It had no corporate life – at any rate for those Africans who lived there'.[64] White people continued to dominate the spaces of Ikoyi, and their interactions with Nigerians were often superficial. The continuing tacit racialisation of space was reflected in de facto segregation *within* reservations. Hugh and Mabel Smythe, American sociologists who worked in Nigeria from 1957 to 1958, observed that at reservations, 'a great many apartment buildings tend to become all-Nigerian after one Nigerian family moves in', suggesting that white British officials remained reluctant to live alongside their Nigerian colleagues.[65] Tacitly racialised exclusion continued to shape life at late colonial reservations.

Ironically, the success of educated Nigerians' campaigns against overt racial exclusion contributed to reservations' rapid and costly expansion during the 1950s. Federal and regional governments sought to provide reservation housing for all senior officials, Nigerian and British, employed in the rapidly expanding civil service. Even as the transfer of power neared, the federal government reclaimed swampland at Ikoyi to permit the construction of new bungalows.[66] This was an odd outcome. The British established

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[64] C. Achebe, *No Longer at Ease* (London, 2010), 14. Also see T. Livsey, 'Grave reservations: Nigerian literature and histories of "European reservations" during decolonization', *Journal of West African History,* 7:2 (2021), 8–12.
[65] H. H. Smythe and M. M. Smythe, *The New Nigerian Elite* (Stanford, 1960), 129.
[66] TNA CO554/1361, W. M. Woodhouse to G. A. Atkinson, 19 Feb. 1957.

reservations as overtly racialised colonial-era institutions. But educated Nigerians' calls for equal access to reservations, rather than for their abolition, implied that reservations were an appropriate state institution for Nigeria, and contributed to their enlargement during the late colonial years. The inequalities inherent in providing senior state officials with expensive reservation housing would be inherited by postcolonial Nigeria.

Educated Nigerians' campaigning about reservations was thus at once a triumph and a disaster. They helped to forge a late colonial state by discrediting explicit racial exclusion, but the dynamics of educated Nigerians' campaigns contributed to the expansion of these tacitly racialised spaces. They tended not to focus on the continuing relationships between reservations and whiteness, or reservations' suitability for an independent African nation. The historian E. A. Ayandele in 1973 argued that the 'so-called nationalists … bellowed because they wanted that the educated elite be put into such cushy "for the whites only" positions and enjoy the same privileges'.[67] His comments captured the way late colonial campaigns against explicit racial exclusion could leave more subtly racialised institutions unexamined. Later scholars, including Philip S. Zachernuk, have also suggested that Nigerian educated elites failed to articulate a coherent critical response to colonial institutions during the late colonial years.[68] These criticisms reflected educated Nigerians' ambivalent achievements in negotiating a late colonial state at Ikoyi, but at the same time understated their dogged challenge to racial segregation, which overcame their overtly racialised exclusion from reservations earlier than many scholars have acknowledged.

Migrants to Nigeria

[67] Ayandele gave these lectures in 1973, and they were published the following year. E. A. Ayandele, *The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society* (Ibadan, 1974), 74.
[68] Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, 125–74.

Historians have had little to say about the negotiation of state, space, and race at reservations by migrants to Nigeria aside from white Westerners.[69] Like educated Nigerians, migrants to Nigeria with roots in the Eastern Mediterranean or India challenged explicitly racialised exclusion. They won access to reservations, but proved less able to challenge implicitly racialised late colonial standards.

These migrants to Nigeria were diverse, but shared an uncomfortable position as a small minority in colonial society. British officials did not see them as Westerners, despite Eastern Mediterranean migrants often claiming whiteness, and many Nigerians treated them as outsiders.[70] Some wanted to live at Ikoyi, but migrants lacked educated Nigerians' campaigning resources such as Legislative Council representation. They therefore did not publicly campaign for access, but applied individually to lease plots using a process that colonial officials intended for white businessmen.[71] Migrants' efforts to challenge overt racial exclusion at Ikoyi helped to produce a late colonial shift, ostensibly from racial standards to standards rooted in social class. However, examining how British officials considered migrants' applications for Ikoyi plots highlights the tacit role of race in their thinking about class.

British officials rejected migrants' applications for Ikoyi plots outright until the later 1930s. In 1937, for example, they informed an Egyptian applicant that 'sites at Ikoyi are

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[69] For an important exception see Olukoju, 'The segregation', 281–2.
[70] On Eastern Mediterranean migrants to Nigeria, see I. O. Albert, 'Trade rivalry between the Yoruba and Syrians in colonial south-western Nigeria', in O. C. Adesina (ed.), *Nigeria in the Twentieth Century: History, Governance and Society* (Ibadan, 2017), 72–102; and T. Falola, 'Lebanese traders in southwestern Nigeria, 1900-1960', *African Affairs*, 89:357 (1990), 523–53. On Eastern Mediterranean migrants in wider West Africa, see E. K. Akyeampong, 'Race, identity and citizenship in Black Africa: the case of the Lebanese in Ghana', *Africa*, 76:3 (2006), 297–323; and A. Arsan, *Interlopers of Empire: the Lebanese Diaspora in Colonial French West Africa* (London, 2014). On migrants with Indian roots see R. B. Winder, 'The Lebanese in West Africa', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4:3 (1962), 311n61.
[71] Unlike colonial officials, those leasing plots were required to construct their own houses, subject to reservation regulations, rather than occupying housing constructed by the government.

reserved for persons of European descent'.[72] After colonial officials replaced the overtly racialised nomenclature 'European reservation' in 1938, they still viewed reservations in tacitly racialised terms. This is clear from their consideration of the next migrant to Nigeria who applied for an Ikoyi plot: Mr Jivatsing, the Lagos manager of the Indian-owned trading company K. Chellaram and Son. Chellarams owned a chain of stores in Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone that specialised in 'fancy goods, provisions, haberdashery, [and] footwear for men, women and children'.[73] Jivatsing applied for a plot twice, in February and September 1944. He consciously probed the racialised nature of space at Ikoyi, asking for example that colonial officials 'kindly make explicit to us why' his applications were rejected.[74]

The British officials who considered Jivatsing's application in 1944 generally agreed that 'persons of any race are eligible to lease plots in Government Residential Areas', and that 'standard of living is the criterion', which implied that social class was now the main standard for assessing reservations' prospective residents.[75] British officials accordingly viewed Jivatsing relatively favourably. As 'a man of some standing and means', he could 'be expected to conform to the health standards required in a Government Residential Area'.[76] But British authorities had doubts about Jivatsing's Indian employees, whom he also wanted to house at Ikoyi. After Jivatsing's second application, British officials took the remarkable step, given that there was no suggestion that he had committed any offence, of ordering a CID (Criminal Investigation Department) enquiry. It alleged that Jivatsing and his staff 'live a communal life in quarters above the firms [*sic*] shop … in conditions said to be little above

[72] The available files unfortunately reveal little about this case, not even the applicant's name. NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, Commissioner of Lands to Chief Secretary, 18 Feb. 1944.
[73] See the advertisement in *Nigeria Civil Servant*, 2:1 (1944), 21. The company still exists in Nigeria. See http://www.chellaramsplc.com/?page_id=765 (accessed 14 Apr. 2020).
[74] NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, Manager, K. Chellaram and Sons to Commissioner of Lands, 1 Mar. 1944.
[75] NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, M or G [?] minute, 21 Mar. 1944, 1–2; XO minute, 22 Mar. 1944.
[76] NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, M or G [?] minute, 21 Mar. 1944, 2.

African standards', showing how — amongst themselves — many British officials still understood social class and different ways of life in terms of a racialised hierarchy.[77] One argued that there was 'some difference between making a plot available for Chellaram's manager who is known to be a man of some standing and culture ... and making one available for the purpose of erecting barracks for the firm's underlings'.[78] British officials rejected the application because they saw only Jivatsing himself, and not his employees, as likely to uphold Ikoyi's tacitly racialised standards, which were based on the behaviour white British colonial officials expected from each other. Because late colonial state authorities now forswore racial exclusion, they kept this reasoning private, issuing bland explanations stressing the limited space at Ikoyi.[79] Jivatsing and his colleagues were barred from the reservation because, as a group, they were not deemed likely to conform with these tacitly racialised standards of behaviour.

When a migrant eventually applied for an Ikoyi plot successfully, it was because he ranked highly on colonial officials' racialised hierarchy of standards, and benefitted from educated Nigerians' campaigning. On 25 August 1946, a man asked at a Lands Department office to lease an Ikoyi plot. Clover, the British official who dealt with the enquiry, 'did not clearly hear this gentleman's name at the time and from his appearance took him to be a European'. Clover therefore 'informed him that his name would be added to the waiting list'.[80] When Clover later received a letter from the man, he noticed that his name was Mattar. Clover asked the CID to investigate Mattar, who, again, was not suspected of wrongdoing.

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[77] NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, Commissioner of Lands to Chief Secretary, 15 Jul. 1944.
[78] NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, J.O. Field minute, 20 Jul. 1944.
[79] For example, see NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, Acting Chief Secretary to Manager, K. Chellaram and Sons, 17 Feb. 1945. The founder of the company, Kishinchand Chellaram, later secured housing at Ikoyi. See https://www.forbesafrica.com/focus/2012/03/01/from-refugees-to-tycoons/ (accessed 20 Apr. 2022).
[80] NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, Acting Commissioner of Lands to Chief Secretary, 24 Jan. 1947.

These enquires revealed that Mattar was ‘a British subject by birth, of Syrian parentage’, who had ‘served in the British Army and held the rank of Captain’.[81] Clover’s verbal acceptance of Mattar’s application, based on his mistaken assessment of Mattar’s ethnicity, created a situation one British official described as ‘a little delicate’.[82] Some were concerned that granting Mattar a lease may create ‘an undesirable precedent’, but another official argued that Mattar was ‘as suitable a candidate for a plot in Ikoyi as any non-European is likely to be’, a comment which again implied a racialised hierarchy of class. [83] Mattar’s service as a commissioned officer in the British army meant that most colonial officials were prepared to locate him as high on their hierarchy of standards as was possible for a person that they did not view as white. Colonial authorities granted him the lease in October 1947, partly because of the colonial governor’s recent measures to abolish overt racial segregation in the wake of the Bristol Hotel protests.[84] Educated Nigerian campaigns against the colonial state’s racialised standards helped to open the way for Mattar to live at Ikoyi.

These migrants to Nigeria mobilised fewer campaigning resources than educated Nigerians, but still helped to make a late colonial state by challenging explicitly racialised standards of statehood and space. Their experience shows the diversity of those involved in forging late colonialism. Even when explicitly racialised exclusion had been abandoned, however, British officials still sought to regulate Ikoyi according to standards rooted in their own, implicitly racialised, norms. Like educated Nigerians, migrants to Nigeria gained access to Ikoyi, but proved less able to challenge tacitly racialised late colonial understandings of statehood and space.

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[81] *Ibid.*
[82] NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, J. O. Field minute, 14 Feb. 1947.
[83] NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, J. O. Field minute, 14 Feb. 1947; PL [?] to Chief Secretary, 2 Oct. 1947.
[84] NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, Chief Secretary to Commissioner of Lands, 3 Oct. 1947, also see Commissioner of the Colony to Chief Secretary, 15 Apr. 1947. Olukoju mistakenly suggested that Mattar’s application ‘was turned down’: see Olukoju, ‘The segregation’, 282.

Colonial officials

Reservations featured prominently in debates amongst another group of migrants to Nigeria, white British colonial officials. They retained substantial control over the levers of the late colonial state from the 1930s to the 1950s, but found it increasingly difficult to agree amongst themselves about reservations. Many British officials questioned explicit racial exclusion, but even they proved less willing to interrogate their implicitly racialised thinking about statehood and space.

British officials formed a more heterogenous group as a larger, more developmentalist late colonial state emerged in Nigeria from the later 1930s. Administrative officials faced new challenges from their specialist colleagues, such as medical officers, who were recruited in larger numbers.[85] The meanings of late colonial statehood and space were increasingly negotiated *amongst* British officials. Generalist colonial administrators based in Nigeria, rather than — as Carl Nightingale has suggested — the Colonial Office in London, took the initiative in abandoning overt racial exclusion at reservations.[86] Specialist medical officials, supported by the Colonial Office, unsuccessfully argued for continued racial segregation. These debates suggest the limitations of seeing late colonial state building as chiefly a 'triumph of the expert', in which specialist officials wielded increased influence.[87]

Medical officers argued that explicit racial segregation was necessary to protect British officials' health, and banned all Africans — apart from male domestic servants — from living in reservations. 'Native children should on no account be allowed to reside within

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[85] Nigeria, *Blue Book for the Year Ending 31st December, 1935* (Lagos, 1936), L12–17; Nigeria, *Blue Book for the Year Ending 31st December, 1938* (Lagos, 1939), L28–33.
[86] Nightingale, *Segregation*, 188.
[87] C. Bonneuil, 'Development as experiment: science and state building in late colonial and postcolonial Africa, 1930–1970', *Osiris*, 2nd ser. 15 (2000), 258–81; J. M. Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens, OH, 2007).

the reservation', wrote a sanitary officer in 1919, reflecting colonial medical officials' view that African children were especially infectious carriers of tropical diseases.[88] He also sought to bar 'native women … without a special pass'.[89] These regulations sought to minimise Africans' residence at reservations.

By the later 1930s, medical officials vociferously complained about the lax enforcement of these rules. Rupert Briercliffe, the director of Nigeria's medical department, in 1936 objected to 'large numbers of African children (and ... servants and their wives)' living at Lagos reservations.[90] He demanded changes to exclude Nigerian children and limit resident servants to one per household. The problem for Briercliffe was medical officials' restricted powers over reservations: they could usually only *request* that householders evict unauthorised Nigerian residents, including servants' family members and friends.[91] P. S. Selwyn-Clarke, the medical department's deputy director, escalated the dispute in 1937. He complained that colonial administrators were not properly enforcing segregation, and appealed directly to the secretary of state for the colonies in London. Selwyn-Clarke called for 'the exclusion of African children' from reservations, the prohibition of African women at night, fewer resident male servants, and greater powers of enforcement.[92] A 1938 conference of medical officials from across British-controlled West Africa endorsed this agenda. They emphasised that 'the number of Africans, who form the reservoir of infection, living in residential areas should be very strictly limited'.[93] Explicit racial segregation retained

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[88] A now discredited idea. In relation to malaria, see J. L. A. Webb Jr, *Humanity's Burden: A Global History of Malaria* (Cambridge, 2009), 131.
[89] NAI CSO26 11136, 'Extract from Senior Sanitary Officer's Memorandum of 8.8.19', 2.
[90] TNA CO583/215/1, R. Briercliffe to Chief Secretary, 16 Nov. 1936, 2.
[91] Only four reservations in Nigeria (Kaduna, Kano, Lokoja, and Zaria in the north) were legally classified as such under the 1917 Townships Ordinance, which gave colonial officials additional powers over these spaces. TNA CO583/215/1, P. S. Selwyn-Clarke to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 2 Jul. 1937, 11.
[92] *Ibid*., 11, 18.
[93] Nigeria, *Proceedings of the Fourth Conference of the Senior Members of the West African Medical Staff* (Lagos, n.d. [c. 1938]), 3.

widespread support amongst colonial medical officers in the later 1930s, and enjoyed considerable support at the Colonial Office as well. William Ormsby-Gore, the secretary of state, wrote to Bourdillon in 1937 that 'the good results achieved by the policy of segregation' should not be 'obscured by other, e.g. political, considerations'.[94] Overt segregation at reservations still had vocal advocates within the colonial establishment.

But this was not to be a triumph of expert medical officials. Colonial administrators in Nigeria, under pressure from educated Nigerians' campaigning, and aware that explicit racial segregation had become a political liability, successfully sidelined medical officers' proposals. Bourdillon dismissed Selwyn-Clarke's plans as 'extreme', and most senior administrators supported the governor.[95] Sir William Hunt, the chief commissioner of the southern provinces, argued that segregation was more a 'political' than a 'hygiene' matter, for example, and advocated segregation by 'standard of living' — that is, by social class — instead of overt racial exclusion.[96] Colonial administrators' 1938 decision to change reservations' official name to 'government residential areas' proved decisive in this tussle. Bourdillon informed the secretary of state that '*normally* residence in these areas should be confined to Europeans', effectively permitting some Nigerian householders.[97] Officials at the Colonial Office quickly realised that this was a decisive intervention, with R. E. Turnbull of the West African Department shrewdly suggesting that 'the policy of the Medical Department has been effectively killed'.[98] The administrators retreated from explicit racial segregation, giving way to educated Nigerians' campaigns to access reservation housing. It would be a mistake to read medical officials' interventions in these ongoing debates as

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[94] TNA CO583/215/1, W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore to B. Bourdillon, 22 Nov. 1937, 2.
[95] TNA CO583/215/1, B. Bourdillon to W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, 22 Jul. 1937, 5.
[96] TNA CO583/233/10, W. E. Hunt, 'European Reservations', 11 Oct. 1937, 1; also see Chief Commissioner, Northern Provinces, 'European Reservations', 14 Aug. 1937.
[97] TNA CO583/233/10, B. Bourdillon to W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, 26 Jan. 1938, 2. Emphasis added.
[98] TNA CO583/233/10, R. E. Turnbull minute, 10 Mar. 1938, 4.

agreed statements of policy or practice, as Jemima Pierre has done for Ghana.[99] Colonial administrators in Nigeria (and in Ghana a few years later) succeeded in framing racial segregation as chiefly a political issue that fell within their purview, rather than that of medical officials.[100]

Nevertheless, high-ranking white British administrators still claimed the right to define and regulate standards at reservations and, as a result, these standards continued to incorporate tacitly racialised content. This was reflected in the views of J. G. Pyke-Knot, the secretary of the eastern provinces, who in 1950 wrote of reservations: '(a) There should be no discrimination on grounds of race; (b) The standard to be aimed at should be that of the Senior Government Service'.[101] Pyke-Knot condemned explicit racial exclusion, but affirmed that standards should continue to be those of 'the Senior Government Service', which had been established, and was still led, by white British officials. British administrators proved unwilling to consider that standards rooted in their own norms would be tacitly racialised. Rather, they presented them as neutral standards appropriate for modern forms of statehood and urban space.

Debates about reservations within British officialdom testified to the late colonial state's growing plurality, but they were not, in this instance, characterised by a triumph of specialist colonial officials. British administrators distanced themselves from explicit racial exclusion, although they still claimed the authority to set and enforce standards rooted in their own norms, which invariably incorporated tacitly racialised content.

Nigerian domestic servants

[99] J. Pierre, *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race* (Chicago, 2013), 29–30.
[100] On Ghana, see TNA CO554/128/5, A. Burns to C. J. Jeffries, 16 Apr. 1942.
[101] NAI CSO26 03272/S.1 vol. I, Secretary, Eastern Provinces to Chief Secretary, 3 Mar. 1950, 5.

Nigerian domestic servants, their relatives, and friends formed another group that actively negotiated state, space, and race at Ikoyi. Reservations were unhomely spaces for servants and their families.[102] 'Life can be pretty lonely in white men's compounds. No one talks to you and you must not make noise', as Cordelia, a cook's wife, observes in a 1939 scene from Buchi Emecheta's 1979 novel *The Joys of Motherhood*.[103] Servants' family and friends therefore came to live at Ikoyi, defying the reservation's explicitly racialised regulations in an effort to make life there more congenial. In so doing, they widened access to the late colonial state's resources, including housing and utilities. However, these non-elite Nigerians proved less able to contest tacitly racialised experiences of statehood and space.

Servants' main resource in their challenge to Ikoyi's regulations was that they comprised most of the reservation's residents. Each European household, which comprised a single colonial official, or sometimes an official and his wife, employed around three Nigerian servants, who lived in quarters behind the employers' bungalows.[104] A 1931 census suggests that the Ikoyi reservation had a population of 908, which included only 234 'non-Africans'.[105] These figures probably underestimated Ikoyi's Nigerian population by excluding unauthorised residents.[106] Historians have noted in passing reservations' large African populations, but have rarely explored in detail how they shaped experiences of these

[102] On the 'unhomely' as 'a paradigmatic colonial and post-colonial condition', see H. K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994), 9.
[103] B. Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* (Harlow, 2008), 108.
[104] For example, see NAI CSO26 03204 vol. VII, Council Chairman, Association of European Civil Servants of Nigeria to Chief Secretary, 2 Mar. 1938.
[105] Nigeria, *Legislative Council Debates: Third Session. 21st and 22nd November, 1949* (Lagos, 1949), 94.
[106] According to the 1950 census there were 12,320 Nigerians and 2,738 others living in the area designated Ward G, although this included southwest Ikoyi and the Lighthouse Beach area as well as the Ikoyi reservation. Nigeria, *Population Census of Lagos, 1950* (Kaduna, 1951), 31, 113–14.

spaces.[107] The large number of Nigerian servants, their family, and friends at Ikoyi meant that they influenced patterns of everyday life at the reservation, which afforded them some leverage over relationships between state, space, and race.

The unauthorised residence of servants' wives, children, and friends in servants' quarters challenged British officials' original vision of Ikoyi as an explicitly racialised space with as few Nigerian residents as possible. Colonial authorities provided servants' quarters to facilitate the work of male domestic staff, and expected their families to live elsewhere in Lagos. The unauthorised residence of servants' family and friends showed how these Nigerians took the initiative to make life at Ikoyi more convivial. They undermined the colonial state's racialised distribution of resources by making the servants' quarters buildings and their utilities, which included better access to piped water than in many parts of Lagos, available to more Nigerians.[108]

These agendas are clear from inspections of servants' quarters. One search in 1937 found seven men, two women, and two children in quarters intended for around three male servants.[109] European householders' complaint letters, which often focused on Nigerian children, also document the presence of servants' family members at Ikoyi, and their contravention of expected standards of behaviour. The colonial official G. Darby in 1937 protested about 'African women and children living in one or other of the compounds adjacent to mine'. Despite the regulations excluding Nigerian children, Darby complained that he had 'been disturbed by crying at every hour of the twenty-four'.[110] Colonial authorities received many similar complaints over a long period. N. Rasmusson, an agent of

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[107] On Ikoyi, see Bigon, *A History*, 153; Olukoju, 'The Segregation', 279. For coverage of another reservation, see Goerg, 'From Hill Station', 15–16.
[108] A. Olukoju, *Infrastructure Development and Urban Facilities in Lagos, 1861-2000* (Ibadan, 2003), 63.
[109] NAI Comcol1 1985 vol. I, I. Ladipo Oluwole to Messrs H. E. B. Greene and Co., 27 Jul. 1937.
[110] TNA CO583/215/1, G. Darby to Deputy Director of Health Service, 1 Mar. 1937, 5.

the Lagos Timber Company who lived at Ikoyi, protested in 1944 'about the noise caused by children of domestic servants', and asked the government 'to enforce the restrictive covenant in the lease which forbids the residence of non-Europeans other than ... domestic servants'.[111] Clearly, more Nigerians lived at Ikoyi servants' quarters than the regulations had intended.

Perhaps surprisingly, the servants won the support of some influential colonial administrators. Governor Bourdillon in 1937 dismissed Darby as 'an officer of decidedly old-maidish tendencies', and the chief secretary ignored Rasmusson's concerns in 1944.[112] 'Government does not propose to amend existing leases but the restrictive covenant ... will not be enforced', he ruled.[113] This extraordinary response reflected colonial administrators' growing scepticism about medical arguments for racial segregation, as well as their self-interest. As one noted in 1947, 'it is often more satisfactory for an employer to allow the family of his servant to reside on the premises, for reasons of health, convenience and efficiency'.[114] Permitting servants' families to live in Ikoyi meant that servants were more likely to be nearby when householders required them, and were considered less likely to carry disease to Ikoyi from poorer districts of Lagos.[115] The initiative of servants, their families, and friends helped to dismantle explicitly racialised regulations regarding Nigerian women and children.

The late colonial state's recruitment of more white British officials from the later 1930s, and the construction at Ikoyi of flats to house them, also brought more Nigerian servants to the reservation. They lived in larger groups at the flats than elsewhere in Ikoyi, as

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[111] NAI CSO26 11136, Commissioner of Lands to Chief Secretary, 5 Apr. 1944.
[112] Note the gendered dimension of Bourdillon's comment, suggesting how colonial administrators often envisioned Ikoyi as a masculine space. TNA CO583/215/1, B. Bourdillon to W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, 22 Jul. 1937, 8.
[113] NAI CSO26 11136, Chief Secretary to Commissioner of Lands, 14 Apr. 1944.
[114] NAI Comcol1 1985 vol. I, Commissioner of the Colony to Manager, Socony Vacuum Oil Company, 21 Feb. 1947.
[115] For the point about disease, see NAI CSO26 06670, C. C. Woolley to Lord Lloyd, 4 Jul. 1940, 1.

all servants working at each block of flats lived in a single servants' quarters building, rather than in smaller, separate buildings located behind each employer's bungalow. This made it harder for British householders to regulate servants' quarters at the flats, and allowed servants more freedom to live in ways they found comfortable. This is lavishly documented in complaint letters. C. L. Southall, who lived at one of the first blocks of flats, protested in 1941 about 'a squealing infant', and suggested that 'if no steps are taken the flats will be occupied by 70-80 Africans & 16 Europeans'.[116] Southall was probably exaggerating, but his letter suggests the success of servants' family and friends in taking up residence at the flats.

Complaints multiplied as more blocks of flats were completed after 1945. One letter, written by F. H. A. Bex in April 1949, was unusually long, but included many frequently cited grievances. He complained that 'servants keep chickens & ducks, entertain guests noisily & make themselves objectionable to anyone complaining'. Bex noted that 'half the servants' quarters are out of sight of the flat to which they belong & therefore outside its control', and criticised the overcrowding of rooms 'fit for the occupation of 2 persons'. 'A lot of noise is caused by those who have a wife & 3 or 4 small children', he continued, adding that 'brothers and friends are allowed to live there'.[117] These letters elaborated anxieties that Nigerian servants were succeeding in remaking relationships between state, space, and race at Ikoyi, and were indeed offering a more thoroughgoing challenge to British officials' racialised expectations than residents who were educated Nigerians or migrants to Nigeria. 'This particular compound … is becoming much like an African village and affords no peace for Europeans who like to spend some of their time in their own homes', concluded Joan Saint, another resident of the flats, in a 1947 letter about noise from nearby servants' quarters.[118]

[116] NAI Comcol1 356/2, C. L. Southall to District Officer, Colony, 25 Sep. 1941, 2.
[117] NAI Comcol1 1985 vol. I, F. H. A. Bex to Allen, 5 Apr. 1949, 1, 2.
[118] NAI Comcol1 1985 vol. I, J. M. T. Saint to Commissioner of the Colony, 13 Oct. 1947.

Nevertheless, even as British officials retreated from explicitly racialised regulations, tacitly racialised hierarchies remained extremely important to non-elite Nigerians' experiences of Ikoyi. Lamidu Omomeji, a nine-year-old boy, went to pick cashews in the garden of an Ikoyi bungalow in May 1954. The householder, the British assistant superintendent of police, took his air rifle and shot Omomeji, hospitalising him.[119] The police officer was reprimanded, but escaped prosecution.[120] This shocking incident, and the limited consequences for the officer involved, suggest that despite the late colonial retreat from explicit racial segregation, in practice white British officials still claimed a tacitly racialised authority to define and enforce standards at Ikoyi.

Nigerian servants, their relatives, and friends had little to gain from racialised standards at Ikoyi and challenged them through their patterns of everyday life. They successfully overturned British officials' prohibition on Nigerian women and children living at Ikoyi, secured better access to state resources, and thus actively forged a late colonial state. These Nigerians challenged British officials' implicitly racialised conceptions of proper standards, but were ultimately in too weak a position to overturn them completely, as shown by the violent response to Lamidu Omomeji and the minimal consequences for the perpetrator.

Conclusion

A focus on Ikoyi shows in unprecedented detail when and how segregationist policies changed in Nigeria. At Ikoyi, a wide range of actors renegotiated constructions of space and

[119] S. Aderinto, *Guns and Society in Colonial Nigeria: Firearms, Culture, and Public Order* (Bloomington, IN, 2018), 148; 'Police officer reprimanded for shooting two boys', *Daily Times* (Lagos), 21 Aug. 1954. I am grateful to Saheed Aderinto for drawing my attention to this incident.

[120] 'Police officer acted foolishly says acting attorney-general', *West African Pilot*, 21 Aug. 1954.

race, contributing to the wider emergence of a late colonial state. This involved non-elites as well as elites: late colonial state building was not only a top down process. Attention to changes in segregationist policy and practice sheds new light on the emergence of late colonialism, and vice versa.

Ikoyi highlights the role of race and space in the making of a late colonial state. Disputes about reservations forced late colonial authorities to disavow explicitly racialised forms of statehood and space, a seismic shift that undercut the foundations of colonial rule. But these debates were less successful in addressing the continuing purchase of implicitly racialised standards. Educated Nigerians and migrants focused on dismantling explicit racial segregation at Ikoyi, winning access to reservations, and British administrators ditched explicitly racialised standards as they became a political liability. But these groups offered no sustained challenge to the institution of the reservation itself, the planning and regulation of which were informed by white British officials' racialised ideas about statehood and space. Educated Nigerians, migrants to Nigeria, and British officials alike found it difficult to interrogate implicit understandings of racial difference that remained important to experiences of Ikoyi. Nigerian domestic servants, their family members, and friends posed the most comprehensive challenge to tacitly racialised standards of statehood and space, but wielded insufficient power to overturn them.

So the dynamics of negotiating a late colonial state at Ikoyi did not bequeath independent Nigeria decolonised, postracial forms of statehood or space. Rather, they foreclosed the opportunity of assessing from first principles the kinds of state and urban space best suited to a soon-to-be independent country. Reservations like Ikoyi exemplified the way postcolonial Nigeria inherited forms of statehood and space that remained shot through with tacitly racialised standards and colonial-era logics. It is no coincidence that

Ikoyi repeatedly featured in the musician-activist Fela Kuti's 1970s critiques of postcolonial Nigeria, which he saw as stymied by an enduring 'Ikoyi mentality'.[121]

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Figure Legend

Figure 1. Map of Lagos in the 1950s showing the Ikoyi reservation, marked as 'Residential Area'. The reservation was surrounded by water to the north, south, and east, and was separated from the city of Lagos to the west by a 'building free zone'.

Source: Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industry, *Handbook of Commerce and Industry in Nigeria* (Lagos, 1960), 26.

Figure 2. Detail of a 1955 plan of Ikoyi. Note the low-density plots for bungalows in the north and east, and the denser concentrations of flats in the south west. The 'building free zone' separating the reservation from the city of Lagos was occupied by the golf course marked in the south west. The area on the banks of the lagoon hatched in pencil was the site for a proposed land reclamation project.

Source: NAI Comcol1 3911, 'Plan of Ikoyi' (1955). Reproduced courtesy of the National Archives, Ibadan.

[121] Fela Kuti, 'Ikoyi Mentality versus Mushin Mentality', from 'Why Black Man Dey Suffer', African Songs Limited (1971).