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**MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT: INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS  
ON PRIVATE CAR PURCHASE AND USE**  
(A Case Study of Car Consumption in the City of Lagos, Nigeria)

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                             |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| CHAPTER ONE .....                                                                           | 4  |
| 1.1 INTRODUCTION .....                                                                      | 4  |
| 1.2 CASE STUDY BACKGROUND/STATEMENT OF PROBLEM .....                                        | 2  |
| 1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY .....                                                            | 5  |
| 1.4 STUDY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES .....                                                         | 6  |
| CHAPTER TWO.....                                                                            | 8  |
| 2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....                                                             | 8  |
| 2.1.1 The Rational Choice Theory.....                                                       | 8  |
| 2.1.2 Collective Consciousness and Collective Representations.....                          | 10 |
| 2.1.3 Choice Processing Perspective .....                                                   | 11 |
| 2.1.4 Sociological/Anthropological Perspective.....                                         | 12 |
| 2.2 THEORETICAL MODEL.....                                                                  | 15 |
| CHAPTER THREE.....                                                                          | 16 |
| 3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....                                                              | 16 |
| 3.1.1 Study Area .....                                                                      | 16 |
| 3.2 PRESENTATION OF MINOR CASES .....                                                       | 20 |
| 3.2.1 Bank Workers: .....                                                                   | 20 |
| 3.2.2 Health Personnel;.....                                                                | 20 |
| 3.2.3 Students and Fresh school leavers; .....                                              | 20 |
| 3.2.4 Ministry Representatives; .....                                                       | 20 |
| CHAPTER FOUR.....                                                                           | 22 |
| 4.1 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS .....                                                           | 22 |
| CHAPTER FIVE.....                                                                           | 25 |
| 5.1 CASE STUDY ANALYSIS .....                                                               | 25 |
| 5.1.1. The Car and Individual Preferences .....                                             | 25 |
| 5.1.2 The Car as Necessity .....                                                            | 27 |
| 5.1.3 The Social Side of the Car (Society, Social Groups and Car Consumption in Lagos)..... | 29 |
| 5.1.4 Status and Identity on Wheels .....                                                   | 30 |
| 5.1.5. A Demographic Perspective To car Consumption .....                                   | 33 |
| 5.1.6. The Transport Problem, Environment and Sustainability.....                           | 33 |
| CHAPTER SIX .....                                                                           | 36 |
| 6.1 DISCUSSION ON CASE STUDY ANALYSIS .....                                                 | 36 |
| 6.1.1 Study Limitations .....                                                               | 36 |
| 6.1.2 Discussion on Case Study Findings.....                                                | 37 |
| 6.1.3 Conclusions .....                                                                     | 41 |
| REFERENCES.....                                                                             | 42 |
| APPENDIX .....                                                                              | 46 |

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to Asa and Ingegerd, and then to my baby nephews Ikem, Sean Michael, Chicky and Bobo. And to all those in Lagos who pray that God should help them buy Jeeps!

### *Abstract*

*Contrary to prior views, developing countries presently display unsustainable consumption patterns and have increased the global consumer class. Car consumption in Lagos is argued in this thesis to be one of such unsustainable consumption patterns. For various reasons (which could be explained by increased mobility demands, the absence of an effective and efficient public transport system, socio-anthological reasons that emphasize conspicuous consumption etc), car consumption in Lagos is on a steady increase. Consequent to this are environmental and health related problems that portray the unsustainability of this mode of consumption. I argue in this thesis that an alleviation of these problems necessitates an understanding of the complex dynamics inherent in car consumption trends of Lagos citizens. This thesis makes a case study of why and how people use cars in Lagos, and goes ahead to consider the sustainability implications for the city on Lagos. The case study uses a triangulation of qualitative methods and theories and analyzes the transport situation in Lagos as unsustainable. The implications for the future are noted while recommendations are proposed for short and long terms. In addition, the study makes a novel approach to understanding the transport situation in Lagos and opens up avenues for further research*

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

We live in a present age where the debates about the duo of an increasing global population and concerns over what has been described as the growth of a global consumer class have caused a riotous stir.<sup>1</sup> Prior to this sort of coupling between population growth and the emergence of a global consumer class, much emphasis had been laid on trying to understand and analyze the effects of population increase at national, regional and global levels. However, since the beginning of the 1980s, experts have realised that the problem is not just the increase in population. It was discovered that global patterns of consumption were unsustainable<sup>2</sup> and that our present generation's problems were not just the products of aggregate numbers but of the consequences and implications produced by the pressure created from a coupling of the twin factors of an increasing population growth and unsustainable consumptive patterns.<sup>3</sup>

From a global point of view, population growth has been shown to follow different trends in developed and developing countries. While most developed countries have been able to check and control their population rate, developing countries, especially third world countries like Nigeria (with a present population of more than 120 million growing at an annual rate of 3.0 percent)<sup>4</sup> are still faced with the implications that are sequel to an ever increasing population growth (Ibid)<sup>5</sup> as their populations continue to increase at an alarming rate. On the other hand, even as most developed countries have been able to stabilize their population they have not been able to extend such stability to patterns of individual and/or aggregate consumption.<sup>6</sup> Thus, developed countries have been noted to use and consume more of the earth's resources than their counterparts in the developing world. Be that as it may, the present debate and concern about the future of our generation and those to come have noted the effects of a still rising-rising population that is closely intertwined with an increase in a global consumer class.

There are rising fears as to the increase in the number of the consumer class in the developing countries. Going by statistics that indicate an increase in population for developing countries and the fact that these countries presently produce about half of the emergent consumer class,<sup>7</sup> having adopted lifestyles that were once limited to developed countries,<sup>8</sup> there is no gainsaying the fact that they are most likely to produce the highest number of consumers in the near future. An obvious and logical implication from the foregoing would be that, apart from high rate of population, the present adoption of a consumer attitude akin to what obtains in the western world should be seen as an impending

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<sup>1</sup> World Watch Institute (2004), *State of the World 2004*. The entire edition of this report is devoted to examining the implication of population growth while noting that a coupling of population growth with consumption will go a long way to increase overall global unsustainability

<sup>2</sup> Agenda 21 of The Earth Summit. Rio d Janeiro, Brazil

<sup>3</sup> Brown et al (1999) *Beyond Malthus; Nineteen Dimensions of the Population Change*, Washington DC, World Watch Institute

<sup>4</sup> Population figures and annual growth rates are not consistent for Nigeria. The CIA World Fact Book for Nigeria (available at [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ni.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ni.html)) puts the National population estimate at 128771988. The figures are higher from Nigeria Direct – The Official Information Gateway for Nigeria (available at [www.nigeria.gov.ng](http://www.nigeria.gov.ng)). It estimates the present population for Nigeria to be approximately 140 million.

<sup>5</sup> Brown et al (1999) *Beyond Malthus; Nineteen Dimensions of the Population Change*

<sup>6</sup> Brown et al (1999) *Beyond Malthus: Nineteen Dimensions of the Population Change*

<sup>7</sup> World Watch Institute (2004) *State of the World 2004*

<sup>8</sup> Gardener et al (2004) "The State Of Consumption Today" in *State of the World 2004*. World Watch Institute

problem; one that should be addressed if the hallmarks of sustainability are to be obtained in developing countries.

The World Watch Institute<sup>9</sup> make a succinct capturing of global consumption trends, noting car consumption as one of such consumptive patterns that has shown a tremendous increase on aggregate global consumption levels. The extension of the consumer class to developing countries with respect to car consumption and its numerous unsustainable consequences is very well typified by the nature of car purchase and use, as well as transportation situation in the City of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Consumption in terms of car use in Lagos has been a subject of numerous debates. Metropolitan Lagos (Lagos City) has over the years experienced an increase in the number of cars in use. A logical connection can be made between such increase and the increased rate of urbanization in the city. According to Okunlola<sup>10</sup>, the urbanization rate in Lagos as at 2000 was estimated at about 300,000 yearly, an average of 34 additional people into the city per hour. This rate of urbanization necessarily increases the demand for mobility and puts pressure on the city's transport system, creating a scenario where a large population (high demand) are faced with inadequate and ineffective access to the required transport modes (low/inefficient supply). Experts have opined that the nature of the transport system in Lagos has lead to numerous problems that range from environmental degradation, loss of man hours, numerous forms of pollution and other health impacts that combine to result in an unsustainable society in many ramifications.<sup>11</sup> Experts as those noted in the foregoing agree that an understanding of the dynamics inherent in the overall scenario presented by the transport situation is important to understanding and subsequently addressing/solving the problems that follow from it.

In a bid to creating such understanding as noted above, the Ministry of Transport of the State of Lagos has carried out various Policy implementation programmes as well as the creation of structures and agencies targeted towards addressing the problems of transportation in the city.<sup>12</sup> For numerous reasons, the ministry has not recorded much success in its quest.<sup>13</sup> In this regard, I argue that other strategies other more than policy implementation are needed if this issue is to be properly understood and addressed. This contention forms the basis and main argument of this thesis

The following thesis takes the Lagos transportation problem noted above as starting point to its research strategy. I do not negate the fact that good policies are expedient towards addressing the problem. I argue that in addition to this or any other measures that are employed, an understanding of the complex dynamics inherent in the reasons why and how people use cars in Lagos would be a good way in understanding the root and nature of the inherent consumptive/transport situation. In line with the foregoing, the thesis draws on the correlation between an increasing human population in Lagos city and the numbers of cars in use as take off to analyzing the problematique evident in the Lagos city transport system. By creating a theoretical framework built around the Rational Choice Theory, Durkheim's concepts of Collective Consciousness and Representation and literature on consumption, I have attempted to posit and find answers to the research's main question, "why and how do people use cars in Lagos city and how does this relate to the sustainability of the transport sector and Lagos city in general?"

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<sup>9</sup> World Watch Institute, "State of the World 2004: Consumption by the Numbers" News Jan 07, 2004. Available at <http://www.worldwatch.org/press/news/2004/01/07/>

<sup>10</sup> Okunlola, P (2005) The Power and The Heartbeat of Africa's Biggest Urban Jungle. UN HABITAT. Available at [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

<sup>11</sup> Enemari, J.J (2001), "Vehicular Emission, Environmental and Health Implications" at *Fade Out of Leaded Gasoline in Nigeria*. Abuja: Nicon Hilton (Nov 16-17). Okunlola, P as cited in 10 above, Baumbach et al (1995), Air Pollution in a large Tropical City with a high Traffic Density – Results of Measurements in Lagos, Nigeria. *The Science of the Total Environment* 169 (1995) 25-31

<sup>12</sup> Lagos Ministry of Transport, Policy Papers on Transportation: Lagos State 2001-2004

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

I have used the case study as the thesis' research strategy for data collection and analysis. For the purposes of adequately responding to the research questions and theoretical propositions, various minor cases were chosen for the study while interviews, observations, extraction of archival and documentary materials and a Focus Group Discussion were used to collect relevant data from sources and respondents (in this case mainly interviewees) in Lagos city to meet the research objectives/aims. The analysis of the case study evidence uses a thematic approach (and a cross case analysis) and relates them to the study's theoretical propositions. In the final analysis, I have argued that present car consumption trends in the city of Lagos are problematic. I note the individual as well as socially derived factors that influence car purchase and use and argue that these have unsustainable implications for the city especially in the long term. Finally, I discuss the sustainability implications and go further to suggest interventions and measures to address the car consumption problem.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

There is a strong relationship between population and car consumption in. From a logical point of view, it would be consistent to make the claim that the demands for mobility in an area are likely to increase the more there are people seeking to have access to the existing modes and available means of transportation. In other words, the more there is an increase in human population in an area, the more will be the demand for mobility of goods and people. This would most likely increase the number of vehicles in use as more vehicles would be needed to meet mobility demands. A comparison of the statistics on population and number of vehicle in Lagos over time supports this contention.

**Table 1. Lagos Population Statistics (1980 – 2015)**

| • Year          | Population<br>1980- 2015 | Percentage of<br>urban population<br>(%)<br>1950 - 2015 | Percentage of<br>total population (%)<br>1950 - 2015 |
|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1980            | 2 572 000                | 14.9                                                    | 4.0                                                  |
| 1985            | 3 501 000                | 15.4                                                    | 4.7                                                  |
| 1990            | 4 765 000                | 15.8                                                    | 5.5                                                  |
| 1995            | 6 485 000                | 16.5                                                    | 6.5                                                  |
| 2000            | 8 665 000                | 17.3                                                    | 7.6                                                  |
| 2005            | 11 134 000               | 17.8                                                    | 8.6                                                  |
| 2010            | 13 627 000               | 17.8                                                    | 9.3                                                  |
| 2015            | 15 966 000               | 17.4                                                    | 9.7                                                  |
| Source: UN 2001 |                          |                                                         |                                                      |

The table shows an average of two million people added to the entire population yearly. Even though statistics from other sources might be somewhat different, for instance Okunlola<sup>14</sup> notes that Lagos had a population of 13.4 million people in 2000, the fact of a continued increase in human population as depicted in the table presented in the foregoing is given credence.

<sup>14</sup> Okunlola, P (2004) "The Power and the Heartbeat of West Africa's Biggest Urban Jungle" in *State of the World's Cities 2004/5*. UN HABITAT: Globalization and Urban Culture

**Table 2**

| NUMBER OF MOTOR VEHICLES BY TYPE OF OWNERSHIP AND YEAR OF REGISTRATION: 1987 - 2002 |                                        |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |               |               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| TYPE OF OWNERSHIP                                                                   | NUMBER OF VEHICLES REGISTERED ANNUALLY |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |               |               |
|                                                                                     | 1987                                   | 1988         | 1989         | 1990         | 1991         | 1992         | 1993         | 1994         | 1995         | 1996         | 1997         | 1998         | 1999         | 2000         | 2001          | 2002          |
| PRIVATE                                                                             | 4108                                   | 5070         | 6277         | 15267        | 17559        | 27422        | 27169        | 26723        | 18862        | 21892        | 12205        | 10073        | 11260        | 25944        | 107555        | 121646        |
| COMMERCIAL                                                                          | 1311                                   | 893          | 742          | 2372         | 4768         | 7959         | 11011        | 6204         | 4680         | 3616         | 1482         | 1057         | 1544         | 2270         | 13078         | 15651         |
| GOVERNMENT                                                                          | 321                                    | 356          | 241          | 661          | 523          | 860          | 781          | 254          | 187          | 131          | 73           | 87           | 86           | 204          | 320           | 373           |
| MISSION/SCHOOL                                                                      | 34                                     | 37           | 79           | 66           | 102          | 474          | 453          | 131          | 123          | 134          | 17           | 53           | 76           | 105          | 370           | 419           |
| *CORPORATION                                                                        | 3403                                   | 3723         | 4456         | 8037         | 7751         | 6621         | 10227        | 8110         | 3702         | 2871         | 1234         | 1609         | 1890         | 3518         | 11773         | 12531         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                        | <b>9177</b>                            | <b>10079</b> | <b>11795</b> | <b>26403</b> | <b>30703</b> | <b>43336</b> | <b>49641</b> | <b>41422</b> | <b>27554</b> | <b>28644</b> | <b>15011</b> | <b>12879</b> | <b>14856</b> | <b>32041</b> | <b>133096</b> | <b>150620</b> |

*Source: Lagos State Ministry of Transport*

The consistent increase in the number of vehicles in Lagos state as evidenced in the above table (Table 2) is corroborated by Obio and Adegbule<sup>15</sup> who note that the number of vehicles in Lagos has increased tremendously over time. However, they have even noted an increase that is by far more than the increase level shown in the above table. While the table above notes the figures for vehicles in Lagos as at 1992 to be 43,336, Obio and Adegbule opine that the number of vehicles at the same time in question was 1,666,731<sup>16</sup>. The difference in statistics could possibly be explained by the fact that the Lagos State Ministry accounted only for vehicles registered under one of its agencies while Obio and Adegbule could have had accounted for unregistered vehicles as well. Be that as it may, the issue here is not on the comparison of these figures to determine which one of them is most accurate; rather what could be safely argued from both statistics is the fact of a direct proportionality between increases in human population and number of vehicles in Lagos. Given the consistent trend in population-vehicle increase overtime, there are every likelihood that such a trend is bound to continue as long as there are no radical changes in the transport system. Obio and Adegbule concur to the above assertion, and go further to opine that this sort of scenario has lead to numerous problems with inimical consequences especially with regard to consequent increases in petrol consumption and levels of vehicular pollution.<sup>17</sup>

A close look at the table reveals that as at year 2002, private vehicles (cars) constituted more than 81 percent of the entire vehicular fleet while commercial vehicles (those used for public transport) were only 15851, or about 10.5 percent of the entire vehicular fleet.<sup>18</sup> The foregoing could be seen as an indicator that there are likely not enough vehicles to service the public transport sector (given that the population at year 2002 when there were just about 16,000 commercial vehicles stood at about 10 million).

Over the years, the sizes of the roads have remained the same, not much roads have been constructed and the existing ones get dilapidated by the day. The rail system is almost non-existent while air travel is considered a prerogative of the affluent. In this light the Lagos State Ministry of Transport has

<sup>15</sup> Obio and Adegbule as cited in Enemari, J.J (2001) "Vehicular Emissions, Environmental and Health Implications" at *Fade Out of Leaded Gasoline in Nigeria*. Abuja: Nicon Hilton (Nov 16-17).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> The percentages were obtained by a simple percentage calculation for figures on private cars (121646) and commercial vehicles (15851) from the statistics of year 2002 in Table 2 above.

lamented the absence of an integrated transport system in the city of Lagos.<sup>19</sup> To this effect, the bulk of its working plan for the years 2001 to 2004 centres around the introduction of better air, rail and water transport modes to complement the inefficient public mass transport and over reliance on private car use within the city.<sup>20</sup> A major problem that arises from over reliance on road transport (especially with private cars, most of which are weak-engined second hand vehicles imported from Europe, forming the dominant mode of transport) is the problem of pollution.

The effects of such vehicular pollution have detrimental consequences for human beings and the environment in which they live. Miller<sup>21</sup> makes a succinct presentation of the effects of vehicular tailpipe emissions on the environment and on human health. He notes that concerns about global warming and climate change are related to cars in that they (vehicles of which cars are a constituent) emit Green House Gases that are responsible for climate change and global warming. Furthermore, emissions from vehicles have been shown to be of grave danger to human health. Vehicular tailpipe emissions cause respiratory diseases of varied forms, and the contracting of such diseases is mainly by the maintenance of a close proximity to sources of emissions.<sup>22</sup> The consequences for children are enamous. The digestive systems of children absorb lead more easily than adults and the ground on which they often play increases their rate of exposure. This is because lead easily accumulates on soil. Exposure to lead can lead to health problems such as hypertension, anaemia and permanent loss of memory. Apart from illness, exposure to lead can cause permanent stunted mentality in children. Although the use of leaded gasoline has been recently phased out in Nigeria,<sup>23</sup> a good number of people, adults and children alike, are likely to have been affected and thus suffer from the inimical health consequences associated with lead exposure.

The results of a study carried out in Lagos city gives an apt capturing of the problematique noted in the foregoing as it relates to emissions and city residents exposure to emissions thus;

...most of the identified air pollution in Lagos is caused by the traffic which can even be recognized without measurement, by strong turbidity, bad smell and eye irritation. This pollution is caused by the combination of many strongly emitting vehicles and frequent traffic jams. Diesel engines emit plumes of black smoke consisting of soot. Many petrol engined cars exhaust blue smoke which is caused by unburnt oil; market places are established especially around bus stops and many people are exposed to unhealthy high concentrations of aromatic hydrocarbons<sup>24</sup>

Noting the inimical consequences that car use has for the health of Lagos citizens as well as on the environment, this thesis argues that there is need to understand why people embark on this unsustainable mode of consumption, that is, car purchase and use. Given the fact that a continued increase in population will necessarily lead to increase in mobility demands and ipso facto number of vehicles (especially cars) in use, there is need to understand why a lot people opt for car use. There could be other drivers/factors that determine why people make choices and decisions to own cars. Apart from individual choice, the desire to own and use cars could be responses to societal perceptions

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<sup>19</sup> Lagos Ministry of Transport, Policy Papers on Transportation Lagos State 2001-2004

<sup>20</sup> Lagos Ministry of Transport, Policy Papers on Transportation Lagos State 2001-2004

<sup>21</sup> Miller, G.T (2004), *Living in the Environment; Principles, Connections and Solutions* (13<sup>th</sup> edition). California: Thomas Learning (Brooks/Cole)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Miller notes that most diseases that are caused by vehicular emissions are got from exposure or close contact with gases emitted from the combustion of hydrocarbons in vehicles. Accordingly he notes the most harmful components of PMS and diesel as oxides of Nitrogen and Sulphur, and Suspended Particulate Matter.

<sup>23</sup> This information was offered by a senior staff of the Federal Ministry of Environment, Abuja, Nigeria



on patterns of consumption since the decision to consume a particular good or service (as will be expounded in the subsequent chapters) is not only a function of individual choice.<sup>25</sup> A salient but important question that could be asked from the brief exposition given in the foregoing would be to find answers to why people in Lagos use cars (here the emphasis is on private vehicles). What does this mode of mobility stand for people? Apart from solving mobility needs, are there other functions (sociological or otherwise) that car ownership and use serve for those that decide to embark on this pattern of consumption, and to what extent are residents aware of the inimical consequences to themselves and to the environment?

Finding answers to these sorts of questions becomes pertinent and necessary if the resultant Lagos transport problematique is to be understood and addressed. The question of why people use cars is argued in this thesis to be one of the important issues that lie at the root of this problem. On a very unfortunate note, it has been noted the increase in the number of cars in use in Lagos is likely to continue.<sup>26</sup> It could be implied from the exposition done so far that people use cars because cars are cheap, or that they have no other efficient or effective alternatives. Whatever might be possible assumptions and/or findings of literature or the measures carried out by the Lagos State Ministry of Transport<sup>27</sup> to address this problem, perhaps what could be a source of better understanding the problematique noted in the foregoing would be to make an inquiry into the reason why people opt for car use, not only by analyzing the existing transport modes and drawing inferences from this, but by trying to juxtapose such findings with answers that come from the people themselves as to why they subscribe to such a pattern of consumption evidenced in car use. In other words, an inquiry that takes a multidisciplinary approach into understanding the complex dynamics inherent in the debate surrounding the problematique of the Lagos transport situation and its consequent effects on citizens' lives and the state of the environment is seen as forming the basis for the following thesis presentation. It is such an inquiry that this case study carried out.

### **1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY**

Purcell<sup>28</sup> has argued that car consumption is a unique mode of consumption that has had tremendous effects on the lives of people. According to him, the car has come to occupy an important place in the lives of people and serves to meet the basic needs of mobility. However he notes that this mode of consumption is unsustainable. In Purcell's own words, the car is: "polluting, isolating, destructive, eroding, possessive, individualistic, and antidemocratic. A hard set of words, indeed, yet each is an accurate description of the car"<sup>29</sup> It is the researcher's position that Purcell aptly captures the car consumption problem in these words. I opine that the car has come to represent so much in the life of Lagos city residents that life seems incomplete without it. People care less about the destructions that accompany car consumption and seem unwilling and unable to contemplate an alternative way of life. From my point of view, car consumption in Lagos has become a unique source of destruction, an inviting and attractive, yet unsustainable pattern of consumption; one whose unsustainable implications can only be addressed by an understanding of the dynamics inherent in reasons why

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<sup>25</sup> Chapter Two will focus on experts' opinions on Consumption. The theoretical Model that will be built from such opinions will expatiates on the notion that the consumption of any particular good or service by an individual is not only a function of the individual's rational choice or decision to consume. The society in which one lives with its worldviews and perception will be seen as playing a big role in individual aspirations and final decision to consume a good or service.

<sup>26</sup> Akintola-Arikawe, J.O (2000) "Lagos State" in Mamman, A.B; Oyebanji, J.O; Petters, S.W (eds). Nigeria: A People United, A Future Assured, Vol 2

<sup>27</sup> The opinion of the Ministry as regards the poor state of the public transport system has been noted in the introduction of this work. The Lagos State Ministry of Transport concedes to the fact that the present public transport system has not succeeded in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

<sup>28</sup> Purcell, D (2000) The Car and the City. Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society, 20 (5) 348-359

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

Lagos city residents embark on this mode of consumption purchase. I have used the case study to attempt such an understanding.

The case study approach is used because it is considered very well suited for the nature of the problem to be addressed. According to Yin<sup>30</sup>, “the case study has distinct advantage over others when a “how” or “why” question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control”. This applies in every respect to this thesis. The research question is “*why do people buy and use cars and how does such car consumption affect the sustainability of the transport sector in Lagos?*” In this way it can be seen to deal with a contemporary set of event that the researcher has no control over.

The case study doesn't often make use of statistical tools. In this way generalizations will not be easy to make. Nevertheless, the study will still lead to an understanding of the transport situation in Lagos from a perspective that has received very little or no attention. This case study presents “life stories” of Lagos residents as regards their aspirations, perception and conceptions of car consumption (car purchase and use). In other words, first hand information is retrieved from the major stakeholders (city residents). Viewed in this light, the study results can be safely argued to be novel in the sense of its incorporation of residents' life stories in an understanding of the car use- transportation problem. However, the study results would not only be novel to the debate on the transport situation in Lagos city but would lay the foundation for further research and consequently a better understanding of the problem.

## **1.4 STUDY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

This study attempts to understand and explain why and how people use cars in Lagos, and how this can be related to the sustainability of the city.

Specifically, the study does this by seeking answers to research question developed from the main study objective. From this, the following specific study objectives are derived.

1. To determine the major priorities (values) that lead to individual choice and decision to car ownership.
2. To understand external factors (social and anthropological) that influence individual decisions to car ownership
3. To determine the extent to which the demographic factors of age, sex and occupational status affect car consumptive patterns
4. To assess the extent to which cars are perceived as necessities or luxuries by individuals and social groups.
5. To understand individual and social groups' aspirations and perceptions towards car ownership.
6. To determine the extent of individual awareness of the unsustainability effects implicit in car use
7. To make recommendations targeted towards addressing the research problem based on study findings.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The above aims and objectives will be arrived at through answers to the following research questions

1. What are the major values that an individual considers rational and supportive of his/her choice/decision to own a car?
2. How (and why)do external social and anthropological forces affect the individuals choice and decision to own a car

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<sup>30</sup> Yin, R.K (2003), Case Study Research; Design and Methods. Thousand Oaks California: Sage Publications

3. How do the demographic factors of sex, age and occupational factors relate and/or affect individuals' choice and decisions to car consumptive patterns
4. Is the consumptive pattern expressed in car use seen as a necessity or luxury by individuals?
5. How have the Ministries of Transport, Environment and Environmental Protection Agency contributed to alleviate or worsen the transport situation in Lagos?
6. How do individuals assess this mode of consumption (car purchase and use) in terms of overall transport sustainability

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is dedicated towards creating a theoretical framework for the case study. The theoretical framework builds on theories and literature that will make the needed connections between individuals (as individuals and also as social groups) and patterns of car consumption. This chapter does not seek to make an extensive review of literature on car consumption; it only builds around relevant literature and theories to come up with a framework that suits the aims and objectives of the study. The theoretical framework as is expounded in the following sections situates the two dominant views on consumption as posited by Schaefer and Crane<sup>31</sup> within the contexts of the Rational Choice Theory and Durkheim's concepts of Collective Consciousness and Collective Representation.

The choice of the Rational Choice Theory and Durkheimian Concepts of Collective Consciousness and Representation is based on the researcher's contention that they offer a comprehensive explanation for general conceptualizations of Consumption as noted by Schaefer and Crane. In the following sections, the relevant theoretical standpoints of the Rational Choice Theory and the Durkheimian Social Theory concepts (Collective Consciousness and Collective Representation) are outlined. Literatures on patterns of Consumption are then situated within the context of these two theoretical perspectives. A theoretical model on car consumption is then built based on the foregoing theoretical cum literature triangulation.

#### 2.1.1 The Rational Choice Theory

The Rational Choice Theory can be argued to date back to a long Rationalist philosophical tradition. The theory of Rationalism dates back to the ancient philosophical works of Descartes.

In his "Discourse on the Method",<sup>32</sup> Descartes opines that the essence of being human lies in the fact of "thinking". The human being is a being that thinks and his thinking is a manifestation of his being rational. His choices are made based on a process of ratiocination and the ends to which he strives directed by rational purposiveness.<sup>33</sup> Choices and decisions are from this point dependent on individual evaluation, preferences and tastes. Descartes' understanding of man as a rational being is closely allied to one of the basic tenets of the Rational Choice Theory.

However, the formulation of the Rational Choice Theory proper can be located within the context of the neoclassical economics' notion of the "economic man". The economic man aptly represents the cardinal postulate of neoclassical economics which opines that "individuals and entrepreneurs seek to maximize their unique positions in the world... and that men are rational and can discern their own

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<sup>31</sup> Schaefer, A. Crane, A (2005). Addressing Sustainability and Consumption. *Journal of Macromarketing*. 25 (1): 76-92. In this article, the authors try to examine issues of sustainability in relation to consumption. They opine that literature on consumption can be classified under two dominant themes or modes of conceptualization. According to them, literature on consumption can be seen as understanding this topic from a Choice/Information-Processing perspective or from a Social/Anthropological point of view

<sup>32</sup> Descartes, R. (1596-1650), "*Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and of Seeking Truth*". Project Gutenberg: Online Book Catalog (available at [www.gutenberg.org/etext/59](http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/59))

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

best interests”.<sup>34</sup> From Adam Smith onwards, there has been emphasis on the economic man who is considered as capable of making maximum use of his rationality to attain monetary goals. This assumption stems from the fact men are rational and that they are motivated by the possibilities of being able to make money and the possibilities of making profit in their overall life activities is seen as centred on economic activity. According to Scott<sup>35</sup> what is basic and runs through all the various strands of the rational choice theory is the assumption that social phenomena, no matter how complex, can be explained from the point of view of the elementary composite individual actions that make them up. In this way, social actions are considered to be nothing other than a chain of the individuals’ activities that make up the society. Social phenomena from the rational point of view can be reducible to individual actions. Succinctly put, actors are the focus in the Rational Choice Theory. Any explanations for social institutions and even social change are got from examinations into the interactions and actions of individuals. This rationalist standpoint has been expounded by Elster<sup>36</sup> who opines that individual human actions are the elementary units of social life.

According to Friedman and Hechter, intentionality and purposiveness are central to actors from the rational choice theory point of view.<sup>37</sup> In acting towards an end, individuals are believed to weigh their profit against their rewards and costs. An individual goes for an end if he feels he will profit from it, that is, if his rational calculations tell him that his rewards will be greater than the costs he put in the means to achieving these ends. As regards actors and the purposiveness and intentionality inherent in the choices they make, Ritzer’s assertion echoes the opinions of Friedman and Hechter<sup>38</sup> thus,

...actors have ends or goals towards which their actions are aimed. Actors are seen as having preferences (or values, utilities). Rational choice theory is unconcerned with what these preferences, or their sources, are. Of importance is the fact that action is undertaken to achieve objectives that are consistent with an actor’s preference hierarchy.<sup>39</sup>

From the foregoing, the choice to consume a good or commodity would depend on whether the actor or individual thinks (or better put, “rationalizes”) it high enough in his hierarchy of preference or if s/he considers it an end worth pursuing or striving for. However, the availability of resources has been noted to be a major determining factor on whether an actor chooses to consume a good or not.<sup>40</sup> In other words, an actor’s final consumption of a commodity will be dependent on availability of resources (in this case one notes income) to meet his consumption needs.

Be that as it may, the problems of collective action, social norms and social structure show that the rational choice theory is insufficient in explaining all human action. If humans tend to maximize their gain seeking activities, then there should be no basis for the forms of altruism or norms that make people place the interest and good of others their personal interests. In addition, certain obligations carried out by human beings are carried out in ways that show that they transcend individual costs-reward calculations. Cooperative and altruistic behaviours which are often sensed as normative

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<sup>34</sup> Williams E.E and Findlay M.C (1981) “A reconsideration of the Rationality Postulate: “Right Hemisphere Thinking in Economics” in Abbel P (ed) (1991) Schools of Thought in Sociology and rational Choice Theory. England, Hants: Edward Elgar Pub Ltd.

<sup>35</sup> Scott, J “Rational Choice Theory” in Browning, G., Halici, A. and Webster, F (2000) Understanding Contemporary Society: Theories of the Present. London: Sage Pubs

<sup>36</sup> Elster, J (1989) The Cement of Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., in Scott, J (2000) Rational Choice

<sup>37</sup> Friedman, D and Hechter, M (1988) “The Contribution of Rational Choice Theory to Microsociological Research” Sociological Theory. 6:201-218

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* It is the idea of these authors that Ritzer subtly reframes in his own words

<sup>39</sup> Ritzer, G (1996) Sociological Theory. Singapore: McGraw-Hill Book Co

<sup>40</sup> Friedman, D and Hechter, M. “The Contribution of Rational Choice Theory” in Ritzer, G (1996) Sociological Theory. Singapore: McGraw-Hill Book Co 6:201-218

matters (connoting commitment and obligation) are not explainable by the rational choice theory. Thus, while the rational choice theory gives a solid explanation of how the individual can make choices and decision in a rational process based on a cost-benefit analysis of preferences, it fails to take into account the fact that there exist occasions when individuals act “irrationally”, as has been seen in the foregoing.

### 2.1.2 Collective Consciousness and Collective Representations

The concept of collective consciousness was used by Durkheim in his attempt to explain the possible forms of social solidarity in a society. Durkheim introduces two types of solidarity; Mechanical and Organic Solidarity. Callinicos is of the opinion that it is within the context of Durkheim’s attempt to counterpose his theory on Organic and Mechanistic Solidarity that he introduces one of his best concepts (Collective Consciousness, “conscience collective”)<sup>41</sup>

It is not my intention to expatiate on Durkheim’s social theory. For the purposes of this study, his idea of the collective consciousness is invoked because it goes a long way to bridge the gap that the rational choice theory has created in its inability to account for such social phenomena as norms and obligations. One might argue that by using these concepts in these ways, this thesis situates the concepts in focus outside the contexts and milieu within which Durkheim found them applicable. I will go ahead to show that this is not the case.

In his division of labour, Durkheim himself has argued against the core assumption of the rational choice theory<sup>42</sup>. He notes that the rational choice theory alone cannot account for the institutional framework of norms where according to him the location of all rational economic action exists. This fact is further buttressed by Scott’s<sup>43</sup> interpretation of Parson’s opinion that “self-interested rational actors cannot generate a stable economic order on an economic (or coercive, political) basis”. According to Scott, Parson’s viewpoint is that any explanation for social order has to take cognisance of the presence of the normative elements implied in individual contracts. Such normative elements possess a non-rational character.<sup>44</sup> Together with Parson, Durkheim argued that there is more to understanding social relations than the invocation of a rational choice explanation model. There is need to incorporate a social perspective to the understanding of human actions. Human beings are not just individuals standing on their own; they are social beings whose existence and actions are heavily influenced by the societies in which they live. It is on the strength of this position which runs central in Durkheim’s social theory<sup>45</sup> that I have decided to use the Durkheimian concepts for the theoretical framework of this study. In this way I follow the tradition whereby a theory is identified by means of its problem situation<sup>46</sup>. The following brief presentation of the Concepts of Collective consciousness will lay credence to my stance that Durkheim’s concepts of Collective Consciousness and Collective Representation do fit well for the creation of a good theoretical framework to facilitate this study

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<sup>41</sup> Callinicos, A (1999) *Social Theory: A Historical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press

<sup>42</sup> Durkheim, E (1893/1984) *The Division of labour in Society* (Halls, W.D ed). London: Macmillan Education

<sup>43</sup> Scott, J “Rational Choice Theory” in Browning, G., Halici, A. and Webster, F (2000) *Understanding Contemporary Society: Theories of the Present*. London: Sage Pubs

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> In this work, Jones makes a compilation and interpretation of four works of Durkheim. Durkheim’s social theory, like all social theories attempts to create a better explanation for the nature of society. His famous work “Suicide” makes explicit his emphasis on the importance of group solidarity. This work explained suicide as caused by factors that revolve more on social group than on individual. Social groups perceptions hold meanings for individuals, it somehow secures them. In such groups, suicide is less than when an individual stands alone.

<sup>46</sup> Callinicos, A (1999:9) *Social Theory: A Historical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press

Callinicos sees this strategy as a good means of addressing a problem, noting that it has a long philosophical tradition. It is this way of identifying a theory with the context of a problem that I have applied in the choice and selection of the Durkheimian concepts

In his early works, Durkheim had opined that there was to be found existent in every society some form of collective consciousness. His explanations about the collective consciousness can be inferred from his assertion that,

The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society forms a determinate system which has its own life; one may call it a collective or common conscience...it is thus a different thing from particular consciences, although it can be realized through them.<sup>47</sup>

The fact of trying to extend a conscience to the “totality of beliefs and sentiments” of course presents itself as a big problem, as it is not likely to have a society where every individual share the same beliefs. In addition, is not easy to make a definition of who qualifies to be the “average citizen” or how this can be derived. Durkheim himself realized the too broad and amorphous nature of such an opinion as he later abandoned it for a more specific concept of collective representation. Ritzer<sup>48</sup> opines that the collective representation can be seen as layers or substrata of the more generic collective conscience. Thus, instead of extending the sharing of beliefs and sentiments to the entirety of average citizens of a society, the collective representation takes into account smaller social groups’ (families, clique of friends, work/occupational groups etc) worldviews, taste and values. In this way it gives room for the possibility of deviations from what would be considered making general rules without giving room for possible deviations or smaller groups. I will now go ahead to situate the two conceptualizations of consumption offered by Schaefer and Crane within the contexts of the rational choice theory and Durkheim’s Collective Consciousness and Collective representation

### 2.1.3 Choice Process Perspective

Central to the Choice Processing is the conceptualization that consumption choices stem from individual choices. According to Schaefer and Crane<sup>49</sup> this perspective tries to uncover and understand the socio-psychological processes that make for individual consumption processes and patterns. Coupled with choice is the fact that people as rational agents do not simply make choices out of the blues. Their tastes, aspirations and personal evaluation together with information as regards what commodity to choose helps in ensuring that the ends to which an individual strives should help him/her choose what s/he feels is very important at any point in time. In this regard, it becomes expedient to note that the input of individual aspirations, values, tastes etc towards the decision making process and evaluation that leads to the final consumption of a commodity (good or service) cannot be overemphasized.

The imports of such cognitive processes have been explored by thinkers<sup>50</sup> and have formed the basis for much of the theories that have been used to buttress the tenets of this perspective to consumption. There is no gainsaying the fact the choice Process perspective is linked to the Rational Choice Theory.

Relating the Choice Process to car consumption, studies have focused on different aspects of this perspective. Sheller<sup>51</sup> opines that the rational choice perspective pervades numerous works on the car consumption debate, but goes further to argue that a better understanding of the car Consumption versus Sustainability would be achieved by focusing on other explanations. She argues that car

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<sup>47</sup> Durkheim, E (1893)1964. *The Division of Labour in Society*. London: Free Press, as cited in Ritzer, G (1996) *Sociological Theory*. Singapore: McGraw-Hill Book Co

<sup>48</sup> Ritzer, G (1996) *Sociological Theory*. Singapore: McGraw-Hill Book Co

<sup>49</sup> Schaefer and Crane (2005) “Addressing Sustainability and Consumption”.

<sup>50</sup> Ajzen, I., and Fishbein, M (1980) *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behaviour*. Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall in Ritzer, G (1996) *Sociological Theory*. Singapore: McGraw-Hill Book Co

<sup>51</sup> Sheller, M “Automotive Emotions; Feeling the Car” in *Theory, Culture and Society*. 21(45)221-243

consumption is not only about rational economic decisions and choices, adding that factors such as aesthetics, emotional as well as sensory responses to driving are crucial to understanding the dynamics inherent in the car consumption versus sustainability debate. In this way her opinions fall in line with contentions that hold that the adoption of lifestyles, by individuals in developing countries, similar to those of the developed countries has led to a tremendous increase the rise of a consumer class.<sup>52</sup> Viewed in the light of the contentions of the rational choice theory, I argue that certain patterns of consumption have become placed top most in the hierarchy of preferences of the consumer class, and that the high increase in the number of cars<sup>53</sup> is a strong indicator to the fact that car consumption is one of such consumptive patterns.

The fact that individuals might lack the right knowledge needed to make rational choices in addition to their lack of resources has been noted to be a big problem on the possibility of individuals attaining some ends.<sup>54</sup> Apart from scarcity and lack of adequate knowledge, literature on car consumption have alluded to the fact that car consumption is not only a product of rational choice but also those of individual and shared meanings as well as emotional aspirations towards the car;<sup>55</sup> a consumptive society where car ownership has social meanings (such as status communication);<sup>56</sup> a system of social and technical practices that has transformed civil society, thus making the car more than just an object or commodity of consumption.<sup>57</sup>

Such assertions as the ones above suggests that the Choice/Information-Processing perspective (like the rational choice theory) does not offer an exhaustive explanation to the issues involved in car consumption, thus giving reason for the introduction of an alternative or complimentary perspective which helps to explain the car consumption issue in its entirety. To this end, it is my opinion that a sociological/anthropological perspective would go a long way to give a broader and more exhaustive capturing of the dynamics inherent in car consumption, especially as it relates to the situation in Lagos. Schaefer and Crane have outlined the hallmarks of the Socio-Anthropological Perspective.

#### **2.1.4 Sociological/Anthropological Perspective**

The Sociological/Anthropological perspective takes a completely, yet complimentary, different view from the Choice/Information-Processing perspective. Unlike the latter which focuses on perceptions, evaluations and selections of different consumption options by individuals, the former considers the functions that consumption plays for individuals, as individuals and at the same time as members of any given society.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Gardener et al (2004) "The State Of Consumption Today" in State of the World 2004. World Watch Institute

<sup>53</sup> The World Watch Institute News (January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004) available at the Institute's webpage ([www.worldwatch.org](http://www.worldwatch.org)) presents figures and statistics for global increase in passenger cars. It notes that global passenger cars increase by about 11 million every year, adding that five times (forty one million cars) as much cars present as at 1950 were rolled out in 2002 only. It is possible that increase in global population accounted for part of the increase, but the magnitude of the figures suggest more than the influence of an increased global population, and points towards a great global preference for private car use. The fact of an emerging consumer class (akin to that obtainable in the developed countries) in the developing countries suggests that car consumption is more a pattern of consumption than a response to mobility demands for developing countries' citizens. As I have contended, and will reiterate buttressing my opinion with facts and evidences, Car consumption in Lagos is a typical manifestation of the foregoing contention

<sup>54</sup> Ritzer, G (1996; 401) Sociological Theory. Singapore: McGraw-Hill Co

<sup>55</sup> Sheller, M (2004). "Automotive Emotions; Feeling the Car". Theory, Culture and Society, 21(45)221-243

<sup>56</sup> Purcell, D (2000). "The car and the City". Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society 20(5)348-359

<sup>57</sup> Urry, J (2000). Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century. London: Routledge

<sup>58</sup> Schaefer and Crane (2005) "Addressing Sustainability and Consumption". This article has been cited in earlier sections and will be cited more in subsequent sections. The fact that consumption plays functions on an individual as an individual and also as a member of society will be used in this study's data collection.



The Sociological/Anthropological perspective has numerous theoretical orientations that draw their inspiration from as diverse disciplines as postmodernism, post structuralism, feminism and social construction.<sup>59</sup> These different orientations notwithstanding, a common trend runs through the opinions from these disciplines. They all contend that consumption is not to be seen strictly as resulting from rationalization as proposed by the Choice/Information-process conceptualization. Be that as it may, the emphasis taken by different thinkers are more often than not divergent as expressed in their respective works. However, they still have points of convergence. According to Schaefer and Crane, the dominantly emphasized standpoints see consumption as: hedonistic; a means for self-identity construction and; as a means whereby social relationships are constructed, and socio-cultural meanings communicated.<sup>60</sup> This standpoint of Schaefer and Crane is adopted for this thesis, and expatiated in the following sections. I argue that they are all linked back to some form of Durkheimian Collective Consciousness and/or Representation.

**Hedonism;** As the name implies, consumption is perceived as a source of pleasure. In such instances, consumption can afford pleasure by the act of purchasing itself (shopping), the actual use of a purchased commodity (consumption proper) or from the fact of owning a good, thereby affording the owner the opportunity to display taste and style. This contention is very well expounded in Bourdieu's theory of consumption as class distinction. In his book "Distinction"<sup>61</sup>, Bourdieu opines that commodities for consumption could be used as status symbols, arguing that when such commodities are given socially constructed meanings, they often become testimonies to an individual's class position. This Bourdiean contention has been applied to explain car consumption patterns and class conflict trends in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century American society. Gartman<sup>62</sup> argues that at this time, auto manufacturers capitalized on the class division to produce beautiful cars that could only be afforded by the upper bourgeois class. He notes that car ownership in this sense made clear the distinction between the wealthy and the less rich. Only the rich could afford these automobiles which were used more for displays than for practical mobility purposes. Owning a car became a sign of wealth that defined classes, and projected the affluent as being free from worldly concerns such as work and functional strivings that aptly defined the life of the less affluent.<sup>63</sup> Suffice it to say that the car became a means for the establishment of a type of collective representation in favour of the rich. I will later show that such a trend holds for Lagos city as well.

### **Construction of Identity**

It is not very easy to draw the line where hedonism stops and where consumption is used as a means of constructing identity. The construction of identity is many a time supported by patterns of consumption. Such constructions stem from the fact that humans' identities have always had links to the special and cherished objects<sup>64</sup> which are ascribed meanings and whose consumption puts the consumer on some sort of level of reckoning or rating in the society. The relationship between consumers and such objects of consumption imbued with cultural meanings is the high visibility of use in the individuals' act of consumption. Individuals use these objects because they are aware and desire inferences, remarks and opinions which others draw from the fact of their consumption of a good in a

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Interviewees were considered and asked questions in that regard. This will be better expounded in the Research Protocol

<sup>59</sup> *ibid*

<sup>60</sup> *ibid*

<sup>61</sup> Bourdieu, P (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press in Gartman, D (2004) *Three Ages of the Automobile; The Cultural Logics of the Car*. *Theory, Culture and Society*. 21(45) 169-195.

<sup>62</sup> Gartman, D (2004) *Three Ages of the Automobile; The Cultural Logics of the Car*. *Theory, Culture and Society*. 21(45) 169-195.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid*

<sup>64</sup> Belk, R.W (1998), *Possessions and the extended self*. *Journal of Consumer Research* 15 (2): 139-168

flaunty fashion<sup>65</sup>. In subsequent chapters, I will show that the car has become an object that aids the construction of identity for Lagos city residents.

### **Communication**

Because social groups (family units, circle of friends, work groups and other forms of social units) are often the location where a large proportion of consumption is found obtainable, and that it is often the case that consumption is done in the presence of others or with them in mind, consumption often becomes a tool for communication. Veblen's conspicuous consumption presented in his "The Theory of the Leisure Class"<sup>66</sup> shows how consumption is used to express and communicate status and identity. In this case, the major value a good or commodity possesses is found in its sign value. Such sign values as we have seen are societal constructions; the symbolism ascribed to an object or commodity.

Having explored the two major perspectives, I now argue that concepts of Collective Consciousness and Collective Representation are especially relevant in explaining the socio/anthropological conceptualization of consumption. From my point of view, the Durkeimian theoretical stance takes into account almost all the tenets of the Sociological/Anthropological perspective since both have their basis on some kind of shared/collective worldview (whether it be by way of collection conscience/representation, hedonism, status and identity construction and/or communication). There has to be some general agreement about which good is a source of identity creation and the same goes for communication which implies the presence of a group who share similar views on the value a commodity possesses. All these and similar instances are implied in the Durkheimian collective representation and can be seen as constituting the hallmarks of the Sociological/Anthropological perspective to Consumption.

In the following discourse on theory I have tried to show that the conceptualizations on patterns of consumptions can be well understood by the recognition of the fact that choice and decisions as made by individuals are dictated by factors that influence the individual from within and from without. My argument here is that the choices we make are not only products of our personal or private decision neither are they based solely on our perception that such choices would lead to our most desired or beneficial ends. To some extent, social factors constrain what would have been our individual preferences and as such alter our "would have been" line of action. Suffice it to say that the choices we make, to consume or not to consume a good or commodity, are determined by individual factors as well as social influences. Thus, factors such as individual preferences, tastes and needs are sometimes not realized outside social influences, worldviews and culture.

I do not deny the fact of a rational individual who is capable of making choices to suit his/her personal wants or needs. As a being imbued with rationality, the essential character that defines him/her and distinguishes him/her from other animals, man makes choices in accordance to the best means he perceives as making for his continued preservation and existence. However, man at the same is a "social" being. S/he does not live in isolation. S/he lives collectively with others in a society. He influences others just as they influence him. S/he contributes to shape their worldviews while already shaped worldviews turn around to reshape and determine his way of life. His/her relationship with his/her society or any group s/he finds himself is to a large extent one of a "give" and "take" character.

As I argue for this type of individual-societal relationship, I note that it is neither possible to state the limits where the individual can on his own make rational choices without being influenced from

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<sup>65</sup> Gabriel, Y., and Lang, T (1995) *The unmanageable consumer: Contemporary consumption and its fragmentation*, London: Sage. This idea was got from Schaefer and Crane (2005) *Addressing Sustainability and Consumption*

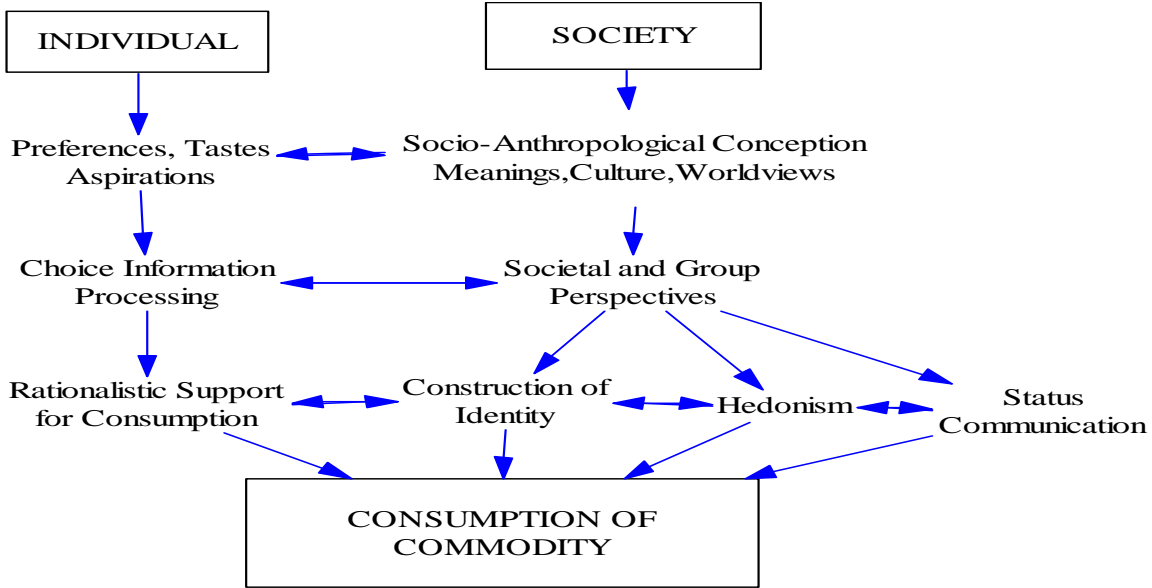
<sup>66</sup> Veblen, T (1899) 1925. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An economic study of Institutions*. London: Allen and Urwin

without, nor the point where social influences commence or end their influences on the individual's choices and decisions. For the purpose of this thesis, I believe it is sufficient to establish the fact that individual choices can be rational and based on personal dispositions, or could be "irrational" in the sense that the individual merely makes a choice (consciously and even unconsciously) while being guided by societal ways of "seeing things". This point is suggested by Durkheim<sup>67</sup> in his expression that the collective consciousness is a product of individuals put together. This same consciousness turns around to influence the private individual's choices and tastes towards preferences (in the case of this study, car consumption becomes the focus). Thus, the emergence of a di-polar relationship between rational individually motivated tastes, choices and decisions on one hand and socially influencing factors as I have argued for is given credence by Durkheim and supported by the rational choice theory. The conceptualizations on consumption as proposed by Scafefer and Anja have been shown to fall in line with these theoretical positions.

**2.2 THEORETICAL MODEL**

The following theoretical model is derived from the foregoing theoretical exposition coupled with literature on consumption and will form the basis from which Car Consumption in Lagos will be considered. It shows the di-polar relationship between individual level and societal/group. It incorporates the rational choice theory perspective (relating to choice information processing conceptualization) and Durkheimian concepts (that highlight the socio-anthropological conceptualization)

**Figure 1: Theoretical Model for Case Study**



<sup>67</sup> Durkheim, E (1893)1964. The Division of Labour in Society. London: Free Press, as cited in Ritzer, G (1996) Sociological Theory

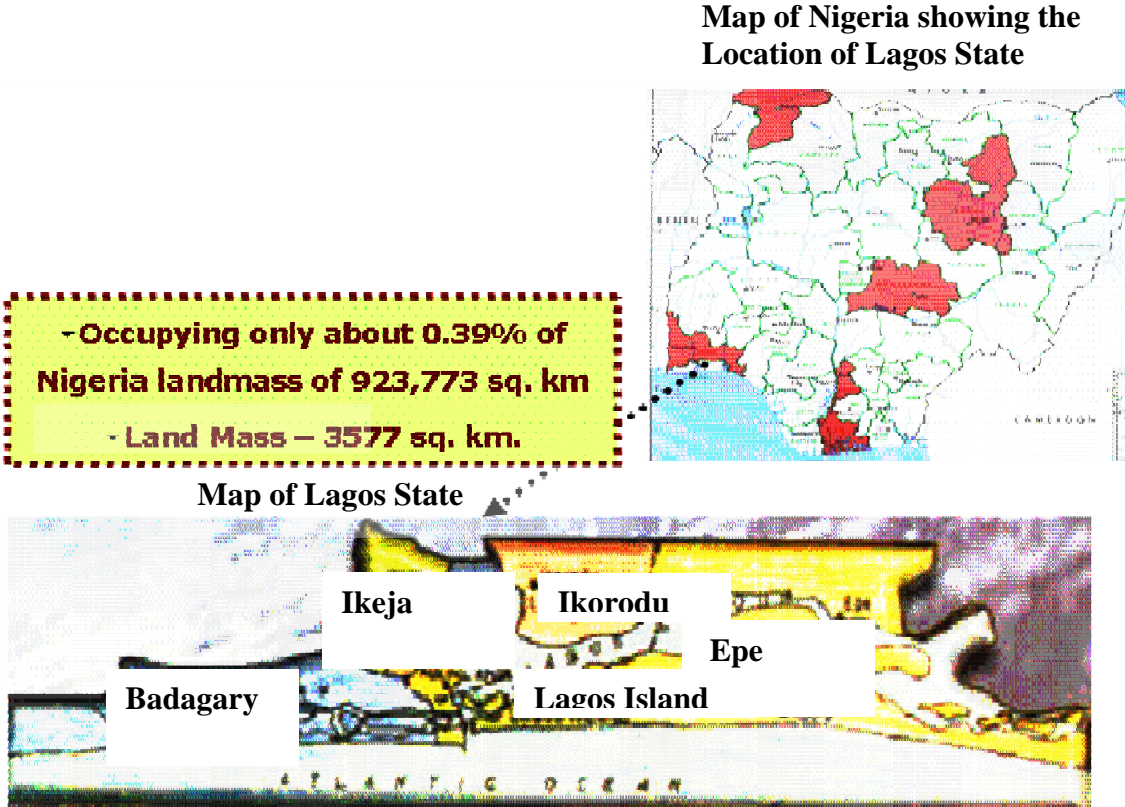
# CHAPTER THREE

## 3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1.1 Study Area

The case study area as has been noted in the forgoing is Lagos City. However, some parts of the study area were chosen specifically for conducting the study. The reasons for selecting these areas were based mainly on the researcher’s personal hunch and contention that these areas or parts of Lagos were most suitable for the study because of reasons that include easy access to data collection and case study respondents amongst others. The following presentation about the study area will go a long way to justify the decision for their selection for the case study.

Figure 2: Map of Lagos State



Source: Lagos State Ministry of Transport

Lagos State is one of the 36 states of the Federal republic of Nigeria. It has been described as the engine room that drives the economic growth of the nation as well as that of the entire West African sub-region<sup>68</sup>. Although the smallest of all the states in the nation (in terms of land mass), this state is the most populous. Statistics and figures are not agreed as to the exact population of the state;<sup>69</sup> however what are consistent have been the claims that the Lagos has a population of more than 10 million. According to estimates cited by Okunlola<sup>70</sup>, the yearly growth has been 30,000 or 34 additional people very hour. He rightly argues that this high growth rate has made Lagos State more populous than 32 countries in Africa. Even as there might not be accurate statistics on the exact population of Lagos states, the state can be rightly said to be experiencing a rapid increase in population; a trend whose consequences on the mobility demands of the people and, and ipso facto, the overall sustainability of the state cannot be overemphasized.

Lagos State, a wetland area lying in the southwest coastland of Nigeria, lies approximately on longitude 20 degrees 42E and 3 degrees 22E. The state has a territorial land area of 356,861 hectares (3577 square kilometres as opined by Okunola).<sup>71</sup> While the average population density for the state has been put at 1,308 persons per square kilometre, the average density for the built up metropolitan areas which account for about 78 percent of the entire city population is said to be 20,000 persons per square kilometre.<sup>72</sup> This has led to overcrowding in such metropolitan areas, especially in the numerous slum areas where as much as eight people share a room<sup>73</sup>. The situation in these slum areas are made worse by lack of basic amenities. The few existing ones are hardly sufficient, and often times remain in a state of continuous deterioration due to lack of adequate maintenance.

The state is made up of five administrative zones; Lagos, Ikorodu, Epe, Badagary and Ikeja. These divisions also form the main urban centres in the state. This case study was conducted mainly in the Lagos division. This division has often been referred to as the core of the state due to the fact that it is here that the major commercial, financial and maritime structures in the state are located. This division can be described as a high activity area. It is one of the most urbanized divisions and is made up of five local government islets, namely Lagos Island, Lagos Mainland, Surulere, Apapa and Eti-Osa. Lagos Island is the centre as well as the most developed of these five islands commonly referred to as “The City of Lagos”<sup>74</sup>. It is because of the important role that the Lagos division plays both on a national as well as sub-regional level, in addition to recognition of the high activity rate of this area, that it forms the main focus area for the study. Some interviews were carried out as well in the Ikeja Division where the ministries of Transport and Environment as well as the Environmental Protection Agency are located. This division is home to the state capital and is thus the administrative centre of the state.

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<sup>68</sup> Okunlola, P (2005) *The Power and The Heartbeat of Africa’s Biggest Urban Jungle*. UN HABITAT. Available at [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

<sup>69</sup> Okunola contends that the population at 2001 was 13.4 million while the UN figures for the same year was put at 11.1 million (see table in chapter one). An environmental and social impact assessment made by the Lagos State government this year for its joint “Lagos Metropolitan Development Project” with the World Bank put the current population at 11.14million. However, in his opening at the “Dialogue on Urban Sustainability of the second World Urban Forum” held at Barcelona, Spain (15<sup>th</sup> September 2004) The Lagos State governor, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu claimed that the population of the state was about 15 million which made it the most populous city in the continent.

<sup>70</sup> Okunola, P (2005) *The power and heartbeat of Africa’s Biggest Urban Jungle*

<sup>71</sup> This piece of information was got from the official web site of the Lagos State Government. Available at [www.lagosstate.gov.ng](http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng)

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>73</sup> Environmental and Social Impact Assessment for the “Lagos Metropolitan Development Project” (LMDP). Lagos State Government, May 2005

<sup>74</sup> Information pertaining to this paragraph was got from the Lagos State official website. Available at [www.lagosstate.gov.ng](http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng)

Rightly described as the commercial nerve of the country and other West African countries, Lagos City is home to the most important national seaport, nodes for telecommunication and the largest concentration of multinationals. Alone, it accounts for 25 percent of Nigeria's financial institutions.<sup>75</sup> More than half of the non-oil economy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is said to be located in Lagos City. In spite of its potentials and important roles, it has been termed a "poor city" due to paucity of available resources for the maintenance of its structures. According to the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment final report for the Lagos Metropolitan Development Project (May 2005), the state operates with a meagre annual budget of about 650 million dollars. Okunola makes a comparison of the annual budgets of Lagos and Johannesburg. According to him, whereas Johannesburg has only one sixth the population of Lagos, its annual budget of 1.2 billion dollars is about four times that of Lagos' meagre 300 million US dollars<sup>76</sup>. The import of such dearth of funding has been noted as being responsible for the deterioration of existing structures in addition to undermining urban productivity.

Apart from inadequate resources, inadequate knowledge, lack of reliable data for decision making, lack of urban management tools for planning and the foregoing noted unprecedented high growth in population have combined to make it difficult for the public sector to manage growth and deliver the much needed services to its huge population. In the face of this scenario, officials are scared of what has been described and termed "a grave urban crisis" that faces the City of Lagos<sup>77</sup>. In addition to the slum and population related problems already outlined, the basis for such concerns are captured in the following assertion,

...the quantum of decaying infrastructure, widespread urban poverty, massive unemployment, pervasive security inadequate, emerging slums and overwhelming environmental decay have become the major characteristics that progressively define the city's fortunes.<sup>78</sup>

The environmental problem in the city of Lagos is evidenced in the visible huge mass of refuse that are generated and left littering the streets on a regular daily basis. Perhaps what is of most inimical consequence to the environment and humans is the "endless traffic snarls (that) expose the challenges of managing a vehicular density of 222 automobiles per kilometres against the national average of only 11 per kilometre"<sup>79</sup>. The fact of a high vehicular density could be attributed to a number of reasons. In the first instance it suggests that there are many vehicles plying the streets of Lagos. It could also be an indicator to the fact that there are likely to be more vehicles on the road than the roads can contain. No matter what reasons are offered, this assertion goes a long way to imply that the road transport situation is froth with problems. What is more, the ratio of private cars to commercial vehicles (121,646 to 1,5651 as shown in the table in chapter 1) depicts a road transport system that is heavily reliant on private car use. As already expounded in the statement of problem for this study the transport situation in Lagos which is to a large extent dependent on private car use does not appear to be a sustainable one. Over reliance on car use poses a big threat both to human health and the environment.

The present transport system in Lagos is one that needs urgent attention especially when long term implications of over reliance on private cars are considered. This is because the problems posed by a likely increase in car use might not be immediately felt. Associated problems as pollution transcend the state as well as nation and cuts across the entire sub-region. Effects could as well extend to the

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<sup>75</sup> The choice of Lagos as the main focus for the case study was also hinged on this fact that this area has the highest conglomeration of Banks and banking institutions. Suffice it to say that Lagos facilitated access to numerous of the chosen minor cases of the case study.

<sup>76</sup> Okunola, P (2005) The power and the heartbeat of Africa's Biggest Urban Jungle

<sup>77</sup> ibid

<sup>78</sup> ibid

<sup>79</sup> ibid

entire globe. Experts<sup>80</sup> have noted that environmental problems are trans-boundary, implying that what happens in an area in some cases (as pollution from vehicular tail pipe emissions) goes beyond the immediate environment to affect other areas that are not readily visible. The effects of car consumption in Lagos can be seen as a typical manifestation of such instance, implying the need for such studies as this thesis.

### **Research Methods**

The study is qualitative in nature and uses a variety of methods, also called methodological triangulation to enhance the validity of the study<sup>81</sup>. The following methods were used for the study

**Interviews:** Depending on the nature of the question and the type of respondents, I decided which type of interview to use. In instances where I wanted information from respondents as individuals as well as members of a society and carriers of information I employed the use of in-depth interviews. The same was applied when officials of institutions were interviewed as representatives of their respective institutions. However, in the later instance, the questions were no longer directed to them as individuals, but as representing the opinions of the institutions they represented. Although some respondent decided to remain anonymous, some of the interviews were recorded on tape. In all cases, notes were taken for later reference and the creation of a database for the study.

**Observation:** Observation played a very crucial role in the study. In numerous instances interviewees alluded to real life situations and experiences. In some cases, the researcher would go to certain areas or embark on certain activities to see if he would share the same opinion as they did, or if he would have the same perception as the ones respondents highlighted under similar circumstances. In such and other different cases, the study was able to corroborate further the claims that were made by interviewees. In no case did the study dismiss any interviewee claims that did not match the researcher's perception of a re-lived experience. Observations were meant to strengthen or refute claims, and never to judge an interviewee's claim as true or false. Notes and jottings about observations were also made. This also contributed to the database from which the study made its analysis and discussions

**Texts, Documentaries and Archives:** Data from these outlined sources were collected from relevant Ministries, institutions and agencies, and the information they contained weighed against evidence collected from interviews and observation. Important information were jotted from sources or photocopied.

Data got from these sources constituted part of the study's data base. All the interviews were carried out in English, thus reducing the problems associated with transcription of interview tapes. Summaries of the findings from these sources and methods were made according to themes which I chose for the presentation of the case study findings.

**Systems Thinking:** I see the resultant car consumption patterns and trends existent in Lagos as forming a system. I apply a systems thinking perspective in my discussion of the case study findings and causal loop Diagram is used in that discussion.

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<sup>80</sup> Miller, G.T (2004) *Living in the Environment; principles, Connections and Solutions*. California: Thomas Learning (Brooks/Cole). Cater, N (2001) *The Politics of the Environment: Ideas, Activism, and Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

<sup>81</sup> The logic behind the use of methodological triangulation as a means to enhance validity will be explored in subsequent sections of this chapter.

## **3.2 PRESENTATION OF MINOR CASES**

The study had a main case, Lagos City. However to achieve the objectives of the study as well as operationalize the research questions in a manner I thought most suitable, I selected minor cases (or units of analysis) from within the main case. The following minor cases or units of analysis were chosen for the study:

### **3.2.1 Bank Workers:**

My choice of bankers as a unit of analysis was borne out of a personal hunch and impression as one who has lived in Lagos metropolitan areas for many years. I felt Bankers would be a good unit of analysis in exploring the nature or possible existence of a collective conscience as per car consumption trends in Lagos. Bankers in Lagos are considered by the public as having good income levels. They are seen as a group whose level of income can afford most life pleasures, and car ownership is held by many as one of such pleasures. Almost all the bankers I can remember ever knowing owned private cars. I decided to interview bankers of different ages, occupational level and sex. In all, four male bankers were interviewed

### **3.2.2 Health Personnel;**

Health personnel (doctors and nurses) were chosen because they would be in a better position to understand the health implications related to car use (effects of pollution on human health). In addition they have a stable and reasonably high income level. Furthermore, the health profession would afford ready access to females of different ages since a greater percentage of nurses in Nigeria are females. I think this was very important as feminine opinions would not only make for a more comprehensive data collection, but could give insight as to the nature of patriarchy (male dominance) in a place like Lagos. One doctor and three nurses were interviewed.

### **3.2.3 Students and Fresh school leavers;**

This group of people will hold various posts in different works of life in the near future. They were chosen so that an examination of what their aspirations and values consisted could be made. Their perception of car consumption and the meaning of this pattern of consumption would represent the opinion of a group of young minds whose mode of thinking would go a long way to determine the nature of consumption exemplified in car ownership. This group was composed of one male and two female students

### **3.2.4 Ministry Representatives;**

I interviewed two people each from the Ministries of Transport and the Ministry of Environment, and one from the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency. These groups of people represented the opinions of the Ministries they worked in. They also responded to questions that pertained to their individual perceptions of the car consumption issue in Lagos state.

Apart from these units of analysis, interviews were done with numerous other city residents. A female accountant, the wife of a high ranked banker, a self employed/freelance journalist, two actors from the Nigerian home video industry, two car dealers and some unemployed school leavers were interviewed. I also interviewed a top official of the Federal Ministry of Environment at Abuja to get information about the ministry's perception and stance about the environmental implications of the problem of car use in Lagos. In addition, I took part in a road traffic defaulter enlightenment meeting organized by the Federal Road Safety Commission, Abuja, and afterwards had the opportunity to talk with the official



in charge of this programme. A focus group discussion was conducted with eight young people selected from different works of life.

The protocol that guided the interviews and overall data collection process is set forth in the following section.

### **3.2 THE CASE STUDY PROTOCOL**

A case study protocol was developed to operationalize the theoretical framework built for the thesis. The protocol focuses on the research questions to guide the research as well as the researcher, and becomes a very strong tool in increasing the reliability of the case study. In addition it helped to ensure that the right questions and data were sought for. In other words, it helped to keep both research topic and researcher within reasonable boundaries. It was designed in a way that uses different levels of questions. It is important to note that the levels of questions were a necessary consequence and response towards the guidance and operationalization of the research questions so that they meet the aims and objectives of the study. The case study protocol was made on five question levels

Level one; Questions asked of respondents as individuals/persons in their own right

Level two; Questions asked of respondents as members of society and carriers of information

Level three; Questions asked of specific individuals as representatives of organisation (in this case, ministries and agencies).

Level four; Questions asked about policy implementation and recommendations.

Level five; Questions asked about extent of awareness as well as possibilities and preparedness of individuals and society to change.<sup>82</sup>

The case study protocol ensured that even as the questions asked of interviewees were not the same, the targets set out in the protocol ensured that there were no deviations from the main objectives of the data collection process, in this case the interview sessions.

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<sup>82</sup> See appendix 1 for the case study protocol

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.1 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The data collection process attempted the use of methodological triangulation, that is, the incorporation of various methods (literature, observation, interviews, and documents) to corroborate and strengthen claims and facts. A very important advantage of this research strategy is that it would go a long way to enhance the validity of the study findings. This is because when evidence from the use of a particular type of method is corroborated by findings from one or two different methods (or sources of information); it increases the likelihood that the particular claim in question is indeed a fact. In other words, obtaining similar findings about the nature or trend of a particular event, happening or claim using different sources is a strong indication that the obtained result is a true depiction of a matter of fact.

The first step in the data collection process was dedicated to gaining access to the various respondents that were selected for the study. This involved moving around in Lagos city, making calls to offices, writing letters (to Ministries and agencies) requesting access to officials for interviews and getting in first contact with other proposed respondents. For all of these cases, I had to give the respondents prior information on what the study was all about. This turned out to be a good strategy as it made respondents aware of which aspects of their activities I wanted to get information about. For ministries and agencies this approach made it easier for them to identify the best officials to attend to me.

The first group that were interviewed were the bankers. Gaining access to bankers was not very difficult. Since these bankers were not interviewed as staff or representative of any particular banks, what I did was to enter the banking hall, approach and fix individual interview dates and times with bankers from two different but highly rated banks on the Lagos Island. The choice of these two banks was made after sampling the opinion of ten people on the Lagos Island. These people were asked which banks they felt were about the best in terms of efficiency and good pay package for their workers. Two banks were mentioned twice and it was to these two banks that I obtained respondents for the interviews. Four male bankers were interviewed; all were senior staffed workers in their respective banks. The bankers responded to questions bordering on the following.

1. If they had cars, and whether the cars were bought by them or were official vehicles.
2. The main reasons why they bought their cars
3. Bankers collective conscience and car consumption patterns
4. Societal conception of bankers and car consumption
5. Their awareness of the environmental and social costs associated with car use in Lagos.
6. An assessment of government ministries and agencies with respect to the transport situation in Lagos

The responses from bankers raised some matters of interest especially with regard to the role and efficiency of government ministries towards the creation of a good transport system. Mention was often made of the fact that the problem of car consumption in Lagos did not seem to be anywhere in the agenda of the Federal Ministry of Environment. To this end, I decided to visit the ministry so as to get firsthand opinion and its stand point in this regard.<sup>83</sup>

Three nurses and one doctor were interviewed from the health sector. Like the bankers, this group was selected to see if they shared some kind of collective mentality with regard to car use and also because

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<sup>83</sup> More about the findings from this visit will be presented in the study findings

they offered an occupational group where females were to a large extent available, in this way providing opportunity to assess opinion from females. It was assumed that being health care workers, they would be in a better position to understand the health impacts associated with car consumption (especially the nature of health problems people were likely to encounter by exposure to cars' emissions). For this group, the study wanted to find out what the individual health worker's opinion were about the following aspects of car consumption in the city of Lagos.

1. If s/he had a car (self purchased or official), the main reason for purchasing and/or using it.
2. Awareness of the impacts of car use (environmental as well as health impacts) in the city as a health worker, and the extent to which s/he thinks s/he contributes to the problem.
3. An appraisal of government ministries and agencies to combating to the effects of car consumption (with particular emphasis on the health aspects)
4. Issues bordering on collective and group conscience (for health workers, others groups and society at large) with respect to patterns of car consumption in Lagos
5. Perceptions of the transport situation in Lagos in terms of sustainability

As in the case of bankers, health workers laid claims that indicted the government and the ministries responsible for managing this situation. Numerous allegations were laid against government ministries, officials and agencies. In many instances these allegations were posited as reasons for an increase in car consumption. I will return to this later

Three university undergraduates and three fresh university graduates were interviewed. They were selected to provide insight as to what would be the aspirations of young males and females who were yet to start working and earning income. None of these people had cars of their own. To this end, interviews held with them focused on their aspirations and orientations towards car ownership. This group was chosen because their perceptions and opinions as regards car consumption would to a large extent affect the future of the culture of car consumption since the decisions and choices they would make in the near future would to a large extent depend on the choices and patterns of consumption they embark upon. Their aspirations were considered from the point of view of individual perception, values and tastes as well as perceived social influences towards car consumption. Questions to which they responded were centred on the foregoing as well as the following;

1. Their level of awareness of the effects of a culture that emphasized car consumption
2. The extent to which they felt society/groups influence patterns of consumption related to car use
3. Their assessment of governmental ministries, institutions and agencies.

The opinions of the Ministry of Transport, The Ministry of Environment and the Lagos State Environmental protection agency were the next in the series of information that were obtained. Policy documents on the state of the transport situation were obtained from the Ministry of Transport. Two officials were interviewed to get the standpoint of the Ministry of Transport while an official of the Environmental Protection Agency stood for his agency

A wealth of information was collected that corroborated many claims from respondents. Worthy of note is the claim that the public transport system in Lagos was inefficient and ineffective and that people buy and use cars because they have no other alternatives. These (and more) also formed the basis for collection of data from documentary and archival materials. The following form the central themes within which the officials of the respective governmental institutions were interviewed.

1. Whether the ministry sees any problem with the pattern of consumption evidenced in Car consumption. If so what has it done or propose to do to address this problem.
2. Collaboration between ministries and stakeholders with a view to addressing the problem.
3. Policy implementation and strategies to alleviate the problem. The assessment of implemented strategies and policies, in terms of success and failure, as well as the identification of bottlenecks that made such policies and strategies fail.

4. The sustainability of a transport system that is heavily dependent on road transport generally, and car use specifically.

Interviews were also conducted with individuals as Lagos citizens, without any consideration of them being members of a social or occupational group. In these cases, respondents were asked about their aspirations, choices and decisions as regards car ownership and use. Questions asked in these cases were akin to those asked of bankers, school leavers and health personnel. Their responses did not differ much from what had already been obtained.

The study used the logic outlined in the first paragraph<sup>84</sup> of this chapter during the collection of data. In this regard, I introduced a *flexible movement* for strengthening claims that were seen as related to the major themes inherent in the study's discourse on car consumption in Lagos. This movement involved first getting claims and information from respondents during interview sessions. Then, I sought to establish grounds to support or reduce the strength of such claims by observation or by juxtaposing them with data from documented and archival sources. The movement sometimes progressed backwards in which case documented material was considered in line with what had been mentioned during interviews or observed. For instance, observation confirmed respondents' claims that public commuter buses are inefficient. I noticed that these buses are often overloaded and people get squeezed inside. Many a time one would be lucky to be among the few passengers squeezed in a seating row. The unfortunate ones have no choice than to stand. This often happens at peak hours when people are either going or returning from work. Getting squeezed in the early morning peak hours is manageable, but having to be on one of the typical Lagos commuter buses can be very discomfoting. Numerous instances will be cited to show the steps embarked upon in establishing grounds to rebut or strengthen particular claims.

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<sup>84</sup> This logic is based on the fact that a claim is further strengthened when more than one perspective sees it in the same light. In this case, the study strengthened a claim when direct observations and other sources of data collection corroborated such claim. As will be seen in the course of the report presentation, not all such claims were corroborated. This sort of rebuttal was not considered as strong evidence to discard the prior claim but necessitated more inquiry into the nature of the claim(s). This will be explored in the report findings

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.1 CASE STUDY ANALYSIS**

The following section makes an analysis of the data constructed from fieldwork for the case study. As has been noted in previous sections of this report, the strategy to be used in this analysis is a thematic cross case analysis. Specific themes will be explored in light of the research problem. Data from all the varied sources will be used (where applicable) in the exposition of the selected themes. The themes have been selected in such a way that they both reflect the research questions and emerge from the empirical material collected in the field. In addition, I have tried to align them in such a way that they remain consistent and in consonance with the theoretical framework. In some cases, claims and/or information about a particular minor case have been emphasized where I think this helps to shed more light on a theme.

The following is a thematic cross analysis (between the minicases) on the life stories of Lagos city residents. Their experiences and opinions about car consumption form a major crux of the perspective for the analysis. Observation by the researcher and documented evidences are used to corroborate case study findings from respondents.

#### **5.1.1. The Car and Individual Preferences**

Individual preferences are a key determinant when people make choices. The fact that individuals have a list of many values and ends from which they choose in accordance to which ones they consider best affordable and most useful is a dominant theme in this study. In accord with the rational choice theory of neoclassical economics, I assumed that car consumption in Lagos would to a large extent be determined by the fact that the purchase and use of the car would occupy paramount place in the list of “goods” from which individuals made choices based on preferences. But an important question that would arise from this would be how to make a determination of what are the “goods” out of which the car is given more preference. Normally one would expect that the basic necessities of life (food, shelter and clothing) are to be given topmost priority in the life of the individual. This fact was corroborated in the interviews that were held in the course of this study. The respondents had a unanimous contention that the purchase of the car only comes as a sequel to the acquisition of these basic necessities.

Preference for a particular good or commodity implies that it is considered or weighed against others. The choice for a good is made based on the belief that it would serve as a means to an end (or an end in itself) that the individual thinks best suits his/her interest. In this case where the focus is on car consumption or private car purchase and use, the realm of consideration is on what might be considered a better alternative to this mode of consumption. The closest alternative to private car consumption would be a public transport system (be it by road, rail, air or water). Thus, what would be the best choice in terms of mobility for the average Lagos resident is in this study considered a strong indicator of his/her preference in terms of choice of mobility mode.

The general opinion of respondents was that the private car is the best means of mobility in Lagos. The non existence of light rail (metro line) leaves residents with making a choice between road public transport system and the use of public cars. For every interview and for each respondent, the use of a private car was noted as the best mode of mobility. However, some respondents made allusions to the fact that their choice for private car use was more of a consequence of not having any other efficient alternative means of commuting.

Bankers and others who had to get to work in the early hours emphasized that the need to be punctual was a vital reason for their preference to private cars over the public transport system. For most people who have to get to their offices as early as 8am the car seemed the surest bet to achieving punctuality at work. The buses used for public transport do not have any particular time schedule, their timing and mode of operation lies in the hands of the bus driver who may decide to operate or not depending on his mood. Sometimes it is not easy to get buses on time for several reasons. In the early hours, there are always a huge number of passengers waiting for buses. One would have to rush and virtually fight his way into the next available bus. There are no queues at these bus stops and in the processes of trying to squeeze ones way into a bus, one could fall a victim to pick pockets.<sup>85</sup>

Findings from the case study Focus Group Discussion further revealed some problems which suggest that commuting via the public transport is not easy and is froth with problems. Apart from the ones listed above, many respondents made mention of “one chance”, a ploy used by armed robbers to steal from helpless residents who in the bid to avoid the early morning rush for buses decide to come out earlier than normal. In trying to avoid the morning rush for buses, some people prefer to come out earlier than the times of the rush. However, robbers have capitalized on this to rob innocent residents of valuables that range from mobile phones, jewelleryes and other personal effects. These robbers use the normal public transport type of buses and pretend to be public commuter buses. Because it is early in the morning and few people are yet out on the streets, the first passenger they sight is told to hurry in as the bus has only got one “one chance” (a single sitting space). Unknown to the unlucky person, every other person in the bus is a member of the armed robbery gang. The unlucky passenger is driven to any nearby outskirts to town, robbed and thrown out of the vehicle.<sup>86</sup>

Further evidence why people opt out for public commuter buses are given by a respondent,

...everybody would like to have his or her own car for easy movement. Because sometimes as we are seeing in this transport sector, it is not easy to get buses in this town . So I believe everybody would like to have his or her own car. With the problems we are having with all these bus operators, I would support government to eradicate them. Their attitude often times is very bad. They insult and say bad words to you...<sup>87</sup>

The young man’s assertion was made in line with the other problems of travel time, security, comfort and the absence of any other alternative of meeting mobility demands for those that cannot afford to buy cars. His opinion as can be deduced adds to the already noted problems which other respondents noted. His contention of having an “easy movement” can be translated to mean convenience.

Data from the Ministry of Transport showed that the Ministry was planning to revamp this crisis situation via collaboration with private investors to create an integrated public transport system comprising of road, rail and water modes of transport. It is hoped that with the introduction of private investors, then specifications and regulations will be implemented to check the activities of bus operators. There are high hopes that investors will respond to government’s privatization of the public transport sector, but until this is achieved, the public transport sector continues to operate like a free

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<sup>85</sup> These problems associated with public transport were given especially by bankers as reasons why they opt for the use of private cars. Other respondents shared similar views as well. My early morning watch at events at bus stops close to the place of my residence make me share the same opinion

<sup>86</sup> The “one chance” incidents were reiterated by numerous respondents. This style of the “one chance” mode of operation was given by a female respondent.

<sup>87</sup> A1: This quotation is taken from an in depth interview with a Lagos resident who preferred to remain anonymous

market, without neither check nor any serious form of regulation<sup>88</sup>. In this way it is easy for buses to be used for “one chance” or other forms of robbery and hardly be traced.

For the average Lagos resident, the car becomes more than just a luxury. The car becomes more of a necessity.

### 5.1.2 The Car as Necessity

The private vehicle for the Lagos resident ensures that travel time is not only reduced, but can be estimated. As against the bus, one can calculate the expected time in traffic congestion; add this to the time it would take to get to where s/he wants to go and from this can make a safe estimate as to when to get to his/her destination. But with the public transport this is not so. Public commuters often have to wait till their buses are full before they take off. They drop passengers along the way, and sometimes spend plenty of time at bus stops hoping and waiting for passengers to fill their buses before they take off. At times like this, many passengers who have appointments would start to yell at the driver, urging him to move the bus. Some bus drivers are kind enough not to respond, the less kind ones could go the extra mile to say bad things about the passenger, his/her family and so on. As part of my research and in a bid to better experience and corroborate interviewees’ opinions, I decided to use the public commuter buses as my main means of mobility. On two occasions the researcher missed interview appointments because of the foregoing noted problems of travel time associated with public commercial buses.

In the first occasion I was billed for an appointment for 3pm at the Lagos State Environmental Protection. I was advised to leave my place of residence two hours before the appointed time. I heeded this advice, but it took me about three and half hours to get there. I had to board four different buses to get to the place and all of them took time getting full before moving. It was only on my return that I was made to realize that travelling in the afternoons (before the evening rush hour) took longer time, as most people would have already been in the respective places of work, thus reducing the number of passengers on the streets. Thus, it would take a much longer time for buses to get full before moving. Faced with a situation like this, my impression would be that the private car would be a better means of commuting.

In a previous section, I have outlined the importance of Travel Time as expounded by Zahavi.<sup>89</sup> This study had proposed that factors that affect Travel Time would to a very large extent determine the choices of transport modes people make in Lagos. Respondents and my personal experiences go a long way to strengthen this proposition. Besides the need to keep within a favourable travel time, another factor that runs across the studied cases as to why individuals perceive the car as a necessity is the fact of convenience.

Convenience is already implied in the opinions explored. However, I will use an example offered by a respondent to make this point clearer. A respondent<sup>90</sup> noted that he was married with three children. He gave an instance when he and his entire family used one of the regular “molue”<sup>91</sup> buses. When they got to the point of their destination, they had the problem of getting down the bus. The entrances

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<sup>88</sup> This is the opinion of a staff at the Lagos State Ministry of Transport who begged to remain anonymous. This source noted that it was enough to buy a bus and put it on the road, no one would question. In the words of this source “who even knows when a bus enters or leaves the roads”

<sup>89</sup> I have outlined the concepts of Travel Time and Travel Money Budget as explained by Zahavi in the theoretical proposition (Chapter Two)

<sup>90</sup> A3: Interview with city respondent. The importance of this respondent’s assertion stems from the fact the respondent is an official of the Lagos State Ministry of Transport

<sup>91</sup> Molue is the name given to the famous big buses used for transport in Lagos. These buses are noted for their big size and low charges. Many people opt for them only because they are cheap

to these types of buses have high elevations, making it difficult for kids or elderly people to get on and off the bus. But there is a more serious problem with alighting from these buses; they hardly stop! People many a time have to jump on, and alight from these vehicles while they are still in motion. One wonders why these buses' drivers often opt not to stop. The respondent in question noted that he had a hell of a time trying to get himself and his family off the bus. It is in line with this sort of problem that a female respondent asserted;

I want to buy my own car for easy movement, because when you have your own car you can easily move freely where you want to go. Considering the hike in transport fares, you can even still afford to move<sup>92</sup>

From her point of view the car offers a more convenient means of commuting. Implicit in her assertion is a consideration of the costs of travelling. In making consideration related to fares and costs she can be seen to make a rationalist cost-reward calculation akin to the Rational Choice theory proposition. Rational choice theory posits that individual make choices when they feel that the costs they make are less than the rewards they get in their quest to achieving a desired end. The calculation thus made is also in line with Zahavi's contention that passengers make a calculation of the costs of mobility.<sup>93</sup> This respondent therefore makes a calculation that incorporates Travel Money Budget while being rational in making a choice from her preferences. The necessity of the private car as can be deduced from information presented in the foregoing is that private cars appear to offer security, convenience and are consistent in relation to a reduced and estimable Travel Time.

The analysis so far can be seen to be on the realm of the conceptualization of the car from the Choice Process conceptualization as offered by Shaefer and Crane (discussed in chapter Two). At this point I will go ahead to outline empirical material constructed from the study findings which show that apart from these rational choice/information-processing approach to car consumption, the car has meanings that lie outside any personal rationalization process for Lagos residents. In this vein respondents made allusions suggestive of the fact that the car has culturally ascribed meanings; meanings that exist outside the personal individual's perceptions, choices and values which greatly affect their car consumption choices.

The foregoing implies that we consider whether there truly exists any socially constructed meanings to car consumption in Lagos. The import of such cultural or social meaning would fall in line with the study's theoretical model and serve as a good means of explaining the car consumption patterns that exist in Lagos. The following theme makes an x-ray into the possible existence and import of any social or cultural meanings that the car holds for residents of Lagos.

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<sup>92</sup> A2: These are the words of a female respondent in an interview with the researcher

<sup>93</sup> Zahavi, Y (1981) *The UMOT-Urban Interactions*. DOT-RSPA 10/7. Washington DC: US Department of Transport., Shafer, A and Victor, D.G., (2000) *The Future Mobility of the World Population*. *Transportation Research (Part A)* 34: 171-205. These authors contend that Time and Money are central to the driving forces behind passenger transport and that humans spend a fraction of their time and money on travel. Zahavi refers to this as an individual's Travel/Time Budget. A logical inference (which I have taken for the purpose of this study's objectives) that could be drawn from this is that Time and Money consideration would be placed high on an individual's hierarchy of needs as regards choices and decisions related to the choice of a particular transport mode. In this regard, I consider Travel-Time considerations a key determinant to car consumption for the Lagos city resident, and causal factor to implications that follow it (car consumption)



### 5.1.3 The Social Side of the Car (Society, Social Groups and Car Consumption in Lagos)

The discourse so far has strongly shown that the car is generally seen as a necessity in Lagos. Individual decisions towards car consumption, from the point of view so far discussed, point towards what can be explained as a car culture in the city of Lagos. If cars are seen as necessities in that they are the best choice for a convenient, secure, and comfortable means of mobility, one can argue this sort of mentality as a way of life; in other words, a sort of culture. Culture in this case is understood literally as the attitudes and behaviour characteristic of a particular social group.<sup>94</sup> However, I am of the opinion that culture in the proper sense also connotes the worldviews and societal meanings which cultural objects signify. Meanings, values and worldview constitute the defining characteristics of a culture. Thus, to talk of a car culture for Lagos implies that the car has become a cultural object that has meaning for society and its social groups.

A lot of effort was dedicated by this study in trying to establish whether or not the car has meaning and symbolic representations for Lagos residents. Such meanings and symbols if existent would affect people's aspirations, evaluations and eventual choices as regards car consumption. It would shape and determine not only the decision to purchase and use cars but would determine the type of car as well as pattern in which cars are used. Evidence from the study suggests the existence of a culture in Lagos that has symbolized the car. In response to why he would buy a car and the type of car he aspires towards, an interviewee made the following assertion that has plenty of bearing on why people buy cars from a social representative point of view, as well as how they use them

What you have to know is that every human being dreams. Particularly myself, I dream very high. High ambition is not a crime. I pray to God to give me money to buy a jeep. If I have a jeep, it will help me to transact my business with others and people will respect me and give me more contracts. The jeep will attract more money to me and increase my prospects.<sup>95</sup>

From his assertion it seems that this young man has an opinion as to what effects the car he uses has on people's perception towards him. Note his view that the jeep will attract more money to him and help increase his prospects. I understand his views to mean that the jeep has some symbolic meaning attached to it. His mention of using a jeep made me prod further and I wanted to know if he felt this sort of thinking was shared by others as well. To this he responded,

No. Everybody has his own ambitions and has got his own decisions, and has got his own levels. Like for instance, the "okada"<sup>96</sup> is for poor people. It depends on your income level, how you get your money and the types of things you use your money for. If you got money and you consider the amount of money in your pocket, then you would know exactly the kind of car you will buy. But particularly for myself, it is my prayer, it is my dream to buy a jeep in order that people respect me<sup>97</sup>

Two important points can be inferred from the quotation above. First is the fact that decisions are to a large extent dependent on individual choice, tastes and values, and that income is budgeted to meet individual car aspirations and eventual consumption. Second is the fact that the young man in question feels and believes that the jeep in itself as a car would accord him some sort of status. Once again, the importance of income level and its effect on consumptive patterns evident in car consumption are

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<sup>94</sup> Judy Pearsall (ed) (1998) *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.

<sup>95</sup> A4: The words of the free lance journalist in an interview session

<sup>96</sup> The okada is the name given to commercial motorcycles. In Lagos and almost every town in Nigeria, commercial motorcycles operate mainly short distances. However, it is also seen as a means of transport for those who do not have cars.

<sup>97</sup> These are the words of respondent A4

reiterated. If the young man's perception about the jeep and respect are correct, an important question that arises from this would be "what is in a jeep that makes it attract respect from people"

Apart from the response I got from the same young man, many other opinions supported his, which held that "in Nigeria and Lagos especially, people regard those who drive jeeps as "big men", those who have acquired wealth". Within the course of the interviews, I asked a number of interviewees if they felt any particular car had any form of symbolic meaning. All the respondents mentioned the jeep amongst many other vehicle brands they thought were associated with status and identity creation. A person that drives a car like a jeep is seen as wealthy and is respected from this point of view. This fact that the car affords the user some form of recognition or accorded him/her some form of status was explored to a large extent from other points of view.

#### **5.1.4 Status and Identity on Wheels**

The researcher has lived in the city of Lagos for many years. I share the view that the car has social meanings attached to it. People that drive cars are considered as successful. I also used to share a popular opinion that bankers use cars to show or express the fact that they are successful or, if I were to use a common word used by most respondents, "have arrived". The fact of having "arrived" as related to bankers stem from the fact that are perceived as having a reasonably stable level of income. The bankers I interviewed stated outright that they do not concur with the opinion that bankers buy or use car to communicate status in any way. In response to questions posed to them, all respondent bankers shared the following views.

1. Bankers on their own do not go way out to show the fact that they have "arrived". The decision to use cars to express status is an individual choice, and cannot be ascribed to bankers
2. The fact of conspicuous consumption; that is, that car users are seen as successful and are accorded status and respect exists within the city of Lagos.
3. Bankers use cars because they think it is necessity, especially in terms of affording them the possibility of easy movement which the public transport system cannot offer. Cars reduce their overall travel time and enhance punctuality which they noted as very important for their job security.
4. Management encourages them to use cars by giving loans. One banker mentioned an important experience related to his friend who worked in a different bank. The friend told him that the management of the banking institution warned their staff against using commercial motorcycles (okada).
5. They would prefer to use public transport system than their private cars but would only do so if the public transport system was effective and efficient

The consensus on the above opinions show that it is wrong to make a categorical statement or hold the belief that bankers use cars to express status. On the other hand, the information obtained from all the interviewed bankers is not enough to make a statement on the contrary, that is, that bankers do not use cars to express status. However, I think it is safe to opine that the use of car as a means to express status among bankers is dependent on personal decision. The interviews with bankers show that some bankers do not use their cars to express status. In this case, any contention which assumes that bankers use cars as a means of expressing status would only be correct if it noted the important fact that not all bankers engage in this form of conspicuous. This study has established that there are exceptions to any such claims that posit that bankers use cars to express status. Thus, such a claim would be a hasty generalization, and from this point of view a fallacy.

However, this study on bankers also had important revelations and possible assumptions. If management encouraged car purchase by giving loans, perhaps it was because of some inherent value they felt the car would offer their staff. In response to this, one of the bankers argued it was because management wanted them to "look good". Management probably feels that a person who works in

“money house” (to use the phrase of one of the bankers) should portray a sign of being comfortable. This banker further opined that management opinion was that if customers see bank staff as living well they feel more confident that their money is safe and that bank staff have no reason to steal or do away with their money. If this reason offered by this banker is true, then it could be an indication that management see car ownership as a good means of expressing some degree of living a comfortable life. The argument in this case goes thus; if bank management want their staff to reflect some degree of living a comfortable life and they award them car loans, it could imply that they see car ownership and use on the part of their staff as a means to express their reasonable level of comfort. This is an indication of a possible conception held by a group, a sort of Collective Representation.

In a Focus Group Discussion, I asked respondents why they would buy cars. After a list of reasons, a unanimous consensus was reached that the car was a necessity. The different reasons given by the respondents revolved around the already discussed issues noted in the section “The Car as a Necessity”. But I went further to ask them if there was any other reason why they would buy cars apart from the fact that they see car consumption as a necessity. The following dialogue ensued in response to the question

Man 1: I want to buy a car to show my friends that I have arrived

I took the discussion further, asking if every member present would buy a car to show that s/he had arrived. All but one young man said they would buy cars to show that they had arrived

Man X: To me, the car does not show that one has arrived. You can get the cheapest car for a little amount of money. You can get a car for just about three hundred to four hundred thousand (Nigerian currency). With such a car, it is not arriving. It is not luxury. It is not a big car. You cannot present it and say you have car. But for the fact that a car gives me what I want (pause) to me, I don't give a damn. Once I want to go out, I go out. But if you have too much money, then you can buy a car.<sup>98</sup>

Interviewer: You said “if you have too much money”. Assuming you have too much money what type of car would you buy?

Man X: Fine, if I have such money like you are talking about, I could equally buy a Humma<sup>99</sup>

Man 2: A big car?

Man X: call it a big car. Since I have got money, what then am I cheating myself for. Life is about living and dying. If I have big money I can buy any car I want, I don't give a damn

Interviewer: If you have money what type of car will you buy?

Man X: If I have money I will buy a big car. But then I cannot have just one car. I will equally have a smaller car for Lagos (smiles and grins), as in Lagos.

Man 4: And what will the big one be for?

Man X: It can only come out when there is occasion...I will use it for going to church, parties, club...

Interviewer: But the small one can take you these places as well

Man 2: Ask him!!

Man X: It is because I have the money, and as I have the money I have decided to live my life that way. When I have so much money, I will use my big car for occasions on weekends...and the small one when I am going to office. You don't expect me to use the big one for things like going to the office. This is why I need a small car...

Interviewer: And the big one of course, when you want to “show”? (Stress on the show, where upon there was murmuring and laughter)

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<sup>98</sup> Note Man X's use of the word car. He first notes a cheap car cannot be presented as a car. Later, he says that “if you have too much money, then you can buy a car”. For him, a car, a real car is the expensive and flashy one; a real car is a “big” car (that is, an expensive, flashy car. Preferable a jeep)

<sup>99</sup> The Humma is perhaps considered one of the “biggest” cars one can own in Nigeria. Bigness in this case does not refer to size. A big car is one that expresses status. They are the expensive, classy and flashy cars. Most jeeps are considered big cars in Nigeria. This definition of a big car was given by a respondent. The researcher is not alien to the term, having lived in Lagos and having used the term himself

Man X: No, no... well, eh if you put it that way it is still okay.

(At this point there was applause and cheering. One of the young men walked up to me, shook my hands and gave me a hug. A gesture I interpreted to mean something like “Thank you for bringing out the truth in him”

The session continued with a discussion on how the society in Lagos perceives one who owns and drives a car. A member of the group opined that Lagos residents regard one who owns a car as having arrived especially if the car is a “big”. All the members of the group said this was true, including Man X. One of the girls in the session, a newly graduated university student had this to say

I think he has made a point because in Nigeria people regard those who have cars as wealthy people. Like when you come to my own school you find out that most drivers who come to pick up girls, and at the end of the day you find out that you are given more attention when you come with a car. You see girls jumping up for the girl that the car came to pick. So I feel this issue of one having a car and getting more attention, I agree.<sup>100</sup>

I asked a different girl what type of car she would like to buy. She opted for a “small” car. When I reframed the question and asked her what sort of car she would like to buy assuming she had “plenty” of money not minding if she was married, she replied that she would buy a Lexus jeep. The reason why she would buy a big car if she had money was, “I want to be noticed”. I asked if every member in the session wanted to be noticed, and there was a unanimous “Yes” from everyone except Man X. He felt it was better not to be noticed. If one was to get broke later for any reason and could not take care of his “big” car, then he turns into a laughing stock for the same people that hailed him when he could maintain a “big” car. This stance strongly suggests that for some reasons some people would like to be noticed. The researcher did not go into the details of what these reasons might be. For the purposes of this thesis I thought it was sufficient not to analyse any further so as not to go outside the scope of the case study.

The empirical materials got from interviews suggest that people in Lagos want to be seen as having “arrived”; they want to be “noticed”. A different respondent had opined that every young man in Lagos wants to be the champion. He is of the opinion that being in Lagos is all about striving. It is like being in a playing ground where everyone wants to win in a competition. What makes one a champion are; the car one drives, the type of house and area one resides and his/her manner of speech.

From the analysis so far, we can argue for a sort of collective representation which gives meaning to the car and in this way becomes a strong reason why people aspire towards buying cars. I refer to this as a collective representation (and not a collective consciousness, since this implies that the whole society shares the same view) since, as I have pointed out, it is not possible to state categorically that every Lagos resident sees the car as a means of communicating status. Following the “collective representation” of Durkheim,<sup>101</sup> the aspirations and inclination of people in Lagos towards the conception of the car as a means of status expression is not unanimous. Thus we cannot argue for a collective consciousness (to explain this in a Durkheimian fashion). We are left with making inference for groups. It is safe to opine that a certain group of people in Lagos conceive the car as a means to express status, while some do not. The fact that some will not is drawn deductively from the experience of the Focus Group Discussion where there was not a unanimous consensus on the topic of car use and status expression. However, the arguments from the Focus Group Discussion helped to lay solid grounds for any argument that advocates strong indications that there would be many Lagos residents who subscribe to this sort of perception.

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<sup>100</sup> F1: A female respondent in the Focus Group Discussion

<sup>101</sup> Durkheim, E (1893/1984) *The Division of labour in Society* (Halls, W.D ed). London: Macmillan Education

### 5.1.5. A Demographic Perspective To car Consumption

On the relationships between the demographic factors of age, sex and occupation, the following can be deduced from the case study report.

There is a strong indication that younger people<sup>102</sup> tended to flaunt their cars more than the elderly. The researcher observed that it was only the younger people who blasted the sounds from their car radios. They were the one who had very long antennas sticking from the top of their cars. The youth in Lagos are very emotional towards their cars. At some bars and fast food joints (a common meeting place for most young men in Lagos) that I visited to observe if I could see any pattern and/or trends in the way cars were related to cliques and social groups, I noticed that numerous conversations among groups of young men were centred on girls and cars. The discourses on the cars took different trends but revolved around who uses what type of cars in town, and which cars they thought were the best car brands. On one occasion a group of friends came to a bar to “wash” a car that had just been bought by a member of their clique. The washing of the car meant that he had to buy drinks for all members of his cliques to show them his new car. Later they went and said prayers for the owner, pouring wine over the car bonnet. The “washing” of the car<sup>103</sup> ended with songs of praise and congratulations to the young man who had bought the car.

The study did not see much difference in terms of taste and aspiration between groups and individuals of the opposite sex. Both sexes appeared to have the same tastes, especially for the young people. The jeep was acclaimed the ideal car by both parties, and both males and females alike opined they would love to possess one if they could afford it. However, information from a car seller revealed that it was actually men that bought virtually all the cars that were sold. According to this car dealer, few women buy cars compared to men. A likely explanation could be found in the patriarchal nature of the society. Isiugo-Abanihe<sup>104</sup> has studied the male role in family decisions in Nigeria. Although his study was focused on decision pertaining to female reproductive issues, he nevertheless showed that a majority of household decisions were taken by men in the Nigerian society. This could account for the reason why few females buy cars. The study did not explore this further, but leaves it a potential area for further research.

### 5.1.6. The Transport Problem, Environment and Sustainability

To a large extent, respondents claimed to be aware of the problems associated with car consumption. Most of them claimed that the problems of pollution and traffic congestions were caused more by the buses used for transport and the attitudes of the drivers of these buses. As have been noted earlier, the claim that these buses are not well maintained was a reason offered to support claims that these calibre of road vehicles emit more than private vehicles.

On observation, the researcher noticed many of such buses emitting heavy tailpipe exhaust fumes. Buses stop and park even in the middle of the road to pick passengers thereby causing traffic congestion along city roads. There are not enough designated car parks to cater for both public and private cars. In Lagos, anywhere can be a car park. The few parks that are created are not well managed. According to a source at the Ministry of Transport, city residents do not comply with driving and traffic rules. They flout these rules with reckless abandon, and even oppose and resist

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<sup>102</sup> By younger people I refer to those that would fall between the ages of eighteen to forty

<sup>103</sup> To wash a car is to make a presentation of ones car to friends, well wishers or members of a social group.

This formal presentation often goes with celebration and drinking of wine. This fact is common in other cities and even villages. It is a way to show ones achievement in town.

<sup>104</sup> Isiugo-Abanihe, U.C (2003) Male Role and responsibility Fertility and Reproductive Health in Nigeria.

Ibadan: Ababa Press

Ministry officials who attempt to apprehend them for violating driving and traffic rules. A ministry representative claimed that their officials on numerous occasions have been attacked and beaten up by drivers who resist being apprehended for flouting traffic rules.

On the other hand, respondents claim that government and its institution have not been responsive to the problems inherent in the transport situation in Lagos. They opine that there are very few workable rules in Lagos and that government is not willing to enforce the few existing rules it has put in place. A respondent noted,

Lagos doesn't have rules. There are no rules. Things do not work in Lagos. Everybody does whatever he likes, because everybody wants to show off. Even if there are laws, all these people who created them are corrupt. They are not even trying to monitor what they have put in place<sup>105</sup>

I will attempt to make an analysis of this respondent's assertion in the light of empirical material from the study. Contrary to the first opinion of this respondents, the study found out that there were traffic rules and regulations. However, the study also found evidence to corroborate the claims that these rules are not being well implemented. Both Ministry and private sources alluded to this fact. MOT and other road worthiness tests are not done by vehicle owners. Both sources noted that corruption played a major part in hindering policy implementation. The study found out from interviewees with individuals and Ministry representatives that vehicles owners bribe officials to get road certificates, drivers' license and other particulars related to their vehicles.

Documents from The Lagos State Ministry of Health showed that some MOT test centres were shut down because of corrupt practices.<sup>106</sup> The researcher was opportune to read a letter from the Ministry of Transport which stated that government officials were one of the worse culprits in terms of refusals to subject vehicles for MOT tests. These two instances confirm the position in the assertion above that those who put the laws are corrupt and do not monitor the laws they have placed. Sadly enough, the led have no choice than to follow the putrid steps of the leaders.

The Environmental Protection Agency noted that the problem of car use was causing serious environmental problems especially with regard to the various forms of pollution that are glaringly evident in the city environment. As has been noted in a previous section, a study showed that the levels of emission from car exhaust pipes are so high that you feel them in many congested parts of the city. The stench of hazardous gases from tail pipe emissions is so high that they cause eye irritation.<sup>107</sup> Respondents feel that this sort of problem is grave enough to demand urgent attention. However, the Environmental Protection Agency is yet to get the necessary equipment needed to measure and monitor pollution and its effects. Thus, there are no emission standards and consequently no regulations exist as to how to check pollution from vehicular sources. A source at the agency noted that plans are underway for procurement of the necessary equipment needed in this regard. From this point of view, the claim by the respondent that there are no rules and/or regulations is to a great extent justified.

The level of awareness of the problems associated with an increasing trend in car consumption in Lagos is high. Every respondent that was interviewed was aware that car consumption had a negative impact on human health. Most were conversant with the fact the inhalation of Carbon Monoxide was dangerous to human health. However, they were of the opinion that environmental and sustainability issues are not being given proper attention in the city. The fact that the creation of awareness would

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<sup>105</sup> The words of respondent A4

<sup>106</sup> Lagos Ministry of Transport, Policy Papers on Transportation Lagos State 2001-2004

<sup>107</sup> Baumbach et al (1995), Air Pollution in a large Tropical City with a high Traffic Density – Results of Measurements in Lagos, Nigeria. *The Science of the Total Environment* 169 (1995) 25-31

help to create some sort of value re-orientation, and in this way reduce trends in car consumption patterns was mentioned by some. In the face of all these, all the respondents including ministry representatives felt that the future of the transport sector in Lagos look bleak. When asked what they thought would be the future of the transport sector in Lagos over the years, interviewed respondents came up with the following responses,

1. There are bound to be more cars and more problems over the years
2. Citizens are very selfish and will always flout rules and laws related to transport. Lagos residents prefer to have the easier ways out of every situation. MOT tests and the few measures put in place will therefore not be effective.
3. The selfishness of citizens is made worse with the presence of an uncaring and corrupt government. Thus the necessary infrastructure to revamp the transport crisis will not be put in place. The few existing ones will continue to deteriorate. The roads were always cited as typical of such infrastructure.
4. The environmental and sustainability aspects of car consumption in Lagos are connected to the economic, political and social values of life. Unless there are improvements in all these areas of life, the situation will only get worse
5. Until there is the presence of an effective alternative to private car use, cars will be on the increase, and the situation will reach a state when the roads wont be able to contain all the cars in Lagos
6. Cars are a necessity and will only cease to be a necessity when there are efficient and effective alternatives. Government is not responsive to the needs of the people, and if this continues, there will be no alternatives and people will continue to use private cars

The impressions of city residents as to future of the environment and sustainability of the transport sector can be summed in the words of a taxi driver,<sup>108</sup> “we do not need a soothsayer to tell us that we are in for a very big problem in the future”

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<sup>108</sup> This Taxi driver was not part of the case study design. I started a conversation with him as we drove from my place of resident to one of the banks where I had the interviews. He had so much knowledge about the impact of pollution on human health and the natural vegetation. His opinion was that the exhaust from cars was causing a change in the weather and affecting crop yield. He noted that these changes would lead to some kind of illnesses that have not yet been known. I asked for his source of information. He had no references except for what he termed his close attention and watch of trends as they relate to the environment. According to him, the present generation of Lagos citizens are causing problems for the future. However, a source of joy for him came from the fact that it might not take long for the effects he said would take place to manifest, in this way the creators of these problems would live to experience the consequences of their “indiscipline lives”

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6.1 DISCUSSION ON CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

The following analysis uses a logic that links the data from the data construction process to theoretical framework and my research questions. In many cases I refer back to literature and ideas already cited in previous sections. In such cases, I do not make foot notes references. However, I hope that I make such references to ideas clear enough in such a way that the reader does not need to go back to previous sections or chapters searching for such references. It is important to note at this point that the case study does not intend to make categorical and conclusive statements with regard to the case study analysis and evidences. This study makes a good attempt at exploring the car consumption problematique in the city of Lagos. But at the same it finds explanations for certain issues and events that relate to car purchase and use in Lagos City. Thus, any explanations offered in this thesis are at best considered grounds to support or refute some strong claims.

#### 6.1.1 Study Limitations

First, the use of the case study as my research strategy already makes it very difficult to arrive at conclusive statements. This is because the population studied here was merely chosen to suit the case study from the point of view deemed fit by the researcher. One could argue that the population and choice of respondents chosen do not adequately represent the experiences or opinions of Lagos city residents. To such a claim, I have no response save that anyone who holds such a position should judge the study based on the merits of the data collected and its method of analysis. I have tried to give reasons for the choices made in terms of minor cases and method of analysis. I have followed the directives for making a good case study strategy as proposed by Robert Yin.<sup>109</sup> To this end, this case studies methodology is not solely based on the researcher's personal hunches, perspective and/or discretion.

In the course of the study, I noticed some issues that demanded more attention than was given. The import of age and sex were not fully explored in the study. At the beginning, the researcher had the opinion that these did not constitute the very important factors to be considered. On the contrary, evidences from the study strongly suggest that the factor of sex is an area that should be explored further. In this regard, two opinions stand out as worthy of consideration. The females encountered in the course of the study desire to buy cars. However, evidence from a car dealer suggests that very few females actually buy cars. I suggested at this point somewhere in the paper that patriarchy and male dominance at homes could be an explanation for this. The study did not delve further into this potentially important issue that has plenty of bearing on the issue of consumption.

To what extent can this study be repeated to get the same results? This question argues for the validity and replicability of this study. Validity and replicability are one of the qualities of a good research. In terms of validity, I contend that the logic of linking data to theory and research questions gives this thesis a high degree of validity. Thus by constantly making reference to theory and literature, this study can be seen not to stand solely on its own grounds. Besides, what has been studied is a contemporary event whose trends could change overtime. To this end, the possibility of repeating a study like this to get the same results might not be feasible. In addition, the study has dealt with a social phenomenon, one which cannot be subjected to the test criteria that apply to the physical sciences. The study was conducted on individuals, social groups and society whose endowment with freedom make their choices, tastes and values subject to change at any point in time. The context within which the study was carried out was dependent on the economic, socio-political as well as

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<sup>109</sup> Yin, R. K (2003) Case Study Research: Design and Methods. Thousand Oaks, California: sage Publications



cultural factors existent at the time of the study. A change in any one or all of these could produce different results for this and/or any other similar studies. Perhaps a time-series study and analysis, or a comparative study of Lagos and a different city, or even two different divisions in Lagos would have offered a better explanation for the research topic. I believe this to be true and would not argue that this is not a limitation of this study. It is however important to note that time and resources (financial and human) were also limited for the study. These and more combined to limit the scope and strength of the study.

### **6.1.2 Discussion on Case Study Findings**

Be that as it may, I argue that the study has made some novel (albeit preliminary) findings and explanations about the nature of car consumption in Lagos State. In attempting to respond to the “why” and “how” people use cars in Lagos city, this study has opened up areas for further research. For most of the issues where I noted a unanimous consensus from respondents, I opine that for such cases it would be safe to argue for a high probability that that is the case for Lagos city. In the final analysis, I contend that this study is not all about making definitive or completely exhaustive statements that account for the whole of Lagos but of gaining enough grounds to make strong suggestions in favour or against certain claims and positions as they relate to car consumption in Lagos city. Nevertheless, there are still cases where one could argue for more than just strong suggestions. If the researcher observes a social phenomenon as “car washing” and notes this as being obtainable in Lagos and other cities, it is possible to make inferences and explanations about the meaning of such practice.<sup>110</sup> Car washing is a socially existing fact whose meanings point to the social values attached to car consumption in Lagos and Nigeria as a whole. As a social fact, not all residents might subscribe to it, but its existence implies that it has meanings for the society. The import of “car washing” shows that the car has strong social meanings for Lagos city residents. It is indeed a strong revelation of the fact that car use in Lagos has a social side. The ritualistic aspects that go with car washing are strong indications of the emotional aspects that go with car ownership. This can be likened to the welcome that heralds the birth of a new baby (only in this case the emotional ties might not be as strong in car washing as it would be with the arrival of a new born baby) and is expressive of a social fact that could be used to argue for a car culture in the city of Lagos.

On another hand, there are indications to argue that car consumption patterns in Lagos are in some situations more affected by social conceptualizations than individually motivated factors. The study finding about female aspirations and eventual purchase of cars offers a huge support to this indication. While the study found grounds to argue that males and females to a large extent share the same personal tastes, values and aspirations towards car ownership, it also found out that in the final analysis, very few females eventual realize this aspiration. From this, it could be safely argued there as it pertains to females and car consumption in Lagos; it is possible to see that aspirations and even individual preferences are often times not realized for other reasons. The implication would be that there is more than mere choice or preference as it relates to the eventual purchase and ownership of cars by females in Lagos. This study however, due to certain constraints, does not explore in details the contexts in which this sort of situation plays out.

However, it is important to note that despite the fact that this study has made the above noted findings, this case study is not more about getting new findings than it is about exploring and finding explanations for the “whyness” and “howness” implied in the study’s research questions and objective. Research is not all about getting new findings. This is especially true when the case study is used as a

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<sup>110</sup> I have in the previous chapter explained this concept. To wash a car is to make a presentation of ones car to friends, well wishers or members of a social group. This formal presentation often goes with celebration and drinking of wine. This fact is common in other cities and even villages. The researcher himself has participated in events of “car washing”. At times, a person who buys a vehicles invites an ordained person (a priest or a pastor in the case of Christians) to lead the prayer session of the car “washing”



the three from the use of cars will make the owner use the car more since he will want to continue reaping the benefits of reduced Travel Time, security and convenience

As was seen in the case study analysis, the private car affords some sort of security and privacy which the public transport cannot offer. Important documents can be safely kept in ones private vehicle. The private vehicle reduces risks of getting the “one chance” experience. It also reduces the risks associated with contracting diseases by close contact with infected co –passengers in a bus In addition it is convenient in that it makes the overall mobility project stress free. The stress of having to jump on and off buses is reduced by the use of a private car. The other aspect from which the car is considered a necessity as can be opined from the analysis is the fact the car use reduces Travel Time. These as we saw are most important for residents who have to report to work early.

The fact of the private car being a necessity is centred on these three factors (security, convenience and Travel Time. These factors can be seen to be related to the fact that city residents consider them important and see them as enough rational reasons why they should opt for private car use. If these factors were to be non-existent, there is good reason to believe that the number of people who use cars from the point of view that it affords them the values inherent in a reduction in travel time, security and convenience will be reduced. A strategy that seeks to create alternatives to car use while providing convenience, reduced travel time and convenience would be a good way of reducing the emphasis on car consumption in Lagos.

From a systems analysis perspective, it implies balancing the reinforcing loops that exist between car use and convenience on one hand, and car use and security on the other. The reinforcing loop in this case portrays the type of relationship that exists between car use on one hand, and security and convenience on the other. Car use is seen as increasing convenience and security. At the same time security and convenience are believed to increase with car use. The implication is that since cars are seen to increase security and convenience, the need for convenience and security at the same time implies that car use will be increased. A good way to balance this loop (reducing the strong relationship between car use and security/convenience) would be by creating an efficient and effective alternative to car use. I will give a good example of a way to create such loop balancing.

If bank management and other corporate bodies for instance were to be mandated to provide commuter buses for their workers, this could reduce the numbers of their staff who use cars. The study findings reveal that a good number of bankers would be ready to use a public transport system if they felt such a system would assure them security, convenience and punctuality. Should they have good commuter buses to take them to and fro their respective homes and workplaces, a good number of private vehicles would be put off the city roads. A good commuter bus can take as much as thirty four persons;<sup>114</sup> implying that if the likes of bankers had access to such a transport mode, there is likely to be a reduction in the number of private cars on the streets of Lagos. What is more, the fact that bank management can afford car loans to its staff is a strong indication that they can afford enough commuter buses for the transportation of their staff. I argue for a government policy that requires banks and other corporate organizations to make mass transport facilities available to their staff. In addition, I strongly believe and argue that the use of such a mass transport system by staff of corporate organizations will help to deconstruct some values attached to car ownership. If bankers and their like, considered by the average city resident as having a reasonably high income level, resort to not buying cars and using a mass transport system, this will go a long way to deconstruct the societal perception of car ownership as a sign of “arriving”. When other social groups see that bankers and others whom they felt used cars to communicate and express status and identity can get along well without private

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<sup>114</sup> This opinion was supported by a staff at the Lagos State Ministry of Environment. This respondent concurs with the researcher’s contention that the provision of staff buses will reduce car use by staff of corporate organizations. He noted that the Ministry of Environment has such a mass transport system for its workers, and that each bus used for transporting staff of the Ministry has a thirty four person carriage capacity

cars, they too might tow the same way of life. This will be a good way to start the deconstruction process of the symbolic values attached to car ownership and use in Lagos. This approach can easily take off at any point and does not require government expenditure. Government would then have to make arrangements for the introduction of an effective and efficient public transportation system. I do not propose to give extensive recommendations to tackle the problem, rather I try to show the points at which policies and measures should be targeted to create better results for the solution of the transport problems in Lagos. There is need to create alternatives to car use from any possible target point.

From a Rational theory point of view, the creation of such alternatives would re-arrange the list of preferences for any individual since it would offer an alternative that can compete with the desired qualities for which the private car is chosen over other preferences by individuals. Since the efficient alternative would offer what the private car does, the individual would then have to get into a deeper rational process to make assessments based on other factor such as cost effectiveness. Depending on what final choice the individual decides to make, the effects of Travel Budget will also be considered. It is possible that an individual will be rationally inclined to whichever alternative is cheaper; in line with the rationalist point of view that individuals will tend to maximize their gains as against loses.

The Choice/Information-Processing conceptualization is in support with the above contention. I opine that the presence of an efficient and effective public transport system in Lagos would be a very sure means to reduce car consumption. The fact that many people buy and use cheap second hand vehicles imported from Europe strongly suggests that these cars are bought to facilitate what this study has referred to as convenience. Thus, an alternative that is efficient and effective will reduce the rationalized idea of perceiving the car as a necessity.

The CLD also shows car use as having reinforcing loops with Social recognition, Justifications for Status seeking and Identity Creation. As in the case where the car is seen as a necessity (in terms of affording security and convenience), balancing the existent reinforcing loops between the uses of private cars in relation to these socially constructed factors will reduce private car use. Education and awareness creation as to the negative effects of car consumption could reduce the citizens' orientations to car use

The study analysis gives every reason to argue for the existence of a representation or collective consciousness (to use Durkheimian concepts) that ascribes meanings to the car. The car for the Lagos city resident is a symbol of status, one which draws respect (albeit a sort of fake respect since respect in the right sense ought to be earned and not got from the consumption of a good or commodity) and gives the owner some sort of identity; a form of "embourgeoisement".<sup>115</sup> But unlike the previous case where it is easy to pin point a plausible alternative to the car as necessity for enhancing mobility, it is not easy to substitute a societal way of perception. Cultural meanings such as those accorded the car in Lagos are difficult to alter. A very strong reason will have to be presented to the people to effectuate the necessary paradigm shift that will make them change the social ascriptions given to the car. Because it is not very easy to change this pattern of thinking, it is the researcher's view that a special kind of education and creation of awareness could lead to some kind of value re-orientation that would lead to the desired reduction in car consumption. This sort of education might not change the socially constructed meanings given to car and its consumptive patterns, but would go a long way in reducing the negative effects of car consumption. An education which stresses especially the negative health impacts of exposure to pollution while stressing the fact the "When each one of us uses a car we increase pollution. You must not own and use a car" will be of great importance in solving this problem. With such stress, people would at least be wary of getting themselves exposed to vehicular tailpipe emissions and other types of pollution. To make them reduce their use of cars, an effective and

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<sup>115</sup> This word is the researcher's coinage. I have used it just for emphasis sake. Here, I intend it to denote the fact of becoming higher placed on a higher social class, that is, of a class higher than where one originally was. It is the manifestation of what I have previously described as "arriving"

efficient alternative would still be needed. It is not enough to make people stop using their cars, alternatives that they can fall back to if they gave up their private cars must be put in place for them to be able to give up private car use.

The CLD shows that congestion and pollution come from both commercial vehicles and private cars. These increase environmental problems and reduce the good health of city residents. The dangers and hazards of exposure to tail pipe emissions as well as their negative impacts on the environment have been noted in foregoing chapters. Corruption contributes to more lawlessness in the city. Furthermore, it leads to less commitment to duty. In the former instance flouting of rules increase traffic congestion. This increases Travel Time, and leads to a consequent loss in productive man hours. The same goes for the latter instance. Corruption as a practice would lead to less job commitment and in the final analysis reduce productivity in the city.

Implicit in the foregoing would be questions as to the Sustainability of the transport situation in the city of Lagos. The present transport scenario in the city as depicted above is definitely not sustainable. The sustainability implications are numerous.

Given the role Lagos plays in terms of being the economic centre of the nation and West African sub-region, the issue of sustainability when considered from any point of view cannot be overemphasized. Suffice it to say that the numerous man hours lost due to increase in travel time (attributable to congestion) and ill health takes a great toll on the economic strength of the city. The loss in travel time and illnesses that occur due to residents' exposure to pollution and congestion will reduce their overall level of productivity. There are likelihoods that the population will continue to increase. Should population continue to increase and the transport situation remain the same, then there are likely to be more cars in use in the city of Lagos. The consequent problems to the environment and human health that have been highlighted in this study are bound to increase. A lot has to be done to revamp the transport problem in Lagos city. The Federal Ministry of Environment intends setting emission standards for cities in Nigeria<sup>116</sup> and has noted the emission problems in Lagos as one that needs to be urgently addressed. It is the researcher's opinion that the implementation of emission standards is very important for Lagos. If properly monitored and enforced, this will reduce the amount of pollution coming from vehicles in Lagos.

The sustainability of economic activities, residents' health and the environment of Lagos and nearby cities as well as countries is largely threatened by transportation trends in Lagos. The findings of this study suggest that modes of private car consumption play a big role in this regard. Succinctly put the sustainability of Lagos as a commercial city and the health of resident are threatened by an increase in private car consumption. Private cars might be necessary, but the destructions that accompany their purchase and use make it an unsustainable mode of consumption.

### **6.1.3 Conclusions**

The study findings suggest that the car consumption in Lagos is reflective of the theoretical model. Individual as well as social factors combine to influence eventual decision to purchase and use cars. Individuals rationalize car consumption as a necessity. At the same time, the car for Lagos residents is imbued with social meanings that support its increased use. While residents appear to be aware of the unsustainable implications of this mode of consumption, they are sceptical of a better future for the overall transport and environmental situation of the city.

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<sup>116</sup> A source at the Federal Ministry of Environment noted that the Ministry is working towards setting emission standards for cities in the country especially for Lagos which the Ministry has noted to be facing serious emission problems. It hopes to work in liaison with Ministries and governments of other West African countries to set regional emission standards

I have argued that car consumption has sustainability implications for Lagos city. It leads to varied forms of environmental and health problems. These reduce the overall productivity of residents (who fall sick due to exposure to emissions, lose productive man hours due to congestion) and affects the economic strength of the city. For a city that has been described as the nerve centre of the entire West African sub-region, the problems of car consumption need urgent treatment. To this end, I have argued that the creation of an effective and efficient alternative (in this case an integrated public transport system that incorporates rail, road and water transport modes) to private car use would reduce the conceptualization of the car as a necessity. I cited a good instance whereby corporate organizations' provision of a good mass transport system for their staff can enhance efficiency and effectivity of a public mass transport system and reduce private car use (although this mass transit system will be available only to staff of corporate organizations). I have argued that the employment of this type of mass transit could a long way in deconstructing public opinions that support the conspicuous consumption of private cars. These recommendations, far from being exhaustive, give indication that understanding the car consumption problematic from a perspective that takes into account the perspectives and life stories of the stakeholders (residents, Ministries, workers, lay people and so on) directly involved, as has been done by this study, affords the possibilities of not only understanding the complex dynamics inherent in the problem, but makes possible the identification of possible target areas in revamping the crisis situation

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### RESPONDENTS/INTERVIEWEES

| Name                 | Place                                      | Date                            |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
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| Agbomeji, S.A        | Lagos State Ministry of Transport, Lagos   | 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2005 |
| Ayeni S.A            | Lagos State Ministry of Transport, Ikeja   | 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2005 |
| Bello, K.A           | Lagos State Env. Protection Agency, Ikeja  | 8 <sup>th</sup> September 2005  |
| Eke, O               | Isolo, Lagos                               | 8 <sup>th</sup> September       |
| Enemari J.J (Engr) : | Fed Ministry of Environment, Abuja         | 24 <sup>th</sup> August 2005    |
| Mike-Eneh, C         | Nigeria International Bank, V.I Lagos      | 13 <sup>th</sup> September 2005 |
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| Ike, N.N             | Gbagada, Lagos                             | 9 <sup>th</sup> August 2005     |
| Ilechukwu, M         | Victoria Island, Lagos                     | 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2005  |
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| Odom, M              | Isolo, Lagos                               | 8 <sup>th</sup> September 2005  |
| Okuonghae, A         | Federal Road Safety Commission, Abuja      | 24 <sup>th</sup> August 2005    |

## APPENDIXES

### Appendix 1: Case Study Protocol

| QUESTION LEVEL | AGENT         | FOCUS                          | CONTEXT OF CONCEPTUALIZATION                                         | TARGET FOR RESPONSE                                                                         |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ONE            | INDIVIDUAL    | INDIVIDUAL                     | SUBJECTIVE OPINION                                                   | ASPIRATIONS, VALUES, CHOICES                                                                |
| TWO            | INDIVIDUAL(S) | SOCIETY AND GROUPS             | WORLDVIEWS AND CULTURES                                              | SOCIAL INFLUENCE ON INDIVIDUAL'S CHOICES, VALUES AND ASPIRATIONS                            |
| THREE          | INDIVIDUAL(S) | MINISTRIES AND/OR AGENCIES     | MINISTRY AND AGENCY ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES                        | IMPACT OF POLICIES AND STRATEGIES                                                           |
| FOUR           | INDIVIDUAL(S) | INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY/GROUPS | IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES AND STRATEGIES                            | IMPACT OF POLICIES AND STRATEGIES                                                           |
| FIVE           | INDIVIDUAL(S) | INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY/GROUPS | SUSTAINABILITY OF CONTINUED CAR USE AND THAT OF THE TRANSPORT SYSTEM | PROSPECTS AND POSSIBILITIES AS WELL AS DISPOSITION FOR INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETAL/GROUP CHANGE |

## **Appendix: 2 Interview Questions**

### **Bankers**

1. Do you use a private car? If yes did you buy it yourself or is it an official car attached to your office?
2. When you decided to buy your car, what would be the most important factors you considered? What were the main gains or derivable merits (from your personal point of view) that car ownership would afford you?
3. Some people opine that bankers use cars to display the fact that they have “arrived”. As a banker what is your opinion in this regard? What do you think are the opinions of other bankers?
4. There are numerous cars plying Lagos streets, and yours is one of them, did you consider the implications of everyone owing a car in Lagos? Do you see yourself as contributing to the problems of congestion and pollution in the city? Must you own a car?
5. Do you see the increase in private vehicle use as problematic? If so, to what extent do you think Lagos City residents are aware of the problematic inherent in car use.
6. Do you think the Ministries responsible to check this problem are doing well in terms of addressing the problem in terms policy making and implementation? What would be your impression about citizens’ responses to government and ministry?
7. What is your opinion about the future of the transport situation in conjunction with the issues you have raised, especially with reference to policy implementation and attitude of citizens to wards them?

### **Students and fresh school leavers**

1. Is it your aspiration to own a car in the near future? What type of car would you like to buy assuming you have “big” money, and why would you buy this type of car?
2. Do you think most young people especially students and fresh school leavers think the same way as you do?
3. Are you aware that the more cars there are on the roads, the more there are problems of congestion and pollution, and that by buying a car you contribute to this problem? Do you think Lagos residents think in the way you have just noted or is this strictly your own personal opinion?
4. Do you see the over reliance on private car use as a problem that needs to be addressed urgently? How would you rate government and ministries efforts towards addressing the problem? Do you see the increase in private vehicle use as problematic? If so, to what extent do you think Lagos City residents are aware of the problematic inherent in car use.
6. Do you think the Ministries responsible to check this problem are doing well in terms of addressing the problem in terms policy making and implementation? What would be your impression about citizens’ responses to government and ministry?
7. What is your opinion about the future of the transport situation in conjunction with the issues you have raised, especially with reference to policy implementation and attitude of citizens towards these policies?

### **Ministry Representatives**

1. Does your ministry see private car use in the city as constituting a problem? If so, what has it done, or what does it propose by way of tackling this problem? Have city residents cooperated in the right manner to make your ministries policies and measures successful or not?
2. Do you think city residents are fully aware of the implications of the problematic we are discussing?
3. Does this ministry work in liaison with other ministries in addressing this problem? Can you access the extent to which this ministry has been able to reduce the transport related problems you noted?
4. What have been the constraints of the ministry in realizing solutions to this problem?
5. What is your opinion about the future of the transport situation in conjunction with the issues you have raised, especially with reference to policy implementation and attitude of citizens towards these policies?

### **Health Personnel**

1. Do you use a private car? If yes did you buy it yourself or is it an official car attached to your office?
2. When you decided to buy your car, what would be the most important factors you considered? What were the main gains or derivable merits (from your personal point of view) that car ownership would afford you?
3. Cars are a major source of pollution and are linked to other health hazards, as a health personnel, how do you see car use in Lagos with relation to this problem? Do you see the present car consumption patterns in Lagos as posing serious health problems to citizens? Do you see yourself as aiding in creating the problem by your own car use?
4. Do you think government and related ministries are doing enough in tackling this problem? What do you think government and ministries need to do to revamp this situation?
5. To what extent do you think city residents are aware of these problems? How do you assess their response to measures that have been put in place to address this situation? What is your impression about the level of damage caused to human health by car consumptive trends?
6. Are there hopes for a better transport situation in the future?

N/B. The following are leading questions as they were used for the interviews. The framing of these questions and the sequence in which they followed were dependent on interviewee responses to questions as they were posed to them. But in every case, the questions were made to follow the outline and framework of the Case Study Protocol. In this way the study was able to explore interviewee opinion and experiences while remaining within the study boundaries as guided and directed by the Case Study Protocol.