The Social Life of Rubbish: An Ethnography in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research calls for a reconsideration of the notion of rubbish; one that does not consider disposal as the final act of the production-consumption cycle but, instead, appreciates the practices enacted around rubbish as constitutive of value creation. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's *Production of Space* (1991) and *Rhythmanalysis* (2004) this thesis traces the social life of rubbish to understand the social, cultural, political, and economic practices implicated in the organisation of waste. In particular, I employed a sensory ethnographic approach comprising of participant observations, self-reflexive observations, formal and informal interviews. I undertook a six months fieldwork, where I explored and documented the practices enacted by six sets of stakeholder who are involved in the organisation of rubbish in Lagos, Nigeria.

Without overlooking the representational aspects (i.e. interviews, visuals) of practices, this thesis contributes to consumer research and the wider marketing discipline by tackling the more-than-representational elements of practices. The research exposes the spatial dynamics, embodied and multisensory experiences and power relations that are negotiated and co-produced when everyday practices are performed around rubbish. In so doing, I question and challenge the notion of disposal as being limited to environmentalism, green consumption and sustainability. I pushed these boundaries by investigating how rubbish acts as the lifeblood that fuels socio-spatial as well as economic relations in both formal and informal economies.

This ethnographic study reveals the coping tactics and spaces of resistance that are utilised by marginalised informal operators to 'make-do' and sometimes subvert the strategies imposed by the formal authorities when they attempt to abolish these practices. The findings unmask the processual quality of practices and the recursive nature of objects in terms of their transformation from a state of 'rubbish' into valuable categories. It also makes visible the manner in which the practices enacted around rubbish (de)synchronises with natural rhythms such as seasons.

The thesis alerts policymakers to the contributions of the informal waste economy to the socioeconomic development of the formal economy. It also suggests that the urge to engage in sustainable consumption practices – recycling and less consumption – can have detrimental effects on stakeholders that rely on the surplus or detritus that emerge post consumption to sustain their socioeconomic livelihoods in developing economies across the world such as Lagos, Nigeria.

Keywords: Everyday Practices, Materiality, Rhythms, Rubbish, Space, Formal and Informal economy

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My parents Abel Akponah and Christiana Akponah

And, to my siblings

Annabel Emore, Kore Akponah and Igho Akponah

List of Abbreviations

ANT	Actor Network Theory
BBC	British Broadcasting Service
CAC	Corporate Affairs Commission
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
CLI	Cleaner Lagos Initiative
DIY	Do It Yourself
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
KAI	Kick Against Indiscipline
LASG	Lagos State Government
LBS	Lagos Bureau of Statistics
LAWMA	Lagos Waste Management Authority
NBC	Nigeria Bottling Company
NRT	Non-Representational Theory
NSE	Nigerian Stock Exchange
PA	Precious Akponah
PET	Polyethylene Terephthalate
PSP	Private Sector Participants
SAN	Scavengers Association of Nigeria
SEIF	Social Enterprise Investment Fund
SMS	Short Messaging Service
STS	Science and Technology Studies
TCR	Transformative Consumer Research
UN	United Nations
VCR	Video Cassette Recorder

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introducing the Thesis

There is a need to rethink the place of rubbish in our consideration of the production-consumption and disposal processes. By privileging production and consumption, consumer researchers have overlooked processes of disposal in consumer society (Parsons, 2008). Where disposal is approached, there is a tendency to consider it through its object form; a dirty output that is derived from a consumer good (Tudor et al., 2011). The problem with this approach is that it fails to capture the social processes, everyday practices and the uneven relations of power that are perpetuated in the very act of wasting. Moreover, there is a need to reconsider rubbish as constitutive of value creation (O'Brien, 1999, 2008). Such a consideration, I argue, exposes the role that rubbish plays in the dynamics of everyday life, where rubbish fuels the cultural and enterprising lifeblood of social actors that are involved in its handling (Hetherington, 2004).

Following Hetherington (2004), this thesis adopts a view that challenges disposal as a final act of rubbishing. Instead, I argue that the practice of disposal is integral to the production and consumption process, one that constitutes the means with which consumers sustain their socioeconomic livelihoods in developing economies across the globe. It is my contention that the organisation of waste in developing cities – such as Lagos – cannot be limited to the discourse of 'environmentalism', which is predicated on promoting sustainable and greener consumption particularly within the western context (McDonagh et al., 2012). I argue that such western discourses on waste tend to be mired in a moralistic, political and ideological debate. In the discipline of consumer research, we witness how such discourses are implicated and resisted in consumerist movements such as freeganism[1] (Pentina and Amos, 2011), downshifters who advocate a simply lifestyle characterised by self-sufficiency (Alexander and

[1] The act of reclaiming and consuming discarded food and other items (Pentina and Amos, 2011)

Ussher, 2012; Nelson et al., 2007), voluntary simplifiers who resist consumerism by living off the grid (McDonagh et al., 2012), and green movements that are aimed at promoting sustainable consumption choices so as to minimise the negative environmental impact on the planet (Prothero, 1990; Peattie, 2010). Against this backdrop, however, this research demonstrates how such moral and political agendas are 'out of sync' in developing economies, and particularly cities like Lagos, Nigeria, where rubbish generates social relations and practices that are intricately bound up with economic livelihood and survival. This thesis emphasises the importance of community entanglement with rubbish; one that is embedded in economic, political and cultural concerns. Such a perspective can be witnessed in a recent report by Concern Worldwide, which portrays how an informal and unregulated industry of 'rubbish' management has mushroomed in various slums in Nairobi, Kenya, supporting the livelihoods of up to 10,000 dwellers that rely on the sifting, collecting and recycling of rubbish to survive and foster community spirit (Chonghaile, 2012). My interest in this thesis therefore, is to interrogate the informal spaces, particularly the liminal spaces within which these mundane practices are enacted and performed around rubbish. Thus, I am interested in exploring the formal strategies and representations of waste management and how these impact on the quotidian practices and spatial relations that are enacted by the informal actors in the lived spaces of Lagos.

1.2. Defining Domestic Rubbish

Before I proceed to discuss the context and my interest in exploring the socio-spatial, cultural, political and economic practices around rubbish, it is important first to make clear what is meant by the term 'rubbish' in this thesis. This is because the term is loosely defined and has been used interchangeably with terminologies such as 'dirt', 'filth', 'garbage', 'junk', 'litter', scrap', 'trash' and 'waste'–(see Crane, 2000; Douglas, 1966; Gregson et al., 2007; Hawkins, 2001; Lange, 1988; Reno, 2009). For clarity and consistency in this thesis, I use the term 'rubbish' as a point of reference to embrace other terminologies (see fig 1). Hence, whenever I use other terms such as waste, garbage, filth, junk, refuse, I

am referring to rubbish. Herein defined as objects possessing 'zero value' (Thompson, 1979).

Concepts	Meaning / Usage / Context
Rubbish	Thompson (1979) describes 'rubbish' as objects possessing zero value.
Refuse	Crane (2000) used 'refuse' as a universal term to describe unwanted and worthless things. For Crane, rubbish, garbage, filth and trash are all refuse.
Junk	The Oxford dictionary defines junk as scrap, meaning old, worthless, and meaningless objects. This definition ignores the possibility for junk to provide economic benefits when exchanged for money (Hawkins 2001).
Trash	The Oxford dictionary meaning of trash is "waste material or refuse". Lange (1988) used 'trash' to describe salvaged and resalable materials. Crane (2000) considers rubbish and trash to mean the same thing.
Garbage	Crane (2000) used Garbage to describe vile or organic refuse i.e. dead animals, rotten food and vegetable from the kitchen.
Filth	The District of Colombia Board of Health 1878, listed filth, excrement, dead fish, and offensive matter from kitchens as nuisances and as being responsible for diseases.
Dirt	Douglas (1966) sees dirt as 'matter out of place' and a form of disorder that exists in "the eyes of the beholder".
Waste	The Oxford dictionary defines 'waste' as 'to destroy', 'to consume', and 'to squander'. Hawkins (2001) describes waste as things that require getting rid of to retain the boundaries of what does and doesn't constitute who we are.
Scrap	Scrap is defined as small pieces, fragments, and remains from old and unwanted items. Their use value is represented in their form as raw materials reprocessed for profits (Reno 2009).
Litter	Litter is defined as a morally unsettling act (verb) of keeping things (rubbish) in unwanted places (Hawkins 2001). This definition mirrors that of Douglas' (1966) conceptualization of dirt (noun) as 'matter out of place'.

Figure 1: Definitional terms for rubbish

1.3. The Research Context

Lagos is the biggest city and like London to the UK, the 'commercial' capital of Nigeria. Besides, if Lagos were a country, she would easily pass as one of the leading economies in Africa (Akinmade and Salami, 2010; Kingsley, 2013). As a cosmopolitan city, Lagos is home to people from various ethnic groups who have migrated from the various states (particularly the less developed and rural cities) in Nigeria. Coupled with an increasing influx of expatriates from mainly Western and Asian countries, these movements are predicated on the economic opportunities (i.e. employment, entrepreneurial and business prospects) that are

available and the state's increasing openness to policies that encourage Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) (LASG, 2017). Nigeria is made up of three major ethnic groups and these are the Hausas [occupying the northern region of Nigeria], the Igbos [occupying mainly the eastern regions] and the Yoruba's [occupying the western region of Nigeria]. Yet, as a multi-ethnic country, Nigeria has over 250 ethnic groups, who speak over 400 languages, and these are spread across the city of Lagos. While these ethnic groups make up the population in the city of Lagos (Adeyemi, 2012), the Yorubas occupy a dominant position owing to their geographical proximity, being located in the South-Western region of Nigeria (Osaghae, 1991; Sijuwade, 2011).

Apart from ethnic differences, religion also adds to the layer of diversity in Nigeria. Other than local indigenous religious and spiritual beliefs, Islamism and Christianity represent the two dominant religions in Nigeria. The northerners consider Islam to be their primary religion while in the southern, eastern and western regions of Nigeria, Christianity is the main religion. Falola (1998) argues that Nigerians are more committed to abiding by religious values and ethos rather than state declarations. Akwara and Ojomah (2013) concur, claiming that the existential outlook of most Nigerians is, broadly speaking, based on spirituality and religion. This is indeed what guides Nigerians when they attempt to understand their purpose and realities as it pertains to their daily life (Adogame, 2010). This commitment to religious doctrines rather than state declarations reveal a complex relationship between religion, society and economy. It is common to find a high proportion of Christians and Muslims within every social, formal, and informal economic sphere within Nigeria. This religious interplay can be found in the cosmopolitan city of Lagos which is populated with a high proportion of Christians and Muslims. In short, the informal waste economic activities like scavenging is mainly dominated by the Hausa's who are predominantly Muslims and generally considered to be a significant stakeholder in the informal waste sector.

The population of the city of Lagos is disputed since there has not been a recent population census. While the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) reports a

figure of about 9 million following the 2006 census (National Population Commission, 2006), the Lagos Bureau of Statistics documented a population of over 17 million in 2006 (LBS, 2013). However, Page (2015) recently reported a figure of over 17 million and this is projected to double by 2050. Similarly, the United Nations estimates Lagos' population to be well over 24 million by 2030 (United Nations, 2014). Irrespective of the sources, it is fair to assume that Lagos is the most populated city in Nigeria. As a former capital of Nigeria and Crown Colony during the British colonial rule, Lagos has always attracted economic and infrastructural development in areas such as railways, banking facilities and electricity (Langer and Ukiwo, 2008). This has helped consolidate her position as the commercial hub of Nigeria despite the relocation of the capital to Abuja in December 1991 (Adejuyigbe, 1970).

The well-developed infrastructure, compared to other cities in Nigeria, has attracted local and international investors. The huge influx of migrants into the city has led to an overloading of the city's infrastructures. For instance, Lagos witnessed a formation of slum settlements in places where there are insufficient housing infrastructures. Also, the ever-increasing population and corresponding volume of waste produced have saddled the waste management sector with the challenge of keeping the city clean and free of litter. As I discuss in chapter five, such problems have compelled the Lagos state government to introduce a number of waste management reforms and policies. At present, such policy reforms have had a profound impact on the formal and informal stakeholders operating in the private and public spheres. My interest in this research is to explore the waste management policies and specifically consider how these shapes the mundane practices that are performed by these stakeholders (Lagos Waste Management Authority [LAWMA], householders, itinerant scavengers, dumpsite scavengers, junk artists and Wecyclers [social enterprise promoting recycling]). See Appendix 5 for a description of these stakeholders.

1.4. Why Rubbish?

During the last four years, I have frequently responded to the question of 'why rubbish?' from colleagues and friends. My responses have always been based on justifying the need to explore the social and material perceptive of waste from a critical angle. This is partly to do with my interest in gaining an in-depth insight into the social problems associated with the waste management sector in Lagos, Nigeria. Yet the idea of studying the social life rubbish was a product of an informal discussion with Dr Ai-Ling Lai, who had supervised my master's dissertation. In this work, I drew on Marxist notion of commodity fetishism to understand how goods become fetishized through marketing practices. Following successful completion of the master's program, I was keen to extend a Marxist critique of political economy at a doctoral level, and Ai-Ling suggested that the burgeoning field of consumption studies had focused on exploring the materiality of objects. At the end of our meeting, we had both agreed that a good starting point for getting into this area would be to extend these ideas to the materiality of objects i.e. rubbish. Following her suggestion, I proceeded to watch Kevin McCloud's documentary *Slumming it*, in which he takes his viewers through the Dharavi slum in Mumbai, India, to show the manner in which rubbish supports the social and economic livelihoods of slum dwellers.

After watching the documentary and reading literature around recycling, I became inspired, and my thoughts ignited leading me to Michael Thompson's work on *Rubbish Theory* (1979), in which he explores the categorisation, movement of meanings, and values of objects. As my interest and reading progressed, I became fascinated and decided to take these ideas to the Lagos context, which I was already familiar with, having lived and worked in the city for three years before commencing my master's degree in 2011. Initially, my readings focused on the materiality of objects and the notion of bridging the subject-object divide. Researches by Parsons (2008), Borgerson (2005), Miller (2005) and Dant (2005) were useful in helping me to situate my ideas within the broader marketing discipline. However, as I began to gain a substantial

understanding of the field, I became increasingly interested in theories of practice; particularly those performed around rubbish. It was here that I turned to scholars from the field of human geography, particularly Henri Lefebvre's work on the production of space and rhythmanalysis as well as Michel de Certeau's (1984) writings on social space. Indeed, both scholars were useful in framing the theoretical ideas and arguments presented in this thesis. Having established my interest and motivations, I now situate the study within the discipline of consumer research as well as provide insights into the potential contributions of this research to theory and practice.

1.5. Situating the Research and its Contributions

Badje (2013) encourages consumer researchers to 'flatten' the use of relational theories by departing from representational practices and embracing a more ideographic description of how heterogeneous networks interweave. For Badje, such an approach "would enable the researcher to capture aspects of reality otherwise obscured by presupposed hierarchies of time, space, subject and object" (p.239). Inspired by Badje's call, Hill et al. (2014) explain that non-representational marketing theories constitutes an all-encompassing approach that is useful for researching social, material, and networks; or in other words, enables us to capture the more than human and textual elements of everyday practices. In doing so, researchers are able to capture the taken-for-granted aspects of social life that may otherwise escape the conscious awareness of research participants. Hill et al. (2014) proceeded to introduce Thrift's (2008) non-representational theory to consumer researchers as one approach to go beyond representational accounts to considering the role of bodies, affect, and atmosphere, objects and spaces in the exploration of practices (Thrift, 2008). Indeed, Hill et al explains that the usefulness of NRT for exploring "the messiness of life in manners than highlight novel human aspects of assemblages that we may otherwise miss" (p.386). However, while NRT may serve as a useful framework for exploring onflows accounts, corporeal actions, multisensory experiences as well as subject and object relations, it is my contention that like

other practice theories (such as ANT, assemblages and practice theory), it is not well equipped for exploring the politics and power relations that are characteristic of practices – something that is integral to this research.

In this research, I offer Lefebvre's (2004) theory of rhythmanalysis as a more-than-representational marketing theory that is useful for exploring practices. I argue that Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis offers fresh ontological insights that are useful for uncovering the political underpinning of practice-based consumer research studies that focus on everyday life. The introduction of rhythmanalysis as a practice theory represents a crucial shift from consumer researcher's reliance on ANT, assemblage and practice theory perspectives in the exploration of market place or everyday practices. Rhythmanalysis is however not new to scholars working in the discipline of human geography and sociology since it has been considered as a theoretical framework for exploring the rhythms of markets (Borch et al., 2015; Cronon 2008; Kärrhom 2009; Middleton, 2010). Only recently has consumer researchers given attention to the theory, which are evident in works exploring the temporal aspects of consumption practices (McEachern et al., 2012; Warnaby 2013) and in bridging the dualism of time and space (Lai and Lim, 2017).

By adopting Lefebvre's *Production of Space* (1991) and Rhythmanalysis (2004), this thesis shift marketing and consumer research thoughts to a new mode of undertaking practice-based studies. The rhythmic and space-time perspective that underpins Lefebvre's theories provides this thesis with the conceptual tools that could potentially expose the embodied and socio-spatial practices that lead to the transformation of objects value as they move across space and time. By using Lefebvre's theories to examine the embodied and multisensory elements of the quotidian practices enacted around rubbish, this thesis addresses the criticism of the dominant paradigms such as ANT and assemblages perspective, which consumer researchers have suggested are overly representational (Hill et al., 2014). In this way, the research promises to enrich consumer and market researchers understanding of materiality and practices from an embodied and spatial perspective.

This research is committed to transcending the environmental discourses that underpin western discourses of sustainability and environmentalism. It has the potential to demonstrate how tat practices of disposal do not represent a final closure of the production-consumption cycle. The findings derived from the research advance consumer researchers and marketing's understanding of social practices around the transformation of objects (i.e. rubbish) values and meanings. It also reveals how objects (rubbish), in turn, shape the enactment of practices as well as the socio-spatial relations of the stakeholders involved in the organisation of waste. This research, therefore, traces the 'social life' of rubbish in Lagos, Nigeria, to understand how the practices enacted around rubbish shape the power dynamics, spatial and embodied experiences within the social, cultural, political and economic contexts. The findings derived from the research reveal implications for theory and practice that might improve societies in terms of the formal and informal practices of rubbish handling. The exploration of these practices also reveals implications for macromarketing, specifically by considering how the marketisation of waste, sustainability and socio-economic development overlay local practices in the Lagos. Finally, the thesis resonates with the core commitment of Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) to address issues pertaining to the well-being of consumers, engagement with rigorous theory, methods as well as disseminating relevant findings to critical stakeholders in the waste sector (Mick et al., 2012). Having observed some of the potential contributions of this research, I now provide an overview of the methodological approaches considered for the research.

1.6. A More-than-representational Research

In response to Hill et al's (2014) suggestion that consumer researchers should utilise innovative methods to study practices, this research moves beyond the representational aspects of practices (interviews and visuals) to explore the spatial, embodied and multisensory experiences that underpin practices of rubbish handling. Consistent with a rhythmanalysis theoretical perspective, I argue that a sensory ethnographic methodology can encourage ethnographers to draw on their sensorial and embodied experiences when immersing themselves in social practices. This approach offers researchers the possibility to move beyond traditional ethnographic approach, which focuses on thick descriptions. In other words, sensorial ethnography embraces innovative methods that are useful for capturing unreflexive and taken-for-granted actions as it unfold in everyday life. The fieldwork for this research spanned across six-months during which I observe and follow six sets of (in)formal stakeholders who are involved in the waste management sector in Lagos, Nigeria. These stakeholders include the Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), householders, itinerant scavengers, dumpsite scavengers, junk artists and Wecyclers. During the data collection phase, I utilised data collection methods and tools that are consistent with a practice-based methodology that look to observe the spatial, material, corporeal and multisensory experiences that are present in the performance of practices. These include participant observation, self-reflexive observations, informal interviews, formal interviews, field diaries, audio and visual approaches. I will expand on these methods and approaches in section 4.4. Having discussed the contributions and potential impact of this research, I now present the order in which I have structured the thesis.

1.7. Thesis Overview

Following this introduction, chapter two provides a discussion around practices of waste disposal, taking as my starting point the ideas developed by Mary Douglas' (1966) in *Purity and Danger*, which was a seminal contribution to the

development of studies that explore ‘discards’, or rubbish. Following this, I critically review Thompson’s (1979) *Rubbish Theory* and his categorisation of objects. Building on Parsons' (2008) critique of Thompson’s work, I then discuss his lack of appreciation of the embodied and material perspective of objects and practices, which underpin the creation of value. Following this, I argue for the need to adopt a practice-based approach to understanding value creation; one that will account for the social and material perspective of practices. I then discuss the growing interest of marketing and consumer researchers to explore practices using actor-network theories. The crux of the discussion here was to demonstrate consumer researchers’ interest in reinstating the agentic capacity of objects in relation to human and nonhuman interactions. Following a critical appraisal of the ANT paradigm and finding it to be overly-representational and, as a result, leaving out essential sensitives such as spatial, embodied and multisensory experiences, I conclude the chapter by calling for a fresh theoretical framework that can address these shortcomings.

Chapter three offers Lefebvre’s *Production of Space* (1991) and *Rhythmanalysis* (2004) as theoretical frameworks that can address the criticism levelled against ANT in the preceding chapter. I offer a critical and enriched discussion of Lefebvre’s ideas and specifically outline his commitment to tackling the socio-spatial, embodied and temporal dimensions of practices. I then discuss the usefulness of Lefebvre’s frameworks in providing new insights that can assist researchers in tackling the more-than-representational aspects of practices. Following this, I explain how concepts such as spatial practices, representation of spaces, spaces of representation, abstract space, cyclical and linear rhythms, arrhythmia, eurythmia and dressage are useful for analysing the quotidian practices that are enacted around rubbish in Lagos.

In chapter four, I outline the methodological approaches I employed for the study. I explain how rhythmanalysis and sensory ethnography underpin the ontological and epistemological positioning of the thesis. I then discuss my research design and justify the methodological tools with which I collected and analysed the empirical data. This chapter also includes a reflective account of the

sampling methods, the process of obtaining access to research sites and some of the difficulties that come with undertaking edgy ethnographies.

I then present the findings and analysis of my empirical data in chapter five. Firstly, I outline the formal waste management practices in Lagos. The aim is to familiarise readers with the waste management policies and formal actors (Private Sector Participants [PSPs], Wecyclers) involved in this sector and how these can be understood within the context of Lagos. I draw on Lefebvre's (1991) concepts of spatial practices, representation of spaces, abstract space and institutional rhythms to show how the formal strategies of the governing body (LAWMA) shape the everyday practices and lived spaces of other stakeholders (i.e. householders, itinerant scavengers, dumpsite scavengers, junk artists).

Chapter six is the longest chapter of the thesis. In it, I unpack the mundane practices that enacted by the different stakeholders involved in the handling of waste across the lived spaces. This chapter constitutes an integral component of this thesis in that it traces the trajectories of rubbish as it traverses across the different terminal points identified in the research, i.e. from homes to landfills. I illustrate how the practices of reclaiming and exchanging waste provide the means with which people support their socio-economic livelihood. I show how the linear practices – human and non-human – enacted around rubbish (de)synchronise with cyclical rhythms (i.e. those of seasons).

I took as my starting point the quotidian and rhythmic practices that are undertaken by householders during the handling of waste. My empirical discussion here was not limited to rubbish since I considered other household possessions that are 'transient,' i.e. objects that are yet to be allotted to the category of rubbish. Next, I discuss the practices undertaken by itinerant scavengers within the urban spaces of Lagos. I expand on their role within the informal economy as well as expose the hierarchies that exist within the informal scrapping industry. I then analyse their lived experiences in relation to how their practices synchronises with institutional rhythms as well as the cyclical rhythms of seasons in Lagos. Following the exploration of the itinerant scavengers, I turn

my attention towards exploring the practices that are enacted by the dumpsite scavengers at the Olusosun landfill. I discuss how the practices that are undertaken by dumpsite scavengers differ from those performed by itinerant scavengers and how these actors become bonded over rubbish. I conclude the chapter by tracing the movement of rubbish to the studios of junk artists. Here I observe and analyse the practices that come together when artworks are produced. I explore the movement of meanings and the human and nonhuman interactions that take place during the transformation of objects values and meanings.

The final chapter of the thesis draws together the findings presented in the empirical chapters. I return to the original aim and objectives of the research and consider how my empirical findings have addressed them. I then reflect on the key theoretical and methodological contributions of my thesis before drawing out significant practical, marketing and policy implications for both for academics and practitioners. Just as importantly, I conclude the chapter with some suggestions that may direct future studies as well as a reflective account of the entire research process.

Chapter Two: A Materiality Perspective of Rubbish

2.1. Introduction

I begin this thesis by outlining the need to study the mundane practices that are enacted around rubbish in Lagos, Nigeria. As a starting point, I review the literature that contributes to the understanding of practices of disposal that are implicated in the movements and transformation of objects values and meanings. Following this, I introduce Mary Douglas' (1966) ideas discussed in *Purity and Danger* with a view to outlining the importance of her work in igniting research interest in exploring the materiality of waste. I then urge for the necessity to move beyond Douglas' ideas to consider the shift in ontological emphasis from studying rubbish from archaic contexts (Douglas, 1966) to modern-day sociocultural and material perspectives. In section 2.4, I introduce Michael Thompson's (1979) 'Rubbish Theory' in which he addresses the social and cultural schemes that shape the categorisation, meanings, and values of objects.

Thompson's neglect of the material qualities of objects and the embodied practices, particularly his failure to document the practices that leads to the transformation of object values and their meanings (Parsons, 2008), is what forms the core of section 2.5. In section 2.6, I turn my attention to Appadurai (1986) and Kopytoff's (1986) accounts in *The Social Life of Things* with a view of understanding value creation and the flow of commodities and their shifting meanings. I conclude the section by introducing Arnould's (2014) ideas of a practice-based approach to understanding value, an approach that takes into account the co-production of meanings taking place between human, material and networks. In section 2.7 and 2.8, I shift the discussion to discuss the nitty-gritty of materiality and its prominence before explaining how ANT has become a dominant paradigm in consumer research.

2.2. Situating the Research in the Context of Disposal and Everyday Life

Previous consumer research studies have tended to focus on object acquisition while paying less attention to the act of disposal and the de-commoditisation phase of value destruction (Arnould and Thompson, 2007). More recently, emerging studies have begun to consider the disposal of specific objects (such as pre-owned clothes, left-over meals, second-hand markets, electrical appliances and antiques) as a *recursive* process rather than the final stage of consumption (see Cappellini, 2009; Cruz-Càrdenas et al., 2017; Evans, 2012; Gregson et al., 2000; Gregson et al., 2007; Tranberg-Hansen, 1999/2000; Hetherington 2004; Lovatt, 2015; Parsons, 2008; Skuse, 2005). Largely inspired by Appadurai's (1986) view of objects as possessing a 'social life' as they move in and out of commodity state, these studies focus on exploring the meanings, acquisitions and circulation of things.

Traditional consumer research has approached objects from a diverse perspective. For instance, one body of literature has considered the symbolic properties of objects (Belk, 1976; Mick and DeMoss, 1990) which consumers utilise to construct their identities at group and individual levels (Belk, 1988; Belk, 1990; Mehta and Belk, 1991; Ozanne, 1992). Another body of research has explored the emotional connections consumers share with things (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Holbrook, 1993). However, these early writings tend to emphasise the agentic capability of the consuming subjects. Such a perspective views consumers as actively imbuing objects with meanings. Dant (2005) calls for consumption studies to embrace traditions that can account for the 'sociality of things', and this has inspired consumer researchers to move beyond exploring cultural/symbolic meanings of objects. Indeed, consumer research has since moved towards conceptualising indeterminacy and materiality of objects (Bettany, 2007). This shift has coincided with an increased prominence of materiality as a theory within the field of consumer research (Borgerson, 2005) with scholars urging a 'thingly turn' – a focus on studying the agencies of things

(Parsons, 2008, p.392). This growing interest in materiality centres on the idea that values are co-created and co-produced within a network of relations, and this transcends the dualistic divide between subjects and objects (Borgerson, 2005; Dant, 2005; Miller, 2005). More recently, Actor-Network Theory (ANT) – primarily considered to be among the family of practice theories – has gained considerable credence in consumer research as a countervailing perspective, against the humanistic conception of consumption (Bettany, 2007; Epp and Price, 2008; Hirschman, 1986; Hoffman and Novak, 2017). This approach to studying practices has been critiqued for leaving out post-human elements of everyday life i.e. embodied practices, affects, sensory engagements (Hill et al., 2014).

2.3. Beyond Purity and Danger: Towards a Practice approach to Rubbish

Mary Douglas' conceptualisation of dirt as 'matter out of place' in *Purity and Danger* (1966) has been a central premise for research exploring the social, cultural and economic value of rubbish (McLaughlin 1971; Thompson 1979; Scanlan 2005). Douglas' (1966) thesis extends anthropological enquiries beyond its focus on religion, rituals and rites of passage to capture the cultural and symbolic elements of everyday rituals performed around dirt (i.e. orderliness, tidiness and sacraments). Commenting on the equivocal nature of dirt, Douglas (1966) writes:

> "[D]irt is essentially disorder. There is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder. If we shun dirt, it is not because of craven fear, still less dread or holy terror. Nor do our ideas about disease account for the range of our behaviour in cleaning or avoiding dirt. Dirt offends against order. [...] For I believe that ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience." (P. 2-4)

Douglas' commentary suggests that dirt cannot be considered as an intrinsic or physical property, rather, it is experienced or perceived as a different category by those in contact with it. Douglas' discussion hints at a systematic classification

(sorting) of objects, one that is bounded by the politics of classification. From Douglas' perspective, the assignation of matter as 'in place' or 'out of place' is grounded in the social and cultural disposition of a particular system in which an individual does or does not belong (Simondon, 1992). In other words, there is a need to explore and understand how a set of practices can be perpetuated within particular contexts. From Douglas' perspective, such practices may involve the inclusion of what is valuable and excluding what is threatening. Furthermore, Douglas' thesis serves as a useful entry point into a discussion of how human and non-human practices come together to produce meanings. In doing so, her work draws our attention to the indeterminacy of material objects, in this case, rubbish.

O'Brien (2008) explains that Douglas' (1966) paradoxical argument of dirt 'as matter out of place' suggests that "it is matter that is either yet to be allotted its cultural and political space in the ordered world of a total culture or intrudes to disturb a culture's ordered totality" (p.126). As such, it is the very 'out of placement' of dirt that motivates the search for usefulness, meaning or worth. It is what aids a culture in demarcating orderliness from disorderliness, worthy from worthless, clean and unclean. Whilst Douglas' assertion that 'dirt' results from the transgression of a cultural system is conceptually interesting, it nevertheless presents dirt as an act of closure, thereby overlooking the possibility that things, once they are relegated as dirt, can be readmitted into society (Cappellini 2009; Gregson et al., 2007; Hetherington, 2004; Munro, 1995; Hawkins, 2010). For example, human and animal skeletons, which are categorised as 'dirt' or 'unclean' (Douglas, 1966) can be collected, repurposed and purified as aesthetic, scientific or educational artefacts. In other words, these 'purified objects' are transformed into something of value.

Bell (1997) acknowledges Douglas' call to consider 'dirt' or 'pollution'; from a cultural, historical and religious perspective. However, Bell is also critical of Douglas' work due to her failure to provide an in-depth account of the practices that create systems of classifications. Bell (1997) argues that rituals need to be

understood from a practice-based perspective; one that would yield a richer account of the reasons as to why people do things. She calls for:

> "...a shift from looking at activity as the expression of cultural patterns to looking at it as that which makes and harbors such patterns. [Practices] offer greater opportunity to formulate the subtler ways in which power is recognized and diffused, interpretations are negotiated, and people struggle to make more embracing meanings personally effective". (Bell, 1997p.82)

Bell's (1997) critical appraisal lays bare Douglas' oversight and considers the systems of classification a form of political practice, which would potentially reveal the power dynamics that manifest when practices of classification are performed. In the same vein, Creswell's (1996) essay "*In Place/Out of Place*" reinforced the need to explore acts of transgression through a practice-oriented approach. Creswell (1996) argues that, if we are to gain a full understanding of Douglas' notion of transgressions, we need to focus on practices that are deemed out of place and the locations in which they are carried out. Indeed, Creswell's (1996) perspective, like that of Bell (1997), focuses on the political dimension of practices.

For instance, Creswell (1996) shows how practices of transgressions by women protesters established and reproduced discourses of displacement so that they were deemed to be 'out of place' in public spaces. Through an analysis of the media response to the Greenham Common women's protest, Creswell (1996) demonstrates how the women's actions were represented as acts of transgression. Importantly, Creswell's analysis incorporates an appreciation of the ways through which practices of transgressions lay bare the politics that are enmeshed in sets of practices. For example, how metaphors (i.e. smell, dirty, children, food, and kitchen) are used by broadcast media to invoke gender norms and sexuality. In this thesis, I am interested in the ways in which a systematic and detailed account of practices can tell us more about the power dynamics and social structures that are produced when mundane acts are enacted and performed around rubbish. Moreover, Gregson et al., (2007) argue that things are not just within or outside boundaries, and that 'matter out of place' are not

permanently ‘dirty’. Instead, Gregson et al., contend that things possess flexible properties which allow them to move across several categories, which I will now discuss.

2.4. Michael Thompson’s Rubbish Theory

In ‘Rubbish Theory’, Thompson (1979) rejects the idea that the values of objects are fixed. Instead, Thompson posits that the values, and movements of objects meanings are open to the push and pull of social life. Thompson’s (1979) argument in ‘rubbish theory’ begins with a thought-provoking riddle in which he asks, “... what does the rich man put in his pocket that the poor man throws away?” (p.1). The answer – ‘snot’ – sets the scene for exploring the characteristics of objects value. According to Thompson (1979) objects are deemed to be either valuable, valueless or negatively valued. Valuable objects possess high social and economic properties and are deemed desirable. Valueless objects are considered to have no use-value. However, it is crucial to note that what is deemed valueless by one person or within one culture might be considered as valuable in another, thus allowing for a potential exchange to take place. A negatively valued object is seen as not only possessing ‘no value’ but also comprising certain characteristics which make them unpleasant i.e. bodily waste such as snot and faeces.

The answer to Thompson’s riddle (snot) illustrates the distinction between these categories of possessable objects. Whilst in the rich man’s nose, the snot represents a negatively valued object, one that should be put away. However, the movement of the snot into his handkerchief and pocket altered the category of the snot from a negatively valued object (bodily waste) to a valueless object – one that is neither positively or negatively valued (at least conceptually). We see from Thompson’s (1979) account that the practices and rituals associated with disposal (i.e. the use and non-use of a handkerchief) are capable of shaping values, meanings, and categories of objects. Thompson (1979) asserts that the categorisation of an object is predicated on the worldview of the possessor and

this is often influenced by social status or class. Yet, the idea that objects can be easily sorted into categories is something one may cast a critical eye on. I further argue that the sorting of objects into categories represents a modernist approach that leaves little room for the contestation of values and meanings of objects.

Moreover, Thompson (1979) explains that objects can be categorised into three distinctive groups – 'transient', 'durable' and 'rubbish'. Transient objects possess a finite lifespan as their value depreciates over the course of their usage (i.e. used cars). Durable objects, on the other hand, possess an infinite and enduring lifespan in that their value appreciate over time (for example, antiques). For Thompson, both transient and durable objects are governed by a control mechanism, the qualities society confer on objects – that ensure the maintenance of their value (Parsons, 2008) and their candidacy as commodities (Appadurai, 1986). Thompson uses the example of Queen Anne Tallboy and second-hand cars to explain this, arguing that both transient and durable objects occupy 'a region of fixed assumptions' where their value will either increase or decrease (P.7). However, he argues that our treatment of objects whether as either antique or second-hand determines their category membership. Thompson's work is significant for this research because of his third category of objects – 'rubbish'. Rubbish is categorically assigned as an object of 'no value' (Parson, 2008; Thompson, 1979). As such, it is rendered 'out of place' and thus must be 'made invisible' and 'be disposed of' (Douglas, 1966).

Thompson (1979, p.9) explains that 'rubbish' sits in the 'region of flexibility'; one that 'is able to provide the path for the seemingly impossible transfer of an object from transient to durability'. Thus, just as 'dirt' constitutes a significant cultural category and motivates a search for meaning, usefulness and worth (Douglas, 1966) 'rubbish' also facilitates the movement of objects from a transient category to durability. Thompson (1979) believes that, in an ideal situation, a transient object will gradually decrease in value and slide into the rubbish category until it is rediscovered by a knowledgeable collector who may potentially transform it into a durable category.

If we take seriously Thompson's suggestion, we see that the act of rubbishing is crucial to the transformation of an object's value. Indeed, attempts to reuse or transform things can delay the passage of certain transient objects into durability. For example, we can witness the transformation of rubbish to durability in art collections. Equally, there is the possibility of rubbish being transferred into another transient object. For instance, disposed of plastic bottles may be recovered, sanitised and repurposed through upcycling. Thompson's (1979) discussion of object categories does very little to highlight the material dimensions of objects or the role of materiality in informing the meanings and values of things. Instead, his work emphasises how the cultural categories and values of objects are socially imposed on them as they migrate through boundaries and timeless limbo where they are sometimes forgotten, cast aside or lost.

Munro (1995) explains that the material and semiotic quality of objects (i.e. rubbish) imply that things are never truly disposed of since they continue to exist long after disposal. As such, Hetherington (2004) contends that disposal does not represent a terminal act of consumption. Acts of disposal are instead comprised of the management of social relations, movements, placements and transformations that are performed between the spectrums of production to consumption. Reno (2009) concurs, claiming that certain social objects must be revived from their 'rubbish' state in order for their value to be inscribed or realised. To this end, Hetherington (2004) suggests that, rather than consider rubbish as closure, it should be seen as a door or conduit which facilitates the transfer of an objects' value. Such an approach is particularly salient since it captures and takes into account the social (regenerative) life of rubbish. Hetherington (2004) argues that the career of certain objects follows a two-stage process, consisting of what he calls a first and second burial before they are finally disposed of. For example, the storage of an unwanted object in the attic or recycle bin may be considered a first burial while the permanent disposal of the same object can be seen as second burial. His discussion suggests that objects are kept in abeyance which is a dormant and unused state where their

value/wastage is scrutinised before a decision is made on whether to dispose of them (Strathern, 1999).

Similarly, Evans (2012) draws upon Hetherington's ideas as he asserts that the refrigeration can delay the passage of food from being consigned to the category of rubbish. Due to their fragile properties (in that they possess limited shelf-life) Evans shows that food can become a negatively valued object (poison). Although there are certainly exceptions such as the maturation of wine, beef and cheese. Nevertheless, the potential transformation of food into compost can inspire organic reproduction of food (DeSilvey, 2006). Like Evans (2012), Cappellini's (2009) discussion of food divestment illuminates the potential for things to experience a 'second chance' which enables them to re-emerge as an object of value in the consumption process. The upcycling of things can also revive the values of objects that are destined for disposal. Through practices of value (re)creation, objects previously stored, forgotten, moved along (Gregson et al., 2007) and kept out of sight (Douglas 1966) can possess a second chance, thus enabling them to return as valuable. In the section below, I will elaborate on the practices of value creation.

2.5. Practices of Value Creation: A Critical Appraisal of Rubbish Theory

Elizabeth Parsons (2008) critiqued Thompson's (1979) lack of discussion on the practices that engender the movement of meanings and values between the categories of transient, durable and rubbish. She argues that the value or categories of objects are not only shaped by external control mechanisms (i.e. societal values) as Thompson suggests. Instead, Parsons (2008) urges us to consider individual and household practices that help facilitate the transfer of objects between these categories. Parsons' argument echoes Hetherington's (2004) critique of Thompson, whose discussion of an objects' value has failed to extend beyond the sphere of exchange value. For Hetherington (2004), such an omission meant that Thompson's rubbish theory cannot account for objects that

have no exchange value yet may nevertheless remain practically useful to their possessor (i.e. the sentimental value that are attached to objects). Moreover, Parsons' (2008) discussion of the practices that lead to the creation of value is interesting and provides a rich account of how individuals' creative everyday practices can facilitate the transition of objects across different categories of values. These practices include but are not limited to the 'finding', 'displaying' and 'transforming' and 'reusing' of objects.

Firstly, 'finding' an object is an activity embroiled in the process of exploration where an individual discovers something that is of worth. For example, Parsons (2008) describes how bargain hunts can lead to a serendipitous discovery of a valuable object. Parsons (2008) argues that act of 'finding' an object when viewed from market perspectives or in relation to exchange is limiting; 'practices of finding' should go beyond merely exploring bargain buys and should equally encompass the exploration and discovery of objects that have been hidden away or overlooked. From Parsons' (2008) perspective 'practices of finding' are not limited to discovering a totally new object, but also the repurposing of already existing objects. One example that illuminates the practice of 'finding things' could be the discovery of an obsolete working VCR that has been hidden away for years. The thrill that comes with the rediscovery of such a vintage item and the sentimental and perhaps economic value it possesses may further explain the meaning-making 'practices of finding'. In this research, I am keen to explore how 'practices of finding' are enacted and performed by people around rubbish.

Secondly, the display of objects reveals elements of creativity, aesthetics, and presentation that are produced by an array of established institutional actors (such as interior and fashion designers). This can be enacted in a localised context such as the home (Hurdley cited in Parsons, 2008). These established institutions influence and direct the ways in which we experience our physical environments (Merrifield, 1993). The positioning of objects in the front and back end of the home spaces has implications for the meanings and values we attribute to objects. For example, Parsons (2008) illustrates how objects displayed in frontal spaces would ideally be more valuable and possess better

aesthetics value as opposed to the less desirable objects that occupy the backspaces.

Finally, the practice of 'transforming and reusing' objects draws our attention to the creative practices that can re-enliven things that may at one point have been considered valueless (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Skuse, 2005). Such creative acts may take place through tangible actions that are underpinned by productive moments and relate to the deliberate and physical alteration of objects i.e. the conversion of unwanted or scrapped metals into a junk art (Damme and Vermoesen, 2009). Parsons (2008) explains that the reusing of things can delay and possibly prevent objects from slipping into the categories of rubbish and/or perceived as valueless. Hawkins (2001) also acknowledges the role of individual thoughts, actions and feelings in transforming the meanings and values of objects across categories. Cappellini and Parsons (2012) reveal the set of practices that are implicated when foods are divested within the home space. Their discussion illuminates how the practices enacted around the classification, selection, storage and the reuse of food leftovers aids the transformation of food remains that are destined for the bin to become essential ingredients for future meals and possibly compost for the garden. In this thesis, I am interested in exploring some of the creative actions that are employed by householders and various stakeholders when practices relating to disposal are perpetuated.

Parsons' (2008) critical appraisal therefore represent a useful starting point for expanding Thompson's rubbish theory. Her critique of Thompson's (1979) ideas document the individual and household practices that leads to the movement and transformation of objects' values and categories. However, I argue that such a critique needs to be further extended beyond the household sphere to consider practices that are enacted when objects reach the category of rubbish i.e. dumpsites, landfills and various point of rubbish collection). Moreover, we need to go beyond simply understanding practices that lead to value creation. As I discussed earlier in the chapter, we should also explore the relations of power that manifest in the ebb and flow of quotidian life around which objects are

socially and economically entangled. Thompson's (1979) and Parsons' (2008) discussions of the practices of value creation neglect the embodied aspect of practices: the physical handling of objects and how these manifest and contribute to their meanings and transformation.

Thompson (1979) and Parsons (2008) both reflect on how space is implicated in the transformation of objects categories, but their analysis of objects, their meanings and values, provides limited understanding of the role of space and temporality in aiding the transformation. Although, drawing on the example of Stevengraphs (silk woven pictures), Thompson illustrate how worthless objects can re-emerge as a valuable material, thus hinting at the role of time in the transformation of objects. However, I am left wondering whether an analysis of this temporal aspect of value transformation from a spatial perspective might enrich our understanding of practices in relation to value creation. Similarly, Parsons' discussion of objects placements and home spaces hints at a spatial consideration, and perhaps an analysis of these from a spatial account might expand the understanding of value creation practices. In short, Parsons' (2008) critical appraisal has not completely addressed the problematic elements that are present in rubbish theory. For instance, Thompson (1979) overemphasises how social and cultural relations impose meanings and categorises objects as transient, durable, or rubbish. His theory therefore privileges the subjects as the custodian of the meaning-making process. Parsons (2008) on the other hand, explains that the creative actions of individuals are critical to the transformation of an object's value and meaning. As I will show in subsequent sections, these views have been subject to critiques from post-humanist perspectives and the wider discipline of the social sciences. As such, an incorporation of these missing analyses of everyday practice around use and valuation is a fundamental focus of this thesis, and something I will address in the sections that follow. But for now, in order to stay focused and maintain the flow of the discussion, I will turn to accounts that consider how objects like humans are considered to have social lives.

2.6. Social / Material Perspective of Practice

Most studies that address the materiality of objects build on Arjun Appadurai's (1986) critique of the Marxist (1976) assumption that value emerges from the sum of labour required to produce things. In *Capital* Marx (1976) argues that the value of a thing can be measured through its quality and its quantity. Here, the qualitative aspect of value refers to the use-value and as such, the 'usefulness' of anything is contingent upon the intrinsic quality of the object to satisfy a material need. On the other hand, the quantitative aspect of a value refers to the equivalent that is derived from an object when exchanged and is usually connected to third thing i.e. monetary or economic value. For Marx, the usefulness of a thing does not make it a commodity, instead a thing only becomes a commodity if it produces use-value for others and is transferred through the medium of exchange. Appadurai (1986) steps away from such a productivist Marxist analysis of commodities and calls for the need to consider how exchange is integral to commodities' value throughout their social life. Instead of focusing on the definitional status of commodities, Appadurai (1986) asks for a consideration of the forms of exchange that amount to a commodity exchange. The perspective of Appadurai encourages us to reject conventional anthropological understanding of commodities as limited only to the sphere of market exchange (Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986). Instead, he urges for the need to embrace a broader understanding of the value of commodities that takes into account all forms of exchange regimes (whether barter, gift or market). In short, Appadurai (1986) contends that:

> "Things have no meaning apart from those that human transactions, attributions and motivation endowed them with, the anthropological problem is that this formal truth does not illuminate the concrete, historical circulation of things. For that we have to follow the things themselves, for their meaning are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories. It is only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculations that enliven things." (p.5)

Appadurai (1986) shows how value is socially and culturally constructed and produce through the politics of value. For Appadurai, these politics manifest

themselves through the mundane social practices that take place in everyday life. Rather than considering value as an intricate element of things following their production or a representation of human needs, Appadurai seeks to establish a connection between value, demand and politics. He explains that what is deemed desirable or valuable is predicated on the demand and systems of classification that is present within that social and cultural context. Drawing on Malinowski's discussion of the Kula[2]. Appadurai (1986) shows how value and circulation are determined by people and how the 'Kula' in return defines the value and relationship between people. This means that the co-production of meaning ensues between people and things. Appadurai therefore suggests that, if we are to fully capture the meanings, trajectories and commodity candidacy of an object, we must study the social life, practices and politics that become enmeshed in commodities during moments of exchange.

In this way, the biographies of commodities are dictated by a web of social, cultural, economic and political practices which, in turn, affect the value of objects. Such a methodological and conceptual move underpins discussion around the cultural biographies that things acquire as they move in and out of commodity phases. In line with this, Kopytoff (1986, p.83) contends that objects are "ambiguous and open to the push and pull of events and desires, as it is shuffled about in the flux of social life" (p.83). Thus, the value of objects contains paradoxes so that what constitutes their value varies across contexts and phases so that the only moment when the "status of a thing is beyond question is the moment of actual exchange" (ibid, p.83).

Concurring with Appadurai (1986) and Kopytoff (1986), Arnould (2014) argues that market-based exchange or 'typologies of value' [i.e. exchange value, use-value, perceived value, social value, experiential value etc.] (Karababa and Kjeldgaard, 2014) are limiting due to their failure to consider that all values cannot be derived, or perhaps are not emphasised in the forms of exchange that

[2] The 'Kula' system was practiced by the Trobiand Islanders in the Pacific during the preindustrial era and explained by Malinoswki as a monetary medium of exchange which supports the circulation of objects between men of substance.

dominate pre-capitalist markets. Arnould (2014) therefore encourages a practice-based approach to studying value as this considers the various forms of value that are created across barter, gifts and markets. Moreover, in the context of this thesis, there is a need to consider the possibility that things are exchanged outside capitalist markets through mediums of gifting. There are instances where people gift their unwanted possessions to charities, friends, and family instead of binning them. Belk (2014) echoes this idea and show how contemporary society relies on sharing and collaborative consumption practices (i.e. bartering, swapping and receiving non-monetary compensation). Arnould (2014) maintains that despite their differences, the three spheres of exchange (barter, gift and market) must be thought together because they produce a constitutive relationship between social and material relations, between people and things.

The system of gift exchange privileges personhood while at the same time refutes "the alienability of both things and persons [...] since it is through non-equivalence that social relations may be perpetuated" (Arnould, 2014 p.3). In contrast, the barter framework emphasises the objectification of things so that "things are alienated but not the persons exchanging, as no standard of production exists [...] barter relationships are rarely one-off transactions" (p.3). The market-based exchange differs from gift and barter in that "both things and people are alienated; people from the product of their labour and from their labour itself" (p.3).

For Arnould (2014), a practice-based theory of value will illuminate the process through which an array of coordinated human action leads to the creation of value. Such a theorisation of practice "offers a solution to the perennial structure-agency problem in social theory in so far as it takes structures and agents both to be contingent outcomes of practices" (p.1). Thus, Arnould's (2014) approach considers value as the outcome of co-production and consumption processes involving the coordination of human and material actions. In addition, from this perspective, value is neither objective nor subjective but is contingent on a combination of both in that it comprises of interactions (Ramirez, 1999). In essence, subjects appear as carriers of practices and these practices are, in turn,

carriers of value (Schau et al., 2009). Warde (2005) observes that these practices and performances comprise of both productive and consumptive moments. Productive moments involve the process where materials are offered in the form of objects/commodities while consumptive moments, on the other hand, take an experiential turn and include resources that are received such as information. It is in these moments of interaction that active and inactive carriers of practice (subjects, objects and networks) come together to co-produce value.

This section has explored how practices can enable an understanding of the dialectic between the social and the material. In order to comprehend practices in this sense, there is also the need to understand how objects have a life of their own. I now go on to critically review consumer research writings that have explored this interaction between subjects, objects and networks within a broader context of materiality.

2.7. Materiality: An Approach to Doing Practice

Consumer researchers who are interested in objects and practices have often turned to the concept of materiality, which emphasises that values, meanings and agencies are attributed to both subjects and objects. In recent years, the concept of materiality has gained increased prominence within the field of consumer research (Borgerson, 2005) with academics studying the life of objects to enhance the understanding of how the agencies of things influence consumption (Bennett, 2010; Parsons, 2008; Parsons, 2009). Borgerson explains that consumer researchers have previously focused on the role of objects in shaping consumers' identities (Belk, 1988; Holt, 2004; McCracken, 1986) and that such a focus on materiality is constitutive of practical engagements (Shove et al., 2010). In other words, the insufficient analysis of how materiality constitutes practices ensures consumer research is yet to fully appreciate the meaning and roles of objects in the enactment and performance of practices. This growing body of literature centres on the idea that values are co-created

and co-produced within a network of relations, and thus transcends the dualistic divide between subjects and objects (Dant, 2005; Miller 2005).

Miller (2005) describes materiality as the theory of things, one that explores the hybridity of subjects and objects. Miller draws upon Hegel's (1977) work *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* in which he argues that humanity and materiality cannot be separated given that objects created by humans, in turn, determine human actions. Miller (2005, p.8) explains that "everything that we create has by virtue of that act, the potential to appear, and to become, alien to us". Objects are presented here as autonomous in that things created by humans can potentially take on their own path and, in that process, cause us to become alienated by them. Using the legal system as an example, Miller (2005) argues that 'law', supposedly created by society to police and uphold justice but has, in turn, created a systematic career that sustains the livelihood of practicing lawyers. Miller writes that:

> "Our humanity is not prior to what it creates. What is prior is the process of objectification that gives form and that produces in its wake what appear to us as both autonomous subjects and autonomous objects, which leads us to think in terms of a person using an object or an institution." (Miller 2005, p.10)

Miller charts the process of objectification that produces autonomous subject/objects. He urges the need for us to consider the processes that make manifest subject and object relations. In essence, Miller (2005) points to how ethnographic engagements can help document the practices that are enacted during the interactions between subjects and objects. Dant's (2005) research on *Car Care Project* explores the practices and interaction that take place between human and material objects. Dant (2005) discusses the ways in which objects become constituted in individuals' relations by pointing to how objects are incorporated into peoples' lives. In so doing, objects act as the channel that conveys cultural values, which in turn shapes individuals' actions. In other words, material objects possess agency although not in the same capacity as those possessed by humans.

Gell (1998) makes a similar argument as he claims that the agency of objects can be autonomous and that, in rare occasions (such as the breakdown of a car in the middle of the night), objects, like subjects, possess the capability to act as agents. The difference is that objects acquire these agencies and capabilities following human interactions and enlivenment practices (Bunzel and Parker, 2009; Skuse, 2005). To come back to the work of Dant (2005), he argues that objects relations take place by means of affects, meanings and perception. For instance, Dant (2005), explains that objects take on a diverse level of meanings depending on the level of investment afforded to them by people and the social and emotional connections they share within particular situations. In this way, objects are able to enact relationships between past and present as well as build new ones. In a similar vein, Turkle (2011) demonstrates how evocative objects have the potential to carry memories, sustain relationships and enable people to recollect their life experiences.

Having discussed the prominence of materiality within consumer research, I now discuss Actor-network theory (ANT) as the dominant paradigm through which consumer researchers have tended to explore and document practices and materiality.

2.8. Actor-Network Theory: A Dominant Paradigm in Exploring Objects and Practices

Primarily developed in science and technology studies (STS), the main protagonists of Actor Network Theory are Latour (2005), Law (2009) and Callon (1986). ANT is located in an intellectual tradition that is similar to those of practice theories (Shove et al., 2012) and is therefore a useful framework for presenting a thick description of processes through which social and material actants come together to create meanings (Bueger and Gadinger, 2018). Actor-Network theory is different from other approaches to materiality and practice in that it is profoundly interested in the capability of objects to act independently. The ontological position of ANT advocates a relational materiality which sees all

entities as networks possessing significant relationships with each other. Latour (2005) argues that non-human entities should be accorded equal status with humans. While 'theory' is present in the title, it is often described as a method of analysis (Arnould and Thompson 2007; Latour 1999; Law, 2004, 2009; Martin and Schouten, 2014) and a toolkit for documenting interesting stories about human and non-human relations (Bueger and Gadinger, 2018).

The ANT framework rejects the social constructionist approach, which attributes agency to the 'human subject' only (i.e. privileges the role of the speaking subject). Human but also non-human actors possess agency to disrupt the actions or activity of other actors (Latour, 2005). According to Latour, any mediator (whether human or non-human) become actors or actants the moment they exert intentionality onto another mediator. According to Bajde (2013), such a view positions the consumer as an effect instead of according them the status of a sovereign subject or an enforcer of action. For Bajde, this does not imply that consumers are non-existent, instead it explains how several networks must assemble in order for a consumer role to become effective. ANT therefore calls for the examination, identification, interpretation, tracing, following and unmasking of these heterogeneous networks. For instance, Hitchings' (2003) study explored the engagement and interactions between rubbish, plants, people, objects, animals and culture in relation to how they collectively shape nature and society. For Hitchings (2003) humans (the gardener) and non-humans (i.e. plants, garden equipment, soils) are embroiled in a dance of interaction that collectively produces as well as inform gardeners expectations of what gardens should look like. In this sense, ANT strongly emphasises non-human entities (i.e. texts, machines, objects) as a fusion of agencies between technical and social actors.

Given the propensity within ANT to explore heterogeneous assemblages (Law, 2004), it therefore refutes the Durkheimian conception that perceives humans as the custodian of non-human entities. On the contrary, by rejecting the idea that humans possess exclusive rights to meaning-making, non-human actants become equal participants in the production of meanings (Law, 2004).

Ontological symmetry (the idea that neither the subject nor the object is privileged) and openness of ANT means that multiple meanings are created through a heterogeneous network involving various actants (Bajde, 2013). As Kjelberg, (2008) explains, this makes it possible for consumer researchers to develop alternative theories and practices of consumption. As such, Bettany and Kerrane (2011) encourage us to consider the co-production of meaning between human and non-human entities instead of attributing the social characteristics of humans onto objects. In their discussion of Omlet Eglu, they demonstrate how objects can present themselves as ambivalent actors that allow consumers to enact and co-produce binaries relating to consumption/anti-consumption and resistance/domination.

The debate about how 'the humanity of humans' is eliminated in ANT studies remains problematic, and this leads to the eradication of the dynamism and unpredictability associated with humans (Laurier and Philo, 1999; Hitchings, 2003). Moreover, the ontological and epistemological considerations of ANT warrant the need to follow several translations, or heterogeneous networks, to which consumption objects or subjects may belong (Latour, 2005). In light of this Bajde (2013) argues that continuously following and tracing the trajectories of objects and subjects can prove frustrating and lead to a never-ending chain of enquiry. Martin and Schouten (2014) add that the possibility of discovering countless and boundless actor-networks makes the approach problematic in that it is difficult to decide when to stop identifying networks.

ANT has equally been critiqued from a post-humanistic perspective for its overly representational approach to practice given its over-reliance on representational accounts such as in-depth interviews (Bettany and Kerrane, 2011). Also, the insufficient attention to the embodied practices within the ANT framework means that these studies in this area leave out human phenomena such as the expressive aspects of humans, imaginations and multisensory experiences that are present in the enactment of practices.

Additionally, Hill et al., (2014, p.381) observe that “consumers are often framed as self-reflexive sovereign agents who are able to recall and recount their engagement in consumption experiences”. In other words, while consumer voices can represent the production of meanings and values, they nevertheless leave out the human or embodied elements of practices. Consequently, ANT is not equipped to document the onflows of everyday life – one that can account for post-human elements of daily life such as ‘affect’ – the precognitive, unreflexive or embodied emotion that occurs prior to action (Hill et al., 2014). Shove et al. (2012) therefore suggests that a broader and richer understanding of people, things and networks can be better achieved through a practice-oriented approach. Pointing to Reckwitz (2002) and Schatzki (2002) argument that artefacts do not really possess the capability to literally construct social order, Shove et al., dismisses the notion that material objects are able to act as transmitters of power or exists as an anchor that provokes social action. They maintain the view that artefacts and/or objects do not literally exist as elements of practice but are, instead, part of the arrangements that exist to co-produce practices.

Given my primary focus is to explore the everyday practices around rubbish, I am interested in exploring the human, non-human, and embodied entities that come together when practices are enacted and performed. These practices that constitute the handling of rubbish are laden with embodied, spatial, and multisensory experiences. I am particularly interested in gaining an embodied understanding of the spatial dynamics and processes that make up the everyday practices around rubbish. There is, therefore, a need to turn to a theoretical framework that will enable me to capture and explore such sensitivities in the performances around rubbish. It is on this note that in the next chapter, I turn my attention to Lefebvre’s *Production of Space* (1991) and Rhythmanalysis (2004) which champions a spatial, temporal and embodied approach that is useful for exploring and analysing practices.

2.9. Summary

I began this chapter by highlighting the need to move from a consideration of 'rubbish' that seeks to understand the transition within academic studies from viewing it primarily within an archaic context to one that considers it from social, economic and material perspectives. This move has warranted the need to understand some of the practices that lead to the transformation of objects' (i.e. rubbish) values and their meanings. I explained that the increased interest in exploring the values and meanings of objects (i.e. rubbish) within the consumer research discipline has been influenced by Appadurai (1986) and Kopytoff's (1986) discussions around the social life of things – in which they argued that things, like persons, acquire biographies as they move in and out of commodity state. Such a position presents objects as having agencies that are similar to those possessed by humans.

Also, I argued for the need to consider a practice-based approach to understanding the social and material perspective of an object's value; one that presents structure and agencies as contingent upon sets of practices (Arnould, 2014). This underlying premise has informed recent writings among consumer researchers, who are interested in exploring material interactions as well as the co-production of meaning taking place between subjects and objects. I then explained how consumer research exploring practices and objects has mostly relied on ANT perspectives which advocates for the need to accord equal agency to both human and non-human participants (Latour 2005; Law 2009; Callon 1986). However, I reflected on how Latour's (2005) claim that objects can literally, and not merely metaphorically, construct meanings has been challenged, with Schatzki, (2002) and Shove et al., (2012) arguing that non-human entities only exist as part of arrangements that come together to make up practices. Furthermore, I pointed to critiques of ANT from a post-humanist perspective which accuses the framework as too representational since it leaves embodied, spatial, multisensory experiences that are crucial to understanding practice. I argued for a consideration of Lefebvre's spatial theories discussed in

his work on *Production of Space* and *Rhythmanalysis* as a way of addressing these shortcomings and particularly my interest in exploring the spatial and embodied experiences that makeup practices around rubbish. This I discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: A Spatial and Rhythmic Approach to Practice

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I turn my attention to theoretical perspectives that address questions of [social] space and rhythms. I present a Lefebvrian account of social space and rhythms as the conceptual and theoretical framework on which this thesis is built. I explain how Lefebvre's theories of the production of space (1991) and his writings on rhythmanalysis (2004) can be combined to explore the additional sensitivities that are missing from representational approaches such as those of ANT. In particular, I will provide a discussion of how Lefebvre's conceptual tools are useful for exploring the spatial and embodied aspects of practices. I begin, however, with de Certeau's (1984) discussion of strategies and tactics in the *Practice of Everyday Life*, for which there is a conceptual overlap with Lefebvre's spatial triad; particularly, his concept of representation of space and spaces of representation (see Hubbard and Sanders, 2003).

De Certeau's (1984) contention that city spaces are produced following the strategies laid down by the powerful, whilst tactics are adopted by the weak resonates with Lefebvre's ideas in the production of space. In this chapter I will show how, both de Certeau (1984) and Lefebvre (1991) consider spaces not as predefined containers in which objects are housed. Instead, for both thinkers spaces are considered to emerge from ongoing interactions between people, objects, networks and institutions (Castilhos et al., 2014). It is therefore essential to grapple with de Certeau's concepts of 'strategies' and 'tactics' before turning to Lefebvre's theoretical framework. Through the incorporation of the theories of the production of space and rhythmanalysis, I push the boundaries to illustrate the manner in which practices can be explored within the discipline of consumer research.

There have been a few consumer research and marketing studies (see Araujo et al., 2008; Bettany, 2007, Bettany and Kerrane, 2011; Borch et al., 2015; Epp and

Price, 2010; Larsen, 2015; McEachern et al., 2012; Warf and Arias, 2009) that have devoted sufficient attention to how the production of [social] space and rhythmanalysis might be useful for understanding consumers' everyday practices. Consumer research studies that have studied everyday practices of consumers from a spatial perspective have considered Michel de Certeau's (1984) frameworks. In particular, marketing scholars have used de Certeau's concepts of 'strategies' and 'tactics' to explore how consumers are able to resist the domineering effect of marketplace structures (see Izberk-Bilgin, 2010; Carrigan et al., 2004; Denegri-Knott et al., 2006; Dobscha 1998; Holt, 2002; Luedicke and Giesler, 2008; Moisio and Askegaard, 2002; Penaloza and Price, 1993). For these scholars, resistance usually involves the enactment of tactical manoeuvres that are geared towards, outwitting, opposing and appropriating spaces of dominant consumer culture (Dobscha, 1998; Gabriel and Lang, 2015).

The findings from these studies reject the view that consumers are passive receptacles who are influenced by market structures (Murray and Ozanne 1991; Ozanne and Murray, 1995). Rather, consumers are presented as active players, or in other words, people who can infuse opposing meanings to commodities through consumption practices (Holt, 2002). Additionally, other bodies of research which have adopted de Certeau's (1984) framework have tended to locate their work within the 'practice turn' – which aims to understand consumers and the marketplace through sets of practices (Andres, 2013; Araujo et al., 2008; Bernthal et al., 2005; Coupland, 2005; Round et al., 2008; 2010; Skålén and Hackley 2011). These studies investigate the taken-for-granted practices that reveal ways in which consumers tactically cope and engage in resisting marketplace strategies.

This chapter is laid out as follows; in section 3.2, I discuss de Certeau's ideas of 'strategies' and 'tactics' and outline its relevance to the thesis. In section 3.3, I consider Lefebvre's (1991) *Production of Space* with the aim of illustrating its significance in exploring practices. I unpack the spatial triad – spatial practices, representation of space and spaces of representation – and explain their usefulness to the thesis. In Section 3.4, I present a critical appraisal of the

production of space before outlining the usefulness of rhythmanalysis in addressing the shortcomings of Production of Space. I continue with section 3.5 which delves into the details of rhythmanalysis and discusses how its conceptual tools set the frame for the research. The discussion focuses on addressing the key tenets of this theory by examining rhythms and bodies, rhythms and materiality, rhythms and multisensory experiences and, finally, institutional rhythms. In section 3.6, I reflect on the need to consider space and time together rather than separately as well as their appropriateness for exploring the embodied aspect of practices. I close this chapter with section 3.7 in which I present the research aim and objectives that guide my inquiry before summarising the key points addressed in the chapter.

3.2. Strategies and Tactics

Michel de Certeau (1984) insists that strategies are born out of regulative power, which seeks conformity by imposing spatial practices that regulate people to abide by certain norms. The concept of 'strategy' is best described as the means through which formal institutions use interventions to transform and regulate urban spaces. Strategies usually take the form of laws, rules and regulations which are geared towards subjecting everyday users to control (Andres, 2013). De Certeau (1984) argues that subversion is possible through the use of 'tactics'. Tactics, argued de Certeau, are premeditated actions employed by the weak who operate within the terrain which is authorised by institutions of power (de Certeau, 1984). Tactics are "dependent upon the possibilities offered by circumstances, [and] these transverse tactics do not obey the law of the place for they are not defined or identified by it" (p.29). Tactics rely on circumstantial resources and are employed in a flexible, opportunist, spontaneous and mobile manner by those who are not in the position of power. Moreover, de Certeau (1984) explains that the absence of a locus in tactics suggest that it lacks the possibility of creating a general strategy and therefore:

> "operates in isolated actions, blow by blow... taking advantage of opportunities and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own positions, and plan raids." (37)

De Certeau argues that groups operating on the margins employ tactics (wily tricks) often to 'make-do' and, at times, subvert strategies imposed by the powerful. For instance, when the economic conditions become rife due to rising unemployment, individuals operating at the lower cadre of the society often turn to informal economic activities as a means of making-do (Whitson, 2007). In so doing, they insert themselves into the formal spaces of the powerful and carve out their own space by enacting specific everyday practices. According to Round et al., (2008), tactics manifest themselves through stealth actions and are impossible as a general strategy. Thus, social groups can simultaneously employ a range of strategies and tactics. For example, Round et al., (2008) illustrate how informal market sellers, operating in the informal spaces of the market, employ a range of tactics to fight off new (threats) people from entering the market space in a bid to maintain market share. They do this by employing defensive strategies to ensure these spaces are safeguarded against potential new entrants.

De Certeau's (1984) ideas on 'tactics' and 'strategies' has been critiqued for its rejection that subjectivity (i.e. an individual's intention to act) is shaped by individuals' environment or habitus (embodied dispositions) to borrow from Bourdieu (Mitchell 2007). Mitchell argues de Certeau's thesis suggests that tactical manoeuvres (i.e. agency) appear as a transcendental feature of people thus leaving out the role of socio-cultural and economic dispositions in generating practices. This position overemphasises the capacity of humans to develop tactics (Sahlins, 1993) and as such de Certeau's framework appear more theological than theoretical. By bracketing out the role of these dispositions in shaping actions, de Certeau seems to locate agency "as transcendent features of the person, conceived as an eternal soul", bestowed with capabilities of action (Mitchell, 2007, p.102). Moreover, de Certeau's writings on social space appear not focused on the political, but on documenting stories about everyday practices. He provides very little for analysing politics, power relations, class

struggles and inequality but, instead, is focused on showing how spatial thinking and practices explain the way people navigate their everyday lives (Olsen, 2013). This framework is therefore limited in undertaking research that seeks to explore the more-than-representation sensitivities as well as the social, economic and political discourses that are present when practices around rubbish are performed. More so, de Certeau's (1984) emphasis on the textual representation of space ensures that practices are presented as stories/narratives (Wild, 2012). This representation of practices and space as text is reductive and does not account for the embodied elements of practices as experienced by people (Cronin, 2006). Given the commitment of this thesis to advancing the understanding of the embodied and multisensory experiences associated with practice, I need to address the sensitivities (i.e. affects, embodied practices, onflows) and power relations that are missing from de Certeau's framework.

Lefebvre's work on the production of space (1991) and rhythmanalysis (2004) can address these shortcomings. As such, in the rest of this chapter, I discuss Lefebvre's concept of the spatial triad and rhythmanalysis as useful frameworks for advancing our appreciation of the materiality of objects, affects and the embodied experiences that are located in practices. Lefebvre establishes the need to consider space as political and one that serves as a locus of contestation, power, and class struggle within society (Elden, 2004). A turn to the production of space and rhythm can help reveal the power dynamics and politics of value that are at play in spaces where everyday practices around rubbish are performed. Moreover, Lefebvre's (2004) assertion that the body acts as a useful tool for analysing rhythms ensures that the adoption of this theoretical framework can help address the shortcoming of ANT, discussed in Chapter 2, to explore the spatial and embodied aspect of practices around rubbish. Taken together, de Certeau and Lefebvre's work will enhance the understanding of how the movement of rubbish affects the social, cultural, political and economic practices and meanings surrounding the organisation of rubbish in Lagos, Nigeria.

3.3. Lefebvre and the Production of Space

Lefebvre (1991) defines space as emerging from the collective outcome of activities between the material and the social; one that does not see space as existing as an independent and physical entity. For Lefebvre, the production of social space can be understood to emerge following the interaction of three dimensions of space; spatial practices, representation of space and spaces of representation. Marx (1976) argued that things under capitalism are produced through the social character of production and that human labour becomes alienated from the product of their labour. A Marxist analysis sees space as bounded by social and material relations (Lefebvre 1991). In the *Critique of Everyday Life*, Lefebvre (1991a) challenges Marx's concept of alienation, arguing that it is reductive given its exclusive focus on market exchanges. Lefebvre encourages us to move beyond an analysis that focuses on labour and production to address other aspects of the worker's live i.e. their social, family and political life (Elden, 2004). For Lefebvre (1991), the everyday cannot simply be reduced to theoretical objects encountered in daily life. It must encompass both the extraordinary and the mundane aspects of the quotidian.

Lefebvre (1991) argues that the omission of the social relations that are present in the production of space is analogous to the fetishisation of commodities i.e. the separation of humans from the product of their labour (Marx, 1976). He proposes a new approach to unearth the dynamic interplay between social, cultural, physical and political relationships. Lefebvre believes that the social constitutes an important part of capitalist society and that a critique of the everyday would encourage an analysis of the 'leisure' aspect of the worker's life. In *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukacs (1971) echoed this point and suggested that an exploration of the everyday lived experience of the commodified worker would yield a richer understanding of capitalism and commodities (Goonewardena et al., 2008). Of Lefebvre's extensive writings on the *Critique of Everyday Life*, the focus of his thesis lies with the series on the production of space and rhythmanalysis.

Using Venice as an example, Lefebvre (1991, p.76) argues that the city emerged as a product of the "relationship between a place built by collective will and collective thought on the one hand, and the productive forces of the period on the other hand". Such an interaction between will and the physical or material properties of production suggests a conceptualisation of space, not as primordial but rather, space conceived as emerging from a productive activity that encompasses practices and interactions between the social and material world (Merrifield, 1993). Lefebvre (1991) builds upon this premise to theorise space – i.e. by underlining the relevance of everyday life in establishing a unified conceptualisation of physical (tangible space), mental (imaginative space) as well as social space. He addresses the different elements of space within one unified theory of space to provide a richer understanding of how space is socially produced. Lefebvre (1991) writes:

> "[Social] space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products; rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder." (p.73)

Lefebvre's remark suggests that space and things are not mutually exclusive but instead appear as socially produced following the interaction of a multitude of things including but not limited to the social, the material and networks all working together to create forms or spatiality (Ronneberger in Goonewardena et al., 2008). Prigge (2008, p.47) explains that the epistemological notion of space as socially produced ensures that "critical social scientists have returned to the social. They grapple with the objective, economic, political, and cultural practices that explain social processes, and ultimately also the spatiality of these processes". Lefebvre (1991) encourages us to depart from ideologies that promote abstract or conceived space and segmented representations of physical space. Instead, he argues that social space should be thought of as a triad of spatial practices (physical or perceived space), representation of spaces (conceived or mental space) and spaces of representation (lived or social space). Reinforcing Lefebvre's point, Elden (2004) writes that a dialectical interpretation

of space will address questions of lived space and resolve the contradictions between perceived and conceived space. A dialectical analysis of [social] space would therefore consider how the interaction between each element of the spatial triad produces space (Lefebvre, 1991). In this way, each dimension of space relates to the other two and each would appear superficial without the other dimensions (Schmid, 2008). At the same time, such dialectical interaction connects three elements of social space with each one possessing equal significance as well as occupying an identical position in relation to the other dimensions (ibid). I will now delve into each of these dimensions.

3.3.1. Spatial Practices

This element of the spatial triad refers to the materially constituted space that is physically perceived through the five senses of touch, sight, taste, smell and sound (Schmid, 2008). It includes but is not limited to everyday interactions, social relationships as well as social activities. This aspect of the spatial triad encompasses the production and reproduction of social relations and everyday life in the spaces of homes, workplace, and so on (Lefebvre, 1991). Essentially, spatial practice refers to the learned and embodied skills which people acquire to navigate their everyday lives – something that is performed routinely (Watkins, 2005). Thus, an analysis of spatial practices is also an analysis of the modes of operation through which people use objects and draw on their embodied skills to make sense of their environment. Lefebvre is vague as to how this embodied element of spatial practice operates, but he later returns to this question of the body in his rhythmanalysis project which will be further discussed in section 3.5. According to Schmid (2008, p.37), spatial practice considers the "interlinking chain or network of activities or interactions which on their part rest upon a determinate material basis". Spatial practices are predicated on an understanding of perceived space i.e. embodied perceptions that inform how individuals make use of space and determine how they move, work, and engage in leisure activities (Merrifield, 1993). Merrifield (2006) argues that whilst Lefebvre conceptualises social space as fluid, he does not document how the spatial triad operates dialectically. Schmid (2008) express similar concerns, suggesting that it was only

in Lefebvre's recent work on rhythmanalysis (2004) that the dialectical interaction of space, time and energy was fully addressed.

A study of spatial practices enables me to explore the behaviours, meanings, and movements of people across different spaces as they interact with rubbish. This dimension of space allows me to observe how people 'make-do' with rubbish and how rubbish, in turn, shapes social relations and activities (Storr, 2008). Besides, an analysis of spatial practices also enables me to explore how rubbish creates territories, knits relationships and prompts actions. Having discussed perceived space, I now go on to discuss representation of space – the spaces produced by the powerful.

3.3.2. Representation of Spaces

Representation of spaces refers to the visual, dominant space of society that emerges from codifications and images such as city maps, plans, descriptions and photos representing spaces (Schmid, 2008). This dimension of space emerges from abstract or mental ideas of space and is associated with formal institutions that regulate social spaces (Petersen, and Warburton 2012; Shields, 2005). These exist as codes, or theories, and are associated with productive relationships which are informed, constructed and determined by engineers, developers, geographers and other such agents. Lefebvre (1991) explains that representation of spaces emerges following the enforcement and instilment of state laws, values and everyday symbols. This, in turn, creates an abstract space that eliminates distinctions. In this way, the representation of spaces exists as points of reference which help organise and regulate spatial activities. Essentially, it is the spatial practices and interactions that are informed by the action of the powerful in relation to their organisation of the social space. This element of the spatial triad can be extended to my research, which explores the formal and informal practices that are performed in the Lagos waste management sector. By analysing the representation of space, I am alerted to the relations of power between the state and the informal waste economy. This allows me to consider how institutionalised representations dictate the flow of rubbish across the city

of Lagos. It will also help in my understanding of the strategies that are used by the state in legitimising waste management policies.

My research resonates with the work of Soja (2010) who argues that Lefebvre's (1991) representation of space is relevant for investigating the transformation of cities and how these create social injustices within societies. I am interested in exploring representations that are geared towards the colonisation of urban spaces, and how this leads to the potential displacement of social actors in Lagos. Displacements resulting from land reforms and social and economic policy changes often amount to the creation of hidden struggles that will potentially provoke resistance, subversion, and acts of 'making-do' from social groups or people with less power i.e. street vendors (Round et al., 2008; Whitson, 2007). In this thesis, a consideration of the 'representation of space' will enable me to understand the extent to which the strategies formulated by the state are geared towards organising rubbish in a way that shapes the physical landscape of the city (Kudva, 2009). Besides, I identify and explore the practices, subversion and resistance that are performed by informal waste operators in these spaces. This will also enable a consideration of other stakeholders' (such as private organisations that operate within the waste management sector) and their relations to the state.

3.3.3. Spaces of Representation

Spaces of representation refers to the non-specialist, directly 'lived' space – one that captures the social experience of everyday life (Merrifield, 2006). This dimension of space "do(es) not refer to the spaces themselves but to something else: a divine power, the logos, the state, masculine or feminine principle" (Schmid, 2008, p.37). Essentially, this aspect of space attends to the 'lived' experience where symbols and images associated with spaces lead to the emergence of lived space (Watkins, 2005). Representation of spaces refers to physical space as felt by the users and their spatial participation and social encounters which create diversity, individualism and deviations (Watkins, 2005). In short, 'spaces of representation' are the experiential, "dominated, passively

experienced space that the conceived, ordered, hegemonic space will intervene in, codify, rationalize and ultimately attempt to usurp" (Merrifield, 1993 p.523). It is the elusive space where people attempt to appropriate their daily life in relation to the representation of space i.e. planners, engineers, architects (ibid).

Merrifield (2006, P.110) describes 'spaces of representation' as "the cafes on the corner, the block facing the park, the third street on the right after the Cedar Tavern, near the post office". These spaces of representation therefore represent a site of struggle and economic survival for less powerful actors (i.e. informal street vendors). For instance, it is a generally accepted view that powerful institutions pursue and depend on a well-organised and aesthetically pleasing urban space to reinforce the legitimacy of the state; a space that is devoid of crime and abject poverty (King and Dovey, 2013). Consequently, for certain groups to survive, they must appropriate the 'representation of spaces' set out by the planners and institutions of power to their advantage. Round et al., (2010) argues that such contestation of spaces is what gives birth to informal spaces or, in Lefebvre's term, 'spaces of representation'. Informal social groups must be considered key actors in the production of spaces (Babere, 2015; Roy, 2011). As much as city planners attempt to regulate space, informal social groups are able to influence the activities of city planners when they occupy the interstitial margins of the city.

In this thesis, 'spaces of representation' will serve as a tool for exploring the symbolic dimension of space in its relation to both material images and symbols (Petersen and Minnery, 2013). By attending to the 'spaces of representation', I am able to move beyond spaces of the home to explore the wider context of how marginalised and excluded actors such as informal scavengers are entangled in the contestation of urban spaces through tactical manoeuvres surrounding the handling of rubbish (Elden, 2004). Together, the dialectics of the spatial practices, representation of spaces and spaces of representation proves useful to explain the reterritorialization of spaces by both formal and informal actors. 'Spaces of representation' provides the lens through which I will analyse the appropriation of formal spaces by informal groups. It also provides an insight

into how flourishing informal economic spaces are appropriated by the institutions of power.

3.4. A Critique of the Production of Space

Unwin (2000) has criticised Lefebvre's theorisation of the production of space by pointing to the absence of a clear differentiation between the traditional view of space as a container and space as socially produced. For Unwin, Lefebvre's acknowledgment of the existence of 'absolute space' and mental space, in conjunction with his failure to make clear the aspects of mental or absolute spaces that have no value, makes it difficult to have a unified definition of space. Unwin (2000) insists that Lefebvre's (1991) attempt to demonstrate and conceptualise a new approach to understanding space has left him wrestling with the paradoxes of space as being simultaneously social and physical, to the extent that it loses its meaning. Moreover, Lefebvre writes:

> "Social space can never escape its duality, even though triadic determining factors may sometimes override and incorporate its binary or dual nature. ... is not social space both...a field of action...and a basis of action...is it not at once actual (given) and potential (locus of possibilities) ... is it not at once quantitative and qualitative and is it not at once a collection of materials (objects, things) and an ensemble of materiel (procedures necessary to make efficient use of things)?" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.191)

This commentary suggests that space exists on an objective and social level. Therefore, the paradox of such an all-encompassing definition of space has created not only a dilemma between the physical and mental spaces but also between physical and social geographical spaces. It has created conflicting positions for geographers who deal with the physical (measurable space) and social space (where spatial activities take place) especially in relation to the use of languages in their discipline (Unwin, 2000). Yet, this production of space can be useful to marketing scholars in helping to gain a better understanding of the marketplace. In particular, Lefebvre's spatial triad provides a fresh ontological lens with which consumer researchers can explore consumers' practices, lived experiences and their interaction with and production of the market space.

In addition, although interested in the everyday lived experience of people, the *Production of Space* appears to be primarily focused on the final product, 'social space'. In it, Lefebvre (1991, p.280) argues that states are a product of violence and that "state power endures only by virtue of violence and struggles that are directed towards a space". Yet as Unwin argues, the people (men, women, and children) who are victims of these struggles and violence are not explicitly mentioned in Lefebvre's work. Rather, "it is the [theorisation or] 'production of space', rather than 'space' itself that becomes a fundamental object of interest" (Unwin, 2000, p.23). Arguing for a commitment to 'space' and to the location of the discourse of space and objects-in-space on equal theoretical footing means that things – social as well as material – in space are overlooked. Furthermore, Unwin (2000) observes that such a focus on space and the neglect of the embodied aspect of practices can lead to the demise of the human elements of nature. For Unwin, the production of space appears to dehumanize or subsume humanistic acts in favour of the production of the final product – space. Unwin's criticism of the production of space, in leaving out questions of the body, has since been addressed by Lefebvre in his subsequent work on rhythmanalysis which I will discuss in the next section.

3.5. Lefebvre and Rhythmanalysis

Following Lefebvre's (2004) suggestions that space is socially produced and thus becomes a site of dwelling (i.e. lived space), he proceeds to show how the socially produced and lived space can be analysed. To clarify, Lefebvre himself explains that the production of space is incomplete without an analysis of rhythms. For Lefebvre (2004), a study of rhythms will consider the embodied aspect of practices. By championing the role of the body, Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis addresses the criticism that the production of space leaves out the body. Lefebvre's (2004) starting point in rhythmanalysis is that rhythms play an integral role in in the production of space. Elden (2004) explains that the understanding of everyday life can be enriched by paying careful attention to the

repetitive rhythms that are present in the routines of life. For Lefebvre (2004), rhythmanalysis is both a method and a theory. He writes that a study of rhythms pursues a "time-honoured labour in a systematic and theoretical manner, by bringing together very diverse practices and very different types of knowledge: medicine, history, climatology, cosmology, poetry and sociology" (Lefebvre, 2004, p.25). Edensor (2010) concurs arguing that rhythmanalysis can provide an in-depth insight into the synchronic everyday practices that occur in space while also considering the sensations, affects and spatial qualities that are present in intersubjective habits. The central point in these arguments is the need to consider the place of rhythms in sustaining the everyday routines that shape human experience of time/space and everyday life.

As Lefebvre (2004) argues, rhythms are produced through the interaction between space, time, and energy in the context of everyday life. For Lefebvre rhythms are not simply mechanical processes but can be understood as part of an organic process that continually unfolds. Drawing on the analogy of music, Lefebvre argues that rhythms are not limited to the counting of beats but encompass 'repetitive' physical or bodily movements and sounds that come together as sets of practices. So, we can think about the rhythms of music as bounded by a dialectical interaction between the beats, the interval between the beats, the musical chords and so on. It is therefore a combination of these various repetitive rhythms that collectively produce music. Lefebvre (2004) contends that there remains a contrast between two forms of repetitive rhythms. Biological or cyclical rhythms (those of the body) and mechanical or linear rhythms (those of machines).

3.5.1. Cyclical (Biological) and Linear (Mechanical) Rhythms

Cyclical rhythms refer to temporalities that are predicated on the cosmos – the natural – and thus include the changing seasons of night-time, daylight, month and years. Elden (2004 p.196) writes that "the point of cyclical time is that there is no beginning and end; that new cycles are born from previous ones". Cyclical rhythms can therefore be attributed to the repetitions of biological repetition such

as hunger, excretion, sleep and diurnal times. On the other hand, linear rhythms refer to those that are produced by social processes and are centred on the human actions that are imposed by a productivist mode of work, commuting patterns and institutional rhythms of social structures. Edensor (2010) explain that Lefebvre is increasingly concerned by the gradual colonisation by capitalist linear rhythms on everyday life. This is manifested in the solidification of practices that relate to commuting, clandestine movements of marginalised actors, and exclusion policies of municipal authorities. As Cronin (2006) observes, linear and cyclic rhythms both work together in complex ways to create compromises and disturbances – "the circular course of the hands on (traditional) clock-faces and watches is accompanied by a linear tick-tock" (p.18). The cyclical rhythms do not interrupt but instead modify the daily linear movements by slowing them down. In this research, I am interested in exploring the seasonal rhythms (i.e. cyclical) and how these intersperse with humans to shape and produce the practices that are enacted around rubbish. An exploration of the combination of these different rhythms warrants the need to consider how the body represents a central locus for understanding and documenting rhythms, particularly biological rhythms. I now discuss this.

3.5.2. Rhythms and Bodies

Lefebvre (2004) maintain that, in order to understand and appreciate the rhythms of everyday life, the rhythmanalyst must first listen to the body. The rhythmanalyst relies on the five senses to listen to both taken-for-granted sounds and silences as well as paying close attention to timings, periods, phases and recurrences of events whilst not losing sight of spaces (Lefebvre, 2004). In this way, rhythmanalysis takes into consideration affects and embodied practices in its understanding of everyday practices. Lefebvre makes clear the importance of these embodied aspects in his discussion on rhythms. He writes:

> "The rhythmanalyst calls on all his senses. He draws on his breathing, the circulation of his blood, the beatings of his heart and the delivery of his speech as landmarks. Without privileging anyone of these sensations, raised by him in the perception of rhythms, to the detriment of any other. He thinks with his

> body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality [...] he does not neglect smells, scents, the impressions that are so strong in the child and other living beings, which society atrophies, neutralises in order to arrive at the colourless, the odourless and the insensible. Yet smells are a part of rhythms, reveal them: odours of the morning and evening, of hours of sunlight or darkness, of rain or fine weather. The rhythmanalyst observes and retains smells as traces that mark out rhythms. He garbs himself in the tissue of the lived, of the everyday." (Lefebvre, 2004 p.31)

As indicated above, an analysis of rhythms appears suited to this thesis in that it can provide a richer understanding of practices. Rhythmanalysis provides the tools that are necessary for investigating the rhythms that are characteristics of people's everyday practices. It will sensitise me to the ebb and flow of the practices that are enacted around rubbish. Rhythmanalysis would be useful for exploring the working patterns of refuse workers (i.e. scavengers), the everyday household rituals and rhythmic movement of rubbish in the city of Lagos.

Returning to the relationship between rhythms and the body, Lefebvre (2004) uses the concept of *eurythmia* to argue that the equality of rhythms is founded on the harmony between parts of the individual body (i.e. lungs, heart and other parts). *Eurythmia* refers to the point where rhythms of the body appear to experience a harmonious relationship (Lee, 2016). Such synchronisation between the body and rhythms is akin to the coordinated music led by a choral director (ibid). For Lefebvre, the rhythms associated with *eurythmia* are likely to go unnoticed and are therefore taken for granted until there is a breakdown in rhythms thus leading to what he terms *arrhythmia.* Arrhythmia can be described as the desynchronised interaction between the body parts (i.e. biological rhythms). Lefebvre (2004) argues that structures and organisations experiencing arrhythmia will make an effort to return to a state of normalcy and, in the process, create a *eurhythmic* situation. Lee (2016, p.9), concurs, arguing that "whenever there is a disruption to the accepted rhythm, such as during illness, when the physical body does not have the energy to discharge the responsibilities that it is usually required to do, it needs to rest until the energy level catches up". This process of adjusting or adaptation to changes might take the form of

finding a new space or developing an equilibrium to accommodate or adjust to a new rhythm.

For example, the calendar system of schools and institutions affords students a study break that runs concurrently with the cyclic pattern of the summer seasons. Yet, this cyclical movement of the seasons does not stop the movement of people around the campuses. Students will sometimes use the summer break in preparation for the new academic session. The understanding of rhythms thus emerges following the interaction between space (campus), time (season) and energy expenditure (physical movements). However, any disruption to these moments will lead to a disruption of the other two (Lee, 2016). As the season changes, so also are the movements of human traffic around campus. In short, the campus space is shaped by the interaction of all three moments.

Furthermore, Lefebvre's (2004) notion of 'dressage' addresses the corporeal training that are associated with movements and rhythmic activities. A process that is characterised by the disciplining of the body in a manner that forces it to engage in repetitive practices. For Lefebvre, these practices may take the form of embodied gestures. In this way, Lefebvre argues that humans are able to break themselves in, just like animals (i.e. horses or dogs).

> "One can and must distinguish between education, learning, and dressage [training]. Knowing how to live, knowing how to do something...to enter into society, a group or nationality is to accept values [that are taught], to learn a trade by following the right channels, but to bend oneself to its ways...dressage therefore has its rhythms; breeders know them. Learning has its own, which educators know. Training also has its rhythms, which accompany those of dancers and tamers. ... Dressage puts into place an automatism of repetitions...one breaks-in another human living being by making them repeat a certain act, a certain gesture or movement." (Lefebvre, 2004, p.39-48)

Lefebvre thus considers embodied learning a rhythmic activity, one that takes place through an engagement with a linear and cyclical repetitions of gestures. For Lefebvre, such gestures or mannerisms are not produced as part of nature but instead constitute part of the make-up of societies and are subject to changes; through dressage, humans break themselves in like animals. In this

thesis, I am interested in exploring the everyday rituals, gestures, and educative rhythms that manifest as 'dressage' or educative rhythms when practices around rubbish are performed. Not only that, I am equally attentive to the extent to which materiality is constituted of rhythms.

3.5.3. Rhythms and Materiality

Given that this research is primarily focused on the human and non-human relations that come together when practices are enacted and performed around rubbish, there is the need to shed light on the various ways in which non-human rhythms become enmeshed with human rhythms. Following Lefebvre's claim that nothing is inert in the world, Edensor (2010) argues that an acknowledgement of the:

> "...cyclical rhythms of nature: processes of growth and decay, the surging's of rivers, the changes in the weather and the activities of animals and birds which breed, nest and migrate, we can identify the ubiquitous presences of non-human entities and energies in and through place." (p.7)

In this way, the study of rhythms will not only aid in the analysis of movements of people and rubbish, but it also captures the sights, sounds and smells that accompany rubbish through their journey through space and time. I have emphasised the usefulness of the production of space and rhythmanalysis in exploring the everyday practices. Indeed, an attentiveness and understanding of rhythmanalysis will be useful for going beyond participants' voices to account for other important sensitives and questions relating to human and non-human relations. This is clear in Lefebvre remark that:

> "No cameras, no image or series of images can show these rhythms. It requires equally attentive eyes and ears, a head and a memory and a heart. A memory? Yes, in order to grasp this present otherwise than in an instantaneous moment, to restore it in its moments, in the movement of diverse rhythms. The recollection of other moments and of all hours is indispensable, not as a simple point of reference, but in order not to isolate this present and in order to *live* it in all its diversity, made up of *subjects* and *objects*, subjective states and objective figures." (Lefebvre, 2004 p.450)

The acknowledgement and affirmation within rhythmanalysis of practices and materiality suggest that attending to non-human rhythms would be useful for analysing the subject and object relations. For instance, in this thesis, I am interested in the embodied experiences (as well as non-human rhythms that are present in the handling of rubbish. In short, a consideration of the embodied practices and materialities that are present in the rhythms of everyday life would help flesh out the more-than-representation aspect of the practices. This warrants the need to consider the role of multisensory perceptions (sight, touch, smell and sound) in shaping the everyday practices around rubbish.

3.5.4. Rhythms and Multisensory Experiences

The underlying premise of these discussions is the notion that human experiences of place and the production of knowledge is attributed to vision (Rodaway, 1994; Synnott, 1991). Global developments and their relationship with visual elements of print media, television, internet make it is easy to explain the hegemonic discourses surrounding visual perception (Tuan, 1974). Rodaway has critiqued the privileging of vision, instead, arguing that other non-visual elements of sensory perception play a key role in the production of meanings and experiences. A close analysis of visual experience will reveal a multisensory perception that is not limited to mere visual sensations and should therefore incorporate other non-visual perceptions such as sounds, tactile qualities of touch and the sense of smell (Ackerman, 1991; Casey, 1996; Porteous, 1985; Tuan, 1977). Along these lines, Larsen and Urry, (2011) have argued that, while vision plays a crucial role in perception, it does not constitute an exclusive determinant of experience. Thus, for a participant to fully grasp the experience of something, let's say, the scavenging of waste, there has to be a mediation between the various sensory perceptions (Degen, 2008). One aspect of a multisensory experience refers to sound. Lefebvre (2004) has emphasised how sounds are important for grasping the rhythmic experiences that intertwine with the quotidian. For Lefebvre, by listening to the silence, multiple noises, murmurs, moving bodies, cars, the rhythmanalyst is able to observe "the harmony between what one sees and what one hears" (p.38). In line with this, as part of my

exploration of the quotidian, I am interested in exploring the soundscapes of the sites where mundane practices around rubbish are performed.

Also, Obrador-Pons (2007) has argued that physical touch is useful for documenting repetitious perceptions. Sensory touch offers a medium with which we can capture and remember embodied sensorial accounts and enables individuals to gain a sense of the relationship between their body and the environment (Gibson, 1966). For instance, by feeling the wintery breeze, a blind person can recognise that they are outside or that they have left the door/window open. Tuan (1993) contends that there is need to understand perceptions as multisensory and highlights how the tactile qualities associated with physical touch are linked with sensorial vision. Moreover, Tuan argues that the tactile qualities of, for let's say, the chillness of ice or the weight of a rock, can be felt with the eye. Furthermore, Paterson (2009) has argued that vision, when combined with touch, is able to provide a more accurate sensorial perception of reality. In this thesis, I aim to document how sensorial accounts of touch are integral to the enactment of the everyday practices around rubbish. Notwithstanding, a multisensory experience of reality goes beyond the use of vision and touch. There is equally the role of olfactory senses in contributing to an all-round experience of a space.

Warnaby and Medway (2013) explain that consumer researchers have too often relied on visual and narrative features when exploring the marketplace. Studies on olfactory senses within the marketing literature tend to focus on how store atmospherics influence consumers' consumption experiences and, in doing this, privilege the visuals (Bäckström and Johansson, 2006; Ballantine et al., 2010; Childers et al., 2001; Foster and McLelland, 2015; Spence et al., 2014; Warnaby, 2009). Yet, marketing researchers have argued that, by focusing on 'representing' the visual, marketers are unable to understand the complexities associated with spatial aspects of the marketplace (Agapito et al., 2013; Anderson and Harrison 2010; Henshaw et al., 2015). Recently, the nosenographic research undertaken by Canniford et al., (2017) has addressed this shortcoming by attending to embodied sensitivities (i.e. smell) that are

characteristics of spaces and in doing so, advance the understanding of how smells encode spaces with meanings and relations of power.

Indeed, I am attentive to how odours interlink with the everyday practices performed around rubbish. Lefebvre (2004) has established the importance of odours in everyday life. Lefebvre considers smells as part of rhythms and distinguishes between odours of the morning from those of the evenings before urging the rhythmanalyst to observe and retain smell as traces of rhythms (p.31). Yet, while urban marketing studies have considered how the olfaction qualities of cities can provide an enriched sense of place as well as the urban experience of people (Henshaw et al., 2016; Reinarz, 2014). These marketing studies suggest that smell provides a useful tool for exploring and understanding consumers' relationship with the market place. Edensor (2007) has argued that, within western society, there is a tendency to mask and regulate the sense of smell within public spaces. This has ensured that people and spaces have become desensitised to the sensory perception of smell (Lefebvre, 2004; Porteous, 1985). Building on this, Tuan (1993) argues that olfactory senses are integral to providing a meaningful social encounter and interaction between people as well as space. Tuan (1993, p.58) writes that without smell;

> "Life and the world become gray and passionless [and that] visual and auditory beauties cannot altogether compensate for the deprivation of stimuli that arouse the deepest emotions and instincts of one's animal nature".

Thus, while sound and sight are integral to social experience, Tuan believes that only a combination of all these sensory perceptions can offer a complete experience of humans and society. Henshaw et al., (2010) concur, claiming that a combination of the tactile qualities (touch), visual and olfactory senses can provide an enriched experience of place. Thus, the sensory perception of smell is socially constructed and, to an extent, influences how spaces, people and objects are perceived positively or negatively (Canniford et al., 2017; Synnott, 1993), but are also fluid as adaptation is integral to understanding the sensory perception of smell (Porteous, 1985). Adaptation in this sense refers to the notion that odours do not necessarily disappear from a place but rather human's ability

to perceive them wanes as people become familiar with or adapt to the smellscapes of a place (Porteous, 1985). Therefore, olfactory sense is ambiguous, transitory, and has a temporal dimension to it (Drobnick, 2005). In this way, people are able to recall and recognise the olfactory sense of place, objects that had previously been experienced (ibid). In this thesis, I am committed to exploring the role and rhythms of smell in the practices and performances around rubbish; particularly in relation to the smellscapes of my research site (Canniford et al., 2017; Porteous, 1985).

3.5.5. Institutional and Resistant Rhythms

Lefebvre (2004) uses the concept of polyrhythmia to describe the bundle of rhythms that exist in urban and lived space. In the essay '*Seen from the Window*', Lefebvre demonstrates the rhythmic quality of non-human entities to explain how multiple rhythms exist together but at the same time remain apart. He writes:

> "But look at those trees, those lawns and those groves. To your eyes they situate themselves in permanence, in a spatial simultaneity, in a coexistence. But look harder and longer. This simultaneity, up to a certain point, is only apparent; a surface, a spectacle. Go deeper, dig beneath the surface, listen attentively instead of simply looking, of reflecting the effects of a mirror. You thus perceive that each plant, each tree, has its rhythm, made up of several: the trees, the flowers, the seeds and fruits, each have their own time." (Lefebvre, 2004, p.40-41)

Such a polyrhythmic understanding of plants can be extended to the various rhythms that make up the everyday practices around rubbish that manifest in the lived space. For instance, polyrhythmia will be useful for exploring questions around politics and the power dynamics that manifest in the practices of various stakeholders involved in the organisation of rubbish. In particular, it would help to explore the ways in which multiple rhythms by various stakeholders' shape practices around rubbish. It would equally aid in analysing the ways in which they clash and, in the process, establish practices that are context specific. We can think of the process through which powerful institutions dictate the flows and patterns of everyday practices through sets of rules. For example, Edensor (2010) explains that the dominant rhythms of institutions of power are often used to regulate business opening hours and spaces where commodities (i.e. cigarettes and alcohol) are sold and consumed. Degen (2010) has shown how attempts to beautify and commodify cities has led powerful institutions to control and eliminate unruly and negative urban rhythms.

Lefebvre's writings were critical of the manner in which capitalist rhythms or official rhythms impose themselves on the quotidian rhythms as well as those of

the body. Lefebvre (1996) argues that it is those in positions of power who hold the ability to manipulate time and rhythms. Harvey (1989) also argued that contemporary urban rhythms relating to the transport system have brought about a disruption in the temporal rhythms of the everyday. This interest in capitalist rhythms is relevant to my thesis, in that I am interested in exploring the extent to which the official strategies, in other words, waste management policies disrupt the spatial practices of key stakeholders involved in the sector. However, the lived spaces are not only made up of dominant rhythms. There are, equally, those marginal rhythms that are performed informally and often exist in the interstices of 'lived' space (King and Dovey, 2013). All operating individually, the dominant rhythms enforced by the capitalist mode of production are open to appropriation, subversion, and resistance from these marginal rhythms.

For example, Edensor (2010), explains that resistance rhythms offer alternative approaches to spending time and performing practices that go against the rhythms of capitalism or institutions of power. Similarly, citing the Critical Mass global biking movement, Edensor insists that capitalist rhythmic imposition is often accompanied with acts of resistance which tend to slow down capitalist rhythms. Edensor refers to how motionless bodies in the crowd result in inhibiting traffic flow, the disruption that emanates from the violation of a one-way street and the noises created by night revellers. Similarly, Shaw (1991) argues that attempts to engage in consumption practices such as downshifting can resist normative rhythms.

My attentiveness to rhythms will enable me to explore the extent to which actors in the waste management sector resist capitalist rhythms. Moreover, an understanding of institutional rhythms will help flesh out the various practices with which institutions of power (i.e. LAWMA) set the rules and regulations that dictate the rhythms and flow of people, rubbish and networks within the city of Lagos. It will also aid the exploration of the several rhythms that are performed by the various stakeholders involved in the organisation of rubbish. Not only that, it will be useful for exploring the way in which dominant, conflicting and

superimposed rhythms are subverted and perhaps resisted by marginal and social groups through their own rhythms.

3.6. Thinking Space and Time Together

Having explored the production of space and rhythmanalysis there is the need to reflect on Lefebvre's contention that space and time must be thought together rather than considered as separate things. In *the Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991) conceptualises space as a social product; one that is socially produced following a dialectical interaction of three dimensions of space – spatial practices (*physical space such as those of the city, households, landfills, slums and dumpsites*), representation of spaces (c*onceived and dominant space of society and ruled by capitalist*) and spaces of representation (*social or lived space; one that is passively experienced*). Just as social space differs from actual space, Lefebvre's work on time (rhythmanalysis) challenges the reductive conceptualisation of time by arguing that time must be considered distinctive from actual capitalist time (Elden, 2004). A key aspect of Lefebvre's critique was to establish a relationship between space and time (Elden, 2004). In short, Lefebvre argues that space and time are integral to understanding the quotidian and therefore advocates the need to consider space and time together while avoiding the need to reduce one to the other.

Rhythmanalysis sensitises us to how rhythms collectively shape our experiences in time/space within the context of everyday life. With rhythmanalysis, Lefebvre (2004) establishes a connection between everyday life, social space and the body while contending that rhythms must always be related to practices. For Lefebvre (2004), there is a relationship between cyclical (biological) and linear rhythms (those of societies). In rhythmanalysis, Lefebvre acknowledges the role of space and time in coordinating the affairs of the everyday life. This monologue between space and time is well documented in Lefebvre's insistence that "everywhere where there is [an] interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm" (Lefebvre, 2004, p.15). While rhythmanalysis represents

a continuation of Lefebvre's earlier work on the *Critique of the Everyday Life*, it simultaneously completes his series on the production of social space (Elden, 2004). Furthermore, the ontological and epistemological positions of Lefebvre's theories of production of space and rhythmanalysis will assist this thesis in going beyond mere 'representations' to consider (1) how embodied practices around rubbish disposal manifests in 'tactile spaces': the ways in which the body interacts with senses and the environment (Carolan, 2007, p.333); (2) an improved understanding of 'tactile spaces', as well as how everyday practices around rubbish are enacted, performed as well as address the post-humanist aspect of daily life; (3) Lefebvre's assertion that rhythms are political and a locus and medium of struggle suggests that his theories are useful for exploring political practices, questions of domination, appropriation, struggles, and social injustices within the Lagos waste management sector.

At this juncture, it is imperative to return to the underlying premise of this thesis which is to further the understanding of the performative role of rubbish in everyday life. Moreover, as already mentioned, a turn to the social processes and everyday practices that are involved in wasting can create a better understanding of the role of rubbish within societies. All along, I have argued for a theoretical and methodological approach that is constitutive of practices. In line with this, I suggested that a consideration of these everyday practices around rubbish in Lagos should move beyond simply focusing on issues of sustainability, environmentalism and green consumption. Instead I have hinted that rubbish represents a genuine material substance that provides millions of people with the means to sustain their economic livelihoods in cities like Lagos. I have equally argued that the everyday practices that are performed around rubbish have important implications for not only economics but are equally mired in political, cultural and social entanglements. Building on this, I now present the research questions that serve as a guide to addressing these substantial issues raised by the thesis.

3.7. Aim and Research Objectives

The thesis aim is to gain an embodied understanding of the spatial dynamics and processes underpinning the social, cultural, political and economic practices surrounding the organisation of 'rubbish' in Lagos, Nigeria.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To understand the extent to which the institutional practices regarding the handling of rubbish shape the 'lived' spaces and relations of power between PSPs, Wecyclers, dumpsite scavengers and itinerant scavengers.

2. To observe and document the everyday routines around the production, consumption, and disposal of household rubbish.

3. To understand the extent to which linear rhythms and the practices enacted around rubbish (de)synchronise with cyclical rhythms in both the formal and informal economies of Lagos.

4. To explore the human and non-human interactions that take place at various transition points when objects are transformed between transient, durable, and rubbish categories.

3.8. Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the theoretical framework upon which this research is built. I introduced Lefebvre's production of space, rhythmanalysis, as well as offered insights into how de Certeau's (1984) 'strategies' and 'tactics' are useful for exploring the everyday practices around rubbish. These theoretical perspectives are useful for addressing the sensitives missing from ANT perspectives described at the end of chapter two. I suggested that Lefebvre's theoretical concepts; spatial practices, representation of space, spaces of representation, cyclical and linear rhythms, rhythms and body, institutional rhythms and materiality are effective tools with which we can explore the everyday practices. Throughout the thesis, I showed how these concepts are useful in advancing the understanding of the affects, embodied practices, onflows and social, political and economic relations that are enmeshed with the everyday practices that are enacted and performed around rubbish.

This thesis adopts a Lefebvrian perspective to offer an enriched account of the everyday practices around rubbish. An exploration of practices in the empirical chapters can be enhanced by a methodology that focuses on embodied sensitivities. In the next chapter, I will discuss the methodological underpinning of this thesis. In chapter 5 and 6, I will show how Lefebvre's theoretical and conceptual understanding of 'social space' and rhythms are useful for exploring the everyday practices of the various stakeholders (both formal and informal) involved in the organisation of rubbish in Lagos. In tracing the social life of rubbish, I tease out how everyday practices around rubbish are negotiated and contested between LAWMA, social enterprises, householders, itinerant scavengers, dumpsite scavengers and junk artists. However, before doing so, I first discuss the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of this thesis.

Chapter Four: Methodology

"It would be a blessing if it were possible to study garbage in the abstract, to study garbage without having to handle it physically. But that is not possible. Garbage is not mathematics. To understand garbage, you have to touch it, to feel it, to sort it, to smell it" (Rathje and Murphy, 2001, p.9)".

"The social scientist who wishes to study rubbish must, at the very least 'paddle' in it" (Thompson, 1979, p.5).

4.1. Introduction

In chapter two and three I reviewed the relevant literature and discussed the theoretical frameworks that inform this thesis. I then conclude with an outline of the research objectives that guide this research. In this chapter, I consider the methodological and practical approaches that direct the research. My aim here is to explain and justify the methodological strategies that I adopt for the study. Following this introduction, section 4.2 presents a discussion of the philosophical approaches that informs my choice of data collection methods. I begin with the ontological and epistemological considerations of the research and show how these are underpinned by Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis (Lefebvre, 2004). After that, I provide a rationale for my decision to adopt a sensory ethnographic methodology in section 4.3. This leads to section 4.4 where I explain the practical aspects of my research by explaining how my choice of methods goes beyond merely accounting for textual or representational data. Instead, I consider the extent to which my data collection methods assisted in collecting the data during my fieldwork (i.e. participant observations, self-reflexive observations, interviews, field diaries, photographs and videos). In section 4.5 and 4.6 I discuss the sampling techniques employed and the process I followed in terms of securing access to the sites where observations occurred. I proceed to consider some of the risks that comes with undertaking sensitive ethnographies as well as offer a reflexive account of position during the fieldwork (4.7). In section 4.8 I discuss the challenges I encountered during my fieldwork before reflecting on

the tactics with which I navigated these difficult situations. This leads to section 4.9, where I offer an in-depth account of the methods and processes I followed to analyse the research data. I conclude the chapter with a reflective consideration of the ethical implications and the overall research process for the study.

4.2. Research Philosophies: Ontological and Epistemological Orientation of Rhythmanalysis

Holden and Lynch (2003) explain that the philosophical underpinning of any research is essential to justify the need for undertaking such research. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that it is significant for researchers to pinpoint the philosophical traditions that guide their research approaches. Two philosophical approaches underpin any given research. These comprise the ontological and epistemological positions. Ontology refers to the nature of reality and what constitutes knowledge. This branch of philosophy asks researchers to consider how reality is constructed (Burrell and Morgan, 1979); whether knowledge is produced following the interaction between people and the world or whether reality is objective and independent of human interactions (Crotty, 1998). Gray writes that "epistemology provides a philosophical background for deciding what kinds of knowledge are legitimate and adequate" (2017, p.21) for undertaking research. Easterby-Smith et al., (2012) explain that epistemological considerations are useful for justifying the tools and methods that are utilised for undertaking research. They highlight the importance for researchers to chisel out the epistemological positions of their research. The interpretive paradigm stands in contrast to positivism and subscribes to a relativist ontology that embraces a social construction of multiple realities. Whereas the positivist approach privileges uniformity and objectivity, Crotty (1998, p.68) argues that when undertaking research "interpretivists tend to focus on exactly those aspects that are unique, individual and qualitative". Crotty's comment suggests that interpretive researchers are interested in interpreting multiple meanings and accounts that are not generalizable. Moreover, the notion that such accounts are

derived following human interaction suggests that the research findings acquired through this approach are value-laden (Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

Regarding the theoretical frameworks on which this thesis is built, I want to clarify that the ontological orientation of 'practice' is reflected in my choice of combining Lefebvre's social space (1991) and rhythmanalysis (2004). These frameworks have, at their centre, the idea that practices, particularly those of the everyday, are socially produced. However, while Lefebvre's production of space and rhythmanalysis are deemed humanist theories, it is pertinent to note that his frameworks accommodate a post-humanist perspective, which enables researchers to consider the role of objects in the manifestation of practices. Although, Lefebvre is a Marxist with a realist materialist standpoint, his ideas are nevertheless anthropocentric in that he takes an embodied approach to exploring people's struggles and the conflicts that exist between different groups in societies (Zieleniec, 2016). For instance, Lefebvre writes:

> "The body. Our body. So neglected in philosophy that it ends up speaking its mind and kicking up a fuss. Left to physiology and medicine...the body consists of a bundle of rhythms, different but in tune. It is not only in music that one produces perfect harmonies. The body produces a garland of rhythms... [and with it] the rhythmanalyst will be attentive, but not only to words or pieces of information, the confessions and confidences of a partner or a client. He will listen to the world, and above all to what are disdainfully called noises, which are said without meaning, and the murmurs, full of meaning – and finally he will listen to silences." (Lefebvre, 2004, p.29-30)

Lefebvre's comments highlight the importance of the body to the rhythmanalyst during the research process. 'Knowledge' in this sense is subjective and reliant on the subjective experience and perception of the researcher in relation to 'lived temporality' (p.31). Lefebvre is also clear about the role of materiality in his critique of everyday life and the production of space. He acknowledges the importance of attending to the materiality of space and objects in his analysis of rhythms. Although subtly emphasised, Lefebvre (1991/2004) demonstrates the importance of artefacts (city maps, high buildings, trees, windows, cars) in providing a representation of spaces. This notion of materiality in Lefebvre's writings is apparent in his contention that:

> "The surroundings of the body, the social just as much as the cosmic body, are equally bundles of rhythms...now look around you at this meadow, this garden, these trees and these houses...you at once notice that every plant, every tree has its rhythm. And even several rhythms. Leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds." (2004, p.88-89)

In Chapter 3, I discussed the tenets of rhythmanalysis and explained how it is simultaneously a theory and a method that is useful for exploring space, embodied practices and rhythms of daily life. Rhythmanalysis, therefore, provides a useful analytical framework for capturing the rhythmicity of 'space and time' analysis in the everyday practices around rubbish (Edensor, 2010). Lefebvre (2004) noted that the rhythmanalyst utilises the body as the first point of analysis "...to listen to a house, a street, a town as one listens to a symphony, an opera" (p.5). Lefebvre (2004, p.29) argues that using the body as a metronome, the rhythmanalyst first learns from his own body rhythms before using this to analyse and appreciate other external rhythms thus leading to a co-rhythmanalytical process. Rhythmanalysis has been used to explore embodied practices. For instance, using rhythmanalysis as a research framework, Rantala and Valtonen (2014) undertook an analysis of sleeping practices of tourists and demonstrate how the different seasonal cycles impact on the embodied practices of tourists. Equally, Mertena (2015) conducted a rhythmanalysis of the mobile experience of tourists or train travellers while paying attention to how the cyclical, mechanical, linear and social rhythms affect the overall experience of tourists. Thus, the rhythmanalyst is expected to call on his senses to capture even the most mundane of activities, temporal dimensions of places and spaces.

While Lefebvre (1991) considers space to be socially produced, his engagement with the production of social space was made primarily through an ontological engagement (i.e. dialectical interactions) without any explicit attempt to outline his epistemological positions (Pierce and Martin, 2015). This shortcoming of rhythmanalysis has been attributed to the notion that it is an incomplete project which fails to identify a precise method for executing it as a tool of analysis (Amin and Thrift, 2002). Lefebvre argues that space is socially produced; but then falls

short of chiselling out how the production of space can be tested (Simonsen, 2004; Stanek, 2011). It is not my aim to offer a full critique of the ontological and epistemological positions of Lefebvre's framework, which have already been addressed (see Pierce and Martin 2015; Stanek, 2011; Unwin, 2000). As I discussed towards the end of chapter two and three, Lefebvre's emphasis on the primacy of everyday life, the role of the body in the performance of practices and materiality cannot be overlooked and makes it a useful framework for this research.

Therefore, in this research rhythmanalysis is useful for noting down the rituals that are performed in everyday life while not losing sight of the routinised practices enacted by household stakeholders (i.e. rhythms of waste disposal). I equally undertook a rhythmanalysis of the research sites. I paid attention to the smellscapes of the dumpsites, the physical movements and social practices of the actors within the waste management sector. I spent a reasonable amount of time relying on my body to document how the natural and linear rhythms are able to dictate the practices performed these waste management actors. In short, at the centre of my methodology is the reliance on my self-reflexive experiences (both embodied) and those of my participants in documenting and exploring practices around rubbish. Therefore, in keeping with rhythmanalysis, I adopted a sensory ethnographic strategy as my underlying research method. I now discuss this.

4.3. Sensory Ethnographic Methodology

Before discussing the nitty-gritty of my consideration of sensory ethnographic method, it is imperative to explain my decision to undertake an ethnographic approach. In *Rubbish Theory*, Thompson (1979) makes it clear that, for social researchers to fully understand rubbish, they must 'paddle' through it. Thompson's remark hints at the notion that rubbish is not an abstract thing. It possesses qualities that are associated with the five senses; the smells associated with it, the physical attributes such as shape, weight and texture. In short, my

choice of an ethnographic approach is informed by my commitment to explore peoples' everyday practices around rubbish as they unfold in real-time.

Specifically, I adopted a sensory ethnographic approach to attend to the senses that are present in participants' interaction with rubbish (Pink, 2015). For Pink, an attendance to sensorial perceptions is integral to understanding how their life stories are told. Thus, sensory ethnography provides researchers with an innovative approach that is able to document experiences and practices in an unconventional style (Paterson, 2009). Sensory ethnography, therefore, departs from traditional ethnographical approaches that focus on 'thick description' following participant observations (Delamont, 2004). Instead, Pink (2015, p.4) insists that "sensory ethnography is a reflexive and experiential process through which understanding, knowing and knowledge are produced". Mertena (2015) agrees, arguing that a sensory ethnographic methodology will enable researchers document embodied practices performed by research participants. For example, Middleton (2010) takes a sensory ethnographic approach to explore the sensual engagements and embodied aspects of urban pedestrians' everyday walking practices. Also, Bloch contends that sensory ethnography equips researchers with the method necessary to uncover "the most profound type of knowledge [that] is not spoken of at all and thus inaccessible to ethnographic observations or interview" (1998, p.46).

My choice of sensory ethnography is born out of my commitment to document and observe multiple understandings of practices "that may evade interviewees conscious awareness" (Hill et al., 2014, p.383). By taking into account the multisensory aspects of everyday life, this research attends to the visual and non-visual senses (such as smells, sights and sounds) to gain insights into participants' experiences and practices around rubbish (Pink, 2015). Steven Feld's work in Papua New Guinea shows how a focus on multisensory perceptions is integral to ethnographic research. Feld illustrates how visual (sight) and non-visual perceptions (sound) represent different meanings to individuals. For instance, he demonstrates how a Kaluli man's account of 'bird' sound reads: "...listen – to you they are birds, to me they are voices of the forest" (Pink, 2015,

p.52). As Feld notes in his discussion, 'bird' sound, for members of the Kaluli clan, represent the presence of the deceased and evidence of their ancestors in the forest. This example demonstrates the ways in which both visual and non-visual data can be crucial for my ethnographic research. During my fieldwork, I paid attention to the smellscapes and soundscapes and embodied practices that are characteristic of my research sites. I noted how sounds and the tactile qualities of objects were useful in enacting practices around rubbish.

4.4. Data Collection Methods

Traditional qualitative research tools such as interviews rely on the ability of research participants to form, recollect and share their experiences which are, in turn, recorded by researchers (Gretzel and Fesenmaier, 2010). Such traditional qualitative methods have been criticised for placing emphasis on text, the cognitive and visual aspect of everyday practices and experiences of people and, in doing so, neglect the emotional, sensorial aspects of everyday practices, space and time (Taylor, 2002). Thrift (1996) has argued that such an approach leaves out some of the unspoken and embodied experiences. Indeed, Dickinson and Dickinson (2006) point out that such a representational approach enables researchers to capture only the aspect of experiences that are remembered or more easily expressed by research participants. Therefore, researchers' reliance on such individuals to reflect and fully articulate these forms of practices might prove futile since they omit part of the make-up of the pre-cognitive and embodied perspective.

In the *Production of Space* Lefebvre (1991) is clear on how the spatial triad makes it possible for researchers to go beyond the everyday interactions and account for a materially constituted space that can be empirically accessed through multisensory perceptions. Lefebvre's attentiveness to the embodied perceptions in rhythmanalysis was useful in exploring the way everyday practices around waste are embodied and taken-for-granted. As Edensor (2001) argues, people are routinely socialised into unreflexive habits or performances so that

they enact practices without even thinking about them. For instance, I documented the rhythmic practices relating to waste production and disposal; the regularity of disposal and the people responsible for it. These are activities we engage in without thinking or that we forget to do due to it being low on the list of our priorities. Hill et al., (2014) and Stoller (1989) have suggested that only a unique form of ethnographic inquiry can help capture the sensorial or non-textual aspects of practices.

Pink's (2015) sensory ethnography represents one such unique ethnographic approach. At the centre of sensory ethnography is the researcher's reflexivity – the idea that researchers need to rely on their own sensory experiences to identify and capture embodied experiences (Crang, 2003). Pink (2015) writes:

> "The self-conscious and reflexive use of the senses [...] is an important and strategic act. By attempting to become similarly situated to one's research participants and by attending to the bodily sensations and culturally specific sensory categories (e.g. in some, but not all cultures, smell, touch, sound, vision, taste) through which these feelings are communicated about and given value, ethnographers can come to know about other people's lives in ways that are particularly intense." (Pink, 2015, p.59)

Pink (2015) rejects the traditional stance of qualitative research in which researchers are represented as detached from their research context and, instead, produce objectified accounts of participants' life stories. Silverman (2015) concurs, claiming that it is indeed a fantasy to think that ethnographers can remove themselves from the context of their study. If anything, such detachments run the risk of failing to provide an in-depth account of everyday life. Pink's (2015) sensory ethnographic approach, therefore, considers the ethnographic encounter as "a collaborative process through which shared understandings are produced" (p.58).

To address my research aim – which is to gain an embodied understanding of the spatial dynamics and processes underpinning the social, cultural, political and economic practices enacted around rubbish – I utilised tools that are consistent with the sensory aspect of rhythmanalysis in an attempt to engage them as co-

rhythmanalysts (see Lai and Lim, 2017). Through my participation and self-reflexive experience of the field, I moved beyond the textual to account for the multisensorial aspects of spaces, people and practices (Hein et al., 2008). In undertaking a sensory ethnography, I combined a range of research methods that enabled me to attend to the visual, textual, embodied and multisensory elements of the everyday practices around rubbish. These research methods include participant observation, self-reflexive observations, interviews, visual methods i.e. photograph and videos (see fig 2).

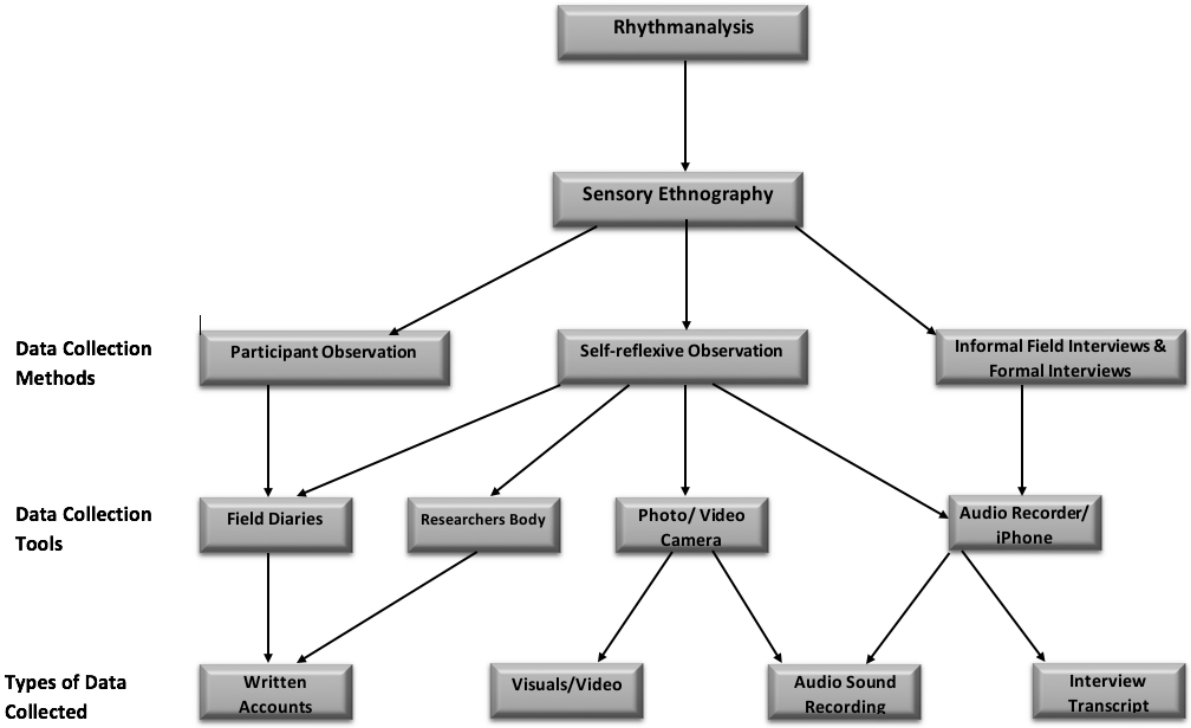


Figure 2 Relationship between the data collection methods

4.4.1. Participant Observations

Participant observation is an ethnographic approach where the researcher immerses themselves in the lifeworld of participants to learn about them. During this immersion, the researcher engages in a real-time documentation and

interpretation of the events that occur in research sites (Delamont, 2004; Rosen, 1991). Gobo (2011) maintains that researchers must dwell in the field and actively use their cognitive and sensory abilities (vision, sounds, smells) to observe and record proceedings as they unfold in the participants' everyday life. For this study, I was involved in six months of participant observation which allowed me to foster and engender rapport and trust with my research participants (Agar, 1996; Junker, 1960; Seale, 2012). In particular, I immersed myself in the daily life of Lagos households and local communities and participated in their day-to-day activities involving waste disposal, scavenging, sorting and recycling (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2010).

Boote and Matthews (1998) argue that, as a data collection tool, participant observation has often been overlooked in marketing literature. This is partly to do with a perception that it is time-consuming and unable to provide in-depth data that are generalisable (ibid). However, Boote and Matthews reflect on how ethnographic observations can aid researchers' in dealing with response biases since they can scrutinise participants' sayings in relation to what they actually do. Pink (2015, p.20) also suggests that ethnographic approaches can aid consumer researchers in exploring consumers' "multisensory relationships to the materialities and environments of their everyday lives". In this way, observations created a reflexive space which allowed me to pay attention to human and non-human entities. For instance, I noticed that the tools that are used for scavenging, objects in the art studios, and sounds that are characteristics of research sites were all integral in prompting my participants' actions during the performance of practices around rubbish. Participant observation therefore, presents an advantage to this research. For instance, participant observation can offer an in-depth insight into the everyday routines that are often overlooked.

During the fieldwork, I observed the practices that are performed by the different stakeholders involved in the waste management sector (see Appendix 7 for observation guide). These observations involved the documentation of mundane practices that are often repetitive (i.e. retrieval, sorting and collection of objects, such as metals and plastics), paying attention to spoken words and behaviours

(Back, 2015; Seale, 2012). For example, I spent hours observing householders produce and dispose of rubbish as well as scrutinise the worth of objects that are yet to be rubbish. These observations centred on documenting the locations of the rubbish bins, the spaces they are kept, the rituals performed around the handling of waste and practices of disposal. During my visits to the dumpsite, I spent up to eight hours daily observing and interviewing informal scavengers as they recovered and traded waste.

With the consent of my participants', I engaged in mobile observations[3] which enabled me to shadow scavengers who were 'on the move' collecting waste. This was useful in learning about their routes, identifying the spaces where they undertake their operations, and the strategies and tactics employed while enacting practices of scavenging. Following Saunders et al., (2012), these observations were mostly overt since participants were aware of my position as the researcher. Although an overt approach may have led to participants adjusting their behaviour during these observations (Bryman and Bell, 2015); such method nevertheless outweighs the ethical repercussions involving the invasion of participants' privacy and the lack of informed consent associated with covert observations (Grix, 2010; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2010).

Furthermore, my observations were often based on activities or specific practices that grasped my attention. Hammersley and Atkinson (2010) and Lofland and Lofland (2006) have suggested that mental notes are useful for researchers who do not want to be seen to take notes when closely watching participants. Guided by Lofland and Lofland suggestion, I noted down things that were of interest to the research and I documented these using mental notes, before approaching participants for either a formal or an informal chat. These observations afforded me the opportunity to ask questions that were crucial for understanding the hidden meanings underpinning practices enacted during the handling of waste. Having discussed my observation of the research participants, I now turn to explaining how self-reflexive observations were crucial for the study.

[3] Given that that the operations of itinerant scavengers are nomadic, shadowing them means constantly roaming the streets of Lagos looking for valuable materials

4.4.2. Self-Reflexive Observations

During and after the day's activities, self-reflexive observations were useful for noting the rhythms that are characteristic of the spaces (research sites) and practices before attempting to synthesise my sensory experiences with those of the research participants. This prompted me to probe, document, and analyse the multisensory and rhythmic experiences of the research participants. For instance, post-observation, my self-reflexive notes served as a guide during subsequent observations and interviews. According to Rose (1997), this approach follows an introspective process where researchers self-reflect to gain a better understanding of their research settings. Pink (2015) suggests that researchers adopting a sensory ethnographic approach need to develop a reflexive appreciation of their sensorium; and researchers need to be aware of experiences that they will easily absorb from the research without being aware. As a Nigerian, I was already familiar with some of the experiences from a broader cultural perspective. In particular, it was a challenge to document the mundane aspect of household activities since some of these practices were already known to me. Other research sites, like the dumpsite, represented a new experience for me, so it was easier to notice the rhythms of this social space. Nevertheless, my self-reflexive notes and interview transcripts were integral in identifying the nuances that are present in the everyday practices around rubbish.

Howes and Classen (cited in Pink 2015) also recommend that, in preparation for sensory ethnographic fieldwork, researchers must attempt to overcome their own sensory biases before training themselves to become "sensitive to a multiplicity of sensory expressions" (p.60). This training amounts to researchers developing the ability to simultaneously access and analyse two different cultural systems – theirs and those of the culture under study (ibid). Although, like Pink (2005, 2007), I did not engage in a pilot study nor "attempted to deconstruct my personal sensory experiences" regarding the everyday practices around rubbish. Nevertheless, following Pink's (2015) suggestion, my self-awareness and ability

to spot and analyse how my personal sensory embodied perception differs from those of my participants developed organically during the research process. For instance, it was important to explore and gain insight into how taken-for-granted experiences such as 'olfactory senses' of a places impact on participants' everyday life. Once I had made diary entries of my own embodied experiences, I followed these up by asking participants about their own experiences regarding these. For example, after noting my struggles to deal with the offensive odour from the dumpsite, I proceeded to ask my participants about their own experiences. Integral to self-reflexive observations is the role of the researcher's body in understanding and documenting the everyday practices that are performed around rubbish. This process of using the body as an ethnographic research tool has been championed by Lefebvre (2004).

So far, I have discussed how self-reflexive notes were integral to my observations. I have equally explained the process of undertaking observation during the research process. At this juncture, it is important to mention that these observations were not undertaken in isolation. As mentioned earlier, some of the notes documented were often able to prompt and drive field conversations with my participants. Besides, Russell et al., (2011) suggest that observations do not necessarily reveal hidden meanings, intentions, and feelings behind practices. Thus, to unearth these practices, researchers need to explore these meanings through interviewing participants. What follows next is a discussion of the process I underwent in conducting the formal and informal interviews.

4.4.3. Field Interviews

It is impossible to discuss participant observations without also establishing the role of field interviews in sensory ethnography. Interviews serve as a useful tool for exploring the viewpoints of participants. I am sensitive to the idea that my approach to interview discussions was not purely representational. In other words, the interviews conducted did not follow the traditional method, which involves merely tape recording and transcribing voices of participants. Instead,

the interviews conducted during the research took into account the multisensory experiences that unfolded during the enactment of practices (Pink, 2015). This approach enabled me to take into account sounds, body language and gestures and affects during the interview discussions with my participants. Lefebvre (2004) contends that gesticulations produce their rhythms and that there are nuances within such rhythms. In other words, the gestures expressed by people vary from context to context (ibid). Indeed, during interviews and observations, both gestures and mannerisms helped to spark interesting conversations with my participants. For instance, participants often commented on my attire and my gestures during interviews (a detailed discussion of this is presented in section 6.3.7).

This style of interviewing allowed me to gain a nuanced understanding of the relationship between subjects and object relations that are present in participants' life experiences. For example, during interviews, my participants told stories about their possessions. In the process, I observed my participants' body language and mood, as they shared stories about how specific objects evoked emotions. Guided by Pink (2004; 2015) I asked specific questions about objects before probing the ensuing response from my participants. Such an approach treats interviews as a collaborative process which involves the co-production of meanings between the researcher and the participants. The photographs below depict some of the objects that I used in driving interviews.

Photo 1: Musa talking about his scrapped vehicle wiper

Photo 2: Fatima talking about her decision to upcycle

Photo 3: Peter sharing stories about an art piece

Following Belk and Costa (1998) and Schouten and McAlexander (1995), formal and informal interviews were undertaken for the research. Informal interviews were useful for probing participants on practices that were of interest to my research. In keeping with my collaborative interview engagement, I allowed participants the freedom to express their own interests during interviews. Short informal chats were also invaluable for me to engage with participants who were not keen to be interviewed while working. Moreover, most of the informal interviews were conducted while 'on the move' as I often chased along participants who were scavenging. During these informal mobile interviews, I acknowledge that I impacted on the rhythms of my participants and, in the

process, co-produced a different rhythm. At other times, it was difficult to build rapport with some research participants (Seale et al., 2004). This was because participants were not prepared to lose time and money. The consequence of this was that some interviews terminating prematurely with a duration between 10 and 15 minutes.

Guided by Mertena's (2015) tactic, I sometimes had to make quick decisions on whether to approach people for interviews, and whenever I did approach them, I relied on gauging the rhythms that potential participants were immersed in. For instance, I was hesitant to approach people who were engaged in picking materials that have been disposed of. And when I approached them, I often waited for when they took breaks to have lunch or simply took rests. Even so, I was sensitive to potential participants' moods and the atmosphere of the research site when deciding on whether participants would be willing to speak. Furthermore, it was challenging to record and transcribe these interviews due to constant movements, wind and background noises that are characteristic of the research environment.

In addition, informal interviews were usually followed up with formal interviews and these took place at a different time and space. These formal interviews were characteristic of a slower rhythm; one that is more adaptable to the formal interview process. For instance, there was little or no background noise, participants were not in haste to leave, and we were in a relaxed mood. Formal interviews enabled me to obtain a richer account of participants' views. Such discussions were often conducted post-observation to create a reflexive space, thereby allowing the participants to reflect on their practices and experiences around rubbish and how these can be understood in relation to a cultural, political, and economic standpoint.

I conducted formal interviews with each of the stakeholders identified in the research. Apart from the formal interviews conducted on the dumpsites, 11 formal interview discussions were held in the homes of household individuals with their consent. This ensured that I and my participants were relaxed and comfortable throughout the interview process. The length of these interviews

ranged from 45 minutes to 90 minutes. In total, I conducted 45 interviews which comprised 28 formal interviews and 17 informal interviews (see Appendix 9 for the profile of participants who graciously took part in the research and the volume of data obtained in the research sites). In general, semi-structured and open-ended questions were used to generate discussion during the interviews (Stern et al., 1998). Despite having an interview guide to hand, participants had the freedom to go off topic to discuss other aspects of their everyday practices that are relevant to their handling of rubbish. This approach offered my participants the flexibility to explore other topics that were of interest while the flow and direction of the discussion are managed to ensure that they did not wander too far off-topic (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Rapley, 2004).

All interviews were audio recorded using an iPhone and sometimes an audio recording device. For security, the audio files were encrypted and stored on my computer at the close of the day in preparation for transcription. The interviews were conducted in languages which included English, Nigerian Creole language of pidgin, Yoruba[4] and Urhobo[5]. It was important to conduct interviews in these languages because some participants, notably scavengers, often had difficulty communicating in English. My proficiency in these languages enabled me to transcribe and, where necessary, translate (symbolically) into English before analysing the interviews to minimise misinterpretation and maintain contextual meanings (Esposito, 2001).

4.4.4. Field Diaries

The use of field diaries in documenting the experiences of the researcher and the researched has been discussed extensively in qualitative research literature (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Pink, 2007; Seale, 2012). Schouten and McAlexander (1995) showed how fieldnotes (collected during observations) served as a tool for understanding the consumption practices and behaviours of Harley owners. Specifically, field diaries are valuable for documenting mundane practices,

[4] One of the major languages spoken in Nigeria
[5] A language spoken by the biggest ethnic group in the Niger delta region of Nigeria.

movements, physical gestures and the manner in which people make use of their personal space (Baerenholt et al., 2004; Mack et al., 2005). Guided by this, I used field diaries to document the practices performed by the research participants. I noted details about the research sites, movements of people, and the sounds that are characteristic of the research sites. I usually made notes of activities before approaching participants to ask questions about them. For example, I noticed that the rhythms and movements of female waste pickers within the dumpsite was bounded by specific time (i.e. between 07:00 and 11:00). After noting this down, I approached participants to ask more details relating to this particular rhythm.

Field diaries were not limited to ethnographic observations. During formal interviews, I also documented expressions displayed by interviewees. For instance, during interviews, I noted down expressions such as disdain, anger, sadness, and discontentment. I recall a conversation with a participant who expressed sadness when he spoke about a possession that reminded him of his late mother. Also, during another interview, a participant expressed anger when she talked about how her domestic rhythms often clashed with those of her husband. These notes were useful for analysing the interview data as is reflected in the empirical chapters.

Mertena (2015) shows how field diaries are useful for documenting personal experiences while undertaking a sensory ethnographic research. Inspired by this I used field diaries to record my embodied experience of the research sites that I visited. For instance, I noted my personal experience of the olfactory senses of the Olusosun landfill where I undertook extensive observation of informal scavengers. I noted the myriad of physical interactions or embodied senses I experienced (dehydration, the feeling of tiredness, Harmattan breeze[6]) while moving around the research sites. In short, these auto-ethnographic notes, like interview transcripts, constitute part of the materials that were analysed in the empirical chapters. Furthermore, I followed Mertena (2015) and Pink's (2015)

[6] The harmattan is a season synonymous with West African countries. It is characteristic of a dry and dusty wind blowing from the Saharan desert between November and March

advice to complement written accounts with visual data (photographs and videos) while undertaking sensory ethnography.

4.4.5. Photographs and Videos

Photographs and videos are useful for "reliving the lived experience" of social actors (Hill, in Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) as well as providing visual records of the practices performed by actors involved in the organisation of waste. Farrimond (2013) suggests that researchers should endeavour to give something back to participants. As such, photographs featuring myself and research participants were of interest to them in terms of reliving the research experience (Pink, 2007). After the fieldwork concluded, I was in contact with some of my informants and shared some of the visual materials collected during the fieldwork, and these were well received.

According to Pink (2007), photographs from fieldwork can also be used for publication purposes as well as for eliciting information during interviews. Images, when shown to participants through a series of projective techniques, can open up boundaries and evoke memories that may otherwise be impossible without the use of photos (Harper, 2002; Heisley and Levy, 1991; Schwartz, 1992). During the data collection process, there were instances where I took photographs of particular activities and used these to prompt my informants during interviews. Guided by Pink's (2007) discussion on photo elicitation, I showed a series of photographs that captured certain household objects to my participants and asked questions about the objects. For example, on arrival at one of my participant's homes, I took a photo of mortars placed at the entrance. I then found the photograph was useful during the interview. Photographs were also valuable in charting the movements and transformation of rubbish into valuable goods (see section 6.4).

Furthermore, images and videos taken during fieldwork were useful for reminiscing my experiences post-fieldwork. For instance, during the process of analysing my data, I replayed several videos, and these were useful for recollecting my experience from the field. I was able to match visuals with sounds

by just replaying some the videos. In doing this, I was able to support my analysis using visual materials and, in the process, fulfil my commitment to undertake rhythmanalysis project. Furthermore, as part of the data collection process, I focused on capturing the visual landscape of dumpsites, participants' home spaces as well as objects that have not yet been assigned to the category of rubbish but yet have the potential to do so.

4.5. Sampling

In line with qualitative research, I considered a non-probability sampling method for this project. I employed a judgment sampling technique, which assisted me in recruiting participants who I felt possessed relevant knowledge pertaining to the topic (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The research participants observed and interviewed span across six stakeholders (LAWMA, Wecyclers, householders, dumpsite scavengers, itinerant scavengers and junk artists (see Appendix 5 for a description of these stakeholders). I relied on my judgment to select the research sites (i.e. Olusosun landfill, Wecyclers). I considered Olusosun landfill not only because it is the biggest and busiest landfill controlled by LAWMA but also because it is easily accessible by local transport. Wecyclers' position as one of the leading social enterprises working closely with LAWMA made them a crucial formal stakeholder involved in recycling activities.

The sample size of qualitative studies has been widely discussed with advocates of quantitative research pointing to the limitations of small sample sizes in providing an adequate amount of data for research (Gray, 2017). I took a more pragmatic approach in which I collected data until I reached theoretical saturation (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012; Fusch and Ness, 2015; Marshall et al., 2013). It is common that findings derived using a qualitative approach are not easily generalisable to other contexts. In any case, I did not intend to make factual claims about the everyday practices enacted around rubbish. Firestone (1993) contends that qualitative research should not be dismissed for its weak "claims for generalizability" since the rich findings derived using this method

make up for its shortcomings. Similarly, Finlay (2006) believes that qualitative research findings may be relevant to several individuals within and outside a research context. Having discussed the method of sampling adopted for the research, I now go on to explain the process I undertook to obtain access to the research sites.

4.6. Obtaining Access

Before embarking on fieldwork, it is important for ethnographers to consider how they will access the sites where observations and interviews take place. Johl and Renganathan (2010) explain that there is a tendency for researchers to consider a 'secured access' as a one-way ticket. However, Feldman et al., (2004) argue that the process of securing access requires researchers to convince and develop a rapport with people so that they are best placed to learn about the life experiences of participants. Such a consideration suggests that obtaining access to a research site or group is not a one-off exercise but, instead, it is an ongoing process that requires strong commitments and good use of tactics (Van Maanen and Kolb, 1985).

For instance, Buchanan et al., 1988 (in Johl and Renganathan, 2010, p.42) suggest four stages in securing research access and these comprise of "getting in, getting on, getting out and getting back". The 'getting in' phase involves the initial stage of signalling research intention to organisations or relevant stakeholders, while the 'getting on' stage requires researchers to negotiate access into the lifeworld of the research participants. The 'getting out' phase represents the process of negotiating the duration or date and time when the research will come to a close. Finally, the 'getting back' phase represents a process whereby the researcher leaves the research site and organisation graciously so as to allow him or her return in the future. Similarly, Gummesson (2000) explains that the process of securing research access can be categorised into physical access, continued access and mental access. Like the 'getting in' stage, physical access refers to the process of making physical contact with the people or object under study. Continued access can be described as ongoing

access during the research process while mental access can be simply described as a situation where researchers consider themselves part of the group.

Consistent with the above, I obtained formal access from the stakeholders involved in the research before commencing the data collection process. I secured physical access to research sites from LAWMA, Wecyclers, and the Abule-Nla community, where I undertook observations and interviews (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3). I wrote formal emails to the gatekeeper representing each stakeholder. Upon receiving my formal request, I was interviewed by the LAWMA's in-house research committee, and my status as a student at the University of Leicester was verified by Dr Ai-Ling Lai (one of my PhD supervisors) through a telephone conference. Once the research committee were satisfied with my proposal, I was issued a letter granting me access to the waste management and disposal site (Olusosun landfill). During the early stages of the research, I secured the trust of my gatekeepers, who vouched for me while making an effort to help me build rapport with my participants, who operate in the landfill (Feldman et al., 2004). I also secured access from informal waste operators (i.e. scrap dealers and itinerant scavengers) who engage in scrap dealing. Access to these sites was secured informally. I simply turned up at the scrapyards and introduced myself and my research intentions (Laurila, 1997). Once participants were satisfied with my intentions, they granted me access to these sites and consented to my research.

Drawing on Gummesson's (2000) approach to maintaining access, I ensured that I continued to treat access as an ongoing process. I made constant efforts to build rapport and reassure my participants that my research will not pose any risk to them during and after the project (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2010; Wood, 2006). It is important to note that ongoing access goes beyond simply building rapport with research participants. For instance, I noticed that my efforts at maintaining on-going access coincided with my process of becoming a part of this group. In other words, my quest to build rapport and create a pleasant atmosphere that could facilitate exchange between myself and my participants led to me performing similar practices as those of my participants. In particular,

I took into account the norms and rituals that are peculiar to the group while negotiating ongoing access, since there are practices that an outsider may take for granted that are important to research groups. For example, I observed that within the dumpsite, regular shaking of hands represents a ritual. Every time I met with informal scavengers, handshakes are offered not just at the beginning or end of conversations, but intermittently during chats. They often reacted to humour by offering informal handshakes which are similar to 'high-fives'. In these instances I reflected on my inhibitions – i.e. since scavengers' use their hands as a tool to pick materials from the dumpsite, I felt a reluctance to participate in these handshakes. However, upon noticing that it was something important for me to build rapport as long as I was in that space, I decided to embrace this ritual and, in the process, I slowly abandoned my discrete routine of using a sanitizer regularly. Having discussed the process of securing and maintaining ongoing research access, I now offer a reflexive discussion of the extent to which my socioeconomic background may have influenced on the research process.

4.7. A Reflexive Account of my Position in the Field

It is helpful to reflect on the extent to which my cultural and socio-economic background has impacted on my research. I am a 31 year old male Nigerian, born and raised in the Delta State (which sits in the south-south geopolitical zone or the Niger delta region). Having lived in cities across three of the six geopolitical zones[7] of Nigeria, I am familiar with some of the socio-cultural and economic practices around rubbish, which are enacted in Nigerian everyday life. For instance, I remembered trading some of my unwanted household items such as used clothes, bottles and metals to groups I refer to as itinerant scavengers in this thesis. I was also familiar with the offensive odours emanated from the Olusosun landfill in Lagos. Commuters who drive through Ojota expressway or travel to the Victoria island using the famous third mainland bridge will attest to

[7] There are 36 states in Nigeria excluding the federal capital territory – Abuja. These states are categorised into geopolitical zones (North Central, North East, North West, South East, South South, South West) and each of these zones comprises of states that share a similar culture, ethnic groups and sometimes indigenous languages.

the smell that penetrate vehicle windows as they drive past the landfill. It would therefore not be an understatement to acknowledge that I have some preconceptions of matters that relates to the organisation of rubbish in Lagos. That said, I went to the field believing that I would easily adjust to the settings and maintain my position as the researcher. However, I was 'jolted out of my senses' when I realised that there is a stark contrast between perceiving the foul odour from the landfill while in in car and actually tip-toeing on the landfill itself. Without going into details (for I have offered a nuanced discussion of such difficulties in section 4.8), I want to expand on the extent to which my social, cultural and economic background was useful in maintaining my position as a researcher in the field.

As it will become clear in section 6.1, the socioeconomic classification system in Nigeria is blurred in that there are no official metrics for classifying the working, middle, or upper class. Growing up from a humble beginning, I am nowhere near the upper-middle or high socioeconomic class, neither am I am close to the lowest socio-economic class in Nigeria. However, I acknowledge that my socioeconomic disposition was integral to my success in navigating the data collections process. In the process of securing access to the landfill, I went through complex identity presentation processes that required that I engaged in intellectual discussions with formal authorities while relying on good social skills to convince a number of stakeholders to grant me access to the research sites. I believe that without my educational experiences and social networks, I suspect that it would have been difficult if not impossible to secure access to the sites where I undertook the research. Similarly, I feel that that my humble origin was crucial in facilitating my adaptation to the difficult experiences that I dealt with while navigating the research sites (again, see section 4.8 for an in-depth discussion on this). Not only have these experiences been useful in building rapport with participants from a lower socioeconomic background, it was also crucial in engendering trust with the often marginalised scavengers. While I acknowledge that my socioeconomic background may have influenced the research process, I wish to categorically state that the research has influenced me as much as I have influenced it.

As a practitioner of higher education this research has had a profound influence on both my research and teaching practices. Post-fieldwork, I have become conscious of placing people on centre-stage in my teaching. In the lecture theatre, I often draw on students' experiences. In my research, I advocate methodologies that are inclined towards an understanding of the spatial, the embodied and the multisensorial. This has informed my teaching philosophy, as I have begun to emphasise how materialities, corporeal, and temporal experiences interweave with the processes of teaching and learning. More importantly, this research has heightened my awareness of how the future of certain people can be shaped and enabled by educational opportunities afforded to them. For example, one widow I interviewed at the Olusosun dumpsite had funded one of her son's education at a European university so that out of those humble beginnings her son was given a chance to strive for excellence in one of the world's most dynamic educational system. I keep such stories at heart when facing students or writing about my research; knowing that my job is to help individuals, particularly my students, to fulfil their potential. Having reflected on my position as a researcher and an educator, I will now consider the risks that accompanies undertaking ethnography in difficult research settings.

4.8. Undertaking Ethnographies under Difficult Conditions

The extent to which an awareness of research ethics can assist in protecting researchers and informants from potential physical, psychological, reputation and emotional harm has been widely discussed (see Dixit, 2012; Drake and Harvey, 2014; Warden, 2013). However, Power (1996) contends that the belief that managerial 'tick boxes' such as risk assessments and research ethics approval, can flag and control the risks associated with undertaking edgy research is flawed. Power believes that in order to extend scholarship on extreme research; researchers must be prepared to take risks and accept the likelihood that harms can potentially come their way during the research process. It goes without saying that I dealt with some risks and dangers during my fieldwork. On reading the title of this section, one may be forgiven to assume that I had proposed to engage in an extreme form of ethnography. However, this was not the case as the decision to reflect on my difficulties and dangers I faced during the research was made only recently. What follows is a discussion of a number of some difficult situations that occurred which I could not have envisaged.

In preparation for the fieldwork, I took a number of steps to ensure that I was ready to deal with possible health and safety issues. Following an in-depth discussion with my supervisors, research ethics committee and consultation with health care practitioners, it was decided that it was necessary for me to take some vaccines to mitigate against contracting diseases during fieldwork. Thus, before departing from the U.K., I got vaccinated against malaria, yellow fever, meningitis, tetanus, polio, typhoid, hepatitis A and hepatitis B. I also took with me a nose mask, a good stash of repellents and mosquito nets. In the early weeks of my fieldwork, I made use of a nose mask to cope with the offensive stench from the rubbish deposited and the dust that accompanies the moving compactor trucks in the landfill. However, I soon noticed that my attentiveness to health and safety norms (using the mask) marked me out as an outsider from the participants' standpoint. It signalled to them that I disapproved of the smell associated with the social space of the landfill (Largey and Watson, 1972). Upon

recognising this, and in an effort to build better rapport with my participants, I decided to abandon the use of the mask in order to blend in with the group. As such, I learnt to tolerate the peculiar odour of the dumpsites. Without going into details of this unmasking process (I have done this in section 6.3.8) I want to clarify that post-fieldwork, I developed phantosmia (a disease that characteristic of olfactory hallucinations) so that I occasionally perceive smells that are not present. In this case, the odour of the Olusosun landfill, where I undertook observations during the research process, was stored within my olfactory cells.

In addition, I also suffered from skin reactions and bites from mosquitoes and insects. Although my use of mosquito nets and repellents kept mosquitoes at bay during the nights and the day's activities, however, it was impossible to keep insects and mosquitoes away. Although I did not contract malaria during my time in the field, the bites left temporary scars on my body. The photo below depicts some of the scars from the mosquito bites during the fieldwork.

Photo 4: Scars from mosquitoes and insects' bites

Furthermore, there were moments when I was exposed to the risk of physical harm during field observations. Most notably, given the competitive nature of scavenging, the scavengers are often aggressive when they jostle for valuable discards. It is not uncommon to find scavengers operating in cliques within the dumpsite and these factions are bounded by shared language, geographical

location and culture. It is common to find scavengers from Sokoto[8] hanging out together, while informal operators from Kano[9] share a bond predicated on their place of origin. Belonging to cliques has important implications for informal workers as they are able to protect and support themselves and their members during the occasional clashes that occur in the dumpsite.

Photo 5: Scavenging tool (Akro)

For example, I witnessed a clash between two scavengers who fought over ownership of a piece of jewellery picked up in the dumpsite. What started as a quarrel between two individuals, quickly grew into a full-blown fight between two cliques that left several people injured. During the fight, scavengers attempted to physically harm their opponents using their akro[10] as weapons. Despite the fact that I had obtained full access from the formal authority to undertake research in this site, I felt vulnerable during these moments and wondered whether an aggressive person who is unhappy with my presence would latch on to me during these moments. Fortunately for me, I managed these situations quite well by staying away from these conflicts and only returning to the sites

[8] Sokoto is a state in located in the north west of Nigeria,
[9] Kano is state located in the northern part of Nigeria where the Hausa language is spoken.
[10] An 'akro' is a tool made from iron (with a curved sharp edge) and is often used by scavengers to dig through piles of rubbish in search of valuables

when activities returned to normal. Also, it is important to mention that my gatekeeper was helpful in ensuring my safety during my fieldwork. His presence during the early stage of my fieldwork ensured that most of the informal workers were familiar with my face and had knowledge of my status as a researcher.

4.9. Data Analysis

I followed Pink's (2015) perspective that there is no single template for undertaking an analysis of sensory ethnographic data. It is crucial is to note that data analysis cannot be separated from the ethnographic research process itself. It is not a structured activity that is separate from both the participants' and researchers sensory experiences (ibid). In other words, my interpretation of the research data occurred during and after the process of collecting them. Lefebvre's (2004) rhythmanalysis was integral to this process in that I relied on my body as a metronome for exploring the comings and goings across my research sites. Rhythmanalysis was useful for noting the sensory and embodied experiences (vision, smell, touch, sounds) that are characteristic of the waste disposal sites, as well as observing and documenting the manner in which the seasonal cycles (rain and sun) (de)synchronises with the practices that are performed around rubbish.

Although the process of organising the data (interview transcripts, videos, photographs, field diaries) were performed outside the ethnographic encounter or research settings, the meanings, patterns and themes started to emerge simultaneously with the data during my fieldwork. Pink (2015) considers a sensory ethnographic analysis to be an intuitive, messy and serendipitous task. Pink is of the view that the analysis and presentation of ethnographic data involve "bringing together or entangling a series of things in ways that make them mutually meaningful" (Pink, 2015, p.142). Guided by this, I engaged in a detailed, self-reflective and intuitive evaluation of the various research materials to derive emerging themes. These themes were created in relation to the theoretical frameworks (production of space and rhythmanalysis) underpinning

the research. In doing this, I demonstrate an appreciation of a method of analysis that fully integrates theory into the discursive elements rather than present a naked analytical description of data (Coffey, 1999; Kondo, 2009).

In terms of the nitty-gritty of the data analysis, I admit that it was not always a smooth process but rather an incremental and continuous one (Pink, 2015). Once I completed interviews, I transcribed them and kept electronic copies in folders. Interviews conducted in local languages were first transcribed and then translated into English to ensure that they are readable and relevant for the analysis. I made sure to retain peculiar words that were integral to research participants' intended meanings. Following my initial interpretation and presentation of the data, themes started to emerge, particularly in relation to the everyday practices performed by various stakeholders of this research. What was not clear at this stage was whether my analytical discussion of the data reflected the concepts or key topics associated with the theoretical constructs that underpinned the thesis. I then turned to the Lefebvre's (1999, 2004) theoretical concepts (spatial practices, representation of spaces, spaces of representation, arrhythmia, eurythmia, dressage, linear and cyclical rhythms) and used them to think through my empirical data. It was at this stage that I started to see how my empirical materials (transcripts, photographs, videos, diaries and self-reflexive notes) synthesised with Lefevbrian theoretical tools.

Furthermore, as part of keeping with the multisensory ethnographic methodology, I did not lose sight of my own embodied knowing and sensory experience (see Pink, 2015). Thus, I acknowledge that I became a co-producer of rhythms in the research process. Moreover, the use of auto-ethnographic notes implies that my voice, those of my participants, and objects can be heard in the analysis and research findings. Furthermore, I used photographs to illuminate some of the findings presented in the research. Following Pink, I considered photographs "as evocative of the research encounter through which they were produced, and of the embodied knowing this involved" (2015, p.144). Having discussed the process of analysing the research data, I now go on to discuss some of the ethical implications and reflexivity considered for this project.

4.10. Reflection and Limitations

Reflexivity is a fundamental aspect of social science research (Finlay et al., 2008). An aspect of reflection comprises of attending to the ethical issues that researchers' face prior, during and post the research process. Following Hammersley and Atkinson (2010), participation in this research was strictly voluntary, and participants were aware of their right to terminate the interviews at any given time during the research process. Before undertaking the interviews, participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix 4), which clearly states the researcher's intention to maintain confidentiality (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Although it was impossible to request individual consent during observations that took place in public spaces i.e. Olusosun landfill, prior to the start of the fieldwork, I obtained access to conduct the research in the site and I made efforts to seek individual consent whenever it was possible. Also, in an attempt to maintain privacy and confidentiality, I used pseudonyms and pixilation tools to anonymise the identity of my participants while presenting the data (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Undertaking participant observation comes with the risk of researchers going 'native' – a situation where a researcher becomes over-attached to the research settings and therefore loses objectivity and analytical perspective (Adler and Adler, 1987). During the research process, I attempted to deal with this issue by maintaining a cautious participatory level during observation. For instance, I employed pre-emptive tactics (i.e. body language) to avoid over-involvement in extreme activities (Pollner and Emerson, 1983). I took short breaks (1-2 weeks) from the sites. While these tactics allowed me to retain my analytical perspective, in hindsight, they were not successful in preventing me from engaging in some of the rituals and practices performed by my participants (something already discussed as part of ongoing access and doing edgy ethnographies).

According to Bryman and Bell (2015), researchers should endeavour to provide an accurate representation of participants' views. As such, I utilised member-checking to cross-check with participants whether their views had been properly understood and expressed. This was salient given that several interviews were conducted in the local dialects of research participants. Esposito (2001) argues that there is a tendency for researchers to sometimes lose meanings when interviews are conducted in languages that are different from those utilised in analysing the research data. However, my fluency in local Nigerian languages enabled me to analyse interview excerpts in the local language before translating back to English. This was important in achieving an accurate representation of the practices, behaviours, and words of the research participants.

Yet, Seale (2012) contends that research participants may not agree with researchers' analysis and this might be as a result of their inability to articulate and rationalise their actions. Agar (1996) concurs, claiming that such an issue is commonly associated with ethnographic observations where members of the group may have a different interpretation or experiences. Member-checking was therefore useful in clarifying my participants' views particularly in relation to the interviews. The member-checking was undertaken during the interview process and post-fieldwork. During the interview stage, I made sure to re-state and summarise the responses of my participants who are illiterate. I also made the interview transcripts available to these participants in the local languages. This was to ensure that I had correctly understood their views and to avoid misrepresentation during the data analysis stage. It was also a tactic to prevent a scenario where such participants may struggle to read and understand the interview transcript post-fieldwork. The member-checking employed during the data analysis stage was carried out with participants who are literate and able to process the information. In terms of the observation, it was impossible to conduct member-checking relating to the observations that took place in public spaces such as the landfill. However, guided by Lincoln and Guba (2000), I have used visual data and my self-reflexive auto-ethnographic notes to validate my observation of the practices that were documented during the research.

I admit that my pre-understanding may have influenced the research process. For instance, Ruby argues that an ethically minded visual representation in research should “be collaborative, reflexive, and to represent the ‘voices’ of informants” (cited in Pink, 2006, p.33). Ideally, I would have employed a photo elicitation technique where participants are asked to take photos which are then analysed in tandem with their narratives. However, most of my participants, particularly the informal waste workers, neither had the time nor the resources (photo or video equipment) to take photos or make videos. This left me with the responsibilities of capturing the visual materials for this research. I therefore acknowledge that my preconceptions, hunches and my way of seeing may have influenced my decision to take certain photographs and that my interpretation of visual materials may communicate specific power relations. Gummesson (2000, p.79) explains that a researcher’s pre-conception is an essential tenet of inductive research and that inductive research lacking pre-understanding will be open to criticisms and misleading discoveries. Nevertheless, to ensure trustworthiness and rigour during the research process, I set aside but not wholly discount my pre-understanding of the topic (Stark and Trinidad, 2007). I did this through by documenting memos throughout the data collection and analysis process. I previously explained my self-reflexive diaries were made throughout the research process and memos were created during the data collection and analysis to document the evolution of my ideas as I immersed myself in the data (Cutcliffe, 2003; Tufford, and Newman, 2012).

4.11. Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the methodological approaches that support this research. I began with a discussion of the philosophical underpinning by sketching out the ontological and epistemological considerations of the thesis. I proceeded to explain the ontological and epistemological considerations of rhythmanalysis and my choice of sensory ethnographic methodology. I outlined the data collection methods such as participant observation, self-reflexive observation, field interviews, field diaries and photographs and videos, which enabled me to explore the practices and experiences that are performed around rubbish. Following this, I discussed my consideration of judgement and snowball sampling techniques for recruiting participants for the research. I discussed how ongoing access was critical to the fieldwork before reflecting on the challenges that come with undertaking ethnographies under difficult situations. I explained the procedure for analysing the research data and reflected on the underlying research ethics of this project. Having discussed the methodological underpinning of this thesis, I now turn to the empirical chapters, where I present and analyse the data collected for this study.

Chapter Five: The Context of Lagos Revisited: The Official Representation of Waste Management

5.1. Introduction

All along I have emphasised that rubbish is not something that can be easily categorised. I have argued that the production and consumption of rubbish are integral to the social and economic regeneration of developing cities like Lagos. To reiterate, the aim of my research aim is to gain an embodied understanding of the spatial dynamics and processes underpinning the social, cultural, political and economic practices enacted around rubbish. In keeping with this aim, in this chapter I present the data obtained from the formal stakeholder, i.e. LAWMA – an organisation that champions the formal organisation of waste in Lagos. In this chapter, I draw on Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the spatial triads and particularly his concept of the representation of space to analyse the formal strategy ingrained in the waste management practices in Lagos. This is crucial, given the thesis's commitment to exploring the strategic and institutional practices that are enacted around rubbish and how these shapes the quotidian life in the urban spaces of Lagos (Lefebvre, 1991; 2004).

In particular, I focus on the power dynamics that emerge when formal waste management practices intertwine with the everyday and informal practices that are enacted around rubbish. Here, I am interested in charting the manner in which the official waste management policies dictate the (in)formal practices of waste management. Following Lefebvre (1991), I argue that representation of space – that is, the formal structures responsible for coordinating space – regulates the everyday practices of the various stakeholders involved in the organisation of rubbish. In section 5.2, I begin with a discussion of the formal actors involved in the waste management sector in Lagos. Here, I examine the role of LAWMA as the principal actor involved in the formal waste management sector. I consider how the official representations of LAWMA have impacted on

the everyday practices of other formal waste management organisations. In 5.3, I discuss how the ideological underpinnings of Lagos waste management practices are influenced by the socio-economic benefits that are extracted from waste. I then move to section 5.4 where I discuss the operations of Wecyclers – a social enterprise that is committed to promoting recycling in Lagos. In sections, 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7, I examine how these strategies for monitoring waste disposal inform the marginal representations of informal operators (i.e. scavengers) by the general public. I reflect on the formal and institutional strategies that enable the professional waste management sector, planners and policymakers to control the informal economic spaces.

5.2. Lagos Waste Management Policies

Generating over 14,000 metric tons of waste per day, the city of Lagos had been named as one of the dirtiest cities in Africa (Oyeniyi, 2011). The lack of adequate waste management policies, waste separation methods, and proper recycling infrastructures has generated significant health risks and environmental concerns for Lagos residents (Akinbode 2002; Taiwo, 2009). To deal with these issues, LAWMA was established in 1991 under Edict 55 of Lagos State Government and was entrusted with the responsibility of keeping the city clean as well as promoting waste recovery and recycling. As a state-controlled organisation, LAWMA constitutes an authoritative body for the management and disposal of rubbish in Lagos. As the population of the city continues to swell due to the influx of migrant workers who come searching for economic opportunities, the city's infrastructure has increasingly become overloaded as it is unable to cope with the inevitable increase in the waste generated (Langer and Ukiwo, 2008).

Despite efforts by LAMWA to create adequate waste management policies, the problems associated with inadequate and ineffective disposal of waste continue to linger (Akiyode and Sojinu, 2006). Consequently, this paved the way for a flourishing informal industry, in which cart pushers step in to undertake door-to-door waste collection for householders in return for small fees (Araba, 2010).

Mostly shabby and unkempt, these cart pushers announce their presence to householders with a unique sound that is created by striking an iron rod against their locally constructed carts. Upon request, they transport household rubbish to designated disposal sites. Although intervention by these informal cart pushers has provided additional avenues for urban households to get rid of their waste, the problems of piling rubbish remain unresolved in Lagos, and the city streets were continually littered with refuse.

The need to tackle the ever-increasing problem of waste led to the introduction of a new waste management reform in October 2004 (Araba, 2010). This reform saw the establishment of Private Sector Participants (PSP) who were entrusted with the responsibility to undertake household waste collection and disposal across 24 municipal local government districts within Lagos state (ibid). Following this privatisation of the waste management sector, the informal cart pushers who had engaged in door-to-door collection and disposal of household rubbish were simultaneously declared illegal. Since then, householders have been forbidden from using their services. LAWMA mandates that cart pushers must be prohibited from collecting and transporting refuse because they engaged in illegal dumping and fly-tipping that ultimately leads to drainage blockages and floods (Akoni, 2013). Indeed, informal cart pushers are often accused of illegally disposing of household waste in locations such as drainages, kerbsides, streams and illegal dumpsites.

Yet the privatisation of the waste management sector did not completely relieve LAWMA of the responsibility to conduct the affairs of the PSPs. Indeed, under the new waste management reform, LAWMA continues to regulate the operations of PSPs in Lagos. As a critical stakeholder in the waste management sector, the activities of the PSPs are geared towards reducing, recovering and encouraging the recycling of waste in the city. These activities fit into LAWMA's agenda to transform the city's aesthetics as well as to promote a cleaner and safer city for its residents (LAWMA, 2017). Moreover, the arrival of the PSPs brought about an approach that was not solely centred on the collection and transportation of domestic and commercial waste to the landfills. It also led to an upgrade in waste

management infrastructures such as the use of waste compactor trucks, adequate waste containers, as well as the distribution of large waste bags to both domestic and commercial residents.

With the privatisation of waste management, individual and commercial residents are expected to pay a fee to the local PSPs that handle their disposal services (Akiyode and Sojinu, 2006). This waste management reform remained mostly inadequate as householders' compliance with payments was low (ibid). Consequently, the lack of payment has meant that the services offered by the PSPs were often inefficient. To improve their performance, the state (through LAWMA) launched another reform in 2004 to ensure the PSPs receive monthly payments from LAWMA. In turn, the state recouped the expenses by billing households and commercial organisations on a monthly basis (Akiyode and Sojinu, 2006). The remuneration offered to the PSPs was based on the tonnage of waste collected, transported and disposed of at designated sites (i.e. landfills)[11].

According to Segun Adeniji, the then general manager of LAWMA, the payment is based on an agreement that ensures LAWMA collect and keep 40% of the income generated from household and commercial outlay while the remaining 60% is returned to the PSPs (Hanafi, 2017). Moreover, under this reform, the responsibility for educating households on the appropriate ways of sorting, packing and readying their waste for disposal was passed to the PSPs. Besides, the PSPs are expected to monitor the conduct of households and other commercial enterprise. In some cases, PSPs report clients/households who have violated the rules and regulations laid down by LAWMA, who in turn issue a fine. Mr Ola Oresanya, the former managing director of LAWMA, reported that the waste management reform ensured that the waste management sector witnessed a dramatic improvement in the performance of waste disposal by the

[11] There are 3 major landfills operated by the state. This includes the Olusosun site, Abule-Egba site and Solous sites. The Olusosun landfill is of particular significance because it is the largest and is geographically situated in the centre of Lagos. Besides, it is one of the main sites in which I conducted my field work.

PSPs (Akoni, 2014). In short, the sector experienced a surge in the quantity of waste deposited to the landfills such that the number of compactor trucks visiting the Olusosun landfill on a daily basis increased from 30–80 to over 500 (LAWMA, 2015).

Recently, under the leadership of Governor Akinwummi Ambode[12], the waste management sector has undergone yet another waste reform, one that has been termed Cleaner Lagos Initiative (CLI) and passed into law through the 'Environmental Management and Protection Bill' of 2017. Under this reform, the local PSPs are expected to give way to a foreign environmental consortia which now have sole responsibility for the collection and disposal of residential or household rubbish. Under this arrangement, the commercial sector or industrial waste continues to be served by the PSPs. In a recent statement published in the Premium Times paper, the governor of Lagos state made the following remark:

> "I don't like the way the city is and the Private Sector Participants (PSP) collectors are not having enough capacity to do it. But again, should I tax people to death? The answer is no. I don't want to tax people and so we need this partnership with the private sector so that they can invest in the sanitation management of the city and in no time, maybe by July, the city will change forever" (source: Ezeamalu, 2017).

The above timelines show that the waste management sector has been subjected to several reforms and policy directions. This has led the sector to experience uncertainties and instability. Governor Ambode's remark only serves to reinforce the state's agenda to adopt a waste management practice that is befitting of modern cities, especially one that is aesthetically pleasing. Ambode's decision to handover the responsibility of domestic waste collection and disposal to overseas companies resonates with the government's effort to modernise the waste sector. I argue that such an effort constitutes a rhetorical dressing up of a neo-liberal agenda (Harvey, 1989; Mbah and Nzeadibe, 2016) that paves the way towards the privatisation of the waste management sector. This neoliberal turn

[12] Ambode is the current governor of Lagos State

exemplifies Lefebvre's (1996) critique of the gradual colonisation of urban spaces by capitalist and market forces. According to Zieleniec (2016, p.8), such a neoliberal agenda weakens the local economy and potentially disrupts the "collective social and spatial solidarity". In this manner, the co-optation of local waste management practices by global economic and political forces perpetuates the production of what Lefebvre (1991) calls the 'abstract space' of capital – defined as a homogenised space that is absent of localised forms of practices or differences. While it bodes well for the city in terms of the advancement of waste management practices, the local PSPs are aggrieved that this reform puts them in a disadvantageous position since they do not have the capital to invest in the sector (Olowoopejo, 2017). As such, this new reform has created a tense atmosphere where local PSPs consider themselves to be victims of the state strategies (ibid). During an interview with Vanguard Newspaper, Mr Michael Olamilekan – one of the local PSP – made the following remark:

> "In the last 16 years, we have invested millions of naira into waste collection in Lagos state. In fact, some of us got the funds through a loan to purchase compactor trucks. And each of the truck costs N20 million (£41,719) while secondhand compactor trucks cost N12 million (£25,000) ...it is pathetic that after assisting the government to sustain a cleaner Lagos, that they now feel we are not competent to achieve their aim. If the government discovers a new model of waste collection, all it should have done was to issue another guideline for operators. I remember when we started in 1999 and today we have graduated to compactor trucks. We are not against the government on the new policy, what we are saying is that we should have been invited for dialogue before embarking on the new policy" (Source: Olawoopejo, 2017, Vanguard News).

In the above excerpt, Mr Olamilekan laments how the state's new waste management reform represents a strategy that does away with their services and contributions. For Olamilekan, the decision to award a foreign consortium [Visionscape Group][13] monopoly to collect and dispose of household rubbish constitutes a passive strategy that forces local PSPs out of the formal waste

[13] Visionscape group consists of a group of companies that provides specialised global services to different communities. Under the recent reform on Cleaner Lagos Initiative (CLI), Visionscape Group are granted exclusive rights over the collection and disposal of household waste.

management sector. This turn to foreign investment can be considered as an imposition of capitalist rhythms on the lived spaces and illuminate the manner in which such rhythms disrupts the spatial practices that are enacted by the local PSPs (Lefebvre, 1996). Yet as reflected in a recent remark by the Lagos commissioner for information, the local PSPs are currently making efforts to resist these dominant capitalist rhythms.

> "A PSP operator was caught along the Lagos Island Central Business District discharging refuse on the street…in the middle of the night which shows the institutional corruption that has been lingering in the sector which the State Government intends to fight with the [Cleaner Lagos Initiative] reform put in place…The arrest of the PSP operator is a clear example of the deliberate efforts to sabotage what the [state] government is doing…it is unfortunate that some PSP operators were allowing vested interests to use them to blackmail the government into abandoning the reforms designed to revolutionize waste management in the state in line with global best practices" (Kehinde Bamigbean, Source: Vanguard newspaper).

As indicated above, the alleged PSPs mischievous effort to deliberately litter the streets of Lagos with refuse can be considered as an act of subversion or resistance if you like, one that they hope will discredit the effectiveness of the CLI reform as well as undo the efforts of Visionscape's management of the waste sector. This resonates with Edensor's (2010) claim that the imposition of capitalist rhythms is often accompanied by resistance that aims to obstruct these superimposed rhythms. So far, I have shown the various changes and transformation witnessed in the waste management sector and mainly identified the role of LAWMA in regulating and enforcing the formal practices of waste management. In chapter two, I argued that the organisation of waste in Lagos cannot be limited to discourses around environmentalism, sustainability and green consumption. Instead, I contend that rubbish serves as a raw material, one that is crucial for supporting socio and economic livelihoods. In the next section, I explore the discourses and ideologies that shape the formal practices and policies of Lagos waste management.

5.3. The Discourse of Waste Management is driven by Financial Benefits

Studies on the informal waste economy often noted how the financial resources generated from the scavenging of waste provides the means with which informal scavengers support their socio-economic livelihoods (Birkbeck, 1978; Bromley, 1978; Medina, 2007; Neuwirth, 2011; Nzeadibe and Mbah, 2015; Mbah and Nzeadibe, 2016; Sicular, 1991; Rogerson, 2001; Tevera, 1994). However, the idea is that waste as a source of income is not just limited to the informal workers but can equally be attributed to formal waste management actors. For instance, LAWMA has previously championed a program called 'Waste to Wealth'. This program was specifically aimed at recovering discarded materials such as nylons, plastic, and papers. In this scheme, LAWMA aims to purchase recovered materials from scavengers and offer logistical support to social enterprises[14] that are involved in promoting recycling in Lagos (LAWMA, 2015). Rather than the discourses around environmentalism and sustainability, the emphasis on wealth creation in LAWMA's promotional materials suggests that their primary interest is to encourage the generation of income from waste. In this section, I argue that this interest in the economic benefit of waste is integral in shaping the formal practices and policies that are enacted around waste. To illustrate this, I now analyse some of the representations that have been used to frame the waste management activities in Lagos state. In a speech delivered to school pupils, the executive chairman of LAWMA expressed the following:

> "Let us look at ways of recycling our wastes such as sachet water packs, PET plastic bottles, cartons, aluminium cans, among others to generate wealth. This is one way we can help create jobs that will lead to a more secured Nigeria for our children" – Adejokun (Ihua-Maduenyi, 2017).

The above speech can be interpreted as a pedagogical strategy that is aimed at socialising and sensitising young children to the idea that their economic survival and that of Nigeria are dependent on their commitment to recycling. Such a

[14]. One of the organisations that benefits from such formal partnership is Wecyclers and I will return to them later in the chapter.

representation of waste exposes the state's concern for generating revenue from waste and not necessarily promoting a greener environment. In another recent media briefing, the Executive Chairman of LAWMA described the recovery of waste as a crucial means for generating much-needed economic revenue for the state. He stated the following:

> "What we call waste is no more waste, they are raw materials. Papers, plastic, iron, nylon and other things scavengers gather across the state must attract levies. So, all these scavengers must register to make revenue for the government. They are stealing government's raw materials. Every scavenger must pay. We must generate money for government" – Adejokun (Daily Post, 2017).

As indicated above, waste from the state's perspective is considered as an economic resource, one that has the potential to generate value through recycling schemes. Crucially the act of recycling and waste policies are not necessarily founded on a moralistic or environmental discourse. It is interesting to note how informal scavenging has been equated to the theft of government resources – i.e. the building block of Lagos's economy. In short, what is clear from these commentaries is the notion that the generation of revenue from waste is the main driver the policies that are centred around waste in Lagos. Having explored the discourses that shape the formal practices of waste management and disposal, it is worth highlighting the role of other stakeholders involved in the formal practices of waste management. In the next section, I discuss the role of social enterprises, such as Wecyclers, in promoting recycling in Lagos.

5.4. Wecyclers as a Formal Waste Management Actor

Wecyclers constitutes one of the key stakeholders I explored during my fieldwork. As a social enterprise, Wecyclers is committed to encouraging recycling activities in Lagos and among the broader Nigerian communities. With a specific focus on the impoverished communities, Wecyclers proposes effective and more convenient ways of recycling household materials. Using locally constructed eco-friendly bicycles (see photo 6), employees of Wecyclers offer households the

opportunity to extract economic value from the waste that they produce. They do this by engaging in a door-to-door collection of materials such as PET bottles, aluminium, and plastic bags. In exchange for these recyclables, the company award points to individuals from the household who participate in their 'waste-to-wealth' scheme. These points can, in turn, be converted into monetary value and collected in cash or small household items such as blenders, toasters, and other small gift items. The recyclables are then transported to the company's local sorting centre, where they are sorted, processed, and then sold to recycling companies who use them as semi-raw materials. Also, Wecyclers is also interested in retrieving recyclables from organisations such as hospitals and schools in Lagos. More importantly, a critical aspect of their activities includes providing training and support to private and public organisations through consultancy services (Wecyclers, 2017).

Photo 6: Low cost bicycle in one of Wecyclers' sorting facilities

The organisation's commitment to promoting modern waste management practices such as recycling has resulted in fruitful partnerships with several organisations who supposedly share a similar interest in supporting and encouraging environmental sustainability. These partners include LAWMA, DHL, Oracle, UKaid, Unilever and Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC). For example,

through their partnership with DHL, Wecyclers have organised campaigns that are geared towards cleaning up waterways by involving local communities (Wecyclers.com, 2017). At the centre of these campaigns is the need to raise awareness among Nigerians to consider waste as a solution for economic problems. Wecyclers' position as one of the frontrunner of Nigeria's sustainable environmental movements has led the organisation to gain positive recognitions and awards including SEIF Awards, Sustania Awards, Cartiers Women Initiative and the Tech Awards and Le Monde Smart Cities innovation award (Wecyclers, 2017).

Crucially, the sustainable vision of Wecyclers fits with LAWMA's overarching agenda to promote a cleaner city. As such, the company receives extensive support from LAWMA. This is reflected in my interview with an employee of the organisation:

> "LAWMA has been our rock since we started. Much of the tactical things and ideas come from them. For example, where we are staying, the different locations, they suggested ways to make our models better. They have also given us money and support and they also monitor what we do...they don't charge us for using their space" (Anita, Interview).

Another employee also comments:

> "We are very close to LAWMA, we could not operate without them, and we use their land, a lot of their information, a lot of their machineries. We have lots of baling machines and bicycles which were donated by LAWMA. ...we put their name on everything that we do so we help promote them too" (Frank, Interview).

In the excerpts above, Anita and Frank admit that Wecyclers receives enormous support from LAWMA to promote sustainable practices in the state. In particular, Anita's comments suggest that the ideological foundation of LAWMA is what drives the spatial practices and performances of Wecyclers. LAWMA's role in influencing the strategic operations ['tactical ideas', 'locations'] exemplifies what Lefebvre (1991) associates with 'representation of space'. Indeed, LAWMA's support has been integral to the organisation's emergence as one of the leaders

of household recycling initiatives in Nigeria. In short, this working relationship suggests that the practices of Wecyclers synchronise with those of LAWMA. Having discussed LAWMA's relationship with Wecyclers, I now go on to discuss the process through which value is extracted from materials collected from households.

5.4.1. The Transformation of PET Bottles

The interview and observation conducted with employees of Wecyclers revealed that the shredding of PET bottles is imperative for its potential to generate economic and exchange value. During my observation, I witnessed how objects such as PET possess transformative potential. It became clear to me that the values attributed to PET bottles are not fixed (Thompson, 1979) but are contingent upon certain processes that lead to their transformation. For instance, in the excerpt below, Akin charts the destruction of a specific aspect of PET bottles that inspires the transformation and creation of new value.

> "We add value to it by removing the labels, rings and by separating out the different types of plastic and actually baling or crushing the materials together, and selling it off to large scale recyclers to end the whole reprocessing process...and different plastics with different value, brown plastic has least value, brown PET has least value, green has slightly higher value than that and white and blue have the highest value...And there's not really a set price exactly on it because it depends on how bailed, how tightly it is, if it's crushed, if it's clean, if it's separated, if it's mixed with other different materials and then it becomes competitive in the market as well. The shredded stuffs on the deck are actually the samples that we have right now. We don't have the machine to shred it unfortunately. It's a much higher profit than baling" (Akin, interview Wecyclers).

Photo 7: Shredded plastic bottles

The above excerpt illustrates the importance of value destruction prior to value creation. As indicated, the PET bottles are stripped down to their bare materials as their labels and caps are removed. The process of destruction ends with the bottles being crushed and shredded into flakes. The destruction (crushing and shredding) of certain qualities of the PET bottles is integral to increasing its economic value. In short, the transformation, dispossession, categorisation, crushing, and shredding of PET bottles following their disposal supports the argument of Hetherington (2004) that disposal does not represent the end stage of the production and consumption cycles. It equally demonstrates that production and consumption should not be treated as a linear process but instead

as a recursive process which allows the transformation of objects once considered to be valueless into the valuable category. Having examined the transformation of PET bottles following their removal from households, I now turn my attention to the notion of how rubbish provides the means through which employees of Wecyclers support their livelihood.

5.4.2. Rubbish as a Source of Income

The central focus of Wecyclers is to make a profit and to make a significant contribution to Nigerian society by promoting and encouraging sustainability. In doing so, the organisation has been able to create a platform that provides job opportunities for individuals who would otherwise have been jobless. During my interviews with the employees of Wecyclers, a number of them admitted that rubbish served as a source of income that sustains their livelihood. For instance, in the excerpt below, Toyeen explains that the income generated from the sorting of rubbish forms the backbone that supports her family's socioeconomic livelihood.

> PA. "So how much will you earn from sorting eight bags?"
>
> "Per bag is N300 (£0.62). So since I started working here, I sometimes sort seven or eight bags. I take care of my transport, and my feeding and that cost me around N600 (£1.25) daily. So that is why I want to sort eight bags. Those eight bags are about N2, 400 (£9.00). So at the end of the month when I receive my salary, I will deduct all my expenses and the remaining one I keep my profit. I thank God for everything. Because I can't regret this work. I used it to train my children in school because without a man; it's not easy for a single mother to care for the family. But I thank God. When I started this work, I train my daughter to the polytechnic. Now she is just graduating. Well, I pray God, if God answers my prayers, as time goes on, I will need to look for another job that can help support my family" (Toyeen, Interview).

Toyeen works as a sorter at Wecyclers and has been with the organisation for about two years. As a sorter, Toyeen's job involves removing the labels and caps from recovered PET bottles. Her duties also include separating plastics in the order of sizes, colours, and quality. As one of the most experienced sorter at Wecyclers, Toyeen enjoys a great deal of respect from everyone in the

organisation. In the excerpt above, Toyeen describes how her earnings are dependent on the daily number of PET bottles sorted. This suggests that her earnings are contingent upon her commitment, capacity and willingness to sort bags of PET bottles on a daily basis. Toyeen's reference to her status as a "single mother" hints at norms of heterosexuality and gender inequality which represents men as the provider within Nigeria (Lindsay, 2003). Wecyclers therefore afford women like Toyeen with the opportunity to earn an income. By using the income generated to support her children's education she is able to transform her economic capital into cultural capital (see Bourdieu, 1984). Moreover, Toyeen's aspiration to consider another job suggest that she is not satisfied with her current earnings. For her, the sorting of plastic does not represent a permanent position but rather a temporary means of survival. Toyeen responded with the excerpt below when she was asked why she was keen to find another job considering her potential monthly earnings of N62, 400 (£130) is well over the state's monthly minimum wage of N18, 000 (£38).

> "How much we are going to make is a big thing. It also depends on whether there are lots of materials and the number of people working on a particular day" (Toyeen, Interview).

The account above suggests that the sorters working at Wecyclers are not guaranteed a stable income. Since Toyeen is not the only sorter working at Wecyclers, she must compete with other sorters for the materials on a daily basis. Toyeen's daily struggle draw my attention to how seasonal rhythms are capable of affecting the financial stability of sorters. For example, I observed that the number of available materials is contingent upon the cyclical rhythms of rainy and dry seasons[15]. Lagos is considered to be unusually wet with mild rains between October and December, while it is usual to experience an intense and sustained rainfall between April and July. The climate of Lagos is characterised by a mild heat between August and September with the dry season peaking between December and March when temperatures can rise to 36 degrees Celsius. Given that Wecyclers primarily focus on the recovering of PET bottles and sachet

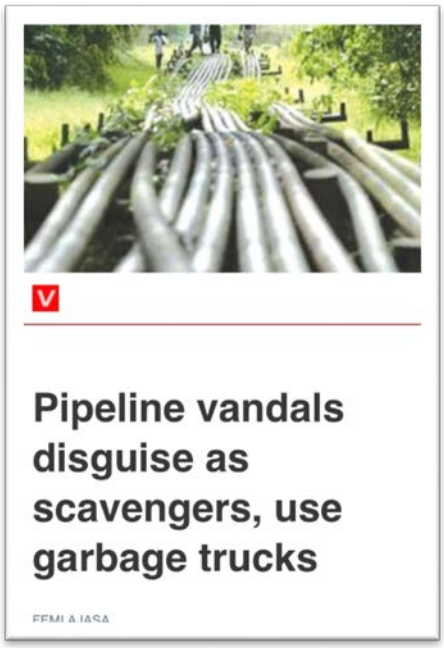
[15] Nigeria is beset by two major seasons – rainy (cool) and dry (warm) seasons.

water plastics, it is unsurprising that the dry season (when people are naturally thirsty) witnessed an increase in materials available for sorting. Meanwhile, during the rainy seasons, the flow and availability of these materials are significantly impaired since naturally a smaller quantity of mineral water is consumed. Similarly, a high number of PET bottles are collected post-wedding and funeral ceremonies, and these events are mostly planned during the dry season in a bid to avoid rain disruptions. In this way, the season cycles (time/temporality) influence the rhythms of the workforce, particularly the economic stability of people like Toyeen. In this section, I have looked at the practices and strategies enacted by the formal stakeholders. What follows is a discussion of the official representations of informal operators (i.e. scavengers) as deviants.

5.5. The Representation of Informal Scavengers as Deviants

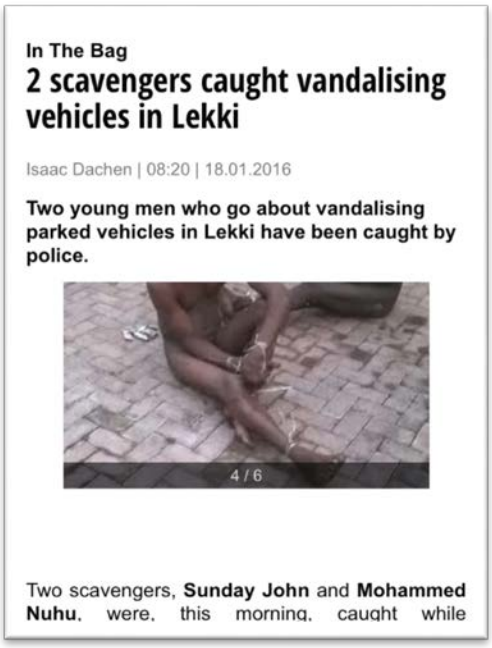
The official operational manual for waste management clearly defines the ownership of waste as predicated on its location. For instance, the official handbook provided to PSPs by LAWMA stipulates that the rubbish generated remains the property of households and commercial organisations prior to its divestment (LAWMA, 2017). However, once any such waste has been disposed of from the premises of houses and organisations, its ownership is transferred to the local government authorities responsible for its disposal (LAWMA, 2017). This definition of waste ownership has a profound impact on what constitutes (il)legal handling of rubbish. Consequently, the state's ownership of waste have a great impact on the informal practices enacted by scavengers, who rely on the recovering and repurposing of waste to sustain their livelihood. For instance, scavengers who pick materials from dumpsites are labelled as thieves who steal government resources. Such a representation often depicts informal scavengers as dirty and belonging to criminal groups that transgresses the boundaries of legality and illegality. For instance, the caption of news headlines is often presented in the following manner.

Photo 8: Usman (2016) Vanguard Online Newspaper



Pipeline vandals disguise as scavengers, use garbage trucks

FEMI AJASA



In The Bag

2 scavengers caught vandalising vehicles in Lekki

Isaac Dachen | 08:20 | 18.01.2016

Two young men who go about vandalising parked vehicles in Lekki have been caught by police.

4 / 6

Two scavengers, **Sunday John** and **Mohammed Nuhu**, were, this morning, caught while

Photo 9: Dachen (2016) Pulse Online Newspaper

While it may be the case that scavengers are transgressors, it is not always true that these informal waste operators are thieves. For instance, in photo 9, the news headline illustrates that criminals had masqueraded as scavengers using garbage trucks to perpetrate pipeline vandalism. Although, this is one of such cases, there are other situations where scavengers had been construed as criminals. For instance, my participants often lamented the treatment that they receive from the general public who accuse them of stealing. My observations show that such situations have largely perpetuated the negative representation of informal waste scavengers. Such a representation of scavengers can be interpreted as a spurious tactic for criminalising and doing away with the informal operators. By urging householders to shun indiscriminate disposal of waste or “handing it to cart-pushers” (itinerant scavengers), LAWMA and the media are reinforcing the marginal role of these informal operators.

5.6. The Ambiguous Position of Informal Operators in the Waste Sector

Apart from the marginal representation of informal waste scavengers, their position within the waste management sector can be described as ambiguous. Ambiguous in the sense that the formal representation of informal workers appears paradoxical on the one hand, LAWMA (through their chairman) labels the scavengers as thieves, discourages cart pushing activities and urges households to desist from handing over their rubbish to scavengers (see Adejokun's remark on p.103). However, in the same speech, he maintains that "every scavenger must pay" so as to generate revenue for the Lagos state government. His remark regarding remittances can be interpreted as a double standard. If indeed the state and LAWMA are serious about getting rid of these informal waste scavengers, they would not consider the option of collecting payments from informal waste operators in order to continue to perform the practices of scavenging. This double standard is also evident in the sense that LAWMA's treatment of informal waste scavengers is determined by the spaces in which they undertake their operations. There are two main categories of informal waste scavengers operating in Lagos. These are the dumpsite scavengers and the itinerant scavengers. I will now discuss the representations of dumpsite and itinerant scavengers in the formal waste sector.

5.6.1. Formal Representation of Dumpsite Scavengers

Dumpsite scavengers operate at the various landfills that are run by LAWMA. As previously mentioned, my research focused on the waste management practices performed at Olusosun landfill. Scavenging activities on this site date back to the 1980s when scavengers established the Scavengers Association of Nigeria (SAN) (Afon, 2012). The formal policies regarding scavenging at the Olusosun landfill can be described as lax, characterised by 'neglect' (ibid, p.666). This is because the practices undertaken by scavengers in this dumpsite are neither suppressed nor encouraged by the state. Scavengers are therefore allowed to scrounge

through and recover discards from the landfill in order to sustain their socioeconomic livelihood. Although, as I explained above, this policy of neglect is fast disappearing as the state looks to generate revenue by collecting remittances from the informal scavengers. Nevertheless, despite the absence of formal repressive policies, the scavengers' association is determined to keep their position in the Olusosun landfill by maintaining good conduct. During my fieldwork, a key informant with a close relationship to LAWMA confessed that the expert knowledge and skills displayed by the scavengers have been crucial to LAWMA's commitment to convert 'waste to wealth'. My informant went on to explain that the scavengers have been useful to LAWMA as their expertise is indispensable in creating potential economic opportunities by recovering various types of materials from the dumpsite.

5.6.2. Formal Representation of Itinerant Scavengers

Itinerant scavengers, often referred to as cart pushers are known to recover scraps from the streets of Lagos. Unlike the dumpsite scavengers who are allowed to operate in landfills, itinerant scavengers are controlled with the aid of repressive policies in an attempt to discourage their activities. According to Medina (2000; 2007), such repressive policies are often shaped by the notion that scavenging represents a symbol of backwardness, shame and aesthetically displeasing to a well-ordered city. Indeed, itinerant scavengers in the Lagos context, are renowned for moving around in the city with locally constructed carts in search of valuable materials. They have also been accused of engaging in illegal disposal of refuse in undesignated places such as kerbside, street gutter, and bushes. As such, their operations are largely frowned upon, and the state's policies on road use are designed to discourage their practices. As part of Lagos state's commitment to maintaining an ordered city, the Lagos traffic code forbids the use of such locally constructed carts on Lagos expressways (Lagos Traffic Laws, 2012).

The state's passive policies regarding dumpsite scavengers, I argue, are shaped by a consideration that practices of scavenging undertaken in the landfill are

deemed to be 'in place'. That is the impurities, abject, and backwardness that are associated with the practice of scavenging are best suited to the dumpsite, which is hidden away from the public. In contrast, the practice of scavenging within the spaces of the city is considered polluting, 'out of place' and an act of transgression (Douglas, 1966). These policies of neglect and repression echo Creswell's (1996) contention that a systematic analysis of acts of transgression can reveal relations of power and the social structures that are ingrained in practices. Following de Certeau (1984) I argue that the regulation of territorial spaces where practices of scavenging are performed appear as a dominant ordering which seeks to regulate activities of informal economic activities. I have identified two types of informal waste scavengers as well as their relationships with formal authorities. In the next section I discuss the strategies that are used by the formal authorities to regulate scavenging practices that are deemed to be 'out of place'.

5.7. Strategies of Control: Regulating Improper Disposal Practices

Due to the clandestine nature of the itinerant scavenging activities, the job of controlling the activities of informal operators' i.e. itinerant scavengers is quite challenging. Besides, the negative representation of these operators within the Lagos context ensures that there is an increased pressure on the relevant law enforcement agencies to police the activities of scavengers. One of such actions involves the ongoing 'pursuit and arrest' of scavengers that are adjudged to have transgressed. A number of law enforcement agencies undertakes the disciplining of transgressors, and these include LAWMA, the Nigerian Police Force and Kick against Indiscipline (KAI) brigade.

LAWMA has set up a monitoring team that is committed to discouraging and preventing illegal cart pushing and waste disposal. Apart from monitoring the unlawful disposal of rubbish by individuals and organisations, law enforcement agents from LAWMA, I am told by itinerant scavengers intimidate and punish

scavengers who operate in the urban spaces of Lagos. Indeed, the representation of scavengers as criminals and deviants makes them obvious targets for the Nigerian Police patrol, who are often looking to arrest and prosecute them. KAI is brigade created under the Ministry of Environment and is tasked with the responsibility of enforcing discipline on the Lagos streets and highways. As part of their duties, they are responsible for enforcing the prohibition of street hawking along the expressways and arresting itinerant scavengers who ride their carts along the streets. Itinerant scavengers that are considered to be 'out of place' are often arrested, their carts are confiscated, and they are made to pay a fine or risk prosecution and imprisonment. As I will show in chapter six, section 6.2, itinerant scavengers employ a range of clandestine tactics to counter or negate the disciplinary strategies employed by formal waste management authorities. These strategies of control employed by the formal authorities resonate with de Certeau's (1984) notion of 'strategies'. In short, the neglect and repressive policies regarding the dumpsite scavengers and itinerant scavengers can be considered as an apparatus, a mechanism of control set up to render informal scavengers invisible in the city. In doing so, the informal practices of scavenging are represented as a disturbance to social space. The goal of the formal authorities, therefore, is to restrict the scavenging to enclosed areas such as the Olusosun landfill, out of the streets.

5.8. Summary

This chapter sheds light on the formal representation of waste management in Lagos. I discussed some of the historic reforms that gave rise to the growth and development of the Lagos waste management sector. In it, I explored the formal practices that are enacted in the sector. I began with a discussion of the Lagos waste management policies, with particular reference to the formal representations that shape the management and organisation of waste in the state. This was followed by a discussion of the formal stakeholders involved in the sector. The chapter explored the role of LAWMA, PSPs, and Wecyclers as key actors that drive the formal waste management practices in Lagos. Moreover, I

illustrated how formal practices and institutional strategies are enacted to dictate the everyday practices of those engaged in the informal economy of waste. I explored the formal strategy of waste management and the negative media representations of informal waste scavengers that are out of sync with the state's vision to develop a clean and well-ordered city. I hinted at how the state's interest in extracting economic value from waste is key to the ideology underpinning the waste management policies enacted in Lagos. Such an ideology, I argued outweighs the moralistic discourses that underpin green consumption, environmentalism, and sustainability. Having discussed the formal practices enacted around waste, I now go on to explore the mundane practices of waste from the perspective of the lived spaces of Lagos.

Chapter Six: Spaces of Representation: The Trajectories of Rubbish in the Lived Space

In chapter five, I discussed the formal practices and official representation of waste management in Lagos. I explored the role of the various formal stakeholders involved in the organisation of waste in the city. I examined the ideological underpinnings of formal waste management practices and showed how these are manifested in the practices of Private Sector Participants (PSPs) and social enterprises such as Wecyclers. It is becoming increasingly clear that the discourses that surround the official representations of waste management are largely driven by the prospective economic value that can be extracted from waste materials.

In this chapter, I turn my attention to the everyday practices that are enacted around rubbish in the 'lived' space. In particular, I trace the social life of rubbish, particularly its trajectory as it moves across different spaces (i.e. from household to landfill and sometimes return) as well as stakeholders when rubbish is disposed of and potentially recycled. In the preceding chapter, I hinted at how formal practices dictate the activities of informal waste actors. In this chapter, I provide a detailed account of some of these informal practices. I wish to acknowledge that the flow or trajectory of rubbish is not limited to those presented in this chapter. However, for clarity of presentation and discussion, I have structured this chapter in a manner that traces the flow of rubbish across four key stakeholders. These are the household individuals, itinerant scavengers, dumpsite scavengers and junk artists. I have chosen to commence my chapter with an exploration of household practices because they represent the primary source or producer of domestic waste which is subsequently funnelled to the landfill across Lagos.

That said, in section 6.1, I explore the everyday household practices around the production and disposal of rubbish. In section 6.2, I turn my attention to the informal practices performed by itinerant scavengers who are considered to be illegal by the state. Yet, their nomadic practices make them an integral

stakeholder in shaping the movements and flow of rubbish across Lagos. Integral to the discussion here will be an analysis of the power relations and rhythms that are manifested when informal operators attempt to impose themselves onto urban life. In section 6.3, I explore the everyday practices of dumpsites scavengers operating in the landfill. In contrast to the itinerant scavengers, these dumpsite scavengers operate in the designated area of the Olusosun landfill in Lagos. As a potential final destination of rubbish, it is essential to explore the Olusosun site. I draw attention to the embodied skills that informal scavengers draw on when they engage in scavenging. Section 6.4 concludes with a discussion of how junk artists recover discards and transform them into valuable artefacts. Interestingly, the data collected from this stakeholder raises questions about how human and non-human interactions produce practices and work of art that challenges the acts of rubbishing (Hetherington, 2004).

6.1. Household Practices and Performances around Rubbish

The aim of this section is to analyse the everyday routines performed around household rubbish. In particular, I am interested in observing how household practices around rubbish produce interpersonal dynamics ranging from gender relations, home tensions and contestation within the home space. Before this, let me clarify that in keeping with my aim to document the social processes involved in disposal, the discussions presented in this section are not limited to 'rubbish'. Instead, I also consider transient objects or, to put it another way, I explore liminal objects that are neither rubbish nor valuable. I begin this section with an analysis of the socioeconomic conditions of my participants and discuss the extent to which this shapes the mundane practices that are enacted around waste. Next, I consider how intergenerational gifting serves as one of the pathways through which my household participants divest things. The section then concludes with an in-depth discussion of the ambiguities and materiality that are associated with objects and home spaces. I discuss the material qualities of memorial objects and its role in shaping the practices and performances that are enacted around household rubbish.

6.1.1. Socio-Economic Dispositions and Household Practices

My observation of household participants suggests that the socio-economic status of participants plays a role in shaping their everyday practices and interaction in their homes. Morley (2000) explains that the home represents a disputed terrain where spaces and identities are negotiated and defined mostly through tensions and disagreement between members of the household. Indeed, close observations of my research participants suggest that their socio-economic conditions underpin the degree to which divisions of labour are organised and performed. I observed and interviewed household participants with high and low socio-economic backgrounds – defined in terms of the economic/material possessions of individuals i.e. neighbourhoods, occupation, and educational qualifications of people (Gwatkin et al., 2007). The empirical data collected from

participants suggests that households with middle-high socio-economic disposition display gendered practices in relation to the production and disposal of rubbish; a practice that differ from those performed by participants belonging to a low socio-economic background. The research findings reveal that the socio-economic dispositions of participants shapes their home practices and relationships. Therefore, the discussion that follows provides some insight into how gendered relations are constructed or shaped by the socio-economic disposition of my research participants. I now discuss the data collected from one such household.

6.1.1.1. Gendered Division: Negotiating Domestic Duties

PA: Who takes the rubbish out?

> "In this house, it is my father, he's hands-on, and he is not behaving like this in a guest house. My father is involved in housework in this home. This home is not the average Nigeria home...everyone goes to work here, and we are all making contributions, so everything needs to be shared...roles are being discussed because now women are even making more money and contributing so if women are bringing money then housework should be shared. He takes care of plants by watering them, cleans the surroundings, and those are the things he handles. He is the one who designed this place, who set the design and takes care of the environment. Every morning you see him cleaning and taking care of things. He is involved, and my mom comes downstairs and exercises. We are mostly concerned with kitchen cooking and all that. The only thing that we do as women in this house is that we have bin bags around the house. In the kitchen, upstairs, in all the bedrooms, so we all have the responsibility to bring them downstairs when they are filled to the main bin bags, and then it is transported outside the house by my father where they are picked up by the waste management company. I don't have anything to do with the rubbish; the only time I know that something is wrong is when LAWMA or the waste management people do not pick up the rubbish from outside...when I am driving out and see that the rubbish is still outside or when it is oozing out, but even the person who complains or tries to do anything about it is my dad" (Julia, Interview).

Julia is a successful business owner living with her parents on Victoria Island – a neighbourhood that is populated by residents with middle to high socio-economic conditions (i.e. income). In the above excerpt, Julia distances her home from the archetypal Nigerian home where 'maleness' is associated with superiority and

where domestic duties are considered to be a woman's domain (Agbalajobi, 2010; Izugbara, 2004). According to Izugbara (2004), the social or household practices within Nigerian cultures reinforces such patriarchal relations that construct males as domineering, unyielding and superior to their female counterparts. Julia's comments "everyone goes to work so everything needs to be shared" can be interpreted as a rejection of the typical Nigerian patriarchy that constructs males as breadwinners and females as the weak, obedient, and submissive housekeepers (Izugbara, 2004). Similarly, Julia's remark on the earning power of women supports the view that the home as a site of reproductive labour is disappearing due to the rising feminist movement and women's participation within the capitalist sphere (Pahl, 1984; Walby, 1990). Julia's comment equally supports Walby's (1990) contention that decent employment can offer women an effective bargaining power when gendered domestic duties are being negotiated across the home.

This broader shift in gendered politics, therefore, shapes the practices around waste disposal and housework in Julia's home. However, Julia's confession that kitchen duties are exclusively the responsibility of women in her household is inconsistent with the view that her home is not a typical Nigerian home. If anything, such an admission reinforces the kitchen space as a woman's domain. By admitting that their role as women in the house is to take care of the kitchen, Julia has paradoxically reproduced a gendered division of labour within her household. According to Njoku and Nwachukwu (2015), the perpetuation of the kitchen space as a woman's territory can be considered disempowering to full-time housewives since it suggests that their place is in the kitchen. It also makes visible the notion that housework, i.e. kitchen duties, are unpaid (Shelton, 2006). Yet Julia's remark "*women are bringing in money, so the housework needs to be shared*" suggests that the perpetuation of the kitchen as the domain of women can be interpreted as empowering within her household. It is empowering in the sense that women's participation is based on an equal negotiation of housework between both genders. Besides, Julia's comment suggests that domestic duties within her household remain resolutely gendered despite attempts to produce an egalitarian home.

According to Horton (2005, p.158), rhythms are everywhere and they are often unnoticed and 'taken-for-granted'. However, they are only noticeable when there is a breakdown in the normative rhythms or what Lefebvre refers to as eurhythmia (2004). Julia's confession that she only notices the rhythms of her household rubbish is when it is oozing out or when it is not picked up by the PSPs supports Lefebvre's (2004) contention that rhythms are made manifest when there is a breakdown or disruption in the accepted rhythms (Lee, 2016). In this way, the undesirable smell from the undisposed refuse creates an arrhythmic situation that often leads Julia to notice the presence of the waste outside. Furthermore, during the interview, Julia hinted that the women within her household are responsible for disposing of their feminine waste. Thus, I was keen on knowing more about this, so I proceeded to ask Fatima (Julia's sister), and she responded with the following:

> "...women stuff you know, I have four sisters in this house, and this means we generate our own wastes as a result, sanitary hygiene and all that. So, we have a different bin for these sort of things [rubbish] and my dad cannot dispose of these things [rubbish]. These are the ones that we have to take out ourselves" (Fatima, Interview).

Fatima's response has implications for the production and categorisation of rubbish within this household. Fatima's use of the phrase 'women stuff' could indicate a feeling of embarrassment when a female-specific category of waste is exposed to their father. Such exposure to female waste may potentially be interpreted as an act that can threaten the 'manliness' of their father or in other words debase his position as the head (male) of the family. Fatima's account echoes Mary Douglas' contention that matter, when in the wrong place, can constitute an act of transgression (Douglas, 1966). Similarly, Creswell (1996), in reference to Douglas' (1966) work, has noted that evidence of menstruation must be kept out of public spaces as it invokes a taboo and constitutes a transgression of established boundaries. The possible exposure of feminine waste to their father, when viewed from Douglas' perspective, is considered inappropriate, threatening to pollute, out-of-place, and a gendered transgression.

So far, I have analysed the ways in which the socioeconomic dispositions of Julia's family shapes their everyday practices of disposal. However, the idea that high social-economic dispositions of households dictates their practices around rubbish is also corroborated by other households. For instance, the ethnographic diary presented in the section that follows illuminates how household spaces are contested and negotiated in another family with middle-high socio-economic disposition.

6.1.1.2. Gendered Spaces: This Place is Out of Bounds to You!

As with most formal organisational structures, the broader political, economic and social issues, such as inequality and gender division of labour, can be linked to the domestic spheres within households. Massey (1994, p.186) writes "that space and place, spaces and places, and our senses of them are gendered through and through". In other words, spaces and places are gendered in diverse ways, and the understanding of these gendered spaces has an effect on how gender is constructed within cultures and the broader society. Similarly, Madsen, (2005) found that gender ideologies (patriarchal practices) and unequal division of domestic work is manifested in the inequalities of waste handling activities. Such inequalities mean that women's labour is appropriated, unnoticed and more often than not under-compensated (Massey, 1994; Young, 2011). Howell (1986) comments on how women struggle to deal with the domineering strategies employed by men to control women within households. Other studies have also explored how gendered norms displayed in developing countries shed light on how women attempt to grapple with and resist injustices around inequality (see Dias and Fernandez, 2012; Dias and Ogando, 2015; Scheinberg et al., 1999; Nzeadibe and Adama, 2015). While I do not intend to engage with the broader feminist discourse on gender, this section will bring to light some of the gendered norms, relations of power, and tensions that emerge when mundane practices around the production and disposal of rubbish are performed in Lagos households. In what follows, I draw on field diaries, observations, and interviews conducted with household participants to explore gendered productions across

home spaces.

> Ziggy and Sharon are a middle-aged couple living with their two sons (both younger than 5) in a modern detached duplex in Ajah, Lagos. As is customary in Lagos, the buildings in the couple's neighbourhood are surrounded by high fences and gates which serve to secure the occupants from intruders. Ziggy's occupation as a medical doctor and Sharon's position as a team leader in customer service department of a Lagos based telecommunication organisation suggests that the benefit from an above average income. As my host family, a close observation of this household reveals that the division of domestic practices around waste and negotiation of home space is bounded by gendered norms. Ziggy, the husband, has the responsibility of taking the rubbish outside. Sharon, on the other hand, is responsible for kitchen duties such as cooking and the general cleaning of the home. I had witnessed how Sharon repeatedly reproached her children whenever they play in the kitchen area. In one such situation, she exclaimed: "stop playing in mummy's kitchen!". Similarly, Sharon maintains that her duty is to cook for the family and that the kitchen is not a place for men. Reacting to Ziggy's presence in the kitchen one evening, Sharon is disgruntled with Ziggy and remarked: *"you know you are not meant to be in my kitchen, this place is out of bounds to you"*. Later on, there was an incident which led to one of the kids tripping over and spilling the contents of the bin in the kitchen. Annoyed by this, Sharon yelled at her children saying "do not touch that (in reference to the bin)" before instructing them to leave her kitchen. Sharon was furious that the rubbish had not been disposed of and she admonished Ziggy asking, "when are you going to take your bin out?" It became apparent that there are gendered dynamics taking place in relation to the division of housework within their home (Field Diary, Ziggy and Sharon).

Ziggy and Sharon occupations and neighbourhood allude to their high socio-economic status. Sharon's remarks "stop playing in mummy's kitchen", "you know you are not meant to be in my kitchen, this place is out of bounds to you" can be interpreted as a perpetuation of the kitchen as a female domain. Such a gendered conceptualisation of the kitchen as a female domain has been discussed within the Nigerian cultural context. For instance, Izugbara, (2004) has explained that the Nigerian media, society and scholarly conversations are woven around the idea that the woman's place is in the kitchen. Several pedagogical materials employed in child education are saturated with commentaries that shape boys as heroes killing snakes, cycling or hunting with their fathers while young females are depicted as ones that should stay at home and learn to cook with their mothers (Ibid, 2004).

Thus, I argue that Sharon's approach to handling Ziggy (and the kids) encroachment of the kitchen space can be considered as acts of transgressions in relation to the kitchen space. With regards to her children, Sharon exhibits concern for their safety and thus forbids them from crossing those boundaries. However, these boundaries, I argue, are shaped by Sharon's interpretation of rubbish as something that is unwanted, dirty and should be kept out of sight. Yet by forbidding Ziggy from the kitchen, Sharon is also reproducing the broader norms that marks women as homemakers or simply housewives (Agbalajobi, 2010). During field interviews, Sharon confessed that Ziggy's responsibility to dispose of the household rubbish is based on the notion that he is the "man of the house" and therefore should undertake the appropriate roles by performing tasks that relate to masculinity. For instance, in the excerpts below, Sharon's description of Ziggy's role as "the garbage man" reveals a waste disposal rhythm that is bounded by space and gender.

> "It's not like I want to be putting my husband at risk...but for safety, the man should be able to go outside to sort the rubbish. I am looking at it from a woman's perspective, it is easier for a man to go outside knowing that he will not be raped...But not even that, there are other things to consider like kidnapping. It's not like any of these will happen but it's something to think about and since it is something that has to be done, the man should go out and deal with it...This is Nigeria we are talking about and the stigma attached to it is not something you want" (Sharon, Interview).

Photo 10: Multi-purpose rubbish bins positioned outside the gates

Of course, the disposal of waste that Christina is referring to entails transferring the waste from the kitchen bin to the general or multi-purpose bin located outside the gate. This waste is in turn collected by the private sector participants (PSPS). In the above excerpt, Sharon attempts to justify Ziggy's role as the "garbage handler". Nonetheless, Ziggy's role as the "garbage handler" and Sharon's position as a waged worker supports the argument that gendered roles along the parallel of housework are becoming symmetrical (Young and Wilmott, 1973). However, we can interpret Sharon's comments as a construction of the female gender as weak and vulnerable as opposed to the male counterparts. Furthermore, there is more to the dynamics of Ziggy's role or at least the significance of the location of this household's general refuse bin. Within the Nigerian context, the security of a house is predicated on whether it is fenced and has a gate. Often comprising of thick concrete walls fortified by barbed wires and steel, the gates do not only help to establish a boundary between inside (the compound premises) and outside, it equally serves as a deterrent to intruders, thieves or trespassers or possibly kidnappers and rapists as Sharon complained. Thus, for Sharon, outside the gate represents a risky environment where unfortunate things can happen to women. As the man and leader of the house, Sharon considers Ziggy as the appropriate person to venture outside the gate where the rubbish bin is situated. Christina's accounts therefore illuminate the

notion of how the practices of rubbish disposal within her household perpetuate gender practices that are bounded by spaces.

Izugbara, (2004) has described how gendered practices within Nigerian households are upheld by norms of heterosexuality. For Izugbara (2004), the failure of any man or woman to conform to this 'natural' order can be perceived as 'out-of-place' and will therefore be considered derogatory. For instance, a male who exists outside of this framework is commonly referred to as 'weaklings', 'slow poison' or simply 'women'. Similarly, a female who exists outside of this framework is often referred to as an 'iron lady' a 'tiger' and a 'woman soldier'. Therefore, Sharon's remark "the man should be able to go outside to sort the rubbish" can be construed as a reproduction of these norms of heterosexuality (Izubgara, 2004). For Sharon then, her husband's failure or unwillingness to take the rubbish would likely relegate him to the category of 'chicken' or 'weakling'. As a way of stepping outside the norms of women as men's chattels or home keepers Sharon strongly believes that men should participate in domestic duties. However, her justification for leaving the task of taking the refuse outside to Ziggy (who is a male) is paradoxically reproducing heteropatriarchy discourses. Whereas in Julia's home (previously discussed), I considered the gendered division of labour as empowering to women, the same cannot be said of Sharon's household. If anything, the demarcation of spaces on the basis of gender as understood from Sharon's account can be interpreted as disempowering to females in that it presents them as weak, while the male position is portrayed as the knight in shining armour and protector is being reinforced (Izubgara, 2004). Thus, Ziggy as the stronger male should deal with the messiness and possible dangers that are associated with the household rubbish and what lies beyond the gate of the home. Although these imaginaries of women as weak and disempowered are displayed in Sharon's household (high income), it was most evident among households with very meagre earnings. In the next section, I turn my attention to the everyday practices that are performed by families with low socio-economic dispositions. I draw on the interviews and ethnographic accounts of the research participants to show how gendered practices are disempowering to women across households with low socioeconomic dispositions.

6.1.1.3. Gendered Practices and Women's Disempowerment

The research findings reveal that the practices enacted around rubbish by households from a low socio-economic background appear disempowering to women. For instance, during an interview with Lydia, she complained about her husband's messy attitude towards the organisation of their home space, before disclosing her approach to dealing with it.

> "He is the head of the house and whatever he says is final, so there is nothing we can do about it…if he says he is going to put his rubbish on his bed then that's where it's going to be. All we can do is complain about it, and that's it. I have to be patient with him and accept him the way he is because if I keep talking and talking, we get on each other's nerves, so I learn to tolerate him and forge ahead" (Lydia, Interview).

Lydia is a full-time housewife from a lower socio-economic background living with her husband and two children. Lydia's remark can be understood as a submission, one that reproduces norms that construct women as weak and submissive (Dias and Ogando, 2015; Izugbara, 2004). For Izugbara (2004), such cultural norms are shaped by religious discourses that champion sexuality and gendered norms that appear to privilege males as the head of the home. This idea that gendered practices are disempowering within households with low socio-economic disposition was equally familiar across other research participants with low socio-economic disposition. In the dialogue below, Fred describes how the gendered practices and performances around rubbish are disempowering to women.

> Q: Who disposes of the rubbish in your home?
>
> Fred: My sisters.
>
> Q: Why your sisters?
>
> "You know sisters, anything girls, they are the ones that can do, let me say, domestic duties than men…men do not have much to do in the house. But my sister will not expect her husband to cook, sweep or pack [dispose of] those

> things [rubbish] when she goes to her husband's house. So, it has to start in our house so that she will know about it before she goes to her husband…they have to be prepared for marriage" (Fred, Interview).

In the excerpt above, Fred considers the duty of cleaning and waste disposal as best suited to women (ibid). Fred's patriarchal views of women as housewives is a recurrent theme across households with lower socio-economic disposition. It supports Izugbara's (2004) assertion that within Nigerian culture males and females are socialised into the idea that the male is the head of the house while women must act as the obedient housekeeper. My research findings reveal that such gendered ideologies are accepted and reproduced by my female participants from low socio-economic households. For instance, in the excerpt below, Lydia provides a manifestation of the norms of heterosexuality.

> Q: Who takes your household rubbish outside?
>
> Lydia: Sometimes my daughter or myself.
>
> Q: Why not your son?
>
> "No! I always teach them, like, especially my daughters, I always teach her all these things to manage the home and all. Men do not have time to be doing all these types of work (referring to disposing of rubbish or house chores). For example, men should not sweep or empty the rubbish because of shame; they should be outside looking for money" (Lydia, Interview).

As a mother, Lydia does not entertain the idea that men should be involved in household chores. Instead, she accepts domestic duties as defining roles for women and perpetuates this by raising her daughters with the mentality that their place is in the kitchen. Such conceptualisation of gendered roles echoes Walby's (1990) contention that men's role belongs in the external world while women's role includes taking care of the internal needs of the family. According to Federici (1994), such manifestations of male dominance (especially as breadwinners) is common within families with low socio-economic dispositions and only serve to undermine women's position. As Tunde's excerpt shows, such disempowering or degradation of women's role can be linked to norms of culture and religion (Federici, 2004).

Q: Do you think that men should be involved in household work?

"I don't think it is a problem because I am a Christian and I know what the bible says about helping women because they are not slaves but helpers to men. So maybe if my wife is sick and she is unable to deal with the dirt in the house, I will need to help her. But the general problem is that people think that when a man is taking the rubbish outside or cleaning the house, then the wife has fed him with *Efo*[16]" (Tunde, Interview)

Q: Interesting. What is *Efo*?

"Laughs... I just said that ... [continues laughing] ... well you know that I am a Yoruba man, and this is Yoruba land. *Efo* is a charm. Here, if a man helps his wife with domestic work like taking the rubbish outside, cooking, or bathing the children and doing laundry, everyone will think that his wife has cooked *Efo* for him so that she can command the husband" (Tunde, Interview).

Q: Interesting, please tell me more about this?

"Look there are some men that are very hostile to their wives and when these women complain to their friends, they go to an herbalist who will give them the charm to put in her husband's food which will enable her to tame him. So, this substance is usually black in colour so if they put it in any other food, it will be visible. But if they cook it with *Efo*, it will be invisible because *Efo* itself is black. That is why Yoruba people always say *Efo, Efo* ... you have eaten *Efo*" (Tunde, Interview).

Here Tunde explains why it is necessary for men to support women by engaging in domestic duties and justifies his position by referring to norms of Christianity. However, Tunde's interpretation of the Bible's teachings and its influence in shaping his understanding of gendered roles stands in contrast to Izugbara's contention that norms of Christianity create 'hetero-patriarchal' gendered relations that afford men control over women (Izugbara, 2004, p.15). Moreover, upon discovering that Tunde had not used Efo in the traditional sense that I understood it, I urged him to explain further the argument he was making. From his ensuing response, it became clear that the treatment of rubbish disposal or

[16] *Efo* is a peculiar vegetable – one of the ingredients used in cooking a local Yoruba delicacy

cooking (as a domestic chore) in Tunde's household is embedded in a broader cultural norm of patriarchy that is affected by cultural and perhaps superstitious beliefs.

Indeed, as I have explained previously, gendered roles within the households are designated along the parallels of culture and to a certain extent, religion; and this, in turn, affects how society perceives a household when these roles appear reversed. Efo in this sense represents a metaphorical signification that encapsulates cultural beliefs surrounding gender dynamics. Thus, Efo, as the physical evidence of Tunde's cultural belief that a man can be hypnotised into bending to the will of the woman, becomes the means by which Tunde's immediate society or environment may interpret his engagement in performing domestic duties in the first place. This is why Tunde will only step into the "woman's role" if she is ill because it is his defence against society's verdict on men who have transgressed the established boundaries or norms of heterosexuality (Izugbara, 2004).

The above discussion provides a foregrounding of the various practices and perceptions of society in terms of how they interpret the role of men in housework duties. Although, it is important to note that participants from households with middle/high socio-economic disposition did not seem to share Tunde's interpretations of the gendered roles and superstitious beliefs. I argue that such difference in perceptions stems from the different socio-economic disposition of my participants. On this basis, I argue that the broader norm of patriarchy experienced by Tunde and others before him emerged due to societal pressure. However, such pressures and experiences are diluted as individuals become exposed to more western education and ways of thinking; something that holds true for households with a high socio-economic background.

6.1.1.4. Familial Tensions in Low Socio-economic Households

The notion that the socio-economic dispositions of families influence home practices and performances around rubbish is one that was common throughout my field observations with households. Although, as I have previously mentioned, these practices expose us to issues around gendered norms, contestation of space and sometimes uneven power relations within families. For instance, an analysis of a diary entry from a household from a low socioeconomic background reveals how the negotiation of home spaces are contested between couples and their children and how these contestations are mired with tensions. My ethnographical observations of Mary and Musa's household will shed light on how spaces and waste disposal practices are performed differently from households with an above average socio-economic background. The discussion will equally show how these practices sometimes create familial tensions within the home space.

Mary and Musa currently live with their three teenage children in a two-bedroom flat in the Hausa Quarters[17] of Idi-araba, Lagos. Idi-Araba is a heavily congested neighbourhood situated in the north of Lagos. The neighbourhood falls within the jurisdiction of the Mushin Local Government and is primarily occupied by migrants that are of Hausa origins (Ujorha, 2012). Although there are some exceptions, the demographic of Idi-Araba is mostly made up of households of low socio-economic background. Mary is a fulltime housewife while Musa, her husband, is the breadwinner of the household. As such Musa shoulders the responsibility as the provider for his family. Musa's occupation as a freelance electrician means that he does not necessarily benefit from a stable income. By continually striving for economic survival, Musa's family uphold the ethos of 'living for the day'. Field observation and interviews with Mary and Musa's family illustrates the manner in which family's everyday practices and routines are shaped by waste as well as objects that are yet to be allotted the category of

[17] A neighbourhood that is largely made up of Hausa migrants who came together to build a settlement which strongly fosters their cultural heritage and ethos.

rubbish.

Mary and Musa's flat is located in a non-gated building in something locally referred to as a 'face me, I face you' settlement.[18] As such, this household does not benefit from having a personal multipurpose refuse bin. Whereas high socioeconomic households are expected to transport their rubbish to an offsite location (outside the gate), the movement and placement of rubbish across low-income households differs extensively. Indeed, most of the households in this impoverished neighbourhood share a common space at the front, and as such placing a bin outside the door often attracts protests and objections from neighbours due to the likelihood that the bin would overspill and pollute the environment. To avoid possible conflicts with neighbours, Mary placed her bin in her 'kitchen store' (pantry), a little room that is separated from the kitchen by a door. The pantry also represents a storage for items such as cooking utensils (i.e. pots, buckets and thermos/cool boxes) and broken electrical pieces such as cables and DIY tools. Mary explains that her decision to place the bin in the pantry is born out of the necessity to keep the kitchen space organised as well as to avoid the likely pollution from the bin.

(Photo credit: Adetunji, 2017)

[18] A phrase that is used to describe lowly rented flats in Nigeria with neighbours' entrance doors facing each other.

Photo 11: What 'face me, I face' you looks like

Mary's decision to place the bin in an out-of-sight location can be seen as an attempt to avoid the possible dangers from a polluted bin. In this way, we see that the configuration of domestic spaces in non-gated communities dictates household spatial practices as well as the placement and rhythms of waste disposal. Moreover, during our discussion I noticed that Mary was unhappy that her pantry was swamped with Musa's work items. Mary, therefore, complained that her efforts to organise the kitchen storage had proved abortive due to Musa's refusal to change.

Photo 12: Mary's kitchen pantry

Photo 13: Mary's pantry encroached by Musa's tools

> "I keep telling him to remove his 'jaga' 'jaga' (local term for rubbish) from the kitchen and so he has refused so there is not a lot I can do about it. I can't throw them away because he is going to get upset and we start fighting again…It would not be a problem if he can keep them somewhere more appropriate instead of my kitchen, they have no relationship…It is just difficult for him to let them go…I don't know, but I think it's difficult because he thinks he is going to use them later and he doesn't want to spend money to get them again" (Interview, Mary).

From the above excerpt, we can see that Mary's frustration is born out of her compulsion to keep the kitchen space organised. Her comment "I keep telling him" suggests that the issue of space contestation is a recurrent episode, one that has led to a series of disagreement within this household. Mary is disgruntled, arguing that Musa's belongings are valueless. In other words, Musa's propensity to hold onto things countervails against Mary's efforts to declutter the kitchen pantry. For Mary, Musa's belongings are not placed in an appropriate location and therefore emerges as 'jaga' 'jaga' (rubbish) since and they are inconveniently in her way. This resonates with Douglas' premise in *Purity and Danger* which define dirt [rubbish] as offensive when it transgresses established boundaries (Douglas, 1966). Thus, Mary's dissatisfaction is therefore unsurprising because Musa's belongings has 'spilled over' into Mary's domain (Gregson et al., 2007). So, for Mary, kitchen utensils are appropriate for the pantry but not Musa's belongings (i.e. scraps and DIY equipment).

Moreover, Mary's spatial boundaries reflect Parsons' (2008) contention that the categorisation of objects (as valuable or rubbish) is contingent upon practices of placement. Unlike the kitchen, the pantry serves as a liminal and transitional space, where the categorisation of ambiguous objects can be facilitated (Hirschman et al., 2012). The pantry is therefore a temporary location for both rubbish (i.e. the trash bin) as well as objects that are yet to be assigned a category. Within Mary's household, the distinction between work and home space is blurred. The pantry, for instance, is simultaneously a site of male labour

production [in that it houses Musa's technical equipment] as well as a female domain due to its proximity to the kitchen and as a storage for kitchen utensils.

Furthermore, during my stay in Mary and Musa's household, I witnessed a disagreement that ensued between the couple. The dispute stemmed from Musa's decision to store worn out automobile tyres in the pantry, a place Mary considers inappropriate for such objects. For Mary, the tyres are of no value (damaged), and their placement in the pantry would disorganise the already cluttered space. Musa rebuked Mary, arguing that the tyres were still of use to him (valuable). Later on, and at separate times, I asked Mary and Musa to shed light on what happened, and they responded with the following respectively.

> "I have told him that I don't like those things (tyres) in the store (pantry), they have no value and to make matters worse he keeps the things he hasn't even used for years and when we talk about them, he keeps saying, I will use it, I will use it and that something might come up and I will use it. But he hasn't used these things in years!" (Mary, Interview).

Musa on the other hand responded with the following:

> "I don't just discard things...I know when and how they will be useful to me, the slogan is this ...technicians find it difficult to dispose of things... Look at this condenser; it may not be useful for the particular car I took it from because I have sold it, but I can use it to repair some part of a generator... Because of my technical know-how, I find it difficult to dispose of them. Look at these air conditioners... they are not working because the compressors are bad, but there are other components that are good inside it and that can be used as spare parts for repairing refrigerators, and this is where my technical know-how comes into place" (Musa, Interview).

There is a common theme that runs through Mary and Musa's excerpt. To be clear, Mary attributes Musa's behaviour to his unwillingness to let things go. Musa, on the other hand, justifies his inclination to hold onto things as influenced by his occupation as an electrician. Sookman et al., (2005) argued that such practices are indeed common with technicians. Nevertheless, the controversy surrounding the use of the pantry in Mary and Musa's household exposes a clash of rhythms or arrhythmic experiences to borrow from Lefebvre (2004). For

instance, Mary as a full-time housewife considers the pantry as a space for domestic and leisure activities, one that she believes is separate from work. Musa, on the other hand, sees the pantry as a space for work as well as an industrial site is useful for storing his work tools. Although occupying a dormant state, Musa's comment suggests that his possessions occupy a 'region of flexibility' where there is the possibility of extracting future economic value. Mary's remark categorises Musa's belongings as rubbish, that is objects that are effectively worthy of 'zero value' (Thompson, 1979, p.9), out-of-synch with household rhythms, and should therefore be disposed of. This demonstrates the temporal aspects of space in terms of its relevance to the categorisation of objects values and meanings. I argue that the contestation of home spaces and the temporal dimensions of objects are essential to the shaping of the social relations at least within this household.

Furthermore, Musa's inclination to hold onto things and the future value of objects can be interpreted as a 'functional hoarding' practice (Cherrier and Ponnor, 2010); one that ensures people accumulate things in a bid to deal with the uncertainties of the future. Musa's hoarding can also be interpreted as what McKinnnon et al., (1985) call 'risk minimisation' – which propels individuals to hoard multiple amounts of similar objects in an attempt to deal with future scarcity or shortages. Furthermore, during subsequent interviews, Mary disclosed some of the tactics she draws on to manages the tensions that are created around the practice of waste disposal and disagreement stemming from the use of spaces.

> "We are fighting over this all the time and he doesn't like when I tell him where to keep his stuff...Knowing my husband, I know it will cause a lot of problems, so I just keep quiet and deal with some of the waste in my own way...I tell my children to look out for the aboki's[19] [itinerant scavengers] because they normally come to our street. So, we sell most of his rubbish to them...I reserve my plastic bottles for the bicycle boys [Wecyclers][20] so that I can at least I get

[19] Aboki is a Hausa term which means 'friend'. It is also a word that is often used in a derogatory way to refer to poor migrant workers engaging in lowly paid jobs.
[20] Wecyclers operates a reward programme that is points-based. Households earn points for plastics given to Wecyclers and these points are redeemed quarterly by receiving items like toasters, irons and cooking utensils.

> something from them no matter how little… something is better than nothing. The rest we throw into the bush" (Mary, interview).

From Mary's remark, we can identify three channels through which things are disposed of. By selling unwanted items to the aboki's (itinerant scavengers) and exchanging plastic bottles for redeemable points awarded by Wecyclers, Mary is able to extract economic value from the waste generated by her household. Mary's remark suggests that as a full-time housewife with no earnings 'rubbish' provides her with a source of income, however minimal. This is in contrast to homes with middle to high socio-economic dispositions where rubbish is not only seen as an inconvenience but as something that should be immediately disposed of. Thus, in households with a low socio-economic background, we see that there is both a production and consumption of liminal objects – things that are neither rubbish nor valuable objects. In Mary and Musa's household, materials must be reused, repurposed, or alternatively sold to generate income. The valuation of rubbish and unwanted things is geared towards economic survival. Mary also confessed that some of her unwanted items are disposed of into the bush, a channel of disposal that is considered to be illegal and violates the regulations of waste management as stipulated by LAWMA. It is not unusual for household individuals that resides in poor neighbourhoods to engage in the practice of fly-tipping. This is because the waste management and disposal infrastructure are seldom inefficient in the run-down neighbourhoods. In this way, fly-tipping can be seen as a mechanism for those from a low socio-economic background to circumvent the inadequate or ineffective waste management infrastructure in their neighbourhoods.

I began the section with a discussion of how everyday practices around rubbish create gendered patterns and division of labour within households from middle to a high socio-economic background. Through an analysis of field notes and interview excerpts, I showed how these gendered practices are empowering to women from middle-high socio-economic background. Immediately following this was a discussion of gendered spaces and the manner in which division of labour manifest in households with low socio-economic backgrounds. Here, I showed

that these gendered practices could be (dis)empowering to women. The thrust of this argument is that these practices enacted around rubbish overlaps with the broader norms of heterosexuality and patriarchal structures in Lagos, Nigeria. Importantly, the section traces the trajectories traversed by rubbish and things that are yet to be rubbish when they are removed from the household. I then explored the way in which unwanted household objects are divested using other channels like itinerant scavengers and (bicycles boys) employees from Wecyclers. In keeping with the idea of discussing the everyday household practices around liminal objects (i.e. rubbish and things that are yet to be rubbish), I now turn to the practice of gifting to show that it represents a conduit through which objects are divested.

6.1.2. Intergenerational Gifting: A Pathway for Divesting Objects

One aim of this thesis is to explore the social processes that are present in the act of disposal. In this section, I examine the meanings and values associated with objects and how these inform the practices through which household objects are disposed of. The aim here is to expose further the practices and processes that are mired in the dispossession of things. By doing this, I intend to consolidate the discussion presented in the preceding sections by exploring the transfer of intergenerational objects through gifting as well as observe the displacements of objects that has little significance and little or no use value. In my observation and interviews with Aisha, I observed that intergenerational transfer, that is the gifting of cherished objects, serves as one channel through which objects are divested.

Photo 12: Aisha's mortars in her kitchen (left) and kitchen storage room (right)

Aisha is a widow living with her daughter in Ijora-Olopa[21] area of Lagos state. On my visit to Aisha's home, I encountered two pestle and mortars in her house. The location of one pestle and mortar was her pantry, which ignited my interest in the object.

Q: Oh! That's another mortar there! How did you come to own two?

[21] A highly-populated area with neighbourhoods that are characteristic of slum settlements

> "Well, I had these for a long time, in fact dating back to when I had my traditional marriage. Before the marriage, I had one as a spinster but received the other one as a marriage present from my aunt. She didn't know that I already had one" (Aisha, Interview).
>
> Q: That is interesting. I saw that the one in your kitchen storage room does not seem to be in use. Can you tell me why you haven't used it or given it to someone else?
>
> "I have to say that I completely forgot about it. But thinking about it just now, as I already told you, I had one and received another one making two. I cannot give it away because it was a marriage gift from my aunt to me. Where I come from we do not transfer gifts to someone else, so I just left it there because maybe one day I will need it. Maybe this one [pointing to the one in use] will break and I will need another one. But this thing is very strong, and I don't think it will ever break so maybe one day I will give it to my daughter when she is moving out of my house [that is getting married] ... it is not useless to me, I will leave it there, and I don't even mind allowing it to rot there, but I cannot sell or give it to anybody that is not family" (Aisha, Interview).

Aisha's decision to transfer the pestle and mortar over to her daughter shows her intention to retain such a cherished item within her family. Through intergenerational gifting, Aisha hopes to retain the material meanings (as a sacred gift) invested in the pestle and mortar. In this way, intergenerational gifting can be seen as one channel through which personal or household possessions are passed on (Curasi 1999). As Gregson et al., (2007) observe, the material qualities of objects are dependent on the meanings invested in them throughout their biographies and trajectories. It is these meanings or material qualities that determine the means by which such cherished possessions are transferred (McCracken, 1986). Whether an object is gifted to the charity, disposed of in the bin, sold to cart pushers or Wecyclers will depend on the meanings that have been invested in them by their possessors, in Aisha's case, the material qualities of the pestle and mortar as a special possession, one that is encoded with symbolic meaning that can only be passed onto her daughter (Belk et al., 1989; Price et al., 2000; Schwartz, 1967).

Aisha's decision to transfer the item to her daughter when she reaches marriageable age is consistent with the notion that sacred objects should not be sold but instead transferred within family networks (Curasi et al., 2004). For Aisha, the pestle and mortar can be considered as a valuable memento that carries with it life events through different generations (Belk, 1990). As a wedding gift, the pestle and mortar hold memories and knit family relations as well as facilitate the transmission of social values and expectations (Grayson and Shulman, 2000; Sherry, 1983; Trager, 1998). Therefore, any attempt to transfer the mortars to a non-family member is against Aisha's traditions and can be considered a taboo. This is consistent with Curasi's (1999) argument that intergenerational gifting involves the transfer of cherished items to family members in an attempt to preserve its meanings, memories, and experiences pertinent to objects.

Unlike Mary and Musa's account, Aisha's mortars are not intruding in her daily rhythm. Instead, they exist in a liminal state where their value as gifts is yet to be realised. Again, there is a hint of how objects' values are linked to their temporal qualities in relation to time and space. As a liminal object (neither inside/outside nor useful/useless) it assumes an indeterminate status and thus should be stored in a liminal space such as the pantry (Hirschman et al., 2012). As a liminal space, Aisha's pantry serves as a temporary bin where objects are kept in abeyance until they are retrieved [when her daughter reaches a marriageable age or gets married] (Hetherington, 2004). However, should that opportunity not arise, such objects are then potentially moved along through a different conduit [through binning]. We can assume that as a redundant object, Aisha's intention to hand it as a gift to her daughter implies that the mortar will inevitably be removed from the house following her daughter's wedding. Aisha's case shows how certain channels through which things are moved along have important social and cultural implications. As an intergenerational object, Aisha's mortars are imbued with symbolic meanings and have the potential to foster social and family relationships (Gregson et al., 2007; Nelson et al., 2007).

So far, I have explored intergenerational gifting as one of the channels through which households move things along. I have shown how the meanings invested into objects dictates the practices that are enacted around their divestments. In keeping with the exploration of the material and symbolic meanings that are invested in objects and how these inform their movement and disposal, I now turn my attention to memorial objects.

6.1.3. Repurposing Things: Sacred Rhythm and Quotidian Rhythm

There is been an increased interest in the disposition of special possessions such as memorial objects within consumer research studies (Lim and Fitchett, 2011; Price et al., 2000). Consistent within these studies is the notion that objects associated with death can reveal practices and categories of culture (Douglas and Isherwood, 1978). Field interviews and observations with my research participants demonstrate that the meanings associated with deceased or memorial objects influence the practices that are enacted around their disposition. In the excerpt below Joseph provides an idiosynsyncratic exchange regarding the meanings and relationship between one such memorial object.

> Q: I noticed two mortars outside your gate when I came in. How did they get there?
>
> "Oh, those were put outside by my brother. I guess he wanted people to be able to sit there when they come around, especially the man at the gate [Gatekeeper or Door man]" (Joseph, Interview).
>
> Q: That's interesting...he could have kept a chair there, why that particular object?
>
> "Well I am not sure, but it was considered a nuisance in the garage, so I guess that's why he decided to put it outside for a different purpose and maybe it's because we didn't want to throw it away" (Joseph, Interview).
>
> Q: Oh ok, so where was it before the garage?
>
> "Well that is a long story (there was a silence), but it was in our house, in the kitchen. My mom used to make Amala with Ewedu with it before she passed.

After her passing they were lying there, and no one was using them, so we decided to clear the kitchen to create more space and that was when we decided to put keep them in the garage" (Joseph, Interview).

Photo 13: Mortars used as seats outside Joseph's house

Joseph's excerpt echoes Aisha's story, revealing how familial relations are fostered around certain home possessions. He outlined the difficulty his family faced in disposing of the mortars that were previously owned by his late mother as it continually serves as a link between the dead as well as previous family experiences around the objects (Dant, 2005). The case shows the significance of mundane objects in the everyday lives of people. For instance, objects can serve as a bearer of memory in that they allow people to reminisce about nostalgic experiences that are born out of the meanings invested into material objects. Memorial objects in this way can foster relationships between the living and those that are no longer alive (Hallam and Hockey, 2001).

Throughout our discussion, Joseph's gestures, particularly his facial expressions illuminate the manner in which evocative objects (e.g. possessions of the deceased) can act as potential pitfalls to the living (Turkle, 2007). Joseph's confession that the mortars served as a 'painful reminder' of the comfort once

offered by the mortars can be considered as an arrhythmic situation (Lefebvre, 2004). In this way, Joseph's case is in contrast with the idea that cherished possessions of the deceased provide warmth and comfort due to their 'almost sacred status' (Curasi, 1991). By preserving the mortars following their mom's passing, we can assume that the comfort they once provided had changed into a painful memory, one that they tried to banish by moving the mortars to the garage – a place where the presence of the objects is not immediately obvious. Indeed, Joseph's household's intention was to use the garage as a conduit or as a temporary graveyard to divest the memories that are out of sync with their everyday rhythm.

This case support Bettany and Kerrane's (2011) arguments that objects are not just things acted on by consuming subjects but that their meaning emerges following a series of negotiations or interrelations between subjects and objects. The idea that the mortars were able to conjure up memories of their late mother brings to light the material qualities and agentic features and their possibility of leaving "material footprints of the departed" (Turley and Donohoe, 2012, p.1342). We see from Joseph's story that attempts to displace or dispose of objects can be disruptive because objects can simply refuse to do what we want them to do thereby creating the possibility for them to return (Gregson et al., 2007). However, while in the garage, the mortars continued to constitute a 'white elephant – a 'troublesome' and liminal object that needed to be dealt with. As Hirschman et al., (2012) observe, liminal spaces (such as Joseph's garage) serve as a temporary site for objects, a place that affords individuals the opportunity to scrutinize the worth of memorial objects appreciating their biographies as well as the nostalgic feelings that they transmit before accepting their passing with a little feeling of regret.

Joseph's case charts the social processes involved in disposal as their difficulty in disposing of the mortars following their mothers passing compelled them to move the objects from the kitchen to the garage. Occupying a liminal space allowed them enough time to mourn the objects before finally relocating them to outside the gate. Moreover, the transfer of the mortars to a location outside the gate can

be interpreted as a tactic to dispose of the mortars without necessarily assuming responsibility for the action of disposing of it: presumably, they hoped that someone will do the 'difficult' job of finally disposing of the troublesome mortars. Thus, in as much as the garage serves as a transitional space between past, present, and future, outside the gate, equally serves as a doorway through which the mortar is finally moved out of the house. Earlier, I explained that gates within the Nigerian household context provide a border that demarcates the compound premises from the outside world. Indeed, outside the gate represents an interstitial space where anything can happen to the mortars. Thus, before repurposing the items as outdoor seats Joseph and his brother are aware that the mortars could be stolen, disposed of by the municipal waste collector or damaged by the rain or sun. As such, I argue that Joseph's household were passively disposing of the mortars [that has simply refused to go away] using 'outside the gate' as a conduit. Such a situation is consistent with the contention by Price et al., (2000) that the disposal of memorial objects is often marred with ambivalent emotions.

So far, this story shows that the qualities of objects inform the practices around their movement and potential disposal and in so doing reinstating objects as active partners in the meaning-making process (Skuse, 2005). On a functional level, the mortar represents a practical consideration in that it is used as a seat. The symbolic meaning associated with an object imbues it with symbolic value (Kirk and Sellen, 2010; Holt, 2004), and its disposal does not completely strip it of its semiotic and symbolic quality (Munro, 1995; Rodden and Wood, 2003). In Joseph's case, the semiotic and symbolic properties of his late mother's mortars meant that they continue to experience a bittersweet emotion even after the object has been removed (Belk, 1991; Price et al., 2000).

6.1.4. Summary

In this section, I drew upon the interviews and observations that I conducted with household participants to explore the mundane social processes involved in the disposal of things. In particular, I explored the everyday practices that are enacted across low and middle-high socio-economic households. Of course, the discussion was not limited to rubbish but equally liminal objects that have the potential to become rubbish. I showed that the mundane practices enacted around rubbish reveal dynamics around familial tensions, negotiation of home space, and gender relations of power. Not only that, I observed the gendered practices, the division of labour, as well as the extent to which these practices are shaped by the social, economic and cultural backgrounds of these households. I also traced the conduits and trajectories of households' rubbish following their removal from home spaces. Specifically, I explored how objects that are considered rubbish, surplus, worthless are divested using channels facilitated by itinerant scavengers, Wecyclers, PSPs, intergenerational gifting or even repurposed. Furthermore, the section concluded with a discussion of the material qualities of memorial objects and its impact on practices around disposal. Yet, in tracing the movement of rubbish, it is important to consider what happens to objects when they are divested from the household space. It is for this reason that I now go on to explore the role of itinerant scavengers in sustaining the flow and trajectories of rubbish.

6.2. Itinerant Scavengers/Cart Pushers

In this section I focus on the everyday practices performed around rubbish, performed by itinerant scavengers (also referred to as cart pushers). Recall that in chapter five, I identified two types of scavengers: dumpsite scavengers, who undertake their operations in landfills and itinerant scavengers (cart pushers) who operate within the city. As such, the data presented in this chapter emerged from my interviews and observations of informal cart pushers. The section explores and analyses the intricate everyday practices of cart pushers as they navigate within the interstitial spaces of the city.

Photo 14: A Cart Pusher

Earlier on, I explained that the reform pertaining to the formal waste management practices has led to the persecution of cart pushers in that they are banned from undertaking activities related to waste disposal. However, the banning of cart pushers did not entirely put an end to such informal activities. Indeed, cart pushers continued to perform waste disposal for people interested in their services as well as to recover discarded material. Itinerant scavengers are predominantly male, and their daily routine includes patrolling the streets of Lagos in search of materials that have been disposed of (items scavenged

includes metals, irons, plastics, copper etc.). Often marking their presence with a clanging sound made from striking an iron against their carts, itinerant scavengers attempt to buy scraps from households. It is worth mentioning that the decision of itinerant scavengers to offer cash in exchange for scraps is driven by the necessity to present themselves as people of good character and not thieves or social deviants. As already explained, the media representations of scavengers as thieves has led to them being stereotyped. Thus to avoid such a label, most itinerant scavengers attempt to pay for materials when necessary. In this way, they are simultaneously itinerant scavengers and itinerant buyers. For the sake of clarity, I will use the term 'itinerant scavenger' going forward. Although I am chiefly concerned with exploring the daily practices of itinerant scavengers, it is imperative to note that the activities of these itinerant scavengers are generally interwoven with those of a more experienced 'boss' generally referred to as a scrap dealer.

6.2.1. Scrap Dealers

The scrap dealers occupy a higher hierarchy in the scrap industry. This is mainly because scrap dealers when compared with itinerant scavengers tend to possess a superior socio-economic dispositions (i.e. better economic resources and social connections within the scrap industry), which enable them to own and manage a scrapyard. The scrap dealers are generally considered legitimate as they are registered under the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and as such are obligated to pay taxes to the Lagos state government. However, they rely on the illegal cart pushers to source for scraps, rendering them closely connected to the informal economy. In this way, scrap dealers occupy a liminal position straddling the formal and informal economies. As such, the scrap dealers constitute a crucial stakeholder in the informal waste sector in that they exist as the primary benefactor of the illegal itinerant scavengers. For instance, in the excerpt below, Habib charts this relationship between scrap dealers and and itinerant scavengers.

> "The people working here are mostly people who have just arrived in Lagos. When they come, they just look for places where they are doing scrap business…all these boys here, I don't know them, I don't know their family, we just met here and became brothers, and we became family. I don't know his mother; I don't know his brother…we usually give them the carts, we give them money to buy scrap …they usually make a lot of profit on a daily basis" (Habib, scrap dealer).

Photo 15: A scrap dealer disbursing money to a cart pusher

Habib is a scrap dealer and is originally from Kano. With over 30 years' experience as a scrap dealer, Habib owns and manages a scrapyard in the Idi-araba area of Lagos. Habib's scrapyard serves as a workspace to a large number of itinerant scavengers. Habib is particularly interested in gathering scrapped aluminium, irons, and copper in large quantities before selling them to companies and other middlemen who in turn process them as semi-raw materials for local manufacturing. Through an informal arrangement with itinerant scavengers, Habib allocates to each itinerant scavenger the sum of N3,000 (£6.30) as well as a cart on a daily basis. These allow the itinerant scavenger to buy any scrap on offer. Habib expects the itinerant scavenger to return with scraps at the close of each day. According to Habib, cart pushers can earn between N10,000 (£20.80) and N20,000 (£41.67) when they spend the entire N3000 on scrap that is considered valuable. After deducting the initial sum of N3000 (£6.30), the cart

pushers are then allowed to keep 80% of the profit while Habib, as the scrap dealer, keeps the remaining 20%.

Photo 16. An example of a typical scrapyard

As migrants from the Northern villages, these itinerant scavengers have very little or none of the skills required to survive the harsh economic conditions of urban life. Habib's position therefore resembles that of a big brother. Habib's relationship with the cart pusher is not so much bonded by kinship but by their collective interest in scrap, in which the dealer acts as a figurehead, as he provides the informal migrants (scavengers) with a platform to partake in the urban economy. Yet, the order of this relationship between scrap dealers and itinerant scavengers exposes some interesting power dynamics. While Habib presents himself as a philanthropist, looking after the interests of the ('poor') itinerant scavengers, it goes without saying that these scavengers, in reality, are the value providers in the scrap industry. Without their efforts, it would be difficult, and perhaps impossible, for scrap dealers to stay in the scrap business. Although the cart pushers occupy one of the lowest positions in the scrap industry, the financial income generated from the cart pushing activities is nevertheless sufficient to keep them subservient to the scrap dealers. In reality, the nature of this relationship can easily pass as that between 'masters and slaves'.

6.2.2. Career Progressions in the Scrap Industry

My interviews with, and observations of, itinerant scavengers reveal that the funds generated from scavenging are often channelled into entrepreneurial activities. For instance, Salim, a scrapper discussed the potential of career advancement in the work of itinerant scavenging.

> "I don't think people who start this business want to move to anything else because there is money in it. Most people like myself started from cart pusher, then a picker before progressing to scrap dealer. Even though we want to move to something else, we go back to the village, invest the money in cows [cattle] and start training [rearing] them there then return to continue this business…I personally have cattle in the village and someone is looking after them for me. Some of my brothers here have rice farms in the village so depending on the person they just invest their money in different business in the village" (Salim, interview).

Salim is a scrap dealer with more than 20 years of experience in the practice of cart pushing. Before this, Salim was a cart pusher. In the above excerpt, Salim describes how he has achieved upward mobility from the position of a cart-pusher to a scrap dealer. Unlike scavenging, scrap dealing constitutes a form of permanent work. In contrast to the literature which constructs scavenging as a temporary means of getting by (Sicular, 1991), Salim manages to get himself from a temporary existence to a more permanent one, a position that has enabled him and others like him to raise seed money to create other streams of income (Thieme, 2015). Thus, by reinvesting the financial proceeds from scrapping into agricultural activities (i.e. food and animal farming), Salim is able to engage in entrepreneurial-related activities. Moreover, it is not uncommon to find informal operators that consider scavenging as a means of survival to adjust to urban economic activities. For example, in the excerpt below, Seun explains that scavenging represents a stepping stone towards becoming a commercial tricycle operator.

> "I am tired of this job. If I get a Keke (tricycle) I will drive it. I know how to ride motorcycle very well. I have previously worked as a commercial

motorcyclist in my village. I am not able to ride one here because the use of motorcycles for commercial purposes has been banned in Lagos...I don't have money for Keke so I am working here to make the money I need to buy one" (Seun, Interview).

Having made the long trip from Sokoto to Lagos, Seun was disappointed to learn that it is illegal to work as a commercial motorcyclist in Lagos. Seun therefore turned to the informal waste economy to generate the cash that is required to purchase the more expensive tricycle with which he provides commercial transport services to residents – a practice that is considered legal in some geographical areas of Lagos. In short, informal operators like Salim, Seun (and others) are able to establish their foothold in the formal economic spaces (Medina, 2007). Although it sounds heroic that informal operators can progress economically in the scrap industry, such progression is dependent on their knowledge and mastery of the skills required to compete and succeed in the industry. What follows is a discussion of the skills and know-how that are necessary for engaging in the scrapping business.

6.2.3. Capital Required for Categorising Scrap

Once scraps are collected and wheeled into the scrapyards, it undergoes a transformative process before it is sold off to interested middlemen and local industries. One aspect of such a process entails the practice of dismantling or 'destroying', as Jide refers to it in the excerpt below.

"I started to pick slippers [rubber footwear]. From there, I came to learn everything, noticed how people go about the business. After starting from 'picking' I became the number one destroyer...This job is important because if someone buys an engine (broken) and he does not know the difference between iron, metal, and copper, the person will not know how to remove all the different parts. So I got to that level where I knew how to pick, how to buy and how to destroy the scrap. You have to take the objects apart piece by piece, everything...aluminium is different because when you are buying iron for N10.00, and aluminium is selling for N50.00. You need to separate them so that you don't end up selling something worth N50.00 for N10.00. If you look at it (pointing to an engine) it is completely iron but inside there is some aluminium so you have to be able to identify the different parts and know how to destroy it for you to sell them at different prices. We sell in kilos so if you don't destroy it, the

complete engine will be sold as iron even though there is valuable aluminium inside…so after destroying it, I will sell the aluminium inside for N50 per kilo, the iron for N40 and earn N90.00 instead of N40.00... again, when you see compressors [from refrigerators] it's all iron and when you scale it, it will be worth nothing more than N200 but there is expensive copper wire inside so when we destroy [cut the outer iron] the compressor we sell the copper for N800.00 instead of N200.00. So there is a difference between aluminium, copper wire, iron, zinc and brass" (Jide, interview).

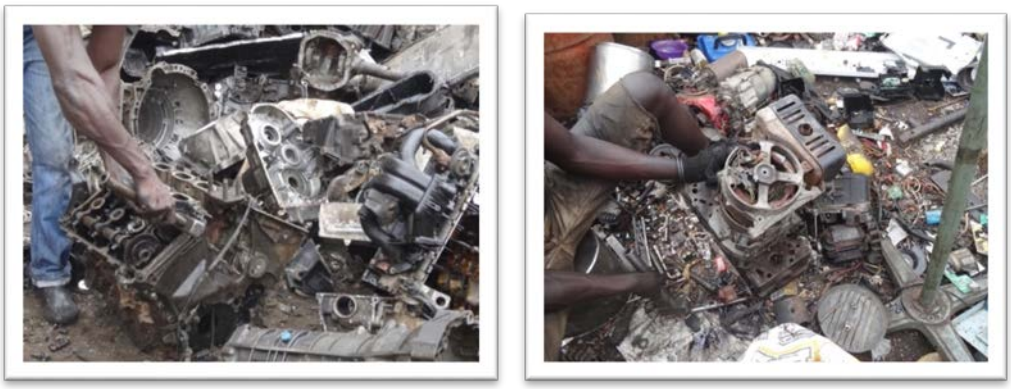


Photo 17: Itinerant scavengers dismantling broken engines in a scrapyard

Jide is an experienced itinerant scavenger operating in a scrapyard at Mushin, Lagos. The above photos show the process through which Jide dismantles and extracts the valuable components that can be found in a broken engine. His knowledge of the valuation practices in the scrapping industry is on display here, and this can be interpreted as a form of embodied knowledge, a skill that can only be acquired through years of engaging in the practice of scavenging and constitutes what distinguishes Jide from a novice cart pusher. Jide's embodied know-how enables him to instinctively identify and differentiate the components (such as compressors, copper, and aluminium) that can be found in the engine. Jide's ability to discern the value of objects, I argue, can be interpreted as what Lefebvre's (2004) refers to as educated rhythms, one that has been acquired through a form of dressage and this is what enables Jide to master the practices of scrapping. Through years of engaging in a repetitive scrapping practice, Jide has acquired a corporeal mastery of the skills required for the job.

Needless to say, novice itinerant scavengers are expected to shadow a more experienced colleague for a minimum of one week before they are allowed to go out and operate independently. During this time, they are expected to rely on

aids such as magnets for separating aluminium from iron. In this way, the scrap industry is not so dissimilar from other formal sectors, where a recruit is expected to attend training courses and workshops to develop skills and competencies in relation to their jobs. As I witnessed, an aluminium that is coated with paints is difficult to discern from iron and as such early career itinerant scavengers rely on magnets to undertake a more accurate valuation of objects recovered. Even so, other objects are difficult to differentiate. In some cases, itinerant scavengers have to chisel (scratch) and hammer the objects to determine whether it is aluminium or stainless steel.

The discussion so far has been focused on exploring the everyday practices around cart pushing. However, these scavenging practices, as I explained in chapter five, are deemed to be illegal. Thus, in the next section, I discuss how the formal representation of waste practices dictates the practices of itinerant scavenging/cart-pushing in the informal waste sector.

6.2.4. Marginal Rhythms of Cart Pushers

Although the career progressions of itinerant scavengers and the successes of scrap dealers have been documented in the preceding section, the operations of the itinerant scavengers are not as straightforward as it seems. The formal prohibition of scavenging and the representation of scavengers as deviants have led to the marginalisation of itinerant scavengers. They are often subject to verbal and sometimes physical abuse from the public. Such treatment is heightened by the negative representation of scavengers as miscreants who steal government resources (see chapter 5). The cart pushers I interviewed described their relationship with the state apparatus as one that considers them to be criminals. The excerpt below illustrates this point.

> **"**It's really difficult for us to survive in Lagos. Even when we pick something from inside the [street] gutter, Yoruba man will say drop it! What are you looking for in the gutter? They will tell you that they need it and meanwhile it's inside dirty drainage water" (Mohammed, interview).

In the above excerpt, Mohammed recalls one such negative encounter with a member of the public. His experiences, as well as those of others, indicates how cart pushers are socially stereotyped as thieves and thus are treated with disdain. Their activities are generally considered to be an act of transgression. Often considered to be a grotesque place, the gutters in impoverished areas of Lagos are often without any covering, a breeding ground for mosquitoes, stagnant water, grimes, and frequently cluttered with discarded items (i.e. plastic, bottles and polythene bags). As a public space, the street gutters are managed by the state (i.e. through the local government authorities). Although Mohammed is mainly interested in extracting economic value from the materials disposed of in the gutter, his action – although illegal – I argue, constitutes a public service in that it helps in unclogging the drainage system. Even so, his effort is considered to be an act of theft. Their marginal status does not only subject them to disciplining by law enforcement agents; it equally leaves them exposed to verbal attacks from the public. Indeed, these informal waste workers are also open to exploitation by law enforcement agents such as the police. I now discuss this.

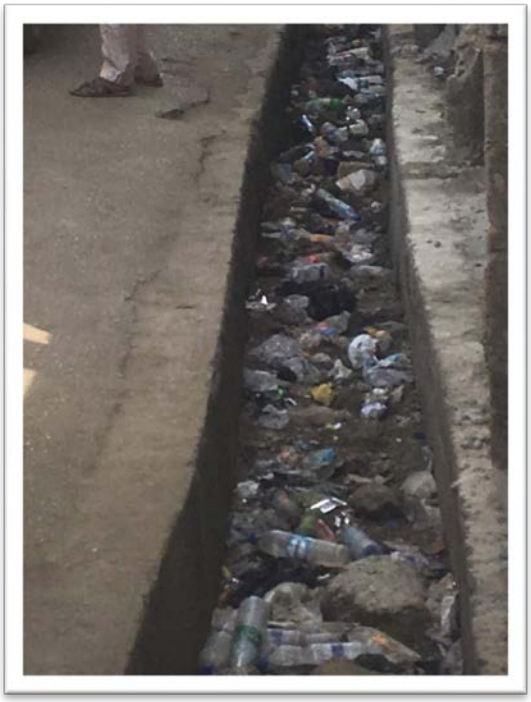


Photo 18: A typical gutter in a low socio-economic neighbourhood

6.2.5. Informal Economic Spaces as Sites of Exploitation

Existing literature suggests that scavengers are often harassed and exploited by the police who demand a bribe in exchange for not policing their activities (Asim et al., 2012). Similarly, the itinerant scavengers I observed explain that corrupt practices such as bribing are common practice among the police. For instance, in the excerpt below Bayo narrates one scenario where he was subject to bullying from the police.

> "You know any business that has lots of illiterate people is always like this...if I'm educated, you cannot ask me to provide a receipt for something I took from the dump... look at this rim, it is damaged but if I pick it, the police will accuse me of stealing it at the checkpoint...they will ask me to produce the receipt or take them to the people that gave it to us...if you think of the stress and distance of taking the police to where the item is picked, the whole day is gone, it is impossible so we just pay them" (Bayo, Interview).

Photo 19: Bayo with a cart full vehicle wheel rims

Bayo is an itinerant scavenger who specialises in collecting scrapped iron and metal for a scrap dealer. Bayo believes that his lack of formal education means that he is at the mercy of corrupt police officers. Bayo's case illustrates how those in power (i.e. law enforcement officers) attempt to exploit the illiteracy of scavengers. For instance, the police are aware that most scavengers are unable to read or understand the concept of receipt. As such, their inability to provide evidence to substantiate their case leaves them open to exploitation. Like Mohammed, Bayo feels victimised, and alienated from society and is constricted from engaging in norms that are considered appropriate for others. Bayo's story presents an image of disempowerment, and exclusion and only serves to reinforce the marginality of informal operators. Bayo's decision to bribe the corrupt policemen can be considered a 'coping tactic', which leads to an appropriation of the formal economic spaces (Lefebvre, 1991; Round et al., 2008). In principle, it creates a system in which the control and regulation of formal waste management practices happen outside the scope of formal regulation. In this way, everyday practices, movement, and flow of rubbish (whether as commodities or discards) in the informal economic spaces are dictated by the corrupt practices employed by the police. Also, the cart pusher's marginal status is also creates tension with other law enforcement agents (i.e. KAI and LAWMA).

> "Our challenges are KAI, LAWMA, and Police…they make life unbearable for us. KAI challenge is that they know that we are paying tax to the Lagos State Government. We are supplying tax [sic], our union is also paying taxes. The Lorries we use in loading our scraps are paying revenue, do you understand? And our boys before they go to work they will buy a sticker from the state government that allows them to push the carts. This is the sticker for example now (showing the sticker). You can see that on the sticker there is wheelbarrow, carts, trucks, head truck, look at it…the sticker is N1,000 each year. No cart can go out without the sticker. If they see a scavenger without one, they will arrest him, and you will pay a fine of N4, 500 (£16) before they will give you your cart back. As the State Government know that each Local Government has their sticker, they have to leave us to do our business because they are collecting money for the sticker. We pay our taxes, but we still have challenges…although, we have already solved the problem with KAI for up to 10 years now" (Idris, scrap dealer).

Photo 20: Photograph of the authorising sticker

PA. How did you solve the problem with KAI?

> "When they were disturbing our boys, arresting them, taking them to Kirikiri (a prison) ... collecting N11,000 (£23) bail from us...together with our association, we discussed with them several alternatives, but we could not resolve the issue. So, what we decided was to speak to them individually, I personally went to speak to one of their bosses and told him I have x number of boys and where my scrapyard is located. So, we agreed that I should make a special ID card for my boys and that whenever they arrest my boys and they show the card, they will know that this is my boy... If they see my own boys, if they arrest my boys and they show the KAI my ID card, they will release them... We settle them with N20,000 (£42) every week. So, I make sure that anybody I am giving money to the market [sic] will have my ID card before they go out... so we protect our boys from everything" (Idris, scrap dealer).

As Idris explains, there is an ongoing conflict between the formal policies around cart pushing as laid out by the state and the actual lived experiences of the itinerant scavengers. Considering that these practices are illegal, the remittances made by itinerant scavengers for stickers contradicts the state government official prohibition of itinerant scavenging. It is clear that the state benefits from their activity in the sense that they generate revenue through the sale of stickers to cart pushers. The situation appears contradictory, and I argue that if the state is serious about getting rid of the informal practices, they will not seek ways to

generate revenue from the cart pushers' activities. Nevertheless, Idris' account resonates with King and Dovey's (2013) contention that the state relies on informal economic practices to sustain the formal economy.

Furthermore, Round et al., (2008) also identify corruption and bribery as tactics that enable informal market sellers to appropriate formal economic spaces (i.e. the market). Similarly, Idris' special arrangement with the KAI brigade further exposes their corrupt practices. By circumventing KAI's practices, the itinerant scavengers are able to continue the practices of cart-pushing despite their status as outlaws. After rejecting the collective bargaining made by the cart pushers' association, KAI later facilitated a bespoke agreement (i.e. the use of special identity cards) with individual scrap dealers like Idris. Such a strategy can enable the corrupt KAI officials to benefit from a covert and profitable arrangement with the cart pushers. By paying a monthly remittance of N20,000 (£42) to the corrupt officers, scrap dealers are able to offer protection for the itinerant scavengers operating under them (Round et al., 2008). In effect, this constitutes a more satisfactory bargain for the scrap dealers, considering the bail charges for the arrest of a cart pusher cost N11,000 (£23) each. These practices that are performed by the law enforcement agents and the informal operators collectively shape the informal economic spaces of waste and can be interpreted as spaces of representation (Lefebvre, 1991).

Subsequent field interviews and observation also revealed that rival scrap dealers and itinerant scavengers do not know of these special arrangements. Idris for example, believes that withholding such information from his rivals affords him a competitive advantage; one that ensures that he is able to control larger informal spaces. In this way, the scrap dealers do not only employ 'tactics' that enable them to offer protection for itinerant scavengers but also use defensive 'strategies' to maintain competitive advantage (Round et al., 2008).

6.2.6. Night Rhythms of Cart Pushers

While most itinerant scavengers are protected by scrap dealers like Idris; there are others who are not able to enjoy such privileges. This is due to their lack of economic disposition or put simply their poorer social networks. These itinerant scavengers cannot afford the financial commitment required to make special arrangements with corrupt law enforcement agents nor do they have the protection of scrap dealers. As such, they must employ 'wily tricks' to ensure that they are able to evade the police, KAI and LAWMA officials (de Certeau, 1984). The notes below reveal a series of tactics involved in scavenging at specific moments and territories that allow them to elude the police.

> "It's 5.00am and Uche, one of my gate-keepers is running late for his road trip to Ughelli[22]. As we drove hastily through an expressway (name withheld), we were greeted by the morning mist from the December Harmattan. I am intrigued to find several itinerant scavengers heading towards the city of Lagos. We stopped and engaged with one of the itinerant scavengers, "Aziz...Good morning! How are you?" Aziz replied with a Hausa accent, 'Oga I nor hear you' [meaning, sir I can't understand the language]. I had misjudged Aziz, believing we could both converse in the English language. So, I immediately switched to the Nigeria creole language (pidgin) and we started to converse. Aziz revealed that he like many other itinerant scavengers must sneak into the city before daylight. The itinerant scavengers live in shanty houses in a remote area (name withheld), some 71 kilometres from the main city. Aziz explained that getting through this expressway poses a high risk because they are usually exposed and likely to be apprehended by law enforcement agents. Besides it is also more difficult for the itinerant scavengers to get their carts through the road during peak hours, so they must commute during odd times of the day" (Field Diary 12/12/2015).

As an independent itinerant scavenger, Aziz has no special arrangements with police, KAI or LAWMA agents. This implies that Aziz is his own boss and does not operate under any scrap dealer. Therefore, Aziz must deal with any punishment that he may incur from violating the law regarding cart pushing activities. Consequently, the spatial practices performed by Aziz's and other itinerant scavengers like him create an entirely different rhythm; one that differs from those enacted by itinerant scavengers with protection. These spatial practices

[22] A city in located in Delta State, the southern area of Nigeria

follow a night rhythm; one that allows Aziz to evade the watchful eyes of the law enforcement agents. Aziz remarked in Nigerian creole, “Oga KAI people self dey sleep” suggesting that the KAI brigade patrol agents are unlikely to perform their duties during the late and early hours of the day. The most significant route for itinerant scavengers’ commuting patterns is the use of highways. Highways are very regularly patrolled by the police and other law enforcement agents from KAI and LAWMA. Section 3 sub-section 1 of the Lagos States road traffic laws stipulates that “no person shall ride, drive or propel a cart, wheel barrow, motorcycle or tricycle on any of the routes specified in Schedule 11” (Lagos Traffic Laws, 2012). Therefore, the itinerant scavengers are prone to arrest when they use the expressways.

By mastering the rhythmic movement or specific practices of law enforcement agents, Aziz is able to draw on a range of tactics to evade them. One of these tactics involves commuting at hours when people are fast asleep in the city. Besides, Aziz’s spatial practice of ‘ghosting in and out’ of the city can be interpreted as a tactic employed by the itinerant scavengers to sneak into the urban areas where they do not belong (Moreno, 2017). Of course, Aziz’s decision to seek shelter on the outskirts of Lagos is driven by his lack of economic resources and networks required to insert himself into the more urban spaces. For example, some itinerant scavengers are known to sleep at the city mosques or the scrapyards. For this to happen, a scavenger must possess the right social networks. Thus, the housing and commuting pattern of Aziz and others to and from these rural outskirts, I argue, is changing the outlay of the urban spaces of Lagos (Kudva, 2009).

Furthermore, the night rhythmic tactics employed by the itinerant scavengers is not solely to evade the police. These tactics are equally driven by competition, i.e. to get first access to rubbish that has been left outside by householders during the night. Joel – one of my informants – stated “*Oga you know say early morning market na dey hot*” meaning that business undertaken in the early hours of the morning is usually more profitable. Thus, by leaving early, itinerant scavengers have the opportunity to scrounge through the waste bins laid outside

Lagos households. It also represents a time when cart pushers are able to recover discards from the streets without being confronted by members of the general public. In *Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991) makes it clear that the three elements of the spatial triad (spatial practices, representation of spaces and spaces of representation), all collectively interact to produce 'social space'. The analysis presented in this section, therefore, provides a foreground of how the spatial practices of the itinerant scavengers, the spatial ordering of the formal city [i.e. representation of space] and the tactical manoeuvres (spaces of representation) all collectively interact to co-produce the informal economic spaces. In turn, we see how the representation of space and formal practices around the use of and formal practices of urban spaces are able to dictate the rhythmic movement itinerant scavengers and particularly their everyday practices of scavenging; one that is characterised by peculiar commute patterns during odd hours of the day. As Edensor (2010, p.6) argues, such commute patterns (i.e. such as those of itinerant scavengers) is what gives birth to 'mobile place'; one that is dictated by the dialectical interactions between the elements of the spatial triad.

6.2.7. Resistant Rhythms: The Tactic of Flight

Given their disenfranchised status, these informal operators seek to insert themselves into the formal economic spaces and in doing so, create resistant rhythms that allow them to appropriate space (Edensor, 2010). Indeed, Moreno (2017) has shown how everyday resistance has a close relationship with embodied practices. The spatial practices employed by itinerant scavengers can be interpreted from an embodied perspective. The subversive tactics enacted by itinerant scavengers (i.e. night rhythms) produces subversive spaces which allow them to 'make-do'. By occupying the spaces of the hinterland, ghettos, bush paths, untarred road and hidden corners, itinerant scavengers can move freely without needing to constantly 'look' over their shoulders (ibid, 2017).

In these spaces, they are also in close proximity to the rubbish deposited in illegal dumpsites. These spaces offer itinerant scavengers a haven, one that allows them to avoid being arrested. For instance, Dafe disclosed a range of mobile

tactics that he employs in order to evade the law enforcement agents. These tactics are instinctive and are contingent upon several factors ranging from whether the law enforcement agents (i.e. Police, LAWMA, KAI) are in pursuit, the location, and the worth of scrap in their possession. During a day out, Dafe remarked:

> "LAWMA normally confiscate our carts. Why KAI will arrest the person, you understand? LAWMA will not arrest you, they will just seize the cart, and they dump it somewhere else and destroy it...some of the LAWMA officials will sell the carts they confiscate from scavengers in Mushin to scavengers operating in Ojota. Sometimes they call some people to ask whether they are interested in buying the carts" (Dafe, Interview).

In the above excerpt, Dafe explains the penalties invoked by the various law enforcement agents when illegal itinerant scavengers are arrested. These penalties have implication for the tactics enacted by the informal itinerant scavengers. For instance, during a day out scavenging, Dafe made it clear that the most viable decision, when being pursued by law enforcement agents, is to flee. However, our decision to flee is contingent upon a number of factors ranging from which agent was pursuing, where we were and the scraps in our cart. Based on this, instant decisions are made as to whether one should stay and negotiate or whether one should flee.

Dafe explains that the greater the economic value of the scraps in possession, the more likely he is to resist; and this will determine his willingness to resist arrest or surrender to the law enforcement agents. On the other hand, when the economic value of scrap is less than the fee required for bail charges, the instinctive action is to abandon the cart and flee. Fleeing, as Dafe explains, is the most cost-effective option because the financial burden that comes with bribing the law enforcement agents or paying the bail charges is higher than the cost of replacing a cart. Besides, Dafe's remark "they call some people to ask whether they are interested in buying the carts" alludes to the fact that confiscated carts are sold cheaply on the black market by corrupt officials.

In an attempt to drive home, the idea that fleeing is the best tactic, Dafe stated, "How I go suffer inside 'Green Maria'[23], come still pay pass the total market when I carry"? Dafe suggests that it will be foolish of him to experience the torture and inhumane experience of being transported to a correctional facility in a Green Maria before parting with an amount (bail charges) considered higher than the worth of the carts. These wily tricks and tactical manoeuvres employed by itinerant scavengers are 'mobile' 'tactics' that "must 'poach', operate 'blow' by 'blow' and create surprises in order to evade control" (de Certeau, (1984 p.37). Such premeditated tactics undermine the surveillance strategies employed by formal authorities. In so doing, the informal operators are able to appropriate these informal economic spaces, subvert and resist the oppression, power relations, and discrimination through acts of making-do. The appropriation of these informal spaces is what Lefebvre describes as 'spaces of representation' (Lefebvre, 1991).

[23] A mobile prison that is used to transport offenders to detention centres

6.2.8. Temporality: An Analysis of Human and Non-Human Rhythms

In this thesis, I am interested in non-human rhythms (such as the daily comings and goings of people, seasons and movement of things) that become entangled with human rhythms (Edensor, 2010; Lefebvre, 2004). Here is this section, I am keen not only to explore the biological rhythm that imposes itself on the everyday spatial practices of itinerant scavengers but also the role of the non-human arrangement that comes together when itinerant scavenging is performed. Interviews and observations undertaken with this stakeholder revealed that the cyclical rhythms of the seasons have a profound effect on the spatial practices of itinerant scavengers as well as the temporality of place. In rhythmanalysis, Lefebvre (2004) posits that cyclical rhythms can modify and, at times, intrude on the everyday spatial practices of people. Similarly, Degen (2010) argues that an enriched account of everyday spatial practices of people is intricately connected with biological rhythms such as those of thirst and respiration. Therefore, it is possible to establish a connection between cyclical seasons (i.e. raining or dry seasons), spatial practices in urban spaces, and biological rhythms. Jones (2010) has shown that the rhythmic elements of the sea tides across geographical locations have profound effects on the affective experience people have with particular landscapes and places. During my field observations, I documented several ways in which seasonal rhythms impact on the practices of itinerant scavengers. For instance, the field diary below reveals that the climate conditions of the physical environment have a profound effect on the spatial and embodied practices of scavenging.

6.2.9. Consumption Rhythms: Cyclical Rhythms and Biological Needs

> "It's a hot sunny afternoon and I am shadowing Yusuf (an itinerant scavenger) to learn and experience the techniques and skills required for scavenging. We had spent over two hours walking through the Mushin route when I began to feel my legs dragging. The scorching heat from the sun left me with a headache. Feeling tired, my legs hurting, gasping for air, and with sweat rolling down my forehead, we paused, and I profusely wiped the sweat off my forehead using my upper arms in an attempt to avoid my dirty hands. Desperately in need of water, Yusuf informs me that there is still a relatively

> long distance to walk before we can find a kiosk for water…Today is remarkably different from other days I thought to myself, the temperature is extremely hot for a rainy season and I am feeling the effect of it on my body." (Field diary, 14/07/2015).

The above diary entry depicts the relationship between cyclical rhythms (i.e. climate) and the everyday mundane and embodied practices such as walking. My experiences emerge as an arrhythmia that reveals the intrusion of natural rhythms on my practices of walking (Lefebvre, 2004; Middleton, 2010). For instance, the extremely hot temperature had a profound effect on my energy levels and intimately affected the performance of my body. Besides, the cyclical rhythms such as dehydration, thirst, and perspiration resulting from my exposure to the heat further disrupted my linear rhythms (i.e. scavenging practices). Likewise, the data obtained from my research participants reveal how seasonal and biological rhythms can generate linear rhythms that are associated with increased productivity.

> "During the rainy season, it's difficult to find the PET bottles but on dry seasons people get thirsty, street hawkers will sell bottled water in the traffic, people will consume them and dispose of the bottles anywhere. It represents a really a good time for our business" (Seun, Interview).

Seun is an itinerant scavenger whose livelihood depends on recovering street discards such as PET bottles. In the excerpt above, Seun establishes a relationship between biological rhythms and season rhythms. In particular, Seun draws attention to the relationship between the consumption patterns of road users and the seasonal cycles of the dry seasons. This supports Lefebvre's (2004) argument that cyclical and linear rhythms regularly tamper with each other. Seun's contention that a significant number of PET bottles are discarded during the dry season suggests that the changes in biological rhythms shape the spatial practices as well as informal economic activities of waste collectors. It appears, therefore, that there is a relationship between the natural rhythms and the actual lived experiences of eating and drinking (Relph, 2004). Just as the heat led me to experience arrhythmia, so also do the rainy and dry seasons create arrhythmic experiences for itinerant scavengers and other road users. Furthermore, this

notion that cyclical rhythms are able to dictate the linear and repetitive everyday practices was a common theme during interviews. Itinerant scavengers who specialise in scavenging cartons and paper complained that the seasonal cycles of rain disrupt their spatial practices in a number of ways.

> "The business is seasonal. There are times when the business becomes crippled. Like during the rainy season, the business does not stay alive until the dry season. The reason why we are enjoying it now is that the rain has slowed down, we all know that July is rainy season but unlike the previous years, this one is different…the rain is no longer falling and that is why the business is booming" (Collins, Interview).

Collins is an itinerant scavenger who engages in a door-to-door paper collection by using a locally constructed cart. Collins' comments reinforce the idea that seasonal cycles (i.e. rain) can dictate the economic performance of scavenging. Collins' case helps us to gain an understanding of the effect of the rhythmic climate changes in the complex everyday practices of both the informal economic spaces. It shows how seasonal rhythms interlink with other spheres of societies and shape the pattern of lived experience of itinerant scavengers like Collins (Lefebvre, 2004). Jones (2010) has described the various ways in which shifting rhythmic movement of tides impact on particular geographical locations across the UK. Similarly, this idea that cyclical rhythms dictate the spatial practices of society equally has implication for the physical mobility of some informal operators. For instance, the field notes below indicate how the cyclical rhythms dictate the flow of economic resources and movement of itinerant scavengers through geographical space and time.

> "It's a cold, wet afternoon and I had just arrived at Aminu scrapyard when the rain gained momentum. As I talked with Aminu, we struggled to hear each other due to the torrential rain. As Aminu wrestled with his leaking roof, he lamented the struggle to go about his scrapping business during the rainy season. Aminu remarked in creole "wallahi (truly), my brother business slows this time, you nor see everywhere be so?" suggesting that the regular rain is getting in the way of business and hence there is no business activity taking place. I noticed Aminu's scrapyard was indeed uncharacteristically quiet and am curious to learn more about how Aminu is deal with the season disruption; he informs me that most itinerant scavengers had travelled to their villages to reunite with families. Aminu tells me that the rainy season is usually a good

> time for growing agricultural produce like cassava, beans, sugar cane and tomatoes. During this season, the funds that they have generated from scavenging practices are channelled into agricultural produce and the sale of these products, in turn, provides itinerant scavengers with an additional source of income." (Field diary, 15/07/15).

The above notes were made during the middle of July, a period that is characterised by very heavy rainfall. Most of the itinerant scavengers I interviewed agreed that the month of July is a particularly difficult month for itinerant scavenging and other cart pushing related activities. The itinerant scavengers operate in the shanty areas where there is less risk of being detected by law enforcement agents. However, these places are often marred by bad roads, potholes, and orange-coloured muddy water caused by the regular sand erosion that comes with the rainy season. These severe conditions make it difficult and sometimes impossible for itinerant scavengers to move around, something I experienced first-hand. As such, the dilapidated state of these spaces stemming from the often-problematic rain thus has significant implications for the spatial practices of itinerant scavengers.

According to Lefebvre (2004, p.77) "we are only conscious of most of our rhythms when we begin to suffer some irregularity". For example, my informants reported that the regular rainfall and flooding brought about disruption in the wheeling of their carts. Moreover, these disruptions are experienced differently by the itinerant scavengers. Thus, some of the scavengers are attuned to the possible arrhythmic occurrences that accompany the seasonal rain and have devised adequate contingencies for adapting to such disruptive rhythms (Edensor, 2014). For instance, it is common practice for itinerant scavengers with entrepreneurial ambitions to use this 'unproductive period' to engage in farming activities as Aminu made clear. Moreover, it is indeed an opportunity to invest the funds generated from scavenging in a bid to create additional sources of revenue. As I have shown, participants often lamented the influence of the seasonal cycles in disrupting the rhythms of scavenging. Yet, it is worth noting that a few participants hold a contrary view and argue that rainy seasons can indeed spark a period of sustained success. This suggests that various

scavengers experience cyclical rhythms in diverse ways. For instance, in the excerpt below, Mustapha explains how the changes brought about by the frequent rainfall are beneficial to practices of scavenging.

> "During the rainy season, vehicles can fall into potholes because the roads will be covered with water and difficult to navigate... cars can break down easily and vehicle owners must change the broken parts. Even the damaged, rusted parts will just be laying outside the workshop and rain will get them rusty...So many people will sell or hand them to us instead of allowing them to rot away. In the past we could easily find scrap by the roadside or around anywhere but now people know that we are looking for these materials, even children gather them from the street and sell these items to us for a cheap price...not everyone knows this rainy season secret, but it has been working for me" (Mustapha, Interview).

Mustapha is an itinerant scavenger with extensive experience in scavenging scrapped metal and iron. As Mustapha disclosed, most of his scrap is bought or recovered from roadside auto mechanics, who often seek ways to dispose of damaged vehicles. Given the ineffective enforcement of regulations or statutory laws concerning the appropriate storage and disposal of damaged vehicle spare parts, it is not uncommon to find broken spare parts lying around auto mechanic garages in Lagos. Whereas other cart pushers consider the rainy season to be a slow period and therefore turn to farming, Mustapha sees the breakdown of a car as good news, a vital period, one that he admits is integral to a successful scrapping business. Birth (2012, p.106) has referred to this process as 'contingent timings' where people take advantage of seasonal cycles that are considered unfavourable by others. Moreover, it is useful to note that Mustapha's understanding of the temporal aspects of scrapping can be linked to his in-depth knowledge of how cycles of seasons affect the practices of scrapping.

Additionally, Mustapha's excerpt illuminates the manner in which the human and non-human rhythms combine to dictate the spatial practices that sustain the informal scrap activities. According to Michael (2000, p.115):

> "Mundane technology such as walking boots...are intrinsic to our supposedly pure relations to the environment, incorporating and expanding affordances

> ...they are not simple means of conveyance, or conduits by which messages (defined as heterogeneous) pass from humans to nature and back again. They intervene and influence these messages...in heterogeneous ways."

This conceptualisation of the relationship between the body, things and the natural environment has important implications for Mustapha. It provides an analytical angle for understanding the human and non-human interactions that manifest when the spatial practices of cart pushers. In other words, rather than consider the seasonal rhythms of rain, spatial practices of cart pushers and the damaged roads as separate entities, we can consider them as a unified analytical component. To borrow from Michael's (2000) term, we can analyse Mustapha's excerpt by considering the disruption that brings about damaged vehicles and the potholes as a consequence of the non-human rhythms related to seasonal cycles of torrential rain. The frequent breakdowns of cars and ensuing replacement of the broken parts ensure that itinerant scavengers like Mustapha are able to enjoy a sustained period of prosperity. Furthermore, the practices of scavenging are able to bring about changes in the consumption patterns or behaviour of people. The changes in children's attitude and orientation towards scrap so that they perceive use and exchange value in scraps. In other words, the prospective economic benefits that accompany the exchange of scraps has socialised children and the general public to engage in sustainable practices that are related to extracting value from waste.

6.2.10. Rhythms of Capital: Informal Banking System

In the preceding section, I have suggested that cyclical rhythms such as those of seasons have implications for the movement of itinerant scavengers and the flow of economic capital. I explored how informal operators divert the funds generated from scavenging into smallholder farming in most northern villages (usually in northern states such as Kano, Kaduna[24], and Sokoto). Watt (2003) contends that northern Nigerian local communities are a primary producer of agricultural products, and that some smallholding produce ends up in the commodity markets. In this section, I would like to explore and analyse the medium through which income from itinerant scavengers flows from the informal economy to their respective villages.

My field interviews with several research participants reveal that itinerant scavengers are part of bespoke informal banking arrangements that enable scavengers to transfer funds to their families in their villages. According to my informants, the rationale for using a bespoke arrangement stems from the complexities surrounding setting up a bank account with commercial banks. For instance, they lack the socio-economic disposition required to fulfil the formal obligations required for opening a bank account (i.e. tendering a utility bill or providing a guarantor). In the excerpt below, Azeez describes how the informal banking system depends on a high level of trust between informal operators and the informal paymaster, whose service he relies on to send and receive payment.

> "We keep our money with the Mallams[25] that we are familiar with because we can trust them to keep it safe... We do not trust the bank and we need easy access to the money so that we can use it whenever we want. We cannot go to the bank because it is very far from where we live and sometimes there is no bank in our village so there is no need to keep my money in any bank. Besides, it is difficult to open a bank account because they ask us for our electric bill and house address but as you can see most of us don't have any address or electric bill, or guarantor…Even people are complaining that banks are stealing money with alert services, little by little they are taking all your money so Mallam is better for me" (Azeez, Interview).

[24] Kaduna city is the capital of Kaduna state and is located in the North West of Nigeria
[25] A highly respected Islamic scholar who teaches the Koran

In the above excerpt, Azeez justifies his choice for using the informal banking system, stating the lack of trust as well as the lack of transparency regarding the extortionate charges for bank alert services. According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), it is mandatory for customers to sign up for bank transactions alert services (CBN, 2017). The purpose of these alert services is to help customers to monitor their transactions so that they can quickly identify, report and track unauthorised and fraudulent bank transactions. For instance, customers receive an SMS alert and sometimes an email alert when money is deposited or withdrawn from their bank account. In return for providing customers with this service, the CBN regulations stipulate that banks can charge a maximum amount of N4 per SMS while email alert services are free.

Azeez and other itinerant scavengers are not alone in their distrust as a significant number of Nigerians consider the commercial banks exploitative and deceitful in their handling of these alert services (Ogubunka, 2017). Indeed, this subject has received a lot of attention in the public domain leading to the recent public inquest by the CBN. This inquest recovers over N50 billion from banks that had illegally imposed or excessively charged customers (Ujah, 2017). Azeez considers the prerequisites for opening a bank account (i.e. providing utility bills, guarantor) excluded them from the formal banking system. Of course, the ambiguous position of most itinerant scavengers in relation to their nomadic practices, and their difficulty in settling into urban economic life (i.e. often possessing little or no social networks or funds required to rent a home upon arrival in Lagos) implies that it is impossible for them to meet the requirements for setting up a bank account.

Moreover, Azeez admitted that his decision to boycott commercial banks in favour of the informal network is also due to the difficulty in accessing them. Thus, by relying on the informal network, such as the Mallams, the itinerant scavengers are able to create their own flow of capital, one that is distinct from the formal system. Such practices enacted by informal operators can be considered as a making-do tactic, one that goes against the formal flow of capital and expects

them to use the services of commercial banks (de, Certeau, 1984; Edensor, 2007).

Furthermore, Azeez's account shows that the degree to which itinerant scavengers rely on the services of the trusted Mallams is dependent on the know-how or competence that Mallam's are known to possess. Within the Hausa's and Fulani's traditions, Mallams are considered to be scholars who have responsibilities for teaching children (commonly referred to as disciplines or al' majirai) the study of the Koran. Parents are known to send their wards to attend Arabic lessons delivered by the Mallams. Children from very low-income families are usually encouraged to engage in street begging in order to fund their lessons and support their subsistence during their stay (Okehie-Offoha and Sadiku, 1996). The Hausas or Fulani believe that children must grow up under the tutelage of Mallams if they are to develop good morals and discipline (ibid). Thus, the cultural and religious resources of the Mallams makes them trustworthy, reliable and easily accessible as far as the itinerant scavengers are concerned. In exchange for their services, Bashiru, an experienced scrap dealer disclosed that the Mallams receive 10% of the transaction made by itinerant scavengers.

> "The way it works is that if you want to send money through the Mallam contact they will collect something from the money...so if you want to send like N1,000 (£2.08), he will collect N100 (£0.28) and if you want to send N10,000 (£20.8) he will collect N1,000 (£2.08). So, the boys will write the details and handover the sum they are sending. The Mallam will then send all the money to the respective recipients using the banks and a representative who is domiciled in the destination of the recipients (i.e. Kano). The representatives will then process it and distribute the money to their wives and children in their respective villages" (Bashiru, Interview).

From Bashiru's account, we see that Mallams rely on the formal operations of commercial banks. The Mallams possess the socio-economic resources required to meet the conditions necessary for setting up a formal bank account. Moreover, it is clear that the additional expenses that come with the use of these informal services are significantly higher than what it would have cost the itinerant scavengers to use the services of commercial banks. Moreover, the proximity of commercial banks to their villages remains an issue. Interestingly, we see from

Azeez's account that the perceptions, trust and respect itinerant scavengers hold regarding the Mallams' services are influenced by their cultural and religious dispositions.

6.2.11. Summary

In this section, I have analysed the everyday practices around rubbish that are performed by itinerant scavengers. I began with a discussion of the hierarchical power relations and career progression that exists within the scrap industry. As part of the discussion, I offered insight on the formal waste management practices or representation of spaces shape the informal practices that are enacted around rubbish by the itinerant scavengers. I illustrated the manner in which law enforcement agents police the illegal practices enacted by itinerant scavengers. More importantly, I showed how a range of corrupt strategies employed by law enforcement agents such as the police, KAI, and LAWMA reinforce the spaces of the informal economy as sites of exploitation. At the same time, I established that itinerant scavengers employ a range of mobile tactics to enable them to 'make-do' and sometimes resist the formal strategies. In doing this, I showed that the informal operators go about appropriating the spaces of informal economy. The section concluded with an analysis of the human and non-human rhythms that come together in the everyday practice of scrapping. I analysed how non-human rhythms or cyclical rhythms shape the rhythms of capital as well as the spatial practices of itinerant scavengers. Despite offering a nuanced analysis of the practices of informal operators, it is worth noting that itinerant scavengers and scrap dealers represent one part of the informal waste economy. As I will show in the following section, the dumpsite scavengers also constitute an integral actor in the informal waste economy. I now discuss their everyday practices.

6.3. Dumpsite Scavengers: Chronicles of Olusosun Landfill

Photo 21: Olusosun landfill at a glance (source: Cetusnews.com, 2018)

> "This place is just like a company. Though we know its dumpsite; it's where they throw refuse. It's our company because anywhere an individual is generating revenue regardless of how little the profit, it is a company." John (Raphael, informal waste buyer)

In this section, I present an account of the everyday practices of dumpsite scavengers – herein referred to as the scavengers operating at the Olusosun landfill. I observe the social, cultural and economic practices and meanings that are enmeshed in their mundane practices around rubbish. Thus, the findings and discussion presented in here are woven around the practices enacted by informal scavengers in the dumpsite. In the first instance, I discuss how the landfills serve as a land of opportunity which provides informal scavengers with the means with which to support their livelihood. Secondly, I discuss the informal organisation that is characteristic of the landfill. As part of this, I unpack the power dynamics that are embedded in these informal economic spaces as well as the embodied practices that are enacted during the act of scavenging. Finally, I discuss the social relationships and community spirit shared by informal scavengers operating in the dumpsite.

6.3.1. The Landfill: An Interlude

> "It's a Friday afternoon, and I have just arrived at Olusosun landfill in a taxi. As I made my way to the onsite LAWMA office to announce my arrival, I am greeted by the stench resulting from mountains of rubbish that surround the dump. Immediately, questioning and rethinking my decision to explore the social life of rubbish, I am immediately frustrated by the fact that I will be spending the next six months on the site. Before entering the office, I walked past a long queue of garbage trucks all waiting, in turn, to empty their truckload of rubbish into the landfill. There are so many people, in their hundreds, swarming around rubbish, the sound of voices from transactions, exchange, flies, and people digging through the rubbish to recover 'goods' as they call it." (Field diary 31/June/2015).

At 42.7 hectares, Olusosun site is the largest landfill in Lagos and is home to 40 percent of the waste (domestic and industrial) generated in the city (LAWMA, 2017). The landfill is located in the commercial district of Ojota, a central location and near the middle-class residential area of Maryland. The Lagos state government secretariat in Alausa, Ikeja is located about 3.27 km from Olusosun. An accurate estimate of the number of informal operators working in this landfill is yet to be documented, but from my observation and discussion with my key informants, the landfill represents a workspace for over 5,000 workers. These numbers include scavengers, food hawkers, waste buyers and other similar informal actors whose livelihood and survival depends on the materials recovered from the dumpsite.

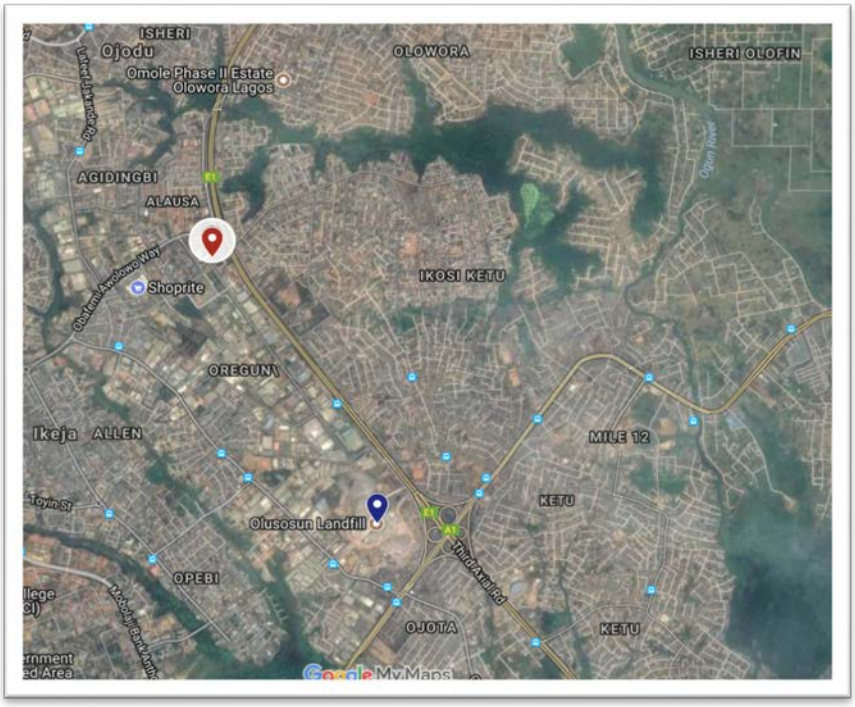


Photo 22: A map showing the location of the Olusosun landfill

We will recall that in chapter five, I discussed how the formal representation of informal operators (i.e. scavengers) is generally constructed around stereotypes of abject, poverty-stricken, dirty, peasants as well as an epitome of criminality (Medina, 2007). Despite these associations, informal scavengers represent a crucial stakeholder involved in the organisation of waste in Lagos. Interviews and observations with these informants at Olusosun landfill reveal other outcomes from this site which I will now discuss.

6.3.2. Olusosun Landfill: A Land of Opportunity!

Standing in front of the long queue of garbage trucks waiting to tip their contents, I could barely cope with the offensive smell, dust and noise that engulfed the Olusosun landfill. As I turned to my right, I spotted an informal worker who was keenly scrutinising the value of a suitcase that had arrived in one of the garbage trucks. As we engaged in a friendly chat, Efe revealed that he has been working at the dump for approximately 20 years. Further into the field interview, Efe talked about his experiences working in the dump and his motivations for doing so.

Photo 23: Efe assessing the value of a recovered suitcase

> "Well, people would always call life a challenge. But I believe that everything in life is in its rightful place. I believe nothing happen by accident, but we have free will to choose; choice. Any choice we make, whether to go to the dump to work or not, to go to work in a restaurant if you're poor. I think I made the choice of coming to the dump when things were so hard because I needed the freedom for myself so that I can get the chance to do music. I am not going to work under somebody for 30 days in a month and they pay me little salary. I choose the dump because it is a free world where hard work meets with opportunity. Success is work. I can choose, I can go to the dump a day and find gold like this, four pieces. Sell it in the dump and make N60,000 (£126) the equivalent to what most people make in a month. I can go to the dump and find brass or copper this huge and still make that same amount of money in a few minutes. Because the dump is luck. I can go to the dump and find money. I chose the dump but it's painful because I am an [aspiring] musician. Life was very hard, so I made that choice to go to the dump to work because I am from Ajegunle[26], I was very young, and this is what most youths do to survive" (Efe, Interview).

Efe considers the landfill to be a land of opportunity where taking advantage of opportunities through hard work is integral to one's success. Efe's remark 'dump is luck' paints a picture of a treasure hunt, an adventure where a discovery can completely change one's economic status. Efe's construction of the landfill echoes Parsons' (2008) argument that the act of findings things represents a

[26] Sections of Ajegunle are considered a multi-ethnic ghetto, one that is notorious for violent crimes, prostitution, and drug abuse, social and economic struggles but equally epitomizes creativity, hustling, and music (Ogunbowale, 2012).

practice of value creation. Moreover, by describing the dumpsite as a 'free world', Efe explains how scavenging for disposed-of valuables can be more profitable than partaking in a full-time job with lesser income. For instance, Efe can earn up to N60,000 (£124) through scavenging while a full-time job for the unskilled will see him earn a minimum wage of N18,000 (£37) per month. For Efe, the dumpsite and the practice of scavenging constitutes a life support and a survival mechanism for the urban poor and slum dwellers, who will otherwise have found it challenging to achieve upward social mobility (from unemployment to employment). Efe's decision to become a scavenger was only driven by his economic condition, but also by his ambition to forge a career in music. For Efe, scavenging offers him the freedom and economic resources required to pursue his lifelong dream as a musician. Efe's career can therefore follow two possibilities: he will either invest the earnings generated from scavenging in a waste management business or he will raise the capital required to advance his music career. The notion of the landfill as a land of opportunity also resonates with other informal waste workers I encountered in the field. For instance, my field discussion with Kikelomo reveals how the landfill provides him with the financial support required to climb the socio-economic ladder.

Photo 24: Kikelomo and myself sitting outside her shed in the dumpsite

Kikelomo is over 65 years of age and has been part of the scavenging community for the past 25 years. Kikelomo has expertise in recovering organic waste (particularly food waste) from the landfill. She is also involved in processing this waste into animal feed by drying, grinding and adding nutrients to it. The resultant feed is then supplied to animal farms, with which farmers feed their livestock (i.e. pig farmers). During my conversation with Kikelomo (who uses the Yoruba dialect), Rosaline interrupted and remarked: "I am her daughter, I will speak for her. My mother gave birth to me in this place, and I met her doing it". It soon became clear from our conversation that Rosaline is currently learning from Kikelomo with the intention of taking over the business when she finally retires. As an elder and an experienced informal operator, Kikelomo receives a great deal of respect from most people working in the landfill. Indeed, one of my key informants had suggested that I must meet her since she is one of the oldest operators in the dump.

Further into our conversation, Kikelomo spoke with pride and confidence recounting she has conquered the challenges life has thrown at her since she lost her husband. As Kikelomo later remarked, her earnings from the landfill have afforded her travel to Jerusalem, a consumption practice that she would have otherwise been excluded from due to her impoverished background. Elaborating on the earning opportunity provided by her scavenging activities, Kikelomo revealed that she has been able to sponsor her son's emigration to a European country. To put things into perspective, except for exceptional cases where scholarships and grants are provided, Kikelomo's accomplishment represents a remarkable feat in Nigeria as only families from a middle/high economic background could have afforded this. In a similar vein this attainment of upward social mobility was evident in Mike's life story.

> "In every career, there are people that are serious and there are people that are not serious. For me, I will say that in this scavenging people are making progress. I and over 20 people that I know have moved to our personal houses. Some people use their own [money] to marry three or four wives. So, everybody has his own lifestyle. So, in this place I will say we are making progress. You know the scavenging business is a dirty job. And initially, nobody will like to start this business in the first place. So, because of the

> economic situation many of us found ourselves, we had no choice...but in the process we discovered that there is a better life in the scavenging work. Today people come with their jeep (SUV). I have my own Toyota Camry too. So, we are doing business, and we have our own money too. As I speak to you now, I have my factory at Sagamu[27] and I am bringing in my machines now. If I was told 20 years ago that Mike, a time will come when you will have your own house, your car, you would organise your marriage and guests will come and eat, and you will have children, you will have a factory, I wouldn't have believed. But today it's a different story for me ...even my wife; I got my wife through this very place" (Mike, Interview).

Like Kikelomo, Mike is a senior and experienced informal waste worker operating in the landfill. With over 30 years' experience in the landfill, Mike is popular and well regarded for his successful journey to the top. Mike's story is a tale of 'rag to riches'. As Mike reveals, the landfill and the practices of scavenging has enabled him and his friends to build a platform for their enterprise. They were able to set up a recycling factory which contributes to the formal economy in terms of creating job opportunities. Mike was also grateful that the landfill had provided the financial resources for him to fund his secondary education.

> "After school hours I will go and scavenge because I was the one sponsoring myself through school back then. So, when I finished my education, I began to ask myself questions like is there's a way I can make more money out of rubbish if I do proper research" (Mike, Interview).

According to Medina (2000), scavengers have very little opportunity to enter the conventional or formal employment sector. This is partly attributed to their lack of formal education and at times due to their physical disability. Consequently, they often take on marginal roles as informal garbage collectors i.e. the Egyptian Zabbaleen community (ibid). In Mike's case, he has utilised the knowledge gained from formal education to improve the life of other informal scavengers. This allows him to establish valuable social relationships, one that ultimately led him to meet his life partner. In a similar vein, Justin reveals how he scavenge useful literature to satisfy his intellectual curiosity.

> "I dropped out of secondary school when I had an accident. You can see my leg. Life was so hard for me. The basic of life, if you can understand, is to

[27] Sagamu is a town located in Ogun state and some 72km from Lagos

learn how to read and write in primary school. The rest is finding and reading books at the dumpsite. Thought books, philosophical books...so we come here to work as a scavenger and clean ourselves from the waste with what we gain from here. I found most of the books that lured me into metaphysics at the dump. Great books about the Biafra war, the Saxons, history of Britain, the Crusaders, Napoleon the great, and the Second World War. Even there is a book that is not on the market I found it at the dump, 'Long Walk to Freedom', by Mandela, 'Why Black Man Carry Shit' written by Fela. It's at the dump that I found a classic Greek that's about Plato, Socrates, Pythagoras...When I'm discussing, most people would think I am a scholar, if I want to lie I'd tell you I went to university, I read the philosophy and history in the dumpsite. You understand?" (Justin, interview).

Photo 25: A collage of some of Justin's books recovered from the dumpsite

Justin is considered by his community to be a motivational speaker. Previously a scavenger at the Olusosun landfill, Justin confessed that his experiences from scavenging had taught him several life lessons. Throughout our discussion, Justin emphasised that he is a born champion and that he never accepted his position as a scavenger. He is keen to display the breadth of his knowledge derived from the books he recovered from the dumpsite. His story is interesting for understanding how the detritus of consumption is able to transform the lives of people like Justin. While those people who disposed of these books consider them a waste, for Justin, these books constitute valuable knowledge that enabled

his self-education. By consuming knowledge, he transformed himself through internal cleansing – a reclamation of a world that he feels robbed of. Although, the landfill represents an official space where the city's garbage ends up, an 'out-of-place' site where informal operators undertake scavenging to sustain their livelihoods. Yet, by consuming knowledge from the dump, Justin is able to appropriate this space (de Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1991).

I have discussed how the dumpsite serves as a field that offers informal operators the opportunity to generate income with which they support their livelihood. I have also analysed how the dumpsite provides a suitable support mechanism to disenfranchised scavengers who have no choice but to turn to the informal economy of waste for survival. Having established how the Olusosun landfill serves as a field of opportunity for informal scavengers, their operations have several features that resemble a formal organisation. These organised practices are useful for protecting the interests of the scavengers working at the landfill. However, this has some significant implications as it creates specific structures and hierarchies within the informal economic spaces, such as the Olusosun landfill.

6.3.3. Informal Organisation of the Landfill

The sun was shining, and I was weaving through the heaps of empty bottles, cartons, and shanty houses looking for Festus. I had been informed of Festus' reputation as one of the oldest and most experienced scavengers operating in the dump. Upon discovering his little shanty house in the dumpsite and eager to engage in an informal chat with him, I began our discussion by asking "... what comes to your mind when I mention the word 'rubbish'?" Bemused by my question, Festus responded with the following:

> "What comes to my mind is that I would like to tell you that a while ago some foreigners came to shoot a documentary (Welcome to Lagos) and they interview one of our members but in the end, it backfired and brought some problems to this place. The documentary went viral and my colleague who featured in it was evicted from the landfill" (Festus, Interview).

Festus is worried about my intention in the field and rightly so and, thus, attempts to dodge my initial question. Indeed, he wanted to know whether I had authorised access to the landfill before proceeding with our discussion. I presented Festus with the official document, which permitted me to undertake research in the landfill. Satisfied, he began to open up remarking that a lot had changed during his 15 years working at the dumpsite. According to Festus, the rules and regulations guiding their engagement in the landfill had become stricter. Their activities in the landfill had gained global recognition following the 'Welcome to Lagos' documentary, which was aired on the BBC in April 2010. Festus tells me that the formal authorities in the waste management industry were unhappy with the way in which Lagos and particularly the landfill were represented in a negative light, one that epitomised poverty and dirtiness.

In light of this programme, there was mounting pressure from the then state governor and the general public to reorganise the landfill by improving the formal and informal practices around waste (not only on the dumpsite, but in the entire city). Festus explains that scavengers were banned from living in the landfill. Shanty houses were subsequently destroyed, and scavengers were prohibited from building new ones. Their movement within the landfill was limited to business hours between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Consequently, the spatial practices of the scavengers came to be governed by the linear rhythm of repetitive clock-time imposed by the formal authorities or representation of space (Lefebvre, 1991; 2004). Festus confessed that LAWMA were sympathetic to them considering that their socio-economic livelihood is largely dependent on having access to the landfill. However, the state was less forgiving of a frequent burning of refuse by scavengers as it exacerbates the problem of pollution around the area. As such, another research participant (Bello) disclosed how new rules and regulations forbidding refuse burning were placed on them.

> "At a point, they summoned us and told us about the fire situation ...so then, we gathered ourselves and agreed that as soon as anyone sees any smoke coming up, we will collectively extinguish it...we knew if we didn't quench it, if anything happens according to what we were told, we will be driven away.

> And that fear that we would not want to leave where we are eating we try as much as we can to stop those fires" (Bello, Interview).

As part of the process of re-organising, the scavengers collectively set up an association to govern the everyday affairs in the dumpsite (Scavengers Association of Nigeria). The Scavengers' Association is headed by some executive officers, who are appointed through a voting system. The officers range from the chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer and so on. Although access to Olusosun landfill appears to be open to anyone, it is not quite so in reality. Instead, access is strictly controlled by the Association and newcomers are expected to pay levies to the Association. For instance, I was reliably informed by a key participant that male scavengers are expected to pay N70 (£0.14) for a daily ticket while female scavengers are charged a one-off entry fee of N10,000 (£21). The executive members of the committee select an internal taskforce whose role is to police the activities of the group and ensure that all members are abiding by the rules and regulations of the landfill. The informal rules and regulations are enforced by specially appointed personnel referred to as 'taskforces'. These task forces are often staffed by experienced scavengers, who are selected based on the judgement of the executive officers to instil discipline and enforce the conformity of scavengers to their in-house rules and regulations.

The taskforce vigilantly polices the borders of the dumpsite by spotting intruders and by deterring those who use the landfill as a haven for harbouring criminal activities. Criminals or offenders apprehended are reported and often handed over to the state police who then arrest and prosecute them. Recall that in chapter five, I discussed the negative representation of scavengers, the delegitimisation of their activities and their negative media portrayal as thieves. While on site, I was also informed by my participants that road-side thieves (pickpockets, burglars) have in the past sought refuge in the landfill when fleeing from the police. Given the sheer number of scavengers working in the landfill, it is unsurprising that thieves were able to disguise themselves as scavengers in an attempt to evade arrest. As Bello explains, the difficulty of "separating the sheep from the wolves" has led to a public misperception that all scavengers are

thieves. Thus, members of the taskforce are given the responsibility to rid the landfill of criminals. In this regard, the dumpsite can be considered to possess qualities akin to heterotopias – i.e. it is an organised space for those who are considered to be deviants and those excluded from society (Foucault, 1997; Foucault and Miskowiec, 1986).

Furthermore, Bello revealed that changes over the years have led to a great deal of competition in the dumpsite. As the biggest and busiest landfill, thousands of scavengers turned to the Olusosun dump site for socio-economic support, and this led to confusion and disharmony. Increasingly, existing scavengers complained that they were unable to earn enough to survive. In an attempt to deal with this problem, the executives of the scavenger's association have devised a strategy to ensure that informal workers are only able to take on a single role in the landfill. This is to ensure that there is a fair division of labour across the landfill.

6.3.4. Division of Labour in Dumpsite

During my field observation, I noted that there were broadly three primary levels of informal workers operating in the landfill. These are the pickers, the scalers and the suppliers. My field observations and informal chats with scavengers provide me with an insight into these different roles and their potential for career progression. The ***pickers*** perform the most challenging job and yet they represent the lowest level in the hierarchies of informal operators. The waste pickers are the most important workers in this dumpsite since they are responsible for recovering valuable materials. Despite the difficulty of the job, pickers receive the lowest level of compensation. This is partly to do with the fact that they have very little influence over the pricing of the materials they recover. The pickers are made-up of predominantly Hausa migrants, who migrated from the Northern part of Nigeria in search of economic opportunities in the south. They recover materials such as bottles, metals, iron, copper, cartons, empty ink cartridges, hair extensions, copper, pet bottles, clothes and several other items.

The ***scalers*** occupy a level above that of the pickers. They act as the middleman between the waste pickers and the suppliers (buyers). However, the scalers' operation works typically in the interests of the buyers they represent. Their activities involve roaming around the dumpsite identifying waste pickers and weighing the materials recovered to be sold to the suppliers. Both the scalers and the pickers are remunerated in proportion to the weight of the materials recovered. Besides the value of each material is determined by the sum that recycling and manufacturing companies are willing to pay for items. Moreover, the amount or cost of materials is determined by their weight in kilograms. For example, 1 kilogram of recyclable paper, I was told, is valued at N25.00 (£0.05). These values are often subject to negotiation between the suppliers and the companies that are in demand of materials. To make a profit, suppliers usually pay a lower amount to pickers/scalers for materials recovered from the dumpsite.

The ***suppliers*** *(sometimes referred to as buyers)* are the most influential actors within the informal waste hierarchy. Often possessing a higher socio-economic status, suppliers are able to establish connections and create rapport with recycling companies which require the materials recovered from the dumpsite. In most cases, these suppliers provide scalers with the funds to source the materials needed from the waste pickers. Once these materials are identified, the scalers will estimate their value by weighing them before informing the supplier/buyer, who then makes the cash payment. The final stage of these transactions involves the sale of the materials to small/medium recycling companies, who in turn use them as semi-raw materials for both local and international manufacturing companies. Figure 3 depicts the flow of rubbish exchanges that occur and the hierarchies that exist at the Olusosun landfill, although, I acknowledge that other trajectories are not reflected in the chart. Also, it is worth pointing out that my enquiry did not extend to local manufacturing companies, high-end intermediaries and international exports.

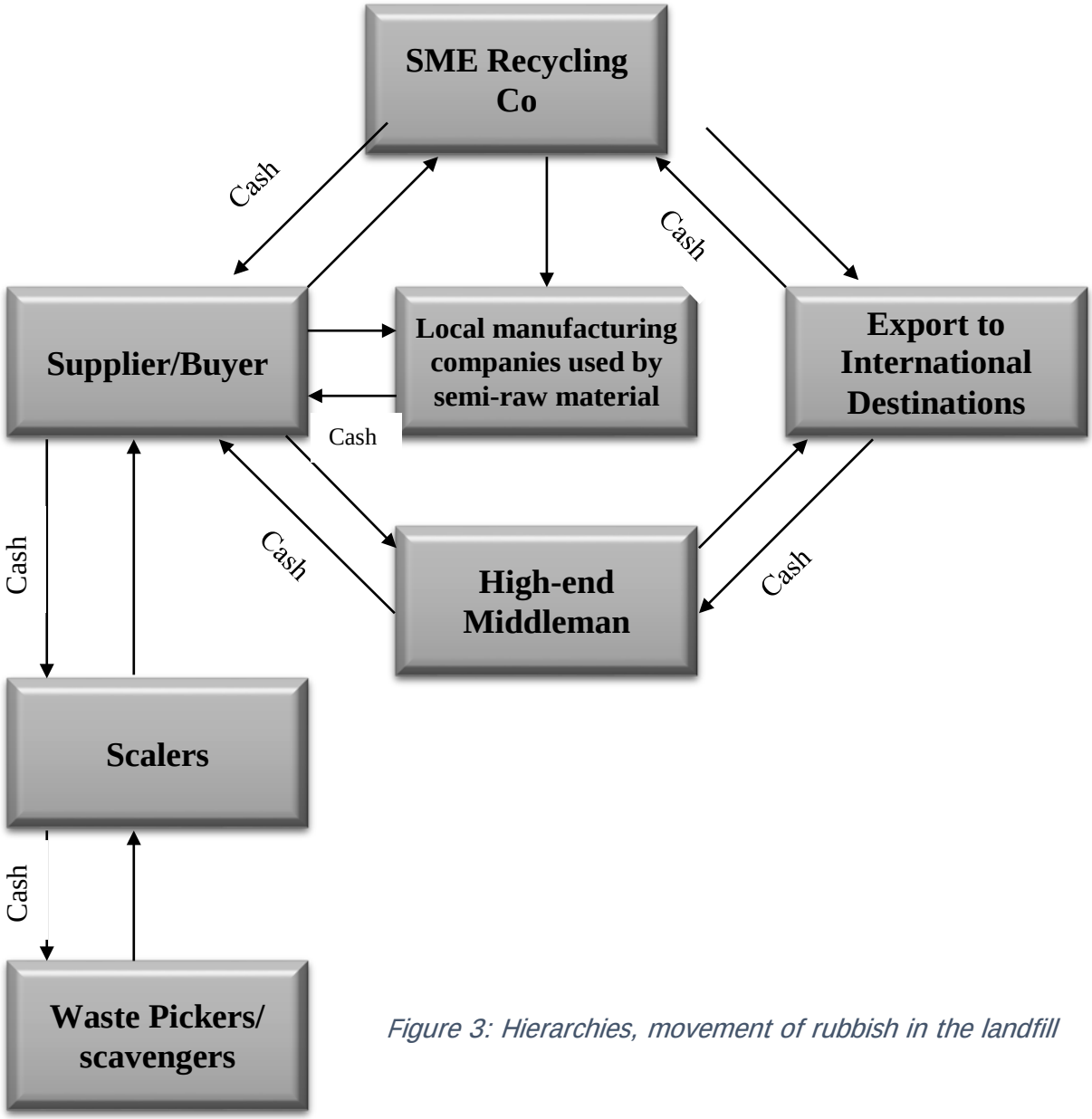


Figure 3: Hierarchies, movement of rubbish in the landfill

Following this division of labour, the scavenger's association established a rule that no operator can simultaneously perform two or more roles. Thus, to an extent, this division of labour has helped in managing the competition such that there is a job for everyone at the dump. Creating these different roles within the landfill has dealt with the intense competition to the extent that there is something for every informal operator. However, these hierarchies are not fixed since informal operators can progress from one level to another. The degree to which a scavenger is able to move between the hierarchies is dependent on certain conditions. I now go on to discuss this.

6.3.5. Career Progressions in the Dumpsite

During my visits to the dumpsite, I observed that there were certain informal operators who novice scavengers look to for inspiration. There were moments when scavengers referred to the success of established waste buyers who began their career as a waste picker. As a result, I was keen to learn the skills, and conditions that are necessary for a scavenger to progress in their career. James, an informal operator explains how he has successfully transited from the position of a picker to that of a supplier.

> "You know when we first got here [Olusosun landfill], the people we met here or let's say the people that came with us are the Hausas. These Hausas know the business better than us; you understand me now? But the difference is that they do not take it far. They do it within their local understanding. But they taught us the business that this is aluminium, this is steel, this is plastic, this is copper, this is brass, you understand me? We learned it from them. It's just that we went to do more research. So, my friends and I went to companies to make enquiries. And they gave us information regarding what we can bring to them and how much they are willing to pay. So, we returned and said to ourselves that we could do it. So, we told our other colleagues that when they gather those things we will pay them a specific amount, and they too were happy. So, when they gathered them, we scaled them and paid lower than what the companies offered us. We now start assembling them, and when it's up to a truckload, we took it to the company. My brother, it was wonderful. That is why we are better than them now. People that we met here, it's like we're doing better than them because they remain at that local level, but we took it beyond their level" (James, Interview).

James is a Yoruba native and a supplier. He is one of the informal operators who has enjoyed a successful scavenging career. In the excerpts above, James charts his journey through the different levels of the scavenging hierarchy. Starting out as a picker, James set out to acquire knowledge of the Hausa waste pickers. His education was then put to good use as he rose through the positions as a supplier. Such a career progression has seen James earning significant respect from those who work in the landfill. However, James is mindful that success in scavenging requires that he goes beyond merely knowing what materials to pick and how to identify them. As I explained in the previous section, for one to become a supplier, one needs to possess a good socio-economic disposition to enable one to establish necessary contacts with formal organisations. James' intelligent foresight and keenness attune him to the rhythms of the formal market, which subsequently lead to his success in securing a reliable network with recycling companies.

So far, I have analysed the division of labour laid out by the executives of the association and how these help in the management of competition in the landfill. It is essential to turn the analysis to how the informal organisation and structure of the landfills creates uneven power relations.

6.3.6. Powerful Rhythms in the Dumpsite

While the division of labour set up by the Scavenger Association was intended to level out the unfair competition in the landfill, the hierarchies that ensued, however, led to uneven relations of power. In particular, I observed how the setup of the dumpsite created a condition where waste pickers are exploited. During my conversation with Raphael (who is a buyer), he shed light on his relationship with some of the waste pickers that work for him.

Q: Please tell me about your workers?

> "Most of them are abokis from the same region (Katsina[28], Sokoto). I have been here for 15 years so when those Mallams travel back home, I usually ask them to import people that will work for me. I know a Mallam that travels regularly. I just tell him to help me bring around 10 'abokis' because it's the 'abokis' that are good people in this place, they are hardworking and sincere" (Raphael, interview).

> PA. What happens when the abokis arrive?

> "...I'll show them one or two works that they will be doing. Then I will look for somewhere they will be sleeping. Some of them sleep here. I don't sleep here. I have my own boy that works under me, as in my manager. He can do most of the tasks on his own when I am not around. He is also an aboki so he can speak their dialect" (Raphael, interview).

Raphael's position as a 'buyer' and 'taskforce' implies that he is well placed in the hierarchies in the dumpsite. Raphael is able to exploit his relationship with the Mallams to "import" abokis from the Northern part to Nigeria who in turn work for him for very little sums. As explained earlier, the abokis are generally considered to be uneducated, socially undesirable, and are deemed as one (if not) of the cheapest labour forces in Nigeria. Given their status as migrant workers, the abokis are known to accept lowly wages for physically-demanding jobs within the informal economy. Although Raphael considers the abokis to be hardworking and honest, it is pertinent to note that within Nigeria (particularly the southern and western regions) 'aboki' is a derogatory term sometimes used to describe people who engage in socially undesirable practices and socially degrading jobs such as gatemen and servants. By recruiting the abokis, Raphael is able to pay lower wages instead of the more expensive option of purchasing materials from other scalers by kilograms. Raphael's success as a buyer is therefore predicated as dependent on the commodification and appropriation of the abokis' labour power, a practice which on the face of it appears to be somewhat disturbing. Of course, most novice scavengers aspire to be as successful as Raphael and believe the road to his success is through hard work. However, Raphael's account shows that abokis and perhaps other waste pickers are exploited in the process of climbing the scavenging hierarchy.

[28] A state in the North West Zone of Nigeria

I have explored the informal arrangements that come together when the practices of scavenging are performed in the Olusosun landfill. Moreover, given the thesis' commitment to exploring the embodied practices that are embedded in the performance of the everyday practices enacted around rubbish, there is the need to unpack the role of the body in undertaking the practices of scavenging. This forms the crux of the following section.

6.3.7. Constructing the Body in the Landfill

My early days in the dumpsite were inundated with problems relating to identification. There were occasions when I was interrogated and harassed by the members of the taskforce policing the dumpsite. Upon arrival at the landfill, a representative of LAWMA – as a goodwill gesture – handed me a hat and a boot which bore the organisation logo. However, I recognised that an overt affiliation with LAWMA might deter my respondents from participating in my research. I therefore decided to stay neutral by not using any of the branded clothing handed to me. The implication of this was that I was regularly interrogated and harassed by members of the task force who identified me as a stranger. At the same time, I had experienced some difficulties with a few informants who were not keen on speaking to me. As a researcher, I observed how my embodied dispositions and gestures are crucial for gaining the trust of the group. This embodied perspective is illuminated in the diary extract below.

> "During a field chat with an informant, I was interrupted by George who happens to be a member of the task force. Recognising his position as a member of the task force, I greeted him with "good afternoon sir" ... George responded with a stern face, "I don't know you" ... Feeling a little bit anxious, I quickly responded by saying 'my name is Precious and I am a researcher'. While staring in the opposite direction George nonchalantly replied, "what are you doing here?" I quickly replied stating that I am doing research on handling rubbish. George nods and asked whether I had authorisation to be on the site and I responded in the affirmative. Following this, our conversation became smoother. We had a brief chat about my project and in a much lighter mood, I asked George how he was able to identify me given there were a good number of people around me. Using the Nigerian creole, George wittingly remarked *"you nor dey see say your skin dey shine? See your lens [glasses],*

> *e nor hard to notice sey you nor be one of us*" meaning 'it's easy to see that you are different from everyone here. Although, I had made efforts to 'look the part' by carefully choosing my attire to blend into the dumpsite. This encounter brought to light the importance of the embodied gestures in this site" (Field Diary, 17/08/2015).

The above foregrounds the idea that embodied gestures are an essential aspect of social settings and particularly the dumpsite. The embodied element of the everyday practices and performances around rubbish is equally crucial for the construction of identities within this particular social space (i.e. the landfill). Thus, my physical body served as a valuable heuristic in defining my position as an 'insider' versus the 'outsider'. More so, George's remark "you nor dey see say your skin dey shine?" can be interpreted as a construction of my socio-economic status. For George, the appearance of my skin suggests that I come from a well-to-do background. At the same time, George's commentary regarding my self-presentation, props (i.e. glasses), countenance and speech illuminates the importance of my embodied dispositions in constructing my identity in the dumpsite. My appearances marked me out as an outsider and in doing so reinforced the notion that bodies have their rhythms and "that familiar gestures and everyday manners" of people differ across contexts (Lefebvre, 2004, p.47). Furthermore, the relevance of the body in constructing identities was not only demonstrated in my encounter with George – it was a recurring theme throughout my observation of the spatial practices of informal operators working in the dumpsite. For example, field discussions and observation reveal informal operators are compelled to adapt their body to the odour of the landfill in other to engage in the everyday practices of scavenging. I now go on to discuss this.

6.3.8. Smellscapes: Adapting the Body

Drobnick (2002) has argued that the role of smell in understanding human sensorial perception has often been overlooked. Synnott (1991) explains that the neglect of smell in social science research is lowly in comparison to other human senses. Yet, odour constitutes an integral element of social interaction and everyday practices (Canniford et al., 2017; Tuan, 1993) especially for informal operators in the landfill. Indeed, the nauseating smell associated with the Olusosun landfill represents an integral element of the social space. As the notes below indicate, this olfactory identity of the landfill is made more apparent when it rains heavily, and it is something one must adapt to while on this site.

> "The rain was falling heavily as I prepared to go into the dumpsite. Jubril, my gatekeeper, suggested that I should wait until the rain is over, explaining that the dumpsite is likely to be hazardous and that I am likely to get exhausted due to the messiness of the environment. Following my insistence to proceed, Andrew advised me to be careful, explaining that rain presents a very challenging period for undertaking operations at the landfill. Truly, the site was visibly empty when compared with a normal day, with only a handful of people. The surface is slippery making it difficult to walk on. As a result, garbage trucks are forced to slow down in other to reduce the risk of accidents, the mixture of waste, rainwater and methane gas from the tons of rubbish creates an overpowering odour that is difficult to cope with" (Field Diary, 15/07/2015).

The notes above make visible the rhythmic element of the smellscape of the landfill. Without a doubt, it is difficult to cope with the smell during a regular sunny day. However, when it rains, the intensity of the landfill's odour has a temporal dimension to it. The strong periodic smell of the landfill shows how seasonal rhythms (i.e. rain) interlink with the spatial practices and embodied rhythms enacted on the landfill. In other words, the rain creates a slower working rhythm where garbage truck handlers, informal scavengers and myself are compelled to reduce our working pace. It also shows how the olfactory experience of the landfill is dictated by the seasons in Lagos. Smells, therefore, possess a rhythmic pattern since morning odours differ from those of evenings and are collectively shaped by weather conditions (Lefebvre, 2004, p.31). The

difficulty of dealing with this unpleasant odour was something that I wrestled with during the early days of my fieldwork. In fact, to deal with the olfactory qualities associated with the dumpsite, I made a nose mask which attenuated the smell and prevented the flies from flying into my mouth. My battle to grapple with the unpleasant odour led me to ask one of my informants about their strategies for coping with the olfactory experience of the site and Mayowa responded with the following remark:

> "I do go to hospital regularly. I take care of myself. Even when I'm not even feeling sick, I go to my doctor, and I say I want to do a general check-up on my body. So it depends on them ...If I start covering my nose like you, most people (pickers) would not like to sell to me. They will say, go away since you're covering your nose, why are you here? So that's the problem" (Mayowa, Interview).

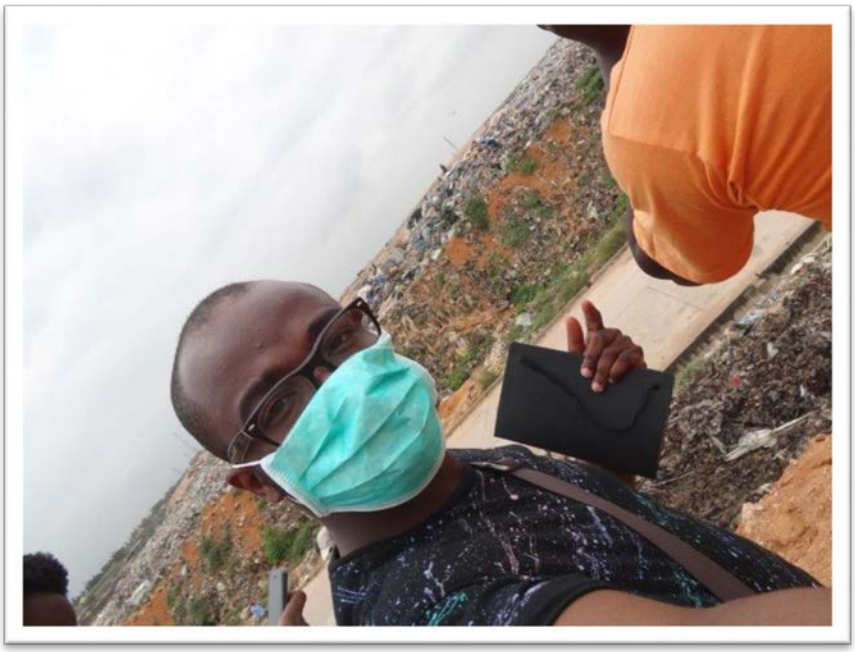


Photo 26: Image of myself wearing a mask

Mayowa is a 'supplier' who has been working at the Olusosun landfill for approximately eight years. Unlike other buyers who progressed from the rank of a picker, Mayowa commenced her career from the position of a buyer. Like most Nigerians, Mayowa relocated to Lagos in search of a white-collar job soon after she earned a bachelor's degree at a university in Delta state, Nigeria. Unable to secure a job after three years of searching, Mayowa soon joined the business of plastics, trading the materials which are recovered from the landfill. Mayowa's

remarks demonstrate that she is conscious that the odour and dust from the landfill pose some risk to her health. Therefore, she consults with her doctors even when everything seems perfectly fine with her. However, while on the dumpsite, she must adapt her physical body (breath, sight) to cope with the offending smellscape of the landfill. Mayowa explains that the covering of the nose can be detrimental to her relationship with the informal scavengers. For Mayowa, working in a landfill involves the adaptation of the body otherwise the informal refuse workers may feel alienated, as their perceived abject poverty is made apparent by the wearing of masks. It seems that social acceptance of people within this informal economic space is dependent on the ability of people like myself or Mayowa to manage the offensive odour of the landfill. This supports Henshaw et al.'s (2010) argument that smell is integral to providing an enriched account of a place.

Looking back on the first few weeks of fieldwork, my reliance on the nose mask appeared to have sent a negative message to potential informants. I can think of situations where it was difficult to build rapport with several informal operators working in the landfill. Indeed, my initial inability to adjust to offensive smellscape of the dumpsite can be termed an arrhythmic experience (Lefebvre, 2004). The constant disruption created by the olfactory aspect of the dumpsite was nevertheless short-lived since six weeks into my stay, my body had undergone a sensory adaptation and had adjusted to the pronounced odour produced in the landfill. I became comfortable in the dumpsite to the point where I found myself snacking when hungry – an act, I had initially questioned and found disgusting during my early days in the landfill. What was initially unacceptable, unfamiliar and socially disturbing had become acceptable for me (Lee, 2016). The process of adaptation, the readjustment of my body and particularly the altered regulation of sensory cells in my nose can be described as what Lefebvre (2004) calls eurhythmia.

This supports Porteous' (1985) contention that odours do not disappear but rather the ability for people to perceive it wanes as they become accustomed to it. In this way, the smellscapes of a particular place can produce nebulous and

temporary experiences that are episodic in time and space (Drobnick, 2005; Mertena, 2015). In this vein, Rodaway (1994) contends that periodic smells of places become registered in people's sensorial perception so that they are likely to be recalled and recognised. A post-fieldwork note from my diary reveals the following:

> "Attending a waste management workshop at Lund University, we were treated with a tour around the Vera Park waste recovery facility and former landfill in Helsingborg, Sweden. As we walked through the Helsingborg landfill, I was intrigued that the olfactory experience of this site was similar to that of the Olusosun landfill where I had spent six months researching the everyday practices of scavengers. Now well over 16 months since I returned to the UK post-fieldwork, the memory of the smell remained with me and was evoked as soon as we stepped out of the tour bus. Despite the difference in time and space, I was able to recall the familiar smellscapes of the Olusosun landfill" (Field Diary, 28/04/2017).

The above foregrounds the process in which the sensorial stimuli not only provide details about social space but are equally able to evoke the embodied sensorial perceptions and memories (Seremetakis, 1993). In this case, by re-experiencing the same olfactory profile, I was able to reminisce, relive my experiences from the Olusosun landfill, and equally forge a connection with the Helsingborg landfill (Canniford et al., 2017; Tuan, 1993). Moreover, my experiences echo Edensor's (2007) argument that it is possible to separate an urban space from a dilapidated place through smellscapes. Having discussed smellscapes associated with the landfill, I want to stress that there are other embodied skills that scavengers draw upon when they engage in the act of scavenging. These embodied skills are contingent upon the use of the other senses. I now go on to discuss this.

6.3.9. Embodied Skills: Other Sensorial Perception and Scavenging

I have discussed in detail how smellscapes are integral to the lived experience of scavengers and how smell constitutes a critical element of the social interactions that take place in the landfill. However, in this section, I discuss other embodied skills that are required for categorising materials recovered from the dumpsite. To begin with, I observed that in the world of scavenging nothing is taken-for-granted. I experienced first-hand the importance of using sensory cues such as sight, sounds and touch in identifying valuable materials in the dumpsite. By understanding and mastering these cues, scavengers can compete and subsequently progress in the dumpsite. I will now consider a few ways in which these embodied senses are evoked in waste picking activities.

Sight or the visual element of the everyday practices of scavengers cannot be overlooked. Waste pickers rely on excellent vision to quickly identify discards that are considered valuable. In preparation for participant observation, one of my key informants – *Akin* – cheekily remarked:

"*If your eyes are dirty, better wash them before we begin*"

Akin and I were discussing what I needed to do to have a successful day at the dumpsite. Given that there are over a thousand scavengers scrounging valuables at a given time, it is imperative that a waste picker remains visually alert to the surrounding. Similar to sight or vision, there is also a need to be able to differentiate or categorise objects with their sound. The use of sounds is integral for identifying the materials recovered. As previously mentioned, materials such as copper and brass are more desirable than irons and command a higher economic value. As I experienced, there is a peculiar sound (i.e. clanking for metals, clanging for aluminium, hollow for PETs) that emerges when the different objects are struck. By striking objects with the 'Akro' we are able to identify, categorise and evaluate the value of objects in split seconds. With very little time to think about objects in the field, sounds, therefore, become an important

heuristic for targeting and recovering valuable materials. Besides, the striking of objects ensures that waste pickers, through their body, come to share human and nonhuman relations with objects i.e. Akro (Grosz, 1994). More so, notes from my field diary document how physical touch is equally vital for waste picking activities.

> "The practice of scavenging does not only require the expenditure of physical energy. Knowing the right tactics can make one's life easy in the dumpsite. It is always better to have a sack quarter-filled with brass, aluminium, and copper than a sack filled with iron. It is difficult to move in the dump because of the soft, sinking and sloppy surface of the dump" (Field Diary – 29/08/2015).

The above note documents how the 'feel' and 'weight' of objects is integral to waste picking activities. As we set out for scavenging, Akin, a more experienced picker, made it clear that our first objective was to fill our sacks with lighter and more valuable materials. For Akin, this would ensure that we have a better mobility while scavenging for valuables. Therefore, we targeted materials such as brass, aluminium and copper. We tried as much as possible to avoid the iron because it is not only less valuable, it impairs our movement in the dumpsite, thereby slowing our progress and making us less competitive in comparison to other pickers. My experience in the landfill reveals how human and non-human relations are through practices of scavenging. We see how material objects like iron, sacks can be understood as part of the arrangement that comes together during the practice of scavenging (Shove et al., 2012). Thus, the heavier the material in the sack, the greater the disruption in the physical movement of the scavenger.

Physical touch is also essential for evaluating a material; one that requires scrutinising objects to discern their value. For instance, waste pickers explained that the feeling and touching of objects represents a safest and reliable way of assessing their value. Moreover, the feeling or touching of objects works in parallel with vision. According to Paterson (2009), the pairing of vision with sight in evaluating materials can provide an authentic reality and representation of objects. Similarly, Tuan (1993) has argued that tactile qualities such as the

weight of a rock, the smoothness of flour can be indirectly felt through sight. For instance, the ability to feel the weight of iron during scavenging can hasten the decision to avoid it altogether. More importantly, these embodied practices (particularly those of touch) come in handy when waste is sorted and valued post-picking activity. Indeed, the close evaluation of objects is necessary as scavengers sometimes sort out specific items for personal consumption before the rest are prepared and made available for market exchanges. This close physical evaluation of materials recovered is further elaborated in Efe's account.

> "...if you see the raw gold, it looks dusty and billions of people in the world will pass by and will not know that it is gold, but I will know and can confirm when I touch it, I know what to look out for" (Efe interview).

In the above excerpt, Efe emphasises how tactile qualities are integral and far superior to vision for identifying and valuing materials recovered from the dump objects. In particular, Efe is attentive to the material qualities of objects, and his remark supports Paterson's (2009) and Tuan's (1993) contention that vision, when combined with tactile qualities, can assist in providing a genuine representation of objects. For Efe, touching and feeling the objects (mainly their weight) can help differentiate aluminium from iron and more importantly ensure that waste pickers do not short-change themselves by under-pricing objects recovered. Furthermore, Efe explained that the physical examination of objects, such as jewellery, requires some technical know-how. I was intrigued when Efe outlined how the numbers engraved into jewels can reveal their worth in terms of carats. Efe maintained that his know-how and competence in scavenging is a product of years spent in the dump.

> "[...] you can go to a university and study waste management. But if you come to the business of scavenging, you still pass through me if you want to learn it. The thing here is that the dump, as we say here in Ajegunle, 'nor be moi moi' [sic] (meaning it is not an easy task). With eye, just with my eye, I will tell you this is gold, and this is not gold. If you look at this ring, to the ordinary eyes, they don't know what it is. But this is white gold, I saw it from the dump, and I just picked it in seconds. This is white gold, as little as it is, I can sell it for N20,000 (£41) depending on the area. If I don't want to go far, if I want to sell it in Ajegunle, I can sell it for like N6,000 (£13) or N7,000 (£15). You

can see the difference! So those experiences are the dump. You can't take it away from me" (Efe, Interview).

Efe's technical know-how and embodied skills acquired from his 20 years' experience working as a scavenger are on display here. For Efe, the skills and competence required are not only required for the recovering and valuation of scavenged materials. One must know the territories and particularly the geographical locations where objects can be exchanged for a higher value. Efe is mindful and attentive to the poor socio-economic disposition of most residents occupying the slum areas of this neighbourhood, so selling the jewellery here would fetch a lower price. Efe's account is consistent with Parsons (2005) contention the knowledge of markets and that of objects are integral to realising the (potential) value of objects. Further, such knowledge and experience refer to know-how, one that cannot be taught at formal institutions like universities but is acquired through what Lefebvre (2004) refers to as dressage – an education that people gain through years of experience engaging in the practice of scavenging. I have explored some of the embodied skills that waste pickers rely on to undertake the practice of scavenging. In the next section, I discuss how the body constitutes an important capital that waste pickers rely on as they jostle for discards.

6.3.10. Body as Form of Capital

During my field observations, I noticed that there were moments when only women were allowed to pick PETs in the dumpsite. I was informed by one of the senior scavengers that following a series of complaints from women, the Scavengers Association collectively agreed to allow women the priority to scavenge for PETs at all times except between the hours of 7.00 and 11.00am when male scavengers are permitted to collect PETs. During field interviews, my informants repeatedly suggested that women are better off picking PETs because they are lighter in weight and usually in large quantities. Ade explains the rationale behind the committee's decision to grant women exclusive access to PET bottles during specific hours.

> "The women cannot stand that because if they try to go for the metals, copper, it's too expensive. They won't see it because the men are stronger, they will guide them and collect it. The boys leave the plastic, and some of the cans and the nylons for them" (Ade, Interview).

There are two issues that present themselves in the above excerpt. The first relates to the physicality, strength and aggression required for performing waste picking activities. The second refers to matters of gender and patriarchal relations within the dumpsite. With regards to the first, it is increasingly apparent that waste pickers require sheer body strength to compete with other pickers for access to rubbish. I noted that a female waste picker was often aggressively shoved aside by the male waste pickers. Ade's remark "the women cannot stand that because if they try to go for the metals, copper, it's too expensive...they (men) will guide them and collect it" echoes my observations and reinforces the point that bodily prowess represents an important resource required to compete in the dumpsite. Women's supposed lack of bodily strength is considered to be of less value when compared to men. If anything, women within this space, are thought to have a 'slow' and uncompetitive rhythm and to be unable to cope with the 'fast' pace of the male pickers. Such portrayal of female waste pickers constructs women as a weaker other, and not possessing the bodily strength required to keep up with the competitive and patriarchal space. Furthermore, the excerpt below supports my analysis of how physical aggression represents an essential feature of waste picking activities.

> "We are friends. But when we are working, there is no friendship because it's a jungle. The dump is a jungle where the lion goes for the big kill. After the lion feeds, the hyenas and the vultures can then come in. In the dump, the lions are the strong boys. They go for the truck, they scatter, and they fight. We fight ourselves to get it. After that, the ones who are not that strong, who don't like struggling, would stay behind. These are the hyenas. Some women still come close but when the truck leaves, the women will be crying to the boys, 'Egba mi Fun mi eleyi, Egba mi Fun mi eleyi[29]' (meaning please give me this, please give me this). So these are the vultures because they feast on the remnants, they wait to take the food off after the lion is satisfied" (Efe, Interview).

[29] Yoruba language

Photo 27: Female scavengers waiting for the strong boys

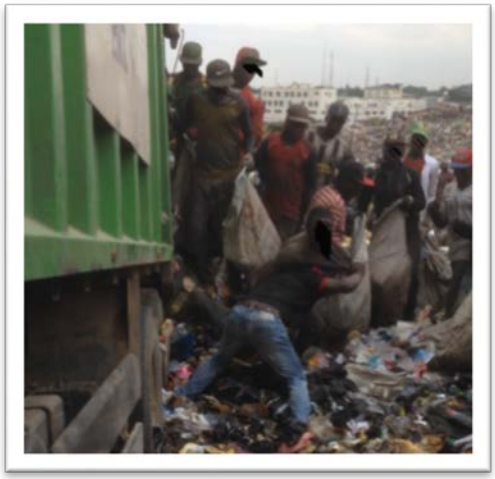


Photo 28: Scavengers fighting

By equating the dumpsite to a 'jungle', Efe effectively constructs the dump as a battleground ruled by the survival of the fittest. Efe's remark about 'friendship' alludes to his recognition that fighting is not acceptable social behaviour. However, the competitive and territorial nature of the dumpsite creates an arrhythmic situation (so that fighting becomes an accepted rhythm while scavenging (Lefebvre, 2004). Indeed, Efe's comments suggest that it is not the operators who are aggressive. Instead, the imagery of the dump as a 'jungle' is what turns friendships to hostility and aggression during waste picking, with friendship becoming a barrier to successful competition for valuable copper.

We can interpret Efe's comment – *'the big kill'* – as a reference to the more valuable materials in the dump – materials that the strong men (the lions) are not willing to share with the weaker women (hyenas). Besides, Efe's analogy of the female waste pickers as vultures waiting to feast on the scraps left by the strong male scavengers is captured in photos 29 and 30. In this image, we see a woman waiting at the backend of the queue for the male waste pickers to finish before scrounging through the leftovers. One can argue, however, that it is the men who have created the aggressive conditions that present a barrier and an indirect tactic that prevents women from competing. Nonetheless, there is more

than meets the eye here. The decision to grant female waste pickers sole access to PET bottles at bespoke times reveals issues of power and gender relations. The decision to allow women access to PETs within specific hours is not solely to deal with the inequality presented by their alleged fragility and inability to compete with their male counterparts. It is an open secret in the dump that PETs garner the lowest value compared to other materials such as metals, iron, copper, and brass. Indeed, the female waste pickers could have been allowed to pick the other more valuable materials at a designated time. Ade's comments indicate that stronger male scavengers are mostly interested in more valuable materials.

If the gender division of labour is genuinely geared towards equal gender access, then women might as well be granted sole access to the 'precious' copper, brass and aluminium during the bespoke period. Instead, this gendered division of labour, I argue, constitutes a tactical way for men to appropriate women's labour power – a token gesture and a tactic – that reproduces the patriarchal structure that exists within and outside the dumpsite. Such a tactic does not necessarily address the disadvantageous position of the female waste pickers. Interestingly, this gendered division of labour is reproduced by most women operating in the Olusosun. For the most part, their seeming acceptance of such a gendered role is based on their contentment at being able to earn just enough to sustain their livelihood. For instance, commenting on the subject, Rita remarked the following.

> "It's true that the metals and iron are so hard for us women especially when there are so many men. They can normally hit us, so the PET is very ok for us" (Rita, interview).

In the above excerpt, Rita unproblematically accepts the idea that the job of picking metals and iron is better suited to men due to their strength. However, her remark "they can normally hit us" suggests that aggression is used by men to 'put' women in their place. It seems therefore that Rita's and perhaps other women's preference for collecting PETs is born out of the necessity to stay out of danger, rather than the fact that PETs are lighter in weight. Thus, I argue that

the gendered rhythms that exist within the Olusosun landfill are underpinned by male and female embodied dispositions and gestures.

In this section, I have discussed how the body serves as an important resource for performing practices of scavenging. I have shown how this leaves female waste pickers at a disadvantage and particularly how the efforts to overcome such inequality is merely a token gesture that reproduces unequal gendered relations of power. However, I want to emphasise that despite such stealth inequalities, the social rhythms of these informal waste workers ensure that they are collectively bonded over rubbish. I will now go on to discuss the social rhythms that are born out of the everyday practices performed in the dumpsite.

6.3.11. Social Relationships: Bonded Over Rubbish

> "The landfill was uncharacteristically quiet... although the garbage trucks continued to move in their numbers, the physical movements of people, atmosphere, and landscape of the landfill were different. People gathered around each other in groups of two, four and five, speaking in whispers. The anguished looks and the tears flowing down the cheeks of some waste pickers alerted me that something was wrong. I approached one of my informants to find out what was happening, and he broke the news that one of their members had passed away. As a gesture of solidarity, the waste pickers took the day off to mourn the passing of their beloved comrade. With the overwhelming sight of black attires, there was a strong indication that most of the waste pickers were grieving the passing of their late colleague" (Field Diary, 11/07/15).

It is evident from the above that the social relations and community spirit displayed by the informal waste workers operating in the landfill are prominently felt. Indeed, the informal space of the dumpsite affords members the opportunity to share their struggles, as well as moments of happiness. In this case, the mourning of the passing of their beloved co-worker demonstrates the bond shared by this group especially when we take into account the competitive nature of the dumpsite. The willingness of informal operators (who are often living hand to mouth), to give up work in solidarity with and as a show of respect to their deceased member, demonstrate a form of indivisibility, brotherhood, and comradeship. Indeed, this idea of community spirit was something that featured

prominently in my field discussion with the waste pickers. The research participants were often keen to point out the significance of the social support network in championing group identity and solidarity within this informal space. For instance, during a field discussion, Taiwo remarked on the social relationships and community spirit that exists within this informal economic space.

> "Nobody will tell me that rubbish is nothing. It means a lot, and you can see the social aspect of it. We have our association. We do things together. If something comes up and someone wants to organise an event, we lend support to them by giving them whatever they need. Then we accompany them down there and celebrate with them. If a member comes with their invitation card, the association will look at it and consider all the information on the card. Then we will ask ourselves, do we know this person? If two or three people know him very well, we will ask what he does here. Perhaps he is a picker, loader, or a buyer or whatever role. We will then inform everyone during a meeting that this person wants to get married and that the association is willing to support him with some money. And we will also support the person with time by going with him. Anything he needs he will not lack. If it's the money aspect, we are going to take care of it. If they need us there, we will go with them" (Taiwo, Interview).

With extensive experience in the dumpsite, Taiwo is one of the leaders of the scavengers' association. In the above excerpt, Taiwo emphasises the social aspects around practices of scavenging in the dumpsite. He highlights the togetherness and community spirit shared by informal waste workers. Indeed, the need for such a support network was on display throughout my time in the dumpsite. Living far away from their families and support networks, their reliance on the solidarity of their comrades cannot be overlooked. Most of my informants admitted that they benefit from the welfare offered by the association. For most, such support has made it easier to cope with the financial burden that comes with childbirth, bereavements, and weddings. For example, the female waste pickers are awarded a postnatal stipend of N10,000 (£21). Male and female members of the community are equally entitled to the sum of N20,000 (£42) as a contribution towards their wedding expenses. Although the sum appears meagre, if one considers the state's dysfunctional social welfare, such a gesture is considered generous by the waste pickers who are often migrant workers. It's

a symbolic gesture that reinforces the sense of community spirit, mutual trust and bond shared by the informal operators.

Photo 29: An example of tents and guests during traditional marriage ceremonies

Apart from the financial support that informal waste pickers receive from the association, I want to comment on the social significance of supporting waste pickers by attending ceremonial occasions such as wedding and funerals. In particular, the importance of social networks and guest attendance during marriage ceremonies cannot be underestimated in the Nigerian context. If anything, this relationship that is bonded over rubbish ensures that every member of the group enjoys the collective backing of the scavengers' association. For instance, during traditional marriage ceremonies, separate tents are set up to accommodate the families and friends of the bride and the groom. The number of guests attending the ceremony is especially significant as it symbolises the extent of the couple's social acceptance and network. This has significant implications for migrant workers who often live far away from their social and

family networks. It is likely that without the presence of the scavenging community, migrant waste pickers intending to get married would only have a handful of guests gracing their big occasion. Thus, the social network offered by the community of scavengers to individual waste pickers serves as an important resource which enables them to settle into urban life (Brown et al., 2010).

Photo 30: Scavengers playing football in the landfill

Furthermore, it is a recurrent ritual for the Scavengers' Association to organise other recreational activities that are aimed at reinforcing the social relationships and community spirit at the dumpsite. A few such recreational activities include sporting activities such as football and organising an annual end of year parties. The end of year parties is particularly grand as renowned musicians are often invited to perform to the delight of the informal waste pickers. Food is cooked and distributed amongst themselves. During these activities, I was informed that the mood, space and ambience of the dumpsite becomes wholly transformed as everyone is in a lighter mood. Waste pickers are dressed in their most elegant clothes and not necessarily the rags that are used as work clothes. I was unable to experience this occasion myself as my fieldwork came to an end before the 2015 end of year party took place. Notwithstanding, my observation and discussion with the informal operators offer enough indication that the waste pickers are truly bonded over rubbish.

6.3.12. Summary

In this section, I have discussed the everyday practices performed at the Olusosun landfill. In particular, the discussion began with an analysis of how the dumpsite serves as a land of opportunity for the informal waste workers operating there. I showed that the economic resources derived from dumpsite are converted into social, cultural and economic capital. I looked at the informal organisation of the dumpsite and unpacked the power relations structured by such arrangements. Moreover, I explored the career progression and the gendered division of labour that emerge as part of this informal organisation. Following this I turned my attention to the embodied practices that are enacted during waste picking activities. I showed that the tactile qualities of objects are integral to the sorting, and categorisation of objects. Central to the discussion was an analysis of the smellscapes, sounds, and vision that the waste pickers harness in the informal economic space. Using my participants' excerpts, field notes, and observations, I showed that rubbish and specifically the dump served not only as a land where socio-economic livelihoods are supported; I also showed that informal operators are bonded through their shared interest in scavenging. As such, we saw that the everyday practices around rubbish sustain individuals' livelihoods, shape social relationships and engender feelings of brotherhood between informal operators.

Having explored the informal practices that are performed around rubbish in the Olusosun landfill, I would like to conclude this chapter by charting the transformative potential of rubbish. To do this, I will turn to explore some of the practices performed around rubbish by junk artists.

6.4. Junk Artist: The Role of Objects in Shaping Practices

> It is 14.35 hours, the sun is at its full strength, and the temperature is extremely hot as I arrive at the Artcafé on Victoria Island, where I had agreed to meet with two visiting French researchers. I had been informed by my gatekeepers of the French's interest in the formal waste management sector. I arrived early, and while waiting for them to show up, I was very taken by an aesthetically beautiful craft that embodied a motorcycle that is crafted using upcycled materials such as iron and rubber. I soon noticed that the café's interior comprised of art themed art pieces. Behind the Artcafé is an art gallery, owned by a foreign national. Fascinated by the various junk artworks that are on display, I made enquiries regarding the production of the art pieces from one of the baristas and was that a certain junk artist operating in Lagos had produced them. This triggered my curiosity to learn about junk arts and ignited my interest to explore the mundane practices that are enacted by junk artists in Lagos (Field Diary, 03/08/2015).

Photo 31: One example of such Junk Art on display

When we think of scavenging, our first response is to connect the practice with those performed by informal operators, people often living on the margins and those deemed to be socially unacceptable by society (Medina, 2007). However, there are scavengers who recover objects for the sole purpose of transforming them from valueless state into valuable objects such as art pieces. Medina has described this practice as scavenging for artisan purpose, whereby individuals

attempt to repurpose or manufacture a wide range of consumer products from waste. My fieldwork has led me to the studios of junk artists.

Junk artists represents one of the stakeholders involved in the transformation of rubbish post disposal. There are junk artists that recover materials that have been disposed of with a view of repurposing and transforming them for the purpose of commodification. In this final section, I observe the everyday practices that are enacted by artists around rubbish in Lagos. I analyse the material interactions that are encapsulated in the practice of repurposing and transforming trash into art pieces. In so doing, I trace the processual aspects, meanings, and human and non-human elements that come together in the performance of such practices around art making.

6.4.1. Unwrapping the Transformative Potential of Rubbish

The findings from my data show that rubbish is ambiguous, and not so easily categorised (see Epp and Price, 2010; Kopytoff, 1986). Contrary to the traditional ideas which categorise objects as passive, objects in the category of rubbish were found to be capable of prompting actions of people (Bettany and Kerrane, 2011). Moreover, the meaning of objects emerges following the social and material interaction between people and things thus emphasising the co-production of meaning. In putting these discussions into context, I turn to Peter's account to showcase the trajectories of certain objects in the category of rubbish following their disposal by households. Peter's account unwraps the transformative potential of objects that had been categorised as rubbish and how their meanings are negotiated and transformed throughout the objects biography.

> "This is 'odo' (local dialect for mortar) and I picked it up from the dump in 'alagumeji'. I am not sure why I picked it...but it will tell me what to do with it...when I saw it, my spirit told me that it would be useful for my work. When I was picking it people looked at me and imagined what is wrong with this well-dressed boy, why is he picking up rubbish? ...at the moment, I use it as a base for my painting brush and board and nothing more" (Peter, Interview).

Photo 32: Mortar in Peter's studio following its recovery from the dump

Peter is a junk artist operating in Victoria Island, Lagos. He is particularly interested in recovering and transforming objects that have been disposed of into artworks. By being well dressed, he attempts to distance himself from other informal scavengers. As can be seen from the above, Peter's decision to recover the mortar from the dump is grounded in intuition. This can be interpreted as an embodied intuition, one that is amassed through experiences of producing art pieces. Peter's current use of the mortar as a base for his paintbrush demonstrates that objects can take on new meanings and values depending on the space. In this case, the mortar first existed as 'rubbish' and is of 'zero value' in the dumpsite (Thompson, 1979). Through Peter, the mortar takes on a functional value in his studio. During subsequent visits to Peter's studio, I noticed that the mortar continually underwent several modifications which led to its transformation. Intrigued by these changes, I proceeded to ask Peter to tell me about the changes and what had inspired these transformations.

> "When I pick these things, I bring them to my studio, and I would take time to look at it and see what message it is sending to me because in abstract

everything has a message, so I would picture what message the object is already presenting. I will then put the head and the tail together to see what shape would come out, and I would try to find another piece that I can incorporate into it. In the end, everything will then develop gradually...This is the mortar; it was bad but now I have made the breast of a woman without silicon or surgery. This is who we are. We don't need to make other colours in our body, so I planted a flower on it, which symbolises beauty and growth of a woman. I could have done something else with it, but I figured this is the waist, and this is the hip, and this is the shoulder, the body, and this is the chest. If you look at it, this is the belly, and this is the chest so this is the shape I found out and I worked based on it. I have twisted it into a something different using clay, and this feeling brings me close to earth because it makes you feel the soil; it makes you feel God" (Peter, Interview).

Photo 33: The transformation stage of the discarded mortar

The ambiguous qualities of the mortar allow the meaning of the object to evolve in the context and space that it occupies. The mortar, therefore, occupies a 'region of flexibility' (Thompson, 1979). In the artist's studio, the mortar both inspire and prompt actions by entering into arrangements that make up the practices that led to the transformation of the object (Callon, 1986; Law, 2009; Schatzki 2010). For instance, Peter demonstrates that the mortar has agencies or intentionality such that they shape the artist's practice (Skuse, 2005). From Peter's account, the physical characteristics of the mortar and its curvaceous shape beckoned on him to mould womanlike features into the object (i.e. breasts,

plants and so on). The moulding of the object follows an incremental and precognitive process so that Peter plays the role as a facilitator who brings meaning into things (the mortar) rather imposing his subjectivity into the passive mortar. Therefore, I argue that the mortar, in this case, is participating in the construction of meaning and reality. Thus, the physical characteristic of the mortar shaped the tactile moulding of the object, and ultimately produces a work of art. Through the mortar, Peter attempts to signpost the development of the piece as 'natural', 'earthy' in that the piece develops 'organically' into a black African female figure, one that he as the artist simply brought into life. Such a position supports the claim by Dant's (2005) that objects are able to convey cultural values which in turn shape individuals' thoughts and actions. Furthermore, the role and potentiality of objects to prompt actions and facilitate their transformation were revealed during subsequent visits to Peter's studio. During the third visit to Peter's studio, I noticed that the mortar was absent from his studio. Peter explained that the mortar was currently on display at an art gallery. On my request, Peter and I visited the gallery where the mortar was displayed and remarked on the following:

> "You see the cowries, beads, crown, and jewellery which women use to top up their beauty. But then, it doesn't still change the fact that natural beauty is there. But the black woman can just glow without any additional makeup. Just like plants grow from the soil... And all these things, they have a relation. Like stone, sand, root, and flowers. These are the things that make up the environment for living things like this. In the same way, the soil in the mortar signifies the fertility of black women, they can have a lot of children I am trying to capture the natural black woman – see, I have not made her skin lighter...in fact, she is even darker" (Peter, Interview).

Photo 34: The mortar displayed in the art gallery

Peter's remark can be considered as an attempt to reclaim the beauty of the black body. In this way, Peter's comments reflect Jackson's point that "blacks can endlessly participate in self-healing exercises in an effort to retrieve custody over the total inscription of their bodies" (Jackson, 2006, p.11). The material interaction between Peter and the mortar supports the arguments by Bettany and Kerrane's (2011) that objects are not solely things acted on by consuming subjects but that their meaning emerges following a series of negotiations or interrelations between human and non-human entities. The journey of the mortar from rubbish to artwork sheds light on how meanings emerge following practices of divestment and investments of objects. At each level, depending on the context, the mortar is configured and reconfigured across several spaces, time and place so that it connotes different meaning at different times (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2007). It is this mobility of objects across different geographical locations and historical time that allows the fluidity of objects as well as facilitating the alteration of their values (Gregson, 2007). This movement of

objects and their meanings charts the 'social life of things' and how their biographies are dependent on their ownership (Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986). As the mortar migrate across various boundaries (dumpsite, studio, and gallery), it renounced the properties which initially rendered it dirty and 'out of place' (Douglas, 1966). In the process, it takes up different forms of values (i.e. functional, economic and aesthetic value) on its way to becoming art. This resonates with the contention by O'Brien (1999) that the 'out of placement' of objects inspires the search for new forms of value. Using Peter's account, I have shown how human and non-human interactions that come together when practices around art are performed. The discussion also provides a processual account of how the transformation of objects value takes place over time and space. However, field discussion with other junk artists highlights the role of sensory perceptions and the tactile qualities of objects during these material interactions.

6.4.2. Sensory Perception and Transformation of Objects

At the end of chapter two, I argued that vision, touch and smell are integral to the performance of everyday practices. Indeed, interview and observation data revealed that artists often rely on their multisensory perception to transform pieces of junks into art. For instance, during a field discussion, Michel's remark sheds light on the sensory perception as well as the human and non-human interaction that comes in the production of arts.

> "They look at artists as crazy people. But things speak to us and we speak back to those things...we draw inspiration from the things around us. What you consider waste might be something, a scene that can bring reality, it can recycle and bring life. It can put life into those things you call rubbish ...if you look at this work, you see this sawdust, it was a heap of sawdust and they were going to burn it or something. But I requested it because there is something useful from that sawdust. I discovered that I can use it to craft the body of a snail...I was thinking... how do I bring life, body into this thing? I thought, I must look for something that will relate, something that will connote that body. And that is why I decide to use the sawdust. I could have used other materials, but if you look at the body of the snail carefully, there are segments... So I decided to stick the sawdust there because it would create

that segment for me too…I had initially looked at the sand, I looked at using small pebbles, but it was the sawdust that was dragging my attention…well what was a waste, a dead thing, is now life, I brought it back to life" (Michel, Interview).

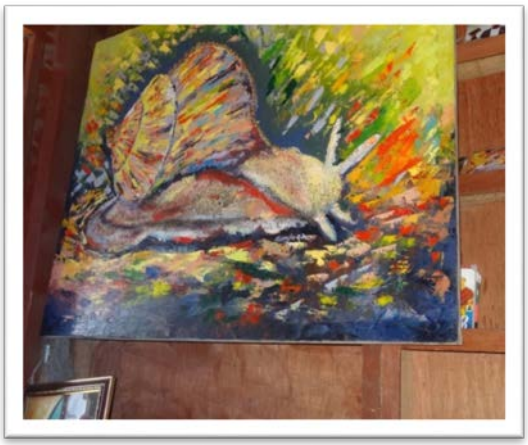


Photo 35: Painting made with snail shells and sawdust to create tactile effects

Michel illustrates the ways in which the interaction between human and non-human inspires artistic creativity. Like Peter, Michel is attentive to the message or intentionality that is being communicated by objects during the process of creating arts. Although, his paradoxical remark regarding bringing the "dead thing" back to life contradicts this position in that Michel assumes the position of the 'privileged' and supreme subject. Michel's wrestle to find an object that will connote the body of a snail can be interpreted as a reliance on the tactile qualities of objects to perform a practice. By evaluating the roughness of the sawdust and that of the sand, Michel is combing the sense of touch and vision to create the rough segments of the snail. This echoes the argument by Tuan's (1993) that

sensory perception relies on the tactile qualities of touch and its relationship with vision. In a nutshell, the practices and performance that are related to the production of artwork follow a multisensory approach that considers the role of human and non-human entities.

Having explored how material interactions between human and non-human entities shape the performance of practice around the creation of value. However, the data collected from the junk artists also indicates that the value destruction of objects singularises them and in doing so paradoxically increases their value. As such, in the next section, I turn my attention to questions around how non-human rhythms such as those of time and temporality mediate with human rhythms or everyday practices around art objects.

6.4.3. Temporality, Objects and Value

The amount of time invested in objects can to a large extent determine the value that are attributed to them. Gregson and Crewe (2003) have explored the increased interest by consumers to pass up the notion of 'newness' in favour of the originality, imagined singularity, and perhaps the authenticities that are associated with goods. For instance, objects that are categorised as old, antique, retro or vintage are renowned to command high exchange value. This burgeoning interest in the consumption of older objects has coincided with the recent trend of embracing the second-hand markets (Brooks 2013; Norris, 2010). These literature emphasises the need to consider the implication of the 'age' of objects when determining its value. In other words, there is a need to consider the temporal dimensions of objects. Given that the 'age' of objects is not limited to the counting of the mechanical time (i.e. clock time), it is crucial to explore questions around the temporal connotations associated with specific objects. Field interviews and observations with junk artists show that mundane practices around objects and their values has some temporal dimensions to it. My research findings suggest that the practice of deliberately distressing an object so that it

takes on the appearance of a vintage item can inspire an increase in their exchange value. In the excerpt below, Tega explains how this process works.

> "Yeah, I put it out here so that the sun and the rain, the dust, everything would hit on it. So it would transform it to antique effect…I don't want it to look very, how will I say it now, like modern. I want it to have an ancient feel because it's a mask. It's something that has been from the olden days till this millennium. I want it to have that feel of ancient…I want people to see, I want people to try to think how long and for how old has this thing been, and the best way to make it old is by destroying some of its value to make it more expensive and worth buying" (Tega, Interview).

Photo 36: The carved mask exposed to rain and sunlight in Tega's studio

Like Peter, Tega is an artist who specialises in transforming rubbish into art. By exposing the carved mask to the sun and rain, Tega attempts to obliterate the 'newness' that is associated with the mask. Tega's effort brings to light the notion that the retro and vintage qualities of objects are attractive and worthy of a higher economic value. Tega's actions show that he adept to the ever increase in consumers appreciation of objects antique qualities (Appelgren and Bohlin, 2015). By destroying the modern, contemporary, and pristine qualities of the mask, Tega is able to transform the mask from a mere commodity into a singularised piece of work that is worthy of a premium value. The carving of

‘time’ into the object (mask) can be interpreted as an attempt to transfer the mask, a supposed transient object, into a durable category (Thompson, 1979), one that is associated with antiquity and commands better exchange value. Moreover, the practice of transformation has very little to do with the linear clock-time in the Tega’s case. In other words, the ageing of the artwork cannot be attributed to just the counting down of the clock-time. Rather, what is crucial to note is the relationship between Tega’s spatial practices and the seasonal rhythms of the weather (i.e. rain, sun, dust) which contribute to ageing the mask. In this way, we see that space, materiality and temporalities are weaved together in the practice of art-making (Shove et al., 2009). In rhythmanalysis, Lefebvre (2004) argued that “the object is not inert; time is not set aside for the subject. It is only slow in relation to our time, to our body, the measures of rhythm” (p.30). This hints at a significant ramification of the role of nonhuman rhythms, i.e. cyclical rhythms of nature in the performance of practices relating to objects. Indeed, the transformation of the mask in Tega’s account supports Lefebvre’s contention that objects can break in humid conditions (p.30). Tega’s account therefore illuminates the process by which human and non-human rhythms become enmeshed when art-making practices are performed.

6.4.4. Summary

In this section, I explored the materiality of objects from the perspective of junk arts. This section is woven around three central themes. I showed that objects such as rubbish are ambiguous and hence not easily categorised. As part of the discussion, I examined the human and non-human interactions that come together when practices around arts are performed. As such, objects are not passive receptacles, but are instead co-constituted and part of the arrangements that shape everyday practices. If anything, the material qualities of objects such as rubbish suggest that they are able to prompt actions. Secondly, the section illuminates the idea that disposal follows a recursive process which ensures that what is considered rubbish and matter out of place has the potential to return as a valuable material. By charting the trajectory of Peter’s mortar, I showed that disposal does not represent the end stage of consumption, but instead kickstarts

a chain of events that leads to the transformation of objects value. I concluded the chapter with an exploration of the temporal aspects of practices as well as its implication in the creation and destruction of objects value. I argued that the practices and processes that come together during the transformation of transient objects (pieces of junks) into durable categories (artworks) (de)synchronise with natural rhythms of the seasons.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

My commitment in this thesis was to provide a nuanced understanding of practices, particularly those enacted around rubbish. As such, I contended that there is the need for marketing scholars to move beyond a representational approach to exploring practices. This approach, I argued, will assist scholars in moving beyond the dominant ANT's application to studying practices within marketing literature, which Hill et al., (2014) have recently described as overly representational. Drawing on Lefebvre's spatial triadic framework in *Production of Space* (1991) as well as Rhythmanalysis (2004), I offered an enriched empirical account of the spatial, processual, and embodied elements of practices. I unpacked the more-than-representational aspects of the everyday practices that are enacted around waste in Lagos. I showed how Lefebvre's framework is adept at exploring practices, specifically the routines and social processes that are involved in the production, disposal, and consumption of rubbish as it traverses across the different stakeholders operating within the Lagos waste management sector. This theoretical and conceptual outlook assisted me in considering the spatial, embodied and multisensory aspects of those practices that are performed around rubbish in Lagos. I contend that the findings presented in this thesis expose academics and practitioners to the social processes and imaginaries that are attributed to the production, disposal, and consumption of waste in Lagos.

Thus, to achieve my main aim in this thesis: which is to gain an embodied understanding of the spatial dynamics and processes underpinning the social, cultural, political and economic practices enacted around rubbish, I formulated a set of objectives that guided my field enquiry. This includes the following:

1. To understand the extent to which the institutional practices regarding the handling of rubbish shape the 'lived' spaces and relations of power between PSPs, Wecyclers, dumpsite scavengers and itinerant scavengers.

2. To observe and document the everyday routines around the production, consumption, and disposal of household rubbish.

3. To understand the extent to which linear rhythms and the practices enacted around rubbish (de)synchronise with cyclical rhythms in both the formal and informal economies of Lagos.

4. To explore the human and non-human interactions that take place at various transition points when objects are transformed between transient, durable, and rubbish categories.

Having outlined the research objectives, my plan for the section that follows is to present a synopsis of the thesis. I begin with the conceptual, theoretical and methodological framework considered for the research. I then draw attention to the critical findings of the study and explain the extent to which I have achieved the research objectives outlined above. I then present the key contributions that the research makes to theory and practice. I conclude by drawing out the managerial and policy implications derived from the research before suggesting directions that future studies might take.

7.2. Synopsis of the Thesis

To gain an in-depth understanding of the everyday practices performed around waste, I commenced with a critical review of the classical works that informed scholarly interest in the study of waste. My starting point was to highlight the importance of Douglas' (1966) *Purity and Danger* and Thompson's (1979) *Rubbish Theory* in understanding the social and material dimensions of waste. This discussion progressed to consider current consumer research studies that rely on the ANT framework for exploring the practices around objects. Following a critique of ANT as too representational and its inability to explore the minutiae aspects of practices, I argued for a consideration of Lefebvre's (1991; 2004) framework in exploring practices.

In chapter three, I laid out the theoretical framework for the thesis by reviewing Lefebvre's *Production of Space* and *Rhythmanalysis*. I discussed the usefulness of Lefebvre's concepts in exploring the embodied aspects of the everyday practices performed by the formal and informal waste management actors. However, before explaining Lefebvre's spatial triad (spatial practices, representation of space and spaces of representation), I briefly introduced de Certeau's (1984) concepts of 'strategies' and 'tactics' and discussed their conceptual overlap with the latter two of Lefebvre's triad. I then explained how each of the spatial triads provides a theoretical base and conceptual tools to tackle the practices that are enacted around rubbish.

I proceeded to reiterate Lefebvre's contention that the production of space would not be complete without an incorporation and appreciation of the analysis of time. I thus supplemented Lefebvre's (1991) *Production of Space* with rhythmanalysis (2004) and explained its usefulness for tackling the embodied and multisensory experiences, particularly those that are present when mundane practices are enacted around rubbish by Lagos residents. I followed this up by expanding my discussion to include Lefebvre's concepts such as linear rhythms, cyclical rhythms, institutional rhythms, arrhythmia, eurhythmia, isorhythmia and

dressage. The foci here was to argue that Lefebvre's theoretical framework constitutes a non-representational approach that is useful for exploring the unrepresented aspect of the quotidian practices. I concluded with a presentation of the aims and objectives that direct the thesis.

In chapter four, I discussed the methodological underpinning of this study. I began by explaining the ontological and epistemological consideration of the research. Given my primary interest in exploring the embodied practices that are performed around rubbish, I adopted Pink's (2015) sensory ethnography since it is suited to the philosophical underpinnings of rhythmanalysis. The usefulness of these approaches in exploring the embodied and multisensory experiences is what forms the crux of my discussion. I provided a detailed account of the data collection methods employed during the research. I then proceeded to discuss the sampling methods, research access, and the difficulties I encountered during my fieldwork. I finished with a justification of my decision to undertake a manual analysis of the qualitative data before closing with a reflective account of the ethical implications of the research.

The findings and analysis of the research data make up the core of chapters 5 and 6. I drew on my theoretical framework to analyse the everyday practices performed around rubbish. To reduce the complexity of presenting, analysing and discussing the data obtained from the five stakeholders featured in this research, I structured the empirical chapters using each of these stakeholders. Before doing so, I provided an enriched discussion of the official strategies and representations of waste management in Lagos. This discussion was what formed the basis of chapter five. My aim was to offer background information that would aid in understanding the working practices of the state government in relation to the handling of waste. I reviewed the Lagos waste management policies and identified the formal waste actors (i.e. LAWMA, Private Sector Participants, and Wecyclers). I then shed light on the representations of informal operators such as scavengers by the formal sector, especially the media discourses that are used to portray their activities.

In chapter six, I focused on documenting the flow and trajectories of rubbish as it traverses the different stakeholders. I divided this chapter into four sections and devoted each section to the practices undertaken by the different stakeholders. Section 6.1 documents the mundane practices and social processes relating to the rituals around the production, consumption and disposal of things. Following an exploration of household practices, I proceeded to analyse the practices performed by the informal waste operators in section 6.2 and 6.3. I explored the rhythmic practices that are performed in the informal waste sector. I shed light on how the cyclical rhythms (i.e. seasons) dictate the mundane practices of itinerant and dumpsite scavengers. In these sections, I showed how the discards recovered from the landfill provide the means with which struggling informal operators sustain their social and economic livelihood. I also explain how such practices countervail against the official strategies that are created by the state. Throughout the discussion, I was attentive to the embodied and multisensory experiences that are present in the sites where rubbish are enacted around rubbish. I concluded the empirical discussion by looking at the practices enacted by junk artists. I followed the social trajectories of objects as they traversed different spaces and highlighted the movements of their meanings and the transformation of their value. Throughout the discussion, I considered the human and non-human relations that come together when artistry practices are performed.

Having presented a synopsis of my thesis, I now draw on my preceding discussions and analysis of the empirical chapters to formulate answers for my research objectives.

7.3. Discussion of Findings and Conclusion

To begin with, I consider it necessary to return to what ignited my interest to do this research in the first place. My initial point of departure was to reconsider rubbish as constitutive of value creation; one that does not see disposal as the final act of consumption. With this in mind, I argued that one way to capture the social life and trajectories of rubbish following their disposal was to explore the non-representational (i.e. spatial, embodied) aspects of the practices performed around rubbish. An integral aspect of such a theoretical move was centred on exploring the official strategies that make-up the practices enacted around waste; what is referred to as 'representations of space' in Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad. With this in mind I proceeded to understand:

7.3.1. Objective #1: Institutional Practices of Rubbish and the Lived Space

To understand how the institutional practices regarding the handling of rubbish shape the 'lived' spaces and the relations of power between PSPs, Wecyclers, dumpsite scavengers and itinerant scavengers.

This research objective serves as a guide towards exploring the practices that are enacted by the formal and informal actors involved in the Lagos waste management sector. My findings reveal that rubbish constitutes a significant economic resource that contributes to the livelihood of formal and informal labours in Lagos (Daniels 2004). The findings suggest that the intent to extract economic value from waste is considered to be an integral element of the policies and practices that underpin the organisation and disposal of waste in Lagos. The research findings reveal that the Lagos state persuasion of Lagos residents to consider recycling as a means of generating income and creating job opportunities for the state represents a grandiose and pedagogical market development strategy that is aimed at socialising them into the enactment of exchange value in the waste sector. If anything, the public labelling of informal waste scavengers' as thieves and the deliberate discouragement of residents'

patronage of their services, I contend, represents a broader tactic whose aim is to pave the way for the marketisation of waste in Lagos.

The findings reveal that the practices that are enacted around waste by other stakeholders (Wecyclers, scavengers, junk artists) conform to this interest and motivation to extract exchange value from waste. In chapter five, I explained that Wecyclers (a social enterprise) generate income by engaging in a door-to-door collection of PET bottles and other valuable materials from households. In doing this, Wecyclers offer householders (particularly those from low socio-economic backgrounds) the opportunity to exchange their waste for money and small household appliances i.e. toasters, blenders. In turn, through the sorting and reselling of these materials to other stakeholders, the organisation is able to provide employment while enabling householders the opportunity to earn income from their waste.

Similarly, the reclamation and subsequent exchanges of valuable materials from dumpsites across Lagos present informal scavengers with the opportunity to insert themselves into the urban spaces of Lagos. Rubbish, therefore, provides informal operators with a career trajectory, which they are otherwise denied in a formal urban economy – i.e. they begin as waste pickers before being promoted to higher positions as waste buyers and scrap dealers. The economic proceeds derived from exchanging waste further engenders entrepreneurial activities, which in-turn enable informal operators to generate additional income from agricultural investments. The findings suggest that the practices enacted by such informal scavengers are primarily geared towards exchange relations rather than implicitly addressing the issues related to environmental sustainability. Although starting off in the radical and interstitial spaces (i.e. dumpsites), the everyday engagement of informal scavengers', I argue, metamorphizes into set of practices that are akin to the all too familiar formal economic activities, where the worker exists as the means through which employers extract value and offer wages in exchange for their labour. This illuminates Lefebvre's (1991) analysis of 'representation of spaces'; one that enables informal scavengers to appropriate the formal economic spaces.

The thesis reveals the manner in which the institutional rhythmic waste management practices shape mundane practices that are enacted around rubbish in the lived spaces of Lagos. In chapter five, I discussed how the initial inadequate waste management strategies, or 'representation of spaces' (Lefebvre, 1991) if you will, pave the way for informal cart-pushers to step in and assist in the door-to-door collection and disposal of household waste in exchange for a small fee. However, the Lagos state authority's efforts to improve the effectiveness of waste disposal and the aesthetics of the city led to the abolition of the burgeoning cart-pushing service, a practice the formal authorities consider as backward (Medina, 2007). The ensuing privatisation of waste ensured that local private sector participants (PSPs) were handed the responsibility to remove household and commercial waste. Despite such initiatives, informal scavengers continued to engage in the practice by way of resisting the state strategies laid out by the formal authorities to get rid of them. I found that the efforts to resist such 'representation of spaces' (Lefebvre, 1991) leaves informal operators in a precarious position so that they are construed as thieves and persecuted by the authorities. Yet, this research shows that the undertakings of informal operators (i.e. itinerant scavengers) resemble those performed by formal enterprises like Wecyclers. However, whereas Wecyclers is supported by LAWMA for their role in promoting the conversation of rubbish into economic resources, the scavengers are chastised for engaging in a similar practice.

For example, an analysis of secondary materials (i.e. journalistic sources) exposes some of the rhetorical tactics that are utilised to denigrate the activities of scavengers. The media and the formal representatives of the waste sector consider scavengers to be deviants, criminals and backward thinking; these representations delegitimise scavenging as a danger to the establishment of a well-ordered city. The state monitors and controls cart pushing and scavenging activities through law enforcement agents from the police, Kick Against Indiscipline (KAI) brigade and LAWMA. Offenders are arrested and made to pay fines or risk facing prosecution. Lefebvre (1996) describes these processes as

the gradual colonisation of the urban space by capitalist forces – a scenario where the dominant rhythms or official strategies impose themselves on quotidian life.

Nonetheless, I found that informal operators (i.e. itinerant scavengers) subvert the strategies that are put in place to abolish scavenging activities by offering bribes to corrupt enforcement agents. In exchange, corrupt officials grant such operators a concession which allows them to continue their practices. Yet, not all itinerant scavengers are privileged to broker such an arrangement with the monitoring agents. The less privileged scavengers (usually possessing low social and economic resources) must, therefore, remain adaptive and vigilant to the rhythms of police patrols to be able to evade arrest. The research revealed how the 'tactics of flight' and a nightly rhythmic operation constitutes tactics utilised for escaping the police. These tactics require scavengers to flee, sometimes leaving their carts behind. However, the decision of whether to leave carts behind is predicated upon the economic value of the cart's contents. The findings reveal how informal operators make instinctive decisions on whether to flee leaving their carts behind, to offer bribes or face arrest and pay the fines or bail charges. A night rhythm enables itinerant scavengers to sneak in and out of the city without being detected by the police. It also puts the informal operator in an advantageous position to intercept rubbish that has been disposed of over the night. These 'making-do' tactics shape the informal economic spaces (de Certeau, 1984) and enable the itinerant scavengers to subvert the colonisation of urban spaces by 'formal' capitalist forces.

Further, my findings reveal that this gradual co-optation and marketisation agenda have led to the squeezing of liminal spaces operated by informal operators as well as the formal economy by powerful capitalist forces. Under the current Lagos waste management framework, local PSPs have been relieved of the responsibility to collect and dispose of domestic waste. This task has been passed on to the Visionscape Group – a Dubai-based corporation – as part of the Cleaner Lagos Initiative (CLI). Akinwunmi Ambode, the governor of Lagos state, cited the local PSPs' inadequate infrastructural capability as the reason for turning to a foreign partner. A corporation he believes to be capable of managing the

city's waste in a manner that will modernise the urban space as well as meet global standards of environmental sustainability. In response, the local PSPs have resorted to tactics that take the form of deliberately littering the streets with garbage in an attempt to sabotage the efforts of Visionscape. This tactic, I argue, is aimed at resisting the recent CLI waste reform and the broader marketisation of waste imposed by the dominant capitalist rhythms. If anything, the research findings show that the urban spaces of Lagos, particularly concerning the waste economy, are becoming infiltrated by global forces and this ultimately shapes the everyday practices and informal economic spaces (Lefebvre, 1996).

7.3.2. Objective #2: The Mundane Household Practices around Waste

To observe and document the everyday practices surrounding the production, and disposal and consumption of household rubbish.

In order to trace the trajectories of rubbish, I commenced with the households of Lagos, since domestic waste is primarily produced in the home. I dwelled in the homes of my participants and documented their practices and engagement with rubbish and objects that are yet to be confined to the category of rubbish. The research observe that the socio-economic backgrounds (defined in terms of participants' income, neighbourhood and education) of householders inform the practices enacted around the disposal of rubbish. These practices, I argued, reveal gendered politics that relates to division of labour and demarcation of spaces. In chapter six, I drew on my empirical findings to illustrate how the spatial relations of Lagos' householders are organised in a manner that reveals a patriarchal gendered division of labour. However, the extent to which these gendered norms are reproduced differs across households possessing low, middle, and high socio-economic backgrounds.

For instance, my findings show that participants from a lower socio-economic background consider house work – i.e. the practice of disposing of rubbish – to be to the duty of women. In these families, the practices of waste disposal reflect a demarcated gender role, in which women assume the role of the obedient homemakers while men are considered to be the breadwinners and therefore occupy a superior position as head of the house (Izugbara, 2004). In contrast, such division of labour is less demarcated across middle-high socio-economic households. Here men can be found engaging in housework as much as women. For example, participants from middle socio-economic backgrounds distanced their homes from the typical Nigerian households where male is supreme and exempted from house duties. Such participants maintained that the equal participation of women in contributing to the household income warrants the need for males to participate in the equal sharing of housework. This reinforces the notion that a decent employment can soften the perpetuation of women as housekeepers and lead to a fair negotiation of domestic roles (Walby, 1990).

More broadly, these findings illuminate the manner in which the rhythm of industrial production (waged employment) influences domestic production as well as the heterosexual norms and practices that are common in Nigerian homes (Izubgara, 2004).

Despite Walby's contention that the performance of domestic duties in middle-high households is increasingly becoming symmetrical, this thesis suggests that the division of housework in such homes continues to remain gendered and this often invokes acts of transgressions of boundaries (Creswell, 1996). In chapter five, I demonstrated how such gendered transgressions are invoked during the disposal of gendered items like female waste. An observation of the rhythms of waste disposal within households makes visible the manner in which acts of disposal can lead to the transgression of gender norms. Female participants in one such household voiced concerns about exposing female sanitary waste to their (male) father who has responsibility for transferring the household rubbish into the bin. For these participants, the exposure of female sanitary waste to a male would lead to an arrhythmic experience (Lefebvre, 2004), one that is induces feelings of embarrassment as well as contaminate social relations within the home. Thus, the production, sorting and disposal of the female waste produce interesting rhythmic gendered division of labour in households.

The thesis findings show that practices of disposal, particularly those related to the negotiation and use of home space reproduce heteropatriarchal norms (Izugbara, 2004). The research reveals that the kitchen space is constructed as a female domain within one particular household; a space that is considered to be out of bounds to the male (head) of the house. Similarly, I observed that the chore of taking out 'rubbish' to a multi-purpose bin is firmly assigned to a male. The allocation of this role is often based on heterosexual norms which project females as weak and males as strong and capable of undertaking difficult tasks in the external world (Walby, 1990). Indeed, female participants maintained that the location of the bin (outside the gate) represented a dangerous place for women, arguing that rape and kidnapping could occur within such spaces. Moreover, the findings show that the labelling of household items as valuable or

valueless and their placements has important spatial gendered relations. In chapter five, I illustrated how the space in the kitchen pantry is contested between couples such that my participant (Mary, a full-time housewife) assigned her husband's (Musa, a technician) technical tools to the category of 'rubbish' because she considers them to be out-of-place while in the pantry. Mary's consideration of the pantry as a domestic space (where kitchen utensils are stored) meant that the spillage of Musa's work items into her domain creates a disruption in Mary's domestic rhythms and the industrial productive rhythms. The findings show that the (de)synchronisation of objects within the everyday rhythms of householders creates arrhythmic situations that amount to the threatening of social relations between people. These findings are consistent with Douglas' contention that dirt, when in the wrong place, can offend and transgress established boundaries. A rhythmanalysis of these spatial practices therefore reinforces the notion that the placement of objects has significant ramifications for their meanings and values (Parsons, 2008). The findings show that household spaces are part of the rhythmic processes and practices enacted around rubbish in Lagos. Such liminal, ambiguous, and transitional spaces, can facilitate the categorisation and transformation of objects values and their meanings.

7.3.3. Objective #3: Waste Practices (de)Synchronise with Seasonal Rhythms

To understand the extent to which linear rhythms (or the spatial practices) enacted around rubbish (de)synchronise with cyclical rhythms (i.e. climates, seasons) in both the formal and informal economies of Lagos.

I formulated this objective to observe document the rhythmic experiences that interlink with the mundane practices that are enacted around rubbish in Lagos. The research findings revealed that the spatial practices undertaken by formal and informal actors (de)synchronise with the seasonal cycles (i.e. rainy and dry seasons). For instance, the surface of the landfill becomes muddy and slippery during the rainy seasons, and this often inhibits the movement of people and garbage trucks that attempt to tip rubbish. The thesis illuminates the manner in which the rainfall creates disruptions in the landfill impact on the energy level of workers as opposed to the sunny days that are characteristic of the dry seasons.

Indeed, the research findings show that the regular rainfall makes the organisation of the landfill particularly strenuous. The research showed that the seasonal cycles also shape the everyday practices of people in Lagos. For example, the thesis observed and documented the various (de)synchronisation that takes place between the seasons and the consumption of fluids such as water. In other words, using auto ethnographic diaries, I illustrated the manner in which the scorching heat that accompanies the dry season impacted on my biological rhythms so that I grew uncharacteristically tired and thirsty. This experience, I argued, charts an arrhythmic experience (Lefebvre, 2004), one that had an impact on my energy levels, thus leading me to experience a slow walking rhythm. Likewise, the research findings shows that the availability of PET materials is linked to the changing seasons. I found that during the dry seasons (October–March), there is increased consumption of mineral water while the rainy season (April–July) bring about a slower consumption of mineral water. The surplus PET bottles disposed of post-consumption becomes an essential resource to informal operators who reclaim and exchange them into cash.

The nuances of the rhythms and seasonality can be both disruptive for some informal operators while being appropriated by others. I found that the rain cripples the activities of scavengers that specialises in reclaiming papers and cartons. Like PET bottles, the availability of papers is notoriously scarce during the rainy season. This is partly to do with the obvious damage of papers by the wet conditions of the environment and the increased competition as scavengers jostle for the little that is left. Yet, dealing with these slower rhythms and the increased scarcity due to competition requires quick-witted informal operators to turn their focus to other materials such as metals and iron. These findings reveal that informal waste operators deal with this unfavourable season by switching to an alternative engagements like agricultural activities. In this way, the thesis illuminates the temporal elements of the practices of scavenging. It also throws light on the manner in which seasonality shapes the rhythms of temporary work and the urban-rural-urban migration in the city of Lagos.

Further, the thesis show the usefulness of rhythmanalysis, as a theoretical framework for exploring the spatial and rhythmic practices. One such practices relates to the olfactory experiences of informal scavengers operating in the dumpsite. The thesis exposes the rhythmic elements of odours and how this synchronises with the cyclical rhythms of the seasons (Lefebvre, 2004). The smells of dumpsites respond to the changing weather conditions such that the smellscapes of the mornings differ from those of the evenings. In particular, this thesis shows that the offensive odour that is characteristic of dumpsites is usually at its peak when it rains. The combination of rainwater, disposed of rubbish and the leachate from decomposed materials creates severe pollution of the dumpsite. This temporal dimension of smell illustrates that olfactory experiences are episodic in time, space and rhythms so that the periodic smell associated with spaces becomes registered as part of the sensory perceptions of consumers (Drobnick, 2005; Rodaway, 1994). If anything, these finding illuminates Lefebvre's contention that "smells are part of rhythms" (p.310).

7.3.4. Objective #4: Human and Non-Human Elements of Practices

To explore and understand the human and non-human interactions enacted when rubbish is transformed (through recycling and upcycling) into valuable goods in Lagos.

The focus of this objective was to explore the material interactions that takes place when junk artists enact practices that leads to the production of artworks. The thesis demonstrates that human practices often become entangled within nonhuman entities (artefacts) during the process of transforming pieces of junks into valuable artworks. This thesis makes visible the material interactions, movements, and transformation of objects and their meanings as they traverse space and time. It helps in establishing the processual qualities of practices, particularly those that are enacted and performed around junks. The empirical data presented in section 6.4 showed that junk artists interact with material objects when producing artworks and their practices often follow a precognitive process. That is, their practices are often embodied and rely on multisensory experiences such as vision, sights, sounds and touch.

In chapter six, I showed that the tactile qualities of objects inspire art practices such as moulding, carving, painting and so on. In one instance, a series of interviews and observations with a junk artist show the manner in which the curvaceous shape of a mortar that has been disposed of inspired the artist to mould the object into shape and in doing so, transform what was supposedly rubbish into an art piece. Similarly, this thesis illustrated the manner in which the sense of vision and touch combine during the production of art pieces like canvas paintings. Inspired by the roughness of sawdust and the segments that are associated with snail shells, junk artists are able to produce taxidermies. What is clear from the findings of this thesis is that objects are ambiguous, possess a social life and take on new meanings and values as they circulate through difference terminal points. For example, the thesis documents how rubbish that has been condemned to the dumpsite and doomed to rot became transformed and re-emerged as a durable object (Thompson, 1979). While in the hands of artists, discarded materials are transformed and invested with meanings such that they go on to possess aesthetic, economic and sign value (Hawkins, 2001; Kirk and Sellen, 2010). These interactions illuminate the transformative potential of rubbish, where objects assigned the category of zero value is capable of being reinstated to a valuable category (Parsons, 2008). Besides, this transformation of pieces of junk into rare, valuable artefacts alludes to the process of singularization which explains the stripping of an object's commodity candidacy (Kopytoff, 1986).

Further, the research findings highlight the notion that the values of objects are not always static. If anything, this thesis shows that objects, whether in the rubbish category – i.e. zero value – or those that are yet to be allotted a category, are always in a state of becoming and never the 'final' product. This thesis shows that objects that are considered to have no use-value continue to foster familial relations and symbolic meanings in the lives of people. For instance, the research participants demonstrated how certain household possessions (i.e. pestle and mortar) are able to prompt divestment practices. For example, my participants maintained that the disposal or exchange of household items such as those acquired as gifts, or material possessions left behind by the deceased relatives is

inconceivable. More often than not, householders expect such liminal objects to remain in a timeless limbo until their worth is carefully considered. What is clear from the accounts presented in this thesis is that objects are not passive. They continue to remain active carriers of meanings which can foster relations as well as prompt the everyday practices that are enacted around them.

I want to stress that spaces or spatiality if you will, have significant implications for the transformation and becoming of objects. This thesis shows that spaces are integral to the process of divestment, meanings, and transformation of objects' value. The findings showed that efforts to hold onto such 'sacred' items often requires the shifting and placement of these items in liminal spaces (i.e. pantries and garages) within the home. For instance, I observed that my participant's efforts to declutter her pantry informed their decision to relocate items to similar temporary locations such as the garage and outside the house. Moreover, as objects moved across these different spaces (the pantry, garage, outside the gate), they took on new meanings, values, and categorisations. This resonates with Hetherington's (2004) contention that home spaces can serve as conduits that are useful for the divestment of things.

Furthermore, this thesis commitment to explore the more-than-representational aspects of practices meant that I was attentive to the multisensory experiences that are present in the handling of waste. My findings show that scavengers rely on a range of multisensory perceptions (i.e. vision, sound, and touch) while seeking valuable materials in the landfill. Sound is an important heuristic for distinguishing between different objects in the dumpsite. It is crucial for a scavenger to be able to distinguish the clanging sounds of heavy metals from the clanking and hollow sounds associated with aluminium. By relying on the sound made by striking the scavenging rod against objects, scavengers can avoid less valuable objects while targeting more valuable items (i.e. aluminium and brass). The findings also reveal an implication for researchers concerning resisting the urge to privilege vision over other senses. For instance, while engaged in a participant observation, one of my research participants warned me to 'wash my eyes if they are dirty'. Although, his remark was at best a metaphorical message

that urges me to maintain vigilance, my observation showed that the propensity to privilege vision over senses like touch is unfounded at least in the context of waste scavenging. While undertaking waste picking, the sense of touch or the tactile qualities associated with objects have as much relevance as vision since scavengers need to feel objects as part of their valuation practice. In chapter six, I explained the importance of avoiding reclaiming objects made of iron because they are heavier and less valuable when compared with the lighter aluminium. A sack that is filled with irons will slow down the rhythms of waste picking performed by scavengers. Informal scavengers must therefore rely on the tactile properties of objects as well as their sounds to quickly categorise, discern their value and decide on whether to collect them. This supports the contention of Larsen and Urry (2011) that vision does not represent the sole determinant of an individual's perceptions and experience. It also helps to advance the understanding of how multisensory perceptions interact during the enactment of practices (Degen, 2008), especially those performed by informal waste scavengers. Yet the ability to draw on these embodied skills is not easily passed on to novice scavengers – something I struggled with during participant observations. These embodied skills are acquired through years of engagement in the informal practice of scavenging. It is only through a repetitive engagements that novice scavengers are able to break the practice of scavenging into their bodies and objects. This is reflected in Lefebvre's conceptualisation of dressage (2004) in which a skilled scavenger develops corporeal mastery of the valuation process as part of their valuation practice.

7.4. Contributions and Implications of this Research

7.4.1. Practices are Processual and Objects are Always Becoming

In the introductory chapter of this thesis I argued that marketers and consumer researchers have tended to treat the practices around disposal as the end stage of production and consumption process. Benton (2014) argues that marketing scholars has too often ignored the marketing of waste, and instead tend to focus on consumption through marketing practices such as buying, selling, advertising and distribution. Notably, Hetherington (2004) explains that "disposal is never final as is implied by the notion of rubbish" (p.157). Increasingly, consumer researchers have become interested in these debates by tackling questions of disposal from on a conceptual (Benton, 2014; Hetherington, 2004; Parsons, 2008) as well as empirical level (Cappellini and Parsons 2010; Evans, 2012; Gregson et al. 2007). This study advances current research by presenting an empirical insight into the market practice of disposal by considering the reverse channels of distribution. Specifically, the thesis offer a full account of the entire market systems, exposing social practices, spatial dynamics and embodied perspectives that are entangled in a network of waste handling. By emphasising disposal as a social practice, this thesis challenges long held assumptions in consumer research that considered disposal as a reductive practice on the final stage of the production-consumption spectrum – i.e. simply an act of getting rid of things. The thesis offers fresh insights into the rhythmic practices enacted around waste, and in doing so, exposes the production and consumption experiences that are manifested prior to and after the disposal of things.

In short, an understanding of the practices around rubbish reveals that when objects are assigned the categories of rubbish and disposed of, it is not merely because they have reached a terminal point in their life cycle. Indeed, the research shows that the (de)synchronisation of objects with the practices are enacted by households have consequence for the (re)categorisation of objects value. For instance, the thesis shows that when objects are out of sync with the rhythmic practices enacted by householders, it create transgressions that leads

to the subsequent labelling of such objects as rubbish. The thesis has shown that the disposal practices can tell us more about the political and economic development of markets. This findings of this research encourage consumer researchers and marketing practitioners to take the processes of disposal seriously and consider it as a starting point in conceptualising consumption. In this study, I demonstrate how by tracing the flow, trajectories, re-use, (re)distribution, and transformation of rubbish as they move across the different stakeholders, we are able to lay bare the processual aspects of practices. It illuminates the notion that there is no end point in the movement and transformation of objects in terms of values and meanings. In so doing, the thesis, refutes the claim that disposal represents the final acts in the cycle of consumption and instead suggests that objects, when disposed, are always in a state of becoming. For instance, the thesis shows that the disposal of mineral water (PET bottles) post consumption kickstarts different (in)formal practices (i.e. itinerant scavenging, recycling, upcycling, dumpsite scavenging). And the processual elements of these practices dance in a collective synchronicity to produce market spaces.

7.4.2. Theoretical and Methodological Contributions for Marketing

I want to stress that the theoretical and methodological approaches utilised for this study constitutes one of the key contributions of the research to academic practice. The inclination for consumer researchers to explore marketplace practices using representational theories (i.e. ANT and assemblages) has been critiqued. Hill et al. (2014) encourages consumer researchers to expand their ontological sensitivities to consider nonrepresentational marketing theories that are useful for attending to the minutiae aspect of everyday life. Through an engagement with Lefebvre's *Production of space* (1991) and rhythmanalysis (2004), this research contributes to consumer research by introducing a fresh ontological perspective to explore the spatial, embodied, temporal and post-humanist aspect of practices. By adopting a range of embodied methods, this thesis contributes to a methodological framework that capture the more-than-representational aspects of marketplace practices. This research is therefore

distinctive from previous consumer research and marketing studies as it emphasises a methodological sensitivities towards the spatial, temporal, embodied and multisensory elements. In my fieldwork, I and my participants do not only 'talk' and 'visualise' rubbish, we collaboratively feel, smell, touch, and explore the shape and a weight of rubbish. We traced rubbish across space and time and senses its transformative value.

Through a nuanced engagement with methods such as auto-ethnographic observations, self-reflexive observations, mobile interviews, I as the researcher uses the body, as a metronomic instrument (Lefebvre, 2004). Indeed, Lefebvre (2004) highlights that it is necessary for the rhythmanalyst to be 'grasped by' rhythms in order for them to grasp it. For instance, as I paid attention to the rhythmic practices that occur around rubbish during my fieldwork I became grasped by the rhythms and this coincided with my becoming an insider in the field. In this way, my thesis has demonstrated how rhythmanalysis as a methodology can be operationalised. The thesis has therefore successfully answer recent call by Canniford et al., (2017) to consider unique methods that are able to capture "the tacit, embodied, non-representational aspects of social life" (p.11).

7.4.3. Contributions to Macromarketing

This thesis also contributes to macromarketing since it exposes a different ways in which waste is organised within the context of a developing country. As I mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, western understanding of the consumption and disposal of waste is largely underpinned by the moral ethos of environmentalism or sustainability. However, this thesis shows that waste and practices of disposal are integral to the socioeconomic regeneration of society particularly in the context of Lagos, Nigeria. On the one hand, while practices enacted by the (in)formal stakeholders in Lagos can be considered sustainable, the motives and the core values that shapes these practices are not driven by the agenda of sustainability. For instance, my empirical data show that the motivation of Lagos householders to recycle is predicated on economic benefit

they hope to extract by selling recyclables to itinerant scavengers and recycling organisations like Wecyclers. Similarly, the formal promotional materials and rhetorical tactics used to promote recycling in Lagos is informed by the financial benefits the state expect to garner from waste. The dumpsite scavengers and itinerant scavengers likewise, are keen to become waste pickers with the sole intention of progressing to other entrepreneurial activities. Similarly, the practice of transforming rubbish into art pieces by junk artists is driven by their motivations to engage in market exchanges. Though the practices explored in this thesis are, context specific, I contend that the empirical evidence documented in my study shows that an understanding of the mundane practices around rubbish can alert stakeholders in developing markets to the ways in which local systems of disposal operate.

Furthermore, the research addresses important macromarketing pertaining to the marginalisation and exclusions of informal stakeholders in developing market spaces. Indeed, through my engagement with the organisation of waste in Lagos, Nigeria, I observe how alternative forms (formal and informal) and practices surrounding waste has sustained livelihoods and improve the quality of life of those who often face social exclusion in the African context. In short, the research has implications for policymakers, particularly in considering how the informal waste economy can contribute to the development of the formal economy in developing nations. In doing so, the research answer a recent call in the *Journal of Macromarketing* for marketing scholars to tackle issues that relates to sustainable development, self-reliance, as well as the development of market within the African context.

7.4.4. Contributions to Transformative Consumer Research

While I do not situate this research within the TCR body of, I assert that the research findings contributes have implications for TCR (Mick et al., 2012). My research resonates with the principal commitments of TCR by considering the improvement of well-being and encouraging paradigm diversity. My research has the potential to diffuse valuable research findings to relevant stakeholders,

partnering with consumers and their caretakers, highlighting socio-cultural and situational contexts as well as utilising rigorous theory and methods (ibid, 2012).

First, this research exposes the extent to which practices enacted around rubbish are integral for improving the well-being of Lagos residents as well as the physical environment. More specifically, the research tackle issues relating to social injustice, inequalities, sustainability, marginalisation that are produced when mundane practices are enacted around waste (Blocker et al., 2013; Ozanne et al., 2015). By addressing the extent to which such issues affects the urban poor, this research meets TCR commitment to consider "the problems and opportunities surrounding the dimensions of well-being (Mick et al., 2012, p.6).

Second, I have rigorously engaged with a range of theories and methods that are not only relevant but equally grounded in well justified theoretical frameworks. Indeed, my engagement with rhythmanalysis, sensory, visual, and auto forms of ethnography has been useful for offering "penetrating insights on everyday consumer behaviour and well-being" (Mick et al., 2012, p.7). In this way, the research addresses TCR commitment to promote a meticulous application of theories and methods to achieve its goals.

Thirdly, in line with TCR commitment to disseminate research implications to relevant stakeholders that might benefit from the research findings, this research looked at the broader aspect of mundane practices enacted around waste, one being the practice of informal scavenging of waste. This research therefore assist academic researchers, practitioners and (in)formal stakeholders to gain better understanding of the complexities surrounding the organisation of waste in Lagos and perhaps similar developing markets. Consequently this research offer policymakers insights into the potential impacts of waste policies on both formal and informal actors. Using platforms like radio, (see appendix 10), presentations, and informal debates, I engaged in meaningful discussions relating to the formal and informal organisation of waste in Lagos, Nigeria and in doing so, the research meets TCR mission to disseminate findings to a wide array of relevant audience (Mick et al., 2012).

Fourth, as I have discussed throughout this thesis, the theoretical frameworks and methodological tools adopted during the research process highlights the collaborative nature of the project. In other words, I considered how my research participants act as active collaborators in the production of knowledge. I managed to achieved this by actively participating in the everyday practices of scavenging, what I described as 'dwelling' and 'shadowing' my participants.

Lastly the thesis focus on exploring the lifeworld of consumers. My commitment to explore questions relating to waste (something that constitutes a pressing concern and perhaps opportunity) is consistent with TCR's agenda to tackle the well-being of the environment and the everyday life of consumer (Mick et al. 2012). For instance, the thesis offers transformative consumer researchers fresh insights into unique challenges and perhaps new opportunities for tackling issues relating to sustainability within developing markets or non-western economies. Such ideas, I argue, is valuable to researchers and practitioners as it helps us uncover systemic solutions that are useful for tackling social problems facing the world's poor.

7.5. Policy and Marketing Implications

In this section, my aim is to make visible the ways in which the findings of this research is relevant to the stakeholders that are involved in the Lagos waste management sector. The findings of this thesis has potential to inform policies that will reflect the needs of the formal and informal stakeholders in the sector. I have shown that informal waste activities often synchronise with the formal practices that are enacted around rubbish in Lagos. The thesis findings show that the reclamation of waste and dumpsites constitute a land of opportunity for individuals who struggle to find opportunities in the formal economy. Although a big ask, I am of the opinion that it is in the best interest of Lagos policymakers to consider the extent to which policy changes in the waste sector will affect the socioeconomic practices that are enacted by informal operators. I have shown that the practice of scavenging provides a safety net for struggling individuals. As such, waste management policies that threatens their livelihood might create disruptions that would lead to an increase in unemployment and economic hardship. As the thesis demonstrates, the current neoliberal waste management framework, although attractive to the state and foreign direct investments, excludes the local PSPs as well as the informal scavengers whose livelihoods depend on monetary gains extracted from the sale of reclaimed items. As such, in the process of 'making-do', these local actors are likely to subvert and sometimes resist strategies and policies that they deem to be oppressive.

For instance, in the thesis attention is given to how in a bid to survive, informal scavengers employ a range of tactics to subvert the actions of law enforcement agents who attempt to police cart-pushing activities. My argument here is that the Lagos state government should take a pragmatic approach that is aimed at considering the adverse effect of neoliberal policies on the operations of informal scavengers. I suggest that rather than suppress and eliminate these informal operators, the state government should create bespoke policies and strategies that harness their expertise in a manner that would be advantageous to the formal and informal sectors. To expand on this point, it is pertinent to note that the thesis brings to light the role of social enterprises (i.e. Wecyclers) in

promoting a cleaner environment by encouraging recycling. As observed, this success can also be extended to informal operators who engage in activities that are similar to those undertaken by Wecyclers (i.e. door-to-door collection of valuable materials that have been disposed of). As the research findings reveal, the ambition of several informal scavengers is to metamorphose into entrepreneurs whether as a scrap dealer or smallholding farmer.

It is my contention that instead of considering itinerant scavengers as deviants, the state could extend a helping hand to these informal operators to aid their transition into the formal economy since that is what they aspire to achieve. This would have potential benefit to the state in the long term since they will be able to regulate them a bit more and, in the process, encourage entrepreneurial pathways and as a consequence generate revenues through taxation. Not only that, successful entrepreneurial investments on the part of informal operators would lead to an exponential growth in terms of job opportunities – something that remains a critical issue in Nigeria. Furthermore, the educative and rhythmic practices of picking, sorting, recycling, upcycling and valuation represent a contribution that is not limited to monetary aspects. If anything, by engaging in these practices, people are able to develop alternative ways of organising themselves. Organisation pattern that encourage the development of social cohesion, improve socio-economic livelihoods and more importantly provide an escape route for struggling individuals.

While the focus of this thesis is not to champion an environmentalist agenda, the findings discussed in it have significant implications for micro and macro marketing when looked at from the perspective of green consumption and environmental sustainability. Regarding the micro aspects, this thesis shows that marketers looking to promote recycling activities in Lagos might consider a pragmatic approach that will take into account the local practices enacted around waste by Lagos residents. For instance, this research has shown that people are primarily interested in generating revenue from the rubbish in the context of Lagos. This suggests that marketing or promotional materials that are aimed at transforming individuals' and groups' attitudes in relation to sustainable

consumption practices (i.e. recycling) must abandon rhetoric that advocates moral ethos that encourages people to protect the planet. Instead, the promotional materials and advertising messages utilised by practitioners should reinforce the economic or financial benefits that people stand to gain when they engage in sustainable recycling initiatives. I would even go as far as to argue that marketers and practitioners may create the conditions that will allow people to benefit economically from such sustainable practice. This, I argue, would constitute a more effective strategy that is useful in encouraging consumers to make green choices (such as recycling) in Lagos as well as other similar contexts.

On a macro level, this thesis show the importance of considering the production and consumption aspects that are associated with ecological sustainability. The thesis interrogates the contention that specific sustainable consumption policies that geared towards discouraging overconsumption of goods (McDonagh et al., 2012). For instance, we can think about how western policies and initiatives around the taxation of plastic bags have compelled and encouraged producers and consumers (i.e. shoppers in this case) to consider the consequences of their consumption choices in the environment. However, while this seems to be fine within the western context, the research findings suggest that the other parts of society like developing markets like Lagos are likely to lose out from policies that are aimed at discouraging overconsumption or “wasting less” (Corvellec and Hultman, 2012). If anything, this thesis has made visible the significant contributions of the surpluses of societies to the formal and informal economies in Lagos. The discussion on upcycling revealed that stakeholders, such as householders, junk artists, and informal scavengers, take on the role of producers and consumers. Indeed, the famous 3Rs (reduce, reuse, and recycle) I argue, ignore the productive aspects of the social practices relating to the disposal process. I am hopeful that this thesis will expose academic, marketing practitioners, as well as policymakers to what (McDonagh et al., 2012, p.272) has been described as the “insidious or hidden” relationship between consumption and production elements of sustainable practices.

7.6. Suggestions for Future Studies

Although I explored the social practices and the transformative potential of rubbish in Lagos, I do not suggest that my research findings are generalisable to other contexts. In other words, it would be useful for researchers to step away from the one-size-fits-all approach to considering the various social processes that are involved in waste disposal across countries and cultures. The vast literature which has explored practices around waste in developing cities has mostly considered it from a political-economic standpoint (see Birkbeck, 1978; Bromley, 1978; Mbah and Nzeadibe, 2016; Medina, 2007; Nzeadibe and Mbah, 2015; Rogerson, 2001). These studies consider the economic and political aspects of formal and informal waste management practice from case studies, cultural contexts and a neoliberal perspective. While I have extended the discussion in these areas, the eclectic nature of this thesis, I believe, would ignite the interest of future researchers who are keen to explore the practices of disposal from a multisensory and embodied perspective. Future studies could take this research beyond borders to explore some of the mundane practices that are performed in similar cities across the world.

This research traced the flow and trajectories of rubbish following its removal from the household. Yet, there were some limitations in terms of the extent to which I followed and documented the trajectories and transformations of rubbish across the formal stakeholders. In this research, I hinted that the good traded to waste buyers and other intermediaries are often sold off to local and international recycling companies. However, the nitty-gritty of the practices and performances enacted by these actors were blind spots for myself and most of my participants. For instance, research participants often explained that most of the materials reclaimed from the dumpsite and sold off to middlemen are recycled. However, neither myself nor most of my participants, particularly the vast number of informal scavengers have been to these recycling factories. As a result, very little is understood about the practices that are enacted around the recycling of these materials within this community. It would be interesting for future studies in this

area to trace the flow of rubbish to recycling firms and consider the everyday practices that lead to the transformation of recyclable objects. Furthermore, given that a good portion of recyclable PETs are exported outside the borders of Nigeria, it would be interesting to consider bigger political questions such as the Nigerian government's position on the export of such materials to foreign countries – something that is missing in this thesis. Future studies could also explore the institutional arrangements that govern local recycling and manufacturing companies, their quotidian practices as well as the global value and commodity chains that exist in their networks.

Although I engaged with Lefebvre's concept of 'abstract space' and the manipulation of time by capital, I admit that there is more to be done regarding exploring the role of capitalist rhythms in creating differential spaces. Of course, the hints provided in this thesis shows that the government of Lagos state leans towards a neoliberal political perspective. One such change relates to the Cleaner Lagos Initiative (CLI) which has led to the outsourcing and privatisation of domestic waste to Visionscape Group. Such changes, I argue, may have some impact on the domestic environment, especially since the market will dictate policies and movements that may not be in the interests of the stakeholders operating in the informal economy. For instance, a neoliberal direction might have implications for the (re)classification of people in areas of (un)employment as well as lead to the creation or expansion of a gig economy. A neoliberal perspective might also spark a new focus in terms of the measures or metrics with which the state government measure the performance of the formal and informal waste management sector. For instance, under a neoliberal perspective, the state might focus on the efficiency of the waste collection and disposal practices concerning waste reduction, i.e. what ends up in the landfill and the general aesthetics of the urban city. These new directions may be detrimental to the socio-economic livelihood of the local formal and informal actors operating in the sector. For example, as part of the CLI initiative, LAWMA has taken on a more supervisory role while the KIA brigade has been dissolved. These changes might have led to a loss of employment from these agencies while indigenous waste management operators may struggle. These are likely changes in the

waste management sector and future studies into this area could use ideas from Lefebvre's frameworks to engage in a more enriched investigation of neoliberal arrangements that may affect formal and informal waste actors in the long run.

Furthermore, the thesis focused on exploring the mundane practices that are enacted around domestic waste in Lagos, Nigeria. Future studies could take a similar approach to explore the mundane practices that are performed around waste within a western context. Researchers interested in this area could consider Lefebvre's (1996) writings on cities as a theoretical base for exploring the everyday practices around waste from a territorial or national perspective. Scholars may, for instance, undertake a comparative and multi-sited study that would potentially expand the understanding of the social, cultural, political and economic entanglements that exists across different contexts. It might also be interesting to observe whether the hierarchical structures and relationships that are present in the operations of formal waste management organisations are similar to the mundane practices that are enacted around rubbish in the informal economy as evidenced in this research.

7.7. Concluding Remarks

My journey through this project has been a herculean task; I found myself immersed in human geographical literature, an area of which I had no background knowledge. Nevertheless, the thorough and enlightening fieldwork, as well as the rich empirical data collected, has made this project successful. Looking back, the entire research process has been a very rewarding and a life-changing experience for me. Listening to my participants' stories, observing and documenting the rhythmic and the mundane practices that are enacted and performed around rubbish has taught me more about the local Lagos context than the three years I lived in the city before immigrating to the United Kingdom. I have learned more about the city, particularly the struggles facing impoverished individuals, their social, cultural and economic entanglements with waste and how the practices enacted around it are integral to the sustenance of their socioeconomic livelihoods. This research has exposed me to the formal practices and the political strategies and processes that underpin the waste management sector. The knowledge and experience of the formal and informal sector gained as part of this project has inspired my vision to serve as an active Nigerian politician in the future. I am keen to participate and contribute to debates that would lead to the positive development of the waste management sector not just in Lagos but across the nation. This project has taught me to be patient and tolerant, but above all, I have learned that there are no limits to what is possible with commitment. I am delighted that I summoned the courage to begin the thesis, the enthusiasm to continue when the process became tough, and the resilience to finish it.

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Appendix 1: Access Letter (LAWMA)

LAGOS WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

3, Otto Road, Ijora Olopa, Lagos.

To: Controller Landfill

6th May, 2014

LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION

The bearer Orhie Precious Akponah, is a postgraduate student of the University of Leicester, United Kingdom; School of Management with a proposed research topic titled: The Social life of Rubbish: An Ethnographic research in Lagos, Nigeria.

2. He has been interviewed by the Research Technical Committee and will be permitted to carry out interviews and observations on our Landfill Sites following an undertaking that a copy of his research dissertation will be submitted to LAWMA at the end of his work.

3. Kindly contact 08032111461 or 08028980663 for further information.

4. Thank you.

Professor Tunde Ogunsanwo
Chairman: Research Technical Committee

Toll-free lines: 5577, 07055893400, 07080601020
E-mail: info@lawma.gov.ng **Website:** www.lawma.gov.ng.

Appendix 2: Access Letter (Wecyclers)

wecyclers

Recycling, why not?!

Block A2, Suite 59, Sura Shopping Complex, Simpson Street, Lagos.
Tel: 0808 583 2423 www.wecyclers.com

TO: Whom it may concern
FROM: Wecyclers Nigeria Limited
DATE: 25th August, 2014

LETTER OF ACCESS TO WECYCLERS NIGERIA LIMITED

This is to confirm that Mr. Precious Orhie Akponah, a postgraduate student of the University of Leicester, United Kingdom, school of management has discussed his intentions to access our company's facilities as part of his fieldwork in Lagos, Nigeria.

Following a satisfactory discussion with the above named person, we have agreed to grant him access/permission to carry out all operations required for his fieldwork. This ranges from interviews with our employees, conversation with our customers, optics and so on.

We will be pleased to give him all the co-operation that he requires for his fieldwork to be a huge success.

For further clarification on this, please feel free to contact us at kelechi@wecyclers.com

Thanks

Yours truly,

Kelli

Onwumere Kelechi
07066030077
Assistant operations manager,
Wecyclers Nigeria Limited.

Appendix 3: Access Letter to Abule-Nla Community

ABULE-NLA

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Motto: Selfless Service to the Community

Secretariat: 11, Oluwa Lane, Off Olokodana Street, Ebute Metta (West), Lagos.

7th July, 2014.

To whom this may concern,

LETTER OF AUTHORISATION

This is to confirm that Mr. **Precious Orhie Akponah**, a postgraduate student of the University of Leicester, United Kingdom, school of management met with the committee in charge of Abule-Nla community to discuss his intention to conduct his fieldwork in our community.

Having discussed extensively with him on his proposed research, we have granted him permission to carry out interviews and observations in our community for up to 6 months following the commencement of his fieldwork. We are happy to give him all the support he needs throughout his research process.

In the event that you require further information, please contact us on Phone +234 8029424292, 08054228216

Thanks

Alh. Adewumi Yekini
Chairman
Community Development Association

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ALH. YEKINI ADEWUNMI (Chairman); MR. OLANREWAJU BABATUNDE (1st vice Chairman); MR. WAHEED YUSSUF (2nd Vice Chairman); MR. ADEDIRAN MORUF (Gen. Secretary); MR. ADEKUNLE HAMED (Asst. Gen Secretary); ALH. Y.O. ALABI (Treasurer); MRS. BOLA ANIMASAUN (Financial Secretary); MR. ADISA ISMAILA (Auditor); MRS. OLAIDE OLATUNDE (P.R.O); MR. OMOLOLAAHOBAYEH (Social Secretary), MISSBADMUS TUNRAYO (Welfare Officer); MRS. k. BAKARE (1st Ex-Officio); MR. OLASUNKADE HASSAN (2nd Ex-Officio); MRS. SALAMI SUWEBAT (3rd Ex-Officio); MR. SOILE (E/Past Chairman); MR. OKUBAJO (Ex-Past Secretary); MR. OGUNJINRIN (Ex-Past Treasure

Appendix 4: Participants Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

Research Topic: The Social Life of Rubbish: An Ethnography in Lagos, Nigeria

Name of Researcher: Precious O. Akponah
Contact: opa4@le.ac.uk

Supervisor 1: Dr Matthew Higgins
Contact: mh64@le.ac.uk

Supervisor 2: Dr Ai-Ling Lai
Contact: al231@le.ac.uk

I am a postgraduate student at University of Leicester, United Kingdom studying the everyday practices that are enacted and performed around rubbish in Lagos. You have been selected to take participate in my research which specifically explores the social, cultural, political and economic practices and meanings surrounding the organisation of rubbish within Lagos. This is because you meet the criteria set for recruiting participants for this research. This means you can provide me with meaningful and insightful data to help me achieve my research aims and objectives. During interviews and observations, you will be asked to offer insight into your everyday practices regarding the disposal of rubbish as well as the role rubbish plays within your community.

If you wish to participate in this research, you will be asked to sign this form. This consent form provides you with information about your rights as a research participant and what the study involves. Please take time to read the information provided below.

1. This is an academic piece of research and a compulsory part of the degree requirement for which I am currently enrolled on. Therefore, the data collected from this interview/observation will be used primarily for academic purposes.

2. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse participation. If you do decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time, or skip any questions you do not wish to answer.

3. The interview will take approximately 30–90 minutes.

4. During the course of the interview, you may be asked to articulate your answers through simple exercises such as commenting on photographs and videos as well as storytelling. This is to help you answer some of the questions, which you may find more difficult to put into words. You are free to refuse participation in any of these exercises or choose alternative ways of representing your answers.

5. Your confidentiality will be respected. Only I, my supervisors, Dr Higgins and Dr Lai and external examiners will have access to your answers. In the event of

publication of this research or any other academic activities such as teaching, verbatim quotations and photographs with no identifying details will be disclosed. I will ensure this through the use of pseudonyms and anonymization of research data (i.e. name change and pixelation of photos/videos).

6. In order to help me remember what you have said, the interview session will be recorded using a video/audio-recorder with your permission. The interviews will be transcribed, and the transcripts and notes may be indexed and held by the researcher and his supervisors.

7. A copy of the transcript, photographs and videos will be made available to you for 28 days. During this time, you have the right to correct errors in the transcript and to remove any data prior to its inclusion in the final research analysis.

Please Initial Box

a) I have read and understood the information listed in the consent form and I have voluntarily agreed to participate in this research. ☐

b) I have granted the researcher permission to record the interview. ☐

c) The use of research data, storage, sharing and publication has been explained to me. ☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Participant Email	Telephone	Mobile
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

Appendix 5: Tabular Description of Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Roles	Mode of Access	Sample	Method	Possible Risk	Dealing with risk
Upper/middle / lower class households	The group contributes significantly to the rubbish that ends up in the slums and dumpsites	Snowballing from friends and relatives	Judgmental and snowball samples of up to 11 participants	Participant observations and interviews	N/A	N/A
Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA)	Formal organization possessing constituted authority on organising waste in Lagos.	I obtained access to their facilities (i.e. landfill).	Judgmental/convenient sampling involving the Olusosun landfill	Participant observations and interviews	Possibility of gatekeeper (LAWMA) withdrawing their support	Inform supervisors and possibly rely on collecting data from slum
Itinerant Scavengers/ Dumpsite Scavengers	Individuals who reclaim materials that have been disposed of from streets and dumpsites	I accessed these individuals through gate-keepers, LAWMA and direct contact	Judgmental and convenient sampling	Participant observation and interviews	Researchers safety in terms of security	Security from gatekeeper and paying attention to cues pointing to violent conducts
Wecyclers	This stakeholder engage in door-to-door collection of waste for householders before trading them on a large scale	I have agreed access with 'Wecyclers' (a recycling company that creates value from waste).	Judgmental sampling	In-depth interviews with 'Wecyclers' personnel	N/A	N/A

Junk Artists	These are artists who upcycle materials by turning rubbish into art pieces	I accessed them by simply turning up at their studio and requesting their participation.	Snowball sampling technique involving 3 artists	Participant observations and in-depth interviews	N/A	N/A

Appendix 6: Risk Assessment

Risks	Description	Those Exposed	Likelihood	Worst outcome	Existing Control
Reputation Damage	This may be a risk of my research bringing the university to disrepute	University	Remote	No Injury	This risk has been minimised since I have attended a 6-month doctoral training programme which covers all the key tenets of social science research. Secondly, ongoing supervision from both my supervisors (Matthew and Ai-Ling) has enabled me to produce a research proposal that has been accepted by the upgrade panel on the grounds of its rigorous and robust methodology. This shows that I can independently undertake and defend the research.
Data security	This risk is associated with loss of research data to theft or misplacement	Research participants	Possible	No Injury	I will anonymize and encrypt all research data obtained from participants. This will help to reduce the risk that comes with losing research data. I have undertaken online data security training which has enlightened to me the university policies surrounding the safe-keeping of research data.
Participants' Vulnerability	As slum dwellers are often socially deprived, this can lead to increase in their expectations.	Research participants	Possible	No injury	Prior to securing access, I made it clear to the gate-keepers the true aim of my research which is not based on alleviating the community economic situation. This was to avoid creating any false hope within the community. My gatekeepers' role as mediators between myself and the community will be crucial for dealing with this issue. Moreover, I will ensure the maintenance of my role as a researcher rather than a psychologist or counsellor. However, if any of my participants experience an outburst, I will refer to them an appropriate body/organisation that can offer help. Some of them include: MeHPriC – Mental Health in Primary Care Project Mental Health Foundation Lagos Federal Neuro Psychiatric Hospital Yaba, Lagos As part of my negotiation for access, I agreed to present a copy of my completed thesis to LAWMA. This may jeopardize the reputation of some of my research participants (LAWMA employees) thus making them vulnerable. However, anonymity and member-checking with such participants before presenting my thesis to LAWMA can help deal with this issue.

Physical well-being	This risk is connected with injuries and illnesses that I may encounter during my fieldwork.	Researcher	Possible	Major	To minimise this risk, I will inform friends, family and supervisors (when possible) of interview timings and venues to ensure they know my whereabouts. As part of my negotiation for access, the gate-keepers promised to protect me by introducing me to the participating groups and assigning an insider who will accompany me throughout my fieldwork. I will also pay attention to my physical appearance, particularly my attire. Both can help ensure that I am not seen as an intruder or complete outsider while also circumventing robbery and other issues that may arise. I will take vaccinations for malaria, typhoid, yellow fever and tetanus. This will prevent me contracting these diseases. I will make use of personal protective wears (boots, gloves) during my day-to-day activities in the slums and landfills. Furthermore, I will be seeking out the university insurance policy before leaving for my fieldwork while also yielding the commonwealth advice on travel to Lagos. Additionally, my supervisors and I decided that we would maintain a tracking system where I will need to 'sign in and out' at the start and end of the day. We agreed that I would do this by email. We also agreed that failure to hear from me within 24 hours will act as a trigger which will lead to contacting my uncle and key contact within Lagos (who is a resident of Lagos). As a plan B, we also agreed that my whereabouts would be tracked using an iPhone application (with my consent). Nevertheless, I would still have to continually update my supervisors on the current situation. Finally, my supervisors and I agreed that I would share my gatekeepers' contacts details (with their consent) to enable them to contact the gate-keepers should the need arise.
Mental well-being	This risk may arise from my experience of living in the slum since I am not used to it	Researcher	Improbable	Major	I have attended an advanced training in ethnography. This training sheds light on some of the traumatic experiences a researcher might face when undertaking research. This has helped prepare me for some of the uncertainties I am likely to face during my time in the slum. Nevertheless, if I require any support, I will seek the help of the university counselling service or my supervisors.

Appendix 7: Observation Guide

Category	Details	Description
Appearance	Participants attire, age range, gender attributes and physical appearance	This category document details that hinted at group membership, social-economic class, religious, cultural and political status and power relations within research sites (homes, landfill, dumpsites, scrapyards)
Verbal Behaviour /Interaction	This dimension involved observing who spoke to whom and for what duration, languages spoken, power relations deduced from statements, happiness, sadness, disgusts, feelings of disappointments etc.	This observation documented details related to education and profession of participants within the research sites. This was done by paying attention to the dynamics of interaction among participants. The languages or dialects spoken and the voice tones, slang or terminology used for describing 'rubbish'
Physical Behaviours	I noted down practices enacted by participants, what they did with rubbish, their physical/facial expression when dealing with rubbish, the roles within the sites	This dimension focused on participants' bodily interaction when dealing with rubbish and embodied practices such as how voices represent their emotions and feelings towards one another, activities that are taken-for-granted, the social ranking or hierarchies inherent in the informal scavenging activities, asking what relationship exists between participants and their rubbish.
Rituals	Procedures, traditional/ceremonial acts, pattern of behaviours, code of conducts and greetings	This dimension involved observing the specific times/days/weeks where rubbish is deposited or picked-up, who gets first access to rubbish deposited (i.e. any priority), rules of engagements/regulations which informal scavengers must adhere to, unspoken rules.
Personal Space, Use of Space	The dynamics or relationship between participants, how spaces constitute boundaries, participants' use of spaces across research sites (i.e. home space, landfill and sorting facilities)	This dimension observed how personal and work spaces within sites define participants' relationship, how often they invade other participants' space (how close people stand to one another), whether they work as a close-knit team or individually, if there is any rivalry taking place between groups, whether spaces are gendered, and if so, in what ways.
Human and Nonhuman Rhythms	This dimension entails the observation of movements, who entered, left, and spent time at research sites. How the natural rhythms (i.e. seasons) impact on the daily practices	Observation was aimed at noting down who enters and exits; how long they stay; who they are whether they are alone or accompanied by other people, motives for entering the research sites, criteria for entering, how these practices are influenced by cycles of seasons and how these affect the bodily rhythms of participants.

Significant Individuals/Hierarchical Structures	This dimension will seek to identify the various hierarchies or bureaucratic setups in place (if any), observing whether any significant people receive particular attention. Observing whether any significant people receive particular attention	The characteristics of these individuals; what differentiates them from others; whether people consult them, or they approach other people; whether they seem to be strangers or well known by others present

Appendix 8: Interview Guide

Topic 1: Everyday routines around the production, consumption and disposal of household rubbish.

Possible questions

- How would you define rubbish?
- What do you make of your rubbish? (Probe further)
- Can you describe the frequency with which you dispose of your rubbish?
- Can you tell me who undertakes the disposal of rubbish in your home?
- How do you dispose of your unwanted materials/rubbish?
- Tell me about your relationship with your rubbish?
- Do you have separate bins/baskets for rubbish?
- Can you describe how you get rid of waste?
- Can you show me any of your possessions that are not currently in use? (Probe further to find out why and what participants hope to do with them.)

Topic 2: The social, cultural, political and economic role of rubbish in local communities in Lagos.

Possible questions

- What are your thoughts and feelings about the activities of LAWMA regarding the management of waste in the neighbourhood (Lagos)? (Probe)
- What are your general thoughts on living here and how long have you lived here?
- What were your motives for relocating here? (Questions for slum dwellers)
- Are there any means through which you generate income from 'rubbish'? (If yes, probe further.)
- Do you think the development currently experienced in the waste management sector is positive or negative? Do you think it should stay unchanged, and why?
- How did the neighbourhood, dumpsites look 5 years ago here? What about 20 years ago?
- Can you think of any wants or needs of the people living in your neighbourhood connected to waste?

- Do you believe rubbish is important or dangerous and if so, in what ways and to whom?
- What would (or not) motivate you to engage in sorting and collection of household waste?

Topic 3: Human and non-human interactions that take place when objects are transformed between transient, durable, and rubbish categories.

Possible questions

- Do you treat your wastes differently, and, if yes, can you describe in what ways?
- What are your thoughts on re-using things and do you know the materials can be reused?
- Can you describe a possible situation where you felt negative about handled organic household waste?
- Do you recycle? If so, what sort of waste materials do you upcycle/recycle? If not, why do you not upcycle/recycle? (Probe)
- How do you decide on what materials can be upcycled?
- How do you think the waste management situation will look in a couple of years?

Topic 4: The institutional practices around the handling of rubbish and relations of power between PSPs, Wecyclers, dumpsite scavengers and itinerant scavengers.

Possible questions

- If you were to implement policies on the handling of waste in a sustainable way, what would it look like?
- How long have you been in engaging in the practice of scavenging? Can you please tell me how you got involved in this occupation? (Probe)
- While engaged in scavenging, are you attracted to any particular material? (scavengers) (Probe)
- Can you tell me whether there are possible risks or threats associated with the practice of scavenging? (Probe)
- Please describe how you transport materials recovered to the sorting centres, scrapyards or storage locations?

- How long have you been an employee with LAWMA, Wecyclers, and in what capacity?
- What are your thoughts on collecting, sorting and recycling of waste? Do you think that it matters to take care of garbage in a wider perspective (for future generations, nature and humans)?
- Please tell me how you engage in waste collection? (Questions for Wecyclers employees) (Probe further)
- How would you describe the effectiveness of the current LAWMA's 'waste to wealth' scheme?

Appendix 9: Participants Profile and Data Volume

Stakeholders	No	Gender	Participant's Name	Formal Interview	Informal Interview	Observation	Place of Interview
Households	1	M	Joseph			1 visit	Participant`s Home
	2	F	Sharon			14 days stay	Participant`s Home
	3	F	Fatima			2 visit	Participant`s Home
	4	M	Julia			1 visit	Participant`s Home
	5	F	Mary			1 week stay	Participant`s Home
	6	M	Ziggy			14 days stay	Participant`s Home
	7	M	Musa			1 week stay	Participant`s Home
	8	M	Fred			1 visit	Participant`s Home
	9	F	Lydia			1 visit	Participant`s Home
	10	M	Tunde			2 visits	Participant`s Home
	11	F	Aisha			2 days stay	Participant`s Home
LAWMA	12	M	Chinedu			N/A	Olusosun landfill
	13	F	Alice			N/A	Olusosun landfill
Wecyclers	14	F	Anita			I made regular visits to the sorting facility for a period of two months (June to August)	Sorting facility
	15	M	Frank				Sorting facility
	16	M	Akin				Sorting facility
	17	M	Koredo				Sorting facility
	18	M	Clive				Sorting facility
	19	F	Toyeen				Sorting facility
	20	M	Ochuko				Street
Itinerant Scavengers	21	M	Jide			I made regular visits to the scrapyards for a period of 5-months period (July to November) I then shadowed itinerant scavengers regularly	Scrapyard
	22	M	Bayo				Scrapyard
	23	M	Aziz				Dumpsite
	24	M	Bashiru				Scrapyard
	25	M	Azeez				Scrapyard
	26	M	Dafe				Scrapyard
	27	M	Yusuf				Lagos Street
	28	M	Collins				Scrapyard
	29	M	Seun				Office
	30	M	Samuel				Lagos Street
	31	M	Mustapha				Dumpsite
Junk Artist	32	M	Peter			3 weeks visits	Art studio/gallery
	33	M	Michel			1 day visit	Art studio
	34	M	Tega			1 day visit	Art studio
Dumpsite Scavengers/ Waste Buyers	35	M	Raphael			I made regular visits to the landfill for 6 months (June to November). I also took a short break of 2 weeks to retain my analytic perspective	Olusosun landfill
	36	M	Efe				Olusosun landfill
	37	F	Kikelomo				Olusosun landfill
	38	F	Mayowa				Olusosun landfill
	39	M	Justin				Olusosun landfill
	40	M	Ade				Olusosun landfill
	41	F	Ruth				Olusosun landfill
	42	F	Rita				Olusosun landfill
	43	M	Bello				Olusosun landfill
	44	M	Mike				Olusosun landfill
	45	M	Taiwo				Olusosun landfill

Appendix 10: Hyperlink to Radio Interview

2016	**Leicester Think Community Radio**	Interview in which I discuss the politics of rubbish in Lagos, Nigeria https://archive.org/details/Thinkcommunity08Nov2016