

International Studies Public Forum (ISPF)

“Africa for the Africans?” Reimagining Space, Place & Possibility in 1860s Lagos ADEMIDE ADELUSI-ADELUYI

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE

Lagos, in the 1860s offered opportunities for freedom from enslavement for African and African-descended populations. In Lagos, the indigenous ara Eko were joined by migrants from cities such as Freetown, Salvador, and Abeokuta. Newcomers tried to stake a claim in the newly colonial, and potentially “post slavery” society. To stay, they needed access to land. And to get land, they had to prove they “belonged,” at the same time that the ara Eko were trying to protect their city from annexation by the British. Consular officials found their motto, “Africa for the Africans” unsettling. But which Africa, and for which Africans? And who would determine which was which? Traditionally, the historiography of Lagos has emphasized how the physical space between the centers of each population was symbolic of their social distance. However, in mapping moments of cooperation and friction between these populations as they played out social and spatially, this talk argues that debates in early colonial Lagos over blackness and belonging, indigeneity and “civilization” became legible in the process of reconstructing the city



Trained as both historian and computer engineer, Ademide’s research into the history of west African cities combines a set of interdisciplinary interests in urban history, technology, cartography and spatial humanities. She joined UC Riverside’s History department in July 2015 and received her PhD in History from NYU in 2016. Her current book project, “Imagine Lagos: Mapmaking and Representation in Nineteenth-Century West Africa,” is a spatial history of precolonial and early colonial Lagos. Accompanying this book project is a cartographic database, “New Maps of Old Lagos,” which comes out of her research as an Andrew Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Rice University’s Humanities Research Center. “New Maps” offers visual interpretations of intersecting historical vignettes of nineteenth-century Lagos, narrating urban change by illustrating the effects that civil wars, colonialism, slavery, and emancipation had on the city’s morphology.

Tuesday, May 3rd
5:00 - 6:20 p.m.
Social Science Plaza A, Room 1100

For more information, please visit
internationalstudies.socsci.uci.edu



This talk is by the Institute for
International, Global and Regional
Studies (IIGARS)