

Architecture of the Caged and Confused Nigerian Roads: the case of the abused development laws in Nigeria

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Abstract

Architecture has often been seen as only the design and erection of buildings. While that may seem obvious in some quarters, the fact remains that, the spatial emergence and generic function guiding the relationship between human beings and space have for centuries, guided the architecture of the cities. The design, construction and erection of roads, bridges and community street security gates are architectural, however, sometimes, negatively impacting the areas architecture. The aim of this paper is to create awareness and point to the fact, that the Nigerian players (policy makers) have in the past, designed models to direct positive growth and development in the country, but failed to properly implement the programmes and that is detrimental to the country's built environment and especially, architecture and infrastructure. This paper adopted qualitative research methods that embraced archival and observational methods. The government needs to pay attention to the country's built environments, the security of the communities and most importantly, joblessness and unemployment issues that pushed people into importation of other country's waste and throw-away items in the name of "Tokumbo" (already used items) just to create jobs for themselves. The government needs to start implementing the country's urban development, environmental and community development laws to eradicate inappropriate commercialization of the community roads and restore sanity in the communities.

Key Words: Architecture, waste, death, infrastructure, growth, development

INTRODUCTION

It is a truism to say that architecture evolves over time. The term 'evolve' is however usually used quite loosely to mean that architecture changes over time and that it is possible to trace the sources of these changes to work produced by a previous generation of architects, Obiadi and Nzewi (2018) citing Brown (2006). Each period offered something new and different because they were not all similar, but most architecture are influenced by other periods/civilizations. Architecture captures

the birth of new ideas to the scares of tragic events. Architecture has evolved from Greco-Roman period to Modern Day. As time progresses, architecture advances, yet there are things that have retained conservative. This is done so that contemporary people may share the same experiences as the people in the prior time periods. Architecture is the art of building in which human requirements and construction materials are related so as to furnish practical use as well as an aesthetic solution, thus differing from the pure utility of engineering construction (Bo, et al, 2010).

While it is not the intent of this paper to get deep, into the evolution of architecture, it is rather important to understand architecture, how it evolved and the influence it will have on this paper. The focus of this paper is the confused architecture of the Nigerian roads, be it street markets, highway hawking, gated communities, narrow bridges, retention basins, and land managements to accommodate wider roads or refuse dump sites. According to Hiller (1996), the relationship between human beings and space was, at a deep level, governed by two laws: laws of spatial emergence, by which the larger-scale configurational properties of space followed as a necessary consequence from different kinds of local physical intervention; and laws of generic function by which constraints were placed on space by the most generic aspects of human activity, such as the simply facts of occupying space and moving between spaces. Hiller (1996) further states that, to a significant extent, the spatial forms of cities are expressions of these laws, and that if we wish to understand them we must learn to see them as “things made of space,” governed by spatial law whose effects, but not whose nature can be guided by human agency. One implication of this argument will be that twenty-century design has often used spatial concepts for urban and housing areas which fall outside the scope of these laws, creating space which lacks elementary patterning which these laws have normally imposed, in some shape or form, in the past. If as is argued here, such laws exist, then it will be necessary to revise current concepts of the well-ordered city back in the direction implied by the laws.

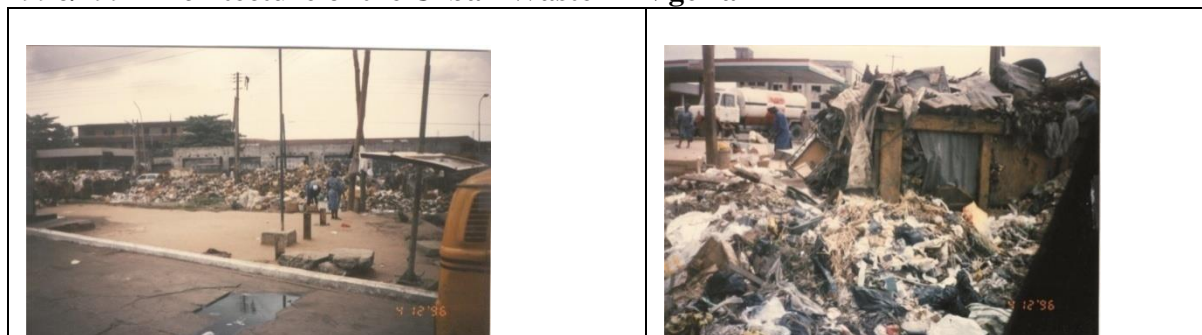
Architecture has equally been defined as the “design and construction of buildings, the style in which a building is designed and constructed, and the complex structure of something (Soanes, 2001). The complex structure of something is however, too wide to mean anything, but not limited to creative nature and the architecture of the urban waste dump sites, abandoned bridges and their rusted protective handrails, collapsing colonial narrow bridges, urban and city sidewalks turned into store-fronts, etc. (Obiadi and Nzewi (2018). These definitions when pulled together, addressed all aspects of designing the environment and the structures by a single class, the architect. The urban environmental fronts littered with garbage dump sites with default architecture graced most cities corners and forming part of the cities architecture. The definition of architecture although not definite, could further looked at architecture from a broader perspective comprising all aspects of designs from buildings, urban spaces to road constructions, bridges and their components. Architecture is both the process and product of planning, designing and constructing form, space and ambience that reflect functional, technical, social, and aesthetic considerations (Architecture, 2011). In general terms, it is a collaborative process where materials, technology, labour and mind come together to create a physical structure or form, not minding whether or not it is a building or road construction.



Considering all these definitions, it would be agreed that the dumping and concentration of urban refuse dumps in major areas of the communities are the work of architecture although, it could be argued that they are negative architecture. However, in a broader perspective, the rapid increase in municipal solid waste is a significant global problem. Municipal solid waste is what everyone else calls garbage. It's about bottles, cans, disposables, diapers, uneaten food, scraps of wood and metal, worn-out tires, and used-up batteries, papers and plastic packages, boxes, broken furniture and appliances, clippings from our lawns and shrubs-the varied human refuse of our modern industrial society according to Porter (1989). As the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1976) states, population growth and increasing per capital output have led to an increasing generation of goods, and hence of waste. Also increasing per capita income and changing patterns of consumption have resulted in materials previously regarded as useful now being discarded. In short, per capita waste generated has been rising sharply, leading to increased disposal cost; there is no indication that this trend would significantly be reversed in near future unless appropriate measures are taken. Additionally, locational changes such as the continuing migration of people to urban areas, and the concentration of livestock into intensive production units, exacerbate local problems of waste disposal.

Ukpong and Udofia (2011) note that in Nigeria, a major feature of the urban environment, particularly from the beginning of the oil boom in the 1970's was the rapid takeover of the cities by all kinds of waste. Most states capitals and other large cities are littered with solid waste (plates 1 to 8) despite the presence of state and local government-owned waste management agencies including private waste. Asante-Duah et al. (1995, 232) noted that in Nigeria, heaps of refuse and garbage are a common sight in most state capitals and other urban areas.

According Obiadi and Nzewi (2018), citing Curi (1982), one of the ever present facts of human existence is the generation of wastes. People produce wastes in their homes, work places and leisure area. Collection and disposal of these wastes have always been major concerns of societies, for both health and economic reasons. As global population increases at tremendous rate, waste generation throughout the world has also drastically increased; however, this problem is most acutely felt in the least developed counties (LDCs). The negative environmental impacts of the society's waste dumping and littering, also affects the infrastructure of the communities leading to their architectural decays.

1996/1997 Architecture of the Urban Waste in Nigeria



<p>Plate 1. Itire Street, Lagos dump site Source: Obiadi's field work (1996).</p>	<p>Plate 2. Itire Street, Lagos dump site Source: Obiadi's field work (1996)</p>
	
<p>Plate 3. Enugu dump site Source: Obiadi's field work (1996).</p>	<p>Plate 4. Fegge, Onitsha dump site Source: Obiadi's field work (1996).</p>

2012/2013 Architecture of the Urban Waste in Nigeria

	
<p>Plate 5. Broad Street, Lagos dump site Source: Obiadi's field work (2012)</p>	<p>Plate 6. Randle Street, Surulere, Lagos site Source: Obiadi's field work (2012)</p>
	
<p>Plate 7. Lagos canal filled with plastic materials Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).</p>	<p>Plate 8. Owerri dump site Source: Don Emeka Anetoh, (2015).</p>

Dumping of refuse on the city streets, defacing of city sidewalks, non-maintenance of the urban/suburban highways and bridges negatively impact the architecture and infrastructure of the areas. The destruction of architecture, infrastructure and the environmental situations in Nigerian cities are very reproachable. The streets are blocked with ugly security gates, roads and bridges collapsing, urban and suburban streets are littered with garbage, tree trunks, tires, bottles, abandoned cars, buses, and rusted city sanitary trucks (plates 13 to 27).

Aim of Study

The primary aim of this paper is to create awareness and point to the fact that the Nigerian policy makers have always made policies gearing and propelling the country towards the right directions, but have failed to monitor the implementations resulting in collapses in the country's architecture, infrastructure, urban and suburban environments. It is equally the aim of this paper to prove that architecture involves more than designing buildings and by the architects. It includes the human environments and their spatial integration of community wastes, security gates, rusted and dilapidating highway bridges and the surrounding environments. The design, construction and erection of roads and bridges are architectural and letting them fall apart drops the architectural values of the country's built environment.

Methodology

The paper adopted qualitative research methods that embraced archival, interviews and observational methods, content base analysis (secondary data sources), where the authors carefully analyzed and interpreted works of other authors and used them in buttressing their points as applied to the issues at hand, "the confused nature of the Nigerian roads, road conditions, construction, and their architecture. The topical issues of focus are, the architecture of the Nigerian roads, roads conditions and construction or better said, the architecture of the Nigerian roads. As such, the authors laid emphasis on qualitative research method that considered previous works on the subject matter.

Findings

The society has always seen architecture as involving only the design and erection of buildings however, from the cited definitions, heaps of the community's municipal solid waste dumps, their daily expansion and configurations are equally architectural and defines the area's architectural environment. The assemblage of community commercial motorcycles by motorcycle riders at major intersections of the cities and commercial areas defy the architecture of the areas. In a society where most of their drivers and motorcycle riders operate unprofessionally and without respect for other road users, people, within the government cycle, are not executing or enforcing the laws governing their behaviors and protecting the society's infrastructure (sidewalks). That society's architecture and infrastructure suffer (Uyaka, 2013). Governments in Nigeria spent time and money creating beautiful roads and carefully, separated pedestrian sidewalks from the vehicular traffic ways to avoid accidents, impediments and free flow of traffic, but they are not following through, making sure that the roads are used as intended. Most roads and sidewalks in Nigeria are used as markets places. The motorcycle operators ride on the pedestrians' walkways, areas meant only for pedestrians.

In the other parts of the world, especially, in the United States and Europe, roads and sidewalks are used for marketing and selling of market products however, their usage are regulated. In Chicago, US, the famous Maxwell Street market operates mostly on Sundays and at regulated time. According to Tepper (2018), the hubbub of Maxwell Street Market began in the 1870s. Eastern European Jewish immigrants were coming to Chicago en masse to escape the murderous pogroms in czarist Russia, Poland, and Romania. Some 16,000 eventually crowded into the Maxwell Street

area, the cheapest part of town with synagogues and kosher delis, where they lived in tenement housing. Facing discrimination from the city's English, Irish, and German populations — and unable to secure traditional jobs in department stores or banks — many took to selling household items from pushcarts down Maxwell Street. Business boomed, and by 1916 — four years after the city formally recognized the market — much of this Jewish population had moved to the city's West Side, able to afford higher standards of living. But they continued to commute to the market by cable car (plate 9 to 11).



Plate 9. Maxwell Street market, Chicago, Illinois, USA, 2018

Source: https://www.yelp.com/biz_photos/maxwell-street-market-chicago?select=xXHGouJRn9I9uhgUIF5AFA&reviewid=Oo6AVU4oOGIPg1wvN9czWw



Plate 10. Maxwell Street Flea Market, Chicago, Illinois. July 10, 2011
Source: <https://www.meetup.com/Coffee-in-Chicagoland/photos/2317661/>



Plate 11. Maxwell Street market, Chicago, Illinois, USA, 1941

Source: <https://www.alamy.com/maxwell-street-market-chicago-illinois-usa-1941-image60240029.html> (Heritage Image Partnership Ltd/Alamy, Stock Photo, Curt Teich Postcard Achives)

Plate 11, shows Maxwell Street market, Chicago, Illinois, USA, 1941. Postcard. The view shows outdoor stalls, vendors and customers. Maxwell Street was the site of a huge outdoor market. A cultural and ethnic melting pot, it was nicknamed the Ellis Island of the Midwest. The area was also associated with the birth of Chicago Blues music in the 1930s and 1940s, with an influx of musicians from the South intermingling with local performers. Playing outdoors, in order to be heard by large numbers of people, they developed a new sound using electric guitars and amplifiers. Traders and shopkeepers encouraged the musicians, recognizing that the audiences they attracted represented potential customers for their wares (Tepper, 2018).

In the Bay area of California, the Oakland city has farmers market that happens on the street. According to the Urban Village Farmers' Market Association (2018), for over 20 years, the Old Oakland Farmers' Market (plate 12) has been the East Bay's most diverse, affordable, and accessible Farmer's Market. It is now also the home of California's most revered certified organic farmers and food purveyors. This market has it ALL! Operated different days in the following areas: Cambrian Park, Wednesday, Old Oakland, Friday, Castro Valley, Saturday, Santa Clara, Saturday, Sunnyvale, Saturday, Willow Glen, Saturday, California Avenue, Sunday, Campbell, Sunday, Montclair, Sunday and Temescal, Sunday



Plate 12. Oakland California's farmers market. Operated 8am to 2pm

Source: Urban Village Farmers' Market uvfm. <https://uvfm.org/old-oakland-fridays> (Retrieved April 2, 2019)

In advanced economies, street markets are regulated while in Nigerians, there are laws, governing and protecting lives and properties in different communities, but they shy away from enforcing them. Ignoring and not enforcing the laws expose the sidewalk users to vehicular and motorcycle accidents (Uyaka, 2013). The sidewalks are mostly and constantly occupied by hawkers (plates 14 to 20), motorcycle riders, merchants, and touts hustling money from bus drivers and motorcycle riders and forcing pedestrians to share the road ways with vehicles, motorcycle riders, trucks, and wheel barrows operators, exposing them to accidents. This, does not tell well of the society rather, confirms the social disorder, disregard for law and order. It also reaffirms the quagmire, false sense of place and space in the society and that the people have accepted the confused state of the society as their ways of life.

Cars are indiscriminately parked along major sidewalks (plate 13) and no one complains. All the government agencies have law enforcement units, but they appear sympathetic to the complaints of the offenders (traders, hawkers and car parkers). Parking structures and retail facilities (shops) are in most cases provided, but people would never pay to make use of them rather, gamble and take advantage of public facilities at the expense of others (plates 13 to 16).



Plate 13. Opposite Kings College, Lagos
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).



Plate 14. Sidewalk street open market, Yaba, Lagos
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).



Plate 15. Sidewalk street open market, Yaba, Lagos
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).



Plate 16. Lagos sidewalk street market
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).

The Architecture Awka, Anambra State Capital's Commercial Paradise

The architecture and infrastructure of a confused Awka, Anambra State's major thoroughfare, Zik Avenue is in disarray (plates 17 to 20). Awka's Zik Avenue architecture has defied text book theories and in total mess. That people are confused is a common saying in Nigerian communities and saying that most of the Nigerian cities are confused may confuse more people, but it is true (Anetoh, 2014). During the colonial period in Nigeria, cities urban environments were more orderly organized and managed although, one may argue that urbanization was not as radical as it is today. Today, the cities are overcrowded, congested and lacked adequate commercial and market facilities for the expanding population. It is also arguable that it resulted in pedestrian walkways in almost all the cities been commercialized. The roads, buildings and business signs are in disarray (Obiadi and Nzewi, 2018).

Zik Avenue, Awka is negatively growing, congested and out of character for a city looking to identify and to match Dubia both in architecture and tourism (plates 17 to 20). The architecture and infrastructure are deplorable and mostly in disrepair. There is absolutely zero pedestrian right-

of-way on that thoroughfare. The sidewalks have been converted into commercial alleys. The worst of the area's commercial alleys resulted from fraudulent city employees and touts parading the avenue with utmost impunity, arrogance and indiscriminately extorting money from poor sidewalk traders and allowing them to stay at the detriment of the area's upright growth and development, detrimental to the area's architecture and infrastructure.



Plate 17. Zik Avenue's commercial area showing a building and electric pole atop the pedestrian sidewalk.
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).
The electric pole has nothing, but cut and none functional wires dangling over people's head. The building sitting atop the pedestrian sidewalk is in total disrepair and the little part of the sidewalk left for the pedestrians was covered with empty cartons, shielding off and prevention the designated users' access.



Plate 18. Zik Avenue's commercial area showing pedestrians and cars, jostling for access.
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).
The merchants, without regards for the sidewalk users, covered the sidewalk with their merchandise, forcing the users out and on the road.



Plate 19. Eke Awka-Zik Avenue's roundabout.
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).
The Eke Awka roundabout, showing state municipal solid waste collection point at the middle of the road and been used as buffer for hawkers displaying their products for sale



Plate 20. Eke Awka-Zik Avenue's roundabout.
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).
This Eke Awka roundabout area with no visibility of the pedestrian sidewalk. Merchants covered the sidewalk with their products and part of the road, also, used as sales area.

The Architecture of the Nigerian Caged Communities

According Obiadi and Nzewi (2018), not too long ago, probably in the mid-1970s and 80s, during the oil boom in Nigeria, the communities enjoyed freedom and structural growth. Freedom in the sense that young school leaver found jobs in the areas of interest. Inflation was within control and Naira (Nigerian money) attracted good values. Nigeria was not flooded with other countries waste in the name of imported "Tokumbo" (used items). The "Tokumbo" would, for this paper, be expanded to include cars, refrigerators, motorcycles, generators, kitchen utensils, furniture and all

condemned items worthy of other countries landfills. Before the federal government of Nigeria imposed conditions on their importation, some of them arrived dead and remained inoperable. They were abandoned by the road sides (plates 21 to 26), impeding free traffic flows and defacing the area's architecture and built environment.

It is understandable that the country is growing, but regrettable that the country does not have sufficient jobs to occupy the people and especially, young school leavers. In want of what to do to earn decent living, some of them joined trading that resulted in import and export businesses. While trading may have been lucrative to some of them, it was not their first option. While in importation business, a lot of them concentrated more in cars and condemned items from other countries for quick gains. The cars and other items were so affordable that almost everyone in the society can afford them. Not only that unemployment forced a great majority of them into careers not before thought of or considered, a lot of the unfortunate ones who do not have the capacity to join trading took other options and indulgences including, stealing (Obiadi and Nzewi, 2018). Stealing to survive, forced a lot of communities to form community watch dog groups, generally known as "community policing." Communities are coming together and campaigning against robbery and in the process, installing security gates (plates 21 to 26) in many of the city streets in both urban and rural communities. The intent of the security gates are clear and loud (for security), but are not the correct measures to apply? With the ugly gates defacing the area's architecture, the society is trapped and living in bondage in the name of providing security. Locking the gates prevented free flow of movements (cars and pedestrians) within and out of the arterial streets, roads and defacing the architecture of the beautiful streets yet, people live under siege.

Another negative part of the community policing and gate locking scenario is that most of the gates are rusted and in total disrepair, at the same time, gracing the views. In some of the streets, behind the gates, are those imported dead and abandoned cars and other items. In most cases, the abandoned imported items add to the poor, ugly and bad landscape and architecture of the Nigerian streets. The items are defacing the architecture of the streets and communities (plates 21 to 26).



Plate 21. Surulere, Lagos photograph
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).
Photograph shows a neighborhood street, with a gate locked at the middle of the day. Abandoned buses packed at both sides of the street.



Plate 22. Surulere, Lagos photograph
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).
Part of the street blocked with a concrete wall, creating imported vehicle's parking area on the street



Plate 23. Surulere, Lagos photograph
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).
Surulere security gate house in disrepair and abandoned for a long time.



Plate 24. Surulere, Lagos photograph
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).
Street security gate house, built at the middle of the road and with a gate. The building has formed a buffer for street dumps (waste collection point).

However, because of the width of some of the streets, concrete blocks were used in blocking off half of them (in some cases) before installing the security gates and security guard's sheds. Unfortunately, those concrete blocks once built, are not maintained and within a short period, would start cracking and falling apart (plates 21 to 26).

On the majority of the gates visited by the authors, half of them remained bolted and locked to the ground while the other side opened at all times. Most of the built security guard's houses are no longer in use and are still there. Behind some of the security guards' sheds and concrete blocks, hips of municipal solid waste and in some places, packed cooking wood (plates 21 to 26).



Plate 25. Surulere, Lagos photograph
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).
Abandoned street gate in disrepair and serves as a stand for a community vulcanizer and motor mechanic.



Plate 26. Surulere, Lagos photograph
Source: Obiadi's field work (2015).
A better photograph of the street, showing the abandoned security gate, gate in disrepair, abandoned tires, concrete slabs, and empty concrete bays at the middle of the road. A van parked at the middle of the road behind the concrete slabs.

Recommendations

The governments in Nigeria rush to institute laws and without appropriate implementations and monitoring programmes. This is not to criticize the programmes because it is not good and

appreciated when criticized, but criticism is healthy when it attracts changes and developments. If Nigerians want growth and changes on their road programmes, they must all get involved, speak with one voice and move towards one goal and would not allow any distraction or divides in the programmes. The Nigerian road management programmes are good, but poorly implemented and heavily influenced by the privileged and or, compromised and that needs to be stopped. .

It is time the government pays attention to the urban front's environmental concerns, roads, highways and bridges. Unemployment issues that led to importation of unwanted items into the country, criminal activities because a great number of people could not secure gainful employments and that resulted in stealing and introduction of both urban and suburbia security gates that are defacing the area's architecture. Locking those gates no doubt, would only serve as deterrent to none-professional criminals and robbers. Any determined and planned robbery would happen with or without the gates locked. Locking the gates has only succeeded in giving the communities comfort and not protection. God has been protecting the communities and would continue doing so (Umoru, 2014).

Nigeria has professional associations of well trained and qualified architects and engineers and not taking advantage of their skills and professional obligations. The Nigerian government cannot afford to be ignoring the falling standards of the communities' architecture and awarding building and road construction contracts to quacks and business men simply because they have influential political connections. It is equally irresponsible for the politicians to secure the building and road construction contracts and award them to unqualified and incompetent construction companies only interested in profit making (Anetoh, 2014).

While there is no clear definition or solutions to some of the social problems as mentioned above, from urban planning point of view, adequate measures must be made to implement the urban and regional development environmental laws guiding the communities' infrastructure and developments (Anetoh, 2014). Standardized policing by both the state and federal security agents, police and private security agents could be used in securing the communities and all the gates eliminated. With the elimination of the street gates, the original architecture of the streets would be restored. In all, to de-cage the communities and emancipate the people from their current bondage, the government needs to rethink her stands in some road monitoring and maintenance policies and possibly adopt better implementation procedures for her road management, monitoring and construction agencies. The government needs to be proactive in her implementations instead of been reactive.

Conclusion

The negligence and poor implementation of the laws by the governments in Nigeria along with the ignorance of the communities resulted in decay, in the communities' Urban Fronts Architecture. The governments, for a long time, ignored the deteriorating Urban Fronts and in most cases, haphazardly monitored the communities' infrastructures in disrepair. Along the same line, the communities' "I don't care attitude" towards their built environment resulted in randomly dumping of refuse almost everywhere, attributable to decay in Urban Fronts Architecture in Nigeria.

The Urban and suburban architecture that included bridges, roads and other infrastructures are all part of architecture according to earlier definitions and the argument raised in this paper, they are the responsibilities of the government. While the intentions of both the federal and state governments' road management and monitoring agencies are good, their duties and responsibilities are not well defined or better said, their job priorities are often misplaced and compromised (Anetoh, 2014).

The governments, in most cases, are challenged to provide community infrastructures. Since the government takes up that challenge, it is equally the responsibility of the government, to monitor and maintain the infrastructures to avoid deterioration and decays, badly impacting the architecture of cities in Nigeria. Parking cars and the use of community sidewalks as markets are not only defacing the area's architecture, but are dangerous to the pedestrians and the marketers. They impede free flow of traffic, marketers litter the sidewalks with garbage and also, the sidewalk markets are breeding grounds for criminals who extort money from poor and innocent traders and sometimes, break into packed cars.

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