Understanding travel behaviour post-Covid in Nigeria

Presented at the ITF Roundtable discussion on Shaping Post-Covid Mobility in Cities

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Objectives

How travel behaviour has changed

Why travel behaviour has changed

For **whom** travel behaviour has changed

Reflect on the role of policymakers in taking stock of these changes

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Nigeria

- The most densely populated in Africa, with an estimated 200 million inhabitants

- There are inherent challenges with transportation in the country, especially considering its large population

- Like many developing countries, there is insufficient infrastructure to meet the growing demands of commuters, and the pandemic has exacerbated this problem.

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A typical busy Lagos market street [PHOTO CREDIT: Council on Foreign Relations]

How

- Health and safety concerns – wouldn't want to expose myself to any infection

- Desire for control – how I travel, who I travel with and what I am exposed to

- Revisiting travel activities – religious activities online, working from home and attending other events. Social and education activities often still requires physical presence

- Exploring alternatives – relocate, buy a car or motorcycle

- Affordability is a huge limitations – wishful thinking. Wants to make changes but can't make those changes
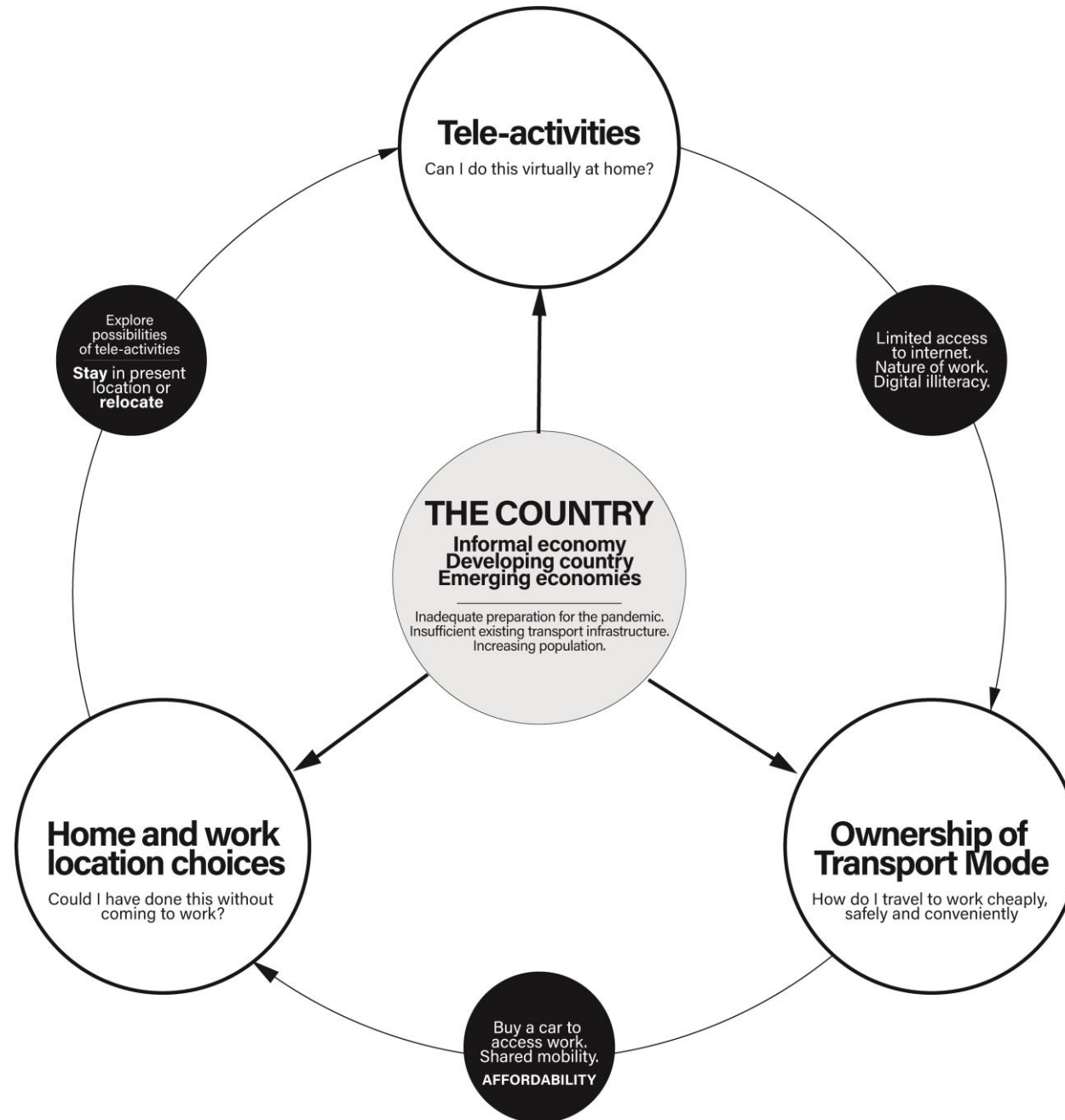
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Why

- Awareness about the pandemic – is it real or now? They can't really be serious! We don't have an option

- Prospects of exploring tele activities – I can do these things without leaving the house.

- Travel mode ownership – Can afford a car, stop using public transport or take Uber

- Socio-economic situation – work, infrastructures and attitude towards active mobility

Whom

- Understanding the travel needs of people – school, work, social, religious and shopping trips

- Who are those taking these trips – family, children, disabled, adults, employed, students

- The economic context – emerging economy, financial capabilities

- Variation across the country, willingness to relocate or stay?

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Reflect

Addressing the **vicious cycle** of the impact of the pandemic on transportation in Nigeria

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Tele-activities
Can I do this virtually at home?

Explore possibilities of tele-activities
Stay in present location or **relocate**

Limited access to internet. Nature of work. Digital illiteracy.

THE COUNTRY
Informal economy
Developing country
Emerging economies

Inadequate preparation for the pandemic.
Insufficient existing transport infrastructure.
Increasing population.

Home and work location choices
Could I have done this without coming to work?

Ownership of Transport Mode
How do I travel to work cheaply, safely and conveniently

Buy a car to access work.
Shared mobility.
AFFORDABILITY

Online activities

- Access to skills, tools, and infrastructure is needed to support online activities.

- Improvement is required in internet access, power (electricity).

- Infrastructures and confidence in information technology.

- Allowing more investors into these digital spaces

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Transport Modes

- Improving access to a sustainable urban mobility

- Providing support and incentives towards electric vehicles and encouraging more people to walk and cycle.

- Government can provide grants for people to buy bicycles and electric motorcycles (e.g. the Bike 2 Work Scheme in the UK)

- Supporting transport-tech start-ups and manufacturers working on the supply of these sustainable modes of transportation.

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Work and residential location choices.

- Structural changes to existing infrastructures
- The great divide between infrastructures in the rural and urban areas, it is not surprising to see many people travelling distances to access work and other opportunities
- It is, therefore, critical for policymakers to invest equitably in different locations across the states, bring travel activities closer to people and reduce their journey times.
- There should be more investment in transportation, for example, high-speed rail, investment in facilities that create employment and reduce journey times and investment in health and education facilities.

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Conclusion

- Travel behaviours are changing, but influenced by ==affordability==, ==convenience==, and ==awareness.==

- The long-term effect of the pandemic on home or work location choices are further influenced by the large informal economy of the country and the infrastructural developments across various locations.

- The desires and dreams of the commuters are great, and they want to reduce their journey, work from home, and do online shopping. However, when they consider the inherent challenges, they can only hope for a better future.

Conclusion

- Addressing these long-term impacts for the benefit of the commuters and the environment is urgently needed

- It requires a holistic and simultaneous ==investment== in infrastructural development (transport facilities and internet technology),

- ==Awareness== (about climate change and sustainability) and

- ==Education== (around non-motorised transportation and travel behaviour).

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Further reading

Wishful thinking? Addressing the long-term implications of COVID-19 for transport in Nigeria

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trd.2022.103206

Dealing with impact of COVID-19 on transportation in a developing country: Insights and policy recommendations

Emmanuel Mogaji [a, e], Ibrahim Adekunle [b], Stella Aririguzoh [c], Adeyemi Oginni [d]

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2021.12.002

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Thank you.

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