

# Durham E-Theses

---

## *Some of the urban geography of Freetown, Sierra Leone*

McKay, J.

---

### How to cite:

McKay, J. (1967) *Some of the urban geography of Freetown, Sierra Leone*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/9968/>

---

### Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

# Some aspects of the urban geography of Freetown, Sierra Leone

J. McKay

M.A. Thesis, 1967

## Abstract

During the past few years a wide variety of new techniques and concepts have been developed for the study of the commercial structure of the city, the central business district receiving particular attention. But so far the vast majority of this work has been concerned with the forms of urban commerce found in Western Europe and North America. The aim of this thesis was to apply some of these techniques to a tropical city, Freetown, Sierra Leone, to see if the rather different forms of commerce encountered there could still be studied in this way. It was found that the method of central business district developed by Murphy and Vance could not be applied, and a more suitable alternative method was presented. Freetown's commerce contains an important group of European entrepreneurs, but the addition of Lebanese, Indian and African retailers gives the trade of the city a rather unique character. The importance of each of these trading groups was analyzed, and it was found that each had a special position in the overall spatial structure of trade and each served a particular income group within the city's population. Although special reference was made to the central business district, by far the most important element in the trade of the city, Freetown's overall commercial structure was analyzed, and the roles of the various ethnic groups again noted. As might be expected, the commerce of Freetown showed many signs of immaturity, directly related to Sierra Leone's underdeveloped economy. The probable impact on Freetown's future growth of the Government's economic development policy was considered. Freetown's history of growth is a very special one, and an attempt was made to view the nature of the city as it fits into the wider regional context, by comparing it with a number of other West African cities.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE URBAN GEOGRAPHY OF FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE,  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

A thesis presented in fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in the

University of Durham

by

J. McKay, B.A. (Durham)

Fourah Bay College

1967

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author.  
No quotation from it should be published without  
his prior written consent and information derived  
from it should be acknowledged.

## CONTENTS

	Page
Table of contents	
List of figures	
List of tables	
Acknowledgements	
Introduction	1
I General methods of CBD analysis	7
II Historical development of Freetown's CBD	22
III Land use	34
IV Land values	55
V Building heights	64
VI Population	66
VII The place of the CBD in Freetown's overall commercial structure	70
VIII Future development of commerce in the CBD	79
IX Comparisons with the commercial structure of some other West African cities	90
Conclusions	106

## LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Facing Page</u>
1:1 Freetown: Urban area	2
1:2 Central Freetown: Locations	3
1:1 Zonal hypothesis of city structure (after Burgess)	8
1:2 Sector hypothesis of city structure (after Hoyt)	9
1:3 CBD shapes of nine American cities (after Murphy and Vance)	15
1:4 Frequency distribution of retail frontage percentages by blocks in Dar es Salaam (after de Blij)	19
2:1 Central Freetown in 1815 (after Porter)	24
3:1 Central Freetown: Number of floors of central business uses	36
3:2 Frequency distribution of Central Business Height Indices by blocks in central Freetown	37
3:3 Frequency distribution of Central Business Intensity Indices by blocks in central Freetown	38
3:4 Central Freetown: Distribution of Central Business Height Index divisions	39
3:5 Central Freetown: Distribution of Central Business Intensity Index divisions	40
3:6 Frequency distribution of Central Business Frontage Percentages by blocks in central Freetown	41
3:7 Central Freetown: Distribution of Central Business Frontage Intensity divisions	42
3:8 Central Freetown: Distribution of European commerce	44
3:9 Central Freetown: Distribution of Indian commerce	45
3:10 Central Freetown: Distribution of Lebanese commerce	47
3:11 Central Freetown: Distribution of African commerce	48

3:12	Central Freetown: Some non-central business uses	50
4:1	Central Freetown: Average freehold land values, 1965	57
4:2	Central Freetown: Average leasehold land values, 1965	58
4:3	Central Freetown: Average leasehold values of office/ commercial accommodation, 1965	59
5:1	Central Freetown: Building heights	65
6:1	Age-sex pyramids, 1963 (a) Freetown City Area (b) Central Freetown	68
7:1	Freetown: Urban land use	74
9:1	Central Monrovia	94
9:2	Abidjan	97
9:3	The retail structure of Lagos (after Mabogunje)	100

## LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1:1 Relative rank-order of the four zones in proportion to space occupied by various types of establishments (after Murphy and Vance)	15a
1:2 Relative rank-order of first, second and upper floors in all zones combined in proportion of space occupied by various types of establishments (after Murphy and Vance)	15b
3:1 Basic land use classification adopted in the initial field study	34
3:2 Land use data	36
3:3 Central Business Height and Intensity Indices by block	37
3:4 Central Business Frontage Intensity Indices by blocks	40
4:1 Average freehold land values per town lot, 1961 and 1965	56a
4:2 Average leasehold land values per town lot, 1961 and 1965	56b
4:3 Value of leasehold office/commercial accommodation, per sq. ft. per annum, 1961 and 1965	56c
4:4 Rate of decline of freehold land values from peak value point	59a
4:5 Rate of decline of leasehold land values from peak value point	60a
4:6 Rate of decline of office/commercial accommodation rents from peak value point	60b
4:7 Average rateable values of buildings by street	61a
5:1 Total Height Indices in Central Freetown	64a
6:1 Central Freetown - Grouped age structure (1963)	67
6:2 Freetown City Area - Age structure (1963)	68
8:1 Per capita income in selected West African countries (1961)	79

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank all those who helped in any way in the preparation of this thesis. The encouragement and advice of Dr. J. I. Clarke, Dr. P. K. Mitchell and Dr. M. E. E. Harvey of the Department of Geography, Fourah Bay College have been invaluable. The civil servants, businessmen and ordinary citizens of Freetown who were helpful are too numerous to mention individually, but the assistance of all of them was greatly appreciated. The author would also like to express his gratitude to the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, whose extremely generous financial support made the study possible. Grateful thanks are also due to Mr. S. J. A. Nelson of the Department of Geography, Fourah Bay College for valuable advice on the maps, and to Mrs. G. Harvey who typed the manuscript.



## INTRODUCTION

The city which is the object of this study is situated on the northern seaboard of the Freetown Peninsula, overlooking the estuary of the Sierra Leone River (Fig. 1:1). The built-up area covers a series of raised beaches at the foot of the very imposing semicircle of the Peninsula Mountains. Freetown originated towards the end of the eighteenth century as a settlement for former slaves, and grew for a century and a half as the principal port and administrative centre of the Sierra Leone Colony. In 1961 the status of the city rose by becoming the capital of the new independent state of Sierra Leone.

Although research into most detailed aspects of the geography of West Africa is at an early stage, work by Jarrett<sup>1</sup>, supplemented by the historical and sociological findings of Fyfe<sup>2</sup> and Banton<sup>3</sup> has given an insight into the general growth and urban geography of Freetown. It is now possible to investigate in greater depth. The aim of this study is to analyse the commercial structure of the city, particularly of its central commercial core. In many ways commerce is the most basic and influential aspect of the morphology of the West African city, since it is with the coming of Europeans and the introduction of a western-type market economy that urban life has begun to develop in this area. West Africa has been brought from a subsistence level into the mainstream of world economy, and the most dominant symbol of this is the development of the city. Urban geographers may note differences between former-French and former-British colonial towns, or differences between individual towns in one

# FREETOWN : URBAN AREA

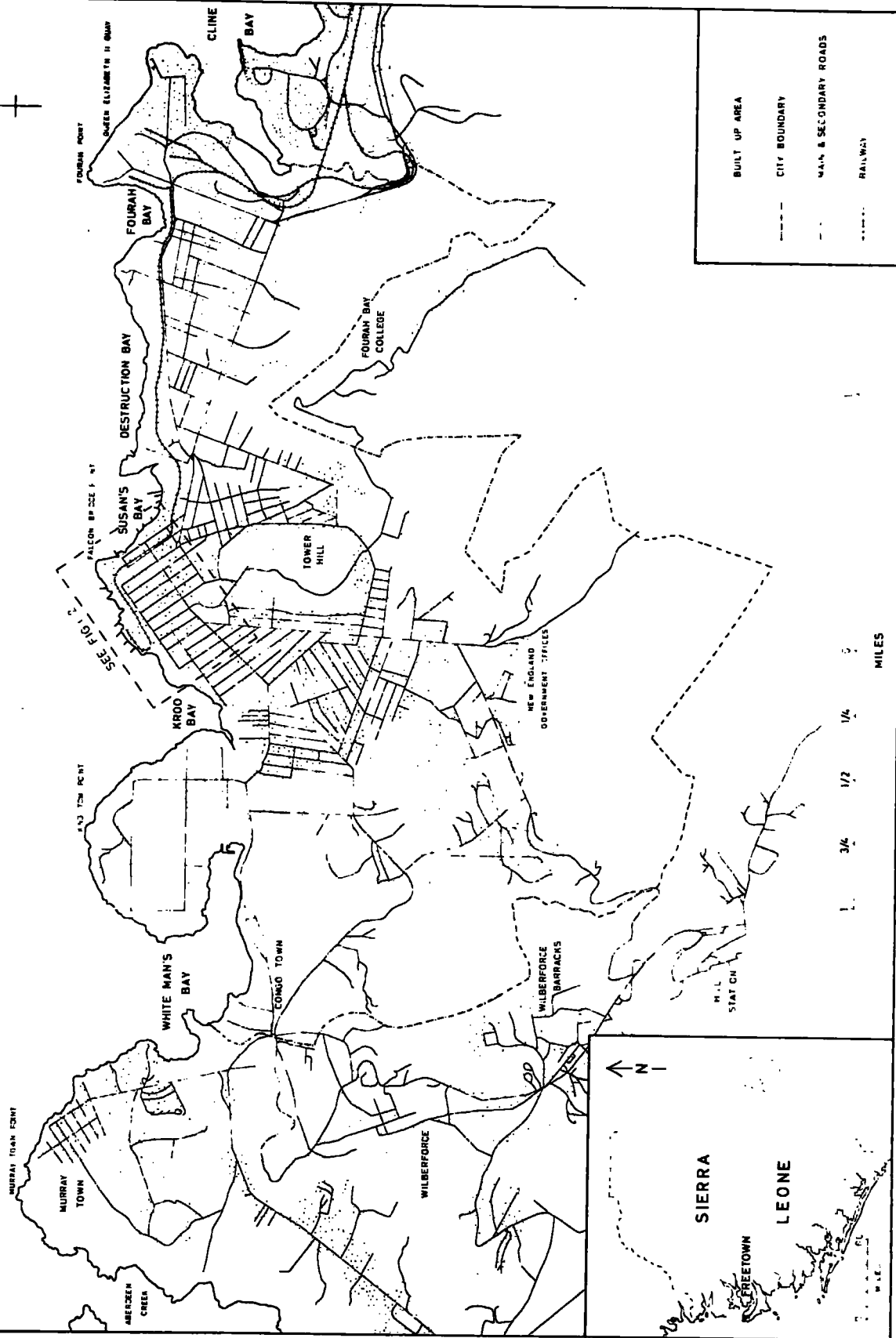


FIG. 1-1

country, but such contrasts are of minor significance compared with those between the pre-Colonial town and later forms.

As commerce is so fundamental to urban life and development it is well worthy of the geographer's attention. Since the need for economic and commercial development in West Africa is so urgent, a study of commerce in Freetown might be of practical planning value, thus supplementing geography's claim to be a valuable applied, as well as academic, discipline.

The commercial centre of Freetown, upon which particular attention is focussed, is the oldest part of the city. This area, with its regular rectilinear street pattern was enclosed by the defensive wall of the original settlement. The establishment of European-owned shops and offices made this core area the undoubted apex of the commercial hierarchy of the city. A general outline of this area, with the location of some of the most important buildings, is shown in Fig. 1:2. As much of this survey will use individual blocks as the basic unit, each of the blocks is given a reference number to aid future identification.

In the United States the central areas of cities have received particular attention. One is immediately faced with a problem very familiar to the tropical geographer. Can the methods developed in America be adopted in underdeveloped countries, and if so, can the results so obtained really be compared? There is a very real danger, especially for a geographer working in the tropics for the first time, of using these methods wholesale and for their own sake, without considering the implications and difficulties raised by the totally different environment. However, it must be remembered that these methods, in particular the use of models, are not an end in themselves but are simply useful tools in

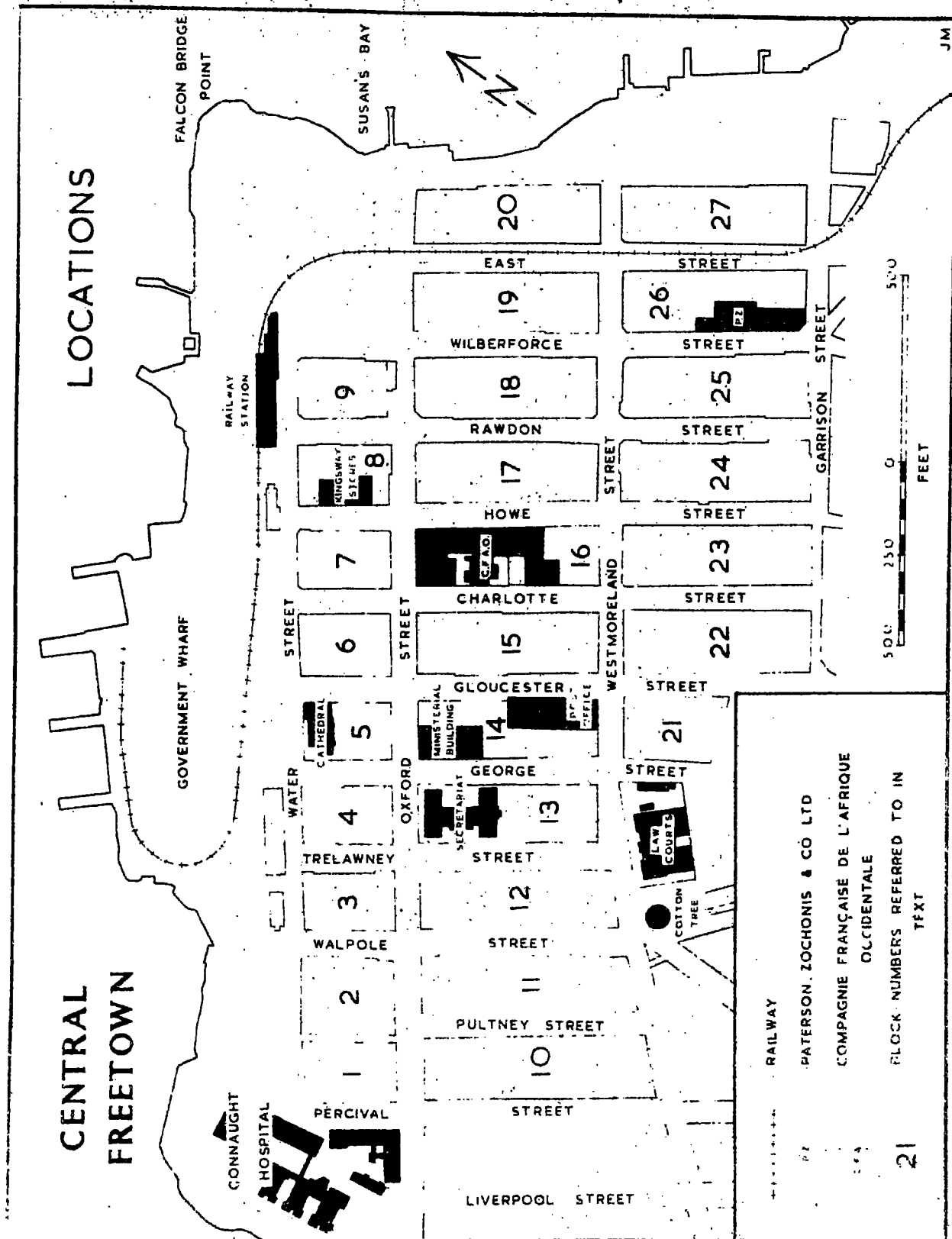


FIG. 1:2

explaining reality. They are a useful yardstick against which the real world may be measured. In this way, deviations from the theoretical models may be more easily understood and explained. If African urban conditions do not 'fit' the models constructed for American and European cities, this in itself is useful. These new methods at least give one some meaningful quantitative measures of differences between conditions in developed and underdeveloped areas. Deviations from the theoretical models can be clearly identified, and thus one is aided in the basic task of explanation. One is then in a much better position to construct more useful models with less 'noise' more closely adapted to African conditions. Thus, if care is taken not to allow these techniques to become more than mere aids in explanation there is no real reason why they should not be used in an initial investigation into African urban forms.

Similarly one is faced with the problem of deciding whether terminology originally applied to Western cities can be used to describe features in underdeveloped areas. Many terms have acquired a special meaning because of their association with European or American cities. The term 'central business district' (hereafter referred to by the usual abbreviation of 'CBD') is often associated with the busy centre of a European or American city dominated by department stores and skyscraper office blocks. By using such a term to describe a feature of an African city a reader might be given a totally false impression. Thus one must take account of the connotations of any terms used before applying them in underdeveloped areas. The term 'CBD' will be applied to the commercial core of Freetown, but as will be shown, this area contains so many European-owned shops and offices that this central area is sufficiently akin to the centre of a

Western city for the use of the term to be justified.

In this thesis the basic method for the delimitation and study of the CBD devised by Murphy and Vance<sup>4</sup>, and later applied by them to the central areas of nine American cities<sup>5</sup>, will be applied to the commercial core of Freetown. The objectives of this are twofold. Firstly, it is hoped to show quantitatively how the CBD of an African city such as Freetown differs from that of a Western city, particularly in the intensity of land use. Secondly, it is hoped to suggest ways in which these techniques might be modified to make them more easily applicable to tropical urban conditions. As has been argued previously, the first of these steps is useful, perhaps vital, for the carrying out of the second objective.

Having delimited Freetown's CBD in this way, its internal structure will be studied in some detail. The historical and economic forces which have resulted in the present morphology are analysed. A knowledge of the very special origins of the settlement and way in which its layout was planned is essential in the understanding of its regular street pattern and the division of each block into the present lots. Also, the chronology and ethnic composition of each influx of entrepreneurs has had an important influence on the development of commerce within the CBD. Although the central area is dominated by European companies, the presence of Lebanese, Indian and African businessmen has given it a very special character of its own. The varying roles of each of these ethnic groups in the commerce of the CBD will be examined. Detailed analyses of land use patterns and the ways in which these patterns interact with land values are also necessary.

After this detailed study it will be possible to ascertain the position

and importance of this core area in the general commercial structure of the city. In particular, consideration must be given to the validity of Berry's general model of commercial structure<sup>6</sup>, as well as the importance of ethnic divisions in this general structure.

After only five years of independence in Sierra Leone, the present structure of Freetown is still a relic of Colonial conditions. Recent legislation by the Sierra Leone Government has been aimed at giving its own nationals a greater share in commerce. It is now possible to look at the first effects of this on the commercial structure of Freetown and the possible long-term consequences.

Finally a general view of the commercial structures of other West African cities known personally to the author will be made so that the normality or uniqueness of Freetown can be judged. In this way the theoretical principles suggested to explain Freetown's morphology can be tested for general validity.

The difficulty in obtaining accurate statistical information, the constant bane of the geographer in Africa, must be mentioned. Some information was obtained from the Freetown City Council and from the 1963 census, although all the results of this census are not yet available. The bulk of the material was obtained by personal field observation and by interviewing many of Freetown's businessmen. While more detailed statistical information of the kind available for British or American cities would have been extremely useful, it is not proposed to make the lack of data an excuse for any deficiencies which may occur in this study.

# References

1. Jarrett, H. R., "Freetown: a study in space relationships", Sierra Leone Studies II (1954), 98-108.  
-----, "The port and town of Freetown", Geography XL (1955), 108-118.  
-----, "Rents, roads and railways. A study of their inter-relationships in Freetown", Sierra Leone Studies III (1955), 36-43.  
-----, "Some aspects of the urban geography of Freetown", Geogr. Rev. XLIII (1956), 334-354.
2. Fyfe, C., A History of Sierra Leone (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962).
3. Banton, M., West African City (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1957).
4. Murphy, R. E. and Vance, J. E., "Delimiting the CBD", Econ. Geog. XXX (1954), 189-222.
5. -----, "A comparative study of nine Central Business Districts", Econ. Geog. XXX (1954), 301-336.
6. Berry, B. J. L., Commercial structure and commercial blight (University of Chicago, Dept. of Geography, Research Paper No. 85).



## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL METHODS OF CBD ANALYSIS

#### A. WHAT IS A CBD?

The CBD stands at the apex of both the spatial and commercial structures of any city.

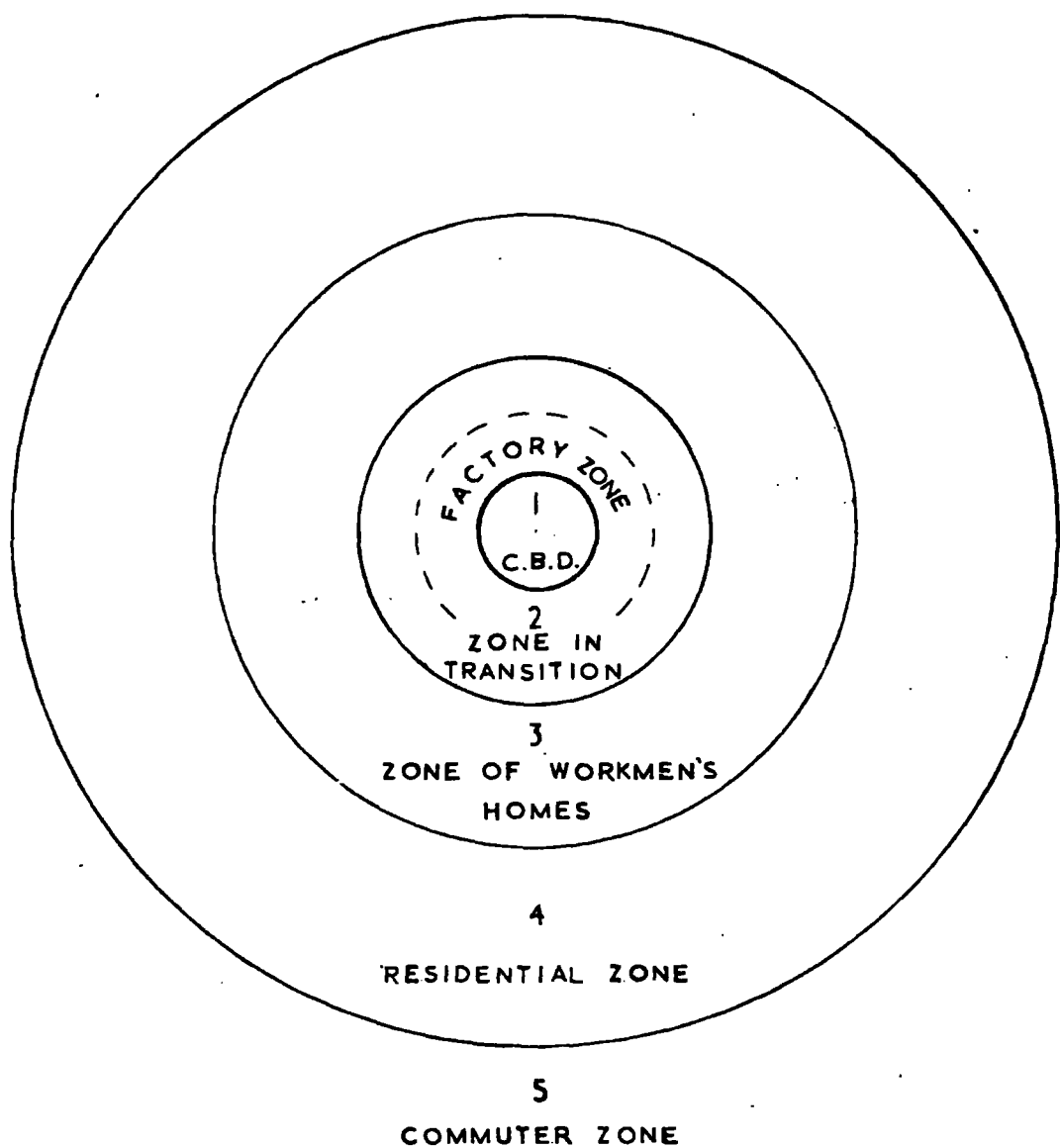
As the name implies, the CBD is usually situated at or near the geographical centre of the urban area. The well-known scheme of city structure put forward by Burgess<sup>1</sup> shows the CBD surrounded by concentric zones of other land use. Moving from the city centre to the suburbs, the land use sequence is:

1. The CBD.
2. The transition zone, which is being invaded by business and light industry and is usually characterised by low quality housing.
3. The zone of workingmen's homes; inhabited by the workers in industries, who have escaped from the area of deterioration but who desire to live within easy access of their work.
4. The residential zone of high-class apartment buildings or exclusive residential districts of single family dwellings.
5. The commuter zone beyond the city limits, within a thirty to sixty minute ride of the CBD.

(See Fig. I:1)

In the sector theory of city structure postulated by Hoyt<sup>2</sup>, the CBD also stands at the centre of the urban area (Fig. I:2).

Similarly, the CBD stands at the apex of the commercial structure of city. If one applies the concepts of central place theory one would expect,



ZONAL HYPOTHESIS OF CITY STRUCTURE  
(After E.W. Burgess)

JM

FIG. 1:1

and indeed does find, a hierarchy of business centres. This has been noted by such writers as Malcolm J. Proudfoot<sup>3</sup> and B. J. L. Berry<sup>4</sup>. Berry recognises the following hierarchy, in order of increasing importance:

1. Convenience stores and "streetcorner" developments.
2. Neighbourhood business centres.
3. Community business centres.
4. Regional shopping centres.
5. Metropolitan CBD.

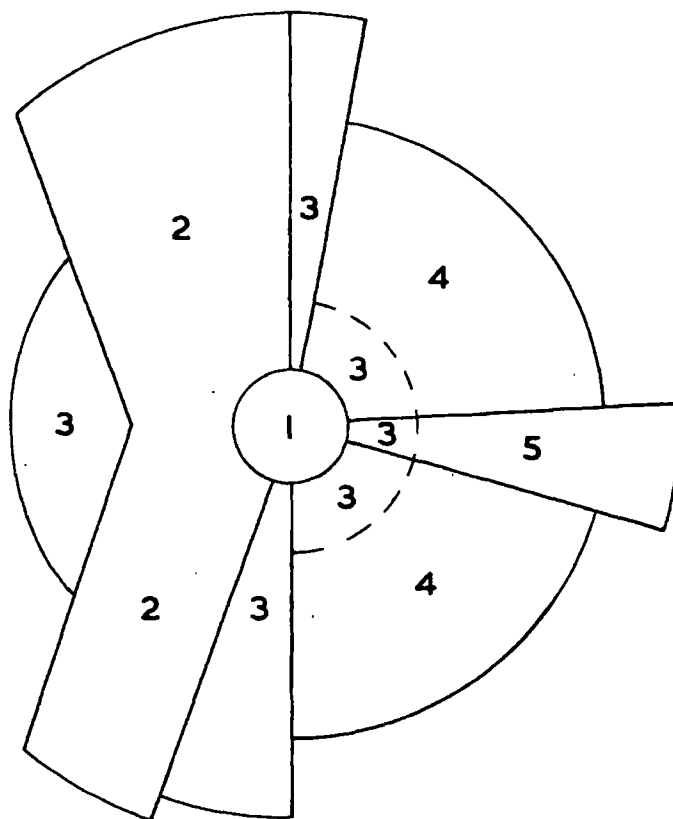
The functions of the CBD are essentially, as stated by Murphy and Vance<sup>5</sup>, "the retailing of goods and services for a profit and the performing of various office functions". Of course, these activities are also carried on in other parts of the city, but it is in the CBD that one finds the greatest number of establishments providing these goods and services. This is because the city centre is the area most accessible to the whole of the city and its service area, and is therefore able to draw upon the largest possible market area.

As demand by business interests for such highly accessible sites is intense, the highest land values of the city, and what is known as the "peak land-value intersection", are found within the CBD. This often leads to an intensive use being made of this valuable land by the construction of multi-storey buildings, and in some cases sky-scrapers.

A large percentage of the city population moves into the CBD for employment and to make use of the services provided there. Donald L. Foley<sup>6</sup> has calculated that in an average medium sized city in the United States one in five of the city's residents has at least one destination in the CBD during each weekday. It is not surprising that many city

# SECTOR HYPOTHESIS OF CITY STRUCTURE

(AFTER HOYT)



- 1 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
- 2 WHOLESALE LIGHT MANUFACTURING
- 3 LOW-CLASS RESIDENTIAL
- 4 MEDIUM-CLASS RESIDENTIAL
- 5 HIGH-CLASS RESIDENTIAL

JM

FIG. 1:2

centres suffer from considerable traffic congestion. This is especially true in the cities of the United States and Western Europe where large percentages of the population own cars, and the problem is very acute in relatively old cities, such as those of Britain, where the streets were not designed for the age of motor vehicles.

== A feature of the CBD which is often stressed is the lack of permanent population. Every morning there is an inward flow of shop and office workers, and a return flow every evening. Since census figures generally portray conditions existing on one particular night, census returns tend to emphasise this lack of permanent population.

These are the general features of the CBD of the average city, especially in the United States and Western Europe. More detailed characteristics will emerge in the following analysis of the methods which have been adopted in the past in the delimitation and analysis of the CBD.

## B. CBD ANALYSIS METHODS

The first studies of individual CBDs, and in particular the first attempts to delimit their boundaries, were carried out in a piecemeal and very subjective fashion. In Scandinavia a study was undertaken by William Olsson in Stockholm<sup>7</sup>, using figures for shop rents. However, it has been found that in many cities this information is not available. Volume of trade figures were used in a study of Philadelphia supervised by Malcolm J. Proudfoot<sup>8</sup>. But this study was confined to retail trade, and thus took no account of the service and office functions which are such important components of the CBD structure.

By far the most important contribution to the analysis of the CBD has

been made by Raymond E. Murphy and J. E. Vance in a series of three articles. The first of these dealt with the delimitation of the boundaries of the CBD<sup>9</sup>. Their aim was to provide a method which would, as far as possible, enable the CBD to be viewed objectively. The three criteria which might be used in this way - population distribution and related phenomena, valuation of land and land use - were considered in turn:

(a) Population and related phenomena. The use of population data is based on the lack of permanent residences inside the CBD. A certain population density might be used to mark the boundary. But it is very difficult to obtain accurate results using this method, since even the smallest census areas are too large to give the detailed position<sup>on</sup> the CBD edge. Alternatively, employment figures might be used, but again the figures available are not sufficiently detailed.

Pedestrian counts and traffic flows, reflecting the great activity found within the city centre might be used, but traffic regulations, such as the banning of parking in many areas, prevent the building up of an accurate picture.

(b) Land values. Lack of information was also responsible for the rejection of techniques based on values of land. Where information is available it provides the value of each lot and is therefore very detailed. But in most cities, especially those in underdeveloped areas, this data cannot be obtained. Where this technique has been used it has been found that land at the edge of the CBD has a value equivalent to five per cent of the figure found at the peak land value intersection.

(c) Land use. Consequently, Murphy and Vance decided that analysis of land use distribution offered the best possibilities for logical and accurate

delimitation. At first techniques which did not involve the land use mapping of the whole central area were considered. Breaks in continuity of land use from the shops and offices of the CBD to the residences and factories outside might be used, but delimitation of this kind must be very subjective. A technique might be based on the fact that certain types of land uses accumulate at the edge of the CBD, notably supermarkets, car sales rooms, filling stations, boarding houses and furniture stores. Some broad relationships were found, but variations from city to city are so great that this method cannot be used universally.

It became obvious that only detailed land use mapping would provide the necessary accurate data. It was important to decide what types of land uses were typical of the CBD since "there is a considerable difference between a church engulfed by CBD development, and a department store, which depends upon the advantages that a CBD location has to offer"<sup>10</sup>. The main types of land use which are not central business in character are:

1. Permanent residences (including apartment houses and rooming houses).
2. Governmental and public.
3. Organisational (churches, fraternal orders, etc.).
4. Industrial establishments (excluding newspapers).
5. Wholesaling.
6. Vacant buildings.
7. Vacant lots.
8. Commercial storage.

Although the use of street frontage areas may appear more realistic, it was decided that the ease of subsequent statistical treatment made the arrangement of information by blocks advisable. Using the data obtained

from the detailed mapping, certain important calculations were made:

1. Total Height Index. This represents the height, in floors, if all the buildings were spread uniformly over the block. It is obtained by dividing the total floor space by the ground floor space.  
i.e.  $T.H.I. = \frac{\text{total floor space}}{\text{total ground floor space}}$

total ground floor space

2. Central Business Height Index. This is the number of floors of central business uses if these are spread evenly over the block.  
i.e.  $C.B.H.I. = \frac{\text{Central business space}}{\text{total ground floor space}}$

total ground floor space

This is a much more meaningful index than that of total building heights, since it takes the type of land use into consideration. However, it fails to show the proportion of all space in central business uses.

3. Central Business Intensity Index. This indicates the porportion of all floor space in central business uses, presented as a percentage.  
i.e.  $C.B.I.I. = \frac{\text{Central Business space} \times 100}{\text{total floor space}}$

total floor space

This measure has the limitation of not showing the gross amount of central business space.

It was decided that a central business height index of one gave a good limiting value. This represents the equivalent of a one-storey building devoted to central business uses covering the entire block. A central business intensity index of fifty per cent, representing half the total floor space of the block devoted to central business uses, was also considered significant. If these two figures are considered together an even more realistic delimitation is achieved. Thus a block, to be considered part of the CBD, must have a central business height index of at least one and a central business intensity index of fifty per cent or more.



Murphy and Vance are the first to admit that this method is not perfect. No method for the substitution of a single line for what is in reality a zone of transition can ever be really satisfactory. Also, no indication of different grades of activities is given. The method has not been used widely enough to judge whether it can be used for cities of all sizes. The entire system has been attacked by R. E. Dickison<sup>11</sup> as being far too narrow, but there is no doubt that it is by far the most satisfactory scheme so far evolved.

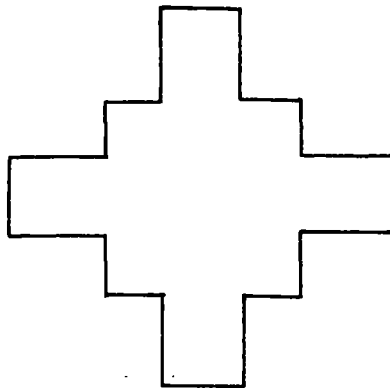
#### C. STUDIES USING THE MURPHY AND VANCE METHOD

The widest application of this method has been made by Murphy and Vance themselves. They first of all delimited the CBDs of a sample of nine cities in the United States<sup>12</sup>, and then examined the nine CBDs in an attempt to generalise about the nature of the CBD<sup>13</sup>.

The nine cities studied were: Worcester (Massachusetts); Grand Rapids (Michigan); Salt Lake City (Utah); Tacoma (Washington); Sacramento (California); Phoenix (Arizona); Tulsa (Oklahoma); Mobile (Alabama); and Roanoke (Virginia). It was hoped to discover to what factors the size of the CBD appeared to be related, what is the typical shape of the CBD, why some CBDs are more centrally situated than others, what land use percentages are typical and how the CBD varies with the economic speciality of the city.

SIZE OF THE CBD. The size seems to bear a closer correspondence to the number of retail and wholesale employees in each city than to the size of the market area. Each twelve acres of central business floor space appear to give rise to about one thousand employees.

SHAPE. There appears to be no evidence of a star-like pattern, or of the "tilted square or diamond" pattern postulated by Hartman<sup>14</sup>. Where two intersecting streets of equal importance exist, and interstitial infilling takes place near the centre, a CBD in the approximate shape of a quadrate cross is formed, as in Roanoke, Mobile and to some extent in Phoenix and Worcester (Fig. I:3). This would seem to be the best idealised outline of the CBD.



A Quadrate Cross

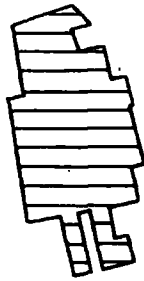
Where a dominant single street exists there is a marked elongation of the CBD, as in Grand Rapids and Sacramento. If two parallel streets exceed in importance any crossing street an oblong-shaped CBD is the result, as in Tulsa, Salt Lake City and possibly Tacoma. All of these shapes are modified by such important barriers to expansion as railways, government buildings, parks and steep slopes.

It was noted that port cities tend to develop CBDs which are not in the geographical centre of the urban area. This seems to result more from the movement away from the port facilities than from any positive attractions by other factors.

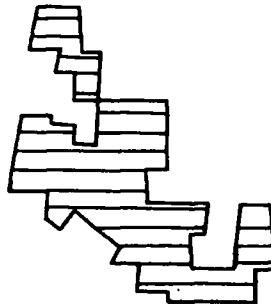
As a basis for studying the arrangement of land uses, a pattern of four walking-distance zones was developed for each CBD:

# CBD SHAPES OF NINE AMERICAN CITIES

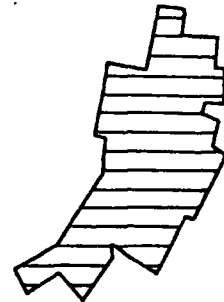
(AFTER MURPHY & VANCE)



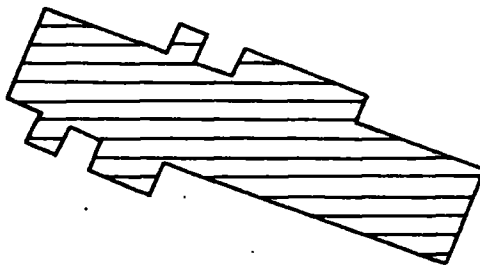
TACOMA



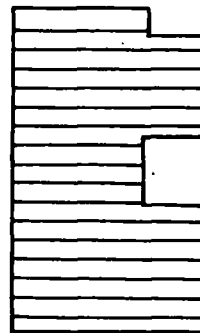
GRAND RAPIDS



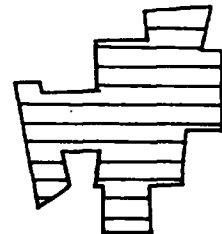
WORCESTER



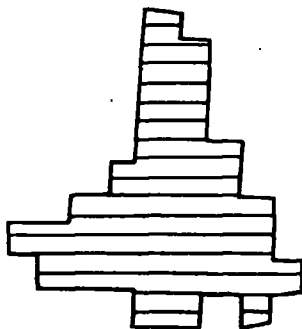
SACRAMENTO



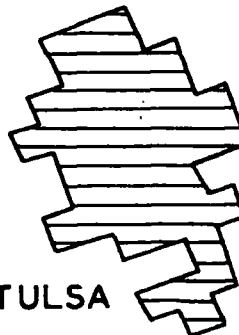
SALT LAKE CITY



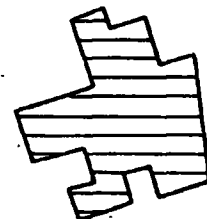
ROANOKE



PHOENIX



TULSA



MOBILE

0 1800  
FEET



JM

FIG. 1:3

Zone 1. The area surrounding the peak land value intersection nowhere exceeding one hundred yards walking distance along intersecting streets from the centre of this intersection.

Zone 2. 100 - 200 yards walking distance.

Zone 3. 200 - 300 yards " "

Zone 4. 300 - 400 yards " "

The land uses found in each of these zones are summarised in Table 1:1.

In each CBD retail businesses occupy more than half the total space, while non-central business uses account for only twelve per cent of the area.

Retail business uses also predominate on the ground floors of buildings, since retailing required the most accessible sites possible. Offices, and especially residences and industries are not able to compete for ground floor space. Vertical variations in land use are summarised in Table 1:2.

It must be stressed that these findings were based on data from only nine American cities, and none of these cities was more than medium-sized. Thus, although many of the general findings represent conditions in most cities, some of the more detailed conclusions must be treated with caution.

Studies using broadly similar methods have been carried out by D, Hywel Davies in Cape Town<sup>15</sup>, P. Scott in Australia<sup>16</sup>, and D. R. Diamond in Glasgow<sup>17</sup>. Diamond argues that wholesaling is an integral part of the central area of Glasgow, and therefore includes it as a central business use. As would be expected all of these studies reach some conclusions which are slightly different from those of Murphy and Vance, but the similarities in their findings are far more numerous and important. The next important task is to discover if similar results are obtained in the study of cities in less developed areas.

	<u>ZONES</u>			
	1	2	3	4
<u>Retail Business Uses</u>	1	2	3	4
Food	4	3	1	2
Clothing	1	2	3	4
Household	4	3	2	1
Automobile	nr	3	2	1
Variety	1	2	3	4
Miscellaneous	4	1	3	2
<u>Service - Financial</u>				
Office Uses	4	1	2	3
Financial	4	2	1	3
Headquarters Office	3	2	1	4
General Office	3	1	2	4
Service Trades	4	2	3	1
Transport	4	3	2	1
Transient residences	4	2	3	1
Parking	4	2	3	1
<u>Non-Central Business</u>				
<u>Uses</u>	4	3	2	1
Public & organisational	4	3	1	2
Residential	nr	3	2	1
Wholesale	nr	3	2	1
Industrial	nr	1	3	2
Vacancy	1	4	3	2

nr - not represented

TABLE I:1

Relative Rank-Order of the Four Zones in Proportion to  
Space Occupied by Various Types of Establishments  
 (After Murphy and Vance)

## FLOORS

	<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Upper</u>
<u>Retail Business Uses</u>	1	2	3
Food	1	2	nr
Clothing	1	2	3
Household	1	2	3
Automobile	1	3	2
Variety	2	1	3
Miscellaneous	1	2	3
<u>Service - Financial - Office Uses</u>	3	2	1
Financial	1	2	3
Headquarters Offices	3	2	1
General Offices	3	2	1
Services Trades	1	2	3
Transport	1	2	3
Transient Residences	3	2	1
Parking	1	2	3
<u>Non-Central Business Uses</u>	3	1	2
Public and Organisational	1	2	3
Residential	3	1	2
Wholesale	1	2	3
Industrial	2	1	3
Vacancy	3	1	2

nr - not represented

TABLE I:2

Relative Rank-Order of First, Second and Upper Floors in all  
Zones Combined in Porportion of Space Occupied by Various  
Types of Establishments

(After Murphy and Vance)

## THE CBD IN UNDERDEVELOPED AREAS

Consideration of the CBDs of West African towns and cities other than Freetown will be postponed until a later chapter, but some general observations may be made about other underdeveloped areas.

The commercial centres of the native towns of North Africa, the Middle East and the Far East are traditionally very different from those in more developed areas, and in many cases European influence has only slightly changed this pattern. In some areas much commercial activity is carried on outside any form of town, such as in the native markets (ASWAQ) of Morocco described by Mikesell<sup>18</sup>. These markets serve the needs of most rural areas and have therefore inhibited the growth of towns as service centres. Towns in Morocco have essentially been the creation of alien rulers and have become parasites draining support from the countryside but offering little in exchange.

Even though in most areas cities are important centres of commercial activity, it is rare to find an area solely devoted to commercial activities, as is characteristic of the CBD of Western Europe and North America. Commerce, residences and industry are usually found together in most parts of the city, but it can be said that in certain areas of all cities commerce predominates.

Pierre George<sup>19</sup> has recognised three components in the commercial structure of the towns of North Africa and the Middle East:

1. The BAZAAR - a kind of large market, often covered, made up of many streets, each specialising in its own trades and products.
2. The SOUKH - a market of a definite nature made up of one or more streets, such as a soukh of cobblers or a soukh of butchers.

3. The KHAN - a kind of entrepot where goods are loaded on or taken off caravans.

The bazaar may be considered as being the typical form of commercial centre and the nearest equivalent to the CBD. This is usually an area of narrow, crooked and congested streets. Individual trading units are very small. J. I. Clarke<sup>20</sup>, working in Shiraz, notes that an average shop has a frontage of only three to four metres. The grouping of competing merchants in particular sections has been emphasised by Mikesell in Morocco<sup>21</sup>, Brush in India<sup>22</sup>, and by Hamdan in Khartoum<sup>23</sup>. However, Clarke has pointed out that in Shiraz this pattern, once dominant, has now been broken down. In Morocco commercial activities which require space or are looked upon as being undesirable - such as butchers, dyers or tanners - are usually found on the edge of the built-up area.

The trade carried on in the bazaar attracts other forms of commercial activity. Brush has noted that in India native bankers and moneylenders, health practitioners, dentists and letter writers congregate in the vicinity of the bazaar (called "CHOWK" or "CHAUK" in Northern India), sometimes occupying second-storey rooms above the shops.

European influence has changed the character of the bazaar very little - rather it has supplemented the commercial structure of the city. Commercial ribbon development has taken place along the main route-ways, and in many cases a separate commercial centre has been created. When the French began their occupation of Morocco in 1912 Marshal Lyantey declared that European settlements should be kept apart from native centres. In Spanish Morocco such a division evolved naturally<sup>24</sup>. In India real CBDs have developed in Bombay and Calcutta, while in other towns separate



commercial centres have been created. A good example of this binuclear commercial pattern is found in Delhi, where the British-built India Chawk of New Delhi contrasts with the Chandi Chawk of Old New Delhi<sup>25</sup>. In Khartoum a similar separation is found<sup>26</sup>. These separate centres are not comparable with the outlying business centres of American cities, which compete with the CBD - rather, they complement the services of the bazaar and cater for a different type of clientele.

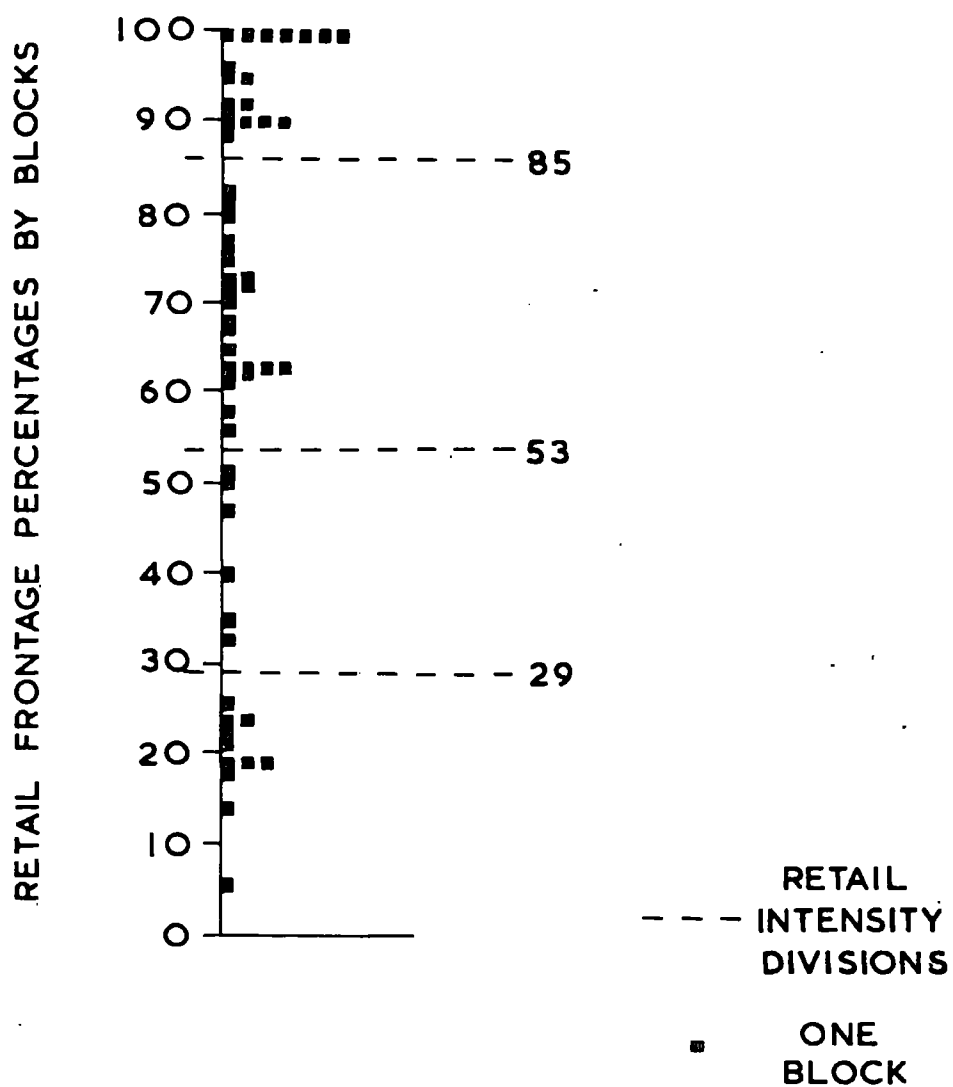
In East Africa, where a less developed native commercial structure was found, CBDs more similar to those in Western Europe have evolved. H. J. de Blij working in Lourenço Marques<sup>27</sup> and Dar es Salaam<sup>28</sup> attempted to use Murphy and Vance's methods of delimitation, but found that their application was very difficult. In both cities blocks are rather large, and the centre of each block tends to be empty or occupied only by shacks. Thus the indices computed for each block were rather low. De Blij then adopted a method involving the calculation of the percentage of each block frontage devoted to what he called "retail activities". In fact he included banks and certain types of offices in this category. Since vertical development was almost completely absent in both of these cities only the ground floor of each block was considered. Based on the frequency distribution of the values obtained in Dar es Salaam (Fig. I:4), de Blij devised categories of retail intensity:

1. Ultra - extensive retail frontage (28% and under)
2. Extensive retail frontage (29-52%)
3. Semi-intensive retail frontage (53-84%)
4. Intensive retail frontage (85% and over)

A very similar frequency distribution was found in Lourenço Marques. Blocks

# FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF RETAIL FRONTAGE PERCENTAGES BY BLOCKS IN DAR ES SALAAM

(AFTER H.J. DE BLIJ)



JM

FIG. 1:4

with ultra-extensive retail frontages were considered to be outside the CBD.

Thus the commercial centres of towns in underdeveloped areas are very different to those in Western Europe and North America, and rather different methods of studying their characteristics may be necessary.

## References

1. Burgess, E. W., "The Growth of the City", in Burgess, E. W., Park R. E. and McKenzie R. D. (Eds.), The City (Chicago, 1925), 51-53.
2. Hoyt, H., The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighbourhoods in American Cities (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939), 129-30.
3. Proudfoot, M. J., "City Retail Structure", Econ. Geog., XIII (1937), 424-428.
4. Berry, B. J. L., Commercial Structure and Commercial Blight (Univ. of Chicago, Dept. of Geography, Research Paper No. 85), 19-24.
5. Murphy R. E. and Vance J. E., "Delimiting the CBD", Econ. Geog., XXX (July 1954), p. 203.
6. Foley, D. L., "The Daily Movement of Population into Central Business Districts", American Sociological Rev., XVII (October 1962), 538-43.
7. William-Olsson W., "Stockholm: Its Structure and Development", Geog. Rev., XXX (1940), 420-38.
8. Proudfoot, M. J., op. cit.
9. Murphy, R. E. and Vance J. E., op. cit., 189-222.
10. -----, op. cit., p. 202.
11. Dickinson, R. E., City and Region (London, 1964), p. 223.
12. Murphy, R. E. and Vance J. E., "A Comparative Study of Nine Central Business Districts", Econ. Geog., XXX (1954), 301-336.
13. Murphy, R. E., Vance J. E. and Epstein, B. J., "Internal Structure of the CBD", Econ. Geog., XXXI (1955), 21-46.
14. Hartman, G. W., "Central Business District: A Study in Urban Geography", Econ. Geog., XXVI (1950), 237-44.
15. Hywel Davies, D., "Boundary Study as a Tool in CBD Analysis: An Interpretation of Certain Aspects of the Boundary of Cape Town's CBD", Econ. Geog., XXXV (1959), 322-345.
16. Scott, P., "The Australian CBD", Econ. Geog., XXV (1959), 290-314.

17. Diamond, D. R., "The CBD of Glasgow", in I.G.U. Symposium in Urban Geography (London: 1960), 525-534.
18. Mikesell, M. W., "The Role of Tribal Markets in Morocco", Geog. Rev., XLVIII (1958), 494-511.
19. George, P., Precis de Geographie Urbaine (Paris: Presse: Universitaires de France, 1961), 143-163.
20. Clarke, J. I., Shiraz (Univ. of Durham, Dept. of Geography, Research Paper No. 7, 1963), 27-35.
21. Mikesell, M. W., Northern Morocco: A Cultural Geography (Univ. of California Publications in Geography No. 14: University of California Press, 1961), 66-69.
22. Brush, J. E., "The Morphology of Indian Cities", in R. Turner (ed.), India's Urban Future (Univ. of California Press, 1963), 57-70.
23. Hamdan, G., "The Growth and Functional Structure of Khartoum", Geog. Rev., L (1960), 20-40.
24. Mikesell, M. W., Northern Morocco: A Cultural Geography, op. cit., p. 65.
25. Brush, J. E. op. cit., p. 67.
26. Hamdan, G., op. cit., 29-31.
27. de Blij, H. J., "The Functional Structure and CBD of Lourenco Marques, Mocambique", Econ. Geog., XXXVIII (1962), 56-77.
28. de Blij, H. J., Dar es Salaam: A Study in Urban Geography (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963), 45-60.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF FREETOWN'S CBD

It is not intended to give, in this chapter, an account of the history of Freetown. This has been dealt with in great detail by Christopher Fyfe<sup>1</sup>. But some historical background is necessary to understand the geographical factors which have been important in the development of the central area.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Freetown owes its origins to the abolition of the slave trade and the subsequent humanitarian desires of such men as Wilberforce, Macaulay and Sharp to resettle former slaves in their homeland. In 1787 a group of former slaves, who had found their way to England from the West Indies but who had been unable to find employment there and become known as the "Black Poor", were sent out to Sierra Leone. The settlement was established to the East of the present city centre and was named Granville Town in honour of the settlers' benefactor Granville Sharp. It soon became clear that the group was ill-prepared for the harsh conditions which were encountered, and an attack by a local chief in 1789 scattered the group throughout the country. The real settlement of Freetown dates from 1792 when a group of one thousand former slaves was brought over from Nova Scotia by the

newly formed Sierra Leone Company to live in "the province of Freedom". Hence the name of Freetown was quickly adopted. The site chosen was an area of flat, well drained land between what was then known as St. George's Bay and the present Susan's Bay. This area is one of a series of raised beach surfaces which are enclosed by the semicircle of the Peninsula Mountains and are well placed to take advantage of the magnificent natural harbour provided by the estuary of the Sierra Leone River. It was on the site of this original nucleus that the present CBD has developed. A map prepared by the Sierra Leone Company in 1794 shows that the street pattern still found in central Freetown had already been established. This pattern was exactly the same as that existing in 1815 (Fig. 2:1). C. B. Wadstrom gives a description of Freetown as it was around 1794:

"It is situated on a dry and rather elevated spot, on the south side of the river, and occupies between 70 and 80 acres, its length being about one-third of a mile, and its breadth nearly the same. It contains near 400 houses, each having one twelfth of an acre annexed, on which a few vegetables are raised. There are nine streets, running from N.W. to S.E. and three cross streets, and they are 80 feet wide, except one, which runs within 50 feet of the river, and which is 160 feet wide. In the broad street area, are almost all the public buildings, consisting of a church, near the middle, capable of containing 800 people; a Governor's house and offices; a large store-house, under which, and the Governor's house, there are brick store-cellars; a large hospital, and 6 or 8 other wooden houses, offices and shops, occupied by the Company's servants .... The houses of the colonists were at first inferior, but are now far superior to those of the natives .."<sup>2</sup>

Defences were established at Fort Thornton, where the State House now stands, because of possible attacks from rival colonial powers, notably France, and from neighbouring native chiefs. In 1805 the more commanding site of Tower Hill became the main defensive position.

In 1800 a further group of settlers, known as Maroons was brought over

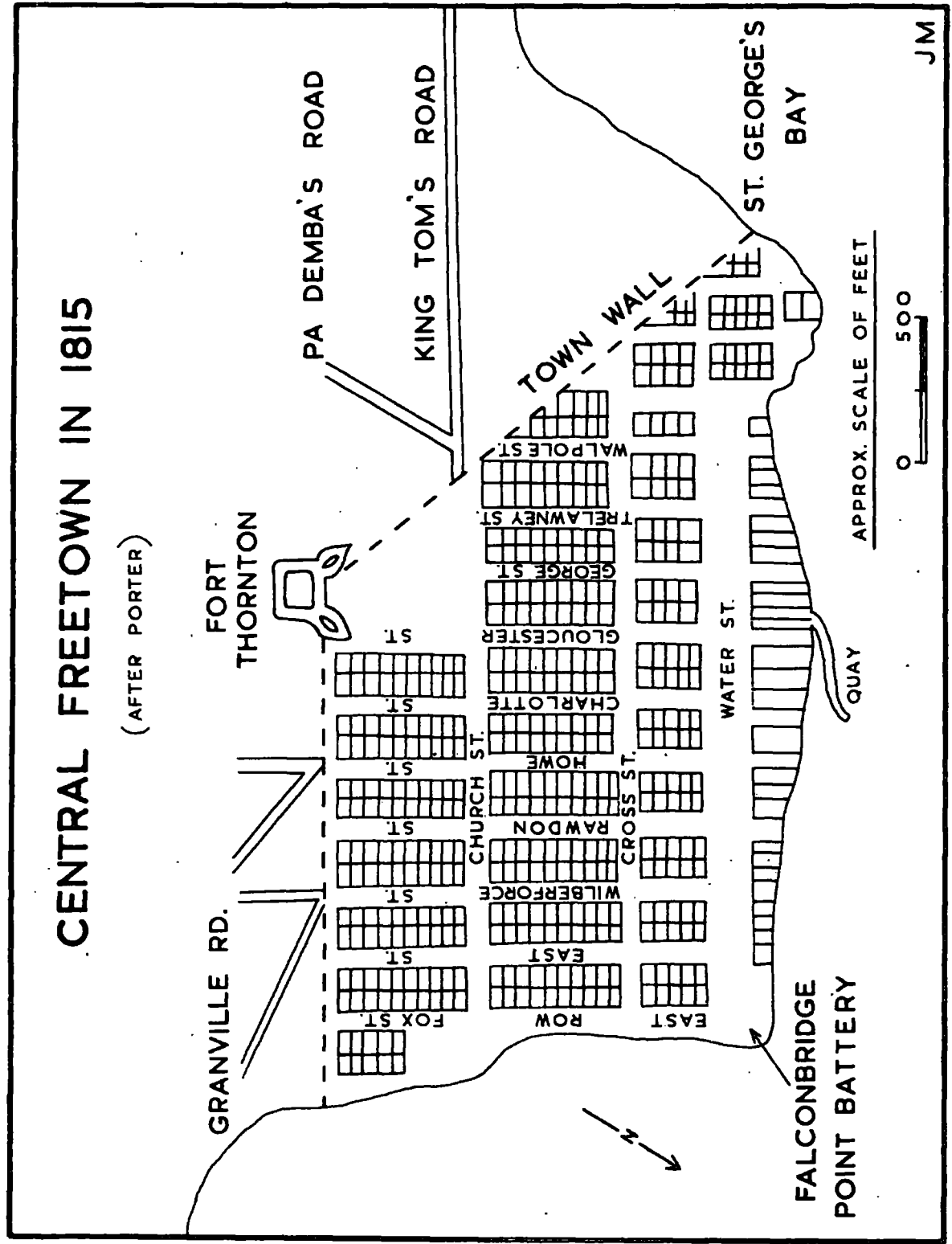


FIG. 2:1



from Jamaica. The street names (Fig. 2:1), which still largely survive, reflected the geographical division between the two groups of settlers. The Nova Scotian streets began with East Row and East Street. Wilberforce Street was formerly called Tarleton Street, after a general under whom the Nova Scotians had served in the War of American Independence, but possibly because of his opposition to the abolition of the slave trade, the street name was changed. Rawdon and Howe Streets were also named after generals in the American war. The next three streets were named after members of the Royal family - Queen Charlotte, the Duke of Gloucester and George III. George Street marked the beginning of the area inhabited by the Maroons. Trelawney Street, to the West, commemorated the Jamaican home of the Maroons, while Walpole Street was named in honour of a British army officer who had been their champion. The southernmost street running East to West was originally called Church Street, but in 1816 the name was changed to Westmoreland Street, a Jamaican name. Cross Street, originally known as Davies Street, later became Oxford Street, while the name of Water Street has remained unchanged.

The blocks were laid out in regular lots (Fig. 2:1), each of which was to contain a house and garden. Dividing walls made of laterite bricks were erected in each block and many of these still survive, although in some cases two or more lots have since been amalgamated to accommodate large buildings. Parts of the walls have also been demolished and the material used in later buildings. Building types, described by Fyfe<sup>3</sup>, reflected the American and West Indian origins of the settlers rather than the styles of either Europe or Africa. Houses were generally built on high stone cellars, and approached by a flight of stairs. Upstairs verandahs, jutting out on

pillars were enclosed as wooden piazzas to hide the owners from passers-by, unlike the open African verandah. These houses turned life inward, unlike the neighbouring Temne and Bulom houses, and reflected an individualistic, property-owning society rather than a group with communal obligations. There were some impressive public buildings, including St. George's Cathedral, the foundations of which were laid in 1817. Tradesmen were coming in from Europe and America to supply the needs of the growing community. Hotels were opened in George Street, Rawdon Street and Walpole Street. In 1808 an Admiralty Court had been established in Freetown to which all captured slave vessels were taken for the punishment of the owners and the freeing of the slaves. From this time the settlement grew rapidly by the addition of freed slaves. Many of the former slaves had been influenced to varying degrees by European culture and formed the distinctive "Creole" population. The settled area spread beyond the present central area, initiating the process which led to the functional differentiation of the core. By 1827, when all doubts that the settlement would not survive had been dispelled, land values in the central area began to rise. In 1830 premises on the South-east corner of Rawdon Street and Water Street were sold for five hundred pounds<sup>4</sup>. In 1813 Thomas Carew, a butcher, paid two hundred and sixty-two pounds for a house in Rawdon Street, while in 1837 a house on the corner of Walpole and Cross Streets was sold for three hundred and seven pounds<sup>5</sup>. William Pratt bought land on the North side of Oxford Street for three hundred pounds<sup>6</sup>. The majority of trade, formerly conducted directly by large London merchant companies, was now carried out by individual traders selling goods on commission. Very few of these European shopkeepers, relying on credit rather than capital, were prosperous. It was

estimated that in 1842 only three of the twenty-eight English merchants trading in Sierra Leone during the previous thirty years had retired with a profit<sup>7</sup>. Nevertheless, Freetown was developing as a trading centre, based upon the harbour and the commercial core area was emerging.

Since trade was already a vital part of the life of the settlement, the effects of the economic depression in the 1880's was felt in Freetown. Many merchants looked to more local factors as the cause of their discomfort. Many attributed their difficulties to the lack of control over Freetown's hinterland. Wages fell, but the cost of living and immigration into the Colony from neighbouring tribal areas increased. Thus the tribal people became the scapegoats. The Sierra Leone Association requested that the secretary of State should give Sierra Leone's traders in tribal areas better protection and that, if necessary, armed force should be used to secure peace among warring tribes. Sir Samuel Lewis, a notable citizen of Freetown, suggested a solution:

"The colony could only prosper if its trade was assured of dependant markets among the interior peoples. Had its settlers been European, this would have been secured long before. Now the attempts to provide security by treaties and stipends having failed, a more active use of military power was needed to suppress tribal war. If this security could be given only by foreign states, the traders would have to accept it".<sup>8</sup>

These demands, along with the general competition for African territories at this time, led the British Government to establish the Protectorate over the hinterland in 1896. This clearly demonstrates the important place which trade and commerce had come to hold in Freetown. At this time European companies were quick to see the increased prospects for trading in Freetown, and many of the firms which still form the most important element in the central area sent agents out to Sierra Leone. Paterson

Zochonis and Company, G. B. Ollivant and the Compagnie Française de L'Afrique Occidentale sent out representatives at this time. During the late 1880's Lebanese traders began to enter Sierra Leone. These traded not only in Freetown but penetrated inland, selling cheap textiles and other goods in return for produce, which was sold to the Freetown exporting companies. They were able to obtain credit facilities with the European businesses and could increase the scale of their dealings and the range of their products. Creole traders suffered seriously from this competition, and by 1910 the Lebanese were firmly established. As Alldridge points out:

"The Syrian trader has annexed the west coast; he has come and come to stay .... He is more than a clever man of business; his tact is wonderful, amounting to genius .... Content with the 'nimble ninepence' .... the Syrian saves where the Sierra Leonean squanders .... How under the present circumstances, with the importing retailing houses on the one hand and the Syrian gleaners on the other, they are to exist, is with them one of the most serious problems of the day".<sup>9</sup>

In 1919 Creole resentment against Lebanese competition led to riots, and these strong feelings have survived to the present day.

Trading in the CBD is still dominated by European companies, while Lebanese shops are also found in large numbers, especially on the edge and in commercial ribbon developments on the main roads leading from the CBD. Therefore the basic structure of the CBD has changed little since the turn of the century, but there has been a considerable expansion of this core area, with an intensification of land use there.

Probably the best method of studying the geographical factors which have led to the present structure of the CBD has been put forward by J. Wreford Watson<sup>10</sup> based on a suggestion by Alan G. Ogilvie<sup>11</sup>. This is what Watson calls 'relict geography' and involves the study of various relics from previous ages as indications of the time factor. This is an

attempt to provide a system of dynamic study similar to the use of relict floras in plant ecology. The geographer should be concerned less with individual remains than with fragments of the whole landscape which have persisted and become an integral part of the scene. It is the growth and modification of relict zones that account for the present patterns observed. Of course, the method tells one little about zones which have become completely changed. Relics belong to the geography of competition and invasion - they indicate the degree of persistence in the story of change. Watson classifies relict zones on the basis of their resistance or acquiescence to change:

1. Zone of accommodation - areas which show some degree of accommodation, as well as of resistance, to change.
2. Zones of retardation - which hold back change, but which under the influence of more powerful stimuli may become zones of accommodation.
3. Zones of ossification - where relics indicate a definite hardening against change and petrify the live developments formerly associated with them.
4. Zones of deviation and isolation - whose relics show a deviation from the main line of advance, or an actual flight from change.
5. Zones of deterioration - areas which have lost their original function and have declined in appearance.

Watson applied this concept to the study of Halifax Nova Scotia, a city which is in many ways similar to Freetown, and it would seem that a study of the present CBD of Freetown in terms of relics would be the most satisfactory way of appraising the geographical factors in its historical development.

## BOUNDARIES

The types of land use surviving on the general boundaries of the central area give a valuable indication of the stages of expansion and the factors involved.

To the North the core is bounded by the harbour facilities of Government Wharf. This boundary is a clear and complete break. Government Wharf was the first area where port facilities were established, and one would have expected this historical impetus to lead to the primacy of this dock area. But the relative decline in importance of Government Wharf is partly the result of this strict boundary, and partly the proximity of the commercial area, which would in any case have been too strong a competitor for land to allow the dock area to expand any further inland.

To the North-east the railway line to the main Freetown station in Water Street has been an effective barrier to development, especially since much of the land beyond is devoted to port facilities. The line actually runs at the side of East Street, and this hampers accessibility to such an extent that a clear-cut barrier to the development of the central area has resulted.

The other boundaries are far less clear cut and thus relics are more in evidence. In the West a large area of government buildings has blocked any commercial expansion in that direction. Fort Thornton and Tower Hill were government areas from the very early days of the settlement, and a solid wedge of government buildings has spread down the hill. This includes the Law Courts, Police Station, Secretariat, the recently completed Ministerial Building and the headquarters of the Bank of Sierra Leone at present under construction. There the business area, in pushing westward, has come into conflict with a zone which cannot be overcome in the same way that residential

areas can be transformed. Where these two forces have met, the result has been what Watson has called a "shatter belt", an area of general deterioration. The poor quality, and in some cases vacant, buildings in the block bounded by Gloucester & Charlotte Streets are all relics which point to the presence of this conflict. Only at the end of these blocks, where the more important routes of Oxford Street and Westmoreland Street provide more accessible sites, has commercial development taken place. As this barrier cannot be overcome, businesses, in order to expand to the West have been forced to leap-frog over this area. Thus there are signs that a secondary nucleus is being developed, but this is still in a very early stage.

Southward expansion has been halted by the presence of a public park. The poorly developed properties along Garrison Street are partly representative of a shatter belt, and partly reflect the much lower accessibility of sites along Garrison Street, compared with those on Westmoreland Street, to the North of these blocks.

In the North-east there is a gradation into the ribbon development of Lebanese and Indian traders of Kissy Street, the main route from the CBD to the East of the city. Lebaneses traders are found inside the CBD, and are present in large numbers in Wilberforce Street, which merges into Kissy Street, where European firms are almost completely absent.

### STREET PATTERN

Street patterns, in general, survive change more readily than any other aspect of the urban landscape. As has already been pointed out, the present street names of central Freetown were established very early in the town's history. The factors which led to the establishment and survival of this

pattern may now be considered.

Stanislowski<sup>12</sup> has put forward evidence suggesting that the grid-iron street pattern first appeared in Mohenjo-Daro in India, and gives reasons why this pattern should be established in any town:

1. A grid-iron pattern never appears by spontaneous growth - it must be planned. Thus centralised power - either military, political or religious - is necessary.
2. Once a street pattern is established, it cannot be changed easily. Thus grid-iron patterns are never established in cities with pre-existing systems of other kinds. This regular pattern can only be set up in totally new urban units or in newly added sub-divisions. The pattern is not conceivable except as an organic whole - the planner must not think in terms of individual buildings.
3. Since this pattern lends itself to easy and equal sub-divisions of land, the desire for measured apportionment of land is usually a necessary requirement.

All of these conditions existed at the time when Freetown was established. Centralised power and a completely new site were present, and everyone hoped to create an egalitarian society in the place of slavery. The leaders of the new community came from a Europe whose cities were being transformed by the French school of town planners, therefore the desire to create an orderly pattern would have been imprinted on their minds. The defensive needs of Freetown were also important, since there were dangers of attack from other colonial powers and from local chiefs. As a result, Fort Thornton, Falconbridge Point battery and a defensive wall were established (Fig. 2:1). The presence of the wall restricted the expansion of the settlement, thus maximum use had to be made of the available land. The grid iron pattern is most economical in terms of space, and this would be another important factor leading to its adoption. Also, any internal disorders could be more easily controlled in rectilinear streets than in



tortuous ones. If one examines the present street pattern of the whole of Freetown (Fig. i:1) it can be seen that the streets beyond the position of the former wall are far less regular. The main streets leading from the wall at first connected the main settlement with outlying villages and followed the quickest or the best routes, in terms of topography. As the town expanded beyond the wall, these main arteries were connected by straight, parallel cross Streets. Moreover the effects of topography made it impracticable for the grid-iron plan to be extended beyond the flat, raised beach area.

### References

1. Fyfe, C., A History of Sierra Leone, (Oxford University Press, 1962).
2. Wadstrom, C. B., An Essay on Colonisation, (London, 1794), Vol. ii, 60-62.
3. Fyfe, C., op. cit., 143-144.
4. Ibid., 180-181.
5. Ibid., 204-205.
6. Porter, A. T., Creoledom, (London, Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 54.
7. Fyfe, C., op. cit., 225-226.
8. Hargreaves, J. D., "The Evolution of the Native Affairs Department",  
Sierra Leone Studies, N.S. III (Dec. 1954), p. 47.
9. Aildridge, T. J., A Transformed Colony, (London, Seeley, 1910), p. 67.
10. Watson, J. W., "Relict Geography in an Urban Community", in R. Miller  
and J. W. Watson (ed.), Geographical Essays in Memory  
of Alan G. Ogilvie, (Nelson, 1959), 110-144.
11. Ogilvie, A. G., "The Time Element in Geography", I.B.G. Trans. and Papers,  
XVIII (1952), 1-15.
12. Stanislawski, D., "The Origin and Spread of the Grid-Pattern Town",  
Geog. Rev. XXXVI, (1946), 105-120.

### CHAPTER III

#### LAND USE

The first step in the analysis of the land use pattern of central Freetown was a detailed field study and mapping of the whole area. Since vertical development is of only limited extent it was decided that it was not necessary to generalise the land use of the upper floors of buildings. Thus the land use of each floor of every building was plotted. A modified version of the classification adopted by Murphy and Vance<sup>1</sup> and D. Hywel Davies<sup>2</sup> was used in the field mapping.

Table 3.1

Basic Land Use Classification adopted in the Initial Field Study

Central Business Uses

A. Retail Business Uses

1. Food
2. Clothing
3. Household
4. Automobile
5. Variety
6. Amusement
7. Miscellaneous
8. Petty Trades
9. Department Stores

B. Service, Financial and Office Uses

1. Financial
2. Service Trades
3. Headquarter Offices

4. General Offices
5. Transport
6. Transient Residences
7. Parking

#### Non-Central Business Uses

1. Residential
2. Public and Government
3. Schools
4. Industrial
5. Wholesale
6. Commercial Storage
7. Vacant
8. Churches and Mosques
9. Institutions

The basic importance of the profit motive was accepted in the primary division into central business and non-central business uses.

#### DELIMITATION OF THE CBD

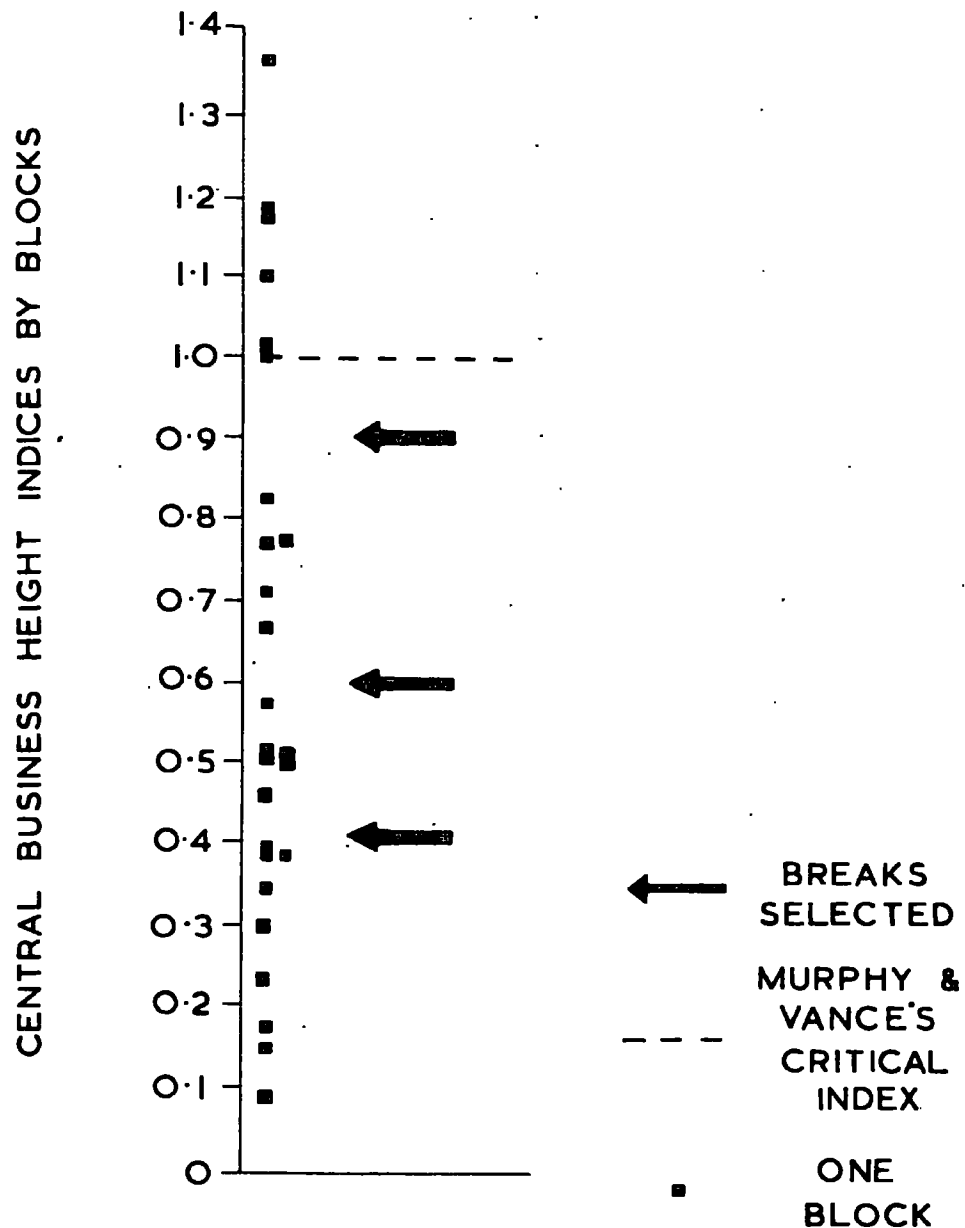
From this basic information a map of the areas devoted to central business activities was developed (Fig. 3:1). This map, used in conjunction with one showing total building heights (Fig. 5:1) facilitated the calculation of the Central Business Height - and Intensity Indices for each block.

Table 3:2Land Use Data

Block Number*	Total Ground Floor Area (Sq. Ft.)	Total Floor Space (Sq. Ft.)	Total Central Business Space (Sq. Ft.)
1	46,704.0	69,619.2	17,203.2
2	52,348.8	77,078.4	19,689.6
3	38,572.8	68,073.6	29,299.2
4	37,699.2	61,219.2	14,582.4
5	36,422.4	52,886.4	12,499.2
6	42,336.0	84,672.0	43,376.0
7	39,984.0	86,016.0	40,185.6
8	41,328.0	70,761.6	45,561.6
9	40,118.4	49,251.6	20,092.8
10	100,464.0	145,756.8	9,273.6
11	87,091.2	146,294.4	40,588.8
12	81,312.0	113,500.8	10,281.6
13	77,280.0	190,444.8	55,036.8
14	77,280.0	239,232.0	10,617.6
15	80,777.4	137,760.0	42,201.6
16	78,355.2	117,196.8	64,848.0
17	79,228.8	133,593.6	40,118.4
18	80,640.0	176,332.8	109,132.8
19	80,640.0	159,196.8	62,294.4
20	73,785.6	148,377.6	39,312.0
21	86,486.4	162,220.8	26,611.0
22	87,994.4	142,800.0	20,563.2
23	79,968.0	154,896.0	81,446.4
24	83,059.2	151,872.0	55,574.4
25	80,371.2	136,617.6	81,648.0
26	78,624.0	160,406.4	40,051.2

\* see Fig. i:2

# FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF CENTRAL BUSINESS HEIGHT INDICES BY BLOCKS IN CENTRAL FREETOWN



J M

FIG. 3:2

# CENTRAL FREETOWN

## NUMBER OF FLOORS OF CENTRAL BUSINESS USES

GOVERNMENT WHARF

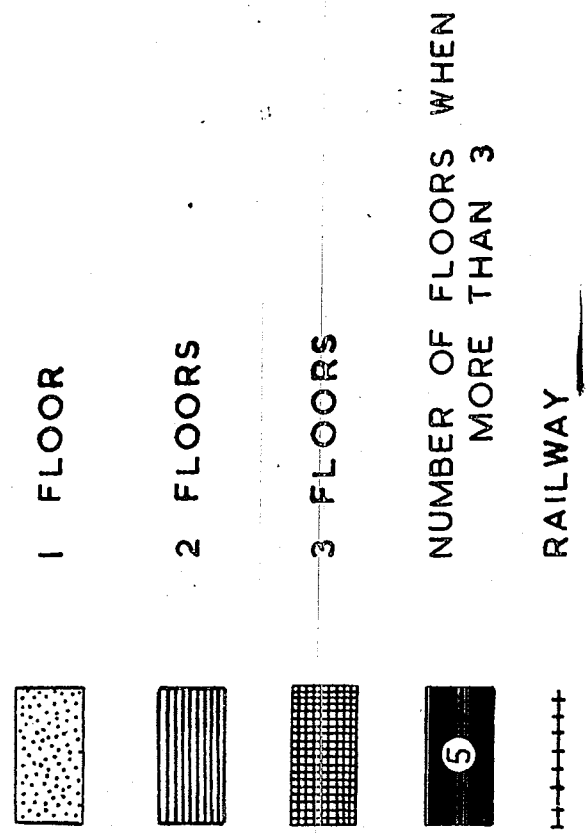
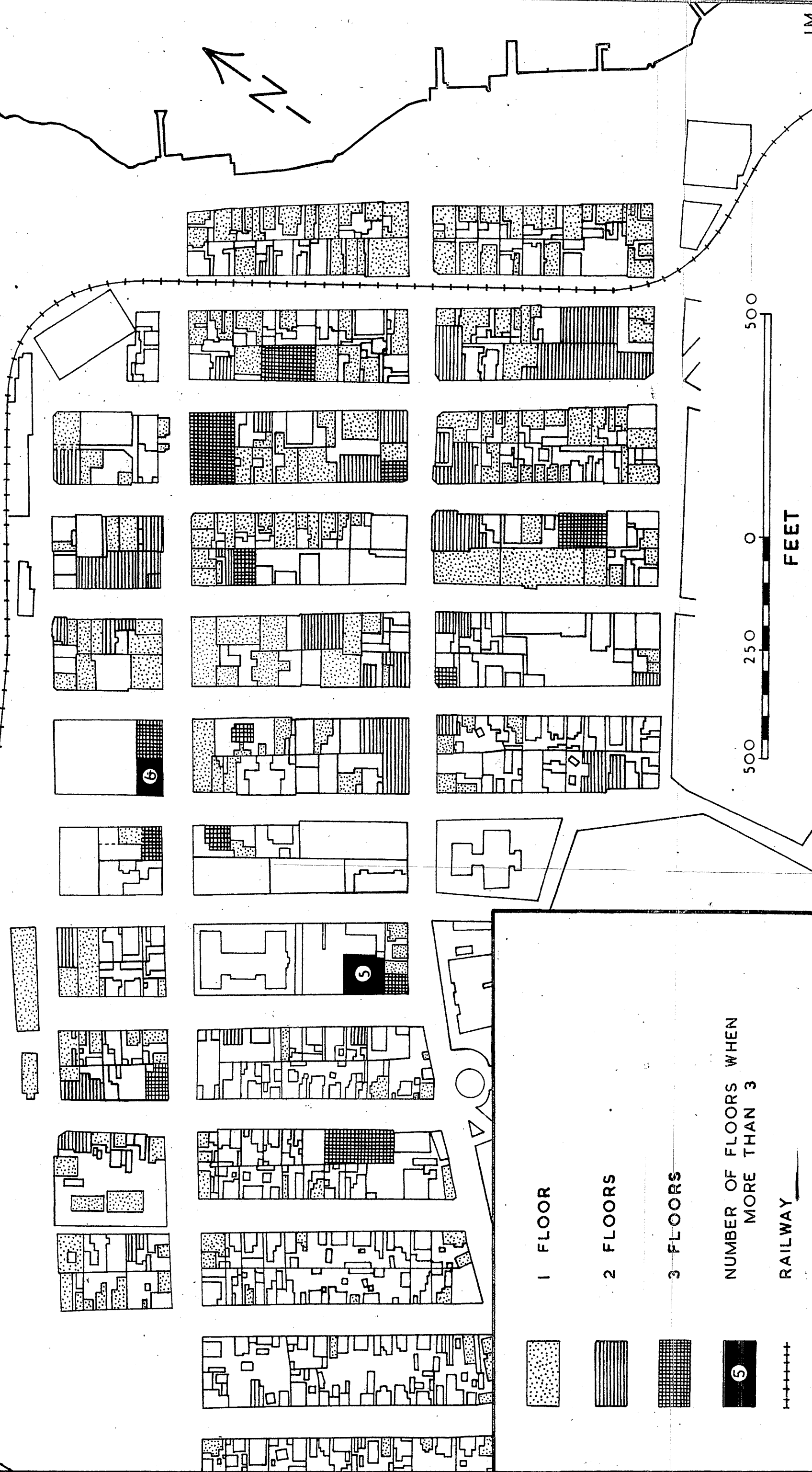


FIG. 3:1

JM

Table 3:3Central Business Height and Intensity Indices by Block

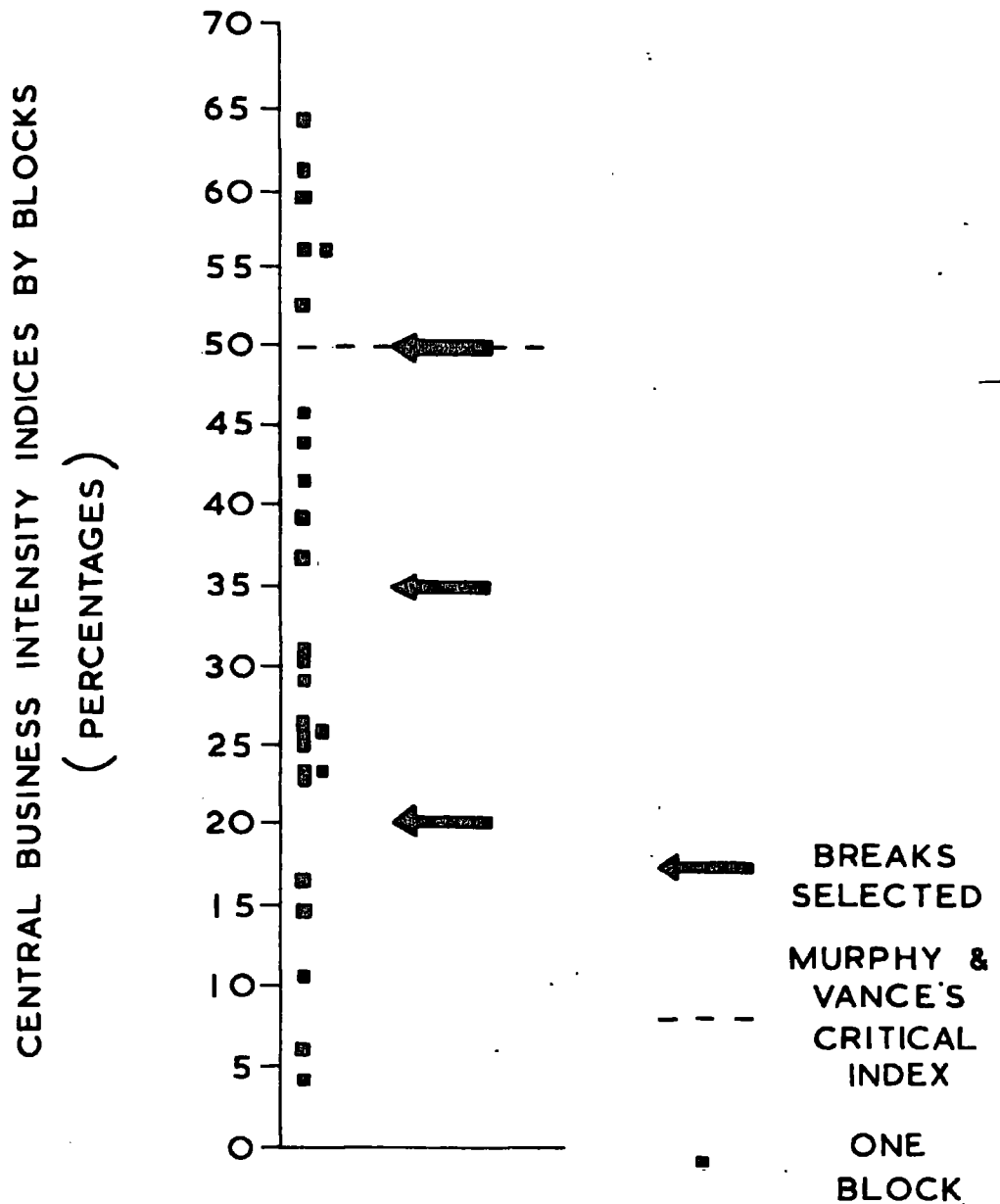
Block Number <sup>+</sup>	Central Business Height Index	Central Business Intensity Index (%)
1	0.37	24.0
2	0.38	25.5
3	0.76	43.0
4	0.39	23.8
5	0.34	23.6
6	1.12 <sub>≡</sub>	55.95 <sub>≡</sub>
7	1.00 <sub>≡</sub>	46.7
8	1.10 <sub>≡</sub>	64.39 <sub>≡</sub>
9	0.5	40.79
10	0.09	6.45
11	0.47	27.8
12	0.13	9.06
13	0.71	28.9
14	0.14	4.44
15	0.52	30.6
16	0.83	55.3 <sub>≡</sub>
17	0.51	30.03
18	1.35 <sub>≡</sub>	61.9 <sub>≡</sub>
19	0.77	39.2
20	0.53	26.5
21	0.30	16.4
22	0.24	14.4
23	1.02 <sub>≡</sub>	52.6
24	0.67	36.6
25.	1.17 <sub>≡</sub>	59.8 <sub>≡</sub>
26	0.51	25.0

+ see Fig. i:2

≡ above Murphy and Vance's Critical Figure



# FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF CENTRAL BUSINESS INTENSITY INDICES BY BLOCKS IN CENTRAL FREETOWN



JM

FIG. 3:3

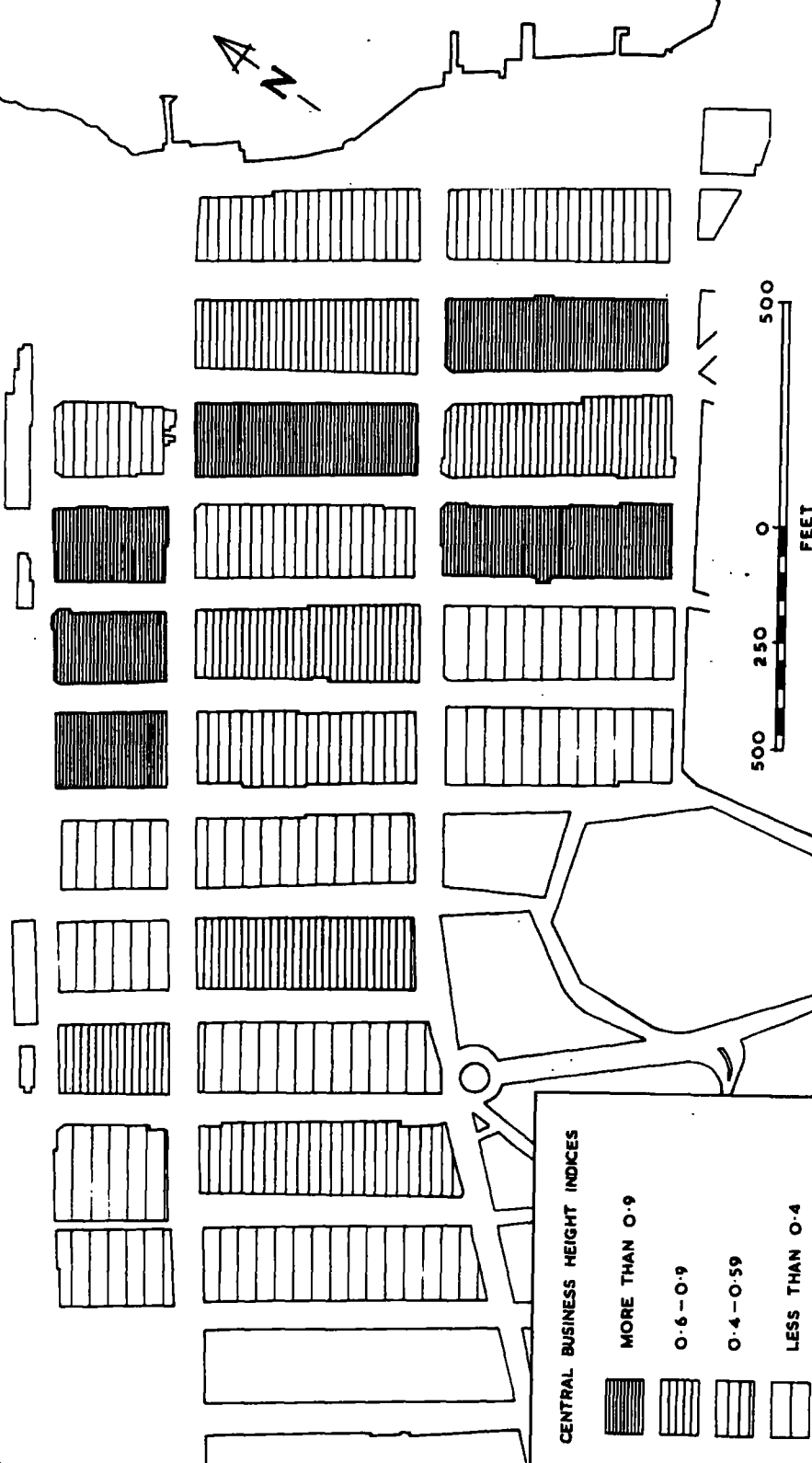
If one applies the criteria put forward by Murphy and Vance (whereby a block must have a Central Business Height Index of at least one and a Central Business Intensity Index of fifty per cent or over), only five blocks in the whole of central Freetown could be considered part of the CBD proper (i.e. blocks 6, 8, 18, 23 and 25). This list would be modified under certain rules adopted by Murphy and Vance. Block 6 would be excluded since it is not part of a group surrounding the peak land value intersection, and block 24 would be included because it is surrounded by blocks which are part of the CBD. Thus, using these criteria the CBD would consist of blocks 8, 18, 23, 24 and 25. This area has its main axis from North-east to South-west, along the line of Wilberforce and Rawdon Streets, with a broader section in the South of these blocks. This area largely corresponds with the distribution of European owned department stores, and shows how these dominate the retail trade of Freetown. Thus block 8 is largely occupied by Kingsway Stores, block 23 by the Freetown Cold Storage Company and block 25 by Paterson, Zochonis and Company. Block 18 has high indices mainly because of the presence of the large Bank of West Africa building.

Clearly, delimitation based on these criteria is far too narrow and unreal. The indices were arranged in dispersion graphs in an attempt to find more realistic criteria (Figs. 3:2 and 3:3).

In the Central Business Height Index figures (Fig. 3:4) breaks were selected at 0.4, 0.6 and 0.9. The distribution of the resultant divisions is shown in Fig. 3:4. None of the blocks in the upper division fall short of Murphy and Vance's criteria, although block 7, with a Height Index of 1.0 is excluded from the CBD proper by a low Intensity Index of 46.7%. The second division consists of blocks, 3, 13, 16, 19 and 23. Most of these have at

# CENTRAL FREETOWN

## DISTRIBUTION OF CENTRAL BUSINESS HEIGHT INDEX DIVISIONS



### CENTRAL BUSINESS HEIGHT INDICES

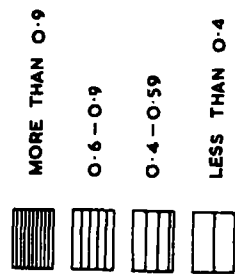


FIG. 3:4

JM

least one important commercial building. Thus, block 3 is occupied by a large office block, block 13 by the Agip Company offices, block 16 by the C.F.A.O. department store, block 19 by the Paterson Zochonis and Company garage and offices, while block 24 has many closely packed Lebanese and Indian owned stores.

In the third division blocks 9, 11 and 15 have a very low intensity of commercial activity except for one quite important development in each case - the United Africa Company Offices, the Roxy Cinema and Barclays Bank D.C.O. respectively. On the other hand, blocks 17 and 20 have a uniform, moderate density of Lebanese traders.

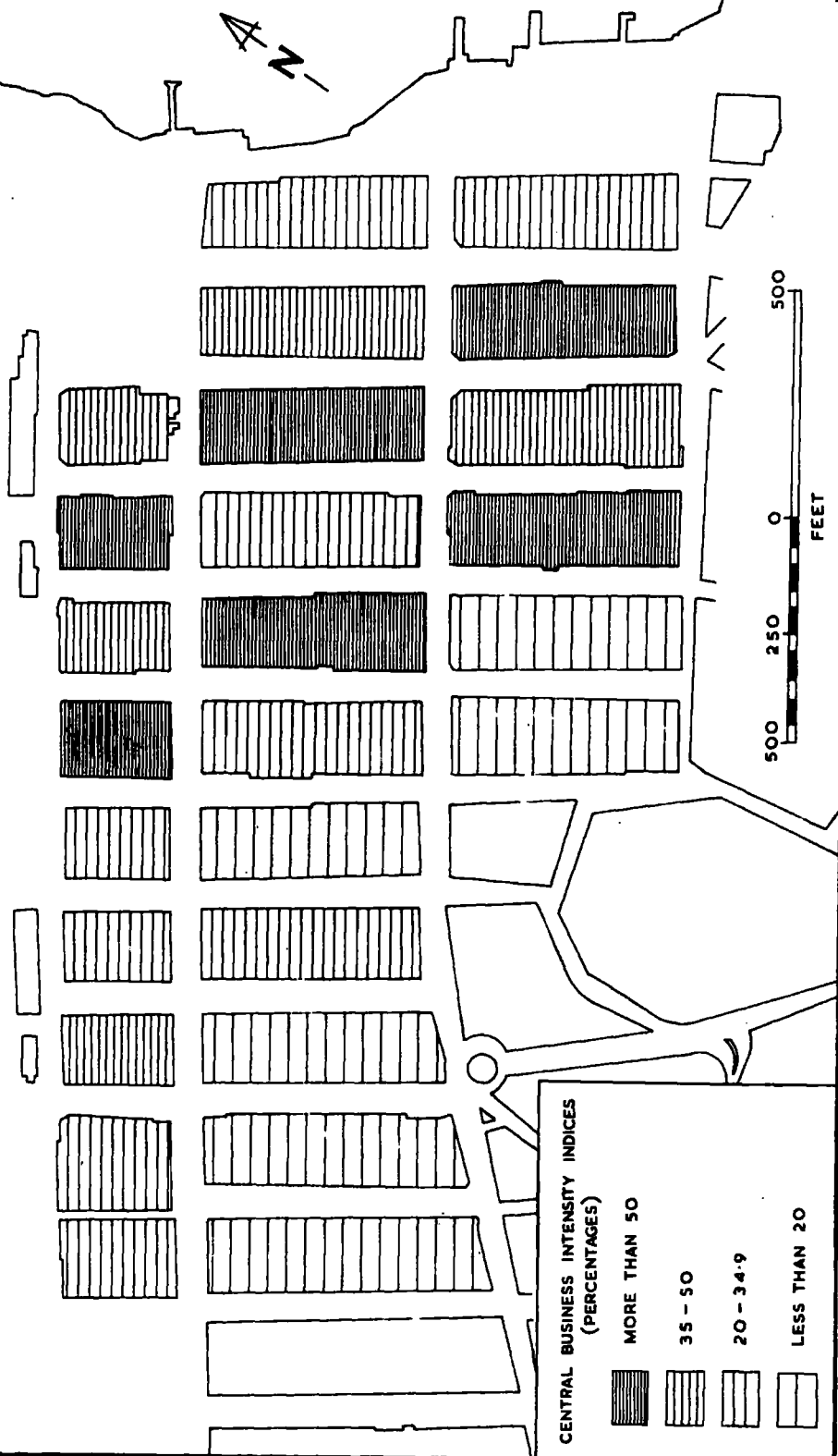
The other blocks considered all have very low indices. Blocks 1, 2 and 10 are well away from the main area of commercial activity, while areas of block 4, and most of block 5, are owned by the church. Much of block 12 is occupied by the United States Embassy, and block 14 by the Prime Minister's office.

Most of these remarks could also be applied to the distribution of Central Business Intensity Index divisions (Fig. 3:5). In particular, the blocks found in the first two divisions are strikingly similar to those in the first two divisions of Fig. 3:4 and for much the same reasons.

The reasons for the low indices found in many of the blocks are much the same as those cited by de Blij in his studies of Lourenço Marques and Dar es Salaam<sup>3</sup>. Many blocks are too large for their whole areas to be used for commercial activities. Consequently, in many cases only the block frontage is used for commerce, while the centres are used for gardens or contain shanty dwellings. The lots delimited in the early plan of Freetown (Fig. 2:1) were designed for a house and accompanying garden and are therefore unusually large.

# CENTRAL FREETOWN

## DISTRIBUTION OF CENTRAL BUSINESS INTENSITY INDEX DIVISIONS



CENTRAL BUSINESS INTENSITY INDICES  
(PERCENTAGES)

MORE THAN 50

35 - 50

20 - 34.9

LESS THAN 20

FIG. 3:5

Thus it would seem more reasonable to follow the system adopted by de Blij of using the proportion of each block frontage devoted to central business activities. de Blij used only the percentage of the ground floor area used in this way, but in this study it was decided to use the proportion of the block frontage at all levels. Thus a Central Business Frontage Intensity Index of 200 indicates that the frontage of the whole block is occupied by two floors of central business uses.

i.e. Central Business Frontage Intensity Index

$$= \frac{\text{Central Business Frontage on all floors}}{\text{Block Frontage at Ground Floor Level}} \times 100$$

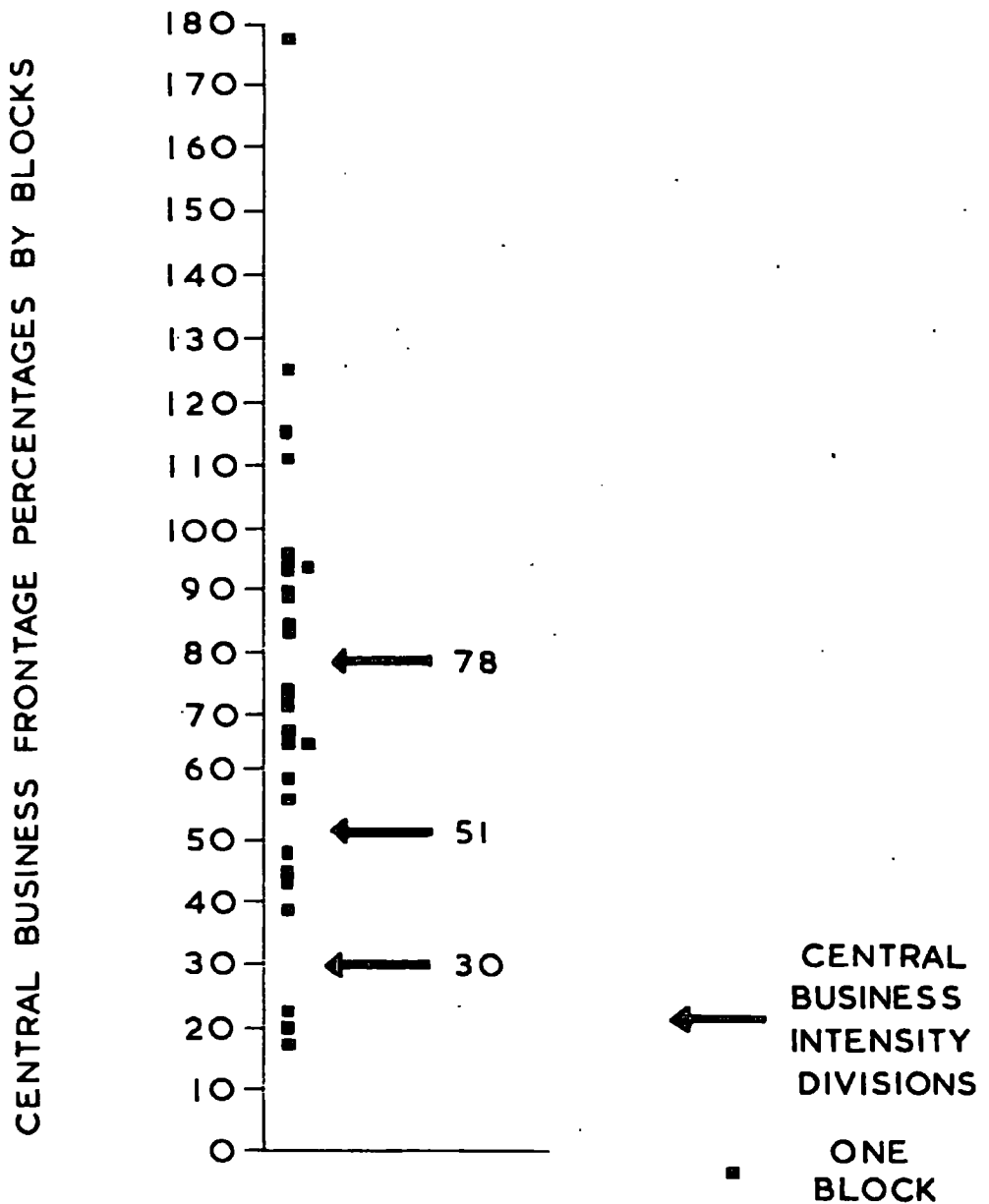
Table 3:4

Central Business Frontage Intensity Indices by Blocks

Block Number <sup>±</sup>	Central Business Frontage Intensity Index
1	64.4
2	38.5
3	126.2
4	58.8
5	54.8
6	93.3
7	92.6
8	111.1
9	63.6
10	19.9
11	48.6
12	21.8
13	66.3
14	17.8
15	92.4
16	88.3
17	82.0
18	178.2
19	73.1
20	73.7
21	44.2
22	46.0
23	89.6
24	84.8
25	115.4
26	72.0

± see Fig. 1:2

# FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF CENTRAL BUSINESS FRONTAGE PERCENTAGES BY BLOCKS IN CENTRAL FREETOWN



JM

FIG. 3:6

In fact, the use of all floors of central business uses makes little difference to most of the indices, since it is only in the blocks containing department stores or banks that second or third floors become important, and these blocks would have high indices in any case. However, this modification does highlight the dominance of these blocks in the commercial pattern of Freetown.

These results were also arranged in a dispersion graph (Fig. 3:6). The significant breaks selected were at 30, 51 and 78, and adopting de Blij's terminology the resulting divisions were named:

1. Intensive Central Business Frontage (Indices of 78 and above)
2. Semi-intensive Central Business Frontage (51.0-77.9)
3. Extensive Central Business Frontage (30.0-50.9)
4. Ultra-extensive Central Business Frontage (less than 30.0).

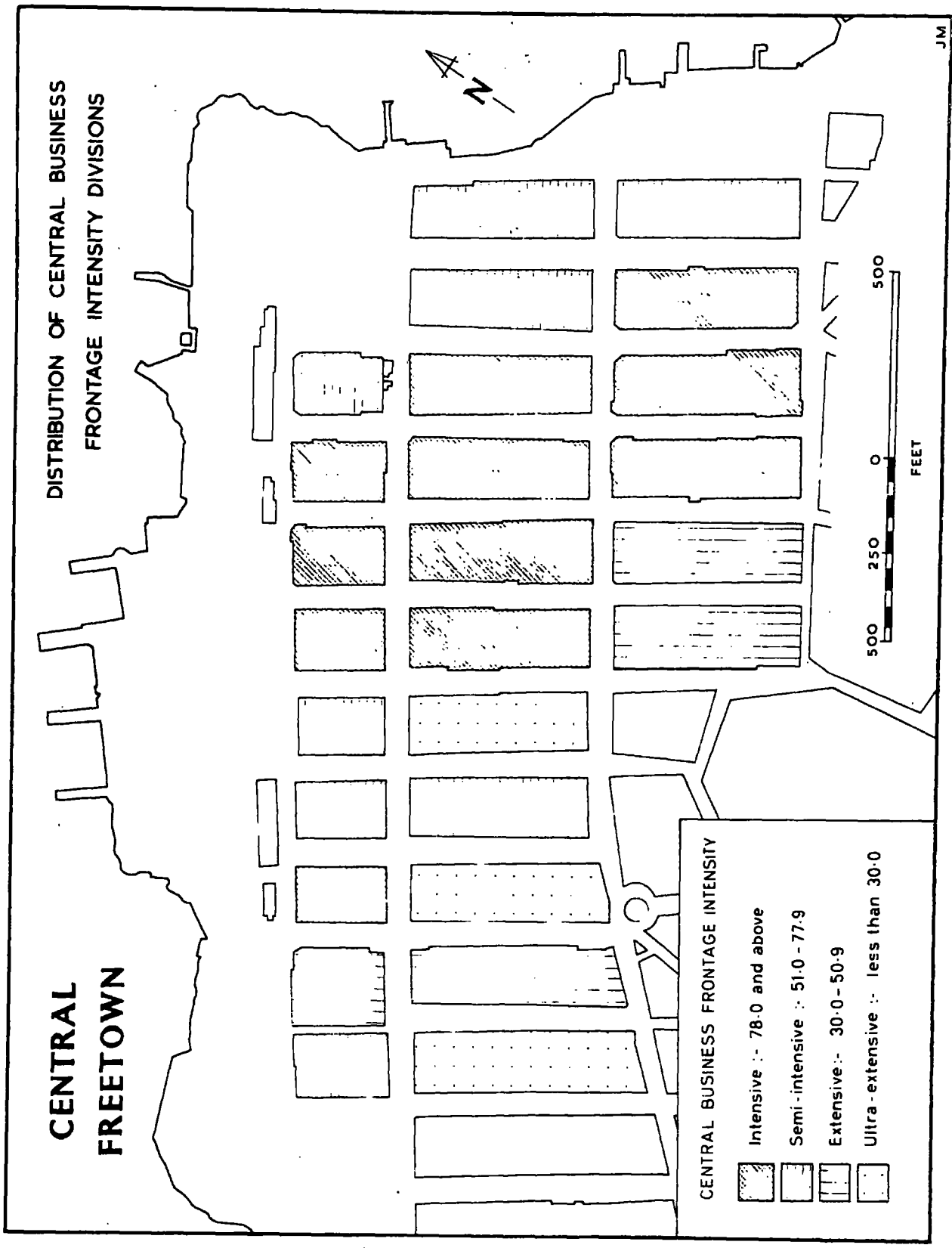
The distribution of these divisions is represented in Fig. 3:7. This shows a core area of intensive frontage use, consisting of blocks 6, 7, 8, 15, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24 and 25. The large areas devoted to Government and Embassy uses in blocks 12 and 14 have placed these in the lowest division, and inhibited the development of blocks 11 and 13, although these have risen above the lowest division. Thus, if one excludes the blocks with ultra-extensive retail frontage from the CBD, the area outlined in Fig. 3:7 remains. A subjective judgement based on mere observation would also suggest that these would be the most sensible boundaries to select.

#### BOUNDARIES OF THE CBD





##### (a) The Core Area

The North-western boundary of this area, and of the whole CBD, is clearly





**CENTRAL BUSINESS FRONTAGE INTENSITY**

-  Intensive :- 78.0 and above
-  Semi-intensive :- 51.0 - 77.9
-  Extensive :- 30.0 - 50.9
-  Ultra-extensive :- less than 30.0

**FIG. 3:7**

marked by Water Street with Government Wharf beyond. The street is situated at the top of a pronounced break of slope, which has effectively separated the two land uses. The break of slope and the commercial area beyond have prevented the expansion of the Government Wharf port facilities, and partly explain the decline in importance of this quay area, which was formerly Freetown's main trade outlet.

In the North the boundary is first marked by Rawdon Street, which divides block 8, containing Kingsway Stores, from block 9, devoted largely to wholesaling. This boundary then runs along Wilberforce Street between blocks 18, containing the Bank of West Africa, and 19, largely occupied by Lebanese traders. East Street is the next dividing line, between block 25 containing the Paterson, Zochonis and Company department store and block 26, again occupied by Lebanese traders. This section of the Northern boundary is also marked by the main railway line, which considerably reduces the accessibility of blocks 19 and 26.

The Eastern boundary of the core, and of the whole CBD, is Garrison Street with the Victoria Park beyond.

In the South-east the boundary at first follows Howe Street between blocks 23, containing the Freetown Cold Storage Company, and block 22 which is partly occupied by embassies. Further West this boundary follows Gloucester Street, which divides the commercial area of block 15 (Barclays Bank D.C.O.) and block 6 (Delco House) from block 14 (Prime Minister's Office, Post Office and Police Station) and block 5 (Anglican Cathedral).

The core area broadly corresponds to the CBD as defined using the upper divisions of the CB Height and Intensity Indices.

(b) The CBD Proper

The entire Northern and North-western boundary is marked by Water Street,

separating the commercial area from the harbour, and in the North-east by the harbour facilities of Susan's Bay, the actual limit being along Little East Street. In the South-east, as in the case of the core area, Garrison Street and the Victoria Park form the barrier. In the South-west the boundary is first marked by Gloucester Street, but is then irregular - at first running South-westwards along Oxford Street, but later taking in block 11, containing the large Roxy Cinema and Texaco Company Building, and block 13, with the Agip Company and Guma Valley Water Company offices.

Thus, the main boundaries of the CBD are:

1. In the North-west, North and North-east the harbour facilities of Susan's Bay and Government Wharf.
2. In the South-east the recreational area of Victoria Park.
3. In the South-west the main area of Government and embassy buildings, with blocks 12 and 14 protruding into the business area and giving it an irregular outline.

#### INTERNAL STRUCTURE AND LAND USE OF THE CBD

The most striking feature of the commerce within the CBD is the almost complete lack of specialisation by individual shops. Most shops appear to sell almost everything. The most logical classification of these would appear to be one based upon the nationality of the entrepreneur and the income group of the clientele. The main shop-owning groups are:

1. European companies
2. Indian companies and individuals
3. Lebanese traders
4. African traders.

#### 1. European Commerce

Retail shops owned by Europeans are entirely branches of the large

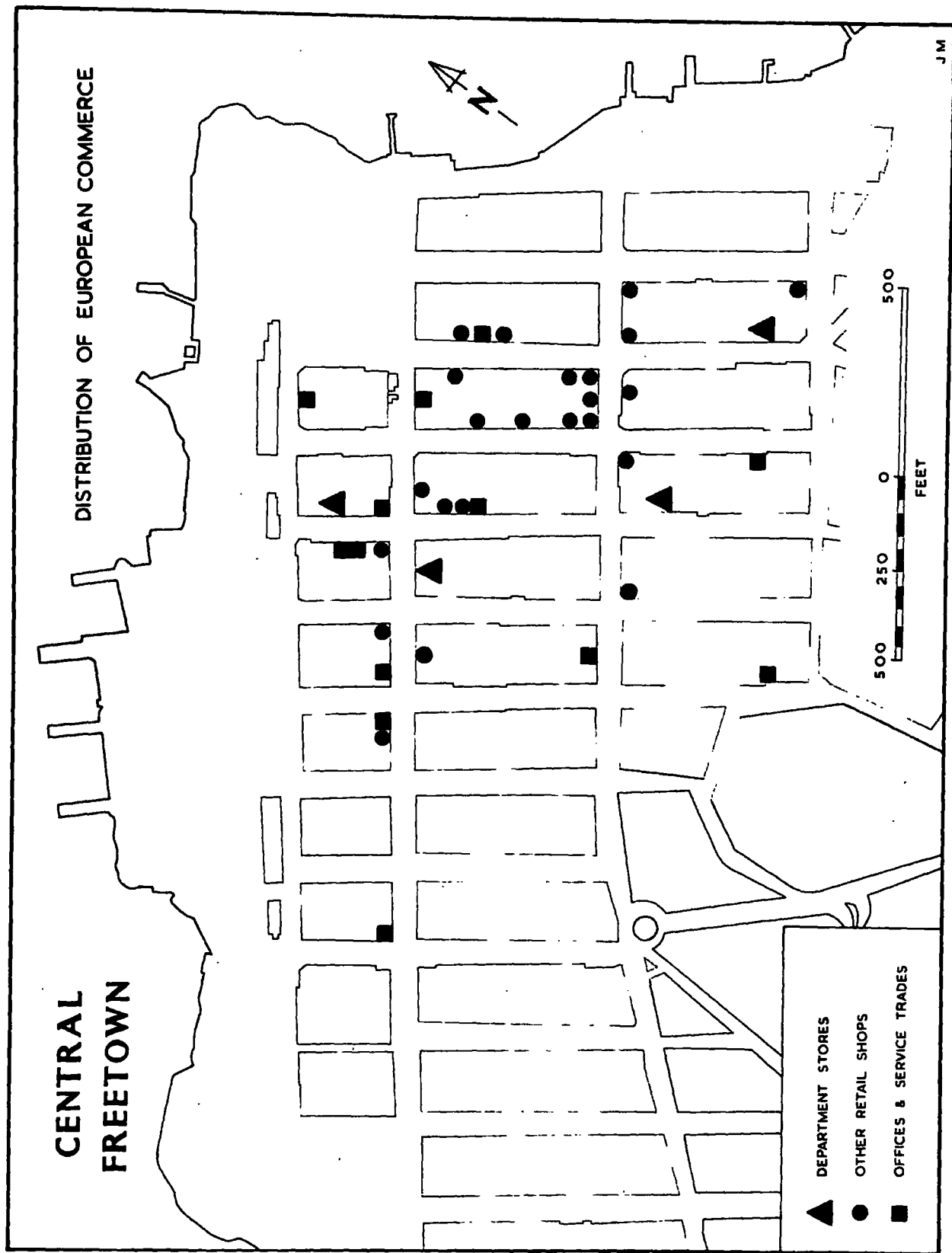


FIG. 3:8

department stores. These are (Fig. 3:8):

1. Kingsway Stores (United Africa Company) - Howe Street.
2. Paterson, Zochonis and Company Ltd. - Wilberforce Street.
3. Compagnie Française de l'Afrique Occidentale - corner of Howe Street and Oxford Street.
4. Freetown Cold Storage Co. - Howe Street.

These supply almost all the needs of the higher income group, both Europeans, who are numerically small but with a high per capita purchasing power, and the professional classes among Sierra Leoneans. Thus, these stores dominate the whole commercial life of central Freetown. Practically all the goods on sale are imported, mainly from Britain, and it is possible to purchase as wide a range of goods as in British stores.

The few specialised shops which do exist are owned by Europeans and are found only in the trades which supply large numbers of the population, including the lower sections of the income scale. A good example of this is the large shoe store owned by the Bata Company.

Other retail shops owned by European companies are grouped in the very centre of the commercial area, especially in Wilberforce, Rawdon and Howe Streets (Fig. 3:8) - i.e. in the most accessible part of Freetown and in the area with the highest land values.

Offices and service trades tend to be rather more scattered towards the edge of the area. The most important of these are the manufacturers' representatives, owned by Europeans and representing mainly European companies. Of considerable importance are the agents of British insurance companies, which are now thriving on the rapidly expanding car insurance market.

Although wholesaling is not strictly a central business land use, considerable areas of central Freetown are devoted to this. Much of this trade

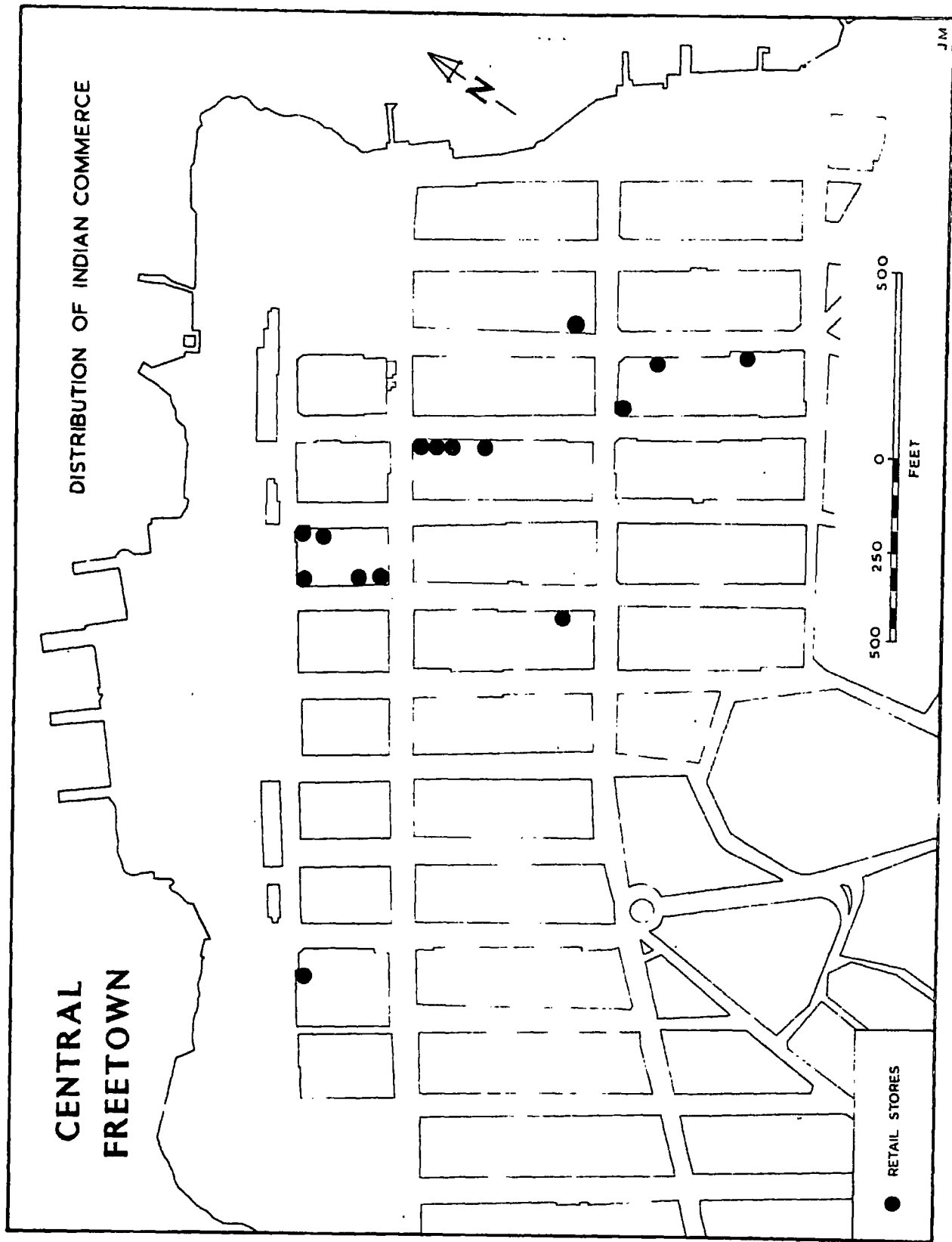


FIG. 3:9

is carried on by European companies, especially the United Africa Company and its subsidiary, G. B. Ollivant.

## 2. Indian Commerce

Indians have entered West Africa comparatively recently, but are now playing an active part in commerce. The retailing carried out by Indians is very variable in scale, ranging from large companies to individual traders. Some of the large companies can rival the large European owned stores. This is especially true of K. Chellaram and Company, which have shops in several parts of central Freetown. Together these constitute a formidable concern. An unusual feature of this company is the functional specialisation of each of these branch shops - food, clothing and electrical goods are sold in separate stores.

Of less importance are companies such as Chanrai and Daldas, although by Freetown standards these are still quite important. Unlike Chellarams, the various branches of these companies sell a wide variety of goods, and are almost indistinguishable from stores owned by individual Indian traders.

The true individual traders are usually found outside the central area. These sell a wide variety of goods, and are very similar to the Lebanese traders, which will be described later.

The shops within the central area, which apart from those in block 2 are owned by the large Indian companies, form three main concentrations (Fig. 3:9), in blocks 7, 17 and 25. This can be accounted for by the tightly knit nature of the Indian community, and the family ties of many of its members.

## 3. Lebanese Commerce

The vast majority of Lebanese commerce is in the hands of individual traders. Functional specialisation is almost completely absent, each trader

selling a wide variety of goods including cheap printed cotton cloth, cooking equipment, food, automobile spares and a wide variety of clothing. Most shops are operated by a single family, the mother and children serving customers. In most cases the family lives on the one or two floors above the shop itself. These two or three storey buildings, with their upper floor verandahs and flat roofs, form a distinctive architectural type found throughout the West African coast. As the family lives above the shop there is, of course, no problem of journey to work. This is in marked contrast to the European businessmen, many of whom live in the Hill Station/Wilberforce area and cause considerable traffic congestion every morning and evening.

Although there has been no detailed anthropological work on the social structure of Freetown's Lebanese community, work by Khuri<sup>4</sup> on very similar groups in Magbraka, Sierra Leone and Ouagadougou, Upper Volta provides some very valuable pointers. Indeed, his findings correspond so well with those of Morill<sup>5</sup> for Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ghana that it is almost certain that these results apply to the whole of West Africa including Freetown. The motives of most Lebanese in coming to Africa were clearly given by one emigrant when he said that "those who fail their future in Lebanon search for it in Africa"<sup>6</sup>. All the migrants from one town or village in the Lebanon tend to congregate in one African town. Thus, most of the Lebanese in Dakar (Senegal) come from Tyre, and most of those in Bamako (Mali) come from Bayt Shabab, in Mount Lebanon. When possible, the kinship structure of the parent community is reproduced in the emigrant settlement. Links with the parent community remain very strong. Young men are sent out to Africa, sponsored by successful migrants, and are taught to be traders. Children are sent home to the Lebanon for education and to absorb the Lebanese culture.



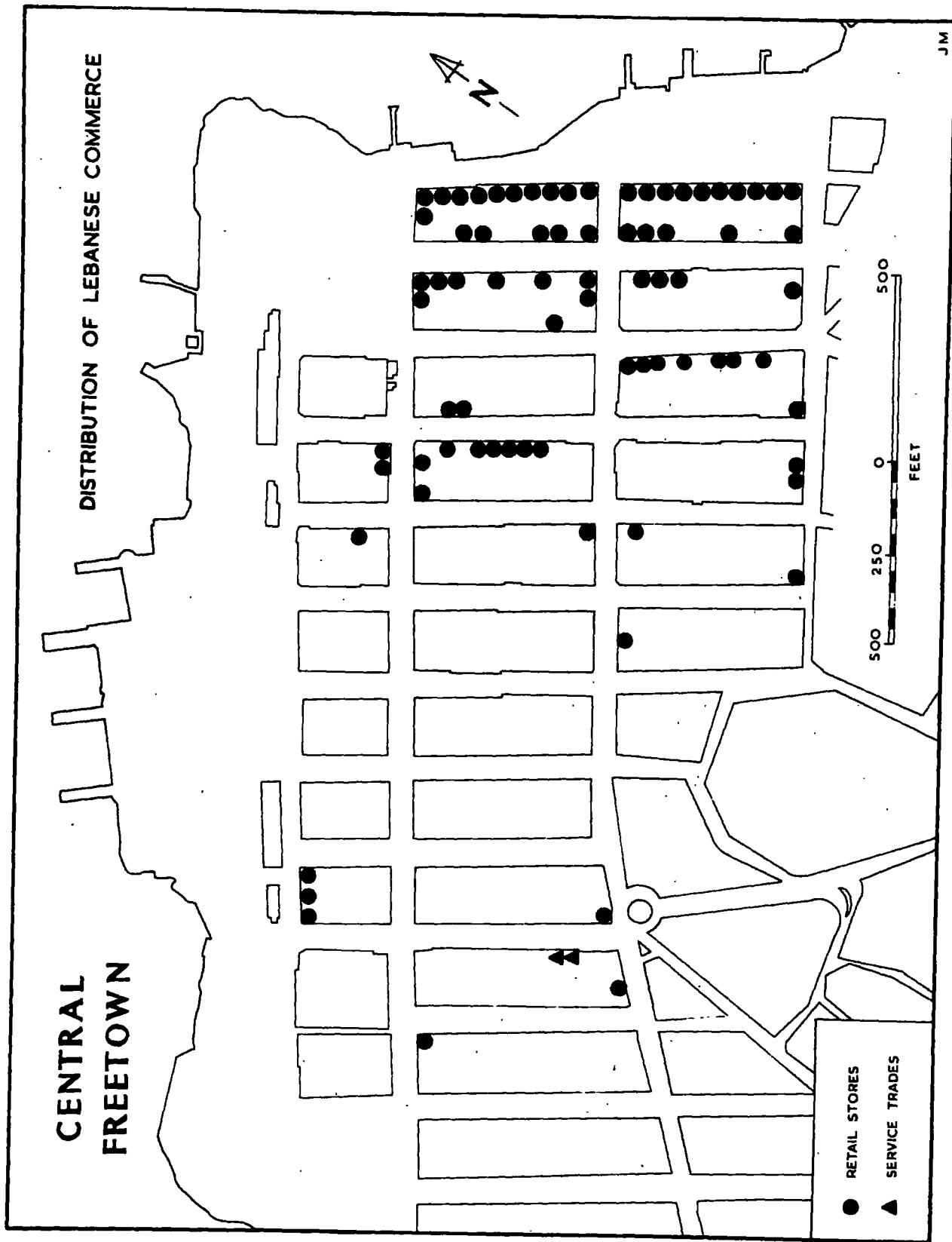


FIG. 3:10

Thus a very tightly knit community tends to form in West African towns. This is reflected in the distribution of Lebanese traders in Freetown (Fig. 3:10). Family groups of traders establish groups of shops, and sons setting up businesses of their own try to find shops close to their parents' homes. This process has resulted in the very dense concentration of Lebanese in East Street and Little East Street.

#### 4. African Traders

Almost all African commerce is carried out on a very small scale, usually just by one person. Such businesses, lacking capital and high turn-overs, have been pushed out of the high-rent central area (Fig. 3:11).

The largest concentration of African business is in the South-west corner of the central area, close to the markets near King Jimmy. Most of these shops sell small quantities of a wide range of goods. Here it is possible to buy one penny-worth of salt, a dozen sugar lumps or one cigarette. Since turn-over and profits are so small, shopkeepers work extremely long hours in an attempt to sell a few more goods. Members of the Fula tribe constitute the majority of these petty traders - their commercial sense is seemingly better developed than most of the other Sierra Leone tribes. Small shops of this kind are scattered throughout the city, catering for high frequency convenience shopping needs.

A few larger scale African shops are emerging within the central area, supplying such things as electrical goods and curios for the tourist trade (which the Sierra Leone Government is actively attempting to expand). However, these are still very small in number.

Markets, the traditional form of African commerce, still have an important part to play in the supply of food to the bulk of the African population. None of Freetown's markets is actually within the central area, but the group

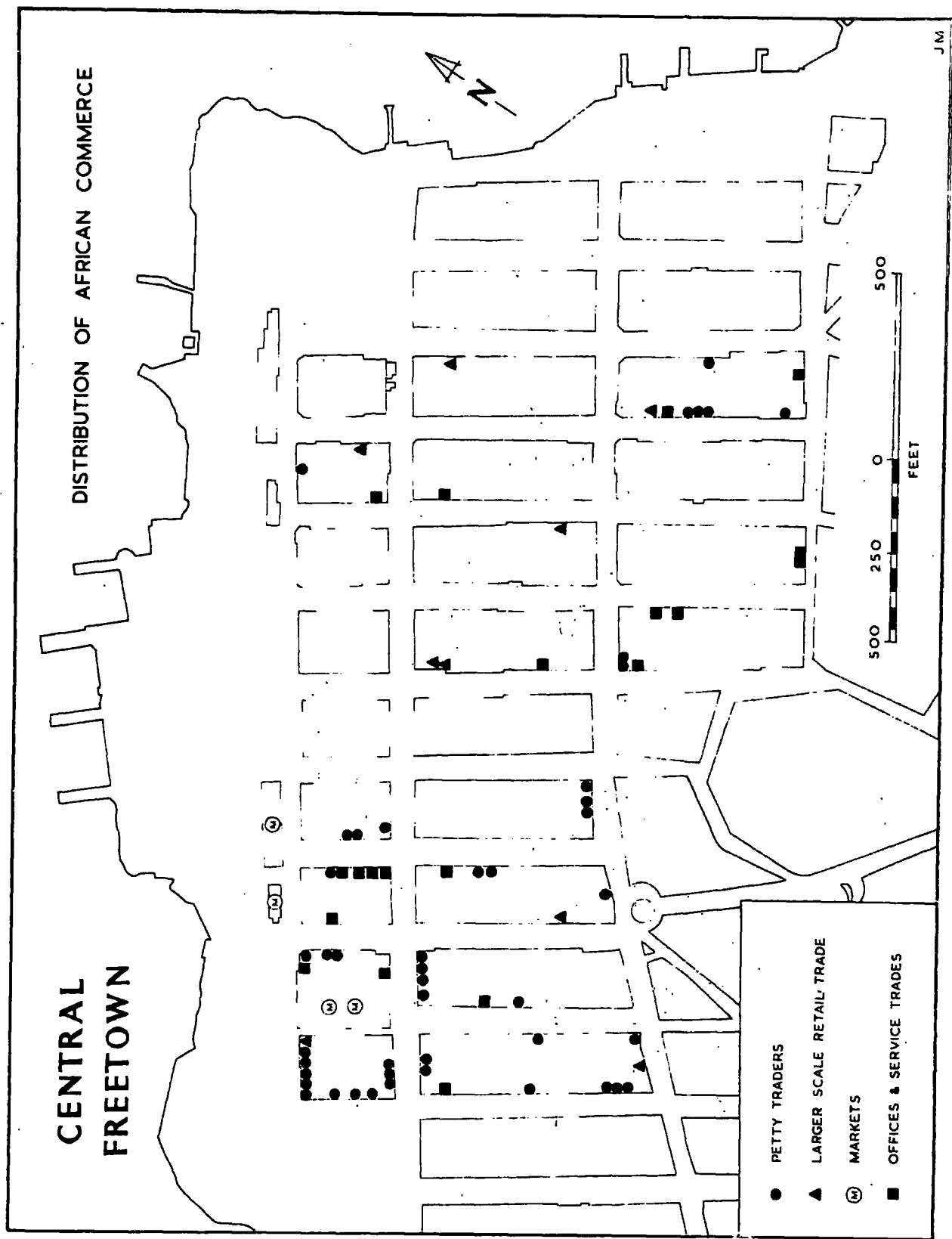


FIG. 3:11

of markets around King Jimmy are on the South-western border. The King Jimmy market itself, which is held on the site of the "Watering Place" so well known to sixteenth century and later mariners, is similarly important in distributing the fresh vegetables and fruits brought over the river from the area around Lungi by the traditional "Bulloom" boats. Although some slight grouping of traders selling similar products does occur in some sections of the markets, this functional grouping does not approach the intensity found within the commercial areas of many Middle Eastern cities.

Anyone walking along the streets of Freetown cannot help but be struck by the profusion and persistence of African street hawkers. Some of these, especially the women and children, sell fruit and vegetables, especially oranges, bananas, plantains and pineapples. The recent Government ban on the sale of rice by all non-Sierra Leoneans meant that for a time street hawkers selling packets of rice enjoyed a virtual monopoly of the market. Most male hawkers concentrate on the sale of watches, cheap jewelry and sunglasses. Street hawkers are found in all the busy streets of the central area, and particularly outside the large department stores. The Freetown City Council is now trying to confine such sales to the proper market areas (where market dues can be collected from each trader). Consequently, the police are now trying to stop any sales by the street hawkers, and recently some arrests have been made.

The offices of several doctors and lawyers - the occupations which most of the educated Creoles aspire to - are found within the central area (Fig. 3:11). As is usual in many American cities, most of these offices are found on the upper floors of shops on the edge of the core area proper, where rents are rather lower.

### Intensity of Commercial Occupance

Although, for reasons already explained, Central Business Height and Intensity Indices are somewhat artificially low, this method of analysis is useful in demonstrating the relatively low intensity of commercial land use in central Freetown. Even though direct quantitative comparisons with American and European cities may not be justified, the results obtained for Freetown do stand in marked contrast to the results presented by Murphy and Vance after their study of nine cities in the United States<sup>7</sup>. Even using de Blij's less rigorous criteria, only a small area of fairly intensive land use was found.

This can largely be explained by the fact that the Sierra Leone economy is not running at a very high level. Very few new companies have come into the country in the past few years, therefore demand for new commercial accommodation in central Freetown has not been high. Many of the recent economic projects are directly owned and operated by the Sierra Leone Government, thus their presence is not directly reflected in the construction of new head offices within the capital city. Development resulting from the two major sources of prosperity, iron ore and diamonds, has largely benefited provincial centres such as Lurnar and Kenema. Thus, one does not find the marked centralisation on the capital city which has resulted in the obvious prosperity of Dakar, Abidjan and similar cities. In many ways the Sierra Leone policy of widespread national development is preferable, but it does not result in a booming and eye-catchingly modern capital city.

### Non-Central Business Land Uses

As a result of this lack of intense demand for commercial space, considerable areas of central Freetown are still devoted to what are classed as non-central business uses (Fig. 3:12).

# CENTRAL FREETOWN SOME NON-CENTRAL BUSINESS USES

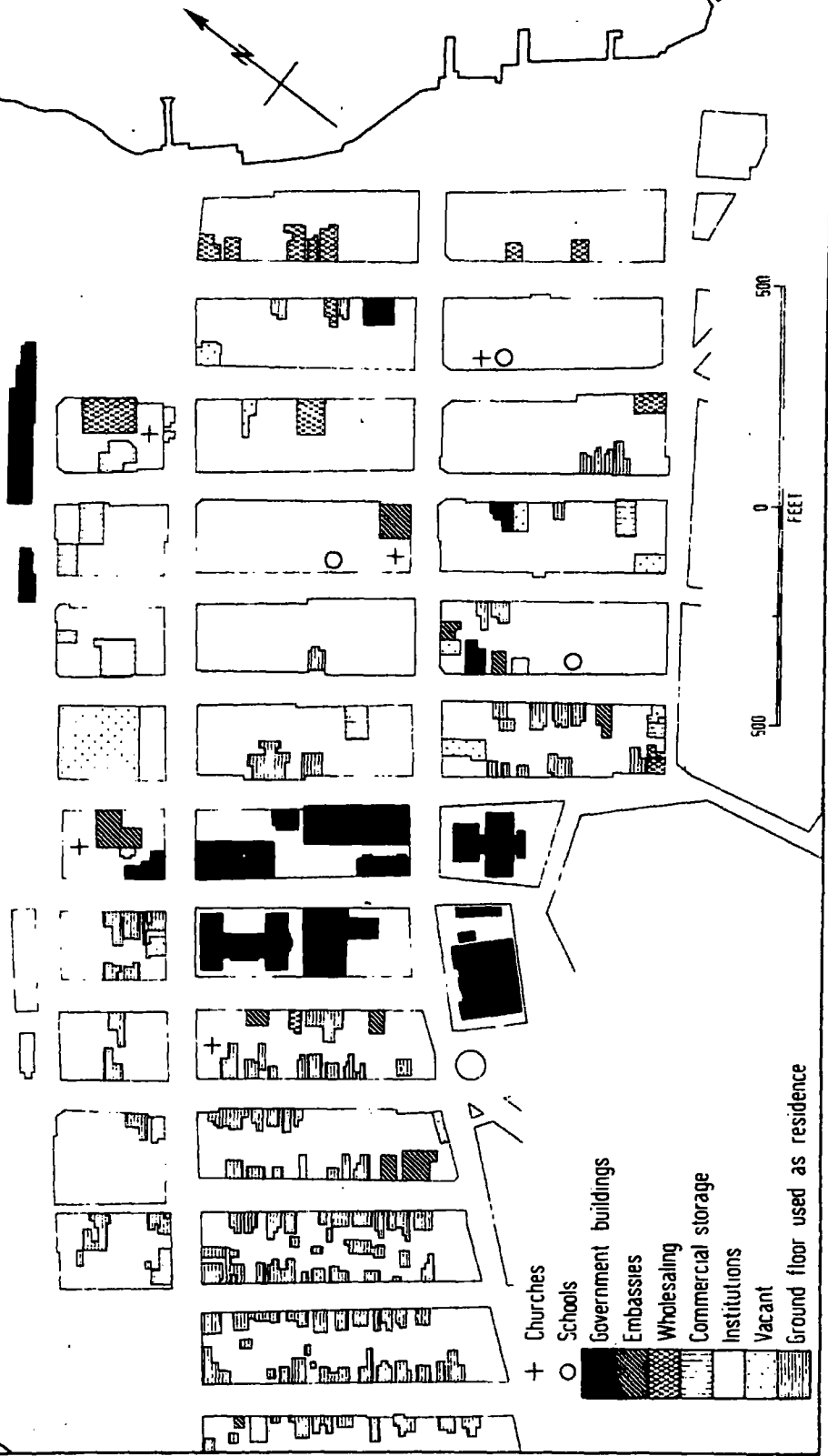


FIG. 3:12

A wedge of Government buildings extends from the State House, through blocks 13 and 14 (containing the Secretariat and Prime Minister's Office) to the Freetown City Council Offices. This marked concentration of Governmental activities in the central area is very unusual, since most administrations try to avoid such high land value areas. Nor is this centralisation mere historical inertia. Some Government Departments are situated on the outskirts of the city at New England. Here there is ample room for expansion, but the old one storey wooden buildings surviving from the Colonial administration are not being replaced. Rather, available resources are being used to develop premises in the central area. This is clearly demonstrated by the recent construction of the tower block for the Prime Minister's department. The explanation for this centralisation probably lies in the very real desire to make ministers and other government officials easily accessible to the general public. It is felt that every citizen should be able to present a grievance to a government official as easily as possible. As most Africans do not own cars and cannot afford taxi fares a central location for the administration is most convenient for the majority. Of course a price has to be paid for this accessibility, but this is felt to be justified. Most Freetown businessmen feel that this trend towards central location will continue. No-one seems prepared to develop the areas close to existing government buildings since these would be quickly taken over should expansion of the administration take place. This would explain the numerous derelict buildings in block 15.

Wholesalers tend to congregate in the North-eastern section of the CBD. This is partly because this area adjoins the port facilities of Government Wharf, which until 1954 was the main importing point for the city. This has now been replaced by the Queen Elizabeth II Quay, and many warehousing

and wholesaling companies have moved their premises close to this deep-water harbour. But some wholesalers still retain their premises close to the city centre. Such a site also has the advantage of being very accessible to stores in this core area, but being far enough away from the peak land value intersection to keep costs fairly low. Since most wholesalers require large areas of floor space this land value consideration is very important. Many Lebanese wholesalers occupy sites to the East of the railway line in East Street since land values drop sharply beyond this line. So much wholesaling is found within the actual CBD that a case might be made (as Diamond did in the case of Glasgow<sup>8</sup>) for including wholesaling as a central business land use. Its importance is likely to increase as Freetown is becoming a more important wholesaling centre. As communications, and roads in particular, are being rapidly improved, many up-country traders are finding it more economic to buy their own vehicles and buy their goods direct from Freetown wholesalers rather than from middle-men in the provincial centres. This means that most traders now tend to buy supplies in bulk and reduce costs in this way as well as saving some of the profit necessarily taken by provincial wholesalers. Therefore it seems certain that the centralisation of wholesaling on Freetown will become even stronger in the near future.

The close relationship between missionaries and the development of education is clearly demonstrated by the frequent adjacent positions of churches and schools. This pattern is common in all Sierra Leone towns and even in the centre of Freetown. Pressure from commerce has not yet been strong enough to force these institutions to take less valuable sites in the suburbs. Thus a very large school, covering almost half a block, is located next to the Roman Catholic Cathedral, very close to the peak land value intersection. There are numerous similar examples within the CBD. But the



position and importance of missionary societies in education is now declining. The state feels a responsibility for extending education to all Sierra Leonean children, and perhaps even resents foreign interference in education. Missionaries have tended to become identified with the old colonialism, and it is a part of the nationalist dogma that the importance of such bodies should be minimised as soon as the Sierra Leone economy is strong enough to provide alternative facilities. State schools will not, of course, be tied to the location of churches. Indeed, all the government schools built recently in Freetown have been located on the outskirts of the city where land is cheaper, there is room for future expansion and the surroundings are generally quieter and more pleasant for children.

The low level of commercial activity in Freetown has meant that a considerable number of lots and buildings have been left vacant. These are mainly just away from the centre of business activity in the blocks adjoining Water Street and Garrison Street. The majority of block 6 is vacant. This has partly been filled by the Delco and Bata building, but only on the more accessible Oxford Street side.

A surprisingly large number of residential buildings are found within the commercial area, especially in the South close to Victoria Park. The upper storeys of so many buildings are used as residences that in this discussion only the cases in which the ground floors, the most accessible and therefore of most value to commerce, are used for this purpose will be considered. In the real core area a number of houses owned by the old, well-established Creole families still survive. These sites have been handed down from the original settlers to their present descendants, and it is part of the Creole pride in their background and feeling of social superiority that such houses have been retained. Most of these houses have been modernised

and are in first-class condition. As one would expect, there are considerably more buildings used as houses to the West of the government area. Again, these are on the sites of houses dating from the early phases of settlement. In many cases the original houses made of wood, with an upper balcony supported on pillars in front of the ground floor and with dormer windows in the upper floor, still survive. The area around Liverpool Street is ideal for studying the original architecture of Freetown, reflecting the strong influence of the Southern United States. In this area occur some of the worst housing conditions in the city, and it could be argued that this is a 'blighted zone' or 'zone of deterioration' ready to be taken over by an expanding commercial area.

REFERENCES

1. MURPHY, R. E. and VANCE, J. E., "Delimiting the CBD", op. cit., 189-222.
2. DAVIES, D. Hywel., op. cit., 322-345.
3. DE BLIJ, H. J., "The Functional Structure and CBD of Lourenco Marques, Mocambique", op. cit., 56-77.
4. ----- Dar es Salaam: A Study in Urban Geography, op. cit., 45-60.
4. KHURI, F. I., "Kinship, Emigration and Trade Partnership among the Lebanese of West Africa", Africa, XXXV (1965), 385-395.
5. MORRILL, W. T., "Socio-cultural Adaptation in a West African Lebanese Community", Anthropological Quarterly, XXXV, 146-155.
6. KHURI, F. I., op. cit., p 385.
7. MURPHY, R. E. and VANCE, J. E., "A Comparative Study of Nine Central Business Districts", op. cit., 21-46.
8. DIAMOND, D. R., op. cit., 525-534.

#### CHAPTER IV

#### LAND VALUES

Although Murphy and Vance pointed out some important limitations in the use of land values in the delimitation of the CBD<sup>1</sup>, such information can be of use in explaining certain features of the land use pattern.

All commercial companies benefit from and strive for maximum accessibility to their market. Since the CBD is the most attractive area of the city in this respect, most firms would benefit from being located there. However, space in this core area is limited, thus in a free market system firms compete for the best sites by offering what are generally known as "bid rents". The companies which place the highest value on the most accessible sites and are thus prepared to pay the highest prices, occupy the best positions. Thus in all cities one finds that the highest land values are encountered in the CBD. From the single point with the highest market price (known as the "peak land value intersection"), land values usually decline fairly quickly towards the edge of the CBD, and are still lower at the edge of the city, although the decline with increased distance from the centre is less rapid there.

In deciding upon a suitable site, each individual firm must weigh the

advantages of high accessibility against the cost of land. Different classes of commerce place differing emphasis on easy access to their market. Those which attach most importance to this find it more profitable to occupy a site in the centre of the CBD in spite of the higher cost of land. Some types of land use are forced to take sites on the periphery of the CBD, while others, generally those which require large areas of land, are forced out of the CBD. The arterial commercial ribbons described by Berry<sup>2</sup> are usually made up of firms of the latter type. Thus the land use pattern described in Table 1:1 can be accounted for in terms of the value which each type of establishment places upon accessibility to the market.

Land value information is of two basic types:

1. Appraised land values, which are estimates of the market values of particular properties.
2. Assessed land values, which are the legal valuations of properties for tax purposes.

Information of both types was collected for the central area of Freetown.

### APPRAISED LAND VALUES (3)

Figs. 4:1, 4:2 and 4:3 show appraised land values of three different kinds (all figures refer to 1965):

1. Freehold values, per town lot of bare building land. (1 town lot = 50 feet by 75 feet, or 11.627 town lots = 1 acre).
2. Leasehold values, per town lot per annum on a twenty year lease, of bare building land.
3. Leasehold values per square foot per annum of office and commercial accommodation.

TABLE 4:1Average Freehold Land Values per Town Lot, 1961 and 1965

<u>Street</u>	<u>Average Freehold Value per Town Lot (Leones)</u>		<u>Percentage Change</u>
	<u>1961</u>	<u>1965</u>	
East	16,000	12,000	-25.0
Wilberforce	18,000	13,000	-27.8
Rawdon	14-16,000	10-12,000	-26.1
Howe	12-16,000	9-12,000	-25.0
Charlotte	9-12,000	8-11,000	-11 - -8.3
Gloucester	16,000	12,000	-25.0
George	12-16,000	9-12,000	-25.0
Trelawney	12-16,000	9-12,000	-25.0
Walpole	8,000	7,000	-12.5
Pultney	5- 6,000	6,000	+ 8.3
Percival	4,000	5,000	+25.0
Liverpool	4,000	4,000	-
Bathurst	3,600	3,000	-16.6
Wellington	2,400-3,000	2,500	-4.2 - -16.6
Waterloo	2,000-2,400	2,000	0 - -16.6
Brook	2,000	2,000	-

(One Pound Sterling = Two Leones)

TABLE 4:2Average Leasehold Land Values per Town Lot, 1961 and 1965

<u>Street</u>	<u>Leasehold Land Values per Town Lot per annum on a Twenty Year Lease (Leones)</u>		<u>Percentage Change</u>
	<u>1961</u>	<u>1965</u>	
East	1,200	1,300	+ 8.3
Wilberforce	1,300	1,400	+ 7.7
Rawdon	1,200	1,100	- 8.3
Howe	1,100	1,000	- 9.1
Charlotte	900	900	-
Gloucester	1,200	1,200	-
George	1,000	1,000	-
Trelawney	1,000	900	-10
Walpole	600	800	+33
Pultney	500	750	+50
Percival	400	600	+50
Liverpool	300	500	+66
Bathurst	280	400	+42.9
Wellington	260	300	+15.4
Waterloo	240	250	+ 4.2
Brook	200	200	-

TABLE 4:3Value of Leasehold Office/ Commercial Accommodation per Sq. Ft., per annum,1961 and 1965

<u>Street</u>	<u>Leasehold Office/Commercial Accommodation per Sq. Ft., per annum (Leones)</u>		<u>Percentage Change</u>
	<u>1961</u>	<u>1965</u>	
East	2.50	2.00	-20
Wilberforce	2.50	2.00	-20
Rawdon	2.00-2.50	1.50	-25 - -40
Howe	1.50-2.00	1.00-1.50	-33.3 - -25
Charlotte	1.50-2.00	1.00-1.50	-33.3 - -25
Gloucester	2.00	1.50	-25
George	2.50-3.00	2.00-2.50	-20 - -16.6
Trelawney	2.00	1.50	-25
Walpole	1.50	1.00	-
Pultney	1.00	1.00	-
Percival	1.00	1.00	-
Liverpool	0.80	0.75	-6.25
Bathurst	0.70	0.70	-
Wellington	0.65	0.65	-
Waterloo	0.60	0.60	-
Brook	0.50	0.50	-



# PRELIMINARY

96

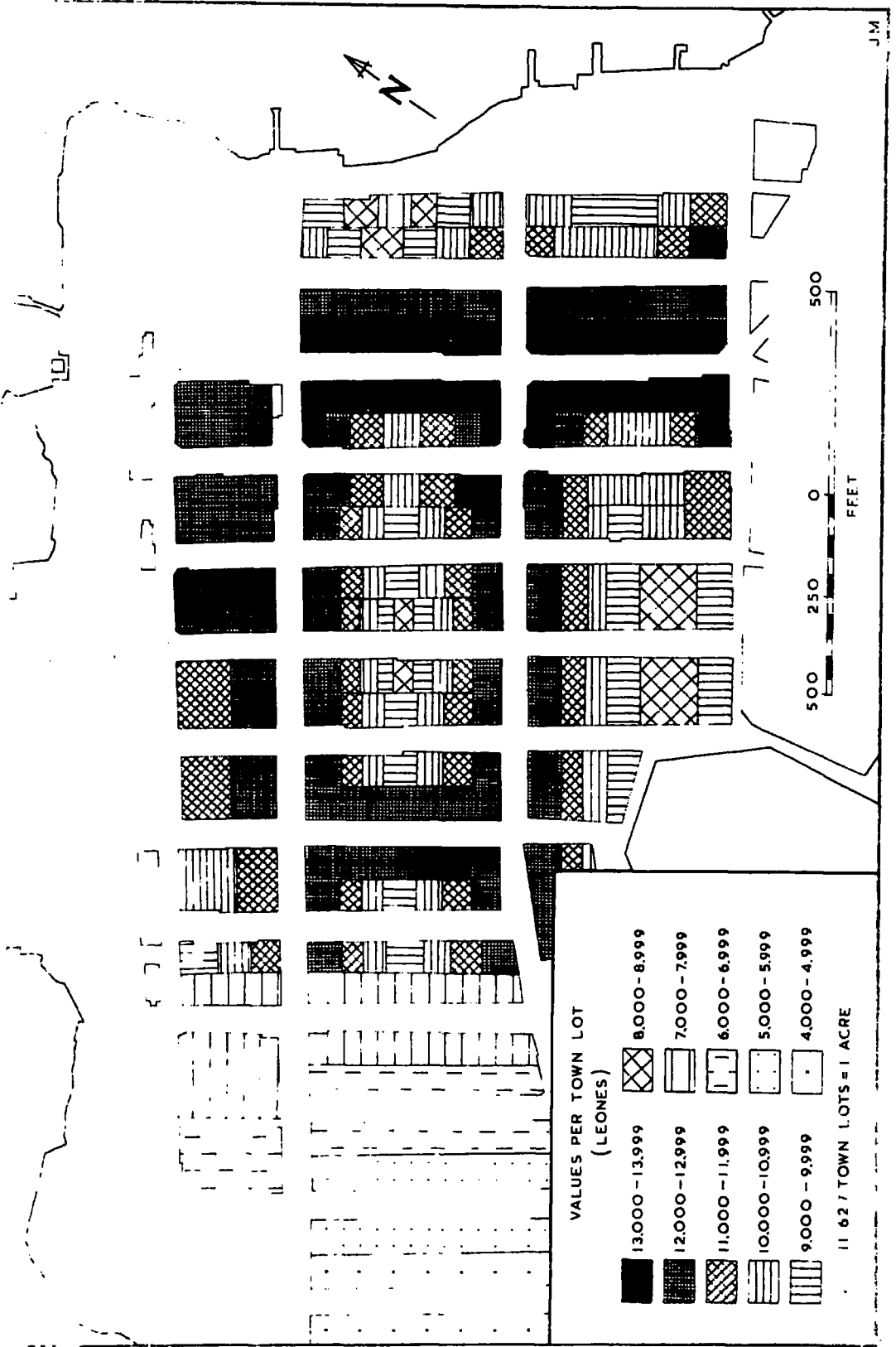


FIG. 4:1

If one compares these figures with similar information for 1961, it can be seen that freehold values in most parts of central Freetown have declined by approximately 25%. One notable exception is the Pultney Street - Percival Street area to the west of the main commercial centre, which has shown a small rise, indicating increased movement of commercial activity into this area.

Two main factors account for this general decrease:

1. The Land Development Act No. 61 of 1962 stipulated that only citizens of Sierra Leone could purchase or receive in exchange or as a gift any freehold land in the western Area of Sierra Leone. This has resulted in the exclusion of expatriates from the market and therefore significantly reduced the demand for freehold land.
2. Under the Registration of Instruments (Amendment) Act No. 6 of 1964 a registration fee must accompany every sale of land. This is paid at the rate of one hundred Leones per acre, and has eliminated some potential land buyers from the market.

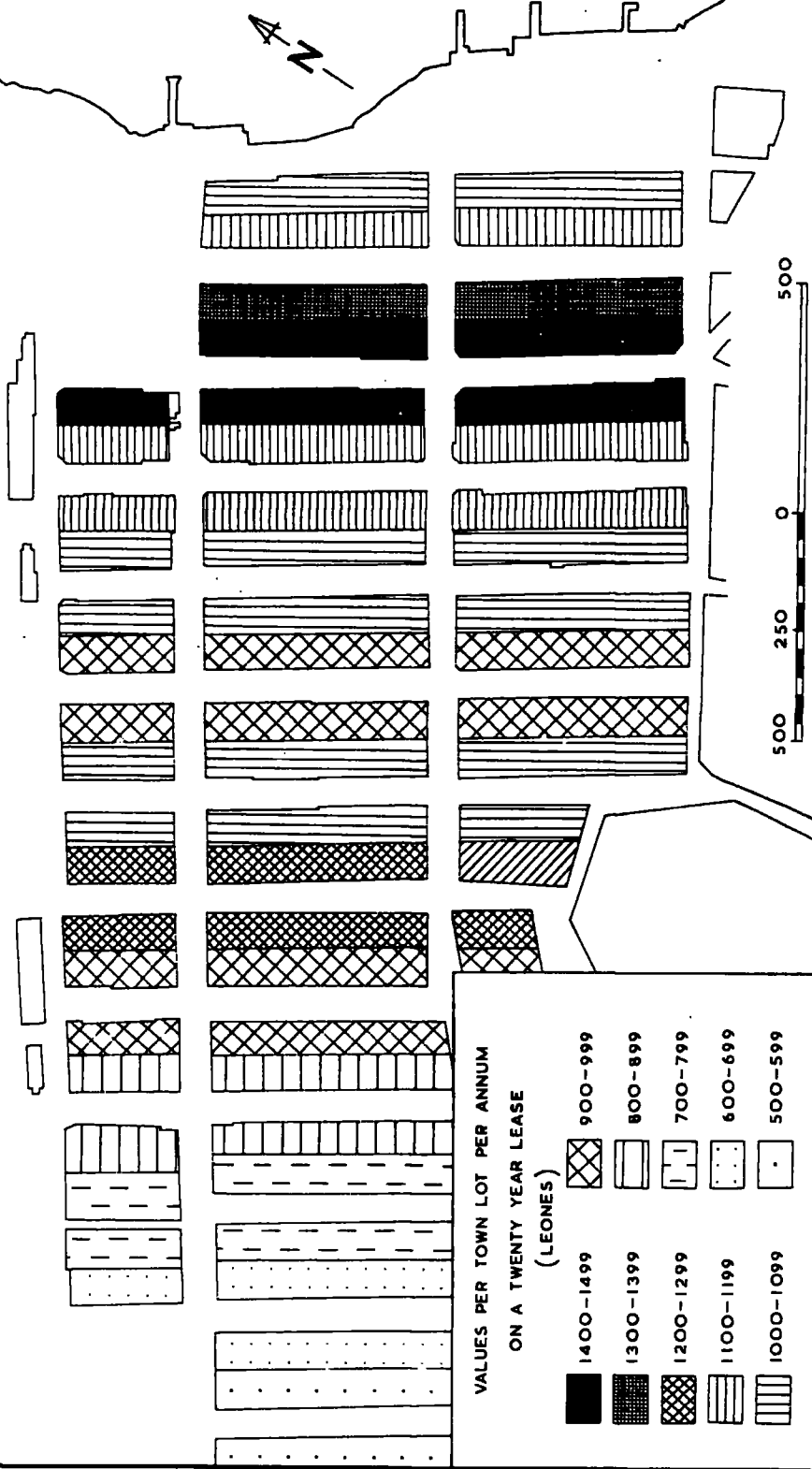
Thus, a free-market system no longer operates. But even though the magnitude of values has changed between 1961 and 1965, the distribution of relative values has remained much the same.

Leasehold land and leasehold office/commercial accommodation values have not been affected by Government legislation. Thus leasehold values per town lot of bare building land have shown a general increase, largely as a result of demand from expatriate firms.

Large increases (up to 66%) have taken place in the area to the west of Walpole Street, while small decreases are found in the eastern part of the CBD. This confirms the impression gained from the freehold figures of increased commercial activity to the west of the present core, especially in Walpole Street, Pultney Street, Percival Street, Liverpool Street and

# CENTRAL FREETOWN

## AVERAGE LEASEHOLD LAND VALUES 1965



VALUES PER TOWN LOT PER ANNUM  
ON A TWENTY YEAR LEASE

(LEONES)

1400-1499	900-999
1300-1399	800-899
1200-1299	700-799
1100-1199	600-699
1000-1099	500-599

11-627 TOWN LOTS = 1 ACRE

FIG. 4:2

JM

Bathurst Street.

Office and commercial accommodation rents have shown a general decline of up to 40% in the eastern part of the CBD, while they have remained steady in the area west of Walpole Street. One would expect this relative change between east and west but the leasehold figures would lead one to anticipate a general increase. However, the difficulty experienced by the owners in finding tenants for office accommodation in Leone House in Westmoreland Street and the Guma Valley Water Company Building in Trelawney Street confirm the impression given by the figures opposite. This may be the result of increasing specialisation in the needs of commerce. Companies now tend to lease lots and build accommodation designed for their own particular needs rather than renting buildings already constructed. The Guma Valley Water Company Building was designed mainly for the company but it was found that two whole floors were not needed. It might be suggested that such buildings are made larger than necessary simply for prestige reasons.

Before considering Figs. 4:1, 4:2 and 4:3 in detail, some limitations of the information available must be stressed. Land value data is not available for each town lot and generalisations have had to be made by parts of blocks, blocks or even whole streets. This is particularly true of the leasehold values and office/commercial accommodation maps, and if more detailed information were available it is probable that these would show patterns almost identical to the freehold values map. On all three maps values in George Street appear very high. This is largely the result of inadequate numbers of land transactions on which to base an average figure, since this street is almost entirely occupied by Government buildings.

# CENTRAL FREETOWN

AVERAGE LEASEHOLD VALUES OF  
OFFICE/COMMERCIAL ACCOMMODATION  
1965

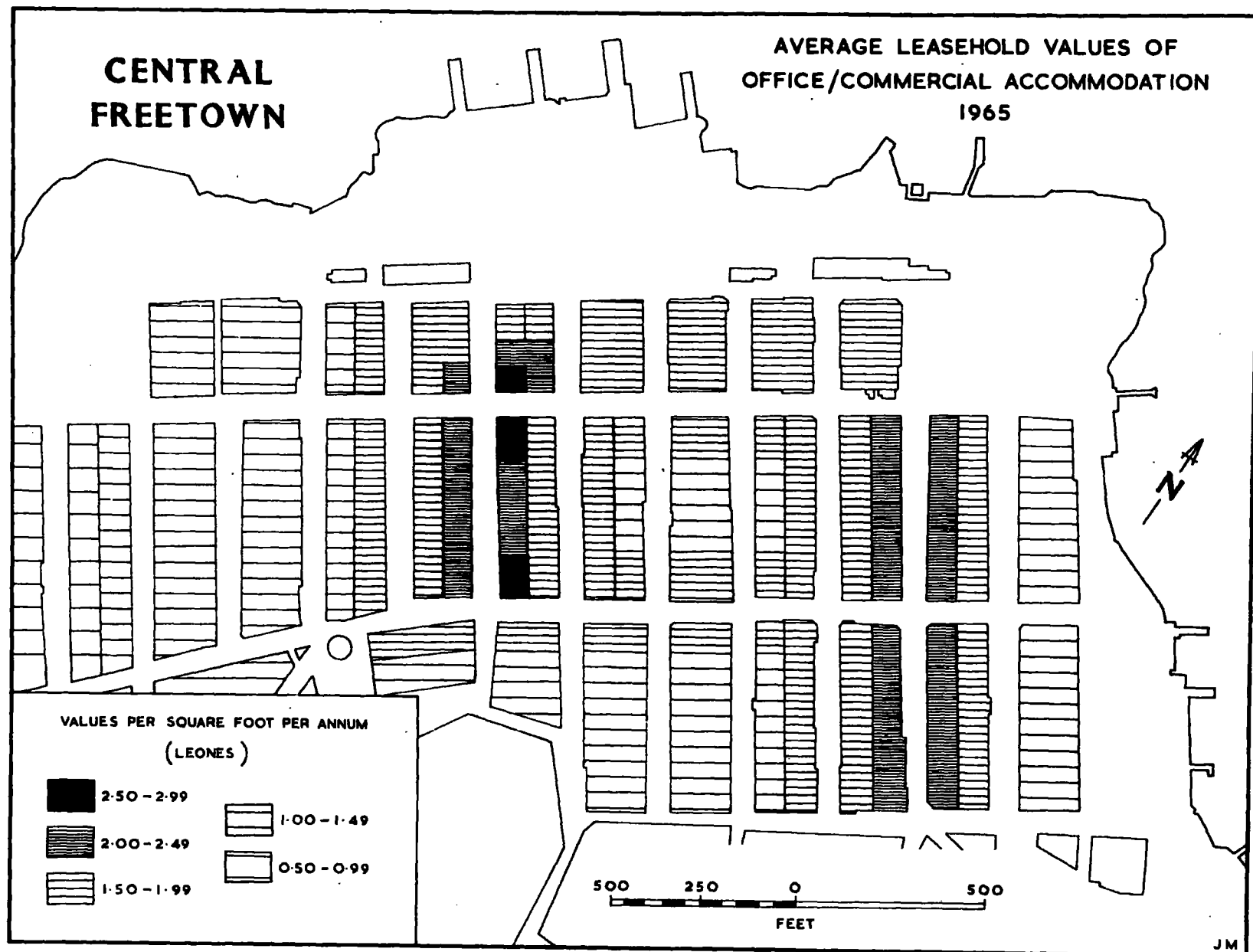


FIG. 4:3

### Freehold Land Values

Fig. 4:1 clearly shows that the peak land value intersection lies at the junction of Wilberforce Street and Westmoreland Street. From this point values decline in all directions. Compared with cities in Western Europe and the United States this decline is very slow. Murphy and Vance found that land values at the edge of the CBD were about 5% of the peak value. In Freetown the figure is nearer 50%.

It is only at the edge of the city that one finds values equivalent to 5% of the peak value. The explanation of this would seem to lie more in the relatively low values of the central area than in abnormally high values on the city edge. Demand by commerce has never been intense enough to raise values in the central area to the height one normally expects in a CBD. This would seem to be another indication of the incipient nature of development in central Freetown.

As one would expect, land values are relatively high along the main east-west routes of Oxford Street and Westmoreland Street, and decline in the centre of the large blocks between these two streets, where accessibility is reduced. The blocks between Oxford Street and Water Street are much smaller, thus values in these are far more uniform. There is a marked decline southward from Westmoreland Street, illustrating that Garrison Street is a far less important east-west artery. The differences between the values on the east compared with the west side of East Street are accounted for by the presence of the railway line on the east side, which reduces accessibility.

The peak value area of Wilberforce Street contains many small shops

TABLE 4:4Rate of Decline of Freehold Land Values from Peak Value Point

<u>Street</u>	<u>Freehold Value per Town Lot, 1965 (Leones)</u>	<u>Percentage of Peak Value</u>
East	12,000	92.3
Wilberforce	13,000	100
Rawdon	10-12,000	77-92.3
Howe	9-12,000	69-92.3
Charlotte	8-11,000	61.5-84.6
Gloucester	12,000	92.3
George	9-12,000	69-92.3
Trelawney	9-12,000	69-92.3
Walpole	7,000	53.8
Pultney	6,000	46.1
Percival	5,000	38.5
Liverpool	4,000	30.8
Bathurst	3,000	23.1
Wellington	2,500	19.2
Waterloo	2,000	15.4
Brook	2,000	15.4

owned by Lebanese traders. This form of land occupation is very intense and to a large extent accounts for the very high land values in this street. Lebanese traders endeavour to gather in clusters, comparable with the grouping of similar traders in a bazaar. In the past demand for land has been high in areas where Lebanese traders have gathered, such as Kissy Street and Wilberforce Street, and has forced up land values. However, with the prevention to land buying by Lebanese, this pattern has begun to be modified.

The sharp drop in land values between Trelawney Street and Walpole Street is significant and might be used as an indication of the western boundary of the CBD. In the South, the sharp drop in values along Garrison Street could be used in a similar way. In the east, no such pattern has been allowed to develop, since the shore of Susan's Bay is quite close to the peak value area.

### Leasehold Land Values

Much of what has been said concerning freehold values could also be applied to leasehold values per town lot and per square foot of office/commercial accommodation.

As far as general leasehold values are concerned the peak land value intersection is also at the junction of Wilberforce and Westmoreland Streets, and the decline outwards is very similar, apart from a sharp drop from Wilberforce Street to Rawdon Street.

Office and commercial accommodation rents have their peak value at the junction of George Street and Westmoreland Street, but the artificially high figures for George Street have already been explained. Once again values



TABLE 4:5Rate of Decline of Leasehold Land Values from Peak Value Point

<u>Street</u>	<u>Leasehold Values per Town Lot, 1965 (Leones)</u>	<u>Percentage of Peak Value</u>
East	1,300	92.9
Wilberforce	1,400	100
Rawdon	1,100	78.6
Howe	1,000	71.4
Charlotte	900	64.3
Gloucester	1,000	71.4
George	1,200	85.7
Trelawney	900	64.3
Walpole	800	57.1
Pultney	750	53.6
Percival	600	42.9
Liverpool	500	35.7
Bathurst	400	28.6
Wellington	300	21.4
Waterloo	250	17.9
Brook	200	14.3

TABLE 4.6Rate of Decline of Office/Commercial Accommodation Rents from Peak Value Point

<u>Street</u>	<u>Office/Commercial Accommodation per Sq. Ft. per annum, 1965 (Leones)</u>	<u>Percentage of Peak Value</u>
East	2.00	80
Wilberforce	2.00	80
Rawdon	1.50	60
Howe	1.00-1.50	40-60
Charlotte	1.00-1.50	40-60
Gloucester	1.50	60
George	2.00-2.50	80-100
Trelawney	1.50	60
Walpole	1.50	40
Pultney	1.00	40
Percival	1.00	40
Liverpool	0.75	30
Bathurst	0.70	28
Wellington	0.65	26
Waterloo	0.60	24
Brook	0.50	20

in Wilberforce Street are high but after a rapid decrease to Rawdon Street similar to that found in the general leasehold values, the decline is rather less steep than in the other two categories. Thus the figure at Brook Street is about 5% higher than in the case of freehold and general leasehold figures.

Thus land values are determined by the normal laws of supply and demand (even though the demand has now been artificially reduced), and consequently are a function of general land use. But the location of individual firms wishing to enter the CBD can be explained largely in terms of the existing land values.

#### ASSESSED LAND VALUES (4)

The legal assessment of rateable value made for each building by the Rating Office of the Freetown City Council gives a rather more complex picture of the land value situation. The rateable value of a particular property is a reflection of the rent which could reasonably be charged for the use of that building. The rent which a building can command will obviously be influenced by such factors as the area of floor space and the state of repair of the structure as well as its position and accessibility in relation to the city centre. Whereas appraised land values are more a reflection of the potential of a site, based largely on its position within the city's core area, assessed land values are dictated by the potential of a site and the extent to which this has been exploited. Thus, rateable values give a useful picture of the intensity of land use within the city central area, although this is valid only for one particular moment in time. A "blighted

TABLE 4:7Average Rateable Values of Buildings by Street

<u>Street</u>	<u>Rateable Value of Average Building (Leones)</u>	<u>Rateable Value as Percentage of Peak Value</u>
Kissy	349	43.0
Little East	269	33.1
East	321	39.5
Water	461	56.8
Oxford	751	92.5
Westmoreland	505	62.2
Garrison	181	22.3
Wilberforce	640	78.8
Rawdon	312	38.4
Howe	812	100.0
Charlotte	226	27.8
Gloucester	414	51.0
George	108	13.3
Trelawney	191	23.5
Walpole =	393	48.4
Pultney	176	21.6
Percival	67	8.3
Liverpool	56	6.9
Bathurst	50	6.2

belt", with much derelict property but ripe for incorporation into the nearby business area, would appear as a fairly low rateable value area, whereas appraised land values would reflect this potential development.

Although the rateable value of each building in Freetown can be readily obtained, the floor space area of each is not available. Thus it has not been possible to present rateable value variations within the central area in terms of value per unit area of floor space. The only method available for constructing a meaningful picture of rateable values was to calculate the average rateable value of a building in each street.

The general distribution is very similar to that found in the case of appraised land values, a peak occurring around Wilberforce and Howe Streets, with a general decline in all directions. However, the special method of calculating assessed land values does result in the appearance of some interesting differences. The general level of rateable values is low, so that the existence of even one large building with a high rateable value is sufficient to influence the average quite considerably. The average for Howe Street is appreciably increased by the presence of the large Kingsway Stores building (rateable value Le 3300), and that of Oxford Street by the Bank of West Africa (Le 16,080).

Since almost all of these large premises are owned by Europeans, assessed land values tend to pick out the various ethnic regions very clearly. East Street and Little East Street no longer rival Howe Street, as they did in the case of appraised values. Similarly, the predominantly African areas of Liverpool Street and Bathurst Street have a very low rateable value, approximately one sixteenth of the peak.

Land value information, even if available only in this very general form, is an interesting part of the information which can be used in a study of central Freetown. However, as one of the factors which can be put forward to explain the existing land use pattern, it is probably of limited importance. Murphy and Vance used the five percentile of the peak land value as marking the approximate boundary of the CBD. This simple rule of thumb certainly cannot be applied to Freetown, where the gradient away from the peak land value intersection is very gradual indeed. This is essentially the result of the relatively low demand for commercial accommodation, causing a low peak land value. Consequently, varying land values do not cause the marked functional regions which are apparent in the CBDs of Western cities. In Freetown economic forces of this kind are not strong enough to submerge such social considerations as the family ties which cause the clusterings of Lebanese-owned stores.

#### REFERENCES

1. MURPHY, R. E. and VANCE, J. E., "Delimiting the CBD", op. cit., 189-222.
2. BERRY, B. J. L., Commercial Structure and Commercial Blight, op. cit., 19-24.
3. The author acknowledges the valuable help in the preparation of this section given by Mr. George Beresford-Cole of the Marjay Real Estate Agency.
4. Rateable values obtained from the Rating Office, Freetown City Council.

## CHAPTER V

### BUILDING HEIGHTS

The response to the high land values usually found in <sup>city</sup>centres is often the construction of multi-storey buildings. Murphy and Vance have evolved a simple index for expressing the level of multi-floor development, again using the block as the basic unit of measurement. This they have termed the Total Height Index<sup>1</sup>. It is calculated by dividing the total floor space, regardless of use, by the ground floor area; i.e.

$$\text{Total Height Index} = \frac{\text{Total floor space}}{\text{Ground floor area}}$$

Indices were calculated for each of the blocks in central Freetown.

A mean value of 1.87, indicating an average building height in central Freetown of less than two storeys, clearly demonstrates a low level of vertical development. This index suffers, of course, from the same shortcomings as the other Murphy and Vance indices, in that the results are lowered by the vacant centres of most of the blocks. But even allowing for this, there is no doubt that multi-storey development is extremely limited in extent (Fig. 5:1). Buildings with more than three floors are extremely rare, most of these being Government owned. The tallest build-

TABLE 5.1. Total Height Indices in Central Freetown

<u>Block Number</u>	<u>Total Height Index</u>
1	1.5
2	1.5
3	1.8
4	1.6
5	1.5
6	2.0
7	2.2
8	1.7
9	1.2
10	1.5
11	1.7
12	1.4
13	2.5
14	3.1
15	1.7
16	1.5
17	1.7
18	2.1
19	1.9
20	2.1
21	1.9
22	1.6
23	1.9
24	1.8
25	1.7
26	2.0

Mean = 1.87



# CENTRAL FREETOWN

## BUILDING HEIGHTS

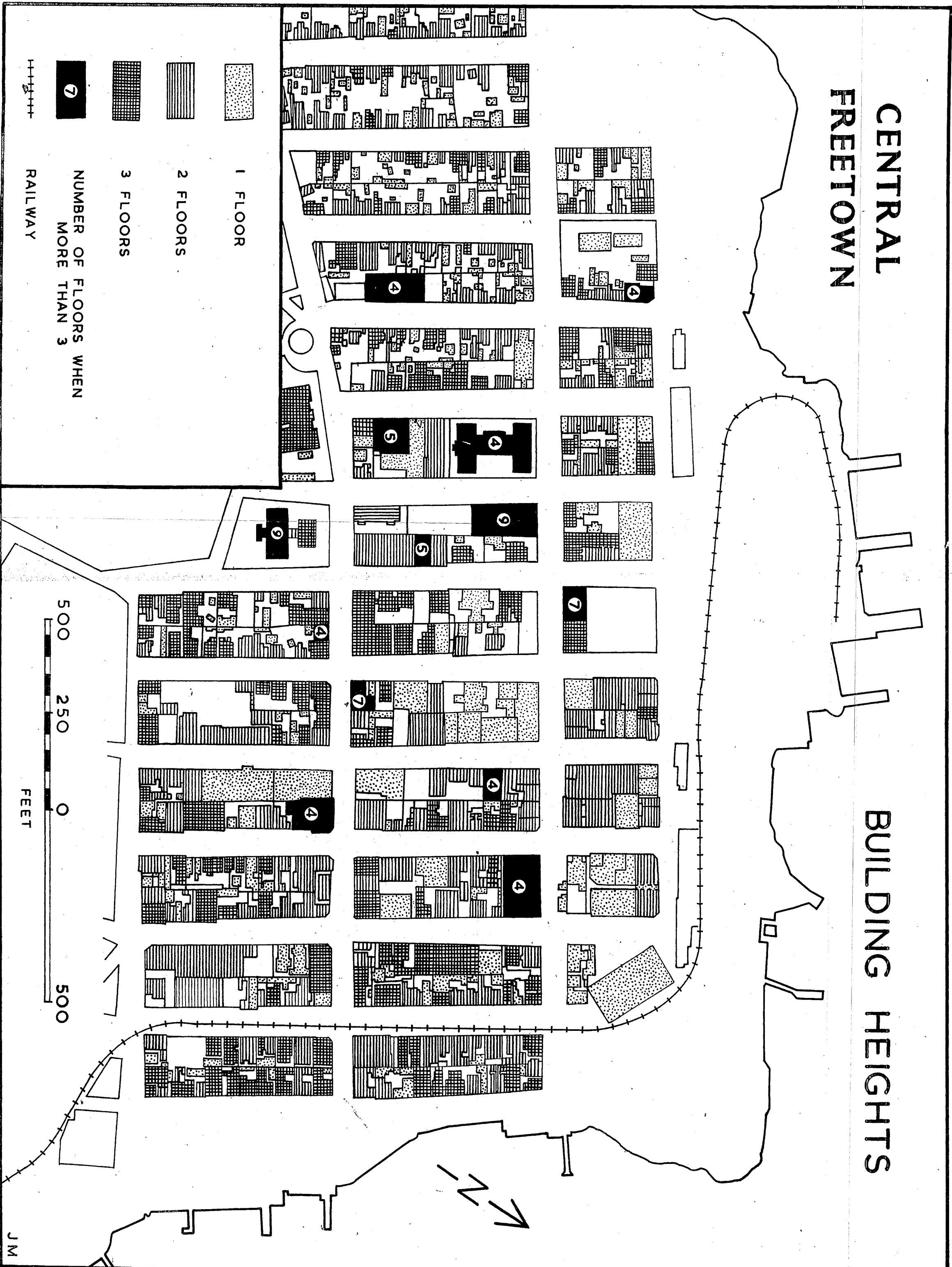


FIG. 5 : 1

ings in Freetown are the Prime Minister's Office, the Secretariat and the new Bank of Sierra Leone. The only commercial building to rival these is the administrative office of the Sierra Leone Development Company, the operators of the iron ore mine at Marampa.

The reason for this pronounced lack of vertical development can be traced back to the low intensity of commercial life found in central Freetown. The construction of tall buildings requires large amounts of capital. Such sums are available to the Government and to a very limited number of expatriate companies. Sierra Leone depends very heavily upon the export of primary products, notably diamonds and iron ore. Large sums of money are available to the iron mining company for the construction of an expensive office block, but few other companies have an annual turnover large enough to justify such expenditure. The low level of demand for office accommodation is particularly important here, since retailing does not usually extend above second floor level for reasons of customer-accessibility. For this reason, retailers such as Kingsway Stores, Paterson, Zochonis and Company and Freetown Cold Store favour long low buildings with extensive ground floor areas. The comparatively low land values do not make this practice prohibitively expensive.

The general decline in land values which has taken place since 1961 ensures that this lack of multi-storey buildings in central Freetown will continue for the foreseeable future - another indication of the immaturity of commercial development in the city.

### References

1. MURPHY, R. E. and VANCE, J. E., "Delimiting the CBD", op. cit., p 205.

## CHAPTER VI

### POPULATION STRUCTURE

The first national census of Sierra Leone was held in April 1963. Work on the population structure of the country, and of Freetown in particular, had previously been carried out by Kuczynski<sup>1</sup>, but the census allows a real demographic analysis to be made for the first time. In particular, the census data permits the study of population within a very restricted area such as central Freetown.

There are some obvious shortcomings in the census material available. The difficulties of enumeration in areas such as tropical Africa are well known and need not be elaborated here. The main difficulty encountered in this particular study was that information on occupations, which would have been most useful, was not made available in time for incorporation into this analysis. Moreover, information such as ethnic composition, which is available on a national scale, could not be obtained for the one enumeration area covering the central area of Freetown. Ethnic structure would have been of interest, but the classification used does not distinguish between the various types of non-Sierra Leoneans and therefore would only have been of limited value in studying the various racial groupings encountered.

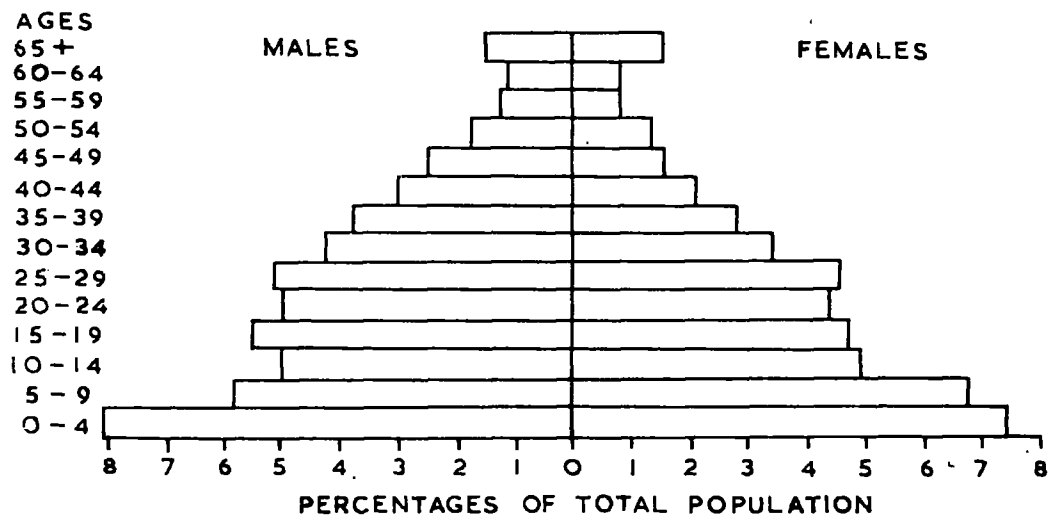
It was fortunate that the boundaries chosen by the census authorities for one of the Freetown enumeration areas coincided almost exactly with the boundaries of the CBD delimited in Chapter III. Detailed age and sex structure information was obtained for this one enumeration area<sup>2</sup>. This gave the numbers of each sex found within each one-year age division. Throughout the compilation of the Sierra Leone Census it became clear that many people were not sure of their exact ages. This was reflected in the clustering of declared ages at the figures of five, ten and their multiples - figures which are approximately correct and which first spring to mind when answering the questions put by the enumeration officer. This feature was clearly demonstrated in the data obtained for central Freetown, particularly in the upper age groups. In order to overcome this difficulty the ages were grouped into five-year divisions.

TABLE 6:1. Central Freetown - Grouped Age Structure (1963)

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total Pop.</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total Pop.</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total Pop.</u>
0- 4	82	6.18	75	5.65	157	11.80
5- 9	54	4.07	74	5.58	128	9.65
10-14	68	5.12	66	4.98	134	10.10
15-19	92	6.93	72	5.43	164	12.36
20-24	83	6.25	45	3.39	128	9.65
25-29	97	7.31	36	2.71	133	10.00
30-34	54	4.07	37	2.79	91	6.80
35-39	67	5.05	44	3.32	111	8.37
40-44	35	2.63	21	1.58	56	4.22
45-49	39	2.94	29	2.19	68	5.12
50-54	25	1.88	13	0.98	38	2.86
55-59	23	1.73	12	0.90	28	2.11
65 & over	29	2.22	26	2.00	55	4.16
<u>Totals</u>	762	57.46	564	42.54	1326	100.00

# AGE-SEX PYRAMIDS 1963

## A. FREETOWN CITY AREA



## B. CENTRAL FREETOWN

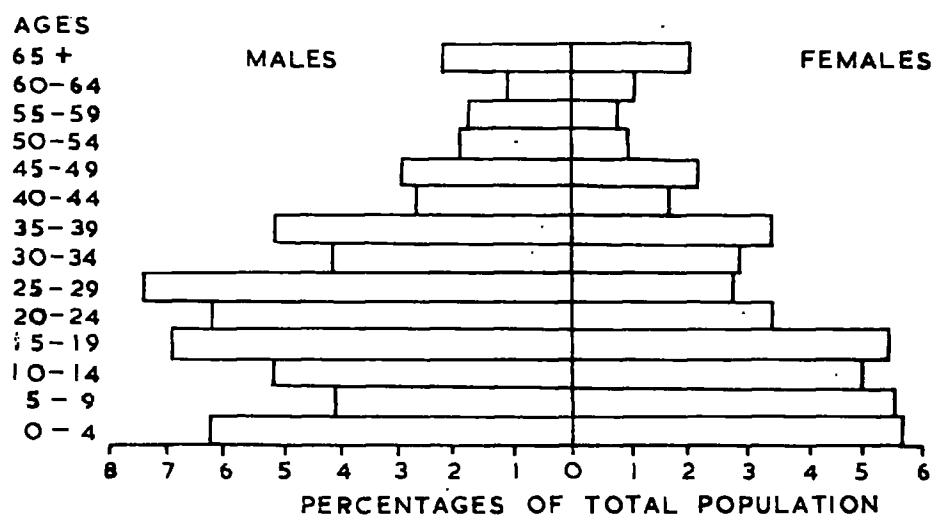


FIG. 6:1

The comparative figures for the total city area are:

TABLE 6:2. Freetown City Area - Age Structure (1963)

<u>Age</u> <u>Group</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of</u> <u>Total Pop.</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of</u> <u>Total Pop.</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of</u> <u>Total Pop.</u>
0- 4	9,118	8.1	9,516	7.4	18,634	15.5
5- 9	7,401	5.8	8,528	6.7	15,929	12.5
10-14	6,424	5.0	6,289	4.9	12,713	9.9
15-19	7,083	5.5	6,025	4.7	13,108	10.2
20-24	6,406	5.0	5,593	4.4	11,999	9.4
25-29	6,576	5.1	5,845	4.6	12,421	9.7
30-34	5,341	4.2	4,439	3.5	9,780	7.7
35-39	4,882	3.8	3,637	2.8	8,519	6.6
40-44	3,870	3.0	2,629	2.1	6,499	5.1
45-49	3,170	2.5	2,006	1.6	5,174	4.1
50-54	2,193	1.7	1,730	1.4	3,923	3.1
55-59	1,546	1.2	1,130	0.9	2,676	2.1
60-64	1,385	1.1	1,197	0.9	2,582	2.0
65 & over	1,856	1.5	2,102	1.6	3,958	3.1
<u>Totals</u>	67,251	52.5	60,666	47.5	127,917	100.0

This comparison is represented graphically in Fig. 6:1.

A total of 1,326 persons living within a central area as restricted in extent as that of Freetown's is high by the standards of Western cities, but this can easily be explained by the presence of the shanty dwellings in the centres of the very large blocks, and by the Lebanese families living above their stores.

As one would expect, there is a marked preponderance of males in the population, especially in the age-groups 15-30. The general movement of population from the rural areas to the growing towns of West Africa has affected males of these groups in particular. This centripetal movement can be explained partly by the "push" factors - all those features of the traditional society which encourage young men in particular to seek a better

life elsewhere, such as the overpowering obligations of the extended family system and the inhibiting power exerted by the old tribal rules. Of even greater importance are the "pull" factors - the obvious attractions which the bustling, colourful life of the city has to offer, such as possibilities of wage-earning employment. For many young men the city, with its cinemas, bars, clubs and motor cars forms the modern equivalent of an initiation rite. To prove himself to be a man, a young person increasingly must have lived in the city and acquired some of its ways. Of course, many young men move to the city for only a limited period, to earn money for taxes which must be paid in currency or to accumulate enough wealth to pay for a wife. Many of these men are not able to find employment. Activity in the Sierra Leone economy is not high enough to absorb all the immigrants. Thus, many of them turn to crime or join the vast numbers of petty traders to be found on the street corners. Similarly, many of the young girls coming to the city turn to prostitution.

Compared with the total city area, central Freetown has a small proportion of young people in the under-15 age groups. Freetown, with its relatively large number of schools attracts young people seeking education from all over the country, but few of these find suitable lodgings within the central area itself. The recent construction of a number of large Government schools on the outskirts of the city, where land is plentiful, have intensified this tendency

### References

1. KUCZYNSKI, R. R., Demographic survey of the British Colonial Empire (London, 1948), Vol I (West Africa), 19-307.
2. The author wishes to thank Mr. Eugene Benjamin, Statistician in the Central Statistice Office, Freetown, for his valuable help in the collection of this data.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PLACE OF THE CBD IN FREETOWN'S OVERALL COMMERCIAL STRUCTURE

The general theoretical models of city structure developed by Park and Hoyt (see p 7) have been supplemented by more detailed models relating specifically to commercial structure. The first of these was presented by Proudfoot in 1937<sup>1</sup>, based on a study of the principal cities of the United States. Proudfoot recognised five main elements in the commercial structures of these cities:

- (a) The Central Business District
- (b) The Outlying Business Centre
- (c) The Principal Business Thoroughfare
- (d) The Neighbourhood Business Street
- (e) The Isolated Sore Cluster.

Later studies by Ratcliff<sup>2</sup> and Hoyt<sup>3</sup> have confirmed the existence of these components.

A more detailed analysis of commercial structure has been carried out by Berry<sup>4</sup>. He recognised four main elements in the overall structure:

- (a) Central Business District
- (b) A hierarchy of business centres
- (c) Urban arterial commercial developments
- (d) Specialised functional areas.



The hierarchy of business centres below the CBD is subdivided into:

- (a) Isolated convenience stores and streetcorner developments
- (b) Neighbourhood business centres - usually containing grocery stores, drugstores, laundries, dry cleaners, etc.
- (c) Community business centres - containing clothing stores, bakeries, florists and perhaps banks
- (d) Regional shopping centres - containing department stores and specialised shops.

These centres usually display a spatial pattern that conforms to the distribution of customers. Each is located centrally with respect to the maximum number of customers it can serve, although the size of its trade area is maintained in the course of competition at about the minimum size necessary to support its specialised functions (its threshold size).

A hierarchy results because, on the supply side, different commercial functions have different thresholds, and thus demand minimum trade areas of different sizes for their support. On the demand side, consumers spend differing proportions of their incomes on different goods and services, and purchase them with differing degrees of frequency. Low threshold, high frequency functions are found in lower-level nucleations (convenience goods centres), whereas high threshold, low frequency functions are found in higher-level nucleations servicing larger trade areas (shopping goods centres).

Most of the functions found in urban arterial locations like reasonable access to the urban market, but because of their space requirements and the ways in which consumers use them, they function most effectively outside the nucleated centres. Examples of such functions are car repair depots, furniture shops and office equipment stores. These are uses for

which the householder has an infrequent, specialised demand that calls for a special-purpose trip.

Specialised functional areas are held intact by the close linkages between establishments provided by comparative shopping, by economies in advertising and by common use of specialists and special services. Berry recognised a wide variety of these centres, including automobile rows, printing districts, entertainment districts, exotic markets, furniture districts and medical centres.

Berry does recognise that modifications are introduced into this structure by differing levels of purchasing power among the areas served by shopping centres, and by the planning of commercial provision which has become so important in recent years.

All of this work so far discussed has been based on cities in the United States, and in Berry's case on the city of Chicago. It is therefore interesting and illuminating to compare the commercial structure of Freetown with this generalised model.

Two important facts must be borne in mind in making this comparison. Firstly, Freetown, with a population in 1963 of 127,917, does not compare in size with most of the cities studied by Proudfoot, and is much smaller than Chicago, which was analysed by Berry. Some allowance must be made because of Freetown's position as a capital city, which brings with it a variety of services and facilities not normally encountered in cities of this size. However, the city serves as a capital for a country of only just over two million people. Therefore, Freetown can only be considered to be a medium sized town. Secondly, and of even greater importance, one

must consider the low buying power of the vast majority of the population which Freetown does serve. This must obviously have a profound effect upon the range and grade of services that can economically be provided.

Both of these factors have had an enormous influence on the development of Freetown's overall commercial structure, and largely account for the deviations from Proudfoot's and Berry's models that do exist.

The outlying business centre does not really exist in Freetown. This is largely a function of city size. Even the upper income groups in the Hill Station - Wilberforce area, who have the purchasing power to support their own service centre, can travel by car into central Freetown in a matter of a few minutes. As yet the central area does not suffer from serious traffic congestion, therefore there has been no real impetus for the creation of a subsidiary, outlying centre. A case might be made for the consideration of the numerous markets as outlying centres. These serve the vast majority of the population of both the city area and the surrounding villages. However, it would seem that markets, most of which are situated on the periphery of the CBD (Fig. 7.1) complement rather than compete with the commercial nucleus proper. It cannot be denied that markets do play an important part in trade. A remarkable degree of functional specialisation does occur between and within particular markets. The market at King Jimmy concentrates on the sale of fruit and vegetables brought over from the Bullom Shore, which faces Freetown across the Sierra Leone River. Three times every week the traditional Bullom Boats bring the market "mammies" over to King Jimmy to sell their produce, and this constitutes an important element in the provision of the city's food supply. Women selling a particular product tend to congregate together in small

# FREETOWN : URBAN LAND USE

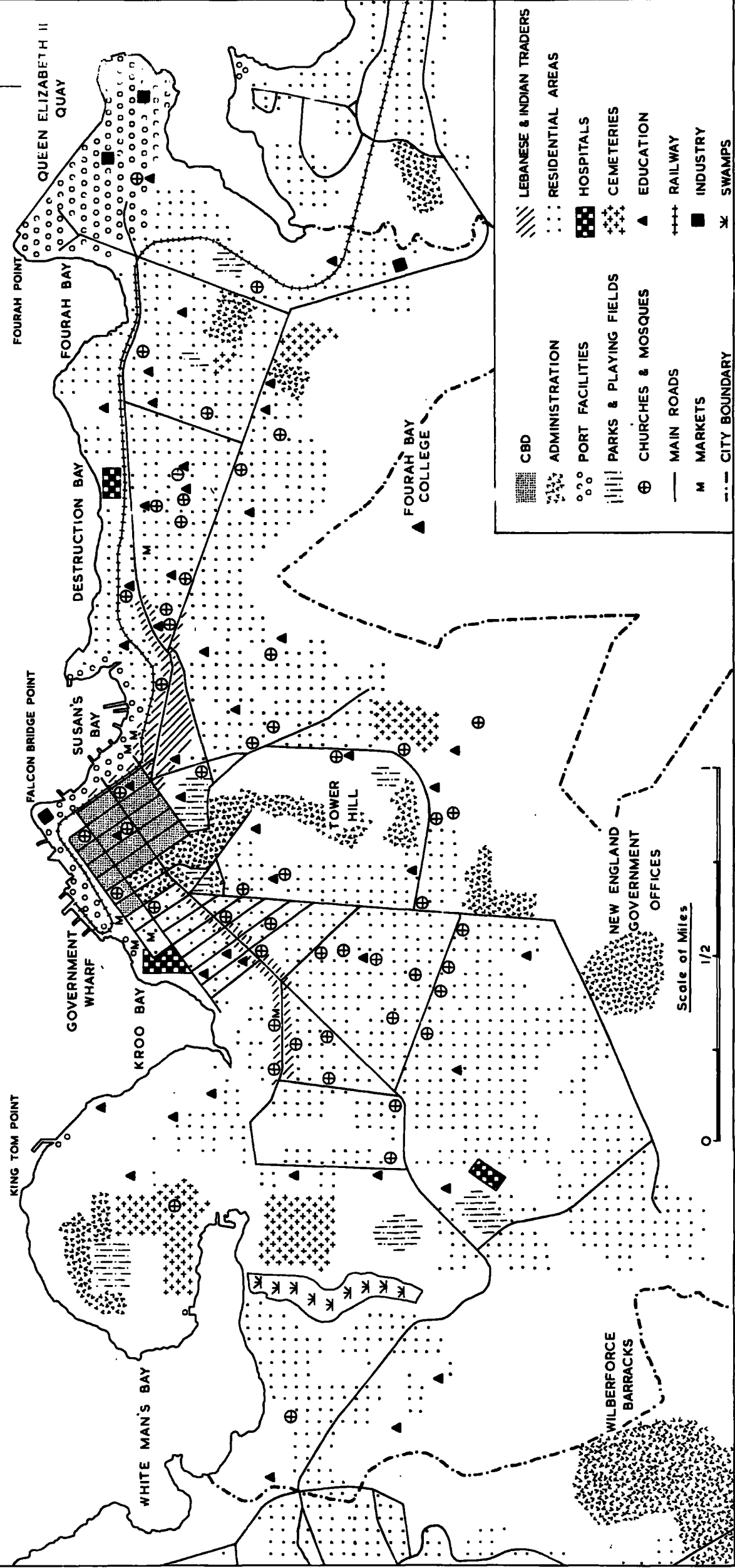


FIG. 7:1

specialised groups. Thus the sellers of peppers set up a group of stalls separated from those selling cassava or oranges. This grouping is a common feature of most African markets, as has been pointed out by Bohannon and Dalton<sup>5</sup>. Situated very close to King Jimmy, but on the other side of Water Street, is the special market devoted to the sale of fish. This has recently been modernised by Sea Products Limited, and is now one of the most efficient trading areas within the city. This is of particular importance in a society which has fish as such a vital part of its diet. In 1963 an estimated 19,000 metric tons of fish was landed in Sierra Leone, the majority of this being marketed in Freetown<sup>6</sup>.

Between King Jimmy and the main offices of the Posts and Telegraphs Department is another market of a very specialised nature, in this case dealing entirely in locally woven baskets. This is quite a large market, with stalls selling baskets of every conceivable size and shape.

On the other side of the CBD, at the junction of Kissy Street and East Street is another large market area. Part of this is entirely devoted to the sale of meat. Freetown is largely dependent upon the northern part of Sierra Leone and the adjoining parts of Guinea for its supply of cattle<sup>7</sup>. The rest of this market area is taken up by a large variety of traders, many of whose stalls are erected dangerously close to the main line of the Sierra Leone Government Railway. Of the wide range of products, perhaps enamel kitchen utensils can be singled out as being particularly represented in this particular market area.

The two market areas a little further away from the CBD, in Bombay Street and Kroo Town Road, are situated on two of the most important routes leading out of the city, to the east and west respectively. These are

truly general markets, selling fruit, vegetables, palm oil, firewood, textiles and soap in particular.

Thus, markets are an important part of Freetown's commercial structure, but it would seem to be pushing the analogy of Western-type morphology too far to suggest that these are true outlying business centres. Rather, they are a distinctive part of African life and commerce, complementing the functions of the CBD.

Principal business thoroughfares or urban arterial commercial developments are much more easy to identify, although they are not of the same type as those described by Berry and do not contain a similar range of goods and services. The main ones of these are in Kissy Street, the main route leading eastwards from the CBD, where commercial development stretches as far as the clock tower, and in Kroo Town Road and the continuation of Westmoreland Street, the main routes leading to the west. These consist almost entirely of Lebanese stores, of the type described earlier, with a few Indian stores, particularly in Westmoreland. These have been pushed out from the CBD by the higher land values found there and by the rather cramped conditions found within the Lebanese section on the extreme eastern edge of the CBD, where land values are a little lower actually within the core. Harvey<sup>8</sup> has noted the existence of such ribbons of Lebanese stores, each shop having the characteristic architecture of Lebanese stores found throughout West Africa, in most of the towns of Sierra Leone. He has attributed their existence to the occupation of the best sites in the central areas by European companies before the arrival of the Lebanese. In these ribbon areas there is once again a marked lack of functional specialisation, each Lebanese store selling a wide variety of

goods. The importance of cotton prints in such trade has given rise to an interesting functional inter-relationship. African tailors set up their sewing machines outside the stores, and make up the material bought there by customers. Harvey has noted this feature also in many towns in Sierra Leone.

Once again, these commercial areas are not, in any real sense, competitors of the stores within the CBD. They tend to serve a clientele of a generally lower income group, and also provide services at rather different hours. Whereas the CBD stores tend to close at 5.30 p.m. and the areas become quiet (although not as deserted as the centres of Western cities), in streets like Kroo Town Road the shops stay open very late, and the bustling streets are a social as well as trading area late into the night.

The bulk of Freetown's population has a low income and is therefore not able to support a large number of high grade services. At the same time this means that most people cannot afford cars or taxi fares, and are therefore not mobile and wide-ranging in their shopping visits. Hence, neighbourhood store clusters and isolated street corner developments are of great importance in satisfying the needs of local areas for "convenience" goods. Such shops, mainly owned by African traders, are scattered throughout the city. The buildings themselves exhibit a wide variety of architecture ranging from well-built, two or three storey shops similar in style to Lebanese stores to small tin boxes only a few feet square. Most street corner developments consist of a combination of a number of each of these. A number of small shops or stalls usually agglomerate close to one of these stores and partake of demand generated by customers attracted to this.

In many cases a bar will be established in these minor trading centres. Street hawkers also tend to be attracted to these local nuclei. Women selling fruit and vegetables congregate on the pavement outside these stores. Such shops tend to stay open very late, in the hope of increasing what must be very small turnovers. The trading women light small lamps, and the flickering flames of these clearly pick out each street-corner development.

Although the commercial structure of Freetown exhibits some features which are analogous to those which have been observed in American cities, the overall impression is one of immaturity of development. A CBD, which is still in a relatively embryonic state, has radiating from it a number of commercial ribbon developments, while the needs of neighbourhood areas are catered for by large numbers of small store clusters and isolated street-corner developments. The important markets add a distinctively African touch to a structure which is in most respects dominated by expatriate traders, and remind one that Western analogies must not be pressed too far. This general structural immaturity is closely bound up with the small size of Freetown's total population and its generally low per capita purchasing power. Thus, the future of commerce in Freetown depends almost entirely upon general expansion in the Sierra Leone economy and the consequent rise in the aggregate demand for the goods and services provided by the city's businessmen.



References

1. PROUDFOOT, M. J., "City Retail Structure", Econ. Geogr., XIII (1937), 425-428.
2. RATCLIFF, R. U., "Internal Arrangement of Land Uses", Urban Land Economics (New York, 1949), 386-397.
3. HOYT, H., "Classification and Significant Characteristics of Shopping Centres", Appraisal Journal, April 1958, 214-222.
4. BERRY, B. J. L., Commercial Structure and Commercial Blight (Chicago: University of Chicago, Dept. of Geography, Research Paper no. 85, 1963).
- " " "Ribbon Developments in the Urban Business Pattern", Annals Assn. of Amer. Geogrs., XLIX (1959), 145-155.
5. BOHANNAN, P. and DALTON, G., Markets in Africa (Evanston, 1962).
6. WILLIAMS, G. J., "Fisheries", in Clarke, J. I. (Ed.), Sierra Leone in Maps (London, 1966), 84-85.
7. SWINDELL, K., "Cattle", in Clarke, J. I. (Ed.), Sierra Leone in Maps (London, 1966), 82-83.
8. HARVEY, M. E. E., in conversation.

CHAPTER VIIIFUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCE AND THE CBD

The intensity of commerce and its reflection in the urban morphology is inextricably linked with the level of general economic activity within any area or country. Only when the economy provides more jobs, and thereby more wages, can aggregate consumer purchasing power rise and create demand for more goods and services. Thus, any consideration of the future character of commercial life in Freetown must take into account the general economic condition of Sierra Leone and the prospects for future development.

The low intensity of commercial development in central Freetown which emerged from Chapter III obviously reflects the underdeveloped nature of Sierra Leone's economy. Even by African standards, Sierra Leone is far from being a rich country.

TABLE 8:1

Per capita national income in selected West African countries (U.S. dollars)

(1961 except where stated otherwise)

Senegal	325
Ivory Coast	245
Ghana	203
Congo (Brazzaville)	199
Cameroun	172
Niger Republic	141

TABLE 8:1 Contd.

Guinea	133
Togo	116
Nigeria	91
Upper Volta	84
SIERRA LEONE (1957)	70
Mali	63

Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 1964 (1).

It is outside the scope of this study to attempt any detailed discussion of the steps being taken by the Sierra Leone Government to remedy this situation. However, the nature of these steps and the kind of development which they will generate, will have profound consequences for the future growth of Freetown's commerce. These efforts fall into two distinct parts. Firstly, the Sierra Leone <sup>Government</sup> is attempting to ensure a more even distribution of what wealth does exist. Secondly, as a more long term aim, strenuous efforts are being made to increase overall wealth and national income.

It is quite natural for the government of newly independent Sierra Leone to want a more equal distribution of the national cake. Legislation has already been passed to encourage Sierra Leoneans to enter commerce. It is clear that few of them have the experience or capital to compete with Kingsway Stores or any of the other large European stores, but as a first step help is being given to Sierra Leoneans who wish to enter the lower grades of trade and industry. The intention to do so was made clear by the Governor, Sir Henry Lightfoot-Boston, in his Speech from the Throne in March 1965:

"29. My Government will continue to foster the development and expansion of trade in order to maintain a favourable balance and to promote self-sufficiency. The active participation of Sierra Leoneans in all sectors of Commerce and Industry is being vigorously

encouraged and action is in hand to restrict certain aspects of commerce and industry to Sierra Leoneans."

And further:

"31. My Government is determined to ensure the development and promotion of industries. In the field of small scale industries a Development and Training Centre has been set up with the assistance of a Small Industries Expert assigned by the I.L.O. under Technical Assistance arrangements for the Training of Sierra Leoneans in weaving, dyeing, printing of fabrics, pottery and ceramics. It is intended to extent the work of this Centre by mobile extension services and work centres throughout the country."2

These points were further emphasised in the Budget Speech of March 1965:

"21. In order to give concrete evidence of the Government's determination to associate the people of this country more fully with the commercial life of the economy, a Committee has been appointed under the Chairmanship of the Secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr. G. S. Panda, to submit recommendations on the steps which should be taken to implement the Government's policy. The Committee includes persons nominated by the Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce. In his Speech to the Chamber last year, the Honourable the Prime Minister, Sir Albert Margai, assured them of the Government's determination to pursue a vigorous policy of creating a sound industrial and commercial climate wherein they could thrive freely. In return he appealed to the Chamber of Commerce to ensure 'greater participation by Sierra Leoneans in the industrial, commercial and trading life of our country'. It is said that commerce rules the world and until we participate actively in the commercial activities of our country, our political independence cannot be regarded as complete. The methods by which I would like to see these hopes translated into reality are: firstly, commercial and industrial concerns should give more responsible posts to Sierra Leoneans; secondly, the importation of certain commodities which are produced locally should be stopped; thirdly, it is hoped in the long run to reserve certain fields of commerce to Sierra Leoneans; fourthly, in future all designing and supervision of constructional work should provide for qualified Sierra Leonean participation. Finally, the Government notes with concern the practice whereby Agencies for most commodities which are imported are held by non-Sierra Leonean combines. As a result the profit margin of Sierra Leonean firms is negligible, the margin having been reduced by the Agents' Commission. This practice must stop."

"22. The policy of the Government as enunciated by the Prime Minister will be pursued relentlessly."3

Since then a series of Acts have restricted trade in a wide variety of products to Sierra Leone nationals. One of the first commodities to be affected was rice. The sale of this staple foodstuff by all expatriates was forbidden. This changeover was accomplished before adequate alternative arrangements had been made, and for some time the street rice vendors were the only source of supply for many people. The large European stores soon found a way around this law by leasing small parts of their food departments to rice traders of Sierra Leone nationality. However, most of the laws have achieved their objective, and Sierra Leoneans are now playing a more important trading role. Thus one can expect these ethnic divisions within the commercial structure of the city described in Chapter III to break down as Sierra Leoneans rise in the trade hierarchy. Some Africans are already moving into the trading spheres which were formerly the monopoly of the Lebanese, and the Government has taken steps to control future Lebanese immigration. It will be some years before the European companies will be replaced, but this is an aim which is constantly in view.

These measures can, of course, only redistribute the profits at present earned from commerce. Of far greater importance are the attempts being made to increase average per capita income by general economic development. Only when the spending power of the bulk of the population is greatly increased can commerce in Freetown rise above its present low level of intensity. The overall development policy of the Sierra Leone Government is important here. The improvement and modernisation of agriculture <sup>is seen</sup> as the soundest method of advancing the economy towards the 'take-off' into self-sustained growth. Industry is far from being forgotten, but there will be no attempt to find a short-cut towards take-off by a

programme of rapid industrialisation. As a result millions of Leones have already been spent in the creation of agricultural plantations and the organisation of family cooperatives. Thus, the benefits of this growth are spread over all the country. If, on the other hand, industries had been given top priority, Freetown with its great advantages as a port would have been the obvious site for factories, and indeed has been chosen for most of the industries that have been or are about to be set up. One must remember some of the political considerations that must have been taken into account. The governing Sierra Leone Peoples' Party is controlled by people with up-country origins, not by the Freetown-based Creoles, and gains much of its support from the provinces, thus it is quite natural that the hinterland should be given some special consideration. However, most economists would also support this decision, even though the results of it may not be apparent for some years. The result will be that the primacy of Freetown will not develop to the same extent as in some other West African countries, notably Ivory Coast and Senegal, where the 'islands' of development in and around Abidjan and Senegal stand in marked contrast to the hinterland areas. The dominance of Freetown will remain, but smaller centres will receive some real stimulus, producing a much more balanced distribution of wealth.

#### The morphological consequences of future development

Urban geographers in Britain have long looked at the American city to give some indication of how their own urban areas are likely to develop in the next few years when the British economy has reached a broadly

similar stage of development. Similarly, geographers analysing urban development in African countries sometimes turn to past North American and Western European experience for indications of likely future trends. In many ways this is only an extension of the dangerous practice of the wholesale application of techniques developed in a western environment to one which is totally different. However, let us consider for a moment the dominant trends in the growth of commercial functions which seem to be taking place at the moment in the United States, and to a lesser extent in Britain, and see which of these, of any, are likely to be of relevance in the African context.

The most important trend which has emerged in the past decade or so in the cities of the United States has been the decrease in the relative importance of the CBD<sup>4</sup>. Many of the functions which have traditionally been the monopoly of the downtown area have become scattered in a number of regional commercial centres. Briefly, the reasons for this decentralisation can be traced back to the vast increase in personal mobility brought about by the spread of the automobile. It is now possible to live a considerable distance from one's place of work, therefore the process of suburbanisation has advanced rapidly. The ownership of cars is now so widespread that the resultant traffic congestion in city centres has drastically reduced the efficiency of the city centre as a service area. The consideration of convenience has therefore led to the rise of regional service centres which cater for the needs of a more mobile, but at the same time more local, population by the provision of adequate parking facilities as well as all other customer needs. At the same time per capita

spending power has expanded rapidly and provided a much greater market for a wide variety of specialised goods and services. Whereas formerly only the CBD could provide the focus of population and spending power needed to support a very specialised service, the prosperous American urban population now makes it possible for such services to be located in a number of regional sites. One sector of the city can now provide an aggregate spending power above the threshold necessary to support such specialised services. There are signs that the increased per capita income and car ownership in Britain are also allowing this process to take place.

Is there any evidence that this process of decentralisation has begun in Freetown or is likely to do so in the near future? Certainly, as was pointed out earlier, there is no doubt of the dominance of the CBD at present, and no real sign of the development of regional shopping centres. William Alonso, writing about cities in developing countries in general, has predicted that decentralisation will take place:

"It is harder to predict the pattern of development of commercial and industrial facilities. Most of these cities today lack a good system of distribution, partly because they have attained their size too quickly and partly because old traditions, such as bargaining, suited to an older society, have remained into the new urban situation. The squatter rings fill most of their own shopping needs, either by corner stores or, in some countries, by bazaars. But the shopping of the urbanised population, which was performed in the center of the city, is likely to follow the lessons of American merchandising and shift to shopping centers earlier in terms of comparative stages of development than it did in the United States, approaching perhaps a Lösch type pattern. This will be reinforced if the suburbs are separated from the center by the rings of squatters.

"The centre of the area is likely to continue to be important for many types of retail and wholesale enterprises, in part because the demand for their services may be too small to justify many establishments. This may



be reinforced by the central location of offices, particularly governmental ones, which concentrate many potential customers downtown. On the other hand, the tradition that assigns the shopping function to women or to servants may prevent downtown stores from benefitting from the daily concentration of potential customers."5

At the moment, the low per capita income level prevailing in Sierra Leone ensures that high-level shops and services cannot be supported even within the central area of Freetown. When the vast majority of the population has difficulty in affording enough food and adequate clothing the need for even one jeweller or florist in the CBD is very marginal, and certainly a simple neighbourhood could not reach the requisite threshold purchasing level to support such establishments. As pointed out earlier, only when per capita income has increased appreciably will even the CBD rise above its present immaturity. The only suburb which could at present possibly support a modest shopping centre, the high-class Hill Station - Wilberforce Spur area, shows no sign of developing one. Freetown is by no means a big city, nor does it suffer from a serious traffic problem, therefore the car-running population of this area can easily and quickly satisfy its needs in central Freetown.

It would seem more likely that the rise in consumer purchasing power, which everyone hopes will soon take place, will for some time foster only the further development of the CBD. Given this fact one is immediately faced with the problem of the very restricted area for expansion provided by the present site of the CBD, hemmed in as it is by the sea on one side, and by Victoria Park and the wedge of Government buildings spreading down from Tower Hill on the other. Expansion could take place upwards, in the form of high buildings, but the increased needs of the retail trade, which

on the whole demands ground floor selling space, are unlikely to be satisfied in this way. It seems certain that commerce will have to 'leapfrog' over the area of Government buildings and form a separate nucleus. Indeed, there are signs that this is already taking place. The Intra Bank and Texaco Oil building in Walpole Street already forms a sizeable unit which could well be the forerunner of a major development area. As mentioned in Chapter IV land values here, in contrast with the rest of the city, have been rising, and this area is obviously ripe for development. The frontage area of one lot, in contrast to the total area, is seldom large enough for a modern business, therefore the ability to purchase two or more adjacent lots is often an important consideration for any entrepreneur. A study of the land ownership data in the City Rating Office revealed that in the area of Walpole, Pultney and Percival Streets there are many groups of adjacent lots owned by one landlord. The Creole community still owns considerable areas of land, often in groups of lots. Thus a firm setting up new premises in this area would have less difficulty in purchasing an adequate area of block frontage than if each block had been individually owned. Although this new nucleus would be cut off from the existing commerce of the CBD the distance involved is by no means great. The distance involved would be increased in entrepreneurs were unsure of the future space needs of the Government area, and unwilling to build very close to existing administrative buildings because of the fear of some future take-over. There are already signs of a blighted 'shatter-belt' on the edge of the present CBD, and if this trend was continued the distance separating the two parts of the new commercial core would be larger than necessary.

In summary, it can be said that the future development of commerce in Freetown cannot be discussed without reference to the general economic development of Sierra Leone, which will determine future consumer purchasing power. If, as is hoped by everyone, per capita income does rise, the CBD will probably develop more fully, rather than give way to subsidiary shopping centres in various parts of the city. But the present restricted site of the CBD will probably encourage the emergence of a new secondary commercial nucleus to the south-west of the present one.

## References

1. United Nations, Economic Bulletin for Africa, IV (1964), p 75.
2. Speech from the Throne, delivered by His Excellency Sir Henry Lightfoot-Boston, G.C.M.G., J.P., on the occasion of the State Opening of the Fourth Session of the Second Parliament, in the chamber of the Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown, 23rd March, 1965. Government Printer Freetown (G.P. O/2403/65/1,600/3.65), p 4.
3. Budget Speech delivered by the Honourable R. G. O. King, M.B.E., J.P., Minister of Finance, on Wednesday, 31st March, 1965 in the Sierra Leone House of Representatives. Government Printer, Freetown (G.P. O/2904/65/3,000/3.65), p 9.
4. VANCE, J. E., "Emerging patterns of commercial structure of American cities", Proceedings of the I.G.U. symposium in Urban Geography, Lund 1960 (Lund, 1962), 485-518.
5. ALONSO, W., "The form of cities in developing countries", Papers of the Regional Science Association, XIII (1964), p 171.

CHAPTER IXCOMPARISON WITH THE COMMERCIAL STRUCTURE OF SOME OTHER WEST  
AFRICAN CITIES

A detailed comparison between the commerce of Freetown and its counterparts in the other cities of West Africa could fill several large volumes, and obviously space dictates that such a comparison can only be of a general nature. Also, detailed studies of the kind which the author carried out in Freetown are quite rare, so that comments on the other cities must depend heavily on the relatively brief studies and impressions of the author in such of the other West African capitals as he was able to visit. Where possible, studies made by other workers in the field will be utilised. For comparative purposes only the major cities of the coastal West African states are considered, for in this area the dominance of the first order city is very marked, and usually only one city in each country approaches the level of commercial development encountered in Freetown. Such a comparison is useful in that one is able to judge whether the form of commerce in Freetown is the result of the city's rather unique history or simply one example of a morphology common to a much wider area.

As has often been pointed out, urbanisation in Africa is a relatively

new phenomenon. Except for the old trading towns, such as Timbuktu and Kano, at the southern end of the trade routes across the Sahara, and the large Yoruba agricultural settlements in Western Nigeria, towns have essentially grown up since the coming of European influence and the introduction of a market economy. It is only since the gradual breakdown of the predominantly subsistence economy of most of Africa, that urban service and manufacturing centres have become either feasible or necessary. In this general survey of urban commerce in West Africa it will be revealing to look at one of the long established urban centres, the Yoruba town of Ibadan in Western Nigeria, and see how commerce has developed there. Interesting contrasts may also be brought out by reference to a city such as Abidjan in former French West Africa, as well as to Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, which as a settlement for former slaves had origins very similar to those of Freetown. Lastly the commerce of Lagos, a Yoruba town that has experienced a strong European influence will be examined.

#### IBADAN (Western Nigeria)

Ibadan has a population of some 700,000 people (some estimates are as high as one million) and is the largest city in tropical Africa. It was founded in 1821, as a war encampment during the intertribal strife of the nineteenth century<sup>2</sup>. During the last century the Yoruba were driven out of the northern part of their former territory by the Fulani, into the tsetse-infested forest area which could not be penetrated by the Fulani horsemen. Yoruba refugees from the north flooded into Ibadan and neighbouring towns on the edge of the forest, which were free from attack

and yet reasonably close to the easily cultivable lands of the grass-lands. By 1856 Ibadan had a population of 60,000, and by 1900 this figure had been doubled. During the twentieth century the growth of the city has been stimulated by the construction of the railway from Lagos in 1901, and by the increase in cultivation of cacao in the area.

It is really as the centre of a rich agricultural region that Ibadan has developed. The city is not only a service centre for the surrounding area, but is also the home of many of the farmers cultivating the neighbouring fields. The Yoruba towns have been described as simply very large agricultural settlements<sup>3</sup>, and Ibadan still has much of this quality about it. Ibadan is an indigenous city where the small African trader and the African market are of primary importance. Small corner shops and groups of women selling fruit and vegetables are found at intervals among a vast number of tightly packed dwellings, many of them shanties made of wood, corrugated iron or any other material which comes readily to hand.

Upon this structure has been grafted a modern commercial and industrial sector. Towards the centre of the city, although some distance from the original core, are a small number of tall, modern, commercial buildings rising abruptly from a sea of one storey dwellings. Here are found a number of modern department stores, such as Kingsway Stores, offices, garages and hotels. This is the most important commercial and industrial centre of the Western Region of Nigeria, but one has the feeling that this modern CBD is not really integrated into the life of the city, and is only an island around which most of the life of the city flows.

MONROVIA (Liberia)<sup>4</sup>

Monrovia's origins are remarkably similar to those of Freetown. In 1821 Cape Mesurado, the site of the modern city, was selected by the American Colonization Society as an appropriate site for the first detachment of American freed Negroes. The first settlement was established on Providence Island (Fig 9:1), which provided a defence against attacks from hostile indigenous tribes. After numerous setbacks, caused mainly by epidemics of such diseases as yellow fever, a settlement grew up on the mainland opposite Providence Island, and was named Monrovia in honour of the American President, James Monroe, during whose second term of office the city was founded.

The descendants of the original settlers have formed a distinctive class, called Americo-Liberians (although this term is now officially frowned-upon), which is very similar to the Freetown Creoles, in that its members have fully embraced Western dress, manners and culture and as an educated minority have long looked down upon Liberian citizens living in up-country areas. But whereas in Sierra Leone the provincial peoples have gained political control of the country and have been able to acquire education and access to all aspects of Sierra Leonean society, the Americo-Liberians have retained absolute political control and still exercise severe discrimination against all other groups.

However, in Monrovia all of the groups noted in Freetown are represented in a broadly similar way - Europeans, Indians, Lebanese, descendants of slaves, and indigenous Africans - and the interaction of these commercial groups has produced a structure very similar to that encountered in Freetown.



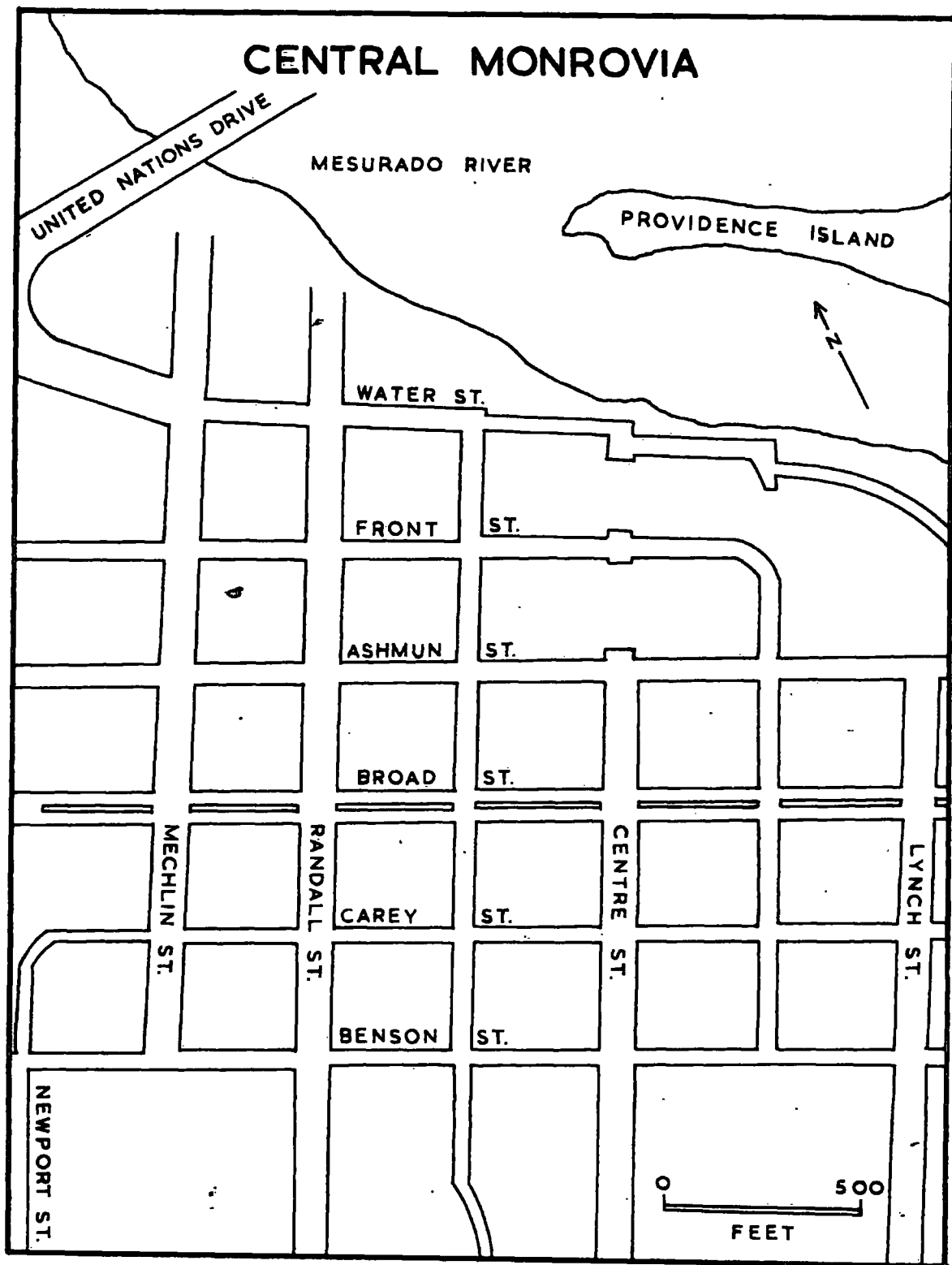


FIG. 9:1

Water Street (Fig 9:1) was the nucleus of the original settlement and developed as the commercial centre. A number of European firms established branches in the street towards the end of the nineteenth century, and they were joined by a number of Lebanese traders. But since then the focus of shopping has moved to the top of the very pronounced break of slope between Water Street and Front Street. Water Street has been left almost entirely to the Lebanese, and in appearance and function is very similar to East Street in Freetown, and similarly adjoins one of the old port areas. European- and American-owned commerce has moved towards Broad Street, and many big firms have become established in the high-class shopping area of Randall Street. As in Freetown, a ribbon of Lebanese shops stretches along one of the main routes out of the CBD, Camp Johnson Road, which is very similar to Kissy Street.

The American interest and influence in Liberia, going back to the very foundations of the first settlement, have remained strong. This is demonstrated not only in the ownership of many businesses, such as the numerous branches of United States banks, but also in the overall appearance and atmosphere of the city. Like Freetown, central Monrovia has a grid-iron street pattern, but the streets are much wider and are lined with large American cars. In many ways Monrovia resembles a Mid-Western city in the United States.

Commerce in Monrovia is generally more prosperous and better developed than in Freetown. The city has changed much since Graham Greene's visit in 1935<sup>5</sup>, and even in 1953 John Grunther wrote:

'The port apart, Monrovia looks like something afflicted by scurvy. It is not merely crumbling with rot, but deliquescent. The streets are for the most part slippery ditches oozing with red mud.'<sup>6</sup>

Now the city has wide, clean streets lined with large American cars, and the shops and offices of central Monrovia are generally housed in modern, well-constructed buildings. This change has partly resulted from the development of the Free Port of Monrovia, an artificial harbour built by American troops to handle military supplies during the Second World War. But the main factor is the increased prosperity caused by the exploitation of Liberia's large resources of iron ore. Mineral output was of little importance before 1950, but by 1961 iron ore accounted for half of all exports. The first iron ore mine in the country, in the Bomi Hills 42 miles north of Monrovia, came into production in 1951, and since then other mines have been opened on the Mano River, in the Bong Range and in the Nimba Mountains. The latter mine, operated by the Liberian-American-Swedish Minerals Company (LAMCO) is connected by a specially constructed railway to the iron ore exporting port of Buchanan, 165 miles away. The operation involves a total investment of some \$200 million, and produces about 10 million tons of high grade ore annually. The impact of these four mining operations on the economy of Liberia has been tremendous. It has been said, with justification, that much of the resulting wealth has been restricted to a few of the powerful Americo-Liberian families, and that the vast majority of the population remains at a bare subsistence level, but as these privileged families live in Monrovia the impact on the city is very obvious. Unlike Freetown, consumer purchasing power is now at a level high enough to support many specialised shops. European- and American-owned chemists, grocers, jewellers and bookshops are found in far greater numbers than in Freetown.

This greater prosperity has also enabled the urban morphology of Monrovia to reach a rather more advanced stage of development, by the construction of a number of very large American-type suburban department stores. The largest of these is situated in the very high-class suburb of Sinkor, and apart from a very wide range of goods has a large car parking area. Most of the large number of Americans and Europeans, especially Germans, living in this suburb, shop in this store, along with the high-income section of the Liberian population.

Liberia's reserves of iron ore are vast, and as long as the world market price does not fall dramatically, one can expect Monrovia to become increasingly prosperous. There is plenty of room for the CBD to expand. The area of Liberian Government buildings is some distance from the core and does not hem in the commercial area as in Freetown. Also, one can expect the increased development of suburban shopping facilities in districts which are increasingly able to support them.

#### ABIDJAN (Ivory Coast)

The British colonial authorities in all the territories of British West Africa did not allow English colonists to come into the area and set up farms or plantations. The only British people to enter the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and Nigeria were administrators, missionaries and the representatives of the commercial companies, and on the whole they lived for only a short period in these territories before being replaced. In contrast, the French Government did allow colonists to enter their West African territories, and these formed a special class of plantation owners and relatively small-scale businessmen not

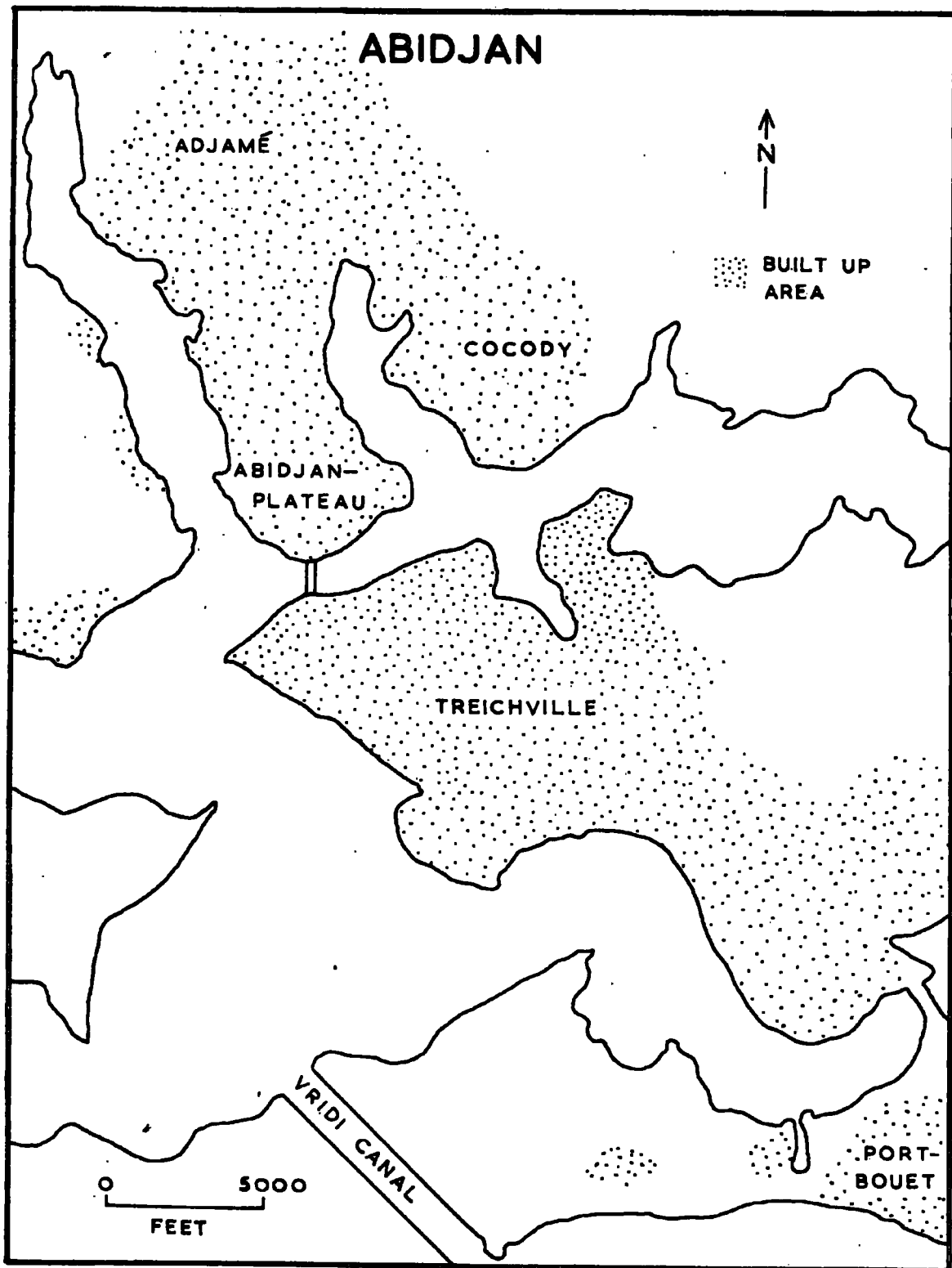


FIG. 9:2

represented in countries like Sierra Leone. The addition of this new entrepreneurial class to the commerce of a city like Abidjan, capital of the Ivory Coast, has been of great importance, and presents an interesting contrast to the conditions encountered in Freetown.

Abidjan is situated on a low promontory of the mainland shore of Ebrie Lagoon (Fig 9:2), opposite a place where the sand bar that forms the coastline is narrow and a submarine valley brings deep water close to the shore. The town dates from 1903, when it was made the terminus of the Ivory Coast railway, and in 1934 it replaced Bingerville as the capital of the colony. Much of its recent prosperity can be accounted for by the construction of the Vridi Canal, completed in 1950, which allowed ocean-going vessels to enter the lagoon and reach the rapidly expanding port, enabling Abidjan to completely overshadow the former chief port and capital of Grand Bassam. Between 1948 and 1952 Abidjan had a threefold increase in population, and in 1961 the population had reached about 200,000. The original site of the city, called the Plateau (Fig 9:2) has not been able to contain the recent rapid growth, and suburban development has taken place on neighbouring promontories and on Petit Bassam Island.

The increased capacity of the port has made possible a fuller exploitation of Abidjan's rich hinterland than had previously been possible. The independent Ivory Coast Government, led by President Houphouet-Boigny, have stressed the importance of the modernisation of agriculture in their overall development plans. Many plantations producing oil palm, cacao, coffee, bananas and citrous fruits have been established, and

have laid a solid foundation for the Ivory Coast's recent spectacular growth. At the same time, Abidjan has become an important industrial centre, processing a wide range of agricultural products. An automobile assembly plant, an oil refinery and a number of other modern factories have been set up, mainly in the Port-Bouet area.

The Ivory Coast's economy is expanding more rapidly than any other in West Africa, national income rising by more than 10% per annum over the last five years. It has been argued that this prosperity is extremely fragile. The economy still depends very heavily upon large numbers of French experts, and outside Abidjan progress has been much less spectacular. However, the bustle and obvious commercial prosperity of the capital is quite staggering in comparison to Freetown.

Within the CBD, situated on the original nucleus of the city on the Plateau, the French small businessmen play an important role. Small grocery, vegetable, household goods and clothes shops, owned and operated by individual families, give central Abidjan a flavour almost identical to a true French city. These shops have a large market within the very considerable French community of some 30,000, more than ten times the European population of the whole of Sierra Leone. These have a high per capita purchasing power, and are anxious to buy the large quantities of food, wine and clothes imported from France. The French community really dominates the central area of the city, and often one has to search hard among the boulevards and pavement cafes to find a black face.

In fact the various ethnic groups found within Abidjan are far more spatially segregated than in Freetown. The 'quartiers' so beloved of

the French school of urban geographers are a reality in Abidjan. The very high class European residential district of Cocody contrasts sharply with the African areas such as Treichville, both in terms of standards of housing and types of commerce. Within Cocody there are a few suburban shopping centres, consisting mainly of French-owned convenience goods stores, especially grocers and bakers, but most needs for shopping goods are met in the central area. In Treichville, on the other hand, the African markets are of great importance, but there are also many general stores owned and operated by Frenchmen, who in many ways take the place of the Lebanese found in Freetown. The city council has provided a number of large modern market buildings of a far higher standard, both visually and hygienically, than those in Freetown.

Thus Abidjan has a commercial structure completely unlike that of Freetown, partly because of the greater prosperity of the Ivory Coast, but the role played by the special class of French small-scale entrepreneurs is also very important.

#### LAGOS (Nigeria)

Detailed work on the commercial structure of Lagos by A. L. Mabogunje<sup>7</sup> has produced findings remarkably similar to those of the author in Freetown.

Lagos, the federal capital of Nigeria, is situated on the only permanent break along the eastern part of the West African coast, and hence grew up as a port, graduating from a slave centre to the most important harbour in West Africa. Accordingly, the population of the city has risen from only 20,000 in 1850 to close on three quarters of a million within the metropolitan area today.



# THE RETAIL STRUCTURE OF LAGOS

(AFTER MABOGUNJE)

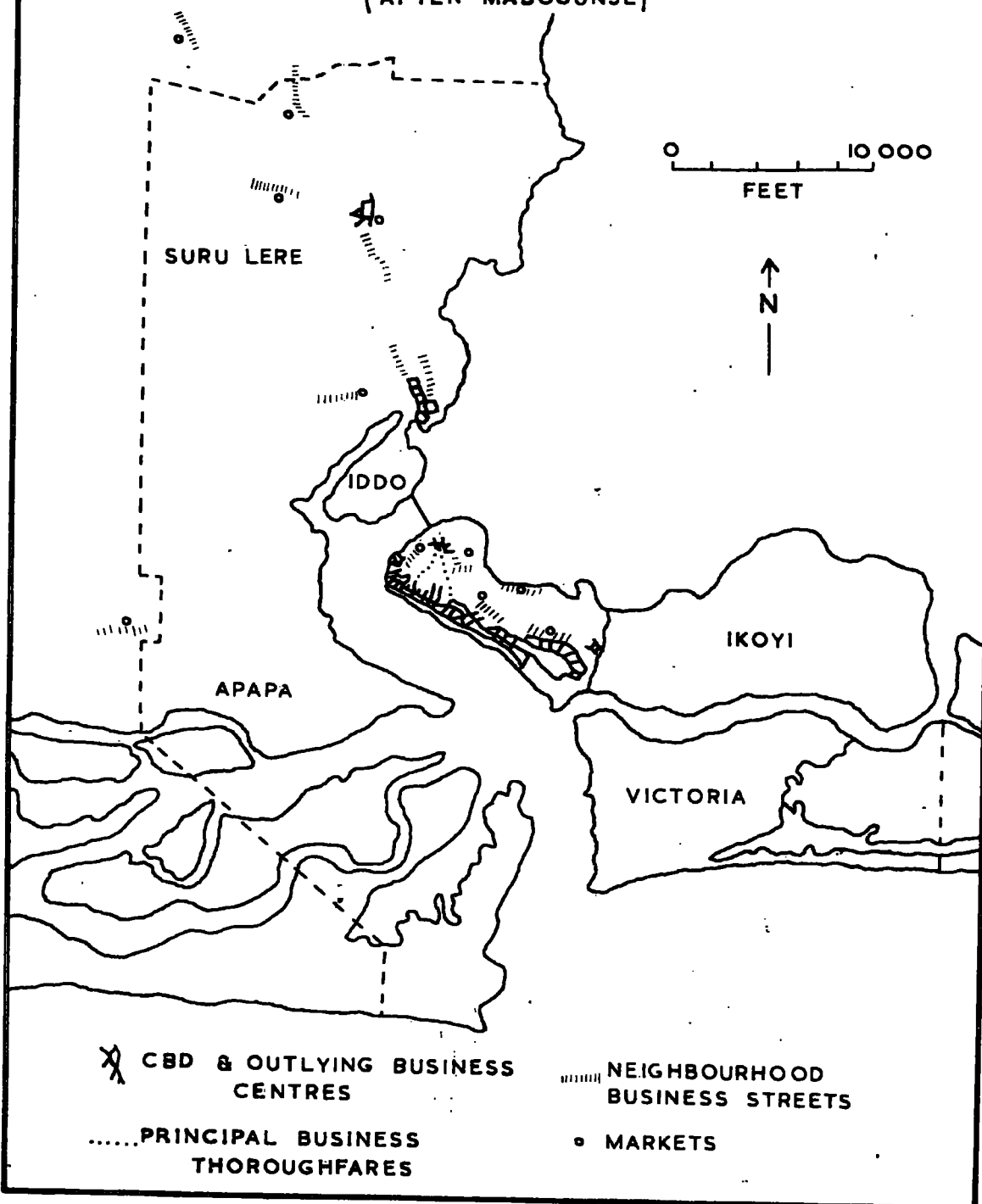


FIG. 9:3

Modern retailing in the city dates from 1852 when, following the British bombardment ending the slave trading, a number of European merchants came to Lagos. By the end of 1852 there were five of them, and two more arrived in the next year<sup>8</sup>. The new community settled on the southern shore of Lagos Island, which was the largest area of vacant land close to the existing town, and has become the site of the present CBD (Fig 9:3). In 1861 one of the merchants, McCasky, acting as Governor for a period, began the construction of two broad streets, the Marina and Broad Streets, which today form the main arteries of the CBD. In the late nineteenth century more and more European merchants took up sites along these streets, building their "factories" with a residence on the floor above the shop. During the twentieth century these old buildings have been replaced by modern shops, department stores, offices, banks and car show-rooms. Most of these businesses in the central area are still controlled by European companies, who also handle the majority of imports arriving in Lagos, some of which are then resold to African and Asian traders.

Mabogunje has analysed the overall commercial structure of Lagos and found that, by and large, all of the five components of city retail structure postulated by Proudfoot<sup>9</sup> are found in the city (Fig 9:3).

These are:

- (a) The CBD
- (b) The Outlying business centre
- (c) The Principal business thoroughfare
- (d) The Neighbourhood business street
- (e) The isolated store cluster.

The CBD of Lagos, situated in the southern part of Lagos island, stands out as an area with higher buildings than are found in other

districts. Here there is a marked concentration of retailing, financing and administrative functions, and as in Freetown wholesaling is well represented. Lagos is well served by a public transport system, whose routes focus on the CBD bringing in workers and shoppers from suburban districts.

Mabogunje, using building height, ground-floor land use and central business intensity index information was able to recognise five sub-districts within the CBD. These are:

1. A warehouse and wholesale sub-district
2. A retail sub-district
3. A finance sub-district
4. An institutional sub-district
5. An administrative sub-district.

The warehouse and wholesale sub-district is situated to the north-west of the retail area, close to deep water enabling berthing facilities to be provided for ships.

The retail sub-district is the real heart of the CBD. Most stores have at least three or four stories, a considerably larger vertical development than is found in Freetown. The area has been able to expand to the north, following slum clearance in 1956 and 1957. As in Freetown, retailing is dominated by the European-owned department stores. There are also a large number of specialised shops - hardware stores, electrical and radio shops, chemists, shoe shops and haberdasheries. Private offices are often situated above these stores.

To the east of this area is the finance sub-district, with a great intensity of banking and insurance businesses, at the centre of which is the Central Bank of Nigeria. Surrounding this <sup>are</sup> the various British,

Nigerian and American banks, usually housed in multi-storey buildings, the upper floors of which are occupied by business offices. Newspaper printing is also found in this district.

Various religious and educational institutions occupy the area east of the finance sub-district. These include the Anglican Cathedral of Lagos, the Baptist Church, the Methodist Boys' High School, St. Mary's Convent School, and the Anglican Girls' School. Just as in Freetown, the location of such establishments is well established, dating from about 1850. Again as in Freetown, the traffic congestion and high land values of the central area have forced many institutions to move to suburban locations.

Farther east is the administrative sub-district, containing the municipal and federal government offices. The constitutional changes which have taken place since 1951 have created a need for a greatly increased area of government offices, and this sub-district now occupies a large area around the race course. Buildings located here include the Federal Legislative Buildings and the National Hall.

The outlying business centres are far less well-developed than those in the United States described by Proudfoot. The beginnings of such centres are found at the Idumata intersection of Victoria and Balogun-Ereko Streets, both of which are business thoroughfares, at Araromi to the east of Lagos Island, at Oyingbo in Ebute Metta, and at Sabo in Yabo. The important elements found in such centres are a department store or large provision store and a bank, and a number of multi-storey buildings have appeared, indicating an increased intensity of land use.

The intersection of main routeways is an ideal location for such developments.

There are two principal business thoroughfares in Lagos, Victoria Street and Balogun-Ereko Street. As with Kissy Street and Kroo Town Road in Freetown, these are main traffic arteries leading from the CBD and derive much of their custom not from people passing along the streets from the central area, as Proudfoot found in Philadelphia, but from an entirely different population group, generally in a lower income bracket than the shopper using the CBD. These streets, just like Kissy Street, are occupied by Lebanese traders selling a wide variety of goods, but mainly textiles and haberdashery. A similar kind of "commercial linkage" exists between these shops and the hawkers who set up their moveable wooden counters outside as was found in Freetown.

At the neighbourhood and local levels, the neighbourhood business street and isolated store clusters, of the type described in Freetown, supplement the role of the African markets, which are still the real centre of neighbourhood economic life. The market has always been an important part of the life of Yoruba towns, and Lagos is no exception even though the number of markets in the city has been reduced from 16 in 1898 to eight at the present time. Neighbourhood business streets are usually found on the main routes leading from the markets, the intensity of commerce declining with increased distance from the market. Most of these shops are operated by Africans working on a very limited capital, and usually occupying only a small area of floor-space. Isolated store clusters as in Freetown sell very small quantities of a wide variety of products. Many shops will sell one cigarette, a few cubes of sugar or

a single envelope, and serve purely local needs.

In many ways the commercial structure of Lagos is similar to that of Freetown. The same ethnic groups are present - Lebanese controlled commercial ribbons lead off from the European-dominated CBD, and African markets, neighbourhood shopping streets and individual store clusters serve more local needs. Also these groups serve their own typical income-group markets - the Europeans catering for high-income groups, the Lebanese the less well-off and the Africans the vast majority of the population, although some Lebanese also cater for this lower group. What differences there are can really be called differences of scale rather than of degree. Lagos is a much bigger city than Freetown, and on the whole per capita income is higher, therefore one can expect a much better developed and more extensive commercial structure. Also, Lagos benefits by being the home of the head-offices of companies operating in other parts of Nigeria. Nigeria, with a population of about 56 millions, is Africa's most populous country, and can obviously support more of these firms than can Sierra Leone. The CBD of Lagos is much larger and prosperous than that of Freetown, and as such has been able to develop distinct sub-regions in a functional sense. In Freetown, on the other hand, the only zoning that can be observed is in ethnic terms, even though that does have some functional expression too. Lagos is far more important as a financial centre. Freetown has only three banks, widely scattered in the central area, plus the newly established Bank of Sierra Leone. Similarly, the existence of outlying business centres, even if only in an embryonic form, can be accounted for by Lagos' far greater size and prosperity.

### References

1. STEEL, R. W., 'The towns of tropical Africa' in Barbour, K. M. and Prothero, R. M. (Eds.), Essays on African Population (London, 1961) 249-278.
2. MABOGUNJE, A. L., 'The growth of residential districts in Ibadan', Geogr. Rev., 52, 1962, 56-77.
3. MITCHEL, N. C., 'Yoruba towns' in Barbour, K. M. and Prothero, R. M. (Eds.), Essays on African Population (London, 1961), 279-302.
4. The author wishes to thank Professor W. Schulze of the University of Monrovia for hospitality and assistance during his stay in Liberia.
5. GREENE, G., Journey without maps (London, 1935).
6. GUNTHER, J., Inside Africa (London, 1955), p 343.
7. MABOGUNJE, A. L., 'The evolution and analysis of the retail structure of Lagos, Nigeria', Econ. Geogr. 40, 1964, 304-323.
8. GEARY, Sir W. N. M., Nigeria under British rule (London, 1927), p 28.
9. PROUDFOOT, M. J., 'City retail structure', Econ. Geog., 13, 1937, 425-428.

### CONCLUSIONS

The main aims of this thesis have been two-fold. Firstly, it was hoped to test some of the methods which have been evolved to study the commercial structure of European and North American cities to see whether these are valid in the African context, an environment very different from areas where they were formulated. In particular it was hoped to look carefully at the method of CBD analysis evolved by Murphy and Vance. But no methods should be used simply for their own sakes, so, secondly, it was hoped to say something in detail about the commercial life of Freetown, about the factors influencing its development, present structure and likely future development.

It has clearly been demonstrated that the well-known method of CBD analysis formulated by Murphy and Vance, and successfully applied to many European and North American cities, cannot justifiably be used in Freetown, largely because of the very special history of the city. Murphy and Vance, for what in their case were very good reasons, employed the city block as the basic unit of land use mapping and retail intensity calculation. However the land allocation used at the time of the establishment of the colony settlement of Freetown was designed to give each resettled slave room for a house and accompanying garden. For this reason the blocks are far too large to be completely used for the present functions of central Freetown, and each of them has developed a 'dead heart'.



Consequently, the various land use intensity indices put forward by Murphy and Vance gave results which are artificially low. As only block frontages are used commercially it seemed logical to apply a slightly modified version of the method suggested by de Blij, and this, being based on a much sounder premise, gave results which were far more realistic. This process of the testing of one method and set of theoretical principles, and on finding them invalid for one reason or another, replacing them with a sound theory and method, illustrates well what the scientific geographer ought to be doing in his search for sets of geographical laws. One can only be said to have formulated a law if the theory which has been postulated has been extensively tested in various situations and found to be correct in every case. It might be argued that the planned layout of Freetown's street pattern is an extremely special case which can almost be classed as a freak, and ought to be ignored. However, the work of de Blij in Dar es Salaam and Lourenco Marques has produced results which are remarkably similar to those of the author in Freetown, and this would tend to suggest that the special block size found in central Freetown is not the only factor responsible. It seems likely that general underdeveloped economies of the African areas so far studied produce a city commercial structure of this kind, but more work will be needed before the detailed mechanism can be described. The present tentative theories put forward in this thesis as to the effects of general economic underdevelopment will have to be tested and improved by studying other examples elsewhere in Africa, and if necessary completely new theories will have to be formulated.

It is only by the application of such theories and methods to the problems of the real world that such devices can be tested and used to do the job for which they were intended - help to tell us something meaningful about the complex environment in which we live. Methods have their final justification in the results they produce, and are judged by the validity of these. The methods used have drawn out in precise terms the differences between Freetown and the Western cities studied by other urban geographers. In particular the methods used for calculating the various types of central business land use intensity have given a quantitative assessment of low level of commercial development found in central Freetown. On a broader scale, comparisons with various models of overall city commercial structure, again mainly used in Western cities, have allowed a precise evaluation of Freetown's total commercial development to be made.

In the introduction the whole question of terminology was raised, and in particular the validity of using the term 'CBD' was questioned. At the end of this study it must be said that central area of Freetown, in terms of its morphology, intensity of development, and overall appearance, bears very little resemblance to central business districts of the average large European and North American city. This is in spite of the important European business community found in central Freetown. It is in fact the interaction of the various ethnic entrepreneurial groups present which gives central Freetown its special character. Each has its own particular spatial position in the core area, its own type of trade, group of customers and each type of business is housed in a building of a special style. The European, Lebanese, Indian and African businessmen do not really compete with one another. Each performs a special function

for one particular sector of the population, and as such each is indispensable to the efficient running of the city, at least under present conditions. A very similar central area structure has developed in Lagos, although on a different scale, by the interaction of just these same racial groups. On the other hand, the special class of small-scale shop owners found in Abidjan has produced a central area almost completely different to that of Freetown. In Ibadan the very low percentage of non-African businessmen found in the city has enabled the traditional types of traders and markets to survive everywhere except in a very small core area.

The various racial groups represented in the CBD of Freetown also have their own special positions in the total city commercial structure. The European companies serving the highest income groups are found almost entirely within the core area of the CBD, their greater turnover allowing them to pay the higher land values commanded by the most easily accessible sites from this. On the main routes leading from the CBD are found the next most accessible sites in the city, but land values here are lower than in the CBD and these sites are occupied by the Lebanese and Indian traders serving the middle income groups. In most Western cities such sites would be occupied by businesses requiring good accessibility but also large areas of floor space. In Freetown this is not the case. Such streets as Kissy Street and Kroo Town Road are occupied by closely packed Lebanese stores, each with a small selling area. As such shops do not generally serve the same group of people as the CBD, they do not depend upon the passage of shoppers along the main routes from the CBD as the means of obtaining patronage. Rather, they have their own group of customers quite separate from those using the shops of the CBD. Exactly

the same feature was noted in Lagos. Serving the needs of the lower income groups and providing convenience goods within the suburban areas are the small-scale African traders and the traditional markets.

Thus whereas in Western cities the morphology of commerce is controlled by the frequency with which each particular type of good or service is required, in Freetown the various components have a much more separate existence and type of customer. This leads one to ask whether the city is really one integrated whole or a number of separate parts. It is often said, with justification, that there is a growing gap between the wage-earning urban population and vast numbers of subsistence farmers living in the rural areas. The fruits of the economic development that takes place are not usually seen by the unfortunate mass of peasants. Similarly it might be said that there is a very real gap between the prosperous few living in the city, those with Government jobs, and the vast majority of the urban population, many of which are periodically unemployed. The existence of separate commercial services catering for these distinct groups, tends to confirm this view. The exploitation of the vast majority of the population by the privileged few was quite rightly criticised by African nationalist leaders in their attacks upon the evils of colonial domination. But now that Africans themselves occupy these positions of power and privilege, there seems to be very little sign of a sweeping away of such abuses. One of the worrying features of modern Africa is the growing gap in living standards between the African elite and the rest of the population. This is seen most clearly in a capital city, where those in positions of power reside. It is quite right for the Government

of Sierra Leone to encourage its own citizens to take a more active part in the commerce of Freetown, profits thus remaining within the country. One must expect African traders to break into commerce more fully, especially in the lower levels of the hierarchy. In particular the position of the Lebanese trader, for long disliked because it was believed he exploited the local population, must be in real danger. It must be regarded as a healthy development for Africans to control their own affairs as much as possible, even though large scale trade requiring much capital will be out of their reach for some time. Freetown's clear racially divided trading group structure may well become less clear in the near future, but it is unfortunate that the separate income groups that support these businesses appear more permanent.

Since urban commerce is so obviously connected with the economic structure of a much wider area, the general level of economic development is a very important consideration. In the case of a capital city like Freetown the economy of the whole nation must be considered. Even by West African standards Sierra Leone is far from being a rich country and this is clearly reflected in Freetown's commerce, largely explaining its lack of intensity. The differences between the CBDs of Freetown and Lagos in terms of scale and prosperity, although not in basic character and composition, are clearly the result of Nigeria's greater economic wealth. Similarly, the booming economy of the Ivory Coast gives Abidjan's commerce a remarkable bustle and prosperity. The intensity indices calculated for central Freetown clearly showed the low level of development of commerce there, and this is borne out by more subjective judgements.

This state of affairs can only be remedied when the Sierra Leone economy reaches a much higher level of activity than at present. Only then will Freetown have the high buildings, and functional specialisation of the American or British CBD, and be able to support the suburban regional and neighbourhood shopping centres which are now an important feature of cities in the United States. An area which has entered the world wide market economy can only function efficiently if urban service centres exist to supply certain vital requirements, and thus the entry of Africa into a wider economy has been marked by the emergence of towns and cities. These same economic forces govern the later development of these centres, so that the present form and future growth of commerce in Freetown very largely depend upon the ability of the whole of Sierra Leone to expand her level of economic activity.