**Infrastructure as Divination: Images from a Nigerian City**

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In the Nigerian city of Jos, as in many African cities, it is striking how the infrastructure’s imperfections make it very present in people’s everyday lives. In a very literal sense, the flaws of infrastructure put the prefix ‘infra’ (‘below’) in brackets; instead of operating behind the scenes, manifesting itself primarily through its effects, its constant failures bring it to the forefront of experience. Not just fixed and solid out there, the infrastructure comes into being through changing processes of flow and non-flow and presence and absence. Much effort is put into trying to predict these changing processes, and to discover new ways around the infrastructure’s shortcomings. At the same time, infrastructure becomes a system of signs through which people try to understand circumstances beyond those immediately at hand. Like when diviners deduce the state of the world through the markings they have made in the sand, *the materiality of infrastructure turns highly elusive questions into tangible clues*.

This paper explores the ways in which infrastructure allows people to explore elusive questions, such as the state of the city and the nation. In a city and a nation that often seems to be beyond any predictions, the likewise uncertain infrastructure, paradoxically comes forward as a valuable tool. The wires, pipes, roads, and signals – water, electricity, transportation, and phone networks that connects and disconnects people, have become essential tools for analysing the city and the nation – instead of being *infra* – underneath and hidden – they have become *supra* – above, and visible – transcending the realm of mere utility, signifying the unpredictable and elusive spirit of Nigeria. Imbedded in them are the indexes, the omens, of what has been, what is, and what will be.