

Megacities: The lagos example/Nigeria

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The debate about the usefulness of Urbanization in Development effort will continue to receive attention both in the negative and positive way. The contribution of urbanization to national development is no longer an academic exercise; the reality is that urbanization with all attendant problems is still a fulcrum of growth.

To appreciate the importance of this assertion, a journey into the development of urbanization and its attendant contributions to development is made here. The aim is to show that urbanization need not be seen as evil but with good management its positive contribution can be maximally harnessed.

The evolution of urban centres highlights a conscious attempt at harnessing maximally the resources of the environment. Although, it was revolutionised immediately after independence, African cities had exhibited the trait of expansion and growth right from the onset. The continent parades a unique urban development which makes it interesting to urban analyst and the world generally. Natural endowment in form of location, minerals (both flow and stock), people (population behaviour and characteristics) and qualitative environment have all combined together to place Africa in a position of envy among various continents of the world.

Trading along major routes which had link with seaports and water environment opened a valve for the evolution of agricultural

settlement where pockets of population can be discerned low land areas accommodated a large number of people because of its ability to provide food for the increasing number of people living within the area. An increase in population leads to the expansion of opportunities and encouragement of growth in population as shown in fig. 1.

This may look too ordinary but it was the game during the precolonial period. Expansion and population growth lead to high demand from the environment and ultimately, struggle for more land and local rancour and war. The issue of might and security gradually rolled in. More people were forced to migrate to areas where security could be guaranteed and eventual agglomeration of people in a particular area. The cultural traits of these migrants are brought to bear at their new area thereby evolving an heterogeneous relationship which can be seen in form of cities.

From this position urbanization stages and the growth of cities in Africa can be divided strictly into 3 phases based on the consideration of economic political and social changes. These phases are:

- Pre colonial phase
- Colonial phase
- Post colonial phase

Pre Colonial Phase: This phase comprised of settlements that had their root in agricultural development and trade. Before

the end of 19th century, South western and Northern part of Nigeria had emerged as areas with many important urban centres. Urban centres emerged in the northern part as commercial centres along the ancient trans Saharan trade routes where goods such as Ivory, salt, hide and skins are exchanged. In other parts of Africa, Sudan, Ghana, Mali and the Songhai empire developed urban centres as a result of these interactions.

It is noteworthy that as at 1896, Leon Africans described as urban economy the settlement of Gobir the capital of one of the Hausa states in the Northern Nigeria where we have great stores of artifacts, leather and shoes.

In fact by 1855, Sokoto had 120,000, Kano 30,000 and Zaria 45,000 people.

These urban centres were governed by people known as their leaders and security was guaranteed against external invasions. The leaders were the custodian of authority and the performance of each settlement was able to attract more people from different areas. To prevent external attack, unfavourable topography were settled as strategic defence sites such as Kotan kartland in Kogi state, Kagoro and Attakar in Kaduna state, Foro and Billiri in Bauchi state, Abeokuta in ogun state, Idanre and Akure in Ondo state.

Colonial Phase: Without urban cities perhaps it would have been difficult for colonial mas-ters to administer the countries. This is because the centres provided a location from where policies, rules, are disseminated to other areas. The focus of the colonialist at inception was to establish administrative centres in the hitherto local urban cities and tap resources from its rural areas. Colonial urban development started with the annexation of Lagos as British colony under Treaty of secession in 1861.

This was followed with:

Introduction of monetised economy and Development of modern transport network.

The colonial government concentrated on the production of cash crops and exploration of mineral resources where they existed leading to the growth of colonial cities. Cocoa and rubber in the South west, development of groundnuts, hides and skin in the north, coal in the Udi hills and Tin in Jos Plateau prompted the development and growth of these areas. By 1895, the colonial government started construction of rail line from Lagos which reached Kano in 1921 to create ease movement of bulky products for onward exportation to Europe through natural ports like Lagos and Port Harcourt. This singular activity contributed immensely to the development of Lagos and Port Harcourt into large and enviable commercial centres attracting large number of immigrants from rural hinterlands. The construction of rail line in 1913 from Port Harcourt contributes to the urban development in the east which prior to the construction of the rail line had no significant record of urbanization. In the west, settlement along the rail way line which developed into cities status include Osogbo, Ilorin and Abeokuta.

It is imperative to observe that there were two major arteries of growth during the colonial period.

The first was the old traditional town which became much active due to their favourable locations which made them relevant to the objectives of the colonial government.

The second was the new land with different development requirements, markets exclusively inhabited by European and government officials with good layouts and infrastructural facilities.

Post Colonial Phase: The political restructuring of the country from 3 regional administration to 4 in 1963 was the first attempt to alter the configuration of urban centres in Nigeria after independence.

Historically the 1967-1970 civil war which naturally restructured the urban centres in the country where people were forced to migrate from the north back to their origin in the east thereby providing population

boom in cities like Enugu, Aba, Onitsha, Port Harcourt, Calabar and Owerri.

In 1967, 1976 and 1987 12, 19 and 21 states were created from the existing 4 regions respectively giving the state capitals the privilege of becoming major urban migration magnet of attraction to large streams of rural urban migration.

Fundamentally too was the petroleum boom between 1973 and 1983 following the Arab Israeli war. Returns made from the sales of crude oil was used to implement gigantic urban based project and the construction of industries in different parts of the country. Notwithstanding this the urban centres were faced with problems of inadequate infrastructure facilities, housing, electricity as a result of unprecedented growth. Policies aimed at ameliorating these were therefore formulated here some which are reviewed here.

Review of policies

Different policies were formulated by separate political entities before the amalgamation into one political region called Nigeria. Briefly stated colonial town planning experience started with the promulgation in Lagos in 1863 of the Town improvement ordinance to control development and urban sanitation. Planning standards were specified for various segments of the city as an area was divided into traditional and government reservation being administered by traditional ruler and colonialists respectively.

Specifically, Lord Lugard Land Proclamation (LLLP) of 1900 introduced indirect rule in the northern part and cantonment proclamation of 1904 for the administration of GRA'S. The township ordinance no 29 of 1917 laid guidelines for physical layout of towns and legalised the segregation of the Europeans from the African residential area.

Between 1924 and 1927, town planning committees were established for the Northern and Southern provinces for first class towns, Local Advisory Board for second class towns and District Officers for the third

class towns. This arrangement lasted for 3 years when in 1928, the Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB) was established to take charge of general development of the Lagos Territory in response to an outbreak of bubonic plague.

The LEDB established under the Lagos Town Planning Ordinance of 1928 concerned itself with slum clearance on Lagos Island, the reclamation of Victoria Island, Housing schemes in Surulere, South west Ikoyi, Apapa, Industrial layout at Apapa, Iganmu and Ijora. It would be seen that the various arrangement were targeted at solving a pressing problem.

A new diversion to it was observed when in 1946, a ten year development and welfare plan was approved for village reconstruction and town planning where the decision of the board is subject to Governor General's approval. From here, it was observed that all the existing cities were in need of proper layout and replanning for future expansion.

As a result of this submission, the Nigerian town and country planning ordinance No. 4 of 1946 was passed to provide for the planning, improvement and development of different parts of the country through planning schemes which was interpreted to mean the provision of more physically attractive layout plans with architecturally well designed housing units. The mineral act 1945 touch on issues like drainage and pollution (land, water air), Public Health Laws (1957) was designed to control overcrowding, diseases and general urban squalor, land development (Roads) law (1948) e.t.c

Post Colonial Planning Experience

The emphasis of the 1946-1956 ten year development plan was on the economic growth of the country which was retained as chapter 123 of the Law of Western Nigeria and chapter 155 of the Laws of Eastern Nigeria.

The first and second national development plan neglected measure of urban development in its formulation and execution as only N39.2 million out of N54 million budg-

eted was disbursed for urban development during the first national plan.

The second plan (1970-74) set aside only 7 percent of the total revenue for town and country planning (including housing, water and sewerage).

The third national plan boosted the integration of urban - rural development, provision of urban infrastructures, correction of physical planning inadequacies, reformation of local government machinery for efficient management of towns and cities and creating a federal ministry responsible for housing and urban development.

The fourth plan (1981-1985) was similar to the third plan.

Planning experiences in Nigeria especially in Lagos focused mainly on infrastructural development which can be seen as centripetal forces attracting potential migrants to the urban centres. Creation of opportunities followed closely as a result of availability of cheap labour from unskilled migrants.

The inward movement of people is believed to affect the amenities that had been provided in the urban centres as it over stretched it. A stock taking on housing and housing production in Lagos state is a good example on weather to encourage or discourage urbanization in third world countries.

Odumosu (1999) observed housing as the totality of human comfort, safety and environment. With the population of 13m (projected), Lagos has over 200,000 persons per square kilometre and a daily intake of migrant to as high as 833 persons per day. The influx of people to metropolitan Lagos puts pressure on housing.

HOUSING STATISTICS IN METROPOLITAN LAGOS

Housing production and availability in Lagos state was from three sources before the advent of democracy in 1999. These are:

Private contribution - procurement of land and building by private owners which is the largest contributor.

Government - It first came as a direct provision through housing corporations and mortgage institutions to give soft loan to developers for example the LEDB. When Lagos was created in 1967, areas and districts had planning authorities to implement development programmes. These planning authorities were later merged with LEDB to form Lagos State Development and Property Corporation LSDPC with the sole aim of preparing housing schemes, construction of houses and shopping centres and the provision of infrastructural facilities in the state. LSDPC between 1972 and 1979 developed 1,500 housing scheme and another 5000 units were sold on the order of the government in 1980 to allottees. Between 1980 and 1990, it had completed another 13,860 low income housing units.

Mortgage institutions were able to provide mortgage facilities to only 2300 applicants at Abbey mortgage finance bank.

Since the inception of Governor Bola Tinubu in Lagos, concerted efforts have been made to provide housing and upgrade other decaying facilities within the metropolis at least to give it a lee way for proper growth. About 2500 housing units were provided within 3 years and there are plans in the pipeline to complete before the tenure terminates in 2003 about 20,000 housing units. A giant stride to the achievement of this was through the establishment of a ministry of housing to compliment the contributions of LSDPC and private developers. The government has expended close to N16 billion to rehabilitate and construct road network within the city while health has gulped as much as N2 billion.

Evaluation

It is very interesting to note that urban centres are the major producers of capital, which means that for any society to think of development, it must think urbanization. From the fore goings, if the highest numbers of investors in housing come from pri-

vate sector, more money is then generated by government in form of various taxes that is levied on both the occupants and the developer.

The policies that have so far been explained gave rise to the increasing number of people in the urban centre as people are naturally attracted to the aesthetics in the urban centres hence a growth in the population an expansion on the facilities available.

As government is forced to make more houses available so also are people coming in to occupy them. The demand is a continuous one. A tilt towards making housing available and affordable by government will create a huge source of revenue for the government and also an avenue for the creation of wealth. Facts that emerged in the recent past indicates that Nigeria has been observed as been blessed with resources, encouraging urbanization will create a valve for the overcrowding rural areas thereby making available fragmented land for mechanization and eventually food surplus for the people.

Manufactured goods can also be sold within short distance thereby yielding maximum profit for the industries because of the concentration of population in the urban centres where industries are located.

For developing states to achieve desired urbanization, effort must be geared towards an improvement in the economic power of the urban government which at first may be by populating the urban centres. In line with the set aim and objectives of this conference, Lagos state has justifiably created panacea for solving encountered problems in the urban centres.

These problems are enumerated below and the responses by Lagos state are also presented.

Unregulated Immigrants: This may be seen as a major problem in the developed states but the reverse is the case in the developing states.

Getting data on migration is generally difficult but Lagos state takes in about 883 persons per day creating cheap labour and population to consume processed foods in the urban centre. Notwithstanding these opportunities accrued to migration, a downturn effect may be observed when the city is taking too much of people and not providing avenues for absorbing them in the employment sector. Lagos state between 1999 and 2002 has employed over 10,000 youths who may be migrants at least to regulate the unemployment and reduce crime in the state. The creation of satellite towns in the state about three of them (Ayobo, Abijo and Eko Akete) is to enable the state control migration and congestion within the urban centres thereby bringing orderliness in space and maximizing urban opportunities.

Inhumane Housing: The evolution of shanting towns and ghettos have been discouraged in the city with the rehabilitation of areas in Ijora Badia and the proposed rehabilitation of Ajegunle just to mention but a few.

Housing in Lagos has been well focused judging from the huge investment by the state, private owners and mortgage industries and lastly private sector participation where the state provides land and private people develops them.

Negative Health Consequences: It is just normal that when population increase, there will be pressure on health facilities available so that more will be provided to cater for the people. Health sector in three years gulped over N2 billion to treat simple cases of malaria, typhoid and procurement of vaccines for various ailment. The antidote to this is the development of primary health care (PHE) to serve as avenue for educating people concerning their health.

Waste Management: Waste generation and disposal was inherited as a consequence of urbanization. This has lead variously to health problem through contamination of air, water and soil. However, urban centres in the developing states are making frantic efforts at getting rid of these by managing properly waste generated by the people. At

the global level, attempts at controlling pollution through proper management has been advocated. Nigeria as a developing country is not lagging behind. With the creation of the ministry of environment, the country is set to stamp out all forms of pollution through effective management.

Crime And Insecurity: This is also an indices of urbanization. The whole world is threatened generally by crime and insecurity. The federal government is tilting towards carrying out the UN regulation on policing by recruiting and training of personnel on security. The recent launching of operation fire for fire is to reduce crime rate and insecurity in the country in line with the global dimension and also to maintain orderlines within the urban centres. The rehabilitation of area boys, adequate legislation on ethnic milita and other complimentary efforts are basically to guarantee security within the urban centres.

For the evolution of megacity, it will be a blessing for the developing countries as efforts to eradicate nuforous activities of the population will be automatically checked. The government at the urban centres are aware of this and they have been contributing in no small ways to compliment the effort of the world body on peace and security and the National government. Nigeria is known for contributing to peace resolution in Liberia and Sierra Leone. We have participated in many peace talks/negotiation in other developing states and developed ones.

Traffic Crises and Inner City: The megacity is characterised by road networks that links different part of the city together by road, rail, water and in some cases air. Adequate transport system is necessary to coordinate the activity of the people residing in the urban centres. Both the federal and the states even to the local councils have invested in the area of public transportation. Increase in vehicle ownership has contributed to the vehicle traffic congestion within the urban centres.

Specifically, the Lagos state government created LASTMA (Lagos State Traffic Man-

agement Authority) to see mainly to the perenial problem of traffic congestion. This has achieved part of the stated responsibility and more recruits are being made to totally and permanently solve the problem. Road construction also gained prominence to ease movement within the city. It is desirable to have megacity so that the opportunities accrued to it will be benefited. The balkanization of political areas into smaller units is to achieve effective inner management. The state has created another 37 local councils out of the 20 to make 57all in an attempt to manage the urban centres.

HIV/AIDS: The campaign by organization in the world and the country specifically is to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS which is seen as a social problem in the urban centres. This is also seen in the context of birth reduction thereby imparting on population growth within the urban centres.

Implications: The implications of the aforementioned on the desirability of megacities in developing countries can be fashioned thus:

Population increase will lead to evolution of megacity as a result of housing demand in the face of limited land supply. This will create opportunity for technological advancement in building and maintenance and journey towards global achievement will begin. Attempts at restructuring the existing urban centres through designing of world acceptable layout will move developing countries towards achieving orderliness in space.

Emergence of new opportunities in the area of communication technology as a result of human agglomeration within the urban centres. Genuine political arrangement that is suitable to the heterogeneous population will be achieved through encouragement of inward movement of people.

The policy of the government should identify the qualification of the urban settlers and pro-viding a commensurate opportunities that will maximally utilize them and a quick return on labour will be enjoyed thereby leading to growth in the megacity.

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Megacity is desirable, therefore must be a chance for the developing countries as exemplified in Japan, China, Korea, India etc. who are competing vividly with the world powers. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to present this piece and hope that the policy thrust that has been highlighted will be properly digested.

Thank you and God bless.

Planning experiences in Nigeria especially in Lagos focused mainly on infrastructural development which can be seen as centripetal forces attracting potential migrants to the urban centres. Creation of opportunities followed closely as a result of availability of cheap labour from unskilled migrants.