

URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN NIGERIA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

Afolabi Francis FATUSIN

Department of Geography and Planning Sciences,
Adekunle Ajasin University,
P.M.B. 001, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: In recent periods urban development has been vigorous and unsustainable in Nigeria. By using a combination of analytical and evaluative techniques this study investigated the reason for this phenomenon and made suggestions on ways of making Nigerian cities more livable. The study discovered that despite several policies and programmes of the successive governments in Nigeria on urban development such as the promulgation of planning laws like the Town and Country Planning ordinance of 1946, Land Use Act to control issuance of permits for housing construction, The Urban and Regional Planning Act to streamline the responsibilities of each level of government on physical planning and preparation of Physical Development plans such as Master plans, Layout plans and Land Use plans, Urban Renewal plans, Zoning of land use, and other Development control principles, which can be classified as policy issues, urban degeneration has continued to increase. The study attributes this to massive population increase in the urban areas, For example the residents of urban centers in Nigeria in 1950 were less than 15% of the population and by 1975, and this proportion rose to 23.4% and in year 2000 was 43.3%. Nigerian urban population growth rate of 4.8% annually was markedly higher than growth rate of 1.2% in Developed countries. This has created several problems some of which are expansion of squatter settlements, increased poverty and a widening gap between the rich and poor, growing insecurity and rising crime rates, inadequate and deteriorating building stock, services and infrastructure. The study therefore recommends that Rural-urban drift will continue to increase in Nigeria, in the absence of any clear cut policy on rural - urban migration. Moreover there should be appropriate implementation and monitoring of master plans for major towns where they exist and the preparation and implementation of new ones where they are non-existent or out of date.

KEYWORDS: Urban Development, Planning, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Urbanisation is not a recent phenomenon in Nigeria. Indeed many ancient cities such as Ile Ife, Kano, Ibadan, Benin and Sokoto have had a rich history of urbanization. Urbanisation however increased significantly during the colonial administrations. It is apparent that the rate of urbanization in recent period has been vigorous, alarming and unsustainable. Urbanization is defined as the agglomeration of people in relatively large number at a particular spot of the earth surface (Onyemelukwe, 1977; Agbola, 2004; Olotuah and Adesiji, 2005). Urbanisation is regarded as a process, whereby an increasing proportion of the world, nations or region's population lives in developed areas (Falade, 2003).

According to Mabogunje (2002), residents of urban centers in Nigeria in 1950 were less than 15% of the population. By 1975, this proportion had risen to 23.4% and by 2000 was 43.3%. According to him, urban population growth rate is 4.8% annually; markedly higher than growth rate of 1.2% in Developed countries (HDR, 2004). Conversely, another school of thought believes that urbanization is not about the population size, but must satisfy certain conditions like modernization, physical and economic development, as well as the heterogeneity in occupation (Wirth, 1938 and Harvey, 2000 and Oyeleye 2013) Urbanisation is not a bad phenomenon as many people wrongly assume Urban areas (and urbanized regions) facilitate agglomeration economies, which are a vital part of firms becoming internationally competitive, with costs reduced through the learning, matching, and sharing (of knowledge, labour, infrastructure) that happens between firms. Urbanization has also

been linked to poverty reduction and innovation. Almost universally, access to basic urban services such as health, education, water, sanitation and electricity are higher in urban areas than in rural areas and are higher in larger urban areas than in smaller urban areas.

With the increasing population explosions and massive rural-urban migration accompanying the urbanization process in the developing countries, global economic integration, increased international trade, capital flows, telecommunication, new waves of technologies, and shifts in the comparative advantage of production continue to play a central role in integrating major urban centers and shaping the spatial organization of the cities (Jiboye, 2005).

Oyesiku (1997) opined that the pressure created by population growth from natural increase and migration on little investment in infrastructure and services in Nigerian urban areas is indeed so great that declines in quality and quantity of these are inevitable. This emigrational factor often results to over urbanization, which constitutes a “strike back” effect on the environment. (Awosusi and Jegede 2013)

In Nigeria the phenomenal rise in population from 82 million in 1991 to an estimated population of about 170 million in 2013 (National Population, Commission, 2010) and massive economic growth at over 7% per annum over the last decade (Awojori, 2011) which makes the country the continent's dominant economy brought much pressure on the already depressed urban infrastructures to the extent that current estimates put the number of homeless people in Lagos in 2010 at over 250000. Yet Lagos was ranked as one of the most unlivable cities in the world in 2009. Nigeria's cities, as elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, lack adequate infrastructure for housing, sanitation, water, and open space. Much of this is due to the absence of effective, proactive and goal getting local administrations that encompass the evolving functions and responsibilities in the face of massive population growth and continued urbanization. Therefore it is clear that to a large extent, urbanization may not be a problem since it is inevitable to urbanize. However problem lies with the process of managing this phenomenon in order to minimize the negative consequences to the level where it constitutes less of a problem

URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA

There is no shortage of urban development strategies and policies in Nigeria right from the colonial period. Urban development interventions ranged from statutory enactments such as the 1863 Town Improvement Ordinance, 1904 Cantonment Proclamation, Township ordinance of 1917, and the Town and Country Planning ordinance of 1946 to guide physical planning, to preparation of Physical plans such as master plans, layout plans and Land Use plans and Urban renewal plans, Land Use Act to control issuance of permits for housing construction, The Urban and Regional Planning Act to streamline the responsibilities of each level of government on physical planning, Zoning of land use, and other Development control principles, which can be classified as policy issues.

While most of these enactments were mainly public health laws, the Town and Country Planning Ordinance was a watershed in the history of colonial planning legislations in Nigeria as it made provisions on a wide range of Town planning issues such as compensation and betterment, process of acquisition of land by the government for development and most especially, establishment of planning authorities to coordinate planning in each local government areas and preparation of planning schemes as a strategy of Urban development. These enactments especially defined the powers and responsibilities of planning authorities as the government's executive arm in planning administration.

The post colonial period also witnessed renewed efforts at decentralization of administration by creating new administrative headquarters at the states and local government levels and the establishment of new Federal capital city in Abuja. The successive military administrations in Nigeria created 36 states to replace the erstwhile regional structure of north, west, east and mid-west. The new state capitals had to be developed as centres of administration. A good chunk of resources meant for the states were channeled to the enhancement of facilities, in these towns leading to what Okowa (1987) refers to as urban bias. In response to this bias, rural dwellers had been migrating to these cities to benefit from the niceties of city life which included modern sector employment, decent housing, among others

In response to this the Federal and states administrations created separate Ministries Agencies and Boards on Urban affairs to develop government policies and responses to urban problems which had become noticeable in the 1980s. One of such was the defunct Capital and Urban Development Agency (CUDA) with a mandate of securing physical development of Akure.

In the area of urban morphology many states and the Federal authority adopted the use of Master planning approach. Thus many states were encouraged to produce master plans of their major towns to guide development and redevelopment. Essagha, (1997) defined master plan in Nigerian context as an official long term document by the appropriate Federal, State

or Local authority as may be desirable clearly stating the direction of future physical development plan of a place. He described the master plan as a public document made up of maps, drawings, sketches and explanatory written reports. The maps/plans could be to direct the physical development of the area or region. The master plan should be able to guide and direct the physical development up to next 20 to 30 years in the planned area or city. Master plans have been used extensively in planning Nigerian cities and towns.

DATA ANALYSIS

The paper draws on document analysis and qualitative research. In addition other relevant materials and data were sourced from published sources including government departments, publications, journal articles and textbooks among others.

THE STATE OF NIGERIAS URBAN AREAS TODAY

The state of the Nigerian urban areas today reveals an environment rich in policies, programmes and laws but deficient in implementation

Lawanson (2006) opines that the most serious problems confronting cities, towns and their inhabitants as identified in Agenda 21(1996) include the following:

Inadequate financial resources, lack of employment opportunities, spreading homelessness and expansion of squatter settlements, increased poverty and a widening gap between the rich and poor, growing insecurity and rising crime rates, inadequate and deteriorating building stock, services and infrastructure. Other problems include lack of health and educational facilities, improper land use, insecure land tenure, rising traffic congestion, increasing pollution, lack of green spaces, inadequate water supply and sanitation, uncoordinated urban development and an increasing vulnerability to disaster. All these have seriously challenged the capacity of government at all levels to realize socio- economic development and environmental protection, which are all components of sustainable urban development.

This situation has been aggravated by the continued rural to urban migration with its attendant stress on infrastructures such as housing leading to homelessness slums pressure on roads light and water supply. In the same vein Adebayo and Jegede who studied urban situation in Ado Ekiti described the appalling state of Nigeria's urban areas below

The Nigerian urban areas today present a grim litany of woes. Many Nigerian cities are vulnerable to flooding, erosion and storm .Invariably, natural disasters in cities kill or injure members of low-income groups disproportionately because the poor often live in unsafe housing on vulnerable lands. The loss of homes, possessions and often livelihood because of a natural disaster often leads to further impoverishment. Motor vehicles and motorcycles also pose a significant environmental threat to urban residents. Reported road traffic accidents in Nigeria between 1990 and 1995 were 121,451 of these figures, 15.66% totaling 19,049 cases occurred in Lagos, Nigeria's metropolitan city.

The list of urban litany of woes seems inexhaustible. Other scholars have also recognized urban sprawl, incompatibility of uses, unplanned poor layouts, poor waste disposal and poor urban governance. All these have reduced the livability of Nigerian cities

Aina (1990) gave a more concise overview of problems in Urban Nigeria as follows

Urban areas of Nigeria are deprived settlements characterized by excessive residential densities, largely uninhabitable housing and the absence of sanitation, basic infrastructure and social services. They harbor migrants from the rural areas who are unable to fit into the economy of the city and so tend to find solace in informal activities and crime The proliferation of these shantytowns results in the unwieldy expansion of the urban centers which poses a major planning problem as provision and management of roads, drainage and sewage systems among other infrastructure proves very difficult.

HOUSING AS A MAJOR FAILED COMPONENT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Housing is by far the most important component of urbanization as collectively it accounts for about 50% of urban land uses. Housing is one of the most investigated sectors in Nigeria (see Aribigbola 2008, Olayiwola 2005), yet the least accessible, least affordable and least equitable in the Nigerian urban areas despite the fact that these have been the major targets of many housing policies and programmes in Nigeria. Fatusin and Aribigbola (2013) in their study of urban housing market in Ondo state wrote

“there is an appalling housing market where policies are at best only partially implemented and where informal housing production still predominate, which confirms the need for more houses to cater for a population of 170 million people which grows at 2.5% per annum. The housing market of the state is dominated by informal sector where housing development programmes on loan and regulations in term of quality do not trickle down to the developers thereby creating chaotic housing market”.

The operation of the free market structure has improved housing market in terms of housing stock growth, housing material production, housing economics, and housing infrastructure only marginally, the central focus which are stated above have not been realized.

In term of housing quality, Fatusin and Aribigbola in their study of housing quality in Akure, Ikare and Okitipupa the urban centres in Ondo state conducted a survey which revealed that 35% of houses in these cities can be classified as poor using yardsticks such as presence/absence of structural defects, materials used in construction, roofing, privacy, availability of courtyards/court gardens etc. while over 11% are in dilapidated forms. Yet out of these 46% (poor & dilapidated), majority of them (58%) were built after the launch of National Housing Policy in 1991. The structure also reveals that 46.6% were made from Crude earth/clay materials, 42.8% of houses do not have toilet facilities, 16.2% do not have access to electricity, 10.5% and 7.2% are still dependent on rainwater and rivers and streams for domestic water needs, 23.9% are still dependent on bush/field for sanitation, 42.8% cook in the open while an average of 56.3% still travel over 15 minutes to get domestic water.

There is a consensus among Nigerian housing experts that the magnitude of housing problems in the country is high. According to FRN (1991), the urban housing shortage as at 1990 was projected at 5 million housing units while the rural housing shortage stood at just 3.2 million. It was further projected that some 700,000 housing units had to be produced annually to tackle this shortage. It will be recalled that Nigeria's population according to National population commission in 1991 was only about 83 million now 165 million. More recently, the United Nations study put the overall housing deficit at 17 million which the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics had earlier estimated at between 12 and 14 million in 2007. It was in a bid to solve this problem that the Federal government of Nigeria formulated the National Housing Programme NHP in 1991, reviewed it in 2002 and made a new one in 2012.

Prior to this time there had been many programmes on housing development right from the colonial period. This period marked the establishment of European Reservation Areas which later metamorphosed into Government Reservation Area, to provide decent housing for the British colonialists. The post-colonial period marked the advent of Housing Corporations in Nigeria which were established to intervene directly in Housing provision. However this was not far reaching enough and the problem remained insurmountable. The first and the second national development plans made scanty provision on housing. However the housing component of the third national rolling plan made a lot of provisions concerning housing. In the Fourth National Development Plan, government accepted housing as a social responsibility and pledged to ensure that the average urban worker do not pay more than 20% of his salary as monthly rent, The period also marked the establishment of the Federal Mortgage Bank to provide loans to people. It is informative to note that provisions were not made for low income people.

REASONS FOR THE FAILURES OF THE MAJOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

There is no doubt that there has been lackluster approach to solving urban problems in Nigeria. Indeed there has been apparent disconnect between these policies programmes and approaches to urban development and the situation on the ground. The appalling state was recognized at the international conference on slums organized by ONU-HABITAT held in Rabat in 2012, where slums were reported to be increasing in many urban areas in Nigeria. For example Lagos was recognised as a mega city of 18 million dwellers. (UDR, 2013), yet the rate of provision of infrastructures and maintenance and new housing provision could not keep pace with population growth from natural increase and mainly from in-migration. Government must live up to expectation in this regard.

According to Oyeleye (2013) Rural-urban migration in Nigeria has been increasing over the past 25 years. Between 1985 and 1990, over 3 million Nigerians migrated from rural areas to urban centres, while over 5 million Nigerians migrated between 2001 and 2005. This shows over 75% increase in the rural-urban migration in Nigeria, for every period of 5-years. This is quite unsustainable and it will therefore put a lot of pressures on existing infrastructures and weak urban managers.

There is no doubt that there is weak urban governance in Nigeria. This is because there is lack of appreciation of planning issues by participants in the political sphere at Federal States and Local levels. The political leaders have shown little or no interest in urban planning issues. By virtue of section 4 of the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Act the local Government is responsible for formulation and implementation of Town plans. Yet the local government as presently constituted is pro inertia as far as urban management is concerned. This is so because the local governments not only lack

the resources financial and human, they seem less concerned about planning issues generally. Yet planning is supposed to be a local government responsibility.

According to Taylor (2000) the reason for the poor state of Nigerian urban areas can be summarized into five points:

the national government stresses economic planning and downplays physical planning generally; local planning authorities are subject to excessive political interference in matters relating to development control; funding is inadequate to implement local planning schemes; there is a lack of a well-trained planning workforce at all governmental levels - federal, state and local; and that there is little coordination between planning levels: there is usually competition between the local political authority and the local planning authorities.

In a nutshell, there is lack of coordination in urban development planning. Ajaegbu (1976) discovered in a study of planning and Development in Jos, Nigeria, that five principal government agencies influenced urban development in that city, but lacked overall coordination and integration in result. In fact, all of the following influenced urban development in Jos: the Local Authority, the Water Board, the Town Council, and the State Ministry of Works. The situation in Lagos is worse with proliferation of agencies and boards which are essentially into urban planning in Lagos. The proliferation of agencies responsible for urban development produce independence of action, unresolved responsibilities, and a woeful result.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There is no doubt the magnitude of Nigeria's urban problems have continued to increase in recent period. Yet very little efforts are being made especially at implementation level to provide sustainable solution to them. Studies have shown that while there is no shortage of policies and programmes, the government does not have the will, commitment and the resources to combat the problem

Rural-urban drift will continue to increase in Nigeria, in the absence of any clear cut policy on rural - urban migration. Therefore Nigeria may continue to experience failures in its urban development in the absence of population and migration policies that seek to reduce the population of those who have no business being in the urban areas.

It is also important to ensure appropriate implementation and monitoring of master plans for major towns where they exist and the preparation and implementation of new ones where they are non-existent or out of date. Moreover old master plans have to be reviewed to ensure they are responsive to the present realities.

The problem of weak institutions especially institutions that are connected with urban development like the ministries of urban development should be strengthened to be able to hold their ground in the face of political interventions from highly placed individuals who are bent on circumventing the system for their personal benefits. The Local governments need to be strengthened to be able to perform efficiently their roles in urban development as defined by the URP Act of 1992.

There is the need to encourage more indigenous housing designs which utilize local building materials, mesh with cultural traditions, and adhere to the environmental restraints of a tropical climate;

Urban renewal must be encouraged to restructure, re-plan and rehabilitate the blighted parts of the Nigerian urban areas. This may not be easy because it will involve as the case may be dislocation of people living in areas regarded as slums, which may be difficult socially and to a large extent economically.

Moreover there is the need for more budgetary provision on issues that border on providing urban infrastructures which at present is low across the three levels of government in Nigeria.

Lastly there is the need for government at all levels to form synergy in form of Public- private- Partnership with other stakeholders like the private sector in building urban infrastructures, since the resources available to government may not be enough to provide for infrastructural investment.

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