

Chapter 57

Socio–Economic and Environmental Impacts of Urbanization in Lagos, Nigeria: A Review of Grey Literature

Andrew Onwuemele

Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Urbanization is simply defined as the shift from rural to an urban society, which is triggered by social, economic, and political developments. Nigerian cities are not left out in the global urbanization trends. Nigeria has an annual urban population growth of 5.8 percent. Lagos as the economic focal point of Nigeria has one of highest rates of urbanization. Several scholars have looked into specific sectoral challenges of urbanization in Lagos; however, there is lack of synthesis posing new challenges for policy development. The goal of the chapter therefore is to examine the socio-economic and environmental consequences of urbanization in Lagos State. The chapter relies on empirical results from literature for its analysis. Results indicate two categories of socio-economic and environmental consequences of urbanization in Lagos. The chapter calls for the termination of urban biased development approach of many sub-national governments in Nigeria as well as equitable deployment of development projects.

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is one of the recent geographic phenomenons being experienced globally. Urbanization is simply defined as the shift from a rural to an urban society. Urbanization is the outcome of the social, economic and political development. A UN Report notes that the global urban population has quadrupled since 1950s, and cities of the developing world now account for over 90 per cent of the world urban growth (UN Habitat, 2007). Current reports also indicate that more than half of the world's population now lives in urban areas, and by the year 2050, 70 per cent will be city dwellers, with cities and towns in Asia and Africa registering the biggest growth. Consequently, urban population is anticipated to grow

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on an average rate of 2.3 per cent per year in the developing world between 2000 and 2030 (United Nations, 2003; Akhmat & Bochun, 2010).

Nigeria and some of its cities are not left out in the global urbanization trends. A UN Report on Nigeria indicates that the annual urban population growth rate is 5.8 per cent, while the national population growth rate is 2.8 per cent. This urbanization rate has resulted in a total urban population of 62.66 million or 43 per cent of the total population (United Nations, 2007). Thus, the country and its urban areas can be said to be experiencing one of the fastest rates of urbanization in the world. This pattern of population growth has resulted in a very dense network of urban centres (Oladunjoye, 2005). The proportion of the Nigerian population living in urban centres has therefore increased phenomenally over the years; while only 7 per cent of Nigerians lived in urban centres in the 1930s, and 10 per cent in 1950, by 1970, 1980 and 1990, 20 per cent, 27 per cent and 35 per cent lived in the cities respectively. Over 40 per cent of Nigerians now live in urban centres of varying sizes (United Nations, 2007; Olotuah & Bobadaye, 2009).

Lagos as the economic focal point of Nigeria has one of highest rate of urbanization among Nigerian urban areas. Although Lagos State is the smallest state in Nigeria, with an area of 356,861 hectares of which 75,755 hectares are wetlands, yet it has the highest population, which is over five per cent of the national estimate. The state has a population of 17 million out of a national estimate of 150 million. The UN estimates that at its present growth rate, Lagos State will be third largest mega city in the world by 2015 after Tokyo in Japan and Bombay in India. According to Lagos State Government (2009), Lagos State population growth rate of 8 per cent has resulted in its capturing of 36.8 per cent of Nigeria's urban population estimate at 49.8 million people of the nation population.

It is instructive to note that several scholars have separately looked into specific sector challenges of rapid population growth and urbanization such as housing, employment, environmental and infrastructure challenges in Lagos State; however, there is lack of synthesis and analysis of linkages among the sectoral challenges posing new challenges for policy development and other efforts to address the problems occasioned by rapid urbanization in Lagos State. The goal of the chapter therefore is to examine the socio-economic and environmental consequences of rapid urbanization as experienced in Lagos State. The chapter relied on empirical results from grey literature from various sources to produce a synthesis of socio-economic and environmental consequences of rapid urbanization in the state.

The remaining part of the chapter is divided into four sections. The first section after this introductory section provides the background and context of the study. The next section after this discusses the conceptual framework of the chapter while the third section will focus on the urbanization process in Lagos State. The next section will critically examine the socio-economic and environmental impacts of urbanization in Lagos State, Nigeria. The last section offers the conclusion and recommendation of the chapter.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY AREA

Lagos State is located in the South Western geo-political zone of Nigeria and lies between latitudes 6 degrees 23'N and Longitudes 2 degrees and 3 degrees 42 E. The state is bounded in the North and East by Ogun State and in the West by the Republic of Benin and in the South by the Atlantic Ocean. The total land mass of the state stretches over 3,345 kilometers making it the smallest state in Nigeria. Lagos State grew mainly as a trade centre and seaport, especially slave trade (Aworawo, 2004). The city was annexed by Great Britain in 1861 with the sole purpose of benefiting from the trade in palm products

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