

Chapter 56

Effective Urban Infrastructure Governance in Africa: Resolving the Wealth–Poverty Paradox

Peter Elias

University of Lagos, Nigeria

Olatunji Babatola

University of Lagos, Nigeria

Ademola Omojola

University of Lagos, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The main thrust of this chapter is to examine effective urban infrastructure governance in Africa: resolving the wealth-poverty paradox. The chapter is organized into five main sections according to the identified objectives with the introduction: infrastructure deficit and poverty nexus in urban Africa as section one. Section two is the background emphasizing Africa's poverty in wealth paradox. Section three focuses on urban revolution in Africa which is characterized by growing poverty instead of wealth and its implication for resolving infrastructure deficit. The nature of urban infrastructure demand and supply in Africa is the emphasis in section four while section five underlines the strategy for future infrastructure governance in Africa. Effective urban infrastructure governance in Africa is particularly challenging the strategies for dealing with the wealth-poverty nexus.

INTRODUCTION: INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICIT AND POVERTY NEXUS IN URBAN AFRICA

The world's population and economic opportunities are increasingly shifting to the cities. The number of city dwellers in developing countries is projected to continue to rise compared to their counterparts in developed countries (UN-Habitat, 2014, Cohen, 2006). Meanwhile, Africa's 2014 population with an average growth rate of two per cent was estimated at 1.069 billion, about 15 percent of world popu-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7311-1.ch056

lation, extends over 30 million square kilometers (The World Bank, 2014). By 2030 more than half of this number will be living in urban centers. How is this urban population happening and what is the implications for urban infrastructure governance? Urban policies and programs in many developing countries have decentralized service delivery and income generation to lower tiers of governments. With the characteristic low capacities of governments to administer urban policies and programs, there is overwhelming gap between needs and delivery of basic infrastructure and services (Cohen, 2006; Elias and Ademola, 2015).

Another dimension to this is the hierarchical fragmentation of urban settlements creating incredible disparities in the functions, economic opportunities and choices, infrastructure and basic services, historic origins and patterns of growth and intensities of formal planning (Cohen, 2006). The obvious disparities between the more affluent and the relatively lower neighborhoods manifests in levels of access to basic services. In developing countries, the failure of the municipal authorities responsible for these critical sectors implies that many low income urban dwellers rely on other sources such as private vendors for basic services (Gandy, 2006). This poor urban governance is also an indication of the failure to effectively and efficiently implement master plans meant to guide infrastructure development and delivery of basic services. Thus, devising development policies is a daunting problem facing urban governance and planning in developing countries (Cohen, 2006).

Urban infrastructures are the necessary foundation for an economy. All industrial, agricultural and economic activities depend on infrastructures to develop (Knox and McCarthy, 2005). Urban infrastructures influence economic efficiency and productivity, public health and safety and prosperity and well-being of the society. According to Saxena (2001), urban infrastructures basically consists of the physical framework of facilities, utilities and support system which form the base for the provision of essential public goods and services. Urban infrastructures are many and diverse including power, education, housing, health, transport, communication, water, waste disposal and recreation. Generally, they provide the measures or indicators for assessing and comparing levels of prosperity and poverty within and between nations. The availability of urban infrastructures create opportunity and choices, generate income and wealth. On the other hand, infrastructure deficit limit opportunities and choices, create poverty and inequality and hold society back from development.

The main thrust of this chapter therefore is to examine effective urban infrastructure governance in Africa towards resolving the wealth-poverty paradox. The chapter is organized into five main sections. This section is the introduction and deals with infrastructure deficit and poverty nexus in urban Africa. The background of this chapter is in section two which emphasizes Africa's poverty in wealth paradox. Section three examines urban revolution in Africa which is characterized by growing poverty instead of wealth and its implication for resolving the infrastructure deficit. In section four, the nature of urban infrastructure demand and supply in Africa is analyzed while section five underlines the strategy for future infrastructure governance in Africa.

BACKGROUND: AFRICA'S POVERTY IN WEALTH PARADOX

Recent urban studies have attempted to explain the relationship between urbanization and urban growth with different characteristics and implications in the context of urban infrastructure governance (Potts, 2012; Muggah, 2012; Fox, 2011). These studies also enumerate some of the conditions that are limiting Africa's capacity for effective urban infrastructure governance. The works by Barrios, Bertinelli, & Strobl

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