

Original Paper

The Emerging Pattern of Metropolitan Governance of Lagos, Its Neighbors and Environmental Sustainability in the 21st Century Nigeria

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Received: October 2, 2020

Accepted: October 15, 2020

Online Published: October 18, 2020

doi:10.22158/se.v5n4p1

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/se.v5n4p1>

Abstract

The paper examines the emerging pattern of governance in metropolitan Lagos and its neighboring settlements taking cognizance of environmental sustainability in the 21st Century with its attendant challenges. The work specifically highlights the metropolitan status of Lagos as a megacity and the issue of having to cope with its incessant population growth vis-à-vis the paucity of basic amenities needed to shove off such a highly vulnerable and competitive milieu.

The work employs secondary data to elicit necessary information for its analysis and findings. Such data includes (but not limited to) textbooks, journals newspapers, magazines, periodicals, World Bank and UN-Habitat reports, etc.

The findings are that governmental and non-governmental actors are involved in the metropolitan governance of Lagos and its neighbor howbeit in a perfunctory manner. Ogun State government is ostensibly proactive along provision of housing that can add value to the environment but these housing estates are deficient in basic infrastructure such as constant water supply, sewage, refuse pack, security, etc.

The paper recommends a synergy among the federal government, Lagos and Ogun States as a means of ameliorating the sufferings of the people living in the area in question, as the population of the area may leap to thirty (30) million in 2025 according to population analysts. Hence, governmental and non-governmental interventions become expedient.

Keywords

metropolitan, governance, lagos, environmental, sustainability

1. Introduction

The World Bank (1992) has largely focused on the public sector in its definition of metropolitan governance. It is seen as a way in which power is exercised in the management of economic and social resources of a country. By 1997, it has been further amplified to mean the way in which official and public institutions acquire and exercise their authority to shape public policy and provision of goods and public services.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the other hand conceive governance as the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of country affairs at all levels, comprising the mechanism, process and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their differences.

For United Nations (UN), governance is considered “good” and democratic in so far as the institutions and processes of each country are transparent. Institution refers to agencies such as parliaments and different ministries. The processes entail fundamental activities such as election and legal processes that must be free of corruption and accountable to the people. The compliance of that norm becomes a parameter for measuring credibility and respect for countries in the comity of nations.

As a prelude to discussing or analysing the term “metropolitan governance”, let us briefly consider the term “urban governance” as defined by UN-Habitat (2002). It has been succinctly defined as how the sum of individual and public or private institutions plan and manage the cities common affairs. This include formal institutions and informal mechanisms through which diverse conflicting interests are aggregated, distilled and managed for the common wealth of all.

The term “metropolitan governance” in a generic usage refers to the administration and the arts of integrating human and material assets to control, secure, dominate, master, salvage metropolitan area to the benefits of all inhabitants (whether directly or indirectly) in such a given geographical ecology. In other words, it is a form of or mechanism of engendering cooperation among critical stakeholders in a metropolitan area. For Oakerson (1999), metropolitan governance is neither provision nor production. Instead, governance (metropolitan) requires ability to make and enforce rules for organising the local public economy, establishing an institutional framework within patterns of provision and production emerging from choices of local citizens and officials. Indeed, it is a form of institutional arrangement or mechanism that is heavily reliant on the people to discriminate among basic structural choices within the framework of their rules and regulation, which in turn form the basis of their agreement to cooperate, unite and forge ahead as a community. In the words of Oakerson (1999), a metropolitan governance is usually distinguished by three central features namely:

- (i) Substantial governing authority is more often than not assigned to the citizenries, in such a way that will enable them make crucial decisions that are germane for shaping the structure of the provision of services (Local public economy).
- (ii) In the process, a metropolitan civil society is expected to operationalise issues at stake, negotiate and arrange for settlements of disputes in pacific manner.

(iii) Provision or availability of an umbrella agent (usually state government) to aggregate decisions in order to enforce the common rules and regulations of the metropolis.

It is within these aforementioned discourse that a penetrating understanding of metropolitan governance can be situated especially in the 21st century model of metropolitan cities with its attendant multi-ethnic and multi-national dwellings. Be that as it may, our analysis will be shifted to the contextual discussion of the metropolitan Lagos and its environs.

2. Lagos and Its Contextualisation

Lagos is arguably the most populated city in West Africa. It is located in the South western part of Nigeria, with approximately 16 million inhabitants. It covers 37% of the land area of Lagos State but it accommodates about 85% of the entire population of 16 million people. The projected average population density of metropolitan Lagos is about 20,000 people per square kilometer. Lagos metropolis also has the highest vehicular density in Nigeria with 222 vehicles per kilometer as against the national average of eleven vehicles per kilometer.

By 2025, as already discussed above, Lagos may become the third largest city in the world with an estimated population of 30 million people. The high population has put a lot of pressure on the vehicular movement, thereby giving rise to the use of motorcycle as a means of intracity movement. This has resulted in incessant intra city road accidents which has claimed many lives. This has resulted in the ban of motorbike as a means of transportation on major roads of Lagos in recent time by the Lagos State government.

Based on the contiguity of Ogun State to Lagos, the latter has been able to benefit from the fallout of Lagos metropolis. One singular advantage Ogun State seems to have over all other states of the Southwest is that, it is the only state that seem to have boundary with Lagos State, hence its near monopoly of the socio-economic dividends that Lagos can offer.

An extensive survey conducted by Oyesiku (2010) revealed the pattern of concentration of settlements in Ogun State. The pattern of the concentration can be divided into two zones of North East and North West of Lagos. The pattern of settlement along the North East of Lagos mirrors the sudden growth of Abeokuta, Ifo, Ota, Agbara, Idiroko, Owode, Alagbado, Ojodu, Ibafo and Mowe. The North Western linear development is made up of Ishara, Iperu, Ilisan, Sagamu, Ikenne, Ijebu Ode, Ijebu-Igbo, Ijebu Oru and Ago-Iwoye. All these areas are witnessing population growth on daily basis owing to migration from Lagos axis.

The Ogun State government and many private estate developers have seized the opportunity of the rapid fallout of Lagos metropolis to acquire and develop housing estates in Ogun State especially along the two major development axis of North east and North west of Lagos. For instance, Ogun State government has housing estates distributed across the state with varying number of housing units such as Ministry of Housing, 834 housing units; Ogun State Housing Corporation, 351 housing units; and Ogun State property and Investment Corporation (OPIC), 344 housing units. Presently, there are over

40 private real estate companies in Ogun State with an average of over 50 housing units at strategic locations to Lagos especially along Ibafo, Mowe, Sagamu road axis into Ofada along Sagamu-Papalanto Road. Many of these estates are mainly housing estates while some of them could be classified as integrated townships or satellite towns. Be that as it may, perhaps of serious concern to this work, is the mode of industrial development in Lagos and its environ, which has a long-term implications for its governance.

3. Pattern of Industrial Development of Metropolitan Lagos

The last two decades have witnessed astronomical growth in the pattern of industries within Lagos and its adjoining settlements. The pattern of industrial development had moved from brick work, palm oil mills, printing press, soap factories, metal container factories to capital intensive manufacturing. The pattern of its population growth has no doubt attracted increase in demand for goods and services.

By 2006, Lagos megacity region had been created which is a continuous built-up land area of 1535.4 square kilometers (592.8 square miles). This consists of local governments situated northward of its East and West areas of Ogun State. Local governments in Ogun State that fall under this region are Obafemi Owode, Sagamu, Ifo, Ado-Odo/Ota and a significant part of Ewekoro.

The rapid growth of industries in Ogun State no doubt gives the impression that Ogun State will overtake Lagos in industrial development within the next one decade. Indeed, Ogun State is being referred to now as the industrial hub of Nigeria. The major advantage which Ogun State has over Lagos is the availability of land, which is a serious setback (challenge) for Lagos. It must be stated also that the pattern of the industrial development of metropolitan Lagos has in-built problems which in itself are necessary for review and proactiveness of Lagos and Ogun states governments.

4. The Emerging Challenges of the Metropolitan Governance

The problem of metropolitan Lagos is complex and multi-dimensional. The most noticeable for all to see is its unchecked demographic expansion, ranging from exodus of people from all parts of Nigeria, and West African countries, who are seeking for jobs, better environmental conditions, pleasure, educational advancement marketing of agro-allied products, etc. This problem is no doubt daunting as it concomitantly centres around infrastructural failure or decline. It is a city that is rapidly urbanising but lack all the necessary infrastructural support.

The vast majority of people living within the metropolitan area, rely on the informal land delivery mechanism to acquire land for development or squats on/occupies government acquired lands (Rakodi, 2006; Ikejiofor, 2006; Egbu et al., 2008). Indeed, many of the residents of this area have been swindled by unscrupulous persons ostensibly acting as either agents or genuine landowners.

A noticeable trend in this area is the existence of large tracts (usually in isolated places) of unused but compulsorily acquired lands, by the governments of Lagos and Osun states, which, in most cases, full compensation have not been paid to the original owners. The land use act provides that secure tenure

on the land by individuals can only be based on obtaining either statutory or customary right of occupancy. In cases of revocation of ownership, the Act further infers that only owners with statutory or customary rights shall be entitled to compensation. It (the Act) also prohibits unauthorized development and stipulates that no compensation shall be paid for their removal. In the extreme situation, the owners of such properties have been called by government agents responsible for demolition to come and pay for the cost of such exercise.

Formalization of lands by landlords has been underscored by (Bimer & Okomu, 2012) as a means to secure informal land rights. However, it must be stated that this method has its own attendant challenges, as most metropolitan lands are not usually properly surveyed and demarcated. In most cases, numerous actors, bureaucratic processes and procedures are usually involved in acquisition of such formalisation. In the final analysis, the exercise is usually shrouded in lack of clarity of the mandate of government agencies associated with land governance resulting in monumental corruption. Aside from payment of statutory fees such as professional fees to surveyor, lawyers and Ministry of Lands and Housing, many have to pay extra out-of-pocket to government agents, vendors, etc. This problem has been escalated in most cases, by multiple sales of some parcels of land by customary land owners and their agents. This has, more often than not, thwarted the idea of formalization of lands in the metropolitan Lagos and its environ.

The proximity of metropolitan Lagos to the peri-urban settlement of Isheri, Ibafo, Mowe, Ofada, Sagamu, etc., has led to astronomical increase in house rent, land values, cost of living, etc., in these areas. The largely uncoordinated outward growth of metropolitan Lagos, has no doubt robbed on the above-named settlements along the peri-urban corridors of Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, the most noticeable of which are traffic snarls, poor environmental sanitation, improper refuse dump, uncoordinated housing plan, etc. In most cases, there are no demarcations among residential, commercial and institutional buildings resulting in sound and atmospheric pollutions.

The Northwestern axis of Lagos metropolis is not better either, with commercial activities in a linear form along the major arteries of Lagos-Abeokuta, Expressway. Hence, Ota has been identified as one of the neighbouring settlements of Lagos metropolis bearing the brunt of the expansion pressure of the metropolitan Lagos.

The other issue germane to this discourse is the constitutional provision, relating to land ownership. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, relating to land administration recognises both statutory and customary rights to land. This has made difficult the work of government planning authorities as there are no integration between traditional (customary) land ownership and that of the government acquired land. Indeed, majority of the urban population are not aware of urban planning processes and regulations in the country (Arigbigbola, 2007). The lacuna in the legal framework, more often than not, is capable of creating tension (mistrust) between the traditional authorities and the state governments. It has also, to a great extent, undermined the legitimacy and relevance of urban planning processes in the area in question. The noticeable trend in metropolitan Lagos is that the modern

planning is restricted to the periphery to the exclusion of the indigenous section of the city (Ogu, 1999). The indigenous areas are not usually receptive to modern planning concepts such as re-development, renewal and urban rejuvenation.

The current problem of national insecurity has found more expression in metropolitan Lagos and its environs. The insecurity of lives and properties has been blamed on unemployment, inequalities, bad economic policy of the government, etc. Most of the youths who migrate to Lagos do so in search of jobs and when the employment is not forthcoming, they usually resort to armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, sexual immorality, etc. The afore-mentioned scenario has made Lagos-Ogun State route unsafe in the last one decade, especially in the night. In recent times, metropolitan Lagos leading to linear settlements along Lagos-Ogun State axis have been epicentre of major crimes in Nigeria. It appears that the seriousness of Lagos State government to stem the tide, is not matched by Ogun State government, hence Ogun State usually (but inadvertently) provides escape routes for these criminals.

The most worrisome, perhaps, is how to cope with the challenge of climate change leading to environmental degradation. The climate change has necessitated, excessive rainfall. Owing to poor drainage in this area, water usually finds it difficult to flow to River Ogun, thereby causing flood in the area. In the process, many houses have been submerged with the result that occupants of those houses are either locked inside or outside depending on where they are at the beginning of the flood.

The area also suffers inadequate and inappropriate refuse dump, with the result that refuse litter the area. Apart from being an eye sore, such an act constitutes health hazard. It is assumed that the flagrant disregard to environmental hygiene is the inability to plan on a long-term basis. There is also the issue of political interference in the planning process. When all these are in place, it is the inhabitants of such area that will suffer the consequences in the long run.

The metropolis also suffers from inadequate energy supply. Given the expanding nature of the area, it will not be an exaggeration to say that the energy demand from the area may be equal to the entire power generation of the country. The epileptic power supply in this area has led to energy crisis which has led some industries to power their businesses on diesel generating plants with its attendant high cost of production. The high cost of production has made the cost of goods very prohibitive to consumers. This has inevitably led to the closure or relocation of some of these industries out of frustration, while a good number of them are currently running below installed capacity. The attempts of Lagos State government to generate its own energy have been frustrated by the federal government owing to lopsidedness of Nigeria's federalism (power generation and distribution) being on the exclusive rights of the federal government.

There is issue or phenomenon of land grabbers. It is a situation that arises from a situation where more than one person lay claim to a portion of land. One of the disputants to the land, will hire the services of thugs to eliminate the other contender. This scenario is currently discouraging many investors in this area.

The metropolitan Lagos suffers from divergent administrative process. Lagos State was broken to

twenty Local Government Areas (LGAs) by the 1976 Local Government Reforms. Only sixteen of the twenty fall within the geographical boundaries of metropolitan Lagos. Such include Lagos Island, Ikoyi, Victoria Island, Lagos Island, Lagos Mainland, EtiOsa, Mushin, Agege, Ikeja, etc. It means that the administrative process of all afore-mentioned areas is being handled by divergent administrative and political functionaries. This in itself can create distortions in governance. The governance deficits are manifested in the poverty of the mass of the people, uncoordinated wealth of the successful few, poor quality of life, insecurity and unhealthy economic competitiveness.

Indeed, the whole of Lagos Metropolis and its environs are faced with the menace of groups of unemployed youths that loiter in public places. They always engage in petty but persistent extortion in exchange for services. These youths are called “Area boys” in local parlance. They are the “city never-do-wells” who usually involve in thefts and riots. It is a well-known fact that politicians use these so-called area boys as things, political enforcers during electoral campaigns, with access to fire-arms and hard drugs. They are no doubt a threat to the peace, safety of lives and properties of the area.

It is instructive to state that the challenges of metropolitan Lagos and its environs are multi-dimensional in nature. Hence, its solutions have to be sourced from multiple angles. It is for this reason among others that this work will attempt a conclusion and a discourse on how a resilient community can be established within the area in question.

5. Conclusion: Towards a Resilient Metropolis

The most important thing to take cognizance of is perhaps the need to have a paradigm shift in our style and model of governance of metropolitan areas. The present model is highly or excessively centralised with government becoming over bearing and immutable in the administrative process. The current focus on governance must be users friendly, citizen and community focused. In other climes (Ostrom, 1997), it has been discovered that the better way to revitalise and reinvigorate a community is for government to engender citizen engagement in their project. This will no doubt encourage polycentric approach to decision-making thereby fostering better infrastructural maintenance, road construction and rehabilitation, better schools and maintenance, and better law enforcement and community policing, etc. Security of lives and properties in this area need a concerted efforts of the inhabitants of this area, working in concert with law enforcement agents, such as Nigeria Security and Civil Defence (NSCD), the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) with up-to-date equipment to combat crime including aerial surveillance, Navy (because of the riverine nature of the area). It is important to stress that all these law enforcers need training and re-training from time to time.

It is highly imperative for the Nigerian state to recognise that all is not well with Lagos metropolis and its environs. Lagos and Ogun states occupy a strategic position in Nigeria. Owing to their geographical positions as main gates to Nigeria either by ocean or air. Lagos being the former administrative and political headquarters of Nigeria, need a special attention in budgetary allocations. The social and environmental problems of this area are perhaps too overwhelming for them to solve. Hence, there is a

need for a tripartite governmental approach consisting of federal, Lagos and Ogun states in a synergic approach.

In practical sense, Lagos metropolis needs urban renewal, which must necessarily commence from urban deconstruction to urban construction. In the process, many of the old structures must give way for new ones, many of the existing landmass will be used for channelization to make for easy passage of water during excessive rainfall. These have to be put in place to save lives and properties from annual floodings.

There is also a serious need to decongest Lagos, through provision of jobs in rural areas, and other states of the federation. Agriculture provides a good way of retaining youths in the rural areas. This must go with other incentive such as agricultural inputs, e.g., fertilizer, loan, machinery and marketability of their products.

The production of energy and its distribution have to be de-centralised. It is anti-podal in a federal system of government for all the federating units to source energy from same source. This is particularly worrisome in Nigeria with a population of over one hundred and eighty million.

There must be a concerted policy at governmental level for a dispersal of industries across Nigeria federation. If adequate attention is paid to roads and rail constructions, it will be a lot easier for goods and services to be provided across board. This method has a propensity for decongesting Lagos metropolis and spread of socio-economic activities across the federation.

Beyond the afore-mentioned is the need for the federal government to partner with relevant international communities to secure Lagos from environmental hazards. There are loans and grants that can be made available for such purposes. Weather forecast equipment and experts are urgently needed to warn people of dangers ahead of time.

Above all, the significance of metropolitan Lagos and its environs cannot be overstressed. Lagos, like Abuja has become a melting point for all Nigerians irrespective of ethnic and religious background. Indeed, it is a source of economic prosperity for the Nigerian state. Hence, the time is ripe for a special legislation of Lagos to provide additional socio-economic benefits to underscore its cardinal importance to all and sundry.

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