

Historical Perspective of Urbanization and Urban Planning of Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This paper presents historical perspectives of urban development and planning legislations in Lagos, Nigeria. In the aspect of urbanization: political influence, population growth, socioeconomics and infrastructure are examined. While in the aspect of urban planning: pre-independence and post-independence regulations are reviewed.*

Keywords: urbanization, urban planning, government, Nigeria, Lagos

1. Introduction

Lagos occupies a unique position in the economic processes of the West African sub-region. As the economic and financial nerve-centre, it accounts for over 70% of Nigeria's industrial and commercial establishments. Lagos has extensive infrastructural facilities, the busiest international airport, seaport, and the most extensive road and telecommunication networks in Nigeria. It is also the host to the most active Stock Exchange in West Africa. These reasons made the conurbation of Lagos the hub of intense settlement and the prime destination of local and international migrants [1]. Despite its economic importance, the environmental sustainability of Lagos has not received the kind of attention it requires. Inadequate housing has led to the emergence of slums, spatial inequity in access to land and infrastructure, haphazard land development, infrastructure decay, persistent flooding, widespread poverty, and unemployment. These symptoms of unsustainable expansion of the city requiring the intervention of land use planners and managers [2]. This study therefore retrospects into the major urbanization issues in Lagos as well as urban planning measures by governments.

2. Urbanization of Lagos

2.1 Political influence

The Benin Kingdom founded Lagos following conquest. They called it Eko (meaning 'war camp'). Till date Lagosians still refer to Lagos as 'Eko.' Lagos was named after Lagos in Portugal, by Portuguese explorers who visited the area in 1472. Lagos served as a major slave trade center between 1404 and 1889. It was annexed as a British colony in 1861. When the colony and protectorate of Nigeria was established in 1914, Lagos was declared its capital; it maintained this status until the 12th of December, 1991 when the capital was formally moved to Abuja [1]. Metropolitan Lagos has been administered under a variety of different territorial schemes. Historically, Lagos started around the Island and Mainland areas as a fishing and agricultural village. It then grew into a small town. When it was ceded to the British in 1861, it was administered as a city-state with its own separate administration. In 1866 it was included in the West African

Settlements under a Governor-in-Chief resident in Sierra Leone, but it retained a separate legislative council and a local administration. Various changes followed, through its status as a separate colony, to its merger with Western Nigeria in 1951. In 1953 a federal territory was carved out of former Western Nigeria, including the colony of Lagos. Owing to the much greater financial resources and administrative capacity available at the federal level, the federal territory of Lagos had a much higher degree of infrastructural development than the outer metropolitan area. Thus, there were evident contrasts in the quality of urban services available in the two areas within the metropolis [3]. From 1958 there was political agitation for a separate Lagos State. This was achieved in 1967 and Ikeja within the Lagos metropolis became the capital of the new state.

2.2 Population growth

The United Nations predicted in 1999 that the population of Lagos will exceed 20 million by the year 2010. 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 [1]. 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. Of this population, Metropolitan Lagos, an area covering 37% of the land area of Lagos State is home to over 85% of the State population. The rate of population growth is about 600,000 per annum with a population density of about 4,193 persons per sq. km. In the built-up areas of Metropolitan Lagos, the average density is over 20,000 persons per square km. Current demographic trend analysis revealed that the State population growth rate of 8% has resulted in its capturing of 36.8% of Nigeria's urban population estimate at 49.8 million people of the nation's million population. The implication is that whereas the country population growth is 4/5% and global 2%, Lagos population is growing ten times faster than New York and Los Angeles with grave implication for urban sustainability [4].

The surging population of Lagos has persistently put a strain on its social and economic infrastructure. Most of the

migrants into Lagos come from rural areas all across the country. To check the rural urban drift, successive federal governments have put in place developmental projects in rural communities in order to discourage people from drifting to the cities in search of opportunities and better life. No post independence census exercise has been accepted by the Lagos State Government. This is because published figures have lagged people's expectations. Population is one of the indices upon which statutory allocations and parliamentary representation are based on. Therefore, census exercises in Nigeria have both political and economic implications. According to the preliminary results of the 2006 census done by the Nigerian federal government, there are 7,937,932 inhabitants in Metropolitan Lagos [4]. This 2006 census preliminary figure is a far-cry from the figures projected by the United Nations and the Lagos State Government. Lagos State rejected the census figures outright and, instead tallied and published its own figures, which shows that Lagos has a population of 17,552,942 [5].

2.3 Socioeconomics

Lagos is Nigeria's commercial nerve centre, where Nigeria's wealth and economic activity are concentrated. The annual budget is \approx US \$700 million which is definitely too small for 20 million people. More than 50% of Nigeria's industrial capacity is located in Lagos's Mainland suburbs. The Port of Lagos is Nigeria's leading port and one of the largest in Africa. It is administered by the Nigerian Port Authority and is split into three main sections: Lagos port, in the main channel next to Lagos Island, no longer used much; Apapa Port (site of the container terminal); and Tin Can Port; both located in Badagry Creek which flows into Lagos Harbour from the west [6]. Trading activities have always been predominant in the informal sector of the metropolitan economy. Manufacturing and other services are also significant [7, 8, 9].

For the whole of Lagos State, primary production activities (fishing, mining and quarrying, agriculture, and forestry) accounted for less than 2% of total workers in 1978. The main formal sector employment-generating activity during the 1970s was manufacturing [10]. Metropolitan Lagos accounted for 38% of total manufacturing employment in

Nigerian cities in 1976; and over 60% of the total value added in manufacturing in the six major industrial centers [11]. Commercial activities have always been very strong in the city and are carried out at both the formal and informal levels. Agriculture and fishing and distributive trade are the largest employers of people without formal education. The role of agriculture within metropolitan Lagos is, however, less than 2% of the workforce. The precise figure of employment in this sector is not available. It finds expression in market gardening and other forms of agriculture, mostly on the outskirts of the metropolis. About one-quarter of all workers are in distributive trade. Public administration accounts for another one-quarter and other services have about one-fifth of the employment in the formal sector. During the oil boom years, the multinational companies were very strong in both manufacturing and trade. However, with the downturn in the economy, the trend has been for many of

them to divest their operations. Relevant figures are, however, not available. With the federal political decision-making organs, and key federal ministries having moved to Abuja, industry and commerce continue to be the live wires of the economy of the metropolis. The Nigerian capital market was founded in Lagos, with the setting up of the Lagos Stock Exchange in 1961. This was the first stock exchange in West Africa, and the sixth in Africa. In 1978 the exchange was transformed into the Nigerian Stock Exchange, with two additional trading branches at Kaduna and Port Harcourt. About 90% of the companies quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange have their headquarters in metropolitan Lagos, with their market capitalization running into billions of naira [3].

One of the major constraints faced by manufacturing companies is inadequate power supply. Other problems are telecommunications, water supply, poor road network and maintenance, drainage, waste disposal, fire services and public transportation. The Nigerian telecommunication problem has been solved/largely with the deregulation of the communication sector and the introduction of the Global System of Mobile communications (GSM). Millions of jobs have been created in Nigeria since the liberalization of the telecommunications sector of the economy. Millions more persons are indirectly employed in the industry, earning their living as equipment vendors, advertising and public relations consultants, recharge card distributors, retailers and phone booth operators. Other benefits of the full liberalization of the sector include the drop in tariffs and charges for fixed telephones and digital mobile lines. Unemployment is one of the major challenges facing urbanization in Lagos. Secondary students, university graduates, and artisans migrate to Lagos on a daily basis in search of job opportunities and a better life. This phenomenon has continually strained the economy of Lagos, in the face of limited financial resources available to the Lagos State Government. The National Manpower Board labour force sample survey in 1974 recorded an unemployment rate of 7.2% for metropolitan Lagos. The statistical survey of Lagos State in 1976 revealed that the unemployed constituted 7.6% of the labour force [12]. Therefore, a simple regression analysis of the figures reported by Lagos State Government [12] gave a projection of 13% unemployment rate in 2008. A recent World Bank study found a 17% national unemployment rate; reaching 25% for university graduates in cities such as Lagos [1].

Lagos being a town of opportunities readily offers the best avenue to adventurous Nigerians to transform their standard of living. Previous and present Lagos State Governments have initiated large projects aimed at improving the lives of every Lagos resident. Lagos Energy City (an initiative of the incumbent Lagos State Government) is envisioned to be the first fully integrated business hub for the oil and gas industry on the Africa continent. It will be providing life, work, and play elements not limited to energy companies. It is a 763 hectare development strategically located in Badagry Town of Lagos. It is in close proximity to the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) market and will be divided into 2 zones. Zone 1 aims to be the region leading convention and tourist destination; Zone 2, or the

Energy City Zone, will provide a world class business and residential environment that will cater for the entire energy industry and all companies in its value chain [13].

2.4 Infrastructure

Transportation

Lagos no doubt has benefited immensely from its former status as the administrative capital of Nigeria. It has the best infrastructure in the country. Lagos flourishes with modern road networks, water ways and ferry services, cyclists (known as Okada), two sea ports, and local and international airports. The mass transit bus called 'Molue' carries large amount of commuters across all parts of Lagos. There are also the smaller buses called 'Danfo.' Only specific categories of smaller buses are allowed into the Island. Buses ordinarily do not ply all the streets of Lagos; therefore, Lagosians rely on the cyclists for street movements. This is because most people cannot afford the high cost of hiring taxis. Lagos has the worst traffic problems in Africa. More than 80% of transportation in the country is provided by the private sector. Rail transportation and the use of water ways should have eased the burden on the roads. Unfortunately the railway company is inept, while the ferry services are poorly run. There is low patronage because of loss of confidence by commuters. A contract was awarded by the Lagos State Government to build a metro line for Lagos. Unfortunately this project that could have resolved the transportation problems in Lagos was cancelled by the incoming military junta (on the allegation that the contract was over quoted). Millions of dollars were paid to the French consultants/contractors for breach of contract by the Nigerian Federal Government. Most roads in Lagos are owned by the federal government; and these roads have been poorly maintained. The Lagos State government has times decided to maintain the federal roads themselves out of frustration of waiting for the federal government to do so. The aviation industry in Nigeria is efficient and solely controlled by the private sector. The Lagos local and international airport terminals are the busiest in Africa [1].

Housing

Both the federal and the state governments have been unable to provide adequate and sustainable housing for Lagosians. The Third Development Plan period (1975-1980) represented the first serious attempt by the federal government to meet the housing needs of Nigerians through direct construction [14]. As a result FESTAC TOWN was built in 1977. Lagos State Development and Property Corporation (LSDPC) is the Corporation responsible for providing housing in Lagos. It was established in 1972. In 1999, the Millennium Housing Scheme was launched by Lagos State Government. Its goal was to provide numerous and affordable houses for ordinary Lagosians. The categories of houses to be built are: high, upper medium, medium and economic (or low income) houses. Research done by Tewari [15] showed that there is no wide disparity between the rents paid by the poor and the rich in Lagos. The rent affordability index between the poor and rich is a not very significant. Most Lagosians can afford to pay their rent bills. Housing challenges in Lagos include:

High population growth and density, limited land supply and acquisition obstacles, lack of adequate physical planning/development control, high cost of building materials, lack of proper co-ordination of public agencies and laws, and poor infrastructure [14].

Electricity

In Nigeria, electricity provision is on the exclusive legislative list. The Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) has suffered neglect from past military governments. Hence it functions at barely 20% efficiency. Lee and Annas [16] reported that establishments are forced to install generators as back-up for their electricity supply needs and to provide their own boreholes to obtain water. These problems still persist. Most manufacturing companies have relocated to neighboring countries like Ghana where basic amenities are more assured. At the moment, achieving an uninterrupted power supply in Nigeria still remains a dream.

Water

Most Lagosians get water from private boreholes. The government both at the federal and state levels, have inherited moribund public owned parastatals, from past military governments. Concerted and proactive efforts are being exerted by present governments to get all public agencies to function well again. Only about 30% of Lagosians are covered by the State owned Water Corporation, known as Lagos Water Corporation [14]. The challenges LWC faces are: poor power supply from PHCN; poor service coverage because of limited reticulation; ageing plants, vehicles and machineries; and poor revenue [17].

Solid Waste Management

The management of urban Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) is a big problem in cities because of the lack of sufficient equipment to collect the waste. This situation is no different in Lagos, Nigeria. There are three major aspects of MSW management [18]. These are: storage; collection and transportation; and treatment and disposal [19]. Concerted effort has been made by successive governments (both at the federal and state levels) to combat the menace of solid waste management in Lagos. Management of solid waste did not become a major problem in Nigeria until the early 1970's. The oil boom, which compounded the emerging industrialization and urbanization, resulted in the high volume of waste which became increasingly difficult for the local government councils in Lagos State to manage. By 1977, when Nigeria hosted FESTAC '77, the world press classified Lagos as the "dirtiest" city capital. Consequently, in April 1977, the first waste management outfit in West Africa was instituted. This was the Lagos State Refuse Disposal Board (LSRDB) in Nigeria, under Edict 9 of 1977, with Powell Duffen Pollution Control Consultants of Canada as managers. In 1981, its name was changed to Lagos State Waste Disposal Board (LSWDB) [20].

In December 1991, its current name, the Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) was christened under Edict No. 55, which made the agency to be responsible for

the collection and disposal of municipal and industrial waste as well as for the provision of commercial waste services to the state and local governments. LAWMA managed 3 dump sites located in Lagos that covered 63.67 hectares. The sites were strategically located on the Northern part of the State within the Quaternary lateritic clay deposit. From 1997 - 2007 the cumulative weight of waste deposited in the 3 landfill sites was about 27,599,825.94 metric tons. The typical Lagos waste stream consists of vegetable (45%), plastics (15%), papers (10%), putrescible (8%), fine (8%), metals (5%), and textiles (4%). The State government later granted approval for the construction of a landfill site in Epe (South East of Lagos). There are also other waste conversion plants in the State, the compost plant at Odogunyan, Ikorodu; and the Plastic Recycling Plant at Ojo, Local Government Area. Youths are encouraged to bring in plastic trash, in return for money value. LAWMA's major challenges include: climate condition, low level of professionalism, local capacity to manage the transfer of foreign technology, cultural and socio-economic factors, high cost of funds (local and foreign), sub-standard spare parts, and energy [19].

3. Urban Planning of Lagos

3.1 Pre-independence planning legislations

No significant planning policy was implemented for Lagos until 1873. One of the foremost planning legacies of Lagos could be traced to the effort made by the colonial surveyors, whom in 1873 gazetted that owners of both occupied and unoccupied lands should ensure their properties are kept clean. Property owners were also requested to ensure that their streets, roads, and entire environs were kept tidy and should be devoid of unwarranted bushes and waste dumps [21].

A proactive planning scheme was initiated by Governor MacGregor who established the Sanitary Board of Health in 1902. The role of the Board was to advise the Governor primarily on the improvement of public health, environmental sanitation, and potable water supply. Under Planning Ordinance of 1902 the Governor was mandated to establish European Reservations under a sub-board called 'Local Board of Health.' The Governor had the responsibility to advance the health and sanitary condition of the European Reservations. After the Planning Ordinance of 1902 came the Public Health Ordinance, which was promulgated in 1908 as an appendage of the Lagos Municipal Board of Health primarily for environmental and health monitoring. The Township Ordinance was promulgated in 1917. This legislation body became the first conventional planning legislation in Nigeria; the primary objectives of this law include: the provision of infrastructure, public utilities, health, and environmental sanitation. As the population of Lagos continued to grow, there was a need to keep reviewing the planning regulations in order to keep pace with the growing needs of the public. The planning Ordinance of 1928 called 'Lagos Town Planning Ordinance' was established primarily for the Lagos Colony. The Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB) was established under the Lagos Town Planning Ordinance. The roles of the LEDB were: the provision of housing, vetting of building

plans, and enactment of bye-laws for land use planning; provision of infrastructure and public utilities; and land reclamation [22].

3.2 Post-independence planning legislations

LEDB remained the regulatory planning body in Lagos until 1972 when the Lagos State Development and Property Corporation (LSDPC) was created. The objectives of the LSDPC included: the acquisition, development, holding, selling, leasing, and letting of both mobile and immobile properties within Lagos. By 1973, the government saw the need to harmonize all the existing planning laws affecting Lagos. This gave rise to the Lagos State Town Country Planning Law of 1973 (popularly called 'Cap 133'). The Lagos Local Government (Power) Act of 1959 (Cap 77), the Lagos Town Planning (Compensation) Act of 1964, the Lagos Executive Development Board (Power) Act of 1964, the Lagos Town Planning (Miscellaneous Provision) Decree of 1967, the Lagos State Town Planning (Miscellaneous Provision) Decree of 1967, the Western Region Law No. 41 of 1969, and the Town Planning Authority (Supervisory Power) Edict of 1971, were all reviewed under the Lagos State Town Country Planning Law of 1973. In 1982 came the Town and Country Planning (Building Plans) Regulation, which was succeeded by the Town and Country Planning (Guidelines for Approval of Layouts) of 1983. The Town and Country Planning Edict and Town and Country Planning (Building Planning) Regulation were enacted in 1985 and 1986 respectively [22].

In 1998, the Lagos State Urban and Regional Planning Edict No. 2 was enacted because there was need to review the subsisting Lagos State planning law to reflect the newly promulgated federal law known as 'Nigerian Urban and Regional Law Decree 88 of 1992.' The consequence of the Nigerian Urban and Regional Law was that it empowered each of the three levels of government in Nigeria (federal, state, and local) to make separate laws to meet their respective planning objectives in such a manner that the states derive their authority from the federal government, while the local governments derive their authority from their respective state governments. In 2005, a law called 'Administration of Physical Planning and Development Agencies in Lagos State' came into being [23]. This new law modified the Lagos State Urban and Regional Planning Edict of 1998; first, to make it workable in a democracy (since the 1998 law was made by the military); second, to give more powers to the ministry in charge of planning rather than concentrating too much powers in the government (as was the case during the military regime); third, to bring planning nearer to the less developed parts of Lagos [22].

4. Conclusion

Lagos is a mega-city, with a very high population density. Tremendous urbanization has taken place in Lagos since Nigerian independence from Britain in 1960. To date, Lagos is still described as a laissez-faire urban society. Informal settlements constitute the biggest problem with urban planning in Lagos. The pre-independence and post-independence planning laws and programmes described in

this paper were intended to equate Lagos with cities like London and New York, but poor planning policies and largely poor implementation of extant planning laws have been major setbacks. Sustainable planning of Lagos can be achieved if planning laws are frequently reviewed to meet contemporary challenges. However, poor implementation of planning regulations is one of the most contemporary challenges confronting Lagos.

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