

URBANIZATION AND HUMAN SECURITY IN DEVELOPING ECONOMY MEGA-CITY: A CASE STUDY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA

Oluwole Olusegun Akiyode

Institute for Environment Research and Development (IERD),
Ota, Nigeria.

Abstract

Human Security is intertwined with the principles of sustainable development. The concept of human security is also interlinked with the principles of environmental security thereby depicting the assurance of life in every society. Therefore, its analysis is indispensable for the well being of every society.

Rapid urbanization in some developing economy countries cannot be overemphasized. This urbanization tendency in some of the developing economy countries such like Nigeria has given rise to the growth of mega-cities. The study emphasizes a growing relationship between rapid urbanization and human security in Lagos mega-city.

This study uses Lagos in Nigeria as a case in examining the urbanization tendency of a developing economy mega-city vis-à-vis its human security. Firstly, it examines the growth of Lagos as a twentieth century megacity using available historical data. It analyses the human security of the developing economy meg-city with the foci eye of environmental security. It posits that the consequences of urbanization affect its human security. The study advocates integrated environmental management approaches in managing Lagos mega-city environment which will enrich its human security.

Keywords: Human Security, urbanization, sustainable development, Lagos and Nigeria.

Introduction

Lagos mega-city in Nigeria is a product of rapid urbanization witnessed in the second part of the twentieth century. Lagos is situated in the coast line of Atlantic Ocean of West Africa. It started as an island but grows in agglomeration of other urban settlements that are in its adjoined mainland to become a mega-city. It has grown nearly over the entire Lagos State and fast approaching the other nearby urban settlements in its bordered Ogun State, thereby remains as one of the fastest growing urban agglomerations in Nigeria and Africa continent.

Historically, Lagos has been a trade center since about 650 years now (Lagos State, 2009). In 1821, it was acclaimed the most important slave port on the West African Coast (Olokesusi, 2011). It grew from a small fishing and farming town in pre-colonial days to commercial trade center,

industrial, administrative headquarters and Nigeria capital city in the later parts of the colonial days. Post independently, Lagos grew as vibrant economic and Nigeria capital city to now a large metropolitan mega-city. It is one of the fastest growing mega cities in the developing world having an estimated growth rate that is ten times faster than that of New York and Los Angeles (Lagos State, 2009).

Lagos has location and administrative advantages that encourages business and commercial activities. It served as the capital city of Nigeria till 1991, when its status changed. Nigeria capital city is now Abuja in the central part of the nation. Lagos remains as both commercial and industrial hub of the nation serving as administrative headquarters to several local and international corporations. It houses more than 70% of Nigeria industries with two sea

ports and airports that continue to encourage sustainable international and local commercial activities. Lagos contributes to about 40% Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (Olokesusi, 2011).

The advantageous economic and commercial status of Lagos mega-city in Nigeria in relationship to its continuous urbanization trends has its human security implications. Therefore, this study reviews the human security of Lagos mega-city with the foci eye of environmental security. It identifies the current environmental problems of Lagos which could hinder its environmental security thereby affecting its human security.

Human Security and Environmental Security

The national security is primary to human and socio-economy development. Nevertheless, the sustainable development of every nation must be anchored on its socio-economic development which will require veritable and practicable human security tenets for its success. Convectional security is dependent on human security, where the latter complement national security by protecting people from range of menaces (Commission on Human Security, 2003). Human security thereby depicts the assurance of life in every society. It is also in the steps towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and at the end preventing conflict (Millar, 2006)

Human security is knitted with sustainable development. They are co-joined together in an inseparable manner. It is interlaced with the developing concept of environmental security. This is because the concept of environmental security advocates for the

security of man/woman in relation to his/her environment (Akiyode, 2010). Even though, the human security concept may be regarded as ambitious by scholars and policy makers, its analysis is essential in every society because of its promising qualities.

Human security has been defined as the "comprehensive view of all threats to human survival, life and dignity and stresses the need to respond to such threats" (Neethling, 2005). The components of human security in accordance with 1994 UNDP reports were highlighted as economic security, food security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security (Svenson, 2007). These highlighted forms of securities are indispensable in every society.

Urbanization and Lagos Mega-city

The World Urban Prospects in its 2003 revision declared that about half of the world's population approximately 3 billion people have been estimated to live in urban areas (United Nations, 2004). This urbanization trend has led to the growth of many cities. This growth of big cities led to the development of the concept of mega-city towards the end of the twentieth century. These are cities that grow above 10 million people.

Lagos city in Nigeria has witnessed rapid population growth towards the end of the last century mostly because of its commercial and administrative nature. Quoting from the UN-Habitat 2002 and LASEED 2005-2007 reports, the Lagos State Government (2009) in its Journal "Bridging the Urban Divide" gave the population of Lagos as following from the 1985 to 2030.

Table 1. Lagos Population 1985-2030

Year	Population
1985	5.8 million
1990	7.7 million
1995	10.28 million

2000	13.42 million
2005	16.85 million
2010	20.19 million
2015	24.6 million
2030	35 million

(Lagos State Government, 2009)

From the table 1.0 above, the span of 10 years from 1985 to 1995 showed an increase of 2.5 million people, while 1995 to 2005 with an increase of 6.57 million and 2005 to 2015 with an increase of 7.75 million people. The table above indicates and substantiates the rapid urbanization tendency of Lagos.

Urbanization and Human Security

The relationship between urbanization and human security cannot be overemphasized especially with range of menaces that are often associated with population growth and development with no compromising infrastructural development. These are characteristics of most developing economy growing cities like Lagos.

The concept of security aligns with the protection of human and society from threats. Extrapolating from the definition given earlier in this study to human security by Neethling (2005) in his research paper *“The Security-Development Nexus and the Imperative of Peacebuilding with special reference to the African Context”*, the study affirms that human security takes a comprehensive view of all threats to human survival, life and dignity and stresses the need to respond to such threats. This makes it to be far different from the traditional security that focuses on only the physical threat or aggression to the society.

Thus, it is not only protecting the integrity of the state but also emphasizes on the sustainability of our environment. Human security and environmental security are interwoven and interconnected to the extent that environmental security can be assumed to stem out of human security while also

human security could also be seen to come out of environmental security.

Environmental security issues in the urban centers may affect the total well being of human and its society thereby making them not to fully access the expected benefits of urban society and may thereby hinder its human security. The underlining goals of the two concepts (Human and Environmental) are aligned towards achieving sustainable development.

Steiner (2006) gave the definition of environmental security “as issues from energy security and climate security, to water and health security”. This definition is all encompassing making environmental security complementary to the protection of individual and entire society thereby supporting the human security. This study analyzes the human security of Lagos mega-city focusing on its environmental security components.

Urbanization, Poverty and Human Security in Lagos Mega-city

Economic security is an indispensable component of human security. The economic security of urban residents is important for urban sustainability. This study examines the economic security in vein of the income level or poverty level of the residents of Lagos mega-city. Generally, the definitions of poverty are subjective, Aluko (2012) citing the Central Bank of Nigeria (1999) describes “poverty as a state where an individual is not able to carter adequately for his or her basic needs of food clothing and shelter and is unable to meet social and economic obligation, lack gainful employment skills assets and self-esteem

and has limited access to social and economic infrastructure such as education, health, portable water and sanitation and consequently has limited chance for his or her capabilities”.

Therefore taking a clue from the Central Bank of Nigeria definition of poverty above, analyzing the poverty level in this case study is essential in determining the level of human dignity and wellbeing in the city. Poverty is therefore not only of the misfortunes and limited capabilities of individuals, but also structure and processes that determine the distribution of income (Lawson, 2012).

Thereby, the poverty level is indispensable to its human security. Consequently, this study examines poverty level of residents of Lagos mega-city through the analysis of their income level. Though, Lagos mega-city is rich economically being a major commercially driving center of Nigeria oil rich economy but majority of its residents are living with low income or in abject poverty. The President of Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan relying on the Central Bank of Nigeria records agreed to the economic viability of Lagos since it controls 52% of Nigeria’s bank deposits and economy (Punch, 2012). Nevertheless, it is regarded as one of the poorest cities in the world, since its estimated poverty level is 70% (Lagos State, 2004).

Lawson (undated) citing Davis (2006) identifies Lagos mega-city as biggest continuous footprint of urban poverty on earth being the biggest node in the shantytown corridor of 70 million people that stretches from Abidjan to Ibadan. This poverty comes with insufficient income to cover minimum standards of food, water, shelter, medical care and schooling (Anger, 2010).

Environmental degradation and poverty are inextricably intertwined, resulting in a vicious cycle in which poverty causes environmental stress, which in turn perpetuates more poverty (Oduwaye and

Lawanson 2007). Poverty puts pressure on people to engage in unsustainable and environmentally unfriendly practices (Oduwaye and Lawanson 2007). Also the poor that resides mostly in slums and other parts of Lagos mega-city are engaged in informal activities encompassing a wide range of small-scale, largely self-employment activities in order to meet their needs which are most times in conflict with official laws and plans (Lawson, 2012).

Urbanization, Climate Change and Human Security in Lagos Mega-city

Climate change as a global common good may have its effects on mega-city such like Lagos thereby hindering its urban sustainability thereby having compromising effects on its human security. The mega-city is also vulnerable to climate variability since it is situated on the coast line of Atlantic Ocean (IPCC, 2001 and Monirul and Mizral, 2003 cited in Dolan and Walker, 2004). Lagos has been adjudged not to be suited to its continuous growth (Sattethwaite, *et al.*, 2007).

The risk and exposure to climate change of an urban center will be influenced by the quality of its infrastructure (Adelakun, 2009 citing Sattertwaite, 2007). Lagos infrastructure at present is not having the carrying capacity for its population and societal growth. Therefore, this continuous population and urban development with no equal development of adequate green infrastructures make the mega-city vulnerable to impact of environmental change. The “existing policies, programmes, actors and measures at present are also insufficient to meet the level of risk posed by the climate change” (Lagos State Government, 2009). The inability of Nigeria to fully implement principle of agenda 21 (i.e. policies on sustainable environmental practices) in the management of its environment will hinder climate change ameliorative strategies (Lagos State 2009). Sustainable strategies

are essential in managing environmental challenges.

About 70% of the population of Lagos residents now lives in slums, thereby making the number of slums in the mega-city to increase from 41 to about 100 now (UNDP, 2003 and Adelekan, 2009). Slums condition predisposes the people to environmental security issues such as climate change effects, water insecurity and health insecurity which will distort its human security.

Urbanization, Environmental Security issues and Human Security in Lagos Mega-city

Negative environmental security issues or menaces will hinder the achievement of human security in Lagos mega-city. A prime environmental security issue in Lagos mega-city is water security. Water security was defined by Grey and Sadoff's (2007) as the "availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods, ecosystems, and production, coupled with an acceptable level of water-related risks to the people, environments, and economics".

The water security situation in Lagos mega-city in terms of availability for human health and livelihood is precarious because the water for consumption are exposed to uncontrolled impurities from unsustainable environmental practices which may affects the health security of the city. It has been noted that adequate water supply covers only 35% of Lagos residence (Moe & Rheingnams, 2006 In Akiyode, 2010). This makes residence to depend on other sources such like wells for their water supply. The health security of residence that depends on alternative sources may not be guaranteed. Inadequate water security in an urban center will hinder human security.

It is also essential to examine water security in Lagos mega-city in terms of excessive water as in flooding as in Grey an Sadoof's (2007) analogy since record shows that water and wetland covers Lagos to the tune of about 40% and an additional 12% subject to flooding which could be affected by block

drains (Iwugo, 2003). Issues of excessive floods in Lagos year through years lead to several loss of lives of some residents. It has also been noted that over the years the Bar beach in Lagos has been steadily eroded until it was almost lost completely to the Atlantic Ocean (UN HSP 2008). This has shown the implications of water insecurity in the mega-city which may be enhanced by climate change impacts. This may adversely affects the city human security.

Waste generations and management are environmental security issues that potentiate negative human security common to growing developing metropolitan city such like Lagos mega-city. Lagos generates about 10,000 metric tonnes of solid waste per day (Lagos State, 2010). Whereas sustainable waste management processes have not been fully acceptable to most of the residents. Thereby, the solid waste is still disposed as mixed wastes which complicate its management processes. Consequently, the end points of the unsustainable waste management being practiced by most of the overwhelming population are the non-engineered dumpsites located in different parts of the city surrounded by residential houses. The dumpsites include Olushosun, Solous and Abule-Egba etc. All the so called landfills (dumpsites) uncontrollably generate methane gases and odour into the atmosphere of the city. The health conditions or security of the residents around the landfills are in jeopardy due to inhalation of these obnoxious gases.

Evidence of challenges in waste management practices could be seen in most of the areas of Lagos mega-city except only in the high brows and sophisticated areas such as Lagos Island, Ikoyi, Lekki, Surulere and Ikeja. Main and interior streets in areas in Lagos mega-city such as Agege, Iyana Ipaja, Ayobo, Ikotun, Ajegunle, Mile 12, Mile 2, Isolo, Igando and Ketu etc are most times donned with solid waste materials waiting for the waste trucks day in day out. Open drains and narrow shallow trenches in Lagos mega-city are also time and again clogged with discarded household or industrial appliances, sand,

and refuse that are most times transported by flooding and when not cleaned are unsightly and exuding unpleasant odours (Olokesusi, 2011).

Conclusion

The study analyses the human security indicators that hinder the process of sustainable development and environmental protection. It agrees that the socio-economic development of the city will continue to serve as bait to rural urban dwellers. It suggests that human security

components of Lagos mega-city may be affected by the negative consequences of rapid urbanization. Thereby it recommends regular environmental assessments and remediation of identified ecologically destabilized spots and the development of environmental sustainable infrastructures in the city. It further advocates integrated environmental management approaches in managing the mega-city environment which will supports its human security.

References

- Anger, B. (2010). Poverty Eradication, Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development* Vol. 3, No. 4 pp. 138-144.
- Adelakun, I. (2009). Vulnerability of Poor Urban Coastal Communities to Climate change in Lagos, Nigeria. Fifth Urban research symposium. <http://www.urs2009.net> assessed March 10, 2010.
- Akiyode O.O. (2010). Urban Environmental Security in Devolving Economy Mega-city: A Case Study of Lagos, Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. Vol 12, No 5.
- Aluko O. (2012) Impact of poverty on housing condition in Nigeria: A case study of Mushin Local Government Area of Lagos State. *Journal of African Studies and Development* Vol. 4(3), pp. 81-89, April 2012.
- Commission on Human Security (2003). Human Security Now. Chapter 1. *Commission on Human Security*. (Washington D.C).
- Dolan A.H. & Walker I.J. (2004). Understanding Vulnerability of Coastal Communities to Climate Change Related Risk. *Journal of Coastal Resource Special Issue* 39.
- Grey, D. & Sadoff, C. (2007). Sink or Swim? Water security for growth and development. *Water Policy*, 9, 545–571.
- Iwugo, K., Arcy, B., & Andoh, R. (2003). Aspect of Land-Based pollution of an African Coastal Megacity of Lagos. *Proceedings of the 7th International Specialised IWA Conference*
- Lagos State (2004). Lagos State Government. Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, 2004
- Lagos State (2009). Lagos State Government. Retrieved December 19, 2010 from <http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng> .
- Lagos State (2010). Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development.
- Lagos State Government (2010). Lagos... Bridging the Urban Divide. Lagos Ministry of Information and Strategy, *Lagos State Government*
- Lawanson T. (2012). Poverty, Home Based Enterprises and Urban Livelihoods in the Lagos Metropolis *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* Vol.14, No.4 Clarion University of

- Pennsylvania, Clarion,
Pennsylvania
- Lawson T.O. (undated). Poverty and Environmental Conditions in the Lagos Megacity: Consequences for Environmental Health. [www.unilag.edu.ng/opendoc.php?sno=4236&doctype=doc...\\$](http://www.unilag.edu.ng/opendoc.php?sno=4236&doctype=doc...$) accessed September 9 2012
- Millar, K. (2006). A Human Security Analysis of the War in Iraq, *Revue de la Sécurité Humaine/ Human Security Journal* – Issue 2
- Neethling, T (2005). The Security-Development Nexus and the Imperative of Peacebuilding with special reference to the African Context”, *African Journal on conflict Resolution*.
- Oduwaye L. and Lawanson T.O. (2007). Poverty and Environmental Degradation in The Lagos Metropolis *Journal of Environmental Sciences*. Vol 11, No 1 June 2007, pp36 – 70 [www.unilag.edu.ng/opendoc.php?sno=4236&doctype=doc...\\$](http://www.unilag.edu.ng/opendoc.php?sno=4236&doctype=doc...$) accessed September 9 2012.
- Olokesusi F. (2011). Lagos: The Challenges and Opportunities of an Emergent African Mega City. Paper Presented at the NISER Seminar Series on 5 July, 2011.
- Punch (2012). Jonathan Seeks Fashola Cooperation over Lagos State. Punch Newspaper. <http://punch.com> Accessed 19th September, 2012
- Satterwaite, D., Huqs, S., Pelling, M., Reid, H. and Lankao, P. (2007). Adapting to Climate Change in urban areas, the possibilities and constrains in low and middle income nations. Humman Settlements Discussion papers series. Theme: Climate change and cities 1. <http://www.Books.goggle.com> assessed March 8, 2010
- Steiner A. (2006). “Environmental Security”. G8 Summit issues and instruments. http://www.unep.org/org/pdf/environmental_security_pdf.
- Svensson, K. (2007). Human Security as Inclusive Security-Gender, epistemology and equality. *African Security Review*, Vol. 16(22):2-13. Retrieved May 15, 2010 from http://www.iss.co.za/index.php?link_26&slink_id=6143&link_type=12&tmpl_id=3
- UNDP (2003). Human Development Report. United Nations Development Programme.
- United Nations, 2004: World Urbanization Prospects: The 2003 Revision. E/ESS/WP.191. United Nations, New York.