

# The Effects Of Urbanization Towards Social And Cultural Changes Among West African Countries

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## Abstract

The West Africa society is rapidly becoming Urban as a result of multitude push and pull factors going on in West Africa. The study examines the rhythm of urban life marked by collective consumption which influences cultural values, pervades dressing styles of the wider social environment and health in West Africa. This has also generated urban health crises among city dwellers and the rural areas. The review showed that the pace of urbanization is unprecedented with cities such as Lagos having annual urban growth rate of 5.8%. Urbanization in West Africa is mainly demographically driven without commensurate socioeconomic dividends and benefits to the urban environment. This has created urban health crises of inadequate water safe supply, squalor and shanty settlements, sanitation, solid waste management, double burden of diseases and inefficient, congested, and risky transport system. In conclusion, when managed carefully, urbanization could reduce hardship and human suffering; on the other hand, it could also increase poverty and squalor. Some laws need to be amended to change the status of poor urban settlements. Urban health development requires intersectoral approach with political will and urban renewal program to make our urban societies sustainable that promote healthy living.

**Keywords:** Cities, West Africa, urbanization, urban health , Cultural values.

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## Introduction

Many of the sub-Saharan African major cities are rapidly going through a process of urban restructuring and physical transformation in their struggles to be integrated into the global economic system. Various assumptions, which described Africa as 'rising', the second fastest-growing region in the world and "last frontier of development" are propelling many of the African governments to strategically position their major cities to take the advantage through the process of series of physical urban transformations, an idea which Goldman (2011), based on the experience of Bangalore, referred to as 'speculative urbanism'. Lagos, just like many other sub-Saharan Africa's large cities, is cut in the struggles of managing population growth, urban development challenges and quest for urban modernity. Over the years, Lagos has witnessed urban growth, relating to its physical configuration, population and socioeconomic composition of its population. Lagos witnessed unprecedented population growth and largely unplanned urban expansion, from its original lagoon setting to encompass a vast expanse of mostly low-rise developments, including as many as 200 different slums ranging in size from clusters of shacks underneath highways to entire districts.

Following this introduction, this paper proceeds with the discussion of conceptual and theoretical issues relating to urban development and livelihoods. The discussion is situated within the broader concept of sustainable development and Lagos urban development context. It then presents the research methodological approach, and analytical and theoretical framework. The understanding derived from the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings was then used to examine some of the urban development policies and projects of the Lagos State government and the implications on the livelihoods of the urban poor. The concluding section summarises the arguments presented in this paper. It advocates that the current urban planning and development policies frameworks must be modified to accommodate the complex realities of the majority and allow them to build on their strengths and use their assets productively.

### **Review and literature background**

Urbanization is a process that leads to the growth of cities due to industrialization and economic development, and that leads to urban-specific changes in specialization, labor division and human behaviors. In that way, urbanization is a force and inevitable demographic movement and this process should not certainly be neglected. Previous study works mainly on a single field such as development, population and environment.

The struggle between urban development initiatives and livelihoods of the urban poor is one of the development challenges facing many developing countries, particularly sub-Saharan African countries today. Wiggins and Higgins (2008) equate development to transformations of society with sharp breaks from past trends, behaviours and institutions. As such, in this paper, urban development and urban transformation are used interchangeably. The materials presented in this paper are based on data from a research project which seeks to understand the complexity of factors which influence the livelihoods of the urban poor in Lagos' informal settlements, through the lens of Sustainable Livelihood Framework (Olajide, 2015). The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach presents a theoretical and analytical framework for understanding livelihoods assets and vulnerability context as well as Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs) (sometimes refers to Transforming Structures and Processes) (DFID, 1999) that mediate both assets and vulnerability of the urban poor. While the Sustainable Livelihood Framework was used as the methodological and analytical framework, as part of a large research project, the data presented in this paper is limited to the aspect which helps to understand the implications of the Lagos megacity urban development aspirations on the livelihoods of the urban poor. This paper, therefore, focuses on the PIPs component of the framework. It specifically explores how PIPs influence the livelihoods of the urban poor within the context of Lagos urban development and transformation initiatives.

The adapted theoretical and analytical framework – Sustainable Livelihood Framework – enables quantitative and qualitative research design and a broad range of data-collection methods. Data were collected in four informal settlements – Ipaja, Ajegule, Oko-Baba and Sari-Iganmu. In each settlement, a combination of data collection tools, including household surveys, interviews, direct observation and photography, were used. A total of 400 questionnaires were administered and 29 interviews were conducted, including key informants' interviews, household in-depth interviews and group discussions. The research adopted non-probability sampling in all the four case study settlements because there was no reliable sample frame, either from census figures or communities' records, to support selection of

sample size based on probability sampling. In addition, the settlements are haphazardly developed, which makes adoption of probability sampling techniques, such as systematic sampling and random sampling, practically inappropriate. Each settlement was divided into 100 clusters. From each cluster, one building was selected. Although the majority of the buildings are occupied by multiple households, only one household was sampled in each selected building. The actual household sampled was selected using the convenience sampling technique (Higginbottom, 2004).

Based on the adapted analytical and theoretical framework, the data were analyzed and discussed through the lenses of policies, regulations and laws with specific relevant cases and their implications on the livelihoods of the urban poor. To strengthen the research results and discussion, empirical evidences were equally triangulated with documentary review and policy document analysis.

### **Research Methodology**

This study utilized both secondary and primary sources of data. The secondary data were collected from the Lagos State valuation office. There were 16 local governments divided into 8 areas and consisting of 53 residential zones in the metropolitan Lagos. The total number of properties in the 53 zones is 135,820. The valuation of properties in all the local governments contained data and information on the number of houses, the valuation area, owner, area of land, address of property, type of occupier, rental information, type of accommodation, gross value, rateables value, etc. Other secondary data consist of relevant information from journals, articles, research reports from government agencies and parastatals.

Primary information was collected from both direct interviews and personal observations. The main primary information was obtained from responses to questionnaires. This is essentially to complement the already available secondary data and other unavailable necessary information. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part consists of the socio-economic variables while the second part consists of some of the variables of spatial location and neighbourhood of housing consumers as reflected in population densities. The third part consists of the structural variables that are selected from a larger pool of housing attributes. The number of questionnaires administered was 1500 (this was based on about 1% of the total number of houses). The large number of properties made it difficult to cover all because of limited fund. The selection of the houses covered by the questionnaire was done by both the random and systematic sampling methods in the Metropolitan areas.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to resolve the objectives and the formulated hypotheses. To test for the variations in house values in different locations and neighborhoods, the analysis of variance and multiple regression model were used.

Housing and Urban Development in Metropolitan Lagos: This section focuses on the spatial growth and the rapid rate of development in Metropolitan Lagos in order to show the significance and the role of housing in the study area. Since Lagos remains the most populous and unequalled state in West Africa with most of its population concentrated in the Metropolitan area, it follows that housing for the people should be adequately researched, as shelter is one of the foremost priorities of life in urban development.

**Population Growth:** Lagos epitomises the phenomenal growth in urban population that is almost typical of most African cities. Estimates made in the latter part of the 18th and the early part of the 19th centuries gave the population as 3,000 in 1800 (Adams, 1900), 20,000 in 1863 and 40,000 in 1864 (Colonial Possessions, 1863 and 1864). Within the first five years after 1866 the population increased by about 14 percent. The population growth rate for the city took a sharp turn in the 20th century. Between 1901 and 1911, the percentage increase rose from 28.7 to 76.3 percent. The trend in growth in the latter part of the century has been more dramatic. In the first 13 years, that is 1950 to 1963, the population of the municipality increased threefold from 230,256 to 665,246. In 1973, the percentage decreased from 188.9 percent to 117 percent and by 1988, it decreased further to 50.2 percent. The 1991 census gave a ridiculous low figure of Lagos Island as 335,300 (Lagos Island and Eti-Osa) and 4,248,963 when the Lagos Mainland figure is added to it. In 2006, the West African Countries Population Commission put the population of Metropolitan Lagos at 8,166,217. The West Africa's population was 140 million with population growth rate at 3.2 per cent.

**Spatial Expansion:** Two main factors account for the rapid growth of Lagos Metropolitan population - net migration and natural increase. Immigration has been a much more potent factor accounting for the rapid population growth in Lagos. Lagos was settled by immigrants from the immediate hinterland. These were the Aworis, members of a Yoruba sub-group. They were followed by the Ijebus and later by the Binis from a much farther distance to the south eastern part of the coast. During the era of the slave trade, Lagos became an important market for the slaves brought from Porto Novo, Badagry, Hausa and Yoruba lands. However, with the abolition of the slave trade in 1851 and the cession of Lagos to the British government in 1861, which ushered in an improved socio-political era, new groups of migrants were attracted to the city. Such groups included freed slaves from Brazil, Sierra-Leone, and from the hinterland. European merchants, missionaries, Egba christian refugees and traders from the interior also came to Lagos for trading, missionary and political reasons respectively.

**Impact on the Urban Environment:** The result of the uncontrolled population growth in the urban areas are characterized by inadequate housing, the growth of slums, traffic congestion, poor waste disposal, shortage of water and inadequate power supply. In addition, the cities face problems of fragmented administration, inefficient coordination in planning and in the allocation of investments. City administrations in the country are inefficient and under-financed. They find it difficult to plan and execute effective budgets and resources allocation.

The city with its concentration of industry, commerce and administration, of capital, Labour and technology has traditionally been a powerful generator of national economic growth. It acts as a central place around which rural activities and development could be organized to promote growth and change. On the other hand, uncontrolled urbanization without attempts to channel and guide it according to a basic strategy which is appropriate to a developing country's agricultural, industrial, commercial and administrative needs can become a rational liability.

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Reversing the trend: Rural-urban migration is a menace to the environment and overcrowding within the cities is a common place. Balanced growth is very essential between urban and rural areas so that the economic and physical development of cities should not be based on a purely urban strategy, but must also consider the interaction between the urban and rural areas in making the most effective use of resources. All the causes of rural-urban migration should be looked into by the government and see that they are resolved. If the situation could be abated and reversed, it will remove some pressures on urban resources. The urban areas will be depopulated and the visible and obvious consequences of urbanization will be reduced.

The general impression that when someone lives the urban center to resettle in a rural area, is an indication that it is finished for him and that all hopes of surviving or making it is totally lost should be disabused. Someone can return to his country home after a successful life in the city to establish and continue with a good life. Rural migrants have played an important part in the development of their districts of origin through the introduction of new skills, crops and capital into such areas.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has been able to examine how urbanization has ushered in complex urban problems. This growth and physical expansion of cities have been accompanied by unplanned urban sprawl, environmental pollution, deterioration, deficiencies in modern basic facilities, and general urban decay. As increased poverty and urbanization exert more pressures on urban facilities, most West african Countries cities tend to have lost their original dignity, social cohesion and administrative efficiency. This research work studied the causes and their impacts on the environment. The paper also gave some corrective suggestions in order to avert the trend. It is, therefore, hoped that the rapid growth in

urbanization which has started since the 1950s could be looked into in order to save the rural areas from being totally deserted. The rate of desertion is alarming and the major food producers are being ignored to the extent that foods produced continue to rot in the remote areas for lack of good storage system and bad roads.

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