



EMERGING ISSUES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAGOS AS A MEGA-CITY

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Abstract

This paper examined some emerging issues in the development of Lagos, using the historical research method/approach and a systematic review of relevant literature as well as archival documents. The location of Lagos State gave it a competitive advantage in global trade, and this created an impetus for the influx of European traders and multinational businesses into Lagos. Besides, the movement of the capital of Nigeria from Calabar to Lagos in 1906 enhanced the position of Lagos as a commercial hub with social infrastructure, rapid industrial development and population explosion which gave Lagos the acquired status of a commercial capital and a mega-city. Ultimately, Lagos State has become the most urbanised state in Nigeria. It was found that despite the movement of the seat of the Nigerian government from Lagos to Abuja on the 12th of December, 1991, Lagos has remained the commercial capital of Nigeria. However, the development of Lagos has resulted in a population explosion, massive unemployment, deficits in infrastructure, frequent disturbance by miscreants, traffic congestion, poor sanitation and waste management problems among other issues. These issues can be attributed to poor management of rural-urban drifts associated with the growth of commerce and industries in Lagos. It is recommended among other things that social infrastructure should be provided to make Lagos State the choice destination for foreign direct investments and a centre for tourists' attraction as Lagos develops into a mega-city.

Keywords: Emerging Issues, Urbanisation, Development, Mega-city, Lagos State

Introduction

Lagos was the epicentre for slave exports which began in the 18th century. Badagry was well-known as a collection centre for slave exports until the mid-19th century when the British government abolished the inhuman trade. Sequel to the abolition of the slave trade, slaves returning from Brazil settled in the older parts of Lagos, such as Campbell Street and its environs referred to as the "Brazilian quarters". Historically, the aborigines of Lagos were the Aworis and the Bini people who settled in Lagos before the advent of the Europeans. The original

name given to Lagos by the aborigines is Eko. Lagos is still identified by this name. Remember the slogan, *Eko oni baje* used extensively during the administration of Governor Babatunde Raji Fashola who governed Lagos from 2007 to 2015. The essence of the slogan was to put Lagos on the path of sustainable growth and development. In 1472, a Portuguese explorer, Rui de Sequeira gave the city its appellation "Lagos" as a result of the prevalence of many lagoons within its geographical territory (Filani, 2012). Agunbiade & Olajide (2016) posited that Lagos originated

from Isale-Eko in the 14th century. Isale- Eko is situated in present day Lagos Island.

Since then, Lagos has metamorphosed into a cosmopolitan and a mega-city and has become the hub for commerce and industry. The transformation of Lagos into a mega-city has brought in its wake certain costs and benefits such as: population explosion, unemployment challenge, infrastructural and housing deficits, sanitation and waste disposal challenges, social vices, rural-urban migration, transportation problems and traffic congestions, urbanisation and the growth of commerce and industry to name a few (Filani, 2012).

This paper examines the origin and development of Lagos with emphasis on the evolution and emerging issues as Lagos develops into a mega-city. The authors further explicated the emerging issues using the historical research method/approach and a systematic review of relevant archival documents.

Literature Review

Lagos became a British colony on the 6th of August, 1861. From the 1st of January, 1862; Lagos was governed from the Colonial Office in London. The first Governor of Lagos Colony, appointed on the 22nd of January 1862 was Mr. H.S. Freeman. As of 1899, there existed: (i) the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos (ii) the Southern Protectorate and (iii) the Northern Protectorate. In February 1906; the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos was merged with the Southern Protectorate to become the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates to form the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria was on the 1st of January, 1914. Lagos became the capital of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria in 1914.

After Lagos was ceded to Britain in 1861, the city was administered as a city-state with its separate administration, and operated as a separate colony until its merger with the former Western Nigeria in 1951. In 1953 a federal territory, which included Lagos, was carved out

of Western Nigeria. On the 27th of May 1967, the military administration led by General Yakubu Gowon created 12 states, including Lagos State, following the abrogation of the erstwhile regions in Nigeria. Lagos State comprises five administrative divisions, 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 37 Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs). The five divisions are Ikorodu, Ikeja, Lagos, Badagry and Epe. In 1991, these five divisions were split into 20 Local Government Areas and in 2006, additional 37 Local Council Development Areas were carved out of the 20 Local Government Areas during the administration of Senator Ahmed Bola Tinubu, the then Governor of Lagos State. It was argued then that with the population of Lagos, there was a need to create more local government areas to promote grassroots development in Lagos State. However, this was not assented to by the then President Olusegun Obasanjo as the Nigerian Constitution did not recognise the plan of Lagos State government at the time.

In 1976, the military administration of Murtala Ramat Mohammed began the plan to move the Federal capital of Nigeria from Lagos to Abuja. This plan led to the establishment of the Justice Akinola Aguda's Panel to work on the relocation. The seat of government was finally moved to Abuja on the 12th of December, 1991 by the then military President of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, 15 years after the idea was conceptualised. Lagos served as the capital of Nigeria for 77 years.

Lagos State is endowed with visionary governors that possessed the capacity to lead the state to the next level and through the path of social change. Both past and present governors have made giant strides in redirecting the growth trajectory of Lagos through the execution of developmental projects and social infrastructures (Agunbiade & Olajide, 2016). Table 1 depicts the past and present governors who have played crucial roles in the emergence and growth of Lagos State as well as its metamorphosis into a mega-city.

Table 1: Past and Present Governors of Lagos

S/N	NAMES	YEARS
1	Brig-Gen. Mobolaji Johnson	1967-1975
2	Navy Cmdr. Adekunle Lawal	1975-1977
3	Navy Cmdr. Ebitu Ukiwe	1978-1979
4	Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande	1979-1983
5	Air Cmdr. Gbolahan Mudashiru	1984-1986
6	Navy Captain Mike Okhai Akhigbe	1986-1988
7	Brig-Gen. Raji Alagbe Rasaki	1988-1991
8	Sir Michael Agbolade Otedola	1992- 1993
9	Col. Olagunsoye Oyinlola	1993-1996
10	Brig-Gen. Mohammed Buba Marwa	1996-1999
11	Senator Ahmed Bola Tinubu	1999-2007
12	Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola (SAN)	2007-2015
13	Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode	2015 to May 29, 2019
14	Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu	May 29, 2019 to Date

Source: Lagos State Government Official Records, (2019)

Table 2: Past and Present Obas of Lagos

S/N	NAMES OF OBA	PERIOD OF REIGN
1	Ashipa	1600-1630
2	Oba Ado	1630-1669
3	Oba Gabaro	1669-1704
4	Oba Akinsemoyin	1704-1749
5	Oba Eletu-Kekere	1749
6	Oba Ologun-Kutere	1749-1775
7	Oba Adele Ajosun	1775-1780
8	Oba Eshilokun	1780-1819
9	Oba Idewu Ojulari	1819-1832
10	Oba Oluwole	1834-1841
11	Oba Akintoye	1841-1845
12	Oba Kosoko	1845-1851
13	Oba Dosunmu	1853-1885
14	Oba Oyekan	1885-1900
15	Oba Esugbayi	1901-1925
16	Oba Ibikunle-Akitoye	1925-1928
17	Oba Sanusi- Olusi	1928-1931
18	Oba Adeniji Adele	1949-1964
19	Oba Adeyinka Oyekan II	1965-2003
20	Oba Rilwan-Akiolu	2003 to date

Source: Adepeju, (2006)

Table 2 depicts the past and present Obas of Lagos whose diverse contributions have led to the emergence and growth of Lagos State beginning from 1600 to date. According to Agunbiade & Olajide (2016), the political history and development of Nigeria and Lagos can be classified into three phases. These are years before 1861 (the pre-colonial), 1861-1960 (colonial) and 1960 to present (post-colonial) as depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: The Political History of Lagos

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	PRE-COLONIAL ERA	COLONIAL ERA		POST COLONIAL ERA				
	Traditional/Monarchical	Indirect Rule		Indigenous governance with global influence				
	1861	1914		1960	1966	1979	1983	1999-2021
Political Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obas and Chiefs- Executives Ogboni-Legislative Arm Oro/Eso- Law Enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queen of England as the Head of Government Governor-General as the representative of the Queen in Lagos Oba and Chiefs as intermediaries with little political power 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Republic Parliamentary system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Military Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second Republic Presidential System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Military 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fourth Republic began in 1999 Presidential system since 1999 to date Call for Political Restructuring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obas as the Lord of the Political Economy Power and Wealth radiate from the Palace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional political power was eroded Lagos became British colony The economy developed around the regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lagos the political capital of Nigeria Population and natural resources began to be depleted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional political power was eroded Regions have autonomy and developing at their pace The traditional institutions were there for legitimacy tool in the hands of the State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democratic dispensation began in 1979 but was terminated in 1983 with the intervention of military rule which lasted till 1998 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 1999 to date, Lagos State has been under democratic rule. 	

Source: Adapted from Agunbiade & Olajide, (2016).

Emerging Issues in the Growth of Lagos as a Mega-city

In spite of the relocation of the seat of the Nigerian government to Abuja on the 12th of December 1991, Lagos remains the commercial capital of Nigeria. However, the development of Lagos has resulted in massive unemployment, deficits in infrastructure, frequent disturbance by miscreants, and traffic congestion, among other issues. These issues can be attributed to poor management of rural-urban drifts associated with the growth of commerce and industries in Lagos. The scope of issues discussed is associated with industrialisation and development globally. The following emerging issues arising from the development of Lagos are examined.

Urbanization

Lagos is an urban centre. According to the 1952 Nigerian census, urban areas should have more than 5,000 people. However, the 1963 Nigerian census fixed 20,000 people and above for an urban centre. According to Harvey (2000), urban centres are characterised by the provision of basic amenities and services, high economic activities, as well as physical infrastructural developments. Thus, urbanisation is caused by rapid development, modernisation, industrialisation and population growth. According to Oyeleye (2013), urbanisation is defined in terms of population sizes in different countries. In Japan, it is at least 30,000 people.

In the United States, it is at least 50,000 people. In Greece, it is at least 10,000 people. In Australia, it is at least 1,000 people and in Denmark, at least 250 people (Aluko, 2010). Fig. 1 depicts the face of urban Lagos.

Figure 1: Aerial view of the Lagos Island Central Business District



Source: Lagos State Government, Ministry of Information and Strategy, 2009.

Population Explosion

With respect to land area, Lagos State remains the smallest State with 3,577 square kilometres. The population of Lagos State increased considerably from just 25,518 in 1871 to about 40,000 in 1901 and subsequently to 662,246 in 1963 (Mabogunje, 1961). However, population growth has significantly affected the improvement of social amenities and infrastructure, traffic control, waste disposal, educational institutions, housing, sanitation and physical planning to name a few. The 2006 National Population Census figure revealed that Lagos State had a population of 9,013,534 people, and it is about 6.4 per cent of the country's population. The United Nations-Habitat (2006) defines a city with 20 million or more inhabitants as a mega-city. As stated earlier, Lagos originated from Isale-Eko in the 14th century. Isale-Eko is situated in present day Lagos Island and had existed before the colonization by Great Britain (Ojikutu, 2023; Agunbiade & Olajide, 2016). Lagos State was created on the 27th of May, 1967. Lagos State comprises five administrative divisions, 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 37 Local Council

Development Areas (LCDAs). The five divisions are Ikorodu, Ikeja, Lagos, Badagry and Epe. The population of Lagos State was estimated to be 24.6 million people, and it was predicted that by 2015, Lagos State would be the third-largest city in the world (United Nations-Habitat, 2006). The population of Lagos State gave the state the acquired status of a mega-city. The growth in population has implications for social infrastructure, employment, massive rural-urban migration, and poverty (Decker, 2010). The pattern and trend of population growth of Lagos State from 1950 to 2035 is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Lagos State Population Data (1950 to 2035)

Year	Population	Growth	Growth Rate
1950	325,218	-	-
1960	762,418	437, 200	134%
1970	1,413,528	651,110	85%
1980	2,572,218	1,158,690	82%
1990	4,764,093	2,191,875	85%
2000	7,280,706	2,576,613	55%
2010	10,441,182	3,160,476	43%
2020	14,368,332	3,927,150	38%
2030	20,600,156	6,231,824	43%
2035	24, 418,768	3,818,612	19%

Source: Adapted from Macrotrends.net, (2022): United Nations Population Projections.

Growth of Commerce and Industries

Lagos has been a trade axis from pre-colonial times owing to its seaports. The location of Lagos gave it a competitive advantage in global trade and this has created an impetus for the influx of European traders and multinational businesses into Lagos. About 85 per cent of Nigeria’s commercial and industrial activities are carried out in Lagos. Aworemi et al. (2011) argue that Lagos is among the fastest growing cities in the world. The Lagos Chambers of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has been instrumental in the promotion of trade and commerce in the State. These developments enhanced the position of

Lagos as a commercial hub with rapid industrial and commercial development, which gave Lagos the acquired status of the commercial capital of Nigeria.

Rural-Urban Migration

Movement or migration of people from remote villages and towns from all the nooks and crannies of Nigeria to Lagos places enormous pressure on the limited infrastructure and housing units in Lagos State (Amrevurayire & Ojeh, 2016). The migration of people from rural areas to Lagos was necessitated by the desire to search for greener pastures or employment opportunities so as to earn a decent living. Migration can be explained by the interaction of the push-out factors (po) of the emigration area and the pull-in factors (pi) of the immigration area (Harris & Todaro, 1970 as cited in Fajana, 2000). Thus, when push-out factors are less than pull-in factors ($po < pi$); there is little or no migration. When push-out factors are greater than pull-in factors ($po > pi$); there is high migration. When push-out factors are equal to pull-in factors ($po = pi$); people face indecision to migrate. The classical economic theory posits that owing to economic imbalance between two geographical areas or regions, people tend to migrate to economically attractive areas or regions to improve their economic standard of living (Fajana, 2000).

Rural-urban drift has led to population explosion in Lagos State with far reaching repercussions. Adesina (2013) attributed the incidence of unemployment in Nigeria to rural-urban migration. This employment challenge is also true of Lagos State. It was found that rural-urban migration became a necessity for rural dwellers as a result of the need to search for perceived or real opportunities in urban areas as a consequence of inequality in wealth and poverty in rural areas (Ajaero & Onokala, 2013). This condition is exacerbated owing to massive drift of youth and able-bodied men and women from the rural areas to urban centres, leaving only the

elderly and aged members to constitute the labour force in rural areas.

Unemployment Challenge

One of the greatest challenges besetting Lagos State as it transforms into a mega-city is unemployment (Abiodun, 2010). According to Ojo (1997, p.216), “to qualify as unemployed, a person must be able to work, wishing to work, dependent on work for a livelihood but unable to obtain suitable employment.” Fajana (2000, p.146), posits that “unemployment is a state of worklessness experienced by persons who are members of the labour force who perceive themselves and are perceived by others as capable of working, but are actively looking for paid employment without success under the prevailing economic circumstances.”

The National Manpower Board (1979) as cited in Ojo (1997, p.216), defines “unemployed persons as all persons aged 15-55 years who were actively looking for work but failed to find one during the reference week.” Fajana (2000) has classified unemployment in terms of: (a) degree (partial and total); (b) volition (voluntary and involuntary); (c) duration (long-term and short-term); and (d) cause (structural, frictional, cyclical, seasonal and residual).

The unemployment challenge in Nigeria has a geographical dimension as it is generally higher in urban areas than in rural areas as a result of massive rural-urban drift among able-bodied persons in search of greener pastures in the cities and urban centres (Emeh, 2012). To combat unemployment, the government at all levels in Nigeria should be firm in its policy on population control by stipulating the number of children a couple can have. During the administration of the then Head of State, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida in the late 1980s, the policy of four children per couple was put in place. However, the policy was not strictly enforced (Chidi & Onabanjo, 2017).

Infrastructural and Housing Deficits

Poor road infrastructure, lack of functional drainage system, lack of decent and inadequate housing are still some of the challenges facing Lagos as it develops into a mega-city. The erstwhile Lagos State Commissioner for Housing, Prince Gbolahan Lawal expressed that Lagos State was in deficit of three million housing units. The provision of decent housing and low-income housing estates for Lagos residents will help mitigate this challenge as was done during the administration of Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande, the first Executive Governor of Lagos State from 1979 to 1983 (Lagos State Government, 2017).

Transportation Problems and Traffic Congestions

Transportation challenges and traffic congestions have bedevilled Lagos State as a mega-city. This has led successive Lagos State Governments to devise various strategies to address these problems. The emergence of mass transportation with the establishment of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), as well as the establishment of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) were meant to halt these challenges or at least to reduce them to the barest minimum. Despite these efforts, the challenges have remained unabated. For a sustainable solution to the problem of transportation in Lagos State, there is a need to modernise the rail transport, as well as water transportation systems in littoral or coastal areas to ease the problem of transportation in Lagos State. The upsurge in vehicular movements on Lagos roads is one of the causes of traffic jams (Olagunju, 2015).

Figure 2: Motorists Stuck in Traffic Jam in Lagos



Source: Obisesan, (2014).

Social Vices and Miscreants

The rate of criminal activities is on the increase in Lagos State as elsewhere especially urban centres in Nigeria. This has created a security burden on the government as well as security agencies in Lagos State and Nigeria as a whole. Carmichael and Ward (2001) investigated the nexus between unemployment and crime. They found that unemployment and different types of crimes such as fraud, forgery, burglary and theft were significantly and positively correlated. Other social vices traceable to unemployment in Nigeria are advance fee fraud otherwise called ‘419’, internet fraud, ritual killings, human trafficking for the purpose of forced labour and domestic servitude. There also exists street trading, hawking on high ways and child labour as well as the activities of area boys. According to Omomia (2015), area boys are used by politicians as thugs to unleash mayhem on political rivals. Some of the nefarious activities of miscreants include: extorting money from commercial bus drivers, killing of political opponents, burglary, rape, kidnapping to name a few (Emordi, 2005; Momoh, 2000;

Omomia, 2015).

Figure 3: Area Boys along Lagos Streets



Source: Agunbiade & Olajide, (2016).

Sanitation and Waste Disposal Challenges

Lack of proper waste management is injurious to human and societal health and well-being. Lagos is faced with huge and chaotic waste disposal management problem with dumpsites in some strategic locations in Lagos State. The Lagos State Government at different times carried out various reform programmes in the sanitation sector to proffer solutions to the problematic state of sanitation as listed below (Fajana, 2010):

- a) In November 2003, the Lagos State Government inaugurated the Sanitation Enforcement Division under the Kick-Against- Indiscipline (KAI) Project.
- b) In November 2003, the Lagos State Government commenced the State-wide Monthly Sanitation Exercise which is now abolished.
- c) In October 2004, the Lagos State Government commenced the Private Sector Participation (PSP) in Waste

- Collection.
- d) In December 2004, the Lagos State Government began the Household Waste Collection Billing.
 - e) In May 2005, the Lagos State Government reformed the Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) to collect waste on the highways, from industrial/ commercial areas, markets, hospitals to name a few; in collaboration with the registered PSP under the agency (Fajana, 2010). This initiative of involving the private sector in waste disposal has been effective in the elimination of waste in Lagos State.

During the past administration of Governor Raji Fashola, the sanitation of Lagos State was on the upward trajectory.

However, there were some challenges in refuse disposal during the later part of the administration of Governor Akinwunmi Ambode as the major streets and roads in Lagos were littered with refuse unattended to by LAWMA for weeks or months (Fajana, 2010). It is the hope of the authors, that this current administration of Governor Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu would make a significant difference to surpass the achievement of Governor Babatunde Raji Fashola in this regard.

Figure 4 depicts the heaps of refuse indiscriminately dumped along major highways and streets in Lagos State which are sorry sights to behold. The need for massive orientation and awareness programmes to warn residents of the dangers posed by this act is highly imperative.

Figure 4: Heaps of Indiscriminate Refuse Along Lagos Streets



Source: Agunbiade & Olajide, (2016).

Methods

The authors adopted the historical research method/approach and a systematic review of relevant literature as well as archival documents. The paper focused on secondary sources of data. The justification for using secondary data is that they are verifiable, cheaper than the primary data and most suited for historical analysis (George, Shadare & Owoyemi, 2012). Archival documents on the history of Lagos State were generated from the Lagos State Records and Archives Bureau, the Lagos State Government Gazette, Nigeria (Lagos) 1887-1919 British Online Archives, Lagos State Government Official Records, Lagos State Genealogy as well as a video documentary on the History of Lagos State.

Conclusion

The rapid urbanisation of Lagos State is traceable to a number of factors. As the former capital of Nigeria as well as its geographical location as a littoral State, Lagos State has witnessed tremendous transformation and has attracted global attention as the melting pot of diverse people of different ethnic groups, cultures, and

nationalities. Lagos State has made giant strides in virtually all facets of human and societal development. The on-going Eko Atlantic City which emerged from the reclamation of land on Victoria Island is yet another issue in the development of Lagos. However, more developmental initiatives are still expected to be achieved as Lagos becomes a mega-city.

Recommendations

Arising from the foregoing, it is recommended among other things that social infrastructure should be provided to make Lagos State the choice destination for foreign direct investments and a centre for tourists' attraction. To fully achieve its mega-city status, it is recommended that the Lagos State Government should provide decent housing and low-income housing estates for Lagos residents. The provision of skill-based vocational training and employment for young people to solve the unemployment challenge and the area boys' syndrome (Agberos) is highly recommended. There should be urgent rehabilitation of bad roads and construction of new road networks to ease traffic congestions in Lagos State. The construction of light rail to ease transportation in Lagos is highly recommended. The Lagos State Government should construct more Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lanes and provide more BRT buses for mass transit. In the area of waste management, the Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) should live up to its responsibilities to ensure a cleaner and healthier environment for Lagos residents.

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