IMPERATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN MAKOKO, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Makoko settlement, like many other informal settlements across the globe is an embodiment of social inequalities, social segregation and social polarization. Over half of the population in Makoko live on less than $1.25 per day. Rapid urbanization in Lagos State, Nigeria has not been matched with sustainable urban and housing policies, as well as adequate legislation and delivery systems. This has overtime led to the proliferation of slums within the city with urban poverty at its highest. This paper aims to examine the development challenges identified in Makoko area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The paper widens and extends the study of urban development through a descriptive analysis of Makoko by engaging some critical questions that continue to confront urban development policies: how can we tackle the challenge of steering complex urban development processes in an already highly urbanizing world? The research utilizes the concept of 'development from within' as a method for analyzing the wide gap between narratives and aspirations of Makoko slum dwellers and state-sponsored urban development specialists, who assume their idea of "development" is the focal mission of a developing country. The paper reveals that Makoko area of Lagos State suffers from historic structural problems, chronic inequality of opportunities, widespread poverty, inadequate capital investment in public goods and lack of pro-poor social programmes. We argue that successive political administrators and their agencies in Lagos State and Nigeria at large will need to embrace the 'development from within' approach to development, based on negotiations and collaborations between the government, non-government agencies and citizens, helping to develop an inclusive open city; a city where people will not only have options but choices. Critically, such responses will help deal with locally existing challenges and gaps in informal settlements like Makoko.

Keywords: Makoko, challenges, social inequalities, sustainable development, development from within

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the decades most urban development initiatives in Lagos State have focused on Lagos Island, specifically Lekki, Ajah, Victoria Island and Ikoyi axis. For many parts of informal settlements in Lagos, most especially in Makoko area, there is no compelling evidence that 'development', however defined, is taking place. Increasing degradation would be a better description than 'development' for the current trends. However, in the last seven years, the Lagos State government has embarked on several model city plans as contained in the Lagos State Development Plan of (2012 – 2025). These mega projects are mainly driven by

private and foreign investments led by Chinese companies (Hoelzel, 2016; Aro, Akwuebu, Apampa, Olowu and Asaolu, 2016).

These development projects happen secretly and result into secluded neighbourhoods that are only accessible to authorized middle and upper classes, representing the opposite of a 'open city'. The 'open city' is inclusive, open socially and spatially. It is a response to United Nations Habitat's call for "transformative change towards people-centered, sustainable urban development beyond the narrow domain of economic growth." This call was also seconded by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), who in an unorthodox step have dissociated themselves from an exclusive focus on economic development in order to "share prosperity for the poorest 40 percent" in the world, in order to end poverty (Hoelzel, 2016; LSDP, 2012). About 70 percent of Lagosians live in sub-standard housing and slums and extreme poverty is on the rise (UN-Habitat, 2003).

According to the Population Reference Bureau (2016), the absolute numbers of slum settlements has grown from 21 to 100 since 1993. Makoko, Oko-Baba, Ilaje, Badia and Amukoko are the names of some of the largest and well -known slum settlements in Lagos State. Little effort has been taken by the Lagos State government to improve and upgrade these places. On the contrary, forced evictions and demolitions without relocation or compensation are still being practiced in the State (Ajayi, 2019). In Makoko area of Lagos State, there is evidence of chronic underdevelopment which have been exacerbated by chronic historic structural problems, inequality of opportunities, widespread poverty, inadequate capital investment in public goods and a lack of pro-poor social programmes.

In the light of these realities, several scholars (Ajayi, Soyinka-Airewele and Samuel, 2019; Hoelzel, 2016, Chapman and Maki, 2016; Nwanna, 2015; Folarin, 2010; Morka, 2007) assert that it is pertinent to engage some critical questions that continue to confront urban development policies; the kind of city urban professionals, development agents and administrators should aspire to and how to tackle the challenge of steering complex urban development processes in an already highly urbanizing world.

2. CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Development 'from within' is based on the concepts of 'development from below', as outlined in *Development from above or below?: the dialectics of regional planning in developing countries* (Stöhr and Taylor, 1981). It is perhaps useful to revisit some of the ideas of 'development from below' before considering 'development from within'. Although new in the context of its time, the concept had its roots in the populist ideas of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A number of books advocating broadly similar or related issues appeared about the same time. These includes: *Territory and function: the evolution of regional planning* (Friedman and Weaver, 1979), *Self-reliance, a strategy for development* (Galtung, O'Brien, and Prieswerk, 1980) and *Alternative Raumpolitik* (Naschold, 1978).

Development from below was primarily developed in a 'Third World' context and grew out of a synthesis of several different ideas which were broadly related to the emerging number of 'alternative development' strategies. It was influenced by a re-examination of populist and anarchist thought of the nineteenth century, allied to the major contributions of thinkers such as Julius Nyerere and Mahatma Ghandi. Development from below was also strongly influenced by dependency theory and by the concept of an ecologically sound development as advocated by Sacks and his colleagues. Shumacher's concept of 'small is beautiful' and appropriate technology also played a part. The concept of development from below saw development as an essentially indigenous process in which concepts of self-reliance and popular participation loom large (Taylor and Mackenzie, 1992).

Taylor and Mackenzie (1992) further assert that development from below was based on the maximum mobilization of each area's natural, human and institutional resources, with the primary objective being the satisfaction of needs of the inhabitants of that area. The dominant building block was a rural, territorially based community at the smallest scale that is efficient and effective. The strategy was basic needs oriented, labour intensive, ecologically sensitive, regional resource based, rural centred and argued for the use of appropriate rather than highest technology.

The concept has now been adopted in rhetorical terms and the slogan 'development from below' has entered the jargon of regional and development planners at all levels. However, there is a lack of specificity of what constitutes 'development from below' and a wide variety of interpretations is given by those involved in dealing with it. Some of these bear little resemblance to the original paradigm and many are in fact antithetical to the original concept.

The original concept was criticized from a number of perspectives. It was argued that there were three major

shortcomings: inadequate specification of the theoretical underpinnings of development from below; failure to specify the necessary and sufficient conditions in which development from below could emerge; and failure to add an adequate theory of explanation to what in essence was a theory of policy.

Considerable scepticism was expressed by some indigenous planners who said that development from below and concomitant ideas, such as agropolitan development, were just one more example of theories and prescriptions which are developed in the North being applied to the South. It was argued that development from below, before it could possibly be taken seriously, would have to be applied to the industrial nations of the North. There was a suspicion that, what was being suggested was a palliative, on acceptance of the inequities of the international system, rather than a device to achieve meaningful change (Taylor and Mackenzie, 1992).

Incidentally, the subsequent development of the concept has taken place almost exclusively in a European context. In the 1980s, several studies on the topic were published, including: *Regional analysis and the new international division of labour,* by Moulaert and Salinas (1983), *Economic restructuring and the territorial community,* by Muegge, Stöhr, Hesp, and Stuckey (1987), and *Endogenous development,* by Stuckey (1985). *Self-reliant development in Europe* is perhaps the most comprehensive of these and reveals some current thinking in the field. The text itself shows that interest seems to have shifted from the problems that are inherent in poverty to a means of dealing with the malaise of post-industrial society. As Brugger and Stuckey (1986) pointed out:

> The demands of economic competitiveness and economic growth conflict more and more frequently with a growing concern for self-development, social morality, and territorial and ecological integrity. We are witnessing a new longing, a longing which reveals a shift in values: from functional goals to territorial life space, from material gains to emotional and spiritual needs, from one-sided intellectual training to meet the demands of the computer age to questions about human life and the natural environment. The revolt of youth, the peace movement, concern for health, natural foods and alternative medicine, the continued drive for ecological sanity – despite rising unemployment – are all examples of a new interest in the concept of self-reliance or development from below (Brugger and Stuckey, 1986, p. 1).

New terms such as 'endogenous development' have been coined and new meanings given to others. Friedmann (1986), for example, defines self-reliance as a form of radical social praxis. He argues: 'A self-reliant society is an inclusive, non-hierarchical society that stresses co-operation over competition, harmony with nature over exploitation, and social needs over unlimited personal desire. It represents the one best chance for the survival of the human race' (Friedmann, 1986, p. 211).

Components of Development from Within

a. Participation

Participation is a key component of 'development from within'. It is a concept that has been written about extensively. Oakley and Marsden (1984) and Goulet (1989), all provide a useful overview of some of the main issues. According to Goulet (1989), participation is defined as 'the organised efforts to increase control over resources and groups, including movements hitherto excluded from such control'. Goulet argues that there are many kinds of participation and suggests a fourfold typology classifying participation in terms of:

(i)   participation as a goal or as a means;

(ii) the scope of the arena in which participation operates;

(iii) the originating agent of the participation;

(iv) the moment at which participation is introduced.

This typology provides a useful framework for consideration of the role of participation as envisaged in development from within. Participation is seen as both a goal and a means; it operates primarily at the local community level in the first instance. It is not induced from above but is generated from below by the populace itself; it can also be generated by the catalytic action of some external third agent.

b. Territoriality

A second major component of 'development from within' is that, it is a territorial concept. This is seen as being quite different from a spatial concept. Gore (1984) argues that regional development 'theory' has been plagued by what he calls the incomplete relational concept of space. Territory is defined here to include

place and the social relations and power interactions which take place within that bounded space. Place has real meaning to most African peoples and it goes well beyond limited economic concepts such as ownership of the means of production. Attachment to place remains, despite physical separation over both time and space.

Territory, as defined for the purposes of development from within by McCall (1988) also includes the social relationships of the community inhabiting the physical space. Rural communities are far from homogenous entities; there are many different actors involved and the tensions and cleavages which exist need to be explicitly considered. Development from within must recognize and consider the realities of rural society as opposed to the mythology and must also accept that the community is a dynamic and changing entity in many cases.

According to Songsore (1983) development from within argues for maximum utilization of the resources of a territory primarily for the satisfaction of the inhabitants of that territory. This includes both physical and human resources of the local community. It is true that many communities are poor in both absolute and relative terms. But it is also true that in many local communities, there are resources which remain underutilized or unutilized.

Taylor and Mackenzie (1992) also opined that 'development from within' is a self-reliant concept, although it is not an autarchic concept. Relationships with the State, and possibly involvement with third parties such as non-government organizations, are an important consideration for development from within. Selective spatial closure, as described in the original concept of development from below, is still an option for development from within but only in very exceptional circumstances.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used both probabilistic and non-probabilistic approaches. The cluster sampling of residents of Makoko area is the probabilistic approach. On the other hand, purposive sampling of selected respondents is the non-probabilistic approach. In order to get a sample size that is representative of the study population (Bhattacherjee, 2012), 1000 copies of questionnaire were administered in Makoko area of Lagos State among the residents in 2017. Two research assistants worked with the researcher to administer the questionnaire. Out of the 1000 copies administered, 963 of them were properly filled and collated. In addition, 16 in-depth interviews were conducted among key government and non-government stakeholders. These two sampling techniques allowed for the acquisition of in-depth information on the imperatives for sustainable development in Makoko, Lagos State, Nigeria.

4. RESULTS

Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by perception of the Government's Renovation Plan

Perception	Percentage (%)
Opportunity to move to a better place	9.4
Government is not serious	4.5
The renovation will render me homeless	85.4
It is bad because I have nowhere to go	0.5
Other	0.3
Total	100%
n	963

Table 2: Percentage distribution of what respondents would do if the government employs force to reject them

What would be done	Percentage (%)
I will move out	66.7
I will not move unless they kill me	19.0
I will go to court to stop it	0.4
I don't know what I will do	7.0
Other	6.8
Total	100%
n	963

Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents by the socio-economic challenges confronting Makoko

| Challenges	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total
High population	89.9	10.1	100
Poor housing	98.4	1.6	100
Lack of security of life and property	74.9	25.1	100
Constant outbreak of diseases	88.1	19.9	100
Environmental hazards	91.8	8.2	100
Poverty	76.6	23.4	100
Hideout for hoodlums and deviants	61.6	38.4	100
Lack of basic infrastructure	99.0	1.0	100
Harassment and social exclusion	86.0	4.0	100
Other	89.4	10.6	100

*Respondents indicated multiple challenges

Table 4: Percentage distribution of respondents by whether they would welcome the renovation and transformation of Makoko by Lagos State Government

Response		Percentage (%)
	Yes	6.6
	No	92.0
	I can't say	1.4
Total		100%
n		963

Table 5: Percentage distribution of respondents by the perceived effect of renovation and transformation of Makoko on the residents

Effects		Percentage (%)
	Displacement and homelessness	89.82
	Relocation	6.96
	Loss of means of livelihood	3.22
Total		100%
n		963
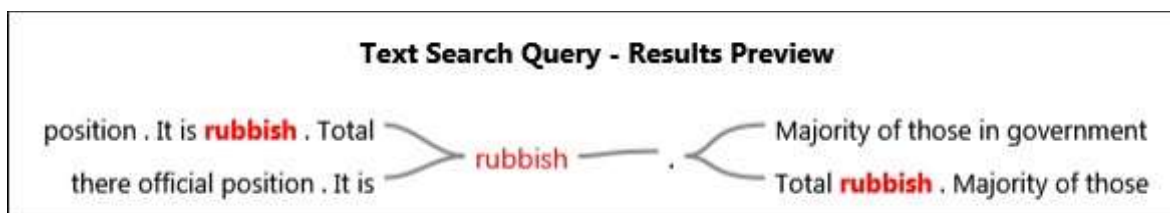
Fig. 1: An Assessment of Lagos State Government's developmental policies in Makoko

4.1 Discussion of Findings

Table 1 shows the perception of respondents about the planned renovation and transformation (gentrification) of Makoko by the Lagos State Government. In their responses, 85.4% of the respondents perceived such plan to renovate and transform (gentrify) the area as an attempt to render them homeless. Apart from this group, 9.4% of them perceived the transformation as good because it would be an opportunity to move to a better area and 4.5% of them considered it as just a threat because the government

could not be serious. This result suggests that Makoko slum provides accommodation for about 200,000 vulnerable residents of Lagos State. This squatter settlement provides shelter for thousands of the poorest city dwellers in Lagos metropolis.

In Table 2, the respondents were asked what they would do if the eviction notice is carried out forcibly and their responses show that 66.7% would move out, 19% would not move unless they were killed. However, 7% of the respondents did not know what to do if it happened and 0.4% said they would go to court. This shows that previous experience (destruction of lives and properties) has taught most of the residents to be cautious while facing a forceful eviction process by peacefully moving out or seeking intervention, as they will be at the losing end because they lack the capacity to confront government mercenaries and machineries.

In Table 3, the respondents were asked to state the main challenges confronting them in Makoko. In the responses given, respondents identified multiple challenges, but three of them stood out: Lack of basic infrastructure (99%), Poor housing (98.4%) and Environmental hazards (91.8%). This result only goes to confirm already established facts, as Makoko slum is an eyesore in an emerging mega city like Lagos. It is a settlement where most inhabitants live in unhygienic and blighted conditions.

In Table 4, the respondents were asked if they would welcome the renovation and transformation (gentrification) of Makoko by the Lagos State Government and the responses show that 92% of them would not welcome the development. Only 6.6% would welcome it. This result confirms scholarly opinions that gentrification has tragically become so deeply intertwined with popular and political visions of development that it negates citizen opposition to the forced removals of the urban poor.

In Table 5, the perceived effect of renovation and transformation (gentrification) of Makoko by the Lagos State Government is presented. The Table and figure show that the attempt to renovate and transform Makoko would lead to displacement and homelessness (89.82%) or relocation (6.96%) or loss of means of livelihood (3.22%). As stated earlier, this result further confirms that Makoko settlement provides shelter for thousands of the poorest city dwellers in Lagos metropolis; they rummage there because they feel they can make a meagre living through fishing, sand mining activities and petty trading. If the residents of Makoko were to be forcibly evicted, affected households would be reluctant to relocate due to the perceived socio-economic effects it poses on their livelihoods, social networks and culture.

Fig. 1 shows the perceived assessment of the Lagos State government's development policies in Makoko. From the diagram, it is evident that the development plan(s), if any, was perceived to be negative and anti-poor, as it was referred to as "rubbish". In fact, the word rubbish was central to the response of most of the interviewees.

The result suggests that there are no clear-cut pro-poor developmental policies and strategies by the Lagos State government to develop Makoko settlement in line with the fourth research question. Hence, the scepticism that the Lagos State government is only interested in Makoko community with the sole mission of gentrifying (mega city vision) the prime location for high profits.

5. CONCLUSION

Makoko settlement, like many other informal settlements across the globe is an embodiment of social inequalities, social segregation and social polarization. Over half of the population in Makoko live on less than $1.25 per day. Rapid urbanization in Lagos State, Nigeria has not been matched with sustainable urban and housing policies, as well as adequate legislation and delivery systems. This has overtime led to the proliferation of slums within the city with urban poverty at its highest.

Rather than undertake responsibility for the welfare of residents of these settlements, the government's strategy of state development is to eliminate informal settlements entirely and focus on beautification and gentrification of those areas (Ajayi, 2019; Ajayi, Soyinka-Airewele and Samuel, 2019; Hoelzel, 2016; Chapman and Maki, 2016; Nwanna, 2015; Watson, 2013; Folarin, 2010; Morka, 2007).

Successive political administrators and their agencies in Lagos State and Nigeria at large will need to embrace the 'development from within' approach to development, based on negotiations and collaborations between the government, non-government agencies and citizens, helping to develop an inclusive open city; a city where people will not only have options but choices. Critically, such responses will help deal with locally existing challenges and gaps in informal settlements like Makoko.

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