

Review

Cities, theories and reality

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How can productive cities be created in the face of economic, social, political and environmental mishaps in planning, management and development process? How can cities become more enjoyable, functional and innovative using city management and development theories? Theoretically the paper examines the importance of cities and impact of urbanization and globalization towards competitiveness of cities. The paper argues that; despite the huge benefits accrued to cities via globalization, most developing cities are suffering from intolerably high levels of poor infrastructure and governance. The interlinks between an array of theories and city development and management forms the focus of the paper. The paper makes its contribution by: examining and discussing the theoretical undertones for sustainable cities and concluded with a set of recommendations on what needs to be done to achieve sustainable city development and management.

Key words: Cities, theories, globalization, sustainability, poverty, governance

INTRODUCTION

Cities are focal points in an economy where people come together primarily to exchange goods and interact. They are “drivers” of societal development, not simply bricks or mortar; they are usually places of dreams, nostalgia and imaginations. However, alarming growth of urban population and poor response of government are a factor that partly contributes to high rate of physical development mishap in cities (IFRI, 2002; Helaakoshi et al., 2001; Egunjobi, 1999). Despite opportunities in cities, developing cities over the years are experiencing increasing rate of urban infrastructural inefficiency.

Interestingly, scholars perceive cities in its various manifestations as catalyst to development in the country. This paper theoretically explored the importance of cities in global context and establishes the fact that theories are foundation blocks for cities to be productive and sustained. In explaining the connectivity between cities and theories, (Figure 1) particular emphasis is given to state of infrastructural services, economic-poverty, globalization, sustainability and governance. This framework has been adopted over the years to examine the functionality and efficiency of cities. For instance, the Centre for local

Government, Sydney in his report (2005) used competitiveness, good governance and bank ability of cities as framework for city development strategies. Stem on this framework, the paper theoretically examined the interplay between cities and salient theories of city management and development to explore the effectiveness of Lagos- an important city in developing countries- Nigeria.

It had been sounded over time that, no where in West Africa is the rate of urbanization in the last few years as unprecedented as the city of Lagos (Braimoh et al., 2007; Neuwirth, 2007; Agbola, 2007). This implies that the city has a persistent rate of growth with a resultant effect on the carrying capacity and ecological footprint of the city. Apart from being the economic focal point of Nigeria, the population is heterogeneous with most parts of the nation being represented. Also, despite the relocation of the Nigerian Federal Capital to Abuja, Lagos still remains strongly the commercial capital and nerve centre of Nigeria (World Bank, 2005). More interestingly, it harbours almost all the headquarters of multinational companies in the country. This partly gives the city the opportunity to tap from capital and social network in the global arena.

Based on this assertions and a host of others, this paper theoretically examined why Lagos, like many developing cities are bogging down from development ladder. More specifically, the aim is to point to the fact that, func-

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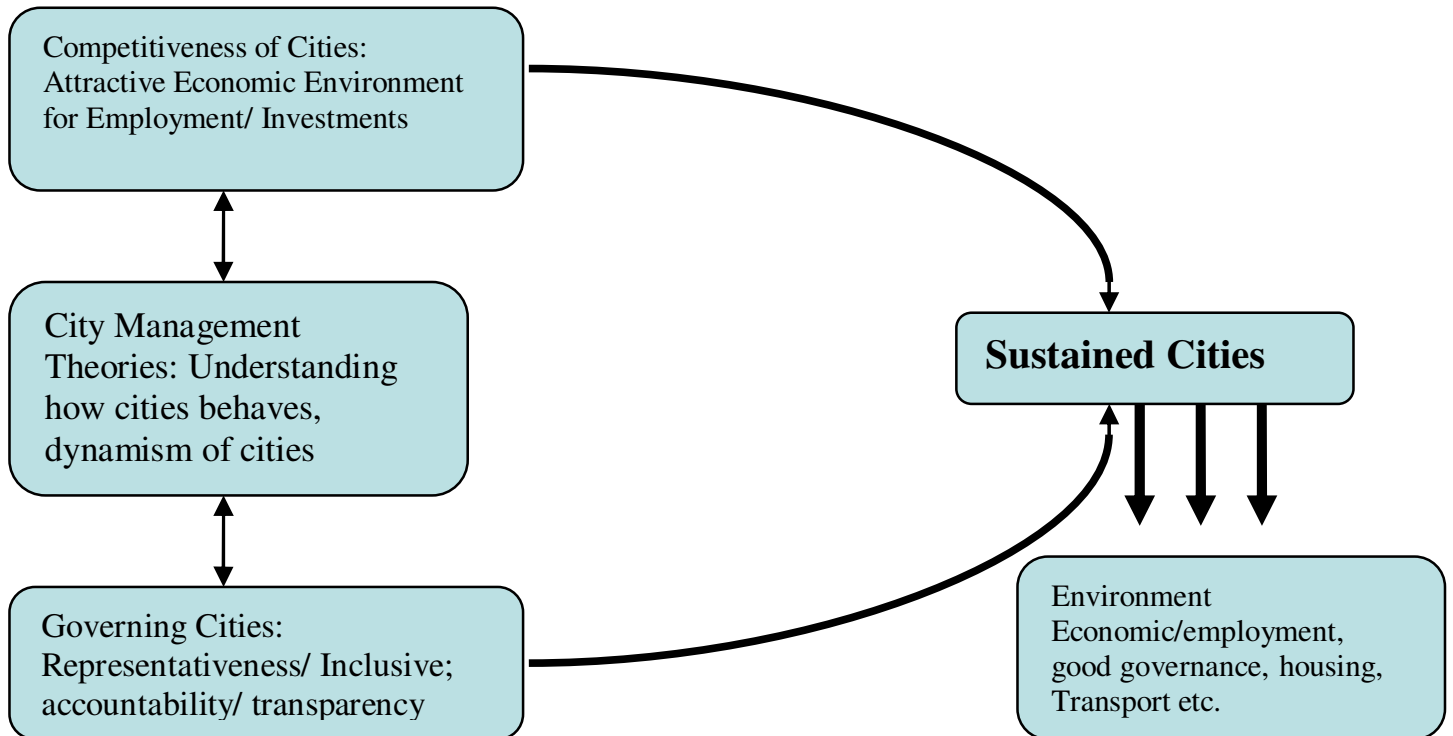


Figure 1. Analytical framework: Cities, theories and reality- the interplay.

tionality and sustainability of cities relies on effective adoption of city development and management theories. It is worth mentioning that city management theories made it clear that, environment, housing, transportation, water, health, economic, waste management, city administration, security, education, and a host of other issues in cities cannot be handled in isolation of the others. Thus, good networking as revealed in Figure 1; particularly between these sectors must be allowed or considered in city governance or administration. This view forms the tenet of this paper as revealed in the framework adopted by the Centre for local Government, Sydney in his report (2005) and World Bank, 2005 (Figure 1). Thus, this introductory section is followed by discussions on competitiveness of cities. We argue that competitiveness of cities centres around buoyant and broad-based growth of employment and investment opportunities. The third section, seeks to emphasise the need for inclusion and participation of different stakeholders in cities developmental activities. It also calls for transparency and accountability of city government towards management and development of cities. This section is closely followed by the conclusive part of the paper that emphasised the lagging behind of most developing countries in development race; which is due to ineffective city management. It therefore calls for re-establishment of government legitimacy, rebuilding city management institutions and re-tooling process of governance towards solving city problems and making cities to be productive.

DOES COMPETITIVENESS OF CITIES MATTERS?

Cities play increasing roles in infrastructural, economic change, poverty reduction and environmental development. The position of cities in the global economy varies as their window of opportunities for development. In developed countries for example, there are cities offering good networks and benefits to the rest of the world. Infrastructural development however, remains the life-wire of activity system of cities. Thus, adequate infrastructure and efficient city management helps to broaden the perspective of city dwellers and foreign investors; it enhances the quality of life of individual as well as the city as a whole. It is worth noting that, improved urban infrastructure as well as effective delivery of public services is a necessary element in alleviating poverty in developing world and developed countries. Improved accessibility to employment, education, health, and other public services is also important for the welfare of the people and the city itself (Haider et al., 2004).

It should be mentioned that, with globalization trend and increasing urbanization, cities in recent time are facing alarming competitions as centers for development and platform for multi-national interactions (Rondinelli et al., 1998; Cohen, 2004). This implies that development of cities is increasingly challenged by globalization processes. In other words, achievement of knowledge-based and technology driven economy, socio-demographical changes, increasing mobility of factors of

production have resulted to an accumulation of social and environmental problems (Okude et al., 2006; Mberu, 2005; Odufuwa, 2006, 2007). Pointing to the need for cities to be competitive, scholars over the years emphasized that, urban competition have become the leading principle that determines the future of urban system in developed and developing cities like Lagos (Brochie et al., 1995; Kresl, 1995; Berg et al., 2004). Based on this fact, it can rightly be deduced that developing cities have not adequately and effectively responded to the opportunity that comes with globalization as well as urbanization. For instance most cities in Nigeria, particularly Lagos is often affected by inconsistent supranational policy, particularly in the economic and political areas. Good cases of note are the prevailing battle between Lagos state and the Federal government on the issue of council creation and the Academic Union of Nigerian University strike. Stem on this, the governor of Lagos recently ascertains the fact that the Federal system of government is faulty, according to him "the Federal Government has failed to recognize the autonomy of states as federating units, competent to take decisions on their own" (Nigerian Tribune, August 8, 2009). Interestingly, it was made clear by the governor that, part of the activities of the Federal government is affecting the progress of most states.

Fortunately, globalization has in recent time been enhanced through the introduction of more efficient means of communication. It should be sounded that, a competitive city is one with relatively high per capita incomes or employment. According to Turok et al. (2004), the theory of competitiveness covers three important determinants of economic development; these include; trading-ability of local firms to sell their products in contested external markets; productivity- value of products and production efficiency; and utilization of local human, capital and natural resources. They argued further that, without competitive economic, cities may become over-dependent on government transfers and income recycled from products or services for local consumption, thereby risking long-term stagnation. The point worth noting is that, competition of city should not be limited to a single sector or variable; this stem on the fact that, city competitiveness is a function of the complex interrelationships between all sectors of the city. Thus, if city focus on one sector or determinant, it risks representing the determinants of place prosperity too narrowly.

Over the years globalization has become a fashionable concept in scholarly discourses, core dictum in the prescriptions of management gurus and catch phrase for journalists and politicians. This implies that, globalization has become a commonly used word world-wide. Central to discussions on globalization; is the fact that, we live in an era in which the greater part of social life is unceasingly determined by global processes which invariably erodes national cultures, national economies, national borders and state of sovereignty (FAO, 2004). Of great importance in this regard is that, globalization is driven by

two main factors; one involves technological advances that have lowered the costs of transportation, communication and computation. The other factor has to do with increasing liberalization of trade and capital markets (FAO, 2004). Globalization can thus be viewed as the growing interdependence of countries resulting from the increasing integration of trade, finance, people and idea in one global market place (Hammonda, 2000). Empirical evidences suggest that; globalization has significantly boosted economic growth in East Asian economies such as Hong Kong (China), the Republic of Korea and Singapore (IIED, 2002), but surprisingly, not all developing countries are equally in a position to benefit from it.

Notably, Lagos has not fully benefits from the introduction of an improved information and communication system in the global arena; Odufuwa, (2007); though the introduction of GSM has resulted into high demands on telecommunication facilities, skilled and unskilled labour in the city; but lots still needs to be done in regards to management or city governance towards reality of the dreams of the city. For instance, the gross inadequate supply of electricity stands as a bottleneck to effective development of the information and communication systems. For many, globalization is not new in city development and management issue; it is however, more than a rising density of economic integration between countries and economies (Wade, 2003); but also points to the influence of new forms of non-territorial economic and political organization (Rosenau, 1997) with the emergence of inter-regional networks and systems of exchange and interaction (Castell, 1996). Although, the globalization trend and rate of urbanization is increasing in developing countries, but; it is displeasing to note that, thousands of developing cities have not adequately managed the process of urbanization and globalization towards harnessing the benefits of various sectors, compared to cities in developed world, where notable transformations of sectors have being achieved. In other words most cities in developing countries lag far behind in the transformation. This is obvious by the inability of most urban dwellers to access sustainable means of livelihoods (Helaakoski et al., 2001; Haider et al., 2004; World Bank, 1990, 2002; SMILE, 2005; Odufuwa, 2006). They however adopt various coping strategies with aim of reaping the benefits of cities. For instance, they rely on informal public transport and most often walking is adopted for trips that require motorized transport. This partly establishes the fact that poverty exist among most city dwellers.

A paradigm in the economic pattern was witnessed in Lagos courtesy of globalization. However, globalization is the re-orientation in business life and continuous clustering of the city. Berg et al. (2004), noted that competition implies that cities will concentrate more on their core competencies; that is, concentration on specialization. Based on this, tourism in Lagos is increasingly becoming an attractive or magnetic force that is beckon-

ing migrants from various areas of the world. Despite this opportunity, the city is yet to gain or tap from the wealth of other notable cities trading with it e.g. Asian cities, China, Singapore etc. Above all, globalization is yet to reinforce the imperative of knowledge and economic potential in the city. Also, Lagos has not fully gotten to the maturity stage in terms of city life cycle compared with other notable developed cities. In other words, the comparative advantages of the city in terms of city competitiveness have not been efficiently and effectively harnessed.

In most developing cities, economic and occupational advantages are unevenly distributed; for instance in Lagos about two third of the population lives below the poverty line (Osinubi, 2003). Studies conducted by scholars over the years shows that, a clear relationship exist between poverty level and access to and control over resources and participation in policy or decisions making process (Kessides, 2006; Booth et al., 2000; World Bank, 2002; Nayar, 2003; Green, 1991). For instance, informal sector have come to stay in most cities as a result of rural-urban migration and unfriendly or rigid governmental regulations or policy, as well as harsh economic situation. It is however; disgusting to note that, the environmental conditions associated with informal sector activities in cities over the years constitute persistent threat to the healthy city and urban livelihoods. Informal activities are often associated with pollution-intensive activities, non-agricultural in nature, small and highly dispersed and more importantly, they are difficult to control. As urban poverty deepened in developing cities, the conditions of most notable road network and streets became unbearable for innocent city dwellers. This is traceable to the unfriendly informal activities by various organizations or groups. For instance, prevalent urban poverty coupled with poor security and regulations have led to homeless youth gangs known as "area boys" that often threaten the general livelihood of the people in most developing cities.

It is pertinent to say that, polarization of socio-economic activities is partly responsible for the inadequacy in the housing sector of the city. Apart from playing host to vast numbers of industrial establishments and economic activities, the rural-urban migrations have "eaten" up the beautiful fabrics of the city. In other words, rural-urban migrations have a negative impact on Lagos. This can be justified when the carrying capacity of the city is effectively examined. As rightly stated by Sule (1990) in his discussion on the slum clearance in Lagos, "to be in Lagos is like an achievement by itself to migrants". This however implies that, most migrants are anxious to move to the city without adequately thinking of what the city itself have in stock for them and more importantly the carrying capacity of the city. In other words, rapid population growth has a notable relationship with the housing situation and condition of the city. More importantly, inadequate housing supply and policy is leading to the

increasing numbers of slums and infrastructural decay of the city. Agbola et al. (2007), identified about 42% slums areas in the city of Lagos. This implies that, most settlements in the city lack adequate, efficient basic infrastructural facilities. For instance, Ajegunle, a notable slum in Nigeria with a population of about 345, 634 (NPC, 2006); with a multi-ethnic population characteristics is still battling to secure adequate infrastructural facilities. Though, the slum areas like the "Jungle-city"- Ajegunle, have prominent and talented individuals, but the vast majority of the people are engaged in different informal activities. This is not amazing, since these areas are not supply with infrastructural facilities, dominated by poor immigrants and characterized by large numbers of informal activities.

Theoretically, housing arrangements in the city reflects segregation of different social classes or social categories. For instance, upper-class group of people live in almost exclusively luxury apartments located in separate estates or 'reservations' in the city; e.g. Ikeja, Ilupeju, Ikoyi and Victoria Island. The long term result of poor or uncomfortable urban livelihoods would result in local housing situations that are no longer able to sustain human populations to any degree. Thus, if the situation is not curtailed, it will result to declining health and general standards of living. Demographic statistics for Lagos reveal a literacy rate of about 82%, more than 50% economically active, 60% infant mortality rate, total fertility rate of 5.4%, mean age at child-bearing about 35.6% and 61.5 years life expectancy (FOS, 2005). Theoretically, sustainability is concern with the ability to effectively and efficiently utilize present resources without jeopardizing the needs of the future generations. This sounds interesting, but surprisingly, the present generation in the city of Lagos is yet to be satisfied with the available resources. The questions based on this shortcomings centers around, Where, When, Who and How are the resources of this city been used before now and presently? Ability to provide answers to these pressing questions will tell the past, present and future of the city of Lagos. Thus, inability of the city to satisfy the general livelihoods of the people can be traced to the shortcomings of the past governments and unsustainable activities of the past generations.

Tapping from the idea of Chaos theory in Mathematics; it can rightly be said that, the world is no longer predictable. Thus, cities are open, non-linear dynamic system with numerous internal and external connections. Based on this; problems of cities cannot be solved by linear urban management and development strategies. Pratap (2001) and Mbara (2002) emphasized that innovative means of planning that deal with complexities and dynamic nature of cities are required. It is worth noting that, previous rationalistic, mechanistic and technocratic approaches must be replaced by facilitative, participative, and flexible approaches emphasizing guiding principles rather than strict rules. Lack of these approaches is partly

responsible for alarming rate of degrading and crumbling infrastructural facilities in most developing cities. A click on theoretical analysis of infrastructures reveals that, infrastructure interacts with the economy through a multiple and complex process (Adenikinju, 2003). This implies that, city requires efficient and effective infrastructural facilities for adequate economic activities and general city development. More importantly, city livelihoods cannot be separated from infrastructural facilities. In Nigeria, provision of infrastructural facilities is the responsibilities of the government. This is based on the required capital investment or set-up cost, common goods and stabilization of pricing structure. Over the years, the public sector have failed to provide the basic infrastructure in the city and this resultantly affect the economic, health, environment, public developmental activities and general wellbeing of the populace. For instance, inadequate electricity supply have forced most households, companies to use generating sets, which on the long run contributes to air and noise pollution, thus leading to health hazards in most cities. More carbon-monoxide was discharged into the environment, thus polluting and reducing life span of people, particularly the poor. High level of motorization, for instance the use of poor public transport vehicles and un-road worthy second-hand use vehicles imported from European countries. These situations corroborate with the rhythm of the late Nigerian Afro beat “Fela” in the late 70s and early 80s; he emphasized the poor state of Nigerian infrastructural facilities by stating that “99% of Nigerians are suffering and smiling” using access to basic infrastructural facilities like water, electricity, transport (private and public) as a yardstick. Basically, challenges facing developing cities like Lagos; centre on, institutions, technical, social and financial constraint. For instance, inadequate resources both human and capital, low tariffs and poor financial sustainability are grossly biting the economic fortunes of the city. Oluba (2008), TUGI (2002) and Shiva (2003) explained that, satisfactory provision of basic structures and facilities that support positive economic performance requires massive financial commitments, ability to work around the difficulty in benefit-split as well as handle the attendant high externalities. It can rightly be said that, public infrastructure touches on a wide spectrum of basic amenities which enhance the capacity of economic agents to conveniently engage in productive activities with less stress. The absence of these amenities or their up-optimal provision can equally result in complete seizure of production at economic unit levels.

RE-TOOLING THE WHEEL OF CITIES

Interestingly, the share of people living in poverty is larger in Africa than any other region in the world (UNICEF, 2006; Kessides, 2006; Booth et al., 2000). Africa is the only part of the world where the number of the urban poor

is increasing (World Bank, 1994). For instance, Mekonnen (1994) emphasized that, 52% of Sub-Sahara Africa’s population was poor in 1985 and this rise to 63% in 1990. Presently, more than 63.5% of Africa’s populations are poor (UNICEF, 2006; World Bank 2001). Based on these statistics, it is not very surprising that most poor people are found in cities of developing countries. Nigeria for instance has 48% urbanized population as at 2005 (UNICEF, 2006); while, more than 42.3% of urban population in the country are living below the United State standard poverty level measure. Therefore, considering the urban poor in cities is essential to ensure that urban services are equitable, affordable and provides access to resources and opportunities required for sustainable livelihoods and development.

The social and economic functionality of city depends on the process of governance. In the last one and half decades, governance has come into centre of attention. Enyedi (2002), noted that; government covers relations among the organizations of the governments (local government, national government agencies and those of local civil society (From theoretical perspective, there is connectivity with all sectors of the city and thus the sustainability of the city is a question of not only good governance, but a question of how connected is the various sectors in the city (URC, 2001). In other words, the city operates like a system; thus a malfunctioning part, may affect the efficiency of the city. The input and output analysis of the city is very important; over the years, government has failed to balance these situations in Lagos (World Bank, 1990, 1993). Nigeria is viewed as one of the poorest countries in the world; justified partly by inefficient and poor management of public sectors (Dibie et al., 2002). In her efforts at getting out of this hook, several public management policies were articulated with a view to promoting economic growth and development. These policies and approaches have been dynamic and categorized into three phases (i) fixed medium-term National Development Plan, (ii) Policy-based economic management strategy and (iii) the three-tier planning framework. The overriding management development objective of these policies is the promotion of efficient and effective delivery of public sector and development of the country. These were to be achieved through strengthening of the productive, institutional and manageability capacity.

Government in most developing cities has often failed to recognize this fact, thus; over-concentration on one sector, affects the other. Government often takes decision without involving the affected people; they are not transparent and always failed to account for what has been done. They hardly provide answers to where, what and how what goes where. More partnerships among other cities in the country and international are not appropriately harnessed. Public, private, voluntary and community based developmental initiative are not often given adequate consideration. Pertinently, decentralization,

transparency, accountability and participation are essential to the attainment of sustainable livelihoods in the city.

CONCLUSION

It is instructive to note that, there is need to re-establish governmental legitimacy and re-build institutions as well as revisit the process of governance towards solving the problem faced by city dwellers. A new paradigm emerging around the world, emphasize the need for governments not to retain direct control over planning, development and management of cities; this implies that, government should act as enablers: creating legislative and administrative frameworks which a wide range of actors: private sector firms and community organizations can follow and operate without jeopardizing the livelihood of others. Equally, governments should be transparent and brings together all stakeholders in the process of initiating, formulation and implementation of policies. In other words, the 'Top-bottom' policy formulation and implementation approach of government need to be re-tooled. More importantly, decentralization of power, authority, and responsibility among institutions can enhanced local participation and encourage democratic practices. Osmani (2001) and UN-Habitat (2004) posited that, decentralization can improve the effectiveness of public policy implementation and produce policies and programmes that are both more efficient and more responsive to local preferences and needs. Basically, decentralization work best when it is inclusive – that is; when authorities or actors ask about and responds to community needs and interests; and when community members, the media, and NGOs participate in decision making. This will go a long way to bring sustainable development, justice, equity, fairness, transparency, efficiency, peace and also make cities more livable.

Interestingly, Lagos is geographically networked among cities in the global arena; this enhances international trade opportunity of the city. Though, the city is yet to attain a full developmental stage, but globalization trend in recent time is putting the city in a more competitive direction. However, there is need for efficient and effective delivery of basic infrastructural facilities. This will partly serve as an attractive factor; and as well improve the productivity levels of the city. It should be noted that, provision of effective and efficient services in developing cities will go a long way to impact positively on the urban economy and general livelihood of the people. Stemmed on the fact that government over time have not being able to provide an adequate basic infrastructure, which is grossly affecting all sectors (health, education, transport, agriculture, economy; etc.) of the city; there is need for strategic involvement of stakeholders as earlier mentioned in the management policies and strategies of all sectors. This will progressively drive developing cities of the world towards achieving the basic goals of sustainability and sustainable city.

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