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Lagos: the 'villagized' city

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Abstract

This work examines some historical processes that have resulted in making Lagos hitherto the most urbanized center in Nigeria, a 'villagized' city. This work demonstrates how the city was made by people and also how the activities of people have been a major threat to the city. In addition, the paper has shown that what is striking to a visitor to Lagos is the site of a city marked by filthiness and degradation with slums and squatter settlements. This situation with its evident health hazards are now monumental that they are almost out of control. These problems are a result of fundamental neglect and poverty of urban governance. The collapse of critical public infrastructure such as roads, water, sewage and drainage systems, power supply and importantly, housing, essential for households and business concerns, increasingly characterize Lagos metropolis, thus making it a villagized city.

Introduction

For much of the growth and development of mankind cities and towns are important factors. Beyond being homes and roots for many people there is something somewhat spiritual about cities, the roots of what could be found in the primordial yearnings for space that is natural to every human being. Nonetheless, there is today much doubt about the livability, viability or otherwise of cities particularly in African countries. The livability and viability of cities and towns are dependent on a combination of factors that include maintenance of the city environment and effective urban governance. The lack of this culture, over time created a process of decay. Reflecting on the above development, Abadoumalig (September 2001, p. 16) noted that except for Johannesburg in South Africa:

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African cities are nowhere close to being world cities. Rather, they are largely sites of intensifying and broadening impoverishment and rampant informality operating on highly insubstantial economic platforms through which it is difficult to discern any sense of long term viability.

It has been estimated that the annual urban growth rate is highest in sub-Saharan Africa with 4.58 percent. In North Africa, it is 2.48 percent, while in developed world it is 0.75 percent. Currently, Africa is the least urbanized in the world with 39.7 percent of its population living in cities by 2005. By 2030 this percentage growth would rise to 53.5, although a little lower than Asia whose percentage growth of urban dwellers stood at 39.9 by 2005 and will rise to 54.5 by 2030 (The Guardian, July 2, 2007, p. 43). Furthermore, it has been estimated that of the population of city dwellers in the world totaling about 3.17 billion by 2005, almost one-third of them live in absolute squalor in slums, and the concentration of slum dwellers is highest in African cities, where 187 million people are living in shanty settlements. Ethiopia and Chad are said to have the highest concentration. 99.4 percent of their urban dwellers live in slums (Vanguard, September 18, 2006, p. 42; The Guardian, July 2, 2007, p. 43).

In industrialized economies, cities are continuously growing and developing yet at the same time, due to the introduction of modern means of communication they continue to shrink. In addition, because of more effective urban governance and management of available resources the cities are constantly enlivened. The reverse is the case with third world countries such as Nigeria where the cumulative effects of years of bad governance has resulted in rapid decay of most of the cities and the impoverishment of the urban poor, who are forced to resort to illegal measures for their housing and sundry human settlements in order to survive. Pockets of slum and squatter settlements have emerged with obvious implication on the attractiveness and habitability of these cities.

This work focuses on how Lagos, a beautiful and charming city in Southwestern Nigeria, has gradually become a villagized city. The article aims to raise the consciousness of various stakeholders in the metropolis on issues of human settlement and human values, because Nigeria has been identified as having some of the worst slums in the world (Emordi March 2005, pp.73-75). This categorization uses indicators such as poverty, literacy levels, and the behaviour of miscreants who distort the peace of the city. Majority of the city dwellers are poor and live in environments where there are no social amenities and in huts constructed on swampy grounds that are unfit for any other purpose.

An important outcome of this study is to highlight lessons that could be learnt by emerging cities from the processes of urbanization in relation to urban management and human habitations. It is hoped that the article will arouse serious interest in improving critical public infrastructure and social amenities in the city of Lagos, Nigeria's main gateway to other parts of the world.

The Development of Lagos into an Urban Centre

The modern transformation of cities in Africa owes its growth and development largely to European colonial urban policies aimed at building markets and colonial administrative centers. These policies later broadened to make cities places of social change, receptacles for

talents and manpower, and places of investment (Bardo and Hartman 1982, pp., 343 and 350). The policies gave rise to rapid urbanization, which not only resulted in the rural-urban drift, but also brought about changes in the everyday lives of residents in the city. With these changes came improved communication system such as roads and sea and airport facilities. All these elevated Lagos to a pre-eminent position in the nation's economy and politics. There is no comparable city in Nigeria, which has been so advantageously positioned as Lagos in being the joint termini of major land and sea as well as air routes. Such a position of Lagos attracted other modern urban functions, and a growing and relatively affluent population which formed the main consumer market when the processes of industrial development began. This in addition to the sheer magnitude of the size of the city puts Lagos in a class of its own and compounded many of its problems (Mobogunje 1968, p. 239; Baker 1974, p. 31; Barnes 1986, pp. 11-15).

Today Lagos stands as the commercial and financial center of Nigeria, a major educational centre a one-time best Nigerian city, best supplied with urban infrastructure such as potable water, roads and electricity, and employment opportunities. All these have transformed the city into a major focus of the urbanization processes in the country. Lagos was the capital of Nigeria up to 1991, when the political power was moved to Abuja for obvious political, economic and social reasons such as the strategic location of the Abuja, the over-crowding nature of Lagos as well as the crisis of congestions arising from its numerous economic, commercial and industrial outposts, which were interfering with the smooth running of the day-to-day business of the federal government. It was also harbouring Ikeja, the seat of the capital of Lagos State, in addition to its status as the headquarters of Nigeria (Immerwahr 13 March 2004; Emordi March 2005, p. 61).

It is important to note that the original inhabitants of Lagos were the Awori fishermen and farmers, a sub-group of the Yoruba who settled first at the Isheri area from where they dispersed to other areas of the metropolis such as Iponri and Iwayi. With the coming of more immigrants, Lagos became a melting-pot of various cultures (Sada and Adegbola 1975, p. 187; Emordi March 2005, pp. 62-63). The metropolitan area of Lagos encompasses the Island of Lagos (Isale Eko), the seat of the traditional administration, Ikoyi, Victoria Island; some old but planned areas of Apapa, Ebute-Metta, Yaba, Ilupeju, Suru-lere and Ikeja, which came up with the increasing commercial activities and growth of industries; some newly planned towns and estates such as Festac Town, Satellite Town, Gowon Estate, Ipaja, Amuwo-Odofin and Anthony Village; and some old and local villages such as Mushin, Iwaya, Iponri, Maroko and Ajegunle. The former local areas have blended with the emerging city into one and they have all lost their individual identity to form what has been described as the Greater Lagos (Emordi March 2005, p. 61; Fapohunda 1975, p. 66; Baker 1974, p. 31; The Guardian, July 24, 1997, p. 11; The Guardian, October 25, 2001, p. 25). This development echoes that of London, which according to Tristram Hunt was 'a conglomeration of villages, communities and estates' (The Observer 30 November 2003, p. 24). Lagos has therefore, developed and expanded to hundreds of squares of kilometers encompassing estates, villages and metropolitan areas in one interdependent area. In 1960, Lagos was 65 square kilometers but by 1985, it had expanded up to an area of 1,140 square kilometers, thereby occupying 32% or 1/3 of the total land area of the state. Likewise, the total population which by 1963 stood at 1,135,854 and by 1991 reached 5,765,118. By 1995 the population was said to be growing at the rate of 5.8 per cent annually, which translates to an average of 300,000 persons per year in the 1980s and 1990s (Oyekanmi 1987, p. 256;

Adisa 1994, p. 142; Aina and Salau 1992, p. 8; Federal Office of Statistics 1999, p. 27; Akintola-Arikawe 1987, pp. 104-110; Adefuye, Agiri and Osuntokun 1987, p. 13).

With these rates of population growth it was further estimated that by the year 2000, the population would reach 12 million and recently, it was claimed by the state government that the population of the city stands at 17 million (The Guardian July 2, 2007, p. 45). Lagos is being propelled to become a mega city by 2015, when it may become 'a home to nearly 25 million people, rising in rank from world's 13th largest city to the third largest' (Awake! April 8, 2001, p. 3). Lagos's rapid population growth has been due a phenomenon intricately connected with African traditional culture, which places premium on the quantity rather than quality of children born to each family. This has had a telling effect on the living conditions of the people in terms of poor provision of critical public infrastructure. Such a situation has impacted the city, such as the activities of 'area boys' who are found in various parts of the metropolis and foment trouble in these areas with reckless abandon and sometimes with the connivance of community leaders. All these factors have made Lagos 'a jungle of asylum only fit for lunatics' (The Guardian July 2, 2007, p. 35; The Guardian April 24, 2003, p. 17; The Guardian November 22, 2002, p. 45; Emordi March 2005, p. 65; Vanguard October 11 2001, p. 29).

The expansion of Lagos stemmed from the lack of improvement in rural economic system. In this direction, it has been noted that the failure to undertake important land reforms and the persistence of outmoded agricultural production technology in the rural areas have been the catalyst for rural-urban migration. That failure and persistence deepened poverty in the rural area and made life unacceptable to the youths. Their decision to migrate to the city to exploit the limited opportunities in the urban areas has resulted in the transference of the rural poverty to the urban areas. If agricultural productivity were to be enhanced and rural life improved, as happened in the developed economies of the west in the 18th and 19th centuries, these efficiencies would result in fewer jobs in the rural areas. The bottom line would be rural-urban drift (The Guardian July 2, 2007, p. 35; Africa February 1977, p. 45).

Developments concerning higher education such as University of Lagos and Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), more industrial estates, the expansion of Apapa Wharf, the construction of Tin Can Island as a big sea port, to mention a few; the development of secondary and tertiary economic activities such as small-scale enterprises in manufacturing and construction, utilities, transport and communication systems, and estate agencies, attracted a lot of people to Lagos. It took many of these people long time to acquire the relevant skills to fit into the system. (Fapohunda 1975, p. 66) In any case with the attraction of these people the city became a crucible of diverse culture and talents and became known as the 'Centre of Excellence' in Nigeria (The Guardian April 24, 2003, p. 17; Tell August 17, 1998, pp. 1 and 2; The Guardian October 11, 2005, p. 65; Vanguard August 15, 2000, p. 12).

The slogan 'Centre of Excellence' that is conspicuous on the number plates of Lagos-registered vehicles derives, therefore, from that fact that Lagos is a centre of excellence in everything including education, fashion, commerce and politics. As Randle (The Guardian April 24, 2003, p. 17) noted, in those days everybody came to Lagos:

no matter which part of the country they came from. It attracted at the beginning some people who came at least with some education, some of their cultural education. So everybody came and contributed to a very nice, beautiful, clean and healthy Lagos.

Therefore, going by the slogan many visitors to Lagos had expectations of a certain level of excellence not only in terms of the actions of people on the environment in the city but also on the activities of local governance and economic well being. This also led to the prevalence of human values in the city.

In the 1960s when one of these writers was a young boy in Lagos, the city was almost as beautiful as it was when Theodoti Artemice Mandillas, wife of J.B. Mandillas visited Lagos at the age of 22 in 1949. As she noted, Lagos was a:

beautiful and charming town. Her people were as interesting and hospitable as her architecture was enchanting. The blend of traditional Portuguese, Brazilian, Sierra Leonean and colonial architecture gave Lagos her own unique character, distinguishing her from other town and cities in Nigeria and beyond (The Guardian November 13, 1999, p. 14).

In addition, she remembered the Lagos of old, when it was called Eko, with a blissful past of no crime, tree-lined streets, lovers' park and all other niceties (The Guardian November 13, 1999, p. 14). All these made Lagos:

great and beautiful, a heaven on earth endowed with everything and lacking nothing; a place where life is but enjoyment; and a land of opportunities where jobs are provided and where fortunes are made easily (Olagbeni 1987, p. 329; The Guardian, 22 November 2002, p. 45; The African Guardian 4 December 1986, p. xi; The Guardian 23 April 2003, p. 17).

Further, Lagos was seen by rural people as a:

place away from home. A place to catch up with the wind of change sweeping across the world, to help wrestle the traditional gods of mud-huts, palm-wine, cutlasses and hoes, and enthrone the western one of skyscrapers, champagne and tractors. (The Guardian February 22, 1987, p. 64)

This myth of endless opportunities was because of the vibrant socio-economic situation and explains the reasons why some scholars have attempted to showcase the menace or grandeur of urbanization in Africa, particularly in Ghana and Nigeria. They demonstrate how African cities resonated with a particular vision of colonial modernity, and how this vision has been inscribed into the space of the city, materializing through determined policies, discipline and hard work, which generated a particular spatial and socio-cultural order. (Osaghae 1994 p. 24; Meyer 13 March 2004, pp. 2-3; Immerwahr 13 March 2004, pp. 1-5) However, it has become increasingly obvious that this vision has never been able to capture contemporary urban life. The rapid urbanization has led to a multiplicity of problems involving mass transit, open space, housing inadequate infrastructure, slums and squatter settlements and other problems associated with human beings in the urban environment. There is also a

problem arising from a symptom of local governments so proliferated that it is almost impossible to deal effectively with the problems outlined above. With time, Lagos became world's dirtiest city (Meyer 13 March 2004 p. 3).

Thus, a visitor today to Lagos would not see what it was in the 1960s. Yes, there were no fly-over bridges in the 1960s until 1970s. Nonetheless, all those niceties seen and enjoyed by the Mandillas have virtually disappeared and so Lagos is no longer beautiful. That culture of welcoming and hospitality implanted by the first generation of settlers is no more in existence. This development has resulted in Lagos as an asylum for people who are unfit to live in a metropolitan, very clean and a very cultural and commercially vibrant city, and the Lagos of the Mandillas era. The arrival of those people of less education and less talent brought in a lot of dislocations and proliferation of the activities of the underworld into the city. Their activities ruined the city. This class of migrants was the type, which according to Bola Ahmed Tinubu:

Converged in Lagos in their hundreds daily in search of employment and improved living conditions; unfortunately most of them are unskilled, ill-prepared for city life with little to offer as economic inputs and end up as social burden on the inadequate resources of the state (sic) (The Guardian November 20, 2006, p. 45).

The Decay and Villagization of Lagos

As we have indicated earlier, urbanization carries with it a change in how people live. This change arises from the city being a great place for development in all facets of life such as being a place where people could invest; where people could get good employment opportunities and where people could enhance their mental horizons as well as develop their children. We also indicated above some of the problems of the city. Very critically, among all the problems confronting the city, Mabogunje notes "The challenge of planning people beyond "planning spaces" ", an important factor where:

The urbanization process in developing countries confronts us more with how to deal with the people, particularly the majority of the poor in our cities rather than simply how to organize the urban space they occupy. This is important if urbanization is to unleash the potential for tremendous socio-economic development in a country (The Guardian July 2, 2007, p. 35).

The point is that human value has to be given priority as an aspect of urban life and this would be a major step towards addressing urban problems in Lagos State.

There is no doubt that the continuous influx of people, especially the poor, into Lagos has made the social fabrics of other African cities such as Nairobi in Kenya and Kinshasa in Democratic Republic of the Congo, open to severe strains and stresses. This situation is an example of increasing urbanization of poverty and increasing villagization of cities in Africa, (The Guardian January 19, 2002, p. 32; The Guardian October 4, 1999, p. 41; Meyer, 13 March 2004, p. 3) and characterized by squatter settlements, illegally built clusters of ramshackle huts that are usually constructed on open spaces unfit for other purposes (Bardo and Hartman 1982, p. 351).

A graphic illustration of this development is the emergence of slum and squatter settlements in Lagos. With increasing population of the city the living condition in the areas of Isale Eko degenerated as the ratio of persons for habitable room rose to between 5.8 and 22 (Akpotor 2001, p. 95). The result was the emergence of Ije Slum in Obalende area of the island. Maroko settlement also degenerated into a slum. The situation in some other non-urban and unplanned areas such as Ajegunle, Iwaya and Iponri that had been engulfed by the expanding metropolis also worsened. Many more emerged to the extent that the Lagos Metropolitan Master Plan prepared in 1980, identified 42 such areas, (The Guardian October 18, 1999, p. 35; The Guardian October 1, 2001, p.41, The Punch October 3, 2001, p. 37; Vanguard December 31, 2002, pp.32-34.) all of which according to Rasna Waran, are 'most obvious manifestation of poverty' (The Punch July 16, 2004, p.16) and decay.

Painting a graphic picture of a slum, Socio-Economic Rights Initiative (SRI), a non-governmental organization in Lagos notes:

The houses are drab, dirty and reeking with unclean and decaying refuse. Water is scarce and must therefore, be rationed; excreta disposal is inadequate with litters of human waste being a common sight in a neighbourhood...[there] are also inadequate drainage facilities with waste water forming mini puddles within the compound where mosquitoes and insect vectors exercise their reproductive potentials. The degree of environmental pollution emanating from such high level of squalor can be imagined by realizing that epidemic of cholera, typhoid fever and dysentery are frequent occurrence (Vanguard September 18, 2006, p. 42).

Despite the relative urbanized nature of Lagos metropolis and its modernity, it exhibits all the characteristics of a villagised city accommodating a large number of slum areas, which are neither legally recognized nor serviced by city authorities. These slums and squatter settlements do not enjoy many benefits of urban life such as access to basic social services, like schools, clinics, electricity power supply, and good health and potable water. The public spaces are tangled in undulating heaps of refuse. The villages and slums lack hygienic toilet facilities. The poor slum dwellers do not have access to government social supports and loan schemes, which could enable them to improve their living conditions. In addition, the living condition in the slums was such that 8.7 persons lived in one substandard room apartment without kitchen. Yet life went on, based on the philosophy of 'life must go on, house or no house, accommodation or no accommodation, and man must survive, government or no government' (Nigerian Tribune 15 August, 1992, p. 5).

Furthermore, despite the conditions the slum dwellers found themselves, they lived in constant fear of eviction. For instance, between 1956 and 1960 attempts were made by the federal government of Nigeria to develop present day Ikoyi. The aftermath of this action was that it gave birth to the Maroko Slum. Between 1983 and 1985 the Ije slum in Obalende was demolished to give way to Dolphin Estate. Again Maroko, which developed and struggled to overthrow Ajagunle as the city's worst jungle, was demolished in July 1990, when the military administration under Raji Rasaki, ordered its demolition to 'enable the government to refill the land', especially as the environment was considered not good enough for habitation (Newswatch March 6, 1989, p. 18; Newswatch February 18, 1991, p.19; Emordi March 2005, p.73). Despite this claim, it was obvious that there was a selfish

reason behind the action of the government regarding the acquisition of the land by the elite (Adejumobi 2000, pp.134-135). The point is that those pieces of land were later allocated to the elite in society who could afford it (Adejumobi 2000, p.134).

The result of the demolition of Maroko, for instance, in the name of slum clearance and renewal without any resettlement worsened the situation as many of them moved into uncompleted buildings in some housing estates such as Satellite Town, Gowon Estate and Ikota Housing Estate which had social amenities, thereby turning them into villages. For instance, Gowon Housing Estate, Ipaja, which was once the pride of the area and every house-seeker's dream in the 1970s, as Sure-lere Housing Estate built in the 1960s was, with modern buildings, good road network and other essential facilities had, by 1994 become a 'living hell' (Daily Times December 2, 1992, p. 26). By the year 2002, the estate was characterized by 'terrible roads with ever-expanding grisly potholes that look like an oil spill site in the Niger Delta, blocked drainages, dilapidating structures, poor electricity and water supply and had thus become a slum' (Meyer 13 March, 2004, p. 3). Times Property investigations further revealed that the:

evacuees from Maroko purportedly resettled at these estates have now turned tenants, who pay exorbitant rent charges to illegal landlords in these estates. Those not able to pay have thereby resorted to erecting and occupying structures similar to those predominant in the old Maroko (The Guardian October 24, 2001, p.11).

Other housing estates such as Satellite Town and FESTAC Town are now almost uninhabitable because of the problems of inadequate critical public infrastructure. The result is that such estates have turned out to be habitable only when they are new, and over time degenerate into slums with 'illicit dwellings and ill-smelling gutters failing to observe even the lowest standards of hygiene' (The Guardian Lagos, October 1, 2001, p. 41). Like many public spaces within the metropolis such as Eyin-Ogun Street and Old Ewu Road, in Mafoluku, Oshodi (Emordi March 2005, pp. 75-77; The Guardian March 31, 2003, p. 13; The News June 7, 1999, p. 35). Yet, those slum dwellers exposed to life of want and poverty, are indispensable to the economy and politics of the city. For instance, during periods of politicking during local and general elections their votes are important, after all, 'a vote is a vote, whether it is from a high brow neighbourhood or a slum' (The News June 7, 1999, p.35).

It is important to note here that the implications of the existing poor public space on the nature of Lagos cannot be overemphasized. For instance, it causes traffic gridlock, or what is popularly known as 'go slow' in Nigeria, which has been persistent and embarrassing. This traffic gridlock causes a lot of disorderliness in traffic movement in a city of over 12 million people and where over a fifth commute to work by cars and over 53 per cent of the total population commute to their various places and destinations by buses and taxis. This was a city with only 14 traffic lights and a high concentration of indiscipline law enforcement agencies that further disturb the flow of traffic by mounting illegal check-points at odd locations to extort money from motorists, 'Okada riders' and road commuters. This situation is made worse by the fact that many parts of the public spaces have been converted into make-shift markets by individuals who are trying to make ends meet because of the existing economic hardship. This development is despite the fact that Lagos has 400 established and recognized markets as well as many other illegal ones in places whenever inhabitants of an

area find convenient. While this populous and hyper-economically active city is seen by many as a land of hope, plenty and prosperity, several others are simply scared of the daily pains and stresses that they are compelled to undergo in their quest for survival (Emordi March 2005, pp.73, 75 and 77; Meyer March 13 2005, p. 3).

These problems are also compounded by erratic power supply. The power supply fails up to 10 times daily. Hence the National Electricity Power Authority (NEPA) became popularly known as 'never expect power always' (Osaghae 1995, p. 34; Eguakhide and Okediran 1999, p. 39). The persistent lack of power supply makes the situation of the 'village' worse.

Really, moving about in Lagos metropolis, aside the presence of some intimidating skyscrapers that never made it to the sky, most of what you find are slummy environments, wretched vehicles including molue buses (mini-sized buses built on Bedford Chasis) and danfo (volkswagon cumbi-buses), only kept on the roads by the constant work of handy roadside vehicle mechanics. You will also find filthy spaces under fly-over bridges controlled by 'area boys' from the slum areas. Under the bridges, they are seen as 'the strange bundles under flyover bridges', making the whole metropolis filthy and rural and who these young men instill moral panic into the minds of Lagosians and visitors with their vicious and dangerous behaviour (The Guardian October 4, 1999, p. 31; The Guardian October 25, 1999, p. 39).

All these problems were compounded following the economic crisis that visited the country in 1980s when the economy crashed. The crash of the economy due to the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) resulted in the construction of houses being left in the hands of private individuals, because there was a decrease in social expenditure as represented in the fall from 34.4 per cent to 10.9 per cent between 1980 and 1988 in the federal budget (Makinwa-Adebusoye 1984, p.112; Emordi March 2005, pp. 70-73). Thus, many individual developers emerged and were left to their own devices to build with minimum supervision or guidance by the planning authority. The citizens had to rely on informal organizations for vital services as water supply, security, refuse collection and housing facilities with obvious implications (Vanguard Lagos, October 12, 2001, p.29; Nigerian Observer, September 29, 1986, p. 3; Sunday Vanguard September 29, 2002, p. 44; The Guardian July 25, 2007, p.45). For instance, house rents increased by some 2000 per cent making the cost three-bedroom flat in Lagos to over fifty thousand naira a year between 1988 and 1990. The situation forced a large number of people, hitherto living in flats, to relocate to one or two-room apartments in the slum areas thereby, imposing on the already strained resources. For instance, available evidence suggests that in the mid-1970s occupancy ratio for Lagos metropolis ranged from the lowest 1.6 and 2.0 for the exclusive, well-planned areas of Victoria Island and Ikoyi to 7.4 at Ebute-Metta, 8.2 in Mushin and 8.7 for Obalende. This situation deteriorated from 1980s due to the crash of the economy and massive retrenchment of workers (The Guardian October 4, 1999, p.31; The Guardian October 25, 1999, p. 39).

Although Nigeria achieved political independence in 1960 with the objective of pursuing economic development within a world order based on justice and equity, it failed to develop as rapidly as possible and also to secure equity in the world economic order. This failure was because of the years of military rule characterized by bad governance. One aspect of the bad governance was the lack of effective urban planning and management, which made the

growth of Lagos to a lot of negative challenges such as endemic poverty, growth of slums with life threatening conditions, housing shortages and overcrowding due to increasing population growth, severe environmental degradation, high crime rate and ethnic tension (Vanguard December 5, 2002, p. 35; Ihonvbere June 2002, pp.1-27; Momoh and Soteolu June 2001, pp.1-9). The revenues from crude oil were squandered and embezzled by those in positions of authority in the country.

Furthermore, these problems stemmed from the fact that urban governance has been characterized by over-dependence on monthly allocations from the federation account and so most of the local government councils did not see the need to control their council areas for the good of all. There is also the self-evident lack of transparency and accountability. For instance, in 1997 and 1998, during Buba Marwa administration in Lagos, a budget of N1 billion was made for street lights around the seat of government, Alausa, Ikeja. The rest of the metropolis had none. In addition, rather than Olagunsoye Oyinlola administration spending available resources on the people in Lagos, he spent them and most of his time fighting National Democratic Coalition's opposition to Sani Abacha's government (The Guardian July 2, 2007, p.43).

The above negative challenges were also worsened with the end of the Cold War in April 1991, and African countries began to abandon the pathway that they believed could facilitate political and economic independence and meandered into the trend of globalization. The results of this development have been obvious. The people became poorer; the state became over-burdened by debt crisis; and cities became villagized. Finally, the villagization of the city of Lagos was a tacit demonstration of the poor level of urban governance which manifested in lack of understanding importance of urban renewal or slum upgrading for the urban poor and the result is really predictable (The Guardian July 2, 2007, p. 43).

Conclusion

This work has demonstrated the gradual villagization of Lagos as a result of population explosion, environmental degradation and the inability of the various governments and urban councils to control the growth of the city. The article has also shown that there is every need to consider the human elements in the emergency and habitation of slums in the city. One conclusion derivable from this is that we should pay attention to the lives of the people in the slums as a way of checkmating the villagization of Lagos City and that we should not only consider the environmental factor. It stressed that the value of the people was of importance too. It is true as the immediate past Governor of the state, Bola Ahmed Tinubu pointed out that many of the urban dwellers were unprepared for urban life.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that demolition of slum areas in the name of upgrading will not solve the problem of villagization of cities. This is because the poor will continue to be part of Lagos and without a concrete attempt at rehabilitation and reconsideration of properly settling them there would be a continuous emergence of slum areas. As has been noted, urbanization is inevitable with obvious accommodation of the problem, yet it can be of positive value. According to Emmanuel Badejo, cities concentrate poverty, but they also represent poor people's best hope of escaping it. (The Punch July 16, 2004, p.16) Cities create environmental problems, but they can also create solutions. This is especially so as the

concentration of population in cities can contribute to long-term sustainability. The challenge is learning to exploit the possibilities. (Momoh and Soteolu June 2001, pp.1-9; The Punch July 16, 2004, p.16)

On the whole, Lagos has been villagized because of a combination of socio-economic, environmental and political factors. It has lost its original conception of being a place of social reform, a place of great advances in education and a place of great opportunities. It needs to be revitalized. The slums should be upgraded. The residents of the slums should be reached and assisted as suggested by Rasna Warah. (The Punch July 16, 2004, p. 16) If we fail to do so, the city of Lagos will continue to decay with obvious implications.

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