

The Impacts of Urbanization on Human Well-Being

The Case of Juba- South Sudan



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February 2017

Urbanization and Development Policy Paper

Introduction

The process of urbanization worldwide is characterized by increase in the proportion of people living in towns and cities as a result of people moving from rural areas to urban areas. Urbanization is also widely accepted as a process with several consequences, such as economic, social and environmental and it usually emerges in developing countries such as South Sudan (Dociu and Anca, 2012). Also considerable expansion of urban areas is due to population migration to concentrated centers such as the one witnessed in Juba (Fernando and Silva, 2012). An overall goal of urbanization is that, urban populations typically benefit from improved forms of education, improved medical care, the availability and distribution of information, and the greater supply of life- sustaining goods, such as shelter and food (Orum, 2004). As the case of Juba in South Sudan suggest, conflict induced displacement has resulted in a distinct form of urbanization and has led to significant strains on infrastructure and services in the receiving urban areas.

The process of urbanization has been experienced throughout the world. Large assemblies of people have existed across the world given the examples from ancient China to ancient Rome and Greece respectively (Orum, 2004). In South Sudan urbanization presents significant opportunities but also challenges. Beneficially, as the case may be townships and capitals are the loci of central, national and international development. Administratively in South Sudan urban spaces remain the midpoints of government institutions (Ellen and Irina, 2011). The absolute numbers of urban poor are significant and likely to increase in line with urbanization trends. As the number of urban population continues to grow, so will the numbers of urban poor. This challenge is in line with World Bank indicators that urban poor are becoming significant with about one in four urban residents living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2011).

Juba as a centre is the capital and main city of the republic of South Sudan. It came to be a real urban area in 2005. The pace of urbanization in South Sudan and Juba in particular comes with some real risk factors. Juba is facing problems such as congested living environments in informal or slum areas, health risks, unemployment, food insecurity insecure land tenure, low access to facilities, connected with pollution and contamination from dusty roads and poor hygiene and clean water scarcity, small arms proliferation and high levels of criminality and dislocation (Ellen and Irina, 2011). The process of urbanization in Juba has not been documented in regards to its impact on health, education, water and sanitation, and livelihoods. The purpose of this paper is to critically discuss the impacts of urbanization on human well-being in Juba- South Sudan. The paper will suggest how the negative impacts of urbanization in Juba could be minimized or reversed to enhance sustainable development.

Discussion

Urbanization widens the inequality gap even further. The patterns produced by urbanization as an overall concept internationally produces numerous groups at middle-income class (not sure what you mean by numerous groups at middle income class) and that have some consequence on livelihood and general wellbeing. The concept may change the urban social structure and consuming pattern of a city or town, urbanization also may lead to changes in housing policies. These patterns produced by the concept of urbanization are becoming typical in Juba South Sudan. As is reflected in South Sudan, natural population increases account for the

lion share of urban population growth. Urbanization in Juba first began when it became the administrative capital of the then government of Southern Sudan in 1956. During that time Juba had a population of 10,600. In the first civil war that occurred from 1955 to 1972 the population of Juba increased to approximately 56,737, this made Juba the largest urban settlement in the South Sudan (Mills, 1985). When relative peace was felt shortly after the civil war the Juba population expanded to 83,787 inhabitants by 1983 the population grew by 47% (USAID, 2005). It was projected at the period that around 80% of such growth was due to migration to the urban area (Mills, 1985). Rapid enlargement was evident by the uncontrolled progression of non-permanent housing and settlements. Juba has continued to grow significantly since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and after South Sudan gained its independence in July 2011. Some recent estimates put the population in Juba to between 500,000 to 800,000 people.

Juba in the past was regarded as an agrarian livelihood; some of this is subsistence farming and pastoralism. Agriculture comprised by far the greatest basis of livelihoods beforehand the rapid progression of the urbanization. During the South Sudan war, most poorer residents of Juba were engaged in agriculture on the peripheries of the town to complement their livelihoods and safeguard simple subsistence but this is now shifting: as neighboring zones of Juba as a city are swallowed up by new upcoming settlements, agriculture space has now become unavailable, the issue of land grabbing is now the order of the day in most parts of Juba. Insecurity in some semi-urban zones has significantly increased compared to the war period. Majority settlers in Juba are unskilled or semi-skilled they work in the informal sector. Mostly as casual laborers or in little trading which increases poverty. As the World Bank put it poverty is viewed as predominantly rural. So this view made government not to respond to addressing such social wellbeing problem (World Bank, 2002). As explained by Ellen and Irina (2011) provision of service and infrastructure in Juba are failing to hold pace with the growing urban center; current structures are facing pressure and some are even deteriorating. Growing evidence indicates that authorities are found to be reluctant to expand public services including infrastructure. It was revealed that, by doing so might encourage many people to come into Juba from various parts of the country. Also employment chances within government structures in Juba as a city are increasingly challenging to find. Few opportunities on employment have been created by the few businesses in Juba, there are efforts by some private companies to increase employment as a way to contribute to people's wellbeing (Peace Dividend, 2010).

Many displaced people who had sought refuge in the Juba town center during the war claim that they have been evicted and forced to the overcrowded, unserved settlements on the outskirts of town, where they struggle to survive and rely on casual labor. It has been reported that in 2009, around 30,000 people faced demolitions, displacement and destruction of their livelihoods due to a badly implemented government effort to improve services, infrastructure and security in the town center. Vacated land has since been occupied by those who could afford (World Bank, 2011). The government actions have been interpreted to have contributed to poverty and also violation of human rights especially the right to property.

Urbanization of Juba has impacted the health system which in many years has been experienced to be better. Some facilities on health are overcrowded and the numbers of patients has doubled or tripled since the country's independence. Notwithstanding government determinations and efforts to rehabilitate local level health units (Ellen and Mosel, 2011) Based on the author's previous observation, the situation in respect to human resources, especially midwifery and nursing, is worse than before the country became independent. As the numbers of

patient increases, personnel servicing in the health center are being cut due to fast population increase. The government is still trying to adjust to the forces of urbanization as it is new conception. Education is equally impacted, as noticed increasingly education service is becoming a problem. schools can not cop up with a growing number of students. With low government capacity it could not robustly handle the education system. Some local communities tried to move on with their own initiative but due to poor land governance system the communities could not proceed. Poor governance, land administration system and planning made most parts of Juba not demarcated. Despite all these some communities in Juba continued to provide education to their children in non-demarcated line (World Bank, 2011).

In Juba some un-demarcated spaces have lacked services for many years. Development agencies and the government could not invest in social services that might later be destroyed in non demarcated areas. Also delayed planning hindered the service delivery. The flow of public services relies on roads being opened in Juba. The lack of roads in un-demarcated areas made them very problematic to access, particularly in the rainy period. Location also determines how access to services can made, the capability to pay for transport to and from town center. The poor people number in Juba has increased significantly over this time. Also the urban poor needs are largely not met. most research undertaken, suggests that those who cannot afford to own land are particularly vulnerable (Deng, D. 2010). Rapid urbanization has real effects on the forest and the general ecosystem around Juba. Since 2006 the surrounding of Juba has been deforested (UNEP, 2007).

It is important to mention that access to clean water in some suburbs of Juba is particularly difficult. Residents regularly rallied on rainwater some of this water bring sicknesses. Due to lack of storage facilities for this water residences have poor systems of storing the water as such the water becomes easily infected. The existing boreholes throughout Juba appear to provide hope for many but piped water is strongly desired (Ellen and Mosel, 2011).

Conclusion and Recommendation

Fast population concentration confronts Juba, which directly impacted peoples wellbeing. There urbanization process comes with important prospects in terms of the real growth and development of South Sudan in totality but sustainable development policies are needed to support the rapid urbanization. it should also be mention that, the urban poor face very high levels of vulnerability with regard to livelihoods, services and infrastructure, exposure to environmental hazards and protection threats.

As discussed above, policy-making in the various levels of officials and government agencies with responsibility for Juba appeared to have not kept pace with the urban expansion, and international development engagement. This is particularly true due to many and wide-ranging difficulties of urbanization. So the government of South Sudan and Juba needs to carry out Some Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Treats, (SWOT) of rapid urbanization and design strategy of properly planning accordingly.

It must be indicated that, sustainable urbanization in Juba South Sudan, therefore, requires all aspects of sustainability to be addressed, within the context of the opportunities and challenges as experienced to have posed massive scale of impact on resident's wellbeing.

Recommendation

All concerned stakeholders in Juba should put hands in developing an urban environment conducive to the efficient operation of enterprises of all sizes with resilience and adaptability in the face of growing competition in Juba and its surrounding areas this is important to addressing the human wellbeing question. One strategy stakeholders need to employ is by concentrating on essential infrastructure, appropriate regulation, and encouraging the development of economic linkages between urban and rural producers; Government should support this by putting in budget in place.

The government of South Sudan needs to work with the city council of Juba in developing the capabilities (education, skills, health) of the urban labour force, so that Juba residents, especially poor men and women and young people, can achieve secure livelihoods and economic enterprises can recruit suitable workforces; The success in this area will depend on allocation of adequate resources both human and financial.

The Juba city council would need to improve the provision of basic utilities (sanitation, water, energy, waste management) to the general populations, especially the poor, by drawing on and learning from recent experiences of public sector reform and the engagement of non-governmental actors, including households, communities, and small and large private operators; for this to become a reality the government need allocate adequate funding for it.

Recognizing the value of reserving areas of undeveloped land in peri-urban Juba and, where appropriate, in some of areas in Juba for agricultural, ecological and recreational purposes and strengthening development regulation and support systems to identify, safeguard and productively use such areas; This will support local people to help themselves and address some of their wellbeing concerns.

One policy recommendation can be that the government and relevant institutions should take priority in their responsibilities and roles with respect to city governance. Governance is key for addressing the human wellbeing issues arising from this paper.

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