

Plurality of urban governance in Nigeria and its implications on delivery of environmental services

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(Received January 6, 2017, Revised April 11, 2017, Accepted April 21, 2017)

Abstract. This paper discussed plurality in urban governance in Nigeria and its implication on delivery of urban environmental services, with a focus on water supply, sanitation and solid waste disposal. Conceptually, it explained urban governance as the sum total of the ways of achieving an inclusive city and expressed the urban governance system of Nigeria based the legal framework set for them. The paper explored the environmental implications of urban governance in Nigeria. It concluded that urban governance has several implications on delivery of urban environmental services in Nigeria. The dualism in urban governance is a factor contributing towards inefficient delivery of environmental services such as water supply, sanitation and solid waste management in Nigeria. The paper recommended, among others, a constitutional reform that will guarantee efficient urban governance and delivery of environmental services in Nigeria.

Keywords: constitution; environmental services; local government; urban governance; urbanization

1. Introduction

Managing cities and urban growth is one of the defining challenges of the twenty-first century. According to Avis (2016), when cities are well managed, they act as engines of growth and provide inhabitants with opportunities. They also contribute to national growth through increased revenue generation and political stability. On the other hand are poorly planned or managed cities, they become centres of poverty, inequality and conflict. Addressing these urban challenges requires facilitating access to economic opportunities, supportive social networks and greater access to services. These solutions, however, depend to a significant extent on urban governance (Devas *et al.* 2004).

Urban governance refers to how government (local, regional and national) among other stakeholders decide how to plan, finance and manage urban areas (Avis 2016). It is political and influenced by the creation and operation of political institutions. It plays a critical role in shaping the physical and social character of urban regions and influences the quantity and quality of local services and efficiency of delivery (Slack and Côté 2014). Urban governance involves a range of actors and institutions and the relationships among them determine what happens in the city.

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Among these stakeholders, the city government is the largest and most visible; others being the private businesses, agencies of central government and the civil society. Particularly in the case of Nigeria, the government (local, state or national) usually determines the daily experiences of urban dwellers, especially as it relates to delivery of environmental services.

In Nigeria, studies have established that rapid urban growth is characterised with inadequate, poorly maintained and deteriorating urban environmental services (Memon 2002, Daramola 2012, Olawuni and Daramola 2013, Daramola 2016, Olowoporoku 2017). The rate of waste generation and lack of capacity to properly dispose of that waste creates challenges for solid waste management. Also, lack of water supply and poor wastewater services are challenges in urban water management (Memon 2002, Daramola and Olowoporoku 2016). Thus, as put by Cities Alliance (2007), the unsanitary conditions created by these deficient environmental services are serious issues in urban environmental management. Nevertheless, despite the rising concern on the inadequate provision of environmental services in Nigeria, less attention has been paid to urban governance, a significant factor of urban environmental service delivery in the country.

According to Ogu (2000), the provision of poor environmental services in Nigerian cities may be understood in the light of the administrative structure and financing arrangements. Nigeria operates federal system of government of three tiers: federal, state and local. The local government is meant to operate at the city level. However, the determination of the administrative boundaries of local government area gives no recognition to municipal administration. This arrangement makes it some cities such as Lagos, Ibadan, Kano and many others as contain multiple independent local governments within their metropolitan areas. As such, coordinated city management becomes a difficult task with the presence of the constituent local government areas. In several cases, the state government take over the city-wide administration of the urban centres. As a result, ensuring good urban governance remains a daunting challenge in Nigeria with several implications on the provision of environmental services.

The delivery of environmental services in Nigerian cities is a reflection of the governance of the cities. Due to the disjointed local governance in Nigerian urban centres and the involvement of higher tiers of government in addressing the challenges of inadequate environmental services, several bodies are established at different levels of government for delivery of urban environmental services leading to duplication of functions in provision of environmental services. Therefore, this study is poised to determined the implication of plurality of urban governance in Nigeria on delivery of environmental services. The study is in five sections starting with this introduction. The second section sheds light on the concept of urban governance followed by the discussion of the Nigerian urban governance system. The fourth section discusses the implication of urban governance in on delivery of environmental services. The last section contains the conclusion for the study and recommendations.

2. Urban governance: An overview

The concept of governance is contextual, meaning different things to different people. As put by Smitha (2011), the actual meaning of the concept depends on the level of governance, the goals to be achieved and the approach to be followed. Therefore, governance is a broader term than government and government is one of the institutions involved in governance. Others include the private sector, the civil society and the community. Nevertheless, the interpretation of governance as the process of decision-making and implementation specifically focuses on the effectiveness of

the government in putting in place the 'processes' and 'structures' that are used in mobilizing a society's economic and social resources to serve the public interest. Thus, in a broad term, governance refers to the process in which diverse groups of peoples, organization (public, private and civil society) levels of governments (national and sub-national) and global and international agencies (multi-lateral and bilateral and multinational) influences the governance process.

According to the OECD (2006), governance connotes the use of political authority and exercise of control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development. It is also described by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1997) as:

The exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.

The foregoing reveals that governance is 'the total ability to organise, synthesise and direct the various actions of the working parts of government machinery in order for such a government to perform meaningfully, creditably and acceptably' (Ikpi 1997:19). It covers all aspects of the complex and myriad relations that exist between a government and a people. The extent to which the people's affairs are managed depends on the governance in operation (Akpotor 2001).

The knowledge of governance helps to give a better understanding of what urban governance connotes. In view of Avis (2016), urban governance refers to the sum total of the ways in which individuals and institutions (both public and private) plan and manage the common affairs of the city. It involves proper management of urban areas and provision of essential services based on effective institutional framework for efficient service delivery, resource mobilization, security, transparency and accountability as well as promoting inclusive city through civic participation and engagement, among others (FGN 2006). In relation to this, the UN-HABITAT (2002) had earlier stated that urban governance requires an efficient and effective response to urban problems by democratically elected and accountable local governments working in partnership with civil society.

According to Freire (2006), there are two aspects of urban governance. The first is the physical arrangement of the localities around a major urban centre, including the planning of infrastructure. The second is the strategic planning developed where the region or space is seen as a dynamic entity shaped by the vision and desires of the different units that form the metropolitan space. As such, governing cities is concerned with several expectations of municipal authorities and other governmental institutions in the management of cities. These include alleviating urban problems by employing mechanism for improved provision and delivery of urban basic services (Mathur 1995).

The understanding of urban governance as the physical arrangement of the localities around a major urban centre, including the planning of infrastructure establishes the intergovernmental nature of urban governance. Studies (Moir *et al.* 2014, Parnell and Simon 2014, World Bank 2009, OECD 2015, UN-Habitat 2015) agree that effective urban governance depends not only on local institutions and actors but also on the framework set by national governments that establishes a connection between the city and broader regional and national development. Avis (2016) opined that the responsibilities of local governments differ across countries and cities, with structure and organisation influenced by the historical, social and political context. National governments allocate responsibilities to the various levels of government, designating territorial jurisdictions, establishing electoral arrangements, designing internal management structures and creating appropriate accountability mechanisms. The author further added that only when national policies

foster favourable policy environments can city-level initiatives be effective. In the light of these opinions is the discussion of Nigerian urban governance in this study.

3. Nigerian urban governance system

As earlier stated that effective urban governance depends the framework set by national governments (Moir *et al.* 2014, Parnell and Simon 2014, World Bank 2009, OECD 2015, UN-Habitat 2015), urban governance in Nigeria is a function of the legal framework set by the Federal Government of Nigeria. This framework established a connection between the city and broader regional and national context in Nigeria. As such, urban governance system in Nigeria can be expressed based on the legal provisions used to determine the classification and extent of cities. The legislation that have influence on governance in Nigeria include the operative 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1976 Guidelines for Local Government Reform, the 1992 Urban and Regional Planning Act.

3.1 1999 Constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria

A constitution comprises the basic law or laws of a nation or a state which set(s) out how it will be organized by deciding the powers and authorities of government between different political units, and by stating the basic law-making and structural principles of society. As a sovereign state, Nigeria has had a series of constitutions. The operative 1999 Constitution of Nigeria provides for federalism, a type of political system in which legislative power is divided between a central or federal government and a number of regional, state, provincial or local government. In Nigerian political system, governmental powers are fundamentally shared between the federal and the component state governments and then, by extension, local governments. The roles of these tiers of government are defined by the constitution of the federation by the classification of the duties or functions of the central and the components governments. As a result, there are traditionally three forms of legislative lists which spell out the functions that are expected for the tiers of government and the matters that they are capable of legislating on, under the constitution.

The first is the exclusive legislative list which contains functions that are assigned solely to the federal tier because of their nationwide character. The second is the concurrent list which gives the functions or powers which both the federal and state governments can perform or exercise with provision that a federal legislation shall supersede a state law in case of any conflict of interest. The last is the residual list which contains functions or powers left for the state tier of government to perform and legislate on. Under this arrangement, the local governments are put under the state governments who are responsible for their creation and also empowered to delegate to them functions or powers to perform or exercise for the people while the federal government can only legally create or exercise authority over local governments in its territories.

An examination of the constitution, however, shows that alongside the environmental objectives contained in the fundamental objectives, among others, the lists in the constitution contain a number of matters that have environmental implications. These include construction, alteration and maintenance of federal trunk roads; mines and minerals; national parks and water on the exclusive list. Those on the concurrent list include antiquities and monuments; industrial, commercial and agricultural development and electric power. As the third tier of government, the constitution recognises the existence of local government and saddles it with certain functions

which include provision and maintenance of public conveniences, sewage and refuse disposal. However, it is important to note that the constitution does not give local governments clear mandates on these functions. As such, they have the problem of resisting state interference in their functions and they also look up to the state in carrying out the functions.

3.2 1976 Guidelines for local government reform

Nigeria is a federation consisting of 36 states and a Federal Capital territory. Also, the country is divided into 774 local governments. However, the division in to local governments is with no consideration to municipal boundaries. The problems with local government are not new in Nigeria. Before and years after independence, several local government structures existed in Nigeria because local governments had become regional or state subjects under the 1951 Nigerian constitution (Mba 1998). Thus, they did not exercise appreciable degree of autonomy and they operated under a structure that did not enhance development of local initiative (Egomnwan 1984) with inadequate staffing and funding (Mba 1998).

A notable effort to address these problems led to the 1976 Local Government Reform. Consequent upon the reform, the Federal Government of Nigeria gave recognition to the local government as the third tier government below the state government (Mba 1998). With the reform, local government began to have financial capacities, staffing and institutional framework to initiate and provide relevant services to their communities. Moreover, they were to have adequate resources to stimulate development at the grassroots (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1976). Other objectives of the reform include enhancement of public participation at the local level, as well as, improvement of basic services and infrastructure at the local and community levels (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1976).

In 1976, the Federal Government initiated a key action to promote a more functional and purposeful Local Governments by issuing Guidelines for Local Government Reform and subsequent several reviews. The document states that Local Governments are the creations of the State Governments with the purpose of providing essential services and mobilizing communities for grassroots development through participation by providing a link between community and government (FGN 1976). Specifically relevant to this context is paragraph 10 of the 1976 National Guidelines for a Reform of Local Government which states thus:

Regardless of population, no town or city should be split between two Primary Local Governments. The whole planning area surrounding a town should be in the same Primary Local Government. This should apply not only to places which have been formally constituted as Planning Areas now, but those which are likely to be so constituted within the next ten years. Where two or more towns, whether they are actually contiguous or not, are nevertheless close to each other as to make up a conurbation, the whole should, with the planning peripheries, be in the same Local Government Area (FGN 1976).

Sequel to this was the review of the activities of the Local Governments in the country in 1985. The review established some criteria on the composition and roles of Local Governments which include: reform of local government every ten years; a minimum population of between 100,000 and 150,000; minimum tax paying population of 20,000; geographical contiguity; traditional association; wishes of the community and financial viability. These criteria negate the one advanced in the Guidelines for 1976 local Government Reform, which accorded recognition for respect of city boundaries and their population size in creating urban Local Governments. The lack of consistency in criteria in guidelines on the creations of Local Governments formed the genesis

Table 1 Planning functions of the three tiers of government in Nigeria

Tier of Government	Executing Body	Types of Physical Development Plan
Federal	Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Physical Development Plan • Regional Plan • Sub-regional Plan • Urban Plan
State	Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Plan • Sub-regional Plan • Urban Plan • Subject Plan
Local	Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Plan • Rural Area Plan • Subject Plan • Local Plan

Source: Federal Government of Nigeria 1992

of the abuse of the creation of urban areas into multiple Local Governments in the country. Two or more urban Local Governments were created out of large cities, while rural Local Governments contain multiples of towns and smaller settlements.

3.3 1992 Urban and regional planning act

One of the laws in Nigeria with environmental implication is Urban and Regional Planning Act of 1992. The main objective of the Act is the promotion of land use planning and development control functions to the three-tier government structure in the country. In achieving this aim, among others, it provides for the setting up of the Commission at the federal level for dealing with federal matters, Board to be set up at the State government level to deal with all state matters, with Local Planning Authority to be set up in each Local Government and area council in the country. By implication, there should be at least a Commission, 36 Boards and 774 Local Planning Authorities in the country with their functions as presented in Table 1. From the table, the overlapping functions of the tiers of government are evident, hence pluralism in physical development plan preparation, and by extension planning for and management of environmental services.

4. Implications of urban governance on delivery of environmental services in Nigeria

As earlier indicated, Nigerian has three levels of government directly operating in its urban governance. These are federal, state and local governments. Thus, Nigerian urban governance is characterised with plurality which manifest in institutional fragmentation, multiplication of agencies, disparity of powers and responsibilities across different tiers and departments of governmental and non-governmental institutions and confusion over 'who does what' (Davoudi and Evans 2005). As noted by Agbola (2003), a formidable obstacle in the way of attaining the norms of good urban governance in Nigeria is lack of city-wide administration in many of the systems of the cities. For example, eleven local governments govern the city of Ibadan while Lagos and Kano cities have more. Smaller towns such as Ile-Ife, Osogbo, Ogbomoso, Onitsha,

Minna, among others have two or more. It is difficult to know who is in charge of the city and this is complicated when the city is a state capital. This practically implies that there is no urban governance in Nigeria but 'local government' governance, inasmuch as there is no legal provision for it, and its practice is nothing but a travesty of what the normal urban governance is. Besides, there are no city mayors. Consequently, the governance of cities in Nigeria is likened to a slave being controlled by several masters.

For many years, certain factors have made the responsibility for urban environmental services remain diverse and diffused. These include lack of overall policies for water supply, sanitation and solid waste management in the form of strategies; functional national infrastructural master plans; and proper mechanisms for intersectional coordination and tariff setting. Different agencies at all tiers of government (federal, state and local) pursue different agenda, leading to fragmentation, duplication and lack of inter-sectoral coordination. For instance, water management is on the concurrent legislative list, which poses a challenge to coordination and definition of roles. Presently, some federal laws such as Water Resources Act, 1993; Minerals Act, 1990; National Water Resources Institute Act, 1990; River Basin Development Act, 1990 as well as state water edicts and laws contribute to water management in Nigeria. Likewise, in some states of the federation, the responsibility of the federal government in dam construction through the River Basin Development Authorities does not aid the responsibility of the State Government in provision of potable water supply.

Constitutionally, the provision of some of these environmental services is within the statutory function of one tier of government or another. For instance, the 1999 federal constitution assigned to local government the responsibility for the construction and maintenance of some categories of road, for street drains, for the installation of street lighting and for the provision of refuse services. In practice, however, state governments have taken over these functions claiming their desire to step in to complement the efforts of local governments. Access roads and street drains are now built by some states. In the case of solid waste management, the condition has been exacerbated by complete control by the state governments. This is sequel to the acclaimed incapability of the local governments to render waste management services. There are now statutory bodies in charge of solid waste management in states like Lagos, Osun, Nasarawa, Anambra, among others.

In the same vein, various federal ministries such as Federal Ministries of Agriculture, Water Resources, Health, Environment, Housing and Urban Development and various State Agencies and Local Governments are involved in the different aspects of environmental service delivery. Efforts have been made to redress the problem of uncoordinated urban management in Nigeria, especially at the State level. A notable attempt in this regard is the creation of state capital territory and supervisory agency commonly known as State Capital Development Authority. This approach enables the state governments carry out some functions that have city-wide importance such as preparation of development plans, construction of sewage, and solid waste collection and disposal. Nonetheless, the attempt has created conflicts between the state and local governments falling within the capital territory. The local government accuses the state agency of hijacking their constitutional roles. Also, it mostly leads to duplication of efforts and wasteful application of resources (Agbola 2007) resulting in unclear overall responsibility for delivery of environmental services.

In essence, the fragmented sectoral practice has also led to disjointed development and has critically led to a situation where there is presently nothing in place to significantly ensure adequate provision of urban environmental services. There are no clear responsibilities, no mandated monitoring, no effective enforcement, no sanctions for polluters, no remediation and

thus no overall picture of the extent of the problem. Conflicts exist between agencies federal agencies (for instance between the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Federal Ministry of Environment), federal and state agencies and state and local governments. Involvement of the three tiers of government in delivery of environmental services without effective collaboration results in weak coordination and inconsistent and conflicting mandates and responsibilities; there are too many agencies claiming ownership for the services but not their responsibility. Besides, the institutional framework for service delivery is commonly weak; there is inadequate involvement of communities, especially women, in all aspects of project work, which has resulted in low community ownership and poor service sustainability

5. Conclusions

This paper has established the plurality of urban governance in Nigeria and the inadequacy of environmental services in Nigerian cities. Also, it has examined the implication of the plurality on the delivery of environmental services in Nigeria. It can then be concluded that urban governance has several implications on delivery of urban environmental services in Nigeria. The dualism in urban governance is a factor contributing towards inefficient delivery of environmental services such as water supply, sanitation and solid waste management in Nigeria. To address this plurality, the following are recommended:

- Identification of relevant stakeholders in urban governance: This will enthrone ideas of multilevel and collaborative governance by both public and private sectors for effective management of the common affairs of the city and enhancement of urban service provision. It will also ensure institutional platform for sustained dialogue and advocacy around issues of good urban governance;
- Institution of constitutional reform for effective urban governance: The constitution should be amended to dissuade fragmented governance structure in Nigerian cities and guarantee the framework for good urban governance. Advocacy for this should be a concern for all stakeholders in urban governance in Nigeria;
- Establishment of city-wide governance structure: This is to redress the problems of plurality in urban governance and perform such metropolitan wide functions as water supply, solid waste management, urban planning and transportation.

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