

URBAN RENEWAL AND SECURITY ISSUES

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ABSTRACT: *Urban renewal involves the application of urban upgrading techniques which have been developed for the treatment of urban obsolescence. Urban renewal theories provide four main approaches with which to address urban renewal challenges namely redevelopment, rehabilitation/renovation, conservation, and revitalization. Application of redevelopment and rehabilitation/renovation techniques, which are not mutually exclusive options, more often than not involve displacement of occupiers. The displaced persons are often helpless and subjected to series of shocks. This situation raises issue of tenure security because unless the slum dwellers are protected by security arrangements, the less privileged households who are mainly the slum residents must always suffer during any slum clearance programme. This paper therefore recommends slum citizen dislocation insurance, eviction pension, relocation microfinance grants, social welfare funds and the use of the provisions of 1978 landuse decree and the declaration of human rights provisions as an authority to guarantee the tenure security of slum dwellers during urban renewal programmes as security packages to cushion the residents' shock during urban renewal programmes.*

KEYWORDS: Urban renewal, tenure security, redevelopment, social benefits, urban renewal shocks.

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, urban renewal is an environmental management technique used to address the problems of blight, deterioration, housing standards and declining property value and general obsolescence in cities. Urban decay and dilapidation are common features of cities worldwide but particularly prevalent in third world countries such as Nigeria, India, Philippines, China, Brazil, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, New Zealand and Kenya where urban development predated the adoption of physical planning tradition. While it can be said that some developed nations such as USA and Britain have to a large extent found long lasting solutions to their decayed cities, developing ones, Nigeria inclusive, are yet to do so. One major problem often adduced to explain the inability of various governments in Nigeria to find sustainable solutions to slum problems is the fact that most cities in Nigeria developed before the adoption of town planning regulation. This means that Nigerian cities are currently consisting of two contrasting sections, viz, the old section which developed during the pre-town planning era and the post town planning era section whose development was guided by modern physical development principles. Although the post town planning era sections are not as modern and liveable as one would expect but exhibit urban problems to a lesser degree than the pre town planning era sections. These pre-town planning sections of the cities which were developed in accordance with the whims and caprices of the developers with little or no recourse to town planning guidelines are the slum

areas of today that pose challenges to both the environmental managers, governments and the residents. Such areas are the slum or sick areas of the city where blight, obsolescence and degeneration are at the peak.

Urban renewal is a concept used to describe the aggregate of techniques which have been developed for the treatment of slum problems (George, 1999). It has been described as a deliberate effort to change the urban environment through planned, large scale adjustment of existing city areas to present and future requirements for urban living and working (Grebbe, 1965). The purpose of urban renewal is to regenerate, make new again, restore, and recover. It focuses on the restoration of vigour, strength and activity within a community and encompasses the dual potential of slum elimination and restoration of physical beauty (Olabisi, 2013). Urban renewal is a comprehensive scheme which aims to redress a complex of urban problems, including unsanitary, deficient or obsolete housing, inadequate transportation, sanitation and provision of other missing urban services and facilities, correction of haphazard landuse, traffic congestion and the sociological correlates of urban decay, such as, crime and other social vices (Olabisi, 2013).

Historically, urban renewal has tended to emphasize the two major dimensions of the city, namely, the physical and the human. There is no gainsaying the fact that indicators of city deterioration are physical, social and economic aspects of the bio-physical environment and renewal programmes have tended to address such related problems. Experience over the years shows that a third dimension of urban renewal has been made manifest and need to be discussed and analyzed. This relates to the issues of security which suppose to be part and parcel of the process of the articulation of urban renewal action plan. The major aim of this paper is to provide a new understanding about urban renewal and upgrading with the objective of sensitizing the urban renewal executors of the necessity of taking the issues of security into consideration while embarking on urban renewal.

Urban renewal is a generic professional term which refers to the processes of achieving solution package articulated for the elimination of blighted areas of the city. Quite often, urban renewal involves demolitions of some structures for three major reasons;

- (i) structures that have dilapidated so much that they constitute danger and threat to the occupants and others around,
- (ii) to create space for the development of missing necessary infrastructures for overriding public interest,
- (iii) structures that are inappropriately or wrongly located vis-à-vis the existing physical development regulations.

For whatever reason demolition is undertaken, it involves displacement and dislocation of households who are usually subjected to series of varied hardships for a long time. This brings the issue of security to fore during urban renewal programmes. In other words, any urban renewal action package which fails to incorporate the issues of residents' security is not only inappropriately packaged but also objectionable and unacceptable. The overriding interest of

this paper is to highlight different security dimensions that should be incorporated into urban renewal plans as a reflection of the urban renewal theories which guide the preparation and procedures for urban renewal programmes.

Theories of urban Renewal

With the advancement and growth of urban renewal as a major branch of town planning and environmental management, greater interest have been shifted to the development of urban renewal theories which tend to reduce the complexities of urban renewal exercise to a manageable pattern which guide the operations and executions of urban renewal. Many specialists with vested interest in the urban dynamics contributed to the development of urban renewal theories. Consequently, three theories were developed to control and guide urban renewal programmes. The theories are Spatial Allocation theory, Economic theory and Behavioural theory. They will be discussed one after the other.

Spatial Allocation Theory

Spatial scientists such as geographers and town planners were the foremost proponents of Spatial Allocation Theory which they used to explain the distribution pattern of land uses. The town planner is primarily concerned with budgeting and allocation of land to various landuses in order to satisfy the space requirements of people and their activities for now and in future.

Central to Spatial Allocation model is its proposition that forces of slum development and urban decay are urban circumstances beyond the control of residents. Therefore, the only effective measure against slum problems is total relocation or allocation of the residents to a new site. This type of thinking influenced the American town planners and local authorities during the post World War II era to the extent that the first federal legislation on Housing Act of 1949 in USA made provisions for the clearance and redevelopment of deteriorated areas or structures for any reuse. Redevelopment was specified to mean total demolition and replacement with new modern structure(s). This Act empowered the town planners and local authorities to clear all buildings and structures within any area that was deteriorated or dilapidated. This has to be so because such area was considered to constitute serious health threats and eyesores.

To make clearance of buildings possible, local governments were vested with two powers, viz; powers of eminent domain and police powers. Powers of eminent domain were exercised for the purpose of acquiring real property for a public purpose with or without compensation. In the other hand, police powers were used to restrain private actions for overriding public interest. For the purpose of execution of urban renewal, the Allocation theory stipulates the following procedural guidelines.

- (i) the use of identifiable criteria to designate urban renewal area;
- (ii) detailed survey of the housing, demographic, socio-economic and environmental characteristics of the area;
- (iii) preparation of the physical development plans for the area;
- (iv) making adequate plans for the relocation of residents; and

- (v) articulation of urban renewal action plan.

Allocation theory recommends the following steps for the purpose of redevelopment programme;

- (1) designation of urban renewal area based on justifiable criteria;
- (2) detailed survey of the housing, demographic, socio-economic and environmental characteristics of the area;
- (3) procurement of resettlement site and establishment of relocation programme;
- (4) development of the resettlement site;
- (5) evacuation and the resettlement of residents at the resettlement site;
- (6) renewal area improvement planning, and development;
- (7) new constructions at the renewal area, and
- (8) bringing back the displaced households.

The spatial allocation theory has been criticized on the grounds that it is an inhuman radicalist's approach. Its rejection is based on the fact that in many cases the envisaged benefits are never realized, rather, as experiences have shown, those who eventually benefit from the urban renewal programme are usually the privileged class instead of the poor residents for whom the renewal programme was undertaken and who ought to be the main beneficiaries because it is basically their plight that warranted the renewal programme. Rather than improve the welfare of the residents, they are usually subjected to series of undue hardships. This kind of thinking triggered off agitations from a group of environmentalists which led to the emergence of the school of humanitarianism in the United States of America. Their views are articulated in what is referred to as behavioural theory.

The Behavioural Theory

The main contention of the behavioural school of thought is that urban renewal should, as a matter of necessity wear a human look and pay disproportionate attention to human elements than physical elements in any urban renewal area. The school is of the opinion that the poor residents of the urban renewal area should be giving unconditional chance to air their views in relation to any plan to upgrade their abode. Therefore, any urban renewal programme which did not have plans for the involvement of the residents and which neglect the participation of those who reside in the urban renewal area is totally unacceptable and rejectionable. It is therefore essential to organize the residents into urban renewal committees which will be able to put forward the collective view of the residents. The urban renewal administrators should as a matter of necessity work with the residents' committees as major and primary stakeholders. The school therefore put forward the options of rehabilitation and conservation strategies which they believe will give a clear social focus to urban renewal programmes.

The Economic Theory

According to Richardson (1971), Davis and Whinston who were the proponents of this theory were mainly concerned with the micro economic situation of the slum residents that are usually affected by the urban renewal programmes. The basic tenets of economic theory is that most

buildings can be maintained in a good state of repair provided that the owners are willing to undertake the maintenance expenditure required. The willingness of the property owners to maintain their buildings will however, depend on their financial capacity to do so. Consequently, structures decline in quality because due to incapacity the owners allow them to do so because an owner obtains the highest return from his property if it is under maintained and receives lower returns if he upkeeps his property in a deteriorated area.

Given this situation, economists want to argue that urban renewal can only work if the public sector can leave the poor where they belong and assume the total cost implications of urban renewal. This theory thus advocates for strategies which help to assimilate the slum creators into active socio-economic life of the city. The end point of the theory is a call for economic revitalization of the run-down areas. The theory proposed taking measures to stimulate employment generation within an urban renewal area which is hoped will take urban renewal beyond mere attack on the symptoms of the problem and progress to the root cause of the problem (Omole, 2000). It is believed that enhancement of the employability and income earning capacity of the slum residents will make them to eat well, think well and remember that they will live in a decent environment.

Strategies of Urban Renewal

The urban renewal theories yielded four strategies which are jointly or separately applied by Town Planners for addressing dilapidation problems during urban renewal programme. They are (i) redevelopment or comprehensive clearance (ii) rehabilitation and renovation, (iii) conservation, and (iv) revitalization.

Redevelopment or Comprehensive Clearance

This is the popular bulldozer approach which actually originated from U.S.A. where urban renewal policy first started in the form of "District Replanning". Redevelopment approach is adopted when dilapidation situation in an area such as slum area is assessed to be so bad that it cannot be remedied in any way. The only option therefore is to use bulldozer to clear everything completely and then prepare a new layout plan for the area. The area is then developed in accordance with the layout plan for the re-occupation of the displaced persons.

Rehabilitation and Renovation

This is the approach usually recommended for structures and houses whose level of deterioration has not reached an advanced stage. As such, certain upgrading actions can be taken in order to bring up the quality of the structure or house such as repainting, replacing wooden/louvers windows with alumaco windows etc, to acceptable prevailing standard. Renovation approach appears to be similar with rehabilitation approach but their technical emphasis differ. Renovation involves breaking of original walls in order to expand sitting room for instance or to introduce doors and windows where they were not existing before in order to enhance indoor lighting and ventilation. Renovation differs from rehabilitation because the former involves much more serious engineering, architectural and technical work than the later.

Revitalization

This approach is more people centered than other strategies. The major aim of this approach is to increase the income earning capacity of the slum residents by providing job opportunities, introducing skill acquisition and entrepreneurial training programmes for the residents to make them economically productive and financially buoyant. This will make them to feed well, think well and hence begin to respond positively to the upgrading effort of their abode.

Urban Renewal Security Issues:

For reasons yet to be disclosed; urban renewal administrators in Nigeria have tended to favour and adopt the redevelopment or comprehensive strategy to the total neglect of other less disruptive strategies during urban renewal projects. The use of bulldozer for urban renewal projects inflicts myriads of socio-economic problems such as displacement of residents, helplessness, dislocation of family ties, economic downturn, loss of accommodation and cost of acquiring new one, loss of properties and friends, increased commuting costs, etc. All these raise the issue of security particularly with regard to the residents of the urban renewal area.

The issue of security problems during urban renewal programmes can be traced to have originated from the rampant politics of exclusion and neglect of governments against the residents of the area designated for urban renewal. Security problems are usually caused by uneven distribution of resources, encroachment, infringement, marginalization, irresponsiveness and exclusion which lead to corresponding disgruntlements by the neglected, marginalized, ignored and excluded. The immediate and direct outcome is dissatisfaction which starts as grumbling and later develops to agitation, confrontation, violence and hostage taking etc (Akinola, 2013). With reference to few notable urban renewal programmes in Nigeria, suffice it to say that the use of bulldozer featured prominently resulting to displacement of several households each time. (See Table I)

Table I Urban Renewal Programmes and Number of Households Displaced.

S/n	Urban Renewal Area	No. of Households Displaced	Source
1	Maroko, Lagos Urban Renewal	12,000	Sule, 1990
2	Olaleye-Iponri, Lagos Urban Renewal	20,000	Alaba, 2010
3	Badia East, Lagos Urban Renewal	18,612	Olayiwula, 2008
4	Okpoko, Onitsha upgrading	128,147	Onweluzo, 2002
5	Owerri, Upgrading	167	World Bank, 1990
6	Aba Upgrading	78	World Bank 1980
7	Umuahia Upgrading	258	World Bank, 1980
8	Bauchi upgrading	2,156	World Bank, 1980

Analysis from these renewal programmes indicate that all the displaced households are those that can be regarded as poor or core poor households no matter the yardstick used in their income assessment. Their poverty goes beyond poor income to poor education, lack of helpers and ill health. Living with such risk is part of their everyday life and changes in politics which normally bring in new administration with new agenda increases fear in their everyday life. They are the most vulnerable in the society because they are most exposed to any decisions about environmental upgrading. Their low income makes them to live in slum areas where they can afford to rent at least a room without regard for quality or availability of amenities and infrastructures. Their lives are not secured and for them to have any feature, they must be provided with security by the state. Poor people live without fundamental freedom of action and choice that the privileged take for granted. They often lack adequate food and shelter, social and political connections, suffer deprivations that keep them from living the kind of life everybody values. They are highly vulnerable to urban renewal and worst more, they are often exposed to ill treatment by the state institutions and the society and are powerless to influence key decisions even when their lives will be adversely affected. These are all dimensions of security issues (World Bank, 2001). Such people need to be protected rather than being forcefully evicted during urban renewal programmes.

The urban poor who are often the victims of urban renewal programmes need security which has to be provided by the government and the civil society consisting of community based organizations (CBOs), Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the politicians, the business people, the traditional elites, the churches and mosques. The security arrangement for them will be that which will make them become less vulnerable to upgrading of their abode. Reduction of vulnerability must aim at helping the slum residents manage risks of displacement better by reducing, mitigating and lessening the impact of shocks. Reduction of vulnerability will also aim at laying the foundation for investment by slum residents that can take them out of poverty and cushion the effect of urban renewal shocks. They must have to be economically empowered for them to enjoy economic security which they need for survival.

Suggested security arrangements and packages to safeguard and protect the vulnerable from economic shocks of urban renewal include slum citizen dislocation insurance, eviction pension, relocation microfinance grants and social welfare funds. These packages will produce dual terminal effects, namely,

- (i) deter government from massive eviction to focus on inevitable minimal cases because of cost implications,
- (ii) reduce the citizens violent protests and demonstrations since their losses are minimal and manageable, and
- (iii) eliminate citizens vulnerability and hence promote their ability to manage shocks of eviction.

Another security issue which is exacerbated by urban renewal relates to insecurity of tenure in the cities. By far the most significant attempt to provide for security of title and alter the holding and use of land for the benefit of the society in Nigeria is the Land Use Decree of 1978. The

decree aimed at introducing a land tenure reform that would replace the authority of customary leaders over land tenure with state control and thereby impose a uniform, nationwide land tenure system. It also aimed at making land available to government for its needs, increasing equity and curbing inflation and land banking (Ikejiofor, 2014). The decree provides that all urban land in the territory of a state is vested in the Governor of that state, who shall hold it in trust for the people of that state. Landuse and Allocation Committees were set up in each state to administer land matters. The establishment of these committees for land administration created room for inefficiency, delay and corruption because the pattern of their activities favoured only those who are wealthy with substantial connections, thus making land to be concentrated in the hands of privileged politicians and their allies. With increasing influx of migrants into urban centres which resulted to high rate of urban physical development, land became commodified and landholding became increasingly individualized particularly in the cities. Under this dispensation, the poor ones, the less connected and the underprivileged who cannot afford to acquire and own land were forced to become perpetual tenants in those neighbourhoods where accommodation rents are cheap, such as in the core slum areas or in the spontaneous squatter settlements at the city periphery.

Thus, these vulnerable households live in the urban sections where population density is as high as 700 persons per hectare and room occupancy ratio is as high as 6.4 persons. Such areas exist as central slum areas or spontaneous squatter settlements which are commonly the targets for urban renewal programmes during which huge army of underprivileged landless urban poor are forced to become homeless. One disheartening story of forced eviction is that no compensation is made since those affected lack tenure legitimacy. Tenure insecurity creates an excruciating condition which affects the psychological wellbeing of an individual which may lead to depression cases. Sometimes the trauma of tenure insecurity can interfere with the need for rest, sleep and relaxation and in extreme cases can lead to untimely sudden death. Some psychological problems such as hopelessness, aggressiveness, insomnia, apathy, delinquency, alcoholism and carefree attitude are partly attributable to insecure tenancy. Most deviant behaviour associated with slum areas can be traced to the general belief by the dwellers that their residency is tenuous and unstable to the extent that they can be forced to relocate at any time.

Government should use the provisions of the 1978 landuse decree as an authority to guarantee the tenure security of residents particularly during urban renewal programmes by regularizing the property title of residents which will qualify them for financial compensations or allocation of alternative accommodation. Afterall, the comprehensive urban renewal approach demands that those adversely affected by urban renewal programmes must be provided with resettlement alternatives; otherwise no demolition of structures should be undertaken. Urban renewal is undertaken principally to enhance the living standard of the people and not to undermine their sensibilities by subjecting them to series of avoidable hardships.

For someone to lose his property just because it is in a state of disrepair is disheartening particularly when it is realized that the major reason for leaving the property to degenerate into disrepair was weak personal income base. To lose a property just because of attempts to upgrade

environmental quality is undemocratic and painful. For a government to forcefully acquire the property of an individual just in the name of urban renewal or face lift is tyrannical. There is every need for the Federal and State legislatures to come up with enactments aimed at providing tenure security for the less privileged property owners in the cities to protect them from forceful eviction without compensation. For the tenants, they should be provided with alternative accommodation preferably through a resettlement programme.

Way Forward

- (i) The large majority of Nigerians who are by circumstances of poverty are compelled to mass themselves in insalubrious urban environment characteristic of informal squatter settlements and who daily live under the constant fear of forceful eviction need to be protected and secured because they are part of mankind and deserve fair treatment. This can be achieved by strict implementation of the sections of the environmental laws which accord meaningful rights to individuals towards protection of fundamental liberties. As far back as 1948, the United Nations came up with the famous Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which meant that the entire humanity formally registered its hatred to oppression and inhuman conduct and as such declared its support for the recognition of and respect for the fundamental and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. The UDHR not only refers to civil and political rights but also includes economic, social and environmental rights. Human rights are said to be indivisible and interrelated (Dele, 2002) and as such must be comprehensively applied to protect both the rich, the connected and the poor, the less privileged and the uneducated living in any part of the city. Forceful eviction or quick quit notice for any reason is tantamount to infringement into the fundamental rights of inhabitants and occupiers.

The above gives credence and support for the adoption of the practice of Advocacy Planning in Nigeria which has hitherto been neglected and unpracticed. Each residential unit particularly the squatter settlements that stand the risk of forceful eviction in the name of urban renewal programme should by policy be made to hire the services of an advocate planner who will be vested with the residential security assignment for the protection of the environmental rights of dwellers in case of any infringement or threat.

The advocate planner should be one who believes in or shares the interest of his clients. Such an advocate therefore requires more than sentiment, anger, dissatisfaction and disaffection to proposed plan. The advocate must be a provider of vital information and well grounded in extensive fieldwork and research so as to be in the position to generate facts and figures that would be needed to defend his client's alternative plan. The advocate must be a hard bargainer and a good negotiator, one who will be able to educate his client group as well as the opponents as to the desirability or otherwise of the aspects of the contending plan. Advocacy is a game of negotiation which is guided by the spirit of give and take so that what will emerge at the end of the negotiation will be the product of conciliation, tradeoffs and negotiations.

- (ii) The Polycentric urban renewal approach should be adopted in Nigeria. According to Akinola et al (2012), this urban renewal strategy is anchored on the existing understanding that African human societies are sustained on the basis of cooperation and as such, models that are designed to address problems of African human societies cannot be effective except such models, policies and programmes take cognizance of the underlining factors that underpin human cooperation such as collectivity, mutual trust and reciprocity which are part and parcel of existence in Africa. For the protection of human citizens, there is need for government to implement inclusive policies to diminish inequalities. In an inclusive city, residents take part in decision making that ranges from the political to issues of daily life. Such participation injects a sense of belonging, relevance, pride and guarantees them a stake in the benefits of urban development.

Polycentric urban renewal model conceptualizes urban renewal project as involving the efforts of three major groups of people in the urban centre namely the governments, financial institutions and the community institutions for the search for solutions to the problems of urban decadence. The model is an innovation designed as an alternative to the centralized, repressive and top-down urban renewal programmes that have perpetuated deprivation, inequality, poverty and human misery. These three groups must as a matter of policy and regulation sit together as welfare officers to discuss intimately and trade off ideas for the purpose of taking urban renewal decisions together. This is a kind of enforcing and encouraging citizen participation. The World Bank (1994) defines participation as a process through which stakeholders' influence share control over development initiatives, decision and resources for moving the community forward. Citizen participation in urban renewal is a means of improving local welfare, training people in local administration and extending government control through local self-help activities.

Participation is a democratic principle in that it calls for representation and total involvement of citizens in taking decisions that affect them and their lives. However for the full benefits of participation to be realized the participation of the citizen must be active, persistent, effective, creative and innovative and the language of communication must be simple and local and the planning issues to be discussed should be non-technical.

- (iii) The legislative arm of the government should come up with enactments aimed at guaranteeing the residential security of urbanites particularly for the slum dwellers who are usually subjected to series of socio-economic, political and environmental problems emanating from forceful eviction in order to execute urban renewal programmes. Such enactments should include but not limited to instruments such as;
- (a) Slum citizen dislocation insurance,
 - (b) Eviction pension,
 - (c) Relocation microfinance grants, and

(d) Social welfare funds

Such enactments will have the effect of selectively reducing to barest minimum the number of people to be displaced or evicted during urban renewal just because of the financial implication of massive eviction, which may eat deep into the government's treasury and hence constrain it from other public pursuits. Having such enactments in place will reduce or eliminate riots, demonstrations, violence and stubborn resistance usually associated with eviction threats during urban renewal. Since the slum dwellers are sure they are protected by enactment to cushion eviction shocks, they will become less disturbed by any urban renewal threats.

CONCLUSION

Urban renewal as one of the environmental management strategies is aimed at upgrading the living environment of the people from the state of general obsolescence and decline to acceptable modern standard conducive for effective functioning of the area as a socio-economic and eco-political unit. It is essentially an opportunistic exercise because governments and town planners often seize the opportunity of the existence of urban obsolescence and general decay to articulate urban renewal action package. In other words, existence of urban blight provides opportunity for urban renewal.

Urban renewal theories provide some strategies which are adopted either separately or jointly for the execution of urban renewal programme. It is instructive to point out that any approach adopted must be applied in compliance with the theoretical dictates, otherwise unanticipated and unintended consequences will emerge to bring about unhealthy complaints, demonstrations and violent opposition which in most cases might frustrate a well intended urban renewal programme. Urban renewal is never without problems because residents must be disturbed, property owners must be shaken and stakeholders must spend their resources. In view of the foregoing, it is absolutely necessary that urban renewal programmes take security issues seriously. This will help ameliorate the sufferings associated with urban renewal particularly on the side of the vulnerable households who are usually the victims of urban renewal. Security of life, continuity, job, property and tenure are serious security issues that must be part and parcel of urban renewal action package.

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