

NEW AVENUES FOR PLANNING PRACTICE IN NIGERIA

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Roles of Urban and Regional Planning in Enhancing the Services of the Nigeria Customs Service

Wole Morenikeji, O.A. Sulyman, B.M. Adeleye
and A.M. Kawu

13.1 Introduction

Cities in the world are experiencing rapid urbanization and this phenomenon is also evident in cities of the developing world. Unlike in the developed world, urbanization in the developing countries is considered a misery because of the problems that accompany them (Olurin, 2003, as cited by **Olujimi, 2009**). The problems bred by this form of urbanization include terrorism, crime, poor state of planning and most especially security challenges. These problems often put security operatives (police, military, immigration and customs) and stakeholders on their toes on how to surmount the security

challenges that come along with the rapid urbanization experienced in our cities.

These security challenges experienced in our cities can be likened to the problems experienced during the 19th and the 20th century when all forms of social vices, health issues and security challenges were apparent. Utopians rose up to the challenges encountered during this era and these problems were surmounted (Egunjobi and Adeleye, 2015). Like the Utopians, urban planners can also play an advisory role in tackling the problems in society, because the planning profession is a pivot of society (Pettit, 2003). This implies that without urban and regional planning our cities, towns, rural areas, and residential communities will not run efficiently.

As many communities face different challenges today, it is the responsibility of an urban planner to address these problems by providing viable solutions for today and the future (Pettit, 2003). Against this background, the roles that can be played by urban and regional planning in enhancing the services of the Nigeria Customs Service will be discussed in this chapter.

13.2 History of Nigeria Custom Service

Nigeria Customs Service is a paramilitary organisation that was established in 1891. At that time, it was under the British colonial administration with the sole responsibility of collecting inland revenue from the Niger Coast Protectorate (Adamu, 2015). In 1922, the Nigeria Custom Service was renamed Department of Customs and Excise and this name was maintained for the next 23 years (NCS, 2017). Towards the end of 1945, the Department

of Customs and Excise was transformed and the name of the organization was changed to the Customs and Excise Preventive Service. It was saddled with the responsibility of maritime and preventive services (Adamu, 2015).

The Maritime Division of the Customs and Excise Preventive Service was responsible for the collection of import and excise duties while the preventive division of the organisation was responsible for enforcement duties. The Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) No. 55 of 1958 was promulgated. Sequel to this promulgation, the affairs of the Customs and Excise Preventive Service were brought under the management of a Board (NCS, 2017). NCS (2017) asserts that the Federal Government's Nigerianisation policy in 1960 brought about the appointment of the first Nigerian Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the Customs and Excise Preventive Service.

In 1978, the two units of the service were merged into a unified Department of Customs and Excise with five distinct directorates placed under the Federal Ministry of Finance (Adamu, 2015). The roles of the Customs and Excise Preventive Service after it were expanded to provide services in revenue collection from imported goods, excise duties from domestic taxable products, suppressing smuggling, suppressing dealings in fake drugs, suppressing dealings in narcotics, suppressing import and export of arms and ammunition, suppressing movement of persons and offensive materials (Adamu, 2015).

According to Adamu (2015), the Customs and Excise Preventive Service at that time (1978) was playing the roles of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control

(NAFDAC), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and Defence Security Service (DSS). In 1985, the organisation took a new dimension, when it was unceremoniously put under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Since then, the name Nigeria Customs has been in existence (Adamu, 2015).

13.3 Statutory Function of Nigeria Customs Service

Over the years, the Nigeria customs service has been providing a vital role in securing the borders of the country and regulating the importation and exportation of illegal goods entering and leaving the country. The roles played by it have a positive impact on the economic life of any country (NCS, 2017). These roles are evident in Nigeria because there is hardly a sector of the nation's economy that is not directly or indirectly affected by the activities of the service (NCS, 2017). The statutory functions of the services include:

- i. collection of revenue (import/excise duties and other taxes/levies) and accounting for same;
- ii. anti-Smuggling activities;
- iii. security functions;
- iv. generating statistics for planning and budgetary purposes;
- v. monitoring foreign exchange utilisation etc.;
- vi. engaging in research, planning and enforcement of fiscal policies of government;
- vii. manifest processing;
- viii. licensing and registration of customs agents;

- ix. registration and designation of collecting banks; and
- x. working in collaboration with other government agencies in all approved ports and border station.

13.4 Strategic Areas Where Urban and Regional Planning Enhance the Nigeria Customs Service

In enhancing the roles of the Nigeria customs service, urban and regional planning practices and approaches can be adopted. Urban planners are professionally trained to apply geographical information in spatial analysis. Thus, Spatial Decision-Making Information Support System can be employed as a vital tool by the urban planner to ensure an effective customs services in the country. The expertise of the urban planner can be applied in the following ways:

(a) Curtailing Activities of Smugglers

In curtailing the activities of smugglers, which is one of the roles of the Nigeria custom service, urban planners can use Geographical Information Systems for mapping out all the conventional and unconventional routes in trans-border communities in the country and ascertain their number and length. According to Abba Moro, Minister of Interior, 1,583 border routes were identified in the country; out of these, 1,499 were illegal (unconventional), while 84 were legal (Ojeme and Odiniya, 2013). In Borno State alone, 100 illegal routes and over 250 footpaths linking Nigeria with Niger, Chad and Cameroon were identified by the Nigeria Customs Service; these routes are used for smuggling (Idris, 2011; Musa, 2013). Using GIS, the

planner will be able to ascertain the actual number of these routes instead of just giving an approximated figure. Mapping of these routes will serve as a guide to the Customs Service in policing the established routes (both conventional and unconventional). Also, digital mapping via GIS by the planner will help the Nigeria Customs Service to establish routes of potential threat from those with unlikely threat of smuggling. Further analysis can be done by the urban planner to provide the customs officers with the trend and changes that have occurred with the smuggling routes in trans-border communities.

(b) Conducting Research, Planning and Enforcement of Fiscal Policies of the Nigerian Government

The Nigeria Customs Service is saddled with the statutory role of conducting research, planning and enforcement of fiscal policies of the Nigerian Government. The urban planner can apply geographic information tools in all the aspects of planning processes of the Customs Service, that is, in the areas of data collection and storage, data analysis and presentation, policy making, and communication with the public and decision-makers (Nedovic, 1999). In communicating with the public and decision-makers, the urban planner can provide a well-articulated map that will easily be comprehended when enlightenment campaigns are carried out by the service.

(c) Location of Facilities

The question of where, why and what size of customs security outpost should be located in the borders/trans-border

community can effectively be answered by the urban planner because of the planner's knowledge of location theories. Location theories serve as the basis for examining how and why the arrangement of cities and facilities are done. These theories also provide the rationale for siting service location by decision-makers (Ayangbile and Adeleye, 2016). Corroborating this theory with Geographical Information Systems, the urban planner can help the customs officers find out what exists at a particular location, the land use in that location and the conditions of all existing borders.

(d) Licensing and Registration of Customs Agents

In performing the role of licensing and registration of customs agents the urban planner can help the Customs Service create a geo-database of features (Cargoes, entry and exit points, security posts) that can be displayed spatially with just a 'click' when the need arises. The creation of the database can help the service move away from the conventional physical filing system. Based on the data provided by the Nigeria Customs Service to the planner, a model can be created to form a query to determine what happens if a certain action is taken by the service (Dekolo and Oduwaye, 2005).

(e) Trans-Border Planning

Through an inclusive planning approach, the Nigeria Customs Service can be advised on how trans-border communities will be planned in order to curtail impending crisis in the country. Aluko (2012) opines that planning of border communities and equipping them with infrastructural facilities will restrain the

tides of arms smuggling along the borders. This information, when provided to decision-makers, will go a long way in helping the service achieve an effective conflict management in the country. Besides, planning of border community will enhance the work of the Nigeria Customs Service; the issue of terrorism (Boko Haram) in the Northeast will be reduced when border communities are planned (Amaliya and Nwankpa, 2014). This implies that planning will simplify the work of the Nigeria Custom Service.

(f) Port Design and Planning

Effective planning will help to achieve a hitch-free circulation of freight within the ports. The Nigerian Custom Service can be advised by the planner on where intermediary freight logistics hubs and transport terminals should be located within the ports. This can be accomplished after the planner has carried out a traffic-flow survey, traffic capacity survey and accident survey within and around the port. Also, design and planning of ports that will be presented by the planner should be problem-solving and this will help minimise any domestic accident that may occur within the port.

(g) Environmental Impact Assessment

In siting of inland ports and seaports the planner with his expertise in environmental impact assessment can advise the custom service and other stakeholders on the implication of siting such facilities in a particular location. Also, the knowledge of EIA can be extended to the service in the area of screening of crates, containers and cargoes. When there is a need to dredge

the seaports, the planner can advise the service on the implication of such action for the inhabitants of the locality.

13.5 Conclusion

The roles of urban and regional planning cannot be undermined in any profession because planning is fundamental to any society that will be practicable in ensuring safety and comfort. Since most activities of the Nigeria Customs Service are carried out in space, it will be so pertinent to seek the advice of the urban managers (physical planners) in performing her roles, especially, the roles of the Nigeria Customs Service that have to do with research, planning and enforcement of government fiscal policies.

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