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EDITORIAL: EXCLUSION, VULNERABILITY AND ADAPTATION

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INTRODUCTION

People, communities and nations are confronted with exclusion, vulnerability and adaptation. These are found across space and communities in different shades. They reflect the complexity of human societies and the imperfection of the various forces that define, shape and nurture human interactions. These phenomena are related (Nunes, 2021) and all have both vertical and horizontal dimensions. Their vertical dimension derives from their sectoral attribute in terms of economic, social and even political aspects while the horizontal dimension relates to their spatial manifestation. In addition, both exclusion and vulnerability are associated with similar causal factors of historical experiences (slave trade, colonialism, apartheid, postcolonial economic relations) and marginalising governance system including poor space and settlement governance. Exclusion, often called social exclusion (Sen, 2000) could also be an external effect of seemingly good public policy and action. Exclusion, in simple terms, means that some people, communities and spaces are outside the driving and or the active elements of the society. They lie at the margin (Estivill,2003) of the community driving forces. Marginality undermines capability. Hence, Sen (2000) opines that exclusion can be 'constitutively a part of capability deprivation as well as instrumentally a cause of diverse capability failures'.

The excluded stand disadvantaged from enjoying the benefits of community development. Exclusion relates to "notions of poverty, hardship, deprivation and marginalisation," (Peace, 2013) and the excluded do not experience a fair deal from the society (Sanusi and Spah, 2019). Exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon (Rawal, 2010, Khan et al, 2015 and Silver, 2019), involving, for example exclusion from formal citizenship rights, labour market, civil participation and social arenas (Rawal, 2010).

Vertically, exclusion can be summarized in terms of low human development; low income, health deprivation and low level of education. Low human development gives rise to a complex of deprivations that subject people and their communities to all forms of exclusion. Exclusion captures the complexity of powerlessness in modern society and incorporates a spatial focus (Muddiman, 2000). Spatially, exclusion is seen in environmental degradation, disasters, idle resources areas, economically depressed regions, deprivations in community facilities and services, urban slums, squatter settlements, exclusion of the physically challenged in space and building design and development and poor transport connectivity. In the opinion of Cuesta, et al (2022), exclusion is supported by factors of divergent identities, unfavourable circumstances and disadvantaged socioeconomic position.

Vulnerability derives partly from exclusion that weakens human capability and undermines resilience. It is associated with restricted choices associated with lack of assets (Nunes, 2021), conditions of climate change, disasters and inequality. Vulnerability undermines people's capacity for competition and accessing basic needs; undermines space's ability to attract investment, generate wealth and reduce inequality. Both exclusion and vulnerability create social discontent, and serve as sources of compromised urban security, communal agitations and at the extreme, sources of armed conflicts, insurgency, and even secession. Above all, exclusion that renders significant population and places vulnerable to negative outcomes of development, will leave such victims behind. Practically, exclusion and vulnerability are threats to the broad objective of the UN Sustainable Development Goals of 'leaving no one behind'. The fears of the danger of exclusion are expressed by the UN (2017) when it shows that exclusion is both a process and a product and that exclusion across countries of the world is putting sustainable development at risk.

The interesting thing about exclusion and vulnerability is that they also attract responses from people by process of adaptation; people and places adjusting to the circumstances of exclusion and vulnerability they found themselves. Adaptation consists of a range of strategies individuals and households in the developing world adopt to respond to a threat (Nunes, 2021) and stands as 'a process through which societies make themselves better able to cope with an uncertain future' (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2009). Adaptation could also be a response to opportunities where positive stimuli could incentivise adaptation as much as the negative stimuli could. But often, adaptation is associated with the negative conditions of exclusion and vulnerability; people and places fighting back to reclaim themselves and to maintain whatever they judge to be the best for them. Adaptation is associated with cost and most of the time, it is a function of the capacity of the adapting agent. Occurring at different scales, adaptation is distinguished by purposefulness and timing; autonomous or spontaneous, planned (reactive or anticipatory), long or short time, localised or widespread (Smit and Pilifosova, 2001).

In practical terms, exclusion and vulnerability found expression in various forms across the world and especially Africa, among people and across human settlements. A clear case of exclusion and vulnerability is the urban slum situation. According to the UN-Habitat (2020), 'slums represent one of the most enduring faces of poverty, inequality, exclusion and deprivation'. The UN-Habitat (2020) shows that a significant proportion of the Sub-Saharan African population live in slums. Although the proportion of the population living in slums declined from about 64% in 2000 to about 55% in 2014, 2016 and 2018, the population of the slum dwellers keep on rising over the years. The number of slum dwellers increased from 131.716 million in 2000 to 202.042 million in 2014, 228.936 million in 2016 and to 237.840 million in 2018. The proportion of Sub-Saharan African slum population is greatly above the global average of about 24% in 2018. In addition, Access to public transport is amazingly poor. In Sub-Saharan Africa; only 3% of the people have access to high-capacity transport systems within 1,000 metres to their homes and 33% of the urban population have access to public transport.

The vulnerability of human settlements became most visible in recent times during the Covid-19 pandemic. Cities are most affected by the pandemic. For example, records show that the percentage of recorded cases in the national capital and four other cities was 87% in Algeria, 81% in Egypt, 77% in Ghana, 59% in Nigeria and 89% in South Africa. Similar vulnerability was observed in other parts of the world. For example, 94% of the recorded cases of the Covid-19 in Argentina occurred in the national capital and 4 other cities; 85% in Chile and 90% in Italy (UN-Habitat, 2020).

Exclusion in energy poverty in Africa has been shown by many analysts (Avila et al, 2017, Sanusi and Spah, 2019, Sanusi, 2023 and Nsafon, 2023). Using the variables of energy access, rural-urban energy differential and energy consumption per head, Sanusi (2023) shows the high level of exclusion in the African energy sector. It is shown that in 2019 access to electricity is 24% in Central Africa, 47% in East Africa and 56% in West Africa. Without the Republic of South Africa, electricity access is 39% in Southern Africa. Rural-urban energy differential is as high as 70% in Zambia, 67% in Burkina Faso, and 66% in Cameroon. Measuring the disparity, it is shown that on a scale of 0-1.000, the index of urban–rural electricity disparity is 0.981 in Djibouti; 0.971 in Benin,; 0.969 in Burundi; 0.968 in Chad; and 0.947 in Democratic Republic of Congo, In general, 18 countries have very high urban-rural electricity disparity index; each of these scoring more than 0.800.

In terms of energy consumption, Sanusi (2023) also shows that electricity consumption in Africa is low. Only 11 African countries have per capita electricity consumption of more than 1000 kwh while 26 have per capita consumption of less than 500 kwh. Indeed, per capita electricity consumption is as low as 16.9 kwh in Somalia, 18.8 kwh in Sierra Leone and 24.3 kwh in Burundi. Sanusi's presentation follows earlier work on the same subject, where it was concluded that although Africa is pursuing energy development process, the continent and especially, Sub-Saharan Africa 'is grossly at the margin of this process' (Sanusi and Spah, 2019). The exclusion leading to energy poverty in Africa has serious implications for achieving not just the Goal 7 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals but also undermines achieving the other goals since energy is critical to eliminating hunger and poverty, ensuring a quality environment devoid of harmful gas emissions and driving the critical sectors of local and national economies. As a result, the range of exclusion associated with energy exclusion seems endless.

COMMENTS REFLECTING THE PAPERS

The focus of the first paper by Cloete, Magdalena Catharina focused on the learning environments for early childhood education in South Africa. The paper explores this subject from an inclusive point of view by using the perspective of women. It believes that early childhood education is critical to addressing exclusion such as poverty, achieving a happy family, building a nation and nurturing the future. The paper discovered deepening inequality of the marginalized groups. The exclusive elements experienced include higher classroom population in the low income, lower quality of buildings and lower period for outdoor recreation by the children in the low income communities than those in the high income communities. While there is a relevant policy to support early childhood development, the policy is deployed to support the learning environment of the children in high income communities rather than the children in low income communities. In addition, children in the low income communities have limited voices and their schools are confronted with limited environmental and learning facilities and absence of support for sensory-sensitive children. It is the submission of the paper that appropriate attention should be paid to the learning environment of children of all socio-economic characteristics.

The second paper by Medayese *et al*., examines the dynamics of the urban space in the coastal cities of Cape Town and Durban, South Africa. The coastal area offers unique ecological configuration that may have an impact on human and physical activities. The paper notes that historical experience has continued to take hold on the spatial characteristics of the coastal cities in South Africa. The study makes use of the concepts of urban sprawl, compact city and urban ecosystem services. Land use and land cover analysis of the coastal cities centres around built-up areas, vegetation, bare ground and water bodies. Normally, the land use mix should demonstrate a fair representation of these uses. However, over a period of 30 years, the paper discovers that the built-up areas continually gained land area while green uses of the water bodies and vegetation lost land area. The proportion of land use had also changed over the years in the two cities in favour of the built-up area. The dominance of built-up area in land use is more visible in Cape Town where it occupies about 93% of total land area in comparison with Durban where built-up area constitutes 67% of total land area in 2024. While vegetation and water bodies occupy about 30% of the land area in Durban, they occupy less than 10% of the land area in Cape Town. It is easy to see spatial deprivations in ecosystem support system in Cape Town and its vulnerability to climate change impacts. As a result, the paper recommends a development approach that balances development pressure with environmental concerns.

The third paper pays attention to gated city practice in South Africa. Gated cities are based on the twin objectives of belonging attitude and security. The study is underscored by the concepts of fortress mentality, isolationism, new world order and economic club. According to the authors, gated cities are on one hand, a spatial development tool, offering an avenue for a controlled urban physical development. On the other hand, it is a socio-economic tool availing the private sector investment platform and offering the consumers of such space security of space, security of living, protection of life and property and a sense of class. Gated cities boost class consciousness and creates their own forms of exclusion. Gated cities are supported by rising level of urban insecurity and the desire for better urban services. Gating could also be a sign of state withdrawal, low state capacity or a partnership tool between the state and the private sector. Interestingly, the paper established that in South Africa, gated cities have not led to withdrawal of urban development functions of the local authorities. While the intention of gated cities may not be a deliberate exclusive tool, exclusion has resulted as an external effect where gated cities become exclusive enclave of the rich

and surrounded by settlements with inadequate services and facilities. As a desired tool of urban development and a growing urban development tool in the developing countries, policy responses must be comprehensive enough to protect the interest of the excluded and prevent deep social cleavage in cities.

Paper 4 by Nazir et al is a case of vulnerability of people and places to external effects over which they have little or no control. Flood is found to be a problem that does not respect level of development; although developed areas may have better adaptive mechanisms than the less developed areas. The study shows increasing minimum water levels between 2010 and 2019. Within this period, the minimum water level rose from 6.65m in 2010 to the peak of 13.12m in 2016. Although the minimum water level dropped to 9.79m, it was higher than the 2010 value. Correspondingly, land uses affected by flood increased throughout the period. For example, residential land affected by flood increased from 39.32 hectares in 2010 to 81.43 hectares in 2016 and declined to 65.4 hectares in 2019 but at the level sufficiently greater than the 2010 value. Vulnerability in terms of the human population also shows increased exposure of the people to the flood hazard. In 2010 only 3715 people were affected but increased to 12 189 in 2019. Similarly, 9643 residential buildings were affected by flooding between 2010 and 2019. The glaring picture here is that there is a direct relationship between urban expansion and vulnerability to flooding. However, a unique feature is that while all socio-economic classes will be affected, the poor already excluded from many development variables suffer the impact of flood more than other socio-economic groups.

In Paper 5, the authors of this paper pay attention to the spatial distribution and patronage pattern of recreational facilities in the University of Ilorin (UNILORIN). The study used primary data, which were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered randomly to the selected academic and non - teaching staff of UNILORIN. Geo-spatial data on the locations of the recreational facilities were collected and analyzed with the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) and Nearest Neighbour Analysis respectively. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis was employed to examine the relationship between residence and patronage of recreational facilities at 5% level of significance. With an Rn value of 1.47 ($p=0.000378$), the distribution of recreational facilities in UNILORIN was dispersed. The paper also observed that, there was no significant relationship between staff place of residence and their patronage of recreational facilities ($r = 0.05$, p value $= 0.474$). The study established that health benefits and pleasure with Enhancing Factor Index of 2.58 and 2.46 respectively, were the major enhancing factors of recreational facilities patronage. The paper concluded that locations of recreational facilities are far from each other and by implication the distribution is nor regular. The paper therefore recommended that future recreational facilities should be evenly distributed so as to foster more patronage by staff members of University of Ilorin.

The concept of exclusion rears its ugly head in food security in the urban centres of South Africa. The study based in Duncan Village located under Buffalo City Municipality employs a simple definition of food security as enough food to suppress hunger. It shows the key elements of food insecurity as low dietary diversity, malnourishment, and distinct hunger seasons. The issues in food insecurity are systemic insecurity and the urban poor relying on the retail system to purchase food. The study also shows that the urban food market is dichotomised between the formal system and the informal system; the latter providing an adaptive mechanism for achieving food security among the low-income people. As much as the informal food system attends to the low income group, it suffers official neglect reflective of the general neglect suffered by the urban informal sector. The study is situated in a marginalized community dominated by low income people and based on the conceptual instruments of sustainable livelihood environment and capabilities. The study reveals that participation in the urban informal food system is a multi-national phenomenon, involving the South African and other nationals. Food vending is an aspect of the informal food market and is found to be a hub of township economy and South Africa's urban food system. In general, about 63% of both the households and food vendors are food insecure. Vulnerability to food insecurity is related to large family size and non-participation in any formal economic activity. Informal food vending is however linked to the formal food market system through sourcing of processed food from the formal stores. Despite this linkage, informal food vending receives little or no support from the government. On the contrary, the vendors suffer harassment from the government, are faced with inadequate vending infrastructure and source business financing through the informal loan system with high interest rates. These challenges will need urgent attention not only to ease the business operation of the food vendors but also to adequately integrate their operation into the urban food marketing system for enhanced urban food security.

The idea of spatial exclusion is pursued by Jimoh and Araromi in paper 7. The paper identified the components of rural transportation as head carriage, wheelbarrow, bicycle and motor vehicle. These reflect the diversity of the modes of transport available to rural dwellers and also shows the disadvantages suffered by the rural dwellers in Igbara-Oke community of Ondo State in Nigeria. The paper shows that less than 20% of people depend on the use of motor vehicles to carry their agricultural products of livestock, perishables, food crops and cash crops. Head carriage is used by more than 40% of the respondents to carry their farm products. There is the dominance of inefficient, low capacity and labour intensive means of transportation to carry agricultural products. In addition, rural transport users spend a long time waiting for transport. More than 70% of the road users spend three hours and above waiting for transport. The paper notes that transport availability is affected by the nature of the road, nature of farm produce and the bargaining power of the users. The exclusive nature of the rural transport experience causes damage to farm products, spoilage of farm products and uncertain market possibility, among other effects.

Conclusion: The phenomena of exclusion, vulnerability and adaptation operate among people and human settlements in various forms. It is safe to say that no human community, space and activities are immune from these phenomena. The collection of papers in this volume of the *Journal of Inclusive Cities and Built Environment* adequately reflects these. Authors of the papers have shown exclusion in various forms in relation to children, rural communities and even urban space. Above all, the papers also show how people and institutions have also devised ways to cope with exclusion and vulnerability; although success and efficiency of adaptation also differ across space, time and people. For example, urban informal food vending and the Almajiri system are adaptive mechanisms. Preparedness for adaptation provides a positive force for a change and, turning the table of exclusion and vulnerability around. However, the institutional environment must be ready by setting appropriate policies, pursuing appropriate actions, building capacity and ensuring effective engagement that will eliminate exclusive behaviour. Institutional participation will strengthen the system and people to achieve resilience to prevent exclusion, reduce vulnerability and enhance inclusion.

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