

Specified case study: two contrasting urban areas

3.2.3.9 Urban environments

What you need to know
Illustrate and analyse key urban themes incl. patterns of economic & social well-being
The character of the urban study areas
The nature and impact of physical environment conditions
Implications of environmental sustainability
The experience and attitudes of their populations

Phoenix, Arizona, USA and Lagos, Nigeria.

Phoenix, Arizona, USA	Lagos, Nigeria
<p>Character of the city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phoenix is the sixth largest city of the USA and capital of the state of Arizona, with a population of just over 1.5m. (2015). It is one of the fastest growing urban areas in the USA with an average 4% annual population increase from the mid-1960s to 2010. It is the only US state capital with over 1m inhabitants. The fastest period of growth, in the 1960s, coincided with the development of Sun City – a development that is now within the Phoenix metropolitan area that was built as a future retirement community; the warm winters of Arizona attracting ‘snowbirds’ or ageing migrants from the northern, industrial cities of the USA. Low state business taxes, very cheap land (semi-desert), few employment regulations and a growing workforce have attracted many modern businesses to Phoenix – a ‘Sun-belt city’ in the last 40 years. Intel processors has one of its largest sites there, employing 12 000, along with aerospace, mining and electronics companies. 	<p>Character of the city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lagos is the largest city not only of Nigeria, but the whole of Africa, with an estimated population of 21m (2016) It was the capital city of Nigeria from 1914 until 1991 when the federal capital moved to Abuja – a more central location in the country. Very rapid population growth has resulted from vast in-migration to the city: the population stood at just 1.4m in 1970. It is currently the 8th fastest growing city in Africa with the total population expected to doubly by 2050. While many millionaires are based in Lagos, two-thirds of the population live in slums. The city has been called the ‘mega-city of slums’ with areas such as Makoko extending out into the shallow lagoon with self-built houses on stilts and transport by canoe/open boat. The port of Lagos is the chief one in the country and one of the largest and busiest of the continent. One of its main exports is crude oil from the Delta-region oilfields. Lagos is the centre for much financial and commercial activity of W. Africa with major banks, investment companies and telecommunications.
<p>The nature and impact of physical environment conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phoenix lies in a desert zone (the Sonoran Desert) with extremely hot summers and short, warm winters. It receives more sunshine than any other major city on the planet. The contribution of the city’s urban heat island effect is to modify the diurnal (day v night) temperature range. The highest recorded temperature is 50C with a mean June high temp. of 41C in July. Much electricity demand is to run air conditioning units in homes, shopping malls, public buildings and places of employment through much of the year. 	<p>The nature and impact of physical environment conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lagos has developed from a series of low-lying islands in Lagos Lagoon with the CBD located on what is known as Lagos Island. There are large areas of brackish water that are both slow moving and ideal habitats for mosquito breeding. The city lies in a tropical savanna climate with a distinct hot, dry season (Nov-March) and a hot/warm wet season (April-Oct). Lying close to the equator the temperature is largely unvarying. Air conditioning is available for the wealthy but this excludes the vast majority of the city’s population.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The water supply is reliant on canals to divert water from regional lakes and rivers with the largest amount coming from the Colorado River (of Grand Canyon fame). The Salt River flows through south Phoenix from springs in the southern Rocky Mtns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lagos is surrounded by water but fresh water is supplied from the Ogun and Owo Rivers. Some water is drawn from local sources. Water for domestic use is often contaminated in the distribution network and many prefer to use bottled water.
<p>Economic and social well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty rates in Phoenix were higher than the national average (1990-2005). The influx of retirees varies from the wealthy, looking to avoid cold winters, to those with limited pensions and savings looking to save on living costs. • The arrival of economic immigrants from nearby Mexico (both legal and illegal) means there are many inhabitants on low incomes. • Young families migrate to Phoenix from other parts of the USA largely for employment opportunities in 'new' industries tend to be better off. • The wealthy tend to live in extensive suburbs; the less wealthy around the central 'downtown' urban zone. • Metropolitan tax revenues are higher in the wealthy suburbs, funding emergency services, social care and environmental maintenance. These are often poorly funded in the central city areas. • There has been a rise in female-headed households (up 20%) and Hispanic households (up 109%) in central Phoenix in recent decades: both are associated with higher vulnerability to poverty. • The children of many immigrants don't speak English, resulting in education obstacles that contributes to Phoenix's lower economic and social scores in the city core (incomes are 8% below the national average.) • Following the global financial crisis in 2008 leading to job losses, over half a million people in Phoenix were reliant on Food Stamps in 2012. 	<p>Economic and social well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of the Lagos population are vulnerable to poverty and over 40% subject to economic deprivation. 70% are classed as 'poor'. • Wealth inequality amongst Lagos inhabitants is wide and increasing, fuelled by the influx of rural migrants continuously arriving seeking work and the buzz of city life. • Many of the multinationals in Lagos have generated a large expatriate (expat) community. The 2014 Economist Intelligence Unit rated the city as among the four worst destinations for expats, coming 137th out of 140 global cities surveyed. • Lagos was condemned for overpopulation, deteriorating infrastructure, problems of traffic, sanitation and pollution and a fear of severe crime. • Lagos has the largest expat community in West Africa which will grow as the economy expands. • The official clampdown on illegal slums by urban authorities in 2012 saw government speedboats bearing machine-wielding men clear out areas of the Makoko slum by destroying many self-build dwellings and making 3000 people homeless. • The total population crammed into the Makoko water-side slum is estimated at over 80 000 people. It is sometimes referred to as the 'Venice of Africa'. • An award-winning 'Makoko Floating School' was constructed for the education of slum children in 2013. It was destroyed in 2016 by a torrential tropical storm. Within days its debris had been scavenged by new arrivals to Lagos to build new (illegal) dwellings.
<p>The experience and attitudes of the population (quotes from online sources)</p> <p>"I am never going to move from Arizona. Yes, the summers are hot. And it will take a bit to get used to it. But the Winters are absolutely fantastic. If you want snow, it's about 1-2 hours away. No hurricanes, no earthquakes, except for the very odd small tornado once every 10 years or so and the Monsoon season that can wreak a bit of havoc we don't really have anything major to deal with. Great views, great sunsets. Mountains all around. Can't find a better place."</p> <p>"Don't. I've been living here practically my whole life and I can't wait to get out. If you like golfing or going to spas, you would love it, but if you like doing anything else, forget it. There is absolutely no culture and</p>	<p>The experience and attitudes of the population (quotes from online source)</p> <p>"The way you experience the life in Lagos varies according to age, social interest and location among others. The life i led (been away for some while) in Lagos was boring, dull and secluded by every standard due to the fact that i have few social interests and friends. Although i would admit to the fast paced quality of Lagos which is really evident when compared to the life in a place like Abuja where everything seems to move like a movie played in slow motion. The reason i listed Age, social interest and location as few things that affect the possible life in the state. For Teenagers there's nothing much to do except with your friends, religious groups, family outings, chores and school work. A typical Lagosian parent cares about education</p>

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<p>downtown is dead by 5pm. The "city" is one giant sprawling disgusting suburb. Summer is unbearable (and I've been living here for close to 20 years now) and during winter you feel robbed (it's 63 degrees right now). Spring and fall don't exist. But you said you're coming for school, right? ASU? If so, as long as you stick near the campus, the Phoenix-metro area is bearable for a few years. "</p> <p>"Many street names and place names are in Spanish. Many people here speak Spanish better than English or only speak Spanish. If you ever wanted to learn a second language, you'll get to study it here."</p> <p>"A beautiful welcoming city with golf, restaurants, endless entertainment ... the more money you are willing/able to part with the more you will be able to partake. For me, I spend my time on lower cost things like swimming in pools and reservoirs, hiking in the many parks, and helping with community building. Wonderful weather October through May but it is hot in the summer so I've moved my entire day up a couple hours to get up at four am and enjoy gorgeous mornings before many people are even up. That said; just like any move, check out the following before deciding where to live in a major city: 1) find the high rated public district schools as they will do well for children and support everyone's property values, 2) if possible live near parks or preserves, 3) live away from high crime rates and incarceration rates as they will vary significantly from precinct to precinct, 4) live east of where you will work: I hate commuting into the sun, and 5) live perpendicular to flight paths of any nearby commercial or GA airports ... a good way to cut down on air traffic noise."</p>	<p>and would probably encourage you to study or compare you with friends that do better than you do in school (but if you are the best then the complains would be on doing better than your current best)"</p> <p>"I have lived in Lagos for more than 6 years, and it's a beautiful place if one has friends; inclusive, charming, full of problems and full of solutions, conversations are easy and free flowing. If roads are busy, there are things you can buy off the road. If there's no power, small roadside bars in unknown streets serve your needs."</p> <p>"I don't see how Lagos can continue functioning at double the size. It barely functions now. Even if you live in a block with an emergency power generator, you need a battery powered UPS for the telly to cover times when the generator doesn't have any fuel. The traffic? You can't describe it. You've been there, or you haven't. It can take two hours to get from your flat on Ikoyi to an office on Victoria."</p> <p>"Lagos has really changed in terms of the people and infrastructure compared to how it was 8 years ago. It has really evolved into a megacity with the help of the former governor Babatunde Raji Fashola, and it has helped people reduce the hardship there used to be. Lagos now has good pedestrian bridges, metropolitan buses we call BRT buses and good roads in the major areas. But the government needs to create more alternative routes for people and expand the roads, because every day of the week there is always traffic everywhere."</p>
<p>Implications of environmental sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issue of water provision. The south-western regions of the USA have been experiencing prolonged droughts and winter snowfall (the source of many rivers) is decreasing. The amount of water being abstracted from rivers is not sustainable as demand grows without significant change. • Electricity is sourced from nuclear and coal-fired power stations in Arizona. There needs to be more investment in wind and solar renewables. • The growth and sprawl of Phoenix is extending commuting times to the downtown and commercial areas. This increases fossil fuel use for transport. • The demographic imbalance between economically active and dependent groups is growing as the elderly retirees live longer and migrant incomers are of child-rearing age. The dependent groups are increasing at the expense of the working population. 	<p>Implications of environmental sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The population is increasing faster than the infrastructure and service-provision can cope with. There are insufficient houses, doctors, schools, roads, electricity and water services etc. • There is little waste management, with the result that sewers in slum areas discharge into Lagos Lagoon creating significant health hazards for those living in the proximity to it. • Air quality is poor due to the lack of effective, cheap, reliable electricity or gas for the poor. Wood and charcoal are used creating domestic and workshop smoke that damages lungs, eyes and skin. • The increasing social inequality is not sustainable as reaction to deprivation and conspicuous wealth ignites tensions. The political machinery necessary to change conditions for the better needs development to reduce the causes of inequality.