

## Rapid Urbanisation: Theories, Causes, Consequences and Coping Strategies

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### ABSTRACT

Urbanisation is a growing challenge in the world today with every society battling with its consequences. Despite the benefits that come with urbanisation, the damages on developing economies are enormous. This paper reviews the origin of urbanisation and the theories that defined its formation. Furthermore, the pattern of urbanisation in developing countries is analyzed in relation with that of the developed world. Finally, the causes and consequences of urbanisation are reviewed, and possible coping strategies suggested.

**Keywords:** Urbanisation, theories, causes, consequences, coping strategies.

### INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is the steady increase in the number of people living in cities or urban centres. This occurrences result from the continuous mass movement of people from the villages or rural settlements to cities or urban areas. It can also result from natural increase (the excess of births over deaths) especially where this population increase take place in areas where advance technology and developmental projects are present. The definition of what qualifies a town as an urban centre differs from one country to another depending on the population criteria used. In Sweden for instance, from as low as 200 inhabitants in a place could be regarded as an urbanised centre; 250 persons for Denmark; 1000 persons in Canada; 10,000 in Greece; while in Nigeria, a place is called an urban when the population is as high as 20,000 inhabitants

(Palen, 2008). Each nation uses its own criteria for defining urban centres depending on how the population are distributed (Satterthwaite, 2005).

For the first time in history, the majority of the people live now in urban areas and the urban population is growing rapidly (UN, 2007). Urbanisation is not common only to a particular country or region of the world, as it is a phenomenon that is currently visiting every nations of the world. In 1960, the global urban population was 34% of the world's total and only 43% as at 1990, however, by 2014 the urban population accounted for 54% of the world's total and continues to grow. By 2050 the proportion living in urban areas is expected to reach 66% (UNDESA, 2014; UN-Habitat, 2016; UNDESA, 2019). Figure 1 shows the change in the rural and urban populations of the world from 1950 through to projected figures up to the year 2050.

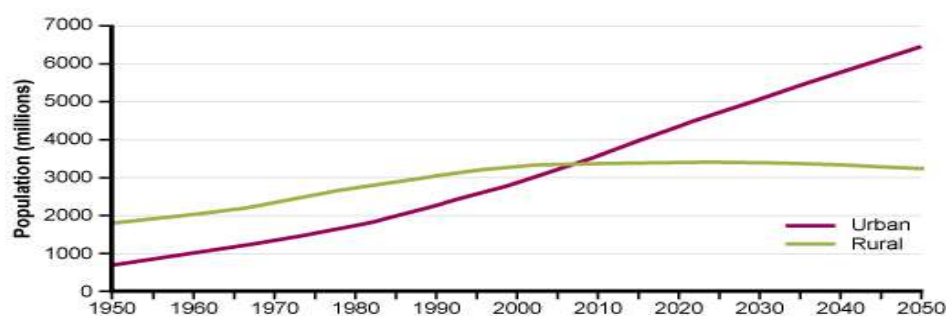


Figure1. Urban and rural population of the world, 1950–2050(Source: UNDESA, 2014)

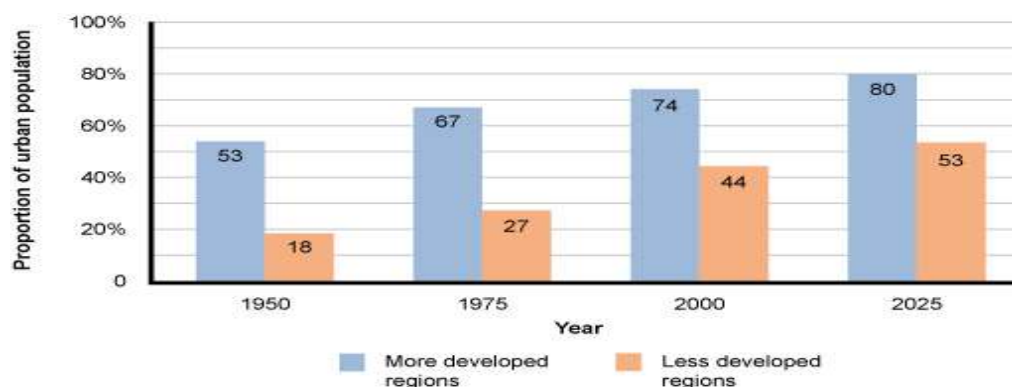
## Rapid Urbanisation: Theories, Causes, Consequences and Coping Strategies

There had been concerns that with the current rapidly growing world's population, the trend of shifting from rural areas to urban settlements is likely to continue, and the overall growth of the world's population could add another 2.5 billion people to urban areas by 2050, with close to 90% of this increase taking place in Asia and Africa (UN, 2018). Urbanisation is a major challenge in the world, but the source of the rapid growth of cities in less developed countries has been a major concern of researchers.

The two sources of urbanisation mostly referred in literatures have been the continued rural-urban migration and the rate of natural increase. Opinions have also differed on the most contributing source of rapid urbanization in these less developed countries, although majority of opinions seem to be that, rural-urban migration has been a net contributor to the growth of urban centres in the 1950s to the 1970s, while natural increase is contributing more to urban growth in the past two decades (Chen and Parish, 1996; Chirisa, 2008).

The challenges posed by this rapid urbanisation are immersed and very frightening with more easily observable, are human and environmental poverty, declining quality of life, and the untapped wealth of human resources that they represent (Chen, 2007). Housing and associated facilities (water, electricity, etc) are similarly inadequate, such that millions now live in substandard and subhuman environments, plagued by slum, squalor, and similarly inadequate social amenities, schools, health and recreational facilities (Bodo, 2015). The city challenges that have led to breakdown of family cohesiveness and community spirit can further increased levels of juvenile delinquency and crime (Burra, 2005).

The rate of urbanization differs from one country to another, even for those in the same region (Chen, 1991). Though, there are similar trend of urbanization in developing and developed countries of the world, but still, there are distinctions in the individual countries (Bodo, 2015). Figure 2 shows a comparison of trends in more or less developed regions of the world.



**Figure 2.** Trends in urban population growth, comparing more and less developed regions (Source: UNDESA, 2014)

Urban growth also differs in the different regions of the world as shown on Table 1. Every city in the world has its own peculiar challenges that makes them different from those of other

cities; even for cities in the same zone (for example, Port Harcourt and Yenagoa in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria) has their peculiar challenges.

**Table 1.** Urban rate of change, 1995-2015

Region/Area	Average annual rate of the urban population				Entire period
	1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015	1995-2015
World	2.13%	2.27%	2.20%	2.05%	2.16%
High-income countries	0.78%	1.00%	1.00%	0.76%	0.88%
Middle-income countries	2.74%	2.77%	2.61%	2.42%	2.63%
Low-income countries	3.54%	3.70%	3.70%	3.77%	3.68%
Africa	3.25%	3.42%	3.55%	3.55%	3.44%
Asia	2.79%	3.05%	2.79%	2.50%	2.78%
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.19%	1.76%	1.55%	1.45%	1.74%
Europe	0.10%	0.34%	0.34%	0.33%	0.31%
North America	1.63%	1.15%	1.15%	1.04%	1.24%
Oceania	1.43%	1.49%	1.78%	1.44%	1.53%

Source: UNDESA, 2014

### HISTORY OF URBANISATION

So many literatures have recounted slighted different versions of the possible origin of urbanisation. However, there seemed to be a consensus in these literatures that the earliest form of urban life started in the Middle and Near East, in what we call today as Iraq around 3,500 BC. In this regard, the oldest urban communities known in history is believed to have started approximately 6,000 years ago and later emerged with the Maya culture in Mexico and in the river basins of China and India. In the earlier period of the thirteenth century, the largest cities in the world were the Chinese cities of Chang'an (Xi'an today) and Hangzhou, which had over one million people. Even the city of London was less than one until the 1700. In the nineteenth century, insufficiency of food supply and the difficulty of the means of transportation necessitated a stable and low population with less than three percent of the world's population living in urban places around 1800 (Clark, 1998).

According to reports from previous scholars, urban population started fluctuating between four and seven percent of the total population from the beginning of the Christian era until 1850. In that same year, out of an estimated world population of 1.3 billion persons, about 80 million or 6.5 percent lived in urban settlements (Grauman, 1976). In 1850, only three cities of the world (London, Beijing and Paris) had more than one million inhabitants, with about 110 other cities presumed to have more than 100,000 inhabitants (Golden, 1981). It was also reported that of the 25 largest cities in the world then, 11 were in Europe, eight in East Asia, four in South Asia, and only two in North America. Between 1850 to 1950, only three regions in Great Britain, North-West Europe, and the USA were more than 20 percent urban. By the first half of the twentieth century, urbanisation was most rapid and extensive in Europe, the Americas and Australasia. Within this period, the number of large cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants in the world had increased to 946; and the city of New York had the largest population of about 2.3 million people (Darvis, 1965). This was a period where the urbanisation of developed countries had largely reached its peak, even though; only a quarter of the world's population lived in the urban places (Davis, 1965).

In the developing world, urbanisation became noticeable in the late twentieth century, although it was difficult to ascertain the actual growth rates or the trend of urbanisation in the less

developed countries due to inconsistency of what should be adjudged or defined as an urban place and also the unavailability or lack of quality of their census data (Timberlake, 1987). The transition from the twentieth to the present century marked a more catastrophic rapid urbanisation growth all over the world, as half of the people in the world were now living in urban areas by 2008. It is predicted that the world's urban population will rise from the current 50 percent to 75 percent by 2050, which is far higher than the mere 10 percent in 1900 (Dogan, 1998). Already the USA, Britain and Germany have already surpassed 75 percent urban and could even exceed 90 percent by 2050 (Soja and Kanai 2007). Available data revealed that South Korea and Mexico had already surpassed 50 percent urban in 1950 and are likely to be more 75 percent urbanised by 2030 (Chen, 2007; Castillo, 2007).

The cities with more than one million inhabitants have gradually grown from only two (London and Beijing) around 1800 to 16 around 1900, to roughly 70 in 1950, to approximately 180 by 1975 and then catapulted to 450 in 2005 (Clark, 1998; Cohen, 2004). Out of these 450 cities, China claimed 100, India about 40, while the USA, Europe and Africa had 40 respectively and the rest shared among the cities in Latin America and the Caribbean. As at 1900, London was the first and only megacity of 10 million inhabitants, but the list has increased to over 20 in 2005.

### THEORIES OF URBANISATION

There are been several explanations on what drives urbanisation and how cities had emerged. Some of the available literatures on the theories of urbanisation have ideas that intersect with others; while some came up as a build up from other theories. Some of these theories are highlighted below to further buttress the understanding of why and how urbanisation takes place.

#### The Theory of Self-Generated Urbanisation

This theory suggest that urbanisation occurrence requires two separate conditions, which are the generation of surplus products that sustain people in non-agricultural activities (Hawley, 1981) and the achievement of a level of social development that allows large communities to be capable of working successfully alone (Bodo, 2015; Lampard, 1965). It is believed that this type of changes that result in urbanisation took place simultaneously in the Neolithic period when the first cities emerged in the Middle East

(Wheatley, 1971). This theory also holds that rural-urban migration was the source of this form of urbanisation, as people began to move to the cities for factory jobs (Childe, 1950). Thus, industrialisation was identified as the driver behind the exodus movement of people from the rural settlements to urban areas. Before the industrial revolution in Great Britain in the twentieth century, historical evidence showed that no society could be described as urbanised. It was after this period that the West began to industrialise rapidly and soon after the accelerated industrialisation and then urbanisation in the rest of the world through the last century to the present. This theory concludes that industrialisation produces urbanisation. This theory has also been queried for focussing on rural-urban shift within counties as the source of the urbanisation, considering that there are other cities that are urbanized based on other factors, and not necessarily through rural-urban migration (Davis, 1972; Pred, 1977).

### Modernization Theory

This theory was prevalent and influential from the 1950s to the 1970s. The theory asserts that urbanization results from the introduction of new things and innovations within the society through industrialisation, technological application, information penetration and cultural diffusion (Smith, 1996). Considering urbanisation through the lens of modernization, first, it is common to see elements of modernisation (new things) in every society that has moved from the primitive era (Stone Age) to a new or modern pattern of doing things. Secondly, the importance of technology in social organisation and shaping of the society is very obvious; as urbanisation usually results afterwards. The present state of urbanisation and development in the world today cannot be separated from its initial state at the onset of modernization (Kasarda and Crenshaw, 1991). Most developments are products of technologically driven societies, which could boost or increase economic capabilities, provide surplus food through improve agricultural system and the use of mechanical and electronic tools or machines to reduce workload on citizen; yet increasing speed and efficiency of work done (Lenski and Nolan, 1984; Nolan and Lenski, 1985).

It is assumed in this context that technology is more important than social organisation of the society. Thus, the application of technology is seen as the main driving force of urbanisation in the society. According to Kasarda and Crenshaw (1991); industrialisation rather than capitalisation

is often seen by scholars in this tradition as having major impact in the transformation of the third world societies. Previous scholars have asserted that the modernization approach encourages cultural diffusion and breeds uneven development especially in the third world countries (Hawley, 1981; Kasarda and Crenshaw, 1991). It is believed that this kind of urbanisation may have been triggered by the concentration of social amenities and developmental projects in certain parts of the society, due to ethnic, racial or religious divisions and corrupt politics, that has created economic dichotomy and uneven developments in the world today (Alonso, 1980). With investments and opportunities concentrated in few places (most likely cities); massive rural-to-urban migration is necessitated stemming from rural-push and urban-pull factors (Berliner, 1977; Kasarda and Crenshaw, 1991).

### Dependency/World-System Theory

There had been several theoretical statements as regard dependency/world-system theory, making it difficult to harmonize these ideas into a single thought (Kasarda and Crenshaw, 1991; Frank, 1967; Baran 1957; Evans, 1979; Timberlake, 1985, 1987). This perspective of urbanisation emerged from the failure of modernization theory to account for both the conditions and consequences of urbanisation in developing countries (Bodo, 2015). The theorists in this tradition believe that, this kind of system is introduced through either intentional coercion or through the inherent logic of capitalism in certain areas; and also the presence of underdevelopment among the population (Wallerstein, 1980; Galtung, 1971). A more critical analysis of dependency/world-system theory had been reviewed at a more basic level, whose views were rested on three assumptions (Kasarda and Crenshaw, 1991; Hermassi, 1978; Chirot and Hall, 1982).

Firstly, these critical theorists believed that a unique form of capitalist development pattern exist in societies, attributing it to a form of social organisation. Secondly, for capitalism to be in place, certain social structure will manifest in the form of unequal exchange, uneven development, individual social inequality, core-periphery hierarchies and dominance structures (Kasarda and Crenshaw, 1991). Perhaps, these features of underdevelopment were not available in such societies; the dependency/world-system theorists asserted that a capitalistic development will necessitate such scenario or create them

into the system (Hermassi, 1978; Kasarda and Crenshaw, 1991).

The views of these theorists were clear, that the social changes in the third world were as a result of structures and processes of the capitalist world system. Thus, this system thrive through the unequal structure and disproportionate development in the society; as the world cities of the developed world are using primate capitals of the third world as accumulators and transmitters of wealth (Portes and Benton, 1984; London, 1987; Bornschie, 1981; Cohen, 1981).

### Theory of Urban Bias

This theory has been supported by several scholars (London and Smith, 1988; Bradshaw, 1987; Tadoro, 1981; Lipton, 1977; among others). Michael Lipton, a development economist, who is a leading proponent of the urban bias theory; in 1977 explained this theory in his paper by comparing the data of 63 less developed countries and nine developed countries, which revealed that urban-rural disparity is seen to growing in the poor countries as the governments of these nations tend to intervene in markets in ways that imposes tax on agriculture; whereas the governments of the richer nation were doing the reverse by intervening in ways that confer subsidies on farmers (Lipton, 1977; Dixon and McMichael, 2016). In this sense, the rural people were described as being parasitized by urban populations, who benefits massively from the consumption of cheap good from the rural settlements and beautiful urban structures from the tax incomes from these rural areas (Dixon and McMichael, 2016). This bias in favour of the urban settlements has created disparity between the rural and urban areas; as regard to consumption, wage and productivity levels; necessitating mass exodus of the rural dwellers to cities for greener pastures and an improved standard of living (Bradshaw, 1987; Corbridge and Jones, 2005).

The sufferings and abject poverty among the people in the rural areas is attributed to urban bias (Lipton 1977). This results from the uneven distribution of available resources among the populace; a situation that concentrate developmental projects like agricultural and industrial reforms in the urban centres, making the impoverish rural dwellers to move to the cities where they can access quality education, health care service, basic social amenities, security, essential goods and services (Lipton, 2005; Bates, 1981). The urban bias theorists believed that there are groups that hinder the economical

development of the rural areas by pressuring the government to protect their interest by their location in urban areas at the expense of the rural areas (Ades and Glaeser, 1994) and this development process in the poor countries that is economically bias to the rural areas has been embedded in the political structure by the urban groups (Varshney, 1994). So, the people in these rural areas continue to suffer from stunted growth, reduced investments, lower public goods provision and political repression due to the lack of political will or power to aid their development (Lipton, 1977).

There had been also other opposing arguments that urban bias does not necessarily cause rural poverty as some governments in developing countries have made efforts in developing the rural areas by enacting laws and policies that favour the rural settlements. Taiwan and South Korea formulated policies on land reforms to boost agricultural production and profits for the rural people; while Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand governments decided to focus developmental projects on health and education in the rural areas (McGuise, 2001). These activities of these governments countered rural-urban migration as more jobs and opportunities were readily available in the rural areas (Muscat, 1990).

### URBANISATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN COMPARISON WITH THE DEVELOPED WORLD

The geographical regions that constitute developing countries are Africa, East Asia, South Asia, Western Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean as shown on Table 2. Prior to 1950, urbanisation was a phenomenon that was only common to developed countries and these countries experienced rapid urbanisation during the period of industrialisation in Europe and North America in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Movements were usually from the rural settlements to the urban centres for better jobs, but after 1950, this trend slowed down in the developed countries (Modal, 2019). In fact, currently people are moving from the big cities in developed countries to rural areas; resulting into what is regarded as *Counter Urbanisation* (Modal, 2019). This trend is what gave birth to the growth of suburbs.

On the other hand, in most developing countries, around 1950, the colonies became independent nations and the quest for development leads to

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accumulation of resources in core settlements (or areas of interest) that immediately became urbanized through two main factors: massive rural-urban migration and natural increase (Abiodun, 1997; Modal, 2018). The urbanisation of developing countries, especially African has been described as unique (Bodo, 2015). Urbanization pattern in African is different from that of other continents of the world. As compared with other regions, Africans are always moving

to other parts of the world for greener pastures, leisure and religious functions, but despite this, the continent is one of the fastest urbanizing regions of the world (Guneralp et al, 2018). Currently, most places in Africa is largely rural and primitive; yet, African urban population is expected to be more than triple in over forty years, from 395 million in 2000 to 1.339 billion in 2050, corresponding to 21<sup>st</sup> of the world's projected urban population (UNDESA., 2019).

**Table2.** *Developing economies by region*

AFRICA		ASIA	LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
<b>North Africa</b> Algeria Egypt Libya Mauritania Morocco Sudan Tunisia	<b>Southern Africa</b> Angola Botswana Lesotho Malawi Mauritius Mozambique Namibia South Africa Zambia Zimbabwe	<b>East Asia</b> Brunei Darussalam China Hong Kong Indonesia Myanmar Papua New Guinea Philippines Republic of Korea Singapore Taiwan of China Thailand Viet Nam	<b>Caribbean</b> Barbados Cuba Dominican Republic Guyana Haiti Jamaica Trinidad and Tobago
<b>Central Africa</b> Cameroon Central African Republic Chad Congo Equatorial Guinea Gabon Sao Tome & Principe	<b>West Africa</b> Benin Burkina Faso Cabo Verde Cote d'Ivoire Gambia Ghana Guinea Guinea-Bissau Liberia Mali Niger Nigeria Senegal Sierra Leone Togo	<b>South Asia</b> Bangladesh India Iran Nepal Pakistan Sri Lanka	<b>Mexico and Central America</b> Costa Rica El Salvador Guatemala Honduras Mexico Nicaragua Panama
<b>East Africa</b> Burundi Comoros Congo DR Djibouti Eritrea Ethiopia Kenya Madagascar Rwanda Somalia Uganda Tanzania		<b>Western Asia</b> Bahrain Iraq Israel Jordan Kuwait Lebanon Oman Qatar Saudi Arabia Syrian Arab Republic Turkey United Arab Emirates Yemen	<b>South America</b> Argentina Bolivia Brazil Chile Columbia Ecuador Paraguay Peru Uruguay Venezuela

Source: UNDESA, 2014

In developing countries, the towns usually serve as sources of opportunities for job seekers. The villagers who are usually able bodied men, leaves their families with the assurance of coming back to the village after few months in the city with enough money to cater for the family needs. In most cases, these journeys that begin with few villagers going to the city are always successful as their objective is met. On their return, they tell others of the mouth-watering opportunities in the city and how they intend to go back into the city to make more money for their family. Gradually, with the quest for an improve standard of living, the trips become more frequent and the stay in the city moves from months into years (McCall, 1955).

Earlier before now, the migration pattern in Africa used to be in circular form with the villagers that travelled to work in the mines, plantations and factories during the colonial times returning after 2 to 5 years (Byerlee, 1974). During those times, the villagers could leave their jobs to visit their families at home for some months and still return to find their jobs waiting for them or they could go for a completely new and better job. But currently, there are lacks of jobs in the cities that have made it risky for villagers with paid job to return home, knowing that their chances of finding a job again are very slim (McCall, 1955). The cities in the developing countries that was once a heaven of opportunities for migrants is now infested with several problems such poverty, high infant mortality, malnutrition, environmental degradation, congestion and inadequate housing (Herrmann and Khan, 2008).

The conditions in rural areas in developing countries are so pitiful that many move to the cities in order to improve their standard of living, only to be faced with what has been described as *urban illusion* (Eyong and foy, 2006). The villagers arrive the city and find it difficult to find a job, their situation become worse than it was before they moved (Stifel and Thorbecke, 2003; Potts, 2006). Urbanisation which is usually complemented by industrialisation should normally lead to an improvement in the economic conditions, living standards of the population as it in developed countries. Unfortunately, urbanisation in most developing countries does not show any significant or an improvement of the living standard of the population (Adegbola, 1987); rather in some African countries, urbanisation creates wars and armed conflicts, insecurity, poverty and diseases (Boadi, et al, 2005; Fay and Opal, 2000). Majority of the urban centres

in developing countries are unable to cope with the needs of the growing population, so the urban dwellers fall back to the informal sectors for employment opportunities (Gundogan and Bicerli, 2009).

### Urbanisation in Nigeria

Urbanisation in Nigeria started a long time ago with cities like Kano, Ibadan, Benin, Zaria, Sokoto and others already urbanised, with about 450 ethnic groups existing before colonisation (Williamson, 1987). The urban environment as at that time was noted for local and international trade, with the some of the famous traditional palaces in these cities. After colonisation and the subsequent amalgamation of the Northern and South protectorates by Lord Fredrick Lugard in 1914; more opportunities for trade were created in the urban centres. Business transaction was mainly on agricultural produce and mineral resources between Nigeria and the Western World (Williamson, 1988). Within the country, the needed roads, rails and infrastructures were constructed in towns where certain items were needed in commercial quantities. For instance, the railways ran from the groundnut pyramids of Kono through the tin-ore of Jos, to the coal deposits of Enugu down to Port Harcourt where ships were already stationed to transport these goods overseas (Okowa, 1991). Other routes were also running as at this time, as the Logos port terminal was popular for importation and exportation of goods. These popular towns used for commercial activities in those days started attracting people from other areas coming to do business and new towns were emerging along the routes of transportation between the major towns.

In 1954, the British government recognised three major regions in Nigeria which were the Western, Eastern and Northern provinces (FGN, 1962). After independence, the pattern of urbanisation in Nigeria was highly depended on the Nigerian government plans and policies (FGN, 1970). In 1967, the military president, General Yakubu Gowon created 12 states with new capitals to replace the regional structure of the North, West, East and the Mid-West (FGN, 1975, 1981). In 1976, the state structure increase to 19 by General Murtala Mohammed, 21 in 1986 and then 30 in 1991 by General Ibrahim Babangida and finally to 36 states in 1993 by General Sani Abacha (FGN, 1991, 1993, 1994). This sequence of state creation was redefining the Nigeria's environment as revenues accrued from oil and other investments to the nation was

shared monthly to the state governors, who immediately started developing their state capitals at the expense of other areas in their locality (FGN, 1996, 1997).. Currently, these thirty six states capitals are urbanized with the outer rural surroundings in abject neglect.

### CAUSES OF URBANISATION

There had been numerous submissions as to what causes urbanisation, some of the reasons given are industrialisation, commercialisation, social beneficial services, natural increase, employment opportunities and others; but for this study, three main reasons were identified which encompasses or envelops every other reasons.

#### Rural to Urban Migration

Migration in the context of this study is the voluntary movement of people (as individuals, family units or large groups) from their homelands (place of birth or residency) to a new location with the intention of settling down temporarily or permanently; due to economical and technological growth or advancement in their desired destination. The absence essential basic amenities, unavailability of government presence and little or no commercial activities in the rural areas of most developing countries serve as *push factor* that drives people away from the rural settlements; whereas the cities of these counties remains the focus of government developmental projects and the centre of several opportunities, necessitating rural dwellers to troop in their numbers to the cities due to these *pull factors*. In developing countries most especially, the main causative factor is rural-urban migration (Bodo, 2015).

The government is bias toward the rural settlement, as they pay special wage structures in urban areas (Gibert and Gugler, 1982). Employment opportunities are believed to be surplus in the cities with many industries offering high wages (Tadaro, 1979). There are more educational institutions, health facilities, beautiful housing facilities, good road networks and bigger markets for the residents to enjoy. Most residents in the rural areas of the some of the poorest countries do not electricity, so they often desire the urban lifestyle with beautiful street lights at night; as compare to the villages were they have rely on the moon' light at night. This factor also makes natural increase more conspicuous in the cities. In Africa, it is believed that the number of children one has determines the level of wealth accumulation. Families in the rural areas have

more children that their counterparts in the cities because of the lack basic knowledge on family planning measures; but the congestion of the people in the urban areas makes the problem of natural increase more seen, as compared to the rural settlement mainly because of the multiplier effect (Bodo, 2015). Polygamy that is common in the rural settlements also increases the number of children in a family unit.

Aside from the reasons mentioned earlier, environmental changes, droughts, floods, lack of availability of sufficiently productive land, and other pressures on rural livelihoods can necessitate migration to the urban areas.

#### Rural Urban Transformation

The process of urbanisation affects all sizes of settlements, so villages gradually grow to become small towns, smaller towns become larger towns, and large towns become cities. This trend has led to the growth of mega-cities. It is possible that in some localities, residents may not need to relocate or migrate to nearby cities for greener pastures, but may see the opportunities they desire, come to them; as some rural settlements metamorphosed in to urban settlements (Bodo, 2019a). Over time, the continuous inputs of scientific and technological knowledge in a small rural settlement, can gradually transform it into a city. Incoming industries may begin to build up commercial activities around their environment and beyond, due to the discovery of minerals, resource exploitation and mechanized agricultural activities. With the prosperity of the rural settlement, there will be increase in production and the availability of commercial goods and services; which will accumulate to boost economic growth and providing more employment to the locals. In most cases, the required skills for certain jobs in the industries may not be available in such a rural settlement and may lead to the importation of specialized or skilled persons to this rural settlement.

With the increase of commercial and industrial activities that could possibly generate more revenue into the government purse and the policy makers are likely to channel construction of basic social amenities, health and housing facilities to maintain the tempo of economic growth or to encourage more businesses in the area. Such rural settlement will gradually be urbanized as people from the neighbouring villages may migrate over to benefit from the employment opportunities.



### Negative Policies

The biggest influence on urbanisation today is the government policies and programmes that are available in individual countries of the world. Nigeria for instance, has a system that focuses development in the capital cities alone, with every government that comes into power focuses on transforming and adding more colours to the already built city where the seat of power is located. The Niger Delta people of Nigeria had over the years complained that the resources generated from the region have been used to build up Lagos and Abuja (former and present nation's capital cities) into mega cities, at their own detriment (Bodo, 2019b; Bodo and David, 2018). The 36 state capitals in Nigeria have been the only areas of infrastructural development and creation of employment opportunities; thereby creating permanent poverty and sufferings in the town and villages surrounding these capital cities (Bodo, 2019a). A typical example of the conscious efforts of government to kill off self surviving town is case of Rivers State in Nigeria. In the late 80s and 90s, there were popular towns like Bori, Isiokpo, Abonnema, Buguma, Ahoada, and others that were known commercial activities, but with the State Government overtime focusing development (security, social amenities, health and educational facilities) in Port Harcourt metropolis (Port Harcourt and Obio-Akpor Local Government Areas); these once beautiful towns have been deserted and are now reverted to rural settlements (Bodo, 2019a). This system of development is common in every part of Nigeria, as towns like Port Harcourt, Calabar, Uyo, Asaba, Umuahia, Yenagoa, Benin are the only fairly developed towns in Niger Delta region. This pattern is not peculiar to only the developing societies, but also in developed world. The government must make conscious efforts to carry out a *spread* and *even* development to curb rural-urban migration and avoid policies that favours only the capital cities.

### CONSEQUENCES OF URBANISATION

#### Inadequate Housing and Development of Slums

In developing countries, about a third of urban inhabitants live in impoverished slums and squatter settlements (UNCHS, 1982). **Slums** are urban areas that are heavily populated and have sub-standard housing with very poor living conditions, creating several problems. The Nigeria government for instance, only provide housing for very senior government personnel (judges, politicians, senior civil servants) that are usually

on the government payroll. The other citizens are expected to fend for themselves, and when they cannot afford the cost of private accommodation, they fall back to outskirts of the town to build squatter structures for them themselves as shown below in figure 3.



**Figure 3.** A typical slum settlement in the waterside of Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Nigeria (Source: Bodo, 2015)

#### Poverty, Poor Sanitation, Health and Spread of Diseases

When people move in their numbers to a particular location, there will be pressure on food supplies and on food distribution in such area. In the rural areas in developing countries, majority of the residents are subsistence farmers who has no food challenges, but rather usually have food in excess for market supply. However, as people continue to migrate from their villages (place of origin) to the cities, they tend to use purchased food instead of their own crops and this makes them more vulnerable to changes in food prices. When they cannot afford the cost of food in the city, they settle on rotten or expired food for survival and then to total lack of food supply; and finally in abject poverty and misery in the city. A situation that defeats their expectation of a better life, resulting to what could be termed as "*suffering in paradise*". The irony of this situation is that, more pressure is mounted on rural people to produce food for the growing number of urban people, but the farmers that were in the rural areas are now in the city also needing someone to produce food that will get to them. On the long-run, food scarcity and high cost of available food (mostly imported foods) becomes the city's reality.

It is difficult for the government to provide water and sanitation services to everyone in the city; so they focus on areas that houses government personnel and around the seat of power. The people in living in the poor and neglected areas do not access to safe drinking water and proper

sanitation. Even available water supplies are contaminated by poor sanitation through waste and garbage disposal as shown on Figure 4. When people live in this deplorable and compacted conditions, it lead to contamination of water sources and causes epidemics of waterborne disease.



**Figure4.** Solid waste cover a section of the road at Market junction of ikwerre road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria (Source: Bodo, 2019a).

### Wastes and pollution

Urbanization affects land, water, air and wildlife because of the number of people, the amount of buildings and the increased demands on the available resources in the cities. The lack of sanitation and sewerage systems has lead to the blockage of the drainage system, causing flooding of the city. Toxic wastes from the industries are often deposited into rivers. This results in contamination of rivers which makes the water unsafe for drinking and irrigation, as well as harming the fishes. The environment is often contaminated from the emissions from the industries and cars in the cities which affect the health of city residents (Bodo and David, 2018).

### Unemployment, Urban Crime and other Vices

One of the main consequences of urbanisation in developing is unemployment. Many of the rural people that migrated in search of jobs in the cities end up on the streets. Most times out of frustration, they start petty stealing like snatching bags from unsuspected victims and may even advance their craft to highway and bank robbers. The women engage in commercialisation of sex to help them fend for their families. The sex business is common in the cities of both the developed and developing countries. In Nigeria, for instance prostitutes could be sited at night in cities like Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt in places where mostly the rich citizens of the country visits, as shown on Figure 5.



**Figure5.** Prostitutes hunting for clients around GRA Phase II, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria (Bodo, 2015)

## HOW TO COPE WITH URBANISATION

So many solutions have been suggested by previous scholars on how to manage urbanisation, and some these solutions have assisted policy makers in resolving issues in their environment (Abiodun, 1997; Cohen, 2006; Golden, 1981; Goldstein, 1990; Rogers, 1982). However, the World Bank reported that no country has been able to successfully solve the problem of urbanisation and rural-urban migration (Drakakis-Smith, 1995) and everyday those concerned with managing urban centres are seeking new ways of coping with the increasing population. In the study, three ways of coping with the unending problems of urbanisation are suggested below.

### Job Creation by Supporting the Informal Sector

Unemployment is of great concern in all the cities in the world today (Rondinelli and Kasarda, 1990). China that has been reported as having the fastest growing economy is struggling to absorb the millions of new entrants in to the urban labour market; and despite the blessings of urbanisation, the problems that follows increases every year (Todaro, 1989). Many believed that it was in the wake to reality of urbanisation as the people of America were moving in their numbers to the capital (Washington, D.C), coupled with the challenges from the cold war and the need for permanent peace, that necessitated John F. Kennedy, the 35<sup>th</sup> president of the United States on 20<sup>th</sup> of January 1961 to seek for support from the informal sector in his popular historic words, “*And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you-ask what you can do for your country*”. It was a clear declaration that the government cannot possibly employ everyone without the help of private business owners. For instance, in Mexico, 60 percent of all jobs are provided by

the informal sector (Castillo, 2007), while in Nigeria, it is believed to be over 80 percent (Bodo, 2015). Governments can further encourage the informal sector by reducing taxes on them and giving soft loan to aspiring entrepreneurs.

### Spread and Even Development

Even and spread development is possible, however ethnic and political sentiments has been the major barrier to national development. Political leaders in developing countries usually start developmental projects running into billions (US dollars) in their home towns (communities of birth) and not necessary where it is needed (Bodo, 2015). If developments were to be planned and distributed fairly to ensure equity in the society; the people in every locality will be contented and may not need to migrate in search of food or employment (Drakakis-Smith, 2000). The backwardness of the rural settlement in Nigeria has been ascribed to lack of government presence through provision of basic amenities (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005).

### Policies That Favours Rural Settlements

Policies of government can be seen on the environment. It is true that countries that are regarded as developed, attained such status through effective policy implementation that is geared toward improving standard of living of its citizens, while the underdeveloped and developing countries either have no policies or have policies that are not effective, as corruptions and gross mismanagement of every available fund is always the end result of every action (Bodo 2019b). Nigeria is a typical example of a country where there is always a plan for development, but such plans often times doesn't see the light of day. Planning culture of Nigeria could be date back to 1946 when the colonial government submitted a Ten-Year plan for development and welfare of Nigerians (Ayeni, 1997). There was also post colonial planning such as the 1<sup>st</sup> National Development Plan (1962-1968), 2<sup>nd</sup> National Development Plan (1970-1974), 3<sup>rd</sup> National Development Plan (1975-1980), 4<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan (1981-1985) and the 5<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan (1988-1992) with the main objectives of encouraging nonoil exports and aid even development (FGN, 1962, 1970, 1975, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997; Bodo, 2015).

There was also the Rolling Plans of the late 90s (1997-1999) that was initiated to ensure that every sector of the nation enjoys better standards of living. Many of these policies never went beyond

the formulation stage into implementation (Bodo, 2015). Policies of government can be aimed toward reducing natural increase, providing low-cost housing in the urban centres, provision basic amenities and job opportunities for the rural dwellers. When policies are right, urbanisation in any geographical space will be well managed.

### CONCLUSION

The main cause of rapid population growth in the world today is due to poor government policies that encourages the concentration of basic social amenities and employment opportunities in only the cities; leading to massive rural to urban migration. The poor urban planning; poor policy implementation; focus of the government in the development of the cities by situating of major developmental projects only in the urban centres has contributed immensely to the rapid population growth in the cities of the developing countries, resulting into an urban lock jam of crisis. There are also other instances where a rural settlement can be transformed into mega city due to due industrialization or the conscious efforts of government to channel resources into such locality like the case of Abuja in Nigeria.

Urbanization has giving rise to several challenges or problems such as like commercialization of sex; increase rate of crimes; the build-up squatter settlements and shanty sites; high cost of housing; pollution, spread of diseases, inadequate solid waste disposal and poor sanitation. Despite all these numerous challenges of urbanization, solutions can come through job creation and formulation of policies that favour rural settlement

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