

URBANIZATION AND THE FAMILY STRUCTURE; A FOCUS ON KARU METROPOLIS
NASARAWA STATE

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Abstract

The objectives of this study is to; examine the challenges faced by the family as a result of urbanization, identify the coping strategies by families in urban areas, examine the effects of urbanization on the family structure in Karu metropolis among others. A survey design was used to gather data through the instrument of questionnaires, and tables and simple percentages were also used for data analysis. Afterward findings revealed that there is a high percentage of urban poor in Karu who earn lower income than supposed, this is largely because of the respondent's occupation, there is also the increase in participation of women in formal labor market, thus, shifting the balance of economic responsibility on families. Findings also reveal that the general living standards is low, where most households live in dilapidated, congested and overcrowded apartments characterized by lack of ventilation and space due to high cost of living explained in terms of the economic changes that have greeted societies in recent times. Therefore it is recommended that policy makers in both private and public sectors should come to the plight of urban dwellers in the provision of basic infrastructures to ameliorate the challenges of congestion and overcrowding through housing schemes.

Keywords: urbanization, family and family structure.

Introduction

Davis (1962) defined urbanization as “the proportion of the total population concentrated in urban settlements” To him the urbanized societies in which a majority of a majority of the people live crowded together in towns and cities, represent a new and fundamental step in man's evolution. Urbanization is

therefore, a manifestation of the interplay of the population dynamics. It has to do with the distribution and concentration of population within a defined settlement or area (Ode, 2006). Although, Demographers, social scientist in Nigeria, and the united nations generally accept as urban a settlement that has a minimum population of twenty (20,000) people, population diffusion, occupational differentiation, physical and structural expansion of an area (Gyuse, 2004).

From an in-depth perspective, the United Nation (UN) (2002) definition of what constitutes an urban area or urbanization falls into three (3) major types: classification of minor division on a chosen criterion which includes: a. Type of local government, b. Number of inhabitant, c. Proportion of population engage in agriculture; secondly, classification of administrative centre of minor rural division as urban, and the remainder of the divisions as rural. Thirdly, the classification of certain size/localities as urban irrespective administrative boundaries. That is in terms of number of the population in a locality. Family on the other hand is a group of individuals related to one another by blood ties, marriage or adoption that formed an economic unit and the adults' members who are responsible for the upbringing of children while family structure is the basic unit of the family institution. It comprises the economy, socialization health, and political structure and household arrangement.

The world has been experiencing rapid growth of cities in the 21st century. Since 1950 urban population has more than tripled, from just over 750 million to about 3 billion. Rapid urbanization first started in today's more developed regions. In 1920, just fewer than 30 percent of Europe, North America, and Oceania's population lived in urban areas, compared to more than half in 1950. By 2007, over 70 percent of the population of Australia and New Zealand and over 80 percent of the population of North America lived in urban area. Among the less developed regions, Latin America and the Caribbean had a similar high level of urbanization- 78 percent in 2007, higher than that of Europe. Africa and Asia have 38 and 41 percent of their population living in urban areas respectively (Nallari& Griffith, 2011). Urbanization is a major change taking place globally. The urban global tipping point was reached in 2007 when for the first time in history over half of the world's population 3.3 billion people were living in urban areas. It is estimated that a further 500 million people will be urbanized in the next five years and projections indicate that 60% of the world's population will be urbanized by 2030 (Adekunle, 2010).

Rapid urbanization is presenting the greatest test for land professionals in the application of land governance to support and achieve the Social Development Goals (SDGs). The challenge is to deal with the social, economic and environment consequences of this development through more effective and comprehensive land administration functions, supported by effective Spatial Data Infrastructures, resolving issues such as climate change, insecurity, energy scarcity, environmental pollution, infrastructure chaos and extreme poverty.

After independent, the Nigeria government introduced some policy programmes and measures that stimulate migration. These include programmes on education ranging at some point from free and compulsory, qualitative, formal and non-formal adult and mass literacy etc. But today one of the stimulation for city ward migration and the increasing rate of urbanization is government continuous neglect of the rural areas, resulting in concentration of people in urban centres such as New Karu, Mararaba, Nyanya and so on which are suburb of Abuja (FCT). The rapid increase in the population of urban centres has increased the cost of living. Higher cost of housing which is often in short supply and out of the economic reach of most urban family/ household (Oladapo and Olutuah, 2007). This is why most urban family has both parents (father and mother) struggling to make ends meet while the children are left all to themselves. This situation has poses grief on the structure (Economic, socialization, Health and mutual co-existence, etc) of most urban family. The danger poses today on the structure of the urban family is most grievous compare to early independent Nigeria urban family.

Nigeria urban centres today are populated by a large mass of people who are on low wages and those who faces irregular employment. These segments of the urban population are indeed poor, and also constrained to limited, insufficient, crowded and cold, dirty shelter and a generally degraded environment (Galbraith, 1968, Mabogunje, 1980). Fulani (1989) has succinctly shown that most urban centres in Nigeria are characterized by high densities of building of space for open air living between houses; poor health, substandard housing and acute environmental and sanitary problems. The shortage of affordable and decent accommodation for the urban poor is thus a major housing problem in Nigeria and Nasarawa state. Studies have shown the deplorable condition of urban housing problem in Nigeria (Onokorhoraye, 1976, Wahab, 1990, Olutuah, 2007). The studies further affirmed that 75% of dwelling unit in Nigeria urban centres is substandard and the dwellings are cited in slums. The studies again shows that buildings are often unsafe, insecure and do not provide adequate shelter from the element of nature.

Karu local government area of Nasarawa state is rated as one of the fastest growing urban center in the world at the rate 40% (Peace work, 2005). This rapid increase comes with its antecedents problems of unemployment which have affected the economic structure of most urban family where children are seen hawking in various streets as their part of contributing to the economic source of their family instead of being in school like most of their peers. This case is rampant in Karu local government area of Nasarawa state. This area is also characterized by an increasing shortage of urban service and infrastructure like ineffective waste management, portable water, efficient transport system, etc.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid growth of urban centers has a harmful impact not only on the environment but also on the family structure. A large number of families in Nigeria's urban areas do not have enough income to meet their needs. Their income is insufficient to cover minimal standards of food, water, fuel, shelter, medical care, and schooling. According to Smith (1999), in spite of this low living standard most urban family still sees the city as a place of hope, opportunities and survival compare to the rural area. Rendering most kids hawking wares and engaged in divers anti-social activities in order to provide for themselves what their families cannot provide for them. A situation that has swallowed the sound or proper socialization and provision function of most urban families. Sound values and norms taught in the family, depends on factors like: religious orientation, environmental influence, economic position of the family and so on (Dauda, 2002). Most urban family lived in areas with poor environmental conditions that lack the basic services. Poor housing conditions often manifest in the numbers of families living in one room and paying exorbitant rents.

Furthermore, most Nigeria urban cities are characterized by poor infrastructural and social services. Primary and secondary health centers are grossly inadequate. The available ones are several miles away from most families. Public schools which are the only affordable educational institution to most urban families are crowded with dilapidated structures- making learning uncondusive and unattractive. And this is where bulk of the urban poor family children attend school. Due to the poor nature of most urban families, their children mostly engaged in drug abuse, sexual mischief, vandalism and petty crime. A condition that has greatly affects the socialization function of most urban families. This study intends to examine the impact of urbanization on the family structure in Karu Metropolitan area as its broad objective. Other specific objectives are to;

- i. Examine the challenges faced by the family as a result of urbanization in Karu Metropolis.
- ii. Identify the coping strategies by families in urban areas of Karu Metropolis.
- iii. Examine the effects of urbanization on the family structure in Karu Metropolis.
- iv. Examine the availability of infrastructure such as housing, health facilities and socialization process of the urban family in Karu Metropolis.

Theory and Methods

“The Malthusian Theory of Population” was adopted to explain the effects of urbanization on family structure. It was propounded by Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834). Malthus (1965/1798) published an Essay on the Principles of Population as it affects the Future Improvement of society in which he argued that “the power of population is infinitely greater than the power of the earth to produce subsistence [food] for man”. That population, if left unchecked, would exceed the available food supply. He argued that the population would increase in a geometrical (exponential) progression (2, 4, 8, 16.....) while the food supply would increase only by an arithmetical progression (2, 4, 6, 8...). In other words, a *doubling effect* occurs but food production increases by only one acre at a time. Thus, population growth inevitably surpasses the food supply, and the lack of food ultimately ends population growth and perhaps eliminate the existing population (Weeks 2005). Even in a best-case scenario, overpopulation results in poverty.

However, Malthus suggested that this disaster might be averted by either *positive* or *preventive* checks on population. *Positive* checks are mortality risks such as famine, disease and war; *preventive* checks are limit to fertility. For Malthus, the only acceptable preventive check was moral restrain; people should practice sexual abstinence before marriage and postpone marriage as long as possible in order to have only a few children. Thus, a continuous increase in the total number of individuals in Karu, without a corresponding increase in the needed infrastructures have created an immense strain on the available infrastructures. As a results of an over stretched or excessive use of these facilities because of high population, it has created inadequacies and finally affects family life. This also creates a noisy atmosphere that opposes healthy lifestyle.

Survey design was used in carrying out the study. The population of this study comprises civil

servants and traders/ artisans. The civil servants chosen for this study are those residents in Ado and New Karu and working in Karu Local Government Area council of Nasarawa state. The choice is based on the fact that Karu local government staff represents the formal sector in the study area. The traders/ artisan represent the informal sector. Both are organized with an effective membership list that made data collection easy and effective. The local government council has staff strength of 783 (Karu Local Government Area Staff Record, 2009). The Ado traders association has a total registered membership of 1,632(Karu Market Traders Association Record, 2014). The study has a total population of 2415 people. The sample size for this study is 290 respondents drawn from the population using Krejcie and Morgan’s sample determination formula (1970). The primary data was gathered using a structured pattern questionnaire and was administered by the researchers and a research assistant

The data was gathered were analyzed using frequency tables and percentages for clear understanding of the data generated from respondents. The table and percentage was used to arrive at the major findings of the study. It was also used for comparison among various categories of the responses.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Socio-demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	154	55
Female	126	45
Total	280	100
Age		
18-27	55	19.6
28-37	70	25
38-47	69	24.6
48-57	57	20
58- and above	30	10.7
Marital Status		
Single	88	31.4
Married	154	55
Divorce	7	2.5
Widowed	26	9.3
Separated	5	1.8
Total	280	100
Occupation		
Civil Servant	70	25
Business	95	33.9
Farming	50	17.9
Artisans	65	23.2
Total	280	100
Place of residence		
Ado	157	56.1
New Karu	123	43.9
Total	280	100
Types of family		
Nuclear family	149	53.3
Polygamous	131	46.7
Total	280	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 1 shows the analyses of the respondent socio-demographic data of respondents. The sex of the respondents shows that 55% of respondents are male while 45% of them are female. The 10% difference

in the male over female respondents is as a result of the areas questionnaires were administered by the researcher, which includes the secretariat that has a higher percentage of the male staff over the female and also male traders who showed great interest to respond to the questionnaires.

Also, the table indicates that 19.6% of the respondents fall within the age range of 18-27 years, 25% fall within the range of 28-37 years, 24.6% fall within the age range of 38-47 years, 20% fall within the range of 48-57 years, 10.7% fall within the range of 58 years and above, This indicates that there are higher percentage of active working age between ages 28-37 which constitutes 25% of the respondents as a pointer to the fact that the proximity of the area to the Federal Capital Territory gives the area of study an urbanized status, and indicates why the community host these age brackets largely for economic reasons evident by high rate of commerce within the Metropolis. The table further shows that 31.40% of the respondents are single, 55% are married, 2.5% are divorced, 9.3% are widowed and 1.8% are separated. From the above table, it is clear that the highest proportion of respondents are married because they constitutes the active working group (as seen in age distribution in table 4.2) who are civil servants and those in private endeavors taking advantage of the opportunity in the urban centres to source provision for the family.

In addition, the table indicates that 25% of the respondents are civil servants, 33.9% do business as their occupation, and 17.9% are farmers, while 23.2% are artisans. This shows that based on the responses, the area of study constitutes economic active people who are socially engaged in the interplay of urban activities. Also shown in the table is the distribution of respondents by place of residence, and 56.1% of respondents reside in Ado while 43.9% reside in New Karu. Thus, the high percentage of respondents under Ado indicates that the respondents are largely resident in Ado community being the hub and central to the activities where the market, secretariat and other urban social utilities are cited.

Finally, the table shows that 53.3% of the respondents are from nuclear families while 46.7% belongs to the polygamous families. This therefore means that Karu family type is largely a nuclear one. This is due to the urban status of the area where people have migrated from different parts of the country to settle in order to commute to the federal capital for their various endeavors, coupled with the high cost of living, most inhabitants especially average or low income earners have decided to settle for nuclear family type so as to effectively cater for their family needs.

Table 2: Opinion on whether urbanization has limited the family size.

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	250	89.3
No	30	10.7
Total	280	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 2 shows that 89.3% of the respondents agreed that urbanization has limited the size of the family while 10.7% disagreed. This means urbanization has actually limited family size. This creates the inability of household heads to manage family growth due to social welfare demands and economic burden on the family.

Table 3: Effect of urbanization on family size

Effects of urbanization on family size	Frequency	Percentage
High cost of living	112	40
High cost of education, and housing	102	36.4
Change in birth rate	46	16.4
Others: death, family planning.	20	7.1
Total	280	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 3 shows that high cost of living constitutes 40%, high cost of education and housing 36.4% and change in birth rate is 16.4% while death and family planning is 7.1%. This shows that the size of family is affected due to high cost of living, high cost of education and housing, change in birth rate and others such as death and family planning associated with urbanization are some of the ways the family is affected.

Table 4: Family living standard in Karu

Family living standard	Frequency	Percentage
High	27	9.6

Moderate	63	22.5
Low	190	67.9
Total	280	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4 indicates that 9.6% of the respondents said the living standard in Karu is high, 22.5% said it is moderate while a larger 67.9% said it is low. The above statistics shows that the living standard in Karu is low. This is because of the low income earnings of the people as pointed out in table 4.8 where a large number of inhabitants earn below minimum wage. This has led to high cost of living without a corresponding change in the high standard of living.

Table 5: Challenges faced in providing for the family needs

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
No employment	99	35.4
Low salary income	83	29.6
Delay in payment	56	20
Low patronage	42	15
Total	280	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 5 shows a pool of challenges faced by respondents in providing for their respective families. Lack of employment came highest with 35.4%, followed by low salary income which has 29.6%, delay in payment and low patronage had 20% and 15% respectively.

Table 6: Coping strategies adopted by families to face the challenges of providing for the family.

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Both parents work	58	20.7
Venturing into businesses	76	27.1
Relative distance from the extended family	102	36.4
Low birth rate	44	15.7
Total	280	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 6 shows the various coping strategies adopted by families to face the challenges of providing for their families. And these includes; 20.7% of both parent work to provide for the family, 27.1% go into various businesses to provide for their family, 36.4% resolve to relatively stay away from extended families so as to cut cost and 15.7% turn to limit the number of children to reduce dependency burden.

Table 7: Impact of urbanization on family structure in Karu

Impact of urbanization on family	Frequency	Percentage
Reduced size of the family	52	18.6
More medical facilities	51	18.2
Well trained children	48	17.1
Modern housing	47	16.8
Parent work to meet family needs	43	15.4
Nuclear family	39	13.9
Total	280	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 7 shows that 18.6% indicated that family size has been reduced due to high cost of living, parents tend to control birth through family planning. The reduction in family size is one of the major impacts of urbanization on the family structure in Karu. More medical facilities occupied 18.2%, well trained children has 17.1%, modern housing has 16.8%, while parent working to meet family needs is 15.4% and nuclear family has 13.9% because most families now fall back to nuclear family type as a result of urbanization so cope with the daily demands associated with urban life. Therefore, all the above mentioned are some of the impacts of urbanization on the family structure observed in Karu.

Table 8: there is a relationship between urbanization and family structure in Karu Metropolis.

Family structure	Urbanization		Total
	Agreed	Disagreed	

Nuclear family	221	15	236
Extended family	30	14	44
Total	251	29	280

Chi-square=25.49; df=1

The result in table 8 above indicates that obtained Chi-square was 25.49 while the table Chi-square at Alpha level 0.05 was 3.841 which is less than the calculated or obtained Chi-square. Therefore, there is statistically significant relationship between urbanization and family structure in Karu Metropolis.

Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed that there is a high percentage of urban poor in Karu Metropolis who earn lower income than supposed as approximately 64% of people in Karu live on wages between #10,000 to #30,000. This is because, considering the respondents occupation, we can infer that the obvious reason for the low income earners is proportional to the occupation of the inhabitants of the study area, who are engaged as farmers, artisans and in various businesses where there are no regulation for the stipulated minimum wage.

Also, from data collected and analyzed, in respect to the effects of urbanization on family in Karu Metropolis, it was revealed that family size has been limited due to high cost of living which includes; food, housing, education, medical care, deaths and family planning. As a result people break away from extended families, control their birth rate, and delay in marriages so as to meet up with the economic demands of urban living. This finding further aligns with Weeks (2005) and Ocholla-Ayayo (1997) who stated that the phenomenal rates of population growth in the world and the rapid increase in the urban population have far reaching implication for social and economic world today. As a result of these implications, the traditional characteristics of family especially in Africa are fast being swept aside. Typically, the extended family system is gradually fading away. He further reported that, family size is fast declining and this could be explained in terms of the economic changes that have greeted societies in recent times. Similarly, findings also show that due to these economic demands, parents spend little or less time together with their families because they are active economically and engaged in providing for the high cost of living, housing and other social amenities for the family in the urban communities. This has created a vacuum that would have enabled constructive family conversation, family group activities, and even a sense of what an intact family unit is like as a result of the pressure exerted by urban life (Olatipo&Olutuah2007). They further said, for many youths there are simply no adult to talk to, to listen to, or to learn from and the oldest daughter may raise her younger brothers and sisters while her mother and father are out working to provide for the family.

In addition, findings show that the general living standard in Karu is low, and due to high cost of living, most households live in poor and dilapidated, congested and overcrowded apartments characterized by lack of ventilation and space. Also the living standard in Karu is characterized by slums with its poor electricity, educational facilities, road network connection, inadequate health care facilities, and lack of adequate safe drinking water which further creates health issues. This is because of low income earnings in contrast with the high cost of living which results in the low standard of living in the study area. This confirms the works of Dauda (2002) and Bernstein (1968) who noted that poor housing conditions often manifest in the numbers of families living in one room and paying exorbitant rents, and that is physical overcrowding which is a determinant of two major types of problems to the structure of the urban family: a health hazard and harmful social behaviour. Also, UN-Habitat (2006) reported that, overcrowding is hazardous to health where sleeping accommodation is congested and ventilations are poor.

Other finding shows that unemployment, low salary income, delays in payment of salary and lack of patronage for business owners have posed an enormous challenge to the family breadwinners. To support this finding, Schutske (2002) stated that urbanization is accompanied by problems such as harsh economic conditions, as result, economic opportunities becomes limited and where there is, the salaries are averagely lower to cater for the long lists of family needs. Further investigation revealed the various strategies adopted by families to cope with these challenges, which are; both parents work to complement each other, some families go into businesses to alleviate the poverty level, some shield away from extended families to cut cost while others engage in birth control measures. This is in congruence with the findings of Onu (1995), who discovered that, there is an increasing movement of women in urban centers into one form of economic activity ranging from petty trading, fetching of water at construction sites, hawking along high ways, so as to provide needed income and financial stability in the family. Similarly, Oladapo and Olutuah, (2007) also stated that due to the challenges of urban life and in order to make ends meet have most urban family has both parents (father and mother) working.

However, despite negative impacts and the challenges of urbanization on urban family, findings also shows that it has equally impacted positively on the urban family as it provides modern housing, more

medical facilities, educational facilities, well trained children, provides means of birth control and family planning, provide employment for both parents, as well as introduce nuclear family that help reduce burden. To elucidate this impact, Kunle and Wale, (2006) noted that urban residents typically benefit from better forms of education, improved medical care, the availability and distribution of information, and the greater supply of life sustaining goods, such as food and shelter than the rural areas. Urbanization also provides an opportunity for individuals as it gives many urban dwellers employments of all kinds, these includes both skilled and unskilled employments (ILO, 1972 in Ode, 2006).

Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to examine the impact of urbanization on the family structure in KaruMetropolis. Urbanization has largely impacted negatively on the family especially in the developing country like Nigeria, especially in areas such as housing, health, and basic sanitation. Others area include, congestions, overcrowding, unemployment, crime, and a general low standard of living characterized by low income earnings. However, despite the enormous negative effects of urbanization on the family which may include shortage of food and lack of basic infrastructures and services due to an explosive population growth, we have seen that it also have contributed to the physical growth of many towns especially when proper measures and policies are put in place to check it. It has also made life worthy of living in towns than in rural areas. This is because it has provided to an extent, though not enough, some basic services and opportunities that are not found in the rural areas.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, this research draw the attention of policy makers in both private and public sectors to the plight of urban and rural dwellers especially as regards to gross inadequacy of basic infrastructures such as schools, hospital, electricity and water supply, road connections so as to alleviate the pains of people in both urban and rural areas, as the provisions of such will improve the living standards of the people. This will also have significant control on rural-flightas most rural-urban migration is triggered by the gross inadequacy of these basic infrastructures in the rural areas.

Also, since congestion and overcrowding is one of the biggest challenges faced by families in the urban areas and beyond, government must make efforts to disperse population through it housing schemes by encouraging private partnership in the provision of descent housing where needed. And these houses should be made affordable to people who cannot build their personal homes. This dispersion of population will go a long way in reducing the problem of traffic congestion and mammoth pilling of waste in the urban centers. In addition, the sanitary practices must be made compulsory by way of observing regular sanitation to be supervised thoroughly by ministry of environment.

More so, government must encourage the private sector employment through liberal policies that allows small business owners to access funds in order to improve their businesses so as to encourage employments. Also, government must help train urbanites and ruralites in different vocational schemes that will give people with little or no formal education, self-employment because government alone cannot absorbed the teaming number of populace that are willing to improve their standards of living by way of getting paid jobs.

Finally, although the government of Federal Republic of Nigeria has been striving to provide essential commodities and facilities for cities residence in Nigeria but however these amenities are not enough because of rapid urbanization. There for, this work recommends adequate provision of infrastructural facilities and strict adherence to the maintenance culture by the authorities in charge of the resident. Also areas of communities where social amenities such as water, roads, electricity, housing, drainage, schools and hospitals were provided for them, they should make it has part of their social responsibilities or obligation to protect and preserve such amenities so that any sincere government in power will be encourage to provide more and better service that will enhance rapid growth and development of the areas.

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