

# Urbanization and Urban Security in Awka, Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects

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**Abstract-** *The 21st century has witnessed an unprecedented level of global urbanization which has led to new and complex security issues for both developed and developing regions of the world. This study examines Urbanization and Urban Security in Awka, Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects. It also considers regional security, in Awka and the dimensions of urbanization. The study used a survey research design, a sample size of 300, and a structured questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 300 households from a total population of 301,657 in Awka, Anambra State. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentages. Results showed that there is rapid expansion of cities due to the movement of people from rural area to urban areas in search of greener pastures. Issues like high pressure on limited resources, such as water, housing and energy, cost of living have resulted in increased levels of pollution and environmental degradation. In addition, urbanization in Awka has led to increased levels of crime and social unrest. The study therefore, recommended that basic human needs should be provided by the Anambra state Government in order to help reduce rural to urban migration thereby mitigating the negative social effect of urbanization.*

**Indexed Terms-** *Urbanization, urban security, Environmental degradation, Urban areas, Urban governance.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

As the world undergoes an unprecedented level of urbanization, the security of cities and their surrounding regions is becoming a pressing global

concern. Cities are now the locus of political, social, and economic activity and are home to an ever-growing population of vulnerable people. At the same time, cities are becoming increasingly important targets for terrorist and criminal attacks.

Despite the fact that urbanization is not a new phenomena, it is anticipated to reach five billion people by 2050. Since the early 1800s, people have been migrating from rural regions to more urbanized middle-income nations in Africa, and this trend will continue in the next decades (Adamu, 2009). This migratory trend, which indicates that Africa is a late starter in the urbanization race, indicates a preference for urban over rural settings. However, different African countries today, like Nigeria is urbanizing at such a rapid rate that there are variables to blame for this inclination. Urban forecasts show that Africa will enter the urban era around 2030, when half of Africans will live in cities (Adetunji & Oyeleye, 2013). Nigeria is the most populous African country, with more chances, greater infrastructure, and greener pastures for its citizens.

The problem of urbanization and urban security in Nigeria is a key challenge facing the country. Rapid population growth and the migration of people from rural to urban areas has resulted in the mushrooming of cities, particularly in the south (Adamu, 2009). This migration has placed a strain on infrastructure and resources, leading to increased levels of poverty and unemployment. It has also led to social tension and crime, as well as environmental degradation. The lack of effective planning and coordination between different levels of government has exacerbated these problems. There is also a lack of cooperation between different government agencies responsible for

security, which has resulted in a fragmented approach to security management. The combination of rapid population growth, urbanization and inadequate infrastructure presents a serious challenge to the government's ability to maintain law and order and ensure regional security (Adamu,2009).

This paper will provide an overview of the current trends in urbanization and Urban security and will discuss some of the main challenges and prospects for improving security in cities and their regions. It is as result of this that this paper focus on urbanization and urban Security in Awka, Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects.

- 1) Causes of urbanization in awka
- 2) to examine the security Issues associated with urbanization in Awka
- 3) the Prospect associated with urbanization in Awka

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### • Causes of Urbanization

There are many causes of urbanization. One of the most common reasons for urbanization is when rural people move to cities in search of jobs and a higher standard of living. This can be caused by a number of factors, including overpopulation, agricultural crisis, lack of opportunity in rural areas, and political or economic instability. Industrialization and the growth of technology can also lead to increased urbanization, as people move to cities to find work in factories and other businesses. When cities become more populous, they can also experience problems such as pollution, traffic congestion, and crime (Celia, 2016).

According to Conserve energy future, (2022) factor such as industrialization, commercialization and Industrialization, social benefit among others may be the causes of urbanization

### • Industrialization

Industrialization is a trend representing a shift from the old agricultural economics to a novel non-agricultural economy, which creates a modernized society. Through the industrial revolution, more people have been attracted to move from rural to urban areas on account of improved employment opportunities. Industrialization has increased employment opportunities by giving people the chance to work in

modern sectors in job categories that aids to stir economic developments. (Conserve energy future,2022)

### • Commercialization

Commerce and trade play a major role in urbanization. The distribution of goods and services and commercial transactions in the modern era has developed modern marketing institutions and exchange methods that have tremendously given rise to the growth of towns and cities. Commercialization and trade come with the general perception that the towns and cities offer better commercial opportunities and returns compared to the rural areas (Conserve energy future,2022)

### • Challenges Of Urbanization

Urbanization in the developing countries has affected the structure and functions of the various social institutions, which include the family, economy, polity, religion, health and education (Celia, 2016). Industrialization and modernization which are intertwined with urbanization have led to the diminished functions of the various institutions in Nigerian urban centers. Urbanization has increased the poverty level in cities due to the alarming population growth of urban centers, and this is further aggravated by unemployment, underemployment, a decrease in real wages due to persistent inflation and uncontrolled migration (Celia, 2016)

### • Housing and Urbanization

Many researchers have described the conditions of the housing where over 60% of urban dwellers live in Nigeria as highly deplorable. High rates of overcrowding, substandard buildings, and infrastructural inadequacies have been reported in all the urban centers in Nigeria (Adedibu,2015). Over 75% of the dwelling units in Nigeria's urban centers are substandard and the dwellings are sited in slums. Thus, over 60% of the urban dwellers live in slums characterized with over-crowding, poor sanitary conditions, lack or inadequate basic facilities and amenities, crimes and poverty among other things (Adedibu,2015). While some urban dwellers still struggle to live in deplorable slums that are nothing but objects of visual pollutants to the western world, some are even homeless thereby sleeping around in different abandoned vehicles and buildings, under bridges, in

stores and so on. This is as a result of high housing rent and cost of land in urban centers which the rural migrants cannot afford. Urbanization tends to increase the number of unoccupied housing in the countryside, while the housing occupancy rate in urban centers is at the extreme to the extents that people live in any available uncompleted structures and slums (Adedibu,2015). According to Oyewale (2020), the average occupancy rate in Akure, the capital city of Ondo State Nigeria is 4.42, while the World Health Organization (WHO,2020) stipulates between 1.8 and 3.1, while the Nigerian Government is of the opinion of 2.0 per room. Building collapse is alarming in Nigerian urban centers, and the incidence is minimal in the countryside. Urbanization influences building collapse, as the demand for more commercial, industrial and residential activities is very high due to the population growth of urban centers (Adamu,2009).

- Poverty and Urbanization

Oyewale (2020), defines poverty as hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not being able to see a doctor, not having access to school and not knowing how to read.. Poverty is also having fear for tomorrow, the state of hopelessness and to be jobless. Nigeria is among the countries working to achieve the eight (8) Millennium Development goals (MDGs) by 2015. It is not a surprise for the president of Nigeria to declare in live broadcast in mid July of 2013, that Nigeria may not achieve any of the MDGs by 2015. The second MDGs, is to eradicate the extreme poverty and hunger. More than 70 million Nigerians live in poverty (Ayedun, *et al.*, 2011). Poverty is high in Nigeria due to the inadequate job opportunities, infrastructural facilities and services that do not meet demands of urban populace. The depth of poverty declined from 19% to 16% in rural areas, while it increased in urban areas from 9% to 12%. In 1985-1992, total extreme poverty in Nigeria increased from 10.1 million people to 13.9 million with a near three-fold increase in the urban extreme poor from 1.5 million to 4.3 million people(Ayedun, *et al.*, 2011).

- Crimes and Insecurity

The incidence of crimes tends to increase in any region, where we have high population of people, and such incidence is reduced in a region with low population of people. Celia (2016) opines that rapid urbanization, industrialization, and migration to the

cities are major factors that contribute to higher crime rates in urban centers. This is not in contrast to the urbanization challenges as regards crimes in Nigerian urban centers. The prevailing crimes in Nigerian urban centers include robbery, kidnapping, rape, murder, child trafficking, murder, political violence, fraud, suicide, and prostitution among other crimes, which are the resultant factors of urbanization. All these crimes are urban affairs and not rural affairs, because many inhabitants of the countryside are related in one way or the other. The Nigerian Police numerical strength is not commensurate with the total population, as one Policeman to 5,000 Nigerians; unlike in developed countries with one Policeman to about 400 people.. Moreover, with the disproportion between the security strength and population in Nigeria, the study by Oyawale(2020) shows that in Nigerian urban centers, a number of persons have been sentenced to death for armed robbery involvement in Nigerian urban center many urban centers of Nigeria today, criminal activities and violence are assuming dangerous tendencies as they threaten lives and properties, the national sense of well-being and coherence, peace, social order and security, thus, reducing the quality of life of the citizens (Ahmed, 2010). At least, one of these crimes is committed on daily basis in Nigerian urban center, while in some cases the culprits are always at large, due to the exploded population growth of urban centers with millions of people. Out of all the crimes in Nigeria, robbery incidence is the highest with 27.3% (Rob, 2017).

- Unemployment and Urbanization

One of the major consequences of the rapid urbanization process has been the burgeoning supply of job seekers in both the modern (formal) and traditional (informal) sectors of the urban economy. Rural-urban migration has a significant impact on unemployment levels of the destination cities (Aworemiet *al.*, 2011). Between 1998 and 1999, urban unemployment rose from 5.5% to 6.5%, a rate higher than the national unemployment which increased from 3.9% to 4.7% during the same period (USAID, 2012). Unemployment is very high in all urban center in Nigeria, and the main reason is because of the high population of migrants from the rural areas in Nigeria and few other national migrants from other African countries that come to seek for jobs that are not that

available in the urban center. As the unemployment rate is increasing in the urban center, it is reducing in country side because of the homogenous type of activity in the countryside which is agriculture (Rob, 2017).

The major challenge of urbanization in Nigerian Urban center are environmental problems. In Nigeria, Oyawale (2020) identifies several types of environmental problems classified as ecological, poaching and habitat loss, increasing desertification and soil erosion. These are further subdivided into pollution (water, land, visual and noise), deforestation, global warming and slum development, etc. Nigeria's coastal regions are currently experiencing widespread contamination from petroleum exploration (gas flaring, oil spillage) while the general poor living conditions in urban areas in the country constitutes an affront to human dignity (Adedeji & Ezeyi, 2010). Environmental problems in the urban center have resulted to many health problems in Nigeria, and they also have a negative effect on the overall economy of the country. Apart from general health implications of environmental problems, there are tendencies of the problems affecting the psyche of the people (Adedeji & Ezeyi, 2010). For instance, residents of urban slums are known to show deviance attitudes, apathy to government programme and anti-social values like, prostitution, crimes, and juvenile delinquency (Adedeji & Ezeyi, 2010). Improper wastes management has made the societal fabric of many urban center in Nigeria to be very unsightly. Traffic congestion which increases the generation of the cars' exhaust due to the traffic delay is another major environmental problem in Nigerian urban center. Slums developments in urban center also deplete the physical environment, increases crimes and violence. The environmental problems in urban center outweigh the experience in the countryside, as the environmental problems are seen as the results of human activities which are higher in the urban center (Rob, 2017).

- Climate Change and Urbanization

Man's activities relating to where he lives, works and his movement from place to place, consumption as well as the usage of technologies, all affect heat emissions in a city (Olaleye, 2013). According to Odjugo (2011), Nigeria is experiencing global

warming at the rate higher than the global mean temperatures. In Nigeria, the mean increase in temperature from 1971 to 2008 is 1.78<sup>0</sup>C, compared to the global mean increase in temperature of 0.74<sup>0</sup>C since instrumental global temperature measurement started in 1860 (Odjugo, 2011). The sharp increase in temperature between 1971 and 2005 in Nigeria could be linked to the effect of climate change and its associated global warming earlier reported ( Odjugo, 2011). Climate change in urban center results from the high rate of industrial and commercial activities in the urban center, with little consideration of the environmental implications of their activities. The climate change results to the incessant flood occurrence, harsh temperature, poor agricultural productivity, and human health diseases (skin reactions and respiratory diseases) among other challenges.

- Prospect of Urbanization

The prospect associated with urbanization is one of increased economic opportunities. As more and more people move into cities, the demand for goods and services grows (Celia, 2016). This leads to an increase in the number of jobs, as well as higher wages. In addition, cities offer a greater variety of cultural experiences and opportunities for socializing. This leads to an increase in the number of people who are able to buy goods and services, which leads to an increase in the amount of money that is available to be spent in the economy. Other prospect as outlined by Conserve energy future, (2022) includes good social services such as road, hospital, schools. Job opportunities among others.

### III. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Since the major objective of this study is to examine Urbanization and Urban Security in Awka, Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects, a survey research design was adopted to examine the opinion of participants and the area of the study focused on Awka the capital of Anambra state. The research population is made up of total population of 301,657 from which Traders, civil servants, students and driver used in the study were selected from. Out of the total population of participants a sample size of 300 was selected purposively, the samples size consists of 120 male and 180 females. The population of the study was

purposively selected to include the categories of persons mentioned above due to the fact that these are the mostly set of people that are found in Awka the Capital of Anambra state. The table below shows the summary of the participants

Table I: Sampling of Participants in Awka

| Commuters       | Number purposively selected |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Traders         | 100                         |
| Cuivil servants | 120                         |
| Students        | 30                          |
| Transporters    | 50                          |
| Total           | 300                         |

Field Work 2022

A structured questionnaire was used for the collection of participants opinion. The data collected were analyzed using frequency and simple percentage as shown by the formula  $N = \frac{X}{T} \times 100$ . (N =percentage ;X=responses; T= total number of responses).

#### IV. RESULTS

Table I below shows 60(20%) of the participant agree that rural urban migration is one of the causes of urbanization, 45(15%) agree that industrialization is the causes, 78(26%) responded that commercialization is another factor that causes urbanization, 35(12%) said is availability of Jobs while 42(14%) and 40(13%) agree that availability of social amenities and high wages are the causes of urbanization respectively. From the responses, it could be concluded that rural urban migration, industrialization and commercialization among others as noted in table above are the actual cause of urbanization.

Table II: Respondent opinion on Causes of urbanization in Awka

| Options                          | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Rural urban migration            | 60        | 20             |
| Industrialization                | 45        | 15             |
| Commercialization                | 78        | 26             |
| Availability of jobs             | 35        | 12             |
| Availability of social amenities | 42        | 14             |

|                           |     |     |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|
| Availabilityof high wages | 40  | 13  |
| Total                     | 300 | 100 |

Source: Field work, 2022

Table II below indicates that 51(17%) of the respondents agree that security issues such as kidnapping is one of the security issue that is associated with urbanization, 48(16%) responded that armed robbery is another security issue, 23(8%) said domestic violence is another issue,60(20%) responded that food security is another common issue in urbanization, 21(7%) said street gangs,29(18%) said rape is another issue while 18(6%) and 50(16%) agree that pocket picking and cyber crime respectively are other problems that are caused by urbanization. Therefore, this implies that there are different common security issues associated with urbanization.

Table III: Respondent opinion on Security Issues associated with urbanization in Awka

| Options           | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Kidnapping        | 51        | 17             |
| Armed robbery     | 48        | 16             |
| Domestic violence | 23        | 8              |
| Food insecurity   | 60        | 20             |
| Street gangs      | 21        | 7              |
| Rape              | 29        | 10             |
| Pocket picking    | 18        | 6              |
| Cyber crime       | 50        | 16             |
| Total             | 300       | 100            |

Source: Field work, 2022

Table III below shows that urbanization comes with a lot of prospect. Some of these prospect are high job opportunity as agree by 90(30%) of the respondents, 76(25%) agree that high paying wage is another prospect,52(17%) responded that availability of Good Schools, 48(16%) agree that availability od good hospital is another key prospect while 43(11%) agree that availability of good roads are other possible prospect associated with urbanization. This result implies that there are a lot of possible prospects that are being associated with urbanization.

Table IV: Respondent’s opinion on Prospects associated with urbanization in Awka

| Options                        | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| High job opportunities         | 90        | 30             |
| High paying wages              | 76        | 25             |
| Availability of Good schools   | 52        | 17             |
| Availability of good hospitals | 48        | 16             |
| Availability of good roads     | 34        | 11             |
| Total                          | 300       | 100            |

Source: Field work, 2022

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Urbanization has caused a lot of issues such as high level of crime as well as environmental pollution. The study’s evidence has also shown that there is a lot of factors which leads to urbanization. Such factors include rural urban migration and the search for greener pasture among others. This leads to conjection, food scarcity and struggle for social amenities. The security challenges posed by urbanization are particularly acute in developing areas of the world, where cities are often unplanned and chaotic. It also affects effective governance and planning in these areas. These findings agree with the finding of Ahmed, (2010) who said that in many urban centers of Nigeria today, criminal activities and violence are assuming dangerous tendencies as they threaten lives and properties, the national sense of well-being and coherence, peace, social order and security, thus, reducing the quality of life of the citizens. The finding also corroborate with the finding of Rob, (2017) who reported that at least, one of these crimes is committed on daily basis in Nigerian urban centre, while in some cases the culprits are always at large, due to the exploded population growth of urban center with millions of people. Out of all the crimes in Nigeria, robbery incidence is the highest with 27.3% .

Irrespective of the challenges and issues associated with urbanization, urbanization also promises good

prospects such as good hospital, job opportunities, good paying jobs among others.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, urbanization has created much insecurity and as well job opportunity for many people. Additionally, the way in which is creating irreversible environmental consequences jeopardize both public health and the planet’s ecosystems. Also, it has caused high level of harm robbery and kidnapping. However, prospects such as availability of social amenities among others are some of the benefits or prospect that can be obtained from urbanization. Therefore, the study recommended that basic human needs should be provided by the Anambra state Government in order to reduce rural to urban migration thereby mitigating the negative social effect of urbanization.

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