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## **EFFECT OF URBANIZATION ON THE LIVING CONDITION OF MPAPE RESIDENTS IN ABUJA – FCT**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

Cities have experienced dramatic growth as a result of rapid urbanization globally. This study examined the effect of urbanization on the living condition of Mpape residents in Abuja the nation's capital. While cities in Nigeria as well as other parts of the world are becoming dominant as both centre of production and consumption, rapid growth of Nigeria cities has seriously outstripped the capacity of most cities to provide and maintain adequate basic services to their residents as this increasing rate does not correspond with infrastructural provision and maintenance of existing infrastructure. This has necessitated undue pressure and challenges on urban environment and residents living condition. The study adopted survey research design and purposive sampling procedure to select informal from Mpape in Bwari Area Council. In-depth-interview was the instrument used for information gathering which was analyzed non-numerically using content analysis. Findings from this study show that housing and social infrastructure like: roads network, healthcare facilities among other are grossly inadequate and lacking while the available ones are in deplorable and pathetic state due to urbanization. The study concluded that urbanization and population growth left uncontrolled and planned within urban areas like Abuja has a drastic effect on the environment and the living condition of resident. The study recommended that the government both at the local and federal level should enforce proper planning and development control policy in the area and effectively implement infrastructural development to ameliorate the challenges confronting the area as a result of urbanization and population growth.

**Keywords:** Urbanization, living Condition, and Development

### **Introduction**

Globally today, cities have grown and continue to grow rapidly with an unprecedented increase in numbers and sizes. These fundamental increases left unchecked have an obvious consequence on human life and civilization. Urbanization is largely considered as a given proportion of the total population concentrated in urban settlements. It therefore, includes: population diffusion, occupational differentiation, physical and structural expansion of an area (Philip & Leo, 1985; Onu, 2014).

The United Nations (UN) states of the world population (2007) report, argued that, majority of people worldwide will be living in towns or cities for the first time in history. This is referred to as the arrival of the “Urban Millennium” or the “tipping point.” With regard to future trends, it is estimated that 93% of urban growth will occur in developing nations, with 80% of urban growth occurring in Africa. The growth rate of urban population is more pronounced in Nigeria today than most other country in the continent of Africa. The former minister of housing and urban development, Mobolaji Osomo placed the rate of migration in Nigeria at 5.5 percent per annum. This rate as she projected further will double in 2015. Nigeria is urbanizing at an astonishing pace. The share of Nigeria urban population increased from 19 percent in 1963 to 20 percent in 1970, to 31 percent in 1991 and 38 percent in 1993 (Adeniyi, 1995; Osomo, 2004; Bilyaminu, 2014).

Furthermore, studies have shown that the rapid rate of urbanization in Nigeria and urban infrastructural development are not in tandem. Infrastructural development is the establishment or provision and continuous maintenance of the basic physical and organized structure needed for the operation of a society or community enterprise, or the services and facilities necessary for an economy to function. This infrastructure covers a

wide range of services and facilities namely; electricity, water, roads, waste disposal, drainages, communication, primary and secondary health services, schools and housing as key ones. It requires large lump sum of investment; and plays a significant role in the overall living condition of residents.

A rapid increase in urban population of any magnitude is supposed to correlate or correspond with infrastructural provision and improvement as aptly captured by Mabogunje, (1968). But the rate of urbanization, the provision and maintenance of urban infrastructure in Nigeria, Abuja and Mpape community under Bwari Area council contradict this assertion and submission. The Abuja master plan was originally projected to cater for 3.1 million people in a land of about 8,000km<sup>2</sup> when it is fully developed by the target year, 2000 (MFCT, 1992). The nation's capital, hit a population of over seven (7) million as at 2010 (Olayiwola, 2010); an increase that more than double the projected 3.1 million targeted population. This increase, is seriously straining the available infrastructure originally designed and planned for 3.1 million people. The complete absent of any form of urban infrastructure is telling greatly on the overall living condition of the Mpape residents. The housing patterns are unauthorized, crowded and inhabitable. The large proportion of unauthorized housings in the study area has drastically affected the pattern of infrastructural development in the area. Health care facilities are also grossly inadequate. The available ones are mile away from several of Mpape residents. Solid waste dump on various points are common sight generated by large population of people engaged in services and retail activities, constitute another challenge.

In view of the above, the focus of this research is on the effect of urbanization on the living condition of Mpape residents in Abuja – FCT, Nigeria.

## **Conceptualization of Keywords/Literature Review**

Urbanization has to do with the expansion of towns and cities as it affects her values, movement of people into cities, and behavioural pattern in conformity with people or groups in the cities. From a more succinct and scholarly point of view, Mabogunje (1968) viewed urbanization as a process whereby human beings congregate in relatively large number at one particular spot of the earth's surface. The emphasis of this definition is on large number and locality undergoing urbanization process. However, Wirth (1938) conceptualized urbanization as a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals' while Goldthorpe (1988) also viewed urbanization from another perspective, as an integral part of the development process. He argued that even by definition, one country is recognized as develop than another if a higher proportion of its people live in towns or urban areas. Henslin (2008) equally conceptualized urbanization as the process by which an increasing proportion of a population lives in cities. From these various definitions, Wirth, (1938) conceptualization of urbanization was adopted for this study as it broadens understanding of urbanization beyond relatively large proportion of people occupying a permanent settlement but also included socially heterogeneous individuals which is in tandem with the area under study.

Nigeria environment is still beset with an array of challenges, which according to Salami (2009) could be termed ecological haemorrhage the "loss of adaptive capacity due to perturbations which weaken the resilience of nature." It is a vivid description of how environmental degradation in the form of disease, epidemics, poor quality, reduction of living space or arable land, accumulation of toxic and hazardous substance all present themselves for urgent amelioration (Olokesusi & Gwary, 2010:449). This appears a good

summary of the environmental situation in Mpape; they pose a serious challenge on the living condition of the residents.

Decency in living condition incorporates factors related to health, income, assets and inequality and the degree to which people have overcome poverty of all variant; poverty measures are therefore useful in explaining decent living conditions. The Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) represents a holistic measure of people's deprivations in health, decent environment, and education using ten indicators across these dimensions. The MPI combines information on the proportion or incidence of people's deprivations as well as the intensity of these deprivations (NBS, 2015). The index can also be decomposed by population growth.

On the whole, the National Human Development (2015) report highlighted and demonstrated what constitute the basic living condition to include indicators like: household need improvement which includes their access to clean water, improved sanitation facilities, and safe cooking fuel. If all these facilities are lacking in any environment and or not within the least global acceptable standard; inference can be drawn that, such residents in such environment are living in poor condition which will definitely impose a heavy health burden on the residents since the area constitute a major health hazard.

This to a large extent paints a picture of Mpape, a slum within Abuja metropolis – the nation's capital; accommodating a riches and poverty which Giddens (2004) description of the nature of infrastructural development in major urban areas as slums verses highbrow, poverty verses prosperity co-existing side by side.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study reviews the ecological theory, sometimes referred to as concentric zone theory. Ecology is the scientific study of the interactions that determine the territorial distribution and abundance of organisms. The term was first used scientifically in 1859 by the German biologist Haeckel in a study of plant ecology. In its original meaning however, it is a branch of biology in which plants and animals are studied in their relationship to each other and to their natural habitat. Plant life and animal life are seen as an intricately complicated whole, a web of life in which each part depends on almost every other part for some aspect of its existence. Organisms in their natural habitat exist in an ongoing balance of nature, dynamic equilibrium in which each individual must struggle to survive (Jain, 2012:139).

Human communities, particularly those organized around a free-market economy and laissez-fair government could be seen to resemble this biotic state in nature. Each individual struggles for his or her survival in an interrelated, mutually dependent community; the Darwinian law of survival of the fittest applies here as well. Park, (1920) proposed a parallel life in societies. He had been a Chicago newspaper reporter for 25 years and had spent much of that time investigating social conditions in the city. Chicago was at that time a massive city of over 2 million; between 1860 and 1910 it had doubled in population every 10 years, with wave upon wave of immigrants. From the study of plant and animal ecology he derived two key concepts that form the basis of what he called the “theory of human ecology.” The first concept came from the observation of the Danish ecologist Warming cited in Schafer (2004), who noted that a group of plants in a given area might have many characteristics that, in combination, were similar to those of

an individual organism. Warming called such group “plant communities”. Park’s work as a newspaperman had led him to view the city in a similar way-not merely as a geographic phenomenon, but as a kind of social organism. The city in his view can be regarded as a functional writ in which the relations among individuals that compose it are determined, not merely by the city’s physical structure, nor even by the formal regulations of a local government, but rather more by the direct and indirect interaction of individuals upon one another. Its component element, institution, and persons are so intimately bound up that the whole tends to assume the character of an organism, or to use Herbert Spencer’s term, cited in Egbo (2003) a super-organism.

Within this super-organism called the city, park found many natural areas where different type of people lived. These natural areas like the natural areas of plants had an organic unity of their own. Some of them were racial or ethnic communities such as China town, little Italy, or the “Black Belt.” Other natural areas were people by individuals in certain income or occupational groups, or they were industrial or business areas. Still other areas were physically cut off from the rest of the city by railroad tracks, rivers, major highways or unused space. Symbolic relationships existed not only among the people within a natural area (where the butcher needed the baker for bread and the baker needed the butcher for meat), but also among the natural areas within the city. Each natural area was seen as playing a part in the life of the city as a whole.

The second basic concept park took from plant ecology involved the process by which the balance of nature in a given area might change. A new species may invade the area, come to dominate it and drive out other life forms. Ecologist call this process “invasion, dominance, and succession.” This process can also be seen in human societies. The

history of America is a process of invasion, dominance, and succession by the white into the territory of the Indians. And in cities one cultural or ethnic group may take over an entire neighbourhood from another group, beginning with the shift of only one or two residents. Similarly, business or industry may move into and ultimately take over a previously residential neighbourhood.

The processes of invasion, dominance, and succession were further explored by Park's associate. Burgess & McKenzie (1928) pointed out that cities do not merely grow at their edge. Rather, they have a tendency to expand radically from their centre in patterns of concentric circles, each moving gradually outward in zones. Zone 1 according to Burgess is the central business district or "Loop." Zone 2 is the area in transition, being invaded by the central business district and business areas. This is generally the oldest section of the city. The residential districts in this zone are already deteriorating and will be allowed to deteriorate further because it is anticipated that they will be turned down in the foreseeable future to make way for incoming business and industry. Zone 2 is usually occupied by the poorest classes; including the most recent migrants to the city. Zone 3 is the zone of workers home, occupied by those who have escaped the deteriorating condition of zone 2. Beyond this is zone 4, the residential district of single-family houses and more expensive apartments. Beyond the city limit are the suburban areas and the satellite cities which constitute zone 5 - the commuter zone. Each of these five zones is growing and thus is gradually moving outward into the territory occupied by the next zone, in process of invasion, dominance, and succession.

The growth and continuous growth of the study area can be likened to Burgess analysis of urban growth and expansion through the process of invasion, succession and



domination. The increasing economic burden in the country couple with increase inflation is further pushing the residents backward and expanding the city radically from the centre in pattern of concentric circle as asserted by Burgess distorting the pattern and development of infrastructure in the area. Government development project and demolition activities without alternative solution in the city centre are also forcing this radical expansion of the Abuja metropolis to slums like Mpape which Kornblum (1997) warn that, unless the city addresses the social problem of urbanization associated with housing and unskilled labour force, the undesirables will always cluster around a particular location. This kind of growth and expansion as captured by Burgess is not merely the growth of the city at its edge and pace but a growth that is instigated by a radical factor of invasion, domination and succession hence the relevance of this theory to this study despite the criticisms.

Burgess's concentric zone theory has been criticized on various grounds. There have been criticisms of the zonal concept itself. Implicit in this concept is the fact that growth takes place along the broad margin of successive zones, whereas the more observable tendency is for growth to concentrate along radial lines, that is, the route ways, which cut across the zones. Another criticism has been the generality of the theory. Here it must be noted that, while Burgess himself believe that the zonal pattern found expression in all American cities, others who have had to defend the validity of some of his hypotheses have generally narrowed the coverage to growing commercial- industrial cities of the developed countries.

Despite the criticism the ecological approach has been as important for the amount of empirical research it has helped to promote as for its value as a theoretical perspective.

Many studies of cities as a whole and of its particular neighbourhood, have been prompted by ecological thinking – concern, for example, with the processes of ‘invasion and ‘succession’. Again, the concentric zone theory to the American situation; is still relevant to explaining the growth and the pattern of infrastructural development and residency in Mpape, Bwari Area Council, Abuja.

### **Methodology**

Information utilized for this study was gathered through primary source. The research design adopted for the study is survey; the study engaged qualitative methods of information collection. Key-Informant Interview (KII) was used as the qualitative method instrument of information collection. A total number of six (6) persons were interviewed (two health workers, one town planner and three Mpape residents); The interviewees were selected using purposive sampling technique based on age, resident status, duration of stay in the area of study, experience and knowledge on the phenomenon under study in the area. The information was analyzed non-numerically using content analysis.

### **Analysis and Discussion of Major Findings**

The in-depth Interview questions revolve around the available infrastructure and social amenities in the areas, the state of the environment on the living condition of Mpape residents among others.

Results gathered from key informants in the course of this study shows a complete absence of basic infrastructures like road, health care centre, portable drinking water and electricity supply, lack of effective waste disposal facilities, visible cases of pollution due to the rapid rate of urbanization and the complete absence of planning in terms of

housing and accessible roads. One of the informants clearly paints the situation of the area and the residents thus:

In Mpape, getting clean portable water is like looking for a hidden treasure. There is no access road; all we have around here are miniature roads. In fact, this area lacks the basic necessities of life. Hundreds of thousands of poor or low income earners are condemned to life in this Mpape's slum.

This findings point to Kornblum (1997) warning that, unless the city addresses the social problem of urbanization associated with housing and unskilled labour force, the undesirables will always cluster around a particular location. This explains the rationale behind the rise of a slum like Mpape – a shanty settlement within Abuja Metropolis begging seriously for attention.

On the health state of the residents due to the environmental nature of the area, informants' views show it is highly pathetic; garbage and waste heap are found by public roads within the area. A closer look into most of waste heaps according to the findings provided by the informants will reveal human faeces in polythene bags which they called “flying toilets”; a practices that was justified by one of the interviewed informants resident in Mpape as follow:

When one has no proper or functional toilets and since nature cannot be cheated, they are left with the option of using the nearby bushes or putting the staff in polythene bags.

In spite of these pathetic states of the area, information provided by the informants' shows that there is no one functional public hospital in the area even though they are

situated within the heart of the Federal Capital City of Nigeria to attend to the health need of the people. Residents of the area depend on Maitama General Hospital for their health challenges triggered mainly by the environmental condition of the area. This situation and the state of Mpape within the Nation's capital bear semblance with Giddens, (2004) description of the nature of infrastructural development in major urban areas as slums verses highbrow, poverty verses prosperity co-existing side by side.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is the conclusion of this study that urbanization or population growth within urban centres has a pathetic effect on the living condition of the residents and infrastructure of Mpape, Bwari Area Council, FCT-Abuja. The rapid growth of this area has brought to the fore, various problems which are manifest not only in the physical forms of the area, but also in the ways they function. The area like most urban areas in Nigeria, have grown in an unmonitored and uncontrolled manner, which has led to the manifestation of various problems such as overcrowding, housing, traffic congestion, environmental pollution as well as the general deterioration of its available infrastructures, which have in turn precipitated various socio-economic and sanitary problem in the area. The awareness and the need for an urban planned programme to manage the phenomenal have become imperative. To this effect, the paper makes the following recommendations:

Appropriate authorities should check the problems arising from the nature and pattern of housing in Mpape, there is a need to put in place building codes. The code should provide minimum standard for building construction and conditions for occupancy. And it should include factors such as lightening, ventilation, heating, sanitation and plumbing, types of

materials and fire prevention and fighting. It should also cover specifications areas for a variety of commercial business such as bakeries, restaurants, shopping mall, parks, hotels etc.

Again, the study recommends zoning of the area; zoning is a form of governmental regulations providing for the ordering social and economic development of an area. This should be adopted and implemented in the area by the authorities charged with such functions to regulating the use of land and buildings by restricting certain areas for industrial, business, residential, agricultural and other activities which are all missed up at the moment in the area.

Finally, existing National policies on the environment should be adopted and implemented effectively in the area as well in order to effectively manage existing and future infrastructure and the provision of social services. Enforcement of urban land use policies, housing policies and planning policies are advocated in all urban centres in Nigeria in order to establish harmony and encourages functional land use patterns. This policy should be adopted and implemented to the latter in the area of study. It should also include urban renewal action and slum clearance which the area really need at the moment.

In addition, the various organs of government, non-governmental organizations, public and private stakeholders should be involve to work harmoniously through a coordinated agency in the area for effective management of the environmental problems. The Habitat agenda acknowledges the important roles which the private sector, non-governmental organization and communities play in the shaping of city. It is therefore the

recommendation of this paper that the management of this area should work in partnership with these actors to improve the condition of the area.

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