

URN URBANISATION
RESEARCH
NIGERIA

URBANISATION RESEARCH
NIGERIA (URN) CONFERENCE
**HOW CAN NIGERIA
BENEFIT FROM
URBANISATION?**

PROF TIMOTHY GYUSE
Dean of Environmental Sciences
Benue State University (BSU), Makurdi

12 - 13 March 2018
Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre
Central Business District
Abuja

URBANISATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE BENUE BASIN



ISSUES OF INTEREST

- ▶ More than 65% of Nigerians in settlements with 5,000 or more population.
- ▶ Urban living is becoming the norm and there is no sustainable policy or practice to meet the social, economic and security challenges.
- ▶ Benue Basin's recent and rapid urbanisation is an opportunity to learn about processes as a basis for present and future policy formulation.
- ▶ There are also rural-urban linkages that are not fully comprehended and therefore planned for.
- ▶ This study attempts to probe these.



FOUR MAIN RESEARCH THEMES

- ▶ Migration Patterns and Impact on Urban–Rural Linkages in the Benue Basin
Track Coordinator: Dr. Ayila Ngutsav
- ▶ Changing Agricultural Systems in the Benue Basin;
Track Coordinator: Dr. Daniel Ortserga
- ▶ Transportation, Accessibility & Rural – Urban Linkages in the Benue Basin
Track Coordinator: Dr. Davidson S.A. Alaci
- ▶ Urban Growth & Changing Urban Patterns in the Benue Basin
Track Coordinator: Dr. Sylvester T. Iorliam



RESEARCH STRATEGIES

- ▶ Field observations
- ▶ Field surveys
- ▶ Focus Group Discussions
- ▶ Archival records
- ▶ Stakeholder meetings and presentations



THE STUDY REGION

1. Note the East-West Orientation of the basin.
2. Note the centrality of River Benue as a connecting spine.
3. Note how central the valley is as a link between Southern and Northern Nigeria.
4. Note how the Benue tributaries cut through the basin.



FINDINGS: MIGRATION AND RURAL URBAN LINKAGES

- ▶ Dominant direction of migration is rural to urban with negative impacts rural productivity and security.
- ▶ In the past, rural-urban migrants contributed to rural development through remittances.
- ▶ Recent migrants engaged in marginal survival employment and not making remittances to rural areas.
- ▶ Migration accelerated by insurgency and insecurity in rural areas.
- ▶ Migration contributing to emergence of new urban centres.
- ▶ Social networks important for choice of destination and survival of new migrants.



FINDINGS ON MIGRATION



Forced migration in the Benue Valley.

FINDINGS: CHANGING AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS AND RURAL URBAN LINKAGES

- ▶ Dominant land holdings is extended family holdings.
- ▶ There is increasing large scale (>100ha) farming.
- ▶ There has been little change in types and range of crops in the rural areas.
- ▶ But shift to commercial market gardening around major urban centres and especially cities with river valleys.
- ▶ Farmers eager and willing to adopt technologies that are demonstrated to improve productivity.



FINDINGS ON CHANGES IN AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES



Changing crop types around urban centres



Willingness to adopt and adapt techniques

FINDINGS: TRANSPORTATION AND RURAL URBAN LINKAGES

- ▶ Poor condition of existing roads hampers movement and integration.
- ▶ Tributaries of the Benue River hamper development of east-west land transportation.
- ▶ Opportunities to use Benue River and its tributaries as part of the transport network inadequately utilised.
- ▶ There is little intermodal connectivity and integration.
- ▶ Motorcycles are the preferred mode of travel and transport.
- ▶ Dominant transport lines are North-South rather than East-West.



FINDING ON TRANSPORTATION



Challenges of land transportation across the basin

FINDINGS: URBAN GROWTH AND CHANGING URBAN PATTERNS

- ▶ Benue Basin is area of recent and rapid urbanisation in Nigeria.
- ▶ Urbanisation fueled by rural-urban migration, changing economies, retuning indigenes and insecurity.
- ▶ Some urbanisation is however a result of densification.
- ▶ Urbanisation has increased land values especially in the peri-urban fringe.
- ▶ State capitals are drawing most of the migrants and growth.
- ▶ Apart form the five state capitals, a five-level hierarchical urban system involving 140 centres has emerged in the Benue Basin.



URBAN GROWTH FINDINGS



Google Earth image of Lokoja, 2018
Light gray areas show continuing sprawl along access roads

POLICY DIRECTIONS: MIGRATION AND URBAN RURAL LINKAGES

- ▶ Rural development policies should enhance productivity and living conditions by creating opportunities for both farm and non-farm investments in rural areas.
- ▶ Development of urban and rural areas should be complementary with labour intensive industries incentivized to locate to rural areas.
- ▶ Business friendly policies should be enacted to stimulate economies and thereby deal with open and disguised unemployment.
- ▶ True information about urban realities need to be disseminated to counter the glamorized images that lure migrants to become victims of exploitation and human trafficking.
- ▶ Conscious investment to improve agricultural capabilities and attractiveness to current farming families.



POLICY DIRECTIONS: CHANGING AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS AND RURAL URBAN LINKAGES

- ▶ Restore an effective extension service program to stimulate agricultural productivity and improve rural livelihoods.
- ▶ Increase synergy between research institutions and farmers in order to domesticate research and increase productivity.
- ▶ Loosen land policies in order to free land from idle ownership into active utilization that enhances agricultural production and food security.
- ▶ Develop, control and disseminate information against harmful application of agro chemicals that harm both farmers and health of consumers.



POLICY DIRECTIONS: TRANSPORTATION AND RURAL URBAN LINKAGES

- ▶ Integrate land based transportation in the basin.
- ▶ Improve connectivity of transportation systems to stimulate integration of the basin and development.
- ▶ Utilize the Benue River and its tributaries as the spine of an integrative transportation system especially for bulky goods using appropriate crafts – hover, shallow drafts barges etc.
- ▶ Strengthen east-west transportation system to unify and integrate the basin.
- ▶ States in the basin to establish a joint transportation and economic development master plan.



TRANSPORTATION POLICY DIRECTION



Image of 130 seat Hover Craft that could ply Benue River
Source: riverclyde photography.uk (from postcard for illustrative purpose only)

POLICY DIRECTIONS: URBAN GROWTH AND CHANGING URBAN PATTERN

- ▶ Because urban living is becoming the norm, there is need to develop clear implementable policies to manage urban growth sustainably and create resilient cities.
- ▶ The following components among others are critical for Nigeria:
 - ▶ Policy for identification and incorporation of settlement
 - ▶ Policy for delineation of boundaries, annexation etc.
 - ▶ Autonomy and responsibilities of each type of settlement including finances, internal controls
 - ▶ Governance structures and relationship to jurisdictions in which the settlements are located
- ▶ Unless urban areas are so engaged the resultant challenges will drown national institutions, structures and finances.



OVERARCHING POLICY CONSIDERATION: URBANISATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ The challenges of urbanisation and urban development are many, costly and multifaceted.
- ▶ Current policies and practice place all responsibilities (planning, funding, execution) on government, especially the Federal Government.
- ▶ States, LGAs and the people have been reduced primarily to demanding resource distribution centres and consumers with little direct responsibility for ensuring their own well being and future
- ▶ Urban areas do not count as a unit of governance at all in Nigeria.
- ▶ For this to change, there need to be programmed devolution of responsibilities along with requisite authority for planning, funding and execution.
- ▶ When the people own their future and the means of securing it, there will be less agitation and competition for central resources and more local initiative and development.
- ▶ Unless urban areas, their residents and regions are so engaged the consequences of the resultant challenges will drown national institutions, structures and finances.



THANK YOU

Professor Timothy T. Gyuse
Dean of Environmental Sciences
tgyuse@bsum.edu.ng
tgyuse62@gmail.com

Visit our Urbanisation Research
Nigeria (URN) website at:
urn.icfwebservices.com



This programme has been funded by UK aid from the UK government; however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.