

The Effect of Urbanisation on Nomadic Culture in Nigeria: A Review of Benue State

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ABSTRACT: This study is on the effect of urbanization on nomadic culture in Nigeria with a focus on Benue State. Urbanization is a dynamic set of processes, responding to changing values and perceptions of the intrinsic characteristics of rural versus urban areas culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music and is different all over the world. Humans acquire culture through the learning processes of enculturation and socialization, which is shown by the diversity of cultures across societies. Nomadism is the way of life of peoples who do not live continually in the same place but move cyclically or periodically and it encompasses three general types: nomadic hunters and gatherers, pastoral nomads, and tinker or trader nomads. As its mixed-methodology, quantitative and qualitative techniques will be adopted for the study to explore the effects of urbanization on nomads in Benue state. Findings indicated that majority of respondents had encountered nomads and their encounter was either peaceful or aggressive, urbanization has a negative impact on culture and has affected the way and manner land is being used for agricultural purpose, culture of nomads Benue state as well as a factor leading to constant violence involving nomads and residents in Benue state. Urbanization has affected various aspects of the nomadic culture such as migration patterns, grazing and pastoralism, irrigation and access to water, agriculture and land use as well as perception.

KEYWORDS: Urbanization, Nomadism, Culture, Conflict, Violence, Migration

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Raymond Williams (1958), every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, and its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing them into the land. Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups. Similarly, Culture may be understood as a consortium of communication (or a bundle of messages) that a given people have in common: their shared experiences, shared perceptions, and values, shared consciousness" (Macdonald, 1991). These values, experiences, and communications are "guidelines about what things mean, what is important, and what should be done" (Schmidt, Conaway, Easton, & Wardrope, 2007). Culture guides the actions of individuals and groups.

Pappas and McKelvie (2021) opines that culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music and is different all over the world. Humans acquire culture through the learning processes of enculturation and socialization, which is shown by the diversity of cultures across societies. A cultural norm codifies acceptable conduct in society; it serves as a guideline for behavior, dress, language, and demeanor in a situation, which serves as a template for expectations in a social group (ibid.).

On the other hand, the United States Environmental Protection Agency sees urbanization as the concentration of human populations into discrete areas. This concentration subsequently leads to the transformation of land for residential, commercial, industrial and transportation purposes. Urbanization is the development of cities and the concentration of populations away from rural lifestyles. It describes both the increasing footprint of urban areas and the increasing percentage of the urban population. It involves expansion and movement of people and resources from one region to another basically on the instance of development. This movement from higher density urban cores to lower density suburbs means that as cities expand, they often begin to take up significant tracts of land formerly used for agriculture and other rural activities. It further increases the need for travel infrastructure, such as roads, because people's homes are likely to be farther away from where they work and the amenities they enjoy.

Nomadism on the other hand does not imply unrestricted and undirected wandering; rather, it is based on temporary centres whose stability depends on the availability of food supply and the technology for exploiting it. The term nomad encompasses three

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general types: nomadic hunters and gatherers, pastoral nomads, and tinker or trader nomads. Across the continent of Africa, there are several pastoral nomads who herd their animals within the arid, semi-arid and savannah vegetation zones, one of these are the Fulani. The Fulani are the largest semi-nomadic group in the world found across west and central Africa. Over the years, they herd their animals across the various vegetation zones in search of pasture and water for their animals, frequently leading to conflict situations and clashes with sedentary farming communities in different countries.

II. THEORETICAL STUDIES

Theoretical studies have demonstrated that Urbanization is the result of social, economic and political developments that lead to urban concentration and expansion of big cities, changes in land use and revolution from rural to urban pattern of organization and governance. Urbanization is a process in which an increased proportion of society lives in cities and the suburbs of the cities. Historically, it has been strongly related with industrialization. Industrialization is processes that widely utilize inanimate sources of energy to improve human productivity.

Orum (2004), further viewed urbanization as the process whereby large numbers of people congregate and settle in an area, eventually developing social institutions, such as businesses and government, to support themselves. Urban areas, or those regions and structures thus created, are basically characterized as relatively dense settlements of people. This could be attributed to purposeful effort by authorities to consciously concentrate power, capital, or both at a particular site e.g., the Federal Capital Territory. It has however, been argued that in today's ever growing and interdependent global and interconnected world, over half of the world's population (54 per cent) lives in urban areas although there is still substantial variability in the levels of urbanization across countries. Globally therefore, it has been noted that, more people live in urban areas than in rural areas, with 54 per cent of the world's population residing in urban areas in 2014. In 1950, 30 per cent of the world's population was urban, and by 2050, 66 per cent of the world's population is projected to be urban (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2014).

1. The Impact of Urbanization

Urbanization has many adverse effects on the structure of society as gigantic concentrations of people compete for limited resources. Rapid housing construction leads to overcrowding and slums, which experience major problems such as poverty, poor sanitation, unemployment and high crime rates. Additionally, strains on important natural resources, such as water supply, leads to higher prices and general environmental sustainability problems (Johor et al, (2012).

2. Land Use and Land Cover

One major impact occasioned by urbanization is the land use and land cover change as identified by Meyer (1995). Meyer opines that land cover is the physical state of the land surface which includes both natural amenities (crop lands, mountains, vegetation, soil type, biodiversity, water resources) and man-made structures (buildings, pavements). Land cover conversion is a change in the overall classification of land cover through a complete replacement of one type of land cover by another type due to change in urban extent, agricultural expansion or deforestation. Whereas, land cover modification is simply a change in the character of land cover without undergoing its overall classification (Kharel, 2010).

The process of urbanization generally creates a dense settlement termed "urban area". The collection or an aggregate of urban areas including its cities and suburbs linked economically and socially constitutes a system known as a metropolitan area or region (Geruson & McGrath, 1977). This definition of metropolitan area has left out one of the major linkages of the system, an ecological linkage, exploitation of which has created the system itself. Rostow (1977) is of the opinion that, a metropolitan area (urban area) is a result of capitalism which promotes diffusion of habitat and activities based on economic functioning and administrative activities. Here diffusion of habitat and activities refers to the consumption of land to locate industrial activities, administrative divisions, new housing units and other infrastructures. Rostow further asserts that metropolitan or urban area "reduces the importance of the physical environment in the determination of the system of functional and social relations, abolishes the distinction between rural and urban, and places in the forefront of the space/society dynamic the historical conjuncture of the social relations that constitute its basis. Lands that were originally used for grazing and farming have now become football fields, airports, hospitals etc.

3. Environment and Ecosystem

Another impact urbanization has is the ecological impact. Cited in Kharel (2010), Mackenzie, Ball, & Virdee (2001) stated that in the discipline of ecology, "**physical environment**" refers to things such as temperature, water, wind, soil etc. An ecosystem is a particular level of organization in a natural world containing a diverse set of living and non-living components which are self-sustained; regulated by positive and negative feedback loops; and characterized by flows of energy and movement of matters on cyclic pathways (Istock, Rees, & Stearns, 1974). Animal and plant species are the living components of the ecosystem whereas temperature, air, water, and soil are the non-living components upon which living components depend for survival. These natural components of ecosystems are environmental resources from which an array of benefits can be generated for human

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consumptions. The growth and prosperity of the human designed world has come from the expense of the resources of the natural world (Khalel, 2010).

Urbanization has put cities on soils that are best suited for other uses such as food and fibre, forests and wetlands. New homes, buildings, roads and other structures are being built every day. Urbanization alters the biological, chemical and physical properties of soil and there by degrading its quality in a way that it leads to loss of vegetation, poor water infiltration, accumulation of heavy metal, excess water runoff and soil erosion (ibid.). Similarly, urbanization alters habitat through housing, road construction, pavement, de-vegetation, plantation of non-native species, land fragmentation etc. Residential development associated with expansion of roads, utilities etc. poses threat to wildlife through loss, degradation, and fragmentation of habitat (Theobald, Miller, & Hobbs, 1997, p. 26).

Through improper waste disposal activities and is destructive to soils, particularly agricultural soils (Blackmore and Raddish, 1996). Take the non-biodegradable polythene bags for example; no Nigerian city is free from its litters. These besides being unsightly, defaces the environment and impair crop yields and development by impeding root growth. An average traveller to any Nigeria's urban centre is usually welcomed by pyramids of wastes generated via myriad of urban activities (Ibrahim and Hassan, 2018).

4. Culture

Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached value. Hofstede, (2001), asserts that culture is shared mental software.

Kroeber and Parsons (1958) put it in a different way "transmitted and created content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic- meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behaviour". This definition takes to account the idea that the behaviour of individuals or groups is interpreted in the light of their shared values and ideas or some form of symbolism that is held by them. Similarly, Brown (1991) posits that "culture consists of the conventional patterns of thought, activity, and artifact that are passed on from generation to generation". Thus, if a society demonstrates a recognizable pattern of activity, such as rice cultivation, that is part of its culture. Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups.

General growth and expansion in the number and size of the markets and urban communities is also another effect of intensification of land shortage and land use changes in the state. The effects of this are change in occupation or increase in part-time activities other than farming and thus, change in the economic status of the people. The interaction between the rural and urban centres is on the increase due to changes in local economic and political life of the people.

5. Nomadism

Nomadic refers to nomads i.e., herdsmen in an area that leads a nomadic existence by moving their livestock around an area or region to feed on available grazing (Bellamy, 2007). Nomadism however, is the practice by members of tribes that move with its animals from place to place in search of pasture and water. Mayhew (2009) sees nomadism as a form of social organization where people move from one place to another in search of natural resources for their survival. It incorporates the advantages of mobility and traditional nomadic groups to exploit natural resources such as grasses and water at dispersed locations in the course of their mobility (ibid).

Further clarification on nomadism is given by Britannica (2016) as the way of life of peoples who do not live continually in the same place but move cyclically or periodically. Nomadism does not imply unrestricted and undirected wandering; rather, it is based on temporary centres whose stability depends on the availability of food supply and the technology for exploiting it (ibid.). The term nomad encompasses three general types: nomadic hunters and gatherers, pastoral nomads, and tinker or trader nomads.

Accordingly, Husain (2012) noted that pastoral nomads are found in different climatic regions of the world, ranging from the equator to the Arctic circle. They are also found across arid deserts into tropical savannas of tall grasses on the equatorial margins of these deserts and are spread across various regions e.g., Nigeria.

Pastoralism involves management of domesticated animals from which food is extracted and it can be carried out from a fixed location. While nomadism and pastoralism are not necessarily mutually inclusive, it is also necessary to note that nomadism represents an integral social, political and environmental dimension of pastoralism. It represents the technique and technology of pastoralism since it is a movement among others. Pastoralists may move with their herds to avoid insects and diseases in order to reduce competition with other groups; and to avoid would be authorities (Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson, 1980:17-18). Pastoral nomadism is thus a form of subsistence agriculture based on herding domesticated animals for their meat, hides, milk, products or item of trade (Husain, 2012). Little wonder the nomenclature "herdsman" which has often been used to describe the typical pastoral nomad in Nigeria.

Pastoral nomads, who depend on domesticated livestock, migrate in an established territory to find pasturage for their animals. Most groups have focal sites that they occupy for considerable periods of the year. Pastoralists may depend entirely on

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their herds or may also hunt or gather, practice some agriculture, or trade with agricultural peoples for grain and other goods (Britannica, 2016).

Pastoral nomadism according to Areola, (1982) is the traditional occupation of a large and distinct ethnic group known as the Bororo Fulbe (Fulani) and it is also the principal way of life of the Shuwa Arabs of Bornu State. The Fulani are larger in number than the Shuwa Arabs and they move across the different geographical regions of Nigeria. The Shuwa Arabs rear cows, goats and sheep around the shores of the Lake Chad i.e., they keep cattle, sheep and goats and live in temporary camps across northern and central Nigeria. These cultures have gravely been affected and eroded in contemporary times owing to the nature of development itself and the concept of urbanization.

III. AN OVERVIEW OF BENUE STATE

Benue State was created in 1976 by the government of General Murtala Mohammed. It is located in the middle belt zone (north central Nigeria). Benue State is bordered by Nasarawa to the north; Taraba to the east; Cross River to the south; Enugu and Ebonyi to the south-east and Kogi to the south-west. The state also shares a common boundary with the Republic of Cameroon on the south-east. The state has an estimated population of 6 million spread across the 23 local government areas which include: Ado, Agatu, Apa, Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer, Gwer West, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, Obi, Ogbadibo, Ohimini, Oju, Okpokwu, Otukpo, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo and Vandeikya with Makurdi as the state capital. the state has a multi ethnic configuration which comprise the Tiv, Idoma, Igede, Etulo, Abakpa (Abakwariga), Jukun, Hausa, Akweya and Nyifon, with the Tiv being the foremost ethnic group accounting for over half of the entire population (adopted from Eti and Akpu, 2021). The state is regarded as the 'food basket of the nation'. It is an agrarian state because of its fertile soil and this makes agriculture very important for their livelihood and survival, even though they also engage in fishing as secondary occupation especially for the population who reside in the riverine areas.

1. The Resultant Impact of Urbanization on Nomadism in Benue State.

A total of 99.51ha of agricultural land use had been converted to settlement between 1997 and 2017 (Shabu et al, 2021). Abass (2012), observed that the major source of tensions between pastoralists and farmers especially in Benue State is economic, with land-related issues accounting for the majority of the conflicts. This can then be situated within the broader context of the political economy of land struggle, traceable to burgeoning demography in which there is fierce competition for fixed space to meet the demands of urbanization and the growing population and of man and animal (especially sheep, goats and cattle) alike.

Yearly, between July and December, they graze within the northern tsetse fly free zone and then moving south wards between December to June to the Guinea and parts of the derived Savannah zone. The distance covered range from 100km to as much as 500km (Areola, 1982). However, from the years 2010 to date the Fulani are moving beyond the derived savannah to the forest zone of southern Nigeria. Suleiman (2018) believes that this cyclic movement makes them to come in contact with the sedentary farming communities of the south that shares nothing in common with the Fulani people and these contacts often times result in conflict seeing the destruction of farmlands, communities/villages and in most cases - death.

The movement of the Fulani herdsmen towards southern Nigeria is mainly attributed to the rapid depletion of natural fodder in northern Nigeria due to the changing climate. The herders are compelled to seek for pastures outside their traditional savannah. Over time, these grazing routes in which these nomads have become accustomed to, becomes obstructed due to developmental strides occasioned by urbanization. As Ahmadu and Ayuba (2018) opined, "the effects of desertification, land degradation, unstable rainfall and other climatic factors, 'pushed' the Fulani pastoralist to abandon their respective traditional ecological range in the neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger and Cameroon republics, and moved inwards into Northern part of Nigeria. This led to increasing demand for land, water and pasture. Besides, major agricultural expansion programs (Fadama Program and River Basins irrigation projects) also contributed to shrinking lands for both pastoralism and sedentarism which led to competition over limited land and pastures".

Shabu, Fate and Ukula (2021) asserted that, in Benue, over 70% of the population is involved in agriculture as a major source of employment to the populace. Depriving the sector of land therefore brings an increase in the unemployment rate. In the urban areas, the cumulative effects of succession and dominance factors have made land increasingly scarce for rural and periurban farmers. Rapid urbanization has adversely affected development efforts in many cities. One of these is changes in land use subsequently leading to decreased agricultural land in favour of the provision of residential accommodation in most urban settlements. This is reflected in the form of dormitory and satellite towns that are being developed in the urban peripheries which were agricultural lands in the urban setting. The key challenge of the urbanization process is the rapid conversion of a large amount of prime agricultural land to urban land use (mostly residential construction), in the urban periphery. The effect is the unavailability of prime agricultural lands.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of Benue State Local Government areas which had recorded an attack or not. A total of 9 out of the 23 LGAs did not record any attack while the remaining 14 had recorded one form of attack or the other.

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Table 1: Local Government Areas of Benue State that had experienced nomadic attack Adopted from Otu and Agbaji (2020).

S/N	Name of LGA	Main ethnic group	Attacked/Not attacked by Herders	Headquarters
1	Ado	Idoma, Akweya	attacked	Igumale
2	Agatu	Agatu	attacked	Ogbagaji
3	Apa	Idoma, Abakpa	Not attacked	Ugbokolo
4	Buruku	Tiv	attacked	Buruku
5	Gboko	Tiv	attacked	Gboko
6	Guma	Tiv, Jukun	attacked	Gbajimba
7	Gwer-East	Tiv	attacked	Aliade
8	Gwer-West	Tiv	attacked	Naka
9	Katsina-Ala	Tiv, Hausa, Etulo	attacked	Katsina-Ala
10	Konshisha	Tiv	Not attacked	Tse-Agberagba
11	Kwande	Tiv, Nyifon	attacked	Adikpo
12	Logo	Tiv	attacked	Ugba
13	Makurdi	Tiv, Hausa	attacked	Makurdi
14	Obi	Igede	Not attacked	Obarike-Ito
15	Ogbadibo	Idoma	Not attacked	Otukpa
16	Ohimini	Idoma, Abakpa	Not attacked	Idekpa
17	Oju	Igede	Not attacked	Oju
18	Otukpo	Idoma	attacked	Utukpo
19	Tarka	Tiv	attacked	Wannune
20	Ukpokwu	Idoma	Not Attacked	Okpoga
21	Ukum	Tiv	attacked	Sankera
22	Ushongo	Tiv	Not attacked	Lessel
23	Vandeikya	Tiv	Not attacked	Vandeikya

Imo (2016) asserted that in the recent times, Nigeria has witnessed series of violent communal clashes arising from the activities of the nomadic herdsmen who move about on a daily basis with their cattle in search of water and green pastures. They are on the streets in most of the cities and could also be found operating in the remotest villages in various states of the country. Nzeh cited in Imo (2015) maintained that in their culture, tradition and occupation, nomadic herdsmen have remained a migrant race who does not own lands nor have any permanent abode. To him, they cared less about land ownership because they are always on the move. It is their belief that land was given freely by God and should be utilize and accessible freely by any individual. Any contrary act or measure against this is viewed as an obstruction and meet with resistance by the nomad.

2. Addressing the Challenge

Table 2: Data on ways to address challenges posed by urbanization on nomadic culture

Strategies	Responses	Percentage
Nomadic Education	149	39
Ranch/Farm development	136	36
Identification and mapping of routes	54	14
Green site/designated areas for nomads	42	11
Total	381	100

The data presented shows a 39% support for nomadic education as a way of addressing the challenges of urbanization as it relates to nomadic culture. 36% of the responses believes ranch development is useful. Other strategies suggested were the identification of grazing routes and the creation of cultural green sites to allow the preservation of nomad's cultural grounds and settlement.

Majority of respondents had encountered nomads and their encounter was either peaceful or aggressive. A high number of respondents had encountered nomads before, while a handful of respondents had a peaceful encounter others had violent or aggressive contacts with the nomads. Although the number of responders who had violent/aggressive encounter was slightly higher than those with peaceful encounter, concluding on such would be ill advised, therefore the research believes it is possible to have greater variations when a specific study is conducted in this regard.

Urbanization has a negative impact on culture and has affected the way and manner land is being used for agricultural purpose as well as culture in Benue state. While urbanization has its positive side and have proven to be advantageous to growing cities and economies, there is however the downside that accompanies it. This involves a drastic change in the way of life of the affected people. It has however been established in this study that urbanization negatively impacts culture as well as land use for agricultural purpose. Moreover, the study identified that the majority of respondents are aware and familiar with the concept of urbanization. This spell out the level of comprehension brought about by high literacy level (education). It is believed that education helps in understanding concepts as well as creating a perception to accommodation and assimilation. With urbanization and the knowledge of it also comes a way of adaptation which has brought about evolution and development.

Urbanization is a factor leading to constant violence involving nomads and residents in Benue state; although the ratio of responses that affirms this position to those who sees it otherwise are quite low, the results however show a degree of affirmation

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that Benue state which have recorded a number of attacks associated with nomads could be premised within the context of the negative effects accompanying the concept of urbanization.

Urbanization has affected various aspects of the nomadic culture such as migration patterns, grazing and pastoralism, irrigation and access to water, agriculture and land use as well as perception. In a great way the impact of urbanization is felt on the pattern of migration of nomads thus, showing there is a relationship between urbanization and nomadic culture in Benue State. Pastoral nomads within Benue state are popular for their grazing and the movement of their pasture, urbanization has changed the way and area in which they graze. Urban shelters and structures have obstructed their routes, infrastructure has forced them to relocate their settlements and it is gradually phasing out their way of life. What is a pastoral nomad without his pasture or a land to graze on? These and others identified are the various ways in which urbanization has impacted nomadic culture in Benue State. Perhaps the incessant case of conflict could be located here. There is therefore a need to view these issues from the perspective of a nomad. Conflict is one of the resultant effect, conflict which basically comes as a result of differences in cultural values and perspective are more often going to be recorded. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that urbanization has no impact on nomadism and that there are no challenges associated with nomadism and urbanization in Benue State is voided.

Nomadic education, development of ranches and farm lands, designated nomads' colony and identification/mapping out of grazing routes for pastoral nomads are some of the steps needed to alleviate conflicts and violence between nomads and urban settlers. Nomadic education is a necessary tool in shaping the perception and understanding of nomads. This is expected to enhance the level of interaction and cordial relationship amongst the nomads and urban dwellers. More so, ranches and farmlands as well as nomad's colony could be developed as a way of preserving the culture of the nomads and mitigate the possibility of conflict occasioned by urbanization on their cultures. On a different level, grazing routes could be identified and mapped out with a view to integrating it with newer development etc.

It is therefore recommended that:

- a. The federal as well as state government should embark on purposive nomadic education.
- b. Have a stake holder meeting with nomads to understand their perspective and plight.
- c. federal/state government designate zones/colony to ensure the survivability of their culture.
- e. National Orientation Agency (NOA) orientate and enlighten the general public on cultural sensitivity.

IV. CONCLUSION

Culture is understood as a consortium of communication that a given people have in common: their shared experiences, shared perceptions, and values, shared consciousness. These values, experiences, and communications are guidelines about what things mean, what is important, and what should be done. It encompasses religion, food, way of dressing, language, marriage, music etc. Nomadism is the practice by members of tribes that move with its animals from place to place in search of pasture and water.

This study examined the effect of urbanization as it impacts on nomads in Benue State. It discovered that urbanization has negatively affected the culture of nomads in Benue state. Effects are felt on their settlements, their migration patterns and grazing routes, other effects are felt via the access to water and agricultural lands. These challenges subsequently lead to conflict with urban dwellers within the state.

Conversely, in order to address this menace, several steps were identified and these includes and not limited to: nomadic education, development of ranches and farm lands, designated nomads' colony and identification/mapping out of grazing routes for pastoral nomads

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