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## **DECONSTRUCTING THE BURDEN OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN A NON-REGULATORY SYSTEM: THE CASE OF LAGOS, NIGERIA**

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### **Summary**

Nigeria is one of the countries in the world <sup>with</sup> very high rural-urban dichotomy. Although the nation is generally characterized by poor social amenities, both in quality and quantity, rural communities are disproportionately more disadvantaged than urban centres due to governmental neglect. Consequently, the number of rural inhabitants that migrate to cities in the hope of overcoming the powerlessness that is consistent with rural life is unprecedented. The resulting population densities in these destinations and the corresponding disadvantages require effective regulations that will engage the push factors, on one hand, and methods for in-migrants to adjust to destination cities without infringing on the existing social equilibrium, on the other. Although the adjustability of some in-migrants in Lagos was examined, the challenge of non-regulation and the consequent unmanageable migrant-inflow into the city sustain the burden at family and societal

levels. This paper argues that Nigeria, generally, practices a non-regulatory internal migration system with prospective recipients, most times, forced to adjust grudgingly to unforeseen human additions. Investigating how these receiving families and groups are coping with this recurring contingency is critical to understanding the burden and contradictions of the non-existence of registration systems and haphazardness in spatial allocations, land use, distribution of public resources and compliance to laws. Suggesting appropriate context-specific intervention strategies to a non-regulatory migration patterns and processes, as in the case of Nigeria, is strongly recommended.

## **Background**

Nigeria is among the few countries of the world characterized by contradictory socio-economic and development scenarios (Nwokocha 2007). Despite its enviable human and material resources, the country and its peoples are still classified, globally, among the very poor (Okunmadewa, 2001) with no fewer than 54% of Nigerians living below poverty level (Akinyele, 2005). Multiple environmental, political, religious and cultural factors have been implicated in Nigeria's underdevelopment situation (Okafor, 2005; Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1997). The political factor is considered, in most quarters, as most crucial in understanding the Nigerian crisis. To a certain extent, this paper subscribes to the above position but argues, and in line with systemic analysis, that the distortion of Nigeria's development agenda could have resulted from any component, given that parts of the society function

collectively to sustain the whole with emphasis on interdependence.

Specifically, long years of military dictatorship and the resultant *tele-guided* mentality impinged negatively on the psyche of Nigerians. Throughout the days of despotism and other dark periods, mediocrity displaced excellence in all spheres of life thus leaving the society without laws and values. For the most part, amenities and welfare were not provided as and when required, with rural communities disproportionately more disadvantaged than urban centres. The situation did not improve during the few intervals of military-supervised democracy. With the return of a fairly military-independent democracy in 1999, Nigeria has made little progress in re-situating itself in the realm of sustainable development. Poverty is still a visible aspect of the people's culture. The dilemma is exacerbated by recurring high levels of unemployment and frustration that have increased the army of disenfranchised people incapable of participating directly in the growth process (Okunmadewa, 2001).

For some individuals, especially young boys and men, out-migration into cities is a necessary approach to overcoming poverty and the attendant powerlessness in rural areas notwithstanding the implications of such migration for individuals, families and groups in destination locations. In some instances, prospective recipients are hardly aware of impending human additions; yet most strive to accommodate the in-migrants in line with the African tradition regarding extended families and hospitality, at times at severe costs. The volume of internal migration in

African countries was aptly highlighted by Findley (1997:110):

By any measure, millions of Africans are migrating from one place to another within their countries. Without regard for migration type ... one in five Africans is no longer living in his or her birthplace ... migration to urban areas or particular cities ranges from 12 percent to 66 percent. In many cities and regions, the proportions are well above 33 percent.

Although the essence of mobility to the survival of any nation is well documented (Filani, 2005), lack of preparedness by prospective migrant-recipients to adjust to consequent changes in household structure is the main source of burden, which is readily manifested in a distorted social equilibrium. The effects of this imbalance are short-lived in some cases while in others are long lasting and even permanent.

Interestingly, Nigeria is practising a non-regulatory system which allows for uncontrolled internal migration. Hence, the decision to out-migrate to urban centres is not usually agonizing as a result of the perceived advantages of doing so. Perhaps, this very easy mental process, more than unavailability of infrastructures, explains the mass movement of rural dwellers to cities. If the latter were the reason, the out-migrant later discovers that infrastructures in most urban centres in Nigeria is mere camouflage, and

hardly able to improve human conditions. This paper is an attempt at understanding the trend and processes of rural-urban migration as it impinges on the development and/or underdevelopment of Lagos state. Its specific objectives include: (a) examining the extent to which Lagos is empowering or otherwise; (b) exploring the mechanism of achieving social stability in the face of burgeoning cultural contacts and complexity; (c) understanding the short and long term adjustment patterns among individuals and groups. We now examine the recurring effects of rural-urban migration in a non-regulatory system such as Nigeria.

### **Rural-urban migration in Nigeria: whither the agony?**

The burden of rural to urban migration in Nigeria is multifaceted and intertwining. As such, an analysis of one decomposable component or consequence, such as unbearable population density, impinges on other issues within the identifiable cycle of burdens. For instance, in examining the immediate effect of rural to urban migration, which is an increase in population, or at the extreme, its explosion, various other subsequent effects are expected to be considered. Population explosion activates the housing challenge both at micro family and macro society levels. Congestion in households and communities has implications for both the health and psychology of victims.

Nigerian cities such as Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Kano, and Onitsha among others are characterized by human traffic, vehicular congestions, environmental pollution, consistent in-migration and the spurious expansion of territories to accommodate human additions. This paper argues that although maternal and infant mortality have



been identified as accounting for a significant number of deaths in Nigeria (Okolocha et al 1998; Isiugo-Abanihe 2003; Population Reference Bureau 2005; Nwokocha 2006), frustration, conflict, poor sanitary conditions and frequent road accidents, which have associations with dense population, individually and collectively contribute most significantly to mortality statistics. Research shows that the life expectancy among Nigerians dropped from an average of 52 to 44 years between 2002 and 2005 (Population Reference Bureau 2002; 2005), even when there was a marked reduction in HIV/AIDS prevalence from 5.8 percent in 2001 to 4.4 percent in 2005 (Olaleye et al 2006)

Unplanned population increases in most cities explains infrastructural decay in relevant contexts. This is especially true in Nigeria where maintenance of existing amenities, which *ab-initio* are haphazardly situated due to unprecedented corruption and biased award of contracts, is not prioritized (Okafor, 2005). It is interesting to note that most roads in the country are impassable, hospitals lack necessary human and material resources, schools are dilapidated and the electricity supply is very far from stable – in most rural communities though, none of these infrastructures exists. The people's agony is visible in frustration arising from avoidable diseases and deaths, lack of access to potable water, subsistent economic activities, various kinds of unemployment, child abuse with all its ramifications and a dwindling emphasis on societal norms and values.

The burden inherent in normative conflict and social maladjustment in a non-regulatory system is enormous (Kammeyer and Ginn, 1986). Given that individuals are

culture-bearing, some in-migrants do not immediately adjust sufficiently to cultures at their destinations, while others are for a very long time guided by ethnocentric orientations hardly adapting to the realities of new locations. High crime rates have also been linked to rural-urban migration given the anonymity provided by urban environments. As Governor Fashola noted (2008: 106):

... like any mega city of its size and complexity across the globe, Lagos state faces immense security challenges. These have been made more pronounced by the protracted national economic crisis, which makes Lagos a magnetic oasis of opportunity surrounded by vast desert of want and deprivation. The result is the desperation by millions of people from within and outside Nigeria to live in Lagos by all means in search of the Golden Fleece. We can therefore best imagine the pressure on infrastructure in the face of inadequate resources and the implications for effectively securing lives and property.

\* Rural communities share this burden through the loss of the necessary manpower for agricultural activities and production. The impoverishment of rural areas in Nigeria is partly explainable by out-migration of able young people in search of employment in cities. Consequently, agriculture, which prior to the discovery of oil was the mainstay of Nigeria's economy, has been relegated to the background

leading to the country's mono-economy status. Overdependence on oil, it is argued here, has led to an employment crisis and the unnecessary importation of agricultural products, which together have, over the years, had a negative net effect on local industries and productions as well as international trade balances. Several analyses of Nigeria's economy insist that petroleum resources have been more of a curse rather than a blessing to the development of the country (Iwayemi, 2006)

It is imperative to note that some migrants in the category discussed in the present paper overcame their locality-imposed powerlessness in new destinations, while a large majority of others became more impoverished to the point of becoming social misfits otherwise known as *area boys and girls*. Another burden imposed by rural to urban migration is the increasing number of cohabitation and consensual unions that result among both married and the not yet married. Although it could be argued in some quarters that such union, especially when it involves people from different ethnic backgrounds, could have positive implications for the country's unity at a macro level, the negative consequences on existing marriages and family unity at the micro level are enormous. The above issues constitute the burden, and in some cases the agony, of rural-urban migration in Nigeria for which organized critical thinking and context specific intervention strategies are essential. In what follows, the situation of Lagos state which is without doubt the melting pot of all Nigerian cultures is examined in line with the thematic phenomenon with a view to understanding how the city deconstructs the antithesis inherent in in-migration at family and society levels.

### **Deconstructing the burden: the case of Lagos.**

Noted for its inherent capacity of emitting hope among inhabitants due to its multidimensional attributes, Lagos is an interesting demographic phenomenon. It is probably the city that receives the highest number of in-migrants in Africa (Adegoroye 2008). Popularly known as the "Centre of Excellence", the city, which also doubles as a state, conjures an image of completeness and mega attraction due to its socio-economic, religious and political features. The agglomeration of seaports, motor parks, airports, industries, academic and financial institutions, markets, NGOs, and foreign missions explains the high in-flow of individuals and groups into this already congested city from inside and outside Nigeria. The critical reality of unplanned human additions is that in-migrants over-burden individuals, families and society at their destination (Nwokocha, 2007), at times, stretching the latter beyond adjustment limits.

Newcomers with meagre financial resources and who are unable to locate individuals and groups for initial accommodation resort to all kinds of shelter. Experience shows that this category of people usually go for the least expensive apartments most times without electricity, ventilation or toilet facilities. Worse still, some are found under flyovers and bridges scattered all over the city. The immediate implication of this situation is environmental degradation, with human excreta being a common sight. Interestingly, a large number of Lagosians belong to the latter category and as such Lagos is unwittingly a city of mega slums. This paper argues that a combination of

affluence and poverty undermines attempts at relocation among most inhabitants. The consciousness in different quarters that individuals of very high socio-economic status will continue to maintain their dominance and the expectation among those in the lower class category that achieving upward mobility is feasible in the shortest possible time has sustained class differences and relative social equilibrium.

The homeostasis persists due to such confidence that explains both a reluctance and an aversion for migrating out of the city. By striving to deconstruct the inherent contradictions of the city, Lagosians exhibit inner motivations to survive in this location notwithstanding visible class divisions, dense population, pollution, normlessness and infrastructural decay which have become part of Lagosian life. These inadequacies are directly related to the de-ruralization of the city accomplished through the expansion efforts of individuals and groups who either find it difficult to cope with its bustling and hustling or pervasive high rent regime that characterizes the housing situation. The insistence on residing in Lagos derives from the perception of persistent city-ness of the thematic city with an enviable capacity for creating and recreating economic expansion. This paper examines critically the view that Lagos is empowering and the implications of this to the attitude and behaviour of its inhabitants. Added to this is an investigation on how social stability is achieved in a state where hoodlums perpetrate criminal acts with reckless abandon. That way, the study provides an understanding on how the patterns and processes of adjustment at micro-

individual and macro-society levels impinge on the human and physical development of the city.

### **A city of two megas: finding the mid-point.**

Each of the attributes of Lagos as a city and a slum possesses the power of attraction for residents and immigrants. The perceived city-ness of *eko* (another name for Lagos) is embedded in the physical and economic idiosyncrasies whose mixture is not found in any other city in Nigeria or West Africa at large. For instance, various types of industries are situated in the area due to its proximity to sources of raw materials, cheap labour, markets and an established road transport system that connects it to other locations in Nigeria and beyond. Added to these are an international airport, seaports and railway lines. The city's appeal is amplified by the very large number of financial groups, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions. These and many other characteristics such as the grouping of several cultures in Nigeria in one location and its rapid growth and expansion confer on Lagos the status of a megacity. Yet, sustainable development has not been attained by the city due to its constantly changing nature and ineffective management. As such, Lagos inevitably conjures for itself an image that reveals the exact opposite of a megacity.

The slum side of Lagos is perhaps more visible and has more influence on the demography, health and socio-economic and political conditions of the area. The latter is explainable in view of the understandably large volume of in-migration and concomitant high population size in the

midst of inadequate infrastructural facilities (Nwokocha, 2007; Olukoju, 2003). Studies indicate that Lagos presently is demographically listed as the sixth largest megacity in the world and is expected to rank third by 2015 (Obono, 2007). Due to its high density, the city has over the decades experienced human, vehicular and physical congestion; unprecedented environmental decay exemplified by blocked drainage systems and unregulated sewage disposal; the institutionalization of air, water and noise pollution; suburb encroachment and the dislocation of the very poor; street trading/emergency markets and an almost total collapse of laws of behaviour. Ironically, this negative aspect of Lagos attracts some in-migrants and also discourages settlers from out-migration. The location increases the anonymity of deviants.

The high crime rate in Lagos and in particular armed robbery attacks account for the death of innocent citizens and an increase in the proliferation of ethnic militias, private security outfits, and neighbourhood groups. The city sits on the fence of classification, constantly exhibiting an ambiguous status, wherein the more attempts are made at understanding it, the more it is misunderstood. This thematic city was aptly described by Obono (2007:32), thus "the city is a bloated slum, undergoing compulsive growth and degeneration produced by the relative poverty of its surrounding regions and its own over-urbanization". This paper opines that the above description is valid for the most part, while in a few instances may not totally be the case of Lagos. The latter submission supposes that an aspect of Lagos is also possible at a time. For instance, the crisis of 12 June 1993 following the annulment of the election of

Chief MKO Abiola as Nigeria's president and the consequent long years of reaction by the Ooduwa People's Congress (a pan-Yoruba reactionary militia group) left Lagos comatose for some time. For most of that period, the city did not experience growth. The above example indicates degeneration only. It is, however, difficult to recall any instance when the situation of Lagos was characterized by growth without some form of decay.

This paper argues however that the ambiguity created by the Lagosian situation when its two sides are emphasized (growth and degeneration) has both positive and negative components: although the latter are more pronounced. This culture of status-unpredictability has implications for the easy mental and physical adjustment of individuals within and outside the city at micro-level. At the macro-society level, such uncertainty demobilizes attempts at effective planning and projection.

Engaging the duality of Lagos as well as locating the mid-point of these two contradictory aspects (city and slum) empowers individuals and groups to exploit the potential of this megacity. As such, the contradictions of the city can be deconstructed. However, achieving the latter requires a careful understanding of the trends, patterns and processes of the demographic, cultural, political and socio-economic dynamics of Lagos at each point in time in order to cope with its shifting equilibrium. In what follows, we examine how the deconstruction of the Lagos antithesis can be achieved by exploiting the midpoint of its sharply contrasting statuses – a situation that projects its enigma and city-ness.



## **The persistent city-ness of Lagos: overturning its contradictions**

Everything that works can be subverted; everything that does not work can be converted to some other use. Lagos is a celebration of defiance against any and all constituted authority. In this, it is a quintessential postmodern megacity of the developing world. Its core attributes are poverty and residential slums. This results in part from the sometimes deluded confidence of many migrants that Lagos holds the key to their future prosperity. Systemic contradictions have led to a leveling of Lagos' residents through the creation of alternative channels of power, including those that undermine the system. Despite these contradictions – and in part because of them – optimism and the promise of opportunity pervade Lagosian society (Obono, 2007:36)

This description of Lagos has implications for its persistent city-ness and although it could be seen as gasping for survival from environmental decay and lawlessness, at the same time it emits economic and employment opportunities and social networks that dislocate powerlessness among individuals and groups. The Spartan

attitude of Lagosians was vividly described by Packer (2006:3):

The hustle never stops in Lagos. Informal transactions make up at least sixty per cent of economic activity; at stoplights and on highways, crowds of boys as young as eight hawk everything from cell phones to fire extinguishers. Begging is rare. In many African cities, there is an oppressive atmosphere of people lying about in the middle of the day, of idleness sinking into despair. In Lagos, everyone is a striver. ...In 1950, fewer than three hundred thousand people lived in Lagos. In the second half of the twentieth century, the city grew at a rate of more than six per cent annually. It is currently the sixth-largest city in the world, and it is growing faster than any of the world's other megacities (the term used by the United Nations Center for Human Settlements for "urban agglomerations" with more than ten million people). By 2015, it is projected, Lagos will rank third, behind Tokyo and Bombay, with twenty-three million inhabitants.

The uniqueness of Lagos among other megacities manifests in its capacity to achieve deconstruction of its own contradictions by empowering residents in a variety of ways. Although it shares some attributes with cities like Cairo in terms of a massive influx of migrants (Zigmann, 2007); Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo with regard to high crime rate (McCann, 2007); and dense population and governance challenge as in South-east Asian cities such as

Bangkok, Manila and Jakarta (Ooi, 2007) among others, Lagos stands out due to its almost complete attributes. Its mega-ness does not derive from population size alone; it possesses outstanding socioeconomic, cultural, political, educational, diplomatic and technological qualities that are presently not comparable with any other megacity in the world.

New migrants to Lagos may become refugees in the interim due to their inability to identify relatives or face rejection as a result of overstretched limits of accommodation by the latter (Nwokocha, 2007), yet chances of survival in the city are associated with its multifaceted nature. Although the poverty level is high as in other Nigerian cities, multiple opportunities make class mobility, from low to high, easier in Lagos. With time, these refugees become rescuers. The effects of poverty are also lower in the thematic city. For instance, suburbs are developing fast to accommodate low income earners while food items are not only cheap due to the economics of scale but are also repackaged in affordable packs. In this regard, the inhabitants of the city are empowered in two ways. First is in their quick access to these foods and second in opportunities to become food producers in primary and/or secondary capacities. In these circumstances and events are embedded the de-ruralization, city-ness, adjustment and empowerment of Lagosians. Notwithstanding the capacity to deconstruct the burden of rural urban migration, Lagos is consistently challenged by the non-regulation of immigration and the attendant consistent overpopulation.

### **Theoretical framework**

This section deals with sociological perspectives that explain the role and adjustability of individuals in society to changing and challenging circumstances. Garfinkel's ethnomethodology which translates to "the body of common-sense knowledge and the range of procedures and considerations by means of which the ordinary members of society make sense of and find their way about in, and act on the circumstances in which they find themselves" (Ritzer 2008: 387 citing Heritage 1984) is adopted for this paper. This perspective locates individuals in the realm of rationality with their actions undertaken only within the context of intentionality. The theory views actors as possessing the mental capacity to weigh the benefits of an intended action against the costs before the course of action is decided upon and eventually undertaken, especially where there are alternatives. The implication is that human actions are driven by personal desires that may culminate in the accomplishment of certain goals and aspirations.

By 'social facts', this theory emphasizes the contributions of individuals to shaping their social environment unlike the Durkheimian conceptualization that views these social facts as supra-individual, to the extent that the attitude and actions of individuals are defined and determined by factors external to them. In the latter sense, the behaviour of individuals within a given community is guided almost wholly by forces such as mores, folkways, values, custom among others over which they have no control.

In the same light, Parsons' Voluntary Social Action theory, which is very much like Weber's social action theory, asserts the primacy of society over the individual

person (Giddens, 2000), and argues that societies exert social constraint over the actions of individuals. This perspective focuses on the course of action as determined by the conditions of the physical and social environment; society influences the end, which the actor seeks and the means s/he will use in attaining them. The implication of this Parsonian view is that the behaviour of individuals is guided or regulated. Perhaps, the burden of rural-urban migration in Nigeria is bolstered by its non-regulatory character that suffices in ethnomethodology which thrives on an overemphasis or rationalization of individual perception and behaviour.

Rural-urban migration in Nigeria can be explained as mainly necessitated by the socio-economic, environmental and psychological incapacitations that inhere in most rural communities in the country. For the most part, these location-inflicted inadequacies serve as an incentive to (or push factors for) migratory flow to urban centres. Beyond the fact that individuals may freely decided to migrate to urban centres in search of a better life and living conditions, that freedom also extends to decisions on the patterns and processes of such movement. Internal migration procedure in Nigeria wherein the migrant sets out without being adequately prepared both in terms of mental adjustment and accommodation at their destination constitutes a burden to receiving households and communities even when the latter, in the spirit of African hospitality, fails to complain about the unplanned human additions that may probably dislocate household equilibrium. Consequently, such freedom may become antithesis to the system both at micro family and macro society levels.

As such, the movement of individuals to new locations as a strategy to overcoming the powerlessness inherent in most Nigerian rural communities, in particular, would make meaning only when the benefits are derived by the migrant without significant costs to their original location, destination and the receiving family. That way, rural-urban migration becomes an acceptable method of seeking socioeconomic and psychological accomplishments in a poverty stricken society such as Nigeria.

### **Intervention strategies: can the agonies be overcome?**

A non-regulatory system does not lend itself to critical investigation, update and adjustments on the basis of its "anything goes" approach. Like other aspects of demographic events, monitoring migration activities in Nigeria is either clumsy or non-existent probably because of the intergenerational orientation that thrives in the evasion of responsibilities and/or ignorance related to the essence of keeping track of records. For instance, vital statistics related to births and deaths outside the formal (orthodox) facilities are generally not undertaken. The situation is exacerbated by the inability (or unwillingness) of the authorities to keep population registers for periodic updates; yet censuses are both irregular and largely unreliable. As such, planning is undertaken from a very weak information base. The critical implication of this lack of emphasis on demographic data is that population policies neither synchronize with, nor derive from, the true situation of things in the country. Consequently, development is generally lopsided or totally undermined. Sustainable growth is only achievable when the inherent agonies of a non-regulatory system, as is the

case of Nigeria, are broken through context-specific interventions.

Although the essence of overcoming the burden of rural-urban migration in Nigeria cannot be overstated, it has been particularly difficult to achieve. Part of the difficulty is in the non-prioritization of reduction in development gaps between rural and urban centres on one hand and the seeming elasticity of families and communities to adjust to human additions, even without prior information, all in the name of African hospitality on the other. This paper argues that the contingency approach has not improved the conditions of individuals and groups; it has instead impinged negatively on the well-being of these recipients.

### **The way forward**

The most realistic strategy for engaging the burden of rural-urban migration in Nigeria is to provide basic amenities in rural communities which will alleviate life and economic activities among rural dwellers on one hand and as a result discourage unnecessary relocation to cities. On the other hand, to propel return-migration among urban inhabitants whose activities do not contribute substantially to family and urban growth as city-dwellers. This can largely be achieved by dismantling structures that support and sustain inactivity among individuals and groups. For instance, demolishing illegal physical structures and social networks in and around Lagos could be a signal that unless an individual fits into the socio-economic and value status of the state, the cost of residing there would outweigh the benefits. In addition, the tax regime in Lagos should be strengthened to ensure that evasion is minimized to an appreciable degree. Fashola (2008:75) had projected thus

“our target is to bring about 5 million people by December this year (referring to 2008) to the tax Net. As at last year (being as it were 2007), barely 1 million people were within the tax Net”. This necessary obligation will discourage people who do not have sufficient cause and capacity to reside in the mega city from persisting as Lagos inhabitants.

Although these strategies do not amount to regulation in a strict sense, they will however contribute to maintaining some equilibrium in rural and urban populations. This latent function wherein the push and pull factors activate some measure of relevance in balancing the movement of people make predictability, planning and balanced development feasible. This paper argues that in view of the level of hardship faced by most urban-dwellers in Nigeria, achieving the proposed attitudinal and behavioural change will not be difficult. By either resisting the urge to move to cities or those already in urban centres opting to return to rural localities, a kind of moderate population size can be maintained. Such an attitudinal shift will translate into breaking the code related to the wrong impression that cities, and in particular Lagos, are the only places that people’s potential can be fulfilled.

A moderate population size would ease housing, congestion and health problems in relevant localities. It also undermines pressure and the over-use of infrastructures to the point of untimely decay. In addition, the challenge related to school enrolment that results from dense population in some urban centres can be eliminated. Experience shows that an enrolment explosion in primary and secondary schools, in most Nigerian cities, without a corresponding provision of facilities is one of the major



reasons for the regrettable diminishing academic standards in the country.

A manageable population size also has implications for the security of lives and property in a given community. The high rate of crime and insecurity in Lagos, Nigeria, for instance, has been attributed to its population density, which has made it extremely difficult for security operatives and law enforcement agents to undertake the task of safeguarding individuals and property effectively. (Adegoroye 2008). The issue for Nigeria is therefore not that of the official regulation of rural to urban migration but how such migration could occur without infringing on the existing social equilibrium.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has examined the burden of rural to urban migration in a non-regulatory system and has established that receiving families and communities face some hardship as a result. Although it is difficult to introduce and sustain a workable regulation system in Nigeria given the existing pervasive extended family ethos that supports the convention of mandatory hospitality in African culture, inherent burden and hardship can be eliminated by resituating rural communities developmentally. The incontrovertible conclusion that derives from internal migration in Nigeria is that population equilibrium in both rural and urban settings can be achieved by making rural communities economically and infrastructural viable. In this way, out-migration will be discouraged while in-migration into rural areas will be encouraged among some urban inhabitants. Achieving this will require a demonstrable

political will and vision since the resources are already available.

Lagos was specifically chosen for this analysis due to its multifaceted attributes and in particular, the unprecedented number of in-migrants that are pulled into the megacity in the hope of overcoming the inadequacies that pushed them out of their initial places of abode in the first place. As events indicate, large number of Lagosians overcame their economic powerlessness through hard-work and multiple activities that resulted from a thorough understanding of the city. As such, part of being a successful Lagosian is in the ability to deconstruct the city's antithesis and buying into the catalogue of opportunities that exist in it without infringing on the common good. Achieving that requires some measure of insight and discipline to recognise one's idiosyncrasies relative to the Lagosian norms and values. That way, an individual would stand out from the Lagos crowd composed mainly of rugged personalities that are hardly impressed by pedestrian attitude and achievements.

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