

Impact of Urbanization on Kinship Ties Under the covid- 19 Era: A Study of Aba Urban, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper draws on qualitative and quantitative data on the migration experiences of migrants living Aba, Nigeria to reflect and expand upon the existing knowledge on the impact of urbanization on kinship ties especially in a recessive economy and also focused on other social networks serving as migration channels for migrants in the informal sector. Primary data was collected using the questionnaire and the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) schedule as research tools. A sampled population of 273 58 (37 women and 21 men) migrants from different parts of Nigeria constituted the respondents. We considered different migrant profiles based on principal migration motives to identify differentiated socio demographic profiles. The migration trends from Northern to Southern Ghana is not a new phenomenon and it is rooted in historical antecedents. Migration scholars in Ghana have attributed these migration trends from an economic lens, arguing that migration has become a household strategy to diversify incomes. However, little research has. In view of this, this paper explores the gendered strategies and social networks that the northern migrants use to gain access to the labour market. Findings of the study show that As migrants move from rural areas to resettle in Aba, their networks change dramatically alongside their living conditions and surroundings. The relative benefit of different kinds of ties in this context indicates that integration and assimilation of migrants into their new community is a function of ethnicity. Strong and weak social ties facilitate migration differently. Whereas the former facilitates migration, the latter offers an enduring support for new migrants in searching for jobs and accommodation on arrival. Quantitative results revealed that the association between the rate of urbanization and the erosion of kinship ties is very negligible at ($p < .01$). Qualitative findings suggest that cultural brokers—social ties that can bridge cultures, languages, and backgrounds were particularly important to the well-being, blending the benefits of strong and weak ties. The study concludes that when people migrate to the urban centres, they do not enter a social vacuum but they rely heavily upon relatives for social interaction, and provision in time of need. That through the migration to *the* urban centre the gap between the rural economy and urban economy is bridged through what can be called 'internal division of labour. Cash income from the urban area and security from the rural areas are passed across.

Keywords: Urbanization, Migration, Kinship ties, Economic recession, and COVID-19, Aba, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

One of the most phenomenal features of humans is their ability to move from one place to another. Thus, man has been noted to be always on the move from one geo-location to another in search of greener pastures and better socioeconomic fortunes. In fact, the search for more favourable conditions has remained the primary reason for migration among humans. Migration, being purely a behavioural phenomenon responding to differences in the endowment of places is difficult to define. However, Human migration is defined as the movement of people from one place to another with the intentions of settling permanently or temporarily at a new location. Migration can either be internal or international. For the international migration which is the

movement of people across international borders, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2019), observed that there is an increase in overall migration flows in G20 countries, as more than 10 million people migrate permanently or temporarily in G20 countries in 2019. Thus the interest of this study is in internal migration which today is indeed, the most dominant migration globally. For example, an estimated 740 million internal migrants are recorded in 2009 [1]. In contemporary times, migration has become prevalent especially rural-urban migration. In sub-Saharan Africa for example, it is reported that people move in droves to urban centres on daily basis. [2] reported that a lot of people are moving to urban centres in search of greener pastures

and to escape rural poverty. This agrees with the early ideas of [3]. Gugler in the book: 'Urbanization and social change in West Africa' made the observation that "in spite of a lack of commensurate industrial growth, West Africa experienced the most rapid rate of urban population growth of any region in the world between 1950 and 1970." It is this mass movement of people to the cities that bring about urbanization. Urbanization technically speaking refers to the population shift from rural to urban residency and the gradual increase in the proportion of people settling in urban areas. It is the concentration of population in larger urban settlements of a given territory that is seen as urbanization. Thus, the United Nations has estimated that more than half of the world's population live in urban areas since the end of 2008; and by 2050 it is predicted that 64.1% and 85.9% of the developing and developed world respectively will be urbanized [4].

Growth of urban towns in Nigeria and Africa in general has been the result of such factors as big economic change, socio-cultural changes, growth of political and administrative bureaucracies, and the prevalent conditions in the rural areas. The common opinion has been that nearly all migration from rural to urban area has economic reason; that the activities in the urban centres create high employment opportunities. The seeming economic potentials of the urban centres make for many people migrating and residing in the cities. Consequently, the city has become an agglomeration of migrants from different cultural settings, and has become the trigger for social change including change in family structure. Migration as it were, has created two locations: urban, and rural.

[5] looking at the distinct locations, has reported that extensive contact exists between the town dwellers and their rural homes. The city though is attractive at least for economic improvement, there is the view that the urbanization of the African town-dweller is far from being complete. The urban dwellers visit their homes regularly. The already established urban dwellers receive newly arrived Kin to the town. The maintenance of this link has some material reasons because the land is very important for the Nigerian urban dwellers. Thus, "the permanent severance of ties with one's rural home might well mean the loss of valuable asset, "Land".

[6] in his study of urbanization and Kinship systems in some West African cities like Lagos, Cameroon and others came out with the result that Kinship ties have continued to exist, and extended family providing shelter and serving the economic and social needs of members. The town-dweller tries to retain their primary rural- derived identities, with a little modification. Thus, it has been said that 'one of the interesting aspects of the urban population is the resiliency of old ties among those of the same tribal and ethnic background.'. Contrary to this view of the retention of primary rural- derived identities, [7] had the view that "the multi- faceted structural differentiation of urbanism weakens small, primary groups." It is against this Wirth's thesis that the problem of this study borders. Therefore, the study wants to see the impact of the growth of urban centres and urbanization as a social process on the survival of kinship; whether increasing urbanization especially under a recessive economic times result to breakdown of the ties among king roping the city and contact between the rural and the urban area.

Statement of Problem and Objectives of the Study

In an ideal traditional African society, Kinship as a system of human social relationship plays a very significant roles in the social organization of the people. This role has been important in the area of politics, economics and socio-cultural sphere. The question this paper wants to answer is: how far has urbanization affected the Kinship system as an aspect of the social organization of urban dwellers in Aba, Nigeria? Aba as a big city, seen as the commercial nerve-centre of Abia State is a melting pot, housing many migrants from many parts of Nigeria and West Africa in general. Aba like most other African cities has long been perceived as a show of the bustling and hustling and other contradictions that characterize street life of the average city dweller. In Aba urban, there are times of economic boom and wealth, times of overwhelming destitution, despair and poverty with its oppression and uncertainties; dilapidated infrastructures, high rate of violent crimes and cybercrimes, youth restiveness and recurrent protests.

Consequent upon the devastating effects of modernization and globalization with cultural transformations, the city and its dwellers under the current economic

recession occasioned by the COVID-19 Pandemic are experiencing serious hardship. The researcher want to find out the extent of disruption of kinship ties due to the changing economic tides under the recessive economy of the COVID-19 era; interrogate the 'impact of urbanization on Kinship ties looking at Aba urban to assess the validity and applicability of some European hypotheses and theories.

The general objective of the study is to place Louis Wirth's hypothesis that "the multi - faceted structural differentiation of urbanism weakens small, primary groups." into the Nigerian situation using Aba urban.

Specifically, the cardinals of this study include to:

1. See the extent to which urbanization affected the social relationships in Aba.
2. Find out whether the urban dwellers and their village still maintain family contact and mutual aids.
3. To assess the effectiveness of village Associations and Town Unions as an integrative force in the creation and maintenance of Kinship structures in Aba urban.
4. To find out the extent of disruption of Kinship ties due to the changing economic tides.

Hypotheses

1. The increasing connectedness of the urban and rural areas strengthens Kinship ties.
2. Kinship attachments often help people with limited means to survive the uncertainties of the urban area.
3. In the urban areas the elementary family does not stand alone.
4. There is no significant relationship between increasing rate of urbanization and the rate of erosion of kinship ties.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework used for the research is grounded in Granovetter's social network theory of "strong ties" and "weak ties" [8]. Social network theory views social relationships in terms of nodes and ties within the networks. While the nodes are seen as the individual actors within the network, the ties are the relationships between the actors. [9] explained that interpersonal ties could be identified as either strong or weak ties. Strong ties are usually kin-based, from close family members, and ethnicity. This

theory has been useful for explaining many real-world phenomena. For example, in the study of migration, social network theory employs a more relational approach that holds that migration should be conceived of as a dynamic social process [10].

This theory examines how migrants' settlement intention is shaped by a wide variety of social ties, including hometown and destination ties. The theory studies how people, organizations or groups interact with others inside their network. These individuals are involved in what [11] defined as a migration network, a composite of interpersonal relations in which the migrants interact with their family, friends or compatriots who stayed behind in their country of origin. The link is seen to cover the exchange of information, financial assistance, help in finding a job and other forms of assistance. This interaction facilitates migration by reducing the costs and inherent risks. Over time, Scholars have employed the above theory to examine migrants' settlement intention in Chinese destination cities. In most of the earlier empirical studies, there is proof that institutional factors are significant in predicting migrants' settlement intention; this is consistent with the logic of structuralism [12].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Area of the Study and Population

The rapid development of Aba as an urban centre is connected with its locational advantage in the trade routes. Aba urban from 1963 National census result has a population of about 131, 003 and also 2,534,265 by 2006 Nigerian Housing and Population census. [13]. Implicit in these figures is a continuous growth at a rate of between 2.5%-3.2%. This urban growth is connected with the change in economic activities, growth of administrative and political bureaucracies and the prevailing condition in the surrounding rural areas. The area of Aba urban covers about 18 square kilometers with a population density of about 140,793 persons /sq.km. The territorial limit extends to Ariaria where the new market is situated. All areas within 5.8km radius with the Aba post office as a center. However, the area under study covers the crown town of the Aba, Ndiegoro, Umungasi and Eziukwu. The main reason for inclusion of these was because of the availability of occupationally homogenous population of people from the

same clans/ ethnic origins in the places. The total population of Aba Urban was 2,534,265. However, the target population of the study was 15,004 migrants being the population of some six (6) relevant population categories for this study which cut across the study

area. The population categories were as follows: - market associations, road transport workers, bankers, civil/public servants, artisans, and teachers. The target population is shown in the table 1.

Table 1: Target Population of the Study

| | Market Association | Road Transport Workers | Bankers | Civil/Pub Servants | Artisans | Teachers | Total |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------|--------------------|----------|----------|---------------|
| Crown Town | 2500 | 720 | 528 | 400 | 1002 | 250 | 5,400 |
| Ndiegoro | 1530 | 405 | 202 | 370 | 805 | 223 | 3535 |
| Umungasi | 1600 | 218 | 211 | 200 | 680 | 110 | 3019 |
| Eziukwu | 1005 | 500 | 300 | 270 | 760 | 215 | 3050 |
| Total | 6,635 | 1843 | 1241 | 1240 | 3247 | 798 | 15,004 |

Source: Official records/registers of market men/women associations, official records/registers of road transport workers associations, official records/nominal rolls of banks, official records/registers of ministries and parastatals, official records/registers of artisans, and official records/registers of schools

Sample Size

The sample size for this study was 273 migrants. This was statistically generated by using Taro Yamane Statistical method of determining sample size as thus:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

Where: n = Sample Size

N= Target Population

e = error of sample (it could be 0.10 down to 0.01, but in this work, 0.06 was used)

1 = unity or constant

Therefore:

$$n = 15004 / (1 + 15004 (.06)^2)$$

$$n = 15004 / (1 + 15004 (0.0036))$$

$$n = 15004 / (1 + 54.0144)$$

$$n = 15004 / 55.0144$$

$$n = 273 \text{ migrants.}$$

Sampling Technique

The multi-stage sampling procedure involving cluster sampling, purposive sampling, proportionate stratified sampling and availability sampling techniques were adopted in the selection of respondents for the study. At first, Aba Urban was clustered into ten (10) clusters such as:

1. Crown town as a secondary locality.
2. Ndiegoro
3. Eziukwu
4. Abaukwu
5. Okpojiaku
6. Umungasi
7. Ogborhill
8. UmuolaEgbelu
9. Ehere and
10. Obuda based on their distinct settlement patterns.

Secondly, four (4) areas out of the 10 clusters were purposively selected based on the prevalence of well occupationally homogeneous built up areas. The selected areas were the Crown Town, Ndiegoro, Umungasi and Eziukwu. The stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to select the respondents from each cluster in view of the fact that clusters did not have equal size. The availability sampling was then used to select the actual respondents from each cluster giving a total sample size of two hundred and seventy three (273) as shown in table 2.

Table 2: proportionate Stratified Random Sampling Technique for the Study

| Selected Areas in Aba Urban | Total | Percentage | Proportionate calculations |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Crown Town | 5400 | 36 | $5400/15004 \times 273/1 = 98$ |
| Ndiegoro | 3535 | 24 | $3535/15004 \times 273/1 = 64$ |
| Umungasi | 3019 | 20 | $3019/15004 \times 273/1 = 55$ |
| Eziukwu | 3050 | 20 | $3050/15004 \times 273/1 = 56$ |
| Total | 15,004 | 100 | 273 |

Data

To collect data for this study, a mixed-method research approach involving the use of quantitative and qualitative methods was used. Questionnaire and interview schedule were utilized as tools for data collection. Again, attitudinal questions using the summated Likert scale incorporated into the questionnaire were also used to draw information. The attitudinal questions were aimed at measuring the attitude of the respondents to the generalized statements about the phenomenon under investigation. The data collected were organized and the content of the questionnaire edited. The method of analysis was qualitative analysis. In the analysis, percentages were used to show numerical differences in the responses to the questions asked in the questionnaire. The generalized statements about the phenomenon under study were derived from

a list of statements using the summated Likert scale. These statements which were to test the attitude of the respondents as regards the issue of Urbanization and its impact on Kinship ties were analyzed using the Lambda as a statistic to measure the degree of the relationship based on the responses to the attitudinal questions. However, statistical data though present in a simple form has not been emphasized since it did not provide all the basis of the analysis and conclusion. It has only been used to give substantive content to the analysis. What was important and thus emphasized was the analysis of the result of the intensive inquiry, observation and responses. All these were placed in historical perspective and in terms of functional and structural relationships to show the trend of the phenomenon under study.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 3 Selected Socio- demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Heads of Household)

| Variables and Categories | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Age | | |
| 30-39 | 70 | 26 |
| 40-49 | 78 | 29 |
| 50-59 | 76 | 28 |
| 60-69 | 36 | 13 |
| 70+ | 13 | 5 |
| Total | 273 | 100 |
| Religion | | |
| Christianity | 232 | 85 |
| Islam | 20 | 7 |
| Traditional religion | 21 | 8 |
| Sex : | | |
| Male | 230 | 84 |
| Female | 43 | 16 |
| Educational Qualification | | |
| No Formal Education | 27 | 10 |
| Primary Education | 77 | 28 |
| Secondary Education | 114 | 42 |
| Higher Education | 53 | 19 |
| Total | 273 | 100 |

Table 3 shows that more than the respondents are between ages 40 years to 59 years, 84 % are males, 85 % are Christians, and majority of the respondents have secondary education (42 %).

Rural urban links and the strength of kinship ties

To guide the collection of data to explain the relationship between urban links and rural kinship ties, the hypothesis- 'the increasing

connectedness of the urban and rural areas strengthens Kinship ties' was tested. To test this hypothesis, the question 'In the last twelve months, how many times did you visit your village' was analyzed as seen in Table 3.

Table 4 Percent Distribution of responses to the question; In the last twelve months, how many times did you visit your village?

| Frequency of visit | Number | Percent |
|--------------------|------------|------------|
| Once a week | 40 | 15 |
| 1-2 times a month | 130 | 48 |
| 1-2 times a year | 60 | 22 |
| Irregular | 28 | 10 |
| Never | 15 | 5 |
| Total | 273 | 100 |

From Table 4, we notice that 130 (48%) of the sample indicated they go home 1-22 times a month, 60 (22%) indicated that they visit home 1-2 times a year. These figures show that many of the town dwellers in Aba urban often go home. The high percentage of respondents going to the village 1-2 times in a month agree with the idea of Mayer (1968) that the African town populations by and large still consisted of Africans who were

spending part of their lives in towns, in between periods spent in the rural hinterland and who continued thinking of the hinterland rather the town as their permanent 'home' because of their greater security there. This is true since the 1950s when Louis Wirth wrote till the recent times from the 1970s [14] and more recent work on housing [15], and blended families [16]. These researches have shown that households in contemporary

urban societies are part of wider kinship configurations of changeable forms mobilized according to social needs, lifecycle changes and moral expectations. [17]. As found among most African towns, there is no total urbanization of the individual. No matter where the individuals live they are still regarded and recognized as full members of the village. The recognition and expectations that the individual will return have some basic impacts on the urban dwellers. Because of the kinship attachment with some people in the village, they visit village regularly. The frequency of the visit depends on among other things, the income of the individual urbanite. The maintenance of this link between urban and rural areas can be explained by the fact that most African urban dwellers in African towns see themselves as

strangers in town. They see their stay there as transitory. The hostilities, insecurities in the urban centres and the uncertainty therein today, make the urban-dwellers to see the rural village as the only place safe and capable of providing needed social security. Thus they maintain ties with the village. This tie is said to be maintained by keeping up all channels of communication with the village through regular and frequent visits, letters, an oral messages, gifts to keep themselves within the rural network of social relations. 60% of the sample indicated they use letters, while 40% indicated that use oral messages as means of communication. To Interrogate further the relationship between urban and rural dwellers, responses to the question: In the last twelve months (2020), how many times were you visited by people from your village was analyzed as is seen in Table 5.

Table5: Response to the question: in the last twelve months (2020), how many times were you visited by people from your village?

| Frequency of visit | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|------------|
| Once/twice | 38 | 14 |
| 3-5 times a month | 85 | 31 |
| 6-10 times a year | 50 | 18 |
| More than 10 times | 75 | 28 |
| Never | 20 | 7 |
| No answer | 5 | 2 |
| Total | 273 | 100 |

From Table 5, 31% of the sample indicated that they were visited 3-5 times during the said period (2020). 18 % were visited 6-10 times in the year while only 7 % said they were not visited. This visit by village relatives is often done with some foodstuffs for the urban relatives. This is seen when we

look at table 5 where about 38.5% of the sample said they receive foodstuffs. 43.2% said they were helped by their relatives advising them on how to conduct themselves in the town, and a disproportionate 1.1% said that they received money to help restart their business.

Table 6: During the 2020 COVID-19 Lockdown and the consequent recession, how did your village relatives help you survive in the urban Area?

| Type of Help | Number | Percentage |
|---|------------|------------|
| By sending money to improve my business | 30 | 1.1 |
| By sending foodstuffs to me | 105 | 38.5 |
| By advising me on how to conduct myself | 118 | 43.2 |
| No response | 25 | 9.2 |
| Total | 273 | 100 |

Table 7: Response to the question: How do you people in the urban area help improve the lives of your rural relatives during the COVID-19 Pandemic

| Frequency of visit | Number | Percentage |
|---|------------|------------|
| By sending money home to my family | 60 | 22 |
| By building a house | 35 | 13 |
| By contributing money / materials as palliatives to the rural kinsmen | 150 | 55 |
| By educating the illiterate relatives | 20 | 7 |
| No response | 8 | 3 |
| Total | 273 | 100 |

From Table7, we notice that 55 % help their rural relatives by contributing to money and materials as palliatives for the rural kinsmen, 22% said they send money home to their family while 30% said they build houses at home and 3% help by educating the illiterate relates on the issue of COVID-19 Pandemic. The economic and social impact of migrants on the 'left behind' is enormous. Economically, migrants tend to send remittances to their home villages. According to [18] "the separation from tribal life and entry into urban life rather than weakening the bond between tribal members, on the contrary, greatly strengthens them". The urban-dwellers constantly remain in a dual system. They are according to [19] urban residents loyal to a rural home. The urban-rural dwellers' bid to maintain a position in the village is said not to be so much a matter of choice but it is initiated by the socio-economic conditions of his urban environment. Essentially what we see from this analysis is the urban dwellers and their rural relatives live in a kind of symbiotic relationship. This relationship is borne out of the urbanite's feeling of ultimate security being available only in their home village.

Table 8: Response to the question: Why did you choose to come to Aba?

| Response | Number | Percentage |
|--|------------|------------|
| Because it is nearer to my village | 55 | 20 |
| Because it is the only town I know | 15 | 6 |
| Because some of my relations and friends live in Aba | 145 | 53 |
| Others | 40 | 15 |
| No answer | 18 | 6 |
| Total | 273 | 100 |

From Table 8, we notice that 145 (53%) of the sample population indicated that they came to Aba because some of their relations and friends live in Aba. "However, I hope that when I get to Aba, I will be able to locate my village members who also engage in textile business to help me get a place to lay my head and start my trade". (Okoro). As the

Thus they see their contribution of cash and goods to the rural economy as a kind of insurance premium. And one of the men in an FGD said "how can we expect our kin, friends to help us later when we are old, if we do not help them now". The integration of the urbanites to the city is partial since their ultimate is the village.

Kinship-Friendship networks as a Factor in the Rural-Urban Migration and Ties

Intending migrants generally depend for their contacts, introduction to employment, and others on their kinsmen and friends who are already settled in towns of their interests. To analyze the Kinship-Friendship Network as a Factor in the Rural-Urban Migration and Ties, this hypothesis: *kinship attachment often helps people with limited means to survive the uncertainties of the urban area.* was tested. To ascertain whether Kinship attachment help people, individuals in Aba urban were asked questions like: who helped you get your job? Who first accommodated you when you came to Aba? Have any of your relatives helped you since you came to this town? Answers to these questions showed the extent to which the stated hypothesis is true.

above quote suggests, Okoro did not use any form of contact before migrating to Aba. He indicated that he would meet some village group members in Aba who would assist him with the needed support. Using [20] concept of strong and weak ties, we realize that the above weak tie serves as a migration channel. [21] also using Granovetter's concept of

strong ties explained how migrants' networks facilitate and perpetuate migration in time and space by reducing the level of risk. Similarly, [22] examined the importance of social capital in migration processes and migrants' livelihood strategies in the informal sector. 55 (20 %) of the sample said they choose Aba because it is nearer to their village. The category 'others' took up to 40 or 15% of the sample because some people have other reasons for coming to Aba other than the stated reasons. Dominant among the reasons indicated by respondents are: because of being on compulsory transfer to Aba, and because their spouses are resident in Aba in the case of some married respondents. However, from what we can see in the above table, people migrate mostly to areas where there are relations to welcome them and introduce them to business and help find them job. Of all the sources of help, relatives offer the highest 65 %. For example, Ekele, one the participants in the male FGD a

Technician who came to work in Aba explains how important the help he received has been: "Before I came my uncle tried to find a room for me. He told others: there is a nephew of mine coming and he is looking for a room"; upon arrival I didn't encounter many barriers because my uncle has mediated my coming and he was a very important facilitator for me in making it possible for me to come. He was the one who arranged a place for me to stay and introduce me to my first contacts". As it were, not only family members mediate in the course of migrating and getting a job, some find their first jobs through their network of weak ties, like friends and church members. This type of mediation has sometimes already taken place before the migrant arrives. From table 8, 65 % indicated that they were accommodated by relatives. Friendship affiliation is no less important in this aspect as about 42 or 16.8% of the sample said they were accommodated by friends.

Table 9: Response to the question: when you came to Aba first, who accommodated you?

| Frequency of visit | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|------------|
| A relative | 178 | 65 |
| A friend | 52 | 19 |
| A church member | 25 | 9 |
| A hotel | 18 | 7 |
| Total | 273 | 100 |

Table 10: Response to the question: Has any of your relations helped you since you came to this town? If yes, how?

| Response | Number | Percent |
|--|------------|------------|
| By giving me food | 80 | 29 |
| By giving me accommodation | 66 | 24 |
| By helping me get a new job | 38 | 14 |
| By helping me learn some trade or work | 25 | 9 |
| By helping me in my business contact | 30 | 11 |
| By sending me to school | 30 | 11 |
| No answer | 4 | 2 |
| Total | 273 | 100 |

In the analysis of table 10, what can be said with conviction is that these urban dwellers help each other often. The 'we' concept dominates the social behavior of the urbanites. This help to new migrants ranges from giving food, locating a job, to improving their business contact. 80 or 29% of the sample were helped by being given food. 14% of the said samples were helped to get job by their relatives. Table 10 has shown that kinship relationship help in locating jobs for members. This kinship network turn out to

be unofficial employment bureau which not only locate jobs but also put prospective apprentices in touch with the appropriate trade. 30 or 14% of sample got their job through their father's connections. Uncles, aunt and siblings help in this location of jobs. Majority of the sample agreed that it is difficult to get a job out of connections. Again, the urban-based Kinship associations like Village associations offer members social security, and create new network for the members. Many in the FGD sessions agreed

that the union or association help by giving money to members during ceremonies like wedding and naming ceremony. Some pointed out that deceased member's family receives some money from the association during a condolence visit. Members are also helped when in trouble with the law (Government). What can be said from all these is that there is a sense of mutual aid and obligation among members. According to Nkechi, one of the female participants in a female FGD, "I did not contact anyone before migrating but was introduced to Stella, a village group member who gave me accommodation, and I joined her to work in the town the next day as a Petrol station Attendant. The above quote indicates that while strong ties play a role in the migration process; ethnic group membership provides social and economic support for easy adaptation to their new home. Findings also indicate that village associations are well organized in addressing migrants' welfare needs and improving the living conditions of the various ethnic groups. The ethnic associations participate in quite a few social activities, like weddings, naming ceremonies,

and funerals. In addition to these social activities, they also organize regular meetings, and these associational meetings are organized based on gender.

Kinship Network in Urban Relations

To investigate kinship network in urban relations, I tested this hypothesis: "In the urban areas the elementary family does not stand alone" Migrants in the urban centre do not exist in isolation; there is deep bond between lineal relatives in particular and certain collateral and affinal kinsmen. The 'we' concept is the watchword. The nuclear families maintain a link with each other. Family meetings are held in the house of the eldest male in town. The elementary family does not stand alone, its members keep up frequent and intimate relationship with parents, some siblings, aunts and uncles and cousins. To test the above stated hypothesis, questions like **how often do you visit your cousins, including nephews/niece , your grandparents or grandchildren, uncles, aunts in a year** was asked. They were also asked, during time of difficulties in this town to whom do you often run to?

Table 11: Frequency of visits to different categories of Kin in the urban area.

| Category of Kin | Responses | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|-------------|-----|----------|--|
| | Once | | Twice | | Irregular | | No Response | | Total | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| a. Cousins, nephews and nieces | 10 | 4 | 94 | 37.6 | 141 | 56.4 | 5 | 2 | 100(273) | |
| b. Grad parents/Grand Children | 40 | 16 | 72 | 28.8 | 128 | 52.2 | 10 | 4 | 100(273) | |
| c. Uncles, Aunts | 29 | 11.6 | 90 | 36 | 115 | 46 | 16 | 6.4 | 100(273) | |
| d. Father/Mother/Brother/Sister | 20 | 8 | 65 | 26 | 115 | 62 | 10 | 4.0 | 100(273) | |

As is shown in Table 11, the column irregular has the highest value for all the categories of kin. This option: irregular, designates the idea that visits are not regulated. They visit each other at will. For instance, in the case of lineal relatives (father, mother, and siblings). 115 or 46% of the sample indicated they visit their lineal relatives irregularly. The column 'once' has the least values because only a few respondents indicated that they visit their grandparents once a year. This is not because they avoid them but because of the grandparents' living in the villages.

What can be said generally is that relationship with Kin in the urban area is entirely a matter of free personal choice. This choice can be influenced by a combination of factors like: "Economic ties among kin; residence and physical

accessibility of kin; type of genealogical relationship, connectedness of the kinship network; perceived similarities between relatives." Living near each other offers members of the kin group the opportunity to attend to ceremonies like birth day, wedding and naming ceremonies. The conjugal families are linked together through relationship between individuals. Majority of those who accept that married brothers or sisters should live near each other accept also the idea of running to their relatives during time of problems of finance or family problems. This suggests that close- kin network of kin which still exist in the urban area may be a carryover from the village way of life. However, the relationship is not as much face to face affair as in the village. Kinship affiliation

has shifted from being absolutely obligatory to being voluntary.

Table 12: Response to the question - During time of difficulties in this town, who do you run to?

(a) Moral problems like drunkenness, discipline of children

| Response | No. | % |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| A close kin (lineal relative) | 180 | 66 |
| An uncle, aunt and nephew | 38 | 14 |
| A guidance counselor | 37 | 14 |
| Head of church | 18 | 6.0 |
| Total | 273 | 100.0 |

(b). financial problems (money to help solve emergency health problems)

| Response | No. | % |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| My church members | 15 | 6 |
| Close kin (brothers/sisters/parents) | 180 | 66 |
| Go to the bank for loan | 28 | 10 |
| My social club | 25 | 9 |
| To neighbours | 20 | 7 |
| Others | 5 | |
| Total | 273 | 100.0 |

Further analysis revealed among many other things that, married brothers or sisters should live near each other with reasons ranging from "it will offer the opportunity to help each other" to "it will make for cordial relationship between them." However, many disagreed with parents living with married children in the urban area. The explanation here is that siblings are more favoured than parents in terms of closeness in the urban area. Parents are seen as potential dependents than siblings of equal status. This agrees with the findings of [23] that relations among kin occurred mostly when there was congeniality, semblance of equality in the relationship.

In Tables 11 a and b, the option of running to close kin dominated the responses in which case close Kin took up 180 or 64% of the

sample. While in (b) it is 180 or 72%. In the case of emergence, close Kin, friends and neighbours are utilized. This shows that relationship among Kin still survive in the urban area.

Urbanization and the Strength of Kinship ties

Testing this hypothesis: The increasing rate of urbanization has not been accompanied by a proportionate rate of erosion of kinship ties, the study wants to see the extent urbanization has affected kinship ties. Some attitudinal questions were formulated to help answer the general question of how urbanization has affected people's idea about Kinship ties. Their responses are tabulated below and the strength of association between urbanization and erosion of Kinship ties measured.

Table 13: Analysis of the attitude of respondents to the Relationship between rate of Urbanization and kinship relations

| Statements | (1) Disagree | (2) No Opinion | (3) Agree | Total |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 There is the view that because of the fast growing rate of towns, family relationship and the relations between brothers have broken | 140 (57.1) | 20 (8.2) | 85 (34.6) | 245 |
| 2 Relatives in the village are useless to the man in town and so should be avoided and disregarded. | 210 (85.7) | 22 (8.9) | 13 (5.3) | 245 |
| 3 Living in the town is the only way to avoid kinship ties and its obligations (the duties of helping needy brother) | 180 (73.5) | 24 (9.4) | 42 (17.1) | 245 |
| Total | 530 (72.1) | 65 (8.8) | 140 (19.1) | 753 |

For a measure of association, the Lambda is used in calculating the strength of the association. The Lambda is used because it does not require the use of dichotomous variables, it requires the data to be in a nominal form, and allows the use of any number of the columns and rows.

The formular is:

$$\lambda = \frac{\sum fr + \sum fc - (Fr + Fc)}{2N - (Fr + Fc)}$$

Where:

fr = the largest cell frequency in each row
 fc = the largest cell frequency in each column

Fr = Largest marginal frequency among the rows

Fc = the largest marginal frequency among the column

$$\begin{aligned} \lambda &= \frac{140 + 210 + 180 + 210 + 85 + 23 - (245 + 530)}{2(735) - (245 + 530)} \\ &= \frac{73}{695} \\ &= 0.1050 \\ &= 0.11 \end{aligned}$$

Decision: Since the calculated value is less than 1, the association is a weak one. Statistically, the conclusion is that since the value is less than 1, the association between the rate of urbanization and the erosion of

kinship ties is very negligible. Again, approaching the relationship from the percentage point of view, we notice that 530 or 72.1% of the sample population disagreed with the three general statements about the relationship against 140 or 19.1% who agreed with the three general statements about the relationship. The wide margin of the difference between disagreement and agreement attest the fact that the increasing rate of urbanization in our Nigerian situation has not been accompanied by a proportionate increase in the erosion of Kinship ties.

Theoretically, the statistical result and conclusion can be explained based on the premise that tensions developed in various components of a given social structure undergoing modernization are not necessarily uniform. "The rates, timing, sequential order and trajectories of change vary in terms of both social life analyzed and the innovative qualities prevailing in the group from which the urbanized individuals are derived." So in our society as the case of Aba has shown, urbanization has not affected Kinship ideology to the same tune it had in the Euro-American societies. This difference can *tie* explained in cultural terms.

CONCLUSION

From the data presented and analyzed, and findings made, the following conclusions are drawn. First, when people migrate to the urban centres, they do not enter a social

vacuum but they rely heavily upon relatives for social interaction, and provision in time of need. Through the migration to *the* Urban centre the gap between the rural economy

and urban economy is bridged through what can be called 'internal division of labour. Cash income from the urban area and security from the rural areas are passed across. Second, moving to the city on the other hand does not dissolve one's family ties. Rather, uncertainties provide conditions for sustained family relations in the absence of alternative agencies of social security. Thus, the notion that Kinship ties and extended family norm have been eroded based on the assumption of 3 lack of family contact and mutual assistance because of spatial distribution and geographical separation does not hold water in the case of Aba Urban. Rather than this, there is the existence of 'modified extended family* which continue to assist members. Thus we can say that urbanization as a process provides mechanisms for disintegration and reintegration. Third, in so far as the urban dwellers are not given enough opportunities to live their lives entirely in the urban centres, they will continue to rely on making their living partly in the rural

RECOMMENDATIONS

The concentration of more economic opportunities in the urban area creates urban-rural inequality. Consequently this creates rural-urban drift. Thus drift causes the wasting of human resources in urban unemployment and underemployment and the suffering of the rural agricultural sector. The government realizing the implication of this drift, has come out to stem the rate of this rural-urban migration. But, the extent to which any government has succeeded in keeping its people permanently in the rural area in the face of lop-sided development is not yet clear.

The urban-rural inequality must be reduced to achieve any success in the de-congestion of the urban centres. Through rural development the gap which the urban dwellers will need to bridge in order to reintegrate themselves with the village will be reduced. Retirement to villages with amenities is less strenuous, and it is attractive. Thus, rural development and maintenance of urban-rural ties must be seen as being mutually reinforcing.

It is my suggestion that as long as most urban dwellers do not see the town as their home, there is much need for the government of Nigeria to shift emphasis from the already congested urban centres to the rural area. It is again in my own view that the government can only stem the flow

area. The social and economic pull from the rural area will continue to exert its influence on the stabilization of the urban population since those who grow old retire to the village, the retrenched workers, even wives and children go back to the village when the economy bites harder. The condition here is that of incomplete urbanization on the part of individuals who live in Aba. Finally, unlike the Euro-American cities where inhabitants adapt socio-psychologically to the city, the Africans in towns always feel the real social security can only be found in the rural village. Thus, the impact of urbanization has not been enormous. Kinship network still dominates the network of social relationships. Relationship is still dominated by emotions and attitude of closeness contrary to the expected impersonality and rationality that should characterize city life. The lack of commensurate industrialization, and extended family norms religious significance of the relationship between land and ancestors act as buffers which attenuate and divert the impact of urbanization on Kinship ties.

of rural-urban migration by improving employment opportunities and making available basic amenities in the rural areas. There is need to locate more public and private investments outside the urban centres for effective relocation of the urban population, I am suggesting that the government should exploit what could be called the 'unanticipated trend' (the urban-rural migration) currently going on in the country now. A number of the urban dwellers are going back to where they came (rural area) in search of greener pastures in the villages.

As these returnees engage in small-scale business and farming the government can use them to develop the rural area by

- (a) Converting the already existing Kinship-based development unions into viable and well-managed co-operative societies to provide institutional frame-work for effective participation of the returnees and small-scale industrialists.
- (b) Providing small-scale loans for the financing of these programmes, when this is done, the vernment would have achieved two things in one. First, many people will be attracted to the quiet village environment to help develop the

abundant land resources. Second, it will help in easing the decongestion of the urban centres and give the municipal authorities at least the chance, to come to grips with the provision of basic

amenities for the urban residents. A nation-wide migration study for effective and useful country-wide migration and urbanization policy will be a beneficial programme to be pursued.

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