

URBAN GOVERNANCE AND THE NEEDS OF YOUTHS IN ZARIA, NIGERIA

Mohammed-Bello Yunusa

Professor of Urban Development and Management, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This paper relies basically on narrative qualitative data. This discourse challenges the idea of urban governance as a frame for youth development and welfare, and the ways governance is taking foot against traditional urban management and administration techniques. It further highlights problems and potentials inherent in entrenching youth needs, issues and priorities in urban governance activities within the broad-spectrum of urban development policies and processes. The objects of analysis include individual youths and institutions such as the Kaduna State Urban Planning Development Authority and Sabon-Gari Local Government Councils. The institutions provided data on the ways they facilitate youth involvement in urban governance, provide opportunities and enhance youth development in the sense of increased employment and livelihood opportunities and meet other needs of youths. The research draws its study group from youths living in three residential sectors of Zaria – Sabon-Gari, Zaria City and the Government Reservation Areas. The youths were drawn from these sectors using informal networks. Two discussion groups of six males and six females were constituted. It was found that the youths want to be patriotic, productive, earn honest living and become respected citizens. However, state corruption, ineptitude, inaction, and insensitivity among others is so pervasive that the capacity of youth to do a thing for the country is completely subverted. This situation puts the youths in the state of idleness and joblessness both of which impose low morals and morality and thereby force them into social and economic decadence and all forms of social vices that are threats to the fundamental foundations of a decent society.

1.0 Introduction

The ideologies of urban ‘governance’ and ‘management’ have been so well researched and discussed but have remained theoretically and practically woolly and elusive. Identification of clear-cut urban ‘governance’ and ‘management’ institutions, personnel and laws in Nigeria is an impossible task. In Nigeria and indeed developing countries, urban governance or management in the traditional parlance, present phenomenal failure as indicated by land use conflicts, poverty, housing shortages, failing public services and utilities, weak economic base, high unemployment and insecurity, poor revenue base and environmental degradation or deterioration. The variety of these problems in typology and magnitude, are on the rise casting doubts on the relevance and functionality of the state. The essence of urban

governance is the meeting of needs of people. Youths, as a social category in urban areas, represent specific human, social, economic, political and environmental cum spatial rights, needs and demands.

The youthful population of urban areas are in constant struggle to realise these rights, needs and demands. The urban areas are both potentials and constraints to this segment of urban population. The ways they negotiate for the potentials and minimise the constrictions to achieve self with the aid of formal institutions is critical to understanding the relationship between the institutions and citizens, particularly the youths. This is particularly so when urban governance is taken to mean promotion of safety, livelihoods, good environment and infrastructure that are bases for meeting the rights, needs and demands. The provision opens opportunities and removes limitations for urban citizens including the youths. Where the limitations are overwhelming, urban governance is deemed to have failed. In most developing countries, the indicators of poor governance and creation of pathology among the youth is the heavy presence of prostitution occasioned by the spread of HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and various shades of criminal activities and social vices that are threats to the social, economic and spatial fabrics of the urban system.

This paper is therefore focused on two main issues. First, it challenges the notions of ‘urban governance’ vis-à-vis ‘urban management’ as conceptual frameworks for addressing urban crisis. Second, it explores the links between the youth and urban governance to demonstrate how the urban formal institutions cope with the demands and needs of youths; how the youths realise own goals and aspirations utilising available agencies of urban governance.

2.0 The Problem of the Study and Research Questions

Urbanisation is constantly on the increase together with its problems of demand for land, facilities and such others as environmental stress, congestion, poverty, housing, employment and inadequate facilities. These problems have varying implications for different segments of urban population. The focus of this study is to examine the implications of urban growth and expansion for the youths in the frame of urban governance.

Despite a deluge of urban studies, little is focused on the marginalised youths. They are marginalised in terms of access to avenues of decision making and suffer from economic woes of society. The network of relationships between youths and formal and non-formal institutions of urban governance requires a critical examination and understanding given the ever growing problems of citizens in urban areas. Indeed, in the urban areas

formal physical, political and social infrastructures are largely unable to absorb, apprehend or utilise the needs, aspirations and resourcefulness of those who live within (Simone, 2001:294).

This analysis of these issues establishes along gender and socio-economic lines, the needs and demands of youths. Furthermore, the analysis establishes how the institutions meet the needs and demands of youths and attain urban governance goals. These issues are pertinent knowing fully that “policy reports on urban management issues point to the absence of institutional capacity and technical know-how” (Simone, 2001:295).

What are the needs and demands of urban youths? What initiatives have the youths taken to advance their needs, demand and aspirations within the structures of urban governance? What is urban governance vis-à-vis urban management – what is the conceptual and practical interface between ‘urban governance’ and ‘management’? What deliberate efforts and avenues are created to accommodate the needs of youths in urban areas? These questions are addressed within the frame of current democratisation process and structures in Nigeria. Briefly, this paper challenges the idea of urban governance as a frame for youth development and welfare. This frame facilitates the establishment of the level to which urban governance, which is not simply “the operation and maintenance of infrastructures and services” (Beall, 1996:4), is taking foot against traditional urban management techniques.

2.1 Research Design: Data Collection and Analysis Technique

The study is located in Zaria urban area, made up of pre-colonial and post-colonial sectors. The town presents complexities of modernity and tradition in socio-spatial terms. Zaria urban area is administered by Sabon-Gari (224, 067 population) and Zaria (284, 318 population) local councils. The Kaduna State Urban Planning and Development Authority (KASUPDA) oversee physical planning and urban development of the town. The objects of study include individual youths and institutions. The institutions such as KASUPDA and the

Local Government Councils provide data on governance and youths in Zaria. The institutions provided data on youth involvement in urban governance, provide opportunities, enhance youth development and meet needs of youths.

The study population is from youths living in three residential sectors – Sabon-Gari, Zaria City and the G.R.A (Government Reservation Areas) of Zaria. These different socio-economic and spatial categories of youths are representative of the cross section. The sample was drawn using informal networks. Two discussion groups of six males and six females were constituted. Each of the groups has two representatives from each of the sectors of Zaria. The discussions focused on the needs, problems and perceptions of the youths of Zaria and its governance. Further to this, semi-structured interviews were conducted with officials of the institutions of urban governance in Zaria. All interviews and discussions were recorded by three research assistants to facilitate the cross checking of records. Data that were collected were manually analysed.

An overview of literature is provided to give the study a perspective on urban governance, livelihood potentials and constraints and demonstrate the theoretical challenge ‘urban governance’ poses to ‘traditional urban management’ technique in meeting needs and demands of citizens in urban areas.

2.2 The Necessity for the Study of Youth and Urban Governance in Nigeria

Urban governance as a means of providing for and administering the urban area has become popular due to United Nations Commission for Human Settlement (UNCHS) campaign for good urban governance as launched in Nigeria in 2001. The notion of governance as a process of running offices gained popularity when the World Bank identified abuse of state power and authority at the core of Africa’s development problems (Hyden, 1992:5). The conceptual challenges of ‘urban governance’ and ‘traditional urban management’ on one hand and the demands of youths on the other are critical and call for understanding given the tide of urbanisation. How the youths and urban governance institutions react to and adopt the ideals of governance in the formulation and execution of projects and programmes that benefit the youths is worth exploring as a contribution to the theory of governance.

Urban Nigeria houses a large proportion of youth population with 37 per cent of urban population aged between 15 and 34 years. In Kaduna state, about a third are in this age category - 31.3 percent males and 36.6 percent females. The needs and demands of a third of urban population cannot be ignored in policy, provisioning and management. These youths, as a social category, require specific infrastructure to make a living in urban areas. Lack of opportunity make the youth vulnerable to activities that endanger urban security and health. An increase in criminal activities and unhealthy sexual relationships threatens property, peace and increase the spread of HIV/AIDS in urban areas. The ways urban formal institutions remove the constraints and enable the youths meet the challenges of living in towns is worth focusing for creating inclusive urban areas.

Statistics have revealed a huge presence of youths in urban areas. This is together with the fact that local councils and the KASUPDA have basically operated under military regimes in Nigeria. Between 1999 to date five popular elections have been held into local councils, state and federal governments. These elections may have created room for urban governance ideals to bloom, and the opportunity for traditional urban management ideals to fade away. In addition, the circumstances of Zaria is peculiar in the sense that it is run by two parallel government agencies – the urban planning and development authority and the local councils. This makes it possible to highlight any practical shift in urban governance styles. This paper therefore conceptually and practically analyses the shifts in paradigms and practice of urban governance.

3.0 Urban Governance as a Frame of Analysis

The notion of management is embedded all human activities. Management is the act of giving directions to human actions and resources towards the achievement of a common goal or public good. This entails coordination of activities, use of resources and developing the best and least costly means to do what is to be done. Management is the manipulation of people and resources to attain specific goals. Urban management is the coordination of activities and mobilising resources to attain public good in the sense of “social responsibility, civic engagement and the protection of public goods like health, safety, and environment’ (Talen, 2002:169). Efficient urban management is shown in levels of productivity,

consumption and welfare as public goods. Urban management involves taking charge of urban land, the natural environment, infrastructure, shelter, social services and economic development (Leman; 1994:1) for greater productivity and welfare of citizens. Urban management institutions, local councils and planning boards should understand the urban land dynamics, infrastructure, social services for proper management.

In managing urban complexity, physical planners rely on “zoning, building codes, official maps, sub-division regulations” (Bolan, Luce and Lam: 1997:3). These urban management mechanisms “have been expanded and include environmental regulations, exactions, impact fees, performance standards and --- subtle fiscal techniques” (Bolan, Luce and Lam; 1997:3). These mechanisms are often enforced in planning offices to the exclusion of urban citizens. These instruments of urban management are the philosophy behind the creation of urban development and management boards that are responsible urban development plans, layout plans, development control and infrastructural provision in Nigeria. These boards, like the KASUPDA have power and authority which are exercised on the private sector and the civil society. The boards operate as structures of bureaucracy such that public participation are minimal and accountability, transparency, democratisation are low. The organisations and officers are answerable and accountable to higher state authorities. The boards are not democratic, transparent and accountable to the people and this inhibits the practice of governance as a relationship between the state agency and citizens.

This alienates the public it serves. The citizens see the boards’ public good” as hindrances through which political leaders and bureaucrats access state treasury for personal benefits. Thus, the citizens vandalise public taps, street furniture etc and resist taxes which are viewed as “state theft” or punishment on the citizenry (Mabogunje, 1995:1). The alienation of citizens and citizens’ perception of governance creates gaps between the state and citizens with respect to resources mobilisation, setting priorities and meeting common goals. The gap between the citizens and the state render the urban areas unmanageable. This is manifested in poor land use, poor urban economic base, failing infrastructure and high rate of poverty, disease.

The failure of urban management paradigm induced the adoption of urban governance concept. Governance, as a World Bank reaction to pervasive abuse of power and corruption in Africa, (Hyden, 1992: 5) imply a relationship between the human agency and the organisation. Hyden (1992:12-14) outlines four elements that make governance more affective in problem solving than management. The four are trust - the extent of cooperation across social categories; responsibility – the intensity and quality of relationships among actors in the promotion of public interests; accountability – the degree to which the governed influences the governor; and authority – the limit to which the governors keep to rules and regulations and change them in agreement with the governed.

For this paper, governance is the cooperation, and relationships among stake holders operating within defined rules and regulations governing the urban system. Governance is thus “a new way of interaction between the state and society, between the public and private sectors-----implying that the relationship between the actors in urban arena has to be redefined” (Kennel, 2003:1).

This notion of urban governance is shrouded in theoretical ambiguity. Efforts to make clear the concept have brought in other age long contentious ideas like participation, decentralisation, accountability and capacity building (Taylor, 2001:79-84). This conceptual cloud notwithstanding, as people contribute ideas and resources to projects, a hierarchy of authorities are created with capacities to decide on resources, responsibilities are assigned to all stakeholders, actions of the state are challenged and financial account books are scrutinised openly, it is said that levels of participation, decentralisation and accountability are high. A skilled and informed citizenry cannot attain these under the traditional management structures. The potential to attain these is in the adoption of governance as a process of “cooperation between the local state and society (that) can activate new resources (financial resources, experience, knowledge) for urban development” (Kennel, 2003:3).

Urban governance is expressed in the Habitat agenda and is executed by the UN-Habitat, as a frame of urban poverty reduction. The adoption of the concept, though without its proper understanding and creation of requisite legal and institutional framework is a reaction to the failure of classical urban management techniques. The shift in paradigm and strategies was

necessitated by the need to provide services and increase citizens' involvement in the running of the city such that "men and women are equally represented and their needs and priorities equally addressed" (UN-Habitat, 2003:1). Urban governance institutions are expected to advance the rights and needs of citizens through budgeting, resource allocation and use of physical planning tools. This challenges the monopoly of the government as inherent in classical urban management to run, control and direct the future of the urban areas as opposed urban governance in which all stakeholders are carried along in the provision, development and control of urban areas.

Governance, "processes through which collective affairs are coordinated" (Kennel, 2003:2) is a holistic process of providing, managing and maintaining the whole gamut of urban socio-economic, political and infrastructure in collaboration with stakeholders. Governance is the accomplishment of collective action in public affairs as no single actor has the capacity to tackle problems unilaterally (Klausen, 2002). Consequently, governance is "a matter of initiating collective action and mobilise collective resources, public and private as well as voluntary" (Klausen, 2002:16) for urban improvement. Within this purview, urban governance is necessarily more civil and breaks the dominance of bureaucratic structures in decision-making and forces power and resource sharing between the state and the civil society.

As asserted by McCurney et al (1995:100), managing the urban areas is not the monopoly of the state; forces outside the state structures shape the cityscape. Bureaucracy and bureaucrats mystify urban government, administration and structures; and render management obscure inaccessible to citizens and insensitive to the needs of citizens. The concept of urban management that focuses on resource mobilisation, coordination and regulation in regimented and bureaucratic structures is inadequate in providing insights into the relationship between the government structures and the needs and priorities of urban social categories. From this position this paper expediently explores urban governance as a frame for examining the relationship between urban youths and institutions of urban governance.

4.0 Urban Youths in Nigeria

Ausbirth – Agagu (2004:26) observed that every six out of ten Nigerians are aged 18 to 35 years. By implication, 60% of Nigerians are classified as youths aged between 18 and 35 years. Youths make up 50% of world population with 60% of this in developing countries (Taylor, 2002:2). In this paper, the term youth refers to the age group between 15 and 34 years of age. Urban youths are the vulnerable group with little or no access to avenues of decision-making and faced with problems of unemployment, lack of skills and adequate training, low income and poverty. The proportion of urban unemployment was 5.6% in 2002 (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2002:53).

In urban Kaduna state, within which Zaria is located, 21 per cent (male) and 23.8 per cent (female) youths are in informal enterprises (Central Bank Of Nigeria, 2001:72). Over three quarters of unemployed urban Nigerian youths are not registered with the labour office; are increasingly submerged by adverse health and education policies and urban crisis and heavily indulge in drug abuse, prostitution, and other vices. Hence, in the urban areas, the youths greatly challenge structures of urban management and living. Yet, there is an “absence of youthful idealism” which is expected to flow from this frustration and possible determination it bears (The Guardian on Sunday, 2003: A2).

The lack of urban governance has turned the Nigerian youths into victims and perpetrators of urban violence. The youths are easily mobilised for violence in the struggle for increased democratic space, livelihoods and access to societal resources. Mamman (undated) notes:

Perhaps amongst the most urgent problems which Nigerian cities face today is that of rising youth violence----complicated by a combination of current crisis, including the current economic crisis; the crisis of governance---Nigeria’s recent democratic experience is the recrudescence of violence and lawlessness of the youth (Mamman, undated: 1-2).

Unwinding the intricate relationships between these i.e. the prevailing youth conditions in urban areas and the processes of urban governance as the central theme of this paper is a contribution to the understanding of governance and exploring the ways of improving youth livelihoods in urban areas.

5.0 State Policies and Programmes for Youths

Urban policies and projects in social and economic infrastructure delivery are roles of the state and urban local councils. The roles of the state and its agencies cover education, urban roads, airport, electricity, water, and health facilities development and the enacting laws, statutes that facilitate urban management. In urban Kaduna state and Zaria, responsibilities are shared among the Local Councils, KASUPDA, Kaduna State Property Development Company, Kaduna State Water Board and Kaduna State Environmental Protection Agency. Together these agencies provide facilities and utilities that support economic activities and welfare alongside investors in housing, transport, health, and education sectors. This is a “the fragmented model----characterised by a myriad of autonomous local government units, each with jurisdictions over a particular function and /or territory” (Montgomery, et al, 2004:261). The local councils provide grassroots government but the 1992 Urban and Regional Planning Law (URPL) is yet to be implemented. The 1992 URPL require the local council to establish Physical Planning Authorities with the responsibilities for development control and infrastructural development. The interface between all the agencies in directing and shaping Zaria to meet the needs of citizens provides an opportunity to examine issues of urban governance.

5.1 Federal Government Policies and Projects

The Federal policies guide state and local policies and projects. Federal policies deal with problems of unemployment and social vices in urban areas. By 1970 youth urban unemployment was 8% of those aged 15 – 55 years (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1970:250) out of which 70% are unemployed youths aged 15 to 23 years. Zaria in Kaduna State has problems of destitution and juvenile delinquency among youths and these are policy issues in state.

The Federal government pursues policies training young men (and women) in skills through vocational training and apprenticeship schemes (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1970:261). The vocational training for self employment cover carpentry, welding, shoe-making, pottery, tailoring, electrical works, motor and tractor driving and repair, bricklaying and later

expanded to cover development of sport facilities and rehabilitation of destitute (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1980:285 – 6). Currently the government has numerous poverty reduction programmes – National Poverty Eradication Programme, National Economic Empowerment Development Scheme, Youth Empowerment Scheme to which 132.47 billion naira to agencies and ministerial departments in 2002 (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2002:54). An officially celebrated project was the acquisition and sale of 2, 497 3-wheel Pagio cars, “Keke NAPEP” to urban youths (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2002:55). This project increased aggravated urban problems of congestion, air pollution and modal conflict on the roads.

5.2 *State Government Policies and Projects*

Kaduna state government compliments these with rehabilitation centres, old peoples’ home remand home for juveniles, youth social centre and stadium (North Central State, 1970:80). This was later expanded to include vocational training centres, orphanages and sports facilities. All these were executed by the Ministries of Social Welfare, Sports and Youths Development.

6.0 *Institutional Perception of Needs of Youths in Urban Kaduna State*

Youths’ needs were defined by the ministries and agencies on the basis of youth problems. Four major problems were identified: pre-marital sex and the spread of HIV/AIDS; drug abuse – use of rubber solutions and marijuana; unemployment among secondary school and higher education graduates; and engagement in criminal activities and prostitution. The problem of drug abuse, spread of HIV/AIDS and involvement in criminal activities are explained by unemployment which creates idleness and tension. The strategies towards solving youth problems include awareness campaigns, exploring self employment and the Bosta institute for rehabilitation of juveniles and youth criminals.

6.1 *Kaduna State Ministry of Youths, Sports and Social Development*

The state Ministry of Youths, Sports and Social Development has three departments – Youth Development, Sports Development and Social Welfare Departments working with the Youth Development Offices (YDOs) in each Local Government Area. The Ministry registers and monitors youths Clubs and Associations through the YDOs to keep track of political, ethnic

and religious developments and movements. The programmes of the Ministry include organisation of sport activities to foster unity among ethnic and religious groups; primary and secondary school educational competition to encourage academic performance; and scholarship award programmes for the indigent youth. The Ministry also organises workshops and seminars for youths on benefits of economic self reliance; provide self employment opportunities, training workshops and business loans for youths to set up businesses; and provision of self employment equipment – motorcycles, sewing machines, knitting machines, hair dressing equipment like dryers and clippers. In 2003, the Sabon-gari YDO distributed 25 motorcycles loans to members of United Motorcycle Association.

6.2 Sabon-Gari Youth Development Office

On its own activities of the YDO cover Sabon-gari local government area with roles registering Clubs and Associations; granting of public financial solicitation permits to clubs, serve as a link between the Ministry and the appropriate youth agencies; information dissemination to youths and general the public. The Sabon-Gari local council YDO (SGCYDO) registered 13 Clubs and Associations in 2003. On approval of registration, a certificate is issued to the applicant under the Nigeria Youths Clubs/Association edict of 1986 from the Ministry in Kaduna. At the time of data collection, a total of 237 registered Clubs and Associations were listed in the book but only 175 were active as indicated by renewal of registration and payment of annual fee of 200 Naira.

6.3 Kaduna State Urban Planning and Development Authority

The Kaduna state Urban Planning and Development Authority (KASUPDA) has responsibilities to govern urban Zaria. At the Zaria office of KASUPDA, the officer was categorical that KASUPDA has no programmes for Youth Development, except for ensuring that facilities in the development plans are implemented within the available resources. At its headquarters, it was gathered that KASUPDA allocates land for youth related activities – play grounds, stadiums, youth multipurpose centres. The lands are not often developed for these purposes. The implications of these are glaring. In Kano, children and youth play on streets and other public pavements at the risk of vehicular traffic for lack of play grounds (Gwadabe; 2003:10). A play ground at Kofar Wambai in Kano became a market; the football pitch of

Shahuci Primary School became another school while the perimeter wall of the school became a shopping mall (Gwadabe, 2003: 11). In Abuja city, 16 plots allocated to schools became hotels, public, residential, commercial and religious land uses; the Abuja master plan provision of 55 plots for schools had 22 of the plots converted to other uses (Abba: 2003:23). Land use provisions for children and youth activities were subverted and this denies children access to schooling and recreation facilities in urban neighbourhoods (Abba, 2003:23).

6.4 Sabon-Gari Local Government Council

The 1976 local government reform unified the structure and developmental roles of local councils in Nigeria with council leaders elected through electoral process. Zaria urban area is run by Zaria and Sobon-Gari Local government councils. The Local government council has a Youth and Social Welfare Development Department. The department provides sports facility development and economic empowerment for youth as the as major programmes. Also, the council has numerous schools for children and teenagers though the schools are poorly staffed with sub-trained, demoralised staff; lacking furniture and basic teaching aids. These schools are patronised by the urban poor for whom, “everything of good life is in short supply” (Nottridge, 1972:99). Furthermore, the council organises sporting activities and competition for youth.

There are two economic empowerment programmes operated by the local council – the youth development programme of the United Nations Development Programme in Samaru trains youths in such skills as use of computer, electrical wiring, auto-mechanics, carpentry, and electronic repair; and the Child Girl Empowerment Programme that trains girls in knitting, sewing, hair dressing, soap and pomade making, dyeing, and photography. The youth have responded to these programmes overwhelmingly and the council is contemplating a Youth and Development Committee to boost the programme.

5.8 Constraints to Meeting Youths Needs by Institutions

At the level of YDOs the major constraint to meeting its goals and the needs of youths is finance. The Ministry is at the centre of all activities for youths, funds are hardly provided to the YDOs yet the YDOs are directly involved with the youths’ clubs and associations. To

overcome funding problem, the Sabon-Gari local council is not forthcoming as the YDOs are state organs and the Kaduna State Government is expected to carry on its responsibility. To circumvent the lack of funds the YDOs organise seminars to coincide with Independence Day and Children's Day celebrations when youth populations gather. This is not an effective means of communication as interactions with the YDOs and understanding is inhibited by the size of youths that gather.

Other than finance there is inadequate conception and definition of youth needs for policies and programmes formulation. The SGLGC YDO is manned by an intermediate staff supported by cleaners and messengers. All of them do not know what specific needs of youths are, except for the types of problems youths cause the government and the society. The problem of youth is compounded by lack of data on the youths. From the ministries to the YDOs no data exists on the profile of youths in urban areas. With lack of data, it is impossible to understand the dynamics of youth transformation and articulate appropriate policies and programmes that target youth problems and needs.

7.0 Socio-Economic Background of Youths

This section presents an understanding of youth needs from the view of youths as gathered from the focus group discussion organised to unveil this in relation to urban governance. For the focus group discussions, separate groups were composed for males and females. The six males were aged between 18 and 28 years; two were university students, one farmer and others are motorcycle taxi operator. The mean monthly income for the six is 2, 125 Naira¹. The female group is made up of six aged between 16 and 23 years. The females were students with two in secondary schools, another two in post-secondary institutions and the others are merely at home. Among the females three have no skill and one is in school and does tailoring. The females have a mean monthly income of 1, 800 naira.

7.1 Youths' Concept of an Urban Area and Its Management

An urban area has many definitions. The consensus is that urban areas are places of authority resides, dense population and supported by huge socio-economic infrastructure (Hanna and

¹ Currently, 35 liter bottle of Coca-Cola costs 35 Naira.

Hanna, 1979:6-7). Urban areas mean different things to different people and groups. According to the males, urban areas represent a place for acquiring education, making a living and earning incomes. The females agree with this and added that Zaria is a place to link with civilisation and westernization both technologically and socially. The consensus is that urban areas are places for self development and actualisation, livelihood opportunities and enjoy good life.

With this concept of urban areas, the youth groups were asked to identify the urban managing authority in Zaria. In this respect the males pointed at local council chief executives while the females pointed at the Emir of Zazzau. Arguing their positions, the males claimed that council chairpersons have legal power, institutional infrastructure and resources to provide, run and maintain various urban activities as the females insisted on the Emir as the peace and tranquillity officer in urban Zaria. The males were vehement and arguments by the females tended towards the position of the males. The males argued:

The Emir has no relevance in our lives. The councillor is our representative and partially helps us though the local council is not living up to expectations. It does not construct culverts, primary school classrooms are leaking and pupils are not protected. New physical projects that can be identified are private properties of elected officials of the council. These are discouraging to the youths.

On the other hand, the females claimed that:

The Emir is the head of Zaria as Chairmen of local councils, provide help to the elderly. The Chairman of Sabon-Gari Local Council once brought people to check the eyes of elder people and also provided employment to some of the youths.

As if to contradict this position, the females went on:

The Emir of today has power and influence comparable to the power and influence of local council chairpersons but cannot do much.

From these, provision for urban inhabitants and administering urban area rests with local council chairpersons. The males are more critical councils than the females. One of the male discussants questioned financial management in the councils with respect to utilisation of internally generated revenue and federal transfers. As it is, there is confusion on who runs Zaria; and there are feelings of corruption. The youths do not know urban authority and

relating to the authority is problematic. The problem manifests as citizens tend to take laws into their hands as witnessed during data collection

The road that links Sabon Gari and Zaria City was under reconstruction. As the construction was going on, a young man of about 35 disregarded all warning signs and ran his scooter motorbike through construction and workers were outraged. They grabbed the young man punching and kicking him. When the workers were asked to take the offender to an authority the workers retorted: “which police or authority? Are you a Nigerian? We will finish it here!”

The lack of governance and inability to provide justice erode state authority and breed lawlessness. The fact that disobedience to warning signs at road construction sites attracts a penalty of 1,000 Naira may not be known to any of the parties.

As for the youths, KASUPDA has little urban management roles. The two groups insist that KASUPDA is only known for development control signs at construction sites. According to one of the discussants, if KASUPDA cannot do anything about the British American Tobacco Company that emits highly obnoxious smell into the urban community at Chikaji area of Zaria, what else can they do?

The male group said the elected officials are acquiring private properties as an indicator of corruption among the elected councillors. When this is juxtaposed with issues of financial management, the councils are thus not transparent, accountable and participatory governance. The management of the councils and urban affairs is short of ideals of urban governance.

7.2 Aspirations, Needs and Problems of Youths

The youths have varied aspirations and these define their needs. While some want to be community advocates or activists in the United Nations system, others want to be successful businessmen or work as public servant in state or federal civil service, and others wish to finish schooling, secure employment, get married and live a peaceful life. According to the FDGs, attainment of all depends on educational facilities, access to information and finance. Though urban Zaria has numerous educational institutions, securing admissions and funding remain insurmountable huddles as parents struggle to meet basic needs, scholarships to

tertiary institutions are scanty. The Zaria Educational Development Association organises sponsorship for youths in Zaria wall city to the exclusion of youths in other parts of Zaria.

Furthermore, the youths complained of inadequate opportunities in the urban economy, employment and poor infrastructure. According to the male group, water supply and road situation are inhibiting factors. The female group added that transportation, security and electricity supply are needed to attain livelihood and welfare goals. Yet, recreation facilities, youth centres and access to information are basically non-existent. It is worse for the females as the males utilize recreation facilities of institutions. The females are reduced to passive recreation activities such as reading novels, visiting age-mates – friends and family relations and watching the television. Further to this, the females are prone to molestations from street urchins that are found in the poor neighbourhoods of the urban area. In the words of the male youths:

Available health centres are not enough and equipped to solve health problems. Access to land has become impossible. There are no play grounds, the roads are bad while the environment is littered by refuse. Yet, there is urban social unrest. The police are not helping matters as the frame youths and jail them.

The females added:

Transportation to school is a problem. There are no buses to and from school and what is available is expensive and takes us late to school.

The youths have high aspirations but the economy and infrastructure are inhibiting factors. The products of this are myriads of problems that stunt the growth and limit the contributions of youths to urban and national development. The males have challenges of employment, schooling opportunities, and involvement in drug abuse, theft and other vices. As for the females faced with problems of lack of interest in western education, and marriage does not come by, they engage in prostitution. Problems of female youths are compounded by some of the parents as the females asserted:

Instead of sending the girls to school, the parents encourage them to hawk petty items to generate income for the household and this exposes them to early sex and prostitution.

The males are bitter on problems of livelihood on graduating from any level of school. This was linked to lack of development activities that creates enabling environment for private initiative. The situation was captured in the narration of a 27 years old man, a bus driver:

(Pointing at the Kwangila Motor Park where mini-buses and taxis load and take off to various places), over there are auto-mechanics, drivers and brick layers working as touts. They earn about 200 to 250 Naira daily which is spent on food, women and drugs. The school leavers cannot get employment while artisans have very low demand for services, thus they are in the motor park.

This narration challenges forms of state employment policies for youths. Since the 1970s, the state policies have been on development of self employment opportunities. Thus youths are facilitated to become carpenters, bricklayers, auto-mechanics, drivers, shoe-makers, photographers among other trades. Thus, this sector is saturated and has become too competitive. The expansion of urban self employment, the increased competition and reduced opportunities was occasioned by new entrants into the sector under the structural adjustment programme (Meagher and Yunusa, 1996:7-8).

Self employment has become unattractive and increased idleness among youths in the urban areas. Idleness is boring to the youths and the youths abhor it. Redirecting the youths' energies, aspirations and time and meeting the challenges is an uphill task to the society and the state. It is worse as urban institutions have plans of investment attraction and creation of employment opportunities for the highly trained tertiary education graduates and artisans.

8.0 Conclusion

The distinction between “urban management” and “urban governance” is at operational rather than structural level. Urban provisioning and supervision structures are either ‘managed’ or ‘governed’. Management is bureaucratic, secretive and alienated from those it seeks to serve. Management is not accountable to the people. Urban management is thus described as self serving, corrupt and insensitive to the needs, priorities and aspirations of urbanites including youths. On the other hand, governance operates according to set rules and is open to inputs from the governed, to which it is accountable; thus governance is

necessarily participatory and transparent. It is expected that the practice of governance will bloom under democratic conditions.

In 1999, the Nigerian state was taken over by democratically elected officials at all levels of government. At the local level, chairpersons and Councillors were elected. Despite this the chairpersons and councillors have continued to conduct public affairs within the philosophy of management and processes of decision making, articulation of needs remain bureaucratic, secretive and devoid of popular participation. The councils relate to the youths as patrons rather than partners and stakeholders in urban development. It is worse for KASUPDA who's Chief Executive Officers are political appointees that are answerable and accountable to the supervisory ministry and state Governor. No wonder that the youths are confused as to who manages urban Zaria.

The gap between the citizens and urban management institutions due to lack of governance is illustrated by the gap in the youths' defined needs and official definition of youth needs. The youths' needs were identified to be education, recreation and employment, infrastructure – water and electricity supply, transport services, environment and access to information on opportunities within and outside the country. The state defines youth needs to be recreation, education, employment, rehabilitation, and HIV/AIDS. From the discussions with the youths, it was obvious that Nigerian youths have great potentials and willingness to contribute to national and urban development if offered the opportunity.

This brings to mind the challenge thrown to citizens to think not of what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country. The youths are thinking about the ways the country can support them to do what they want to do for the country. The youths want to be patriotic, productive, earn honest living and be respected citizens but the state corruption, ineptitude, inaction, and insensitivity etc is so pervasive that their capacity to do a thing for the country is completely submerged. This situation puts the youths in the state of idleness and joblessness both of which impose low morals and morality on the youths and thereby force them into social and economic decadence and social vices that are threats to the fundamental foundations of a society.

The Nigerian state has opportunity to turn things around by adopting the governance model in the operation of urban management structures. The notion of urban governance should be moved out of book shelves, seminar or workshop halls to the field of urban infrastructure investment and land management where the lives of citizens are touched directly. A starting point is the compilation of a profile of youths to establish the needs of each category. This should serve as basis for policy and programme articulation and facilitation of youths' contribution to the development of urban areas and the nation at large.

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