CHALLENGES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA AT 50: ISSUES AND POLICY OPTIONS

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Challenges of Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria at 50: Issues and Policy Options  
Prof. Obafemi Ajibola ............................................................... 1 - 17

SUBTHEME ONE: Family Institution and Socio-Economic Development

Attitudes Towards Wife Beating, Decision Making Autonomy and Contraceptive Use in Nigeria: Evidence from 2008 Demographic and Health Surveys  
Bamiwuye, S. O. and Aransiola, J.O. ........................................... 19 - 31

Parental Socio-Economic Status as Correlates of Child Labour in Ile-Ife, Nigeria  
Elegbeleye, O.S. and Olasupo, M.O.............................................. 32 - 39

Couples’ Demographic and Economic Differentials and Childhood Complete Immunization Uptake in Nigeria  
Banjo, O. O. and Asa, S. S............................................................ 40 - 46

Psychosocial Determinants of Attitude Towards Solid Waste Management in Ikeja and Yaba LGAs of Lagos State, Nigeria  
Ilevbare, F. M.............................................................................. 47 - 57

Cultural Values, Entrepreneurial Orientation and Poverty Eradication among Women Indigo Textile Dyeing Operators in Abeokuta, Nigeria  
Owoeye Omotayo, I. O. and Owoeye, D. K. ................................. 58 - 68

Problems Militating Against Exclusive Breastfeeding among Married Career Women in Ile – Ife, Osun State, Nigeria  
Aransiola, J.O and Bamiwuye, S. O. ............................................. 69 - 77

SUBTHEME TWO: Human Behaviour and The 21st Century Social Development Challenges

Recidivism and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria  
Abrifor, C.A., Awogbade, O. M. and Muoghalu, C.O. ...................... 79 - 93

Prevalence of Kidnapping Cases in Nigeria: A Psychological Perspective  
Aiyinde, A.T. and Akanni, A. ......................................................... 94 - 99

Police-Electorate Ratio and Emerging Attitudes towards Police in Ekiti State: Implications for Election-policing in Nigeria  
Ayodele J.O. ................................................................................ 100 - 113

Enhancing Neighborhood Security in Obafemi Awolowo University Staff Quarters, Ile-Ife, Using Geospatial Techniques  
Babatunde, E. O., Adesina, F. A. and Adeoye, N. O. .......................... 114 - 128
Moving the Urban Masses: An Examination of Accessibility to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Bus Stops in Lagos, Nigeria
Olawole, M.O.......................................................................................... 129 - 143

Geographical Analysis of Location and Patterns of Flow to HIV/AIDS Response Sites in Selected States of Southwest Nigeria
Babatimehin, O. and Ayeni, O. .............................................................. 144 - 156

The Judiciary and the Quest for Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria
Akinola A. O.......................................................................................... 157 - 167

The Woman’s Body; a Man’s Field- The Commodification of Female Sexuality among the Benin people of Southern Nigeria
Osezua, O. C.......................................................................................... 168 - 185

Rural - Urban Interactions within the Forest Region of South-Western Nigeria
A.M. Olayiwola and M.O. Olawole ..................................................... 186 - 205

SUBTHEME THREE: Labour and Socio-Economic Development

Global Financial Crisis and Nigeria Business Environment
Adedokun Adebayo.............................................................................. 207 - 222

Income Inflows and Outflow: A Determinants of Retirement Planning among University workers in Selected Universities in South-West Nigeria
Akinyemi, F.O and Asaolu, T.O......................................................... 223 - 237

Entrepreneurial Small and Medium Enterprises Development in Nigeria
Jegede, C.T. .......................................................................................... 238 - 252

Emigration of health professionals in Nigeria: Review and Evidence on Determinants, patterns and trends
Akinyemi, A. and Ikuteyijo, L. ......................................................... 253 - 268

Health, Policy and Development: Integrating the Multidimensional Impacts of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria’s Socio-Economic Discourse
Babafemi Odunsi ............................................................................. 269 - 278

SUBTHEME FOUR: Macro and Micro-Economic Policies and Socioeconomic Development in Nigeria

Macroeconomic Policies In Nigeria Since Independence: Has Income Distribution Improved?
Adegboye, A. A.and Adedeji, A. O...................................................... 280 - 289
Shortrun and Longrun Effect of Domestic Savings on Economic Growth in Nigeria
Ibrahim, T. R. and Akinbobola T. O. ................................. 290 - 302

Olaniyan, S. O. ................................................................. 303- 314

Policy Reforms and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria at 50: The Journey So Far and Outlook for the Future
Akinlo, E. A. and Yinusa, O. D. ......................................... 315- 333

Gender Responsive Budgeting in Nigeria: Reality or Myth?
Monica A. Orisadare and Adeleke G. Aremo ......................... 334 - 347

Analysis of the Differential Effect of Productive and Non-productive Aid on Economic Growth in Nigeria
Ojo S. M., Yinusa, D. O. and O. T. Ajilore ........................... 348 - 364

Demand Pressure on University Education in Nigeria: Budgetary Allocation Perspective
Adesunkanmi, S. O., Oladeji, S. I. and Olayeni, R.O ................ 365 - 376

SUBTHEME FIVE: Nigeria and Environmental Change

Climate Change and Variability: Implications For The Food Security in Nigeria
Theophilus O. Odekunle and Francis A. Adesina ...................... 378 -394

Nigeria At 50: How Sustainable is the Environment?
Orimoogunje, O.O.I. ......................................................... 394– 408

Effects of urban sprawl on livelihood of urban fringe dwellers in Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria.
Ajala O.A., Tammi Hajjatu and Kufoniyi O. .......................... 409- 423

Nigeria’s Socio-Economic Development: The Place of Sustainable Urban Vacant Land
Baloye D.O. and Tunde-Yara M.O. .................................... 424 - 440

Quality of Well Water in Ede Area, Southwestern Nigeria
Adediji, A. and Ajibade, L.T................................................. 441 - 450

An Assessment of Factors and Impacts of Land Use Changes on the adjoining Rural Land in Maiduguri, Nigeria
Francis A. Adesina and Anthony Dami ................................. 541 - 561
Rural - Urban Interactions within the Forest Region of South-Western Nigeria

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Abstract

This study aimed at finding out and examining the forms of interaction among the rural and urban settlements in Ijesaland, Osun State in the forest region of south-western Nigeria. The study revealed that interactions in the study area were influenced by factors such as distance, and availability of alternative centre outside the region. As economic interaction in the study area showed that people were more unwilling to travel to the service centres as distance increases from them, social interaction indicated a relatively low distance decay function suggesting that distance factor had little impact on social interactions among settlements in the study area. The observed interrelationships among settlements of various hierarchies in Ijesaland were linked to historical ties that bind them. However, the observed patterns showed that settlements of the same hierarchy interacted more among themselves than with any other. With these results, it is hoped that the attentions of policy makers in Nigeria, as a whole, would be paid to the development of policies to address the specific needs of the urban and rural areas in the country. The study underscored that traditional ethnographic regions are often characterized by regional imbalance relating to Core-periphery Model of Freidman.

Key Words: Rural - urban interactions, South Western Nigeria, service centres, distance decay, ethnographic region, urban policy

Introduction

The distinction between “rural” and “urban” is probably inescapable for descriptive purposes; however, it often implies a dichotomy which encompasses both spatial and sectoral dimensions. In censuses and other similar statistical exercises, rural and urban populations are usually defined by residence in settlements above or below a certain size; agriculture is assumed to be the principal activity of rural populations whereas urban dwellers are thought to engage primarily in industrial production and services. In reality, however, things tend to be far more complex: the ways in which nations define what is urban and what is rural can be very different; the boundaries of urban settlements are usually more blurred than portrayed by administrative delimitations, especially when towns’ use of rural resources is considered; and
population movement, especially temporary and seasonal migration, is not usually
reflected in census figures and can make enumerations of rural and urban populations
unreliable. Moreover, a large number of households in urban areas tend to rely on rural
resources, and rural populations are increasingly engaged in non-agricultural activities.

Demographic and economic criteria on which definitions of urban and rural areas are
based can vary widely between different nations, making generalizations problematic.
In the Philippines, urban areas are defined by the national census as all settlements
with a population density of at least 500 persons per square kilometre. The urban
status also applies to centres with the following infrastructure: a parallel or right-
angled street pattern; at least six commercial, manufacturing or similar establishments;
and at least three of the following: a town hall, church or chapel. Other facilities
include park or cemetery; a public plaza, a market place or building where trading
activities are carried out at least once a week; and a public building such as a school,
a hospital or a library. In Nigeria, any settlements with at least 20,000 inhabitants
where the majority are not occupied in farming and/or fishing are considered as urban

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS, 1996) contends that Asia
remains a predominantly rural continent, with two-thirds of its population living in
rural areas in 1990. However, if both India and China were to change their definition
of urban centres to one based on a relatively low population threshold - as used by
many Latin American and European nations - a large proportion of their population
would change from rural to urban. In many of these Latin American and European
nations, all settlements above a certain threshold, often 2,000 or 2,500 inhabitants
and, in some countries, only a few hundred inhabitants are considered urban. A large
proportion of India’s and China’s rural population live in settlements which under
such definitions would be reclassified as urban. Since India and China have a high
share of Asia’s population this, in turn, would significantly change Asia’s level of
urbanization - and even change the world’s level of urbanization by a few percentage
points (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989; UNCHS, 1996).

In Benin, the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Analysis considers as town
any headtown of a district with a population of 10,000 inhabitants or more, and with
at least four of the following: post office, tax office, public treasury, bank, running
water supplies, electricity, health centre and secondary school. Population density
and the proportion of non-agricultural activities are not considered (Tingbé-Azalou,
1997). This is often the case in sub-Saharan Africa, where small towns are defined on
the basis of administrative, demographic and infrastructural characteristics even when
the majority of the population engages in agricultural activities (Gado and Guitart,
1996). Exceptions to rules, however, include Senegal’s main religious centre, Touba,
which is effectively a “sacred site” ruled by the religious hierarchy and where Islamic
legislation prevails over state legislation. Indeed, Touba is still classed as a village
despite an estimated population of over 300,000 which makes it the country’s second
largest settlement (Gueye, 1997).

A second problem is the definition of urban centres’ boundaries. The growth of extended
metropolitan regions where agricultural and non-agricultural activities are spatially
integrated makes the distinction between rural and urban problematic (Firman, 1996; Hugo, 1996; Ginsberg et al., 1991). In some cases, urban and rural activities take place in the same geographical area (McGee, 1987). The process occurs in many different locations with a radius as large as 100 kilometres and involves an intense mixture of land use with agriculture, cottage industries, industrial estates, suburban developments and other uses existing side by side, as well as the extreme mobility and fluidity of the population, including commuting and the movement of goods within the region. In Africa, transformations in the peri-urban areas reflect regional differences and, while agricultural activities still prevail, significant shifts in land ownership and employment patterns take place, often involving the marginalization of both rural and urban poor. In northern Nigeria, the high cost of food and accommodation in the cities has resulted in high levels of daily commuting from peripheral villages which show a strong involvement in the urban food market, a high proportion of non-farm employment, a substantial increase in agricultural wage labour force and a burgeoning land market (Swindell, 1988).

Another uncertainty regarding a definition of urban boundaries is the fact that urban residents and enterprises depend on basic resources and ecological functions in an area significantly larger than the built-up area. This is illustrated by the concept of cities’ ecological footprints developed by Rees (1992), and Wackernagel and Rees (1995), which points to the large land area on whose production the inhabitants and businesses of any city depend for food, other renewable resources and the absorption of carbon to compensate for the carbon dioxide emitted from fossil fuel use. The size of a city’s ecological footprint is typically several times the area of the city itself although its size as a multiple of the city area will vary considerably, and is influenced by the wealth of the city and the energy intensity of its production base as well as by such factors as the basis on which the city boundary is defined. Although resources may be drawn from far beyond the city-region, especially for wealthy cities, for most urban areas in the South, many such resources are drawn from close by. The concept is linked to the idea of carrying-capacity, or the need to balance resource consumption and waste discharge with the preservation of the functional integrity and productivity of relevant ecosystems (UNCHS, 1996).

Definitions based on a sharp distinction between urban and rural settlements often assume that the livelihoods of their inhabitants can be equally reduced to two main categories: agriculture based in rural areas, and a reliance on manufacture and services in urban centres. However, recent research has shown that the number of urban households engaging in agriculture and that of rural households whose income is derived from non-farm activities is far higher than usually thought (Abramovay and Sachs, 1996; Bhooshan, 1986; Bryceson and Jamal, 1997; Misra, 1986; Saint and Goldsmith, 1980). These sectoral interactions can also have a spatial dimension. For example, when one or some of their members migrate but, (as is often the case) retain strong links with their relatives in rural home areas, households can be defined as multi-spatial, combining farm and non-farm activities and rural and urban residence. Even where activities can be described as either rural or urban and are spatially separated, there is a continued and varied exchange of resources. Urban centres provide markets as well as social and producer services for the rural population whereas, for many
urban individuals, access to rural land or produce through family or reciprocal relationships can be crucial.

The policy implications of sectoral interactions are particularly important. For example, rural development programmes have traditionally tended to increase agricultural production but have rarely included non-farm activities such as the processing of raw agricultural materials and the manufacturing of agricultural equipment, tools and inputs, and this has resulted in the marginalization of some groups in rural areas. Similarly, urban housing strategies for low-income groups tend to neglect their need to diversify their incomes or produce foodstuffs for household consumption (for example, through urban agriculture) and maintain and/or expand their social networks with rural areas (for example, by hosting newly arrived migrants in their homes) which can be restricted by narrow controls over settlement and land use in public housing projects (Chase, 1997). Straddling the rural-urban divide is, in some cases and for some groups, an important part of survival strategies. Policies which neglect this may increase their poverty and vulnerability.

To date, most development theory and practice have focused on either “urban” or “rural” issues with little consideration of the interrelations between the two. By contrast, several empirical studies show that the linkages between urban centres and the countryside, including movement of people, goods, capital and other social transactions, play an important role in processes of rural and urban change. Within the economic sphere, many urban enterprises rely on demand from rural consumers, and access to urban markets and services is often crucial for agricultural producers. In addition, a large number of households in both urban and rural areas rely on the combination of agricultural and non-agricultural income sources for their livelihoods. This paper reviews some of the recent literature on rural-urban interactions, with particular attention to the ways in which they have been affected by recent and current economic, social and cultural transformations. The paper is organized as follows: the first three sections discuss definitions of rural and urban areas and activities, review conceptual frameworks and consider how rural-urban interactions are conceptualized within development planning. The last four sections review empirical studies on different flows connecting rural and urban areas (flows of people, of goods and of wastes), and on sectoral interactions (agriculture in the cities, non-agricultural employment in the countryside and rural-urban interlinkages in peri-urban areas).

In 1933, Walter Christaller put forward the “Central Place Theory” to explain the spatial arrangement of settlements and, as well, location of service centres. In explaining the underlining principles of his postulate, Christaller (1966, 1972) assumed hexagonal market areas based on the principle of real range of goods. He posited a regularly spaced array of settlements that form a triangular lattice and others that are located at the centre of the hexagon. Christaller hinted that higher order central places are more widely spaced than lower order places. The latter are nested within the market areas of the former with regards to certain rules. In essence, Christaller was of the view that higher order places offer more services, wider range of goods, have large populations, more trade areas, and more establishments, and provide better opportunity for diversification of business activities than the lower order settlements. Thus, central
places of higher order are those centres whose influence covers a large area and the lower order areas are just the reverse. Complementary areas refer to the region served by a central place.

Losch (1938) in his criticism of the theory observed that settlements performing the same number of functions do not necessarily provide the same kinds of functions. The centre where all the commodities would be available is tagged the metropolis. Scholars like Taylor (1979), Johnson (1980), and Oyeleye (2001) found that in reality while the rural areas perform their primary function to the main settlement (the major city) by providing it with surplus agricultural products, the main centre has been found to offer more central functions even to higher-order towns. The intra-regional linkages continue to revolve around few urban centres at the expense of the immediate rural areas.

However, studies have shown that a region consist not only the large, densely populated urban centres, but also some remote rural communities and a wide range of areas in between. It is equally evident that there are both highly affluent and severely deprived communities could be found in both rural and urban areas throughout the region. Rural and urban communities affect and are affected by each other in various ways, through flows and exchange of people, goods, services and information. In effect, settlements become related to one another through the functions they perform, the socio-cultural and economic links or through a continuous territorial expansion. All settlements, regardless of their hierarchies (whether central place or periphery), are expected to be interdependent in terms of their social and economic needs. The major city in the area should be regarded as a connecting node not only between itself and the surrounding tributary areas but also between it and other cities at great distances.

Freidman (1972) put forward the Core-Periphery Interaction Model to explain the process of spatial development. He maintains that development occurs through a discontinuous but cumulative process of innovation. He believes that development starts in a relatively small number of ‘centres of change’ located at the points of higher potential interaction within a communication field. Innovations are expected to diffuse from these centres of change to areas of lower potential interactions. He termed these major centres as ‘Core Regions’ while all others are regarded as ‘peripheries’. The latter depend largely on the former for developmental processes such as supply and market relations and administrative organization. He asserts that the core region maintains its dominance over the peripheries through six feedback effects: resource transfer to the core from the periphery; increased interaction and innovations in the core; higher rate of innovation due to greater visibility; higher expectations and lower risks; social and institutional change that favour innovation; and increased production, which raises scale and agglomeration economies.

Omuta (1993) studied polarization on the periphery in the Delta region of the former Bendel State of Nigeria. He conceptualizes Growth Pole Theory and Core-Periphery Interaction Model as frameworks for his study. He operationalized ten indices on three broad indicators to measure the spatial influence of eight sub-systems in his study area. The three indicators are manufacturing activities, medical facilities and traditional markets. The subsystems are the Local Government Areas in the Delta
region as at the time of his study. Also, he used population to classify settlements in the study area into rural areas and urban centres. On the whole, Omuta remarked that the impact of an urban centre is strongly constrained by the size of the subsystem it serves; and that population and geographic sizes do not necessarily imply that welfare services will be present in a settlement. He also found that there was an association between the size and the effectiveness of cores or centres as diffusers of developmental impulses.

Abiodun and Salau (1993) observed that there are linkages from the centres through lesser towns and eventually to the remaining parts of the country and exert some impacts on the space economy. The fields of the largest settlement encompass those of the smaller ones, which in turn, encompass those of yet smaller settlements. Petri (2007) observed that all settlements regardless of whether they are central places or peripheries are expected to be interdependent with regards to economic and commercial cum social services.

This paper focuses on interrelationships among settlements in Ijesaland with a view to identifying the level, magnitude, and pattern of interaction existing in Ijesa ethnographic region within the forest region of south-western Nigeria.

The Study Area

This study was conducted in Ijesaland within the forest region of the South Western Nigeria. The Ijesas are organised into six Local Government Areas in Osun State of Nigeria. These are Atakummosa East, Atakummosa West, Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Obokun and Oriade Local Government Areas (Fig. 1).

Peel (1983) traced the historical origin of Ijesaland and found out that the area comprises five distinctive though related group of settlers (Fig. 2). The binding tie between the groups is that they all claim to share the same legend of Ile-Ife dynastic origin. The first group includes those occupying the area prior to the establishment of Ilesa, which later grew to become the capital city of the sub-ethnic group of Ijesas within Yorubaland. Among these earlier settlers are Ipetu, Ibokun, Ijebu-jesa, Esa Oke, Esa-Odo, Ibodi, Otan-Ile, Ilare, Okemesi, Ilowa and Erinmo.

Another group of settlements in Ijesaland are those founded by immigrants who left their original homes for one reason or the other, and asked Owa to give them land for settlement or hunting or farming. It was in this wise that migrants from Ife founded Ifewara, Iganggan by those from Igbonina and northwest Ekiti, and Ise by migrants from southern Ekiti. Although these settlements were founded from or under Ilesa auspices, they have their own dynasties (Peel, 1983). The third category comprises those that were directly close to Ilesa and were ruled by Loja installed by the Owa such as Ere, Ilawun, Osu, Iloba, Odogbo, Idominasi, Iwaro and Ajido. Closely related to this group are settlements like Iwara, Ilaa, Ikiyinwa, Iponda, Iwoye Ijesa and Ijeda; where Loja-dom has now been hived-off. The last group comprises the settlements founded from Ilesa at the tail end of the nineteenth century, between 1896 and 1912. Among these are Itaapa, Faforiji, Eti-Oni, Kajola, Ayinrin, Temidire and Ajebandele (Fig. 2).
Fig. 1: LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA WITHIN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA.
Sources: Osun State Ministry of Land & Physical Planning (2007)
Field Research, 2009.

LEGEND
- State Boundaries
- Local Government Boundaries
- Study Area
LEGEND
- The Regional Capital
- Settlements in existence prior to the establishment of Ilesa
- O Towns founded under Ilesa auspices but with own dynasty
- Settlements ruled by Loja
- Settlements founded from Ilesa after 1885

Fig 2: Ijesaland
Sources: Peel, J. D. Y. (1983), p.58
Ekanade, O. (1984), p. 28
Osun State Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning (2007)
Materials and Method

The starting point was the identification of twenty-seven ‘Central Place Functions’. These central functions coupled with the demographic capacities were used to classify the settlements into rural and urban hierarchies, and consequently, the sample size. One hundred and ninety-nine settlements in Ijesaland had at least one of these functions and were selected for the study. Data required for the study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. While primary sources involved two sets of questionnaire (household and management questionnaires), in-depth interviews and field observation, the secondary sources of data were road map of Osun State, official and unofficial documents on public utilities prepared by the appropriate quarters in the State and Local Government Areas. The household questionnaire was administered on 6,238 heads of households representing five percent of the total in the sampled settlements. The samples were selected through stratified sampling procedure on settlement basis. Management questionnaire was administered on opinion leaders, heads of public and private establishments. Data were analysed using percentages and correlation coefficient.

Results and Discussion

In some sections of this analysis Ilesa East and Ilesa West Local Government Areas are treated as one in some sections since both are located within the same settlement of Ilesa. The sampled settlements, 199 in number, were selected having satisfied the basic criterion of possessing at least one of the twenty-seven (27) variables.

National Population Commission of Nigeria (2006) asserted that the threshold population that qualifies a settlement as an urban centre in Nigeria is 20,000. However, neither population size nor functions of settlements was singularly or independently sufficient enough to classify Ijesa settlements into types. There were some settlements with very low population but possessed certain highly rated higher-order services. Included in this category are settlements like Ijebujesa, Ibokun, Osu and Iperindo whose population figures were less than 20,000 but are Local Government Areas Headquarters. Also, Esa Oke which has a tertiary institution with over 25,000 students and well over 1,000 members of the staff but the population of the town itself is less than 10,000. In view of this observation, the following section aggregates both the factors of population and functions.

Olayiwola (2008) found out that only 35 out of 488 settlements in Ijesaland of Osun State, Nigeria were urban centers. As a result of wide margins in the population and number of spatial structures in each of the settlements and in an attempt to group the settlements based on similarity of functions; urban centers are divided into four categories while rural areas are divided into two classes (Table 1).
Table 1: Distribution of Settlements in Ijesaland by Type and Local Government Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>s/n</th>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Types of Settlements</th>
<th>Number of Settlements (By Local Government Areas)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Atakummosa East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Large Town</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediate Sized Town</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Small Town</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Large Village</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Small Village</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Olayiwola, 2008, p. 107
Field Research, 2009

The thirty-five urban centers were made up of one city, four large towns, eleven intermediate towns and nineteen small towns. Asides the only city of Ilesa, other urban centers are shared in the proportions of fourteen, eleven, five and four between Oriade, Obokun, Atakummosa East and Atakummosa West Local Government Areas, in that order. There were two large towns each in Oriade and Obokun Local Government Areas. It is equally interesting to note that all the five urban enters in Atakummosa East Local Government Area are small towns.

Interdependence and Linkages among Settlements in Ijesaland

For the purpose of this analysis, occupations of respondents were grouped into six classes as contained in Table 2. Private workers are those employed in private establishments like schools, health centres, industrial establishments and attendants or sales boy/girl in shops and filling stations. Bankers, lawyers and other professionals who are engaged by private establishments are also categorized as private. In the self-employed category are drivers and artisans, civil servants are those employed by the government of various tiers: Local, State or Federal. Others class refers to students and unemployed individuals. Traders recorded the highest percentage at 53.2% of the respondents.
In 42% of the settlements analyzed, 86% of the respondents worked outside their places of residence. In Ilesa, for instance, 18% of the civil servants interviewed have their places of works in Osogbo, 26% travel to Osu, 4% to Iperindo, 9% to Ile-Ife, 6% to Esa-Oke, 3% to Ibokun, 28% within Ilesa Township and the remaining 6% to other nearby towns and villages. In Atakummosa East Local Government Area only 12% of the civil servants live within the local Government Area, others come on daily basis from various directions like Ede, Osogbo, Osu, Ifewara, Ilesa, Ibokun, Ipetu-Ijesa and Ile-Ife. In Obokun and Oriade Local Government Areas 78% and 87%, respectively, of the civil servants reside within the settlements in which their places of works are located.

There were daily movements of workers into Ilesa from other Ijesa settlements. The greatest percentage is 80% from Atakummosa East Local Government Area followed by 65% from Atakummosa West Local Government Area and only 15% and 19% from Obokun and Oriade Local Government Areas, respectively. There are members of the staff of Osun State College of Education, Health Technology, Wesley Hospital and Power Holding Company who travel on daily basis to Ilesa to assume duties.

Table 3 contains the percentage of workers employed in the urban centres in Ijesaland. The employment agencies are grouped into five broad classes: banks, education, health institutions, industries and public administration. Sources of labour for all categories of agencies are grouped into three distinctive zones: rural areas, urban centres and
outside Ijesaland. While the first two zones refer to settlements within Ijesaland, the last one refer to all other settlements elsewhere within the state, country or any other part of the world but outside the Ijesa ethnographic region in Osun state of Nigeria. All analyses are based on data obtained from total survey of the concerned institutions through management questionnaire.

Table 3: Percentage of Employees in Urban Areas in Ijesaland (by Sources).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>s/n</th>
<th>Employment Agency</th>
<th>% from rural Areas</th>
<th>% from urban Areas</th>
<th>% from Outside Ijesaland</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Tertiary Institutions</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Technical Colleges</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Secondary Schools</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Primary Schools</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Private</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Public</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Industries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Large Scale</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Small Scale</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cumulative Average</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Research, 2009.
Analysis of employees in urban centres of Ijesaland as contained in Table 3 reveals that 2.3% of the respondents that are bankers are from rural Ijesa, 7.8% from urban centres in Ijesaland and 89.9% from elsewhere outside Ijesaland. This means that only 10.1% bankers that responded to the management questionnaire are permanently resident in Ijesaland. In the education sector 43.9% of the staff (both academic and non academic) are from Ijesaland in the ratio 8.4% to 35.5% between rural areas and urban centres in that other. Secondary Grammar and Primary schools employed most of their staff from Ijesaland as the former employs 73.5% from the region while the latter recruits 77.5% from within the region. The health institution is the greatest employer of Ijesas. 97.2% of health worker respondents are from Ijesaland. This is followed by the industrial sector at 86.5%. On the whole, 15.3% of the respondents from rural areas are employed in the urban centres and, 41.5% are from the urban centres. The greatest percentage (43.2%) of workers in Ijesa urban centres are from outside the region.

Table 4 reveals that in the rural areas, the percentage of workers is shared in the proportions 47.7%, 37.7%, and 14.5% between the rural, urban and outside Ijesaland zones, respectively. The greatest percentage is from the rural areas while the lowest is from outside the region. One major explanation offered for this situation is inability to endure the village life. The rural dwellers have adapted to their environment and thus find it easy to work there. However, it was discovered that the greatest percentage of staff in the education sector are from Ijesa urban areas. 69.8% of the respondents that work in the education category came from urban areas to work in the rural schools while the villages themselves provided 13.2%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>s/n</th>
<th>Employment Agency</th>
<th>% from rural Ijesa</th>
<th>% from urban Ijesa</th>
<th>% from Outside Ijesaland</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Secondary Schools</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Primary Schools</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Industries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Small Scale</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cumulative Average</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Research, 2009.
When the two averages (in Tables 3 and 4) were pulled together and averaged the results obtained reveals that the total percentage of respondents working in rural areas is 31.5%, 39.6% in urban areas while 28.9% is from outside Ijesaland (Table 5). The implication is that there is a very strong relationship between rural and urban centres in Ijesaland with regards to employment criterion.

**Table 5: Percentage Employment Characteristics in Ijesaland (by Location of Workers)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Outside Ijesaland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Computed from Tables 3 and 4

Two types of socio-economic interactions were identified in the study area; regulated and unregulated economic interactions. While the former relates to the daily and weekly movements of people to purchase or sell goods and services in the urban markets, the latter is the movements from rural areas to the urban centres for tertiary services such as banking and postal services. On the whole, weekly movement of people is the most common type of marketing interaction and it account for about 90% of economic activities in the study area. This is because most of the goods of trade are agricultural products which farmers cannot afford to bring to market everyday. The unregulated movement of people to the urban centres is concerned with the sale of big animals which might have been killed by hunters overnight. This type of market activity has no specific location at the urban centres as the hunters can go to any food seller or stay beside the main road that led to Ibadan, Osogbo, Akure or Ile-Ife.

Summary of average distances covered by respondents was as presented in Table 6. The table revealed that 58.6% of the respondents were not willing to travel beyond 10kms for any service. Also, 3.2% did not travel to observe or did not observe any of the services at all. The greatest attractive pull was within 10kms of consumers’ origin while the least was between 61 - 70kms at 0.2% of the total respondents. The 1.7% of respondents that attested to travelling beyond 100kms away from their homes included students in tertiary institutions of learning, large-scale full-time traders and a couple of others who, occasionally, went on visitation to friends and relatives at great distances.
From Table 6 it is evident that banking service attracted the shortest movement as 72.4% of the total respondents did not have to travel for more than 10 kms. Schooling and shopping are the services that attracted the greatest distance travelled by respondents at 5.6% and 4.6% respectively. In respect of schooling, children and wards of respondents were attending higher institutions of learning at great distances like Abeokuta, Ado Ekiti, Akure, Benin City, Ibadan, Ilorin, Lagos.

Table 6: Influence of Distance on Socio-economic Interactions in Ijesaland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance (in km)</th>
<th>Banking</th>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>Schooling</th>
<th>Shopping</th>
<th>Place of Work</th>
<th>Visitation</th>
<th>Usual Market</th>
<th>AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 10</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 20</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 30</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 40</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 – 50</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 – 60</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 – 70</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 – 80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81 – 90</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 – 100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;100</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Research, 2009.
Port Harcourt and Zaria among others. Thus the quest for further studies makes people to travel out from their homes to anywhere the service is available, regardless of distance between the two locations. In like manner, 4.6% of respondents travelled as far as Aba, Lagos and Onitsha for shopping. This particularly affected full-time traders (largely, wholesalers) who usually travelled to sources of the products or major marketing area to buy their wares.

In sum, socio-economic interaction in the study area was influenced by factors such as distance, and availability of another centre outside the region. This implied that rural inhabitants interacted at a relatively higher level with their urban centres. However, the correlation coefficient of economic interaction in the study area yielded 0-.8525 revealing the fact that as distance increases from the centre; people become more unwilling to travel to the urban centres.

Social interaction focussed on the patronage of social facilities such as health centres, educational institutions and religious centres. Virtually all the settlements in the study area had one maternity centre where minor health cases such as fever, malaria, headache etc. were reported, diagnosed and drugs were prescribed or supplied. Pregnant women too do attend the centres for check up and for eventual delivery provided there was no problem incurred during the course of giving birth. However, serious cases were referred to the standard health centre (specifically, Wesley Guild Hospital), in Ilesa where facilities were available for better treatment.

Due to poor transport routes between the villages and the urban centres larger percentage of rural inhabitants that attend urban centres are within the radius of 6 km from the centre as could be seen in the data below. These cases became more pronounced especially during the rainy season when most of the roads are in deplorable conditions. Thus, people at great distant locations preferred to stay away or go to other standard health centres located outside the study area. When total level of health centre patronage in the study area was compared with other social aspects like educational patronage, it was discovered that people interacted more on educational activities than on health.

On the whole, social forms of interaction in the study area revealed relatively low distance decay function at a correlation coefficient of -0.7137. This indicated that distance factor had little impact on social interactions among settlements in the study area. However, the observed pattern showed that settlements of the same hierarchy interacted more among themselves than with any other, even within the same ethnographic region.

**Aggregate Urban - Rural Interdependence in Ijesaland**

All the averages from Tables 3, 4 and 6 were pulled together and subjected to further treatment through statistical average of percentage and presented in Table 7. The overall averages indicate that 26.8% of activities were taken place in the rural areas and 49.1% in urban centres.
Table 7: Urban - Rural Interdependence in Ijesaland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Outside* Ijesaland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-movements</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Average</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Computed from tables 3, 4 and 6.  
*This column is retained to maintain a balance of 100%.

The cross-movement row indicates the percentage of respondents that leaves one location for the other to observe or purchase one service/item or the other. It was observed that 22.1% of the respondents from urban centres went to rural areas for one or more services, 58.6% from rural areas crossed to urban centres and 19.3% from outside Ijesaland were found anywhere within the study area. One major conclusion that can be derived from this kind of association is that rural and urban centres in Ijesaland do not exist in isolation but rather depend upon each other for certain needs.

Implications for Regional Socio-Economic Development Policy

The dichotomy between rural and urban areas is usually reflected in the division of policies along the spatial lines. In the urban areas planners usually concentrate on urban environments with very little or no attention to the rural segment of the region. In the same manner rural development planners tend to ignore urban centres and define rural areas as consisting only of villages and their agricultural land. However, this study has shown that in both rural and urban areas in Ijesaland there were significant proportions of households that engaged in combination of agricultural and non-agricultural income sources. This suggests that regional economic development can be accelerated through agricultural production and industry as well as services. Thus, planners and policy makers should have some rethinking. It is necessary to provide policies that will encourage positive rural-urban interactions and equitable development. Potts and Mutambirwa (1998) observed that rural-urban linkages are influenced by economic reform strategies, which affect both urban and rural populations. There, comprehensive rural-urban development frameworks would serve as attempts to promote rural development and, as well, curb migration into cities. In addition, positive rural-urban linkages could promote regional integration and interdependency.

Creation of more Local Government Areas could promote political and administrative decentralisation which in turn will bring government closer to the people. This would promote provision of infrastructure and basic services. In addition, incentives for local investors would help to bridge the gap between the ‘city rich’ and ‘urban poor’.
This study has shown that economic exchanges are an important link between rural and urban areas. Rural and urban areas in Ijesaland depend upon each other for economic assistance. The exchange of goods and services between the rural and non-rural areas has been able to change the social and economic relations between urban and rural residents in the study area. Interaction is also facilitated by the strong social support network transcending rural and urban areas. Family members living in both localities provide a base from which their relatives can move back and forth. Increasing transportation costs in recent years as well as availability of cellular phones, however, have reduced the frequency of home visits for many people, particularly the poor. For policy-makers and development workers to achieve their aim and objectives, they should realise that rural and urban residents do not toil with the interaction between their communities, thus it is important to provide policies and interventions that would take these linkages into account to provide a holistic approach to improving the welfare of the people.

Conclusion

Analysis of the interrelationships among settlements in Ijesaland shows that settlements (rural and urban communities) in the region all affect and are affected by each other in various ways, through flow and exchange of people, goods and services. Some of the main aspects of these relationships were explored through employment characteristics and general economic activities.

The study revealed that most of the urban dwellers have their origin in the countryside with which they owed great contact. Many of the urban residents maintain strong tie with the rural areas that they consider to be their home. They participate in the urban economy while remaining loyal to the rural community; they operate in geographically separate but culturally and economically integrated systems. ‘Rural’ and ‘urban’ styles and standards, modes of production in the city and its hinterland are synthetic products of the exchange between these systems which in fact are no longer so distinct. Thus, there exists connection or the level of interaction that bound cities and villages together in Ijesha ethnographic region in the rain forest belt of Nigeria.

References


*Environment and Urbanization* 10 (1): 55-76.


