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Introduction

A lot of countries are currently undergoing urban growth in the world today. The growth is either rapid or slow. In most developed countries like France, both urban growth and urban bias is evident. The same is also evident in developing countries such as Morocco, Nigeria, and Tanzania, etc.

Rapid Urban Growth and Urban Bias in Developed Countries

Both the rural and urban populations were increasing in France until mid-19th century when only urban population growth proceeded. The four regions that have the most populations are the Paris region, Rhône-Alpes, Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. They have more than two-fifths of the French population in just less than one-fifth of the area. These areas are closely followed by Lorraine and Toulouse cities, some small-farm areas of Brittany, Alsace, Flanders and the Limagne basin of Auvergne. By 2010, almost 85% of the total population constituted urban population. This increase in urban population in France has been associated mainly with the modernization of French Agriculture after the World War II. A lot of people moved to urban centers to practice the modern agriculture. This movement to urban centers was also supplemented by immigration. The immigrants moved mainly to urban areas neglecting the rural ones due to availability of employment. Because most of those who moved to the cities were of a young age capable of bearing children, there, therefore, occurred multiplication of the city dwellers (Ray 31).

Rapid urban growth has associates with a rapid population growth in France. Most of those people who work in the urban centers live approximately

within 15km from the towns. A tour of the towns will, therefore, reveal much. Immediately you leave Paris, for instance, a scene unfolds that is extraordinary especially to Americans. Development stops, and the countryside of France begins having green pastures, villages and rural roads with ancient trees and a lot of farmhouses. Paris suburbs have a feeling and sense of cities. They are thriving urban centers with small shops in plenty and few mega structures especially supermarkets. These developments come as a result of the careful planning done by the French planners and demographers. In 1965, the demographers projected that Paris population was going to increase by about 15 million in the following 30 years and started building other cities. The building of the other cities has helped absorb the excess population that would have been accommodated by Paris. Europeans live closer to towns due to high energy costs. This life makes them near to shops and work because they are unable to drive for long distances going to work. In Western Europe for instance, a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline goes for about \$ 4 as compared with USA's \$ 1. 28. These figures are according to Energy Détente, oil -industry newsletter in Camarillo, Calif. In addition, the French spends 75% of the total price covering taxes. The high taxes, therefore, force majority of the people to live in apartments and small houses in cities instead of large three-bedroom-plus-family -room home on its plot of land (Nikos Karadimitrio 41). In France, a lot of people love their cities. They like being near to the cities, and this are due to various reasons. The reasons are availability of employment opportunities, culture and power. Most people, therefore, want to be very close to them. It helps them avoid spending too much and also

accessing various services from different departments. The access of most offices and help points is mostly in urban centers. The French also wants to be near to their relatives basing on the fact that most of their relatives and friends are also in the cities. The French does not move as often as the Americans. They like just staying thus making them concentrate mostly in urban centers. With the above reasons, there is an increased rate of urban growth in such countries. Urban bias refers to a situation where there is hampering of economic development by certain urban located groups who pressure authorities to safeguard their welfares. Because of this, there is a bias in urban growth where only urban centers develop more than the rural areas. This imbalance creates saturation especially in employment opportunities, a slow economic growth, slow or lack of development projects in rural areas and public services being overworked. Although it is not much evident in the developed world (France), it occurs in some cases. In France, there is the rapid development of urban areas. This urbanization is brought up by the labor provided by large number of young people who have left the villages for the towns. The villages are now left for the elderly only. The elderly cannot, therefore, pressurize the government to initiate development projects as there may be inadequate human labor. The result of this can, therefore, be referred to as urban bias (Varshney 129).

Urban Bias and Rapid Urban Growth in Developing Countries

The third world is the only place where urban bias is rampant. It has escalated to heights that have been familiar internationally. Examples of third world counties are in Africa, India and some from Latin America. In India

for instance, there is a high percentage of rural poverty. The number of poor people there is estimated at a quarter a billion people. The Indian government came up with a strategy to curb this issue by initiating self-help employment projects to help the rural poor. In morocco, the government has also come up with such measures to initiate rural development. The rural people get knowledge and offer of training so that they acquire the required skills needed. These initiatives have shown positive results. There is an urban bias that is evident in developing countries. There is no equivalent project initiated for the rural areas to counter those being brought up in urban centers. Development strategies in these countries have been shifting towards the private-sector investment models. These private-sector development projects are for the urban youth. They involve such activities as a business and other non-agriculturally related projects, which cannot occur in rural areas. They are also likely to bring loans that could benefit the urban young men ignoring the rural ones. Studies show that people who are creative to become entrepreneurs engage more in the entrepreneurial activities in urban centers as those who grew up in urban centers were exposed to such kinds of activities on every day. This thought is opposed to those who were raised in rural areas as they are prone to some unique socio-political challenges. The challenges are here are not prevalent in urban areas. With the additional risks, time and cost that come with building the capacity of entrepreneurs. The governments and development partners in the third world countries choose to come up with and give support to those policies that are more important to urban and semi-urban areas (Elisa Muzzini 21).

This problem of urban bias in developing countries was discussed many scholars decades ago when they gave its consequences on economic growth. They noted the difference that occurred in poverty levels between the urban and rural areas. They further noted that it was the source of struggle in the most developing countries. In the countries, allocation of national resources is done only towards the urban areas forgetting the rural ones. This imbalance creates a bias that sees the urban class dominates in most dimensions. There is a continued discussion on the role of the rural sector in economic development of the country. Some argue that the rural sector aids economic development through agriculture while others say that the economy can thrive without overreliance on agriculture. There are various papers and scholarly articles that have highlighted a growing concern about poverty and cases of malnutrition in urban centers. Other scholars such as Elisa Muzzini (25) suggest that there is a declining gap between the rural and urban communities due to increasing urban inequality (Elisa Muzzini 25). Urban bias in the third world is not something to end today. It has been there over the years. It escalates through poor governance in the countries. The poor governance is due to the poor political structures and processes. The politicians embezzle the funds meant for rural development. They also misappropriate the funds meant for the rural areas and diverted them to urban areas. This divergence is solely meant to suit their personal interests. They also want to spend the funds they have obtained through dubious methods such as corruption. These acts make donors and other foreign investors to shun the countries. Investors also fear to risk in areas with poor infrastructural development as these may hinder delivery of goods such as

agricultural produce to the market. For one to invest here, they need to incur the extra costs of developing roads, hospitals and such like structures around first before they continue. Poor educational standards in the countries do not allow for the youth to have opened up minds that advocate for rural development. The young entrepreneurial youth, therefore, concentrate on doing their business in urban centers only. The problem of urban bias in the rural areas of the third world can not only be the solution to the investment programs initiated by the governments. The solution can also be the integration of United Nations responsibility towards urban bias. It needs to work with the governments to ensure that also the uneducated rural communities are not looked down upon when the community enterprise programs are being developed. This decision will help prevent the rural to urban migration that exists in these countries. There have also been aspects of rapid urban growth in some countries. There are those developing countries that have fastest growing urban centers. Cities like Kenya's Nairobi, Tanzania's Dar es Salaam, Nigeria's Lagos, Morocco's Rabat among many others are growing at very fast rates. It can be said to be due to various factors such as availability of oil in Nigeria, strategic location of Nairobi and its competitive advantage over other neighboring cities. Further, more the strategic location of Dar es Salaam as a port city among many others (Varshney 24).

Conclusion

The developed countries are dominated by rapid urban development as opposed and fewer cases of urban bias. In developing countries, there is dominance of urban bias and fewer cases of rapid urban growth. This

difference among the two worlds is due to various factors stated and explained.

Works Cited

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