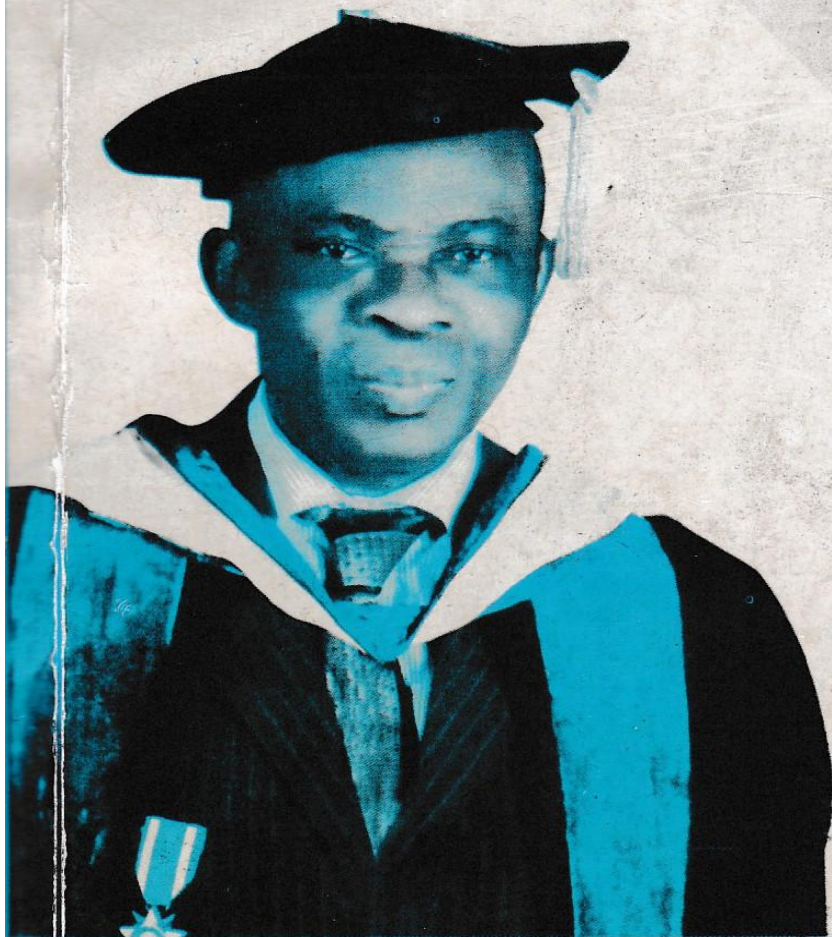


# SOCIOLOGY ON THE ASCENT

## *A FESTSCHRIFT*

In Honour of  
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**THE PERSISTENCE OF RURAL FEATURES IN URBAN CENTRES OF  
NIGERIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN UYO  
METROPOLIS, AKWA IBOM STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

The chapter focused on the persistence of rural features in urban centres of Nigeria, opportunities and challenges in these settlements. In order to unravel the inherent opportunities and challenges with reference to Uyo metropolitan centre, three (3) objectives and three (3) research questions were raised. However, “purposive” and “snowball” sampling techniques were used to select 120 participants at 30 persons from each of the identified groups which were experts in town planning and urban development, social scientists, demographers and rural sociologists, drawn from public establishments and the University of Uyo community. Information generated from these participants through indepth interview were processed and analysed using descriptive statistics (simple percentages-%), while the theory of modernization, was used to explain the phenomenon of rural features. Findings revealed that rural features were common in urban centres of the developing economies including Nigeria and Akwa Ibom State in particular, creating opportunities and distorting aesthetic values. The paper recommended among others that, more embracing policies and programmes should be evolved to remove the dilemma.

**Keywords:** *Rural features; urban centers; opportunities; challenges; socio-economic.*

**1.1 Introduction and Background**

Louis Wirth “urbanism as a way of life” identified a number of key features of urban life. Wirth defined an urban centre as a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals. The very size, density, and heterogeneity of this centre creates social segregation, impersonality, social and geographical mobility. This implies that as a distinct social phenomenon, an urban centre or city possesses definable and distinctive characteristics which

set it apart from other forms of human settlements. Urbanism is a form of created environment in a social and cultural space in which modes of social life reflecting ruralism becomes progressively undermined and turned into a new cultural mosaic of city life.

Essentially, therefore, urbanization is expected to undermine and displace other pre-urban cultural features (such as footpaths, farmlands, thatch-roofed mud houses, tombstones, plantain plantation etc) as it transforms not only the ecology but also the range of productive activities (e.g. agriculture, craftwork, crude technology etc) and other operations in any settlement caught up in the process. Against this background, several authors tend to view “rural” and “urban” as two distinct sociological categories (Hyra, 2008 and Ekong, 2010). According to these authors, the ecological categories “rural” and “urban” depict two sets of settlement with different, if not irreconcilable physical, social and cultural features. In other words, “rural” and “urban” areas are part of the global heritage of mankind. The former shows us what the later will be, while the later shows us what the former was. That is, a rural area shows us the state of urban area before its transformation, while an urban area shows us what the future of a rural area will be.

While the process of development and urbanization as observed earlier on, is supposed to transform the physical, economic and social features of a place, Uyo in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria is characterized by land tenure system, persistence of subsistence agriculture, low investment status, beliefs and traditional practices, crude and obsolete technologies and low order social amenities and infrastructure (Offong, 2007). Consequently, this centre tends to have resisted such transformation despite government intervention projects, colonization, trade, administration via early contact with the outside world. The study believes that a critical investigation of Uyo urban area will reveal in details the opportunities and challenges posed by these rural features in this urban centre.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The major objective of this chapter was to identify opportunities and challenges engendered due to the presence of rural features in the metropolitan centre of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. While the specific objectives were:

- To investigate the opportunities embedded in the rural features in urban area of Uyo;

- To examine the causes of these features within Uyo Urban centre;
- To identify the challenges posed by the presence of rural features in Uyo urban centre.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- To what extent are the opportunities embedded in the presence of rural features within Uyo urban centre?
- What are the causes of these dual features within Uyo urban centre?
- What are the challenges posed by these rural features within Uyo urban centre?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study shall open the frontier of further researches on urban management.

**Further Research:** The findings of this study shall reveal in detail the extent to which opportunities and challenges exist from the presence of rural features within an urban centre. This knowledge will trigger interest by social scientists or urban planners and managers in engaging in rigorous researches. The theories and methodology used provided the foundation to build upon.

**Urban Management:** The findings of this study revealed the degree of distortion or resistance of rural features to urban development. Currently, population density is part of the defining characteristics of urban settlements without a consideration of attitudinal support through the implementation of the master plan. It is the hope of this study that interest in the full implementation of the master plan shall be encouraged.

## **2.1 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1.1 Literature Review**

#### **Conceptualization of Rural features, Urban centre, Opportunities and Challenges**

- a. Rural features:** This means some elements of modernization in one sector and traditionalism in another sector co-exist. In other words, modern tool for economic production has developed alongside a traditional, and indigenous technology, resulting in what is termed dualism. It has been observed that the contrast in economic, infrastructural and social organization between the urban and villages, even within the urban is one of striking and

puzzling characteristics of a backward nation. For instance, in urban centers of most developing nations (e.g. Nigeria) agricultural and industrial activities, family and factor of production of goods and services, crude and modern technologies co-exist. This co-existence is chronic, not merely transitional, not due to a temporary phenomenon which in time will eliminate the discrepancy between the superior and inferior elements, but an enduring one (Anyaku, 2003).

- b. Urban Centre:** Scholars (Breckenfeld, 1977; Harvey, 1983; Ekpenyong, 2000 etc) argue that the term “urban area” is typically used as a synonym for “city” but the two are not the same. According to these scholars, all cities are urban areas, but not all urban areas are cities because of size, population, activities, and socio-infrastructural facilities. Breckenfeld (1977) explains that “urban” is a statistical concept defined by a country's government. That is each government sets its own definition by declaring one or more settlements urban, regardless of size or function. In this regard, many countries based their definition on a threshold number of inhabitants which range from a few hundred as in Peru and Uganda, to a more than ten thousand (10,000) as in Italy and Senegal, while other governments agree on a combination of criteria such as population density, political functions, or predominant activities of the area. A city on the other hand, has a large number of people living in close proximity to one another, with a complex political, economic and social activities (i.e. centre of production, banking, religion, learning, and diverse culture). Therefore, city expansion can create more urban centres, even as urban centres can grow into cities. In this sense “city” and “urban” can be used interchangeably. Consequently, an urban centre can be defined as:

*Centre where large conglomerate of people are brought together in a defined unit of government for the primary purpose of providing them with some essential common services based on their felt needs (Ugwu, 2000).*

- (c) Opportunities and Challenges**
- Opportunity in this study refers to a phenomenon where the existence of rural characteristics in urban centres such as farmlands, livestock rearing, plantations, vast land space, grove (orange, mango, cola nut, etc), palm wine tapping, firewood cooking, pit toilet, open roof bath, tombs in residential homes

and bicycle paths have provided sources of livelihood sustainability for the low income or less privileged class. In addition, serving investors in terms of factory or office space, location of corporate headquarters, educational institutions, churches, playgrounds and space for artisans at minimal cost. Offong (2007) noted in his work “the Dilemma of deruralization: A Socio-anthropological analysis of towns in Akwa Ibom State” that:

*The land tenure system has made provision for lineage or family members that are the components of Uyo town to gain access to inherited land with which they practice subsistence agriculture all year round. The limited number of industries to diversify employment opportunities suggest that agriculture and other rural activities provide the available opportunities.*

In the light of this assertion, it is obvious that the entrenchment of poverty through limited opportunities in employment, bank loan for investment, and low entrepreneurial spirit suggest that indigenous methods of survival, including sales of land to either fellow indigenes or migrants from other cultural backgrounds are the predictable opportunities.

- **Challenges:** The presence of rural features in towns in Nigeria aside from providing outlets for the low income households sustainability and investors to acquire factory office space, engage labour at little or no cost, constitute serious challenge to urban authorities in terms of aesthetic distortion, resistance to urban renewal by the less privileged residents. Consequently, a dilemma has been created either to completely terminate ruralism and regain aesthetic values or allow it to continue and provide for the poor. Beyond this, several efforts had before been intensified, yet no positive result despite enormous financial wastage in the use of bulldozer approach. The ineffectiveness of these efforts is also a major challenge.

Against this background, the persistence of rural features suggests serious resistance to urban renewal effort, distortion of the master plan and a defeat to aesthetic values.

## **2.2 The Persistence of Rural Features in an Urban Settlements**

The notion that a community's future development must be accompanied by the spread of modern production activity (i.e. adoption of modern technology) in dealing with the problem of ruralism is obvious but certainly not practically obtainable. This is because the capacity of old and new cultures to co-exist without conflict and even with mutual adaptations are frequent phenomenon of social change (Offong, 2007). Modo (2016) called the persistence of old culture in a new one "survivals" based on the stage of the development of the overall cultural group. For example, the acceptance of a new cultural device or product, religion (Christianity), mode of decision-making device, and information producing mechanism (computer) in place of the typewriter, does not lead to the disappearance of the old form (typewriter). Uyanga (1992) in Offong (2007) noted that new forms may only increase the range of alternatives. Consequently, it is increasingly practicable that the outcome of modern process and traditional forms is often admixture in which each derives a degree of support from the other, rather than a clash of opposite. Against this background, there are obvious manifestations of rural activities or features in urban centers of African countries which is the practice of farming and livestock rearing fed on the domestic refuse or leaves generated from the nearby bushes and farmlands. This phenomenon has been widely acknowledged:

- Khouri-Dagher (1986) reported that Egypt's capital city had at least 80,000 households raising animals at home;
- In Tanzania, two out of three urban families are engaged in farming to the extent that every open space, utility reserve, roadside, valley or garden in the towns has been taken up for planting of all sorts of seasonal and permanent crops, ranging from vegetables, maize, bananas, to fruit trees;
- In Uganda, particularly Kampala the capital city, household's survival depends on multiple income sources, including urban farming. For instance, most empty spaces beside the city center are covered by perennial crops such that, one get the feelings whether rural sector is overtaking the city instead of the reverse (Bigsten, 1992 in Offong, 2007).
- In Nigeria, the outskirts of the highways into various cities; Port Harcourt, Calabar, Uyo, Benin City, etc, all of these urban centers have fallen under cultivation by farmers on the major route.



Therefore, on accounts of the interface of both rural and urban features in the urban centers or cities of various African countries, it seems there is exchange of skills, values, and material needs (between the rural and urban structures) in a cooperative manner and these seemed to be utilized in the pursuit of new goals. Modo (1995) observed that the Massai of East Africa is a notorious case of resistance to culture change, fiercely upholding existing ways with very little accommodation. Similarly, in most part of Nigeria, some communities would not accommodate much of external influences, because they upheld their old ways with passion and dexterity, thereby regulate the activities of strangers. This has reaffirmed the reliance of many low-income urban households on rural and urban based resources in constructing their livelihoods. This has led to policy makers ignoring the “great-rural-urban divide” which made life more difficult for low-income groups (“the trapped”) in urban centers of Africa. Accordingly, there are significant synergies between many rural and urban interests as an important component of livelihoods source and production systems in many areas. This is not only forming a bridge over a divide as a complex web of connections in a landscape where much is neither urban nor rural, but has features of both rural and urban, especially in the areas around urban centers or along the road out of such centers.

### **2.3 The Causes of the Persistence of Rural Features in Urban Centres**

The persistence of rural features in urban centers or major cities of African countries is evident in the rapid pace of growth in urban cultivation, animal husbandry and the presence of rural physical structures. However, this is attributed to the presence of low-income class and the “trapped” (those residents who could not cope with the urban lifestyle). On the strength of this, research findings in Dares Salaam, the capital of Tanzania revealed that in the 1980s, 44% of low-income earners had farms, but in the late 1980s and 90s, 70% of heads of households engaged in some farming or animal husbandry (Khouridagher, 1986). It can be inferred that the wide spread and expansion in farming, livestock rearing, craftwork as both part time and full-time occupation for urban households in Africa and indeed Nigeria tends to be survival strategy. For instance, Sanyal (1986) in Offong (2007) noted that unemployment, declining real wages occasioned by inflation on one hand, and downsizing of public workforce, irregular payment of retirement benefits etc, on the other are parts of upsurge of rural activities in urban centers of African countries and Nigeria in particular.

Similarly, it can be argued that urban low income class

involvement in urban cultivation and other rural practices are not the activities of recent migrants in those cities but farmers from poor income households who are fully entrenched into urban economy. That is why Sanyal (1986) had rightly observed that:

*More than 60% of African city farmers had been in the city for more than 57 years, 45% for more than 10 years, 57.5% for more than 15 years, 15% for more than 40 years. Therefore, it suffices to say that these activities are creations of low-income families as major source of subsistence for urban under-classes who have access to natural resources.*

In line with this argument, it is possible to believe that the invasion of cities and towns by subsistence cultivators is symptomatic of insensitive economic policies and programmes that are incapable of addressing urban socio-economic challenges for the poor. It is obvious that, the process of the ruralization of cities in Nigeria is not the consequence of rural-urban migration, rather the upsurge of rural activities by the urban poor as an “innovative response from below” to the decline of formal economies in these towns and cities. Drawing from this notion, Uyo metropolis is also a victim of this rural features invasion.

#### **2.4 Challenges Posed by the Persistence of Rural Features in Towns and Cities**

Across urban centers in Nigeria in general and Akwa Ibom State in particular, official reactions to urban rural activities in terms of regaining aesthetic value varied across space and time. Scholars (Ekpenyong, 2000; Tacoli, 2003; Offong, 2007 etc) explain that urban rural activities had occurred often in the face of negative actions of local authorities. According to these scholars, Ekpenyong, Tacoli and Offong, the wide spread occurrence of subsistence consumption as alternative to urban high cost of living notwithstanding, urban crop cultivation, livestock production and other rural activities are not appreciated by urban authorities, because they were not planned for, and cannot be supported. For example, urban authorities in East, Central, Southern, and West Africa perceived rural activities (features) as part of the broader challenge in urban centers, a blot on the city landscape. This phenomenon is a continuous and unwelcome reminder that, programme for urban development and effort to project aura of modernity and progress (enforcement of town planning laws) have not reached very far below the surface. Probably because of corrupt

practices and social exclusion in the corridor of power (Olaigwu, 2018).

Consequently, repressive attitudes towards urban agriculture and other rural infrastructures appear to have cost energy, time, moral courage, and resources to implement in major towns and cities of Nigeria. For example, State repression to checkmate the trend in these cities take the form of destroying plants on the grounds and rural infrastructures; use of agency, taskforce, and the police to rid urban centers of unplanned structures and rural features etc, are predictable measures. However, some of these measures were resisted by some affected low income class arguing that the measures had deprived them of their sources of livelihood. Consequently, the attempt for the removal of rural features to pave the way for urban development has confirmed the fact that “urban” and “rural” areas depict two sets of settlement with a separate and irreconcilable physical, social and cultural differences on one hand, lack moral justification, and creates deprivation on the other.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted classical modernization theory authored by W. W. Rostow in 1960. Rostow (1960) argued that there are a number of stages to societal development and the transition from the traditional to modern society. This approach has it that the development crisis of the developing economies stemmed from the fact that they lack something or there was a missing link. Rostow (1960) proposed that the developing economies must go through such evolutionary stages as:

- Traditional stage is characterized by agriculture, ascription (inherited status) and low levels of science and technology;
- Preconditions for take-off which demonstrate a stage of increase in trade, industry, communications, emergence of the modernizing elites who were capable of using scientific and technical knowledge to promote investment and growth. Society at this stage still retain traditional features;
- Take-off stage where investment grows at least 10 percent of national income as well as social and political reforms to spread development in all facets of life. A situation where ruralism in major cities are completely undermined;
- Drive to maturity refers to a stage where investment growth, social and political reforms to create conducive environment for socio-economic growth continue unabated; and the stage of high mass consumption where economic production is at a consistently high level so that social and political choices can be sustained. Rostow

believed that, this is a level where societies are transformed both at the individual and societal levels.

The implication of this theory is that modernization largely depends on factors internal to the community concerned (Charles, 2010). That is, factors inhibiting or promoting development of the society (rural or urban) are located within that society. These factors are technology, investment, or free enterprise and socio-economic infrastructure for the removal of the traditional cultural practices (through planned change). In other word, a country needed to develop must concentrate on industrialization, utilization of human and natural resources, development of infrastructure as well as technology. Though the technology in question cannot be acquired over-night, it could be diffused from other advanced culture. The consciousness in developing industrial blue print via technical knowledge and contact with advanced culture (global managers) suggest that most socio-cultural resistance to development could be conquered. Thereby accelerate the society development through the various stages. This again means, when enterprises are flourished, infrastructures are developed; the tendency is to filter out all forms of traditionalism or convert it as an integral part of urban life, industrial inputs and tourism (Ecoma, 2012). After all, industrial activities can facilitate urban creation and development as they can pull talents and skills from far and near together for productive activities. Therefore, this theory is a prescription for backward societies with attitudinal support to consciously follow the path of developing towns for socio-economic interactions. These attitudinal dimensions are corrupt free, infrastructural development consciousness and deliberate policies and programmes for urbanization.

### **3.1 Methods of Data Collection**

The study area is Uyo, the capital city of Akwa Ibom State. Uyo town started as a village settlement with large farmlands. Consequently, the main occupation of the earlier settlers was farming. Farming was widespread because of the large expanse of land and simple technology (Hoe, Matchet, Knife etc) involved in the farming practice. In addition, few units of livestock were also kept for social, economic and consumption purposes. This was made possible because livestock (goats, sheep, pig, birds etc) had enough bushes and farms for free ranching. Trading was also prominence because Uyo town served as the earliest major trading point as well as a commercial route connecting the area with Calabar, one of the sea ports used by European traders and missionaries. Beyond this, its geographical location in relation to the

rest of the towns in the then South Eastern State assumed prominence as a commercial nerve center and also as an important road junction, with a big and busy daily market with commodities such as food stuff and imported manufactured goods for the trading business (Noah, 1980).

However, with the passage of time, banking system was introduced with which the few literate salaries earners received their money in these banks, buy bonds, shares, and also engaged in insurance policies. Currently, combination of both modern and traditional money markets for savings and investment are being practiced. The emergence of new class of public and civil servants were meant to handle specialized organs like court and treasury.

Noah (1980) still noted that in 1947, the British colonial administration had fully recognized the need for a modernized local government system to serve as the foundation for democratic political system of various areas of the colonized communities.

Consequent upon this new arrangement, "Area Councils" were established to bring the native administration closer to the people. These councils were to provide some degree of contact between the native authorities and the representatives of rural communities for the provision of their basic needs. Against this background, Uyo became the headquarters of Uyo County Council Area (UCCA) following the Local Government Ordinance of 1950 (Noah, 1980). Subsequent political development elevated Uyo to the status of Provincial Headquarters in the Eastern Region in 1959, with functional agencies such as district office, police stations, prisons, customary and magistrate courts, post office, schools and residential quarters for public servants. In 1956, Noah (1980) noted that the creation of twelve states including the erstwhile South Eastern State also changed the designation to Uyo Division (with Itu and Etinan). On the adoption of the recommendations of "Akilu Commission of Inquiry (ACI) into the administrative structure of the then south Eastern State", Etinan and Itu were excise from Uyo Division. However, the 1976 Local Government reforms in Nigeria had abolished the divisional structure and Uyo remained the headquarters of Uyo Local Government Area in the then new Local Government structure.

In 1989, two Local Government Areas (Uruan and Ekpe Atai) were carved out of Uyo and the subsequent creation of Ibesikpo Asutan

Local Government Area in the mid 1990s left the present Uyo local Government with four (4) clans, twelve (12) wards, and more than 79 villages (Ekong, 2001). From 1976 onward, Uyo had remained Local Government headquarters up till September 23, 1987 when Akwa Ibom State was created out of the Cross River State and Uyo became both Local Government headquarters and State Capital. This new status had generated deliberate or planned efforts based on these two levels of government to provide infrastructure and social amenities to take care of the need of mass movement of people into the town in search of opportunities for businesses and white collar jobs (Offong, 2007). The persistence of rural features in Uyo metropolis seems to be resisting the influence of urbanization, because these rural features have become livelihood sources such as income generating, sustenance, living home space, burial grounds etc for the low income class or urban trapped. In addition, availability of enormous lands has provided space for investors in petroleum, hotels, schools, supermarket or shopping mall and firms of varied sizes.

On the basis of this, the study adopted the “purposive” and “snowball” sampling techniques to select 120 knowledgeable persons amongst town planning and urban development experts; social scientists; demographers; and rural sociologists who are engaged in public service (Akwa Ibom State Government establishments and the University of Uyo community). However, the structured and unstructured interview questions were arranged to form “interview schedule. These questions were validated by experts in “test and measurement” before administering on the 120 respondents. The main focus of this interview activity was in the areas of addressing the extent of the presence of rural and urban features within Uyo metropolis; the socio-economic causes of these features within Uyo metropolis; and the inherent challenges posed by the co-existence of rural and urban features within Uyo metropolis . Data on these variables were analyzed using descriptive statistical tool.

### 3.2 Results

**Table 3.2.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

S/N	Variables	Variable Conceptualization	Frequency	%
A	Sex	Male	100	83.3
		Female	20	41.7
			120	100
B	Age	• 35-39	30	25.0
		• 40-44	50	41.7
		• 45 and above	40	33.3
			120	100
C	Educational attainment	• Diploma	10	09.3
		• B.Sc/BA/HND	80	66.7
		• M.Sc/MA/ its equivalent	30	25.0
			120	100
D	Social Position/ Status Roles	• Public/civil servant	30	25.0
		• University Lecturer	30	25.0
		• Political Appointees	30	25.0
		• Professional Town Planners	30	25.0
			120	100
E	Year of Residence in the area	• 5-14	30	25.0
		• 15-24	70	58.3
		• 25 and above	20	16.7
			120	100
F	Origin	• Indigene	90	75
		• Non-Indigene	30	25
			120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 3.2.1 shows socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. In this regard, table 3.2.1A shows the sex of the participants where male participants were 80.3% and female were 16.7%. The results show that the exercise was not all men affair.

Table 3.2.1B shows age differentials of the participants. Those within the age bracket of 35-39 were 25%, 40-44 were 41.7%, 45 years and above were 33.3%. The results show that all the participants have attained the age of critical evaluation of social phenomena.

Table 3.2.1C measures educational attainment, where those with diploma certificate were 8.3%, B.Sc or its equivalent were 66.7% and those with M.Sc or its equivalent and above were 25%. The results demonstrate that the participants in the study were quite enlightened to provide the necessary information for the achievement of the research objectives.

Table 3.2.1D presents social positions, status and roles. In the light of this, public/civil servants were 25%, university lecturers/experts in different fields were 25%, political appointees in the relevance government establishments were 25%, while professional town planners were 25%. The results show that the research exercise was experts oriented. Therefore, the validity of the research outcomes could have a wider acceptability.

Table 3.2.1E presents years of residence of the participants in the study area. In this regard, those who stay between 5-14 years were 25%, 15-24, were 58.3%, 25 years and above were 16.7%. The results show that the participants were familiar with the study area and could constitute reliable sources of information.

While **table 3.2.1F** presents origin of the participants, where indigenes were 75% and non-indigenes were 25%. The results show that responses to questions were not limited to indigenes, rather people from varied backgrounds who could share their knowledge with the indigenous experiences were made to participate.

**Table 3.2.2: Participants Assessment of the Presence of Rural Features and Opportunities within Uyo Urban Centre  
N=120**

	Variable	Variable Conceptualization	Response		Total
			High	Low	
A	Are you aware of the presence of both rural and urban features in Uyo metropolis?	Conspicuous presence of rural features within the city	100 10 (83.3%)	20 20 (16.7%)	120 (100%)
B	Are rural features of any significance within the metropolis?	Opportunities created in Uyo urban center	90 (75%)	30 (25%)	120 100%



C	Would you support the option of removing these rural features?	Removal of the rural features	Response		120 100%
			Yes	No	
			50 (41.7)	70 (58.3)	120 100%

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 3.2.2 shows the participants assessment of extent of the presence of rural features and opportunities within Uyo urban center.

Table 3.2.2A shows how 83.3% agreed that rural features are coexisting with urban features. This indicates that the existence of dual features within Uyo metropolis is a reality.

Table 3.2.2B shows 75% of the participants who observed that these rural features have created opportunities. The results show that rural features possessed individual and societal opportunities for the self sufficiency of the urban center of Uyo.

Table 3.2.2C shows 41.7% of the research participants calling for the removal of rural features through the enforcement of urban laws, while 58.3% of the research participants argued in favour of the co-existence of rural and urban features. The results indicate that the strength of the persistence of rural features stemmed from the functional roles for households livelihood sustainability of low income class (farm lands for cultivation; livestock rearing; plantain farm; thatched roof mud houses, footpaths etc).

**Table 3.2.3: Participants identification of the causes of the persistence of rural features within Uyo urban centre N=120**

Variable	Variable Conceptualization	Response		Total
		High	Low	
What do you think could be the reasons for the co-existence of rural and urban features in Uyo metropolis?	• presence of low income class (A)	110 (91.7%)	10 (8.3%)	120 (100%)
	• Availability of natural resources (B)	120 (100%)	*	120 (100%)
	• persistence of land tenure system (C)	100 (83.3%)	20 (16.7%)	120 (100%)
		120 (100%)	*	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supportive roles of agricultural produce to cushion the effect of urban high cost of living (D)</li> <li>Ineffective enforcement of town planning laws (E)</li> </ul>	80 (66.7%)	40 (33.3%)	120 (100%)
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Source: Field survey, 2018.

Table 3.2.3 above presents causes of the presence of dual features within Uyo urban center. In this regard, 91.7% of the participants in **table 3.2.3A** noted at different levels of interview that, the presence of low income earners (urban trapped with large family members) have contributed to urban agriculture and rural infrastructure; **table 3.2.3B** shows 100% participants supporting the availability and accessibility of natural resources (farm lands for cultivation); **table 3.2.3C** shows 83.3% of the participants saying that it is the persistence of “land tenure system” which permits land ownership in a fragmented unit for subsistence cultivation; **table 3.2.3D** shows 100% arguing that, urban agriculture has the potency to reduce the effect of urban high cost of living as opportunities of gaining employment are low, couple with the irregular payment of retirement benefits. While **table 3.2.3E** shows 66.7% of the participants attributing the trend to ineffective enforcement of the town planning lands.

**Table 3.2.4: Participants assessment of the challenges posed by rural features within the Urban centre of Uyo**  
N =120

Variable	Variable Conceptualization	Response		Total
		High	Low	
What are the challenges posed by the presence of rural features in urban center of Uyo?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distortion of aesthetic values (A)</li> </ul>	110 (91.7%)	10 (8.3%)	120 (100%)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resistance to the enforcement of town planning laws (B)</li> </ul>	100 (83.3%)	20 (6.7%)	120 (100%)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posture of a non -planned city through haphazard location of commercial ventures and living arrangement (C)</li> </ul>	110 (91.7%)	10 (8.3%)	120 (100%)
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*Source: Field Survey, 2018*

Table 3.2.4 presents data on the challenges posed by rural characteristics in the urban center of Uyo. At three (3) levels of interview, table 3.2.4 (A) presents as a challenge the “distortion of aesthetics value of the city” by 91.7% of the study participants; 83.3% said rural features have posed “resistance to the enforcement of town planning laws in table 3.2.4B while table 3.2.4C presents the views of 91.7% that the location of commercial ventures is typical of a non-planned city. These results show that ruralism in urban center of Uyo is a serious challenge.

### **3.3 Findings and Discussions**

#### **a. The Persistence of Rural Features in Urban Center of Uyo**

Historically, Uyo urban center being the study area evolved from village settlement. As a village settlement, the early settlers were farmers, hunters, and palm wine tapers using crude and locally fabricated technology. In addition to agricultural economy, early settlers had established traditional political institution, and culture with which they governed themselves. However, the historical transformation of “traditional” to “modern” Uyo based on the process of upgrading from the village settlement to “county council area” in 1950; provincial headquarters in the Eastern Region in 1959; Headquarters of Uyo Division in 1966 in the South Eastern State; Headquarters of Uyo Local Government Area in 1976 till date; and the state capital of Akwa Ibom in 1987 did not leave behind rural characteristics associated with its evolution and “survivals” of prehistoric characteristics. These rural features or characteristics have in turn provided opportunities for households' livelihood sources (farmland, livestock etc), and land space for recreation, industrial, investment tourist locations, educational or learning centers etc.

#### **b. Causes of Rural Features in Urban Center of Uyo**

Findings from the study revealed the persistence of rural features co-existing with the urban features. This is primarily because of the presence of low income class (urban trapped); availability of natural resources; existence of agricultural activities; and low cost housing

infrastructure; absence or minimal presence of industrial establishment, where the urban trapped or under-class uphold as opportunity for survival. These findings corroborate earlier works carried out by scholars (Sanyal, 1986; Onorkerhoraye, 1994 in Offong, 2007) who argued that there are four (4) levels of urban systems in Nigeria (first, second, third and fourth). While Onorkerhoraye identified six (6) levels (first, second, third, fourth, fifth and six). But these scholars (Sanyal, Onorkerhoraye and Offong) agreed that for ease of analysis and classification, four levels of urban hierarchy are generally accepted. In this classification according to them, the third grade urban centers (of which Uyo is among) consist of those cities which function more strongly at inter-regional level as state capitals than at the national. In this types of city, due to low interactions with other cities, possess dual features, one serving the less privileged and the other serving the high class residents.

However, they possess such characteristics as rural-urban migration, than inter-regional; they are administrative centers of government with minimal industrial establishments; statuses of houses are a combination of thatched roof and concrete houses (but concrete houses constitute majority); unemployment is wide-spread because technology and industrial development are low, leading to low productivity; high crime rate; presence of destitute and beggars; investment opportunities and tourism development are low due to absence of private sector initiatives; though they have master plan and urban planning laws, sometime may not follow strictly rather adopted the bulldozer approach in their urban renewal efforts etc. Consequently, rural features seem to be increasing by day instead of diminishing by policies. In this regard, the low income class, unemployed, those affected by irregular payment of retirement benefits, the laid-off staff or the retrenched, those affected by small or medium scale business failures, the aged etc are compelled to hide under the availability and accessibility of natural resources; the persistence of land tenure system which conferred right of ownership of a piece of land on individual; ineffective urban planning policies and laws to perpetuate rural methods and practices in their survival activities. Thus, rural features become forceful and beneficial in providing survival source for the vulnerable groups or under-class urban residents as well as investors.

**c. Challenges Posed by the Presence of Rural Features in Urban Centre of Uyo**

The findings of this study revealed that the conspicuous presence of rural characteristics in Uyo urban center is not the

consequence of rural urban migration only, but cultivation by urban poor as “an innovative response from below to the decline of formal urban economies”, and ineffective enforcement of urban renewal plan. In the main, ruralization of urban center of Uyo has distorted aesthetic values and master plan that could have achieved modern urban layout, and poses a serious resistance to the enforcement of town planning laws and urban renewal efforts. The haphazard location of houses, business premises, burial tombs, shrines, farmland and worship centers irrespective of the degree of danger or hazard, suggest a posture of a non-directional urban conditions and helpless urban economy and aesthetics. These findings have confirmed the arguments of Freeman (1991) in Offong (2007) that rural features in most towns and cities in Nigeria is a disruption of aesthetic and a distortion on the city landscape.

Beyond the denial of urban attractiveness, the cost of building the low income and the less-privileged quarters for the relocation of the vulnerable groups, and the payment of compensation on every land surrendered is a depletion of enormous financial resource which is a much threatening challenge. Again, it is also a dislocation of household's livelihood sources. Weighing this against the current socio-economic crises globally and the inflationary trend in the Nigerian economy in particular, suggest a dilemma. Already urban scholars of varied disciplines (Onokerhoraye, 1994; and Hyra, 2008) argued that the political circumstance particularly the structure of urban politics directed internally and externally in the location of infrastructure, allocation of funds to the preferred areas of the city, and the citing of corporate headquarters of various organizations, individual and multinational corporations are critical components of urban development. In addition, global decision makers as well as national government cannot be denied of their vested interest in urban development. Accordingly, the physical features that exist amongst cities of the world have gone beyond enforcement of town planning laws and zoning. Hyra (2008) confirming the work of Offong (2007) observed that such physical features that distinguished urban from any other forms of settlement occur more in terms of powerful and social action than functional and structural adaptations.

The changing shapes of cities of the developed and some developing world, reflects deliberate decisions made by powerful groups and coalitions in order to direct urban growth to their own advantage. Offong (2007) still noted that these powerful groups control the major economic and political institutions of the city which include

corporations, banks, financial markets, real estate, construction firms, internal governments and their programmes. In Uyo metropolis, there is a reflection of this argument where infrastructure and visible development are seen in such “elites dominated” areas as Osongama Estate; Ewet Housing Estate, Shelter Afrique Housing Estate; Ebiye Hundred Units Housing Estate; Federal Housing Estate, Abak Road Uyo etc. The discriminatory, selective, exclusive, and sectional development of Uyo metropolis has weakened the “political will” for the enforcement of town planning laws and urban renewal plan in Uyo and other towns in Akwa Ibom State. Whereas, these choice areas supposed to be models, miniature, predictors, or template of how Uyo metropolis would be in the distinction of city from rural settlement.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Urban centers represent ecology and theater of socio-economic and human interactions. The degree to which these interaction and interface occurs determines the speed of their development. This suggests that, until components of development are present, urban centers cannot achieve meaningful height and influence. These components are trade, industry, communications, technical experts (technological drivers), political reforms (to create political will) that could create conducive environment for economic production. This then bring to mind that, metropolitan centers (Uyo inclusive) are the receptors and processor of both internal and external influences (policies and programmes) that could address the development hindrances, where ruralism is a visible manifestation.

### **3.5 Recommendations**

- Arising from the findings of this study, it is believed that industrialization, urban politics and other viable economic as well as urban policies and programmes are germane to urban development. This is because they are capable of attracting other talents, skills, and wealth from other locations to make them centres of excellence. Therefore, public and private partnership initiative could become the starting point to terminate the rural influence in Uyo metropolis and other towns in Akwa Ibom State.

- Urban development is a deliberate, calculated and well planned programme, especially if the aesthetic value is envisaged alongside economic gains. Therefore, the town planning laws, urban renewal effort as well as the master plan for the lay-out of the city, should be enforced by the governments through their accredited agencies. This is hope to terminate haphazard location of business premises, living homes, burial tombs etc through zoning principle. Consequently, ruralism no matter the opportunities offered by it could gradually disappear, returning the urban centre of Uyo and elsewhere to a centre of economic power and influence.

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