
Counter-urbanization, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Rural Development in Developing Countries: The Nigerian Example

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Abstract: The sustainable development trajectory of rural areas hinges on the number and quality of human resources and endogenous capital. This requires a new and reformed rural development policy to comprehensively address deficiencies of the local development system, poor human resources, and the lack of legitimate local institutions, weakness of trust and entrepreneurship, as well as making all these issues as part of rural development policy. This paper aims to explore the potential of counter-urbanization as an opportunity for developing rural areas, linked with the entrepreneurship tendencies of the diverse peoples involved in counter-urbanization, the residents of rural areas and the potentials and rural capitals endowments of rural areas. In doing this, the paper also explores the age-long and modern functional relationships between urban and rural areas. In this continuum, urban and rural spaces, networks, socioeconomic activities, and identities were never truly separated, due to later urbanization and industrialization in developing countries. Using a review analysis approach, the paper relies on documentary instruments for data generation, as well as content analysis of generated data. The paper is of the view that whereas, the complex consequences of counter-urbanization, present challenges to policymakers who seek to alleviate poverty, improve rural areas conditions and reduce spatially income inequalities. It is however realized that the potentials of counter-urbanization and the closely related factors of entrepreneurship can greatly enhance rural development in developing countries, like Nigeria. What is required are that local development initiatives must use the resources they have (local knowledge, land, skills and traditions, primary production, natural environmental beauty and social networks), turning or configuring these resources into development resources to unlock their internal development capacity sustainably.

Keywords: Rural Development, Entrepreneurship, Tourism, Counter-urbanization, Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

Rural areas across developing countries, especially Africa, though heterogeneous, face similar economic and demographic problems arising from loss of population through out-migration. A priori, migration is linked to several factors, which in turn have important and complicated consequences on the natural environment, economic, social, political, socio-cultural developments of rural areas [87, 17, 27, 2]

Like much of African countries, rural-urban migration is a problem in most of the rural area of Nigeria. Since independence in 1960, rural areas in Nigeria have lost more than half of its population. As loss of labour summarizes the

problems of rural areas in Nigeria, the resultant loss of human capital, labour and basic infrastructure, negatively affect rural socio-economic activities and development [26]. Consequently, many rural areas are unable to attract or maintain sustainable population levels which further reduced economic opportunities and prevent rural regions from overcoming their structural problems, become impossible to take care of cultivable lands or to find workers for forestry job [71, 74]. Since farming and animal husbandry are vital sectors of the rural economy, this, tend to cause an increase in the farm/food prices and products of animal husbandry on the one hand, as rural areas, lose population. Although, the dominant pattern of change in rural areas has been one of population decline, due to rural-urban migration, nonetheless,

there are cases of the increase in population, due to natural increase and some counter-urbanization [81, 57, 2].

The idea and the impact of urban-rural migration (counter-urbanization) is a recent development in the rural development process and is only gradually finding its way into sustainable rural development discourse in developing countries [4]. However, in developed countries, the concept of counter-urbanization has been used to explain the phenomenon of urban-rural migration, where the concept has been loosely defined and tends to direct attention towards urban-centred factors of change [13]. In the process of counter-urbanization, the rural areas are playing an important role as well, and not just passive receivers of migrants [19]. Although the level of counter-urbanization is not sufficient to contribute to a positive rate of net migration, the movement of residents from large urban areas to rural municipalities did, nonetheless, continue [57]. This counter-urbanization is akin to modernization in the 70s and globalization subsequently [4].

No matter how long the rural-urban migrant stays in the city, he regards himself as a temporary sojourner [2]. In effect, the rural areas are not actually abandoned as a result of mostly, seasonal rural-urban migration; there are often feedbacks and linkages in form of remittances, with the rural origin with significant development impact on the rural environment. Moreover, as the effects of the recession and other urban problems are more severely felt in the urban centres [25], rural areas and small towns are increasingly constructed as spaces of refuge from the economic crisis [42].

The complex consequences of rural migration, including counter-urbanization, present challenges to policymakers who seek to alleviate poverty, improve rural areas conditions and reduce spatial income inequalities [44, 87]. Moreover, there is scope for social and economic networks to support such migrants in rural areas [71]. What is required are that local development initiatives must use the resources they have (local knowledge, land, skills and traditions, primary production, natural environmental beauty, and social networks), turning or configuring these resources into the development resources to unlock their internal development capacity sustainably.

This paper aims to explore the potential of counter-urbanization as an opportunity for developing rural areas, linked with the entrepreneurship tendencies of the diverse peoples involved in counter-urbanization, the residents of rural areas and the potentials and rural capitals endowments of rural areas. In doing this, the paper also explores the age-long and modern functional relationships between urban and rural areas. This idea is what is aptly captured in the urban-rural continuum [24, 16]. In this continuum, urban and rural spaces, networks, socioeconomic activities, and identities were never truly separated, due to later urbanization and industrialization in developing countries.

The paper looks at urban-rural migration (counter-urbanization) and entrepreneurship as tools through which the internal development capacity of rural areas can be used

as a springboard for sustainable development. The remaining part of the paper examines how this can happen.

1.1. Methodology

The paper is based on secondary data and the review of the literature to make a case for counter-urbanization and entrepreneurship in rural development. It employed a review analysis approach by relying on documentary instruments for data generation, as well as content analysis of generated data.

1.2. Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is the idea that human societies must live and meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The official definition from the Brundtland Report is that "Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" [30]. Specifically, sustainable development is a way of organizing society so that it can exist in the long term. This means taking into account both the present imperatives and those of the future, such as the preservation of the environment and natural resources or social and economic equity [88].

The entire issues of sustainable development centres around inter-and intra-generational equity anchored essentially on three-dimensional distinct but interconnected pillars, namely the environment, economy, and society. Decision-makers need to be constantly mindful of the relationships, complementarities, and trade-offs among these pillars and ensure responsible human behaviour and actions at the international, national, community and individual levels to uphold and promote the tenets of sustainable development in the interest of human development [53]

Sustainable development is simply seen as the desire to maintain the achievement of such development over time [67]. Sustainable development emerged in the 1980s as a unifying approach to the environment, economic development, and the quality of life.

It is the view in this review that the relatedness of counter-urbanization, entrepreneurship and sustainability at the rural level if appropriately integrated, can form a comprehensive development policy, and can aid sustainable bottom-up rural development in developing countries.

2. Counter-urbanization: A Reversal of Rural-Urban Migration

2.1. Migration

Migration is an old human phenomenon and a key part of human society. In retrospect, human beings have moved and settlements established as rural or urban, showing stratified socio-economic and geo-political compositions. There is a movement between local rural settlements, called rural-rural or lateral migration [57]. Lateral migration is far more common in developing African countries than is rural-urban

migration [82, 2]. To ignore this common form of migration is to lose sight of the heterogeneous nature of the rural sector [48].

Population movement, be it, seasonal, temporary or permanent, rural-urban or rural-rural, and recently, urban-rural, is a routine part of life among settlements in developing countries. Given the significant disparities that have emerged and developed between and within rural and urban settlements, migration phenomenon can be strategically used for the redistribution development dynamics; designed to solve problems usually associated with it. While today human movement is at a high record level, migration should not be viewed solely as a challenge. It is also an opportunity that, if handled well, will help meet many of the goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by world leaders in 2015. Accordingly, it is averred that migration should be incorporated into sustainable development planning [1].

People have migrated since the beginning of human history, usually motivated by pursuit of a better life [33]. The main reasons for the early rural-urban migration are to be the pursuit of employment opportunities, the higher urban real wage as against low rural real wage and earning potentials of urban centres [32, 87, and 82]. The wage gap results in a rural push and urban pull factors. While modernization of farming, the industrial revolution, and resource exports theories are associated with urbanization and economic development, the rural poverty, and urban bias theories imply that urbanization may occur without growth [20]. All these theories assume that urbanization comes from migration only. Moreover, urbanization does not come from migration only, as internal growth also matters. Urban push, (here used as expression opposed to rural push and urban pull), suggests that cities are growing internally and "pushing" their boundaries. It is not that urban workers are being pushed to the countryside, but rather, high urban rates of natural increase are creating an urban population push.

In retrospect, the urban pull and rural push forced the rural population to move out of their settlements of origin in droves, towards the surrounding towns and villages. This mass exodus, particularly to towns and cities resulted in significant problems in these urban centres, i.e, rapid urbanization, constant migration of rural people to cities, and concentration of population and activities in one or two cities or, in other words, urban primacy and macrocephaly. Although, the suburbanization process eased the migration flow to urban centres, thereby helped to relieve urban problems, but generated new settlement locations near to, and well connected to an urban area with attendant problems too [35, 86]

2.2. Counter-urbanization

Counter-urbanization is a term coined and defined as "a process of population de-concentration; it implies a movement from a state of more concentration to a state of less concentration". Counter-urbanization broadly refers to a series of social phenomena concerning the relocation of

residents, either by choice or necessity, from urban to rural residential environments. Counter-urbanization is a demographic and social process whereby people move from urban areas to rural areas, either within or beyond, a political border. Counter-urbanization is a reaction against urbanization processes, such as core-city deprivation, the rising property prices and overcrowding, as well as economic recession as happens in many developing countries from time to time [6, 79, 35, 58, 11, 21, 22, 40, 84].

In England, counter-urbanization is associated with the colonization of the countryside from middle-class residents, motivated by particularly positive views surrounding rural living and rural lifestyle. In other European countries, counter-urbanization is an opportunity for developing rural communities, linked with excessive housing construction and facilitated by the planning system, involving diverse social groups (not just the middle classes) and irrelevant to idyllic representations of rurality [86, 25, 26, 65, 78]. In Australia, counter-urbanization is the net migration downwards in a hierarchy [6]. Indeed, counter-urbanization is about people being able to explore alternatives to living in the city, creating changes in living location preferences.

Three forms of counter-urbanization are identified: back-to-the-land migration, the pursuit of land-based lifestyles, and the creation of eco-villages. Other forms of migration are; green migration, amenity migration, Circular migration, retirement migration and Commuter migration, Counter-migration has internal or domestic dimension and international dimension when foreigners move to the rural area to work or take-up residence [31, 41, 12, 48]. Hence, counter-urbanization refers to the settlement of both internal and international migrant groups in the rural area [4].

Literature accounts show that urban residents are drawn to rural areas for a plethora of reasons. Urban residents are drawn to rural environments for the perceived amenities that they provide. Movements to rural areas for tourism help the economic situation or circumstances of the districts or rural communities; hence it is a form of counter-urbanization. Two schools of thought concerning the reasons for counter-urbanization are identified. However, counter-urbanization means different thing to different people, but it is incontrovertible that the quality-of-lifestyle considerations for counter-urbanization are more than economic factors [11, 4, and 41]. Reasons for return migration to the rural area may include; changing circumstances that led to the initial migration, economic deterioration in the destination area or rising incomes at home may induce return. The behavioural reasons are rural idyll, family, and friends, collective reactions, and individualism [48].

Differences in counter-urbanization trends worldwide show differences in the urbanization history of the countries, the planning systems and rural housing policies that regulate the countryside, as well as socio-cultural values surrounding rural living [24]. A plethora of concepts and names for counter-urbanization processes exist. Some researchers summarize them as exurbanization or dis-urbanization. Others prefer the term counter-urbanization [6, 84, 19, 15,

and 49]. Some prefer the spelling counterurbanisation, others counter-urbanisation, while some researchers are simply trying to avoid the whole term and refer to the process as urban-rural migration, population turnaround, rural repopulation and so on. The variation in factors that account for counter-urbanization also means that there is the need to widen the lens of counter-urbanization theory and include cases that embrace diverse economic, cultural and personal factors [28, 74, 3, 40, 2, 62, 78, and 31].

Counter-urbanization is capable of redistribution of people and businesses toward a more balanced settlement pattern, both in terms of population density and state of development [31]. Counter-urbanization can be regarded as a radical lifestyle-change, continuing urbanization, a deconcentration process or a stage in the life of the town. Of course, not all settlements are affected by counter-urbanization: because of the selective nature of migration, the process of counter-urbanization can cause many changes in some places, while others may remain untouched. Counter-urbanization benefits: rural and urban areas and economy and national economy as well [2]. Rural areas of Greece is an example of the resilient countryside that offers some solutions to crisis-hit urban households, while urban areas are relieved at least temporarily by the migration of urban dwellers to the rural areas at weekends and on major festival periods, this act to decongest the oversaturated urban environment [24, 2].

2.2.1. Forms of Counter-urbanization

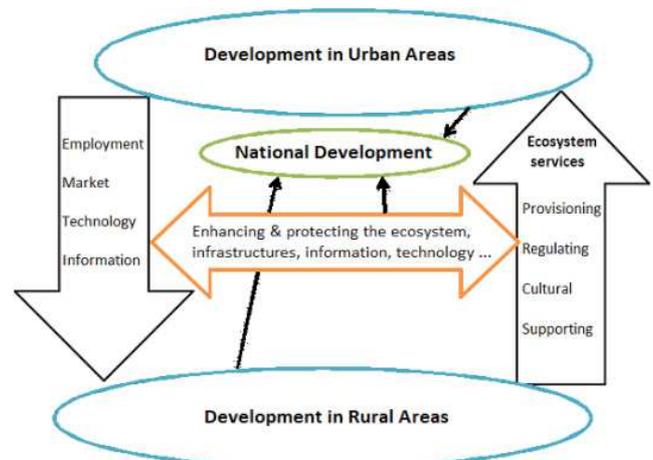
Two forms of counter-urbanization are recognized in the literature: either as a migration movement or a process of settlement system change, resulting in a deconcentrated settlement pattern [58]. Early description focused on what is called statistical counter-urbanization, which saw counter-urbanization as shifts, or a rural turnaround, drawing on quantitative analysis of national population data [11, 21]. Later, the focus of counter-urbanization research changed to qualitative specific local case studies irrespective of wider urban-rural population dynamics [28]. The case study research seeks to highlight the spatially selective character of counter-urbanization and the uneven local and regional geographies of rural in-migration [8, 29, 86]. Studies highlighted the need for more quantitative approaches to examine counter-urbanization in its national, regional and local contexts [73 and 55].

Counter-urbanization in some cases tends to be associated with a very positive perception of rural living, emphasizing the environmental, anti-urban and communitarian features of rural areas, and the existence of a 'rural idyll' has been well used to rationalize the migration decision [31, 85]. Economic condition (push-led) is also an important motivation for counter-urbanization.

Different terms are used to differentiate between economic and quality of life motives associated with the migration decision [58]. Ex-urbanization describes the movement of middle-class commuters to accessible peri-urban rural areas, motivated by environmental amenities associated with rural living; Displaced-urbanization describes relocations

motivated by the need for employment, lower costs of living and/or affordable housing and taking place in any geographic location that provides for these needs; and Anti-urbanization describes the movement of urban residents whose driving force is to live and work in a rural setting. These residents are motivated by anti-urban motives (i.e. urban crime, the rat race) and pro-rural perceptions about rural life. Concerning the people involved in counter-urbanization, this ordinarily refers to out-migration of an urban middle class, marginal settlers and misfits, lesbian households, artists, pre-retirement groups and international return migrants [83, 31, 73, 58, 78, and 60].

In the light of reported cases of urban-rural functional relationships, the issue of counter-urbanization in rural development becomes simpler, especially because literature supports and acknowledges the diverse social, spatial and cultural factors in counter-urbanization [24, 2, 31]. These authors demonstrate the positive implications of such mobility for the rural economy (particularly in agriculture, livestock and the construction industry), but also highlight the migrants' contribution to a wider social rural development (such as the demographic revival of depopulated areas and maintenance of social cohesion). Indeed, national prosperity and spatially balanced development depend on strong linkages between cities and their rural hinterland [81, 50, 86]. This is vividly captured in Figure 1 below.



Source: Gebre and Gebremedhin (2019)

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of rural-urban linkages for National development.

2.2.2. Counter-urbanization - Entrepreneurship Nexus: Key Opportunities

It has been established in the literature that people involved in counter-urbanization are usually adults (though younger than rural population), richer, better educated and trained in one skill or the other [35, 4, 2]. Initially, retirement migration is seen as the main flows into rural areas, but the recent literature provides evidence that some older newcomers are not retired but, instead, people in employment [10, 78, 77]. Indeed, rural areas in developed countries faced with similar structural problems of rural areas in developing

countries, compensate losses of the population with immigration or "importing" young, fertile people of working age [71].

Entrepreneurship has been important for economic development, national and individual wealth creation, productivity and new job formations, wherever individual had the opportunity to make economic initiative (May, 2005). Sexton defined entrepreneurship as the process of identifying opportunities, gathering resources, and exploiting these opportunities through action.

Entrepreneurship function implies the discovery, assessment and exploitation of opportunities. Entrepreneurship – the entrepreneurial function can be conceptualized as the discovery of opportunities and subsequent creation of new economic activity, often via the creation of new organization. It is worth mentioning that the creation of enterprise is an essential element of economic reforms of both the rural and urban settlements [14].

Entrepreneurship activity has low social acceptance and all manners of disadvantages, including, smallness, funding, infrastructure, etc., in the rural areas [43]. Hence, the few new rural businesses, among which many are businesses in retail and local workshops, do reproduce the weak local structures and have lower growth potential. Without prejudice to the homogeneity of rural areas, it is advised that policy instruments that focus on the sustainable development of business in the tourism sectors may better fit the rural entrepreneurial milieu [75, 7]. Moreover, urban migrants are not likely to be engaged in arable farming like the indigenous rural population. It is no accident, therefore, that the current strategy of rural development plans is to support and stimulate entrepreneurship while exploiting the potential of rural capital instead of bringing it in from outside [37, 68].

Although traditional theories of development have always ignored the role of entrepreneurship, studies have established the importance of this concept, especially to encourage sustainable rural development by using local resources [44, 69, 70, 23, and 76]. Social entrepreneurs are considered to be change agents who can break unfavourable routines through social innovation [45]. Entrepreneurs drive economic change by innovatively combining existing elements, while social entrepreneurs push social innovation at the intersection of the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors [23].

Newcomers integrate their urban ways of life into the new relationships obtained in rural areas. Moreover, the rural areas might be peripheral in the physical sense, but globalization, increased mobility, new technologies and the specific use of rural areas open novel possibilities for entrepreneurship in rural areas and challenge the notion of rural business [34]. Return migrants have played an important part in the development of their rural places of origin through the introduction of new ideas, skills, symbols and sociological patterns, collectively called social remittance [2, 46].

It is argued that the main economic impact of newcomer migrants is job creation, and that rural economic diversification and regeneration are mainly driven by locals

and not by newcomers, but the higher human capital and skills attained outside the rural area by the newcomers are crucial for rural change and revitalization. Moreover, urban migrants perceive rural areas as a dynamic, expanding and entrepreneurial milieu in which to invest [22, 77, 9, and 76]. No wonder, the entrepreneurship and endogenous economic growth are the main focus of a New Rural Paradigm [63].

2.2.3. Rural Capital and Tourism: Pivot for Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas

Endogenous development potential forms the basis for the development of different activities in rural areas (agriculture and forestry, entrepreneurship, tourism, recreation, residence, etc.). Rural development as a concept means various things to various people. For a long time, rural development and agricultural production were viewed as synonymous. In recent years, however, it has been argued that agriculture is by no means the only occupation for the rural people and accordingly a new and broader view of rural development must recognize non-farm activities.

Rural development is a development intervention that is directed at:

- i. Sustainable improvement in the living standards and welfare of the rural people,
- ii. Improvement in rural infrastructure and services,
- iii. Availability of access to resources, facilities, and means of production,
- iv. Enhancement of opportunities for participation in designing, managing and steering development [5]

In Nigeria, rural development programmes have focused on more areas of development programmes rather than the traditionally narrow focus on agriculture. While agricultural development is usually still the ultimate of rural development, such as other areas as infrastructural development and health care are gaining increasing attention. Some agencies are created for such development like opening up of rural roads. They also embark on rural water supply, especially boreholes and deep wells, and rural electrification. All these programmes are embarked upon to enhance the stemming of rural-urban migration and also improve lots of the rural dwellers [64].

Rural capital is an organizing concept for rural development. It is the combination of natural capital, man-created capital, human capital, and social capital. Human capital reflects both the size of the working-age population (with population growth leading to the widening of human capital) and investment in education and training of people (which leads to the deepening of human capital) [4]. Social capital refers to trust and social networks among individuals and to the reciprocity, which arises from these connections and the relationships within communities [66, 4]. Environmental capital plays a key role in encouraging or limiting economic development, while physical capital refers to the interconnectedness of the various units concerning roads, telecommunication etc.

The above resources constitute a good business opportunity waiting to be exploited by rural entrepreneurs.

Rural tourism offers a possible solution to the problems associated with lost economic opportunities and population decline that accompany the decline in agriculture employment [18, 36, 37]. Similarly, policy instruments that focus on the sustainable development of business in the tourism sectors may better fit the rural entrepreneurial milieu [7]. Accordingly, the focus on tourism development is due to the increased demand from tourists who want to enjoy nature found only in rural environments as well as to experience cultural heritage that is still preserved by the rural communities [61, 89].

The homestay programme, for example, encourages rural communities to participate in the tourism industry, increase their income and create tourism entrepreneurs in the rural areas [54]. The increasing demand for tourism products will indirectly encourage new investments in infrastructure, communications, and transport and develop rural areas through other social support [56]. The development and conservation of rural capital are of fundamental importance to rural people, as they attempt to resolve local problems and pursue their aspirations. Rural entrepreneurship and rural development are fundamentally influenced by the relative abundance of each type of rural capital. Conversely, the activities of rural entrepreneurs are the major driving force in rural capital accumulation [72, 52].

The mobilization of local (endogenous) resources and local collective goods to support comparative advantages for local businesses, local entrepreneurship and innovation and social cohesion can be better strategies [66]. While rural values (clean environment, natural beauty, cultural traditions, etc.) that have been given little consideration in the past, should be converted or configured to 'marketable assets' and into development resources and that 'old rural resources' (values) (land ecosystem, landscape, animals, social networks, craftsmanship, etc.) should be considered in the context of rural development [59]. The consensus is that rural development should take advantage of both newly emerging and historically rooted realities. One way to do this is by functional integration of newcomers (urban migrants) into the rural environment. Moreover, the concern for sustainable rural development influenced the change from the idea of development as a process mainly linked with economic growth to the approach based on the increase in quality of life and environment [38].

In creating a competitive advantage for the rural area, development strategies should focus on immobile resources, which are not in contention, such as social capital, cultural capital, environmental capital and local knowledge capital, as mobile traditional resources (such as capital, information, skilled labour etc.) have left the rural area and therefore do not create any more solid base for the development of rural areas [80]. What rural areas have in abundance and cannot be attracted away are the rural values. There are three aspects of rural values [59].

Socio-cultural values (rural culture, folklore and the built environment, local cuisine, arts and crafts, locally specific products and production methods, minority languages,

traditional ways of life)

Increasingly, people are discovering the importance of rural values, so, the importance of rural tourism and enterprise has increased [35]. Indeed, the resources and potentials of rural areas can be the basis for thriving rural tourism and if managed effectively, tourism can have a minimal negative impact on the natural environment and can act as a catalyst for social development and biodiversity conservation [51].

From the above discussions, the rural space cannot be considered any longer as being purely for agriculture. Tourism is an agent of rural development; it offers opportunities for the family business and small-scale entrepreneurship [47]. Tourism promotes rural entrepreneurship and business development in the rural areas with touristic resources.

It is also abundantly clear that counter-urbanization and entrepreneurship are the *sines qua non* to sustainable rural development. However, counter-urbanization and entrepreneurship factors only relevant to human resource aspect of rural development. There are equally, both resource-type and access-type disadvantages to contend with in the process of rural development in developing countries.

2.2.4. Main Rural Disadvantages

Rural areas need protection because resulting from a different development trajectory; they have serious comparative disadvantages regarding the competition for markets [59]. One basic aim of rural development is to eliminate or overcome these comparative advantages, to make them competitive and make for social and economic cohesion between different areas. To achieve this, rural areas need to surmount three main disadvantages.

First, the disadvantages of the persistent economic structure: calls these resource-type disadvantages. He likens this to long-term economic and political dependence on urban centres, their unfavourable economic structure and/or geographical location and their limited access to goods, information and central resources [59]. Another major disadvantage is that rural areas in Nigeria are not the only constraint by financial resources; capital accumulation (if available at all) is low and slow in primary production, scarcity of different types of infrastructure also sets constraints on local production and the development of entrepreneurship, so is the weakness of human resources. Both the number and the structure of the rural population, occasioned by severe out-migration and sometimes-negative natural growth, are impediments to rural development.

The third, the disadvantage of (physical) accessibility: Access-type disadvantages are usually visible and quantifiable results of uneven development, based on imperfect resources. Not only does this limit commuting from rural areas to urban markets but also limits the attractiveness of an area for investment.

In surmounting rural disadvantages, the key endogenous potential in the rural area is the entrepreneurship of the area. The regional development agencies that fit both criteria can

contribute much to rural development through entrepreneurship.

And to tackle access- type disadvantages is to successfully improve access to and from the backward rural area, national, regional and local institutions are very necessary. The rural areas gain through the coming of external capital and other resources (information, expertise, etc.), which helps to revitalize the local economy. Besides, improved access open up new space, markets, natural and human resources and supports continuous growth of the urban, regional and national economy.

Moreover, physical access without economic access can make rural areas worse off. Therefore, creating a soft infrastructure for economic access (financial and market support institutions, vertical and horizontal integrations, services, training, etc.) though requires less capital investment but more organization, connections local knowledge and social engineering and therefore, is better undertaken by regional or local institutions [59].

What all this means is that a bottom-up process with the active driving machine of the Local development system (LDS) of rural development is the assured way to increase the competitiveness and comparative advantage of rural areas and development. Local development institutions that are truly on the ground in the rural environment, they are more likely to improve access to the rural areas and the regional/national economy. Local-level institutions are also essential for unlocking resources.

On the other hand in tackling resource- type disadvantages, good rural feeder roads, educational facilities, health facilities etc., in other words, physical, economic and policy accesses mentioned above, in place, will provide the enabling environment required. Beyond that, there is a need for a strong local development system exemplified by local institutions mentioned above. The role of local development system includes:

To put in place a well thought out, a comprehensive development plan for the rural area, a well-articulated strategy of actualizing the development plan, provision of appropriate information about local needs, advisory services; local business associations; local development plans or marketing.

For sustainable rural development, local development initiative must use the resources they have (local knowledge, Land, skills and traditions, primary production, natural environmental beauty and social networks), turning or configuring these resources into development resources to unlock their internal development capacity. This type of local development initiative is specific to the local regional area. The scale of the development and economic and social change is usually smaller than those of large-scale FDI or other urban-based developments and based on rural development resources; building, skills, land, family savings and finances and labour, therefore does not create economic dependency and cannot be disrupted by outside forces (as it is the case with sole development that depends on primary production) through the stoppage of external assistance or

relocation of investment.

Nevertheless, there are problems as identified somewhere above for endogenous development in rural areas; longtime dependency, neglect and economic and social degradation of the rural areas, inadequate, costly to unlock or utilize resources as a result of capital flight, remoteness and lack of infrastructure and local financial capital. Perhaps, the most difficult problems can be attributed to deficiencies of the local development system, poor human resources, the lack of legitimate local institutions, weakness of trust and entrepreneurship. Other factors, like cooperation and innovation, are the ingredients necessary for successful rural development and therefore should be specifically and comprehensively addressed in rural development policy.

3. Conclusion

It is a fact that rural areas and rural settlements are heterogeneous. It is also a fact that large numbers of rural settlements in Africa are facing demographic shrinkage. It is also a fact that rural areas have tremendous capitals, values and resources that can form the basis of sustainable development. But rural-urban migration and lack of infrastructure and neglect are the banes of rural development.

Therefore, rural policy-making and management can help greatly in the counter-urbanization process. The formulation of policy and management of rural areas natural environment development can facilitate the movement of several young, skilful and enterprising migrants in the urban areas into the rural settlements, who will take advantage of the huge resources available in the rural areas. This can help to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants in the rural areas of developing countries like Nigeria. It is the contention in this paper that resources are bound in the rural areas that can form the basis of endogenous development. Therefore, counter-urbanization, entrepreneurship, and tourism should be part of any rural policy to reactivate, rejuvenate and develop the rural areas.

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