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Urbanization and inverted peazantization in Nigeria: Implications for sustainable development

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ABSTRACT

Urbanization and peasantry were previously unrelated variables. The urban setting in the past, accordingly symbolized the qualitative trajectory of human habitation. The rural lands in such former times harboured the peasants, who certainly were the underclass. We argue in this study however that in the developing countries, typified by Nigeria, urbanization is now characterized by an incidence of inverted peasantization. The subaltern members of society in such developing systems have seemingly vacated the countryside and are currently largely in the urban areas. The rural settings are comparatively, currently places to find comfortable residences and lucrative engagements. In the paper, we have made a case-study of the Nigerian condition. We have attempted to underscore the implications for sustainable development in the case-study country, of the brand of urbanization that occasions the incidence of inverted peasantization,

Keywords: Urban Territory; Urbanization; Peasants; Peasantization; Inverted Peasantization; Sustainable Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Orum [1] posits that the process of urbanization has gone on throughout history. Large congregations of people have accordingly existed across the world, from ancient China to ancient Rome and Greece. Although the numbers of residents of such cities pale by comparison with urban areas today, the relatively large and dense congregations of people still helped to foster new institutions and, in general, to make urban life in many ways preferable to that of living in relatively isolated rural areas. Urban residents accordingly, typically benefit from better forms of education, improved medical care, the availability and distribution of information, and the greater supply of life sustaining goods, such as food and shelter [1].

However, the times have since witnessed monumental changes. Urbanization has come with mammoth consequences. In the Nigerian case for instance, Daramola and Ibem [2] contend:

> The inability of Nigerian cities to cope with the increasing environmental challenges has also shown manifestation in poor economic growth and development. Rapid growth of cities due to urbanization has led to the emergence of low-income informal settlements, both in the inner-city and on the outskirts. This development accounted for the over bloated informal sector. The domination of the national economy by the informal sector that is characterized by subsistence economic activities known for low productivity and income, operating in unregulated and uncompetitive markets, outside government-approved guidelines, has far-reaching implications for sustainable economic development. A large proportion of businesses operating in informal settlements in urban areas in Nigeria hardly pay tax, have no financial records, do not form part of government statistical records, and have limited or no access to formal credit facilities . Coupled with an inefficient infrastructure network and unwholesome operating environment, industrial production is low, while manufacturing continues to contribute less than 1 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in Nigeria.

Consequently, as the world continues to urbanize, sustainable development challenges will be increasingly concentrated in cities, particularly in the lower-middle-income countries where the pace of urbanization is fastest [3]. Furthermore, it had been estimated that by 2015, more than half of Nigeria's population would be living in urban centers and with an urbanization rate of about 5.5 percent per annum, it was anticipated that the urban population would have reached 65 percent of the total population [2] Therefore, unless appropriate actions are taken, environmental decay is set to rise, and this poses serious threat to sustainable development because, Nigeria's economy and society largely depend on its ecology for food production, power generation and source of raw materials for industrial activities [2].

Hence, there is the apprehension that as the population of the countryside depletes in Nigeria, the urban scenario would be dominated by an incidence of inverted peasantization, which is antithetical to sustainable development. (We shall presently return to the explication of inverted peasantization). We highlight for now that the general objective of this study is to investigate the incidence of urbanization and inverted peasantization in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

(i) highlight the problems of urban contradictions in Nigeria (ii) examine the challenges of inverted peasantization in the country and (iii) determine the implications of urbanization and inverted peazantization for sustainable development in the Nigerian state. In addition, to underscore the criticality of the peasantry as the focus of this study, La Via Campesina [9] highlight that almost half of the people in the world are peasants. Then, where are the Nigerian peasants located? This constitutes a central research question in this study. Moreover, according to the United Nations [3]:

> Cities offer opportunities of expanded access to services, such as health care and education, for large numbers of people in an economically efficient manner. Providing public transportation, as well as housing, electricity, water and sanitation for a densely settled population is typically cheaper and less environmentally damaging than providing a similar level of services to a predominantly rural household. Urban dwellers also have access to larger and more diversified labour markets, and enjoy healthier lives overall.

Do the above suppositions reflect the Nigerian condition? Are Nigerian cities offering opportunities of expanded access to services, such as health care and education for large numbers of people, in an economically efficient manner? Are such expanded opportunities available in the Nigerian urban setting, even in an economically inefficient manner? Granted that Nigerian urban dwellers may also have access to larger and more diversified labour markets, do they equally enjoy healthier lives overall? How does the condition of the urban dweller in this country relate with sustainable development? Our research essentially revolves around these questions.

2. CONCEPTUAL EXPLICATION

2. 1. Urbanization

For a proper conceptualization of urbanization in this study, we shall take the route of primarily conceptualizing urban territories, as the root-concept of urbanization is the urban location – the urban territory, which has been regarded in United Nations [3] as follows:

> There is no common global definition of what constitutes an urban settlement. As a result, the urban definition employed by national statistical offices varies widely across countries, and in some cases has changed over time within a country. The criteria for classifying an area as urban may be based on one or a combination of characteristics, such as: a minimum population threshold; population density; proportion employed in non-agricultural sectors; the presence of infrastructure such as paved roads, electricity, piped water or sewers; and the presence of education or health services.

On the opposite site of the urban location therefore is the rural community. Thus, urbanization is a tendency of an urban area. In Orum [1], it is viewed as the process whereby large numbers of people congregate and settle in an area, eventually developing social institutions, such as businesses and government, to support themselves. Urban areas, or those

pockets of people and institutions thereby created, are generally characterized as relatively dense settlements of people. Furthermore, it is claimed, they sometimes originate from the effort by authorities to consciously concentrate power, capital, or both at a particular site [1].

According to Orum, urbanization today is different in important respects from its form in the past. The significant twists and turns it has taken includes the incidence of suburbanization - urbanization that produces new residential communities on the outskirts of major cities [1]. Urbanization is a process of urban development marked by a relative increase in urban population as a proportion of the total or the expansion in the proportion of a population living in urban areas [4].

In today's increasingly global and interconnected world, over half of the world's population (54 per cent) lives in urban areas although there is still substantial variability in the levels of urbanization across countries [3]. Globally therefore, more people live in urban areas than in rural areas, with 54 per cent of the world's population residing in urban areas in 2014. In 1950, 30 per cent of the world's population was urban, and by 2050, 66 per cent of the world's population is projected to be urban [3].

2. 2. Conceptualizing Peasantization

Wolf [5] in Friedmann [6] opened a new analytical direction by defining *peasants* as a modern social category that exists in relation to appropriating classes and states. He altered political analysis by showing that all major national liberation and anti-imperial struggles were fought by rural peoples --- what he called *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* [7,6]. Dunford [8] however still defines peasants as smallholder producers and gatherers that make a living from the land and sea. This therefore implies that peasantry and affluence are dichotomous conceptualizations, as making a living from smallholder activities, fundamentally remains an engagement of the underclass.

We consequently define peasantization as that process (inadvertent or intentional) of engendering a peasant categorization in a socio-economic and/or political system. However, citing La Via Campesina [9] and UNHRC Advisory Committee [10], Jovanović [11] gives an extensive definition of ''peasants'' as follows:

1. A peasant is a man or woman of the land, who has a direct and special relationship with the land and nature, through the production of food or other agricultural products. Peasants work the land themselves and rely above all on family labour and other small-scale forms of organizing labour. Peasants are traditionally embedded in their local communities and they take care of local landscapes and of agro-ecological systems.

2. The term peasant can apply to any person engaged in agriculture, cattle-raising, pastoralism, handicrafts related to agriculture or a similar occupation in a rural area. This includes indigenous people working on the land.

3. The term peasant also applies to the landless. [11].

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the following categories of people are considered to be landless and are likely to face difficulties in ensuring their livelihood:

(a) Agricultural labour households with little or no land; (b) Non-agricultural households in rural areas, with little or no land, whose members are engaged in various activities such as fishing, making crafts for the local market, or providing services; (c) Other rural households of pastoralists, nomads, peasants practicing shifting cultivation, hunters and gatherers, and people with similar livelihoods [11].

Edelman [12] posits that the question of how to define "peasant" and "peasantry" has a long, complicated and contentious history. His work distinguishes for heuristic purposes, four different kinds of definition of "peasant", which are:

(1) Historical definitions, such as those from societies where peasants constituted an estate-like, caste-like, corporate or subordinated social group, characterized by specific restrictions on geographical or social mobility, limited rights, and obligations to provide services and perform particular deference behaviors for the super-ordinate groups;

(2) Social scientific definitions, from anthropology and sociology and from the interdisciplinary fields of peasant studies and agrarian studies.

(3) Activist definitions employed by agrarian movements, particularly Vía Campesina and its constituent organizations, that self-identify as "peasants" (or "campesinos," etc.).

(4) Normative definitions, including those proposed by civil society organizations and by the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council.

In his final submissions, Edelman [12] opines that groups, which might reasonably be classified as peasants, have diminished as a proportion of the overall global population, but in absolute numbers, they are more numerous than ever before in history. Thus, conceptualizing peasantization may entail some checkered historiography but in absolute terms, the number of the underclass called peasants, is globally on the increase. Their defining attributes are deprivation and possession of contentious rights in the midst of their apparent contributions to the well-being of the super-ordinate groups in the society. Peasantization is accordingly a function of deprivation, dispossession and disregard of the subaltern class of society by the ostensible superior members.

2.3. Inverted Peasantization

Current estimates show that by 2030, about 61 percent of the total population in the world will be living in cities; and that all the world's increase in population in the next three decades will occur in low and middle-income countries [2]. As vast majority of Nigerians encounter gargantuan deprivations and retardation in the urban settings, they become the new peasants. Daramola and Ibem further highlight:

> As vast majority of urban residents in Nigeria suffer from severe deficiencies in the supply of basic infrastructure and housing, industrial, mining and domestic activities generate dangerous level of air, land and water pollution, endangering human lives and causing serious damage to the ecosystem. Statistics show that a majority of urban residents in the country fall within the low-income group. This income class is the most vulnerable group to prevalent environmental problems such as diseases associated with lack of access to natural resources and basic urban services and pollution. They also suffer the consequences of absence of inappropriate urban planning and

management systems, and thus live in disaster-prone areas of the cities. These ultimately impact on their quality of life, health, and consequently reduce their productivity and economic-development capacity.

In the historical context of his postulations, Edelman [12] highlights:

> The word "peasant" appears in English in late medieval and early modern times, when it was used to refer to the rural poor, rural residents, serfs, agricultural laborers, and the "common" or "simple" people. As a verb in that period, "to peasant" meant to subjugate someone as a peasant is subjugated. Earlier Latin and Latinate forms (French, Castilian, Catalan, Occitan, etc.) date as far back as the sixth century and denoted a rural inhabitant, whether or not involved in agriculture. Very early on, both the English "peasant," the French "paysan" and similar terms sometimes connoted "rustic," "ignorant," "stupid," "crass" and "rude," among many other pejorative terms. The word could also imply criminality, as in thirteenth-century Germany where "'peasant' meant 'villain, rustic, devil, robber, brigand and looter.

In reality therefore, peasantry as empirical phenomenon and effective theoretical construct may not be successfully divorced from societal disadvantages. It is actually only the social scientific, activist and normative definitions [12], that had given the peasantry, its modern, less derogatory colouration. Deteriorations in urban conditions have however tended to reverse the classificatory trend to the negative dimension. The peasants are therefore also currently in the urban setting. They have highly vacated the countryside. This reversal of trend thus, signifies an incidence of inverted peasantization.

Consequently, forty years ago in Africa and South Asia, the common man and woman were usually described as peasants [13]. They resided then in rural areas. In today's Africa, specifically in Nigeria, the common person also resides in urban make-beliefs. Hence, under conditions of inverted peasantization, rural lands are largely unattended to and the neo-peasants of the urban settings become developmental contradictions. The rural resources are not harnessed and the urban areas remain retrogressive. The United Nations [3] adds:

> Urban living is often associated with higher levels of literacy and education, better health, greater access to social services, and enhanced opportunities for cultural and political participation. Nevertheless, rapid and unplanned urban growth threatens sustainable development when the necessary infrastructure is not developed or when policies are not implemented to ensure that the benefits of city life are equitably shared. Today, despite the comparative advantage of cities, urban areas are more unequal than rural areas and hundreds of millions of the world's urban poor live in sub-standard conditions. In some cities, unplanned or inadequately managed urban expansion leads to rapid sprawl, pollution, and environmental degradation, together with unsustainable production and consumption patterns.

2. 4. Sustainable Development

Estes [14] in Okeke, Izueke and Nzekwe [15] highlights that credit for originating the "sustainable development" concept is generally given to the 1987 report of World

Commission on Environment and Development [16]. Popularly referred to also as the Brundtland Commission, the Commission's report, *Our Common Future: from One Earth to One World*, called for emboldened and dramatically new conceptions of development that advanced the material wants of the present generation, without depriving future generations of the resources required to satisfy their needs [15]. Thus, the Commission conceptualized "sustainable development" rather simply as paths of human progress, which meet the needs, and aspirations of the present generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs [14,15].

Today, the sustainable development "movement" is multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral. The movement brings together specialists from the physical and environmental sciences, along with experts in development economics, political science, appropriate technology, human and women's rights, and others [14,15]. Despite the apparent simplicity of the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development, the concept itself is rather complex [14,15]. Consequently, one of the most striking characteristics of the term "sustainable development" is that it can mean all things to all people [17].

Few concepts, argue Pearce & Atkinson [18], appear to have captured the public and political imagination more than that of 'sustainable development'. The concept is intended to embrace the idea of ensuring that future generations inherit an Earth, which will support their livelihoods in such a way that they are no worse off than generations today [18]. Okafor and Abdulazeez [19] therefore opine that sustainable development entails building upon the past for better present, without jeopardizing brighter best future. According to Bärlund [17], an enormous amount of academic, administrative and political effort has been put into trying to find a more precise definition of sustainable development than the one put forward by the Brundtland Commission, but to no avail. Then in these processes, strong disagreements soon crop up and this is the reason why some scholars support the original concept, which has been described as presenting a "constructive ambiguity" [17]. Pearce & Atkinson further argue that definitions of sustainable development are not in themselves very interesting, although there is an interesting debate on how 'development' might be measured in terms other than per capita gross national product (GNP).

We see development in this study as the ever-increasing decreases in the scenario of destitution in a society. It is evidenced by continuing improvements in the welfare and comfort of the human being – the capacity of society to meet the needs and aspirations of its members. Consequently, an important conclusion is that sustainable development is a process, not an end in itself. It also implies that participation and genuine dialogue among stakeholders are key prerequisites for sustainable development [17]. In this study therefore, as in Okeke, Izueke and Nzekwe [15], sustainable development is underscored as human progress, which meets the needs and aspirations of the present generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs [16]. Then how does the brand of urbanization that entail the phenomenon of inverted peasantization relate with sustainable development in our case-study country?

3. THE CURRENT NIGERIAN CONDITION

Nigerian cities are witnessing high rate of environmental deterioration and are rated among urban areas with the lowest livability index in the world. It is estimated that between

20 percent and 30 percent of the urban population enjoy decent urban life in the country [2]. Indeed, according to Daramola & Ibem [2]:

> In the face of increasing urban population in Nigeria, there is inadequate supply of housing and infrastructure, for the teeming population. As a result, the existing infrastructure and housing are overstressed, while unsanitary living conditions, characterized by filthy environment, unclean ambient air, stinky and garbage-filled streets and sub-standard houses, continue to dominate the urban landscape in Nigeria. The concentration of more people in urban areas of the country has brought more pressure on the land space for the production of food, infrastructure, housing and industrialization. This affects the carrying capacity of the environment, as each additional person increases the demand on the infrastructure and natural system, and as a result, creating ecological imbalance, which comes with adverse environmental consequences, such as hazards and disaster. In this circumstance, attempts to address the situation are difficult and capital intensive, because, rapidly growing population does not provide ample room for the introduction of new and innovative approaches to tackling the problems.

Rapid urban growth of Nigerian cities has seriously outstripped the capacity of most cities to provide adequate basic services to their citizens [20]. Hence, after their study of Urban Planning Problems in Nigeria: A Case of Onitsha Metropolis of Anambra State, Izueke and Eme [20] came to the following conclusion:

> In Onitsha Metropolis, the converging forces of urbanization population, technology and environment have come into serious conflict. This situation is a reflection of the poor urban planning efforts in the country . . . very little attention to urban planning has resulted in an outmoded urban structure, providing little satisfaction from the point of view of efficiency or aesthetics. Furthermore, the existing system of local government has failed to provide efficient urban administration. Common services like drainage and refuse disposal have continued to suffer serious neglect, often giving rise to the ugly sight and considerable health and environmental hazards in Onitsha metropolis. Planning for specific projects are not coordinated and integrated to meet the demands of the fast-growing population now and in the future...They fail to indicate land use patterns, population distribution, location of industries, shopping facilities, etc.

Furthermore, interrogating the surrounding issues from the dimension of urban housing shortages, Olotuah & Taiwo [21], assert:

> The rapid rate of urbanization in Nigeria is however not matched by a corresponding development in technological, industrial and economic growth, which is why there is enormous urban housing poverty in the country. The result of this is the rapid deterioration of housing in the urban centres and phenomenal increase in quantitative housing needs arising from shortages in housing units. The rate of expansion of public infrastructure and services is low, compared to the increase in the population of the urban

centres, which results in great strain on the facilities and near collapse in many places. Increase in the quantity of dwelling units too does not match the population explosion resulting in severe overcrowding in the existing units, the growth of squatter settlements in the cities, and the emergence of slums.

Citing Olotuah [22] and FGN [23], Olotuah & Taiwo [21] insist that the housing environments in the urban centres in the country are severely degraded, owing to poor public services and the decay of the building structures themselves. Furthermore, that urban planning has not been properly coordinated in the circumstance, which has given rise to illegal structures sprouting up in the cities. And this has resulted in a situation in which 60% of Nigerians can be said to be houseless persons [21-23].

Babatunde, Adewale & Rachael [4] also found that the most visible and obvious consequence of urbanization in the Nigerian city of Ilorin is rapid deterioration of housing and living condition and high cost of rentage (sic). Furthermore, citing Mabogunje [24], Babatunde, Adewale & Rachael [4] submit:

> In developing countries like Nigeria, urbanization parameters progress at a phenomenal rate without any articulated policy to stem its tide. The dynamics of the scenario in Nigeria is typified by the fact that while less than 15% of the total population lived in cities of 20,000 or more population by 1950, 25 years later - in 1975, this proportion increased to 23.4% and by 2000, the proportion had risen to 43.3%. The prognosis is that by 2015, more than half of the nation's population will live in urban centres. In the strict sense, this will result from the interaction of demographic forces (external and internal) acting on given settlements, in response to the socio-economic, psychological and physical development demands.

4. THE NIGERIAN CONDITION: ADDITIONAL DIMENSION

4. 1. The Incidence of Pauperized Civil Servants and the Dehumanization of Generic Labour

The pauperization of the civil servant in Nigerian and indeed the peazantization of the Nigerian worker are profoundly evident in the phenomenon of perennially unpaid salaries of these workers. Pauperization and inverted peasantization are synonymous notions in this study. Oyedele [25] describes the civil service of any state / the civil servants, in the following terms:

> The civil services of any country stand out as the major machinery of government for the formulation and implementation of public policies. The civil servants play a major role in the performance of these government responsibilities. This is because they constitute the workforce of the civil services at the federal and state levels. The effective management of these servants of the state known as personnel management becomes more important today for sustainable development of the society [25].

Indeed, the formulation and implementation of effective public policies is critical to the engendering of sustainable development. And for the condition of the civil servant in the Nigerian state, Oyedele [25], citing Punch [26], further demonstrates:

> The situation today is that most states in the country have become insolvent to the extent that they cannot pay salaries of their civil servants. Some state governments now owe as much as six months arrears of salaries to their civil servants. This phenomenon had reduced the level of productivity of the civil servants and these had effects on sustainable development in the country. Civil servants in the affected states have now adopted different strategies to survive months of unpaid salaries. Some of these strategies include begging for money, foodstuffs, living on debts, absenteeism from work, among others The National Administrative Council of the Nigeria Labour Congress had on May 19th, 2015, set up a task force to pursue payment of salary arrears owed civil servants by some state governments.

Invariably, peasantized civil servants can neither formulate nor implement sustainable development policies. This is a central thesis in this study. According to Duru [27], most of the Nigerian states or their local governments owed between four to six months salaries of workers, amounting to several billions of Nigeria's Naira. The Benue State government in the country was owing her workers, N12 billion on salary arrears and in Abia State, there were protests and complaints from angry workers, over non-payment of arrears of their salaries [28]. Bassey [29] further highlights that thousands of public service employees in Nigeria, were being owed arrears of salaries and allowances for years. Hence, on the generic condition of labour in Nigeria, Bamidele [30] argues that labour exploitation is pervasive in many organizations in the country. Moreover, it manifests itself in one form or the other, including poor salary and wages, the incidence of salary arrears, casualization of labour and generic dehumanization of work and workers.

4. 2. The Unending Long Queues of Nigerian Citizens Awaiting Discharge of Petroleum Products

It has been posited in indignation, that petrol scarcity is a malady and a serious economic problem in Nigeria. Furthermore, that it has remained an undefeatable macroeconomic monster in the country [31]. According to Timawus [32], across Nigeria, fuel queues are distances long, with motorists hanging out at mega stations throughout the nights. And this is unfortunate, mainly because, Nigeria is a world leading oil producer-nation. Akpan & Nnamseh [31] further contend:

> Perhaps the most complex problem confronting the Nigerian nation is how to make petrol available at all times for local consumption, as practical experience over the years have shown that it has not been easy for Nigeria to find a sustainable solution to frequent and protracted scarcity of petrol in the country. It is important to note that several efforts and permutations have been made and are still being made to address the problem, but the solution is far insight (sic). From the time of military administrations to present democratic dispensation, different strategies such as yearly turn-around maintenance of the refineries and importation of refined petrol to supplement

local production have been adopted without any positive impact. The problem has become a recurrent dilemma in the nation's economy.

Ugwuanyi [33] also remonstrates:

> With over 26,716 filling stations and more than 123 depots spread across the country, and having started crude oil refining since five decades, Nigeria, as Africa's largest oil producer and world's sixth, should have nothing to do with the importation of refined petroleum products and persistent fuel scarcity… As a prominent member of the 13-member, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Nigeria should be a reference point to other oil producers in Africa. But unfortunately, the 'giant of Africa' still battles to meet its internal energy needs. It depends on huge external supply, importing about 75 per cent of its local fuel consumption needs.

The occasioning incident of unending long queues of Nigerian urban dwellers, awaiting the discharge of petroleum products therefore, profoundly adds to the condition of inverted peasantization in the country. As the urban peasants expend some uncountable number of man-hours in search of petrol, the rural dwellers would be busy growing the food, which the urban citizens subsequently come to pay for and evacuate. And who then is dependent on the other for survival? We recall our contextualization of peasantization as having to do with the engendering of a disadvantaged class. It is the underclass (the peasants) of the urban areas that are mainly affected by the unending petroleum products scarcity in the country. In physical and mental trajectories, the fuel scarcity usually immobilizes the city underclass and adds to their condition of inverted peasantization.

4. 3. An Intolerable Level of Unhygienic Urban Environment

Many urban centers in the Nigerian nation are filled with garbage heaps. In contrast, the Nigerian countryside (the previous abode of the peasants) has become sanitarily 'urbanized'. The underclass of the rural setting (the previous peasants), have migrated to the urban setting and worsened the insanitary conundrum in the country. Indeed, the literature on solid waste (mis)management, which typifies the unsanitary condition of Nigerian cities, is tremendous [34-41]. We are further adding by this contribution that the resultant pollution is indicative of inverted peasantization. And in aboriginal configurations, the cities were associated with wholesome and healthy environments and the rural abodes of the erstwhile peasants, were thought to be filled with filth and garbage. Inverted peasantization has however led to changes in these assumptions. Sustainable development is certainly contradicted when the environment is devastated by urban refuse and the attendant pollution.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Urbanization is integrally connected to the three pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social development and environmental protection [3]. In the Nigerian case, urbanization has only become integral to inverted peasantization. Consequently, the Nigerian path of human progress is currently failing to meet the needs and aspirations of the present generation and invariably compromising the ability of future generations to meet their

own needs. Inverted peasantization is enormously suggestive of dismembered relations among the economic, social and environmental tenets of sustainable development. It implies that the neo-Nigerian peasants are currently resident in the urban locations.

Harris [42] agrees with the tripartite distribution of the fundamentals of sustainable development. He further highlights that in the extensive discussion and use of the concept since Brundtland Commission's report in 1987, there has generally been a recognition of three aspects of sustainable development:

Economic: An economically sustainable system must be able to produce goods and services on a continuing basis, to maintain manageable levels of government and external debt, and to avoid extreme sectoral imbalances which damage agricultural or industrial production.

Environmental: An environmentally sustainable system must maintain a stable resource base, avoiding over-exploitation of renewable resource systems or environmental sink functions, and depleting non-renewable resources only to the extent that investment is made in adequate substitutes. This includes maintenance of biodiversity, atmospheric stability, and other ecosystem functions not ordinarily classed as economic resources.

Social: A socially sustainable system must achieve distributional equity, adequate provision of social services, including health and education, gender equity, and political accountability and participation.

The challenge of sustainable development is accordingly, in the decompartmentalization of its economic, social and environmental fundamentals. In other words, the critical question borders on what is to be sustained. Hence, although the debate in sustainable development, regarding what is to be sustained has some merit, arguably, what matters is what has to be done to secure it [18]. Pearce [43] in Pearce & Atkinson [18] consequently opined that the *conditions* for sustainable development are likely to be invariant with the definition since the conditions will be couched in terms of opportunities, capacities and capabilities: i.e. sustainable development becomes an *enabling* concept rather than solely a particular path of change. We consequently conclude that the brand of urbanization that egregiously occasions the incidence of inverted peasantization can never profoundly engender the ideals of sustainable development in any socio-economic or political system. Actually, the phenomenon of peasantry is antithetical to the ideals of sustainable development. Then invariably, its urban-propelled trajectory is abhorrent.

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