



Mult-Dimensional Challenges to Urban Renewal in Kano Walled City, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examines challenges confronting urban renewal in the traditional walled city of Kano. The ancient city of Kano is presently an area posing a serious threat to urban development because the area still retained the morphology of the pre-colonial setting, where buildings are built close to one another and structures are usually separated by narrow winding path. This area is often the most deteriorating part of the city hence, the need for renewal. All efforts of present and past governments did not see the light of the day due to the poor planning of the environment, resistance by residents on the basis of cultural belief and traditional values and economic reasons as majority of the residents are the urban poor. A total of 386 respondents were selected via purposive and systematic sampling techniques. Major findings of the study reveals that the walled city is experiencing myriads of challenges that could be classified as planning challenges socio-cultural and economic challenges and these challenges are key reasons why respondents oppose to urban renewal program within the city. The study concludes by recommending ways to enhance urban renewal in the walled city taking into cognizance the socio-cultural values of the society and the economic situation of the urban poor so as to have a planned and sustainable urban environment.*

Keywords: *Urban Renewal, Challenges, Traditional Walled City, Kano, Nigeria*

I. INTRODUCTION

Urban renewal is a process where an urban neighborhood or area is improved and rehabilitated. The renewal process can include demolishing old or run-down buildings, constructing new, up-to-date housing, or adding in features like a theater or stadium. Urban renewal is usually undergone for the purposes of persuading wealthier individuals to come live in that area. Urban renewal is often part of the gentrification process (Business Dictionary, 2015). The process has also described as a deliberate effort to change the urban environment through planned, large scale adjustment of decayed parts of a city to present and future requirements for urban living and working. It is an exercise, which aims at re-planning and reconstructing dilapidated physical, economic, social, political, cultural and demographic components of an urban environment in order to secure a very high quality urban environment suitable for living, working and playing (Greble, 1965). The purpose of urban renewal according to Olabisi (2013) is to regenerate, make new again, restore, and recover. It focuses on the restoration of vigour, strength and activity within a community and encompasses the dual potential of slum elimination and restoration of physical beauty. The main concern of Urban renewal is the both the physical as well as the human component of the environment and this made Uwadiogwu (2015) to assert that urban renewal has tended to emphasize the two major dimensions of the city, namely, the physical and the human. There is no gainsaying the fact that indicators of city deterioration are physical, social and economic aspects of the bio-physical environment and renewal programmes have tended to address such related problems.

The reasons behind urban renewal are principally, demolishing dilapidated structures, to provide necessary facilities, utilities and infrastructure and to ensure adherence to planning rules and guidelines particularly in relation to properties wrongly placed. The entire process of urban renewal involves demolishing of properties and dislodgement of communities resulting in massive resistance by city dwellers particularly the urban poor. Several factors could be attributed to this resistance which serves as serious challenges to urban renewal projects in most cities in Nigeria particularly in the traditional cities.

It is important to state here that, the nature of built up environment in the walled city of Kano is so complex and unplanned thereby making it extremely difficult for urban renewal process to be conducted smoothly. The present planning problems coupled with numerous cases of dilapidation and collapse of traditional buildings

prevalent in the walled city is posing serious cause for concern for the urban environment. Similarly, due to some cultural and economic reasons residents of the walled city are resisting urban renewal activities in the inner city.

This paper aimed at examining the multi-dimensional challenges to urban renewal in the traditional walled city of Kano, Nigeria. This is in order to identify the nature of the renewal process, unearth the nature of the challenges, as well as attempt to determine the nexus that exist between the challenges identified.

II. MORPHOLOGY OF KANO WALLED CITY

Kano has been a more important commercial and administrative centre than any other Northern Nigerian city in pre-colonial, colonial and independent Nigeria (Urguhart 1977). Kano was founded around Dala Hill in the 9th century A.D., its spatial planning and development started with the building of the first city wall between 1095 and 1134, which started east of the Kurmi market near the Jakara stream. When eventually completed in about 1150, it encompassed such monuments as the Emir's palace, the central mosque, and the Kurmi market, which became the commercial nerve centre of the city. The expansion of the town was largely determined by the city wall, which was the symbol of defence and identity. The wall was extended by successive Kano rulers at various times (See Fig. 2).

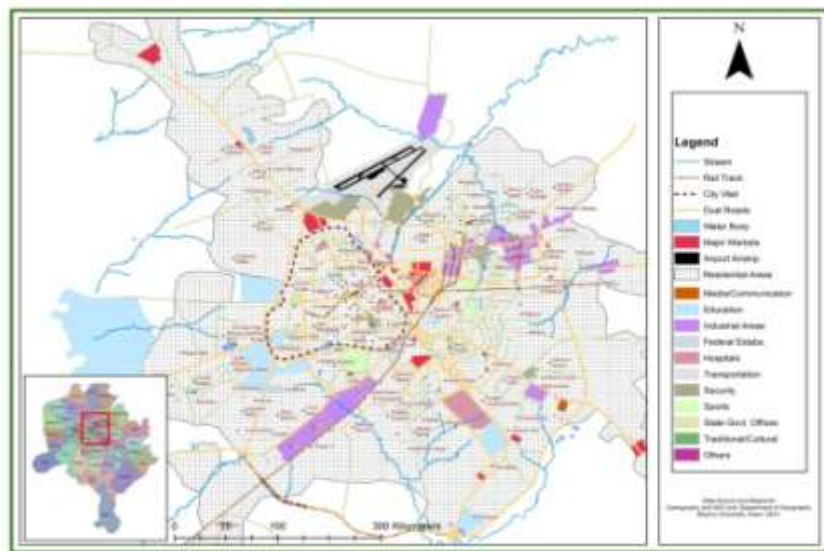


Figure: 1 Map of Kano Metropolis showing the walled city

The city has a clearly identified focal centre, abounding wall and buildings of fairly uniform character occupying most of the land in-between. The city usually has a triple focus, these are the Emir's palace, the main city market (Kurmi market) and the grand mosque, often an imposing building rising high above the general skyline (O'Connor, 1983).

The walled city was not only a centre of population concentration but also of religion, governance, military, industry, and commerce as well as art and architecture. In this respect, the city acted both as;

a fountain head and transmitter of ideas by its ability to radiate influence upon surrounding sea of rurality. Both cultural and technical innovations of diverse origins were synthesized in the city 'Birni' and disseminated for the consumption of the rest of the society" (Sa'ad, 1981), cited in Na'abba 2002: 26.

The city is also divided into wards or quarters and these are further sub-divided into compounds. The houses are mostly made up of mud and narrow winding path (*Lungu*) run between compounds' wall often broken only by a single door way. Minor markets and small mosques are spread through the various wards (*unguwa*) and crafts industries are widely scattered so that for many people, residence and workplace are the same. Thus, it is apparent to find in a typical Hausa-Fulani city or settlement various socio-physical units organised in a sort of hierarchy (Fig. 1). The principle behind the above pattern was the need for community security and privacy. The radial nature of road network is such that;

the major road links the city with other cities, towns or villages via the various gates. The secondary streets provide access to the respective wards (Unguowoi) while individual dwellings are sowed by the narrow blank walled alleys and cul – de – sacs taking up from the secondary streets (Musa, 1979).

The walled city up till today exhibits the morphology described above despite the changes brought about by modernisation and innovation diffusion within the walled city. Township road pattern runs towards the central mosque. This gave the town a general radial growth pattern. Development was organic and streets are narrow and winding conceived to accommodate only pedestrians, horses, donkeys and later, carts. There is homogeneity in the composition of the inhabitants. Many areas remained inaccessible due to the narrow winding paths meant for the pedestrians. Most of the structures in these areas are dilapidated and some are even collapse because of lapse in life span. All these pose a serious threat to urban renewal in the study area (See Plates, 1, 2, 3 and 4).

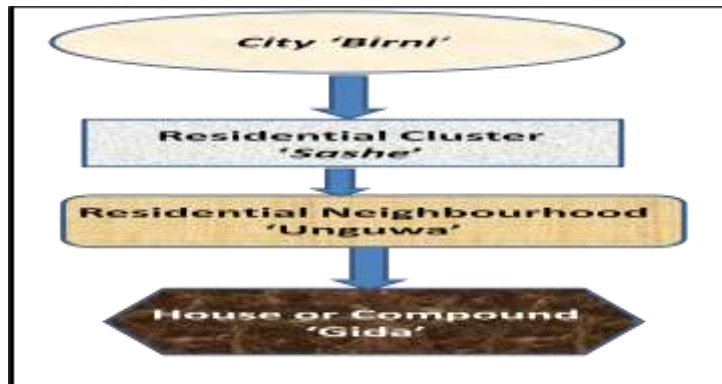


Fig. 2 Hierarchy of Socio-Physical Unit of Hausa (Birni) City
Source: Kaltho, (1982) cited in Kabiru, (1990)



Plate 1: Kano City Wall



Plate 2: Areal View of Kano Walled City



Plate 3: Narrow Winding Path Separating Dwellings



Plate 4: Nature of the Built Environment

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2015

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CYCLES OF DISADVANTAGE AND SPATIAL CONCENTRATION OF THE URBAN POOR

The failure of direct, massive environmental intervention, for example in inner city and peripheral council estates, to resolve basic problems of poverty and social disadvantage gave impetus to a more complex understanding of human, urban problems in terms of recurring cycles of socio-economic disadvantage, into which families were seen as locked. This thesis had its intellectual origins in America in the social area analysis of particularly the Chicago school of sociologists Park and Burgess, extended by the work of Shevky and Bell (1955). The basic premise is that physical, economic and social handicaps reinforce one another to ensure life-cycle and inter-generational multiple deprivation on the part of the urban poor, who are spatially concentrated and can be identified as so. At an extreme interpretation there is an implicit assumption that the origins (or 'culture') of poverty can be found in the inadequacy of individuals and families who live in these deprived environments (Zielenbach and Levin, 2000).

IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the conduct of this study, data was sought through two major sources. Primary data were obtained through the administration of questionnaire to selected residents of the walled city. Secondary data were sourced from published materials, such journals, textbooks, internet and any relevant published materials.

Respondents for this study were selected using a combination of purposive sampling and systematic sampling technique. The adoption of purposive sampling entails direct selection of respondents who resides within the walled city particularly those who owned property within the city. Systematic sampling was adapted to selected household heads from the study area. The operationalization of the systematic sampling involves selecting every 6th household head. Through the two sampling techniques a total of 386 respondents were successfully sampled and administered with questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to acquire and elicit responses on a range of issues such as the nature of the environment, respondents view or conception of urban renewal, examination of cultural factors that made them to oppose urban renewal etc. Data was also sourced from Kano State Urban Planning and Development Authority (KNUPDA) and State Ministry of Land and Survey. The data acquired from these sources provide us with an insight into the planning efforts as well as nature of urban renewal process often undertaken by the government.

Analysis of data was presented in the form of tables showing frequencies and percentages, following each table was the descriptive analysis of our findings. Pie and bar charts were used to depict the flow of phenomenon,

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-Economic Characteristics	Frequency	%
Age		
30-40 Years	84	22
41-50 Years	167	43
Above 50 Years	135	35
Sex		
Male	329	85
Female	57	15
Educational Background		
Islamic	226	59
Primary	81	21
Secondary	58	15
Tertiary	21	05
Main Occupation:		
Business	98	25
Civil Servants	73	19
Trading	187	48
Others (specify)	28	07
Duration of Stay		
Less than `10 years	02	01
11-20 years	29	08
21-30 years	114	29
31-40 years	93	24
41-50 years	86	22
Above 50 years	62	16

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2015

Investigation into the socio-economic characteristics of respondents as depicted in Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents 43% are within the age bracket of 41-50 years while 35% are above 50 years. With respect to sex 85% of the respondents are males and this is not surprising based on the patriarchal nature of the

society where men are providers of almost all the basic needs of the household. Educationally 59% of the respondents have acquired Islamic Education, 15% attended secondary school while 5% attended tertiary education. The dominance of Islamic education is based on the fact that majority of the inhabitant of the walled city are Muslims who are well devoted to the teaching of Islam. Baba (2011) argues that the core north has a predominantly Muslim population and its long history of contact with Islam shaped its socio-economic and political framework long before colonization by the British. Therefore, the introduction of Christianity, western education and colonial state structures by missionaries and colonialists threatened an established social order that derived legitimacy from its linkages with Islam. This resulted in apathy for western education and preference for Islamic which is viewed as supreme. Occupational distribution of the respondents shows that 25% and 48% of the respondents engaged in business and trading respectively while 7% engaged in other forms of occupations such as crafts, tailoring, water vending etc. Kano is re known for its commercial and trading activities since the pre-colonial period hence the Tag ‘Center of Commerce’. Analysis of data with respect to duration of stay of respondents in the walled city indicates that majority of the respondents (29%) have been living in the walled city for a period between 21-30 years, 24% between 31-40 years and only 1% of the respondents claimed to live in the city for less than 10 years. The long duration of stay will go a long way in unearthing the experience as well as the true nature of urban renewal challenges in the walled city from the residents of the city.

Challenges faced by walled City Dwellers:

Residents of Kano walled city are confronted with various forms of challenges to urban renewal that can be categorized as planning, Socio-cultural and Economic in dimension.

Planning Challenges:

One of major challenges facing the traditional walled city of Kano is that of physical planning. The area is characterized by poor planning and culture and traditions play a very prominent role in the development and arrangement of the city. The planning challenges cited by the respondents are; dilapidated buildings 21%, inaccessibility 18%, poor basic infrastructure 16%, waste management 19% and flooding 10% (see Table 1). Looking at this factors or challenges it is obvious that residents of walled city lives in a very poor environmental conditions which only efficient urban renewal exercise can tackled. Traditional walled city is characterized by numerous aged and dilapidated structures some spanning over 50 years and principally made by mud. Most of these structures were devoid of regular maintenance due to the economic status of most respondents. In some cases some respondents are living in partly collapsed houses. A study conducted by Dankani, 2008 and Dankain and Shamaki (2008) indicates that not less than 50 cases of collapse of dilapidated structures were recorded particularly during the rainy season for the past 15 years often accompanied by loss of lives. Furthermore, accessibility is another serious challenge. Interior parts of the city are mostly accessible through narrow winding path often less than 2 meters and some of this narrow winding path can only be accessible by foot, motorcycles or bicycles (Dankani, 2012). In the traditional walled city designated waste disposal points are only found by the sides of the major roads often blocking half of the roads. For the interior parts wastes are disposed indiscriminately on any available open space. In Kano metropolis, like most cities in the developing world, several tones of municipal solid waste is left uncollected on the streets each day, clogging drains, creating breeding ground for vectors and spreading diseases and creating a myriad of related health and infrastructural problems.. The wastes end up finding their ways into the drainage channels thereby causing flooding during the rainy season. Poor land use planning within the walled city makes it difficult for waste collection trucks to reach a lot of areas (Nabegu, 2008). To residents of Jakara, Ayagi and Gyaranya this is a common phenomenon. The walled city being a traditional setting is devoid of basic infrastructure of modern cities. Drainages are narrow and shallow and the area can be described as poor planning wise. Under ideal situation this challenge should have served as impetus for massive renewal activities but inaccessibility is posing a serious problem together with the huge amount of compensation that needs to be paid to property owners in the event of urban renewal activity. Discussion with planners reveals that the Government is quite aware of the enormity of planning challenges within the walled city but this is not something it can do overnight due to massive funds required for acquisition of properties, compensation to property owners and the actual renewal activity involving provision of the much needed infrastructure. They further assert that hundreds of millions of Naira is required to facilitate effective renewal process but the current financial crises confronting most states in Nigeria as a result of decline in Federal monetary allocation to state due to dwindling price of petroleum products is making the government reluctant in engaging in urban renewal activity in the walled city (Rowan, 1981).

Table 1 Planning Challenges:

Planning Challenges	Frequency	%
Dilapidated Building	387	21

Inaccessibility	328	18
Poor Basic Infrastructure	307	16
Poor Physical Planning	285	15
Waste Management	372	19
Flooding	193	10
	1872	

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2015

Socio-Cultural Challenges:

Analysis of data in Table 2 with respect to the main Socio-cultural reasons why respondents resist urban renewal activity in their neighborhood despite the perceived poor environmental quality reveals the following factors as follows; traditional housing settings (20%), setting of the neighborhood 18%, loss of family land 23%, religious and educational reasons (12%) and crime accounts for 2%. At this juncture a brief description of the traditional housing setting will not be out of place. Hausa traditional housing design is associated with courtyard form concepts encircled by numerous rooms that facilitate the expansion to accommodate more inhabitants such as wives and children. Furthermore, the planning concept involves the provision of open air space for injunction. Islamic design principle required seclusion and privacy for women. In this regard, Hausa compounds were divided into two areas namely: the front area or the “Zaure,” which belong to the master of the house and the latter part beyond the “Zaure” provided as women quarters arranged around a courtyard. The entire design is in conformity with the cultural and religious values of the society which encourage the seclusion of women (Purdah) from male dominated areas (Kabiru, 1990, Dankani, 2015, Dankani and Shamaki, 2008, Dimuno and Omotson, 2010).

Osasona, (2007), asserted that “Zaure” happens to be a multi-purpose space that symbolizes social-religious unit within the Hausa building, defining the level of social acceptance. Notwithstanding, only male counterpart that is respected and dignified is allowed to move beyond this zone. The “Zaure” major function as emphasized by Adamu, (2005), includes reception, security, protection, privacy, moral, ethnic ideas, decorations and administration. Moreover, the provision of fairly large spaces at the vicinity of the neighborhood necessitates congregational assembly to celebrate social functions such as a naming ceremony, wedding ceremony, and playground for children and so forth. Because of the settings of the neighborhood which encourages association and bond of relationship, social cohesion and affinity became deeply rooted among the residents of the city. By this assertion of kind of social group emerged of elders meeting at designated point particularly at night. Similarly, the fact that wards and quarters are often inhabited by members of the same family made family bond stronger and hence increase the resistance of city dwellers to any form of urban renewal. Furthermore, because of the affinity people have to their ancestral land, many urban dwellers find it difficult to relocate to new location. This form of resistance is often characterized by violence.

Table 2 Socio- Cultural Challenges:

Socio-Cultural Challenges	Frequency	%
Traditional Housing Setting	313	20
Neighborhood Setting	269	18
Family ties and Social Relation	317	21
Loss of family land	351	23
Religious/ethnic Reasons	184	12
Presence of Family Grave	46	03
Crime	29	02
	1509	

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2015

Economic Challenges:

Investigation into Economic dimension of the challenges of urban renewal in Kano walled cities in Table 3 reveals that majority of the respondents are against urban renewal primarily because they felt the process worsen their poverty situation (35%). 19% and 17% of the respondents dislike urban renewal because it resulted in loss of their means of livelihoods and loss of patronage for their businesses and trading as a result of the renewal process respectively. Financial strain is the reason given by 29% of the respondents.

Incident of poverty is very common among the urban poor in Kano walled city. Majority lives in the city out of necessity and absence of alternative shelter. The houses they lived in are their only means of succor. To an average city dwellers urban renewal is a means of snatching their properties and rendering them homeless thereby further pushing them below the poverty line. The urban poor live with many deprivations. Their daily challenges, according to Baharoglu and Kessides (2004), include limited access to employment opportunities and income, inadequate and insecure housing and services, violent and unhealthy environments, little or no social protection mechanisms and limited access to adequate health and education opportunities.

Urban renewal activities in most cases are accompanied by forceful relocation of those affected by the process. Most of those that relocate often lose their means of livelihood or business because of the distance between their new abode and the old ones and in the event where they decided to continue with their business there, the little income they get will end up being spent on transport cost thereby putting more financial strain on the victims of urban renewal..

Table 3 Economic challenges

Economic Challenges	Frequency	%
Poverty	317	35
Loss of Means of Livelihood	174	19
Loss of Patronage	156	17
Financial Strain	264	29
	911	

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2015

Attempt was made in Table 4 to have an insight into respondent’s perception of Urban renewal exercise. Findings reveals that 59% of the respondents perceived the exercise as bad, 23% as good and 18% claimed to have no idea. One interesting thing about this finding is that among those who perceived it as good majority of them are not so pleased with the way and manner the government go about the process while those who perceived the process as bad cited poor compensation, non involvement in decision as well as increase in poverty and aggravated poor living condition as their reasons.

Table 4 Respondent’s Perception of Urban Renewal :

Planning Challenges	Frequency	%
Good	88	23
Bad	229	59
No Idea	69	18
	386	100

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2015

VI. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper examines the multiple challenges confronting urban renewal in Kano walled city ranging from those challenges that are planning in nature, to those that are more or less socio-cultural and those that are purely economic in nature. Majority of the areas around the walled city are only accessible by foot, bicycles or motorcycles as such the process will result in massive demolition and acquisition of property by the Government thereby gulping much of its budgetary allocation. Culture and cultural practices pose a serious problem to urban renewal in Kano walled city. The paper recognizes the fact that people and culture are two inseparable components as such human cannot be divorced from their cultural norms and beliefs. It is on this premise that this paper argues for the need to incorporate socio-cultural and economic consideration when embarking on urban renewal so as to reduce the level of resistance by the walled city dwellers. Modernity should adapt to co-exist with tradition in this regard. As stated by Agboola and Zango (2014). It will be a great tragedy and a colossal loss if our traditional building styles and construction process disappear from the continent in favour of modern building styles and ways of life.

Similarly, poor compensation given to property owners affected by renewal activity is so meager. It could not afford the property owner to acquire same or another property elsewhere with the little compensation given. Considering the fact that majority of the residents of the walled city are the urban poor, the government needs to come up with better compensation schemes that will entice the urban poor to welcome any form of urban renewal activity.

It is in the light of this that the following recommendations were put forward to enhance proper urban renewal activity in the traditional walled city of Kano:

- i. There is a need for massive awareness and sensitization campaign to enlighten the general public on the importance of urban renewal programs so as to ease their resistance and enhance their cooperation.
- ii. Government should embarks on massive housing provision in order to provide alternative housing for the displace persons taken into cognizance their cultural/traditional values.
- iii. Efforts should be made to involve/engage city dwellers in decision and policy formulation regarding urban renewal. Involvement of the community would go a long way in facilitating amicable resolution of issues regarding their environment.
- iv. There is a need for regular review of urban renewal strategies for each morphological unit of Kano city so as to enhance integration of innovation practice.
- v. Public bodies in charge of urban development should ensure constant measuring of the quality and life span of dwellings and properties as well as projecting and forecasting the housing stock to be required in

the future. This would surely serve as a panacea to the major problems in the walled city by serving as a kind of blue print for the renewal program.

- vi. Government should make compensation attractive to the displaced persons. Such compensation should be enough to provide them with new dwelling so as to minimize the ordeal they may undergo in seeking alternative shelter.

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