

An Account of the High Population in Kano State, Northern Nigeria

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Introduction

Population is one of the four fundamental features of a state, the other three being territory, sovereignty and government. By and large, population is an important factor in the global as well as local politics, economy and ecology. Indeed, population related issues are nowadays in the forefront of development activities/issues.

The principal objectives of this paper is to reveal the following:

- The nature and origin of population development in Kano State
- The socio- cultural impulses for the maintained high population concentration in Kano State
- The prospects for the sustained population growth in Kano state and
- To objectively inform compatriots, expatriates and professionals about the peculiar nature of the population of Kano state.
- To highlight some of the ecological risks associated with the population pressure stress in the state

To achieve these objectives, relevant literature were reviewed and some observations and surveys were made in an attempt to drive home some facts and figures on the character and trends of the population of Kano state.

Population Development Theories

Myriad demographic theories were developed overtime and over places to explain the arguments for or against population expansion. Prominent amongst such include those theories of Adam Smith who was vehemently optimistic of the need for population growth to sustain the emerging industrial muscle of Europe in the 19th century. Thomas Robert Malthus (in the 19th century too) was pessimistic of exploding population when the commensurate food supply was not in sight. Marxist-Lenists on the other hand argue that resources are not always scarce, but the problem lies more with how they are distributed in the society. Neo-Malthusians emerge since the 1960s to reinstate the fears for population growth especially as it relates to depletion of environmental resources. Demographic Transition theorists believe that countries all over the world will follow trends of the advanced countries. In other words, the Third World countries will ultimately attain demographic stability. Cornucopians or optimists just like Adam Smith are of the opinion that resources in the world are just too numerous for the global population and so there is no fear whatsoever for increase in population. For details see *Population Studies for Nigeria* by Umoh (2001). Arguments on why human numbers on the earth should be given unrestricted proliferation or ought to be checked against explosion are employed continuously in many circles of opinions. However, the recent increasing economic prosperity being registered in China, India and Brazil are good examples of the prospects of highly populated areas where (and if) there is effective management of human and natural resources. On the other hand, the much dependency on migrants labour in the oil rich mid-east countries illustrates best example of difficulties of under population.

Population Census and Politics in Nigeria

In an ethnically diverse and multi religious society like Nigeria, the politics of population numbers is crucial and occasionally heightened to the level of brewing and breeding tension on the political landscape. Such problems manifest glaringly during or around periods of general elections or population census as well as in the politics of revenue generation and resource allocation amongst the various states of the federation. By and large, population head-count in the history of modern Nigeria is said to be of staggering records. According to Idris (2006), the first known census was held at Lagos in 1866 and since that series of head count ensued at the

various regions in 1911, 1921 and 1931. It was only in 1952-53 that the first nationwide head count was conducted in Nigeria. The next round of census came up in 1963 with its attending political ambiguities, next was the discarded 1973. Nigerians expected one in 1983 but could only have it in 1991. Interestingly, the 1991 national population census had fewer troubles as compared with its predecessors. The ten year interval was equally missed by 2001 and only the year 2006 brought next round of headcount to our door steps.

As pointed earlier, the politics of demographic strength has raised dust in the precarious Nigerian politics. For instance, Ukpabi (1995) reveals that the 1963 census controversy is believed to be one of the forces that galvanised Nigeria's tense crises period of the late 60s through early 70s. Some Nigerians especially those of southern extraction agitate for the use of principle of derivation in national wealth sharing in lieu of principle of population. Oftenly, our compatriots cast doubt on any election victory perceived to be fuelled by the ballot-power of the North. An example of such stance is revealed by Adewale Ademoyoga in his *Why We Struck – The Story of First Nigerian Coup* (1981), where he claimed that the 1961 census was ground to test the sincerity of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) led government. He concluded that the NPC manipulated the census figures in order to lubricate the smooth victory of the northern Nigeria in the parliamentary elections. The 1973 national population census was heavily criticised among others by the sleepless Lagos-Ibadan press axis. Employing flames-stoking editorials, they mounted so much pressure on the 200 days old General Murtala military regime (1975-1976) to the extent that it had to discard the 1973 census result. However, to their dismay, that government adopted the 1963 census which was in favour of the Northern numerical supremacy. The examples of the said editorials include those of *Daily Times* (June 8, 1974); *Daily Sketch* (May 19, 1974); *Nigerian Herald* (April 19, 1974) and *Nigerian Chronicle* (May 20, 1974). But just like Mainasara (1982) posited in his *The Five Majors -Why They Struck*, the only correct census is one that would give the South more people than the North. Apart from those who commit their arguments into writing, it is common phenomenon in personal discussions with some compatriots to argue bitterly, though with amorphous substance that the population power enjoyed by Kano is fictitious because of the belief they have wrongly established. What will such fellow citizens say if there were no creation of additional states in 1991? The result will definitely show that Kano is ahead of Lagos State by some three million Nigerians!

Believably, any body doubting or ignoring the demographic strength of northern Nigeria is categorically questioning the high concentration of people in Kano State which always takes the lead in the north, if not the whole country. It could be said that while some of the doubting Thomases are subjective, others could be ranked as semi objective. In the case of the former, they are the people who merely reject the towering numbers of people of Kano state out of sheer sentiment. In the case of former, they are people who believe that they are knowledgeably questioning the veracity of Kano state's population. Some of them are experts who observe with rather curious and scientific eyes using some concepts or models to query the high population of Kano state. I will imagine that, such people may say after crisscrossing the length and breadth of Kano, 'we were in Kano state, the demographic giant of the north...even the city, is not as big as Ibadan let alone Lagos... yes, Kano city is enormously filled with people. But apart from the city of Kano no any other town is as big as Ogbomosho, Ile-Ife. Ilesha or Sagamu. So the net population of Kano is suspicious and by implication all other places in the north.' Other design their doubts based on the traffic flow, number of students in schools etc just like the Lagos state government did to challenge the results of the 2006 national census that shows Kano as the most populous state in Nigeria.

Kano seems to be a centre of attraction of such critics because of its highest number of local government areas (LGAs) in the country and people as well. Such critics allege that more LGAs in Kano is borne out of nepotism nursed and nurtured into polity by northern politicians and military in particular. (Such view was expressed by former Special Assistant to President Obasanjo on Public Affairs, Femi Fani Kayode's interview with NTA network on Tuesday, February 28, 2006). Kayode said that Kano and Jigawa states have more legislators in the House of Representatives than the entire South Eastern States? Is that flame stoking on the Nigerian population politics?

Against this background, this write-up intends to look at the basis for the age-long sustained growth of population in Kano state. Kano, being a galaxy of diverse human race is tied by strings of polycultures, sundry economic and historical activities. To say that Kano is a great centre of human population between the Niger and Nile deltas is not a hypothesis but an axiom. Kano has many environmental, cultural, historical and economic

peculiarities and priorities that help to shape and sustain its unique demographic arrangements overtime.

Some Flash Points on Kano's Pre-eminence

Kano is uniquely the most known natural state in Nigeria and indeed in many parts of the world. Speaking in the context of Nigeria, most of states and cities could not match Kano's pre-eminence in the national and global arena. Some compatriots do out of statism or regionalism compare and Kano with such places like Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna, Abuja or even Sokoto. All such places developed via huge inducements of certain political occurrences in the historical strata of Nigeria.

In the case of Lagos, the ex-capital city of Nigeria, it received immense boost from the colonial and post colonial governments and trans-national corporations. In fact, it only appeared on the horizon as a result of colonialism. This means, by implication that every part of its making is rather quite inorganic. Thus, southern coastline towns like Calabar, Port Harcourt and others could equally have been as big as Lagos if they were given the chance to be the nation's capital city. Lagos does not differ much from them in its environmental make up. Kaduna is also a creation of the colonialists, and being the administrative seat of the defunct regional government of northern Nigeria, it received a lot of developmental incentives and inducements that it could only acquire via that exalted and enviable position. Zungeru in Niger State remains a small town, had it retained its earlier position as the pioneer capital of northern Nigeria, it would have been very big by now. Abuja with its shooting star speed of expansion is what it is today simply because of the 1976 General Murtala administration's decision to shift the nations capital city from Lagos on the basis of crowdedness and security reasons. Sokoto being the seat of the West African Sokoto caliphate had only risen during the 19th century above Kano's township population. But, with the dawn of British colonialism in 1803, it was plunged to the back of the queue.

On the other hand, Kano provides a surprising example of a state that is dynamic and naturally sustainable. It has never been a national or regional capital but the dynamism and determination of its people and environment makes it a place that is more than a city-state. Many intellectual giants have seen it with a disinterested view. In effect, it is world writ large. Below are

some of their panegyric remarks on Kano's people, places and activities from couple of centuries ago through the new age.

British explorers namely Hugh Clapperton and Henry Barth visited Kano in the early 19th century. Barth and Clapperton had also visited most of the towns in the forest, savannah and desert regions of Africa. Lord Lugard, the pioneer Governor-General of Nigeria worked for the British colonial office in India, Pakistan, Hong Kong and British East Africa. There are also words of Lt.Col. A.F. Mockler-Ferryman who assessed Kano for the British colonial office in 1902. Doubtlessly, all the four officers mentioned had travelled widely. Based on their wealth of travel experiences, below are some of their words of impression about the people and contents of Kano.

Hugh Clapperton calls it:

‘The great emporium of kingdom of Hausa’

[On Kano’s market] ‘Well supplied with every necessary luxury in request among people ... there is no market in Africa so well regulated’

Henry Barth’s remarks on Kano:

‘The central point of commerce ... a great storehouse of information...a place like Kano... will at some future become important even for the commercial world of Europe... one of the most fertile spots on the earth able to produce not only the supply of corn necessary for its population but can also export... we must presume that Kano is one of the happiest countries in the world.. it was the most animated picture of the little world itself, so different in external form from all that is seen in the European town, yet so similar in its internal principles’

For Nigeria’s First Governor-General, Lord Lugard Kano is seen thus:

‘Commercial emporium of the western Sudan’

[On the Kano city wall] ‘I have never seen, nor even imagined, anything like it in Africa.’

[On the Emir’s palace] ‘a no mean citadel’

For these and more remarks on Kano please see Bello-Kano (2003).

The above remarks perhaps said little about the pre-eminence of Kano. The only state in Nigeria that received highest number of visits by international political, economic and religious leaders after the federal capitals (Lagos and later Abuja) which by design are the expected points of stay of the visiting foreign heads of states and governments. In fact, leaders from the Islamic world, the erstwhile Eastern bloc and western bloc have all personally chosen to visit Kano. Such leaders include Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth (II) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland who is also the head of state of countries like Canada, Australia, New Zealand and head of the Commonwealth as well; President Jimmy Carter of the United States, President Jamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Muamamar Ghaddafi of Libya, President B.J Habibi of Indonesia, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom, Mrs Albright, the former US secretary of state, presidents of the world bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) among others. Her majesty, Queen Elizabeth II came to Kano in 1956, while the most significant visit to Nigeria before that of the queen is that of Prince of Wales in 1925 when **all** the emirs and chiefs in northern Nigeria assembled in Kano to welcome the British heir-apparent that Kano hosted. In 2006 prince of Charles also visited Kano.

Kano is the first place in Africa where the (British Caledonian) now British Airways and the royal Dutch Airlines (KLM) made their first flights. Is Kano the heart of globalisation for Africa?

Peoples of Kano - Settlement and Population Composition Up to the 21st Century

Before one suggests the composition of the people of Kano, it will be more appropriate to point out the temporal and spatial patterns of the evolution of settlements that radiate into and from the Dala hill in the ancient city of Kano which is the outstanding nucleus of the city. There has been a long lasting organic relationship between the city of Kano, and almost all the regions in the present political and social cohesion known as Kano state (with its 44 local government areas). Kano emirate also includes few local government areas that had been in the Kano emirate for centuries but were only excised through the creation of Jigawa State in the year 1991.

It is a common historical expression in various historical texts that Kano became a 'state' i.e. political entity in 999 AD. This however does not mean that people started inhabiting the area around that time. In effect, Olofin

(1987) reveals that a thermoluminescent dating of some man-made relics conducted at United Kingdom for Bayero University's History Department suggests that man was actively engaged in iron smelting culture in Kano at about 320 - 380 AD. So conclusively people must have been there for more than one thousand years to develop such skills of iron smelting. The historical facts of how Kano originate are quite abundant.

It is necessary to query the impression held by some authorities in history of Kano who refer to Kano in some of their works as a city state. An example is that of Adamu (1999): *Confluences and Influences in the Emergence of Kano as a City-State*. Kano could have started as a city state that enclosed the twin hills of Dala and Goron Dutse; but it soon grew above that as it covered and engulfed all the areas of its current land area plus some sections of the present day Jigawa state. A city-state is a country that is made up of one city. Example of that includes the ancient Greek city states of Athens and Sparta as well as the modern Vatican City, Kuwait and Singapore among others. Kano which is and was part of Kano emirate was at one point in time an independent kingdom. This again justifies the argument of Kano not being a city state.

Development of Human Settlement in Kano

Development or evolution of human settlement in Kano is said to criss-cross centuries. By and large, the settlements evolved simultaneously across the length and breadth of the present Kano state. It all started as isolated groups of hunters and gatherers on and around few hills - Dala, Goron Dutse, Magwan, Bompai and Panisau all in the present day Kano metropolitan. Apart from these hills, Last (1979) identifies others which include Lambu settlement complex and Fangwai - Santalo complex which lie within what Mortimore (1972) calls *Kano Close-Settled Zone* which covers an area of over 30 miles (50 kilometres) radius of Kano city which is a high density area.

Liman and Adamu (2003) reveal that Kano survived to answer the name of city only in the 11th and 12th century and that was during the reign of Sarki Jusa when the first phase of the city wall construction project was finished. By then, Kano had become a city where immigrants move into and consequently the need for security had increased rapidly. The authors also quote Lord Lugard where he remarks that by the time that he took over the

administration of northern Nigeria he estimated forty walled towns within the *30 miles* radius of Kano city and a total of *170 walled towns* in the whole province. In short, this means that as at the early days of colonial rule, the number of towns in Kano was quite bold and impressive. This also justifies the saying that Kano is not a city-state but a nation-state where rural and urban dwellers live a symbiotic relationship for a very long period of time.

Dan Asabe (2004) pinpoints that by 19th century; the emirs of Kano had established a number of farm houses or slave estates in many parts of the emirate both near and far away from the city. Such include Yokanna, Gasgainu, Sawaina, Wasai, Gogel, Yalwan Danziyal, Dorayi, Nassarawa, Gandun Albasa and Gurjiya among others. The said farm houses and slave estates could equally be counted down as part of the long standing rural and semi urban settlements in Kano. Similarly, the author adds that to attain maximum security some *ribaats* (frontier military towns) were formed in many parts of the emirate while others were strengthened. The newer ones include Gwarzo in the west, Babura in the north-west, Dambatta in the north and Gwaram in the south-east. The older frontier towns include Karaye in the west and Rano in the south. All these are now flourishing towns in Kano with exception of Babura and Gwaram which are now in Jigawa state. Yet another proof of the long standing history of settlements in Kano is outlined by Ado-Kurawa (1989). The author has successfully sketched out major the campaign grounds used by the Fulani jihadists of the 18th century in Kano. The Fulani clans of Yolawa, Sullubawa, Danejawa, Dambazawa and Mobibawa along with some Hausas launched their campaigns from sixteen towns located to the west of Kano (including its border with Zazzau kingdom). Similarly, organised resistance was also launched from some eleven towns located at the centre, south and east of Kano by other Fulani clans namely Jobawa, Gyanawa and Yaligawa. The author also maintained that the second Fulani Emir of Kano, Mallam Ibrahim Dabo's jihad campaigns had even spread to as far as Riruwai some 200 kilometres away from Kano.

As far as Kano State is concerned, these settlements have remained and in fact more towns have developed as a result of myriad political and economic reasons e.g. agricultural programmes and projects, roads, resettlements, administrative purposes and others. The phenomenon of ghost towns in Kano is rarely known. This author only knows of Old Falgore town which was abandoned for the interest of establishing a game reserve and that town has been replaced by New Falgore town. Of course, some towns have been

excised to Jigawa state but fortunately only the thinly settled areas were carved out.

Population Composition in Kano: Pre-colonial to Postcolonial Periods

This rubric considers the number, density as well as the ethnic composition of the peoples of Kano from its beginning through the modern times. Many historical texts observe that some hunters from Gaya itself an older town, its people namely Abagayawa were the first migrants to settle in the present day Kano. Nonetheless, it could be concluded that the demographic advancement registered by Kano which was occasioned by its good and fertile landscape as well as accessibility and hospitality of its people helped to induce its increased anthropogenic heterogenisation.

Bello-Kano (2003) though focused his searchlight on the literary illustrations on accounts given by three outstanding agents of colonialism namely Clapperton, Barth and Lord Lugard. Their journals indicate a lot about the demographic numbers of Kano which appeared for them to be awesome and opium that intoxicated them as their panegyric and mesmerising remarks on Kano indicate. Clapperton came to Kano as an explorer cum spy in the 1820s and estimated the population of Kano to be between 30,000 - 40,000. Barth on the other hand came to Kano in March 1851 estimated the population of Kano city to be 60, 000 half of which he believed were slaves. As at that time, the area of the walled city of Kano was roughly 5,400 acres out of which, only about 2000 acres were actually inhabited. The ponds and open spaces indicate the eco-friendliness of the city then. However, Barth was of the opinion that the aggregate population of the Kano province by that period stood at *half a million*. Thus, this is yet another ground to support my earlier argument that Kano was not a city-state. In the case of Lord Lugard, the evidence of Kano's demographic might is indicated in his military mobilisation to conquer Kano city and its towns in 1903. By that time Lugard mobilised one thousand foot soldiers, fifty European commanders, plenty long range guns and four maxim guns. All these could be sufficient to destroy any big city in the world even today.

As far back as that time Barth was convinced of Kano's cosmopolitan nature. He saw many people of various ethnic groups conducting their business under free and fair atmosphere. the tribes he recognised include the Nupes, Cyprians, Arabs, Mandigos (Wangara of Mali) among others. The toponomy

(name of places) of many areas in Kano also support the argument that Kano is ethnically cosmopolitan. Dan Asabe (2004) lists some of the wards that bear name of some tribes. they include Zangon Barebari for (Kanuri merchants and scholars); Tudun Nupawa for Nupe; Ayagi for Yorubas; Madabo for Wangarawas of Mali; Kul-Kul, Koki and Kan Tudun Madabo for the people of Katsina; Agadasawa for the people Agades; Daurawa for people of Daura, Soron Dinki for Fulani migrants; and Dandalin Turawa for the people of Arab lineage. All these wards have been in existence since before 19th century. If the above wards are located within the heart of the ancient city of Kano, it is good to add that that the diverse demographic composition of Kano spread to beyond the city. Dan Asabe also relates that many areas outside the city are equally diverse in their ethnic composition. For instance, Agalawa, Torankawa, Kambarin Bare Bare have settled in villages around Kura, Bunkure, Bebeji, Kumurya, Kunya, Bichi Garko, Utai, Sumaila, Madobi, Lambu, Gora, Zabainawa, Bichi and others. At this point, it is pertinent to add that the robust groundnut business during the colonial period had attracted many Arabs - Syrians, Lebanese and Yemenis to Kano's myriad villages and many of them till date have mingled and integrated well with the natives.

It has to be made clear at this point that most of the tribes mentioned have become fully integrated with the domineering Hausa/Fulani population and as such have lost most of their outstanding heritage paraphernalia. And this has always been the case with similar circumstances around the world as an anthropologist would confirm.

The above point, however, should not make us blindfolded. Kano's cosmopolitan nature has rather increased remarkably sequel to economic and political windows of opportunity increasingly coming to its way. Kano has acquired its cosmopolitan or globalised demographic setting since the days of the famous trans-Saharan trade which brought together people from North Africa, sub-Saharan countries and Europe. Surprisingly, as the compass of trade shifts to the Atlantic at the wake of colonial rule many of Kano's sister towns decline in importance and some have decayed forever. On the other hand, for Kano, colonialism is yet another fattening ground as it grows both in importance and vigour in that sort of globalisational process. Since that time, the ethnic composition of Kano has only increased. Some of the nationalities and ethnic groups in Kano excluding the dominant Hausa and Fulani include the following: Kanuris, Yorubas (all dialects), Arabs (Lebanese, Egyptians, Saudis, Lebanese, Yemenis, and Syrians), Chinese,

Malays, Indonesians, Nupes, Djerma, Touregs, Shuwa Arabs, Ebiras, Igalas, Tivs, Jukuns, Angas, Katafs, Igbos, Edos, Itsekiris, Gwaris, Ghanaians, Senegalese, Europeans, Americans including African Americans. In a nutshell, the list is difficult to exhaust. In effect, it is easier to sort out who is not around than who is around the city of Kano. A number of reasons ranging from public service, humanitarian, economic and diplomatic activities are seen as responsible for this enormous ethnic rainbow that Kano is identified with.

Environmental Determinants of High Population Growth in Kano

The primary needs of humankind include air, food, water, shelter and clothes. All these living essential are derived directly from the environmental resources. By implication, it can be said that environment determines and informs where and how humans should subsist. By and large, availability of water, nature of the vegetation, type of the landscape and soils in addition to climate dictate the pattern and distribution of population over any given place on the earth. We will look at Kano's enviable population concentration in relation to these ecological essentials.

Landscape

Kano State is underlain by two major geological formations, the basement complex which covers the largest proportion of the state and the (sandy) Chad formation which covers relatively small areas specifically towards extreme northern part of the state (e.g. Dambatta, Makoda) i.e. its northern border with Jigawa State. The basement complex is composed of older granitic rocks of pre-Cambrian origin. At the extreme southern tip of the state lies a younger granitic rock of Jurassic period. Riruwai and its surroundings are examples of such area. The geologic process of pediplanation has made it possible for the older granites to give way for flat terrain or simply plain-lands in this area, while the pockets of hills that we see all around Kano are merely residual beacons of that natural washing. A dry land plain like that of Kano offers a good opportunity for human settlement, agriculture, grazing and accessibility and mobility of people and materials. In other words, the landscape of this area is suited to accommodate more humans as compared with that of rocky, marshy, sandy or thickly vegetated areas.

Soils

The soils in Kano cover all the three major soil categories - zonal, intra-zonal and azonal. Zonal type of soils cover the largest part of the state they are mainly ferruginous type of soil which have high content of iron. While the intra zonal type are mainly the hydromorphic soils popularly known as *fadamaland* which is wet and fertile area due to its location in the river basin. The azonal soils on the other hand, are of little quantity and quality as far as agricultural production is concerned. They are immature soils found on the slopes or in the river beds. Both zonal and intra-zonal soils develop on wind blown materials. Research has proved that the soils in Kano are very fertile because of the good management strategies of the users as well as harmattan dust which drop some minerals that fertilise the soils again. Kano is no doubt an example of one of the locations on the earth where the population density is high yet in spite of the enormous pressure exerted on the soils, land-fallowing is not practiced because of the marvellous land management practises which help soils to be ever productive and protected. The fertile soils in Kano ensure the food security (with exception of the famine periods of the pre-colonial era). The soil fertility makes it possible for mass production of various food items in the state now and in the past.

Drainage and Hydrology

Water is necessity for all forms of human settlements. Speaking about its availability on the surface and sub-surface in many areas of Kano is also important aspect of population carrying capacity of the land. Two major rivers drain wonderfully over Kano's terrain. River Kano emanates from the southern Kano highlands which is also referred to as the foot slope of the Jos plateau. It flows up to central Kano where it makes a confluence at Tamburawa with River Challawa which emerges from the western Kano. Apart from these there are numerous streams that criss cross the length and breadth of Kano. One interesting aspect of the hydrology of Kano is that its ground water is not deep, in fact many areas both in the city and rural areas could fetch water from local wells at an arm length depending on seasonality and underground pressure. The two major rivers mentioned above are perennial most of the streams are seasonal. The seasonality of rivers and streams in Kano is purportedly caused by dams' impoundments. Presently, Kano State has the largest concentration of dams in Nigeria and two of its

dams Tiga and Challawa are part of the biggest dams in Africa. Both were created by Kano State government in the 1970s.

Vegetation

Naturally, areas with thick and luxuriant vegetation growth and those with little or no vegetation growth correspond with areas that bank little or infinitesimal population concentrations. Kano state in the main, has three types of vegetation. From the extreme south is the first type which is northern guinea savannah well known for its rich biodiversity and luxuriant growth of taller trees. Away from Doguwa which some 200 kilometres from Kano ancient city up to few kilometres north of the city of Kano lies the second type of vegetation called Sudan savannah. It has a sparse distribution of trees and much grasses and shrubs. The strip of belt of Sahelian vegetation forms the third and it is found in the extreme northern Kano. What all this indicates is that all parts of Kano state are arable and could sustainably hold humans and livestock. Humans have boldly interfered with natural vegetation design of Kano, but it is interesting to add that it is one of Kano's peculiarities that its farmers keep an ecologically interesting farming system which involves keeping economic trees on farmlands called farmed parkland. For a long-since, this type of customised vegetation has helped to further embrace chances for expanded growth of food production in Kano. The land in Kano can sustain almost all categories of plants ranging from trees, cereals, tubers, vegetables and variety of tropical leafy foods.

Climate

Kano has a marked dry and wet season with average wet season of about six rainy months. The temperature both on diurnal and annual ranges are not prohibitively high to threaten human, plant and animal life. The annual temperature is slightly above 30 degrees centigrade. However, it is to be noted that climate has a rather striking impact on the demographic arrangement of Kano in the past and through current times. In particular, the movement of people between urban and rural centres is governed by seasonality. People move to urban centres in enmasse during the dry season for menial jobs and other activities in Kano. Such people move back to rural areas for cultivation. This is how the climate impacts on the population redistribution in Kano of the past and present.

To draw curtain on the section of the environmental determinants of the population, it should be noted that whereas some parts of Nigeria face some critical ecological crises like the climate induced disturbing sea level rise like in Lagos and Niger delta or the obvious desertification in some extreme northern states like Sokoto and Yobe. Kano, while has its own peculiar ecological threats, it is not however at the centre of storm. To know more about environmental set up of Kano please refer to Olofin (1987).

Cultural Determinants of High Population in Kano

Culture is the embodiment of traditions, beliefs, customs and values of people. Culture on its part plays a significant role in promoting the chances of population growth in many parts of the world through influences on marriages and procreation rates as a whole. For instance, in western countries and areas that cue their footsteps the culture of raising many children is seen as odd and improper. While Christianity or more precisely the many modern churches are against polygamy and also close chances of remarriage of any of the widowed spouse. Westernised minds have always thought of marriage at maximum age when for many ladies menopause is around the corner and for men they think of marriage at forties. On the basis of culture as it affects population growth in Kano we are to look at it from two prisms: Islam and Hausa Fulani traditions.

More than 95% of the people of Kano are Muslims, and as such Islam influences personal and community affairs and decisions in Kano. Islamic faith conditionally permits Muslims to practice polygamy with a benchmark limit of four wives. Polygamy is a common phenomenon in Kano as such one can observe that averagely such families have higher chances of raising more number of children. Kano is one area where one finds occasions of adding more wives as constantly on the increase. One can observe that this is very common even amongst the well learned public servants, academics and the intelligentsia. The fact that Islam permits remarriage after divorce or at death of a spouse also helps population to grow higher.

On the front of Hausa/Fulani society it is relevant to state that their culture abhors celibacy from angles of both men and women. Consequently, one observes how rural dwellers in particular marry their issues at tender age. Muslim community on the other hand, abhor any extra marital or premarital birth or affair. Thus, even in the city many ladies and gents got married at

dawn of maturity and continue fishing for their education up to university level within the confines of marital boundaries (Werthmann, 2005).

Another good aspect of promoting marriage is exhibited by a standing tradition in Kano and that is through the famous *Tashe* play/festival organised by the Kano palace titled player called *Nalako*. The play is performed during the *Ramadan* (Muslim fasting) period; the play starts in a procession round the city which focuses attention on *Gwauro* (unmarried male). The philosophy of the play is to induce and encourage intending grooms to speed up efforts of retirement from bachelorship.

Political Determinants of High Population in Kano (pre-colonial and colonial eras)

So far we have seen the role played by the physical environment and culture in influencing the flourishing and proliferation of population in Kano. In this section, we will look through historical prisms to find out some of the happenings that favoured population to soar in Kano. The political impacts are no doubt quite significant demographically. The implications of some political actions include in particular the stability brought by the Sokoto caliphate and later colonialism.

Suleiman (2004) disclose that the collapse of the Songhai empire between 17th and 18th century gave Kano a chance to be a more consolidated and diverse state as more immigrants and merchants of Fulani and Arab stock moved into Kano as emerging economic power in the Sudan i.e. the sub-Saharan Africa.

Security is one of the vital pillars of any state, although Kano was quite resilient to many wars that were order of the day, it remained like the proverbial cat with nine lives by surviving the attacks. The attacks on Kano territory by Katsina, Damagaran, Kwararafa, Ningi and others were quite obvious. However, the Sokoto caliphate formed as a result of Dan Fodio Islamic reforms of 1804 in Hausaland gave Kano a maximum security to flourish exponentially. Dan Asabe (2004) posits that since the Sokoto caliphate was a confederation to which Kano *is* or *was* a great member Kano; it became possible for Kano to be shielded from impending attacks from the enemies of the caliphate. Consequently, Kazaure, Daura and Katsina shielded it from Zinder and Maradi, while Hadejia, Katagum,

Gumel, Misau and Jamaare shielded it from north east against Borno empire. Zaria provided Kano with security from the west. From the south it was Bauchi that protected Kano. In fact, it is available in the oral tradition that Borno had attempted attacking Kano in 19th century but the Elkanemis met their waterloo at Bauchi.

Colonialism has in a way accorded Kano a priority that it deserve and command largely due to its demographic strength which has political and economic implications. Saeed (2003) state that at the beginning, colonialists made Kano a mega province under which were subjected Katsina, Katagum, Kazaure, Daura, Gumel, Hadejia, Misau, Jama'are, Dambam and other cities and towns. The centre-periphery relations between Kano and those emirates must have in one way or the other consolidated and strengthened movements between Kano and such places.

Another outstanding political pointer to the high population concentration in Kano is given by Saeed (2003) and Adamu (1999) to be the colonial reorganisation of the administration of the districts. All districts heads were forced to stay and administer their fiefs directly. Hitherto, they stayed in the city and had only their proxies (*jakadu*) there. Consequent to that, *Jumla* (group of villages) and *gundumomi* (hamlets) were also created to facilitate tax collection. As a result of this development, by 1917 Kano had twenty district heads, three hundred and ninety five town and village heads who appropriate enormous and increasing tax for the colonial government. The amount of the tax collected from Kano emirate convinced the colonialists that Kano province (inclusive of all the other emirates) had population close to two million.

Economic Determinants of High Population in Kano

Economy has always played a crucial role in determining the level of population concentration over any given space. Economy has to do with the availability of the natural and human resources, organisation and production which lead to convergence and divergence of people from various locations. In this section, we will look at how Kano fared in the pre-colonial (Trans Saharan trade and sub-Saharan trade routes) and trans-Atlantic trade as well as in the age of globalisation. By and large, right from 18th century Kano has achieved the status of the places that have the optimum population. The population density has been high, jobs were quite available to the extent that

slaves were badly needed and the standard of living was quite appreciable as compared with neighbouring areas.

From the observations of such British explorers like Barth and Clapperton it is conceivable that by the 19th century Kano had become an international market and industrial base whose tentacles spread to all directions. Shea (2003) opines that the regionalisation of the industrial specialisation suggested by the Caliph Muhammad Bello of the Sokoto caliphate had given Kano a chance to be an overwhelming industrial centre that was patronised from all directions. Then, Kano was famous for its textile products, cereals, slaves, hides and skins and others. Adamu (1999) suggests that the cottage industries whose products were exported were not confined to Kano city as there were dye pits and tanneries in such rural places like Kura, Bunkure and Rano. Perhaps that informs the famous epithet of Barth who called Kano ‘a great emporium of the Hausa kingdom’.

Accessibility is yet another premier force that makes Kano economically a centrifugal and centripetal state or kingdom. People from all directions are attracted by the huge market (consumers) and the high production which is informed by the high number of peasants who were engaged in one form of production or the other. Jimada (2004) reveals that by fifteenth century a complex network of trade had developed between Kano located in the savannah and other towns in the Sahara, Middle Niger and the west African forest belt. One of the routes linked Kano with Zinder (in Niger republic), Zaria, Kontagora, Raba, Mokwa, Oyo, Ile, Bussa and Gonja (Ashanti) in Ghana).

Kano was rivalled directly by Katsina in the control of the Trans Saharan trade, while Sokoto was a political *god-father* to Kano exercising and exerting influences some time such interventions were tough. However, by the colonial overtake of the caliphate all such interventions came to virtual standstill. Colonialism has even brought to an end most of the security risks around. The sudden collapse of the Trans Saharan trade due to the British, French, Italian and German colonisation caused serious decline of Sokoto, Katsina, Yerwa, Oyo and many others (Mabogunje 1960). On the contrary, Kano became simply integrated into the Trans Atlantic trade. The railway which came to Kano in 1911 linked it with virtually all parts of Nigeria. The demographic impact of that on Kano was succinctly put by Shea (2003) as follows:

Not only were the world economic conditions made more immediately relevant to the local economy, but also the immigration of large numbers of outsiders had an enduring impact on the nature of the society...New people meant new ideas, new technologies, new skills, more capital, and an overall increase in the cosmopolitan nature of this already sophisticated city. The railway, however, also meant that the newcomers came quickly...

More people troop into Kano after the independence as manufacturing industries crop up and the booming Nigerian economy needed services of the skilled expatriates and unskilled labour of the natives. This is how many more Europeans found their way into Kano. Thanks to the trustworthiness of the Kano business class and the presence of an international airport in Kano, the first of its kind in Nigeria. Many people from southern and central Nigeria looked at Kano as hot cake of jobs and trade and business opportunities. Many West Africans also moved into Kano for menial jobs. Thanks to the weather of hospitality in Kano which is informed by the political ascendancy attained by Kano for a very long time. The New hopes induced by globalisation has made Kano an attractive spot where the Chinese and other south east Asians move towards with vigour and rigour of direct investment.

In summary and summation, the economic opportunities and prosperity in Kano across the time serves as the feeder to its population concentration.

Resource Base and Prospects of Sustained Population Growth in Kano State

The prospects of any state depend much on the abundance and good management of the life supporting resources. No matter how industrialised, politically favoured, and no matter how close a location is to sea and no matter how submissive a location is to the interest of the global super powers there is no alternative to the uncreatable natural endowments of ground and surface water, geologic and biota resources and above all the human resources. Food, water, energy and, job security are at the front. Kano is one of the oldest settlements in Nigeria where the population has been utilising its natural resources for long since. And can still maintain its high population because the available human and natural resources available can sustain its further growth of population. In fact, the population/resource

question has been a worrying question over a very long time simply because the distribution of resources is uneven just like that of population all over the world. Edward Ackerman has successfully created models or typologies of population/resources-use base on the level of technology, population density and land resource availability (Zelinsky, 1970).

Indeed, Kano does not have an autarchy of all the resources that its population need, however an attempt is made to reveal the basic resources that could hold the population and sustain its vigour in the long future. Such resources include water, land and energy. The three are very essential for sustainable development and their good management will also ensure low poverty level, industrialisation and prosperity of the overall population.

Land Resources

In many parts of Nigeria, land is scarce because of its limited nature. Population density is so high and competing uses or natural barriers like forests, deserts, mountains etc further exacerbate the situation of land crises. Kano has quite abundant land for development of various agricultural activities, human settlements, industries and other developmental activities. In the case of land for food production, Kano state sustained its agricultural productivity mainly from rain fed farming. However, since the late 1970s the future of Kano in terms of food production has been redesigned through development of the Kano river basin development project where multiple cash and food crops are cultivated. In the Kano river basin alone, over 60,000 hectares were projected. The phase I of the Kano river project irrigation scheme was designed for 22,000 hectares which is yet to be developed completely. The Federal Government of Nigeria took over the project in the late 1970s and unfortunately the progress of the project has come to stand still since the project was transferred to the Hadejia Jamaare River Basin Development Authority. However, the state government under its various agricultural development projects has created thousands of hectares of irrigation sites in many parts of the state. Such include ones at Gari, Tomas, Kafinchiri, Jakara and others. From what has been mentioned above, Kano state has the abundant land resources to achieve self sufficiency in the production of cereals, vegetables, tuber crops, fish and livestock. Just like the situation is with water, the problems of food production have to do more with management of the land resources particularly in respect of land ownership and protection for sustainability.

Water

Water security is one of the basic developmental challenges that face most of the developing countries and the world as a whole. The quantity and quality of water resources are very significant to all places where humans can inhabit. Although Kano state falls under the range of the global dry land areas, its sustentative and potential water resources are quite large. In fact, one can say that Kano stands a good chance of being the wealthiest state in Nigeria in terms of the availability of water resources for various human development activities. Kano state has over thirty three big, medium and small dams in its territory. God so kind and Glory be to Him, all these dams are not concentrated in one place, they are rather located at every part and angle of the state. The two of these dams are some of the largest in Nigeria if not Africa; they are namely Tiga and Challawa. The state also has some sixteen water treatment plants that as at 1997 have total capacity of some 234.726 million litres per day but these exclude the gigantic projects initiated recently by Shekarau administration to overhaul and raise the level of water supply in the state. Apart from the surface water in dams and rivers the quantity of the ground water is quite appreciable; there are also thousands of bore holes constructed by the state government and individuals all over the state. Going by the amount of water impounded from the rainfall into dams in Kano state, one can say with impunity that the problem of water in the state now and in the future is more a case of poor management. It is far from scarcity of the essential resource called water.

Energy

A research conducted by Mortimore and others (1987) on behalf of the Tokyo based United Nations University revealed that Kano has grown too large to fend itself with the requested fuel wood consumption. Fuel wood is widely consumed in the city and rural areas and that is to the chagrin of the environmental stability of high population density areas like Kano. However, mechanisation and electrification of services and industries has made Kano to depend on the petroleum products which comes from the Niger delta area. Kano also stands to benefit from various West African and north -West African pipeline gas projects which have been proposed and have started in earnest in some areas. The project is part of the efforts of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) to achieve good and reliable energy distribution in Africa. However, in spite of the fact that Kano

lacks means of energy self sufficiency in the fossil fuels (firewood and oil) because it doesn't have mineral oil and huge forest belts, the state has good potentials for generation of the alternative sources of energy - solar energy, and hydro-electric power (HEP) which are cleaner and ecologically sound. We could be optimistic enough to assert that Kano could in the nearest future achieve self sufficiency in generation of energy for domestic and industrial use. The Governor Shekarau administration is right now planning to develop an HEP project for electricity supply in the state. Electricity is one of the projects that Tiga dam as multipurpose dam was originally designed to provide. In the same way, the great Challawa dam could also be used in achieving the same purpose. Besides, another HEP could be developed Zainabi near Riruwai in Doguwa local government in southern Kano, the gradient and the waterfall could be utilised for that purpose. This is also very possible through public-private-partnership. Solar energy is yet another potential vital role player in the quest for wider supply of domestic energy both in urban and rural areas. Being a tropical entity with abundant supply of all year round sunlight this resource could also be harnessed by the present and future people of Kano as clean and cheap source of energy.

How to Prove the High Population of Kano

This section is intended for the Nigerians who could expose their exposure and expertise to investigate the true nature of the population of Kano. This will allow them to gauge its prospects and problems. Many a times, the fourth estate in Nigeria which is supposedly closer to people and the most important tool after the three arms of government in a typical democracy does not help the situation in cases of common interest like census. In essence, I want to invoke scientific minds with all their curiosity and keenly inclination towards facts to understand the peculiarities of the demographic setting of Kano. I would like to help such scientific minds on how to observe the said peculiarities.

Observation is one of the standing tools that almost all disciplines acknowledge and employ in capturing data. Based on this fact, I will not refer to any data or piece of information under this section, but the focus is on the common sense and the ability of the observer to study on his own. One can therefore observe that in both urban and rural areas the following indicators of high population in Kano state: gender composition of the population seen around, farming activity, village markets, and pressure on

resources and services. On the other hand, remote sensing technology can also aid people to observe the situation from the space.

Where are the Women? Half of the Population Seen?

At the very beginning, it has to be made clear to every observer of the demographic nature of Kano that, women are rarely seen on the farmlands, offices, markets, and mosques both in urban and rural areas of the state. Albeit, women could be seen *enmasse* attending formal and informal schools including universities. Their scarcity in the formal sector does not in any way mean that they could not perform like their male counterparts. It is merely a case of cultural difference between human societies. This situation is in sharp contrast with observation made by this author at southern Nigeria (west and east). In Western Nigeria, women move shoulder to shoulder with men in places of worship (mosques, churches and shrines). In fact, in most of the markets in Yorubaland it is women who dominate the scene, hence, the popular term *market-women*. The situation in the East is not dissimilar; an observation of the Igbo business in Kano will also substantiate this argument as one sees women and girls at shops just like their fellow men. Similarly, in 2005 while attending a conference, I surveyed the multi-campus University of Port Harcourt in South-South of Nigeria. I observed that across most of departments and faculties, the female students dominate significantly their male counterparts.

The fact that women do not extensively compete with men in earning livelihood is based on the rationale of division of labour. Women stay at home to take care of family, the basic unit of the society. Once again, it has to be made clear that most of the women under the much criticised *pardah*, offer immense contributions to the development of the state and nation as a whole. For instance, the present Emir of Kano, HRH Alhaji Dr. Ado Bayero was first educated under a woman scholar before joining the formal school.

Critics may argue that Kano loses half of its potentials by the above said role of women. But, this author undertook a rapid survey of the contributions of women to the economy of Kano and the result shows that the home based ladies are quite richer than women who are engaged in the public service. The exception may only be those well-educated women working in well paid places like oil companies or banks, the other exception are those women whose husbands or relations appropriate public funds towards them. It could

also be those women holding political offices which they used in enriching themselves illegally. It is true that housewives are not economically marginalised because they are engaged in the many spheres of informal sector of the economy which is the major earner in the developing countries. The survey also reveals that many housewives own commercial motorcycles, cars and buses roaming in and around the city and towns. Women in Kano are also actively engaged in real estate business; many of them own houses which appropriate rent for them. Others engage in land speculation where they sell piece of land any time they feel it fetches something for them. Besides, many women are actively engaged in textiles, confectionaries and cosmetics business. Others are engaged with agriculture, where they raise livestock and poultry at a micro scale. Perhaps, that is why the poverty alleviation programme of the Shekarau administration involves issuance of goats to rural and urban women. Women are also engaged in fuel wood selling in the city. Women in Kano earn a living from services that they offer inside homes such include hair-dressing, tailoring and others. In the same vein, by scouting the ancient city of Kano one can easily see aged women engaged in leisure business where they sell local confectionaries to formal and Islamic school children.

The culture of fulltime housewife is not alien even to the advanced Western societies and the United States in particular. The celebrated columnist of the New York Times, a leading author and vanguard of American hegemony, Thomas L. Friedman pointed to this culture in his magna opus: *The World is Flat- A Brief History of the Twenty First Century* (2005). The author noticed that wives of *Mormons* a Christian sect, act as full fledged housewives. They do not engage in any work outside their homes, they are glued indoors where they are engaged among others in virtual businesses and other things that keep them busy and productive. Based on the arguments raised above, it could be said that any observer of the population in Kano, either in its rural or urban areas to note that he or she could only see half of the population of the state. This is because the result of the 1991 census indicates that the population of males and females in Nigeria and in Kano state as well is almost fifty-fifty. By this thesis, if one sees any magnanimous gathering of every congregational prayer, market, political campaign ground it means that almost half of that gathering is at home helping humanity!

Farming

Some compatriots in particular, the tribalistic and sectionalist political chieftains like Abraham Adesanya have repeatedly said publicly and privately that the population of the Northern Nigeria is inflated through counting the livestock which is abundant there. For such pessimists, one can advise that they can observe where the people of Kano are especially during the rainy season when every visitor into Kano can observe that every part of the soil of Kano state is under the hoe. This is because people are around every nook and cranny of the State. Hamlets located along the highways are not an indication of high or low population concentration as the situation is with towns and villages down South. One can equally observe the minor roads that interconnect various roads with settlements down the major roads. Nomadic herdsmen are also constantly on the move across the many areas of the state regardless of the season.

Market Days

Market days can serve the need of curious observer of the strength of population in Kano. Just like most parts of Nigeria, market days in rural areas can show the number of people at the close range villages. In Kano rural areas one can see how people are outpouring from various villages in the market days.

Rate of Resources and Services Consumption

Any keen observer into Kano State will understand that there is immense pressure on resources and infrastructural facilities and services in the state which may not be necessarily due to negligence from the side of administrators. The three years of Shekarau administration has put in place many projects that try to overcome such pressure on resources. For instance, dozens of schools have been established across the state, the same applies to clinic and hospitals created, upgraded or rehabilitated. The other area that the Shekarau administration is putting kilobyte effort is in the area of water supply. The exponential growth of the population of Kano has lowered the spirits of many previous governments. The Shekarau administration initiated the largest ever water treatment plant in northern Nigeria, namely the Tamburawa water treatment plant to provide 150 million litres per day when completed. Such a project will go a long way in the daily expanding

population with portable drinking water. Our prayer is that the project will be followed to its logical conclusion.

Remote Sensing Technology

Some of the critics of Kano's population may find solace in the remote sensing technology. In this part, I want particularly reach out to scientists and technologists within and outside the country. Remote sensing is technology that involves use of satellites mounted on platforms roaming in the space and giving out information in various forms of imageries. This technology is used in many fields of human endeavours ranging from security, natural resource surveys, monitoring and management of environment and disasters and even to undertake crude population survey. This technology can assist some doubting scientists and technologists to understand on their own at least something about the spatial spread of the population in Kano state. Such recent imageries on Land Sat (1-7) and other varieties that cover the whole earth are available free of charge at many websites particularly those of the NASA-ZULU, USGS, USDC, GOOGLE EARTH, MAPLANDIA etc. Through (professional) interpretations of such imageries one can see all settlements in Kano from Governor's Bedroom, Emir's *Soron Ingila* to Dantata's residence. Indeed, every hamlet between Riruwai and Dambatta and Karaye and Takai could be observed for its population. So such compatriots and researchers are advised to test this technology in order to find out for himself or herself Kano's mighty population concentration.

Summary and Conclusion

Cognisant of the politics of population census in the Nigerian politics makes writing this work to inform the general public imperative. The objective of this write up is to reveal facts about the peculiar and surprising nature of the composition and distribution of population in the State. That has been done successfully by outlining the physical and cultural determinants of the population concentration in the State. The work also identified the prospects of Kano state to keep up being a centre of great population concentration in the African continent.

This work blends literature review with the observations and surveys to prove the arguments made on why Kano is rendezvous of high population in the sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, Africa and the world came to know Kano before Nigeria come into being. Kano is an exceptional habitat with every thing unique - history, ecology, people, and politics.

Consequently, the peoples of Kano are not in a mood or posture to be duped by revisionists who believe in reconstruction of facts and figures for personal and group interests. The result of the 1991 census put the population of Kano at 5, 725,116 and the results of the 1996 census further substantiated the earlier results whose tradition is to put Kano on top. The recent census results put the population of Kano state at 9,383,682 people of diverse tribes and religious affiliations. So, there is no room for paradigm shift in demography and spatial analysis to contest the project handled by national and international organisations.

As cultural, economic, historical and environmental parameters justify the propensity of the continued population explosion, it may be interpreted as a political gain to the people of Kano. But what matter most is the quality of the population. Yet, it is a huge and prickly challenge. The most prominent of the challenges to resist remedial measures include among others the following:

- The dilapidation of urban infrastructure and services in the city and its environs.
- Poor access to basic health services and facilities
- Lack of clean and sufficient water to urban and rural communities
- Decreasing and degrading sources of energy
- Conflict over land resources between herdsmen and farmers
- Declining soil fertility and desiccation of watershed points
- High level of illiteracy and poverty and
- Insecurity

The above challenges and others within the fold of the UN millenniums development goals ought addressed in Kano soonest or else the rule of 'diminishing returns' sets in.

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