

# University of Nigeria Nsukka research and post-2015 development agenda

Chukwuedozie K. Ajaero<sup>1</sup>, Thaddeus C. Nzeadibe<sup>1</sup>  
& Christian C. Ezeibe<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Geography, University of Nigeria,  
Nsukka Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria,  
Nsukka Nigeria

Email:chukwuedozie.ajaero@unn.edu.ng

## Abstract

This Special Issue of *African Population Studies/Etude de la Population Africaine* brings together current research of faculty members at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka on topics relevant to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) but which have tended to be overlooked in population and development research. It pays particular attention to issues of vulnerable children including alternative care system and placement decision, attitude and determinants of exclusive breastfeeding, and socio-environmental justice in children's (almajirai) involvement in waste management. Adults also received some attention in a paper on the role of the church in the support and care of older adults, human trafficking and domestic violence, determinants of physical intimate partner violence, and determinants of fertility rate among women in Ghana and Nigeria. Another cross-cultural analysis engages with issues of climate change through examination of newspaper framing of climate change mitigation in two West African countries. Topical issues of census activities and incidents of infant mortality arising from gastroenteritis were also examined using spatial analysis. In sum, all the papers in this special issue relate to any of the three major dimensions of sustainability and culture. Thus, this special issue would be relevant in proffering solutions to some of the pressing challenges in Nigeria and in other African countries when development practitioners, governments and communities integrate the findings of these studies in their plans and interventions to enhance social cohesion, economic progress, environmental protection, and cultural diversity.

**Keywords:** Climate change; demography; fertility; human trafficking; intimate partner violence; sustainable development goals; vulnerable children.

## Introduction

Neoliberal forces drive development across the world and this often creates new opportunities for some groups, but increased vulnerability for many. This situation calls for justice and inclusive development for vulnerable populations with such justification anchored on moral, legal, economic, social, security and environmental reasons (Gupta et al. 2014). The United Nations and other regional and national organizations have introduced several programmes including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to tackle these development challenges. However, these development programmes fail to emphasize inclusion and sustainability. Hence, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015-2030) was launched to tackle the global development challenges, especially in the developing countries.

The SDGs are a set of global plan of action or agenda for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. The development agenda contains 17 integrated and indivisible goals with 169 associated targets. The agenda seek to address the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Some of the advantages of these time-bound universal goals are promotion of long-term approach to tackle global challenges, mobilization of the global community, strengthening of networks of stakeholders, achievement of gender equity and empowerment of women, promotion of innovation and sharing of expertise and global best practices (Ezeibe, 2016; Gurbo, 2017; Ajaero, 2017). The SDGs are innovative and consistent with the objectives of social inclusion, economic development and environmental sustainability (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015; Mbah and Nzeadibe 2017).

This Special Issue of African Population Studies/*Etude de la Population Africaine* brings together current research of faculty members at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka relevant to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs). It focuses on the interface between population dynamics, environment and development, using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework. All the papers in this special issue relate to any of the three major dimensions of sustainability and culture which itself is a *sine qua non* for sustainable development and also a lens for understanding social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Soini and Birkeland 2014; Nzeadibe et al 2018).

This special issue comprises ten (10) articles on different aspects of population, environmental and development studies from various disciplines within the social sciences. The contributors to this special issue are leading researchers in their fields of scholarship. In the first paper, Nnama-Okechukwu et al, examined vulnerable children, alternative care system and placement decision in Anambra state, Nigeria. The study found that placement decisions are made by extended family members and friends with little or no active participation of the child in need of placement. In a related study, Anazonwu et al, examined attitude and cultural determinants of exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) among childbearing mothers in Nsukka, Nigeria. The paper concludes that there is need for government, healthcare and social workers to raise awareness on the risks of complementary feeding and the importance of EBF for the reduction of infant mortality and the achievement of related sustainable goals.

Examining the issue of vulnerable children in Almajirai solid waste management in cities of northern Nigeria from the view point of socio-environmental justice, Iheanacho et al, found that many Almajirai contribute to environmental well-being through collection, disposal and recycling of waste. However, they often suffer unbridled socio-environmental injustice in their quest for a livelihood and also for their perceived association with insecurity in northern Nigeria. In the light of the juvenile-related sustainable development goals (SDGs) targets, the paper rethinks the role of Almajirai in SWM while articulating possible policy benefits of scaling up engagement with Almajirai in the post-2015 development era. Arguably, the involvement of children in waste management and impact of waste on children's well-being is grossly under researched in Africa (Adama 2014). In the next paper, Ebimngbo et al, explore the role of the church in the support and care of older adults in Nnewi, South-east Nigeria. Their findings revealed that church-based organisations were a significant source

of support for older adults; however, some of the support provided by church-based organizations was exclusively at the reach of older adults who are members of a particular church network.

Two important issues currently under national discourse and actions are human trafficking and domestic violence. Thus, Nwokeoma's paper examined the perception of the association between population characteristics, fertility norms and human trafficking in Imo State Nigeria. The study showed that more of the victims of trafficking were women with majority of the people trafficked aged less than 26 years. The paper also identified large family size driven by a traditional fertility rite (*ewu- ukwu*) for women with 10+ children to be strongly associated with human trafficking. Next, Onuh, et. al found that significant regional variations and determinants of physical intimate partner violence exist in Nigeria. The results of the study showed that the major determinants of physical intimate partner violence were women's partners who drink alcohol, lower educational levels of women, increase in number of children, household wealth index, number of co-wives, and urban residence of the women.

In a comparative study of determinants of fertility rate among women in Ghana and Nigeria, Ifelunini et al, introduced an economic perspective. The study found that rural population concentration, per capita income, life expectancy of men, female education, and prevalence of contraceptive use among women, composition of women education, life expectancy of men are the key determinants of fertility among women in Ghana and Nigeria. The cross-cultural analysis between Ghana and Nigeria was taken a notch higher in the paper by Ajaero and Anorue. This study compared the influence of newspaper framing on climate change mitigation in the two West African countries. It was found that the issue of climate change was given less coverage with the Nigerian newspapers than Ghanaian newspapers. While the dominant frame used in the Nigerian newspapers was the action frame, Ghanaian newspapers had more environment frame with floods as the prominent climate change issue reported in both countries. Factors such as funding, the technicality of reporting climate change, political system, none documentation and lack of expertise were identified to influence the framings.

The next two papers adopt spatial analysis in discussing topical issues of census mapping and incidents of infant mortality arising from gastroenteritis. Onyekwelu et al, posit that the recurring inaccuracy in census figures since independence may have been as a result of the lacuna in pre-census mapping. Lack of coordinates, poor accuracy, poor place -name rendition, boundary

alignment, point and line feature depiction, typographic casing, land feature/object description, point, line, and polygon feature depiction and description were found to be problems that bedevilled pre-census mapping. Similarly, Onyekwelu et al, dealt with the trend of reported cases of gastroenteritis and associated fatalities among children with a view to mapping the spatial pattern and underlying causes in South-East Nigeria. The most affected localities where the sources of domestic water were poor and contaminated were identified. They argued that hand washing practices, food hygiene, proper waste management, and the provision of basic infrastructure for improved health outcomes among the population are suggested to curb the spread of gastroenteritis.

We conclude that this special edition would be relevant in proffering solutions to some of the pressing international development challenges when development practitioners, governments and communities integrate the findings of these researches in their plans and interventions to enhance social cohesion, economic progress, environmental protection, and cultural diversity in Africa. We acknowledge in a special way the immediate past Dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Rev. Fr. Professor H.C. Achunike, under whom the special issue was initiated, and the current Dean, Prof. Leonard I. Ugwu, for support that led to the actualization of this special edition. We also thank immensely all the authors and reviewers for their inputs.

## Reference

- Adama, O. (2014). Marginalisation and integration within the informal urban economy: the case of child waste pickers in Kaduna, Nigeria. *International Development Planning Review*, 36 (2), 155-180
- Ajaero, C.K. (2017): A gender perspective on the impact of flood on the food security of households in rural communities of Anambra State, Nigeria. *Food Security Journal*, 9(4): 685–695
- Ajaero, I.D and Anorue, L.I.(2018). Newspaper framing and climate change mitigation in Nigeria and Ghana. *African Population Studies Vol 32, No 2, (Supp. 2)*.
- Anazonwu, N.P., Nnama-Okechukwu, C.U., and Obasi-Igwe, I.(2018).Attitude and cultural determinants of exclusive breastfeeding among childbearing mothers in Nsukka urban area of Enugu State, Nigeria. *African Population Studies Vol 32, No 2, (Supp. 2)*.
- Ebimgbo, S.O., Atumah, O.N and Okoye, U.O.(2018).Church-based organisations and their role in the support of older adults in Nnewi, South-east Nigeria. *African Population Studies Vol 32, No 2, (Supp. 2)*.
- Ezeibe C.C. (2016) *ABC of Political Economy: A Beginner's Guide to Understanding the State and Economy*. Enugu: University of Nigeria Nsukka Press.
- Gurbo, M. (2017) *Why are Sustainable Development Goals Important?* Available at: [https://idfi.ge/en/why\\_does\\_sdgs\\_matter](https://idfi.ge/en/why_does_sdgs_matter) [Accessed 5 June, 2017]
- Gupta, J.,Baud, I., Bekkers, R., Bernstein, S., Boas,I., Cornelissen, V., Iguchi, M., Kanie, N., Kim, R.E., Lima, M.B., Obani, P., Schoof, P., Stevens,C., and van Zoomeren, D.(2014). *Sustainable Development Goals and Inclusive Development*. Tokyo: United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability. Available at: [http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:2567/Post2015\\_UNUIAS\\_PolicyBrief5.pdf](http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:2567/Post2015_UNUIAS_PolicyBrief5.pdf) [Accessed 9 November 2015].
- Ifelunini, I.A., Ugwu, S.C., Ichoku, H.E., Omeje, A.N and Ihim, E.(2018).Determinants of fertility rate among women in Ghana and Nigeria: implications for population growth and sustainable development. *African Population Studies Vol 32, No 2, (Supp. 2)*.
- Iheanacho, A.O., Mbah, P.O., Onwuaha, P.C., Eze, E.J., and Nzeadibe, T.C.(2018). Children, waste and well-being: A critical analysis of socio-environmental justice in almajirai solid waste management in Northern Nigerian Cities. *African Population Studies 32 (2), Supp. 2*.
- Mbah, P.O and Nzeadibe, T.C. (2017). Inclusive municipal solid waste management policy in Nigeria: Engaging the informal economy in post-2015 development agenda. *Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability*. 22(2), 203-224.
- Nnama-Okechukwu, C.U., Anazonwu, N.P and Okoye, U.O (2018). Vulnerable children, alternative care system and placement decision in Nigeria: In who's best interest? *African Population Studies Vol 32, No 2, (Supp. 2)*.
- Nzeadibe, A.C., Uchem, R.N and Nzeadibe, T.C..(2018). Beyond 'Traditional Geographies:' Integrating Urban Political Ecology and Cultural Sustainability into Undergraduate Geographical Education in Nigeria. *The Journal of Environmental Education* 49 (3), 228-
- Onuh, J.C., Ajaero, C.K. and Igboeli, E.E (2018).Regional variations and the determinants of physical intimate partner violence in Nigeria.*African Population Studies Vol 32, No 2, (Supp. 2)*.

- Onyekwelu, C.A., Obienusi, E.A., Mozie, A.T., Nwosu, I.G., Adewoyin, Y., Ndichie, C.C and Igboeli, E.E (2018). Mapping incidents of infant mortality arising from gastroenteritis: a case study from South-East Nigeria. *African Population Studies Vol 32, No 2, (Supp. 2)*.
- Onyekwelu, C.A., Uluocha, N.O and Soneye, A.S. (2018). GIS in pre-census mapping of sampled rural and urban localities in Enugu north and south constituency: A sustainable pathway for census planning in Enugu State. *African Population Studies Vol 32, No 2, (Supp. 2)*.
- Soini, K and Birkeland, I.(2014). Exploring the scientific discourse on cultural sustainability. *Geoforum* 51, 213–223.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7891Transforming%20Our%20World.pdf> [Assessed 7 June 2017]