



ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN INFORMAL SOLID WASTE RECYCLING ACTIVITIES AND SUSTAINABLE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT, NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

Felix Kwaghtagher Kwaghsende¹

Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Benue State University, Makurdi

Literature suggest that the fabrics of social relationships in informal solid waste recycling activities is making contributions to the challenge of municipal solid waste management in many developing countries. Despite this, they do not seem to engage the attention of some city authorities in Nigeria where urban solid waste management challenges persist amid high population growth rate and urbanization. Currently, there is paucity of data on social networks in informal solid waste recycling activities in Nigerian cities. This paper examined the contributions of the social connections in informal solid waste recycling activities in Makurdi and Lafia cities, North Central Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted, relying on primary and secondary sources of data. Stratified, purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select the sample. Data was collected from 770 waste collectors using questionnaire while interviews were conducted each with the chairmen of waste dealers' association for Makurdi and Lafia. Similarly, key informant interviews were carried out on the heads of waste management agencies in Makurdi and Lafia cities. Data collected using the questionnaire were coded and entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Software (version 23) to generate the percentages and means while excerpts of the interviews used content analysis. Findings indicate that the networks and their activities collect an average of 79.75kg of recyclables per day and that significant difference occurs in the mean weight collected between Makurdi and Lafia using 0.05 alpha values. Social relationships sustaining the activity include personal ties with households ($x = 3.87$), private business institutions ($x = 3.78$) and the role played by waste dealers associations. The study concludes that although social networks in informal solid waste collection activity is contributing to solid waste management in the study area; it has not been engaged by formal authorities. The network and their activities call for inclusive planning decisions and policies to foster sustained contribution to solid waste management.

Keywords: informal solid waste recycling process, social network, solid waste management, sustainability, urban governance, urbanization

¹ felixkwaghsende@gmail.com; felixkwaghsende@bsum.edu.ng, +234 (0)7061811354