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## Urbanization and Conflict: A Study of Uyo, 1900-2015

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### **Abstract**

*This study seeks to explore critically the place of conflict in urbanization process, using the Uyo urban history as its focal point. There exist a plethora of studies as presented by scholars showing how various cities have through the ages metamorphosed from rural areas into urban centre as a result of rural – urban drift coupled with the clashing of incompatible interests among its inhabitants. However, employing data obtained via secondary and primary sources, the study argues strongly that there cannot be urbanization without conflicts. That is to say, conflict is imminent in any urban developmental process. Using historical and interdisciplinary methods, the study through its findings shows that Uyo, just like many urban centres have had its own fair share of conflict related issues. The study observes that Uyo metropolis as it is today is heavily characterized by diverse forms of conflicts just like many other urban centres, owing to its status. Also, it is the hope of the researchers that close attention be paid to Uyo by policy decision makers in order to keep the city safe at all times and for all and sundry.*

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**Keywords:** *Urban, Uyo, Conflict, Development, Centres and Akwa Ibom State.*

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### **Introduction**

The process of urbanization is without doubt a universal phenomenon. As from earliest times, humans, from different parts of the world have engaged in some sorts of movements especially from a point of relative scarcity to a region of relative abundance in resources all in a bid to boost their chances of all round survival. Undoubtedly, countless numbers of ancient and extant examples would suffice in that direction. However, one of the most remarkable events in human history that best depicts urbanization would be the period of the Industrial Revolution (1760) when workers moved towards industrial manufacturing centers in cities in a bid to secure jobs in factories as conducting agricultural jobs through manual approaches became absolutely irrelevant.

In Nigeria, the history of urbanization dates back to the period before colonial intrusion into the region. As evidences abound suggesting that Nigeria was inhabited by over 450 ethnic groups (Williamson, 1987), and these groups had moved in and across their borders in such for economic enhancements in cities such as Kano, Ibadan, Benin, Kanem-Borno, Arochukwu, Awka, Onitsha, among others (Otto, 2008: 1 – 6). But within the time frame of this study, urbanization took firm roots during colonial era when cities such as Lagos, Kano, Port Harcourt, among others assumed prominent roles with the British expansion of their economic interest. Supporting the view that colonial activities gave birth a neo-urbanization, Mabogunje (1974:14) rightly pointed out that although urban development has had a very long history in many parts of Africa, nevertheless, its modern manifestations within and across the continent of Africa can be said to be essentially due to active European penetration in the continent in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The rippling effect of this development necessitated the mass movement of rural settlers into various cities in their search of jobs which led to the urbanization of these cities. However, a very vital point to state here is that while the development came with urbanization, there is also the need to state that conflict among other social vices was equally a factor that comes with urbanization owing to the influx of large population, a population of variegated personalities with different human behaviours.

Hence, with urbanization comes conflict in multiple dimensions which is undesirable, yet unavoidable. Some of these range from political, economic, socio-cultural and ethno-religious issues as is typical within the Nigerian context.

with a growing frequency, unmet expectations in quantity and quality in governance output [as well as other issues of life] across security, political, economic and social sectors are now resulting in violence and growing manifestations of social protest [conflict] which further destabilizes the urban social and political order...(Cohen, 2009:5)

The above quotation is a clear case of what had transpired in so many urban centres across Nigeria. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that this article seeks to take a historical voyage on the process of urbanization in Uyo. Prior to colonial intrusion, Uyo has long served as one of the major point of contact for trade and commercial activities. The relevance of the town, alongside its features of urban development led to the town becoming the capital of present Akwa Ibom State in 1987 when the state was carved out of Cross River State.

Thus, from this perspective, the research seeks to construct a historical evaluation of Uyo urbanization process and the dynamics of conflict towards what the city has become in this contemporary time. The study will be divided into several distinct but related themes which will help bring the essay to life.

### **Conceptual Clarifications and Justification for the Study**

**Conflict:** - Strictly, conflict is a concept that does not have a universally accepted definition. The term has been defined in different ways than one and can mean different things in different climes and time. However, in spite of the differences in conceptualizing the term, it should be noted that etymological root of the term is Latin; and it is a combination of two Latin words: con “together” and fligere “to strike” (RCBC, 2012). Deductively, the word conflict means two pieces of matter trying to occupy the same place at the same time. Hence, it can be aptly stated that conflict denotes clash of differing points of opinions, interest, or values. As a matter of fact, conflict itself is a product of any given society as it springs forth from the crowded vexed issues that revolved in the society.

Diez (2006: 613 – 636) defines conflict as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. For Diez, conflict denotes the incompatibility of subject positions. As a remark, the definition proffered by Diez emphasizes the opposition or incompatibility at the heart of the conflict, and initially leaves open the exact nature of three incompatibilities, such as whether they are between individuals, groups or societies; whether they rest in diverse interests or belief systems; whether they have material existence or come into being only through discourse. Burton, sees conflict as essentially a social phenomenon with both creative and destructive manifestations (Burton, 1972:133). Burton, as cited by Akpan (2012:21) captures conflict thus:

Conflict just like sex is an essential creative element in human relations. It is the means to change, the means by which our social values of welfare, security, justice and opportunities for personal development can be

achieved. If society becomes static... (Conflict is) neither to be depreciated nor feared... indeed, conflict, like sex, is to be enjoyed.

Taking the same viewpoint as Burton, Coser (1956:31) is the view that conflict can itself be functional for societal development. Coser argues strongly that in the hands of a group of individuals who desire positive social change and development, conflict is a reliable agent. But for those who want to stagnate, conflict can facilitate their ruins. The views of Coser best captures the fact that in urbanization process, conflict is eminent as while some individuals who prefer to see the urban thrive through success, others might want it stagnated on account of certain reasons. The online Cambridge Dictionary defines conflict as “an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles; fighting between two or more people or countries” (Cambridge Dictionary). In this case such disagreement or fight could either be clash of interest, ideas or value system which are incompatible.

In the course of summation of the foregone varied definitions of conflict, it could be deduced that conflict, the clash of interest and value, have both positive and a negative aspects depending on how it is managed. And based on this study, urbanization cannot be said to have occurred without conflictual events the world all over.

**Urbanization:** - Just like conflict, urbanization have gained a plethora of definitions as given by various scholars from different disciplines. In spite of this, Mabogunje (1974:33) defined urbanization as “the concentration of large numbers of people in a relatively small places”. In line with Mabogunje position, W.A Schwab asserts that urbanization should be looked upon as the systematic process of population concentration. According to Schwab, as cited in A. O Njoku, “size is the most important criterion for defining a place as urban”. Schwab (1982:38) strongly noted that urbanization brings about new patterns and trends of population movement with migrant flows targeted towards the central region. The conceptualization of the term “urbanization” as given above are very vital to our collective understanding of Uyo urbanization process and the conflicts therein as prior to colonial intrusion within the Lower Cross River region, the area known as Uyo today was made up of a string of villages occupied by relatively few set of people who possessed autonomous traditional, socio-political, economic, cultural and trado-religious apparatuses.

Urbanization “is the continuous increase of human population in urban as well as the society’s reaction to this phenomenon” (Etuk, 2016). Put differently, it is the rural – urban drift which is phenomenal as a result of the myriads of challenges it possesses which are very obvious and should not be left unattended because of the daring and negative effects it can have on the society (*ibid*). More so, urbanization can equally be seen as “the process by which towns and cities are formed and become larger as more people begin to live and work in central places.” (*ibid*) In the light of this definition it is suggested that issues would have caused or incited people to migrate to where their challenges could be solved since abundant opportunities lies therein. The process could be formal if it has to do with a deliberate creation of urban centres by various authorities and governments through designation, legislation, planning, and provision of infrastructural facilities like roads, electricity and water. However, the process can also be informal due to the spontaneous decision of individuals for obvious reasons. In some quarters it is viewed that the informal process by which towns or cities are formed constitute about eighty (80%) per cent of the challenges of urbanization. It is argued that in most cases the informal process precedes the formal process where the latter could be seen as a corrective measure.

Urbanization should be considered as a phenomenon because of the impact it has exerted on the society, as it seems to always take the society unawares. The pressure on the society manifests as challenges; this include poverty, illiteracy, overpopulation, unemployment, and destitution. Others are poor sanitary condition, lack of waste disposal facility, inequality and high rate of crime.

In pre-colonial times, Uyo which was a component unit of the Ibibioland had its own unique patterns of organizations through which the people sustained themselves, as such, sustenance was not devoid of inter-groups relations with her neighbours which are in contemporary times found in other Local Government Areas such as Itu, Uruan, Etinan, and so on, and so forth. The long standing relations that existed between Uyo and her neighbours on all fronts witnessed a constant influx of people from other areas for many reasons which could either be economic, cultural or any other forms of interaction. There is no denying the fact that while this relations subsisted, Uyo began to witnessed massive migrations when during the colonial rule, it was designated as Uyo Division which made it a much more attractive centre since colonial authority, and offices were domiciled in Uyo- hence it gradually commenced to take the form of an Urban area just like other cities.

Nothing justifies the study as much as the fact that in this twenty-first century, Uyo urban city is confronted with a myriad of problems which ranges from socio-political, economic, and socio-cultural. The challenges of urban cities such as Uyo is what necessitated this study. It should be noted that the primacy of the essay is to help reconstruct the historical development of the town so as to deepen our understanding of how the problems can be tackled on all fronts since it is only logical that in order to solve a problem, the origin of that problem must be known. Hence, the article will employ a few theories that will help substantiate the argument that urbanization cannot take place without breeding conflicts. However, what is paramount is how to curb such conflictual situations in order to create some level of sustainable development in Uyo.

### **Theories of Social Conflict Suggesting that Conflict is Imminent in the Process of Urbanization: A Synopsis**

It has been closely observed by scholars that the concept of conflict has received adequate academic discourse than the concept of urbanization. This is probably so because urbanization is yet to be considered as a milieu in which conflict breeds. Thus, considering the nexus between urbanization and conflict, the structural conflict theory as hypothesized by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel (Faleti, 2006) which posits strongly that conflict do occur based on how societies are structured and organized which generate a myriad of social issues such as political and economic struggles, poverty, disease, exploitation as well as general inequalities.

Further, Marx and Engels's theory split the society into two classes, proletariat and bourgeoisie, where the former are always exploited by the latter who have control of the means of production. Their argument is that due to the exploitation of the masses and proletariat breeds conflict which either is visibly violent or non-violent in nature. Marxist and neo-Marxist aver that structural conflict is common in capitalist economies and the resistance of the proletariat against exploitation causes conflict.

Also, there is the realist theory which places emphases on flaws found in human nature manifesting as frailties in the day-to-day interactions of humans (*ibid*). This theory proves the fact that conflict often takes off from the individual level before getting out of control. Pointedly, advocates (Deutch, Koestler, Walt, Morgenthau, among others) of this theory hold the view that since individual cause conflict, and these individuals are integral parts of a society, such a society will greatly be affected by their actions or inactions, forcing those at the helms of affair to defend the vital interest of the society and ensure self-preservation using any

means necessary. In addition, the frustration-aggression theory has also substantiated the position that conflict is imminent in any society capable of growth and development. This theory attributes conflict to the inability to fulfill needs. The proponent, John Dollard, states that conflict is bound to occur when an individual ends up getting something outside what is needed. Put differently, he surmise it thus “expected need satisfaction” and “actual need satisfaction” (*ibid*). Thus, in an urban setting, people tend to hold those they think are responsible for frustrating their ambitions.

Moreover, the human needs theory as enunciated by Rosati *et al* assume that all humans have basic needs which they seek to fulfill, and that the denial of these needs by other individuals could affect them thereby bringing about conflictual scenarios (*ibid*). Notably, these needs transverse physical psychological, social, economic as well as spiritual needs. Whereas, the physiological theory lays emphases that there is the possibility for one to experience conflict between what one is thinking and feeling. As sometime, this kind of conflict could have dire implications for a society should it is not quickly nipped in the bud (*ibid*).

Economic theory stipulates that conflicts occur whenever people are assumed to be fighting over economic assets, resources or systems (Faleti, 2006), psycho-cultural theory emphasized the role of culturally induced conflicts in which people’s ethnic background, culture, as well as origin can cause discrimination and prejudices sometimes leading to deprivation of certain vital needs, benefits, and satisfactions among others. Nevertheless, other theories include but not limited to systemic theory, biological theory, and relational theory and so on.

### **Uyo Urban Development Process: A Historical Explanation**

Historically, the town, known as Uyo today has no doubt gone through a process that has shaped it into the present urban centre that it is today. This process of development consisted of diverse traditional and colonial inputs which have all helped transformed Uyo from a mere village into an urban centre in the twenty-first century.

At the end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, most coastal cities that had hitherto played important roles in the storage and movement of captured Africans (slaves) ceased to be significant in international trade when the idea of slave trade was outlawed and the subsequent introduction of the commodity trade. The fundamental ideology behind this paradigm shift was that while the slave trade required traders to do their enterprises along the coastal lines, the commodity trade which mostly consisted of buying and selling of articles such as palm kernel and palm oil required the Europeans moving further into the hinterlands where they assumed closer interaction with the Africans as a key factor in this new trade that replaced the former. Hence, villages such as Uyo, among other started to assumed new place in the Afro-European trade relations (Attah & Akpan, 2007: 27). Thus, leading to the massive influx of European traders, missionaries, as well as colonial administrators.

Thus, the establishment of colonial presence in Uyo brought about jobs and development which attracted many people from other regions. As a hub for commerce and other colonial administrative activities, Uyo would later come to experience some infrastructural developments such as building of roads, hospitals, post office, military barrack, colonial court yard, as well as schools. Apart from people coming into Uyo in search of jobs, there were also other population which came in for educational purposes and for buying and selling. One of the most vibrant joints for commerce in those days is what is today refer to as Ibom Plaza, which connects today’s Basse Wellington (formerly Barracks Road), Oron Road, and Ikot Ekpene Road in contemporary times (*ibid*, 27 – 8). As such, Uyo continued to record massive development strides even up to 1960 when Nigeria gained ‘flag’ independence. It is



intrusive to note that on the one hand, while Uyo was getting developed infrastructure wise, the town was equally recording some level of conflicts as well as crimes on the other hand.

By 1987, when Akwa Ibom State was carved out from Cross River, Uyo, having attained some level of development, and also based on its geo-strategic importance, became the capital of Akwa Ibom state. Upon becoming capital city in 1987, the successive governments of Akwa Ibom state did all within their capacity to bring the town to par with what is obtainable in other climes. One particular government was outstanding in terms of giving Uyo a new direction as an urban city, and that was His Excellency Obong Victor Attah's administration which basically drew the blue print for Uyo's urbanization goals. Drawing from his vast experience as a veteran architecture, Attah remodeled Uyo in a way that most of his master plans were also benefiting to his successor His Excellency Godswill Akpabio, who also built upon the grand master plan left behind by Arc. Victor Attah (Uduak, 2018).

In a nutshell, the processes involved in Uyo urbanization could be traced all the way from the colonial period down to the present times. Uyo, though an urban centre still have a lot of work needed to bring it to be at par with many urban centres across the globe. But, more interesting is the fact that in all these developmental processes, conflicts have remained a constant decimal. In short, the process from rural to urban cannot be said to be totally devoid of conflictual developments as it is in the case of Uyo.

As at 2006, when the last head count was conducted, Uyo as an urban area had a staggering population which stood at about 600,000. This goes to prove that Uyo has indeed, without doubt transformed from a village that it used to be in times past to an urban area to be reckon with. As one of the fastest growing urban centres in Nigeria, Uyo covers an area of 42 sq. m 115 km<sup>2</sup> (<http://thegpscoordinates.net/nigeria/uyo>. Accessed 23/02/2018).

### **Dimensions of Urbanization that Stimulates Conflict**

Urbanization with its attendant effects on the society has tremendous dimension globally, especially in the economy and political attitude of nations. Governments of nations come up with policies intended to address the negative effects of urbanization. Thus Cohen, warns that "the current global economic crisis is generating many diverse impacts in cities." (Hoselitz, 1974: n.p). These impacts include export declines, loss of jobs, forfeiting of incomes, low revenue, and austerity measures.

**Export Declines:** The fact that the challenges of urbanization are more synonymous with developing countries is not a fallacy. This is based on the fact that such countries rely more on import to solve the immediate needs of the populace including food and clothing as a result of over-population; and do not match same with export which can bring about trade balance. This simply means that governments of such nations have spent more on importation of goods and services and have little money or capital for development. The absence of development, provision of social infrastructure like roads, schools, hospitals, housing and housing related amenities, as well as fiscal capital enhances conflict because according to Leong, cited by Adeleke *et al* (2012:54), the economies of such countries cannot "absorb the effects of negative trade differentials", which contracts the internal economy and can lead to unhealthy rivalry among competitors and stakeholders.

**Loss of jobs/unemployment:** Unemployment is a state where the qualified and willing persons are not employed especially, if the existing vacancies have been filled, this is one of the challenges of urbanization as a result of over population. It leads to low per capita income based on the fact that greater percentage of the populace, that are not gainfully employed are mere dependents and are most likely to live below poverty line. This can bring about fear,

hatred; suspicion, raiding, killing, and looting, among others. These are elements of conflict (<http://www.polity.co.uk/ccr/contentes/chapters//1.pd/>. Access Date 18-5-16). Manufacturing economies generate and sustain employment however; this is not the case for economies that are import oriented. These are more prone to loss of jobs as a result of government economic policies. The redundant, most probably are subjected to poverty and rejection, breeding discrimination, and unfair representation (*ibid*).<sup>29</sup>

***Forfeiting of Incomes:*** This is a common scenario caused by the government's attempt to address the challenges of urbanization. It is observed that most times those whose properties were demolished without compensation in the course of transformation lose their sources of income. This appears to be a leading cause of crime in the cities because of "loss of their livelihoods as a result of property demolitions for road infrastructure expansion and renewal" (Ummuna, 2016: 67 – 68). It is believed that some of those not compensated take to crime in order to sustain a living. Sometimes victims of demolition vehemently resist the authorities and conflict ensued (*ibid*).

***Low Revenue:*** It is obviously certain that the high dependency ratio, caused by loss of job/unemployment, forfeiting of incomes; will be the order of the day in an import oriented economy. Countries with high dependency ratio are likely to have a large member of unproductive people including children, elderly and unemployed adults which brings about low revenue generation thus affecting the GDP of countries with high risk on urbanization. The ultimate result in such countries is capital flight, because "they pay heavily for imports" (Adeleke *et al*, 2012). This suggests that governments of such countries will have little money for payment of services including banking and insurance, provision of capital loans, transportation, etc. That could have enhanced development and reduce the chances of conflict.

Another aspect of low revenue is from the effect of clamping down on the informal sector. There seems to be a considerable loss of revenue when owners of business demolished are shut out without any form of compensation. Their non-inclusion in the economy reduces the rate of revenue accruable to the government, thus making low revenue an issue in urbanization because government's financial strength is further depleted with virtually nothing left for development. The effect is that the informal sector which is characterized with informal practices is most likely to bring about unhealthy rivalry.

***Austerity measure:*** This can be said to be the direct effect of government policies on the inhabitants when efforts are made to regulate the economy to overcome the prevailing economic situation. It is traditionally accompanied with internal economic contraction with some biting effects on the citizenry. These effects sometimes enhances competition among players and planners in the economy than can generate conflict

***Social discrimination and inequality:*** Though one of the challenges of urbanization it can be considered as a source of conflict in the society. Those who are in the ruling class and the elites tend to have absolute disrespect for the rule of law probably because they want to be viewed as such before the poor masses, so as to sustain the status. Kajom (2015), expressing concern wondered why "government officials appear to lead the way against the rule of law by treating judicial decisions as mere recommendations rather than commands". Citing a court ruling that opposed the government's decision which was not obliged by the government of the day Kajom, warning against the danger insisted that "ordinary Nigerians generally take their cue from this kind of official disregard for the rule of law" (*ibid*). This issue generated conflict between the judiciary and the executive and it is most likely that deviants can be influenced by

such attitude. Social discrimination and inequality as a result of race, tribe, political affiliation, and economic power normally causes unfair representation, hatred and suspicion, etc. As was the case during the apartheid regime in South Africa it generated a lot of conflict.

***Unequal Development:*** Is an aspect of urbanization challenges that can bring about conflict. During the pre-colonial and colonial era in the Yoruba areas the development and expansion of cities along the coastal line railway lines were built for easy transportation of goods and services from the coastal states or cities to the hinterland. This caused conflicts among the various city-states that were located along the rail routes for want of control over market and collection of royalties from the European traders. Magabunje (1974), believes that this was one of the reasons for the prolonged inter-tribal wars among the Yoruba people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Though Government Residential Areas (GRAs) were introduced by the colonial administrators in almost all their colonies, the effect of unequal development in that regards was obvious in some locations and countries. In South Africa, during the apartheid regime, specific towns and cities were singled out for development e.g. Cape Town and Johannesburg. According to Smith, these were “carefully constructed on European models to ensure the maintenance of a privileged way of life” (Smith, 2011). The privileged minority whites settled in these towns, though some elite blacks and coloured also settled there but were restrained and denied certain privileges. This was not the case for Soweto that was designated for the majority black, it was synonymous with slum. This was the principal cause of conflict between the black majority and the white minority as it generated hatred and suspicion, unfair representation, killing, fear, raiding, and so on.

It is suggested that the cause of conflict and violence, and corruption associated with political leaders can be traced to these unequal development and unfair representation that was instituted by the colonialists because they sense “the opportunity of sharing the economic prosperity so ostentatiously displayed by their former colonial masters” (*ibid*).

***Colonial Boundaries/Conurbation/Current Constituencies:*** While colonial boundaries could be referred to as the adjustment and delineation of national boundaries for administration purposes by the colonialists; conurbation is the collapsing of boundaries of towns through regional planning for transformation and development.

The common issue between the two is that boundaries are tempered with, and this traditionally generates conflicts. Kajom (2015) claims that for Nigeria, “the seed of national problem which became obvious after political independence was sowed” by the amalgamation of the Northern protectorate and the southern protectorate in 1914, because different nations were forced together against their aspiration to identify themselves as one nation. As with the case for municipal or capital city through conurbation it causes irredentism and generates conflicts when it has to do with political loyalty, which in many cases Kajom (2015) insists have “become coincident with religious and zonal boundaries of the states”.

***Colonial boundaries:*** This was also an issue from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century during the scramble for Africa. After the Industrial Revolution which was enhanced by urbanization, the European powers namely Britain, Germany, France and Italy rechannelled their influence to Africa in want of raw materials. Their influence and interference in the affairs of Africans in Africa through imperialism and colonialism further hastened the growth of town and cities but not without clashes or conflict between the colonialists and the imperialists. The Moroccan crises, the Tangier crisis of 1905 and the Agadir crisis of 1911 are all cases in point. Morocco having



been guaranteed non-colonialism by international agreement, when France attempted to expand its influence there without the assent of all the other signatories was vehemently opposed by Germany. Which being a member of the Triple Alliance of Italy and Austria was not supported by Italy failed while the French protectorate over Morocco was established in 1912. This among other things led to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

Urbanization because of increase in human population made mobilization and conscription for war much easier, especially with the emergence of the prevailing and counter prevailing force. It was observed that “each country devised a mobilization system whereby the reserves could be called up quickly and sent to key points by rail” (Childs, 1970, 76).

***The Emergence of Prevailing and Counter Prevailing Forces:*** Urbanization has brought about the emergence of prevailing and counter prevailing forces. This is the group of people created out of the poor, deprived and starved inhabitants of the society, who in their quest to emancipate themselves from the dominant group do neither fit into the informal nor formal structure of the society. Kajom (2015) stressed that these people can be manipulated or hired by the highest bidder to generate conflict because they “are inevitably less informed about the essence of the struggle”. They constitute breeding ground for deviants and criminals and can be used against individuals, group of people, corporate bodies and governments.

Also, due to the fact that most members of this group live in areas and settlements that addresses can hardly be traced, especially slums, Abdu claimed that they “frequently engage in conflicts and crime”, as deviants and counter culture groups because they can evade justice making them almost invincible( Abdu, 2015).

### **Urbanization and Conflict: Insights from Uyo Experiences**

Conflict, being a product of the society is more common in an environment where diverse conflicting interests subsist. Therefore, Uyo which is fast becoming a modern city attracts interests from various endeavours both from public and private domains. Upon emerging as the capital of Akwa Ibom State in 1987, the influx of peoples from within the state, as well as other parts of Nigeria into Uyo have helped transformed it into an urban centre with a massive population standing at about six hundred thousand based on the 2006 head count conducted by National Population Commission (NPC).

Consequently, the surge in population, it must be stressed, is basically as a result of the creation of the state with Uyo as its capital both by designation, legislation and funding , which actually commenced right from colonial rule. This buttresses the fact that urbanization is not only the function of industrialization, a view as postulated by Eurocentric scholars. Historically, records show that during the second republic, the region now known as Akwa Ibom State in the erstwhile Cross River State was once flooded with industries such as Champion Breweries, Plasto Crown, Pea Cock Paint, Excel Plastic and Quality Ceremonies. Others were Qua Steel Industry, Sunshine Batteries Industry, and a Confectionary making industry, among others. Apart from Champion Breweries, virtually all were moribund at the end of the second republic. Champion Breweries and the recently resuscitated Pea Cock Paint Industry have survived the plague of moribund. The point to note here is that the impact of these industries *viz-a-viz* urbanization as was hardly recognized, as people then preferred Calabar, the state capital which was is about 44km from Uyo, which was more endowed with social infrastructural amenities (<http://www.tiptopglobe.com> Accessed 12/02/2018).

Also, with the creation of Akwa Ibom and Uyo, as the capital in 1987 the influx of people led to the increase in population with its attendant effects. As it is common with

urbanization, the need to fill vacant posts and offices primarily caused the migration (Ifekwe, 2016). Other causes of migration include the need for social infrastructural amenities and status. This migration no doubt brought about increase in population such that the existing infrastructural amenities could barely sustain the population. Based on these facts, it appears adequate provision was not made for the new status Uyo assumed as the state capital. The inability to sustain this pressure on the available structures brought about challenges of accommodation where residential buildings were hired by the government as offices and residential quarters for some of its staff (*ibid*). This led to exorbitant rent cost in Uyo leading those who could afford to settle for accommodation in suburbs and towns nearby. While some live around dump sites others in active ravine areas. Others live in overcrowded compounds and make-shift accommodations (*ibid*).

The other effects of urbanization in Uyo like other cities include poverty, illiteracy (government had declared free and compulsory education nine years now but its effect is yet to be assessed), destitution, poor sanitation and bad waste management (the authorities had declared a statewide sanitation exercise but it seems to worsen the situation, being that refuse and waste churned out are abandoned on the streets for days before they are evacuated), unemployment, high rate of crime, emergence of government and emergence of prevailing and counter-prevailing forces (the alignment and re-alignment of individuals and groups to serve as pressure groups including, political associations. These effects of urbanization are synonymous with conflict and have made Uyo a place of tension (*ibid*).

However, in order to underscore the place of conflict in the process of urbanization in Uyo, the study will look at this from four dimensions. Which are intra-personal conflict, inter-personal conflict, intra-group conflict, and lastly inter-group conflict. This stratification will help bring the points to be made to bear. Notably, Uyo, it must be stated have experienced all shades of conflict except that of international dimension, because Akwa Ibom State is still an integral part of Nigeria.

### ***Intra-personal Conflict***

Physiological Theorists have through their studies been able to establish the fact that every individual experiences conflict between what he feels and what he thinks. By this it could be deduced that conflict occurs within an individual before decisions are reached, including the decision to migrate, making a case for urbanization as an offshoot of conflict (Faleti, 2006). This theory explains that intra-personal conflict is the bedrock of other types of and theories of conflict.

Another theory that can help one understand the nexus between urbanization and conflict in the Uyo instance, as it would be in most other instances is Human Needs Theory, supported by Neef and Rosati (*ibid*). This theory, among other things, assumes that all humans have basic needs which they seek to address and most times tend to move to other areas in a bid to addressing these (basic) needs. These two theories of conflict critically considered, can to a large extent influence one's decisions based on the desire to meet needs of humans which cuts across physical, psychological, social, spiritual, political, among others. Thus the need for employment and to have access to the social infrastructural amenities precipitated the migration from the rural areas to Uyo and also from other urban areas (for those unemployed and those who need a change of job).

### ***Inter-personal Conflict***

On the other hand, Uyo, as a city, has experienced some forms of inter-personal conflict, (*ibid*) the type between two or more persons. Here the case for child witch is one of such. Victims most times are blamed for misfortune and deaths of family members and are

tortured to make confessions. This on mild instances lead to torture (both physical and psychological including denials of privileges as well as one getting ostracized), banishment and denial of food (Umukoro, 2011). Traditionally, without making any justification for child-witch syndrome, the inhabitants have much abhorrence and disdain for witchcraft apparently because of it, perceived counter-productive abilities. This explains why victims are killed in extreme cases while some are stigmatized (*ibid*). Giving credence to this is the psycho-cultural conflict theory as opined by Maslow and Burton in their studies. Both Maslow and Burton emphasize that conflict can be generated by the culture of a people when seemingly strange attitude, and behavior are observed. This causes discrimination and “deprives one of certain benefits, privileges and satisfaction of their basic needs” (Faleti, 2006).

Also, John Dollard’s Frustration – Aggression theory comes into play here. This theory attributes conflict to the inability to fulfill needs and that people – the frustrated ones – “conflict those they hold responsible for frustrating their ambitions” (Umukoro, 2011). It is worth mentioning that the torture most times is not for confession only but to obtain more information regarding other initiates, especially since it is believed in some quarters that witchcraft is hereditary. This view supports the biological theories of conflict which stresses that human beings are adjudged to be evil by nature because their ancestors were “instinctively violent”.

Moreover, it is intrusive to note that inter-personal conflicts do occur in different sheds of grey. This happens between government agents and tricycle operators in Uyo city centre. Starting from when motorbikes were banned from operating in Uyo, as a means of transportation, to reduce crime and effect modernization till date (<http://www.aksgonline.com.ws033.alentus.com/lga.apsx?qr/D=uyo> Accessed 03/02/2018.), the harassment of tricycle operators by government taskforce on ticketing has persisted unabatedly. Most times their interactions result in conflict, because of overzealousness to generate revenue from defaulters. The tricycle operators in most cases consider government agents as oppressors, who are only concerned with their token, irrespective of the prevailing situation.

Also, it must be stressed that these agents are statutorily compensated for the job. In this scenario the two parties have much in common based on the various theories of conflict. Human Needs Theory, as supported by Rosati *et al* and Neef, states that all humans have basic needs which they seek to fulfill, and that the denials and frustration of these by other groups or individual could affect them thereby leading to conflict. Thus while government agents needed increased revenue to retain their job and bigger take home pay, tricycle operators need more proceeds for the day’s return to the tricycle owner if it was leased and have enough left for his personal needs. Dollard’s Frustration-Aggression theory has a place here. Among other things it attributes conflict to the difference between “expected need satisfaction” and actual need satisfaction”. That when the gap is much those involved as supported by Yates and Anifowose “confront those they hold responsible for frustrating their ambitions”. Morton Deutch, Koestler, Walt, Morgenthau, in their advocacy for Realist Theories (*ibid*) laid emphasis on flaws found in human nature manifesting as weakness of an individual when relating or interacting with others, that these flaws push human kind to behave negatively sometimes to the extreme.

Further, human trafficking for sexual exploitation (rape and prostitution) and child labour are another dimensions of inter-personal conflict that has been recorded in Uyo in the course of her continuous urbanization process. According to Bassey (n.d), “Akwa Ibom is now leading in this form of conflict”. Stressing further that victims of such conflict are primary and secondary school drop outs who are given out by their unsuspecting parents/guardian to their

relations and foster parents who ultimately release them for prostitution and labour against the consent of the parents/guardians and the child. Considering the theories of conflict, Human Needs Theory becomes paramount, starting from the parents/guardians, child, relations/foster parents to the end user; being that human needs cut across physical, psychological, social and spiritual. As expected, parents/guardian who couldn't meet their responsibilities have their psychological need met. Likewise the child's (victim) physical (clothing, food and sometimes education as promised) needs. The relation/foster parents need for monetary gains and the "end user" at one point or the other all have need thus conflict ensues. Realist theories of conflict emphasizing on human weakness, as flaws pushes one into behaving negatively sometime to the extreme. This theory seems to fit the prevailing situations of the parties previously mentioned.

Another dimension of conflict in Uyo's urban process is the issue of kidnapping and armed robbery which are another form of inter-personal conflict. Kidnapping involves arresting and detaining someone, against his/her will for a ransom (cash or kind) (<http://www.aksgonline.com.ws033.alentus.com/lga.apxs?qr/D=uyo> Accessed 03/02/2018). Because it is always against the will of the victims that the assailants with arms, forcefully carryout their enterprises thereby causing conflict. Between 2007 and 2015 statistic shows that this form of conflict was prevalent in Uyo (*ibid*). Ostensibly, the structural conflict theory, as propounded by Karl Marx and Engels theory holds sway here. Engels and Marx opined that based on how the society is structured and organized social issues like political/economic exclusion, poverty, diseases, exploitation and inequality can generate either violent or non-violent conflict. This explains the reason assailants vent their anger on the society (*ibid*).

Making a case for this type of conflict, Ogunipe (n.d) reported that in Uyo, the labourers of China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) were not only "under-compensated for their work" but were "often maltreated by the Chinese personnel as well as by members of the Nigerian Army on orders from their Chinese bosses", apparently on labour-related issues. Establishing the bases for this kind of conflict, supporters of psycho-cultural conflict, Maslow and Burton argue that differences in culture can cause discrimination and sometimes deprive one of certain benefits and privileges. Also, Berkowitz and Feierabends, making a case for Frustration-Aggression theory of conflict asserts that conflict can be caused by inability to fulfill needs; where the Chinese personnel are not satisfied by their labourers quality of job. Realist theory is relevant as well considering what could have pushed the Chinese personnel and the labourers to behave the way they did. It could be that the labourers' attitude was as a result of poor pay package. Arguing further, supporters of Realist Theory like Walt, Morgenthau, Koestler and Deutch all insist that flaws found in human nature pushes one into behaving negatively sometime to the extreme; and that leaders must defend their basic interest and ensure self-preservation using any means necessary (*ibid*).

### ***Intra-group Conflict***

This is a conflict between individuals or faction within a group. In October 2014 during the People's Democratic Party (PDP) primaries conflict erupted between the various factions of the party which left one dead. And in "December there were reports of protests following the announcement of results of the primary elections" (<http://www.libraryforpeace.org/conflictbulletin.akwaibom.com.1508>. Accessed 27/02/2018.). In this case, two theories of conflict can help determine the nature of conflict under study. Supporters of Marx's structural theory including Lenin and Mao Tse Tung arguments further attribute conflict to how the society is structured and organized, therefore, they divided society into two classes – proletariat and bourgeoisie, that the society so structured

breeds political and economic exclusion, among others. By this analysis the resolution not to be excluded can be said to be the cause of the conflict.

Also, couple with the fact that the primaries (election) was skewed in order for it to favour a particular candidate from a particular area of the state, it was only logical to know that conflict was bound to occur even as Uyo continue in its urbanization processes. In light of this, systemic theory of conflict as supported by Johnson, advocates that domination and marginalization of minority groups by those in the majority and lopsided political process, among others can generate conflict which apparently has been the case with Uyo even as she continues in her urban process (*ibid*).

### ***Inter-group Conflict***

This includes conflict between groups such as club, class, and family, among others. A very remarkable example is the conflict that ensued between the state government and Uyo Market traders in 2009. (<http://www.aksgonline.com>. Accessed 03/02/2018. ). The market which had been serving the state right from the colonial days, was no longer considered befitting considering the status of Uyo which was beginning to take on the national and international stage, and also the location of the market (in the heart of the town) was considered by the state government as an anathema to the continuing urban development of Uyo, thus the need to be relocated. The then government in the drive to address urbanization and effect modernization decided to relocate the traders to another market still within Uyo having expanded the facilities at Akpan Andem Market, with compensation plan. Most traders who felt their interests were not accommodated by this arrangement resisted but “government forcefully ejected the traders” bringing about conflict.

Hence, systemic theory popularized by Johnson examines conflict in the social context within which it occurs, as a result of changes in people’s material comfort (due to little or no access to means of livelihood). Thus the thought of not be accommodated in the government’s compensation plan and the fear of losing customers which ultimately could lead to lose of livelihood brought about resistant and conflict. While government’s action can be viewed from the perspective of Realist Theory of conflict which states in parts that, leaders must defend their basic interest (modernization as a result of urbanization) and ensure self –preservation at all cost (*ibid*).

Of all the inter-group conflicts experienced in Uyo and its environs, the pre-election crises in 2011 which according to Nyong (2011) claimed at least fifty (50) lives, and loss of property worth billions of naira till date is the most devastating conflict Uyo had experience in the course of her urban progress. In this case the governorship candidate of the main opposition party Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), who in the previous election was a member of the ruling party The Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP), alongside with his supporters on “their way to attend a rally in Ikot Ekpene” were attacked, leading to the injuries of members of the party. Narrating further, Nyong reports that it was this:

Vengeful crowd that later returned to Uyo to unleash terror on their perceived opponents, attacking and destroying every government personnel and vehicle. (*ibid*)

Individual’s property were not spare as well. As a matter of fact, this was a serious conflict which should be closely examined to ascertain the fact that urbanization is a source of conflict. Using structural theory of conflict which states in parts, that conflicts occur based on how the societies are structured and organized leading to political and economic exclusion is a testament to the reality that political exclusion as has been experienced in Uyo by a certain



class, is no doubt a part of urbanization process. Also, the structural theory of conflict further credits the fact that the then (key) opposition leader who was a member of the then ruling party felt excluded and decided to pitch his tent elsewhere bringing about further conflict.

On the part of the ruling party, Realist Theorists like Morton Deatch and Koestler uphold that human defects pushes humankind into behaving negatively sometime to the extreme; that leaders must defend their basic interest (in this case the re-election bid of the sitting governor) and ensure self-preservation using any means necessary. Considering the comfort and the euphoria of being the ruling party, Johnson's systemic theory states that, conflict should be examined in the social context within which it occurs as a result of changes in peoples' material comfort. Thus this was to forestall such change.

## Conclusion

Given the content of the discourse so far, the study has gone to show that conflict is an inextricable element in urbanization processes. Also, the study has illustrated the position that Uyo urban process was actually initiated by colonial administration, most specifically when Uyo gained urban status in 1919. However, as a matter of fact, successive governments came up to further its urbanization processes up to what it has become in this twenty-first century.

Further, the study has shown the nexus that exist between urbanization and conflict. In fact, it depicts various types of conflicts as well as drew instances of how these conflicts have enhance urbanization in Uyo. Thus, just like it has been noted by scholars, that conflict is in itself a vital ingredient of human existence, it is safe to assert that if any society seeks to grow and even beyond growth, to development, such a society must see conflict as an inevitable attribute which without doubt must be managed properly in order to enhance its usefulness in every ramification. This is not far from what is obtained in Uyo, the capital city of Akwa Ibom State.

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