

POPULATION DRIFT, CRIME RATE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN UYO CAPITAL CITY OF AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Across the globe, urban development resulting from policies of government on urban renewal or expansions, had, most times, engenders population drift rural communities with concomitant incidence of crime rates in the area. The study investigates the implications of population drift and crime rates in the development of Uyo Capital City in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The attribution theory of Kluegel and Eloit was tested on a purposive sample of 120 respondents selected from eight (8) communities of Uyo and Uruan out of the five (5) LGAs of Uyo Capital City Development Authority comprising Uyo, Uruan, Itu, Ibesikpo and Ibiono Ibom. Data obtained was analysed using independent t-test analysis. Findings underscore problems and challenges of migration of the skilled and the educated people from the source areas to the urban depriving the rural areas of the human capital with increase in crime rates and other social problems in the urban area. The study concludes with recommendations that development projects and infrastructural facilities should be extended to rural areas to aid and facilitate employment opportunities and address poverty which will dissuade population drift and attendant crime and underdevelopment not only in Uyo Capital City, but Akwa Ibom State in general.

Keywords: Population Drift, Crime Rates, Socio-Economic Development, Uyo Capital City Akwa Ibom State.

Introduction

Over time, there had been history of population drift of one place to the other. This drift could be internal or external movement and in most cases is attracted by socio-economic factors. Studies in Daniel (2011), reveals that demographers often draw a distinction between internal population drift (i.e. the movement of people across specified boundary within a country for the purpose of changing home) and external (i.e. movement of people between countries or international migration). Though there had been a

change of pattern as a result of government policies of urban renewal and extension, it was observed that the dominant pattern in internal movement is from rural to urban areas (Ekong, 2011). In Nigeria and other West African countries however, movement of farmers between rural areas, or rural-rural is equally very significant (Udo, 1975) and important. However, whether in rural-urban, rural-rural, or (in rare cases) urban-rural movement of people, population drift is basically a reflection of the imbalance in opportunities and life chances which exist

between places. Salvatore and Rama (2018) in their studies on urbanization had observed that naturally, urban development often cause population drift as people move to cities for better opportunities, and sometimes, where the urban infrastructure and social services are strained up, often lead to over-crowding, unemployment, poverty and increased crime rates. The urban development resulting from population drift, as posited by Zheng, Li and Zhang (2020) sometimes have both positive and negative effects on crime rates.

Positively, Hinkle, Berg and Beswick (2019) opined that urban areas tend to offer more employment and economic opportunities, reducing the desperation that can drive individuals towards criminal activities, while on the other hand, as observed in Paternostro and Maro (2022), increased poverty and inequality, particularly in slums where residents may resort to crime as a means of survival or economic advancement. It is quite obvious here that study on population drift concludes that people move primarily for economic reasons. In quest to avoid the consequences of population drift, governments of most countries, according to Effiong (2024), have adopted some policies of enhancing employment generation and that of increasing wage balance in accordance with the sustainable development goals agenda to discourage the drift and its effects on the society.

In Akwa Ibom State, studies, such as Ekong (2003); Daniel, Udom (2016) and Effiong (2019) shows that most rural communities experienced population drifts as a result of dwindling economic burden which affects living and educational standards, skills acquisition or transfer and employments generation which either push or pulls the people to move out to find commensurate opportunities in the urban areas.

Observably, the Uyo Federal Constituency, upon the establishment of Uyo Capital City Development Authority by Edict No. 13 of 1988 of the Laws of Akwa Ibom State Government, had in the past ten (10) years, consistently experience increased population drift occasioned with high incidence of crime rates, unemployment and the

inequality in access to opportunities and properties, resulting from the urban renewal extension policies of government on road constructions and structural development in the area. The situation which according to Okorie, Okon and Nkeme(2022), has not only posed serious development challenges in the urban, but, the depleting effect on the on the source of agricultural products which basically comes from rural areas.

However, in as much as urban development proven worthwhile by enhancing livelihoods, previous studies have not assessed the overall impact of population drift in their review in Uyo Capital City of Akwa Ibom State in particular. Therefore, it is against this background that an idea is conceived in the study to assess the challenges of population drift and its implications on development in the area.

Conceptual Clarifications

Throughout history, population drift or movement has been an important cause of population change, crime rate which has different implications on development. This has been the assertion of Bertrand (1967) who affirmed that a given migration, though might not affect the total population of the world, can however have a drastic effect upon the population of the given country. Deliberating on the universal nature of population movement (i.e., the cosmos nature of the phenomenon), Ekpenyong (1992) pointed out that this is a worldwide phenomenon involving most categories of people, rich or poor, educated or illiterates, from all parts of the country, advanced and underdeveloped, backward regions and even in some cases from beyond the national frontiers.

Population drift in ancient times was for the most part, by small groups such as tribes or clans. In contrast, modern migrations is generally by individuals or families who faced challenges ranges from displacement caused by either environmental hazard, urban renewal policies, unemployment and social services provisions in destination areas, people are constantly on the move and they engage in different types of movement. While some are short distances,

others engage in long distance movements. However whatever pattern it may assume will affect both the place of origin and destination.

Population theorists have made various efforts to expound on the intricacies of population drift especially as it affect such vital issues as who moves as well as the causes and effects of the movement. Ekong (2003) noted the difficulty often faced by students and theorists of the phenomenon when seeking obsolete causes of movement Daniel (2016) observed a seeming consensus against determining causation that connotes absoluteness because it is usually difficult to cite a factor as the absolute cause of population growth. For Daniel, focus should be on what he called correlates of population drift, which refers to factors that are systematically related to the phenomenon of population drift has well as the challenges on the source and areas of destination.

Population Drift Defined

It has already been mentioned that population drift is an obvious phenomenon throughout the world (Ekpenyong, 1992). It is a gradual movement of people that lowers the population in one area and increases it in another which can be caused by a number of change phenomena, such as differential number of offspring left by different members of a population so that certain population increases or decrease over others. Population drift can result in a significant change in population frequency in a short period of time. It is a short or long distant movement which leads to relocation across space, with the aim of residing temporarily or permanently in a new place.

Another point to note is that population drift is the systematic (as opposed to random) movement of individuals of a stock from one place to another. The point just made here triggers off the issue of selectivity in the process of the movement, which shall be revisited. When groups of people migrate together, especially in some given time period, from one country, place or locality to another, for the purpose of establishing a new or semi-permanent residence, it is termed drift.

From all of the above, it becomes obvious that population drift involves more than just spatial movement, but extends to involves the reasons for leaving the source region, the expectations at the destination region and all intervening factors that form the total correlates that complete the account for explanation of the concept, and as well as the experience at the source and destination regions.

Crime Rates Defined

Crime as defined in Macionis (2003:206), is the violation of criminal laws enacted by a locality, state, or the federal government. According to the author, the major kinds of crimes likely prevalent in most urban areas are: *crimes against the person*, which are crimes that direct violence against residents (rural or urban); and the *crimes against property* involving theft of property belonging to others. Property crimes include burglary or theft. This aligns with studies by Mwape and He (2021) that urban development is not without its concomitant effect of crime rates in every society, including the sub-Saharan Africa. In Mexico, similar research on the urbanization, economic development and crime shows that migration has significant force to play in this regard (Salvatore and Rama, 2018). In China, Zheng, Li and Zhang (2020) noted that the population drift had posed serious impact on economic development and crime incidences in notable metropolis in the country. Observations in the study of Paternostro and Maro (2022) reveals causality of economic development and crime in most recently developed cities.

Socio-Economic Development Defined

Population drift and crime posed some kind of with concomitant effects on socio-economic development and livelihoods of residents of rural and urban areas, alike. Development represents the emergence from a primitive state through progressive advancement in sustained socio-politico-economic growth and stability to improved standards of living for the citizenry (Effiong, Udoyen and Udoh, 2021).

Alternatively, Rodney (1978 cited Effiong, 2024) explains the term development to imply the capacity to improve the quality of human life which involves raising the standard of living of people (income, material well-being, infrastructural development, etc), as well as, increasing freedom of choice of goods and services. It is generally acknowledged by most scholars that the advanced societies enjoy rapid growth of urbanization. Thus, the increase in individuals' access to paid employment, (Daniel, 2016) It is true that development can be likened to a concerted effort geared towards improving the qualities of a deteriorated environmental system with a view to improving the living conditions of the inhabitants (Mboho and Udoh, 2018; Effiong, 2019). Therefore, national development is development that affects the entire society or country.

Reasons for Population Drift

People move for various reasons, depending on factors such as, the social condition of the source and destination of regions, time of movement, age distribution of those who moves and government policies which may affects renewal of the area and location of people, as well as issues bothering on social inequality as a potential cause. The following factors therefore are considered as why population drift occur.

Economic Factor

Population drift is closely associated with unequal distribution of resources, assets and income differentials. Also, relative deprivation plays an important role in movement decision(s). it is established that unequal access and ownership of resources and other assets is a leading factor in movement from one area for other opportunities. Subsequently, disparities in wages among rural areas can generate rural-urban drift as well as and also unemployment harsh economic situation and strain in social services provisions can cause population drift in a reverse pattern of urban-rural setting (Daniel, 2016).

From all of the above, it can be deduce that population drift is the result of the interplay of options available in the area of destination as compared to the source area. It is obvious that given the same economic and social condition example availability of social services, higher opportunity to earn ready cash or income and well being population drift can be reduced. Aligning with the Behaviour option theory by Udom and Tahirih and why population drifts, the study deduces that people's behaviour is influenced by the options available which are attractive to them.

Socio-Cultural and Environmental Factors

In addition to the economic basis that account for why people move, Udo (1983) put forward as part of the push factors, the desire by some people to escape from social and cultural imprisonment in homogeneous areas. This refers to some obnoxious socio-cultural practices which may cause unemployment, insecurity, secret cults and other related activities in the societies. Ekong (2003) in a contribution on why people move, considers other factors which he called adverse physical conditions in the environment, such as drought, flood, the menace of wild beasts and insect pests, infertility of the soil, exhaustion of pasture (in the case of nomadic cattle rearers). These have made people to move to less perilous geographical locations. Supporting the above position, Ekong, refers to the influx of aliens from Niger Republic into Nigeria asserting that this was partly what causes insecurity and crime rate the country. Those affected by any form of disaster had to move to other parts of the country to establish.

Still considering adverse physical conditions, as possible causes of uneven distribution of population, Ekpenyong (2000) considered the material factors as the foremost reasons for irregular distribution of the world's population. Ekpenyong identified such physical features like accessibility, climate, social services, availability of water, raw materials and cultivate soils as those that encourage settlement. To Ekpenyong, high altitudes tend to have a low density of population, reflecting the increased material and

psychological cost of living in such areas, except where in such areas are found important mineral deposit. Again, the author considers the world's plains and river valleys as being among the most favourable sites for human settlement. Revising the contributions of Ekong (2003), it is pertinent here to recall his seeming paradox that improvements in employment opportunities are equally potentially related to increased population drift.

Attractions of Population Drift

According to Ekong (2003) the attraction of urban areas is largely but not entirely limited to economic factors Daniel (2016) also note that population drift as attracted by social services and land factors like cost as well as quality of life differentials in those areas. The availability of jobs is critical to population drift. Daniel (2016) noted the availability of superior health care, educational opportunities and housing as additional attractions of population drift. In recent times, inter-ethnic conflict have forced population drift e.g. the Ukanafun/Oruk Anam people, Eman in Uruan have moved to Uyo, Ikono/Ini, Obot Akara and Etim Ekpo people have migrated to Aba and people of Uruan have being found settling in Uyo and other cities in Nigeria as a result of insecurity and communal clash. The tendency to migrate is correlated to sex, age, marital status, education and ethnic group. The trend reflects both the lack of jobs in the source areas and the increasing availability of jobs for women created by the labour-intensive manufacturing operations of multinational corporations and banks. The women also work as domestic helps and in other service jobs available in large cities. Female migration is often undertaken to improve the household's economic situation rather than the migrant's economic status (Ekeng, 2011).

Population drift involved mostly those who faced dislocation as a result of the effect of government policies on settlement patterns, their inability to pay for services enjoyed. In the 1950s, following the adoption of free universal primary education, there were unprecedented large population of primary school graduates at

independence. These young graduates migrated to major urban centres e.g. Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu to increase the number of job seekers. People also move into the cities to acquire education. In many state capitals and other urban centres, there has been a very rapid growth of the student populations at all levels. There has been considerable occupational drift. Both semi-skilled and unskilled people move to urban centres (Ekong, 2003).

Challenges of Population Drift on Development

Like any other social phenomenon, population drift has its positive as well as negative consequences or effects both on the source or donor region and the destination area. On the negative side, it is often held that it affects job opportunities, social services provisions as a result of the growth in population size and increases crime rate because of the depleting employment opportunities (Daniel, 2016).

With no commensurate substitution of capital in place of the displaced labour, economic productivity tends to fall in the source region. It however affects the level of development in the area. Population drift produces local labour shortage at the source regions, and leading to high population density and high rate of unemployment at the region of destination. The other negative effect of population drift particularly, includes the strain it puts on existing urban services such as water supply, transportation, health facilities and general sanitation, housing and employment opportunities. Native-born urbanites may be eased out of jobs as migrants are often willing to take on any job at relatively lower wages than these urbanites (Abasiokong, 1982; Ekong, 2011).

It is generally held that population drift of the skilled and the educated people deprive those areas of the human capital needed for the socio-economic development of the society. (Ekong, 2003). The movement of these educated and the able bodied men in the areas according to Ekong (2011), limits the investment opportunity and thus increases the level of poverty in the areas. To Ekong, these are people who would have the

vision to initiate development programmes which would have enhanced the socio-economic development of their community but where they leaves (living the area with a dependent age), the area is bound to be more striped with poverty; the deduction follows that high population drift is closely related to economic depletion and it leads to underdevelopment and crime rate in the area.

Theoretical Framework

Population theorists have over time put forward several frames, approaches and theories to explain the concept, clarify issues and expose factors that correlate or directly cause population drift. The Attribution Theory of Kluegel and Eliot (1986) is adopted as the theoretical guide in this work.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory deals with the rules that most people use when they attempt to infer the cause of behaviour they observe. The proponent of this theory James Kluegel and Eliot Smith (1986) stated that, people tend to attribute their own behaviour to the situation or circumstances in which they find themselves. To Kluegel and Eliot, people attribute their actions or behaviours to external factors such as the social environment, which may include government policies, economic arrangement, social structure and prevailing values to justify their behaviour.

Deducing from this theory, Ekanem (2000) attributed population drift to poverty occasioned by unemployment and other challenges which include insecurity caused by government insensitivity to the needs of the people. Daniel (2016) mention this problems to include poor transportation network, poverty, lack of good water and power supply, economic regression, environmental degradation, poor resource management and distribution. Other challenges according to Daniel include those related to health and education, women and youth empowerment, community development and inequality. Daniel (2016) however identified economic factor as the major indices of growth in

population and stated that the key to understanding peoples movement rest on the material basis of the society. Where the society is characterized by inequalities in wealth and power distributions among individuals, people are bound to move from such area(s), and therefore hindering the socio-economic expansion of the area.

Supporting this view, Kluegal and Eliot (1986) stated that human actions can be presented as a mechanical process directed by economic forces which follow iron laws. To Kluegal, humans are compelled to act in terms of the constraints imposed by the economy, and passively response to impersonal forces. To them, the superstructure is determined by the infrastructure, and human consciousness is shaped by economic forces independent of human will and beyond humanity control. The theory supports a radical transformation of the society if population drift is to be reduced. It suggested that government and private organizations as well as other developmental agencies should enhance measures of addressing poverty inequalities in order to achieve the liberation and empowerment of individuals living under abandoned designation as well as life without future. This will help the people to actively construct their own history and thus do away with the idea of moving to other areas for meaningful and purposeful opportunities.

Therefore in order to address the problem of population drift, wealth/employment generation opportunities, expansion of road network, health and medical facilities, school, water and power supply and other factors which will enhance a sense of good living should be made people oriented.

Population of the Study

The study population consists people of Uyo and Uruan Local Government Areas, Akwa Ibom State out of which 120 respondents are selected for the study; 10 respondents each from the twelve selected villages.

Table 1: Names of Selected Villages Studied and Response Rate

Villages	No. of Questionnaire distributed	Response rate		% of response	
		Returned	Not returned	Returned	Not Returned
Mbiabong Etoi	10	10	-	8.33	-
Ifa Atai	10	10	-	8.33	-
Mbak Etoi	10	10	-	8.33	-
Use Offot	10	10	-	8.33	-
Ifa Ikot Okpon	10	10	-	8.33	-
Obot Obom	10	10	-	8.33	-
Itiam Etoi	10	10	-	8.33	-
Ikot Inyang Idung	10	10	-	8.33	-
Ibiaku Isset	10	10	-	8.33	-
Idu Uruan	10	10	-	8.33	-

Source: Field Work 2024

Method of Data Analysis

The obtained data was analysed using the Independent t-test analysis since the researcher was interested in the relationship between variables.

Decision Rule:

If the calculated value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis would be rejected while the alternative hypothesis would be retained. But if the calculated value is less than the critical value the alternative hypothesis would be nullified while the null hypothesis would be accepted.

Results

Table 2: Independent t-test under analysis was used to analyse the relationship between population drift and development (n-120).

Variable	N	X	SD	t-cal
Population Drift	70	42.21		
Under development	50	39.12	4.61	2.78

Source: Field Work 2024

$P > 0.05$, $df = 118$, $+ Crit = 0.98$

The analysis in the above indicates that the calculated t-value of 2.78 is greater than the critical value of 0.98 when tested at .05 level of significance with 118 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated

value is higher than the critical value, this implies that there is a significant relationship between population drift and under development.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis as used to analyse the relationship between population drift, crime rate and poverty.

Variable	N	X	SD	t-cal
Population Drift	75	28.34	8.47	2.10
Poverty and crime rate	45	25.42	6.65	

Source: Field Work 2024

$P > 0.05$, $df = 118$, t . Crit = 0.98

The analysed data in the table above shows that the computed t-value of 2.10 is greater than the critical values of 0.98 at .05 level of significance with 118 degrees of freedom. This implies that there is a significant relationship between population drift, crime rate and poverty in the society.

Findings:

From the analysis, it is observed that population drift is a function of under development, poverty, and crime rate poor social services and provisions. In the analysis, it is observed that there is a relationship between population drift and underdevelopment. This findings indicates that where the educated population drifts, it has a dwindling effects on the community's development. Ekong (2011), supporting this position noted that drift of population affects the development of communities. To Ekong, people move because of unexpressive indices of development.

According to Ekong with the depleting state of development in our society the people are left with no option than to move. Aligning these findings with the Healthcare utilization model, is documented by Moses and Udom (2024) the findings indentifies some predisposing factors – enabling factors and Need factors which causes population drift. It is therefore, these factors that the study recommends be provided in the source regime to reduce the effects on both areas.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study on the Challenges of Population Drift Crime Rate and Implications for Development, explores the socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions in our society and the effects of this movement on the economy of the source. Population drift especially have been seen as a product of asset inequality, unequal distribution of resources and socio - cultural and environmental challenges.

Over the years, a good number of indigenes have moved to various parts of Nigeria and beyond. According to Akpan (1988), many reasons

have been adduced to why people move and much striking is that the economic base of the society is a potential reason why people decide to more. Obviously, the attendant harsh conditions in some part of our country, posed partly by poverty, inability of the agricultural sector to provide a corresponding means of livelihood for the rapidly growing population that is tied to unemployment, poor social services provision contributes in no means measure to this movement. Ekpenyong further heralded the consequences of this phenomenon as including cost of survival, under development and food crisis.

After taking a compendium of the contributions to this aspect of the work, it could be safely drawn that population drift, whatever shape and shade it assumes, is underscored by wage differentials between regions. Lending more support to the economic factors that evoke migration. In the theoretical framework, the attribution theory of Kluegei and Eliot (1986) has been adopted in this work. This measure is taken so as to bring about a composite deduction on why people move. The theory guarantees a good blend as it considers a combination of factors in capturing the correlates and challenges of migration.

The implications drawn from this paper towards addressing the challenges of population drift are as follows:

- i. That population drift is related to the level of academic attainment of those that moves. It posits that for our Communities and State to overcome the problems and challenges of population drift and underdevelopment, population drift should be discourage. This according to the paper could be achieved through government and private sectors partnership in the development of human capital projects.

- ii. Development projects and infrastructural facilities should be extended to all communities to aid in job creation. Where this is done, would create employment opportunities, address poverty which will dissuade people from migrating and therefore caused other social problems.
- iii. The study also offers that poverty and population drifts correlate which implies that for us to have a stable economy and developed society, the government should institute poverty alleviating projects, provide incentives to farmers and infrastructural development which will help to reduce the scourge of poverty and therefore reduce the level of drift in population.

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