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## **MIGRATION, URBANISATION AND CRIME RATES IN NIGERIA CITIES: A STUDY OF LAFIA METROPOLIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The influx of people to any area raises many problems. The concentration of population in Lafia city is very alarming and this was largely due to migration with attendant problem of crime increase. It is important to find out if the extent of crime rates can be explained in terms of such factors of migration and urbanization. Multi-stage technique comprising cluster, purposive, systematic and simple random sampling were used for the selection of the respondents. The method includes questionnaires, in-depth interview and direct observation was applied in the study. From the findings, the study concluded that the phenomenal growth in urbanization in Lafia city and the inability of the urban area to be able to utilize/absorb the urban labour that was created through the process of urbanization. A serious malady responsible for urban unemployment and the attendant problems like crime is the staggering rate at which young people migrate to the city. Therefore, an attempt should be taken to embark on planned development whereby rural areas would be developed relatively and have basic social infrastructures that can attract and sustain the population in form of return migration. Also there is the need for industrialization particularly agro-allied industries should be developed to stabilize the process of urbanization in Nigerian cities, this will greatly reduce crime rates.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Despite various researches on rural-urban migration in Nigeria, it has continued to be a recurring pattern in the equation of the nation's socio-political economy. In this study, rural-urban migration will be highlighted as one of the most perplexing dilemmas of the development experience. It is evidently clear that urban areas have grown rapidly, often at rates unimagined in history. In most countries of the world, especially in the developing world, urbanization has become an integral part of the growth and development process. Unfortunately, many developing countries, including Nigeria, are still experiencing urbanization and its associated problems, which they hardly can control or manage. Nigeria is one of the countries in the world with very high rural-urban dichotomy. Although the nation is generally characterised by poor social amenities, both in quality and quantity, rural communities are disproportionately more disadvantaged than urban centres due to government neglect. Consequently, the number of rural inhabitants that migrate to cities with high hopes of overcoming powerlessness consistent with rural life is unprecedented, (Nwokocho, 2007). The growth in the size of cities often lead to higher crime rates, in the sense that certain social processes associated, with large communities – such as the Shaw and McKay found that rates of arrest for delinquency – as well as rates of adult crime, truancy, and mental disorder – were highest in the centre of the city and declined with increasing distance. This is to show that rates of crime are usually highest in areas characterised by low incomes, dilapidated and overcrowded housing, transiency,

unemployment, broken families, and minority groups. These areas are most commonly in the centre of large cities. The urban area is best described as a "*melting point*" signifies an admixture of diverse cultural orientations. In simple and homogenous societies the reverse is the case. There is no clear-cut or consensus about the expectation of the society. This is the genesis of crime and delinquency. The interest of one cannot be the interest of the other, therefore law-breaking becomes a notable phenomenon.

It is in the light of the foregoing that this study will examine various issues under consideration under the following sub-heading: statement of the problem, objective of the study, scope and significance, conceptual and theoretical framework, methodology and discussion of findings.

### **Statement of the problem**

The influx of people in any area or place raises many problems. The concentration of population often causes goods and services to be very expensive, particular when the demand is greater than the supply. When people continue to flock to the towns and cities, it inevitably means that many people must live in a comparatively small area. If the number of houses does not grow with the increase in population, rooms become very expensive and difficult to get. Frequently, impoverished and unskilled migrants pour into urban areas at a faster rate that industries and services cannot absorb them. These people remain jobless for a long time and the immediate result of this is social malaise which is especially evident in increasing disease, crime and violence. In these cities where many cases of robberies have been reported, crime is definitely on the increase. The question is what is responsible for this? Why does migration continue despite the widespread urban unemployment? These and other questions will be asked and attempt will be made to find solutions to them. It has been observed that most of the migrants who did not meet their expectations do not return back to their original area and hence looks for odd means of survival in the new area, some resort to hard work to make ends meet while the majority tries to survive by any means and so get themselves involved in crimes such as stealing, burglary, pocket picking, motor cycle theft, prostitution, etc. Some others become depressed and take to drugs and become nuisance in the society thereby increasing the rate of violence, rape incidences. Breaking of traffic rules and public disturbance.

### **Aims and Objectives of the study**

The primary intent of the study is to examine migration as a factor of urbanization and see how this affects or influence crime rates in the area. The study is to identify and access the impact of the various factors that affect crime rates in Nigerian cities particularly Lafia, the capital of Nasarawa State.

### **Significance of the study**

In a developing country like Nigeria where there is rapid urbanization, it is important to find out if the extent of crime rates can be explained in terms of such factors of migration and urbanization. In addition to research work in the area of study, it would enable us to isolate

the influence of these various factors and would provide us with the best explanation for variance in crime rates in other areas and those settlements without such development. It also bridge research gap and the result could be useful in policy formulation and implementation on crime prevention.

### **Scope of the study**

The central issues to be focussed upon in this study are specifically factors of migration and urbanization that influences the rate of crime in the study area.

### **Conceptual/Theoretical Framework**

Another major change taking place, specifically in developing countries, involves increasing urbanisation, especially in concentrations of population in the largest cities. The cities and towns are growing rapidly due to rural-urban migration while some cities may manage the growth process well; some of the concerns are about the threat of increasing morbidity and mortality, depletion of non-renewable natural resources, and increasing urban poverty and inequality (Soubbotima, and Sheram, 2000). Many of the real problems of population arise not from its overall size but from its concentration, especially in urban areas as a result of accelerated rural-urban migration. A more rational and efficient spatial distribution of national population thus becomes a viable alternative (Andrew, 1994). In summary, the 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries 21<sup>st</sup> century urbanisation was as a result of different conditions from that of Europe. The 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries manifest excess of conglomeration of people in urban localities over economic and service development. The quality of urbanisation in these countries depends on the ability to provide amenities i.e. schools, roads, health services, e.t.c. Unfortunately, dwindling national resources (revenue) in these countries have meant that most of their urban centre were not satisfied with these amenities as a result of this peculiar nature, various terms has been used to describe 3<sup>rd</sup> world urbanisation, i.e. *subsistence urbanisation, pseudo urbanisation, slums of hope, city of peasants*.

Current rates of urban population growth range from 1% per annum in the world's largest cities, New York and London, to over 6-7% in most African countries (UNDP, 2001). The major cause of this urban growth will not be natural population increase but the immigration of rural people. Almost 60% of less developed countries urban growth is due to rural-urban migration. How third world governments plan to cope economically, politically, and socially with such phenomenal urban population growth is crucial to the success or failure of their long-run development strategies. We must recognise at the outset, therefore, that migration in excess of job opportunities is both symptom of and factor to third world underdevelopment (Todaro, 1995). This situation is made worse by the decreasing economic incomes and spiralling external debts of many developing countries attendant upon fiscal austerity or budget constraints which compound most governments' burden of expanding and upgrading infrastructure and social amenities. The provision of infrastructure remains largely elusive because populations are growing much faster than the capacity of the public sector to finance massive investments that are needed to support rapid urbanisation. Added to this is the 'top down' approach towards development planning in the last four decades

(UNCHS, 1996). The impact of rapid urbanisation has indeed become a major threat to the quality and standard of living, urban environment, human health, crime and violence, and urban productivity (Leitmann et al., 1992; Abbott, 1996). It is therefore not too surprising that many basic features are non-existent, while the existing ones continue to deteriorate in quality. According to Onibokun (2004), urbanization itself is not bad, it is, in fact, an inevitable process which is part of the natural process of development in any nation. From available data, a strong correlation exists between the rate of urbanization and other indicators of development like energy consumption per capital, the contribution of the industrial and manufacturing sectors as a percentage of GNP, survival indicators (life expectancy at birth, infant and under five mortality), and the human development index in general. The sheer magnitude and intractability of urban problems in Nigerian towns and cities have brought to the fore the crucial issue of how to plan and manage our cities, with a view to making them liveable and sustainable (Olorunfemi & Raheem 2008). Migration might contribute to higher crime rates because of the disruption to the lives of the people who move from small towns and rural areas to large cities. However, research on the relationship between migration and crime has produced mixed results.

Clinard and Abbott, (1973) studies carried out in Uganda, Kuwait and several African countries have found that migration is associated with high crime rates. Migrants to large cities have higher crime rates than long-term residents of the same cities. The difference can be attributed to the disruption of traditional controls by family and religion, a high unemployment rate, and residence in high crime areas. The fact that migrants are most often young males, a group particularly prone to crime in all societies supports the relationship. This implies that movement often disrupts ties to family, friends, and community, and this may weaken traditional controls over deviant behaviour. In addition, there is usually more affluence in the place to which a migrant moves than in the place from which that person came, and this creates a sense of material deprivation conducive to crime. The relationship between migration and crime seems to depend on several factors, including the crime rate of the migrants prior to moving, the crime rate of the native-born population, and the problems of adjustment encountered by the migrants in their new home. Concern that the city might have a crime-causing effect did not begin with criminologists like Emile Durkheim (1897), Max Weber (1958), Ferdinand Tonnies (1887), and other Europeans sociologists who wrote about the changes that occurred as a result of the transition of societies from agrarian and village-based forms to industrial and urban-based ones. They proposed that during rapid social change, growing and expanding cities would be hotbeds of crime (and experience a number of other problems). David (1985) shows that crime rate per 100,000 people increase with the size of the community, with few exceptions. NCS victimization data indicates that the crime occur at higher rates in central cities than in sub areas. The growth in the size of cities often lead to higher crime rates, in the sense that certain social processes associated, with large communities – such as the Shaw and McKay found that rates of arrest for delinquency – as well as rates of adult crime, truancy, and mental disorder – were highest in the centre of the city and declined with increasing distance. This is to show that rates of crime are usually highest in areas characterised by low incomes, dilapidated and

overcrowded housing, transiency, unemployment, broken families, and minority groups. These areas are most commonly in the centre of large cities. In the urban areas people of diverse cultural background interact on regular basis with each other. Such complex societies often experience a situation of cultural heterogeneity. That is to say people view the same problem differently and react to same differently and provide different solutions to the same problem. The urban area is best described as a “*melting point*” signifies an admixture of diverse cultural orientations. In simple and homogenous societies the reverse is the case. There is no clear-cut or consensus about the expectation of the society. This is the genesis of crime and delinquency. The interest of one cannot be the interest of the other, therefore law-breaking becomes a notable phenomenon. Crime is channelled by a city’s routine social activity patterns and the structure of its transport network into some urban settings and away from others. Crime often concentrates in places that cluster criminal opportunities – shopping and entertainment areas, major transit stops, and neighbourhoods inhabited by relatively well-off, young and single adults. In seeking to understand why cities have higher crime rates, the theory of social disorganisation will be employed as a heuristic tool. Social disorganisation theory is concerned with the way in which characteristics of cities and neighbourhoods influence crime rates. Classical Chicago School Theorists, Shaw and Mckay in particular, were most concerned with the deleterious effects of racial and ethnic heterogeneity, residential mobility and low socio-economic status on an area’s ability to prevent crime. However, works of other researchers who adopt the macro social approach to the study of urban crime have identified a number of additional ‘disorganizing’ factors including family disruption and relative poverty (Sampson & Groves, 1989). Given this, neighbourhoods characterized by high levels of poverty or economic deprivation, residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, family disruption, poor housing conditions and low level of education are most likely to be disorganised and have higher levels of crime and violence.

### **Method and Design**

Purpose sampling technique was used for the selection of study site and respondents who participated in qualitative field exercise. Multi-stage technique comprising of cluster, purposive, simple random and systematic sampling techniques were used for the selection of the respondents, this method acquiesce to a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative approaches covering a total research participant of 120 male and female. The approaches comprising questionnaires, in-depth interview and direct observation was applied in the study. The study was clustered according to the demographic attributes of the study population. The cluster and multi-stage design is most appropriate for the study population for several reasons. Cluster action allowed for group specific responses to be observable for generalization. First, eight areas were purposively selected based on the population density. The areas are Angwan Tiv/Makurdi Road, Sabon Pegi/Lafia East, Ombi I & II, Bukan Sidi, Angwan Mangu/National Supply/Millionaires Quarters, Tudun Gwandara, Emir’s Road/Market/Doma Road, Angwan Maina. Using systematic random sampling, 15 household were selected from each area; a respondent was selected from each household using simple random sampling method. A total of 120 samples were thus selected. Ninety two questionnaires representing 76.7% response rate were duly filled and returned and used for

analysis. Qualitative data was coded and processed, while quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 12.

**FINDINGS**

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents 60.9% are males, the dominance in this sample can be attributed to the fact that males migrate more than the females because they are more adventurous. It was also maintained in this study that 39.1% and 26.1% are young between the ages 20-25 and 26-30 bracket. The table also indicated that 57.6% of the respondents are unmarried while those that are married are 19.6%. In otherwords, the unmarried respondents have the tendency to migrate from place to place in search of job or educational opportunities in the urban centres. From table 1, also the literacy level of the respondents is relatively low. Majority of the respondents 54.3% are holders of primary school certificate, school certificate, and grade II. In the table, it is clear that the higher the level of education the less the tendency to migrate because those with low education still have more years of schooling ahead. In contemporary Nigeria, there is a limited urban employment opportunity, therefore available positions are rationed by educational and professional skills; only those with 'good' educational qualifications have a chance of securing jobs. It can be observed from the table 1 that most of the respondents are economically poor a characteristic of rural-urban migrants. They are usually unskilled individuals, with little or no education whose rural opportunities were for most part non-existent because they tend to migrate from various income level seeking short term urban jobs which are not actually there.

Table 1: Socio Demographic characteristics of Respondents

<b>Sex</b>		<b>N</b>
<b>%</b>		
Male	56	
60.9		
Female	36	
39.1		
<b>Total</b>		<b>92</b>
<b>100</b>		
<b>Age</b>		<b>N</b>
<b>%</b>		
20-25	36	
39.1		
26-30	24	
26.1		
31-35		13
14.1		
36-40		10
10.9		
41-50		6

6.5		
51-60		3
3.3		
<b>Total</b>		<b>92</b>
<b>100</b>		
<b>Marital status</b>		<b>N</b>
<b>%</b>		
Single	53	
57.6		
Married	18	
19.6		
Divorced		12
13.0		
Widow/widower		9
9.8		
<b>Total</b>		<b>92</b>
<b>100</b>		
<b>Education</b>		<b>N</b>
<b>%</b>		
PSLC/WASC/GII	50	
54.3		
NCE/Diploma	25	
27.2		
B.S.C, B.A		11
12.0		
M.S.C, M.A		6
6.5		
<b>Total</b>		<b>92</b>
<b>100</b>		
<b>Income</b>		<b>N</b>
<b>%</b>		
1000 - 5000	43	
46.7		
6000 - 10000	20	
21.7		
11000 - 15000		10
10.9		
16000 - 20000		7
7.6		
21000 - 25000		5
5.4		
26000 - 30000		7
7.6		

<b>Total</b> <b>100</b>	<b>92</b>
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Source: Field Survey, 2012.

Motivating factors of migration to Lafia metropolis

Reasons for migration can involve all sorts of combinations of push and pull factors. Table 2 shows that the pull factors tend to act on the respondents more than the push factors. Migrants to Lafia metropolis moved from their local areas because of educational pursuit unattainable in rural areas or in their place of origin. This represents 33.7% of the total respondents. In Nigeria, the rural areas have been long neglected in terms of educational opportunities. In most cases, the urban areas are filled up with educational institutions of all kinds at the expense of the rural areas; Lafia alone have five (5) tertiary institutions (Polytechnic, College of Agriculture, School of Nursing, Federal University, National Open University Study Centre) and other tertiary institutions affiliates. No wonder then that youths move from the rural settings in search of better education available in the urban areas. Table 2 also reveals that 32.6% of the respondents migrated to Lafia city because of job opportunities. The question is, are the jobs there as envisioned by these migrants? Others 14.1% and 19.6% migrated for commerce and violence experienced in their local areas and other states around particularly from Jos, Yelwa-Shendam, Agyragu, Duduguru, Assakio etc.

Table 2: Respondents and motivating factors for migration

<b>Factors</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
Education	31 33.7	
Employment	30 32.6	
Commerce	13 14.1	
Violence	18 19.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>92</b>

Source: Field Survey 2012

Respondents were further asked of their perception about the rate of urbanization in Lafia in recent times. In table 3, almost 75% of the respondents were of the view that the rate of urbanization is high. 21.7% were of the opinion that the rate is low while 3.3% did not notice any difference.

Table 3: Respondents perceptions on the rate of urbanization in Lafia in recent times



<b>Rates %</b>		<b>N</b>
High 75.0	69	
Low 21.7		20
No Difference 39.1	3	
<b>Total 100</b>		<b>92</b>

Source: Field Survey 2012

Table 4 shows that one of the major causes of urbanization in Lafia is migration. 82.6% indicated that position. This was followed by natural increase that represented 17.4% of the total respondents.

Table 4: Respondents on causes of urbanization in Lafia for the past 7 years

<b>Causes %</b>		<b>N</b>
Migration 82.6	76	
Natural increase 17.4	16	
<b>Total 100</b>		<b>92</b>

Source: Field Survey 2012

Another issue of interest is the rate of crime in Lafia. 79.3% of the respondents were of the opinion that crime rate is on the increase as shown in table 5. While 18.5% and 2.2% said it was decreasing and no difference respectively.

Table 5: Respondents perception on how they see the rate of crime in Lafia in recent time

<b>Rates %</b>		<b>N</b>
Increasing	73	79.3
Decreasing 18.5		17
No Difference	2	2.2
<b>Total 100</b>		<b>92</b>

Source: Field Survey 2012

Respondents opinion were sought on whether rural-urban migration contributes to higher crime rates. About 76.1% either agree or strongly agree while 23.9 also disagree or strongly

disagree as shown in table 6. This suggests that rural-urban migration where there is limited employment opportunities can lead to increase in crime rate.

Table 6: Respondents perception on whether rural-urban migration contributes to higher crime rate

<b>Position</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>%</b>	
Strongly agree	39
Agree	31
Strongly Disagree	12
Agree	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>100</b>	

Source: Field Survey 2012

To properly assess the validity of the above claim, we shall link with another variable that shows whether there is a relationship between urbanization and the rate of crime in Lafia. Table 7 shows that 78.2% of total respondents strongly agree with the position that there is a relationship between urbanization and the rate of crime in Lafia. While 19.6% disagree and 2.2% were not decided. We can see that, even though some disagreed, the majority of the respondents were of the opinion that there is a relationship between urbanization and crime rate in Lafia.

## **CONCLUSION**

In Lafia Metropolis, the urbanization rate is alarming and this was occasioned by migration; influx of people from different localities for various reasons. Principal among them is education, employment, commerce. Added to these factors is that of violence that erupted in several localities both within and outside Nasarawa State. The consequences has manifested in several forms including the increasing rate of crime. There is limited employment opportunities, the available spaces are always and contiguously rationed by educational levels. Important cause of urban employment problems is the phenomenal growth in urbanization and the inability of the urban centres to be able to utilize or absorb the urban labour that was created through the process of urbanization. A serious malady responsible for urban unemployment and the attendant problems like crime is the staggering rate at which young people migrate to the city. The surge in urban crime witnessed in Lafia Metropolis in recent time might be attributed in part to the pressure of migrants who came with the expectation of getting something done but met with disillusionment and general unexpected frustration.

Crime should never be regarded as part of the characteristics of a city or country, but it should always be one considered along with other issues when studying migration, urbanization in developing countries.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Our findings show that crime rate increase considerably as a result of migration particularly rural-urban. Therefore, an attempt should be taken to embark on planned development whereby the rural areas would be developed relatively and have basic social infrastructures that can attract and sustain the population, in form of return migration. Also, there is the need to provide more employment opportunities in rural areas as well as the urban centres to accommodate a considerable labour force which will reduce the influx of people to the urban areas, thereby reducing congestions. Industrialization particularly agro-allied industries should be developed to stabilize the process of urbanization in Nigerian cities; this will greatly reduce crime rates. Also social amenities such as portable drinking water, electricity and infrastructures such as good roads, Standard medical centres should be made available to the rural areas to reduce the attractions of the urban areas. The welfare services of those in the rural areas should be taken into considerations by the Government to reduce migrations, Subsidies and incentives from government seldom reaches the rural areas which in turn makes the people in rural areas farther from government.

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