

# GEOGRAPHY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## A Festschrift

*In Honour of*

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## The Evolution of Uyo: A Nigerian Urban Area (1905 – 2015)

by

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### 1. Introduction

Uyo, a city which derives its name from one of the component families in Uyo village, “Nnung Uyo” is a large urban centre in the South-Eastern corner of Nigeria (Ema, 1989). At present, Uyo is the capital city of Akwa Ibom State. It assumed this status on the 23rd of September, 1987, when Akwa Ibom State was created out of the old Cross River State by the General Ibrahim Babangida's regime. Since then, Uyo has become a phenomenon with different interpretations. For instance, Uyo could mean any of the following, Uyo village, Uyo Local Government Area, Uyo Capital City and Uyo Senatorial District. Uyo village is one of the twenty-two villages in Offot Ukwu clan (Attah and Akpan, 2007). Uyo Local Government Area is made up of four clans, namely: Offot, Etoi, Ikono and Oku; Uyo Capital City consists of Itu, Ibiono Ibom, Nsit Ibom, Ibesikpo/Asutan, and Uruan Local Government Areas, while, Uyo Senatorial District consists of Uyo, Itu, Ibiono Ibom, Etinan, Nsit Ibom, Nsit Ubium, Nsit Atai, Ibesikpo/Asutan and Uruan Local Government Areas (Okpon, Ekanem and Esin, 2007, Eberfiak, 2013).

Landmarks such as Ibom connection and plaza, State Library, Udotung Ubo Street, government house (The Hilltop Mansion), are located in Uyo village, while Akpan Aendem market, Ibom Hall, University of Uyo (except the ravine section) and University of Uyo Teaching Hospital are not located in Uyo village, rather, they are located in Uyo Local Government Area. Also, Itam Peace Column and the yet to be completed Ibom Science Park are not located in Uyo Local Government Area, but in Uyo capital city. On the other hand, the Ibom Airport and the Ibom L'Meridian Hotel are not located in Uyo capital city, but in Uyo Senatorial District (Akpan, 2004).

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Uyo has evolved significantly since it was declared a colonial district in 1905 by the British colonial government. The most significant period of its evolution seems to have begun in September 1987, when it became the capital of Akwa Ibom State. Apart from the growth in infrastructure, the population of Uyo has grown over the years to the extent that people from all parts of Nigeria and some countries of the world now reside in Uyo and undertake diverse businesses and some of them have even claimed to come from Uyo, hence the popular slogan *Uyo nnyin*, (Uyo is our own). Through the process of urbanization, the landscape of Uyo has also enlarged significantly and other clans and Local Government Areas in Ibibio land have been engulfed in the process. Also, the traditional socio-political and economic structures of the people have given way to Western oriented institutions and values.

### 2. The Concept of Urbanization

The meaning of “urbanization” varies from country to country and from one scholar to another (Preston, 1979). According to Akpan (2010), urbanization originates in different places at different times and different ways and proceeds at different rates. The notion of urbanization according to Banks and Carr (1974) is complex, revolving around a number of related, but by no means identical concepts, exhibiting both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Quantitatively, it focuses on concentration of population and qualitatively, it denotes changes in life-styles. Hawley (1978) opined that urbanization is used to “refer to the growing organization of specialists who manufacture goods and provide services that are exchanged for products of surrounding regions”.

Urbanization has played a critical role in both theoretical and empirical studies of modernization and development. Banks and Carr (1974) asserted that urbanization is one of the key aspects of the increased size of cities, the enhanced political importance of urban residents, the concentration of cultural, economic and religious institutions in large cities and the growth of a distinctively urban way of life are almost everywhere identical explicitly or implicitly with the process of development. Bureaucratization and industrialization, even alienation and atomization, all processes associated with development, may or may not occur to a significant extent, but urbanization is almost always found. The World Bank and UNDP equally associate urbanization with development and conclude that the latter substantially results from the productivity of economic activities in expanding cities.

The strong association between urbanization and development derives from a number of factors mostly economic. In the first place, cities are formed because they provide cost effective advantages to producers and consumers, through agglomeration economies. Additionally, urban centres act as reservoirs of skilled workers, which are agents of development. The urban areas also afford the people the opportunities of cheap transport, social and cultural amenities. What these translate to is that urban centres are growth poles which magnetize the best in the country into their orbits including investment opportunities. Firms or new investments would like to be located in urban centres where there are infrastructural facilities that would aid

them to achieve optimum production or attain optimal capacity (Attah and Akpan, 2007).

Just as there is a positive association between urbanization and development, there is also the negative side, especially in urban centres that are not well planned. While it is a fact that cities offer cost reducing advantages of agglomeration economies and economies of scale, the social costs of a progressive overloading of houses and social services, increased crime, pollution and congestion tend to wipe out these historical urban advantages (Akpan, 2004).

The Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) (2001) defined “urban,” as a settlement with at least 20,000 persons. The Akwa Ibom State Government however grants urban status to Local Government Headquarters, having a population is as low as 10,000 (Uyanga, 1994). Akwa Ibom State is ranked among the least urbanized states in Nigeria. The 1991 population census report showed that only 12 per cent of the states' population of 2.4 million lived in urban settlements of 20,000 people or more. There were five such settlements, even though their names were not given by the National Population Commission. In addition to this low level, urbanization in Akwa Ibom State is of very recent origin. It dates back more a period of a little more than one hundred years ago (Akpan and Attah, 2010).

### 3. The Historical Background of Uyo

The history of Uyo village is closely linked with the history of the origin, migration and settlement of the Ibibio people. Some historians and writers, like Obioffiong (1956), Noah (1980), Udo (1983), Abasiattai (1990), have given accounts of the history of origin, migration and settlement of the Ibibio people. However, the most generally accepted version is that the Ibibio migrated from the Central Benue valley to Usak Edet region of the Cameroons before they dispersed to Ibom in the Arochukwu region of present day Abia State, from where they dispersed to the area now known as Akwa Ibom State. Other set of migrants who were sea-borne came in from the Cameroon through Oron, Eket, Ibeno, and the Uruan corridor (Ukpong, 1999).

The settlement of the Ibibio at Ikot Oku Ikono constituted the nucleus from which the various Ibibio groups dispersed to form the various clans such as Ikono, Iman, Nt, Ibibio, Offot-Ukwa, Etoi, Itam and so on. As a result of population explosion and resource conflict occasioned by the absence of the lack of water within the vicinity of Ikot Oku Ikono, gradual dispersal of the groups took place. One of the groups that migrated in-land was the Offot-Ukwa group. The version has it that the twenty-two Offot Ukwa villages in Uyo Local Government Area were established by the Offot Ukwa migrants (Obot, 2010).

However, there is another tradition of origin and migration of Offot-Ukwa which states that the people, or a section of them, migrated from Ukwá Nkasi in Western Calabar through Uruan to their present locale (Ekpenyong, 2014). The tradition has it that even as late as the 21st century, the people of Ukwá Nkasi still saw the Offot people as their kith and kin. In other words, anybody from the twenty-two

villages of Offot-Ukwa clan, including Uyo, is treated with special touch of hospitality in Ukwá in Cross River State till today (Attah and Akpan, 2007). Uyo village emerged as one of the twenty-two villages in Offot Ukwá. The village consists of three families namely: Nnung Uyo, Nnung Akpayak and Nnung Afia. The groups constitute the nucleus of Uyo city (Obot, 2012).

After the establishment of Uyo village, some people from the existing families dispersed to establish settlements in other parts of Akwa Ibom State like Uyo Itam in Itu Local Government Area, Uyo Afaha Nkan and Uyo Obio Itak in Ikono Local Government Area, and Nnung Uyo Idoro, in Oku clan, Uyo Local Government Area (Obot, 2012).

The political structure of the Uyo village began with the *idip ete* (literally the father's womb). This was the smallest unit made of the man, his wife or wives and children. The unit was patriarchal in nature and was headed by the man. The next level was *ufok*, meaning a collection of families that traced their origin to one father, while the third level was the *ekpuk* (extended family) and a collection of *ekpuk* made up the village. The next level was the *oduk*. Uyo and Aka both belong to Oduk Mbiokporo. Beyond this level was the Ikpaisong Offot Ukwá; the peak of the traditional political structure. All these levels of governments played requisite roles in the Uyo village. Powerful secret societies such as, *ekpo*, *ekong*, *idiong*, *ekpri akata*, *ebre*, also played significant role in the day to day governance of Uyo village. For instance, *ekpo* was the principal law enforcement agency in the village. These societies were not secret in the sense of crime syndicate or under-world organizations, they were secret in the sense that they had certain rights, rituals and ceremonies which were exclusively limited to and practiced only by their members or initiates. Some of their rituals and ceremonies were even unknown to non-members and were not performed in their presence (Akpan, 2016).

In addition, the people also used some traditional judicial instruments such as *mbiam*, (*juju*), *idiong* (divination), *ukang* (ordeal), *nnuk enin* (elephant tusk), *eyei* (palm frond), *eyeyen* (grand-children), *ukot* (in-law), *imaan* (ally) *nka* (age-grade) and *iban-isong* (women government). In the economic sphere, the people of Uyo were farmers, fishermen, hunters and traders. Like other Ibibio, they engaged in both short and long distance trading and local crafts like palm wine tapping, smithing, basketry decorations and so on.

### *The British Trading Enterprise and the Evolution of Uyo*

As noted earlier, Uyo owes the origin of its urban status to colonialism and the activities of the British traders who wanted to establish trading posts in the hinterland and not the coasts in order to deal directly with farmers and local traders. While slave trade needed seaports and coastal facilities to thrive, the “legitimate trade” in agricultural produce needed closer association with people in the hinterland. Few decades before the end of the 19th century, slave trade was abolished and replaced with “legitimate trade”. The bulk of goods that serviced this trade were mainly palm produce (palm oil and kernel). These goods were mostly produced in the hinterland

and not the coastal areas. For instance, Itu, which once had a big slave market lost out because it was located on the coast. Other coastal locations like Ifiayong along Nwaniba shared the same experience. The loss of Itu and Ifiayong became Uyo's gain (Attah and Akpan, 2007).

In the calculations of the British traders, missionaries and colonial administrators, Uyo was the place to do business. Its nearness to the sources of goods and its centrality facilitated its emergence as an important administrative centre in the Lower Cross River Basin. Consequently, goods and services passed from *Esuk Uyo* to most parts of today's Akwa Ibom State. According to Akpan (2004), with the increase in the volume of trade in Uyo and the influx of traders to the place, socio-economic services expanded rapidly. First, a rendezvous was created at *Itak Uyo*, literally translated to mean the base of Uyo tree, for traders and travelers. The place was located at Wellington Bassey Way by the present Akpabio Street. At that junction was what may be termed today as a hotel and plaza. It had a bicycle repairer's workshop, a barber's shop, a bar and restaurant. Indigenes of Uyo village like Etim Etok Akpan (the father of Joesco) were prominent service providers at the "plaza".

The junction was a beehive of activities because apart from its nearness to Uyo beach, the road that later became Brooks Street (now Dominic Utuk Avenue) was a major outlet to Ifiayong and Oron. Travelers going to Ifiayong and Oron had to pass through that road (Brooks Street) to Urua Edet (around present day Ikot Abasi Street by Udotung Ubo Street), before continuing their journey to Oron. The Ibom Connection, which later became the economic hub and business junction of Uyo, was merely a T-junction with a straight road from Abak Road down to Wellington Bassey Way. Another one from the Ikot Ekpene Road section joined it to form the junction. That was why the junction was popularly called *Asaka Nta*, meaning a tiresome Road. By the early 20th century, the present day Aka and Oron Roads were not part of the junction.

### ***The Missionary Enterprise and the Evolution of Uyo***

On the 10th of April 1846, the first group of Christian missionaries led by Rev. Hope Masterton Waddell arrived in Calabar, sponsored by the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. For the first fifty years or so, they confined their activities in Efik communities, particularly along the banks of the Cross River and the Calabar River. On the 6th of October 1887 – forty-one years after the first Presbyterians – Rev. Samuel Alexander Bill, the founder of the Qua Iboe Mission, now Qua Iboe Church, (aka United Evangelical Church) arrived in Calabar from Belfast, Northern Ireland. His arrival was the result of an appeal written to Britain by some chiefs from Ibeno. Having established his headquarters in Ibeno, the mission expanded its influence along the banks of the Qua-Iboe River and later, other parts of Nigeria (Ryan, 1987, Akpan, 2016).

The planting of the Qua Iboe Mission in Uyo is associated with the missionary activities of Rev. Jimmy Westgarth. Rev. Westgarth established a church in Ikot Otong Nsit in 1909, but left after the death of his wife in the same year for Aka

agents to interfere in their political, social and religious affairs or to exercise authority over them. With the opposition to British penetration and authority, and Britain's own imperial designs, the protectorate government under Commissioner Ralph Moor (1896-1903), resolved to subdue the people by force as a prelude to effective colonial administration (Abasiattai, 1990).

The activities of the expeditionary force became merged in the turn of the century with the British plans to subdue the Aro-Igbo people. The missionaries and colonial officials erroneously believed that the Aro-Igbo had pernicious influence over the Ibibio, Ijaw and Ejagham neighbours as resident and itinerant traders and custodians of the notorious *Ibin Ukpabi* (Long Juju) of Arochukwu, which these neighbours occasionally consulted. The British blamed the oracle and Aro influence for the slave trade, warfare and social instability in the region, and for the people's opposition to British penetration. The British officials, therefore, concluded that "destroying the oracle and Aro influence, would help facilitate the imposition of British rule over the Cross River Region, opening up of the country and spreading Christianity. Accordingly, a four-columned expedition invaded Arochukwu in November, 1901, destroying its oracle (Anene, 1966, Udo, 1983, Abasiattai, 1990).

The troops undertook a general "pacification" of the surrounding community. As far as the Old Calabar Province was concerned, the so-called "Ibibio Column" under the command of Captain Morrison, marched through Itu, Ediene and Nkwot to Ikot Ekpene, where a camp was pitched in March 1904. Towards the end of 1904, the troops were used to suppress some "truculent" Annang groups "South and West" of Ikot Ekpene. From Ikot Ekpene, under Major Trenchard, the expedition struck North-West towards Itu as far as the Iyere River and then swung round Westward through the present Uyo District (Abasiattai, 1990).

A colonial source records Major Robert Brooks' attempt to penetrate Aka and Uyo from Ukpum Abak, in order to establish the imperial presence thus:

*The territory occupied by the Offot first came in contact with government when Mr. Brooks opened up the first part of Uyo District, as now known....In 1905, another column pushed north and Brooks was detached from the main column when "it reached the Qua Iboe River with the instructions to start a new District to be called "Aka" (N/b) Aka is a village with a large market place situated on the Uyo-Ikot Ubo road about two miles from Uyo Cross Roads), he went there but as he could not get in touch with the natives, he threatened to hunt them out. He then went back to Ukpum, but on the way, he was ambushed. In the skirmish, two carriers were killed and several soldiers wounded. The Offot lost at least a dozen men. The chief was caught and beheaded. A fine of 7,000 manillas was imposed and paid. A few days later, twenty two villages came in and Brooks went in search of a site for the new station. He finally reached Uyo and guided by the chiefs,*

- pushed through the bush till he reached the site of the present Rest House. Here a house was built and a prison on the site now occupied by the Assistant District Officer (Wetherell, 1933).

The report added that:

....The District Officer started with an imprest of 50, and after paying troops, staff, prisoners food and dashes, had 600 at the end of the first month. By 1909, the District was almost as it is now (1919). In the civil service list of that year, Uyo is given as having an area of 1,000 square miles (Wetherell, 1933).

Apart from Robert Brooks, the pioneer colonial administrator of Uyo district, some other colonial officers who administered Uyo District include O. J. Jones-Lyod, E. S. James, E. N. Mylius, S. L. Knight, Milburn, D. Bayley, Mann, Kay, Lt. Commander S. E. Johnson and March (Ema, 1989, Uyanga, 1994).

#### 4. The Evolution of Uyo after the Pacification

Uyo metamorphosed into a small sub-urban area, its core settlement comprised Uyo (Nnung Uyo, Akpayak and Nnung Afia), parts of Aka and Oku. Akpayak was located around the present Brooks Street and Wellington Bassey Way, while Nnung Uyo covered the area that the Government House occupies, the present area of Ibom Plaza, up to the beginning of Abak and Ikot Ekpene roads. Ikot Afia was situated about one kilometer from the Ibom plaza along Aka road. South of Uyo and about three kilometers from the present Ibom Plaza was located Aka village with two main wards, namely; Ifia and Ibibit.

Uyo was given the status of an urban centre in 1919, when it was graded as a third class township with a prescribed coverage of sixteen square kilometers (Uyanga, 1994). The responsibility of the District Officer during the colonial era concentrated mainly on the enforcement of the principles of racial segregation and a few sanitary regulations. They were to ensure that in any second or third class township, the buffer zone between any European Reservation Area and the African section was at least 440 yards (402 metres) broad and also that no European settled in a non-European section (59 to 61 of the Township Ordinance of 1917). From 1919, the following settlements also formed part of Uyo Township – Ikot Akpan Oku, Ikot Ntuen Oku, Ewet, Anua, Ibiaku Offot, Adaha Eyop, Iboko and other wards of the present Four Towns (Afaha Inang) (Mabogunje, 1968, Uyanga, 1994, Obot, 2012).

The movement of Chief James Udo Eka (later known as the father of cooperative societies in Eastern Nigeria) and his relations into a portion of Oku land about 1.0 kilometre from Nnung Uyo along the present Ikot Ekpene road in the 1920s, brought one of the settlements of Oku clan into the sub-urban area of Uyo. Uyo district soon evolved administratively to cover mostly Offot, Uruan, Ikono, Etoi, Asutan and Ibesikpo clans and later the area that constitutes the present Nsit Ibom, Ibesikpo/Asutan and Uruan Local Government Areas (Ema, 1989, Obot, 2012). In the 1920s, the first post office was located close to the District Officer's residence, but

by 1928, it was relocated. Up to the 1930s, all the government offices were located close to the District Officers' residence. The Native Court was first situated close to the original location of the post office before it was moved to present location of the Judiciary headquarters, the first federal prisons still occupies its location. In the 1920s, the first storey building was built by Obong Thomas Udok at No. 1 Barracks Road (now Wellington Bassey Way), Obong Inim Etuk Akpan built another one at No. 96 Aka Road, in 1945, Ete Paul Etuk Akpan built his own in 1947, while Obong Asuquo Utuk erected his own in 1949 along Abak Road (Udoma, 1987, Ema, 1989).

The communication routes in Uyo consisted initially of only footpaths. Major footpaths linked prominent settlements, village squares and market places while the minor ones connected small wards, minor recreational places, streams and farmlands. The first motorable route was Barracks Road (Wellington Bassey Way), which led to the only administrative area of the town. It was followed sequentially by Ikot Ekpene, Abak, Aka, Nwaniba and Oron Roads. The road from Ikot Ubo through Ibesikpo which continued as Aka Road into Uyo was completed in 1913. Before 1920, Ifiaiyong which used to be a very important riverine port was only reached through Ikpa until Nwaniba Road was constructed. It was only then that Akpan Akpan Nwa, who was the first car owner in Uyo and some Annang traders on palm produce, were able to reach Ifiaiyong. By 1932, Oron Road was constructed linking Uyo with Oron Town.

The people of Uyo and its immediate environs were originally farmers and traders but as the area was transformed into an urban environment, emphasis shifted to trading and other related commercial activities. Uyo used to be the centre for palm oil, kernel and other articles of trade which were evacuated through Nwaniba port to Calabar. Before the inception of colonial rule, three main markets existed – Akpan Ndem market, located along Aka Road at the junction of Etinan and Ibesikpo roads, Urua Edem Ade, located along present day Wellington Bassey Way and Urua Itak Uyo, near the Christ the King Primary School (CKS) along Wellington Bassey Way. The sitting of police barracks in 1939, near Itak Uyo market, created a lot of problems for the users of that market. The traders were unnecessarily harassed and exploited until the people had to relocate the market to the site where there was an open space in front of the present post office. At that time, non-indigenes were allowed to freely participate in the socio-economic activities of the town. Both the indigenes and the migrants jointly applied to the colonial authorities to assist them in the development of the market but the request was turned down on the ground that the site was too small. In 1945, when the market was relocated, Mr. Edet Inim was appointed the pioneer market master and the government finally assisted in its development. It continued as a periodic market held only on *Obo* and *Etaha* days until 1950s, when it turned a daily market. The market was originally called *Urua Mbakara* but later became *Urua Uyo* (Ema, 1989).

From 1939 when the indigenes allowed migrants to participate in the socio-economic and physical development of the area, spatial expansion became quite noticeable. By mid 1940s, the developed area within the urban limit covered about

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2.3 kilometres and rose to approximately 7.0 square kilometers in 1975. In the late 1950s when Uyo main market became a daily one, it started functioning as the nucleus of the Central Business District (CBD) and by 1965; there was already a CBD which tripled in size. The CBD followed the main axial routes of Ikot Ekpene, Abak, Aka, Oron, Nwaniba and Barracks Roads turning them into commercial roads. Using 1945 as the base year, Uyo grew spatially at the rate of 89 hectares per annum. By 1965, 1975 and 1986, the developed areas exceeded the base year coverage by 304 per cent, 652 per cent and 1,652 per cent respectively. By 1945 and 1965 Uyo had an average physical growth rate of 20 per cent (47 hectares) per year. Between 1965 and 1975 Uyo had an average growth rate of 11 per cent (80 hectares) per annum. The rate of spatial growth between 1975 and 1986 rose to 13 per cent, indicating that the developed area gained in average 209 hectares (2.09 square kilometers) per year (Ema, 1989).

In 1911, a government primary school was established along the present Wellington Bassey Way, the school was unfortunately closed down in 1930, owing to lack of patronage by the colonial government. With the establishment of a government practicing school along Ikot Ekpene Road, (the present Town Campus of the University of Uyo), Uyo Town had three out of the six public primary schools in the Division by 1945. In 1932, the government in collaboration with the Native Authorities established an Elementary Teachers' Training College, on the site of the Practicing School, at the instance of the Ibibio Union (later the Ibibio State Union). The institution was later changed to a Teachers' Training College until 1970, when it was upgraded by Gov. U.J. Esuene's administration to the status of Advanced Teachers' Training College. It was changed to a College of Education in 1974, and upgraded as the University of Cross River State in 1983, the institution became the University of Uyo in 1990 (Noah, 1980, Akpan, 2015).

The first secondary school Cornelia Connelly College (CCC) was established by the Catholic Church in 1944 at Afaha Oku with students' enrollment of less than one hundred. This was followed by Adiaha Obong Secondary Commercial College, at Eniong Offot, near Anua in 1963, also with less than one hundred students. By 1974, five secondary schools existed in the area with a total of 1,000 boarders. The number increased to six in 1982 with students' enrollment of 5,007 and by 1988, the number of schools stood at ten – one comprehensive, five secondary commercial and four secondary grammar schools, four vocational training centres also existed. By 1955, the number of primary schools within the densely-built-up area and its periphery increased to five, by 1965, eight, 1975 ten, 1981 nineteen and by 1988 twenty-two. In 1982, seven of the schools within the densely-built-up area had total pupils' enrolment of 10,002 (Ema, 1989, Obot, 2012).

When colonial administration began at Uyo, grown-up "native" girls were forced to supply government workers with water but later that responsibility was shifted to prisoners. It continued till late 1950s, when boreholes were sunk in a few government stations. Wells were also sunk in a few public places such as Uyo main market and dispensary along Wellington Bay. In 1959, the inhabitants of Uyo began

to enjoy public pipe borne water supply and the first public running tap was located within the premises of the only dispensary in town (Ema, 1989, Obot, 2012). In terms of health services, before the establishment of St. Luke's Hospital Anua, the leading provider of Western type of health services in Uyo was one Dr. Ekwo from Okon, Eket. His clinic was popularly known as *Ufok Ibok Ekwo*. In 1937, St. Luke's Hospital, Anua established in addition to the government dispensary along Wellington Bassey Way (Obot, 2016).

Commercial activities continued to expand outward along the primary roads of Ikot Ekpene, Abak, Oron, Nwaniba, Aka and Wellington Bassey. From the Independence Circus (Ibom Plaza), commercial activities extended beyond Itam junction (more than three kilometers) along Ikot Ekpene Road, up to Aka junction (3 kilometres) along Aka Road, 1.3 kilometres along Abak Road, 2 kilometres along Oron Road, 1.3 kilometres along Nwaniba and 0.5 kilometres along Barracks Roads. The daily influx of people from the immediate rural hinterland to the markets especially during the market days of the minor urban markets continued. Being an important commercial centre of on the South Eastern corner of the country and with its retail trade character, numerous provision stores, super-markets, liquor, book, shoe, textbook, electrical/electronic equipment, automobile and bicycle dealers abound. In the area of banking, First Bank (formerly Standard Bank) was the first commercial bank that was established in Uyo, it was located in Chief Thomas Udok's compound at No. 1 Wellington Bassey Avenue. Subsequently, other banks such as Union Bank, African Continental Bank, Mercantile Bank, and so on were established.

#### 4.1. The Evolution of Uyo: 1960-1987

In 1959, Uyo achieved the status of a provincial headquarters following the splitting of the Old Calabar Province into Uyo and Ikot Ekpene Provinces. Uyo Province consisted of the present Uyo and Eket Senatorial District plus Ikono and Ini (which were part of the old Itu Division). The province had a landmass of 3235.6 square kilometers and a total population of 352,353 persons in 1963. In 1967, the South Eastern State was created with the capital at Calabar. The state had two zonal headquarters at Uyo and Ogoja. Uyo later became the leading commercial, administrative and educational centre in the mainland part of the state. The condition resulted in rapid rate of integration which combined with natural population growth to give a dense population. In 1983, Uyo had a population of 557,154. Following the creation of Akwa Ibom State, in 1987, Uyo's zone of influence increased to cover a total land mass about 7247.008 square kilometers (Ema, 1989, Akpan, 2016).

The central spot in Uyo for night life was *ESSO Filling Station*, where *OANDO Filling Station* is now located along Oron Road, close to Ibom Plaza. All kinds of social activities including gambling took place there. Later, cinema business started in Uyo. The first of such venture was Diko Cinema, which was located in the building that a Pentecostal church known as Power City International along Nwaniba Road now occupies. One of the most popular hotels in Uyo was the

Ambassador Hotel, located along Ikot Ekpene Road, opposite the old Uyo motor park, and Authentic Hotel located on Oron Road. Later other hotels like the Catering Rest House at Wellington Bassey Way end, Hotel Rendevouz, Lord's Motel, Brownly Guest House, Premier Hotel among others were opened. In the late 1960s, nightlife in the town centered around *Sea Gull Night Club* on Okokon Etuk Street, *Independence Hall* on Abak Road by Udo Eduok Street. The mid 1970s saw the *Jubilee Night Club* on NEPA Line by Okon Essien Street and *Okedo Heaven Hotel* on Udotung Ubo Street. With the establishment of the University of Cross River State in 1983 came *Club Ballavista* located on Ikot Ekpene Road by Udobio Street. Sporting activities, particularly football also developed in Uyo. The game of football was introduced in Uyo by Robert Brooks and was made popular by one of the resident Catholic Priests in Uyo, Rev. Fr. O.O. Sullivan. As the residents of Uyo embraced the game, many football clubs were formed in the town such as Uyo Green Stars, Uyo Sparrows, Standard Bank Football Club, Uyo Pioneers and Jetimo Football Club (Obot, 2016). There was also the NEPA Football Club ran by the defunct National Electricity Power Authority, and the Explosive Football Club of Uyo, formed about 1978 and owned by a certain man that went by the name Expensive Sam Etim.

Throughout the pre-independence period, Uyo had no public electricity supply. Only a few wealthy individuals, educational and health establishments, government offices and staff quarters had electricity supplied by plants using petrol or diesel oil as the source of power. In about 1963, Uyo benefited from public electricity power supply for the first time. Up to 1974, electricity supply was from Aba-Ikot Ekpene-Uyo-Calabar 33KV overhead transmission line stepped down to 11KV for distribution, then further down to 415V along roads and streets for consumption. In 1974, Tesco Cozti Consulting Engineers placed the number of subscribers at 1,000, later, the number rose to 9,374. By 1974, the only big consumer was the waterworks but later medium size factories and numerous small-scale industries benefitted from public electricity supply. In 1976, the industrial sector of the old Cross River State received a boost with the opening of the Cross River Breweries Ltd, producers of Champion Beer and Champ Malta. The brewery became the first profitable government company in the state, created sustainable employment and extensively impacted on the evolution of Uyo. In addition, the Plasto-Crown Industry was established to produce plastic necessary packaging that the breweries required (Umo, 1985 and Ema, 1989).

In the mid-1970s, the commercial transportation sector in Uyo was transformed following the introduction of micro - buses known as "Nuco" (a popular bread of same shape that was produced in the town at that time). However, for safety reasons, the use of the vehicle for commercial transportation was banned by Uyo Local Government authorities. The abrupt ban triggered the emergence of motor bikes known as *akauke* or *alalok* as the most popular means of commercial transport in Uyo.

In 1986, an estimated number of residential compounds stood at 4,090 and in 1987, the number of residential buildings stood at 10,496. In 1985, buildings with

concrete walls and zinc roofs formed 75.31 per cent, wattle and daub walls zinc roofs, 16.31 per cent and wattle and daub walls with thatched roofs formed 7.31 per cent and others 1.0 per cent. Master Plan estimates for 1987 stood at wattle and daub with hatched roof 4.9, wattle and daub with zinc roof 13.1 per cent, sandcrete wall with zinc roof 79.1 per cent, sandcrete with thatched roof 2.7 per cent and others 0.2 per cent (Ema, 1986).

Uyo continued as a Local Government headquarters till the 23rd of September, 1987, when it became the capital city of the newly created Akwa Ibom State. Before the creation of Akwa Ibom State, Uyo Local Government Area was the primary hinterland of Uyo town. It has a land area of 914.309 square kilometers, 253 villages in eight clans and a projected population size of 557,154 and by 1989, had a population of about one million people. In 1988, the area had one university main campus, the University of Cross River State, two other post-secondary institutions, 38 post primary (four senior, 33 junior and one vocational training centre) and 159 primary schools. Fourteen approved Nursery Schools, two Schools of Nursing and Midwifery, two hospitals, eight health centres, five dispensaries and several clinics. Uyo was the second most industrial town in the former Cross River State and had industrial establishments such as the Cross River Breweries, Plasto Crown and so on. Numerous small-scale industrial establishments such as tailoring, welding and panel beating, printing, local crafts work, barbing, hair dressing, bicycle, motorcycle and automobile repairing littered the town (Ema, 1989).

#### 4.2. The Evolution of Uyo from 1987 to 2005

As noted earlier, on the 23rd of September 1987, Akwa Ibom State was created out of the old Cross River State and Uyo was named as the administrative capital of the new state. The first Military Governor of the state was Colonel Tunde Ogbeha. During his ten months tenure, he engaged in laying a foundation for the administration and a smooth take-off of the young state. The administration converted the Uyo Local Government office into the Office of the Military Governor, and made plans for the construction of roads and houses to ease the huge accommodation problem that faced the state. At the end of his tenure, Colonel Godwin Abbe, became the second Governor of the state, he built on the gains of the pioneer administration. The administration established the Uyo Capital Development Authority to oversee the planning and development of the state capital, projects commenced during the administration included Eniong/Itiam/Ewet Housing Estate, Government House/Office Complex, Ibom Hall, opening-up and construction of ring-roads across the state capital, the beautification of Uyo town, including the design and construction of Ibom Connection. Basic amenities such as water, electricity, health facilities were also given adequate attention (Ukpong, 2007).

Group Captain Idongesit Nkanga, served as the first and only indigenous Military Governor of the state from, the 5th of September, 1990 to the 2nd of January 1992. It is to the credit of the administration that tremendous changes in the physical

environment of the Uyo were effected. One of the flagship projects undertaken by the administration was the state secretariat complex, now known as Idongesit Nkanga Secretariat Complex. After the exit of Nkanga, Obong Akpan Isemin became the first civilian Governor of the state in January 1992. His administration made resounding impact in the delivery of infrastructural facilities and basic social amenities in Uyo and beyond.

Other military Governors, namely, Col. Yakubu Bako, Navy Captain Joseph Adeusi and Captain John Ebiye contributed their significant quota to the development of Uyo in particular and Akwa Ibom State in general. For instance, in the transportation sector, Governor Adeusi's administration redesigned and constructed the clumsy Aka-Etinan roundabout. Given the fact that housing as a basic need was becoming difficult to own among average citizens, the administration directed the gradual spread of the state-owned Akwa Savings and Credit Loans Limited to place access to its facilities for house ownership at the disposal of the people, this gesture facilitated the building of more houses in Uyo. The Ebiye's administration paid greater attention to the development of the industrial sector. It reactivated the Plasto Crown and Champion Breweries Limited in Uyo. More significantly, the administration built 100 low cost housing units in an effort to address the lingering accommodation shortage in the state capital (Ukpong, 2007).

Arc. (Obong) Vicor Attah, served as the second civilian Governor of Akwa Ibom State from the 29th of May, 1999 to the 29th of May 2007. The Governor paid focused attention to the development of Uyo capital city. The manifestations of development and modernization are seen all over the state in particular and Uyo in general. These speak glowingly of the modest efforts of the administration. Uyo (as a village, Local Government Area headquarters, capital city and senatorial district headquarters) is a direct beneficiary of the modernization revolution by the Attah's administration (Attah and Akpan, 2007).

According to Akpan and Attah (2007), there are many capital projects that have combined to precipitate the unprecedented transformation of Uyo. They include massive road dualization within Uyo, the construction of a Five Star Hotel and Golf Resort, managed by Le Meridien Group. The hotel project was in keeping with the desire to supply one of the international requirements for making the state an investment destination. In the area of housing, the government adopted the Public Private Partnership (PPP) approach to address the problem of dearth of modern and affordable accommodation. The government deliberately strengthened the state owned Akwa Ibom Property and Investments Company Limited (APICO) to deliver on the housing agenda. The Shelter Afrique Estate, the Osongama Housing Estate and the Akwa Ima Saving Housing Estate were initiated and completed by 2005.

Other significant projects associated with the Attah's administration included the environment and urban renewal (which tackled erosion and flood related projects, massive beautification of Uyo capital, the Uyo Capital City Water Project, the construction of world class four motor parks of international standard in Uyo Capital City, Phase II of the Idongesit Nkanga Secretariat Complex, the House of

Assembly Complex, the Nigerian Stock Exchange building, the Ibom Airport Project, the upgrading of the Specialist Hospital to a University Teaching Hospital, with the aim of providing qualitative health services to the citizens of the state. Also a new Judiciary office complex was built in Uyo, while the Akpan Andem modern market was built to increase the number of markets to two in Uyo capital city.

With the end of Attah's tenure on the 29th of May 2007, Barrister Godswill Akpabio became the Governor. Within the period, some roads were constructed in Uyo, as well as some overhead bridges to ease the flow of traffic. The urban renewal programme of the administration also affected the landscape of Uyo. In addition, a new Government House was built in Uyo. By 2015, many educational institutions particularly nursery and secondary schools had been established in Uyo. Also, many private hospitals came into existence. The Akwa Ibom State government built a specialist hospital in the state capital. In the economic sphere, the Central Bank of Nigeria now has a branch in Uyo, which is located in the banking district along Udo Udoma Avenue in Uyo (Udok, 2015).

## 5. Conclusion

Obviously, Uyo, like every urban city has evolved dramatically within the period of one hundred years as this paper has shown. By the end of the 19th century, Uyo still possessed rural characteristics but the early 20th century destroyed the traditional characteristics of Uyo and transformed the place into an urban centre. Urbanization has to do with the transformation of a rural area into a town or city with a lot of new houses and provisions of many social amenities. Urbanization process of Uyo, like most colonial urban centres in Nigeria is a colonial legacy. The agencies that pioneered the changing scenario were the British business entrepreneurs, the British colonial administration, and the Christian missionaries. The colonial government needed centres of administration in Nigeria for the effective control of the country, consequently the administrators created urban centres in strategic places in the hinterland. The establishment of an administrative office resulted in wage employment. In addition, the provision of a police post, hospital, post office, courts, schools, small scale-business, daily market, water supply, electricity, road network attracted a number of people to the new urban centre. The first wave of migrants came from the neighbouring villages and clans and later, domestic servants, workers of all categories, elites and providers of specialized services from far and near flocked into the town (Ema, 1989, Uyanga, 1994, Attah and Akpan, 2007).

Following the creation of the South Eastern State out of the old Eastern Region, Uyo became a divisional headquarters. It maintained that status until the 23rd of September 1987, when Akwa Ibom State was created out of the old Cross River State and Uyo was named the capital of the new state. In addition, Uyo is also the headquarters of Uyo Local Government Area. Succeeding indigenous administrations both at the state and local government levels have consolidated on the gains of the imperial agencies and Uyo has significantly developed. With much of the areas of Uyo village affected by urbanization especially in terms of available



spaces, new spatial arrangements has resulted in Uyo forming conurbation with the adjoining clans. In the process, these clans have submerged their particulars and their areas came to be called Uyo also. Thus, from a humble beginning as a village settlement in the adjoining areas of today's Ibom plaza, Uyo village grew in size and strength to incorporate, at least nominally, all five clans that make up Uyo Local Government Area. If one adds the Local Government Areas that make up the capital city and those in Uyo senatorial district, then, Uyo as a phenomenon is indeed larger in size than its image and foundation (Attah and Akpan, 2007).

The urbanization of Uyo has come with both positive and negative impacts on the indigenes of Uyo village. Positively, they become part of modernity which urbanized Uyo symbolizes. This gave them a head-start over other places in the Lower Cross River Basin. Urbanization also brought about cross-fertilization of ideas and cross culturalization. The later created urbane personalities and manners in the Uyo people. However, urbanization has affected the history of Uyo negatively. The ancient sites were destroyed to create space for infrastructural facilities. This equally affected the traditional institutions such as this *Okuku, Eteidung* and so on. Christianity, Western judiciary system and cosmopolitan spirit have conspired to erode almost completely, the traditional spirit of the people of Uyo (Akpan and Attah, 2007, Obot, 2012).

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