



## **Urban Planning and Management Issues that Affect Immigrants in Abuja.**

Micheal Mopa Egila<sup>1</sup>, Samuel Emmanuel Ayenajeh<sup>1</sup>; Joy Oyiza Obadoba<sup>2</sup> and Amos Atumye Alao<sup>3</sup>

**Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa, Nigeria<sup>1\*</sup>**

**Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Federal Polytechnic Idah, Nigeria<sup>2</sup>**

**Department of Landscape Architecture Bingham University Nasarawa State, Nigeria<sup>3</sup>**

**\*Email: [ojobadoba@fepoda.edu.ng](mailto:ojobadoba@fepoda.edu.ng)**

### **ABSTRACT**

The rapid growth of the urban population in Abuja has presented numerous challenges leading to the surge in rural-urban migration. The result is an overwhelming economic, infrastructural, and social conditions in the capital city, producing substandard quality of life for the residents. This study aims to enhance our understanding of the existing challenges associated with Abuja's urbanization as the Federal Capital. The paper delves into an analysis of these persistent challenges, their interconnected nature, and the exacerbation inability of the government to address these challenges effectively. The discussion focuses on the planning and mismanagement of immigrants, which has created gaps in the development of crucial social amenities and contributed to a decline in living standards. Moreover, the conclusion provides recommendations to address these challenges. It emphasizes the need to rectify urban planning issues, implement necessary measures to address migration, and untangle the complex web of bureaucracy in achieving sustainable planning.

**Keywords:** Urban Planning, Management of Immigrants, Urbanization, Urban Development, Abuja.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria's urban planning, development, and development system, particularly in Lagos, Calabar, Abuja, and a few other cities, has undergone substantial changes as a result of urbanization (Elleh, 2016). Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria, possesses a distinct urbanization trajectory. Starting from 1991, it assumed the role of the Federal Capital of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, supplanting Lagos as the former capital, and became known as the "FCC" or Federal Capital City. The Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) undertook the development of the FCC according to the 1979 masterplan for Abuja, designated as the New Federal Capital of Nigeria (FCDA, 1979; Uduak, Efanga, Ubokobong, and Uduakobong, 2020).

Abuja's population has experienced a steady and remarkable rise over the years. It grew from 113,000 in 1976 to 378,671 in 1991, and further surged to 1.4 million in 2006. (NPC, 2006). Due to inadequate housing and high rental costs in the capital, a sizable portion of this population tends to settle in the suburbs of the city, such as Kubwa, Karu, Masaka, and Nyanya (Uduak, et al 2020). In 2001, the urban growth rate of suburbs like Karu and Nyanya was recorded at 66.2 per cent, surpassing the growth rate of the entire Abuja region, which was 40.2 per cent. (Jinadu, 2004)

The Federal Capital Territory is expected to play a significant role in the country's economic development, like Lagos, due to its strategic location in the center of the country. Its advantageous positioning offers substantial potential for developing robust logistics networks to connect various regions effectively. (JICA, 2019).

However, since its creation in 1979, the Abuja masterplan has not undergone a thorough review up until 2007. There also exists a major difference between the plan and the actual development. Even though the initial planners of the city envision a city based on seven important principles: equal access, equal citizenship, environmental conservation, the garden city, functional city, effective regional development, and rapid national economic growth (IPA, 1979; Abubakar, 2014). There are worries that urban problems including slum development, pollution, environmental degradation, and traffic congestion have emerged and have a negative influence on economic activity and citizen's livelihood.

Built with urban policies and an emphasis on addressing urbanization issues in the middle of the 1970s. According to the Abuja Master-Plan of 1975, through the application of policies that advised combining the "three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and physical," Abuja City's urban planning policies is designed to promote sustainable urban expansion. This was done to ensure that its citizens would have equal access, a sense of place and integration, physical beauty, and an excellent physical environment (Ikoku, 2004 and Jubril, 2016).

In Abuja, conflicts related to urban space, distortion of the masterplan, unauthorized expansion, deprivation, uneven rights and access to the city, urban exclusion, segregation, and division are among the many instances illustrating how existing urban policies and practices have been unable to adequately address the adverse consequences of swift urbanization. (Ade and Afolabi 2013; Ebo 2013; Ibezem-Ohaeri 2013; Atonko, 2014).

Due to the inflow of new residents, there is an exceptionally high demand for residential accommodation thus an observed imbalance in housing supply and demand, which resulted in high rental prices (Agbola, and Alabi, 2020). The substantial housing deficits have led to a rapid increase in rents, overcrowding, units being sub-divided to accommodate more people, shared households, and the proliferation of small-scale private sector housing in the city's outskirts. Unfortunately, in many instances, this situation has also resulted in homelessness (Ikejiofor, 1998)

The concentration of government offices in city centers as well as the recent demolition project that successive governments have started to decongest the city center. As a result, migrants frequently relocate to places where their money allows them to do so. And this explains why, despite being the sole purposefully constructed metropolis in the nation, ghetto settlements like Bwari, Karimo, Gwagwa, and Lugbe are found in Abuja. Remember that studies have also revealed the appalling circumstances of urban housing in Nigeria (Abuh, 2021). Rapid population increase always results in subpar housing conditions and quality.

The rapid population growth brought on by migration was not adequately anticipated, which has resulted in the difficulties mentioned above. As a result, the study thoroughly evaluates how urban development and administration affect immigrants in the FCT. Considering this circumstance, the city of Abuja provides a valuable real-world context for studying the challenges linked to the insufficiently executed sustainable urban development policies. It serves as an essential area for strategic planning and management of immigrants in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), offering insights into effectively integrating the "three pillars of sustainability" into urban development planning, policies, and management. Moreover, the raised concerns underscore the importance of comprehending the social aspect of sustainable urban development and the necessary steps to implement effective management strategies for urban immigrants in FCT.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conceptual Context**

Many times, urbanization is viewed as the transition from a rural to an urban civilization, which signifies significant, irreversible changes in production, consumption, and how people interact with the environment (Allen, 2020). Urbanization is defined by the United Nations as a movement of people from rural to urban areas with population growth equal to urban migration (United Nations, 2010; Li, Peng, Yanxu, & Yi'na, 2017). Also, Urbanization can be defined as the process through which rural areas transform into urbanized regions due to the impacts of economic development and industrialization (Peng et al. 2010; Momoh, J., Akor and Haithem, 2018). Urbanization involves intricate interactions among

various processes that reshape landscapes originally characterized by rural lifestyles into urban-like environments. It encapsulates the progression of cities from rural regions, driven by economic growth and industrialization (Antrop, 2000)

Urbanization can be defined based on changes in either population or in the character of towns and cities. In terms of population growth, the term "urbanization" describes the gradual movement of people from rural to urban areas (UNDESA, 2014). It is crucial to note that different countries have different ideas on what constitutes an urban environment's important metrics. Therefore, it is essential to use caution when referring to urbanization as a general phrase for all societies. Due to the significant disparity between them, it is essential to exercise caution when making direct comparisons of urbanization among diverse societies. (Nsiah, 2005; UN-Habitat, 2010).

According to Peng et al. (2010), the primary difference separating urban and rural settings lies in the fact that urban areas boast significantly larger, denser, and more diverse populations, while rural areas, in contrast, are characterized by their smaller size, more spaced-out communities, and fewer distinct locales. Urbanization is believed to result from the convergence of social, economic, environmental, and political development factors, culminating in the concentration and expansion of larger cities. This process entails shifts in land utilization and a transition from rural to metropolitan modes of organization, governance, and lifestyle (Nsiah-Gyabaah, 2005).

## **2.2 Challenges, Consequences, Benefits of Urbanization**

According to the 2018 United Nations Human Settlement Programme assessment on the state of African cities, several areas of select African cities have substantial urban sprawl and the creation of urban corridors (UN-HABITAT, 2018). The already limited resource allocation is further reduced because of the growing urban population and the resulting decline in population in these rural villages. As a result, they are further sucked into the cycle of underdevelopment that fuels both the pull and push dynamics that drive migration and economic development. These rural communities' push factors include things that make it difficult for people to live good lives. Land degradation, a lack of sufficient land, unbalanced land distribution, droughts, weak health systems, excessive poverty, and religious strife are some examples of this. These factors - migration and a rise in population growth -have contributed to rapid urbanization.

### **Planning and Management of Immigrants**

There are numerous obstacles to urbanization in Nigeria due to rapid urbanization and uneven infrastructural development. The concentration of resources and development in urban areas, the ongoing flow of resources from rural to urban areas, the dearth of adequate long-term planning for the development of cities and rural areas, and the lack of continuity in the planning and implementation process all serve to exacerbate these problems.

The inability to undertake good long-term planning for the growth of cities and rural areas is partially caused by a lack of resources, capacity, and current data (Jibril, 2016). The Federal Government of Nigeria has frequently tried to put measures into place that will increase population while minimizing the problems caused by urbanization. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the Nigerian Vision 20:2020, the Transformation Agenda, and the 7-point agenda are a few examples of such development policies (Oluwatayo & Opoko, 2014; National Planning Policy, 2012). The focus of these national development plans, carried out by several Nigerian administrations, has been on the creation and execution of clear urbanization policies (Jiboye, 2011). They have attempted to address the issue of inadequate finance for the housing sector and have, to varied degrees, placed the sustained design and implementation of housing programs at the forefront of urban development (National Planning Policy, 2012).

### **Urban Planning**

The development and design of land use and the built environment, including air, water, and the infrastructure passing into and out of urban areas, such as transportation, communications, and distribution networks, as well as their accessibility, are the focus of urban planning, also known as town

planning, city planning, regional planning, or rural planning (Gamache, Shankardass, Lebel, Mabon, & Kanekiyo, 2021).

Urban planning directs orderly growth in urban, suburban, and rural areas by providing solutions to issues about how people will live, work, and play in a certain location (Anttiroiko and Caves, 2014).

### **The Abuja Master Plan and Notable Distortion**

The "Accelerated District" in the Phase 1 Area of the city development was where the workers were supposed to live under the initial implementation strategy for the Master Plan of Abuja. This "Accelerated District," created for low-wage workers to stop the growth of shanty settlements full of construction workers and other laborers on the outskirts of the capital city, was also intended to serve as a test case for the viability of the Detailed Plan idea. The "Accelerated District" saw a significant increase in the number of residential homes built because of the civilian government's decision to bring the migration to Abuja forward to 1982. Additionally, it prevented the planners from putting different plan concepts to the test. As a result, communities like Nya-nya, Apo, Karimu, and Katampe emerged to accommodate the population boom (FCDA, 1979).

The Central Business District, which was intended to be the City Center, was not developed as the City Center due to the non-implementation of the Satellite Town program. Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent and Aminu Kano Crescent, both of which were intended to be residential zones in Wuse II and Garki II, have suffered from conversion instead of this location. City Centre has been created in these regions. Of the eight goals of Abuja's masterplan, five are primarily concerned with environmental concerns. The territory's natural and cultural environments are anticipated to be preserved by the new capital (Ango, 2001). Abuja's successive governments have disregarded these guidelines and distorted the land-use plan.

### **Contribution to knowledge**

Researchers critically analyzed foreign urbanization and urbanization in specific cities without proper reference to recent findings. Idowu, (2013) in his study explained that urbanization, in its rapid, unregulated, and unplanned nature in Abuja and other cities in the global south, has unfortunately increased the level of poverty in these cities because of increased levels of resource competition among a rising number of citizens. Idowu analyzed the problems without proper recommendations of solutions. Afolayan, (2017), in his study also expressed that urbanization problems are not limited to housing and the inconvenience they offer. Instead, they spread to other social areas though tried to proffer solution but traditionally.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this study was to find out the impact of urban planning and management on FCT immigrant. The study adopted desktop study. Data was collected using both published and unpublished materials in literature, as well as archival materials. The research focused on the Abuja region as a study area. Seventy-eight literature was consulted with evidence provided from thirty-five relevant literature. Therefore, to avoid biases from the scholar's observations were validated with the literature for logical conclusions.

This paper provides sufficient data needed to investigate the impact, planning and management has on immigrants in Abuja.

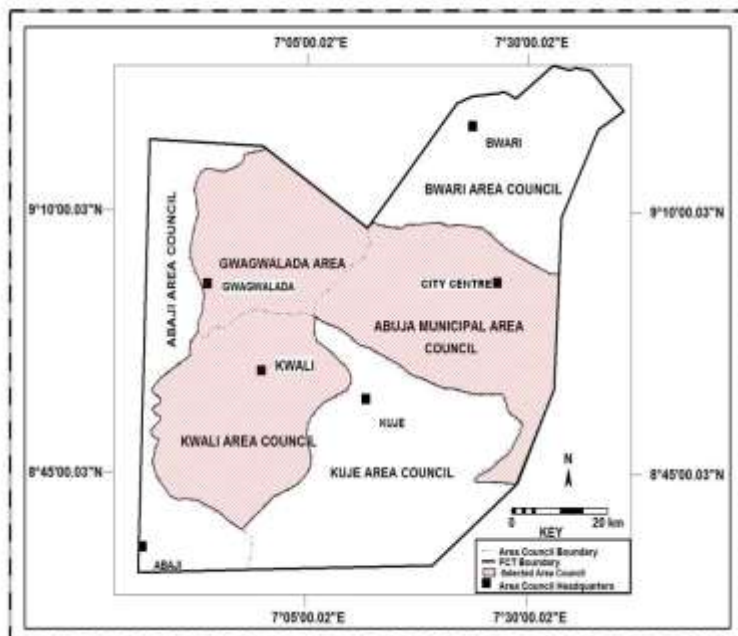
## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The six area councils in the FCT were included in the geographical plan to prepare for urbanization, but not all these plans were carried out as intended, according to the findings. This means that the flood of migrants into the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja has required effective planning and management due to the rise in demand for various social necessities for subsistence.

However, research also demonstrates that the presence of government offices and agencies in the city center has caused development in some areas while leaving others undeveloped, which has resulted in the growth of shantytowns and ghettos in the FCT.

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) was intended to be a tranquil city and the center of government operations. However, this plan has been distorted and several shortcomings hinder peaceful habitation. Figure 1 shows the geographic map of FCT, Abuja.

Figure 1: Map showing FCT, Abuja



Source: Author's Field Study

As previously stated, it has been established that migration and the ensuing urbanization have contributed to several issues, including poor security, extremely high crime rates, high unemployment, extremely extreme poverty rates, slums, insecurity, and environmental degradation (Agbola, 2014; National Planning Policy, 2012). This was due to an initial change in FCT planning. Through the concentration of commercial and administrative operations in the six area councils in the FCT, the continuous rate of immigration has hindered the rate of infrastructure development, which was one of the key manifestations to occur between the nineteenth and twentieth century (Idowu, 2013).

Based on the population that lived there, some places received more attention than others. Between 1985 and 1999, Abuja had rapid development that drove many people out of the city, particularly those looking for better pastures, without providing adequate infrastructure for these "intruders." Due to housing shortages in the Jabi, Karmu, Nyanya, and Kubwa areas, this caused various social concerns and haphazard growth, including squatter communities. According to Owei (2007) villages such as Garki Village and Katampe, became large squatter settlements through a process of private land acquisition by non – indigenes. Before major construction projects by private owners started in places like Bwari, Kuje, Abaji, Kwali, Lugbe, Ktampe, and Gwarimpa, studies showed that there was no proper layout plan. As a result, there are settlements and businesses that are not situated in the proper areas. The result is evident in Kuje, which is designed to house prisons and the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs Headquarters but is currently in Wuse Zone 5. While an unattractive site of vast communities exists along the road to the international airport, for instance.

Social housing, designed to make urban housing affordable for individuals with low incomes, was provided as a solution to tackle some of the challenges arising from the increasing population due to migration. Efforts to alleviate the housing crisis in Abuja face significant challenges, including the absence of affordable housing finance, steep urban land costs, inadequate tenure security, escalating construction expenses, and the widespread existence of slums (Moore, 2019). Findings reveal that lack of network participation and inclusion of low-income earners during policing preparations and housing designs have resulted in the lack of affordable housing including access to migrants. Also, increase in

vacant houses limits access to low-income groups as the houses are built for luxury purpose yet without space consideration.

The conclusion of this is that class discrimination and social exclusion is entrenched in the city. As Vale (1992) cited in Adama, (2020) points out, the poor population faces insurmountable challenges in meeting the housing standards set by the masterplan for constructing houses in the main city area. Therefore, a significant outcome is the concentration of wealthy residents in the central city region, particularly in high-income districts like Maitama and Asokoro, while the poor are compelled to reside in peripheral settlements, resulting in long commutes to their workplace.

Analytically, the need for a variety of social facilities became essential for Abuja residents' survival. As a result of Abuja's excessive growth density, there are more transportation issues and crimes than expected. There are no facilities like auto shops where locals can service their vehicles. Therefore, auto mechanics perform their work on vacant lots, the sides of streets, and open courts. However, technology and globalization have driven the closing of these disparities through a variety of breakthroughs or inventive immigrants with little help from or involvement from the government as supported by Hann (2021).

This urbanization tendency, which encouraged the continuation of rural-to-urban migration, has persisted into the twenty-first century. Yet, this increase has not been complemented by adequate planning, administration, or infrastructure development for both urban and rural areas. There are several obstacles to urbanization in the FCT because of this situation of rapid urbanization and uneven infrastructural development. But these challenges have not been adequately attended to with a concentration of resources and development in the urban centres, not minding continual migration of population from rural areas to urban centres, and without adequate long-term planning for the development of cities and rural areas.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

As a result of significant changes between the original plan and the current development in Abuja, there is need for changes on the safety of immigrants. The paper therefore recommends that government should establish the priorities to accomplish their goals through efficient good governance. Moving from individual score cards to citizens versus projects scorecards. Secondly, efficient government reduces corruption, encourages accountability, and participation by the citizens. This study establishes that good governance addresses the issues that affect the people in the city they govern.

Thirdly, this paper recommends that the city needs to produce locally to reduce the cost of production and over reliance on foreign importation of goods especially consumable goods.

Fourthly. There is a need for a green city plan needs to be included in the city planning. Due to the geographic location of Abuja, tree planting should be encouraged, enforced, and implemented to reduce the urban heat in the city. The result will assist in arresting erosion as well as the vegetative cover in the city, thereby creating a sense of tranquility and aesthetics.

And lastly, effective governance ensures stability (social, political, and economic) and lowers the risk associated with porous decisions. This study recognizes the role of critical thinking in decision making and its antecedent effect on citizens.

In conclusion, the current trend of development in Abuja calls for sustainable land use through integrated road transport and inclusive housing designs that integrate the city. The result is a densified system with efficient economic activities using public mass transport, access to facilities within a limited space and a walkable city.

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