



Slums and squatter settlements in Abuja, the federal capital city of Nigeria: a rereading

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Received 1 Aug 2023; Accepted 4 Sep 2023; Published 12 Sep 2023

Abstract

Abuja the administrative and political capital of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (since 1991) is one of the few purpose-built capital cities in Africa. The city patterned after Washington DC was planned to be a piece of paradise. But today, it is a city in slums, resting on incredible squalor, and typhus atmosphere. This loss of the city to slums has provoked writings with varied misconceptions as to the causes of the slums growth and consolidation. Relying on survey and ethnographic research methodologies conducted in Abuja between January and December 2021, official reports, gazettes, private papers, memoirs, newspapers, articles, and different genres of secondary sources of evidence this study seeks to clear the misconceptions and misinterpretations surrounding the taking over of the new capital city of Nigeria by slums.

Keywords: capital, city, urbanization, squalor, slums

1. Introduction

Slums and sordid squatter settlements have rapidly taken over the entire districts of the capital city of Abuja. Although, slums and squatter settlements among other issues of urban growth are not new globally, what is new in Abuja's case is the alarming rate at which slums and the problems of slums are manifesting in this capital city of Nigeria. The slums and squatter settlements lack of minimum human living standards has become a dangerous threat not only to the slums dwellers but to the entire human residents in the mega town of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The slums and the capital city centre are located cheek and jaw. Given the newness of the Federal Capital City (FCC), and the fact that the construction of all the Phases is yet to be completed; the rapid growth of slums and squatter settlements in Abuja requires a critical study. Abuja is one of the fastest growing cities in Africa, understanding the unique factors contributing to slums formation, expansion and consolidation in this specific context could offer new insights and lessons for urban planning and development in similar regions. The study could provoke new theories on the factors that drive slums in Africa as well as new theories on community development and resilience building in developing countries. This study could as well trigger investigations into how the Abuja native slums communities develop and mobilize social networks and collective actions for addressing common challenges.

Historically, from 1914 to 1991, Lagos was the seat of power of Nigeria and served both as the nation's political and economic capital. The impetus for the Abuja dream as the nation's new capital was triggered by Lagos' population boom and lack of master plan that made the city overcrowded with squalid slums at every location. Put succinctly, although Lagos had been the capital of Nigeria since 1914, it grew on its own unplanned (IPA, 1979). To set Abuja up as a planned Federal

headquarters of Nigeria and as a standing reference capital city in Africa, International Planning Associates (IPA) was commissioned in June, 1977 by the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) to produce the Abuja capital city Master Plan as well as its regional grid. IPA was formed by a consortium of three American firms which won the worldwide competitive bidding for the Abuja Master Plan. More detailed design of the central area of the capital particularly its monumental core, was accomplished by a Japanese architect, Kenzo Tange with his team of city planners via his Urtec Company. The final report by the consortium of firms was submitted to the pioneer Executive Secretary of FCDA, Alhaji Abubakar Koko on 15th January, 1979. In the preface to the Master Plan, the following declarations were made by IPA:

The Master Plan for Abuja, the new capital city of Nigeria represents the culmination of 18 months work by the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) board, several advisory panels consultants. Without the unstinting efforts of these experts, the momentum now exhibited in the beginning of actual implementation of the new capital could not have been achieved. The plan itself represents a milestone in the process of building the new capital city. It is a necessary element in the monumental effort about to be undertaken by the Nigerian people (IPA, 1979).

Although the construction work on the building of the city commenced in the 1970s, the initial city layout and foundations were not completed until well into the 1980s. Abuja officially became Nigeria's capital in December, 1991. By this date, the inner core of the city had to a large extent been completed, but the other areas were still under construction and development. By the Abuja Master Plan, the infrastructural development of the city's districts was to be implemented in five phases. Phase

1 districts were the first to be developed. The districts include: Central Area, Garki, Guzape, Maitama, Wuse and Asokoro.

In these phase 1 districts, especially at the Central Area is located the very important national institutions. It is the home of the three national arms of government, the Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary. The above six districts make up the Phase 1 of Abuja's development. Houses in this zone were to be the most beautiful and at the same time, the most expensive in Africa. Here we find also high class shopping centers, luxurious hotels and wonderful recreational facilities. Phase 2 districts to be developed almost simultaneously with Phase 1 were-

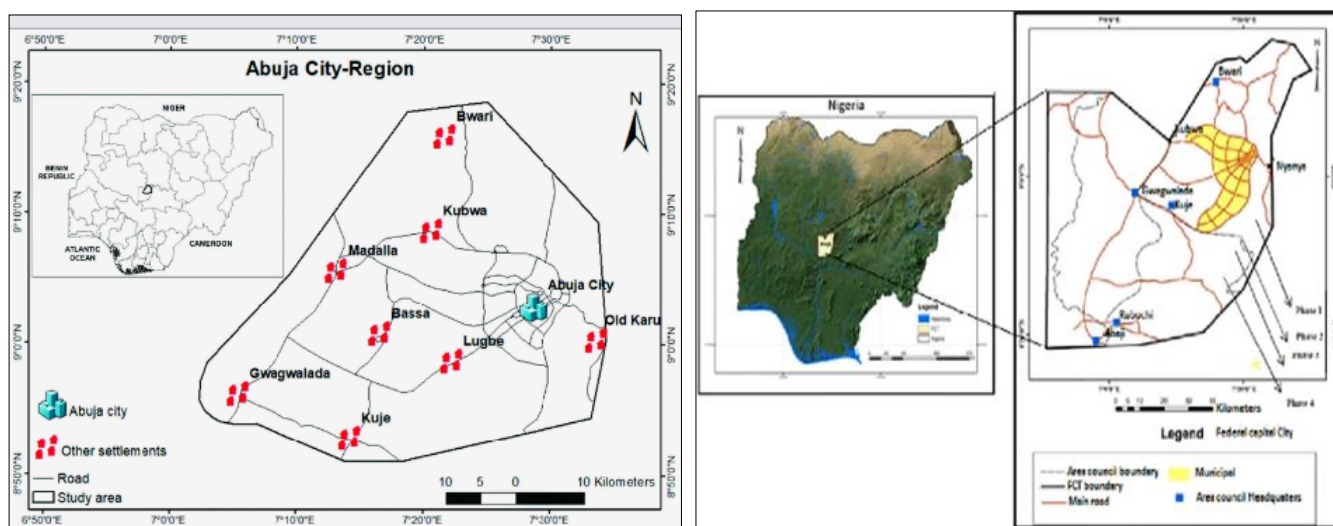
Apo-Dutse, Dakibiyi, Duboyi, Durumi, Gaduwa, Gudu, Jabi, Kado, Katampe, Kaura, Kukwaba, Mabushi, Utako and Wuye As a result of these districts proximity to Phase 1 estate (the seat of government), commercial and residential houses in this region are just as expensive as their counterparts in Phase 1 estate.

The districts have good level of developed infrastructure.

Phase 3 districts which are more of private housing estates by the city's Plan include-Bunkoro, Dakwo, Dape, Galadimawa, Gwarinpa, Kabusa, Industrial area, Karmo, Life camp, Nbora, Lokogoma, Kafe, Okanje, Pyakasa, Saraji. Wumba and Wupa (IPA,1979).

Phase 4 districts by the city's development Plan include-Bude, Burun, Chafe Gidiri, Bahagwa, Gwagwa, Gwari, Idogwari, Idu, Jaite Kaba, Kagini,Karsana, Ketti, Kpoto, Mamusa, Parfun, Sabo Gida, Sheretti, Tasha and Waru-Pozema.

Phase 5 districts are located near Abuja's Airport road. The districts under phase 5 are-Dakwaki, Gwagwalada, Karu, Kubwa, Kuje, Mpape, Nyanya and Lugbe Given the districts closeness to the city, good levels of infrastructural development have occurred in the region. Property here is generally expensive because of the district's nearness to the heart of the city.



Source: Google search

Fig 1: Map of Abuja City Region

1.1 Concepts and review of related literature

This paper reviews relevant literatures on Abuja slums and the city's urbanization to shed light on the various grounds that have been covered by previous scholars and the need for the present study. However, we begin with the definition of terms that drive the research beginning with the word city. Across generations, the academia and governing bodies of various countries have not agreed on a common definition of the word "city". To this effect, the meaning of the word city has been given from sociological, ecological, cultural, historical, administrative, political, demographic and economic perspectives. In the league of the writers that have tried to provide us with the definition of the word city are Ralph Thomlinson (1969), Louis Wirth (1938) [27], Mumford (1966) [18], Robert Park (1952) [22], L.M. Lapidus (1967) Janet Abu Lughod (1971) [5] Max Weber (1958) [28], and V.G. Childe (1951) [11], each offering a definition according to his academic persuasion or background.

Ralph Thomlinson (1969) in defining the word "city" approached it sociologically from demographic perspective

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(population size) or numerical strength. In his words, a common approach in the definition of city is to specify a minimum number of inhabitants or residents that make up a city. In line with his view of numerical definition of a city, minimum population size was fixed by national legislations and other bodies in their city making enterprise. Denmark fixed its own at 200 settlers, Iceland 300, Venezuela 1000, France 2000, the Congo, Israel and Argentina, 2,500 etc. In the 19th century, the United States favored 8000 as minimum population (Ralph Thomlinson, 1969). Distinguishing a "city" from a "non-city" area, Ralph pointed out that, a "city" is characterized by rapidity and fluidity of life, specialization of activities through division of labor, complex social organizations by formalization of institutions and intensification of opportunity. As he continued, anonymity and impersonal secondary relationship are indispensable aspects of city life because of numerous recurrent personal contacts.

To Louis Wirth (1938) [27], a city could simply be defined as a relatively large dense and permanent settlement of heterogeneous individuals. By this definition, he like

Thomlinson from ecological and demographic perspectives considers population size as a fundamental factor in defining a city.

On a more definitive level of analysis, Max Weber (1958) [28] formulated two concepts of a city—one economic and the other political-administrative. Economically, Weber views city as a settlement the inhabitants of which live ordinarily of trade, and commerce rather than agriculture. He applied the term city only in cases where the inhabitants economically satisfy substantial part of their daily wants in the local market and to a substantial extent by products which come from the local population and the immediate hinterland. Put aptly, the indices of a city are the dependence on non-agricultural occupation and sustenance ability through trade and commerce. To Weber, the economic concept of a city must be entirely separated from the political-administrative concept. A locale can qualify as a city because of its administrative rolls in a region though it would not qualify as a city economically. Therefore, one may find communities or settlements classified as cities solely because of their administrative roles in a region. In the middle ages, there were areas legally defined as “cities” in which the inhabitants derived 90% of their livelihood from agriculture.

A highly comprehensive definition of a city is offered by one of the masters in urban studies, Lewis Mumford (1966) [18]. According to him, the city in its complete sense is a geographic “plexus”, an economic organization, an industrial process, a theater of social action and an esthetic symbol of collective unity. On the one hand, it is a physical frame for the common place of domestic and economic activities; on the other hand, it is consciously a dramatic setting for the significant actions and the more sublimated urges of a human culture. The city fosters art and it is art; the city creates the theater and it is the theater. It is in the city that man’s more purposive activities are formulated and worked out. Without the social drama that comes into existence through the focusing and intensification of group activity, there is no single function performed in the city that could not be performed and has not in fact been performed -in the open country. In this definition, the essential feature that differentiates a city from the village is the social drama it creates. Of course, to Mumford, the key variable between a city and a non-city settlement is the social drama the city creates which the suburb lacks. The drama arises from institutional processes, economic organization and division of labor.

United Nations Program on Human Settlements (UN-HABITAT 2007) [32] defines slum as “a contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterized as having inadequate housing and basic services. A slum is often not recognized and addressed by the public authorities as an integral or equal part of the city”. Further, the UN operationally defines a slum as “one or a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area, lacking in one or more of the following five amenities”:

- a. Durable housing.
- b. Sufficient living area (no more than three people share a room).
- c. Access to improved water

d. Access to improved sanitation facilities (a private toilet or a public one shared with a reasonable number of people).

e. Secure tenure (de facto or de jure) (UN-Habitat, 2003) [30]. To B. N. Iffih (1975) [14], the word “slum” is often used to describe informal settlements within cities that have inadequate housing with squalid and miserable living conditions. They are often overcrowded, with many people crammed into very small living spaces. The author further pointed out that like all informal settlements, housing in the slums is built on land that the occupant does not have a legal claim to and without any urban planning or adherence to zoning regulations.

On account of increasing urbanization slums became common from the 18th century in Europe and the United States. London’s East End is generally considered the locale where the term originated in the 19th century, where massive and rapid industrialization of the dockside and industrial areas led to intensive overcrowding in a warren of post-medieval streetscape. The suffering of the poor in the slums of Europe was described in popular fiction by moralist authors such as Charles Dickens- most famously, *Oliver Twist*. Their suffering soon found legal expression in the Public Health Act of 1848 (Roger Caves, 2005) [10]. In 1850, the Catholic Cardinal Wiseman raised public consciousness to the term-slum. He seemed to have foreseen had the Abuja slums in mind when he described the slum known as Devil’s Acre in Westminster, London thus:

Close under the Abby of Westminster, there lie concealed Labyrinths of lanes and potty and alleys and slums, nests of ignorance, vice, depravity, and crimes as well as of squalor, wretchedness, and disease, whose atmosphere is typhus, whose ventilation is cholera, in which swarms of huge and almost countless population, nominally at least, Catholic haunts of filth, which no sewage committee can reach—dark corners, which no lighting board can brighten (Ward Wilfred Philip, 2008) [33].

The above led to the popularization of the word slum to describe bad housing. The 1832 cholera epidemic which hit the slums in France triggered political debate over their status. By 1950s, France had through its public housing initiative removed most of its slums. In 1940s, the British government started slums clearance and replaced them with new council houses. Therefore, many slums in Europe were removed through government initiative. Put another way, they were redesigned and replaced with better public housing (Kelvin Baker, 2001) [6].

Numerous other non-English terms are often used interchangeably with slum. Such non-English terms are-shanty town, favela, rockery, gecekondu, skidrow, barrio, ghetto, bidonville, taudis, bandes de miseria, barrio marginel, morro, loteamento, barraca, musseque, tugurio, mudun, safi, kawasan kumuh, karyan, medina, dagatan, watta, udukku, etc (UN-Habitat, 2007) [32]. In sum, slums are residential areas in an urban locality with socially and physically deteriorated houses. The major recognition of slums is that the condition of housing is extremely bad.

Charles Abrams (1966) [11], Turner John (1969) [25], G.K. Pyane (1977) [21] Ezombi (2008) [13], and Hari Srinivas (2009) [24] have

all done impressive works on slums and squatter settlements. In the words of Ezombi (2008) ^[13], the term “squatter settlement” is a recent western initiated concept which came about by the writing of Charles Abrams and John Turner immediately after the Habitat Conference in 1976 in Vancouver, Canada. Charles Abrams (1966) ^[1] describes squatter settlement as the forcible preemption of land by landless and homeless people in search of a heaven. In essence squatter settlements are identified with people who do not have any access to tenured land of their own in an urban area. Therefore, they squat on vacant lands that may be public or government owned. To G. K. Payne (1977) ^[21], squatter settlements are residential areas in an urban locality inhabited by the very poor. He further identified it as an overcrowded and dirty section of a city inhabited by the very poor.

According to Hari Srinivas (2009) ^[24], there are essentially three defining characteristics that help us understand squatter settlement; the physical, the social and the legal with reasons behind them being interrelated.

- a. **Physical characteristic:** A squatter due to inherent “non-legal” status has services and infrastructure below the “adequate” or minimum levels. Such services they lack include water supply, sanitation, electricity, roads, schools, health care and drainage systems.
- b. **Social characteristics:** Squatters here are mainly migrants, either rural-urban or urban-urban. Further, almost all the households in the settlement belong to the low income group.
- c. **Legal characteristics:** Settlers are strangers to the land they erect their houses. Put another way, they have no right of ownership to the land they build their houses for settlements which are usually on vacant government or public lands. That is to say when such government land is not under productive use, it is appropriated by squatters.

Nevertheless, one major feature common to both slums and squatter settlements is bad housing. The difference between the two terms (slums and squatter settlements) clearly highlighted, in this study, we shall use the two terms interchangeably to mean the same thing- shanty dwellings for the poor within the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Historians, political scientists, and sociologists have all tried to provide us reasons for the Abuja slums. According to M. O Bello (2009) ^[8], in his work on slums and squatter settlement in Abuja, inaccessibility of Land and the Urban Poor are the causes of squatter settlements and growth of slums in Abuja. To the author, the key question to be asked is why do people squat in Abuja? By way of answer he pointed out two reasons. In his words, “one reason is internal to the squatter and the other is external”. Internal reasons include, lack of collateral assets, lack of savings, low wages/income etc. External reasons include high cost of land and other housing services. To G. N. Omenge and Udegbe (2001) ^[19] slums and squatter settlements witnessed a rapid and tremendous expansion in

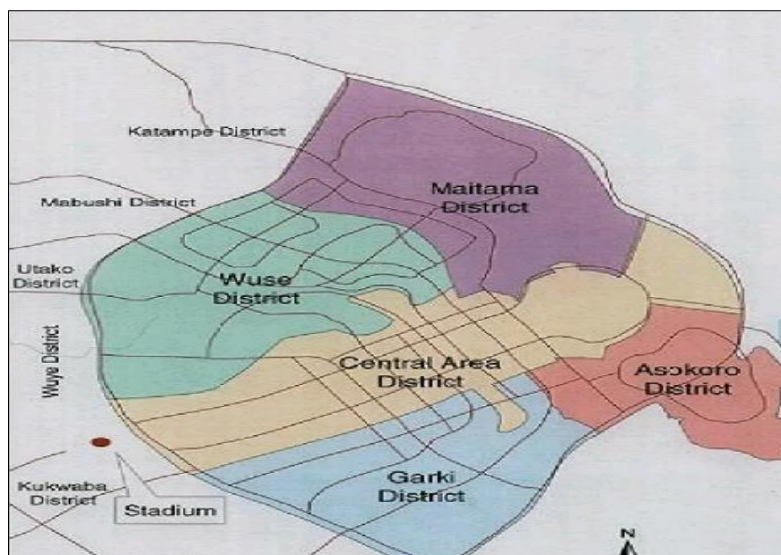
Abuja since 1991 because of the lack of provision by government of low income housing for migrants to the city. Ezombi (2008) ^[13] in support of the averments of Omenge and Udegbe had this to say: “The final movement of government from Lagos to Abuja by the Babagida administration created residential accommodation problems. These led to high rents, unprecedented growth and development of existing traditional villages and massive proliferation of squatter settlements around Abuja city and environs.

Jibril, (2006) ^[15]. in his study entitled “Resettlement Issues, Squatter Settlements and the Problem of Land Administration in Abuja”, notes that the dwellers in the Abuja slums are mainly low income government workers, private employed persons and the urban poor. According to him this class of people has no option than to squat on vacant pieces of land around the Federal Capital City. To Mbogunje (2014), the growth and consolidation of slums and squatter settlements in Abuja is caused by the nation’s poorly performing economy, as well as Boko Haram terrorism as many forced out of the far north see Abuja as safe place for their relocation.

Apparent from the above review of literature is the fact that although the Abuja slums are widely studied, most works on the slums tend to have focused more on the social and policy issues driving the slums. The studies failed to observe that most slums in Abuja are traditional slums created by individuals popularly called “slum Lords”. The “slum lords” mainly indigenes and traditional rulers in those areas subdivided the vacant lands and “sold” them to migrants for purposes of building houses. The slums in Abuja are therefore mostly associated with indigenous communities such as Amwamwa, Bassa, Egbura, Gude, Ganagana, Gbagyi Gbari, Gwandara, Koro etc that make up the Abuja natives. In sum, the Abuja slums have multidimensional angles with a wide range of factors attributed to their occurrence and persistence. Therefore, understanding the city’s slums phenomenon calls for uncovering of new information especially in the areas of the attitudes and activities of the Abuja native communities that have fanned the explosion and development of slums in the city. It is this gap that this study clamors to fill by examining the real reasons behind the taking over of this new Nigerian capital city by slums. This synthesis will help Nigerian governments and non-governmental organizations to evolve better strategies of dealing with slums in the country. It is hoped that the study will provoke new theories on urban governance, participatory planning and policy implementation as well as offer new insights into innovative strategies for inclusive urban development.

1.2 The study area: Federal Capital Territory, Abuja

The Federal Capital Territory, Abuja covers a land area of approximately 7290km² (AGIS, 2006) ^[3]. It is divided into six different area councils namely Abaji, Abuja Municipal, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje, and Kwali.



Source: Google Search

Fig 2: Map of the Abuja six Council Areas

The Abuja geography is defined by Aso Rock, 9,400 metre (1,300ft) monolith left by water erosion (AGIS, 2006) [3]. Under Koppen climate classification, Abuja features a tropical wet and dry seasons (Kopper). The FCT experiences three weather conditions annually. This includes a warm, humid rainy season and a blistering dry season. In between the two seasons, there is naturally a brief interlude of harmattan brought about by the northeast trade wind. The Harmattan

season is characterized by dust, haze and dryness. The FCT falls within the Guinea forest savannah mosaic of West African sub-region.

Although Abuja took over from Lagos in 1991 as the federal capital city of Nigeria, it is today a city in slums. In less than 40 years of its existence as the nation's Federal Capital City, it has today a sea of slums and squatter settlements to contend with.

Table 1: List of slums and squatter settlements within the Federal Capital Territory Abuja

S/N	Name	Type	Area Ha	District
1	Bakasi Market	Slum/Market	20.7	Central Area
2	Zone 3	Slum/Mechanics	5.9	Wuse I
3	Garki	Slum/Market	19.0	Garki Ii
4	Guzape	Slum	225.8	Guzape
5	Garki Village	Slum/Market	14.7	Gudu
6	Apo	Slum/Market	46.8	Durumi, Gudu
7	Durumi	Squatter	32.3	Durumi
8	Mabushi	Squatter/Market	15.5	Mabushi
9	Katampe	Slum	13.9	Katampe
10	Gaduwa	Slum	9.4	Gaduwa
11	Duste	Squatter	189.0	Duste
12	Duste	Slum	21.1	Duste
13	Wumba	Slum	5.3	Wumba
14	Mada	Squatter	165.4	Outside FCC
15	Kurbo	Squatter/Market	54.5	Outside FCC
16	Kuchigoro	Slum	3.7	Kukwaba
17	Kuchigoro Ext	Squatter	59.9	Kukwaba
18	Karmajiji	Squatter	37.9	Kukwaba
19	Wuye	Squatter	2.4	Wuye
20	Jabi	Squatter	14.0	Jabi
21	Jabi	Squatter	4.3	Jabi
22	Jabi/Dakibiyu	Squatter	51.6	Jabi, Dakibiyu
23	Utako	Squatter	11.9	Utako
24	Karmo	Squatter	524.0	Karmo
25	Gwarinpa	Squatter	408.0	Gwarinpa I
26	Dape	Squatter	455.0	Dape
		Total	2412	

Source: Final Report Stage 1, Abuja Geographic Information System (AGIS), 2006 [3]

Other slums and squatter settlements in Abuja, the Federal Capital City of Nigeria not captured in Table1 above include Nyanya, Jikwoyi, Lugbe, Mpape, Karu Village, Idu, Gishiri and Sauka. Others are Gwagwalape, Dawaki, Lokogoma, Dei Dei, Byanzhin, Karshi, Pyakasa, Kabusa, Angwan Tiv, Ketti village, and Kpaduma.

1.3 Population growth rate

Abuja as Nigeria's Federal Capital City was designed to have a population of 1.6 million people. But currently, according to the Minister of FCT Mohammed Bello, the city with its satellite suburbs has a population of over 6million inhabitants. According to United Nations, Abuja grew by 139.7% between 2000 and 2010 making it the fastest growing city in the world (Craig Glenday, 2013) [12]. By 2015, the city had annual population growth of 35% retaining its position as the fastest growing city on the Africa Continent and one of the fastest in the world (Daniel Tovrou, 2015) [29].

In a 2017 study undertaken by the Federal School of Surveying and the FCDA, Abuja's population growth was estimated at 8.32% per annum, while satellite city populations were found to be rising even more quickly, at an estimated 20% each year. In September 2018, Victoria Imande, former acting director of the FCTA's Satellite Town Development Department reported that just about 20% of FCTA's population lives in Abuja city centre, while the remaining 80% reside in peripheral urban areas (slums and squatter settlements) such as Jikoyi, Gwagwalada, Karu, Dutse etc (AGIS, 2018) [4].

Table 2: Abuja, Nigeria Metro Area population Data 2021 -1991

Year	Population	Growth Rate
2021	3,464,000	5.67%
2020	3,278,000	5.91%
2019	3,095,000	6.03%
2018	2,919,000	6.15%
2017	2,750,000	6.14%
2016	2,591,000	6.10%
2015	2,442,000	6.13%
2014	2,301,000	6.13%
2013	2,168,000	6.12%
2012	2,043,000	6.13%
2011	1,925,000	6.12%
2010	1,814,000	6.14%
2009	1,709,000	6.15%
2008	1,610,000	6.13%
2007	1,517,000	6.03%
2006	1,430,000	6.65%
2005	1,316,000	9.58%
2004	1,201,000	9.58%
2003	1,096,000	9.60%
2002	1,000,000	9.65%
2001	912,000	9.48%
2000	833,000	9.61%
1999	760,000	9.67%
1998	673,000	9.65%
1997	632,000	9.53%
1996	577,000	9.70%
1995	526,000	9.53%
1994	480,000	9.59%
1993	438,000	9.50%
1992	400,000	9.89%
1991	364,000	10.30%

2. Methods

2.1 Research methodology, design and data collection

The study examines the factors responsible for the explosion of slums in Abuja, Africa's fastest growing city. The researcher made use of a combination of research methodologies. The study employed case study, ethnographic, and survey research methodologies. The survey yielded information through interviews and questionnaires on the people's, opinions, attitudes, feelings and beliefs about the slums growth and consolidation. The views of the native dwellers in these slums were highly sought for. This methodology goes in line with Agbegbedia's (2013) view that survey is a means of measuring what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person thinks or feels. To Larry Christensen *et al* (2011), "The most basic tenet of survey research is this: If you want to know what people think, then, ask them."

The researcher adopted mixed methods of research design approach that combined both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative research design that yielded non-numerical information focused on in-depth interviews that captured the people's personal perceptive and direct opinions about the growth of slums in the new federal capital city of Nigeria. The quantitative design made use of questionnaires for in-depth understanding of the city's slums phenomenon. This is in line with the submissions of Creswell (1998) and Patton (1990) that a research that collects only quantitative data often provides an incomplete analysis of a phenomenon or event being investigated and that the addition of qualitative data provides added level of understanding.

The data for the study were therefore collected through primary and secondary sources. The study area is Abuja and so the primary data sources were the inhabitants of the Abuja slums especially the local or native inhabitants and some migrants to the city thought to be familiar with the issues under investigation. Data from them were collected through questionnaires and interview protocols. A total of 50 persons (indigenes and migrants) were interviewed in a face-to-face situation the interviews were held in an informal setting which more or less enabled the informants to freely express their views. The study took place in 10 slums located in the Federal Capital Territory. The slums covered were Mpape, Mabushi, Gishiri, Kpaduma, Garki, Guzape, Apo, Durumi, Mada, Wumba. Five persons were interviewed in each of the slums. Some research questions evolved in the process of the interview as the researcher probed the participants for clarifications and follow-up responses. A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed in the 10 locations which sought to measure the participants' opinions and perceptions on the critical factors behind the Abuja slums.

The secondary sources of data for the study included books, journal articles, internet materials, theses and dissertations. Data gathered from the masses through quantitative and qualitative sources were analyzed using contents and descriptive techniques such as frequencies and percentages.

2.2 Presentation of data analysis

The study was carried out to identify and rank order the factors

responsible for the growth of slums in Abuja, one of Africa's fastest growing cities. The table below will show an analysis of data collected. Five factors were listed as the critical variables behind the proliferation of slums in Abuja and respondents were asked to rank order them in descending order of the contributory roles assigned to them with 5 as the highest and 1

as the lowest. The result of the study is organized in a tabular form to show the frequency and percentage derived per factor from the responses to questionnaires shared. Data collected from interviews were used to corroborate the result of the questionnaires protocol.

Table 3: Data set for the 50 questionnaires distributed to respondents in the slums

Factors	Total No. of respondents	Frequency of 5Points	Frequency of 4Points	Frequency of 3Points	Frequency of 2Points	Frequency of 1Point	Total point	Percentage ranking
Government abandonment of the local inhabitants resettling policy	50	3	5	11	16	15	115	15.27%
High unemployment in the country		0	5	9	14	22	97	12.88%
Sabotage of the Abuja federal capital city project by natives		34	11	3	2	0	227	30.15%
Corruption		7	19	17	4	3	173	22.97%
Nigeria people's attitude of lawlessness		6	10	12	13	9	141	18.72%

Source: Author's field survey, 2021

3. Discussion of findings Abuja, the Federal Capital City in Slums

It is beyond controversy that Abuja, the Federal Capital City of Nigeria was conceived to be one of the most beautiful cities in Africa. This capital city which has been listed as the wealthiest urban area in Africa, and among the 20 fastest growing cities in the world, in less than 33 years of its official existence, has been overtaken by slums. Slums and squatter settlements have taken up almost all vacant and underdeveloped plots in the city. Between 2004 and 2007, the then Minister of FCT, Nasir El-Rufai demolished several slums and squatter settlements especially those around the city centre in an effort to give Abuja a befitting outlook. But almost immediately, the demolished slums returned in their places,

Several conflicting reasons have been advanced by writers in their explanation of why Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital City was lost to slums. Scholars hitherto have almost in unison attributed the principal causes of slums in Abuja to government's abandonment of the city's urban planning policy, poorly performing economy of Nigeria as a nation, poverty of the citizens, high unemployment in the country, terrorism and insecurity in the far North of the country, But this study upholding these factors as causes of the slums tends to have gone steps further by identifying other unidentified factors responsible for the slums explosion and consolidation in Abuja. The first factor identified by the study as majorly responsible for the growth of the Abuja slums is the hitherto unidentified variable referred to here as the open sabotage of the Abuja Federal capital city project by the natives and their local rulers or chiefs. Evidence from the ranking of the five variables by respondents shows that this very variable is the principal factor responsible for the explosion of slums in Abuja. As the table shows, this variable received the highest ranking from the participants. Its assigned contributory weight to Abuja slums by the respondents was 30.15% making it the highest factor responsible for the growth of slums in Abuja. According to the natives of the Mpape, Mabushi, Gishiri, Kpaduma and Garki village slums, when the government

announced in 1976 that they have acquired our land, we just felt that they deliberately wanted to dispossess us of the land of our inheritance. Nigeria as we felt is a country where nothing works; a country piloted by both armed and unarmed robbers. We felt that the government (unarmed robbers) wanted to rob us of our ancestral lands. Therefore, we quickly commenced sale of parts of the land, (our land) that was announced to have been acquired by Government. To Timothy, an indigene of the Mabushi slum, "we alienated parts of the land for two reasons. In the first place, we felt the government wanted to take advantage of us, and second, we also felt deep inside of us that the Abuja capital city project was bound to fail. Our reason among others being that Nigeria is a nation of fraud and criminalities. Nigeria is a country of corporate criminalities" (Timothy, personal interview, July, 2020). To Abdulkadir, a native of the Gishiri slum, "We sabotaged the Abuja capital city project by alienating the land because we thought the Abuja project was going to end in failure and falsehood because Nigeria is a country where the leadership says something in the morning, changes it in the evening and denies it the next day" (Abdulkadir, Personal interview, July, 2021). Therefore, in spite of the Decree No. 6 of 1976 promulgated by the Murtala Mohammed regime which vested the entire Federal capital territory (FCT) land's in the Federal Government, the native inhabitants went on to alienate the land. In fact, the natives refused to accept that the entire Federal Capital Territory (FCT) land is vested in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The result was the flourishing of a very vibrant illegal land market. The market flourished with authoritative vibrancy as the Traditional Rulers of the people were seriously engaged in the operation of most of the illegal land markets. The sellers claimed to be alienating their ancestral lands, and most buyers bought in confidence that they were acquiring the property from the very holders of customary rites of occupancy. These illegal "markets" became the easiest way of land acquisition by squatters, and that gave a wonderful impetus to the growth of slums and squatter settlements in the territory.

When the slum “landlords” were asked why they construct shanties as residential buildings for tenants, they gave their reasons. In the words of Timothy (personal interview, September, 2021), “We build our houses here with mud and all forms of substandard materials so that we would not lose so much if the government decides to demolish the settlement.” This statement clearly shows that all the slum lords in the city are fully aware of the illegality of their holdings.

Further, the corruption of the highly placed officials of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) has also been identified by this study and ranked as the second principal factor behind the Abuja slums history. The FCDA is the body which was charged with the responsibility of the infrastructural development of the capital city. This body was known to have joined the natives and their local chiefs in the alienation of the city’s land to migrants. Indeed, many of the highly placed government officials of the FCDA were said to have transferred to themselves ownership of so much of the city’s land, and alienated them accordingly. To the respondents, as evidenced in the table above, this factor ranks second with its contributory role to the city’s slums placed at 22.97%. As Mr. Bulus a native of the Garki village slum pointed out,

The big men of the FCDA illegally transferred to themselves especially some areas of our land that were mapped out for specific public infrastructure like schools, hospitals, packs, police post etc. They sold such innumerable lands of ours and many more to private individuals (Bulus, personal interview, December, 2021).

In furtherance of this point, Mr. Tella a native of Kpaduma slum reflected,

The government of Nigeria dispossessed us of our land and handed it over to men of the FCDA for development. These men appropriated our lands to themselves involving themselves in many shady land deals and corrupt manipulations. Their activities spread over 700 of the 845 villages that make up the city’s land mass have been the force driving the Abuja slums (Tella, personal interview November, 2021).

From the study, another fundamental factor behind the Abuja slums hitherto unidentified by writers but identified here is the Nigerian people’s attitudinal factor of lawlessness. The ranking of the variables shows that this very factor is responsible for 18.72% of the slums in the city of Abuja. Opinions from the study, point to the fact that Nigerians, especially its Southerner elements have terrible gambling spirit. They have no qualms acquiring lands illegally and building thereon hoping to have their returns on the investment before demolition by government. May we listen to one of the Abuja slum landlords, Mike Ejike, an Igbo by birth, (personal interview December, 2021). His words:

We the slum landlords in Abuja know that we lack legal title to the property we occupy. The general belief of us, especially we the Southern migrant slum lords is that one can obtain a parcel of land illegally, develop, rent it out and recover one’s investments within the shortest time possible as two to three years rent are payable at the first instance in most cases. As we believe, before the house

is overtaken by demolition, the builder would have recovered the money invested in the project and more. Therefore, many Nigerian migrants to the city are ready to build in those slum areas irrespective of the prohibiting laws and the risks ahead because of the quick return on the investment. This gambling spirit of the people accounts for slums explosion in the capital city.

Another factors commonly referred to by writers as fundamentally responsible for the city’s slum history is the Government’s abandonment of the local inhabitants’ resettlement policy. The respondents in this study identified and assigned only 15.27% to this variable as its contributory role to the Abuja slums as against all existing opinions that it is the principal factor behind the city’s slums and squatter settlements. The Abuja Master Plan according to information on ground was one founded on socio-spatial exclusion; that is to say, the planning of the poor out of the city. In this vein, the Master Plan recommended resettlement of the poor indigenous inhabitants of the land. By this policy, all indigenous villages existing within five kilometers of the new Federal Capital City (FCC) footprint were to be relocated (Jibril, 2006, Ezombi, 2008, Babagana, 2020) ^[15, 8, 2]. This in the words of the planners was to provide a “blank canvas” construction of the new city (IPA, 1979). But the government rather than carrying out this policy came up with new idea of upgrading of pre-existing villages within the FCC which they never did. This counter-policy explains the presence of slums especially at the city’s centre such as the Asokoro’s with its Kpaduma slum, Maitama with its Mpape slum, the Mabushi slum behind the Federal Ministry of Environment etc. In effect, these slums are associated with indigenous communities that the government failed to resettle. A few of such indigenous communities include Amwamwa, Bassa, Egbura, Gade, Ganagana, Gbagyi, Gbari, Gwandara and Koro (Bello, 2010, Babagana, 2020) ^[7, 2]. Government changed its declared policy of relocating the local inhabitants on the grounds that it had no money. But it is expedient to remember here that it was the same government that had announced to the world that the greatest problem facing it was how to spend its money following the oil boom of the 1970s (Bello, 2010) ^[7].

As Babagana (2020) ^[2] pointed out in his work,

The promise of Babangida’s regime to upgrade Kpaduma village rather than resettle the people in a new location was a tragedy as it has maintained and multiplied slums, miseries and woes of the native inhabitants. The indigenous people lag behind in education, infrastructure, and social amenities and human sustenance and support services.”

According to Jibril, (2006) ^[15], James Yakubu a native resident of the Mpape slum in an interview had this to say,

Our land was annexed 40 years ago by the Nigerian Government under Murtala Muhammed regime. Murtala lied to the world that our land was a virgin land, almost a bona vacantia (ownerless land). But we, over 400,000 indigenous Nigerian citizens had occupied the land since pre-historic times. The plan was to resettle us. But

perhaps when the government realized how numerous we are, they abandoned the plan.

Further, as the study shows, the loss of Abuja to slums was also caused to some extent by the high rate of unemployment in the country. Thousands of Nigerian youths tormented and walloped by poorly performing national economy, migrate to this capital city in search of non-existent jobs. To many writers, this has contributed mightily to the growth and consolidation of Abuja slums (Mabogunje, 2001) [17]. With the jobless youths' regular shift from the rural to the Abuja urban, poverty migrated to the city of Abuja. Urban poverty encourages the formation and demand for slums. Slums are often the only option for the urban poor, especially the unemployed youths. To this study, this factor accounts for 12.88% of the Abuja slums.

In the same vein, the FCT, Abuja has become an important destination for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows. While Lagos had traditionally accounted for the lion's share of foreign capital investment, recent figures indicate that the FCT is catching up. In 2017, FCT attracted the highest amount of foreign capital with 49.8% of the total outpacing Lagos for the first time. The city retained its position in the first quarter of 2018 where it attracted 56.2% of the FDI. The result is that of late, there has been huge influx of people into the city

(Abubakar, 2020) [2]. People throughout Nigeria as well as from foreign countries have been attracted to the city looking for both jobs and the availing new opportunities. As a consequence, the demand for housing and commercial space has been very strong and compelling leading to the increase of shanty towns on the edges of FCT. Places such as Sauka, Karu and Nyanya fit into this description (Jibril, 2006, Abubakar, 2020) [15, 2].

It has also been pointed out that Boko Haram insurgency in the far north of the country is a major recent factor that has created boom in slums and squatter settlements in Abuja. As many parts of the northeast of the country became volatile on account of Boko Haram activities and banditry operations, business could not flourish in many of those areas. Thousands of traders, artisans, contractors, men and women of different professions and works of life forced to close shop in the far north of the country saw Abuja as a safe place for their relocation because of the relative peace and security enjoyed by the residents. But, as this study shows, the massive influx of people into the territory only worsened the problem of living accommodation in the region. As Abubakar (2020) [2] graphically put it: "Boko Haram insurgency did not usher in an epoch of boom for slums here in Abuja, it only worsened problem of accommodation."



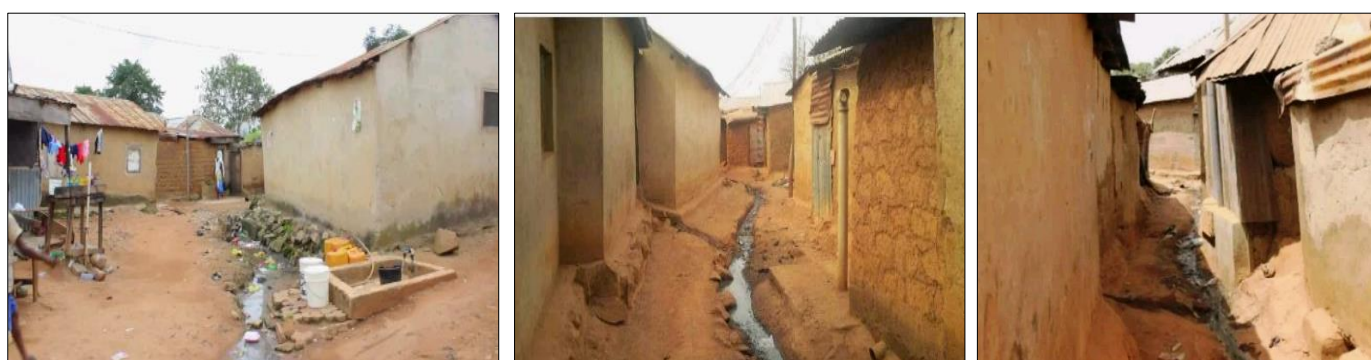
Source: Google Search

Fig 1: Garki Slum





Fig 2: Mabushi slum



Source: Google search

Fig 3: Apo Slum

4. Results

Abuja, the beautifully planned cosmopolitan capital city of Nigeria is today a city in slums. It has over fifty shanty towns (slums) in the territory, many located cheek and jaw with the central area. These sordid slums share common characteristics as all lack basic municipal amenities. The failure of the Abuja dream as a model capital city in Africa has been attributed by writers to government's abandonment of the city's urban planning policy, poorly performing economy of the nation, poverty, high unemployment in the country, terrorism and insecurity in the far North of the country, and many more. Although all these factors have contributed one way or the other in leaving the carefully planned city in an incredible squalor and typhus atmosphere the major factors leading to the explosion and consolidation of slums in the capital city have been identified and ranked by this study. These factors are the open sabotage of the Abuja Federal capital city project by the natives and their local rulers or chiefs, the corruption of the highly placed officials of the Abuja Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), as well as Nigerian people's attitude of lawlessness and criminal gambling spirit. The government has over time tried to maintain a green city posture of the capital through demolition of informal settlements in the territory. As Jibril (2006) ^[15] observed, in the 2006 demolition, over 800,000 persons were rendered homeless by the exercise.

But not long, these slums returned to their places because of corruption.

5. Recommendations and conclusion

The native inhabitants of Abuja and the migrants who occupy the city's village slums should be allowed to remain in their current abodes and development extended to them by the FCDA. The study calls on government of Nigeria to seek the inclusion of the Abuja slums and squatter settlements in its national development budget for improvement or up gradation. The research therefore advocates Abuja slums development or up gradation under a scheme to be called National Slums Development Program. The said slum settlers should also be issued with certificates of occupancy by the government to assure them that their holding is permanent. When this is done, the residents will rebuild their own houses to standards, and perhaps on their own attract to the settlement investments from governments, private individuals and organizations.

The work has demonstrated that the failure of the Abuja dream as a model capital city in Africa should be attributed more to the Abuja natives' open sabotage of the Abuja capital city dream, the attitudinal lawlessness of the Nigerian citizens especially its Southern subjects, and corruption of the Abuja city development officials. Nevertheless, to these could be added government's abandonment of the city's urban planning

policy, poorly performing economy of the nation, poverty, high unemployment in the country, terrorism and insecurity in the far north of the country.

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