

## Analyzing the efficacy of Implementing Procedures in Urban Development Plans: A Comparative Study across FCT Urban Areas

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<p><b>Corresponding Author</b> Tyodzer Patrick PILLAH, Ph.D</p> <p>Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Veritas University Abuja</p> <p><b>Article History</b></p> <p>Received: 05 / 02 / 2025        Accepted: 19 / 02 / 2025        Published: 21 / 02 / 2025</p>	<p><b>Abstract:</b> Over the last thirty years, Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria, has seen swift urbanization. The city has grown without a comprehensive plan, leading to extensive construction and a surge in informal settlements due to the increasing population. This has resulted in distinct spatial separation between low and high-income groups, leaving low-income individuals in inadequate informal settlements. Hence, this paper provides a thorough examination of the effects of policy implementation on urban development plans within the urban areas of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). It assesses the concepts of urbanization, urban development, and the different policies enforced in the FCT and Nigeria as a whole over time. Research information was collected through various literature reviews, using secondary sources such as books, journals, online resources, and historical records to offer comprehensive and pertinent data for analyzing existing urban policies. The findings obtained from the various literature reviewed, discovered that the urbanization strategy for the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) covered all six area councils, but not all of the proposed plans were implemented as originally intended. In addition, the study found that stringent land use regulations have caused a shortage of affordable housing in the FCT, as developers prioritize high-end developments to maximize profits. Finally, the conclusion presents suggestions to tackle these challenges, emphasizing the necessity to address urban planning issues majorly by recommending thorough employment of the Abuja Master Plan to establish an efficient transportation system in the city, which is crucial for attaining Sustainable Development Goal 11(sustainable cities and communities) in the FCT.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Urban development, urbanization, development/planning policy, Master plan.</p>
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### 1. Introduction

The housing and urban development sector plays a significant role in creating job opportunities and has a major impact on economies (Adedeji & Martin, 2014). Housing challenges exist in both wealthy and impoverished nations and are influenced by factors such as poverty, rapid urbanization, and high building material expenses. Satisfactory housing is considered a fundamental human right and has the potential to create job opportunities, decrease crime rates, improve living standards, and alleviate poverty. Urbanization is a driving force behind global transformations, with over 90% of future population growth expected to take place in large cities in developing countries (Chegwe, 2014; Wang, Hui, Choguill, & Jia, 2015; Owens, 2017).

Moreover, the global population living in African cities is expected to increase by 60% by 2050 (Peter & Yang, 2019). Urbanization in Africa is associated with widespread poverty, an

unstable formal economy, weak institutions, and inadequate public services. Despite its importance in modernization and economic growth, urbanization brings challenges such as rural-urban migration, overburdened infrastructures, environmental issues, and a growing number of slum dwellers. Services and job opportunities are often lacking, especially for the nearly 1 billion urban poor living in informal settlements (Bai, Shi, & Liu, 2014; Ugwu & Ogunremi, 2019).

Hence, in Nigeria, urban development is a major concern due to a high annual urban population growth rate and increasing demand for social and public services (Ronald, Michele, Sylvanus, Paola, & Juliana, 2018; Obinna, Chinyere, Chukwudozie, Benjamin, Prine, Juliana, Charles, & Tolib, 2021). The expansion of Nigerian cities and the growing urban population have led to elevated pressure on essential services such as healthcare, housing,

transportation, and infrastructure. The increased population density in urban regions has exerted pressure on land for food production, infrastructure, housing, and industrialisation, adversely affecting the environment's ability to sustain life and resulting in ecological imbalance and detrimental environmental effects (Daramola & Ibem, 2010).

As a result, the establishment of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) led to uneven urban development, with most progress concentrated in the city center and affluent areas, neglecting the outskirts and satellite communities. As a result, satellite areas suffer from a lack of infrastructure, urban services, accessible roads, efficient transportation, adequate housing, overpopulation, and congestion (Ibe, Eugene, & Shaibu, 2023). The Abuja Master Plan aimed for balanced development across all phases of the FCT, but actual implementation has failed to improve living conditions in these areas, resulting in neglect and a lack of essential services for the large population (Bako & Balogun, 2023).

Therefore, it is vital to ensure that urban plans are effectively executed to align with outlined goals and objectives (Han, Wanshun, Lian, Mengyue, Hong, Lin, Quian, Panpan, & Xintang, 2020). Inadequate implementation can lead to challenges and inefficiencies in urban planning, so assessing plan implementation is essential for plan effectiveness. Successful plan implementation requires coordination among different stakeholders involved in land development processes. Monitoring plan implementation can lead to improvements in planning tools and processes, contributing to improved urban planning and management (Wing, Cheng, Gautam, Rowe, Wood, & Yue, 2014; Han et al., 2020). This study examines the influence of implementation procedures in urban development plans across FCT urban areas and is divided into five sections: introduction, literature review, methodology, discussion of findings, conclusion, and recommendation.

## 2. Literature Review

### Urbanization

Urbanisation is the process through which towns, cities, and metropolitan areas change as a result of the growth in size and population of urban centres (Damodar, 2018). In addition, it is said to cause rural-urban migration, which leads to the depopulation of rural areas (Adesoji, 2011). Furthermore, the ratio of a nation's population that lives in urban regions is known as urbanisation, and it is represented by the continuous rise in the urban population (Tombari, 2019). With many rural populations migrating to urban regions, particularly in Asia and Africa, the rate of urbanisation has accelerated over time and is still increasing (UNDESA, 2014; UN-Habitat, 2016; UNDESA, 2019).

According to Modal (2019), industrialised countries' urbanisation patterns are different from those of emerging nations like Nigeria. Urbanisation and industrialisation go hand in hand in developed nations as people move to areas with industry, which fuels the expansion of cities (Fox, 2012). On the other hand, in emerging nations, migration happens more often to escape the difficulties of living in rural areas than because of the existence of industry (McCall, 1955).

According to Eyong and Foy (2006), migrants may experience the "urban illusion" in rural areas, where they see themselves in worse circumstances than they were in urban areas because of the scarcity of resources (Stifel & Thorbecke, 2003;

Potts, 2006). In a similar vein, other academics argue that whereas urbanisation often improves living conditions in developing nations, it does not in affluent nations. Rather, conflicts, insecurity, poverty, and diseases have increased as a result of urbanisation in these places (Adegbola, 1987; Boadi, Kuitunen, Raheem, & Hanninen, 2005; Enoguanbhor, Gollonow, & Walker, 2022).

The disparity between the causes of urbanisation in industrialised and developing nations is probably responsible for the fact that urbanisation does not raise living standards in these nations. Industrialization-driven urbanisation may not produce societal problems like poverty and unemployment, but urbanisation brought about by rural-urban migration—especially in the absence of industrialization—creates "the urban illusion." This predicament arises when migrants experience problems they would not have met in rural areas, such as pollution, unemployment, poor housing, and poverty, but are unable to attain the better life they had hoped for (Fay & Opal, 2000).

### Urban Development

Cultural, economic, and social progress have historically been primarily driven by urban advancement (Wiebusch, 2012). The division of labour in cities leads to a rise in the demand for services and creates job opportunities for people with different skill sets. Metropolitan areas have a substantial population of people with diverse needs and interests, therefore enabling the provision of a broad spectrum of services. Notwithstanding the enhanced options and services, there remains a shortfall for the ever-expanding urban population. In poor countries, towns and cities usually still have a fragile economic base (UN-Habitat, 2010). Numerous financial cooperation-related urban projects are industry-specific and pertinent to jobs in certain industries. It is sense that initiatives to improve urban services could potentially negatively impact city dwellers. But with the right policies in place, these consequences can be mitigated or even avoided (Wiebusch, 2012).

### Review of Strategies for Urban Development

A policy is a plan or set of actions adopted by an organization or individual to address identified issues (Festus & Amos, 2015). Rules and processes are established to impact and dictate important choices and actions, and all activities occur within the limits set by them (Gavin, 1998). Rules assist in impartial decision-making and differ from law in that they guide actions toward those most likely to accomplish a desired outcome. There has been a notable rise in migration from rural to urban areas, leading to an increase in poverty in less developed regions. More cohesive policies are needed to connect housing with urban planning issues, labor market opportunities, and social protection to alleviate poverty (Bodo, 2015).

Hence, the Nigerian Town and Country Planning Law of 1946 serves as the legislative foundation for urban and regional planning laws and regulations in Nigeria. It aims to bring order to urban development by empowering local planning authorities to manage urban growth and coordinate public services. However, some argue that the law limits the activities of planning authorities and hinders rational urban development (Afolabi, 2015; Ayeni, 2017).

On the other hand, in Nigeria, the legislative purposes of urban planning law extend beyond physical planning and improvement works. However, there is disagreement over its provisions, and few major urban and regional plans have been

implemented under its authority (Afolabi, 2015). A study of Jos revealed that multiple government agencies had an impact on urban development, but lacked coordination and integration, leading to issues. This aligns with the view that having numerous agencies responsible for urban development results in independent actions and a lack of coordination in planning (Freund, 2007).

Another concerning aspect is the conflicting nature of planning policy and national economic policy. After gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria pursued a policy of import substitution and manufacturing development. This led to the concentration of industry in Lagos, which accounted for a significant portion of industrial employment and wages (Obiadi, Ezezue, & Uduak, 2019). The government's efforts to manage urban growth and ensure a balanced distribution of urban areas led to the decentralization of the country's administrative structure, creating 12 states in 1967, eventually increasing to 19 states in 1976. However, this policy may have hindered the development of smaller cities in each state region (Obiadi et al., 2019; Chokor, 2005).

According to Ajaegbu, urban growth in Nigeria is reflected in the creation of four industrial-urban metropolises (Ajaegbu, 1976). There has been little attention to urban and regional planning in Nigeria, and the absence of a national urban policy has led to regional imbalance. The Nigerian Constitution of 1979 does not mention the role of the Federal Government in urban and regional planning (Afolabi, 2015). The National Housing Policy was introduced in 1991 in response to the United Nations' declaration of 'Housing for all by the year 2000'. However, many Nigerians still lack adequate housing despite these efforts (Orsorio, 2007; Aribigbola, 2008).

Consequently, the Nigerian government has decided to use national infrastructure expenditure to manage economic expansion and, by extension, urban development, viewing regional and urban planning as a crucial part of economic planning. Urban master plans have been funded by the government, but it has never taken a leading role in seeing them through to completion (Wapwera, 2014). Brimah asserts that a national urban and regional planning document, which provides a comprehensive framework for the location and scale of urban centres, can be utilised to formulate a national urban policy. This would emphasise the specific development roles that cities play in the process of urbanisation, and would also align it with broader national development objectives (Freund, 2007).

Moreover, the federal government took the lead in constructing a new national capital in Abuja when discussing national planning policy. By the year 2000, Abuja was designed to accommodate 1.6 million people. Planning Abuja represented the dream of building a city based on the best planning principles, focusing on sector and neighborhood development. However, it also highlighted the challenge of undertaking such a massive project in an area with no established infrastructure and lacking trained manpower for construction (Adeponle, 2013; Okonkwo, 2013; Obiadi, 2017). The majority of Nigerian writers concur that it was a wise choice to relocate the capital from Lagos to an area devoid of ethnic dominance. The limits of Lagos were emphasised by the Aguda Panel. These included the city's limited space for expansion, its location in an unhealthy and marshy environment, its dominance by a single ethnic community, its excessive size and congestion, and its dual role as the federal and state capital (Adiukwu, 2014). The idea of relocating the federal capital to the

heart of the country, with no dominant ethnic group, a healthy climate, and ample land for development, was appealing. It was also seen as a way to boost the economically struggling middle region. Nonetheless, numerous writers have noted that the urban program, which was intended to foster togetherness and national pride, instead became an endless source of expenditure. Nigeria has not lived up to expectations despite having invested billions of naira (Olaitan, 2004; Okonkwo, 2006; Aduwo, Ibem, & Edewor, 2016; Obiadi, 2018; Job, Buta, Benchir, 2018).

### **Housing and Urban Growth Strategies and Schemes in Nigeria.**

Housing for native employees and expatriates was a priority throughout the colonial era. The Nigerian Building Society was founded in 1955, the Regional Housing Corporation was enacted in 1959, and urban councils were first constituted in 1946. Housing development made significant strides after independence (1960–1979), particularly during the National Development Plans. The Land Use Decree (LUD) of 1978 was enacted concurrently with the Nigerian Building Society's 1977 conversion to the Federal Mortgage Bank. Its objectives were to provide land access for all Nigerians and to stabilise land ownership. The importance of the construction industry and the use of locally produced building materials were stressed in the Nigerian Constitution of 1979. Additionally, the Employees Housing Scheme Decree No 54 of 1979 was introduced to provide housing for staff and housing estates (Bamidele, 2018).

Furthermore, during the military era (1984–1999), the housing policy led to societal division, as rural areas suffered from neglect and disrepair while urban housing took precedence due to high urbanization rates and housing shortages. In order to achieve the primary objectives of the National Housing Policy, the Mortgage Institutions Decree No. 53 of 1989 facilitated further progress in housing policies and services during the 1990s. Furthermore, the Economic Liberalisation Policy implemented by Babangida's government resulted in the participation of private entities in the provision of housing. The National Housing Fund (NHF) Decree No 3 of 1992 and the Urban and Regional Planning Decree 88 of 1992 were subsequently put into effect. Employees earning more than N3,000 a year were obliged to donate 2.5% of their monthly income to the NHF, which guaranteed a consistent supply of funding for housing development and delivery (Ondola, Odundo, & Rambo, 2013).

Moreover, the "housing for all in the year 2000" initiative was not actualised in the post-military administration period by 2000. The Housing and Urban Development Policy was established in 2002 to address the inconsistencies in the Property Use Act and to promote property ownership and banking within a free market economy. In 2011, it was discovered that the Federal Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development lacked any policies to guide its operations. Consequently, the Federal Executive Council sanctioned the National Housing Policy and the National Urban Development Policy in 2012. The National Housing Policy aims to ensure that all Nigerians possess or have access to adequate housing, emphasising the housing sector's role in socioeconomic development. The National Urban Development Policy promotes sustainable economic growth, effective urban planning, and an enhanced standard of living for Nigerians. Urban development policies focus on research, policy recommendations, implementation, and management of developments (People, 2013; Bamidele, 2018).

## Urban Development Policies and Its Implementation in FCT

### ➤ *The Master Scheme*

A city, region, or community's master plan (MP) is a detailed, long-term blueprint intended to direct the physical development of the area and foster progress. Along with data on the community's demographics, economy, housing stock, transit, facilities, leisure activities, institutional, industrial, and agricultural operations, it also contains studies, plans, drawings, evaluations, recommendations, and land use designations. Master planning is defined differently by esteemed scholars, each depicting diverse insights and concepts of this planning tool (Ubani, Mba, Ugwu, 2014).

Ogbazi (1992) defines a master plan (MP) as a written document explicitly envisioned to guide and ensure planned growth of a city or area, emphasising the need for direction or a point of reference to avoid development and constructions being juxtaposed haphazardly. In the Nigerian context, a master plan is defined by Essagha (1997) as an official long-term document issued by the competent federal, state, or municipal government that outlines the precise course of a place's future physical development. According to him, the master plan is a publicly accessible document that consists of written reports, maps, and sketches that provide explanations and can be used to guide the physical development of a region or area.

The planning efforts also led to the establishment of the Abuja master plan for the Federal Capital Development Authority in Abuja. Over the course of eighteen months, International Planning Associates (IPA) developed the Master Plan (Abuja Master Plan, 2016). This included choosing capital locations, draughting city plans, regional plans, designs, and development guidelines. On February 15, 1979, the Master Plan was submitted to the FCDA for approval. The plan, which includes three main phases and will be completed in 25 years, was meant to offer long-term guidance for the proper execution of the capital. In an economical and sustainable way, it addressed land use, housing, transportation, social amenities, and infrastructure (FCDA, 1979; Abuja Master Plan, 2016).

### ➤ *Planning Strategy*

The initial policy in 1978 involved the government's decision to relocate people outside the city at the expense of the Nigerian Government. This was aimed at promoting equal citizenship and ensuring that no one claimed special privileges. All inhabitants' assets in the city were evaluated, and compensation was provided to their owners. According to the master plan, all villages within a five-kilometer radius of the proposed FCT, with game reserves, watersheds, and green plains, were required to be resettled in other areas within Nigeria (FCDA, 1979; Abuja Master Plan, 2016). The peasants were assigned plots, but they never received any paperwork for them. Under the FCT Act/Land Use Act, which gave the indigenous people of the capital the right to be resettled and compensated for the loss of their homes and agricultural fields, the land became alienated to them. The government was forced to alter this approach because of its cost (Ayeeni, 2017).

On December 2, 1992, the government implemented the second policy, which called for the unification of a few areas inside Garki District. Due to the construction of primary and secondary roads and structures, this led to the demolition of some dwellings, while some regions remained unaffected. The third program, which

was implemented in 1999, reversed the second policy and concentrated on the complete relocation of several areas outside the Federal Capital Territory, including Kado, Jabi, and Gwanrinpa. Furthermore, the government started the fourth strategy in 2003 after returning to the original master plan after realising how costly and difficult it was to implement the third policy. The focus shifted to the strict adherence to the initial proposals of the master plan as outlined from the beginning (Jibril, 2003). The FCT has a major problem with squatters, slums, and unplanned settlements. Federal authorities have admitted that the regulations that were put in place lacked consistency, focus, and sincerity from officials. This has consequently resulted in Abuja's incorrect development when compared to the master blueprint that was first proposed.

### **The Effect of the Policies**

Most organizations, whether formally documented or not, have established policies. These policies are meant to guide decision-making and influence real-world outcomes. However, the actual actions taken by organizations often deviate significantly from the stated policies (Ondolaetal.,2013). This discrepancy may be due to political compromises on policies in some cases, and in others, it may result from a lack of policy implementation and enforcement. The implementation of policies can lead to unforeseen consequences, as a policy's impact may extend beyond the specific issue it was initially intended to address (Orsorio, 2007). Policies are typically put in place to prevent negative effects observed within an organization or to achieve positive outcomes. The expected outcomes of a guideline can differ based on the institution and the circumstances in which they are developed. Unforeseen results might occur because the settings that policies seek to impact or manage are usually intricate adaptive systems, like governments and societies, and can produce unexpected results.

## **3. Methodology**

The drive of this research was to assess the efficiency of enacting policies in urban development plans within the urban areas of the FCT. As a result, the study gathered data using a desktop research approach due to its reliance on pre-existing literature. The data were obtained from secondary sources such as textbooks, journals, online materials, and archival sources to ensure the availability of abundant and pertinent information for examining existing urban policies. The research sample was selected from the Abuja Municipal Area Council using the technique of graded random selection.

## **4. Findings**

Based on the various literature reviewed, it was found that the urbanization strategy for the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) covered all six area councils, but not all of the proposed plans were implemented as originally intended. The increase in the number of migrants entering the FCT has created a necessity for efficient planning and management to meet the growing demand for vital social services. Nevertheless, studies indicate that the concentration of government offices and agencies in the city center has resulted in development in some areas while neglecting others, consequently leading to the proliferation of informal settlements and impoverished neighborhoods in the FCT.

Furthermore, the pattern of urbanization, which has promoted ongoing rural-to-urban migration, has continued into the twenty-first century. However, this growth has not been



accompanied by adequate planning, governance, or infrastructure development for both urban and rural areas. The rapid urbanization and uneven infrastructural development present numerous challenges to urbanization in the FCT. These challenges have not been adequately addressed, with resources and development mainly focused on urban centers, despite the ongoing migration from rural areas and the absence of long-term planning for urban and rural development.

In addition, the study found that stringent land use regulations have caused a shortage of affordable housing in the FCT, as developers prioritize high-end developments to maximize profits. Moreover, the high costs of land and limited access to financing have hindered the growth of the housing sector in the FCT. The study also found that the failure to effectively enforce land use regulations has added to the proliferation of informal settlements and unauthorized developments in the FCT, resulting in environmental degradation, inadequate provision of basic services, and public health concerns. The study calls for a more comprehensive approach to land use planning that involves multiple stakeholders and addresses issues of equity, social extensiveness, and environmentally- conscious.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion

The current urban development strategies regarding housing are heavily fixated on supplying inexpensive housing, overlooking the importance of basic amenities in aiding housing. Residences situated in areas with quality infrastructure are scarcely within the financial reach of the average middle-income residents of Abuja. Furthermore, green spaces and recreational areas are almost non-existent in suburban areas due to the high demand for housing plots. Every neighborhood, irrespective of its location, should have a recreational area that can cater to various needs and enhance community living and interaction. In these communities, waste management is a serious issue that is frequently ignored by the government and made worse by the locals. Unlike most portions of the city centre, which are usually clean, the suburban regions frequently have big piles of rubbish by the side of the road. The inhabitants of these locations are affected in terms of their health and general well-being by this. Abuja's housing maintenance standards are often subpar, especially for rental apartments. These and other factors contribute to real estate developers' reluctance to invest in these communities. As a result, social issues including class segregation, development, and laws that tend to assist the higher-income earners, particularly those residing near the city centre, are now more prominent than they were when a major section of the population lived in suburban areas. The FCT policies need to be reevaluated in order to be more inclusive of all resident classes as well as to address the scarcity of housing by building new houses.

### Recommendations

The study's conclusions have led to the following recommendations for improving housing-related urban development policies in Abuja in order to support inclusive city development. The state ought to:

- In order to achieve SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) in the FCT, it is imperative that the Abuja Master Plan be employed comprehensively. This will develop an effective transit system within the city.

- Revise the policy that aims to improve socioeconomic development by focusing on providing affordable housing, to include mandatory standards and requirements for housing provision in specific areas. These standards ought to take into account middle-income earners, the proximity to the city center for the majority of workers, and the necessary facilities for intentional integration into the city.
- Ensure that the council in charge of research, policy suggestions, and implementation conduct additional surveys and take into account more factors to achieve equilibrium in Abuja.
- Address the inadequate execution of urban policy in the FCT by promptly addressing the issues related to providing clean water. This can be accomplished by effectively implementing urban policy, with a focus on providing potable water to satellite communities as access to water is crucial for improving overall community health and contributing to sustainable development.

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