



Abuja, the federal capital of Nigeria: reflections on city making and urban displacement policy

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Abstract

In Nigeria's search for a new Federal capital city, Abuja was spotted out and selected from among the 33 sites visited by the search team. The said chosen site (Abuja) was then the home of over 316,000 households of Nigerian citizens who had occupied the land since pre-historic times. Immediately following this choice was Nigerian government's policy statement in 1976 that the local inhabitants were to be completely relocated outside the new Federal Capital Territory of about 8,000 square kilometers. This was aimed at freeing the capital from primordial claims. But soon, there was a change in policy direction as the government felt that the population to be uprooted was too much for it to bear the costs of their movement or relocation. This work using qualitative and quantitative methods of historical inquiry tends to investigate the displacement of the Abuja native population in the course of the city's development and rapid urbanization. The findings are that the natives were subjected to forced displacements and dislocations. In their displacement, their displacers (FCDA) never gave them opportunity to negotiate their displacement or compensation. As government chose to be pushing them in-land rather than resettle them, some natives have been evicted over three times relocating from one in-land settlement to another leaving them in horror.

Keywords: displacement, compensation, eviction, relocation, city, urban

1. Introduction

Urban displacement is a phenomenon associated with many urban processes across the globe. Gentrification, slum clearance, slum evictions, Urban DID, are all terms used to describe the involuntary movement of people from their homes to "homelessness" due to development. From 1976 to present, the Abuja Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), have had millions of people forcefully displaced or removed from their homes especially the local inhabitants of the city. Their homes or settlements were brought under the destructive power of bulldozers most often without adequate notice and compensation. Although the government announced in the early hours of the year 1976 that the native population of the city was to be resettled to enable the Authorities plan and develop the city without encumbrances, the policy soon changed as the government showed its unwillingness to resettle the people. Ever since, power in the form of coercion and forceful measures seem to have been common displacement mechanisms of the local inhabitants of the capital city. The aggressiveness of their displacement process is manifested at times in physical brutality. Although writers refer to the callous evictions of the people in their works, it deserves to be treated as a standalone issue in academic discourse, hence this study.

2. Concepts and related literature

In an increasingly urbanizing planet, understanding cities and city making have remained high on the agenda of urban thinkers, and cuts across a spectrum of the human sciences-geography, social anthropology, landscape architecture, environmental psychology, history, and philosophy. While

some have tried to explain the processes of city making from inside out, others have approached the subject from outside in. To Mumford (1966) [28], cities are the result of a multiplicity of relationships, flows, interests, layers, forces all intertwined in intricate networks where phenomena from a variety of domains like psychology, sociology, culture, politics and biology combine to make every city unique. In his words, communities become cities when the functions that had been scattered and unorganized were brought together within a limited area and the components of the community were kept in a state of dynamic tension and interaction drama. As he continued, while the new urban brought together larger groups of cooperating and interacting people than ever before, it also divided them into tightly separated strands, each deeply dyed in its occupational colours. Occupational and caste stratification produced urban pyramid with the king at the apex.

To Childe (1954) [8], cities owe their evolution and making to technological development. The earliest cities in Childe's view arose in the Neolithic Age when improvement in technology transformed some tiny villages of self-sufficing farmers into populous cities. According to Childe, the said inventions of the Neolithic Age left the whole area from the Nile and East Mediterranean to the Indus valley sprinkled with cities. Put succinctly, it was the inventions and accumulated scientific knowledge-topographical, geographical, astronomical, chemical, zoological, botanical, mechanical, architectural etc that made urban settlements and urban expansions possible. Weber (1958), on his own part postulates that cities arise as political centers of fortification, and also as trade or market centers. As he observed, economically, cities are known for

their special kind of rent situation presented in urban real estate which consisted in house ownership to which land ownership is accessory.

Historically, the first world cities emerged in the Middle East. Today, authorities agree that cities evolved first in the Mesopotamia region or the area immediately adjacent to it. Among the earliest world cities that merged were Enoch, Eride, Ur, Lagash, and Larsa by the southern portion of Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Urban sociologists have documented the tendency of the elite to cling to cities' centers and the poor being confined to the outskirts. In these ancient cities as well as in the early cities of the Greek and Roman origin, the elite planted themselves in the complex agora (central avenue), which stood at the heart of the town. In essence, the city's central area was the chief residence of the elite with their luxurious dwellings in a town teeming with the underprivileged. The disadvantaged members of the community fanned out towards the periphery with the very poorest living in the suburbs far removed from the centre. This distribution of classes as between the central sector and the periphery is explained by Abu-Lughod (1969) [5] thus: "The elite in order to maintain their prerogative in the society isolate themselves from the non-elite and are centrally located to ensure ready access to the headquarters of the governmental, religious and educational sectors of the state. The locale is moreover the best protected sector of the city. The poor kept at the outskirts are bound to accept all the disabilities of their location". The ecological organization of Abuja resting on a physically related but socially demarcated framework of sub-cities within a city presents an apt illustration of Wirth's (1938) urban milieu. According to him, in an urban milieu, "We are exposed to the glaring contrasts between splendor and squalor, between riches and poverty, intelligence and ignorance, order and chaos". Ezombi (2013) [11] in his study on Abuja displacements and slums pointed out that the residents especially the natives live daily with the perpetual fear of eviction and demolition by the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA). As a result, they live in make-shift apartments and houses constructed with substandard and wooden materials. To Jibril (2006) [17], the eviction of natives and demolition of illegal structures in Abuja generate social, economic and political problems with their attendant security implications. According to him, it tends to portray government as insensitive to the plight of the citizenry.

3. Urban displacement

To Ezombi (2013) [11], the destruction of settlements an indispensable aspect of city making is one of the very heart-rending stories of city building, resulting in the displacement of millions of people world-wide. In 2018 alone about 70.8 million people were forcibly displaced (UNHCR, 2019). More specifically put, urban development causes the displacement of millions of people every year, and so is a global pressing issue (Cernea, 2008). Displacement occurs when any household is forced to move its residence by conditions which affect the dwelling or its immediate surroundings and which-

- Are beyond the household's reasonable ability to prevent

or control.

- Occur despite the household's having met all previously imposed conditions of occupancy, and
- Make continued occupancy by the household impossible, hazardous or unaffordable (Grier and Grier 1978, LeGates and Hartman 1981, Marcuse 1986) [13, 22, 24].

Urban displacement therefore is concerned with loss of one's home, familiar surroundings, neighbours, routines, community, and so on.

Jane Jacobs (1962) [15], Janice Perlman (1976) [16], Mindy (2004) [26], Favela (2009) [12], Marcuse (1986) [24], Lee and Hodge (1984) [21], Megento (2013) [25], Ambaye and Abeliene (2015), Shau and Sahara (2019), and many more have all done impressive works on urban displacement. Urban scholars have identified four terms or policy positions that are associated with displacement. The first widely used term in the discussion of urban displacement is eviction (Kolodney, 1990) [18] and Morka, 2007 [27]. The other terms that describe urban displacement in everyday use are Slum clearance, Rahman (2001) [31] and Bhan (2009). Gentrification, Marcuse (1986) [24], Lee and Hodge (1984) [21] Development Induced Displacement, otherwise called Urban DID, Yntiso (2008), and Megento (2013) [25]. Although these names represent different urban processes, they all end in people being removed from their homes to 'homelessness'. Herman (1997) provides us an insightful narrative of the commonalities of experience of being displaced whether the victim lives in Jamaica, London, India, America, Moscow, Lagos or Abuja etc.

4. The study area: Abuja

Abuja city located in the central part of Nigeria is approximately 300 miles (480 km) northeast of Lagos, the former capital (until 1991). Historically, the land now called Abuja was originally the southwestern part of the Ancient Habe (Hausa) kingdom of Zazzau (Zaira) (Jibril, 2006) [17]. The land was populated for centuries by several semi-independent tribes. The largest of these tribes was Gbagyi (Gwari), followed by Koro, and a few other smaller tribes.

Abuja lies at 1,180ft (360metres) above sea level and has a cooler climate, and less humidity than Lagos. Abuja is also referred to as the "Center of Unity" as a reflection of its central location in the country as From Lagos to Abuja: politics of relocation.

The transfer of Nigeria's capital from Lagos to Abuja was shrewd in deep controversy because the ostensible reasons for the planned transfer were seen as different from the real motivations (Ezombi, 2008) [10]. Lagos which was designated the capital of Nigeria shortly after the British established the unified colony of Nigeria in 1900 was situated in the southwestern corner of the nation in a region heavily dominated by Yoruba Christians. Therefore, in reality, the Northern Muslim political leaders who dominated the national government wanted a capital closer to their centre of influence, the heavily Islamic North. Of course, in the light of the ethnic and religious divisions in Nigeria, plans were devised by the Northern political leadership from the year of the nation's independence in 1960 to have its capital transferred to a place

deemed neutral to all parties (Babagana, 2020) ^[6]. The outbreak of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War made that need more compelling to the Northern political class (Ezombi, 2008) ^[10]. Ostensibly, the impetus for Abuja came because of Lagos' population boom, with its overcrowding, congestion and squalid environmental conditions. Lagos was also identified as hot and humid. Most importantly, Lagos was coastal and therefore open to attack.

The greatest opposition to the dream of relocation of Nigeria's capital from Lagos to Abuja came from the Yoruba ethnic group led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Babagana, 2020) ^[6]. Awolowo as a politician and representative of the Yoruba people defended their claims against the move or relocation of the nation's capital from Lagos to Abuja. During the 1979 Presidential campaign in the country, Awolowo vowed that if voted into power, he would hire the American Walt Disney Corporation to convert the new site (Abuja) into an amusement park. In the election, Awolowo lost to Shehu Shagari. President Shagari after his election showed immediate and avid interest in the Abuja project. The President's first journey after his election was to Abuja for inspection of works on the site. In the visit, he expressed his disappointment over the slow pace of work at the site and urged speedy completion of the project by the contractors. The President perhaps to compel the contractors to finish the project urgently rescheduled the planned relocation of the nation's capital to Abuja from 1986 to 1982 which later proved unworkable. A total of about 845 villages were to be displaced to make way for the Federal Capital Territory (Olaitan, 2004) ^[30]. The Abuja Master Plan provided for the moving out of the territory all the existing population in the region. The new capital city was to be founded on the principles of "equal citizenship" within the territory where no one can claim any special privileges of "indignity" as was the case with Lagos which was seen as a belonging to the Yoruba ethnic group (Jibril, 2006) ^[17].

5. Population growth rate

Abuja as Nigeria's Federal Capital City was designed to hold a population of 1.6 million people. But, according to the Minister of FCT Muhammed Bello, the city with its satellite suburbs has a population of over 6 million 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) ^[9]. By 2015, the city had annual population growth rate of 35% retaining its position as the fastest growing city on the African Continent and one of the fastest in the world (Daniel Tovrou, 2015).

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]. Simply put,

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urbanization rates have far outstripped what was envisioned by the City's Master Plan which laid out the long-term urban design of the capital city. The automatic consequence has been the expansion of informal settlements in the Federal Territory as a result of insufficient housing facilities. By 2017 Abuja's affordable housing shortfall was estimated at 600,000 units with most real estate projects under development remaining unaffordable (UN-Habitat, 2018). The capital city's rapid urbanization could be attributed to a range of factors including better economic opportunities on offer in the territory, relative safety of the area in a nation affected by pockets of violent conflicts and many more. The rapid population growth of the city as already noted has resulted in the emergence and proliferation of informal settlements. The Federal Capital City which took off in 1991 as the political and administrative headquarters of Nigeria with a population of 364,000 people this year (2021) has a metropolitan area population of 3,464,000. For clarity of understanding, we present the city's population history from 2021 down to 1950.

6. Theoretical framework

Two theories guide this study. These are the Urbanization theory by Louis Wirth (1938) and Political Ecology theory by Paul Robbins (2004). The Urbanization theory by Louis Wirth (1938) focuses on the factors and processes that drive urban growth and development as well as the challenges and opportunities facing an emerging and developing city. This theory guides this study because as a rapidly growing city, Abuja faces challenges such as housing, environmental sustainability, wanton displacement of the locals or the native population etc. Urbanization theory could provide insights into the factors behind these problems and how such matters could be addressed through effective urban governance and planning. Of course, the theory will help shed light on the complex dynamics of the Abuja city making and rapid urbanization.

Political Ecology theory by Paul Robbins (2004) on its part is concerned with the relationship between political, economic and environmental factors in shaping urban development. and displacement. The theory regulates this work for through it one could gain insights into how government policies, economic interests, political forces and environmental concerns impact urbanization and urban displacement in Abuja. To the political ecology theory, the transformation of land, social relations and displacement of marginalized communities that follow urbanization are processes driven by political decisions, policies and power relations. In essence, to the political ecology theory, urban development is mightily influenced by political forces, such as government policies, the actions of developers, and corporations. Applied to Abuja's city making and development, the theory provides critical lens for understanding the political, social, economic and environmental factors that drive Abuja's urbanization and development especially the activities and excesses of the Abuja Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), weak urban policies of the Federal Government of Nigeria and many more.

7. Methods research design and study setting

Given that the study is essentially explanatory, the work adopted quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative techniques involve the use of questionnaires to understand the respondents' extent of awareness of the Abuja urban phenomenon in Nigeria. Qualitative method involved in-depth oral interviews used to both enhance and authenticate quantitative results generated in the survey. The study took place in 10 major village slums (settlements of the local inhabitants of the city) and five squatter locations in the Federal Capital territory. The village slums covered were Mpape, Mabushi, Gishiri, Kpaduma, Garki, Guzape, Apo, Durumi, Gaduwa and Wumba. While the five Squatter settlements covered were Utako, Karmo, Gwarinpa, Nyanya and Lugbe. The study began with contact setting and visits to relevant authorities requesting from them the permission to be allowed to carry out the study.

8. Questionnaires and meeting with respondents

On account of the fact that the study was essentially explanatory in view of the subject matter under study, the questions administered to the respondents were limited. Nevertheless, they were sufficient enough to meet the objectives of the study. Questionnaires for this work sought answers to such pertinent questions as sex, age, educational status, occupation, and marital status, awareness of the city's development and urbanization process, the displacement/eviction experiences of the people and problems of the evictees. In the 15 locations, a total of 300 questionnaires were distributed to 200 males and 100 females. The study took place from February 2020 to January 2021.

9. Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with the residents in the selected 15 locations. In each of the 15 locations, twenty (20) respondents participated in the in-depth interviews. So, a total of 300 persons were interviewed (180 males and 120 females) and 300 questionnaires distributed to respondents.

10. Data analysis

In analyzing the interviews, the thematic analysis technique was adopted to uncover themes and trends. The data from the interviews was transcribed, themed, interpreted and analyzed. The process of transcribing the data helped the researcher to reconnect with the thinking of the respondents and understand what the respondents really meant. It further helped the researcher to reflect on what could be missing in order to make the findings complete, and therefore the need for follow up interviews for further information. Follow-up information was therefore acquired through phone and email communication with relevant respondents. According to Maguire & Delahunt (2017), "a theme is a pattern that captures something significant or interesting about the data and/or research question". A theme is characterized by its importance to the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006 as cited in Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p.3356). Excerpts from quantitative results were used to compliment the qualitative depositions.

11. Displacement of Abuja natives

The description of the land area that makes up the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria starts from the village Izom on 7°E longitude and 915'' latitude' project a straight line westwards to a point just North of Lefu on the Kemi River; then project a line along 647¹/₂E southwards passing close to the villages called Semasu, Zui, and Bassa down to a place, a little west of Ebagi, thence project a line along parallel 827¹/₂ 'E (on Kanama River); thence project a straight line to Bugu village on 830'' North latitude and 720''E longitude, thence draw a line north wards joining the village of Odu, Karshi, and Karu. From Karu, the line should proceed along the boundary between North Central (Kaduna) and Northwestern (Niger) states up to the point just north of Bwari village and thence straight to Izom (Akinola Aguda, 1975). Reading the longitude, latitude description of Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, the village names speak to the lives of those who would be displaced. How were these indigenous Nigerian citizens who had occupied the land since pre-historic times displaced or treated?

The displacement of the native people who resided in the former old town of Abuja before it became the Federal Capital Territory is worthy of serious academic attention. On February 3, 1976, General Murtala Muhammed pronounced to the world the choice of Abuja as the site of Nigeria's new Federal Capital Territory. As already noted, the first major policy statement made by government in 1976 when it decided that the nation's capital should move from Lagos to Abuja was for complete relocation of the entire local inhabitants outside the new Federal Capital Territory of about 8000 square kilometers. This was aimed at freeing the Territory from any primordial claims, and to enable government take direct control, plan and develop the new city without any encumbrances. To this effect, the government immediately set up committees that were charged to explore relocation of the native population of the Capital outside the city's Territory. The government assumed the expenses involved, declaring and authorizing in Decree No.6 of 1976 a rate of compensation for households as well as Churches and Mosques. In a deal signed October 10, 1977, the cost of relocating places of worship along with families was agreed at one million naira (N1,000,000.00), for the Niger, Plateau, and Kwara States. Careful enumeration of the native population with all their economic asserts later revealed that what was involved was too much. Indeed, about 316,000 households were to be relocated in the affected communities. Government therefore became reluctant in paying the compensation and families on their own were reluctant to move. There was a need for a shift in policy direction. In this light, it was decided by the government that the inhabitants should remain, but could be resettled within the territory should their places of abode be affected by city development projects. As government made the world believe, uprooting such a huge native population was unwise and could have delayed the take off of the project. This major shift in policy direction could be said to be the root cause of problems of squatters and Land Administration within the FCT. According to Jibril (2006) ^[17], between 1976 and 2003 (a period of 27 years), there were about

four major policy changes affecting resettlement within the FCT. As Jibril (2006) ^[17] continued, it is clear that policy inconsistencies as well as lack of serious efforts and political will by government to resettle the local inhabitants have seriously militated against a lasting solution to Abuja's urbanization history.

Government's plan of resettling the natives only when their places of abode were affected by the city's development projects soon became unrealistic as many were evicted with neither compensation nor resettlement with the arrival of development to their abode. As Yusuf an indigene laments, "The city's continuous expansion means that more and more of our indigenous people are being pressured to leave their land. Of course, pushing us in-land continually as development projects advance has been a popular government policy with our homes under ceaseless demolition by bulldozers" (personal Interview, June, 2020). The lamentations of Bala Iyah who was forced out of his ancestral home in the capital city with his family and chose to dwell in another neighborhood of the capital, Kpaduma is worthy of note. In his words, "We were never compensated for our land. The government just told us to go and that is why we are here now. Government representatives came to Kpaduma few months ago to tell us we must leave again. Without our knowledge, the government has allocated this place to individuals and now they are forcing us to leave again without compensation. We were not even informed of their plans to take this place", (personal interview, August, 2020). Some indigenes narrated how they have been evicted over three times, relocating from one settlement to another. As Chika Oduah of Aljazeera (2007) ^[29] reports, "The indigenous people of Nigeria's capital city have been very angry at the way they are being displaced from the only home they have ever known with their region portrayed as no-man's land. The indigenes say they are frustrated by what they see as injustice. The natives resident in Kpaduma warn that they will take up arms if government tries to displace them again". In the words of Yunusa Yusuf, the spokesman of the coalition of the Federal Capital Territory Indigenous Groups, "Our people have demanded time and again that government should stop the forced displacement of indigenes and compensate families for past dislocations Now, our people have sworn due to their continuous marginalization, deprivation, and exclusion to take up arms if that is the only solution for dialogue" (personal interview, December, 2020).

The Abuja natives did not experience this horror of dislocations and demolitions without compensation alone. Thousands of propertied migrants or settlers also faced this dilemma. Daniel Soetan, a migrant resident in Mpape had this to say by way of lamentation: "I learnt about the demolition last month. I have been a victim of demolition before at old Karimo when I came to Abuja seven years ago. I was only able to pick out few of my properties from my home before the building was brought down. I don't think I want to experience that again. So, I want to leave before the bulldozer enters here. The demolition is sad and the question I have been asking is what the government is up to? I think the government is insensitive, and callous because if it is about development, then for who? Are they

ready to develop these communities or is it all about chasing the people away? After demolition of Old Karimo, thousands of evictees went back there to resettle because the government did not provide alternative housing for them before the demolition. More so, government was not prepared to develop the area after the demolition" (personal interview, January, 2021).

Mr. Ehizogie Edwin (personal interview, December 2020) a trader and resident of Idu-Karimo sharing the same view with Daniel had this to say, "Government tells us that our structures are illegal and illegal structures cannot stand. So, to government, their demolition is not wrong, but government has failed to produce mass housing projects for the poor so that people can pay rent. While the action of the FCDA to demolish a place cannot be stopped, it is important that government creates new areas fully developed for the displaced. Mallam El-Rufai did not provide alternative housing for the poor in Gwagwa, Idu-Karimo, Lugbe, Dei-Dei etc, before sending the bulldozers. So, no sooner had he finished the demolitions than did the houses return to their places and in greater number. I was one of the evictees but weeks after the bulldozers left, we returned". As Jacob Atu pointed out, "The position of Dape, Jahi, and Tasha residents is that their houses should not be demolished without the government first making alternative resettlement plans for them" (Oduah Chika, 2007). Seemingly backed by laws, the authorities always come up with the argument that the implementation of the city's beautification, urban renewal and general environmental friendly programs necessitate the pulling down of illegal structures in the capital city. For the authorities, the power to embark on demolition was supported by law and so public agitations that accompany it will remain a constant feature of Abuja's rapid urbanization drive. As the authorities constantly warned, the Abuja city was not envisaged to cater for the interest of all status of people that have besieged it. Therefore, to arrest the city's spatial extension beyond the limits of its budgetary, administrative, functional and morphological capacity, the recurrent pulling down of structures will continue (Oduah Chika, 2007).

In response to the complaints received from concerned members of the public and the indigenes of the city, the NHRC, in a letter signed by its executive Chairman of Board, Dr. Chidi Odinkalu warned the FCDA authorities against forced evictions and demolitions of human settlements in Abuja without cognizance to human rights standards. According to him, where demolition of human settlements occurs without due process, it is regarded as forced eviction or enforced homelessness and violates the prohibitions against cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment under our 1999 Constitution (Olaitan 2004) ^[30]. The Abuja Writers Forum followed up this warning with their own writings. As Dr. Emmanuel Usman Shehu, the founder of the Forum wrote, "Few things can be as degrading as throwing a family out onto the streets without a roof over their heads" (Olaitan, 2004) ^[30].

Moved perhaps by public agitations and threats from Human Rights organizations, the FCDA, in 2005 began a resettlement policy requiring moving the indigenous people to a specific location where even males of age 18 and above would be given

houses. The implementation of this plan began in 2007, but has remained frustrated by shady processes and corrupt manipulations. The Apo Resettlement Scheme designed to resettle indigenes of three communities displaced by the city, like other government's resettlement schemes in the territory, was a huge fraud and failure. In the Apo Resettlement scheme, government officials of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), were known to have transferred lands provided for the natives and house titles to themselves and to some non-natives thereby shortchanging thousands of rightful indigenes meant to be resettled by the scheme. In the same vein, dozens of land meant for public infrastructure like schools, health centers, police posts and recreational facilities for the resettlement district were illegally sold by the FCDA officials to non-natives who converted them to private properties and businesses areas (Gbaiza, personal interview, November, 2020). In elucidation of the above point, Sunday Wangidoso (personal interview, November, 2020) an indigene of Apo village noted, "My brother was issued a letter for house No. 3, Zone D, with enumeration No. Gk/05/2662, while he was in the process of completing the formalities necessary for taking possession of the property, the original copy of the allocation letter disappeared from government files and records. When he protested, he was told that the allocation had been signed for and collected by the 'owner'. The occupant later turned out to be a non-indigene. In same way, Mr. Josiah Shekwoho was among the beneficiaries of about 1,473 plots and 849 houses allocated by government to indigenes of the three communities under the said Apo Resettlement Scheme. Mr. Shekwoho like Wangidoso was allocated house No. 155 Zone B with enumeration No. Gk/05/1255. When the keys for the houses were handed over to the concerned persons, his name like several others was missing on the list. Shekwoho with his family members have pressed for the allocation to no avail. It is pertinent to mention that some indigenes privy to the allocation picked plots and houses than they were entitled. Many also secured houses and plots on behalf of their kinsmen but refused to hand them over. In the same Apo resettlement site, the portion of land meant for the Chief's palace was allocated by the Department of Resettlement and Compensation (then headed by Mr. Okechukwu) to a private non-indigenous company called April Cost Worldwide. In the same manner, the plots of land provided for the settlers community hall and theatre was given to F.N. Okoye, another non-indigene. The land provided for two police posts for the people's security went to a non-native for private business purpose called Monomial Enterprises No one knows exactly how many natives that were defrauded, but estimates put them in thousands (James Igboho, personal interview, December, 2020). Worse still, the houses being so allocated were poorly built. A few years after erecting the buildings, it was discovered that the houses were falling already as most of their walls were caving in, sewages collapsing and some portions of the houses defaced beyond recognition. In the words of Mr. Gbaiza an indigene (personal interview, November, 2020), "Before the houses were allocated in 2009, they were falling already". The traumatic displacement experiences of the Abuja natives

and migrants in the city may have forced Jude Shikwoho to lament thus, "The national leadership class is celebrating the Abuja city's edifices, the Aso rock villa, the luxury hotels etc but all of them are symbols of urbanization without morality" (personal interview, December, 2020).

12. Findings and results

In the displacement of the Abuja native communities, including migrant inhabitants, their displacers (FCDA), never gave the displaced opportunities to negotiate their displacement or compensation. Individuals and residents who resisted or questioned the eviction process of the people were beaten black and blue, and a times raided at night by the demolition squads made up of the police and other state security operatives. Not a few was apprehended and detained by the police and the like security agents. At times, the bulldozers arrived in the absence of the evictees and their houses demolished with their possessions inside.

In Abuja's city making and urbanization process, although most natives and migrants who were displaced survived the shock and trauma, many died of broken hearts, and not a few took their own lives. Government's plan of resettling the natives (and within FCT) only when their places of abode were affected by the city's development projects was a major shift in policy direction, and is seen as the root cause of problems of natives, squatters and Land Administration in the capital city. With the city's rapid expansion and development projects in top gear government rather than resettle the natives affected by the urbanization process chose pushing them in-land and bulldozing their homes.

Thousands of Abuja indigenous citizens forcibly displaced and or dislodged from their primordial homes have for decades waited for compensation from government to no avail.

The forced evictions and demolitions of human settlements in Abuja is without regard or cognizance to human rights standards. Of course, demolition of human settlements in Abuja is carried out without any due process. The Federal Government's resettlement policy of Abuja communities hit by development drive of the city which took off in 2005 following public agitations was marred and frustrated by shady deals and corrupt manipulations by government officials.

13. Recommendations and conclusion

The author recommends that the government should allow the native inhabitants to remain in their current abodes or village slums and the government extending development to them. In essence, it is recommended that the government upgrades and develops the city along with the village slums and squatter settlements. Further, the village slums and squatter settlements will not only be upgraded by providing them with basic infrastructure, the dwellers should be given tenure security. Put succinctly, they should be given the assurance through regularization of their occupancy that their settlements will not be demolished nor the occupants evicted at any point in the city's development drive. With this, the residents will rebuild their own houses to standards. More so, the government should compensate the displaced local inhabitants who are yet to be

compensated or resettled. Given that thousands of displaced natives were defrauded in the government established resettlements especially in the Apo site, there should be a review of the allocations to ensure justice. The allocations that went to government officials especially officials of the FCDA, companies and non-natives should be revoked. We have demonstrated in the study that the Abuja city making process and development drive have been demonstrations of shifts in policy directions, inconsistencies, forced displacements and dislocations. Power, coercion, brutality, raids, threats and all forms of forceful measures have been the city's common eviction and displacement mechanisms. The evictees were regularly sent to homelessness without compensation and due process.

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