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ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF INDIGENE RESETTLEMENT POLICIES ON PERCEIVED COMMUNITY SECURITY IN ABUJA FCT: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of indigene resettlement policies on perceived community security in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria. Amidst rapid urban expansion and demographic changes, the displacement of indigenous populations has raised serious concerns about social cohesion and public safety. Employing a quantitative research design, the study surveyed 137 respondents from selected resettlement communities to examine the objects of the indigenous resettlement policies in Abuja Federal Capital Territory (FCT), assess the effects of such policies on perceived community security in Abuja Federal Capital Territory (FCT), and identify the challenges of actualizing indigenous resettlement policies in Abuja Federal Capital Territory. Data was gathered using structured questionnaires and analyzed through both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The findings indicate a strong link between satisfaction with resettlement processes and perceptions of community security. Forced displacements lacking adequate compensation or inclusive planning were associated with heightened insecurity, social unrest, and growing mistrust in government institutions. In contrast, communities involved in transparent and participatory resettlement processes reported stronger feelings of

safety, stability, and integration. The study underscores the importance of equitable and culturally sensitive policy implementation in urban development settings. It concludes that sustainable development in Abuja requires a shift toward inclusive and rights-based resettlement frameworks that respect the dignity and traditions of indigenous populations. The study recommends that government agencies adopt participatory planning methods and establish long-term support systems that promote social integration and security in resettlement areas. Ultimately, the research contributes to broader conversations on urban governance, indigenous rights, and peacebuilding in African cities undergoing rapid transformation, offering practical insights for policymakers and development practitioners.

Keywords: resettlement policies, community security, indigenous populations, urban development, Abuja FCT.

1.1 Introduction

Across continents, the relocation and resettlement of indigenous communities remain a persistent challenge in the quest for national development and urban transformation. Countries such as Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Pakistan in Asia; Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zimbabwe in Africa; and Brazil, Argentina, and Costa Rica in South America have all experienced various degrees of turmoil linked to displacement and resettlement policies. These experiences reflect a global dilemma about how can states pursue modernization, national integration, and spatial reconfiguration without marginalizing the very populations who have historically occupied and identified with the affected lands.

In many of these contexts, state-led development projects such as the construction of new capital cities, large infrastructure schemes, and urban renewal initiatives have triggered forced migration and dispossession of indigenous peoples. Often, these actions are implemented with inadequate or ineffective compensation frameworks, ambiguous land tenure systems, and weak institutional support for community integration. The consequence is frequently a fractured social landscape, where indigene-settler relations become volatile, leading to communal tension, legal disputes, and in some cases, violent conflict. This scenario underscores the importance of placing resettlement policies at the heart of discussions on sustainable urban development and national security.

Nigeria offers a striking case study in this regard. Following independence in 1960, Nigeria, like many African nations, undertook a series of political and spatial reorganizations, including changes in its administrative structures and territorial boundaries. A significant manifestation of these changes was the relocation of the nation's capital from Lagos to Abuja. This move was driven by multiple factors, including the centrality of Abuja's location, the overcrowded nature of Lagos, and the desire to create a more neutral, inclusive space for national governance. Initiated under General Murtala Muhammed and later pursued by General Ibrahim Babangida, the Abuja project was emblematic of a broader state-building effort.

However, while Abuja's selection as the new Federal Capital Territory (FCT) was guided by geopolitical and logistical considerations, it also entailed profound socio-cultural implications for the region's indigenous communities. The FCT was carved out of portions of Niger,

Plateau, and Kwara States, home to ethnic groups such as the Gbagyi, Gade, Koro, and Gwandara. These communities, who had inhabited the land for generations, found themselves at the center of a massive state-led development initiative that required their displacement to pave the way for the building of the new capital. Although the Nigerian government made official provisions for compensation and relocation—codified in instruments such as Decree No. 6 of 1979—the actual implementation of these policies has been widely criticized for being inconsistent, inadequate, and lacking in community consultation. Many of the affected communities were promised fair compensation and relocation to areas of their choice at the government's expense. However, historical records and recent assessments indicate that a significant portion of these promises remained unfulfilled or were poorly executed. For example, only a fraction of the agreed financial compensation reportedly reached the displaced populations, and the relocation sites often lacked the infrastructure, public services, and cultural amenities needed to ensure smooth reintegration. The result has been a growing sense of disillusionment and injustice among the original inhabitants of the FCT.

Over the years, this discontent has manifested in various forms, including legal challenges over land ownership, protests against government demolitions, and occasional violent clashes between indigenes and settlers or security forces. Furthermore, advocacy groups such as the Abuja Indigene Forum and the Abuja Youth Group and Development Aspiration Forum have intensified their demands for the recognition of indigenous rights and proper implementation of resettlement schemes. These developments suggest that the socio-economic marginalization of indigenous peoples in the FCT is not just a historical grievance but a continuing challenge that threatens community cohesion and national stability. In a context where land is closely tied to identity, culture, and social security, the failure to effectively manage the displacement of indigenous communities can have far-reaching implications. In Abuja, what began as a bold urban development strategy has inadvertently led to protracted indigene-settler tensions, weakened social trust, and recurrent disruptions to governance and infrastructure projects. More importantly, the persistence of these tensions undermines the overarching goal of Abuja as a symbol of national unity and modernity.

This study investigates the intersection of indigene resettlement policies and community security in Abuja's Federal Capital Territory. While a number of scholarly works have explored general issues of displacement and land governance in Nigeria, there is a notable gap in focused, empirical analyses of how poorly managed resettlement processes affect community-level security in the FCT. This research aims to fill that gap by examining the historical context, policy frameworks, implementation practices, and social consequences of the Abuja resettlement scheme. It seeks to understand not only the institutional failures that have fuelled indigene grievances but also the broader implications for peacebuilding, social justice, and sustainable urban development in Nigeria. By critically engaging with these issues, the study contributes to a growing body of literature on postcolonial urban governance, indigenous rights, and the security implications of development-induced displacement. Ultimately, it calls for more inclusive, transparent, and community-sensitive approaches to urban planning and national policy-making in Nigeria and beyond.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Indigeneship/Citizenship/Settlers Dichotomy

The Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, NIALS (2011) defines an indigene as a person who is a native (first people) to a territory as opposed to a settler (Later comer). Indices such as length of time, settlement in that location, exercises of control over the land and other resources in that location; successful effort at forging a sense of separate distinguishing identity defined indigneship. On the other hand, citizenship refers to nationality, the possession of formal legal membership in specific nation recognized under both international and domestic laws. The nexus between citizenship and indigenship creates an identity dilemma which often breeds hostile relationship between host communities and settler-communities as has been demonstrated in the Ezillo-Ezza-Ezillo conflict of Ebonyi state, the Tiv-Jukun conflict in Taraba state, and the Ijaw and Itskeri crisis in Delta State (Imobighe, 2003).

Ibrahim (2004) cited by Bakut (2005: 9) equally argues that the origin if the concept of indigene in the country can be traced to the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) he stated that the constitution defines indigene as "a person whose parents or grandparents are members of a community indigenous to a particular state". Mamdani (1998) as quoted by Bakut (2005) indigene as someone with a veritable claim of an ancestral home in the state of residence. He argued that in colonial Africa, only natives were said to belong to Ethnic groups. Non-natives had no ethnicity but were identified racially. Colonial law made the fundamental distinction between two types of persons: in other words, the native and non-natives. The distinction between natives and Non-natives enabled the Europeans exploit the continent. Therefore as a colonial creation, he said the division should be discarded.

He further contended that indigene/settler relationship is based on the principle of exclusion that settler exist because some people have succeeded in defining themselves as indigenes in order to exclude others who they defined as "settlers". Some authors are against the use of settler in Modern, Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Yet, they all agreed that a settler is not a native of a particular place he settled. However, Babangida (2002) as quoted by Bakut (2005) agrees that " every Nigerian citizen is a native of a particular homeland and is protected by rights accorded by the 1999 constitution".

The refusal by Bakut (2005), to accept that every Nigerian citizen is a native of a particular homeland is argued by Babangida, makes it difficult to understand the indigene-settler problem not only in Abuja but in Nigeria as a state. According to Feberesima (1994), a settler is "One whose ancestor left his native home (for any part of the country), has fixed home domiciled there as of choice for life... The reason for such migration and the time spent in the new place do not constitute the justification for claims of indigeneship". Meanwhile, settler groups in different parts of the country have constantly maintained that having settled in a place for a long period, it is not proper to refer to them as settlers but indigenes especially as their kiths and kin could be located elsewhere, they could not trace their roots properly neither could they fit properly Into the old societies where their forefathers left several years ago.

The indigenes settler dichotomy with its attendant corollaries have manifested and accounted for "The Ife-Modakeke crisis in Osun state, Ijaw and Itsekiri conflicts in Delta state, Tiv and Junkun crises in Taraba State, division between the Ijebus and Oyo people in Ibadan, Hausa's

and Kataf in Kaduna State and Hausa-Fulani and Berom in Plateau State. Therefore, the same type of conflict could manifest between settlers and indigenes in Abuja based on the state of grievance exhibited by Abuja indigenes towards settlers on land, housing, political and chieftaincy matters.

2.1.2 Relocation of indigene

The end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970 brought economic rush to urban areas in Nigeria and especially, Lagos. The rush to the urban areas stampeded urbanization and according to (Obiadi et al 2019 cited Okonkwo 2013) , in the contemporary Nigerian situation, urbanization is an unstoppable phenomenon and is not a recent phenomenon in the history of Nigeria. The foregoing affecting mostly state capital cities such as Enugu, Lagos, Jos, Ibadan, etc. New employment opportunities became available with the emergence of many industrial units in these urban centers (Obiadi 2018 cited Okonkwo 2013). In addition, the creation of 19 states, each with its own capital city, stimulated a drift of population to these capitals with the associated demand for housing both for official and for private residential uses. These developments produced great pressure on the sizes of urban centers in Nigeria.

The Nigeria Federal Capital City came to be in the 1970s. Designated in the centre of the country to signify neutrality and national unity. Another impetus for Abuja came because of Lagos population boom that made the city overcrowded and conditions squalid. As Lagos was already undergoing rapid economic development, the Nigerian regime felt the need to expand the economy towards the inner part of the country, hence decided to move the administrative capital to Abuja, leaving Lagos as the commercial capital of the Nation. The logic used was similar to the way Brazil planned its capital, Brazila. Construction works on Abuja started in the late 1970s but due to economic and political instability, the initial stages of the city were not completed until the late 1980s. Meanwhile, the hurried movement of federal workers to the new city during the period brought about huge population growth without corresponding infrastructural expansion and growth. This has resulted in squatter settlement and towns which has spread rapidly in and outside the city limits; resulting in the continuous demolition exercise being carried out by successive administration in the city of Abuja since 2003. Thus, the building of a new capital is not akin to Nigeria as a nation alone (UNESCO, 2013).

As noted by Reva (2016). capital relocation is one of the most innovative tools for building states and national identification. According to Olaitan (2004) the Federal Capital City is located on the Gwagwa Plains in the northeastern quadrant of the Federal Capital Territory. It is bounded by the Abuja Hills to the east and the Zango-Kuku Hills to the south. The site for the Federal Capital City was chosen for its location at the center of the nation, its moderate climate, small population and also for political reasons. To accomplish the goal of relocating the Federal Capital to an area, geographically central to Nigeria and with relative equal accessibility to all parts of the nation, about 845 villages were displaced to make way for the Federal Capital Territory, FCT (Olaitan, 2004). The government wanted an area, free of all encumbrances, a principle of "equal citizenship" within the territory where no one can "claim any special privilege" of "indigeneity" as was the case with Lagos (Jibril, 2006; Okonkwo, 2006).

To this end, more should be said about the displacement of the native people who resided in the former old town of Abuja before it became the Federal Capital Territory (FTC). Committees were empowered to explore relocation. The government assumed the expenses involved, declaring and authorizing in Decree No. 6 of 1979 a rate of compensation for households as well as churches and mosques. About 50% of the people in Abuja are Muslim living along side 40% of the rest of the population who are Christian. The cost of relocating places of worship along with families was agreed at the sum of one million *naira* for the Niger, Plateau, and Kwara states, in a deal signed on October 10, 1977. But people were slow to move. Three years later, the decision to move people involuntarily was considered (Talle, 1999).

No doubt, land matter is the major challenge confronting the movers of capital across the world, Nigeria could not have fair better in this aspect. This explains why in Abuja, land matter is the major problem between the natives and Federal Capital Territory Administration. According to Khotari (2010), resource is a major cause of conflict between nations. As he puts it, the control and use of natural resources lies at the heart of the deepening crisis in the world today. Also Fatch (2010) remarks that structural theory is remarkably strong on the immediate and underlying factors that lead to conflict. It was also argued that resource presents a large number of such factors that make the emergence and escalation of internal conflict possible (Brown, 1996: 577). Apart from resource factors, other reasons that are equally germane include economic, social, political and institutional as well as ethnic factors in averting crisis.

Therefore, the quest by indigenes for proper settlement is a major threat to the residents of the city because there is population increases in the new areas of settlement by the locals without enough land to go round all and sundry, apart from ever increasing prices in procuring same, while governments do not fulfil their promises on proper resettlement in any instances.

Goomsu (2005), as quoted by (Adalhkali, 2010) posits that Abuja's paramount role, its choice, design and planning was determined by a seat of government, place and symbol of unity, meeting point of Nigeria's diverse culture, a magnet of diverse people and nations; and a place of physical beauty. However, these lofty objectives were yet to be realized due to emerging security threats being perpetrated by the indigenes with attendant consequence of conflict with other residence.

2.1.3 Demands of the Locals within the Abuja FCT on Indigene Resettlement Policies

Jibril (2006), posit that movement of people can either be forced or voluntary, especially if Government acquires land for developmental project. Other reasons for urban migration could be disasters such as wars, floods, earthquakes which could force man out of an area that he is familiar with to settle in an entirely new area. All over the world, resettlement abound. Most programmes involve Government decisions which leave the affected people with very little room to manoeuvre.

Abuja had been conceived to be a-no-man's-land. This beautiful concept was given legal backing by Decree 6 or 1976 and was expected to be actualised via the compulsory evacuation and resettlement of these indigenes. However, the haphazard and inconsistent implementation of the resettlement policy has resulted in the presence of a large number of the Abuja original inhabitants. The indigenous population were at the initial stages of

development of the federal capital territory concerned with wresting favourable tidings in terms of adequate compensation money and good resettlement centres from the authorities. But with time and having seen that the government could not muster enough courage to execute the entire resettlement project to its logical conclusion, those indigenes that remained in the territory began to turn their attention within, to see what they can make of the prevailing situation. However, instead of satisfaction with the perceived rapid growth and development of the territory the natives seems to be aghast and uncomfortable.

This is not only a denunciation of the legal basis and character of development of the entire Abuja project in the light of existing realities, but also of an attempt by natives to assert their identity. In the latter case, they have particularly been working assiduously to give it concrete expressions through a number of ways. First, is by their apparent domination of the territory's political scene. As was noted earlier, the natives have been calling the shots in the territory 's political terrain. Except for now that the Senatorial seat is occupied by a non-native, the natives always dominate and manage political parties, and cart almost all the elective offices in the territory. Indeed, it is largely for this reason that the natives have been stridently clamouring for the institution of elective majority 'with political' administrative structure of a typical state in Nigeria (Talle M. S. 1999).

Incidentally, it seems that the natives are being aided wittingly or unwittingly by government in the process of asserting their identity. Recent developments in the affairs of the territory such as the establishment of the federal capital territory council of chiefs, coronation and installation of various local chiefs, including in Garki village at the very heart of the federal capital city, could not have come at a better time for the natives . In fact, if anything , this has further strengthened the basis for calling into question and negation of the original conception of Abuja as a no man's land, by the natives . In other words, the official position on paper may be that Abuja is a no man's land but the reality on ground belies this notion, and increasingly point to the existing original inhabitants as at least, 'part-owners ' of the land in conjunction with the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Mamman, et al, 1994).

2.1.4 Challenges of Implementing the Federal Government Resettlement Policies for community Security in Abuja Federal Capital Territory

According to Talle, (1999) the aborigines or original inhabitants of Abuja could be said to have been displaced immediately after formal announcement of Abuja as the nation's capital and the subsequent promulgation of the Federal Capital Territory Decree 6 of 1976. Displacement in this context entails not the immediate physical eviction of persons, but in the legal sense of wresting from the inhabitants the rights to and ownership of their ancestral lands and the entire territory making up the new capital, and its transfer to the Federal Government. In other words, it is the "loss of state citizenship by the indigenes" of Abuja who also bore the disruption of their socio-political set up. In consequence of this development, there arose the issue of resettlement which eventually became an integral part of the framework of plan implementation required to attain the desired new capital city.

Thus, based on this stand, the then Federal Government came up with the policy to relocate and resettle all the indigenous population in their former states of origin or any other place of their choice. In accordance with this policy guidelines some money was advanced to the three states involved to "purchase equipment, clear resettlement sites and conduct the necessary surveys

"The amounts of money advanced to Niger, Plateau and Kwara states: N4 million: N 1.3 million and :N 1 million respectively, though the latter was later returned to the Federal Government following the eventual non-relocation of Kwara state indigenes. In the same vein, the total number of households that needed resettlement according to the census carried out in 1977 was determined at 24,683. (Onibokun, 1995).

However, following a subsequent comprehensive population survey of the federal capital territory, commissioned by government and carried out by Consultants from the University of Ibadan, it was revealed that "to compensate, evacuate and resettle all the inhabitants outside Abuja would require more than two billion naira". This huge amount of money frightened the Obasanjo regime, and consequently the policy was reviewed culminating in limiting the resettlement of inhabitants in only "those areas needed for city development and other priority areas," while those who also opted to leave were to "be given Federal Assistance (Onibokun, 1995)

With this development, especially the option now given inhabitants to either leave or remain in the federal capital territory, the matter subsequently took a new dimension during the Second Republic, when the states of Niger, Plateau and Kwara demanded and insisted that their citizens should be evacuated out of the territory. In response, the Federal Government set up in 1968, a Presidential Ad-hoc Committee which conducted an opinion survey and determined the number of households opting to be moved out of the territory and be resettled in their former states of origin (Olusola, 1993).

Tamuno (2008) finds that materialism or struggle over allocation of resources, which in most cases are scarce, is the main cause of conflicts now brewing between historical indigenes of Abuja and FCT administration. The crux of the matter is revolves round land acquisition. The Gbagyi settlements have to give way for civilization and developments in the FCT. As noted by Audu (2010) there are many instances of unscrupulous land deals in Abuja, which robbed the indigenous people of their beloved possession. Owing to illiteracy level of locals in the past, the author finds out that N1 million was approved and released as compensation, but the Gbayi people were given N100,000 only (Aso Telegraph, 2010)

Charles (2010) posits that some of the people displaced were only given part of the monetary value of their dispossessed land while the balance is still hanging. The author identifies that, other factors like political and chieftaincy differences are exploited to justify struggle over allocation of resources, appointments, resettlement and integration into Abuja master plan. This is exactly the situation in the emerging trend of problems of indigeneship in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and its implication on community cohesion. Based on the foregoing, this research precisely focused on the Indigenes Resettlement Policies and Community Security in Abuja Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria, a gap this study intend to bridge.

3.1 Research Methods

The study employed quantitative research design, with data generated through the administration of structured questionnaires to address the research objectives and questions. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed to selected respondents, of which 137 were

successfully retrieved and analyzed. The questionnaire was structured using a five-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. The response options ranged from *Strongly Agree (SA)*, *Agree (A)*, *Undecided (U)*, *Disagree (D)*, to *Strongly Disagree (SD)*. This scale was designed to capture varying degrees of perception and opinion on issues related to indigenous resettlement.

The study population comprised 150 individuals residing in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Respondents included both male and female participants aged 20 years and above, drawn from diverse categories such as community leaders, farmers, youth leaders, and association heads. To ensure broad representation, 25 respondents were selected from each of the six Area Councils of the FCT, namely: AMAC (25), Abaji (25), Bwari (25), Gwagwalada (25), Kwali (25), and Kuje (25). These areas were selected because they have been significantly affected by the federal government's resettlement policies and host a substantial number of displaced indigenous populations.

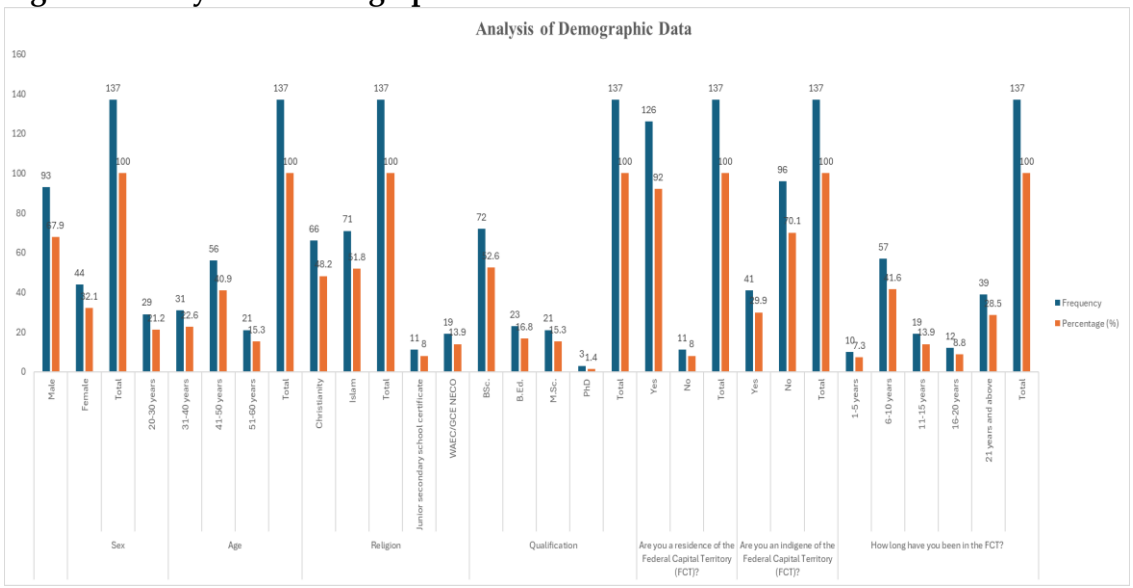
For data presentation, descriptive statistical methods, including frequency tables and graphs, were employed. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to summarize and interpret the patterns and trends in respondents' views. To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated, which provided a measure of internal consistency for the questionnaire items in relation to the study objectives.

Generally, the study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected using research instruments such as questionnaires, as previously described. Secondary data were obtained from a variety of sources, including academic journals, government publications, newspapers, books, and other scholarly research works.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

The objective of this section is to present and analyse the data collected during the research survey and to show the findings resulting from the data collected.

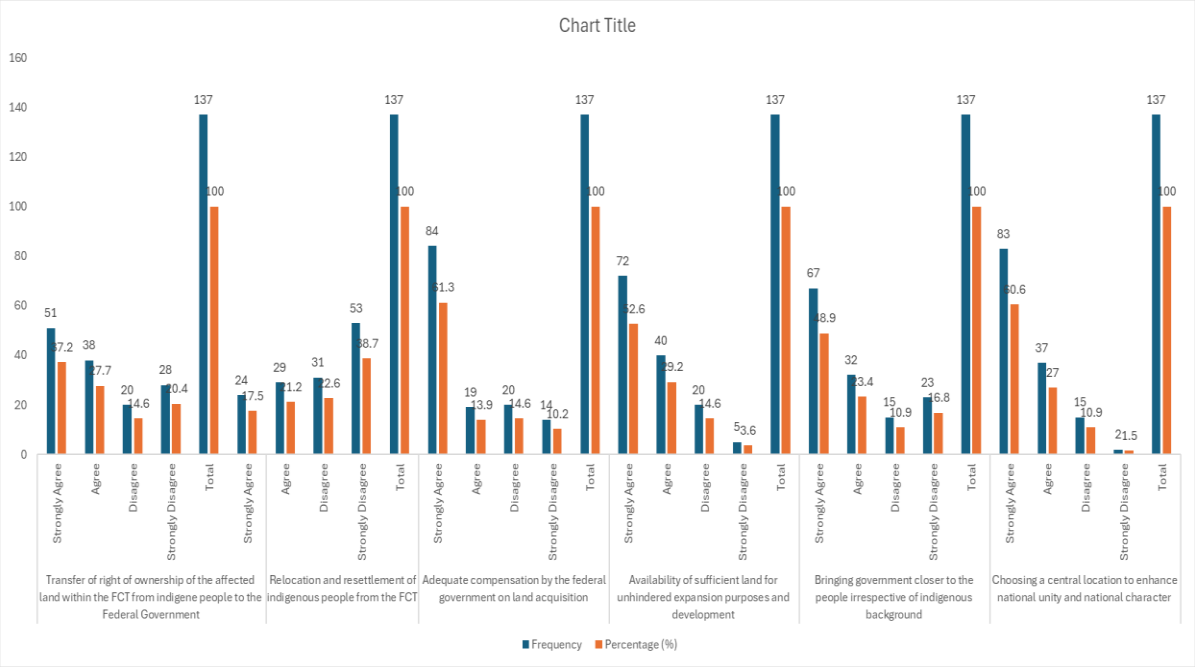
Figure 1: Analysis of Demographic Data



Source: Researcher field work 2024

Figure 1 shows the demographic information; the majorities of responders were male and most were in the 41–50 age range. This suggests that the majority of respondents in the study region were middle-aged, adherents of Islam (i.e., Muslims), and holders of a BSc. Similarly, 92% of respondents were Federal Capital Territory (FCT) residents. Therefore, it can be inferred that everyone who responded was a resident of the FCT. Although the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) is home to 41.6% of the participants, in which most of these respondents have lived there for 6–10 years.

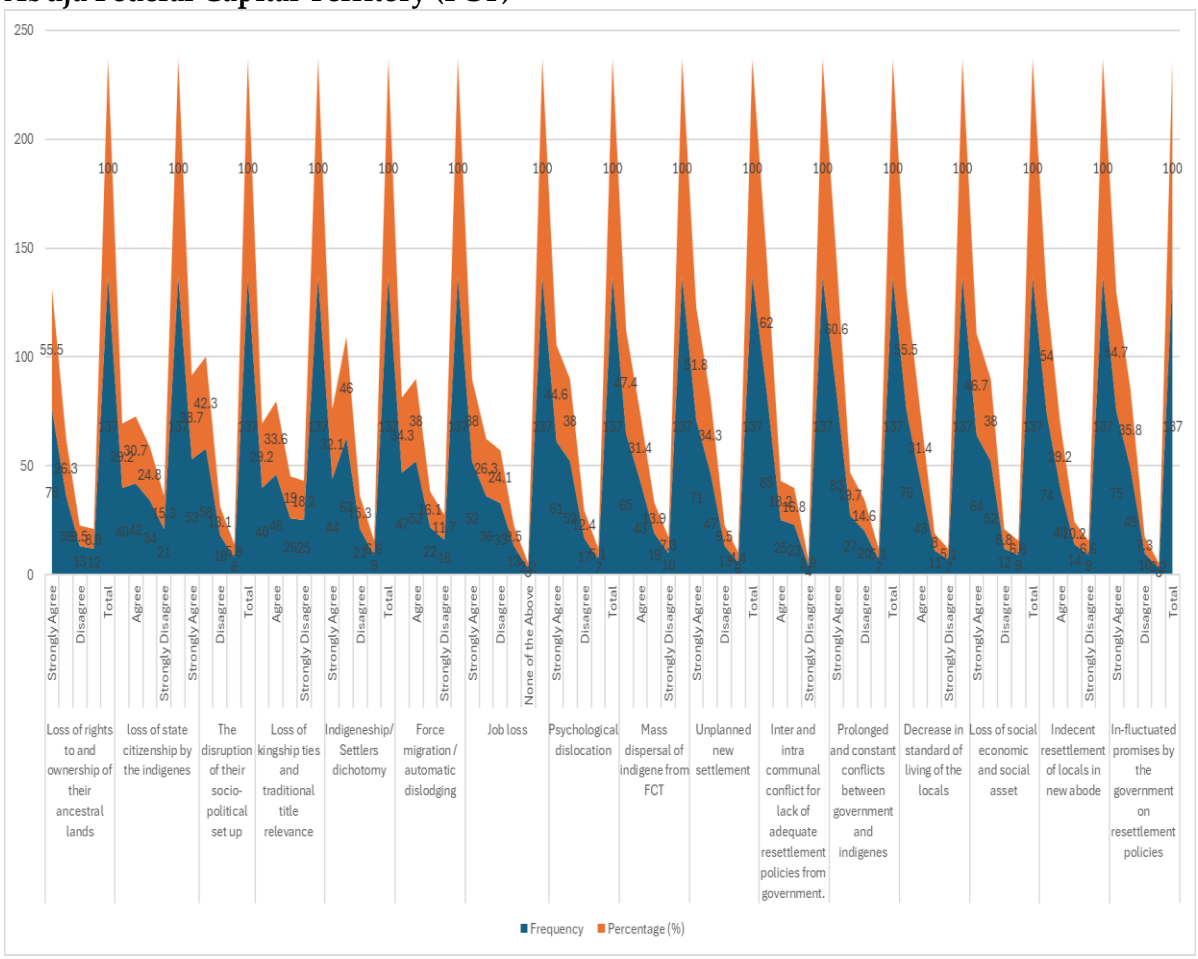
Figure 2: Objects of the Indigenous Resettlement Policies in Abuja Federal Capital Territory (FCT)



Source: Researcher field work 2024

Figure 2 shows the objects of the indigenous resettlement policies in Abuja's Federal Capital Territory (FCT), 64% of the respondents agreed on giving the Federal Government the right of ownership of the affected land within the FCT, while most of the respondents (61.3%) disagreed on relocating and resettling indigenous people from the FCT. It was also revealed that 75.2% of the respondents agreed to take an advisory role in the process. Similarly, 81.8% of the participants concurred that there is enough land available for unrestricted growth and expansion. Furthermore, the results showed that a higher percentage of the respondents strongly agreed with putting government closer to the populace, regardless of their indigenous heritage, and that choosing a central location would strengthen national identity and togetherness.

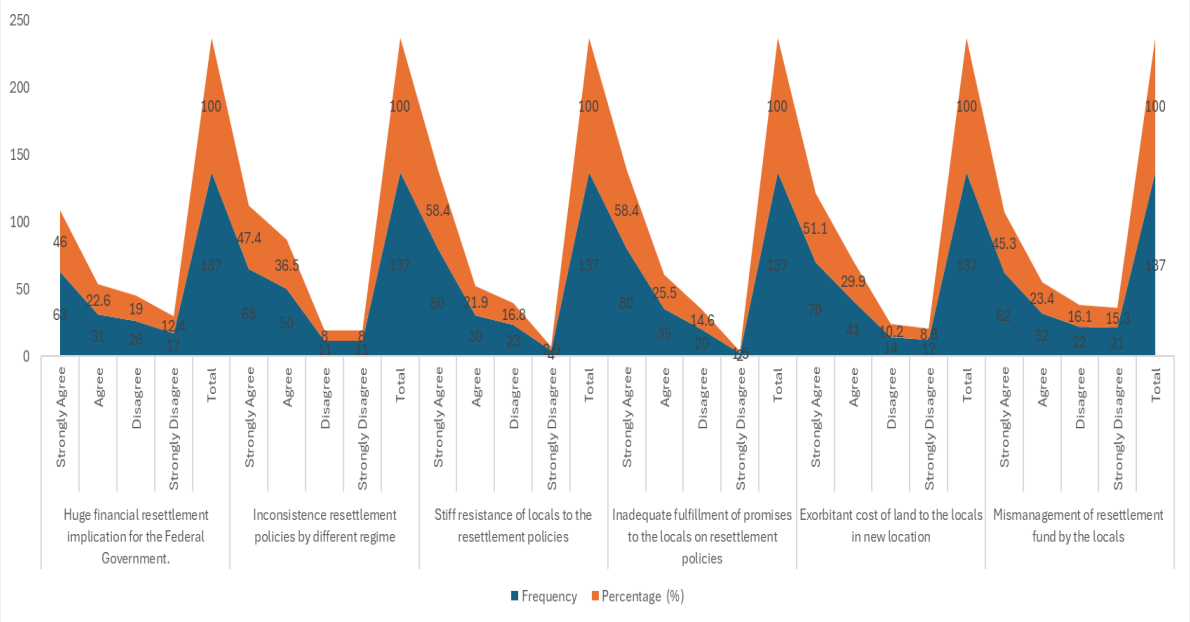
Figure 3: Effects of Indigenous Resettlement Policies on Perceived Community Security in Abuja Federal Capital Territory (FCT)



Source: Researcher field work 2024

Figure 3 shows the consequences of indigenous resettlement policies on the residents of Abuja Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The majority of respondents believed that giving up their ownership and rights to their ancestral lands was one of the consequences of indigenous relocation policy. More specifically, a higher percentage of respondents more than average shared this opinion, viewing it as a loss of state citizenship for the native population and a disruption of their sociopolitical system. Loss of ties to the king and traditional titles, as well as the contrast between natives and settlers, were other effects mentioned by the respondents. In the same vein, a higher majority of respondents concurred that the repercussions of indigenous resettlement policies included forced migration or automatic displacement, job loss, psychological upheaval, mass dispersal of indigenous people from the FCT, and unforeseen new settlement. The lack of effective resettlement strategies from the government, as well as the protracted and ongoing conflicts between the government and indigenous people led to 80.3% of respondents viewing the programme as a source of inter and intracommunal violence. More so, majority of these participants believed that indigenous resettlement policies will lower their standard of living and caused them to lose social, economic, and cultural assets. More so, 90.5% of the respondents believed that this policy would result in the government making inconsistent promises regarding resettlement policies.

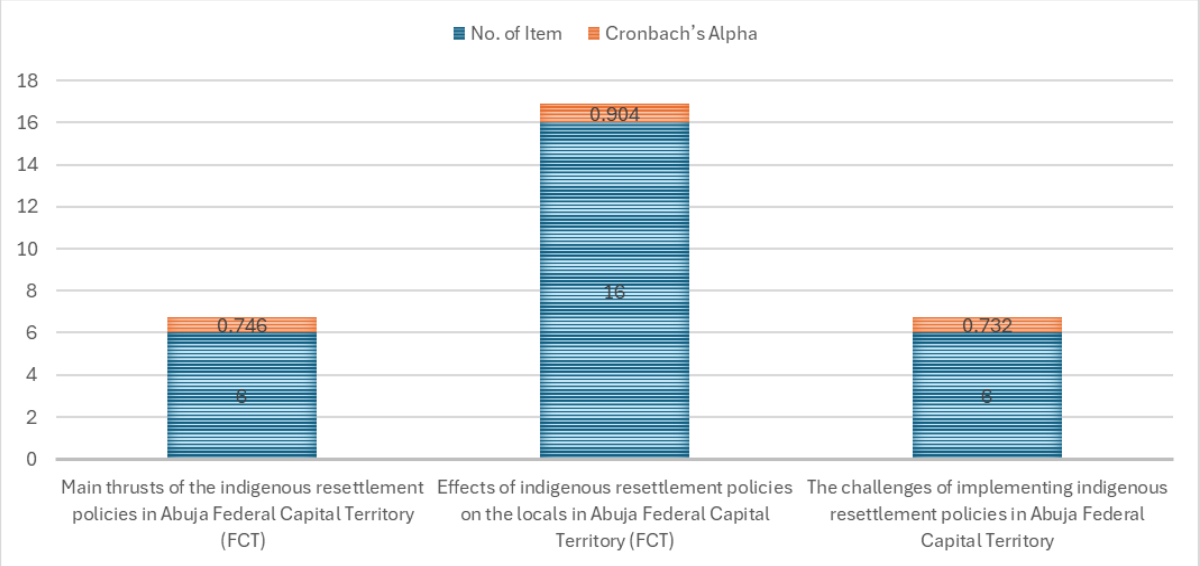
Figure 4: The Challenges of actualizing Indigenous Resettlement Policies in Abuja Federal Capital Territory



Source: Researcher field work 2024

Figure 4 shows the difficulties in executing indigenous resettlement programmes in Abuja Federal Capital Territory. More than half of the respondents believed that the strategy would have a significant financial impact on resettlement for the Federal Government as well as inconsistent resettlement policies by other regimes. More so, 80.3% of these participants agreed with the earlier assertion that the resettlement programmes would be met with fierce local opposition. Furthermore, more than 60% of the respondents concurred that this programme has difficulties due to the residents' poor administration of the resettlement fund, insufficient fulfilment of promises made to them regarding resettlement policies, and expensive land prices in the new area.

Figure 5: Result of the Reliability Test of the Study's Instrument



Source: Researcher field work 2024

Figure 5 shows a typical rule of thumb, a value of 0.6 to 0.7 represents a respectable degree of reliability, and a value of 0.8 or more shows a very good level (Hulin *et al*., 2001). Table 5 therefore displays the Cronbach's Alpha value of all the constructs. According to their Cronbach's Alpha value of greater than 0.7, which is within the accepted criterion, it demonstrates that all the questions under each construct were adequate for the study. This revealed that all the questions in the used instrument (questionnaire) were suitable in responding to the research questions created for the study.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

This study sought to assess the effects of indigenous resettlement policies on perceived community security in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), with a particular focus on the experiences and perceptions of affected populations. The findings, drawn from quantitative data analysed through figures and statistical indicators, offer valuable insights into how resettlement policies have shaped socio-economic realities, governance dynamics, and community well-being in Abuja. First, the demographic overview and respondent composition which presents the demographic profile of respondents. A significant proportion were male and between the ages of 41–50, suggesting a middle-aged population that is likely to have deep-rooted experiences of displacement or long-term observation of resettlement processes. Most respondents identified as Muslims and held a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree, indicating a relatively educated sample with potentially nuanced understandings of public policy and civic engagement. Notably, a higher percentage of respondents were residents of the FCT and had lived in the region for 6–10 years. This demographic information affirms the respondents' firsthand knowledge of local conditions and their qualification to comment meaningfully on resettlement policy outcomes.

The objects and perceived intent of indigenous resettlement policies reveals the complex and often contradictory views regarding the intent and design of indigenous resettlement policies in the FCT. While some of the respondents agreed that the policies serve to vest land ownership rights with the Federal Government, others opposed the idea of relocating and resettling indigenous populations from the FCT. This suggests a general perception that although the policies may support national infrastructure goals, they undermine the rights of local populations. Interestingly, a large number of respondents expressed a willingness to play an advisory role in the process, which underlines a desire for inclusion, participation, and co-ownership in decisions that affect their communities. Furthermore, it was affirmed that sufficient land exists to accommodate urban expansion without necessarily displacing indigenous populations. Respondents also expressed strong support for using Abuja's central location to foster national unity and administrative proximity, highlighting the population's understanding of the symbolic and practical relevance of the FCT. However, this support is tempered by concerns over the exclusionary mechanisms employed in resettlement implementation.

However, the consequences of resettlement policies are largely viewed in negative terms. Respondents overwhelmingly cited the loss of ancestral land and traditional rights as a key effect of resettlement. Many believed that this constituted a symbolic stripping of state citizenship, with accompanying disruptions to the sociopolitical structure of indigenous communities. Other consequences included the erosion of ties to traditional authorities, such as kingship institutions and cultural titles, as well as tensions between original inhabitants

and settlers. Respondents also noted severe socioeconomic impacts, including forced migration, job losses, psychological trauma, and mass displacement. These cumulative effects have led to a fragmented community structure and heightened vulnerability among the indigenous population.

A particularly alarming finding is that almost all of the respondents identified the resettlement policy as a driver of both inter- and intra-communal violence, reflecting the destabilizing potential of poorly managed displacement. Moreover, respondents believed that these policies diminished their standard of living, eroded social and cultural capital, and led to broken promises by the government. A staggering number of respondents believed the state's commitments regarding resettlement had been inconsistent, reinforcing a deep sense of mistrust and betrayal among the affected populations. These findings underscore the broader implications of resettlement on peace, security, and governance.

The study finally highlighted the practical and political obstacles hindering successful implementation of indigenous resettlement policies in Abuja. Financial constraints were identified as a major challenge, with over half the respondents acknowledging the high cost implications for the Federal Government. Respondents also criticized inconsistent implementation across regimes, which reflects a lack of policy continuity and institutional commitment. Additionally, 80.3% agreed that resistance from local communities presents a major barrier to the resettlement programme's success. This resistance is perhaps a reflection of cumulative historical grievances, distrust in government motives, and dissatisfaction with past experiences. Other identified challenges include poor management of resettlement funds, inadequate fulfilment of promises, and unaffordable land prices in new settlements. These issues reveal systemic governance failures and institutional weaknesses in policy execution.

6.1 Conclusion

In sum, the findings paint a compelling picture of the complexities surrounding indigenous resettlement in Abuja. While the objectives of national integration and urban development are broadly understood and even supported, the implementation process has led to significant socio-economic dislocation, loss of traditional identity, and growing insecurity. The lack of participatory planning, inadequate compensation, and inconsistent policy enforcement have not only marginalized indigenous populations but also fostered social tension and mistrust. To address these challenges, there is an urgent need for more inclusive, transparent, and rights-based approaches to urban resettlement that prioritize the well-being and agency of affected communities.

7.1 Recommendations

The findings of this study reinforce an immediate need for a comprehensive and far-reaching re-evaluation of indigenous resettlement policies in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT). There is a predominant attitude of exclusion, disempowerment, and distrust among affected persons, founded on narratives of land dispossession, weakened customary power, and deteriorating socio-economic welfare. Addressing these root causes requires more than policy reorientation, it requires a fundamental transformation of how resettlement is conceived and carried out. Any valuable and effective approach must first guarantee that indigenous people's engagement with the planning and management of resettlement programmes is placed at the top of the list. The respondents' willingness to accept advisory positions reflects

a desire not to obstruct development but to help shape processes that have explicit consequences for their lives and identities. It is a chance for policymakers to build inclusion and rebuild trust through dialogue, openness, and collective decision-making.

A sustainable resettlement policy will also strike a balance between Abuja's development goals at the federal level and safeguarding the rights of indigenous people. This ensures that compensation is equitable, prompt, and responsive to the socio-cultural sacrifices of the displaced individuals, not merely financial compensation but also measures to preserve identity, heritage, and social cohesion. The state must move away from rhetorical promises and establish longer-term supporting mechanisms involving access to land, livelihood opportunities, and education in new settlements. Furthermore, the overall notion of policy inconsistency and promises broken by successive regimes underscores the necessity of institutional continuity and robust accountability regimes. Financial undertakings must be matched with transparent budget management and efficient handling of funds so that resettlement initiatives do not fail due to corruption or delayed bureaucracy.

Above all, this study reveals that insecurity and violence most often follow ill-managed resettlements, triggering ripple effects among communities and eroding peacebuilding. To deal with these tensions, resettlement policy must be infused with peace and conflict sensitivity as core principles. Finally, since the strategic and symbolic nature of Abuja must be respected, resettlement in the FCT has to be a signature of inclusive urban politics that neither dishonours indigenous heritage but accommodates national unity and development. Equally, as a balancing act in the agenda for resettlement, the government can reverse the people's movement to make resettlement a tool for social integration, justice, and lasting peace.

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