THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL URBAN PLANNING APPROACH.
A CASE STUDY OF ABUJA, NIGERIA

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   Formal and informal planning approach

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BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Figure 1.: Diagram illustrating the urban environment (UNECE, 2013).

❑ Urban planning systems are instruments for establishing long term, sustainable frameworks and plans for social, institutional and economic development by encouraging greater diversity, avoiding urban sprawl, urban regeneration and encourage sustainable practices (UNECE, 2013).

❑ It is a set of process that generates different products, which is characterized by interactions among the subjects involved (Cirianni, *et al.*, 2013)

❑ Therefore, it is paramount for city governments to build an urban planning system that is flexible and responsive to shifting local needs, improve living situations in local communities through inclusive development (WHO, 2013; Awuah, *et al.,* 2014).
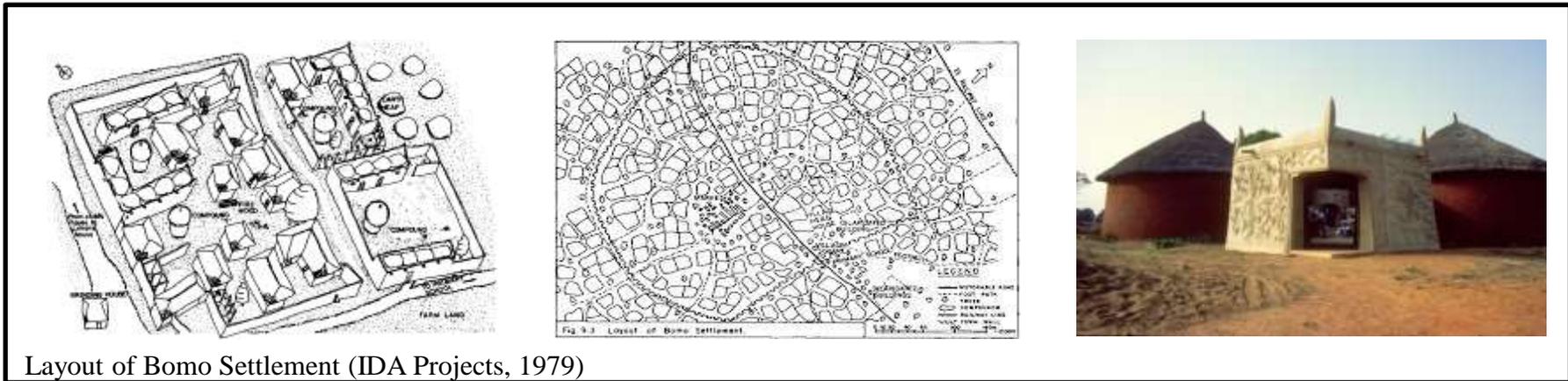
ISSUES

❑ Urban planning issues around the world are more sensitive to local differences and have become more pluralistic with demographic and socio-cultural changes (Healey, 2006).

❑ Most urban planning system and policies around the world do not effectively address social exclusion as a whole (UN-Habitat, 2013; Dugarova and Lavers, 2014; OECD, 2015). But rather, has promoted changes that has resulted in land use segregation, exacerbating environmental issues and social problems (WHO, 1999; UN-Habitat, 2013).

PLANNING APPROACH

Urban planning systems vary in their origins, their institutional arrangement, their policy tools and their personnel (Cullingworth, 1994). The urban planning system and style of government and administration varies by countries and the purpose for which they were originally introduced.

Layout of Bomo Settlement (IDA Projects, 1979)

Abuja Centenary City Layout and Residential apartment development in Abuja (The Address, 2017)

PLANNING APPROACH

Era	Fundamental approaches in urban planning
Up to 18th century **(Informal/Traditional)**	- Traditional approaches - Cultural design and traditional development of community centres
1900-1960s	- Colonization - Comprehensive, rational, modernist approaches - Physical design and development of cities
1960-1980s	- Community participation - Environmental concerns - A shift from physical design to social concerns
1980s-2010	- Collaborative, strategic approach - Participation of all parties in the planning process - Project based development of cities - Upgrading quality in urban centres - Environmental concerns

Table 1.: Table showing the changing urban planning approaches (Ozgur, 2012).

WHAT IS FORMAL?

WHAT IS INFORMAL?

"The informal was the formal (Ikejiofor, 2009)"

THE URBAN PLANNING PROCESS

Figure 2.: Diagram illustrating the different stages in the urban planning process (Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, 2011).

The urban planning process provides frameworks through development strategies and plans at different levels including national, regional, city, neighbourhood and specific sites (European Commission , 1994).

THE URBAN PLANNING PROCESS

"This stage is the auditing stage of the urban situation such as public infrastructure, economic infrastructure, social infrastructure and environmental infrastructure".

❑ This stage involves developing an idea of the future or desired result that is envisioned.
❑ Identifying the problems
❑ Also a vision is agreed after the data and questions have been gathered.

THE URBAN PLANNING PROCESS

"Plan making is the act or process of *making* or carrying out *plans* (Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, 2011)".

❑ This entails generating ideas and plans for action.
❑ It involves the formulation of the plan elements and policies based upon background information and stated development goals and objectives.
❑ It is also about framing questions about development.

THE URBAN PLANNING PROCESS

Goals/Problem identification → Plan making → Design and development → Implementation and enforcement → Management (cyclical process)

"The realization of a concept or idea into a configuration, drawing, model, mould, pattern, plan or specification to help achieve the goals and objectives over a period of time (NALAS, 2010)".

❑ It involves the design and development of the planning authority framework and policy for that area in order to meet the desired vision.

THE URBAN PLANNING PROCESS

"This is the process of putting a decision or plan into effect and making sure they are in compliance with a law, rule, or obligation (Hassenforder *et al.,* 2015)".

❑ This stage includes development, enactment and administration of the various tools for implementing the plan.

THE URBAN PLANNING PROCESS

"Management is the organization and coordination of the urban plans in order to achieve defined goals and objectives (Deslandes, 2014)".

- ❑ The review of the entire process from the beginning (stage one).
- ❑ Data are constantly updated.
- ❑ Management of the urban planning framework.
- ❑ All stakeholders involved in the various actions are normally involved in accessing and evaluating the impacts of the development plan being developed.

CASE STUDY – ABUJA, NIGERIA

LOCATION CONTEXT

Nigeria often referred to as the "Giant of Africa", is the most populous country in Africa and 7th most populous in the world with approximately 182 million inhabitants is viewed as a muiltinational state with over 500 ethnic groups with wide variety of cultures and languages.

Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria. The City population grew from 776,298 in 2006 to well over **3,000,000 in 2015,** and comprises the fourth largest urban area in Nigeria, surpassed only by Lagos, Kano and Ibadan. The city grew at the annual rate of 139.7% between 2000 and 2010, making it the fastest growing city in the world.

OVER 3,000,000

(2015)

(2006 Census)
776,298

ABUJA CITY POPULATION GROWTH

LOCATION

The diversity in Nigeria's ethnic groups became a fundamental reason for the choice of Abuja as Nigeria's new capital city, based on its ethnic neutrality and centralisation within Nigeria's land mass that is accessible easily from every part of the country (FCDA, 1979). The Justice Aguda Recommendation panel noted in its report:

"It is needless for us to state the obvious - that we are just in the process of building a nation of the many 'nations' which occupy the geographic area known as Nigeria. It is our belief that one way of forging the idea of unity of this nation is by building a capital city which will belong to every Nigerian, where every Nigerian will be rest assured that he has opportunity to live in parity with every other Nigerian, and where no Nigerian will be regarded either in law or on the facts as a 'native foreigner" (The Abuja Master-Plan, 1975: 38).
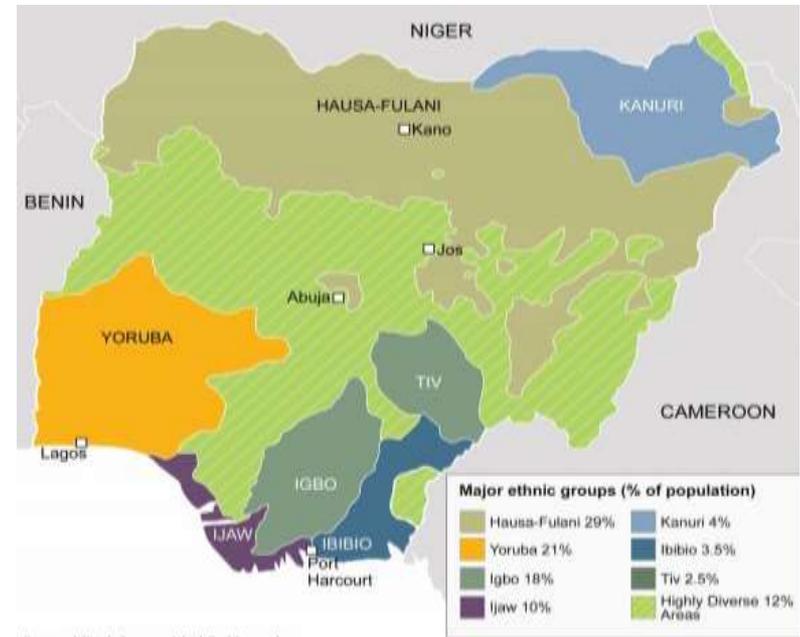
ABUJA URBAN PLANNING SYSTEM

The urban planning system in Abuja has revolved over the years since the 19th century.

❑ The pre-colonial era, urban planning was done at the community level where land was primary held under communal ownership. It was managed on the basis of the customs and traditions of the various ethnic groups that make-up the community (Adeniyi, 2013).

❑ Formal urban planning in Nigeria began in the late nineteenth century with British colonial urban development activities (Home, 1983). The urban planning system was based on two structures of local administration subordinate to the colonial government. First, was a local administration structure based on the indirect rule system, which relied on the Native Authorities and Native Treasuries by means of traditional chiefs who were responsible for the native communities (Home, 1983). The other was townships and municipal administrators supervised by colonial administrators responsible for colonial urban areas, both European residential areas and non-European reservations (Home, 1983).

ABUJA URBAN PLANNING SYSTEM

Urban planning was given further impetus in Nigeria when the Town and Country Planning Ordinance No. 4 of 1946 was passed following the promulgation of the Commonwealth Development and Welfare Act (1940), which sought to promote reconstruction of Great Britain and her colonies (Ogu, 1999).
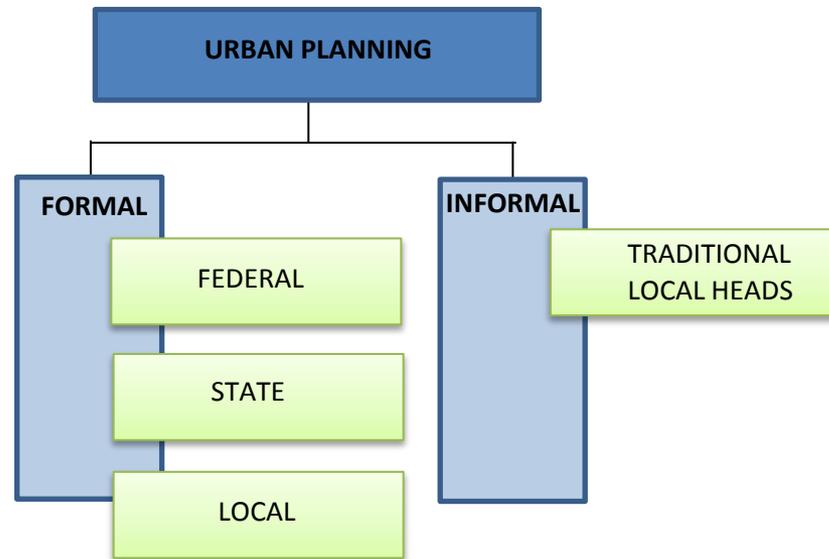
Figure 2: Diagram showing the different planning structure in Nigeria (Adeniyi, 2013).

"Adeniyi, (2013) highlights that urban planning in Nigeria involves a diversity of actors which includes formal and informal structures who share responsibility to govern and plan".
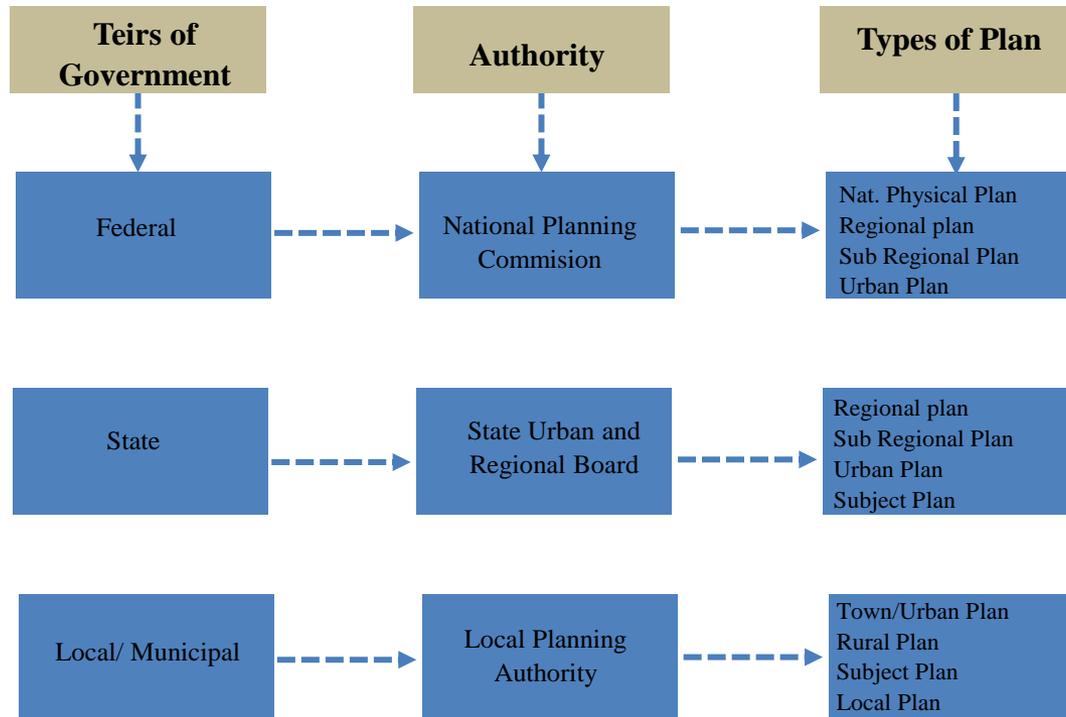
ABUJA URBAN PLANNING SYSTEM - FORMAL

Teirs of Government	Authority	Types of Plan
Federal	National Planning Commision	Nat. Physical Plan Regional plan Sub Regional Plan Urban Plan
State	State Urban and Regional Board	Regional plan Sub Regional Plan Urban Plan Subject Plan
Local/ Municipal	Local Planning Authority	Town/Urban Plan Rural Plan Subject Plan Local Plan

Figure 3. Diagram showing the Nigeria urban planning system (Falade, 2012)

ABUJA URBAN PLANNING SYSTEM - INFORMAL

❑ From the pre-colonial, through the colonial and to the post-colonial eras, the traditional institutions in Nigeria have gone through political changes in the country's political history (Myers, 2011).

❑ The political statuses and influence of local and traditional heads have decreased with far reaching consequences for planning and governance in the country since the early 1960's after Nigeria gained independence (Otiti, 2015).

❑ Traditional institutions are the custodian of their people's norms, cultures and practices. Traditional institutions are symbols of indigenous peoples' rights, privileges, laws, customs and traditions which include but not limited to paramount rulers and their councils (Boege, 2006).

❑ Ikejiofor, (2009) highlights that the importance of these informal institutions to preserve the customs and traditions of the people and to manage conflicts arising among or between members of the community by the instrumentality of laws and customs of the people.

❑ Boege (2006) argues that traditional approaches vary considerably from society to society, from region to region, from community to community, therefore it is important for traditional leaders to develop a system that suites its community.

Few informal urban planning processes can be seen around few areas within Abuja especially those in rural and squatter settlements due to socio-economic situation or cultural norms held in such areas (Lamond, *et al.*, 2015).

❑ For some community or rural projects, the urban planning process starts with the local head/leader identifying a particular project to be executed in consultation with the native clans. They designate a person or group of persons who will be responsible for the planning and monitoring of the project from start to finish (Ikejiofor, 2009). The practices adopted to deliver urban development in these areas are sometimes implemented with the assistance of private developers or public officials, either legally or illegally (Ikejiofor, 2009).

❑ Informal developments and their processes in Abuja, are often criticised as being a nuisance (Abubakar, 2014). However, the Un-Habitat Report (2014) suggest that these developments constitute the larger proportion of all urban developments in Abuja and are the main source of accommodation for housing and other. Nonetheless, some informal developments in Abuja are well laid-out, covered by some form of planning scheme and with connections to basic infrastructure and services.

❑ This is achieved especially when the community in conjunction with public officials plan the project. It is estimated that between 50 and 60 percent of rural and squatter settlement development in Abuja are supplied through this system, and it serves as the major avenue for the urban poor to access land for development (Abubakar, 2014).

SUMMARY

"For a society to achieve effective urban planning practice, the urban planning systems need to reflect a new awareness that integrates all its components holistically to meet to environmental, social, economic and governance need (UN-Habitat, 2013)".

CONCLUSION

❑ It is important that from the beginning to the end of the urban planning process, ways to promote interaction between the formal and informal sector to make sure that the goals and objectives reflect current community values should be employed.

❑ The major aim of the planning process should be to encourage the involvement of all stakeholders including decision makers, community heads, experts, and the public.

❑ An inclusive society as one that rises above social, cultural, economic and institutional differences and works towards the wellbeing of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility

THANK YOU