

Planning Public Spaces for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Crises- and violent conflicts- induced rural-urban migration is now a major factor in the rapid urban growth occurring in many African cities. Consequently, large numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are present in many cities. The situation of these forced migrants has become dire in terms of returning home. Available statistics suggest that, it takes on the average a return period of 17-20 years to places of origin. This implies that city planners have to find alternative solutions in the intermediate term which allows IDPs to integrate faster into their host communities. Against this background, a genre of urban space called public space, specifically parks, squares, gardens and streets have been touted to play a key role in place attachment, social integration, community cohesion, sense of belonging and increased perception of the individuals' rights to the city. This study therefore interrogates how public spaces in Agan, Mbalagh, North bank I and II part of Makurdi have catered for IDPs. Focus group discussions were held with the IDPs. Also, observation of places of agglomeration in the host communities was carried out and questionnaires administered to users of places of relaxation in host communities surrounding the IDP camps. The study discovered that generally residents of Makurdi recreate in hybrid spaces of restaurants and eateries more than in traditional parks and gardens. Therefore, it is suggested, among others, that while considering diverse needs of residents across ages and gender, hybrid of spaces of recreation should be integrated into city planning with unhindered access for IDPs.

Keywords: Inclusion; Internally Displaced Persons; Integration; Public Space; Urban design, Management experience, Service Quality, Economic Recession.

1. Introduction

As of end of 2019, there were over 79.5 million forcibly displaced people in the world, including about 45.7 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) displaced by conflict (UNCHR, 2020). Nigeria in particular, had 2.73 million conflict- and violence-induced IDPs as of 31 December 2020 (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC], 2021). Indeed, violent conflicts and the attendant displacement of persons and interrupted livelihood activities have become increasingly common phenomena on the continent. The rapid increase in the number of displaced persons living in urban areas exacerbates challenges already facing rapidly urbanising societies and growing cities, particularly in the global South (Duisjens, 2010). Consequently, cities that house the majority of forced urban migrants are already under severe strain. They are characterised by dense, diverse, and often very poor neighbourhoods as well as volatile relationships with adjoining communities.

In seeking solutions to the dislocation and displacement being experienced by IDPs (Kälin, 2008) proposed: ensuring voluntariness of return; ensuring the safety of returnees; returning property to the displaced and reconstruction of their houses and creating an environment that sustains return, including appropriate funding mechanisms. Presently, despite these solutions, most IDPs live in conditions of protracted displacement, material dependency, with little or no prospect of a solution that offers legal rights and the opportunity for stability and durable resolution of their situation as displaced persons (Smith 2004; Chen 2004; Loescher & Milner 2004, 2005a, b; Adelman 2008; and Zetter 2011). Increasingly studies show that more time is being spent by displaced people in camps and in cities (Banki, 2004; Zetter 2011; Loescher & Milner 2012).

Additionally, with the upsurge in global terrorism after September, 11 attacks, policy makers and international aid agencies have acknowledged that there is a need for interventions which engage livelihood and development approaches, rather than simple disaster relief (Longley and Maxwell 2003; Macrae & Harmer, 2004). The 1951 UNHCR Convention protected displaced persons' right to work, freedom of movement, and opportunities for property ownership in their host country. In reality, many host countries decline forced migrants these opportunities (Reed, Ludwig, & Braslow, 2016). Sadly, most urban authorities respond to IDPs by

eviction, displacement, formalisation and regularisation (Depraetere & Oosterlynck, 2017; Nordling, Sager, Söderman, 2017). Hence, IDPs constantly face social, economic and racial discrimination often times resulting in tensions between them and host communities. Not much is known about how urban IDPs navigate their way within the urban environment, especially how they integrate into surrounding communities and the peculiar problems they face as compared with other urban poor. Thus, the discourse of inclusion of IDPs into host communities is rife with a narrative of exclusion.

Consequently, IDPs have been described as part of the world's most vulnerable people. The inequalities being experienced by IDPs in addition to urban poverty and environmental degradation highlight concerns for their right to the city which has been described as a right of no exclusion from qualities and benefits of urban life. In cities of the global south, the conception of the right to the city resonates directly with the question of basic needs and access to public services and housing, which is exacerbated by the fast pace of urban growth (Morange & Spire, 2019). This conception has been further narrowed down to human rights in cities as against the original idea of rights to the city (Kuymulu 2013; Purcell, 2014). The gains from this annexation meant that there is widened political support, especially from international bodies like the United Nations, resulting in promotion of individual rights-based approaches to development with a ripple effect that has recognised the importance of cities and city services like public spaces in pursuing human rights (van den Berg & Oomen, 2014; van Lindert & Lettinga, 2014).

Rising security challenges characterise many post-colonial African cities; crises, conflicts, instability, highly volatile hot spots as well as political instability, religious, social, racial and ethnic strife are commonalities in such cities (Achebe 2009; Araoye 2012). In Nigeria, the case is not any different, cities are increasingly volatile and conflict-ridden, and security challenges have escalated since religious terrorism occasioned by the emergence of Boko Haram in northern Nigeria began (Onuoha 2014; Thurston 2017; Abdulbarkindo & Alupsen 2017). Also, in the very fertile plains along the banks of the two major rivers in Nigeria, the Benue and the Niger, disputes over land for grazing and farming have escalated into violence in several towns in Nigeria's North Central Region also known as the middle belt.

These violent crises, has forced thousands to flee their homes. In Benue state, for instance, intercommunal violence resulting from disputes over land for grazing and farming has been happening for years, but the situation has worsened in the past two years. The scarcity of land, population increase and environmental changes have increased the levels of violence, which has forced thousands of people to flee their villages. Recently, over 5,000 unprofiled IDPs were discovered in makeshift camps in Makurdi (Reliefweb, 2021). This is in addition to more than 20,000 who are already living in camps in Agan, Abagena and Daudu on the outskirts of the Capital city, Makurdi (Duru, 2021).

Public spaces play a great role as a catalyst for social change; they provide a gathering space for different community groups. They are spaces for politics, religion, trade, sports, spaces for peaceful coexistence and impersonal encounters (Abbasian, 2016). Most significant is, the potential these spaces have to integrate marginalised and vulnerable segments of society (Jacobs, 1961; Whyte, 1981; Witten, Exeter, & Field, 2003). Studies demonstrated that forming a sense of belonging or attachments to places is subjective and differs from individual to individual (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck & Watson 1992; Johnson, 1998). Individual attachment to a place is also affected by social knowledge, beliefs and attitudes (Ahrentzen, 1992). Other factors such as location, age, gender, income, marital status, education, social class and occupation have been shown to affect place attachment (Bonaiuto, Fornara & Bonnes, 2002; Pretty, Chipuer & Bramston, 2003; Cohen, Shinar 1985). Regardless of these factors, access to public space remains a major factor in determining if citizens cultivate a sense of belonging in cities from their use.

The idea that public spaces in cities is an avenue for expression of human rights and foster development is an emerging thinking which has propelled the inclusion of public spaces in the sustainable development goals (Mngutyo & Alaci, 2020). Consequently, there exists a large body of literature, especially on accessible and inclusive public spaces and the links to development (Jacobs, 1961; Whyte, 1981; Nemeth, 2009). The emphasis has been at the international level, with far less known about the process of realising rights within cities. This is especially true for cities in the Global South. Against this background, public spaces specifically parks, squares, gardens and streets have been publicised as

having a key role to play in social integration, community cohesion, sense of belonging and increase in people's perception of their rights to the city (Porada, 2013). But, the opportunities and constraints facing internally displaced persons in actualising their rights to the city remain underexplored in literature. Therefore, planners as managers of cities should prioritise interim solutions for IDPs which allow them to integrate faster into their host communities. On this basis, this study interrogates the engagement of public space by internally displaced persons in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. Objectives set to actualise the study goal include: a description of public spaces in Makurdi most especially those within the vicinity of the IDP camps, an examination of IDP engagement with public space in Makurdi, interrogation of responses from the host communities as well as a discussion of implications for planning and policy.

2. Study Area

Makurdi, the capital of Benue state, Nigeria, is a multicultural city with a high presence of IDPs and immigrants as well as different types of public spaces. These factors ensure that the town provides a case study research context for critiquing social interaction, inclusion and integration of IDPs in public space. The town is located between latitudes 7°41' and 7°47' North and longitudes 8°29' and 8°36' East within Makurdi Local Government Area (LGA) which covers an area of 804.2 square kilometres (16-kilometre radius). Figure 1 shows the location of Benue State within the context of Nigeria while Figure 2 shows the location of Makurdi within the context of Benue State. Makurdi LGA had a population of 300,377 (National Population Commission [NPC], 2007) as of the last census exercise, it was projected to 426,536 in 2020. The town has a variety of land uses including; residential, commercial and public spaces such as markets, transport termini, parks, squares and gardens.

Makurdi has experienced different forms of violent conflict from as early as the 1960s linked to political power contestation (Abdulbarkinzo & Alupsen 2017; Ahiante 2001). Since then, the town and its environs have experienced series of violent conflicts. For instance, 12 June 2001 witnessed a violent attack which left over 74 people killed with an inestimable value of properties destroyed (Alubo, 2006). Recently as from 2015, there has been an upsurge in attacks against indigenous communities by herdsmen, allegedly of the Hausa-Fulani ethnic stock. The attacks have left many dead with large areas of farmland abandoned. Besides the loss of lives and

properties, the attacks have displaced many people from their ancestral homes in the rural areas into Makurdi Town.

Cities remain the central destination for the majority of the world's migrants, refugees, and otherwise displaced populations (International Organisation for Migration [IOM], 2015). This is also the case in Makurdi town. The most recent wave of violent crises between herdsmen and farmers in 2015, saw the Tiv in Guma, Gwer, Gwer-West, Makurdi and other local government areas recording roughly 458 deaths and attacks on over 350 communities with their inhabitants now living in refugee camps. In Makurdi LGA alone, there were ten (10) different camps for IDPs in 2016. Available records for the years 2014-2016 show that there were 542 households with a population of 4804 persons sharing 12 blocks of classrooms, meant to accommodate at most 50 pupils per class (Benue state Emergency Management Agency, Report on the 2014 Internally Displaced Persons From the Crisis between Cattle Herdsmen and Farmers in Benue State 2014, Volume I and II).

In response to the increasing and continuous IDP/refugee problem, many governments often situate camps on the outskirts of cities or in rural areas. These camps exist for accountability of number of IDPs for attracting international attention and assistance (Banki, 2004). In such camps, the IDPs are fed, sheltered and provided with primary education. However, the oblivion, limbo or sense of idleness that pervades such atmosphere ensures that the capacity for self-sufficiency is virtually non-existent. This is a strong push factor for mainly the male and adolescent populations who silently melt into the surrounding cities looking for opportunities to be productive (Banki, 2004).

3. Literature Review

3.1 Background

In the normative sense, an ideal public space should equally be public, universally-accessible and all-inclusive. This ideal has been argued to be a mirage (Low & Smith 2006; Mitchell 2003). Generally, there is an accord among scholars on the fact that 'access', 'publicness' and 'inclusivity' in public space is declining (Rogers, 1998; Akkar, 2005; Low & Smith, 2006; de Magalhaes & Carmona, 2009; Neal, 2010; Nemeth & Schmidt, 2011; Memlük, 2012). Several factors have been adduced to explain the decline in public space use but the most worrisome is the rising security challenges ensuing from increased global terrorism after the September 2011 attack in the

United States of America (Nemeth, 2009). These challenges amplified social and political movements from public spaces and contribute to the declining use of public space (Mnguty, 2019).

Rather than address issues of integration of IDPs into host communities, extant literatures are mainly focused on how to effectively negotiate between social scientific inquiry and policy relevance for relief and aid intervention (Reed, Ludwig, & Braslow, 2016). Meanwhile, Studies have shown that IDPs or forced migrants, especially those in transit and in camps are experiencing longer periods displaced in host communities (Banki, 2004; Zetter 2011; Loescher & Milner 2012). And above two-thirds of IDPs worldwide have been in displacement for more than five years (Brookings Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2007).

3.2 Conceptualisation of Public Spaces

Legally, public space has been defined as "all places publicly-owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive" (UN Charter of Public Spaces 2013). These genres of spaces are the key places of a community's collective life. They are arenas where expressions of the city's diversity, natural and cultural richness as well as civic identity are on display. As the name implies, they are sites of open communication and deliberation, where people of all religious, ethnic, social classes and even the marginalised and under-represented groups can voice their opinions, make themselves visible, or simply disappear anonymously into the crowd (Young, 1990; Mitchell, 1995; Marcuse, 2002, 2003; Kohn, 2004; Banki, 2004).

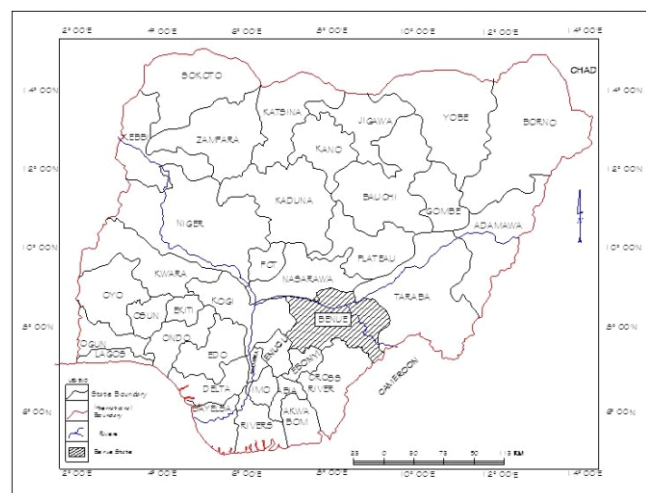
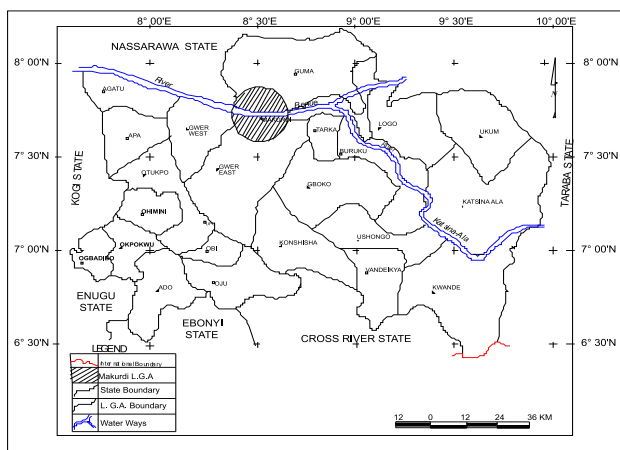


Figure 1: Benue State within Nigeria

Source: Ministry of Lands and Survey, Makurdi, 2018



Map of Benue State Showing Makurdi Local Govt. Area
Source: Ministry of Lands and Survey Makurdi, 2018

Figure 2: Makurdi Local Government Area (LGA) within Benue State

Scholarly literature showcases the distinctiveness of public space from the perspective of race (Ruddick 1996; Jackson 1998; McCann 2000), age (Valentine 1996, 2004; Katz 1998, 2006), gender (Fraser 1990; Wilson 1991; Day 1999; Pain 2001), and class (Mitchell 1995, 2003; Sibley 1995). Some literature exists on its view from the viewpoint of the homeless, displaced and refugees most especially in cities of the global south (Sinclair, 1998; Murungi, 2015). However, very little studies exist on the situation of IDPs in Nigerian cities. Hence, from available studies, variables have been gleaned on how displaced persons engage public space.

3.3 Conceptualisation of Internally Displaced Person’s Inclusion and integration in Cities

Unlike refugees, IDPs are on the run in their country. Records show almost 10 million people internally displaced by armed conflict and other forms of violence in 22 of Africa’s countries (Kälin & Schrepfer 2012). In addition to hosting the largest number of IDPs, Africa has the most developed sound normative framework to protect the rights of IDPs. Several protocols such as the great Lakes protocol on the protection and Assistance to IDPs, and others have tried to address inclusion of IDPs. Several African countries have also developed domestic laws and policies for the protection of IDPs. Despite the various provisions, the discourse of inclusion of IDPs into host communities is pervasive with a storyline of exclusion. Therefore, there is a need to evaluate how IDPs are integrating into host communities. Banki (2004) highlighted several factors used in measuring integration in host communities to include: lack of restriction of IDPs movements; access to own land and participate in local economy.

Also integration into host communities occur when IDPs access local facilities like health care and public spaces, children have access to local schools and they are dispersed among the local community and are making efforts to self-sufficiency. This study is limited to measuring integration using the use of local facilities like public spaces by IDPs.

3.4 Variables for Measuring Integration of IDPs

There is a need for authorities and town planners to anticipate, evaluate and plan for the long-term settlement of displaced populations in urban areas as well as to prepare for their integration into host communities. The following sections describe experiential variables surrounding IDPs and refugees and how IDPs engage public space, which will be used to evaluate advantages from access to parks or areas of leisure and recreation in this study.

3.4.1 Places of Respite

As part of the urban community, refugees and IDPs are affected by and engaged in the process of urbanisation (Crisp, Morris & Refstie, 2012). The daily life of the displaced is usually a daily struggle for survival within a state of limbo. In addition, displaced persons have to contend with the trauma of displacement, loss of social capital, insufficient documentation, limited support networks, displacement in urban areas, restrictions on rights to work and enter markets, and, in many contexts, antagonism by settled residents (Tufts University and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2008; Pavanello, Elhawary & Patulin, 2010; Wyrzykowski 2010).

Furthermore, livelihood opportunities and greater security are some of the most important factors affecting displaced persons (Pavanello, Elhawary & Pantuliano, 2010). Hence, not much of the time of the refugee is spent in play or recreation (Hynes, 2009). Parks and places of recreation and entertainment can provide a space of respite for IDPs. Studies have discovered that displaced persons with children often seek out places for play and recreation needs of the children (Rishbeth, Blachnicka-Ciacek & Darling 2019). The effects of prolonged periods of idleness and helplessness and the use of parks and places of recreation to counter such feelings is a variable used in this study.

3.4.2 Opportunities for Socialisation and Connection

IDPs experience a sense of disconnection from social ties because of the conflicts that cut them off from their original home. This often results in social isolation in refugee camps and shelters. Urban public spaces such as parks, plazas, markets, waterfronts, and natural areas of our cities, contain people from different cultural groups who come together in a supportive context of mutual enjoyment thereby fostering common fellowship in the open which nurtures the growth of public life (Abbasian, 2016). This study evaluates social contacts achieved in public spaces as a variable in measuring the engagement of IDPs with public space.

3.4.3 Uncertainty, Aggression and the Anxieties over the use of Public Spaces

Traditionally, internal displacement is perceived amongst other factors as a security challenge (Kälin & Schrepfer, 2012). Many authorities described displaced persons in illegitimate terms (Refugee Law Project 2005). This creates a pervasive perception of IDPs as criminally-minded and dangerous which bred prejudices and misapprehensions about the rights of IDPs. In some extreme cases, such perceptions have led to xenophobic attacks on IDPs (Risbeth, Blachnicka-Ciacek & Darling 2019). More so, IDPs may not possess the documentation to be eligible for specific activities, or area-based development projects may have been planned before IDPs emergence on the scene. These factors contribute to excluding them from participatory planning processes that may discriminate against them as a result. Further to this is the idea that investment in IDPs is perceived as unsustainable in view of their subsequent return to their areas of origin or the risks of secondary displacement. Conversely, these scenarios foster aggression from host communities who perceive the IDPs as competing with the host communities for shared amenities like public spaces.

3.4.4 Aggression Against women

The composition of urban societies in cities of the global South are intertwined with very marked racial, ethnic, gender or caste divides. These divides also translate to IDP camps as women who are IDPs are always at risk as they reported gender-based violence, harassment and intimidation. This is most especially experienced in public spaces (Stoks 1982) and retards the IDPs ability to integrate into host communities. Consequently, scholars have helped to redirect

attention from the view of IDPs as benefit-dependent victims, to the special needs of forced migrant women and children, and to show the difficulties they face in host and resettlement countries (Agier 2011; Chimni 2009; Lubkemann 2008). In the light of the continuous conflicts on the African continent, it becomes necessary to carry out evaluation of IDPs feelings of safety by women IDPs while in public space.

3.4.5 Opportunities for Improved livelihoods

Public spaces, where people of different ethnicity, religion, gender, and class meet are both a projection surface of society and an arena of action for a wide range of development needs including economic activities (Roji, 2020). Cities represent opportunities for self-reliance and for some durable solutions to displacement (Crisp et al., 2012). The importance of urban public space to the income generation activities of the poor is highlighted in literature as it is the prevailing source of livelihood for majority of urban dwellers in African countries (Pellissery, 2013; International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2018). Accordingly, public space can and should be considered a common property resource from which the urban poor generate a livelihood. Most IDPs fit this profile and also should use public space to improve their livelihoods. The variable of how IDPs provide an income from public space is also used to evaluate how IDPs engage public spaces to gain livelihood opportunities in cities.

4. Methodology

This study relies on a mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collection using observations, measurements, survey questionnaires and interviews as well as focus group discussions. Data needed for the study include; identification, survey and measurement of areas used for recreation, documentation of particular activities carried out by IDPs for recreation, information on how IDPs engage public space, information from host communities on how they relate with IDPs, as well as planning imperatives from the information obtained.

Preliminary survey of Makurdi town highlighted areas used for recreation in Agan, Mbalagh, Northbank I and II wards in Makurdi with large IDPs populations. The areas identified to host an agglomeration of people for recreation activities were identified and a handheld Magellan SporTrak GPS was used to capture coordinates of the areas. These information were then used to produce a single map

showing the location and spatial dispersion of all the existing places for recreation in the Agan, Mbalagh, North bank I and II part of Makurdi. This is with the aim of showing proximity to the camps. The second stage involved observation and measurements of the features of recreation spaces identified to determine among other variables the size of the spaces, the character of the spaces, activities therein and demographics of users. The third stage involved focused group discussions carried out at the refugee camps leading to the development of the study variables and the final stage is the use of statistical tools in analysis of the findings leading to inferences. The study population are the residents of Makurdi including residents of Abagena IDP camp in Makurdi Local Government Area. Conventionally, parks are so called because of their primary function as areas for recreation (Mngutyo and Ajene 2018). This paper however relies on a wider diversity and typology of places used for recreation described by Azare, Dantata, Musa and Duala (2018) as hybrid spaces. They include street joints, bars, restaurants, empty plots, under trees, on street corners, sport fields and community spaces in which people gather for recreation. These spaces are used in this study because there is a conspicuous dearth of parks, in the traditional sense, in the study area. More so, they meet the need for social integration in cities even though they do not strictly conform to scholarly description of parks because their amorphous spatial structure makes classification difficult. What is common among them is the accommodation of agglomeration of people for the purpose of recreation. Recreation is just about anything done for fun outside of work. It is described in both passive and active terms. Active recreation in terms of sporting activity and passive recreation which involves; board games, hanging out with friends, observation of people and nature. All the spaces used for active and passive recreation which attract a crowd of more than 10 people were used as public parks. The Taro Yamane formula was applied to the population figure determined earlier to arrive at a sample figure of 400 respondents.

In Nigeria, neighbourhood parks or recreation areas are second-order recreation areas originally designed to serve people living within 0.4- to 0.8-kilometre radius of the park (Obateru 2003). This study adopts the upper limit of 0.8km for convenience and uniformity. Consequently, 2 km² area around parks was determined as park neighbourhood threshold. These neighbourhoods surrounding parks were then used as spatial units for data collection. This radius

was used rather than using the neighbourhood area boundaries. This is because of the lack of well-defined boundaries between neighbourhoods common to most Nigerian and African cities (Alaci & Chup 2015).

Sampling of the 400 respondents within public spaces was purposively randomly done. Park neighbourhoods and recreation spaces were visited for seven consecutive days within which every 5th park user and 5th household was administered with questionnaires. Parks were visited during business hours in the morning, afternoon and evening period stipulated by time slots of 8 am-12noon, 12 pm -4 pm and 4pm-9 pm.

A combination of descriptive and inferential statistics was used. The analysis consisted of an iterative process comprising three different phases. Data exploring the experience of IDPs highlighting good, bad or neutral practices was captured. Using a process of thematic analysis described by Braun & Clarke (2006), recurring patterns or themes, which described the nature of the experience more specifically, were identified. Among the themes identified was the relationship between public space access and recreation, as discussed in this paper.

T-test, an analysis of variance, was used as inferential statistical tool to answer the research questions guiding this study, while descriptive statistics in the form of percentages, tables and graphs were also used.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Demographic Information

Demographic information was captured both for Makurdi and at the IDP camps. This is important because variables like age, gender and marital status have been shown to be important to access in public space. Therefore, the emerging information on respondents' demographic information will situate data collected in a frame for validity check. Data, as presented in Table 1, indicates that there were generally more males seen in parks than females (57% to 43%).

Thus, the study shows consistently more male than female presence in public parks and in households around parks. In the IDP camp, there were also more males (53%) than females (47%). The findings of this study when viewed from the perspective of the study by Whyte (1981) on public usability of New York's privately owned public plazas indicate that the public

Table 1: Summary of Respondents' Demographic Information

	Variable	Frequency	%	Abagena IDP Camp	
				Frequency	%
Gender	Male	259	56.9	122	52.8
	Female	201	43.1	109	47.2
	Total	460	100	231	100
Age	20-30	78	18.1	51	22.1
	31-40	110	25.5	46	19.9
	41-50	157	36.4	66	28.6
	51-60	86	20	68	29.4
	61-70				
	71 above				
	Total	431	100	231	100
Marital status	Single	162	35.2	41	17.8
	Married	241	52.3	106	45.9
	Divorced/Separated	43	9.3	16	6.9
	Widow/Widower	14	3	68	29.4
	Total	460	100	231	

Source: Author s' Field Survey, 2020

usability of parks in Makurdi is low.

The average age for respondents found in parks and in park neighbourhood was 41-50 years (36.4%). In the IDP camps, the mean age for respondents was 51-60 years (68%). Findings show that mainly older respondents use public spaces within the study period. In any population census, the youths dominate. For instance, the last census showed that youths make up 65% of the population of Nigeria. If this large population is not using parks, then it is indicative of low patronage. This finding could be explained by the fact that older individuals are more independent economically and so can enjoy activities in parks. For the IDP camp respondents, the older respondents who should be able to afford use of parks are in no position to afford extra expenses as they have lost their sources of livelihood while fleeing for their lives. It also means that there is a need to provide, in public spaces, activities that will serve as pull factors for all age groups.

The respondents in park neighbourhoods and within parks were more likely to be married (52%). In the IDP camps also a high percentage (46%) were married. The findings indicate that a high percentage of respondents were mainly married people more than singles. A vital percentage is the singles; this class is inclusive of the divorced and widowed. In parks and

park neighbourhoods, 47.8% of respondents were singles. Even when the categories are combined, more of the respondents were married people and so park use by married was more than by singles. Literature suggests that the importance of people's needs in public space differs according to variables such as age, gender and marital status and so planning for park use should consider the varied needs of all these categories.

5.2 Classification of Public Spaces used for Recreation by IDPs

Findings from respondents in Makurdi identified several spaces which they use for recreation. Key elements of such spaces that was evaluated in this study include; location, character, size, activities carried out therein findings in Table 4.2 show a total of 21 areas identified for recreation in Makurdi by respondents out of which 11(52%) are located in North bank I and II wards. The other recreation areas were located in the Southbank of Makurdi and considered to be too far away from IDPs to be used by them since proximity is an important variable in park utilisation (Giles-Corti & Donovan 2003). The recreation spaces had an average area of 26,798m² and were characterised as mainly restaurants and hotels (45.5%). And the average distance between the spaces and the IDP camp was 4 kilometres.

Table 2: Location and Area of Public spaces in Makurdi

Park Name	Neighbourhood /character	Freq.	%	Coordinates (Easting & Northing)	Area (m ²)	Activities
Villa mart	North bank	44	11	451092, 856555	2,225.9	Bar, restaurant, car park
Suya Spot ct 5 Junction	North bank	32	8.0	450992, 856619	2170.5	Suya stand, mechanic shop, provision shop, shoe maker
City bay	Low-level	52	13	449230, 854037	19707.6	Event center, bar, children halls, play grounds
MJ resort	International market	32	8.0	450511, 850874	3025.5	Swimming pool, bar, restaurant, event centre
BIPC Hotel	North bank	28	4.0	451025, 856527	4,759.4	Hotel accommodation, events hall, swimming pool, restaurant, bar
SRS Junction Joint Bar	North bank	20	5.0	451261, 857631	33,372	Fuel filling station, motor parks, shops
Photo Studio		16	4.0			Taking pictures
Golf Course	North bank	20	5.0	451692, 855913	243,136.5	Golf course
Okiki Hotel	North bank	4	1.0	451818, 860547	11,996	Lodging, restaurant, bar, swimming pool, event hall
Lafia Garage park	North bank	8	2.0	451443, 858704	16,572	Mechanic workshops, petty trading, motor park
Virtual Lodge	Northbank	8	2.0	454926, 858526	5,106	Bar, restaurant, swimming pool, event centre
Ejah Suite	Fiidi	16	4.0	453729, 853723	1,788	Bar, restaurant
White House Hotel	Northbank	4	1.0	451780, 860181	7,380	Lodging, bar
Bush Bar	Naka Road	12	3.0	444992, 852297 445032, 852341	1,216.5	Bar, restaurant, suya spot
Ruth-May Lodge	North bank	8	2.0	450736, 856724	561	Lodging, bar
Exodus Cinema	Wurukum	4	2.0	450188, 853838	8,434	Cinema
Aper Aku Stadium	Wadata	12	3.0	447375, 854688	111,985.3	Sporting activities
District 4	Old GRA	12	3.0	448567, 854756	795.5	Club house, bar
IBB Square Church	High level	12	3.0	447868, 852979	130,275.1	Public gatherings
Tito gate	Clerks Ward	28	7.0			
Heavy Duty Park	North bank	12	3.0	448889, 854073	1,605.8	Restaurant
		12	3.0	451758, 860002	873	Shops, motor park
Total		342				

Source: Ministry of Lands and Survey, 2020

The presence of these spaces for recreation does not presuppose that they are used for recreation. Subsequent sections highlight the activities that attract visitors to areas of recreation.

5.3 Documentation of Particular Activities Carried out by Respondents for Recreation,

Activities carried out in public spaces are a strong attractive force hence activities carried out in space

are a pointer to how the space is used. Findings in table 3 show that major activities people in the host communities around the IDP camps engage in at the spaces they use for recreation include; eating and drinking, drinking, dancing, holding of community and association meetings as well as gisting (talking and socialising with friends). On the average (42.8%) of respondents engage in eating and drinking for recreation, while 47% visit places of recreation for

Table 3: Activities carried out within Recreation areas

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Eating and drinking	171	36.0	36.0	36.0
Drink and dance	188	17.0	17.0	53.0
Hold meetings	124	31.0	31.0	84.0
Gist and rest	64	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author s’ Field Survey, 2020

drinking and 31% use spaces for recreation as places where meetings can be held.

These activities do not deviate from findings of studies as major activities carried out in public space. What is glaringly contrary with what is in literature is the conspicuous absence of activities for young children. Activities for children should be included in spaces planned for recreation in Makurdi most especially IDPs.

5.4 Analysis of IDP Engagement with the Public Spaces of Makurdi

Inclusiveness in urban areas as well as expression of rights to the city has been shown in literature to be greatly enhanced by engagement with public space. Focus group discussions with different homogenous groups selected from residents of Abagena IDP camp made up of three age cohorts including: older men and

women aged above 60 years (n=10); middle aged married men and women <60 years and >30 (n=18) and young males and females aged <30 years (n=16) were conducted in the camp on the outskirts of Makurdi. The discussions reveal the IDPs’ perspectives on engagement with public spaces both within their immediate communities and in the host community. All the IDPs who participated in discussions reside within the camp for displaced persons in Abagena Makurdi local government area. As such, the results reflect that spatial unit of Makurdi town and its environs. IDPs who assented to all five of the variables identified were considered to have a high engagement with public space while those assenting to three to two variables were judged to have average engagement while those with agreement to less than two variables were considered to have few opportunities to engage with public space. The results are illustrated in the figure 3

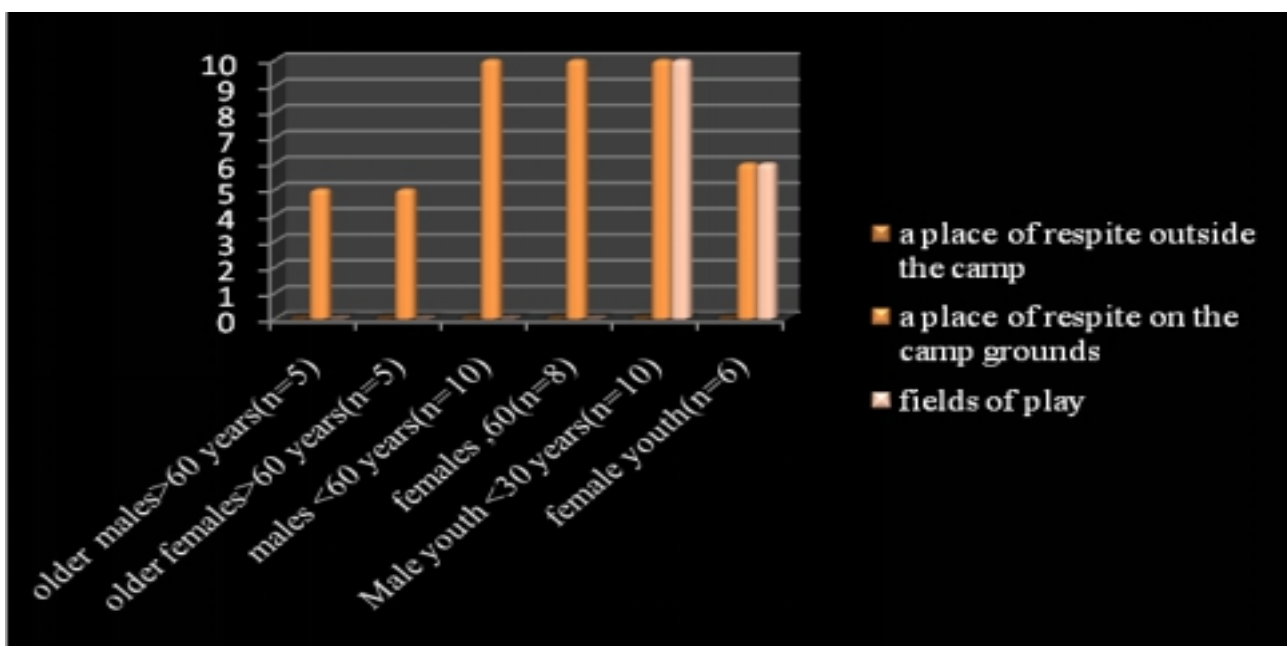


Figure 3: Opportunities of Public Space as a Place of Respite for IDPs (n=44)
Source: Authors’ Field Survey, 2020

Responses from the IDPs showed that the only space for respite from their daily toil for survival is a spot under the tree in front of the camp where they gather for playing of cards, gambling and “daar”; a local based game was also mentioned as male leisure activities in the study area. The married female respondents (n=8) indicated that they had a field outside the camp designated as a football field where their children went to play which was accessible to the children at all times. The women recreate by engaging in church activities and talking among themselves. The young men and women aged under 30 years (n=16) also had access to the football field as the second option for active recreation. None of the respondents had any engagement with places for recreation outside the campground in the host communities. Data reveals generally that, from their perspective, IDPS do not engage public spaces outside the camps; this will have a negative impact on their inclusion in society of the communities in which they reside.

The reasons IDPs did not engage with places of recreation outside the camps were accessed and then analysed. The majority of participants (100%) identified lack of finances as the most significant reason they did not engage with public spaces outside the camps as a place of respite from the daily toils of living in the camp. This view is expressed by some of the respondents

“We are needy and we don’t have any money to go out and relax ourselves. Imagine going out to a place of relaxation and seeing your mates’ spending money to enjoy themselves and you don’t have anything on you. You will feel ashamed of yourself”

*Young Female FGD discussant,
Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.*

During festive seasons and as a means of relaxation some of the respondents especially the females mention the church as a place of respite. According to one of the young ladies respondents.

“In my own place, our enjoyment comes from the church. Before Christmas day, we practise dances in order to entertain people in church. That way we derive our enjoyment. We are not comfortable here and for this reason we cannot enjoy ourselves”

*Young Female FGD discussant,
Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.*

Findings from a study in the rural areas of Benue State

(Sugh, Mngutyo and Ugbem-Onah 2020) clearly reveal that, there are little or no leisure activities or facilities for rural women in the study area. This finding is also confirmed in this study by the respondents

“We don’t go out for relaxation. We often stay in this place and discuss among ourselves as ladies. When we get bored, we normally sleep. Unlike the men, we don’t play card games. We don’t know how to play it”

*Female (<60 years)FGD discussant,
Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.*

The focus here was in using public spaces as a place of recreation as a respite from daily work for survival in the camps. Findings reveal that the IDPs do not go out of their camp to find a breather rather a tree within the environs of the camp is where majority of the IDPs find respite from daily toil. The IDPs’ children also have a field adjacent the camp provided by the government where they engage in active recreation. This finding is bound to negatively affect the productivity and mental health of the IDPs as well as their inclusion into the immediate host community and Makurdi in general.

5.5 Opportunities for Public Space as a Place of Socialisation and Connection for IDPs

As described in this section, the IDPs views on social relationship between members of the host communities in public space were explored through the qualitative data collection process of focus group discussion. They captured the experience of their engagement with host communities surrounding the camps. Initially, on arrival at the camps they developed social relationships with members of the host communities which they say have gradually dwindled over time. According to findings of this study, IDPs responded that the main reason they could not continue relating socially with host communities is that the relationships were not mutually beneficial as the host community members viewed the IDPs as benefitting from the aids government and other organisations bring without including them. These views are expressed below:

“I have never seen people so terrible like the people in this place before. We did our utmost to make friends with the host community but we couldn’t. They are not friendly at all. We even pleaded with some to take us along on their farms, so we could help them work on their farms but they turned us down”

Young Male FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

“We have been able to make friends among ourselves. We also made friends with persons from the host community but such friendship does not last long because we are needy as a result of our idleness and we always don’t have anything to offer our new friends. They always want us to reciprocate their good deeds to us and when we are unable to the friendships don’t last,”

Older Male (>60 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

A number of explanations exist for this lack of sustained socialisation and connection between IDPs and host communities. In the first instance, the basic needs of the IDPs like water and food are provided within the camp, thus reducing incidences for mingling with host communities. The only basic need that takes IDPs out of the camp is the need for firewood used in cooking. Also, the need to charge phones takes IDPs into host communities which have electricity. The IDPs state these instances cause them to interact minimally with host communities as can be seen by the following responses:

“Most of our basic needs like water are present within this facility. For that reason we don’t normally mingle with indigenes of this place because we don’t go outside quite often. One of the few things that make us leave this facility is firewood. We often mobilise and go out in groups to fetch firewood from a nearby forest. So we don’t really have reasons why we should be friends with the indigenes of this place”

Married Female (<60 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

Other opportunities to foster connection with host community come in the form of menial labour on the farms. The host communities engage the IDPs to help with farm labour at very menial cost even this is relegated to the younger respondents who have energy to farm. When they are hired for menial labour in the farms of the host community’s they are paid very meagrely as explained by young male respondents in a focused group discussion below:

“The money we get from our labour is always very meagre. Most of us sitting here are married people. At times, the money we earn from all our labour is just a thousand naira. Which businesses can

one start with that small amount of money? The money we get is always not enough to do anything else but feed in order to survive”

Young Male (<30 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

Consequently, there are very few opportunities for socialisation for the IDPs this will negatively affect their assimilation and inclusion into the societies of surrounding communities. This factor also negatively impacts on how the host community perceives and so relates with the IDPs.

5.6 Uncertainty, Aggression and the Anxieties from host communities against IDPs

The ability of the IDPs to take part in communal life of the host community shows how they are integrated into such society. The older men and women reported that they had no issues with members of the host communities. On the other hand the younger ladies and men as well as the middle aged men and women reveal that they have clashed with members of host communities but such brawls are usually amicably resolved. The question of how the host community perceives the IDPs was put to the IDPs in a FGD and the following reflects their views on the host community’s acceptance of them:

“We the elderly ones don’t normally have issues that are peculiar to us as women because we don’t leave this place but our daughters have encountered issues that are peculiar to them as ladies because they move about”

Older female (>60 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

“We were almost beaten up by persons from the host community when Red Cross brought some aids for us. The police were the ones that came to quell the ensuing crises. They have beaten us here in the camp because we are living in their place.

Young Male (>30 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

“Whenever the Red Cross brings aids for us in their vehicle, it is preferred that the items be offloaded from the vehicles by young men from the camp so they can earn some money. However, the host community insists that only their young men offload and even when our young men from the camps

help out they are not included in the payments for offloading. The governor came here sometime to commiserate with us during the Christmas season, but they came here to forcefully take away some of the things he brought for us. The governor was the one who resisted them. That night we were severely tortured by the host community in retaliation.

Young Male (>30 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

“We have always had issues with the people here because of their nature. They are very troublesome. We often restrain ourselves in order not to fight with them. They always demand a share from the aid the government brings to us and to avoid trouble we always give them a share. They always beat up our children who go to the playground to play football.

Young Male (>30 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

Aggravated treatment of IDPs by host communities will limit their ability to integrate into the host communities and also limit their ability to improve their standard of living. It also shows the perception of the host community of IDPs as imposters.

5.7 Aggression Against women

In Africa in particular, gender, and generation distributions play a role in the organization of camps. Because of traditional roles women are usually caregivers, in the camps these roles place the women at risk especially from hostile host communities. Findings from discussions agree with other studies that state that women in camps are often very vulnerable.

“Sometime in the past, our daughters were on their way to the forest to fetch firewood. They were accosted on their way by some men who seized their axes and cutlasses. The men demanded that our daughters have sex with them before they can return the items back. Our daughters refused and the implements were not returned. Our daughters managed to escape and came to report the case to the elders who engaged the local vigilante and the axes and cutlasses were later returned”
Middle aged female (<60 >30 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

“We have had many issues with persons from the host community in the past. They have beaten our men before. Our women were also beaten when they

went to fetch firewood and the firewood was seized from them as well. When the governor visited us with some items for Christmas, they came here and took one of the pigs he brought for us by force. They treat us with so much disdain because they feel we ought to share the donations given to us with them because we are inhabitants of their land. We have been able to live in harmony with them only recently since we started sharing the donations brought to us by humanitarian bodies like Red Cross, UNICEF etc. with them

Middle aged Male (<60 >30 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

5.8 Opportunities for Improved livelihoods from public spaces in host communities by IDPs

Public spaces such as streets provide arena for economic activities which are a source of livelihood for majority of urban dwellers in African countries. Accordingly, how IDPs provide an income from public space is also evaluated the question income generation avenues in public space was put to the IDPs findings from the discussions are presented below:

“No we don’t have any other means of making money apart from carrying out menial jobs for people. We cannot farm here because we don’t have farmlands. We cannot collect farmlands on lease because we don’t have money to pay for the farmlands

Middle aged Male (<60 >30 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

“We buy and sell things like pepper from the income we make from the menial jobs for people”

Older female (>60 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

When asked if there are opportunities for them to trade in the neighbouring markets like those located in surrounding neighbourhoods like North Bank, Yagba and Daudu where there are daily and five-day cycle markets the discussants had the following explanations:

“Selling in North bank market requires that one pays for a space where they can display their wares. We don’t have money to pay for that. Other expenses like tax etc. are also involved”

Middle aged female (<60 >30 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

“we attempted to sell outside this place, in places like Yagba, Daudu and North bank but the expenses involved in starting a business in such



Figure 4: Respondents views on the quality of relationship between host communities and IDPs
Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2020

places were too much for us. In one place, we were told to bring ten (10) thousand naira. In another, we were to buy drinks and other things before we could get a space to sell. That's the reason why we only sell in this place”

Older female (>60 years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

“One benevolent woman gave me money to start a business, so I went to the market and bought some goods and sold. I made very little profit. But because of hunger, I used part of my capital to buy food to feed my children. This continued until I lost my capital and the business crumbled.

Middle aged female (<60 >30years old) FGD discussant, Abagena IDP camp Agan council ward.

Opportunities for improved livelihoods are a unique area for integration into society. Findings have shown that chances to make a living open to IDPs are limited to the camps thereby reducing the sphere of engagement with host communities and further limiting inclusion for IDPs.

5.9 Relationships between host communities with IDPs

According to literature interdependencies often exist between officially camp-settled, illegally self-settled persons outside camps and host communities (Lubkemann, Minear, & Weiss,2000). However the quality of the relationships is evaluated in this study, questionnaires were administered to host

communities surrounding the camps and relationships were rated in five categories of very cordial, cordial, average, somewhat hostile and hostile, respondents were requested to choose one option in describing the relationship of the host communities with the IDPs. The responses from the respondents are presented in Figure 4.

Respondents especially the male view the relationship as host communities with the IDPs as average (91%)while the females view the relationship as very cordial (112%).Disparities between the gender could be explained by the fact that in the closed traditional societies women generally play background roles which reduce the forums for interaction that could be used to define relationships. Of significance also is the large of male respondents who view the relationship with IDPs as hostile (48%), this collaborates earlier findings from focused group discussion with the IDPs who also describe the relations with host communities as hostile. The Figure 5 shows findings on reasons adduced by respondents on the quality of relationship between IDPs and host communities as described by members of the host community. Five different statements were made based on studies which state that host communities often view IDPs as competing with them for scarce resources, criminal and illegitimate and so not worthy of partaking in the city's common goods (Kälin & Schrepfer 2012; Refugee Law Project 2005;Risbeth, Blachnicka-Ciacek & Darling 2019; Crisp et al.2009).Respondents were asked to pick one statement that best describes the reason for the quality of their relationship with IDPs.

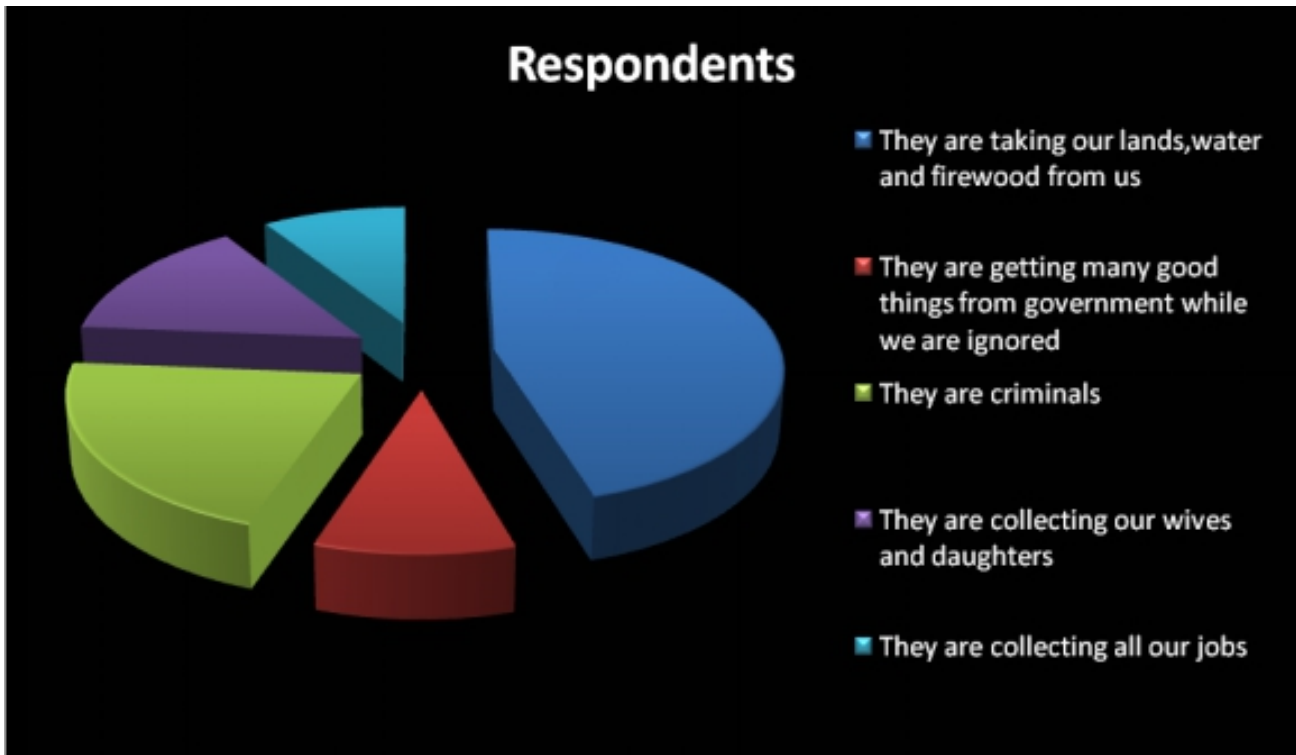


Figure 5: Reasons for the quality of relationship between IDPs and host community
Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2020

According to findings from the survey, the host communities were mainly concerned about the depleting natural resources such as water, firewood and farmland being used by the IDPs (45%) and increased insecurity since the IDPs came on the scene (21%). These concerns especially on the increased claim on natural resources is in line with current literature (Banki, 2004; Risbeth, Blachnicka-Ciacek & Darling 2019). However studies carried out elsewhere show that increased criminality has not been linked to IDP presence (Banki 2004; Lubkemann, Minear, & Weiss 2000) also worrisome is the response of skewed government provision that favours only the IDPs. This finding agrees with (Lubkemann, Minear, & Weiss, 2000) who says if not well managed, Humanitarian action can constitute a “second disaster” if it does not incorporate a fairly refined understanding of local coping capacities and strategies.

5.9 Urban Planning Implications

Urban public facilities such as parks, streets and gardens support social inclusion (arch2o.com 2012-2020). Social inclusion has been shown to be at various levels in diverse situations and settings (Banki 2004) depending on individuals or a group's inability to participate in economic, social and political aspects of life because of imposed constraints rather than by choice (Das and Espinoza,

2019). Social inclusion and appropriate integration, has been seen as a precondition for achieving all-encompassing and sustainable development (Chen, Harvey, Kihato and Skinner, 2018) particularly for vulnerable groups in society among which are IDPs. Consequently, greater recognition of IDP's participative rights in the society of cities should be significant to both urban planners and designers and should result in the design and implementation of more accessible public spaces. It is envisaged that this should improve social inclusion of IDPs and further translate to more sustainable development especially for cities with large IDP populations.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study discovered that generally residents of Makurdi recreate in hybrid spaces of restaurants and eateries more than in traditional parks and gardens. Engagement of IDPs with public space is poor on all indicators. The relationship between the host community and IDPs is average but tending towards hostile reasons border on competing demands on natural resources and perception of IDPs and criminals. These findings lend themselves to the following recommendations:

1. It is important to consider both children, women and men as key user groups when designing public space
2. Planners and city designers should consider

the integration of hybrid spaces of recreation in planning for cities rather than sticking to traditional models of parks and gardens for recreation.

3. Activities common to hybrid spaces like eating and drinking which draw people to such spaces should be included in traditional parks to make them more attractive.
4. Public transportation networks in Makurdi should be improved to improve links between the camps and recreation spaces.
5. Public spaces near camps should provide diverse and free activities for recreation and IDP residents should be encouraged to visit recreation spaces.

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