



Translocal Forced Migration and Spatial Practices of Central Peripheral in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

Significant efforts are made to integrate the emerging urban transformation through socio-spatially related attributes into peripheral centralities often exclusionary of forced urban migrants. This pertains to two contemporary interpretive trends: the first is linked to the concept of city as places of refuge; the second one is centred on the concept that urban socio-spatial and political relations are often fragmented and inflexible, propelling the emergency of sporadic “bypass urbanism” the results in the “othering” of vulnerable demography. The objective of this working paper is to offer a novel perspective on the emerging form of urbanism that is influenced by forced migrants. This is achieved by utilising a socio-spatial, process-oriented epistemological viewpoint that is informed by the theories of the production of space from the seminal work of Lefebvre (1991). The paper provides real-life examples that can be elucidated through a robust combination of urbanisation compatibility, re-enactment, re-invention, and socio-spatial mobility. It underscores the significance of space and the influence of multidimensional relationships that support and inhibit these notions. This endeavour aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the structural characteristics of peripheral centralities in this unique form of emerging urbanism.

Introduction

By conceptualising the periphery as ubiquitous, Prigge (1998) emphasises the city's centrality. Brenner and Schmid (2013) broaden the concept to encompass cities, depicting the urban periphery as an extension of spatial urbanisation. The identification of the peri-urban area, as defined by Iaquinta and Drescher (2000), in this context essentially represents the change of the urban fringes beyond what Brenner (2016) terms "methodological cityism." This perspective aims to expand the limits of this methodological path-dependency by emphasising the centrality—epistemologically, spatially, socially, culturally, and economically—in the re-enactment and re-invention of the peripheral centralities (Phelps et al., 2022).

This is accomplished through a critical synthesis of a diverse, yet interconnected, collection of interpretations and analyses of peripheral centralities. That is, a variety of spaces—industrial, public, unused, residential, commercial, infrastructural, and/or mixed use—that are envisaged, planned, and/or created in outer suburban contexts and play an important role in the city-building process and the formation of metropolitanism. From this perspective, the concept of "peripheral centralities" surpasses the concepts of "enclave urbanism" (Phelps et al., 2020), "polycentric urbanism" (Wang, 2021), and "peri-urban" (Iaquinta & Drescher, 2000) in their endeavour to conceptualise emerging urban theoretical framing.

Sawyer et al. (2021) introduce the notion of "bypass urbanism" via a case study examination of Kolkata, Lagos, and Mexico City. By zoning out and taking into account the socio-spatial structures of the peri-urban regions of cities, the authors define this concept as a process of spatial reordering of the central periphery relations of the city into new hierarchies. Their findings demonstrate a multidimensional material-geographical, socio-economic, and regulatory framework that circumvents simultaneous urban development and regeneration through the ensemble of independent but related frameworks of neoliberal urbanism. This results in the proliferation of fundamental restructuring that extends to what Phelps et al. (2020) refer to as urban enclaves, taking place across the cities.

This form of urbanism is frequently linked to urban local and low-income migrant populations (Sawyer et al., 2021). However, it is not yet inclusive of internally displaced forced migrants, who are traditionally expected to either remain in humanitarian camps or pursue resettlement in rural areas (Kamungi, 2013). This fact supports the framework of urban marginalisation from the city (Olajide & Lawanson, 2022). New data from Nigeria's capital city of Abuja demonstrates the importance of forced urban migrant

demographics as a key component of central peripheralisation. Exploring the spatial practices of internally displaced persons (IDPs) Àjàdí (2022) demonstrates how the socio-spatial transformation of central peripherals are characterised by the insufficient integration of these regions into the dominant structures, processes, and systems of cities. Àjàdí (2022) argues that doing so could lead the revolution of decentralised centrally led urban transformation.

This paper analyses city structure of Lagos, Nigeria, by presenting the diachronic spatio-spatial networked behaviours of internally displaced forced migrants from the north to Lagos. The IOM Global Shelter Cluster (2019) framework incorporates local practices across emergency or arrival, intermediate or transitional, and permanent shelter making, using a case study to examine the process of space to a meaningful placemaking process that began nine years prior by the same group to the current location (see Fig.1).

This is accomplished by socialising space through the induction of material spatial reordering. This socio-spatial approach is analysed to integrate an ongoing form of sporadic urbanism that is being driven by forced migration. This sporadic urbanism is contributing to a new form of urbanism and urbanisation that is poorly understood, yet it is significantly influencing the urban periphery in more ways than can currently be empirically conceptualised. In this context, the spatial practices of urban resilience by internally displaced forced migrants are analysed through a life cycle approach as a continuous process of unfolding and rebuilding in various spaces and overtime.

The semantics of peripheral centralities are used as metrics for understanding urban functions and connectivities by examining socio-spatial interactions and the features and connections of places, networks, and patterns. This research helps evaluate settlements and understand socio-spatial- functional interaction on periphery regions.

Data from surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, spatial ethnography, and oral life history mapping are triangulated and used in its process. It follows a group of resettlers who started resettlement nine years ago. The intertextual narrative includes resettlement's shared urban places from two preceding stages before the case study site. Owode Mango, an IDP-exclusive community in Lekki, Lagos, is the case study. The findings show how IDP urban migrants classify core peripherals via informal settlement arrangements, which are assisted by social capital and networks entrenched in exclusion and selective inclusion. This creates new urbanisation in Lagos' centre periphery and beyond. Proposing that socioeconomic inequities are entrenched and incorporated in the urban fabric rearrangement, peripheralising other metropolitan regions.

The remainder of this work is structured as follows: to commence, an overview of internal

displacement in Nigeria and the current state of long-term and rapid urban migration of displaced individuals from one region to another is provided in order to better comprehend the case study. This positions Lagos as a transnational metropolis that draws all types of migrants, including those who are displaced, due to its economic position. Subsequently, the case study is introduced, and the findings are discussed in relation to the re-enactment of bypass urbanisation and the formation of community in urban enclaves. The discussion then transitions to an examination of the solidarity movement's space and the function of social movements, concluding with enquiries regarding identity, politics, and rights.

Setting the Scene

Despite the fact that climate and ethnic unrest are equally responsible for displacement in Nigeria, the case study focuses on the ongoing protracted conflict and insecurity-induced internal displacement that have been occurring in northern Nigeria since 2001. Nigeria, a protracted displacement state, has one of the greatest displacement rates in the globe, with 3.9 million individuals displaced (UNHCR, 2022). This displacement is predominantly localised in the northern region of the country. The Nigerian government and its developmental and humanitarian partners have created and maintained humanitarian facilities in displacement-affected areas to alleviate rising risks. The UNHCR (2022) enumeration only covers 40% of IDPs who enter humanitarian camps. Most of this group avoids camps, choosing urban migration; yet they are uncaptured in IDP statistics (Olanrewaju et al., 2019).

Lagos is an ideal test case for exploring peripheral centralities since, despite being a metropolis, it is Nigeria's economic powerhouse, ranking seventh in Africa and larger than the size of most African states (Kazeem, 2016). Consequently, this generates a migration draw factor that has recently rendered the city alluring to both displaced populations within and outside of Nigeria (Roberts & Lawanson, 2023). Despite its economic acumen, the city's capacity to supply social products is significantly outstripped by the demand, which is estimated to be 24 million (World Population Review, 2023). Additionally, the city has one of the highest housing deficits in the world (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2017). Lagos is the greatest metropolis in Africa, with a population of 24 million. The migration inflow is a significant contributing factor. Lagos, Africa's seventh biggest economy, accounts for the bulk of Nigeria's internal growth rate (Kazeem, 2016), making it appealing to all types of migrants. Lagos State Government's 2016 assessment estimates that the city receives a daily inflow of 123,000 individuals, despite the fact that inflow migration is challenging to determine. It is expected that the majority of this demographic will be included in the urban impoverished population, which resides in the

central peripherals of the city, typically in informal settlements and slums (Olajide & Lawanson, 2022). According to Heinrich Böll Stiftung (2017), Lagos is 65% informal, with most residents meeting their own requirements informally within the urban peripherals. This portrays Lagos as a metropolis that is perpetually in the process of enduring substantial spatial transformation. In this context, the historical spatial configuration of Lagos' informal self-provision is analysed across various stages and processes of displaced forced migrants' urbanism, spanning from 2003, when the first community lived there, to 2023. This case study delineates a process of resettlement that began in 2014 as inducted into the IOM (2019) shelter framework across arrival, transitional and pseudo permanent settlement, as presented in Figure 1. This analysis provides a context for understanding the morphological practices of peripheral centralities from this demography perspective.



Figure 1: Spatial footprint of IDP forced migrants in Lagos

Upon the commencement of the field work in 2021, the case study population had already begun a nine-year process spanning two preceding stages. The urban footprints and spatial distribution of this process, which date back to 2014, are depicted in Figure 1. Points one and two are the starting points, while point four represents a critical space that the group has cultivated as a space for solidarity building. Point three is the current

case study location in the Lekki area of Lagos, at an IDP exclusive community called Owode Mango.

Who are the IDPs in Owode Mango?

Owode Mango is situated in the eastern region of the city, within the Lekki metropolis. To the best of my knowledge, it was the sole IDP-exclusive community in Lagos at the commencement of the field work. Protracted IDPs from Borno and Adamawa states comprise the majority of the case study population. Between 2011 and 2014, the continuing conflict and Islamic terrorism resulted in the displacement of the majority. Between 2016 and 2019, the bulk relocated to Lagos after a series of rapid interventions, including staying in camps and migrating to other adjacent northern areas. Data shows that IDPs in Lagos, like other kinds of migration, come to the city to recuperate from their long-term displacement, and their choice of destination is influenced by perceived livelihood prospects. Owode Mango was established as a result of the pre-existing social capital and network of seasonal migrants from the north, who had established prior contact with the entity that would become Owode Mango in 2003. The case study population majority arrived in Owode Mango between 2017 and 2019, following the actual formation of the organisation in 2014.

The Adaptation and Transformation of Spaces to Habitable and Pertinent Places

Research shows immigrants need shelter the most. Lagos did not engage with northern Nigerian IDPs due to humanitarian protection regionalisation and intervention limits. Primary culprits were policy structure and resource limitations. Despite their homogeneity, IDP urban migrants cannot find refuge in existing slums and informal communities owing to their displacement, the local population's view of this demographic as a security danger, and the fear of losing territorial control to outsiders. Lagos' informal areas are off-limits to IDPs. IDPs must prepare for segregational settlement with a receptive host community. IDPs from outside Lagos must negotiate with a host community. This resettling group who began their journey to resettlement across space and time in 2014 says this location allows access to urban socio- economic fabric for livelihood and concealment, ergo spatial logic. Between 2014 and 2017, the group settled under a bridge (Fig. 2) until population increase notified the environmental governance agency, which removed them in 2017.

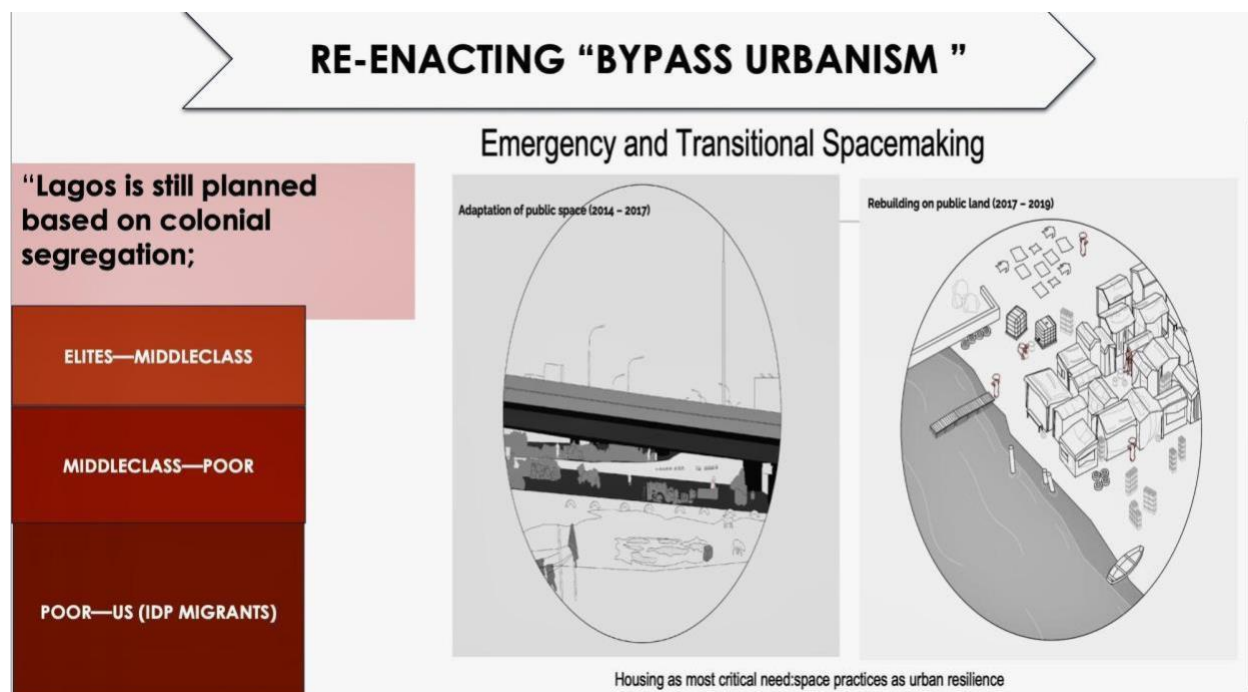


Figure 2: Adaptation of public space to dwelling places 2014 - 2017 and rebuilding on unoccupied public land - 2017 - 2019

Following the eviction notice, the group selected a leader, usually someone who had a close relationship with the neighbourhood and the city as a whole. They then started negotiating for an interim location in a different area, which was situated deeper in downtown Lagos. This site is shown as point 2 in Figure 1. Like the last settlement, this one is segregated and temporal. The IDPs were unaware that this settlement plot was contentious since the indigenous Illurbirin people had been ousted. Many initial settlers returned to live with IDPs after witnessing them. As the population grew, the same government agency uncovered and evicted the group again in 2019. Within two years, the group fostered economic integration, one of the key prerequisites to permanently integrating into the case study community. After evicting the IDPs, the state government and private investors turned this site into a luxury development project.

The impenetrability of existing slum settlements by IDP migrants due to their displacement vulnerability and the status of being considered aliens by the local urban poor population are the driving forces behind the spatial logic of these reenactments of bypass urbanisation. Additionally, the IDP migrants were discovered to be entangled in the historical colonial legacies of Lagos, where spatial uses are present in segregational enclaves. For instance, Figure 2 includes an illustration and a quotation from the leader of the internally displaced community, who asserts that Lagos is still designed according to colonial segregation that transcends socio-economic strata and is now being extended

to them by the local urban impoverished population.

Neighbourhood Making in Owode Mango

A settlement for transitional arrivals from the previous stages was negotiated by the IDP leaders in Owode Mango in 2019. It serves as a finality community for IDPs who are undergoing the settlement process in segments, enabling them to generate socioeconomic capital that would enable them to achieve finality. Data reveal that not all settlers advance from one stage to the next because, owing to their limitation on group rents: only IDPs verified by the group to be economically competent of paying their rent advance across stages up to Owode Mango.



Figure 3: Owode Mango as an extension community

The evolution of the Owode Mango case study community is illustrated in Figure 3. It shows how this community evolved from two pre-existing communities, the Ikate Elegushi and Igbo Efon communities. Igbo Efon expanded from the former, which is an ancient indigenous community, and Owode Mango followed subsequently. Owode Mango is an exclusion community that formed from population increase in Elegushi, Lekki, split into Igbo Efon, where seasonal migrants resided since 2003. These IDPs with previous Lagos connections relocated promptly after their northern relocation. After migrating to Lagos as IDPs in 2011, the group sought courtesy hosting in Igbo Efon

where they were granted and resided there till 2014 owing to the fast IDP inflow. At that time, the local community provided the group their own village, separating IDPs from residents and low-income migrants.

Owode Mango rents public and private land. IDPs rent unoccupied public land from the local community via traditional land settlement. The former sees low-value landowners renting to IDPs to avert land grabs. Both structures are temporary and ruled by force, intimidation and extortion. IDPs must live in groups and cannot rent prefabricated dwellings. Contacts with other IDPs, religious affiliation, and seasonal migrants' historical relationship with Lagos before migration from the north are the major routes to access, participate, and construct this kind and stage of placemaking space, according to research. To join Owode Mango, you need social capital.

Christians and Muslims reside in IDP complexes that divide them. In 2017, the IDP community flourished and religious conflict developed, hence leaders chose internal segregation to maintain peace. The Muslim organisation says the Christian Church has grievances against Muslims because an Islamic terrorist organisation is driving northward migration. The Church agrees and claims segregation protects IDP arrivals from persecution since locals see them as a security threat. Although residing in Owode Mango since 2003 (2014), their IDP clusters are not included in planning. Current marginalisation is explained by state government correspondence:

'The customary law enables local communities to temporarily allow IDPs settle on communal spaces, however, those spaces are not registered as residential to state government, therefore are not captured in any planning policy' (Lagos state government, 2022).

All IDP exclusive clusters in Owode Mango lack basic utilities, and the group, while paying taxes to the local government, provides all their own public goods and services and has no official addresses. Based on a long-distance pre-displacement relationship between Lagosians and northern IDP migrants, the Seriki group leader negotiates with the Baale community leader to provide all basic amenities in Owode Mango. According to the group, this community is permanent, but the official exclusion of IDPs and the power imbalance between both groups make integration difficult. The IDP-host relationship is governed by coercion, harassment and extortion. However, the group links Owode Mango with permanence and community.



Figure 4: Spaces of solidarity: Falomo-Under Bridge

Figure 4, which provides a photographic illustration of point 4 on Figure 1, displays a solidarity spot in downtown Lagos' Ikoyi. The image shows how a strategic location may be used to foster solidarity with Lagos' IDP migrants. This space is known as the Falomo-Under Bridge. This region gained prominence in 2014 when Lagos IDPs launched an advocacy campaign to raise awareness of the April 2014 kidnapping of 276 Chibok schoolgirls in Borno State. BringBackOurGirls (BBOG) was the social movement behind the campaign. After the campaign received global attention, the state administration allowed the IDPs to utilise this area via religious institution alignment and other alliances, branding it with images, murals, and visual markers to promote awareness in Lagos. The charity holds weekly sit-out meetings and helps IDP newcomers establish social capital in Lagos via activism and socialisation.

Conclusions

The article has presented central peripheralisation of spatial structures and landscapes for social process (re)production following social studies' "spatial turn." Although their definitions are theoretically vague, their quantification methods and geographical scales situate IDP migrants in urban centrality periphery discussions. It depicts how peripheral centralities urbanise due to internal displacement, proving that peripheral urban structures are neither homogeneous nor policy driven. Instead, multiple interconnected dynamics represent urbanisation and unattainable urban citizenship and rights.

These informal, community-driven activities are influenced by citizenship and identity policies and urban politics. Socio-spatial lenses such as those applied in this case study can identify urban core patterns, how they assist social processes, and their problems for modern urban structures. This also shows how urban theories have redefined peripheral centrality through the socialisation of the abstract space into meaningful places for the spacemakers. It delineates the absolute importance of centres, based on their internal features, to centrality, the relative importance of centres based on external interaction between centres, and then to accessibility, using cities' internal characteristics to approximate their external relations.

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Rebecca Enobong Roberts is a multidisciplinary development economist and PhD candidate at the Technische Universität Berlin's Habitat Unit. Her dissertation examines the intersectionality between internal displacement and forced migration in the context of sustainable and inclusive urbanisation through a spacemaking case study of internally displaced migrants from the northeast region of Nigeria to the metropolis of Lagos. Rebecca has fifteen years of experience in international humanitarian aid and sustainable development project management across 23 states and multiple cities in Nigeria, Dakar, Senegal, Pretoria, Johannesburg, South Africa, and Accra and Kumasi, Ghana. Her expertise lies in a number of areas including community organisation and engagement, public health, public education, and human rights, including human rights, informalities (rights to the city, livelihood, and housing), sustainable urbanisation, displacement, forced migration, urban refugees, forced migration, youth development, public policy analysis, advocacy, and project monitoring and evaluation.

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