NAVIGATING UNCERTAINTY:

A Phenomenological Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Internally Displaced Women and Older Adults in Nigeria.

By

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ABSTRACT

In the latest assessment conducted during Round 43 of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), it was determined that Nigeria has approximately 2,375,661 IDPs. Among them, 24% are women, 19% are men, 31% are girls, and 26% are boys. The assessment further reveals that over 960,000 IDPs are residing in camp-like settings, while more than 1.4 million are living in host communities (DTM of IOM, 2023).

This research employs a phenomenological approach situated within the interpretivist paradigm to explore the lived experiences of women displaced by conflict and natural disasters. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews (*n=32*) and focus group discussions (*n=4*) involving 61 internally displaced women and older adults in four host communities in Abuja, Northcentral Nigeria, the study aims to unravel the complex layers of how displaced individuals cope, survive, and aspire for a better future. The investigation delves into their community roles, identities, and the psychosocial support they receive.

Utilising a thematic analysis enriched by theoretical frameworks encompassing concepts of structural violence, intersectionality, urban and feminist geographies, social determinants of health, and basic needs approaches, the study interprets the collected data. It examines human agency and coping mechanisms in informal settlements, discussing durable solutions to enhance the quality of life for displaced individuals. The findings portray a distressing scenario of living in precarious conditions, marked by gender-based violence against women and their families, intensified by insecurity, suffering, and the relentless struggle for survival. Despite

mirroring the experiences of internally displaced women globally, the weakened socio-political system in Nigeria and inadequate governmental support compounds their plight.

However, the research refrains from portraying these internally displaced women and older adults as helpless victims, emphasising their strength and agency as architects of their new lives. The study highlights their commitment and determined efforts to ensure the survival of their families and communities, shedding light on their negotiation processes with both human and supernatural forces. Their cultural, religious, and spiritual knowledge emerges as a powerful tool for coping, providing a framework for interpreting and overcoming everyday challenges.

Effective solutions, however, demand renewed political will to address widespread poverty, social inequities, and gender inequality. This necessitates creating an enabling environment with proper infrastructure for economic growth, equal educational and economic opportunities for both genders, and a cultural shift towards recognising and appreciating the contributions of men and women in family, community, and nation-building.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my father, Musa, and brother, Isah. May Allah SWT have mercy on them.

A NOTE OF THANKS

First and foremost, I express my profound gratitude to Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, for bestowing upon me the strength, perseverance, and guidance to undertake and complete this remarkable journey.

This thesis is the culmination of years of dedicated work, perseverance, and the invaluable support of many individuals who have contributed to its success. It is a testament to the collective efforts of many individuals, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the body of knowledge in my field. It is with profound humility and gratitude that I acknowledge the invaluable contributions of all those who have played a role in this remarkable journey.

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PUBLICATIONS

Over the years, preliminary research findings have been presented at several conferences where feedback and questions were welcomed and discussed. Below are the research outputs from my PhD journey:

1. **Book Chapter: Internal Displacement in Nigeria: Evidence from Lagos and Abuja.**

   Zanna, J. M. W., Adejoh, S. and Dhesi, S., (2023), Migration, displacement and diversity: The IRiS anthology. Lessard-Phillips, L., Papoutsi, A., Sigona, N. and Ziss, P. (eds.). Oxford: Oxford Publishing Services, p. 192-192 1. ISBN 9781739784645, 9781739784621.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BH: Boko Haram

DTM: Displacement Tracking Matrix

FEC: Federal Executive Council (commonly in the context of Nigeria's government)

GBV: Gender-Based Violence

GPID: Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee

IDMC: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

IDPs: Internally Displaced Persons

IDW: Internally Displaced Women

IFRC: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

IOA: Internally Displaced Older Adults/Persons

IOM: International Organization for Migration

NCFRMI: National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons

NEMA: National Emergency Management Agency

NGO: Non-governmental Organizations

NPHCDA: National Primary Health Care Development Agency

NRC: Norwegian Refugee Council

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

SDH: Social Determinants of Health

SRMH: Sexual, Reproductive and Menstrual Health

TBA: Traditional Birth Attendants

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNOCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

UNSDG: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

IOM: International Organisation for Migration

WASH: Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This issue of internal displacement cuts beyond geographical and socioeconomic boundaries, affecting both rural and urban areas worldwide. While displacement camps and settlements are commonly associated with rural areas, a large proportion of internally displaced persons (IDPs) seek sanctuary in cities, where they face particular obstacles in accessing basic services, secure housing, and integrating into new communities. These challenges are not inherently more amplified in urban settings than in other displacement settings. With most IDPs having relocated to towns and cities worldwide, the urban component of internal displacement has become increasingly common (IASC, 2016). Nevertheless, although urban living can pose challenges for both IDPs and impoverished local residents, cities can serve as "places of hope and aspiration" for numerous displaced communities, aiding in the pursuit of durable solutions (Klugman and Ortiz, 2022, p.8). It is, therefore, equally important to fully comprehend the lived realities of IDPs, regardless of whether they are displaced in urban or rural regions.

In protracted displacement situations, IDPs remain displaced for extended periods, often resulting in their relocation to informal settlements or host communities rather than planned camps. In these environments, less focus has been placed on the lived experiences of displaced persons, especially women and older people, who face significant challenges and heightened vulnerabilities as a result of long-term displacement in informal settlements, even though the number of IDPs in cities is on the rise. To better understand the lived experiences of internally displaced women (IDW) and older adults (IOA) living in informal settlements in Abuja, Nigeria, this thesis will look into the challenges the individuals face, their tenacious coping

strategies, and their hopes for a more secure and respectable life in the face of protracted displacement.

This thesis is distinguished by its interdisciplinary approach, drawing on insights from human geography, migration studies, and public and environmental health sciences. By integrating these diverse fields, the research provides a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the complex nature of internal displacement. The study examines various aspects of the displacement experience for IDW and IOA within the specific context of informal settlements in Nigeria, thereby contributing to the broader research objectives and understanding of internal displacement. This interdisciplinary lens has been instrumental in shaping the study's methodology, data analysis, and interpretation of findings.

For the purposes of this thesis, older adults refer to women aged 55 years and above, which is in line with the United Nations' definition (United Nations, 2019). This age threshold is especially important in developing nations like Nigeria, where life expectancy is shorter, and health issues often appear earlier than in high-income countries. It is crucial to note that this definition may not always align with local cultural perceptions of ageing or the lived experiences of individuals. The idea of an “older adult” can be shaped by social roles, familial obligations, and physical ability in many African countries, including Nigeria, rather than just chronological age (Aboderin, 2017). This thesis recognises these distinctions while using the UN criteria to provide consistency and comparability with worldwide studies.

It is significant to highlight that references to gender in this thesis are not related to biological sex but rather to socially constructed gender roles and the roles played by women in society. As Connell (2009) contends, gender is a multifarious social structure that impacts personal

experience and societal expectations. Understanding the special difficulties experienced by internally displaced women depends on this point of view. Within the framework of this study, gender is seen as a complex social construct interacting with other elements, including age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic level, to affect the experiences of displacement (Crenshaw, 1989; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

1.1 Background

Internal displacement has become a significant worldwide issue, illustrating the intricate interaction of social, political, and environmental elements that compel persons to leave their residences while staying inside their country's borders. Although the difficulties faced by refugees who cross international boundaries are well discussed, the obstacles encountered by IDPs are generally overlooked, particularly for vulnerable demographics such as women, girls, and older adults. IDPs frequently navigate a precarious legal and humanitarian landscape while remaining under the jurisdiction of their national governments.

By the end of 2023, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2024) reported that the number of IDPs worldwide had increased from 71.1 million in 2022 to approximately 75.9 million due to conflict, violence, and disasters. This remarkable statistic signifies a substantial rise compared to prior years, emphasising the pressing need to tackle the fundamental reasons and outcomes of internal displacement. The number of displaced individuals is steadily increasing as individuals who have been compelled to leave their homes due to catastrophes, conflict, or violence join those who have been displaced for extended periods without finding a lasting solution. A critical issue is the absence of definitive, disaggregated data regarding IDPs' demographics, locations, and specific circumstances (Ferris, 2019; Metcalfe et al., 2011).

It is challenging to recognise and respond to the particular vulnerabilities and needs of displaced women, girls, and older individuals without precise age and sex-disaggregated data.

Various factors contribute to displacement, a complex issue influenced by a range of interconnected elements that differ from region to region. Internal displacement has been much accelerated by armed conflicts in areas characterised by ethnic tensions, religious fanaticism, or political instability. Population displacement inside their own countries has also resulted from environmental disasters like earthquakes, droughts, and floods made worse by climate change. Additionally, community displacement is a common outcome of development projects, including road construction, housing developments, dams, mining operations, and infrastructure projects, particularly affecting marginalised and indigenous populations (Cernea, 1997; Koenig, 2001). Abuse of human rights, including persecution of minority groups, state-approved oppression, and gender-based violence (GBV), adds even more to the forced displacement of individuals inside borders (Aloyo and Cushing, 2021).

Apart from conflicts and natural disasters, urban displacement is also influenced by other contextual factors. The rapid growth of settlements due to urbanisation in many cities has created conditions that can intensify displacement issues. Economic circumstances such as poverty, limited job opportunities, and unequal growth have also contributed to people moving within their countries to seek better opportunities in cities (Crisp et al., 2012). Furthermore, climate change and environmental degradation have emerged as significant drivers of internal migration, particularly in regions affected by desertification, rising sea levels, and frequent natural disasters (Ionesco et al., 2017). Environmental challenges frequently intersect with social, economic, and political considerations, resulting in intricate displacement circumstances that necessitate various responses.

1.2 Researching the Lived Experiences, Intersectionality and Marginalisation of Vulnerable Groups

Although there is an increased cognisance that internal displacement disproportionately affects disadvantaged groups, the real-life experiences of women, children, senior citizens, and other marginalised groups in displacement situations remain under-researched. To guide more inclusive and successful humanitarian responses, this study seeks to clarify the particular needs and obstacles these communities face.

Economic hardship, disruption of education, GBV, and a lack of access to sexual and reproductive health care are some of the increased risks and vulnerabilities that displaced women and girls experience (Aloyo and Cushing, 2021; Freedman, 2022). According to research, displacement can worsen pre-existing gender disparities and harmful societal norms, resulting in an increase in domestic violence, child marriage, and other forms of exploitation. Participatory research approaches have increased the voices and agency of displaced women and girls in problem-solving (Bermudez et al., 2022).

Older IDPs have also drawn attention since they frequently encounter difficulties in obtaining support networks, healthcare, and chances to live in displacement situations (Karunakara and Moyes, 2014; Siriwardhana et al., 2018). Studies have examined how moving affects older people's capacity to retain their independence and dignity, as well as their social isolation and physical and mental health (Bastawrous et al., 2022; Siriwardhana et al., 202). Resilience and contributions to displacement contexts have also been highlighted by studies on the role of older persons as carers and community leaders (Barbelet and Wake, 2020).

Concerning access to school, protection from violence and exploitation, and psychosocial well-being, the effects of internal displacement on children and teenagers have received a lot of attention (Crea et al., 2017; Dryden-Peterson, 2017). Research has looked at how moving disrupts education, takes away childhood, and affects a child's development and future opportunities throughout time (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Verwimp and Maystadt, 2020). Through participatory approaches, displaced children and youth have had their voices and agency increased in research and programme creation (Bermudez et al., 2022).

Further studies have looked at how gender, age, disability, ethnicity, and socioeconomic level interact to shape IDP experiences (Hutchinson and Stavrou, 2004; Mazurana et al., 2019). Research has looked at the particular difficulties experienced by LGBTQ+ people in displacement situations, older persons from marginalised ethnic or religious groups, and displaced women with disabilities (Barbelet and Wake, 2020; Freedman, 2022). The different intersectional strategies seek to draw attention to different communities' particular needs and combined vulnerabilities, guiding more inclusive and customised humanitarian responses.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Recent studies have highlighted these populations' unique challenges and demands when moving from camps to informal settlements and host communities. One significant challenge is the need for comprehensive, disaggregated data on IDP demographics, localities, and unique conditions (Ferris, 2019; Metcalfe et al., 2011). Understanding and addressing the unique vulnerabilities and needs of displaced women, girls, and older adults is challenging without reliable age and gender-disaggregated data.

Displaced women are particularly concerned about their livelihoods and economic chances. They frequently confront more considerable hurdles than men in finding work and money in their displacement locations (Jacobsen, 2006; IOM, 2021). In Ethiopia, 35% of displaced women became unemployed, compared to 30% of men (IOM, 2021). This loss of livelihood not only impoverishes displaced women but also limits their ability to provide education for their children, creating a cycle of poverty (Zetter and Deikun, 2010). Displaced women and girls are also more vulnerable to GBV, which includes intimate relationship violence, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation (UNHCR, 2019; Parker and Maynard, 2015). Separation from family/community support networks, economic stress, overcrowded living conditions, and a lack of security in informal settlements all lead to greater GBV vulnerability (Sanyal, 2014). Access to essential services such as healthcare, education, adequate shelter, and social protection is frequently denied to displaced women and girls outside camps (Earle, 2016; Ferris, 2019). They may end up living in hazardous conditions on the fringes of cities, in informal settlements without essential facilities, or as renters with no tenure security who face eviction (Crisp et al., 2012).

When older displaced individuals are displaced to cities and host communities rather than humanitarian aid camps, they may encounter specific problems accessing age-appropriate services and support systems (Metcalfe et al., 2011). Their unique demands are frequently disregarded in displacement responses (Parker and Maynard, 2015). While stressing the enormous problems, research also emphasises the resilience and coping techniques these groups use and the significance of ensuring their meaningful engagement in solution creation (Ferris, 2019; Sanyal, 2014). Addressing the implications of internal displacement, both

gendered and aged, is crucial for human rights protection and long-term development (IOM, 2021).

To address these research problems, this study aims to generate novel insights into the socio-economic consequences of internal displacement on women and older adults residing in informal settlements in Nigeria. The research will examine their life experiences, identify challenges in accessing essential assistance, investigate coping strategies, analyse current policy frameworks, and develop evidence-based recommendations for more effective interventions.

1.3.1 Specific Research Problems the Thesis Addresses

Although there are national and international legal frameworks in place to safeguard the rights of IDPs, the actual execution and efficacy of these measures in the field continue to pose a substantial problem. In order to better understand how these frameworks affect IDPs' daily lives and their capacity to obtain necessary assistance, find long-term solutions, and exercise their fundamental rights, the thesis investigates their shortcomings and gaps. The thesis explores the many and intricate problems related to internal displacement in Nigeria, concentrating primarily on the situation of IDPs brought about by conflicts and other emergencies. More precisely, it examines the following crucial elements:

The impact of gender and age on displaced populations: Not all persons are equally affected by internal displacement. Women and older persons frequently have increased susceptibility and difficulties in displacement contexts. The thesis explores the intersectional aspects of these experiences, providing insight into the particular

challenges and dangers encountered by displaced women and older individuals, including GBV, restricted healthcare and education opportunities, and the breakdown of conventional support networks.

The social and health concerns utilised by IDPs, particularly women and older adults: Encompassing issues such as limited healthcare accessibility, vulnerability to GBV, and the fulfilment of basic necessities, moving to a new location can significantly affect impacted communities' social structure and general welfare. The thesis examines the many obstacles IDPs encounter when obtaining necessary services, including healthcare, education, and secure housing. It also investigates their susceptibility to different types of violence, exploitation, and marginalisation while living in displacement areas.

The coping mechanisms utilised by vulnerable demographics, namely women and older persons, in effectively managing the difficulties associated with internal displacement:

The thesis examines the various strategies used by vulnerable groups, including women and older persons, to deal with the challenges of displacement while acknowledging their resilience and ability to take action. This entails analysing their support systems, income-generating endeavours, and other tactics they utilise to alleviate the consequences of displacement and aim for a state of normality and well-being.

In doing so, this research will highlight the methods employed by these vulnerable groups to gain insight into their agency, ability to adapt, and potential contribution to developing more impactful and empowering actions. Understanding these strategies will aid policymakers and

aid organisations in recognising possibilities to enhance and reinforce current community-based responses and support systems.

1.4 Rationale

The objective of this study is to conduct a thorough analysis that not only emphasises the difficulties and adaptive methods of internally displaced women and older adults but also provides policy recommendations for more efficient and long-lasting interventions. Specifically, this research aims to examine their life experiences, identify challenges in accessing essential assistance, investigate coping strategies, analyse current policy frameworks, and develop evidence-based recommendations. By doing so, this study seeks to generate novel insights into the socio-economic consequences of internal displacement on these vulnerable groups residing in informal settlements in Nigeria.

1.5 Research Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to generate novel insights into the socio-economic consequences of internal displacement on women and older adults residing in informal settlements in Nigeria. This research seeks to examine their lived experiences, evaluate their challenges, and explore their coping strategies to inform more effective policies and interventions. To operationalise the main research aim into practice, this study outlines the following objectives (see Figure 1.1):

1 ***To examine the life experiences and evaluate the perceptions of standard of living faced by IDW and IOA living in informal environments***. This objective aims to collect

qualitative data on personal narratives and subjective well-being measurements in order to provide a full understanding of the daily experiences encountered by these individuals.

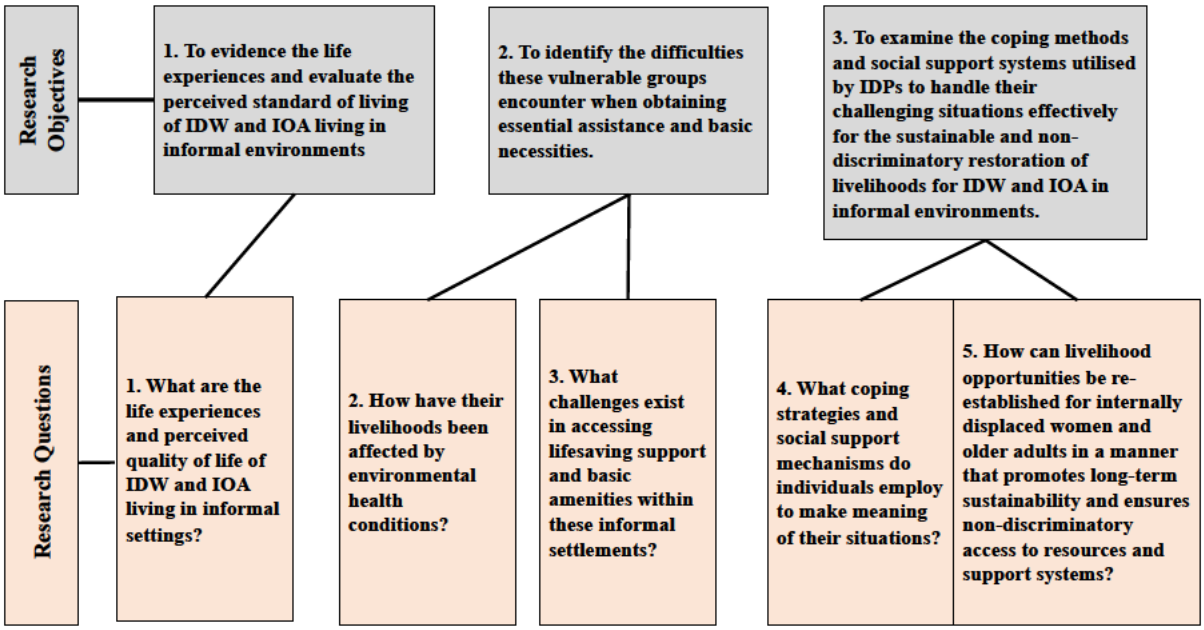


Figure 1.1: *Interaction of thesis objectives and research questions. Source, Author*

2 ***To identify the difficulties these vulnerable groups encounter when obtaining essential assistance and basic necessities.*** It strives to emphasise systemic issues that impede the effective delivery and support of aid, focusing on barriers to healthcare, clean water, sanitation, education and overall livelihood security.

3 ***To examine the coping strategies and social support systems utilised by IDPs to handle their challenging situations effectively for the sustainable and non-discriminatory restoration of livelihoods for IDW and IOA in informal environments***. Gaining knowledge about these adaptive mechanisms will offer valuable insight into the ability of displaced communities to recover and identify the areas where community-led interventions may be enhanced.

The results of these objectives will lead to concrete policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the socioeconomic circumstances of IDPs through inclusive and long-term strategies, as well as make suggestions for the sustainable and indiscriminate restoration of these disadvantaged groups' means of subsistence.

1.5.1 Research Questions

Aligned with the objectives, the following research questions guide this study:

1. What are the life experiences and perceived quality of life of internally displaced women and older adults living in informal settings?
2. How have their livelihoods been affected by environmental health conditions?
3. What challenges exist in accessing lifesaving support and basic amenities within these informal settlements?
4. What coping strategies and social support mechanisms do individuals employ to make meaning of their situations?
5. How can livelihood opportunities be re-established for internally displaced women and older adults in a manner that promotes long-term sustainability and ensures non-discriminatory access to resources and support systems?

1.6 Gaps in Current Literature

Although there has been some research on internal displacement, there is still a lack of knowledge about the broader human rights consequences and the long-term social and economic effects on displaced people in protracted situations. In addition, internal and external policy frameworks fail to adequately address the intersectionality that impacts women and older IDPs.

In the Nigerian context, a substantial portion of the existing scholarship on internal displacement primarily emphasises quantitative aspects, such as statistical data on the number of displaced individuals, the magnitude of the displacement, and the immediate factors driving migration, such as violence and natural disasters (Mohammed, 2017; Bah, 2018; Adeola and Oluwafunmilayo, 2018). However, it is crucial to note that emphasising the quantitative aspects may not adequately reflect the broader worldwide literature on displacement, which frequently includes a more diverse variety of perspectives and techniques. Scholarly work has recorded rapid legal and humanitarian responses but often overlooks the human rights implications and long-term social, socioeconomic, physiological, and psychological effects on displaced populations (Mooney, 2005; Bah, 2018; Cantor, 2021). Furthermore, there is limited investigation into the intersectionality of women and older IDPs and the role of internal and external policy frameworks in effectively resolving these challenges.

A thorough analysis that encompasses the socioeconomic, health, and human rights aspects of internal displacement significantly lacking. The long-term consequences of displacement on individuals' well-being, familial dynamics, and societal structures are not adequately addressed. Additionally, policy considerations and academic discussions frequently fail to fully account for the unique vulnerabilities and requirements of displaced older adults and women.

The development of sustainable and effective solutions to address the multifaceted challenges encountered by IDPs, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups such as women and older adults, is impeded by this gap in knowledge. The current policies and interventions may not be able to adequately support and protect individuals by failing to comprehend the profundity and complexity of their lived experiences (Zetter and Deikun, 2010; Ferris, 2014).

1.7 Justification of Problem

Because internal displacement impacts millions of people and has far-reaching effects on human rights, security, and global health, it is imperative to understand its complex effects. The astonishing sum of the current estimates of IDP numbers by the IDMC highlights the need to find a solution to the different problems that IDPs face because displacement can have long-term consequences for people, families, and entire communities.

In addition to being necessary for humanitarian reasons, resolving these issues is essential for achieving sustainable development goals and maintaining social stability. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated in 2019, internal displacement can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, reinforce cycles of poverty, and undermine initiatives to advance gender equality, educational opportunities, and economic development. Filling the knowledge gap will lead to more effective policymaking, more effective national and international relief programmes, and greater protection of IDPs' rights and quality of life.

Filling this research gap is critical to understanding the unique challenges and intersectional vulnerabilities of this group allowing policymakers and humanitarian organisations to design and implement interventions tailored to their specific needs, ensuring that no one falls behind in responding to internal displacement (Aloyo and Cushing, 2021). In addition, a comprehensive study that considers the social, economic, health, and human rights aspects of internal displacement can provide critical insights and evidence-based recommendations to governments and international organisations. Finally, this understanding can help shape more empowering and culturally appropriate policies and treatments, drawing on these groups' current coping methods and resilience (Aloyo and Cushing, 2021; Zakar et al., 2019).

1.8 Research Scope

The research largely focuses on the policy, development, and humanitarian relief industry. This includes organisations and entities engaged in policy formulation, emergency management, social welfare, healthcare delivery, and community advancement specifically designed for displaced populations. The study aims to impact practices and strategies that improve the living conditions and prospects of IDPs.

The thesis primarily examines internally displaced women and older adults residing in informal settlements. These demographic groups are frequently the most susceptible to harm, experiencing several difficulties, such as violence based on gender, inequalities in health, and reduced availability of economic possibilities. The study seeks to investigate the interconnectedness of the effects of displacement by taking into account variables such as age, gender, socio-economic level, and cultural background within the groups that have been displaced. The fieldwork for this research was conducted between March and April 2022.

1.9 Significance of the Research

This thesis sheds light on the complex dynamics of internal displacement in Nigeria, focusing on the identified vulnerable demographics residing in informal settlements in Abuja. The study addresses theoretical and practical issues related to displacement crises, making it both highly significant from an academic standpoint and practically important. This research aims to fill in important gaps in the academic literature and humanitarian practice by exploring the lived

experiences, systemic difficulties, and coping mechanisms of IDPs. Ultimately, it is intended to propose new understandings and solutions for these urgent situations.

1 Addressing gaps in the literature and introducing Research Novelty

Although a wealth of information is available on the number of people displaced and their immediate needs, there is a significant lack of research on the long-term effects of displacement on vulnerable populations within their unique socio-cultural environments within the Nigerian setting. Insufficient attention has been given to the impact of gender and age on displacement experiences in African environments, which are characterised by distinct family structures, cultural norms, spirituality and economic prospects compared to the Western context. This dissertation addresses the lack of study on these specific demographics, contributing valuable insights to our knowledge of the effects of displacement in the Nigerian context.

This research presents a novel perspective on internal displacement by highlighting the interconnected effects of such crises, necessitating an interdisciplinary approach for effective resolution. The statement implies that effective response strategies cannot be universally applicable but must take into account the varying experiences of different demographic groups. The study emphasises the need for treatments that address the specific vulnerabilities of displaced women and older persons, which are influenced by the intersectionality of gender, age, and various other characteristics. Through the application of an intersectional perspective, the research acknowledges that the experience of displacement is not uniform but rather shaped by the intricate interaction of various identities and social positions. This necessitates the use of customised and nuanced strategies to effectively tackle the distinct obstacles encountered by different groups within displaced communities.

In the Nigerian context, this research effort is one of the first significant interdisciplinary and intersectional studies to investigate the multidimensional effects of displacement on diverse groups within displaced communities. Using empirical data and extensive research, this study questions and broadens conventional concepts and theories about migration and displacement, which frequently fail to capture the intricacies and complexities of displacement experiences in underrepresented contexts.

2 Resolving real-world problems

The findings of this study are likely to enlighten and increase the efficacy of humanitarian assistance by offering thorough insights into the demands and challenges that displaced communities experience. For example, gaining a deeper understanding of the healthcare obstacles encountered by older IDPs can result in implementing more customised health services that take into account restrictions in mobility and the management of chronic conditions. Implementing these research findings in practical ways can enhance the well-being of displaced individuals by ensuring that assistance programmes are more adept at addressing their distinct requirements. Additionally, the research findings can Increase the chances of displaced people to make a living by identifying their talents, resources, and obstacles and creating suitable job assistance services, microfinance programmes, and vocational training programmes that meet their requirements and those of the local market. Addressing the particular needs of displaced females, such as access to reproductive health care, awareness campaigns and safe places to prevent GBV, and empowerment programmes to promote skill development and income-generating activities.

3 Theoretical Contributions

In a theoretical sense, this study contributes to our knowledge of displacement as a multifaceted process that overlaps with gender, age, and socioeconomic status. Through the use of empirical data and thorough research, this work questions and broadens current ideas and theories on migration and displacement. This research enhances academic discourse by emphasising the need to modify or re-evaluate standard ideas in order to accurately depict displacement in underrepresented circumstances that are not extensively covered in existing literature.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the academic debate by emphasising the necessity to alter or reconsider common conceptions to appropriately reflect displacement in underrepresented situations that are not well covered in the existing literature. By investigating the experiences of displaced populations in previously neglected or understudied situations, this study can address gaps in the literature and inform the development of new theoretical frameworks that better reflect the intersectionality of displacement factors in varied settings in Nigeria.

4 Building on Existing Research

This thesis expands upon prior research by including knowledge from various studies. Grounded in the conceptual frameworks of structural violence, intersectionality, vulnerability, social determinants of health, GBV, socio-economic consequences of displacement, and community empowerment, this study examines the systemic barriers that these communities face and the resilient strategies they employ to navigate their circumstances (Galtung, 1969; Crenshaw, 1989). This study builds upon the research conducted by scholars such as Mazurana et al. (2019), Omata and Kaplan (2013), Beyani (2010), and Brun and Lund (2008). These scholars have examined the real-life experiences of older adults and women who have been

internally displaced. By building on this foundation, the thesis aims to further explore and understand the lived experiences of these vulnerable groups within the context of displacement. Prior research, such as that by Owoaje et al. (2016), highlights the critical need for nuanced studies that address the specific vulnerabilities of displaced women and the older adults in urban African settings.

These scholars have taken an interdisciplinary approach and focused on vulnerabilities, highlighting the significance of analysing the intersectionality of factors and addressing the structural violence and inequalities that influence the experiences of displacement. By synthesising and building upon the current literature, the dissertation provides a more thorough perspective on the subject of displacement in Nigeria.

1.10 Thesis Structure

After this introduction, Chapter 2 delves into the significant difficulties experienced by IDPs in Nigeria, with a specific emphasis on women and older individuals. The text explores the historical and present dimensions of displacement, supported by a theoretical examination of systemic violence, vulnerability, and intersectionality. Next, it evaluates the efficacy of both domestic and global policy frameworks in tackling the challenges faced by IDPs, emphasising areas of deficiency and proposing potential enhancements. Subsequently, the chapter delves into the distinct consequences of displacement on several demographic cohorts, illustrating how gender and age shape the ability to get resources and the overall standard of living for displaced individuals. The study seeks to gain a nuanced comprehension of the internal displacement situation in Nigeria and promote more focused and efficient responses through an extensive analysis of literature and theoretical foundations.

Chapter 3 demonstrates the specific methodological technique utilised in the investigation. The study used an interpretivist and phenomenological methodology, combining focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and qualitative observations. The study followed strong ethical requirements, which included obtaining informed consent, maintaining anonymity, and displaying sensitivity to the participants' vulnerabilities. Data collection occurred in four informal camp-like settings located inside the Abuja Municipal Area Council. The analysis process consisted of theme coding and interpretation. The chapter highlights the significance of collecting the participants' perspectives and recognising the researcher's positionality and reflexivity during the research process.

Chapter 4 is the first of the four empirical chapters. Here, the thesis takes on the first research question. It investigates the real-world experiences of internally displaced women and older individuals in Nigeria, focusing on the challenges they encounter, their capacity to recover, and their search for meaning in the midst of displacement. These include mental health issues, isolation, GBV, perilous journeys and difficulties in locating a permanent residence. Detailed interviews are employed to illuminate the challenges and obstacles encountered by marginalised communities in the chapter. Additionally, violence may occur prior to displacement. The accounts underscore the exceptional capacity of these individuals to endure and remain resilient as they navigate the challenges of displacement and strive to rebuild their lives despite the fact that they have experienced difficult and distressing events. This emphasises the pressing necessity for interventions and support systems that are comprehensive and consider the effects of trauma.

Chapter 5 explores the environmental health conditions experienced by internally displaced women and older people residing in informal settlements. The text emphasises the inadequate living conditions, such as cramped and deteriorating housing, absence of privacy, unsanitary shared sanitation facilities, improper waste disposal procedures, and the presence of pests. These circumstances present substantial hazards to both physical and mental health, worsening the vulnerabilities linked to displacement. The results emphasise the necessity of specific interventions, legislative measures, and infrastructure enhancements to tackle the insufficient living conditions and guarantee the dignity and welfare of displaced groups.

Chapter 6 presents a practical examination of the health difficulties faced by internally displaced women and older individuals, with a specific emphasis on reproductive health and the burden of diseases. The results emphasise the limited availability of family planning services, the prevalence of unsafe abortion practices, and insufficient management of menstrual hygiene. These factors compromise the reproductive health and rights of these susceptible groups. Moreover, the high occurrence of contagious illnesses, such as malaria and parasitic infections, presented considerable health hazards that were worsened by inadequate living circumstances and restricted healthcare accessibility. The chapter highlights the immediate necessity for comprehensive initiatives to tackle these complex difficulties, such as enhancing the availability of crucial healthcare services, implementing policies for illness prevention and control, and promoting socioeconomic empowerment to support family stability and general well-being.

Chapter 7 concludes the analysis and is divided into two pieces. The first section, named "Coping and Agency," examines the coping techniques employed by participants. It explores both emotional and problem-focused strategies, such as mutual support, spirituality, and

economic activities, which are used to meet fundamental requirements and build resilience. The statement underscores participants' agency and positive outlook as they strive to restore their lives and communities, driven by deep-rooted spirituality and collective cooperation. The subsequent section, labelled "Seeking Durable Solutions and Restoration of Livelihood," analyses the long-term preferences of IDPs. It evaluates the influence of previous violence, economic stability, and social networks on their choices to either integrate into local communities or return to their original homes. The chapter explores the intricate decision-making process in displaced communities, highlighting a range of emotions experienced by individuals, from optimism to acceptance. These feelings are influenced by personal, economic, and psychological variables, demonstrating the continual battle for self-respect and independence among IDPs.

The final chapter, Chapter 8, is the conclusive section where I recall the principal research objective. It illustrates the key contributions in terms of the key areas of scholarship outlined in this introduction. The chapter also considers possible future areas of research in developing displacement and environmental health research in the Nigerian context and on a wider scale.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the complex experiences of internally displaced women and older people living in informal settlements in Abuja, Nigeria. The objective is to investigate the various aspects of displacement by conducting an extensive analysis of existing literature backed by a strong theoretical framework. This investigation is based on an analysis of historical circumstances and the relevant legal and policy structures at both global and domestic levels. Theoretical frameworks such as structural violence, intersectionality, and vulnerability enhance the comprehension of the difficulties and hardships experienced by these groups. These frameworks provide a clear understanding of how systemic injustices and social hierarchies affect the lives of displaced individuals. The chapter also examines the quality of life, human agency, and coping strategies, which are crucial for understanding how displaced populations manage their daily lives in the face of considerable difficulties.

In addition, the research focuses on the environmental health concerns these communities face, including the obstacles in obtaining life-saving assistance, sustainable means of living, and essential amenities. This study focuses on the urban and feminist geographies that impact the spatial and social environments of displacement. These factors significantly influence the well-being and quality of life of women and the elderly in these areas. The chapter offers a holistic perspective on displaced populations' experiences in Abuja by including various theoretical underpinnings to fulfil the research aims.

2.2 Historical Perspective on Internal Displacement

The movement of people is as old as human history and has seen significant evolution (Britannica, n.d.). People have migrated for various reasons from the beginning of time, including the impact of armed wars, significant and widespread human rights violations (UNHCR, 2022), natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes (IOM, 2022), and climate change (European Parliament, 2023). As a result of crises in more than 125 nations, internal displacement is now an essential aspect of global human movement (IDMC, 2022). Crises of internal displacement are now a global human rights and humanitarian burden for the international community; no region has been spared from this issue for various reasons. If left unchecked, internal displacement becomes a problem of global displacement, i.e., the domestically displaced cross borders and become refugees. The problem of internal displacement, formerly viewed as a trivial blemish on the world humanitarian scene, has matured into a fundamental structural fault inside the international system governed by the UN Charter (Weiss and Korn, 2006). The rise in global human movement (IOM, 2022) and the suffering of impacted communities have made internal displacement a prominent and urgent global issue (UNHCR, 2022; IDMC, 2022). As demography assists in elucidating this trend in global mobility, the reality of internal displacement and the gravity and scope of the crisis evolve. As more attention is paid to IDPs, national and international concerns should extend beyond individuals who have crossed a recognised boundary.

By the end of the year 2023, conflict and natural disasters have resulted in 75.9 million people living in displacement (IDMC, 2024) within their own country, necessitating international intervention. This surge in displaced individuals accounts for a 50% increase from just five years ago. Recognising that the globe was on the verge of a tremendous calamity, immediate

action was required. The problem's severity, intensity, and scale inspired this sense of urgency. The former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, in the forward of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (see figure 2.1), referred to internal displacement as " the great tragedy of our times" due to the physical, social, and psychological dangers and humiliations it exposes people to (GPID, 2001).

Several causes contributed to the international community's growing awareness that internal displacement was escalating into a crisis. The first of these is recognising that internal displacement is not simply a humanitarian issue but also a source of human rights violations (Cohen and Deng, 1998). Even though these individuals are still within the borders of their respective nations, they have been compelled to leave their homes due to events typically associated with international refugee crises, such as armed conflict, systematic violations of human rights, and other threats to their security as IDPs (UNHCR, 2022).

The plight of IDPs is frequently disregarded or neglected in terms of governmental accountability, analogous to being rendered invisible within their own nation. A contributing factor to this invisibility of IDPs is the failure of national authorities to prioritise and effectively address the challenges encountered by IDPs, despite their responsibility to protect and support all citizens, including those who have been displaced. Unlike refugees, however, there appears to be no international mechanism available to aid IDPs in their suffering (UNHCR, 2021). IDPs live in refugee-like circumstances that would qualify them for international protection if they were in a country other than their own. In contrast to refugees, who are supported by an international convention and an international organisation, IDPs lack both a separate international convention and an international organisation to address their issue (IDMC, 2017). How they might be appropriately safeguarded and aided in their country of residency is a

crucial problem presented by the peculiarities of the IDP situation. This is especially true for women and children, who make up about 70% of the global IDP population (Global Education Monitoring, 2020).

This chapter's discourse is separated into two parts: the concept of internal displacement and the causes and dynamics of internal displacement in Nigeria. The first section will discuss the global crisis of internal displacement, while the second section will examine Nigeria's internal displacement trends, with Boko Haram and the Nigerian government's counterinsurgency actions as major drivers.

2.2.1 Global Crisis of Internal Displacement

Although the immediate displacement events are usually well-documented, a significant and difficult aspect of this crisis is prolonged displacement. Protracted displacement occurs when displaced populations are unable to return to their residences for extended durations (often years or decades). This is often due to ongoing instability, a lack of political determination, or persistent threats to safety (IDMC, 2024). These lengthy displacement scenarios are defined by extended periods of uncertainty, reliance on humanitarian assistance, and persistent vulnerabilities, which dramatically influence the social structure, economic stability, and overall welfare of entire communities (Ferris and Winthrop, 2010).

Literature frequently highlights the various reasons for displacement. According to the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), in 2024, conflicts in countries like Syria, Ukraine, and the Democratic Republic of Congo serve as drivers for large-scale internal movements of people. However, environmental factors are increasingly significant as climate change exacerbates disasters' frequency and severity, leading to displacements. Understanding

the differences in internal displacement trends heavily relies on recognising this dual causation. For example, in the Asia Pacific region, displacement is primarily triggered by disasters, like floods and cyclones, whereas in Africa and the Middle East, violence stands out as the leading factor (IDMC, 2022).

Significantly, although literature frequently emphasises the numerical data and statistical aspects of displacement, there is an emerging discussion regarding the human right consequences of internal displacement. Cohen and Deng (1998) contend that the absence of international protection frameworks for IDPs in comparison to refugees creates a notable deficiency in the humanitarian response system. Examples such as the Rohingya in Myanmar, demonstrate the intricate interaction between ethnic persecution and statelessness that leads to displacement without the need to travel borders (Milton et al., 2017). Nevertheless, several researchers, such as Betts (2013), present a contrasting viewpoint that emphasises how the emphasis on internal displacement could divert attention from more comprehensive concerns regarding global migration and refugee policies. Betts (2013) argues that an excessive emphasis on internal factors may restrict the comprehension of cross-border migratory dynamics and international accountability, especially in prolonged conflicts and crises.

The international reaction to internal displacement exhibits significant variation. While certain nations, such as Uganda, have forward-thinking policies that incorporate IDPs into their overall national development plans through initiatives like the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy (Omata, 2012), other countries lack the ability or willingness to alleviate the difficulties experienced by displaced populations. This discrepancy in reaction not only impacts the possibilities of recovery and rehabilitation for IDPs, but also presents a problem for international agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in

terms of coordination and assistance (Harild et al., 2015). To illustrate, the response to the internal displacement problem in Yemen has been critiqued for its lack of coherence and long-term planning, as pointed out by al-Shami et al. (2021).

A major obstacle in dealing with long-lasting displacement is the intricate political situation concerning the rights and acknowledgment of IDPs. Unlike refugees, IDPs frequently do not have the same level of international legal safeguards, resulting in their suffering being less prominent on the global platform (Mooney, 2005; Bradley, 2018a). In addition, host communities may also face resource scarcity, resulting in conflicts and reduced support for internally displaced populations (Bohnet, 2015). The difficulty is exacerbated by weak international responses and poor finance, which do not adequately meet the extensive long-term requirements (Cohen and Bradley, 2010; Ferris and Waring, 2017).

Protracted internal displacement situations in areas such as the Middle East and South America have sparked global discussions regarding the necessity of incorporating IDPs into national planning frameworks as part of sustainable development strategies. Durable solutions, which extend beyond immediate aid and prioritise integration, local settlement, and the eventual safe return of IDPs to their residences, are advocated for by organisations, including the United Nations and numerous non-governmental organisations (UNHCR, 2019).

Protracted displacement is a widespread problem in Africa, particularly in nations like as Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia, which are characterised by recurrent conflicts and instability. Nigeria is currently experiencing a prolonged displacement problem, mostly caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast region, which gained widespread exposure in 2009. In 2024, a significant number of Nigerians are still displaced within their own country,

residing in camps or host communities without any assistance to go back to their homes or reconstruct their lives. The Nigerian government, with support from international organisations, faces challenges in implementing efficient plans to meet the immediate and long-term requirements of IDPs (IDMC, 2024).

To effectively address the worldwide internal displacement crisis, it is crucial to have comprehensive knowledge that goes beyond mere quantification and considers the interconnected human rights, environmental, political, and developmental aspects. Fostering a coordinated global response that upholds national sovereignty, prioritises the well-being of the displaced, tackles the underlying causes of displacement, and advocates for sustainable, long-term resolutions to protracted displacement scenarios presents a formidable task. Ultimately, the goal is to guarantee the dignity and security of millions of IDPs across the globe.

2.2.2. Conceptualisation of Internal Displacement

Recent efforts to highlight the issue of internal displacement date back to a report presented to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on IDP-related human rights issues (Deng, 1993). Deng (1992) emphasised the absence of comprehensive and universally applicable directives for internally displaced individuals, irrespective of the reasons for their displacement, the country in question, or the existing legal, social, political, or military circumstances. They expressed apprehension regarding the absence of a comprehensive framework to tackle internal displacement, which is described as a significant humanitarian and human rights disaster. Deng expressed the view that the applicable international law consists of a fragmented collection of conventional, well-known, and widely accepted principles, rather than a unified set of standards. Stavropoulou (1994) agreed with this viewpoint, recognising that international law has not been very helpful in effectively dealing

with the problem of internal displacement. The lack of a specialised legal instrument or set of rules designed expressly for the distinct issues encountered by IDPs was a notable deficiency in the international legal framework.

Deng (1992) and Stavropoulou's (1994) worries highlighted the necessity of adopting a stronger and more specialised strategy to tackle the humanitarian and human rights crises that emerge from internal displacement. Their views emphasised the drawbacks of exclusively depending on current international legal procedures, which were not specifically formulated to tackle the intricate and nuanced circumstances of internal displacement situations. By highlighting this disparity, they laid the groundwork for subsequent dialogues and initiatives aimed at formulating a more extensive and customised legal structure to safeguard and support internally displaced individuals. This acknowledges the distinct obstacles they encounter in contrast to refugees or other displaced groups.

The reality of these obstacles necessitates that states investigate ways that could provide international protection to IDPs who are legally inside their countries but are unable to acquire sufficient protection and assistance. In spite of this, there is still a lack of comprehension regarding the idea of internal displacement and what exactly constitutes an IDP, which goes beyond the general outlines of the issue. Various discussions have arisen (Deng, 2001; Mooney, 2005; Alobo and Obaji, 2016), and at the heart of these discussions are questions about how to define who should be classified as an IDP, whether it is appropriate to treat IDPs as a distinct category of concern, and how to determine when a person or group should no longer be considered "internally displaced," even if they are still living in the same area. Weiss (1999, p.3) expressed concern that, even though the predicament of IDPs is evident, "the framing of

[the] issues remain esoteric". In order to facilitate discussion in later sections, it will be useful to contextualization some of these issues as detailed below.

2.2.3. Definition and Recognition of IDPs

The primary definition of IDPs has been a constant subject of debate among academics and other interested parties. In fact, terminology frequently generates inconsistent and polarising arguments. The 1998 United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GPID) sought to establish a comprehensive definition for IDPs. However, the intricate nature of displacement has made it difficult to establish an all-encompassing definition. The GPID, pp. 2, describes IDPs as:

> *Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border.* (OCHA, 2004).

This definition omitted temporal and numerical restrictions, encompassing individuals compelled or obligated to evacuate without traversing borders as a result of armed conflict, violence, human rights violations, or natural disasters. Although it covers greater ground, it does not account for all instances of displacement caused by development. Historical definitions and debates have been problematic as they give a single definition that encompasses the various victim groups and contexts, not taking into account a variety of factors that result in displacement. In 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali formulated a working definition of IDPs:

> *Persons or groups who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers, as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters and who are within the territory of their own country.* (UNHCR, 1992, pg. 17)

This definition focuses on sudden and large-scale displacement and is influenced by earlier refugee concepts of the Cartagena Declaration and the Organisation of African Unity. In addition, the "forced to flee" criterion would exclude all instances in which populations were not directly pressured to flee. This will include occasions in which residents were threatened with eviction or conditions were made unsuitable for human habitation. The concept of people fleeing "in large numbers" and "suddenly or unexpectedly" fails to encompass all displacement scenarios, such as smaller, less visible migrations during conflicts or systematic evictions (Cohen and Deng, 1998; Phuong, 2004).

The earlier definitions have been proven limiting in some real-life events. For example, to avoid discovery during the war between the communist rebels in Colombia and the government, those displaced fled in small groups which does not align with the "large numbers" criterion (Attoh,2018). In the late 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s, Kurds were reportedly uprooted by the Iraqi government for an extended period in Iraq, contradicting the "suddenly or unexpectedly" aspect of the definition (Human Rights Watch, 1991). During the Bosnian War (1992–1995), Muslims were forcibly removed from their homes for ethnic and religious grounds; however, not all of these cases may have been deemed "sudden" or "large-scale". Furthermore, the Zimbabwean government violently evicted and confiscated white farmers' land in 2005, resulting in their forced displacement, which does not meet the "forced to flee" criterion (Human Rights Watch, 2005). Stalin's actions in the Soviet Union, which resulted in

the mass expulsion of ethnic minorities like the Crimean Tatars, are another well-known antecedent (Britannica, 2022).

In a similar vein, the majority of IDPs in Nigeria did not necessarily flee in large numbers (Alobo and Obaji, 2016). The revised definition proposed by Deng in the GPID (OCHA, 2004) omitted the time and number criteria, encompassing individuals who were compelled or obligated to flee without traversing borders due to armed conflict, violence, human rights violations, or natural disasters. Although more comprehensive, specific instances of displacement caused by development are still excluded.

Regardless of the expansiveness of the GPID's definition of IDPs, it is believed that it does not adequately capture all those who ought to be included in the group of concern, such as those who have experienced displacement due to development-induced conflict (Mooney, 2005). This is a significant omission, as some cases of development-related displacement meet the two core criteria for who qualifies as an IDP, as described above. An example is the 1990 eviction of Maroko residents in Lagos, where displacement led to long-term suffering and legal battles (Isawade, 2020). There appears to be no consensus on what constitutes an appropriate description and definition of IDPs, so the debates and arguments continue. When Nigeria eventually enacts an IDP law, it will be appropriate and accurate to include development-induced displacement in the definition of IDPs.

2.2.4 Internal Displaced Persons: A group of concern

In addition to definitional issues, there is a debate regarding whether IDPs are a category of concern due to their unique needs and disproportionate suffering compared to the general population, underlining the aptness of giving them special attention (Phuong, 2004).

In contrast, cogent arguments have been advanced in support of isolating IDPs as a distinct category deserving international attention. The main assumption of these arguments is the vulnerability of IDPs. Internal displacement creates conditions that make those displaced especially unprotected and exposed. It expels people from their homes, depriving them of a place of sanctuary and the most basic kind of safety. In contrast, refugees are given certain protection to address challenges that occur when a people can no longer depend on its government to uphold its most basic rights. Also, IDPs are particularly vulnerable, often exposed to a wide range of human rights violations without state assistance or protection and may be perceived as 'enemies of the state,' leaving them caught in ongoing conflicts and displacement challenges (Odhiambo-Abuya, 2003).

The simple act of displacement, which involves leaving an area of danger and reaching a secure location, whether within or outside a camp, exposes individuals to several challenges. Moving to a new area has various adverse impacts on individuals, families, and communities. Furthermore, as Mooney (2005) characterises it, they are not only in a condition of constant change but also face social stigma and lack the necessary resources for existence. Furthermore, displacement results in the loss of friendships, a sense of belonging and cultural heritage (ibid).

Bureaucratic jargon aside, since they are commonly referred to as “IDPs”; they are, in fact, common citizens, predominantly children and women, who have been compelled to leave their places of residence as a result of persecution or armed conflict. As outsiders in their countries, they typically receive little legal or other protection from the state and face an uncertain future. Furthermore, internally displaced people often confront more challenging circumstances. They may be caught up in an ongoing internal dispute and displacement. Their government, which

may regard them as “enemies of the state”, has final control over their fate (UNHCR, 2007, p. 5). For example, Colombian IDPs face violations of their rights to life, physical integrity, freedom of movement, and access to basic services like education and healthcare, especially the Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, following the extended conflict between the rebel forces, paramilitary groups and the government (Amnesty International, 2022). Similarly, the protracted conflict in Palestine (UNRWA, 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2021)) and Sri Lanka (Human Rights Watch, 2009) has resulted in the displacement of thousands of people. The IDPs are faced with different challenges, including torture and restriction of basic amenities, food, water and healthcare (UNHCR, 2021a). The ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict has resulted in over 1.5 million people (UNHCR, 2023) being displaced. IDPs across these conflict-torn countries are undergoing similar violations inclusive of marginalisation and discrimination, housing and property neglect, denial of access to basic services, restriction of movement and a general right to life and physical integrity (UNHCR, 2023; UNHCR, 2021b; OCHA, 2022; Amnesty International, 2022).

While IDPs are protected by international human rights and humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions (UNHCR, 2022), the lack of a legally binding treaty on internal displacement has caused problems (Cohen, 2006). Limited access, insecurity, and resource constraints make it difficult to apply legal frameworks and mobilise humanitarian aid (IDMC, 2022; Ferris, 2008). To meet these challenges, states, international organisations, and donors must work together to protect displaced populations (Kälin, 2008; UNHCR, 2019).

In the situation of internal displacement, a significant number of IDPs face challenges and vulnerabilities that are not unique to the displaced groups, such as living in poverty, but which become particularly acute given their circumstances. There is evidence that IDPs are more

vulnerable to sexual and GBV, malnutrition, inadequate medical care, heightened insecurity, and generally poor living conditions (Zetta and Boano, 2016; Ojo, 2017). The trauma linked with displacement is undoubtedly responsible for the "high prevalence of psychosocial problems among IDPs," as stated by Mooney (2005, p.15). In April 2018, the high suicide rate among the Yazidi community residing in IDP camps in Iraq was largely attributed to the poor living conditions as well as the trauma of encountering ISIS (Al Shahid News, 2016). Research on mental health in IDP camps is scarce, although displaced populations, especially IDPs, are at higher risk of psychological distress, depression, anxiety, and suicide thoughts (Morina et al., 2018; Tinghög, 2017). Nonetheless, it is essential to avoid the common pitfall of conceiving of IDPs and their needs solely in terms of aid. IDPs, like refugees, deserve protection and human rights (Cohen and Deng, 1998; UNHCR, 2022). An approach that protects IDPs' rights, provides essential support and also tackles the root cause of displacement is needed (Kälin, 2008). As with the concept of refugees, it is therefore essential to recognise that the IDP concept is based on protection and human rights issues.

2.3 The Context of Internal Displacement in Nigeria

2.3.1 Historical context: Nigeria

In the nineteenth century, Britain gained influence and control over what is now known as Nigeria. The entire land area of Nigeria is 923,768 square kilometres (356,768 square miles), making it the fourteenth largest country in Africa (World Bank, 2023). It has a 774 km long Gulf of Guinea coastline (480 mi). Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin Republic all share a 2,470 km (2,513 mi) long international border with Nigeria (CIA World Factbook, 2023). With 216 million people as of 2022, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh-largest population-wise nation in the world with this population (World Bank,

2023). There are more than 500 different ethnic groups in Nigeria, although the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo are the three most prominent.

Following the Second World War, Nigeria had several constitutional reforms that gave the country significant autonomy. In 1960, Nigeria achieved independence from its British colonial rulers. After its independence, Nigeria was divided into northern, Western, and Eastern regions. The Hausa/Fulani tribe ruled the northern territory, the Yoruba tribe ruled the western region, and the Igbo tribe ruled the eastern part. A new constitution was adopted, and a proper peaceful transition from a military to a civilian government occurred for the second time in 1999, ending sixteen years of military rule (Agency, 2015).

At present, Nigeria is undergoing its most extended period of civilian governance since attaining independence. The 2015 presidential election was a watershed moment in history due to its status as the first peaceful transition of authority between national political parties (BBC, 2015). However, the nation remains confronted with substantial obstacles, such as poverty, insecurity, ethnic and religious strife, and corruption (World Bank, 2023). The historical trajectory of conflicts in Nigeria, specifically the north-eastern Boko Haram insurgency, continues to be an urgent matter of concern. The history of Nigeria's conflicts is described next.

2.3.2 Conflict in Nigeria

Northern Nigeria comprises nineteen of Nigeria's thirty-six states, and it is the birthplace of the Boko Haram terrorist group. It is also home to nearly 120 million people, 95% of whom are Muslims (Agbiboa, 2014). There are a significant number of Christian minorities who migrated from the southern portion of the country and are now indigenous to the region. Sunnis who adhere to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessing Be Upon Him) are

estimated to constitute 95% of the Muslim population in the North (Danjibo, 2009), and they are distributed among the Qadiriyya and Tijjaniyya sects.

Other Islamic groups in the North, including Izala, Shiites, and Tijjaniyya, but Jamaatul Natural Islam (JNI) is the largest and most recognised Islamic umbrella organisation in Nigeria, responsible for coordinating and controlling Islamic activities. Hausa/Fulani, Tiv, Gwari, Jukun, and Birom are the predominant ethnic groups of Northern Nigeria (Falola, 1998). With the decline of the Nok and Sokoto caliphate, who ruled Central and Northern Nigeria between 800 B.C.E. and 200 C.E., the Hausas/Fulani acquired dominance of the region due to their strong association with the Kanuri people of Kanem in Bornu and their adoption of Islam in 11th Century. According to Agbiboa (2013), the issue of radical Islamism is not a new phenomenon in Northern Nigeria due to the violent conflicts that have occurred in Kano, Kaduna, and Borno States in the past. Many familiar with the complicated nature of religion in Northern Nigeria were not surprised by these confrontations.

Hickey (1984) contends that the Maitatsine uprisings in Kano State have their roots, which can be traced back to their origins and the extremist method of practising Islam that became so prevalent after the Danfodio jihad in the early 19th century. Usman Danfodio waged jihad against a group of Hausa leaders he viewed as hopeless elites of his own time. After the struggle, Danfodio created the Sokoto caliphate, today known as the Sultanate Council, in northern Nigeria between 1804 and 1808 by Islamic law (Hiskett, 1973). In 1903, Sokoto's caliphate and Borno's emirate fell under British colonial administration. Local authorities were met by Islamists hostile to British colonial presence and the concept of uniting Northern and Southern protectorates. Ikelegbe (2010) suggested that the British colonial control of the

caliphate and its friendly ties with British colonial and post-colonial governments contributed to the caliphate's exposure to the corrupt influence of political leaders.

In 1945, Mohammed Marwa, the leader of the Maitatsine clan and an Islamic teacher, travelled from Marwa in northern Cameroon to the Wambai region of Kano (Falola, 1998; Hickey, 1984; Hiskett, 1973). Marwa became an Islamic extremist, claiming that Western powers' corrupt influence overshadows Islam (Danjibo, 2009; Agbiboa, 2014). Marwa mobilised the local impoverished Muslims of Kano, who considered that the political elites were not authentic Muslims, against Western influence and refusal to recognise political powers (Falola, 1998; Hickey, 1984; Hiskett, 1973). The local impoverished Muslims listen to Maitatsine because he opposes the insincerity of the political elites and the disdain shown to the poor by the rich in society, and they pledge to pray for the salvation of Allah on behalf of the honest and sincere individuals in society (Hickey, 1984).

The adherents of Maitatsine distanced themselves from any Muslim who, in their opinion, is not adhering to Islamic teachings (Hickey, 1984; Isichei, 1987). They believed that any wealth and material possessions were directly related to Christianity or Western values (Isichei, 1987; Adesoji, 2011). In 1980, the violent clashes between Maitatsine supporters and the Nigeria Police Force persisted for almost ten days (Isichei, 1987). In 1981, the federal government convened a committee to investigate the immediate and distant causes of the violent conflict, and the group presented its conclusions. In addition to the personnel of the Nigeria Police Force who lost their lives during the war, the committee determined that 4,500 civilian lives were lost (Isichei, 1987). Maitatsine's capture and execution by the Nigerian Army marked the end of the fight (Isichei, 1987). After the Maitatsine crisis, further violent clashes involving radical Muslim extremists occurred in the northern region of Nigeria (Adesoji, 2011).

Many Muslims in Northern Nigeria held Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gummi in high regard as a famous Islamic Scholar. During one of his classes, he mentioned that if one is a true Muslim, it is not right to vote for a non-Muslim candidate in an election with a Muslim candidate (Aguwa, 1997). Sheikh Gummi was also responsible for developing Sharia courts in the southern region of Nigeria, and he believed Nigeria should be regarded as an Islamic nation. His preaching style and the content of his sermons lead many Nigerian Muslims to become extremists. In 1982, this led to the destruction of churches in Kano by Muslim extremists, which marked the beginning of religious warfare in Nigeria. Next, we will explore the nature of the recent war in Nigeria (ibid).

2.3.3 The Boko Haram Conflict: Implications and Impact

Boko Haram, a group of Islamic extremists from Nigeria's north-eastern region, was formed in 2002. However, it was not until 2009 that the group's activities came to the public's attention. Boko Haram is taken from the Hausa word Boko, which means (Book), and the Arabic term Haram, which ideally means forbidden (Forbidden). Boko Haram collectively implies that Western education is prohibited in Islam, even though Islam permits and encourages Muslims to acquire both Islamic and Western knowledge. It is essential to realise that most Muslims in the North formerly believed that the Hausa name "Boko" was initially associated with deceit and falsehood. Despite time, this has remained the same concerning Western texts, as they contain writings that contradict Islamic doctrine. Onuoha (2012) claimed further that, although Boko Haram has distanced itself from its earlier pronouncement that Western education is forbidden, the group's use of the slogan Western culture is forbidden still demonstrates its opposition to Western ideals and ways of life.

Founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002, born in 1970 in the Yobe State hamlet of Girgir, located in Maiduguri, the group aimed to convince the Borno State government to implement Sharia law. Yusuf established a significant Islamic centre in Maiduguri, combining a mosque and a school. This centre not only educated children from impoverished Muslim families across the region and neighbouring countries but also served as a training hub for the group's future extremists (Danjibo, 2009). With membership swelling to over 270,000, including individuals from varied backgrounds across Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon borders, the group's early composition was diverse (Agbiboa, 2013).

The group's transition to violence was marked by a clash with law enforcement over a helmet law in Bauchi State, escalating to severe confrontations resulting in significant casualties. Following a raid in July 2009 where weapons were found at their base, the organisation mobilised its followers. It launched a violent assault against security forces, resulting in the deaths of many civilians and police officers (Danjibo, 2009). Mohammed Yusuf and more than 800 Boko Haram fighters were killed in a military-police operation that contained the crisis. A substantial military and police operation resulted in the deaths of Yusuf and over 800 militants. Despite this, Boko Haram's violent activities intensified, causing widespread devastation and fatalities across Nigeria (Danjibo, 2009).

The Boko Haram conflict has profoundly impacted displacement, particularly making girls and women extremely vulnerable. Attacks often result in the mass displacement of communities, with women and girls facing significant risks of sexual violence, abduction, and forced marriage (Human Rights Watch, 2014). The 2014 Chibok schoolgirl kidnapping is one of the most notorious examples of such vulnerabilities, where over 200 schoolgirls were taken away (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023; Human Rights Watch, 2014; Agbiboa, 2013).

Furthermore, displacement camps, while providing refuge, often become hotspots for exploitation and abuse, complicating the already dire humanitarian situation (Amnesty International, 2016). The loss of homes and livelihoods and the breakdown of community structures due to displacement exacerbate their long-term socio-economic vulnerabilities, hindering their access to education and employment opportunities (Amnesty International, 2016).

According to human rights organisations, thousands of individuals were killed because of Boko Haram's violent actions between 2009 and 2023 across Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria. Between 2014 and 2015 was the peak period of insurgency in the region, which saw the deaths of hundreds of people and the destruction of the town of Baga. It is difficult to estimate the loss of lives caused as a result of the activities of Boko Haram, but credible estimates would suggest that the death toll runs into tens of thousands (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Amnesty International, 2016). Despite concerted military efforts and the involvement of civilian Joint Task Forces, Boko Haram continues to be a significant threat. Their ability to adapt and execute guerrilla tactics complicates the Nigerian government's response to the insurgency. The ongoing instability underscores the need for continued international support and comprehensive strategies to protect and rehabilitate displaced populations, particularly vulnerable groups like women and children (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023).

2.4 Addressing the Plight of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria: Evaluating Legal and Policy Frameworks

2.4.1 International Legal Framework for IDPs

The issue of displacement presents significant challenges on both socioeconomic and humanitarian fronts globally, particularly in Nigeria, where conflicts, environmental

degradation and ethnic tensions have had severe effects. This section delves into the policy frameworks designed to support IDPs in Nigeria, assessing their effectiveness and the barriers hindering their implementation. It sheds light on the struggles faced by this group.

Before creating the United Nations Guiding Principle on Internal Displacement (GPID) in 1998, no international treaty applied to IDPs. They did not enjoy international recognition or protection. Although the Guiding Principles are legally non-binding, they have held significant authority since its inception and serve as a reference point for IDP assistance and protection (Adeola, 2020; GPID, 1998). Some states and regional organisations have adopted Guiding Principles such as the African Union's Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (Kampala Convention) (AU, 2009). The UN General Assembly has since encouraged states and national governments to adopt local policies and legislations (UN Global Protection Cluster, 2018).

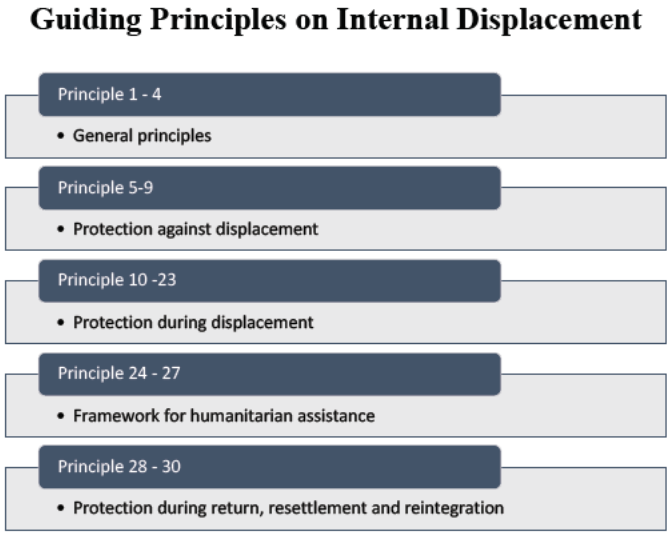


Figure 2.1 *showing the 30 guiding principles of displacement structured around the phases of displacement (GPID, 2018).*

Between 1992 and 2020, only 43 countries with a history of experiencing conflict-induced displacement adopted the Guiding Principles into their local policies (Moore, 2019). Creating local laws regarding IDPs is a significant milestone in the national government stepping up into their primary roles. However, there needs to be more alignment in how individual states ratify the Guiding Principles (Adeola and Orchard, 2020). The first difference is recorded in the definition of IDPs. The definitions were limited to i) to citizens, ii) to specific regions or timestamp, and iii) displacement type (Rep. of Sudan MHA, 2019; Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2014; Kosovo MCR, 2013; Government of Kyrgyzstan MES, 2010; Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2005; Rep. of Azerbaijan, 1999).

2.4.2 National Legislation and International Obligations in Nigeria

Regarding laws and international commitments, while the Nigeria Constitution of 1999 mandates the government to protect the well-being and security of all citizens, including IDPs, there needs to be more specific legislation dedicated solely to addressing their needs. Provisions related to IDPs are scattered across legal texts, failing to tackle their unique requirements (Akinola, 2018) comprehensively. In 2012, Nigeria ratified the Kampala Convention with a pledge to uphold specified standards for protecting and assisting IDPs. However, the enforcement of these standards has been slow due to bureaucratic challenges and limited resources (Ibekwe, 2020; Kälin and Schrepfer, 2012).

2.4.3 Policy Initiative and Governance Challenges

In terms of policy efforts and governance obstacles, the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) is responsible for formulating and executing policies aimed at improving living conditions and ensuring livelihoods for IDPs.

However, the effectiveness and reach of these programs vary, with gaps in implementation noted (Nwogu and Badejo 2019). The decentralised governance system, involving both state entities often results in disjointed efforts that undermine the overall impact of IDP policies. Improved collaboration and coordinated actions are essential for enhancing government responses to IDP requirements (Olawale, 2017).

Despite the efforts made by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) through programs such as the Victims Support Fund and Safe Schools Initiative to assist displaced individuals and safeguard schools from attacks revealed that these initiatives faced obstacles such as funding, lack of transparency and coordination issues between federal and state entities thereby hindering their effectiveness (Akande, 2019). The implementation of the camp management policy by the NCFRMI, which aimed to transition IDPs out of camps towards sustainable solutions, encountered challenges due to power struggles between federal and state authorities regarding resource control and decision-making processes (IDMC, 2020). These cases highlight the governance challenges that Nigeria's system brings, where decentralised strategies and a lack of coordination and collaboration frequently make IDP-related policies less successful.

Nigeria first introduced a draft IDP policy in 2012. The draft introduced a new cause of internal displacement that needs to be included in the Guiding Principles framework (FRN, 2012). The draft was based on the draft policy of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention) of 2009 and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. One of the primary goals of the proposed policy was to include new reasons for internal displacement to be added in the Guiding Principles framework (FRN, 2012).

However, by 2016, the preliminary policy had not been officially endorsed by the Federal Executive Council (FEC), indicating that it was not yet operational, persisting for years without significant strides being made towards implementing it. It wasn't until 2022 that a new National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons was finally approved by the FEC, signalling that the initial draft policy from 2011 had not been adopted during those intervening years. The National Policy for IDPs was a major turning point in Nigeria's attempts to solve the problems encountered by IDPs. Some highlights from the policy include a thorough framework for the protection, support, and long-term solutions, definition of the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in IDP management and finally, calls for the domestication of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) (FGN, 2022).

2.4.4 Accomplishments, Challenges and Restrictions

Some localised achievements have been observed in regions where governmental bodies and local NGOs have worked together effectively, resulting in living conditions and security at specific IDP centres (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Nevertheless, the main hurdle lies in implementing policies due to insufficient funding, corruption, and a lack of political determination. Moreover, there needs to be a legal framework for IDPs as the current position complicates the enforcement of existing policies and measures (Agbiboa, 2013).

Some achievements have been observed at levels where state governments collaborated with NGOs to enhance living conditions in IDP camps. For example, Borno States initiatives highlighted by Amnesty International (2018) have improved shelter facilities and access to

food and healthcare services in camps like Bakassi. However, challenges persist, such as overcrowding issues within camps, educational opportunities, and concerns regarding protection for individuals residing there. Oluwole's (2020) research highlighted the impact of the lack of a legal framework leading to inconsistent responses that fail to cater to the specific requirements of vulnerable groups such as women, children and individuals with disabilities in situations involving IDPs.

2.4.5 Involvement of International and Non-Governmental Organisations

International bodies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) support policy development for Nigerian IDPs. Their engagement goes beyond aid to include capacity-building initiatives for local authorities (UNHCR, 2020a). Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community groups offer support and fight for the rights of IDPs. They often step in where government initiatives fall short, although their work can be hindered by security risks and challenges in accessing conflict-affected areas (Amnesty International, 2016).

Organisations such as the UNHCR have been instrumental in promoting civil documentation of IDPs, making it easier for them to obtain necessary services and backed livelihood projects (UNHCR, 2022). However, their efforts have been hampered by bureaucratic obstacles and difficulties accessing certain areas because of security concerns. NGOs like the Norwegian Refugee Council, Mercy Corps and the International Rescue Committee have been pivotal in delivering emergency shelter, food aid and medical assistance in IDP camps (Nigeria NGO Forum, 2021). Nevertheless, their work is often hindered by constraints, security risks and difficulties in collaborating with government bodies.

2.5 Gendered and Age-based Dynamics in Displacement

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the position of women in Nigerian culture. Next, there is an examination of theoretical and conceptual concepts that are employed as interpretive frameworks to comprehend the real-life experiences of IDW and IOA in Nigeria. Despite the unique problem of displacement, the women in this study identified themselves primarily as Nigerians/Africans before becoming IDPs. In order to comprehend and analyse the actual experiences of IDW and IOA, it is crucial to grasp their status as women and as older people within the context of the Nigerian culture, as well as their rights as citizens and their role within the social structure. Furthermore, the consequences of displacement, whether caused by conflict, natural catastrophes, or urban development, initiate a series of interconnected events and connections that IDW and IOA must navigate in order to lead productive lives.

The research adopts theoretical concepts that help understand the struggles of these vulnerable groups and how they defined themselves within the context of their experiences. It is also vital to use theoretical concepts to shed light on the participants' experiences within their history and culture. Therefore, various critical thinking concepts are used, emphasising structural violence and intersectionality as the overarching interpretive lens.

2.5.1 Women in Displacement: Livelihood, Challenges and Experiences

As with other social phenomena, forced migration and displacement are profoundly gendered and affect each sex and gendered group differently (UNFPA, 2018). Gender plays a vital role in people's experience of displacement. For those already marginalised, disasters increase the risk of becoming displaced and the risks experienced during displacement (Stark, Seff and Reis, 2021; Jensen, 2019). Existing literature indicates that the female population have been disproportionately affected by displacement when compared to men and children (Lennard, 2016; Knezevic and Olson, 2014; Plumper and Neumayer, 2006). During displacement, women and girls are more susceptible and are at a higher risk of GBV (Richard and Bradshaw, 2017; IFRC, 2018). They are also faced with unique challenges such as health, food and nutrition insecurity, and economic hardships (Dynes et al., 2016). In Nigeria, women's unequal status in the polity and their societal roles have contributed to how women experience displacement (Ajayi, 2020).

Over the years, international actors such as the UN have made many achievements in ameliorating the conditions, closing gaps, and managing IDPs' basic humanitarian needs. However, their efforts have been critiqued for offering a blanket kind of intervention that overshadows African women's specific need for displacement (Yacob-Haliso, 2016). This disparity highlights the intersectionality of disadvantages that make African women twice as likely to suffer deprivation in accessing and experiencing sustainable, durable solutions (Carbado et al., 2013). It is also the reality that displaced women carry an unequal burden of care (for children, older adults and at home) compared to their male counterparts (Ajayi, 2020; Vandana, 2012). These responsibilities increase the chances of women in displacement falling into a situation that exposes them to physical and mental health problems, diseases and sexual exploitation (IDMC, 2019; Brookings Institute, 2014).

Internal displacement has been a significant issue in Nigeria for many years, specifically in the nation's northeast and north regions (Alobo and Obaji, 2016; Okon, 2018; Ekoh et al., 2022). Most of these zones have been affected by conflicts, including fights between the non-state armed groups and the Nigerian military and inter-communal violence (Ekoh et al., 2022). According to the IDMC (2024), Nigeria is host to one of Africa's largest populations of IDPs, with approximately 3.4 million IDPs by mid-year 2023. Most were women and children, and IDW made up a significant proportion of that population (UNHCR, 2021a). Localised displacement continues in 2024, with DTM reporting new arrivals in hundreds in Adamawa and Borno in early April (IOM, 2024). Previous studies show that IDPs in Abuja face several life challenges, including a lack of access to basic necessities and healthcare, difficulties finding work, lack of legal protection, and limited access to education (Ekoh et al., 2022; Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2020). Therefore, similar to other places, female IDPs in Abuja encounter more livelihood challenges than their male counterparts due to intersectionality in gender. These challenges, such as sexual, reproductive, and menstrual health (SRMH), are discussed further.

Previous studies, including Akuto (2017), Okon (2018), and Ekoh et al. (2022), have identified challenges faced by Nigerian IDW, including insecurity and violence, limited access to essential services, discrimination and stigma, and difficulties returning home. For instance, Okon (2018) asserts that Nigerian women are often exposed to violence, including sexual and GBV, during displacement. Also, most IDW in Nigeria have limited access to healthcare, education, and other essential services, negatively impacting their health and well-being (Okon, 2018). Okon's (2018) assertions are consistent with challenges established in Ekoh et al.'s (2022) study. According to Ekoh et al. (2022), Nigerian IDW have limited or no access to SRMH services, such as maternal healthcare, family planning, and HIV prevention and

treatment, due to a lack of facilities or trained personnel in their areas of displacement. This results in higher maternal mortality rates, unintended pregnancies, and HIV infections among IDW. Similarly, some of Ekoh et al.'s (2022) and Okon's (2018) ideologies have been identified by Akuto (2017), who asserts that Nigerian IDW has limited access to information and education about SRHR, which results in a lack of knowledge and understanding on how to access and utilise SRHR services. In addition, Akuto (2017) showed that Nigerian IDW face stigma and discrimination when seeking SRMH services due to their displacement status, gender, and other factors. This discourages them from seeking the care and support they need (Akuto, 2017). Therefore, existing literature indicates that Nigerian IDW faces similar challenges to other displaced women within Africa and globally. The practical support of IDPs adapted to cater to women and older adults is critical in attaining the global objective "leave no one behind" of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The ultimate goal is a more inclusive and equitable society (UNSDG/IOM, 2020).

Gender inequalities are another manifestation of structural violence. According to George et al. (2015), the role of women in Nigeria is delineated along gendered lines, where men are regarded as providers and women are expected to be homebound. Any deviation from the patriarchal order is condemned (George et al., 2015). Okeke (2017) concurs, stating that women in African society must adhere to certain gendered norms. However, while George et al. (2015) focused on the effect of patriarchy on women in southwest Nigeria, Okeke (2017) explored the impact of patriarchy on working Nigerians and observed that there is a widespread perception that some jobs are exclusively intended for men.

Lindsey (2015) argues that a person's social standing is determined by the social structure, culture, and power dynamics of the society in which they live and interact. Society's definition

and treatment of individuals are influenced by their social standing (Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003). Goffman (1990), on the other hand, favoured social identity over social status when delineating how societies categorise individuals. He highlighted both individual attributes, such as integrity and honesty, and systemic components, including occupation and professional upbringing, that influence the social identities of individuals.

There is no one-size-fits-all for the status of women in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country like Nigeria. George et al. (2015) observed that the patriarchal system more impacts women in South Nigeria than their counterparts in Northern Nigeria. Walker (2015) also supports the notion that gendered dichotomies characterise women's roles in Nigerian society. According to Walker (2015), traditional gender-biased practices, including purdah, female genital mutilation (FGM), and early marriage, have barred women and young girls from accessing education and enhancing their socio-economic conditions. Walker (2015) contends that these women are expected to become loyal spouses, domestic workers, competent mothers, and perfect the duty of handling various household matters with little or no assistance from their partner. While Walker (2015) agrees with George et al. (2015) that religion marginalises women in Northern Nigeria, she contends that social status is much more important than religion. In essence, Walker (2015) argues that girls from the affluent classes attend the best schools in Nigeria and even overseas. However, girls from the marginalised class or the lower middle class who have little economic resources do not have this option.

Displacement promotes the pre-existing detrimental gender norms that exacerbate socio-economic disadvantages. 27% of surveyed IDP families in Iraq and 15% of those in IDP camps in Somalia indicated that young girls and women avoided certain areas because they felt insecure (REACH, 2020). Wirtz et al. (2014) point to the rise in domestic violence after

resettlement in IDP camps, which may be related to greater associated stress levels. Forced sex, control over the use of contraception, forced abortions, and physical abuse, even during pregnancy, were the most frequent types of domestic violence highlighted by women in IDP camps in Colombia (Cazabat et al., 2020). Domestic violence was mentioned by almost two-thirds of those in IDP camps in Afghanistan, and 12% claimed it became more frequent after displacement (Hall, 2018). The prevalence of forced child marriage reached new heights among IDPs in Iraq in 2018 as prolonged displacement reduced families' finances (Hall, 2018). This paragraph has heightened some of the critical issues that affect women due to structural violence in the form of patriarchy in the IDP camps. Displacement promotes the pre-existing detrimental gender norms that exacerbate socioeconomic disadvantages.

2.5.2 Older Adults in Displacement: Livelihood, Challenges and Experiences

There has been an increased number of global older population, significantly affecting both developed and developing countries' economic, social, and political landscapes (WHO, 2021a; UNDESA, 2019; NRC, 2006). It is projected that by 2050, the global population made up of persons sixty (60) years and above will have doubled from 2019 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division (UNDESA, 2019; WHO,2021). Like other Sub-Saharan countries, Nigeria is projected to experience population ageing but to a lesser extent than other parts of the world. The older adult population is estimated to increase from 3.1% in 2017 to around 5% in 2050. (National Council on Ageing, 2016; UNDESA, 2019).

Although an ageing population indicates the successes of human development, it has significant implications regarding social security, healthcare, and labour markets, to name a few (WHO, 2021a). In a country like Nigeria, with inadequate health care systems and low

levels of economic and social development, as well as the collapse of the family-centred care of older adults, it will be difficult for the country to manage the challenges associated with ageing (Animasahun and Chapman, 2017; Abanyam, 2013; Okoye, 2012).

Displacement also has a disproportionate impact on older adults. Water sanitation and hygiene, food insecurity, health, security, shelter and non-food goods are among the most urgent problems among older adults (Adedeji et al., 2017). Families with vulnerable older adults make up 53% of disadvantaged populations (Adedeji et al., 2017). According to UNCHR (2015), instances of solitary older people with no source of income and unmet dependency requirements have been recorded. Most older adults accompany friends, neighbours, or family members, but some do not. In addition, a UNICEF (2015) report on the assessment of older adult IDPs in Nigeria indicates that they suffer the highest mortality rate (51%) in IDP camps.

The "geographies of age" concept highlights the impact of physical places and social ties on ageing and individuality (Hopkins and Pain 2007). Older adults' daily lives are closely connected to particular locations, such as neighbourhoods, cities, and regions, which can either enable or restrict their access to services, resources, and social relationships. According to Hopkins and Pain (2007), studies should consider spatial considerations about age dynamics. Nevertheless, recognising the socio-aspects of age dynamics is vital, particularly in displacement situations where older adults' ties to their surroundings are disrupted. Their study advocates treating age as an analytical category alongside gender, race, and class in research.

Delving into the geographies of age for displaced individuals entails examining their living environments before displacement, the reasons for and experiences during displacement, and the surroundings of displacement camps or informal settlements (Buffel and Phillipson 2016).

How do adults' physical encounters and access to healthcare, mobility options and social connections change across these various spatial contexts (Schwanen et al., 2012)? As Askew et al. (2017) point out, understanding the social and spatial aspects is crucial to grasping the unique challenges and uncertainties that older individuals encounter in displacement situations.

A case study focusing on displaced Palestinians vividly demonstrates these social and spatial obstacles, as discussed by Sousa et al. (2009). Many of them became refugees in camps without infrastructure and services due to fleeing their homes during the 1948 and 1967 wars. This led to disruptions in their connections, limited access to healthcare and restricted mobility within the camps. Despite these challenges, the camps also served as spaces where new age-related practices emerged, such as Palestinians assuming leadership roles within their communities (ibid.). This indicates an interaction between the spatial environment of displacement and age-related societal dynamics.

Similarly, a study on Syrian refugees residing in Jordan revealed that disparities between urban and rural backgrounds before displacement influenced how older adults adapted to life in displacement camps (Lichtenheld, 2020). Rural individuals encountered difficulties adjusting to camp life compared to urban dwellers, who found it relatively easier. However, both groups faced fragmented social networks and inadequate access to services tailored to their age group. The challenges faced by individuals living in camps due to the effects of ageing, such as limited mobility, inadequate shelter and disrupted access to healthcare and medication, are profound (Lichtenheld, 2020).

These instances highlight how displacement can disrupt older individuals' connections and sense of belonging with their surroundings. However, new social landscapes emerge from the

interactions, identities and relationships formed in camps and informal settlements. According to Askew et al. (2017), it is crucial to map out these socio-spatial environments to shed light on the vulnerabilities and hardships experienced by displaced older adults as a marginalised demographic group. Understanding their geographical experiences related to ageing makes it possible to develop more inclusive policies and humanitarian interventions.

Structural violence is also prevalent in many Sub-Saharan countries, as many lack social security structures to support older adults. Since many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa lack a social security system, informal support or care (provided by families) remains a crucial source of support for nations such as Nigeria (Animasahun and Chapman, 2017). Animasahun and Chapman (2017) argue that caring for older adults in Nigeria is mainly the responsibility of families, with children serving as the primary source of informal support and care. In Nigeria, families offer a broad range of care and support to older adults, including emotional and financial support (Diameta et al., 2018); such care and support have been linked with better psychological well-being of older people (Oladeji, 2011). Faronbi et al. (2019) concur with Animasahun and Chapman (2017) on the importance of families in caring for older adults, stating that reciprocity is a driving factor in providing support and care for older adults in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Faronbi et al. (2019) examined carers' perspectives of chronically ill older people in Nigeria. The authors observed that most carers were family members who felt obligated to assist their older parents because they thought their children would also reciprocate in the future. Unlike Animasahun and Chapman (2017), Faronbi et al. (2019) suggest that the role of the family in caring for older adults is changing. According to Faronbi et al. (2019), the evolving societal and familial support system due to increasing unemployment and poor financial realities

impedes the informal care and assistance provided to older adults. This argument is further reinforced by Akinrolie et al. (2020), who suggest that the fast-evolving family structure may endanger the notion of reciprocity, which fuels family support for older adults in Nigeria. Notably, Akinrolie et al. (2020) state that some older people get care through community efforts or religious groups (Akinrolie et al., 2020). The concept of informal support for older adults is relevant to this study as the lack of it in IDP camps means that older people arriving alone will face more problems.

2.5.3 Gender-based Violence among Internally Displaced Persons

Adejumo et al. (2022) affirms that, unlike males, IDW are at higher risk of GBV because of the instability and insecurity of displacement, power imbalances, and gender inequalities that exist in displacement settings. Previous studies show that IDW experience GBV in various forms, including physical and sexual violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, harassment, and psychological abuse (Aburas et al., 2018; Campbell, 2016; Durrance-Bagale, 2020). They may also be at risk of harmful traditional practices like early and forced marriage (Christelle, 2020; Durrance-Bagale, 2020). For example, Durrance-Bagale (2020) established that displaced women in low-income countries face GBV, including forced and early marriages. Also, high levels of insecurity in IDP camps expose IDW to sexual violence, putting them at higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (Durrance-Bagale, 2020).

Similar to Durrance-Bagale (2020), Campbell's (2016) study shows that IDW in Haiti are forced into early marriages as a means of economic restoration. This causes long-term adverse effects on future opportunities for young women who cannot continue their studies (Campbell, 2016). In addition, Aburas et al. (2018) assert that about 50 per cent of IDW in Syria become victims of domestic violence due to the inability to earn a living which forces them to stay with

abusers who provide them with basic needs such as shelter and food. Christelle (2020), on the other hand, establishes a unique assertion that some countries, such as Ethiopia, have laws and cultures that deny women the legal rights of property ownership.

Building on the perspectives shared by Yadav and Horn (2020), we can further contextualise the dynamic challenges and opportunities facing IDW in the face of GBV. Yadav and Horn elucidate that the continuum of violence experienced by women does not merely pause or cease in times of conflict or displacement but rather transforms and finds new manifestations. They contend that displacement not only worsens vulnerabilities to GBV by causing societal norms and protective institutions to fail but also offers distinct possibilities for reforming gender norms and empowering women. This nuanced perspective is consistent with the observation that, despite the difficult circumstances of being displaced, women frequently take on community leadership roles and actively participate in decision-making processes. This challenges traditional gender norms and contributes to social change within displaced communities (Yadav and Horn, 2020).

These observations necessitate a more thorough discussion on the necessity of specific interventions that not only safeguard individuals with diverse identities from violence but also actively promote their empowerment and participation in the reconstruction of their communities. This approach acknowledges the active involvement of displaced women and their crucial contribution to promoting resilience and leading the rehabilitation process after a crisis. This viewpoint promotes a more sophisticated comprehension of women's encounters in situations of displacement. Based on these reviews, it is crucial for governments, humanitarian organisations, and other actors to address GBV among IDPs by providing safe and accessible services for survivors, including legal assistance and psychosocial support.

2.5.4 Reproductive Rights of Internally Displaced Women: Access to Antenatal and Obstetric Care, Family Planning Information, and Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management Commodities/Services

Previous studies, including Lafta et al. (2016), Sommer (2012) and Jones, Pincock and Hamad (2021), suggest that IDPs, especially women and girls, face challenges in accessing reproductive health services, including a lack of information about available services, lack of access to healthcare facilities, and cultural or social barriers. In addition, Viscek (2020) affirms that IDW are at an increased risk of sexual and GBV, negatively impacting reproductive health.

One key area where internally displaced women face challenges is in accessing antenatal and obstetric care. According to Lafta et al. (2016), internally displaced women in Iraq have challenges accessing antenatal and obstetric care due to poverty, transportation, and cultural barriers. Most IDPs are poor, making it difficult to afford the costs associated with antenatal and obstetric care, such as transportation to healthcare facilities (Lafta et al., 2016). Also, Behnke et al. (2018) and Alhaffar and Janos (2021) have established accessibility problems to antenatal and obstetric care among IDW. According to Behnke et al.'s (2018) US-based study, many internally displaced women live in areas with limited access to healthcare facilities, making it difficult to receive the care they need. Also, most IDPs are unaware of the importance of antenatal and obstetric care or may not know where to access such care (Behnke et al., 2018). Like Behnke (2018), Alhaffar and Janos (2021) highlight that some internally displaced women in Syria have limited knowledge about reproductive health, making it hard for them to understand the importance of antenatal and obstetric care and how to access it. Therefore, existing literature elucidates challenges in accessing antenatal and obstetric care among internally displaced persons.

Obtaining family planning information and services is an additional barrier faced by IDW. While individuals and couples need to have accurate and comprehensive information about the various family planning methods to make informed decisions about their reproductive health, studies by Sommer (2012) and Cantor et al. (2021) elucidate that IDW lack family planning information and services. Based on the work of Sommer (2012), displacement due to conflict, natural disasters, or other reasons causes disruptions in the accessibility of healthcare and other essential services among IDPs in Iraq. Like Sommer (2012), Cantor et al. (2021) established challenges faced by IDPs in accessing family planning services due to poverty and limited knowledge about reproductive health. As mentioned by Cantor et al. (2021), many IDPs live in poverty, making it difficult to afford the costs associated with family planning services and contraception. Also, many internally displaced women have limited knowledge about reproductive health; thus, they do not understand the importance of family planning methods to seek them (Cantor et al., 2021). Therefore, previous studies cite many SRMH-related challenges among internally displaced persons, especially women and young girls.

Another critical issue affecting the reproductive health and wellbeing of IDW is menstrual health and hygiene management. According to Foster et al. (2017), proper menstrual health and hygiene management is essential for displaced women's physical and emotional well-being. Nevertheless, previous studies suggest impoverished and unhygienic conditions among internally displaced women (Jones, Pincock and Hamad, 2021; Schmitt et al., 2017). According to Jones, Pincock and Hamad (2021), it is hard to differentiate between the urban poor and IDPs because IDPs often reside in existing impoverished informal settlements. Hence, the limited access to clean water and sanitation facilities makes it challenging to maintain proper menstrual hygiene. Like Jones, Pincock and Hamad (2021), Schmitt et al. (2017) identified menstrual hygiene challenges facing internally displaced women in Lebanon and Myanmar.

According to Schmitt et al. (2017), many IDW have limited access to sanitary pads, tampons, or other menstrual hygiene products due to financial constraints or lack of availability. Also, some IDW have no access to accurate information about menstrual health and hygiene or have misconceptions due to cultural or religious beliefs, which prevent them from pursuing accurate menstrual hygiene methods and services (Schmitt et al., 2017). Hence, to ensure that IDW have access to the resources and support they need to manage their menstrual health and hygiene effectively, relevant actors should provide IDPs with access to clean water and toilets and affordable, safe, and culturally appropriate menstrual hygiene products.

2.5.5. Quality of life (QoL)

Quality of life (QoL) is closely associated with terms such as 'well-being', 'happiness', 'life expectations', 'good life' and existing in a 'good place' (McCann, 2004; Murgas, 2016). The relationship between quality of life and health is pervasive (Castelli et al., 2009). However, the quality of life also enters into many other geographic phenomena, such as ageing, social quality, and living standards (Aivazian, 2016; Bucher, 2016). QoL, as perceived and lived by individuals, reflects one's abilities to satisfy their needs through the environment and quality of services provided, such as education, health, security, housing and justice (Hassan, 2019).

In humanitarian crises with a high population, critical baseline health status, low access to water supply and sanitation, limited ability to segregate sick people, and little capability to provide healthcare personnel and infrastructure, an epidemic may have potentially disastrous effects. Azman et al. (2020) investigate the possible effect of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak on Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh's Cox’s Bazar camp, which houses about 596,000 people. The researchers note that a large-scale epidemic is probable after a single inoculation of the SARS virus into the camp (Azman et al., 2020). They argue that

after the inoculation of the virus into the camp, a low transmission scenario is that an epidemic of about 1,000 SARS infections occurs in 65% of the simulations, 82% occur in a medium transmission scenario, and 93% of trials occur in high transmission scenario (Azman et al., 2020).

Poole et al. (2020) agree that populations impacted by humanitarian crises are likely more vulnerable to COVID-19 due to displacement, overcrowding, hunger, stigma and inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene resources. According to Poole et al. (2020), refugees and IDP camps lacked the health systems, support and infrastructure needed to launch a comprehensive response. While Azman et al. (2020) suggest that co-morbidities, including poor health status, concomitant diseases and malnutrition, may aggravate the outcomes among refugees, Poole et al. (2020) suggest that political violence, public distrust, and poor governance may further undermine these groups' outcomes. This shows that IDPs and refugees living in deplorable conditions are more likely to be affected by an epidemic like SARS or COVID-19. This is relevant as it provides the lens to explore the conditions in the informal settlements where the IDPs reside.

2.6 Multidimensional Impact of Poverty on Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria

One of the main barriers to Nigeria's socioeconomic progress is poverty. This condition has endured, and multiple ineffective interventions have significantly influenced its development index. Several factors, such as inequality, political unrest, unemployment, and corruption, can bring poverty.

Corruption is the main reason for the high rate of poverty in Nigeria. It has been declared as the single biggest obstacle preventing Nigeria from flourishing since it is present in the daily lives of its citizens (Igiebor, 2019). Poorer communities suffer, and the economic structure is disrupted. Laundering by government officials has deepened poverty by creating artificial shortages, reducing pro-poor expenditures, and creating congestion in public services that causes prolonged unemployment rates (Markovska and Adams, 2015). Through financial corruption, the Nigerian government undermines democracy and the state's legitimacy, reducing prospective economic growth and threatening the security and freedom of citizens, thus hindering national development (Awojobi, 2014).

Unemployment is a significant problem in Nigeria, affecting a large percentage of the population directly and indirectly, resulting in high rates of poverty. Nigeria is a densely populated nation, with the youth being the larger unemployed population (Akanle and Omotayo, 2020). This has led some of them to engage in alcoholism, prostitution, suicide, social, religious, and civil unrest, and crimes such as kidnapping, banditry, insecurity, and other related cases (Oguntunde et al., 2018). The country's system has dilapidated as no section performs well in absorbing and reducing unemployment rates. The government tries to mitigate unemployment by borrowing, but the unemployment rates continue to rise yearly due to corruption (Iwuoha, 2020).

Due to political instability in Nigeria, the focus of leadership has become restricted, with the most significant consideration being personal survival rather than national development. The political fighters have utilised the instrument of state power to promote their agendas (Adeyeri, 2013). Ineffective leadership has resulted in the alienation and stagnation of the citizenry, leading to a lack of structural progress and development. The Nigerian government still needs

to serve the people's interests (Fagbadebo, 2019). A country with weak governance and high corruption levels reduces available resources for infrastructure, social programs, and public services that directly impact the vulnerable and poor in society. These erode sustainable evolution with implications for political instability and economic growth (Lawal, 2021).

Income inequality has stalled Nigeria's economic growth and has resulted in undesirable economic results. Despite different measures targeted at reducing the gap, differences in income distribution persist in Nigeria. Hence, the rich continue to be more affluent, and the poor continue to be poorer (Adeleye, 2020). Inequality has developed as a need for more access to basic needs, inadequate shelter, and decent food (Ogbeide and Agu, 2015). The inequitable sharing of resources hinders low-income people since they will need more to care for their essential needs and those of their children.

People displaced in Nigeria are affected by poverty in several ways. They include inadequate nutrition and food insecurity, lack of access to healthcare, homelessness, and poor education for their children. Food security frequently does not exist among the displaced people due to inadequate social, physical, and economic access. They lack sufficient, nutritious, safe food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for a healthy and active lifestyle (Uzobo and Akhuetie, 2018). This affects their social, physical, cognitive, and emotional development throughout their life and is a major social disruptor with severe consequences for their bodies (Ayinde et al., 2020). In addition, the terrorist activities of Boko Haram have had an impact on agricultural activities, leading to loss of livelihoods and food insecurity (Nwozor et al., 2019).

Displaced people are the largest group of vulnerable people in Nigeria due to the lack of access to health care. This is because of their limited access to a means of fending for themselves

(Faronbi et al., 2019). Many internally displaced persons have faced severe hardships and even death due to lack of adequate healthcare, with diseases such as tuberculosis, diarrhoea, cholera, pneumonia, and malaria taking a heavy toll on their health and even death (Sambo, 2017; Oluwatosin et al., 2019)

Many displaced people migrate to new places where they have to live in battered homes and are sometimes homeless due to the non-existent plan of the government for resettlement (Ekoh et al., 2022). Victims of forced evictions and land grabs in Nigeria face homelessness, violence, job loss, food insecurity, and increased disease morbidity due to poor management of displaced people by the government (Medeiros, 2016). Homeless people suffer many human rights violations with no significant legal protection. The institutions to manage them are hindered by policy deficits and a lack of a framework to address the situation of the displaced (Stephen, 2022).

Education in Nigeria is free at the primary level, but secondary and university are expensive. This sends a wrong message as education is crucial for achieving sustainable development goals because it facilitates peace and a career in the future (Adegbami and Adesanmi, 2018). Most displaced students who face poverty only reach the primary level and drop out due to a lack of resources to fund their secondary and university education (Ojeje and Adodo, 2018). Due to the involuntary movement of the displaced from place to place, students need support in catching up due to frequent school changes. These students cannot join boarding schools because it is expensive, making them fall behind in education (Dunn, 2018).

The complex impacts of poverty on displaced individuals in Nigeria are a pressing issue that requires attention and holistic solutions. Many Nigerians find themselves in situations lacking

human rights and access to crucial services due to the ongoing challenges of poverty, conflict and displacement and implementing measures to ensure that IDPs are provided with the necessary means to get food, healthcare, shelter, and education. (Ayinde et al., 2020; Nwozor et al., 2019; Sambo, 2017; Medeiros, 2016; Adegbami and Adesanmi, 2018; Ojeje and Adodo, 2018; and Dunn, 2018).

2.7 Environmental Health and Displacement

The environment is the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant survives or operates. In contrast, health is considered the state of physical, mental and social well-being (WHO, 2021b). However, environmental health is the category of public health that focuses on the relationships between people and their environment, promoting human health and well-being by fostering healthy and safe communities. Where people live, work and play profoundly impacts their health (Prüss-Ustün et al., 2016). Several factors, such as socioeconomic status, land use and built environment, ethnicity/race and environmental justice, create disparities in a community's health among vulnerable populations, including the children, the poor, women, older adults and minority ethnic groups (The Lancet, 2017; Kennedy and Leonard, 2001).

The environment is related to health, encompassing the physical, chemical, and biological aspects external to the person and the behaviours associated with it (Ten Brink et al., 2016). Access to basic environmental health is essential in increasing the quality of life and years of a healthy life. However, environmental health is a dynamic and evolving field (Robles, Chávez and Ballesteros, 2015). Displacement, particularly in situations of protracted crises, poses significant challenges to maintaining adequate environmental health conditions, which can have severe consequences for the well-being of affected populations.

The environmental health conditions in displacement settings frequently fall below par, encouraging the spread of communicable diseases like respiration infection, measles, cholera and diarrhoea (WHO, 2018; Cronin et al., 2008). These circumstances are often worsened by lacking basic amenities like water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities, poor waste and pest management systems, and overcrowding (Behnke et al., 2020). Non-communicable diseases also have been linked to subjection to adverse conditions in displacement settings (Bausch et al., 2021). However, studies like Sydnor-Bousso et al. (2011) and Oka (2014) highlight the ingenuity and coping mechanism exhibited by communities affected in managing their present environmental health conditions.

When IDPs arrive and settle in host communities, it increases the burden on the already limited resources in those communities (Arredondo et al., 2011; Bondarenko et al., 2020). This notion, however, remains a subject of debate as some studies highlight the resilience and adaptability of host communities in supporting IDPs (Kamta and Scheffran, 2022; Salihu et al., 2022). Researching the EH conditions of displaced groups require a holistic approach that considers the connection between health, socioeconomic position, ethnicity, and the inherent differences between regions (Smith, 2000). Therefore, one must consider various multifaceted factors when investigating the subject. As mentioned by several authors, these factors may include food safety, air quality, waste management systems, menstrual hygiene management and WASH (Shackelford et al., 2020; Dhesi, Isakjee, and Davies, 2018; Adewale, 2016).

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) is a fundamental aspect of EH, especially when it comes to investigation within displacement settings (Sphere Association, 2018). A weak WASH system severely affects any population's health and well-being, particularly vulnerable

groups (UNHCR, 2020b). Several studies, including Ramesh et al. (2015), Hirai et al. (2016) and Gartley et al. 2020) reported that diarrheal diseases, being the primary cause of morbidity and mortality in humanitarian crises, were linked with poor WASH conditions in displacement settings.

In situations where displacement is protracted, WASH facilities and services decline and become dilapidated mainly due to lack of maintenance or overuse, increasing the risks to health and wellbeing (UNHCR, 2017). The research of Nawrotzki et al. (2021) revealed that IDPs in Afghanistan who were living in informal settlements for upward of five years were considerably more likely to experience shortages of WASH facilities compared to those displaced for shorter periods. This underscores the importance of having sustainable and practical WASH interventions that cater most effectively to the changing needs of the displaced (Sphere Association, 2018; Ramesh et al., 2015).

Accessing and practising WASH is significantly affected by gender in displacement situations (Sommer et al., 2015). Krause et al. (2015) examined the situation of women and girls in South Sudan. It showed that they faced risks of harassment, violation, and exposure to disease while using sanitation facilities and water sources, especially in crowded camps. Developing WASH interventions that consider women’s and girls' vulnerabilities will safeguard their dignity and promote good health.

2.7.1 Geographies of Environmental Health in Displacement Settings

Geographies of environmental health examine the spatial aspects and territorial dimensions of health outcomes influenced by the physical environment, social structures, and ecological factors (Gatrell and Elliott, 2009). In displacement settings, such as refugee camps or informal

settlements that host IDPs, the geography of environmental health becomes critically intertwined with the precarious living conditions and systemic vulnerabilities that set apart these areas (Jacobsen, 2014).

Settings of displacement are often characterised by seclusion or marginalisation. They are commonly situated on the outskirts of cities or in areas lacking infrastructure and services (Crea et al., 2017). This spatial segregation can heighten environmental health hazards for displaced communities. Issues such as access to water and sanitation facilities, overcrowding, poor waste disposal practices and exposure to pollutants significantly impact the prevalence of communicable diseases, malnutrition and various health challenges (Sphere Association, 2018). Small living spaces, for example, create the conditions for readily transmitting disease and infection carried by vectors such as malaria, and poor WASH facilitates waterborne ailments (Ramesh et al., 2015).

Additionally, the areas and communities in which IDPs settle are often those that are socio-politically compromised. With few alternatives and choices, displaced communities usually find themselves in areas prone to erosion, flooding, or contaminated land (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2019). This geographic element plays a vital role in the health outcomes of affected communities rather than just being an inactive backdrop of health problems (Gatrell and Elliott, 2009). Environmental health in displacement settings is also profoundly connected to the social determinants of health. Displaced communities frequently experience high levels of poverty, limited access to education, and reduced economic opportunities (Jacobsen, 2014). These factors, combined with the physical geography of their settlements, create complex layers of vulnerability. Health interventions in such contexts require an integrated approach considering the geographic distribution of resources, health services, and populations (Crea et al., 2017).

Mapping these elements can help identify critical areas for intervention and support the planning and delivery of health services that are both accessible and effective (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2019).

Mapping out these elements can pinpoint areas for intervention and assist in planning and delivering accessible and efficient public health and healthcare services. Climate change is another façade of risk exacerbating the vulnerabilities and challenges burdening displaced groups (Reuveny, 2007). Therefore, understanding the geographies of EH in such settings underscores the resilience of infrastructures for adapting to the ever-changing patterns of migration and displacement (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2019).

2.7.2 The Social Determinants of Health Framework

Looking through the lens of Social Determinants of Health (SDH) provides insight into the various factors contributing to health vulnerabilities and disparities different groups face (Solar and Irwin 2010). This perspective shifts the focus from the causes of sickness to the underlying structural factors rooted in socio-economic, political and environmental contexts (Braveman and Gottlieb, 2014). The SDH framework acknowledges that economic stability, education, job status, social support systems, living environments, and healthcare access all shape population health outcomes (Marmot, 2005). Specific segments of society experience challenges across multiple SDH domains, leading to health inequalities. Addressing SDH involves addressing the societal conditions perpetuating these disadvantages (Braveman and Gottlieb 2014). In situations like displacement and informal settlements, these interconnected determinants significantly impact environmental health outcomes and general well-being.

Smith and Easterlow (2005) also stress the connection between housing conditions and health results, underscoring the necessity of an approach to tackling health discrepancies. Richmond and Nightingale (2021) present a viewpoint on how dispossession, displacement and environmental racism affect the health of Indigenous communities. They emphasise the significance of understanding health geographies in this context.

This adapted model of the SDH framework (see Figure 2.2 below) illustrates the web of factors that influence the well-being of marginalised groups in informal settlements. It emphasises the necessity for interventions that tackle societal determinants, enhance the physical environment, and offer tailored support to address intermediate determinants and individual vulnerabilities.

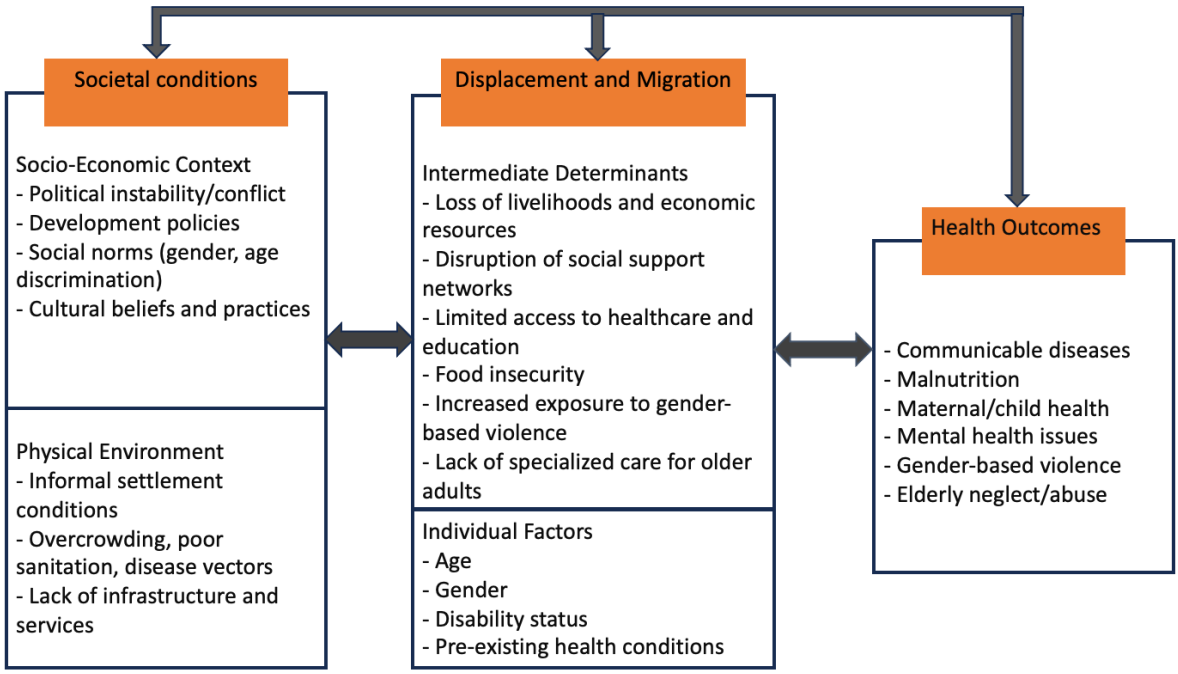


Figure 2.2: Social Determinants of Health Conceptual Model for Health Impacts on Displaced Women and Older Adults in Informal Settlements (Author, 2024)

All these levels of societal determinants, displacement, intermediate determinants and individual factors interact to impact the "Health Outcomes" level at the right end of the diagram. This level represents the health consequences experienced by displaced women and older individuals in informal settlements, including infectious diseases, malnutrition, maternal and child health challenges, mental health issues, GBV as well and neglect and abuse of older adults. The directional arrows in the diagram depict how influences flow from levels (societal determinants, displacement intermediate determinants) to lower levels (individual factors and health outcomes). It's important to recognise that there may be feedback loops and interconnectedness among these levels since these determinants can mutually reinforce each other.

2.7.2.1 Social Determinants of Health: Gender and Age in Informal Settlements

Women who have been displaced encounter unique challenges in terms of SDH, including gender-based discrimination, violence, cultural limitations on movement, limited educational and economic prospects, as well as reproductive health concerns (Kabeer, 2005). Research conducted in Nigeria highlights that female IDPs residing in informal settlements face issues such as food insecurity, sexual assault, unintended pregnancies and engaging in transactional sex, bringing to the fore their specific vulnerabilities due to gender (Adesina, 2021). Nonetheless, some scholars argue that focusing solely on victimisation fails to recognise the autonomy and resilience demonstrated by displaced women in navigating obstacles (Buscher, 2010). It is imperative to understand and address these gender factors to enhance the overall health and well-being g of displaced women.

Furthermore, there is an increase in the proportion of older individuals within displaced communities (UNFPA, 2012). Despite this trend, humanitarian efforts often fail to consider the

unique needs associated with ageing. The displacement-induced deprivation of networks, financial resources and access to geriatric healthcare contributes to heightened risks of illness and mortality among older IDPs (UNHCR, 2012). Studies carried out in Nigeria suggest that older female IDPs face challenges related to exclusion and mistreatment within refugee camps (OCHA, 2023). A real-life example from Colombia sheds light on the health risks faced by older IDPs, such as chronic illnesses, mental health concerns and obstacles in accessing healthcare services (IDMC, 2023). It is crucial to acknowledge and tackle the hurdles encountered by older individuals living in informal settlements to develop comprehensive strategies for intervention.

This section underscores the diverse environmental health issues experienced by internally displaced communities, especially women and older individuals residing in informal settlements. The dynamic relationship between displacement, living conditions in settlements, and various social factors that influence health worsens vulnerabilities and perpetuates health disparities within these populations. While immediate actions addressing hazards like inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, overcrowding, and exposure to disease vectors are essential, sustainable solutions should take a holistic approach that addresses structural root causes such as poverty, discrimination, and limited resource access. Moreover, acknowledging the capabilities, resilience, and unique circumstances within displaced communities is vital for crafting interventions that respect their culture. Collaboration among stakeholders guided by evidence-based research and case studies from diverse settings is crucial for enhancing the well-being of marginalised groups in informal settlements. Tackling environmental health challenges in displacement scenarios necessitates an approach considering the intricate interplay of social and economic political dynamics and environmental aspects influencing health outcomes.

2.8 Geographies of Care, Human Agency and Coping in Displacement

2.8.1 Geographies of Care and Human Agency

While geographies of care refer to the spatial distribution and organisation of care work and how care is provided and received in different locations, human agency refers to the capacity of individuals to make their own choices and decisions and to act upon them to achieve their goals and shape their lives (Hanrahan, 2020; Paternoster, 2017). Earlier studies have made apparent that the connection between the geographies of care and human agency is intricate and diverges significantly based on the particular setting and circumstances. Schwiter and Steiner (2020) argue that having access to high-quality healthcare services can empower individuals to exercise agency and make informed decisions regarding their health and well-being. On the other hand, a lack of access to healthcare can restrict their ability to exercise agency. Similarly, Senanayake and King (2021) argue that the giving and receiving of care can either support or undermine an individual's agency, depending on whether it is done in a way that respects the individual's autonomy and dignity.

Based on existing literature, internal displacement can significantly impact affected populations' geographies of care and human agency because it disrupts access to healthcare, education, housing, and other essential services (Alobo and Obaji, 2016; Muelle, Ojeda and Fleischer, 2021). An investigation conducted by Meteke and Ali (2022) concerning IDPs in Ethiopia revealed that their capacity to exercise autonomy and make well-informed choices regarding their health and overall welfare was constrained by inadequate access to education opportunities and healthcare services within displacement camps. In a similar vein, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2021) emphasised that a considerable number of IDPs in Nigeria encounter obstacles when attempting to obtain sufficient housing, potable

water, and sanitation facilities. These limitations can have adverse effects on their physical and mental well-being, as well as their capacity to exercise autonomy and determine their living conditions.

Moreover, the provision of care for displaced persons can be influenced by the presence and ease of access to care services in various areas, as well as the societal and cultural expectations related to providing care (Brun and Lund, 2008). An investigation conducted by Sawadogo et al. (2023) regarding Syrian refugee women in Jordan revealed that cultural perceptions regarding the roles and freedom of women, together with the presence of female healthcare providers, impacted their capacity to obtain and make use of maternity and reproductive health services.

For instance, Muelle, Ojeda and Fleischer (2021) state that in the context of internal displacement, geographies of care are influenced by the accessibility and availability of care services in different locations and the ability of displaced populations to access and utilise these services. Like geographies of care, Alobo and Obaji (2016) affirm that internal displacement also affects human agency, where people have limited control over their movements and are forced to rely on others for assistance. Displacement can also disrupt social networks and support systems, making it hard for people to take charge and meet their needs (Brun and Lund, 2008; Muelle et al., 2021)

2.8.2 Coping Strategies and Factors Influencing Them

Lazarus (1966, cited in Carver et al., 1989) defined coping as a potential response to threats vis a vis how it is carried out. His work on coping was based on two distinct theories: the first being a problem-solving approach and the second an emotionally focused approach. However,

Carver et al. (1989) argue that this beneficial approach needs to offer a comprehensive view of how people cope. They postulate that the coping mechanism is multifaceted and requires a series of steps and concepts, including adaptive coping that emphasises direct actions to minimise or remove stressors, carrying out each in a planned manner. Restraint coping entails intentionality and restraint until the best possible opportunity presents itself.

Theoretical frameworks provide crucial insights into IDPs' coping processes. Lazarus and Folkman's stress, appraisal, and coping theory demonstrates how adaptive coping can mitigate the effects of stresses on health and well-being (Moos and Holahan, 2003). Furthermore, the link between work circumstances, coping strategies, and well-being outcomes in particular professions has been examined using the Job Demand-Control-Social Support (JDCS) model (Pisanti, 2012). Integrating such theoretical approaches can provide a better conceptual foundation for understanding IDPs' coping methods amid displacement and violence.

Skinner et al. (2003) classified coping methods into four primary groups: 1) Support seeking, 2) Positive cognitive restructuring, 3) Problem-solving, and 4) Distraction and escape avoidance. Turning to family members, friends, religious bodies, informal groups, and professionals is how those in stressful situations can seek support (Skinner et al., 2003; Seguin et al., 2017). Positive cognitive restructuring considers attempting to change how a person sees their current situation, usually to a more positive one. On the other hand, problem-solving involves logical reason, planning, determination, and action. Distraction includes engaging in activities and events that divert from stressful situations. Coping through escape avoidance entails staying away, both physically and mentally, from triggers and conditions that are the reason for stress.

According to Simpson (2018), forced displacement has substantial psychological effects on IDPs, which are further compounded by daily stressors such as social isolation and discrimination, exploitation by government officials, risk of violence, and shortage of resources to meet their basic needs. Simpson (2018) notes that charitable interventions do not consistently tackle the mental issues affecting social cohesion. He contends that addressing trauma is essential in coping with and combating psychological impediments to integration, for example, by assisting young women in dealing with traumatic memories, including sexual violence, in non-aggressive ways. Bosqui and Marshoud (2018) concur that individuals exposed to political violence, armed conflicts or forced displacement have a greater incidence of mental illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PSD), anxiety, and depression. They also experience behavioural, emotional and cognitive impacts, including toxic stress, internalising (e.g., self-harm), and externalising (e.g., aggression) (Bosqui and Marshoud, 2018).

The role of gender is highly influential in determining the coping mechanisms employed by IDPs, especially in informal urban environments. Research continually emphasises the significance of considering coping mechanisms that are distinctive to gender. Research has demonstrated that women are more likely than men to support and utilise emotion-focused coping mechanisms (Renk and Creasey, 2003). Moreover, the study conducted by John-Akinola et al. (2020) highlights the importance of creating customised interventions to improve coping strategies in high-stress settings, specifically among police officers in Nigeria. By acknowledging and dealing with coping methods that are specific to gender, interventions can enhance their effectiveness in promoting the resilience and well-being of in IDPs in informal settlements.

While both Bosqui and Marshoud (2018) and Simpson (2018) agree on the importance of using specialist support to address trauma, Bosqui and Marshoud (2018) emphasise the use of non-specialist support, such as emotional regulation and coping with negative emotions and learning stress management skills. The World Bank (2018) also agrees that victims of civil unrest, including IDPs, are more likely to develop somatisation disorder, PTSD, depression, extreme distress and alcohol abuse due to their social isolation, forced displacement, financial hardship, and limited access to employment and education. On the other hand, the World Bank (2018) also stresses the use of low-cost, low-intensity non-specialist support for mild trauma cases and the use of specialised health facilities for severe cases.

An area that has received significant research attention is the study of coping mechanisms and social support among IDPs, specifically those who have been impacted by conflict and stress. Previous studies have established many coping strategies and social support systems that internally displaced women and older adults employ to make meaning of their situations and navigate challenges (Daoud et al., 2012; Ehiri et al., 2014; Ekezie et al., 2022). Nevertheless, Daoud et al. (2012) also identified an exceptional coping mechanism employed by IDPs: integrating into host communities by adopting new cultural and social environments by learning new languages, customs, and living. Unlike Daoud et al. (2012) and Ehiri et al. (2014), Ekezie et al. (2022) identified that IDPs seek information, understanding, and professional help from mental health professionals and trained counsellors to cope with their experiences.

Additionally, researchers have examined many interventions and methods to enhance the well-being of IDPs, in addition to reviewing coping mechanisms. Due to the problematic situations, environment, and way of life among internally displaced persons, scholars have established many ways in which the livelihoods of IDPs can be restored sustainably and without

discrimination (Roberts et al., 2022; Schuettler and Caron, 2020). These scholars establish opinions that differ from each other. For example, Roberts et al. (2022) assert that IDPs must be protected from violence, persecution, and other forms of harm to create a stable environment where they can rebuild their lives. This requires taking measures like providing security and protection, addressing underlying causes of conflict, and promoting reconciliation and peacebuilding (Roberts et al., 2022). Contrarily, Schuettler and Caron (2020) established remedies unique from those that Roberts et al. (2022) established, including supporting livelihoods and economic recovery and promoting inclusivity and non-discrimination in IDP populations. Schuettler and Caron (2020) assert that most IDPs lose their homes, possessions, and sources of income due to their displacement; hence, providing IDPs with the resources and support they need to restore their livelihoods and economic well-being is important.

Coping methods and social support mechanisms are important in the broader context of public health and environmental variables. To address individuals' health issues, strategies are needed to reduce delays in patients seeking care. This requires educational campaigns or mass media initiatives aimed at raising public awareness and encouraging timely healthcare-seeking behaviour, which could potentially lead to improved individual health outcomes (Seymour, 2018). For instance, public health awareness helps improve patients' recognition of heart attack symptoms. In addition, hospitals must possess adequate support or facilities for patients to reduce delays in reaching the hospitals (Greenaway et al., 2015). Furthermore, it is recommended that future strategies for reducing psychosocial and behavioural blocks be developed to focus on them and take actions that can reduce the risks in rural areas (Greenaway et al., 2015). Additionally, it is necessary to reduce environmental pollution by reducing the polluted air developed from transport or industries that severely affect people's health, mainly older adults (Bukar, 2012). To minimise risks, strategies regarding environmental health must

be developed, and efficient healthcare professionals must be appointed to provide support and care to patients rapidly and improve their health (National Research Council, 2011).

In the context of IDPs living in informal settlements, the response towards coping differs based on gender and contextual factors. Other than that, the reaction of the IDPs living towards coping in the informal settlements has been provided with more attention where it determines the mechanisms of coping adopted and is supplied with different experiences, which illustrates that the men and women in displacement differ from one another (Krause, 2015; Ferris, 2010). The differences above rely upon the aspects, contexts, obstacles, or challenges they have faced.

2.9 Durable Solutions and Sustainable Development Goals

2.9.1 Durable Solutions for Integration of Displaced People

Ahimbisibwe et al. (2017) investigated the available options for providing a durable solution for Rwandan refugees in camps in Uganda. They found that policies that promote the integration of refugees are the preferred choice of the majority of Rwandan refugees. The authors suggested that integration of the refugees as a long-term solution should be promoted via aid programs that benefit both the locals and refugees. They maintained that by improving economic opportunity, social cohesiveness, and access to basic amenities for both groups, such programmes would lower any tensions and advance acceptance and understanding between them.

Akcapar and Simsek (2018) disagree with the view of extending citizenship to refugees as a long-term solution, claiming that citizenship alone is insufficient to promote integration or eradicate social exclusion and prejudice in society and that integration initiatives are the most important. Akcapar and Simsek (2018) found that 86% of Turkish citizens, regardless of voting

behaviour or political affiliation, want Syrian refugees to return home after the conflict has ended. They contend that citizen status is used to reward talented and skilled refugees and migrants. Also, they argue that it also reflects the Turkish government's other demographic, political and social concerns, including fear of losing competent Syrian refugees to the West, shrinking population, and potential backlash if unskilled Syrian refugees are granted citizenship.

The World Bank (2019) recommended economic intervention as a long-term solution for integrating refugees. Bardelli (2018) agrees that economic intervention, including the provision of employment for qualified migrants, is critical to the integration of refugees, arguing that poverty is one of the primary reasons driving refugees to leave their home countries. However, Bardelli (2018) objects to the increasing focus on enhancing displaced peoples' economic involvement as a durable solution to forced displacement instead of providing citizenship to the displaced people. The author contends that the World Bank's (2019) approach inevitably benefits the skilled while marginalising/excluding unskilled and those with low education levels. It ignores social and political issues. Krishnan (2018) emphasises the significance of economic involvement as well. However, unlike the World Bank (2019), Krishnan (2018) believes that unskilled refugees should be educated to empower them. In summary, some of the durable solutions for the integration of refugees include integrating programs that benefit both the locals and the refugees, providing both the skilled and non-skilled refugees with citizenship, economic intervention, and education.

2.9.2 Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Durable Solutions

Finding lasting solutions for people displaced within their country, especially women and older individuals living in informal settlements like those in Abuja, Nigeria, comes with its own

challenges and opportunities. The obstacles are varied, covering economic, social and cultural aspects. From one perspective, the absence of policies and inconsistent enforcement of existing ones hampers the integration and rights of IDPs. A pressing concern is the need for targeted job livelihood support and employment opportunities for displaced individuals with limited skills or education, as poverty and marginalisation can severely restrict their chances of integration into communities.

Social and cultural attempts at integration often clash with prevailing biases and exclusionary practices, making it challenging for IDPs to settle and blend into communities. Moreover, women who have been displaced encounter hurdles like heightened vulnerability to GBV and restricted access to essential health and education services crucial for their empowerment and assimilation. On the other hand, there are opportunities for policy revisions and community-centred initiatives. Strengthening frameworks to uphold the rights of IDPs while enhancing their integration prospects through tailored programs could offer more sustainable resolutions. Engaging communities through activities could foster understanding and collaboration between IDPs and host communities, easing social tensions and fostering peaceful coexistence.

2.10 Theoretical Underpinnings of the Research

2.10.1 Structural Violence in Displacements: Conceptualisation and Theory

Structural violence, as a conceptual framework, reveals the concealed ways in which social structures contribute to the suffering of internally displaced individuals by maintaining situations of extreme poverty and exclusion. The theory of structural violence is valuable for illustrating the informal and indirect practices that have a substantial impact on the lives of internally displaced individuals, leading to extreme poverty and marginalisation. Although an incomplete and undeveloped conception of structural violence could be just as ancient as

conflict and injustice, the notion as a research focus gained traction due to Galtung's seminal work. Galtung (1964) described structural violence as the intentional deprivation of basic human needs by power actors. He rejected the limited concept of violence as only deprivation of health or physical incapacity, with killing as the ultimate expression at the hands of power actors who intend the outcome (Galtung, 1969).

The principles of structural violence provide a sound foundation for understanding the systematic violation of human rights to the extent that basic needs are unachievable. According to Farmer and Sen (2003, p.40), structural violence is 'not the result of an accident or a force majeure; they are the consequence, direct or indirect, of human agency'. For instance, differences in terms of unequal opportunities for a fulfilling life resulting from poverty, deprivation or disease are directly attributed to the disproportionate allocation of resources (Sen, 1999). The unequal distribution of power can be disadvantageous to those with little or no power, clearly implicating human agency within the systematic inequalities (Galtung, 1969). The plight of the Rohingya in Myanmar vividly illustrates Galtung’s notion of structural violence. The systemic denial of citizenship and limited access to healthcare not only marginalizes this group but also underscores their dire state of hardship and displacement (Milton et al., 2017). Social structures have institutionalised structural violence and have left the violence invincible (Bourgois and Scheper-Hughes, 2004). The invincibility of structural violence arises from its integration into everyday life and its incorporation into the fundamental framework of social and political existence.

Although Galtung's comprehensive definition encompasses institutional injustices, it may not fully acknowledge the severe personal violence experienced by IDPs. Other scholars attempt to address this gap by emphasising individual accountability. Going beyond limitations

imposed by the structure, certain theories highlight the crucial influence of individual choices in perpetuating violence against IDPs. Valentino's (2013) theory on the strategic logic of mass killings and Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell's (2007) principal-agent model shift the emphasis from systemic to individual responsibility. Although initially developed to study large-scale massacres and genocide, these theories also apply to important displacement events due to their focus on individual leadership and decision-making by key figures. They contend that structural factors enable widespread infractions, but individual leaders' decisive acts often directly trigger them. Political and military leaders' decisions can directly cause mass displacements, as observed in numerous past and current conflicts. These views emphasise the significance of acknowledging the influence of prominent persons who, via their choices, can either aggravate or mitigate human rights violations. The strategic choices made by leaders, such as Slobodan Milošević, throughout the Yugoslav Wars, demonstrate the ideas proposed by Valentino and other scholars, which emphasise the significant role of individual agency in shaping the patterns of violence and forced migration (Judah, 2000). Valentino, Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell underscore the significant impact of individual activity. However, it is important to recognise that these individual activities are often encouraged and facilitated by already present structural disparities. Thus, a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of IDPs must incorporate an understanding of both structural and individual factors.

While the structural violence paradigm sheds light on the institutional causes that deprive IDPs of their basic rights and needs, some scholars contend that in order to comprehend displacement experiences, individual agency and identity-based oppression ought to be given greater importance. Feminist theorists, for example, highlight how patriarchal power structures create disproportionate vulnerabilities for displaced women and girls. The threat and reality of GBV, whether in conflict, flight, or displacement camps, constitutes a major deprivation of displaced

women's fundamental human rights and security (Hynie, 2018). IDP women's vulnerability to sexual exploitation, inadequate reproductive healthcare, and exclusion from decision-making show how gender discrimination connects with marginalising structures (Oloruntoba et al., 2021). Feminists see gender violence as a sort of structural violence that worsens the plight of displaced women and girls. To fully comprehend their daily conditions, one must consider the effects of displacement, patriarchal systems, and the widespread incidence of masculinised violence. The responsibilities of motherhood and domestic tasks can restrict the ability of displaced women to move about and limit their economic opportunities in resettlement areas (Kihato and Landau, 2017). As in the case of the vulnerability of displaced Syrian women in Jordanian refugee camps, the existing structural violence structures highlight the intersection of gender-based systemic violence and patriarchal customs, which greatly restrict their ability to obtain healthcare and education (Krafft et al., 2019). This example of structural violence is not just about the lack of resources but also about the targeted actions of military forces that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. These micro-level experiences shed light on how gender-based constraints and exploitation intersect with macro-level structural inequalities to shape displaced women's disproportionate insecurity and rights denials.

Likewise, the life-course view also highlights the ways in which the structural violence of displacement has various repercussions on different age groups, with older IDPs experiencing unique vulnerabilities. In times of disasters and emergencies, older persons are commonly left behind during flight due to mobility issues and family concerns of safeguarding the young (Srnka, 2021). They may not receive adequate nourishment or healthcare in displacement camps and settlements due to discrimination and isolation from community social support networks (Tan and Al-Khateeb, 2020). Lifelong disadvantages and marginalising systems affect all IDPs, leaving many older displaced individuals impoverished and neglected in their

most vulnerable years (Bloom et al., 2018). The experiences of older adults during Hurricane Katrina provide a stark example of age-related vulnerabilities in disaster settings, where their specific needs were not adequately addressed, resulting in significant hardships and marginalisation (Henderson et al., 2010). Age-related displacement shows how structural violence causes predictable deprivations and invisibilities for older IDPs.

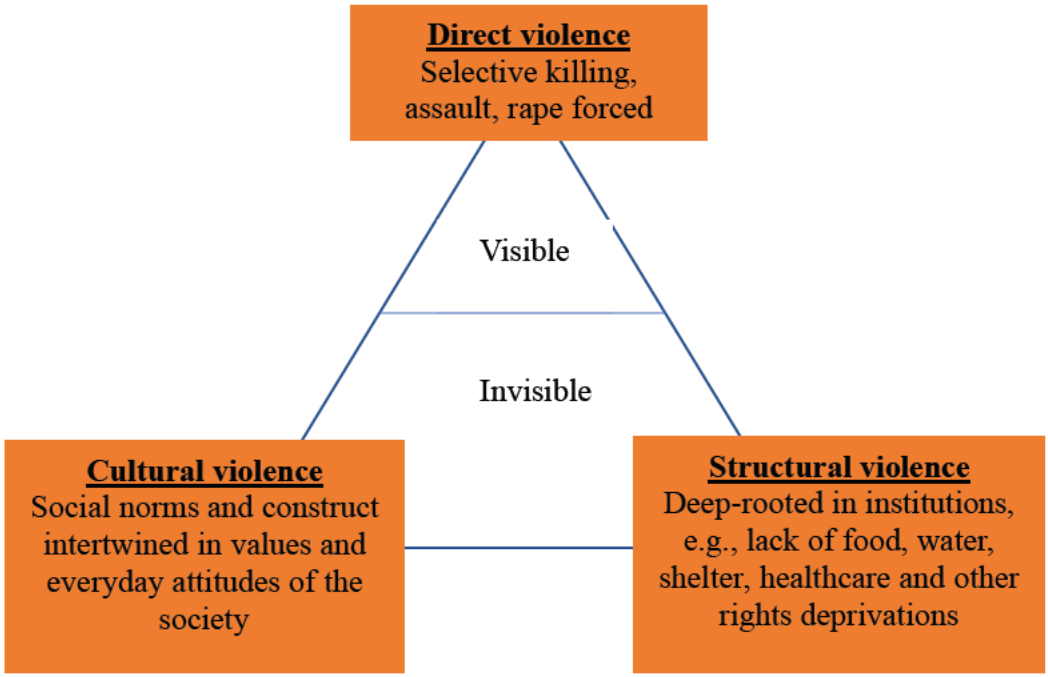


Figure 2.3: *Violence triangle (Adapted from Galtung, 1969 and 1990)*

The Violence Triangle (Galtung,1969, 1990) offers a valuable framework for comprehending the various aspects of structural violence that impact displaced communities. According to this triangle (see Figure 2.3), there are three primary forms of violence that interact to produce violence: structural, cultural, and direct violence.

Direct violence refers to overt, visible acts of violence such as murder, assault, and rape. For displaced people, this could include the violence that prompted their displacement, as well as any direct physical trauma they sustain while fleeing or living in informal settlements (Scheper-

Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). Structural violence, as previously discussed, stems from the unequal distribution of power and resources that prevents certain groups from meeting their basic needs (Farmer, 2004). The inadequate access to adequate food, water, shelter, healthcare and other rights deprivations facing displaced communities constitute structural violence (Jacobsen, 2002). Finally, cultural violence relates to the cultural norms, ideologies and social constructions that legitimise, obscure or render the other two forms of violence acceptable (Galtung, 1990).

By taking into account all three vertices of this violence triangle, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of how displaced populations are made vulnerable by interconnected direct acts, structurally entrenched inequalities, and cultural patterns that normalise their marginalisation (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). The violence triangle reminds us that adequately addressing the precarious lived realities of displaced women, older adults and others requires not just responding to immediate physical threats, but transforming the ingrained structural and cultural forces that enable the continual violation of their fundamental rights and denial of their humanity (Farmer, 2003; Lund et al., 2008).

Poverty consists of a structured denial of fundamental freedoms that individuals cannot or lack the wherewithal to meet their basic needs (Sen, 1999). Poverty is a significant key to marginalisation, which in turn diminishes quality of life, exposing these groups to more significant vulnerabilities, affecting interpersonal relationships and poorer living standards, and depriving individuals of essential resources, capabilities, and freedoms, perpetuating the cycle of marginalisation (Nayak, Oliveira, and Berkes 2014; Trimble and Johnson 2013; Marschke and Berkes 2006).

According to Simmons, Thompson, and Russell (2014), poverty not only refers to scarcity of money but also means an associated deficiency of poor housing, sanitation, access to health services and education. The withholding of one freedom exaggerates or multiplies the withholding of other liberties, making the poor marginalised and vulnerable to a myriad violations (Ho, 2007). Therefore, is it not plausible to say that poverty is a human rights violation? Because displaced persons, unlike refugees, are not protected by international laws. Therefore, the state's inactions and indifference can be viewed as a form of structural violence (Coppola, 2007). Other injustices involving assault, enslavement, discrimination, degradation, and rape also desecrate any minimal notion of recognition for persons as moral equals (Powers and Faden, 2006).

The theory of structural violence offers a valuable framework for comprehending the systematic ways in which marginalised groups, like those in Abuja's informal settlements, suffer from deprivation of their fundamental human needs and rights (Farmer et al., 2006a; Galtung, 1969). As previously said, structural violence emphasises how larger social, economic, and political systems can limit the ability of certain groups to exercise their agency, preventing them from attaining their full potential in terms of well-being and growth (Farmer, 2004). For displaced communities, the inactions and indifference of the state itself can be viewed as a form of structural violence that leaves them vulnerable and marginalised (Farmer, 2003).

The research underscores how poverty, which is endemic among displaced populations, constitutes a fundamental denial of human freedoms and capabilities (Sen, 1999). Displaced women and older adults living in informal settlements likely face intersecting forms of economic marginalisation, lack of access to healthcare, education, safe housing and other

fundamental rights that compound to diminish their quality of life severely (Jacobsen, 2002; Lund et al., 2008). Their disproportionate deprivations reflect underlying structural inequalities and unequal power distributions that systematically disadvantage them despite their basic needs being achievable for others in society (Farmer, 2004).

While alternative theories rightly note the role of individual perpetrators, the structural violence lens reveals how displaced communities' suffering is not accidental but somewhat the consequence of institutionalised social, political and economic arrangements (Galtung, 1969; Farmer, 2004). Their lived realities of marginalisation, ill health, insecurity and rights denials can be traced to these embedded violent structures that render their dignity and development obstacle-ridden (Farmer et al., 2006a). Unpacking these often-invisible structural forces is thus critical to addressing the root causes behind displaced populations' constrained freedoms in informal settlements like Abuja (Jacobsen, 2002; Lund et al., 2008).

In summary, the theoretical premise of structural violence theory is that people are entrenched in structural frameworks that influence their interests, identities, and interactions. This theory addresses how institutions restrict agency to the point where basic human needs are unachievable. Understanding the interplay between structural and individual factors is pivotal in dealing with the complex realities of IDPs. In addition to structural violence acting as a driver of internal displacement, intersectional factors and vulnerability theory shed light on the compounding disadvantages faced by displaced populations.

2.10.2 Vulnerability and Intersectionality: Frameworks for Understanding Displacement

Intersectionality is an analytical way of conceptualising how different elements of a person's political and social identities interact to produce various forms of privilege and discrimination (Carbado et al., 2013). Intersectionality outlines multiple advantages and disadvantages (Carbado et al., 2013). The seminal work of Crenshaw (1989), "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex", introduced the concept of intersectionality. She contended that looking at race and gender in isolation cannot adequately explain Black women's experiences. Instead, she argued that due to their intersectionality, race and gender create unique types of marginalisation and oppression. However, McCall (2005) cautioned that intersectionality can oversimplify the complicated nature of overlapping identities and experiences, requiring a more subtle understanding.

Intersectionality originated from anti-racist feminism and examined relationships between religion, sex, sexuality, gender, race, and age, according to Kuznetsova and Mikheieva (2020). Kuznetsova and Mikheieva (2020) emphasise that these intersecting social identities can be repressive and liberating. Collins (2015) examined the definition and application of intersectionality and its disputes. She stressed the importance of considering how power and oppression shape identity crossings. Patricia Hill Collins (2015) further explored the various dimensions of intersectionality, primarily focusing on the debates and challenges surrounding its definition and application. She emphasised the need to consider the intersections of identities and how broader systems of power and oppression shape these intersections.

Sifris and Tanyag (2019), for example, note that the experiences of Moro women in IDP camps as a consequence of wars in Mindanao provide an excellent example of intersectionality. In essence, how the Moro Women negotiated everyday life between freedom and victimisation in

the IDP camps do not reflect their religion, ethnicity or gender but the mix of these elements; in other words, Moro women suffered not as Moro, the ethnicity, but instead as women from the Moro tribe. This example highlights the importance of adopting an intersectional lens when studying the experiences of IDPs. Buscher (2010) argues that the intersection of different identities, such as ethnicity and gender, can shape displaced populations' unique challenges and vulnerabilities. Polzer and Hammond (2008) further emphasise the need to consider the diverse and intersecting factors contributing to displacement rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach.

This thesis contends that an intersectional lens is beneficial for critically examining the disparities that women and the elderly experience in Nigeria due to forced displacement and how social orders aggravate the issue. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2020) stresses the importance of deconstructing disciplinary borders and categories when studying refugees and IDPs. Researchers can better understand how gender, age, and displacement status intersect to create distinct marginalisation and vulnerability by taking an intersectional perspective. Research by Muggah and Mogire (2021) on urban violence, protection, and displacement in Nairobi and Rio de Janeiro emphasises the need for inclusive programming that addresses gender, poverty, and displacement.

Vulnerability theory, according to Adger (2006), highlights the multifaceted nature of vulnerability. According to this theory, vulnerability results from intricate relationships between a person's or a community's ability to reject, adapt to, or recover from risks. Beyond the first shock of displacement, vulnerability considers the underlying elements that influence an individual's or community's susceptibility to damage in the aftermath. Understanding the

social, economic, political, and environmental aspects of vulnerability is essential when analysing the experiences of IDPs (Füssel, 2007; Bassett and Fogelman, 2013).

The difference between individual and collective vulnerabilities is acknowledged by vulnerability theory. According to Cutter et al. (2003), individual vulnerability is the tendency of a person to suffer harm or unfavourable effects due to their unique circumstances, including age, gender, health, or financial status. Conversely, collective vulnerability pertains to the susceptibility of groups or communities and can be impacted by several elements, such as social networks, institutional support systems, and resource accessibility (Cutter et al., 2003; Wisner et al., 2004). Generally, the vulnerability of IDPs might be heightened by the interplay of both individual and collective vulnerabilities.

This thesis argues that unless the particular requirements of age, gender, and forced displacement are addressed, these groups will continue to be dehumanised in IDP camps and denied their fundamental human rights. Social cohesion and reconciliation will be difficult under these conditions. Because of the intersections of gender and displacement status, women and girls often face specific challenges and vulnerabilities; Gururaja (2000) stresses the importance of taking into account the gender dimensions of displacement as it puts this group at significant risk. As such, humanitarian intervention should consider these intersectional factors, including gender, age, and disability, during the development and implementation stages so that they can meet the different needs and vulnerabilities of IDPs (Ferris, 2008). On the contrary, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2020) and Pacitto (2020) advocate for an intersectional strategy incorporating displacement, faith, and resistance to combat humanitarian operations that neglect religion and spirituality among displaced communities.

In addition, Buscher (2018) explores the response to internal displacement by international, national, and local actors, underscoring the importance of using an intersectional approach that considers the diversity and vulnerabilities based on their intersecting identities and experiences. As in the context of Colombia, with widespread conflict-induced displacement, Buscher (2010) reports that Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities often face distinct problems due to their ethnic identities and displacement status, requiring customised interventions and support.

One of the main elements of vulnerability theory is the Pressure and Release (PAR) model, developed by Blaikie et al. (1994). According to the suggested model, vulnerability results from the complex interactions between social and natural processes. Even in armed conflict or warfare, climate change and natural catastrophes can intensify already-existing conflicts and contribute to population displacement. Environmental variables that might cause resource scarcity, food insecurity, and competition for scarce resources include drought, desertification, and sea level rise. These conditions can exacerbate tensions and conflicts. (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2021). Additionally, natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes can cause displacement, compelling people to evacuate their homes and seek refuge elsewhere (IDMC, 2022).

Particularly in areas where communities are already at risk from poverty, scarce resources, and ineffective governance, the effects of climate change and natural catastrophes on displacement are most noticeable (IDMC, 2022). In these situations, socioeconomic and political vulnerabilities already present can mix with environmental elements to create a complicated web of forces that lead to displacement. For example, access to essentials such as food, water, and shelter in their displaced areas may be significantly more difficult for IDPs who were already living in poverty (Crisp et al., 2009). IDPs who already have disabilities or pre-existing

medical illnesses may find it challenging to access support services and healthcare, which increases their vulnerability (Kett and van Ommeren, 2009).

IDPs may have additional vulnerabilities due to their displacement in addition to already-existing ones. For instance, they might be more vulnerable to human trafficking, exploitation, and abuse based on gender and sexuality (UNHCR, 2021b). Due to their unique requirements and scarce resources, children and older adults may be especially vulnerable in displacement contexts (UNHCR, 2021b). Moreover, many factors that extend beyond their specific circumstances might affect IDPs' susceptibility. IDPs may be more vulnerable due to restricted access to livelihood opportunities, a lack of legal protection and identification, and insufficient assistance from humanitarian organisations (Ferris, 2008; Crisp et al., 2009).

Women, men, people of different gender identities, and people of different ages may experience displacement in different ways due to social and cultural conventions (Neumayer and Plumper, 2007; HelpAge International, 2021). These norms can impact their responsibilities, access to resources, and the risks they encounter while displaced. For example, the increased risk of GBV, the lack of access to healthcare for reproductive requirements, and the unequal authority in decision-making may make women more susceptible to displacement circumstances (Sultana, 2013). The vulnerability of older adults may increase due to difficulties in obtaining essential services and being cut off from their support systems (HelpAge International, 2021). Children are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and lack of access to education, particularly if they are unaccompanied (UNHCR, 2021a). Their class and income levels significantly shape the vulnerability of internally displaced people. Agricultural or unofficial work is the primary source of income for many IDPs, especially in developing nations (Ferris, 2008). For instance,

a sizable fraction of IDPs in Nigeria are farmers or rural residents who lack the savings or belongings necessary to support themselves while displaced (Olayoku, 2020).

People and families with limited financial resources and assets are often more susceptible to the effects of displacement. Accessing basic necessities, securing alternative housing, and finding new livelihood opportunities can be challenging (Crisp et al., 2009). In addition, these limitations can hinder their capacity to deal with the physical, emotional, and economic difficulties of being displaced (Ferris, 2008). On the other hand, more well-off people and families may have advantages such as financial resources, social connections, and other valuable assets that can help lessen the adverse effects of being forced to move (Crisp et al., 2009). They may have an easier time finding alternative housing, accessing healthcare, and discovering new employment opportunities.

The vulnerability of internally displaced persons can also be worsened by the loss of property and livelihoods during displacement, which further solidifies the economic marginalisation that they experience (Ferris, 2008). As a way to reduce IDPs' vulnerability and encourage long-term resilience, a concerted effort needs to be made to support IDPs in achieving economic integration. This section has presented a framework for understanding how vulnerability theory can be applied to the context of internal displacement. By highlighting the various aspects of vulnerability, vulnerability theory allows us to understand better the intricacies involved.

2.10.3 Basic Needs Approaches and Human Needs Theories

Like Galtung's and Burton's theories, Maslow's and Rosenberg's theories highlight the basic needs necessary for survival. In contrast to Galtung and Burton, Maslow and Rosenberg proposed a hierarchical framework for understanding human needs, wherein the most essential

psychological needs were ranked over higher-level needs (Trivedi and Mehta, 2019; Westaway, Jordaan, and Tsai, 2015). A pyramidal structure is proposed by Trivedi and Mehta (2019) to represent Maslow's hierarchy of needs: the most fundamental needs are positioned at the base, while the more intricate needs occupy the uppermost tier. In particular, Maslow (1958) asserted that physiological, safety, love, and belonging requirements must be satisfied before pursuing the next level of needs. After fulfilling these fundamental needs, people can focus on their esteem and self-actualisation requirements. Maslow's theory is similar to Rosenberg's fundamental needs theory in that it proposes that in order to experience motivation and fulfilment, individuals must have their needs fulfilled in a particular order of importance (Westaway, Jordaan, and Tsai, 2015). Similar to the findings of Trivedi and Mehta (2019), the review of Rosenberg's theory by Westaway, Jordaan, and Tsai (2015) demonstrated that physiological needs—namely, sustenance, hydration, and shelter—are the most fundamental requirements for human survival. After their physiological requirements have been fulfilled, individuals strive to have their safety needs attended to. In conclusion, once their safety requirements are fulfilled, people pursue a sense of belonging and affection (Westaway, Jordaan, and Tsai, 2015).

Conversely, unlike Maslow (1958) and Rosenberg (1994), Danielsen (2005) does not subscribe to the hierarchical structure of human needs. Danielsen (2005) asserts that if human needs were hierarchical, it would be hard to address them in conflict situations. Nevertheless, Danielsen (2005) recognises the importance of addressing basic human needs, which, if not met, individuals experience negative consequences such as decreased motivation, decreased well-being, and decreased overall functioning. Therefore, Maslow's, Rosenberg's, and Danielsen's theories affirm the importance of pursuing SDGs among Nigerian IDPs, who are major victims

of the lack of most basic needs like shelter, food, and sexual, reproductive and mental health needs.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 5, which focuses on gender equality and empowering women and girls, play a role in supporting internally displaced women (United Nations, 2015). This empowerment is not only necessary to achieve SDG 5 but also contributes wholesomely to other goals including SDG 1 (Ending Poverty), SDG 3 (Ensuring Good Health and Well-being), and SDG 4 (Promoting Quality Education) (United Nations, 2015).

Empowering displaced women through targeted initiatives can enable them to actively engage in activities and society, leading to social transformations and narrowing gender gaps. Moreover, supporting adults in these communities aligns with SDG 3 by promoting well-being across all ages and supports SDG 10's aim of reducing inequalities. Integrating these SDGs into solutions strategies addresses the immediate needs of internally displaced individuals and aligns with global initiatives for sustainable development, enhancing these interventions' overall impact and longevity.

2.10.4 Urban and Feminist Geographies and Geographies of Place

Urban geography provides a critical lens for examining the complex dynamics of internal displacement within urban settings. Amin’s (2014) and Lefebvre's (1991) studies on space production emphasise how urban architecture can both challenge and help the integration of IDPs. Urban environments frequently intensify susceptibilities as a result of resource competition and population density, but they can also provide enhanced accessibility to services and economic prospects (Landau, 2014; Simone, 2010). Feminist geography, as

described by Kern (2020) and Massey (1994), examines the relationship between gender and space, highlighting how experiences of displacement are influenced by gender. This approach has played a crucial role in demonstrating the distinct ways in which women, who make up a significant portion of IDPs, navigate and experience urban displacement compared to men. This is influenced by factors such as GBV, limited mobility, and unequal access to resources (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014; Brun and Fábos, 2015; Hyndman, 2001).

Case studies like those in Mogadishu show that IDP camps within urban peripheries are often segregated and marginalised, lacking basic services, which urban geographical analysis can elucidate (Haysom, 2013; Kamau and Akumu, 2018)). Conversely, feminist geographical analyses might explore how women in these camps engage with and transform their spaces to negotiate power and identity, as shown in research on Colombian cities (Riaño-Alcalá, 2008; Meertens, 2010). However, such frameworks are not without criticism. Scholars like Hyndman (2019) argue that overemphasising spatial patterns can sometimes overlook the institutional and socio-political contexts driving displacement. Moreover, while feminist geography deeply enriches our understanding of gendered experiences, it can lead to essentialising women's experiences if not carefully contextualised within broader social structures (Mohanty, 2003; Peake, 2015).

2.10.4.1 Geographies of Displacement (People and Place)

Grundy-Warr and Wong Siew (2002) argued that forced displacement is a vital tenet of the increasingly de-territorialised universe, impacting homeland and place of origin perceptions, generating new sets of social structures and relations, new forms of identity and creating entirely different ways of thinking and experiences. They observed that displaced persons are often portrayed as threats and transgressors by the media and state agencies as a tactic to limit

the inflow of refugees, complicating the management and regulation of their predicament. Braithwaite et al. (2019) agree that refugees and displaced persons are often seen as threatening, as a tool to control their migration within a particular area or country. They contend that border fortification, immigration restrictions, and populism represent a new narrative in which migrants and refugees are seen as a burden, if not a threat, to Europeans' way of life (Braithwaite et al., 2019).

While Grundy-Warr and Wong Siew (2002) emphasise the importance of nations sharing responsibilities in hosting refugees and shunning populist politics, Braithwaite et al. (2019) argue that the world is likely moving to a time of increased limits on refugee entry and more attempts to compel refugees to return. These views are backed up by Dionigi (2019), who claims that borders can separate places, creating a discontinuity between citizens and objects confined inside and beyond the boundaries. He contends that cross-border interactions are critical in the resettlement and integration of refugees, depending on the historical circumstances, politics, economies, and societies often do not end in a state's border; instead, they can continue in the form of trade relations, languages, cultural connections and relations, rendering the state boundary existent but thin (Dionigi, 2019). He (Dionigi 2019) further stated that the migration of Syrian refugees to Iraq's Kurdistan Region manifests more complicated factors than conventional conceptions of sovereignty and statehood can explain. This subsection is vital to this research as it offers a lens to analyse the changing and heterogeneous nature of boundaries across Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon. This is important because Nigeria hosts individuals displaced by floods and conflicts within the country and along the Nigeria-Chad-Cameroon border.

Engaging with urban and feminist geographies will bring to the fore the multidimensional nature of internal displacement, incorporating not only the spatial dynamics but also the gendered experiences and power relations that shape the lived realities of displaced populations within urban environments.

2.11 Summary of Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter has presented a thorough examination of the existing literature and theoretical frameworks that are pertinent to comprehending the intricate problem of internal displacement. The analysis started by examining the historical backdrop and the specific circumstances of internal displacement in Nigeria, focusing on the underlying factors, such as the Boko Haram insurgency and its extensive consequences. A critical analysis of the legal and policy frameworks at both international and national levels that aim to solve the difficulties faced by IDPs followed. This evaluation emphasised the achievements, obstacles, and the involvement of different organisations in this matter.

The chapter provided valuable insights into the gendered and age-related aspects of displacement, addressing the distinct experiences, livelihoods, obstacles, and vulnerabilities encountered by women and older persons. It also discussed topics such as GBV and reproductive rights. The discussion also included the diverse effects of poverty and environmental health issues in displacement contexts. The review discussed the ideas of human agency, coping methods, social support systems, and the development of long-lasting solutions that align with the Sustainable Development Goals. Finally, several theoretical perspectives, such as structural violence, vulnerability, intersectionality, and urban and feminist geographies, were discussed, which were proposed as comprehensive frameworks for study.

The next chapter will describe the methodology employed to examine the actual experiences and circumstances of IDW and IOA. This study will provide a comprehensive explanation of the researcher's worldview, qualitative tools, data collection approaches, and analytical strategies that were employed to obtain a detailed understanding of this intricate phenomenon.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this research was to delve into the lived experience of internally displaced women (IDW) and older adults (IOA) in Nigeria and examine the interpretations they derived from those encounters, including instances of GBV. The aim was to conduct a study that would empower IDW and IOA to express their viewpoints on their experiences, ensuring their narratives were not overshadowed or misrepresented. Hence, a methodological approach was adopted to uncover the intricacies and interconnectedness of the challenges faced by these groups. Moreover, the research sought to explore the tactics and strategies, including mutual help, employed by the groups to overcome the difficulties they encountered. To better understand the experiences of the displaced in Nigeria, this study focused on capturing their lived experiences and the significance they attributed to those realities.

Acknowledging the complexity of their experiences, the research aimed to move beyond simple explanations and statistical analysis. Qualitative research was the chosen methodological approach aimed to provide an appreciation of the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by IDW and IOA. It sought to illuminate the underlying complexities and how their experiences were interconnected. A phenomenological study design was adopted to capture and acknowledge that their experiences are not isolated incidents but are deeply embedded within broader social, cultural, and political contexts. Drawing on multiple sources and references, the research aimed to shed light on the myriad factors contributing to the experiences of IDPs in Nigeria. By considering a range of perspectives and incorporating

diverse voices, the study aimed to provide a more nuanced and better understanding of the challenges encountered and the agency practised by IDW and IOA.

3.2 Methodological Framework

3.2.1 Interpretivism

To address the research problems presented in this thesis, adopting an interpretivist strategy anchored in qualitative techniques was essential. Scholars such as Guba and Lincoln (1985), Merriam (1988), Bogdan and Biklen (1992), and Maxwell (2006) argue that an interpretivist approach focuses on understanding the intricate interplay between individuals and broader social systems, as well as how individuals personally construct, interpret, and experience the world. These researchers highlight the importance of recognising that individuals actively interpret social reality for themselves (Tuli, 2010).

Furthermore, an interpretivist perspective implies that the objective of the research is not to generalise findings to an entire community but to gain a deep comprehension of a specific event or phenomenon (Farzanfar, 2005). It emphasises the subjective nature of human experiences and the need to explore the unique meanings attributed by individuals within their social contexts. Researchers who embrace the interpretivist paradigm often rely on qualitative research approaches to study, evaluate, and characterise social reality (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000). Qualitative methods, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, allow researchers to delve into the rich and nuanced aspects of human behaviour and social interactions. This approach enables a detailed exploration of individuals' perspectives, motivations, and experiences, providing valuable insights into the complexity of social phenomena.

In recent years, qualitative research methodologies have significantly expanded, particularly within the social science domains (Tuli, 2010). This growth can be attributed to recognising the unique contributions of qualitative methods in capturing the richness and depth of human experiences and social dynamics. Researchers have increasingly turned to qualitative approaches to gain a deeper understanding of complex social issues, as these methods offer flexibility, contextual richness, and the ability to capture diverse perspectives. Considering the growing recognition of qualitative research and its alignment with the interpretivist approach, this investigation employed qualitative methodologies. By utilising in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, this study aimed to understand the specific event under investigation, capturing individuals' subjective interpretations and experiences within their social contexts.

3.2.2 Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenology is founded on the idea that individuals' experiences are essential in understanding reality, as they shape the meanings attributed to the world around them (Van Manen, 2014). By embracing this approach, researchers can gain insight into the unique experiences of IDPs, capturing the depth and complexity of their realities from their perspectives. As Green and Thorogood (2014) assert, phenomenology facilitates an exploration of phenomena as seen from the participants' viewpoints, making it the most suitable approach to understanding the lived experiences of marginalised and vulnerable populations, such as IDW and IOA.

According to Schram (2003), phenomenology encompasses the study of the conscious experience of various individuals regarding their social actions and everyday lives. Creswell (2013) posited that phenomenological research usually pointed out the essence of distinct

individual experiences described by the participants. As a result, the phenomenologist sought to utilise participant responses alongside a phenomenon through open-ended questions to depict the basic structure or essence of the experience and describe how they lived the phenomenon (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Hays and Wood (2011) asserted that phenomenological studies needed the researchers to ask those participating to describe their experience concerning a phenomenon, aiming to determine the shared experiences from the responses.

Phenomenology has been extensively employed in human geography research to investigate the first-hand experiences of marginalised and vulnerable groups, such as IDPs and refugees (Pascucci, 2017; Limb and Dwyer, 2001; Kitchin and Tate, 2000). Pascucci (2017) utilised a phenomenological methodology to investigate the encounters of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, revealing the intricate interaction between structural elements and human initiative in influencing their actual experiences. Limb and Dwyer (2001) emphasise the significance of qualitative techniques, such as phenomenology, in effectively capturing geographic phenomena' intricate and intricate aspects. In addition, Kitchin and Tate (2000) highlight the significance of using phenomenological approaches in human geography research. These approaches allow researchers to comprehend the subjective importance and interpretations individuals assign to their experiences within particular spatial and temporal contexts.

Phenomenology's core principles centre on the examination of consciousness and subjective experiences. It involves setting aside preconceptions to explore phenomena without imposing external interpretations (Gadamer, 2008). The epoché, or bracketing, is a crucial methodological tool used in phenomenology to suspend preconceived beliefs and approach the phenomena with a fresh perspective (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). Researchers aim to grasp the

essence of experiences through open dialogue with participants to understand the meanings they ascribe to their lived realities (Giorgi, 2012).

The phenomenological approach aligned well with the objectives of understanding the challenges and resilience of IDW and IOA amidst displacement. Their experiences were multifaceted, encompassing emotional, psychological, social, and economic dimensions (Oberoi, 2020). Such complexities demanded a methodological approach that went beyond surface-level analysis and quantification. Phenomenology enabled the researcher to uncover the subjective meanings, coping mechanisms, and aspirations of IDW and IOA, acknowledging the interconnectedness of their experiences with broader socio-cultural and historical contexts (Laverty, 2003).

According to Gadamer (2008), understanding the world and comprehending phenomena involve a dynamic interplay between the subject (the knower) and the object (the thing being known). This process is inherently influenced by the historical and linguistic context in which the knower is situated. Gadamer emphasised that the subject and the object are not separate entities but are intertwined in a reciprocal relationship. The knower's understanding is not a passive reception of objective knowledge but rather an active interpretation influenced by their preconceptions, beliefs, and prejudices (Crotty, 1998). Gadamer's hermeneutic approach recognises that the subject's interpretations are not mere subjective projections but are guided by a fusion of their horizons with that of the known object. This "fusion of horizons" occurs through dialogue, where the knower actively engages with the object and continually refines their understanding in light of new insights (Sloan and Bowe, 2014).

Another crucial concept introduced by Gadamer, the hermeneutic circle, illustrates this interplay between the subject and the object. The hermeneutic circle describes the iterative process in which the knower's pre-understandings influence their interpretation of the object, and in turn, the object's meanings modify the knower's understanding (Crotty, 1998). This circular movement ensures that the knower's understanding continuously evolves and enriches through ongoing dialogue with the object. In essence, Gadamer's work highlights the dialectical nature of the relationship between the knower and the thing being known. This dynamic interaction shapes the knower's understanding and leads to a more profound and comprehensive interpretation of the object. Acknowledging the subject's active role in understanding, Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology provides a methodological approach that captures the complex and contextual nature of human experiences and the world.

Past research underscored that the phenomenological design depended on the assumption that a phenomenon had core meanings mutually understood through common experiences (Moustakas, 1994; Giorgi, 2009). Thus, phenomenological interviews were the primary data collection method to understand the participants' experiences (Giorgi, 2009). On the same note, the researcher ought to refrain from judging the respondents of the interviews and go through an epoch process before collecting any information from individuals with direct experiences of the phenomena (Patton, 2014). For this reason, the study richly encompassed descriptive analysis presenting the phenomenon's essence. Since the researcher aimed to understand better the lived experiences of IDW and IOA living in informal settlements, the phenomenology design used to describe the lived experiences of individuals close to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013) was the best method for this research. Thus, the study included a protocol involving open-ended interviews with the participants to provide data that ultimately answered the research questions.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), research questions in qualitative studies should be general and open-ended. As a result, this study adopted open-ended research questions to obtain the perceptions of those living in makeshift camps or informal settlements instead of constricting the study to the researcher's perspective. As Creswell (2013) presupposed, quantitative research questions that provide potential cause-and-effect connections would not fulfil the purpose of this research appropriately nor answer the research question correctly, and they would be inappropriate for this research. Creswell (2013) pointed out that exploring a phenomenon from the participants' perspective necessitated a qualitative approach, and this study was no exception. The existing gap in the literature on the living conditions, environment, and health of internally displaced women and older adults living in these informal settlements called for a qualitative study design to augment displacement research. Besides, the researcher sought to understand better the daily lives of internally displaced individuals in makeshift camps, making the qualitative method best suited for the research topic.

3.3 Triangulation of Methods

Triangulation, as a methodological strategy, provides numerous advantages in research. This aims to augment the reliability and validity of study findings (Noble and Heale, 2019). Triangulation, the process of merging several data sources or methodologies, enhances trust in research data, uncovers distinctive patterns and questions or merges theories, and offers a more lucid comprehension of the issue being studied (Thurmond, 2001). This methodology can generate novel perspectives on a phenomenon and enhance the examination and understanding of study results (Bekhet and Zauszniewski, 2012). The triangulation type and methodologies selection should be consistent with the research topic and enhance the methodological paradigm that guides the investigation (Farmer et al., 2006b).

The application of methodological triangulation can significantly enhance the quality and quantity of collected data, therefore enhancing the rigour of the research (Begley, 1996). Researchers can combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the same research subject, hence improving the comprehensiveness and scope of the study (Hwang et al., 2016). Triangulation is a valuable method that helps reduce biases, improve generalisability, and enhance the precision and reliability of research findings (Kumar et al., 2022; Donkoh, 2023; Ashour, 2018). In addition, using many types of data and viewpoints in the triangulation process might result in more significant research findings than relying solely on a single approach (Briller et al., 2008).

As such, the research methodology used the triangulation of qualitative methods to examine the lived experiences of IOA and internally displaced women IDW in Nigeria. These techniques, which included phenomenological methods, interpretivist tactics, and methodological instruments, including in-depth interviews and focus groups, were crucial in generating a better understanding (see Figure 3.1). Applying qualitative methods and an interpretivist approach was crucial in explaining the intricate relationship between specific experiences and larger social systems (Maxwell, 2006). Also, phenomenology enhanced the interpretivist approach by examining participants' conscious experiences and highlighting the importance of their viewpoints (Van Manen, 2014).

The interpretivist approach, which prioritised subjective experiences and individual interpretations within their social contexts, aimed to prevent oversimplification and instead foster an understanding of the intricacies of participants' experiences (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000) while the use of phenomenology, the study explored the interpretations that

IDW and IOA attributed to their experiences, resulting in significant and contextualised findings. This facilitated an investigation without preconceived assumptions, guaranteeing that the results accurately mirrored the participants' lived experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 2012).

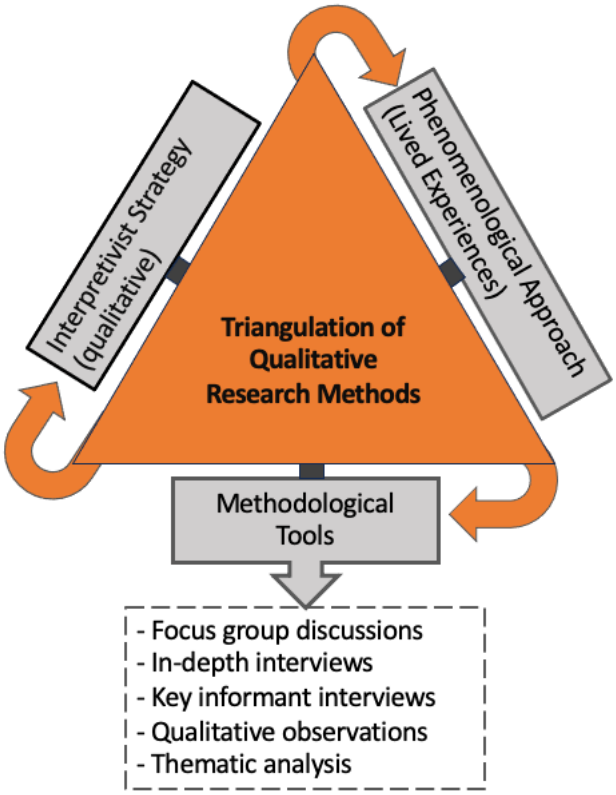


Figure 3.1*: Flow and relationships between different components of qualitative research methodology*

3.3.1 Enhancing methodological complementarity through triangulation.

Using methodological triangulation, combining focus groups, in-depth interviews, and qualitative observations facilitated a thorough investigation of the research inquiries (see Figure 3.1). Focus group discussions utilised the dynamics of group interaction to facilitate more in-depth conversations and reveal collective insights, which were crucial in comprehending shared experiences and communal coping processes (Nyumba et al., 2018). The platform created by these discussions enabled IDW and IOA to openly share their

perspectives in a collective environment, thereby confirming the validity of individual experiences and emphasising shared narratives. On the other hand, in-depth interviews provided a more intimate setting for participants to delve into their narratives independently from group influences. This method was invaluable in recording personal stories and discussing sensitive topics in a more confidential environment. Incorporating both data collection methods enhanced the study's outcomes by offering both breadth and depth when examining the lived experiences of IDW and IOA individuals (Jamshed, 2014).

3.3.2. Synergy in Data Analysis.

The collaboration between these techniques continued into the data analysis stage, where thematic analysis was utilised to detect patterns within the range of data gathered. The analysis was thorough, incorporating results from both group and individual contexts and embracing various experiences and interpretations. This all-around method ensured that the analysis looked at shared experiences and how different people are, which led to a more nuanced understanding of the situation being studied (Ryan and Bernard 2003).

In conclusion, combining these approaches and using qualitative tools extensively improved my capacity to comprehend the multifaceted reality of IDW and IOA in Nigeria. Furthermore, this combination provided a deeper understanding of the study participants' challenges and strengths, hopefully serving as a basis for well-informed intervention-building and provision support systems.

3.4 Study Location

Participants were carefully selected from four distinct informal camp-like settings within the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) (see Figure 3.2). These locations included two

suburban camp-like settlement areas, namely Area One and New Kuchigoro, and two rural host communities, Kabusa and Karon Majiji. Although efforts were made to include participants from other Area Councils where IDPs resided in low-cost buildings, access to these individuals was challenging due to their busy engagement in farm work and difficulties in coordinating meetings with the settlement's coordinator.

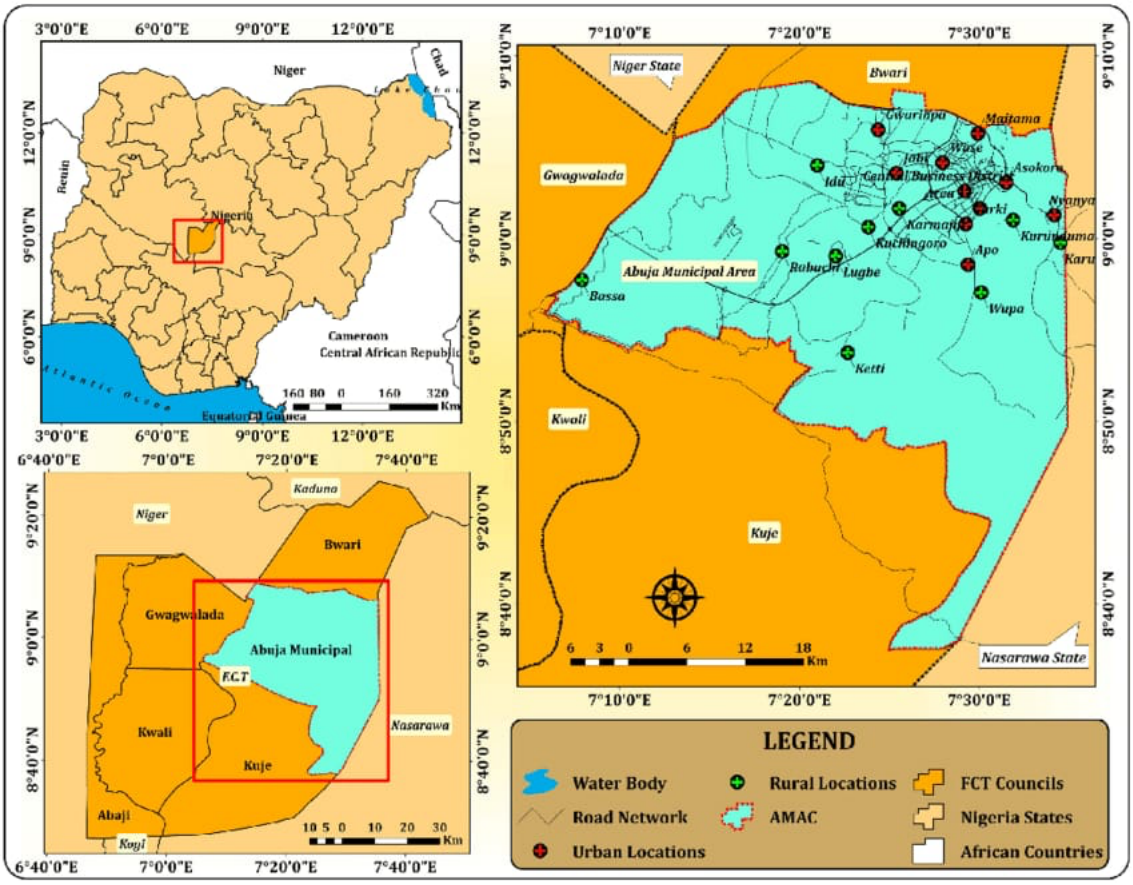


Figure 3.2: *Map of FCT showing AMAC, inset: Map of Nigeria showing FCT (Awuh, Japhets and Enete, 2021).*

It is essential to clarify that the four informal camp settings exhibited subtle contextual differences. The researchers sought to understand how the camp setting and surrounding environment influenced the challenges, coping strategies, and access to opportunities for IDPs by including camps in various parts of the city, with varying levels of integration and interaction with other residents and economic activities (Jacobsen, 2017; UNHCR, 2020a).

This approach recognised that IDPs were not a homogeneous population, and their situations could vary greatly depending on their level of isolation or absorption into the larger metropolitan community (IIED, 2020). The Area One camp mainly housed IDPs but was situated in a part of the capital city that accommodated many artisans, popular markets, and informal businesses. As a result, IDPs often interacted and integrated with other residents during their day-to-day activities. On the other hand, the New Kuchigoro camp was located near popular residential housing estates within an urban slum. It was inhabited by both IDPs and other socio-economically disadvantaged individuals and groups. Moving on, Karon Majiji, located in the southeast of the city centre, was a community comprising a mix of housing developments, informal settlements, and commercial activities. Like Karon Majiji, Kabusa, a village community in the southwest of the city centre, was predominantly occupied by IDPs, surrounded by new housing developments. Notably, in New Kuchigoro, Karon Majiji, and Kabusa, both IDPs and other slum dwellers lived in similar tents, making it challenging to differentiate between them without assistance from the camp leaders.

To ensure the safety and autonomy of the participants, interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were organised in secure venues determined through consultations with camp leaders and participants. This approach aligned with my commitment to creating an egalitarian relationship between the participants and myself (Schreiber and Tomm-Bonde, 2015). However, it was observed that most participants needed more choices regarding venues outside their homes or camps. Consequently, we conducted the sessions at various locations, including an Islamic school site and participants' homes in Karon Majiji, the women's leader's house/health centre in Kabusa, participants' homes and a health centre in Area One, and finally, the primary school premises and participants' homes in New Kuchigoro. Initially, the plan was to conduct interviews in cafes if participants were willing. Unfortunately, finding quiet cafes

without interference proved challenging, and arranging transportation to and from the cafes posed logistical difficulties. As a result, alternative venues were chosen to facilitate meaningful and undisturbed discussions with the participants.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

3.5.1 Focus Group Discussions

This technique was used to gain insight and understand social issues (Nyumba et al., 2018). According to Van Eeuwijk and Angehrn (2017), a focus group discussion is a qualitative data collection technique and research method which involves a selected individual group to discuss a particular issue or topic in-depth and often is guided by a moderator. The process sought to solicit the practices, experiences, knowledge, and the participants' perceptions and attitudes shared through the interaction course with other people. As Van Eeuwijk and Angehrn (2017) presupposed, the technique depended on the assumption that the focus group discussion activated group processes, which helped clarify and identify the shared knowledge among communities and groups that would otherwise have been difficult to obtain using interviews.

I organised four focus groups for this study, each representing a different settlement. Typically, focus groups consist of four to ten participants discussing a specific theme (Green and Thorogood, 2014). In my case, each group comprised five to seven participants. Smaller groups were preferred, considering participants would likely have more to say on the topic, especially if they were emotionally connected (Bryman, 2016). Guest et al.'s (2016) methodology assessment indicated that 2 to 3 focus groups captured approximately 80% of the themes, while 3 to 6 groups covered 90%. However, this approach faced criticism for making realist assumptions, assuming that participants independently produced themes (Sim et. al, 2018). It

was argued that themes were co-productions between researchers and participants, thus not solely dependent on the number of focus groups.

I considered cultural and contextual imperatives when composing the focus groups to ensure a diverse and contextually relevant representation. Participants from various ethnic backgrounds and pre-displacement communities were included to enrich the data and accommodate diverse opinions and perspectives (Abeid et al., 2014). To prevent possible conflicts among representatives from various groups, I took measures to ensure that members in the focus group had similar backgrounds and experiences (Hennink, 2014). For example, the focus groups comprised participants of similar ethnicity or pre-displacement communities to prevent power struggles or potential conflicts that could impede candid conversations. This move was made easier as most people from each settlement I visited shared ethnicity. Additionally, I acknowledged the possible differences between the experiences of women living with and without their partners in displacement. I also aimed to have relatively homogeneous focus groups regarding marital status or living situations to create a comfortable environment for participants to share their lived experiences freely (Hennink, 2014).

Employing FGDs in this study proved advantageous in multiple ways. Firstly, informal gatherings and group activities are natural ways for women to connect and generate ideas in African cultures. Focus groups were excellent starting points for engaging with the women and identifying potential participants for in-depth interviews. They also helped create ideas for further exploration during individual interviews (Hussain and Khan, 2008). Given the study's focus on sensitive issues like family dynamics and gender relations, an interactive group setting was essential to uncover how women in this culture, particularly in IDP communities, discussed

such matters, their language use, and how they approached these topics (Bryman, 2016; Hansen, 2006).

FGDs were valuable tools for capturing the dynamics of group interactions, shared meanings, and the co-construction of significance (Barbour, 2010; Bryman, 2016; Hansen, 2006; Liamputtong, 2007). They encouraged participants to discuss issues they might have previously overlooked or not deeply analysed (Barbour, 2010). By avoiding the pressure associated with individual interviews, focus groups reduce the power imbalance between the researcher and participants, allowing participants to select topics they feel comfortable discussing within the group setting (Barbour, 2010; Liamputtong, 2007). This inclusivity enables the involvement of individuals who might feel intimidated by face-to-face interviews (Schulze and Angermeyer, 2003 in Liamputtong, 2007, p. 107), making focus groups an effective tool for researching vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations and addressing sensitive topics (Barbour, 2010).

Nonetheless, FGDs have some limitations. Green and Thorogood (2014) highlighted challenges in accessing marginalised viewpoints and obtaining in-depth narrative accounts. In some instances, dominant voices within focus groups may overshadow others, potentially representing the entire group (Barbour, 2010; Green and Thorogood, 2014). Despite these limitations, I recognised the significance of focus groups for this study's objectives, the sensitivity of the topics, and the cultural context, and I took steps to mitigate these potential drawbacks.

To prevent participants from becoming upset or re-traumatized during the focus group talks, I created a safe and friendly environment in which they felt secure and appreciated. Before

commencing, I reminded participants that they might refuse to answer any questions or quit the study at any point without penalty (Lewis, 2003). I also informed participants about existing support services in their localities if needed (Hugman et al., 2011).

3.5.2 In-depth Interviews

Past researchers have underscored the significance of in-depth interviews (IDI) in gathering information from different sources. Ayres (2008) claimed that semi-structured interviews were commonly used in qualitative research, where respondents were asked multiple open-ended and predetermined questions. In this approach, the interview guide often contained a list of topics to be covered during the sessions, and the researcher utilised carefully worded and specific questions. According to Jamshed (2014), these interviews were considered in-depth, requiring participants to answer pre-set questions, and were extensively employed as a format for interviewing individuals or groups. Notably, the interview guide facilitated the researcher in exploring several respondents' experiences and opinions more comprehensively and systematically (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006) and maintaining the focus of the interview on the desired areas (Anyan, 2013).

For my study, I conducted 32 semi-structured interviews (see Table 3.1), targeting the internally displaced older adults population aged 65 and above and IDW above 18 years. Before beginning the interview, I administered a short questionnaire to collect background information about the participants. The interviews generally lasted between 40 minutes to 1 hour. To ensure a well-structured and relevant interview, I formulated a guide before the interviews (see Appendix III), covering the relevant topics and questions in line with Creswell's (2013) recommendations. However, before the interviews were conducted, I pilot-tested the interview guide (Yeong et al., 2018) to fine-tune the questions and ensure their alignment with the

research topic. During the interviews, I recorded the conversations to capture information more effectively, and I also took handwritten notes to ensure that I captured all critical points and insights.

Table 3.1: Characteristics of In-depth interview (IDI) participants.

	IDI 1	IDI 2	IDI 3	IDI 4
Number of participants	10	10	7	5
Place of displacement	Gwoza, Bama, Dikwa, Konduga	Gwoza	Gwoza, Bama, Maiduguri	Gwoza, Bama
Settlement	Urban host community	Urban camp-like informal setting	Rural camp-like informal setting	Rural host community

3.5.3 Key Informant Interviews

Researchers have found that key informant interviews (KIIs) help collect information from different individuals, such as professionals, residents, and community leaders who have first-hand knowledge about a particular community (UCLA Center for Health Policy and Research, n.d.). Cossham and Johanson (2019) affirmed that these experts provided recommendations for solutions and gave insights into the phenomenon, relying on their understanding and specific knowledge.

KIIs are a widely used qualitative research method that involves in-depth interviews with individuals with specific knowledge or expertise related to the research topic (Felt et al., 2017). These informants are selected based on their unique perspectives, experiences, or roles within a particular community or setting (Palinkas et al., 2015). Key informants (KIs) are invaluable

for researchers investigating complex social phenomena because they can provide first-hand information and helpful insights that may not be readily available from other sources (Cossham and Johanson, 2019).

A fundamental benefit of employing key informant interviews is their capacity to gather comprehensive, situational information that can assist researchers in comprehending the subtleties, intricacies, and fundamental elements that impact the phenomenon being studied (Felt et al., 2017). According to Palinkas et al. (2015), KIs can impart their experiences, viewpoints, and opinions, thereby increasing the researchers' understanding and enriching data. When conducting qualitative research involving sensitive topics and marginalised or inaccessible populations, KIIs are especially advantageous (Cossham and Johanson, 2019). Researchers can cultivate rapport with communities reluctant to participate in conventional research methods and obtain access to valuable information by capitalising on key informants' knowledge and trusted connections (Felt et al., 2017). In addition, KIIs can corroborate and strengthen the research findings by providing additional qualitative and quantitative data (Palinkas et al., 2015). Researchers can attain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and pinpoint potential avenues for additional investigation or intervention by integrating insights from key informants with additional data sources (Cossham and Johanson, 2019).

The primary informants for this research were community leaders, IDP community Chairmen, Women Leaders and other community officials (see Table 3.2). I established trust within the displaced communities by leveraging local expertise to make introductions and allowing them to present the research being conducted in the community. Furthermore, important informants played a pivotal role in the recruitment phase by aiding the researcher in identifying

participants for the study. Before starting the KIIs, I provided them with information leaflets (see Appendix I) and obtained their informed consent (see Appendix II). We reviewed the research objectives, their right to discontinue the interviews at any moment with no consequence, and any other questions they had for me before I began the interviews (see Appendix IV). I additionally elaborated on the precautions implemented to safeguard the privacy and anonymity of the participants unless they specifically requested otherwise.

Table 3.2: Key Informant Interviews Conducted

Interview	No of Participants	Roles/Positions
KII 1	3	Chairman, Village Head, Women Leader
KII 2	3	Chairman, Village Head, Women Leader
KII 3	1	Women Leader
KII 4	2	Women Leader, Public Relations Officer (PRO)

As de Valenzuela et al. (2016) had presupposed, key informant interviews were either structured or unstructured or, more commonly, semi-structured. The latter involved a set of questions with a provision for free discussions and follow-ups. The researcher employed semi-structured interviews to gather direct knowledge of particular case sites from informants. Furthermore, the researcher accompanied the community leaders to visit the designated locations.

3.5.4 Qualitative Observations

Qualitative observation (QO) is a very effective research technique that enables researchers to fully engage with the real-life environments of their study participants, acquiring direct insights and developing better insights into the research being conducted (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

This approach involves closely watching the population under study and their surroundings to collect information that may be missed using other methods (Kawulich, 2005). QO can take two forms. First, it could be entirely immersive for the researchers as they take the participant position, or secondly, it could be non-participatory, where the observations are done from a distance with the researchers maintaining detachment (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The choice of either method would depend on the researcher's goals as well as their ability to gain trust and access to the community to be observed (Hennink et al., 2020).

One of the strong points of this method is its ability to notice the little differences and complexities that influence human behaviour and experiences (Kawulich, 2005). It allows researchers to glimpse the study participants' everyday lives, such as their interactions with others and their environment, thoughts, and decision-making processes, which other methods may miss or omit (Hennink et al., 2020). In addition, QO strengthens the research validity and accuracy by allowing the triangulation of the data from other methods, such as IDI and FGDs (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This, in turn, allows the researcher to combine qualitative methods, which will improve their understanding and identify areas of future work and research (Hennink et al., 2020).

3.5.4.1 Documentation of Observations

Throughout my time on the field, I recorded my observations by taking notes, photographs, and audio recordings, which were later transcribed into text. I dedicated a week to each settlement and approximately 40 minutes to an hour to interacting with participants. As I began data collection, I received pushback from a few communities. At the settlement in Area 1, the Chairman was absent, and the Women Leader first showed hesitance to participate. She stated that until I brought “something” for them, they would not assist, as they had more pressing

matters to deal with and have had their fair share of time wasters. In response to this issue, I highlighted the prospective advantages of conducting research, explaining in detail my research objective and how the research can benefit the community in the long run. Following additional discussion and establishing a positive relationship, the Women Leader consented to assist me in conducting observations throughout the settlement.

I used QO to gain insight into the living conditions, environment, and health status of the senior population and women in informal settlements. To document these features carefully, I created an observation checklist grounded in accepted criteria found in the literature (Jacobsen, 2017; UNHCR, 2020). The checklist (See Appendix VI) encompassed variables such as the standard of housing, accessibility to potable water and sanitation, presence of healthcare facilities, and measures of general welfare and susceptibility. QO enabled me to apprehend the subtleties and intricacies of these conditions beyond numerical statistics or self-reported knowledge. Through complete involvement in the settlements, I could directly witness the daily difficulties encountered by residents, their strategies for dealing with these issues, and the larger environment in which they resided (Creswell and Poth, 2018). An in-depth comprehension of the actual experiences and surrounding circumstances was crucial in formulating customised interventions and policy suggestions to cater to the distinct requirements of older adults and women residing in these communities (Hennink et al., 2020).

3.5.5 Sensitive Listening

Sensitive listening is a proactive and empathic method that seeks to establish a secure and non-judgmental environment for individuals to discuss sensitive experiences and viewpoints openly. It involves “careful attention to participants' verbal and non-verbal cues and a willingness to follow their lead in what they choose to disclose” (Knapik, 2006, p.79). The

method draws from feminist research principles of giving voice to marginalised groups such as IDPs. The researcher must be attentive to the emotional states and comfort levels of the participants, especially when discussing potentially traumatising or stigmatised topics. Sensitive listening entails keeping an open, caring attitude and demonstrating true regard for participants' lived experiences with sensitive themes such as displacement, violence, or grief.

When doing research on vulnerable populations such as IDW and IOA or other marginalised groups, sensitive listening is essential for building trust and rapport, which allows participants to feel comfortable sharing their experiences (Hugman et al., 2011; Mackenzie et al., 2007). Because sensitive listening makes participants feel heard and unconstrained, it allows for richer, more open, and in-depth sharing of sensitive aspects of their life stories (Dempsey et al., 2016; Elmir et al., 2011). Sensitive listening allows for establishing emotional boundaries and lowers the risk of re-traumatisation by giving participants control over what they reveal about potentially distressing events (Knapik, 2006; Sossou et al., 2008).

This method influenced the careful development of interview guides, ensuring personal questions were open and not leading. Throughout the fieldwork, I endeavoured to apply sensitive listening by engaging in personal reflections, avoiding generalised assumptions, and learning about cultural norms and sensitives relating to gender and age, most especially the displacement context.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research process, I adhered to ethical principles while studying vulnerable populations, always being mindful of and respectful towards their unique culture and worldview. To ensure the research met ethical standards, I obtained ethical approval, with

reference number ERN_20-1571, from the University of Birmingham Ethics Review Committee. Additionally, I completed an online ethics training course offered by the National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) called Training and Resources in Research Ethics Evaluation (TRREE). This course contained ethical guidance for research involving human participants and obtaining informed consent and contextual considerations specific to research in the Nigerian context (NHREC, n.d).

Before commencing fieldwork, I used my personal and professional networks to establish contacts with gatekeepers of both the Karon Majiji and New Kuchigoro camps. I ensured that relevant authorities and institutions were consulted and their approval was obtained before initiating the fieldwork. In line with the recommendations of Pittaway et al. (2010), who made a point about the importance of appropriate compensation for vulnerable groups, participants were provided equal measures of rice, bathing, and washing soap. Also, they offered cold drinks and water during our meetings as a token of appreciation for their contribution to the study.

Regarding informed consent, I adhered to the recommendations by Mackenzie et al. (2007), which emphasise the criticality of establishing ethical relationships in refugee and displacement research. A combination of written and verbal consent procedures was employed to guarantee that all participants, including those with limited literacy or illiteracy, understood the study's objectives and implications and their rights as voluntary participants (Hugman et al., 2011). I distributed the research information leaflet and consent forms to the participants, allowing them sufficient time to provide the written informed consent voluntarily. For participants who could not read the documents in English or Hausa, I gave them verbal information regarding the research in their preferred language. I used simple language and

explanation to elucidate the study's aims, methodologies, potential advantages and disadvantages, and their prerogative to withdraw from the study without repercussions (Lewis, 2003). Before initiating the study, I obtained their verbal consent, guaranteed that they understood the information, and allowed them to make inquiries or express any concerns. Following established protocols in research involving vulnerable populations (Hugman et al., 2011; Pittaway et al., 2010), the verbal consent procedure was selected to guarantee inclusiveness and regard for the participants' varied backgrounds and levels of literacy.

To safeguard my physical and emotional well-being during the fieldwork and data generation process, I implemented strategies identified by Liamputtong (2007). This included addressing possible risks for bodily harm, psychological and emotional distress, and exhaustion from prolonged working hours. I remained open to my needs as the researcher and the researched participants. Before embarking on the field trip, I developed a detailed Fieldwork Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan (F-RAMP), which my Project Supervisor approved before referral to the GEES School Health, Safety and Environment Committee of the University of Birmingham. The F-RAMP included an emergency response procedure with contact information.

While in the research field, I took practical steps to safeguard myself, including keeping a low profile to avoid drawing undue attention and only engaging with individuals relevant to the research. I only revealed my identity if necessary for the recruitment process or formal introduction to officials/camp leaders. Moreover, I assessed each chosen venue for possible risks before commencing interviews or focus group discussions (FGDs). I used pseudonyms to substitute participants' names in the transcripts and pictures to ensure confidentiality and

anonymity. This further protected their identities and ensured their privacy throughout the research.

Furthermore, I made sure to remain impartial and steer clear of any biases that could influence the results and outcomes. I focused on staying open-minded and setting aside my preconceived notions following the principles of phenomenological research outlined by Merleau-Ponty (2012). While it wasn't always easy to set aside personal beliefs and assumptions, I deliberately approached the participants' experiences without imposing any external interpretations to truly understand the essence of their lived realities as shared (Giorgi, 2012). By implementing these measures and following ethical guidelines, I aimed to conduct the research with the utmost respect for the participants' well-being and the integrity of the study.

3.7 Sampling Method

This study employed a purposive sampling technique, which is well-suited to the qualitative, phenomenological nature of the research. Purposive sampling is a non-probability method in which participants are chosen based on certain attributes and the study's objectives (Green and Thorogood, 2014). This approach was chosen because it allowed for the careful selection of participants who could offer insightful, pertinent information about the experiences of IDW and IOA. This strategy was particularly appropriate for this phenomenological study since it ensured the selection of participants with lived experiences directly relevant to the research objectives (Creswell, 2013).

Participants were selected based on specific criteria: adults aged 18 and above, currently internally displaced, living in the informal settlements for at least six months, and willing and able to share their stories. To capture diverse opinions and experiences, the researcher actively

sought to recruit participants of varied ages, ethnicities, and pre-displacement communities (Bryman, 2016). This diversity in sampling aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the range of experiences within the target group.

While purposive sampling does not aim for statistical representativeness and may have drawbacks, including potential bias in participant selection and limited generalisability of findings to the wider IDP community, these limitations were outweighed by the depth and complexity of the data acquired. This approach corresponded with the research objectives of comprehending the lived experiences of IDW and IOA in informal settlements (Van Manen, 2014). The rich, detailed accounts provided by participants through this sampling method were crucial for the phenomenological analysis, justifying its use despite its limitations.

3.7.1 Recruitment of Participants

The participants in this study were IDW aged 18 and above, including older women who had experienced displacement (see Table 3.3 below). This age group was selected because it aligns with Nigeria's generally accepted age for consent, marriage and productivity. To ensure that participants had relevant experiences related to the research focus, I purposively recruited individuals who had experienced displacement for various reasons, including but not limited to conflict-induced displacement (Green and Thorogood, 2014).

I had planned to work with organised displaced persons' camp officials to gain access to the displaced women. However, I discovered that most camps were not directly run by government officials but were established and maintained by the displaced communities. Therefore, I engaged in informal consultations with the leaders of these camps before proceeding with

participant recruitment. The recruitment process varied among the different study settings, and in the following paragraphs, I will detail how I recruited participants in each location.

Table 3.3 showing characteristics of participants

Characteristic of participants		Frequency
Place of displacement	Bama, Borno	4
	Dikwa, Borno	1
	Gamboru Ngala, Borno	1
	Gwoza, Borno	50
	Katsina, Katsina	1
	Konduga, Borno	1
	Maiduguri, Borno	2
	Mincika, Adamawa	1
Age distribution	18-34	32
	35-54	18
	55-64	4
	65 and older	7
Level of education	Islamic	2
	Primary	7
	Secondary	21
	None	31
Employment status	Yes	30
	No	31
Type of employment	Artisan	5
	Farming	7
	Labourer	3
	Prefer	1
	TBA	1
	Teacher	1
	Trading	13
	Unemployed	30
Religion	Christian	20
	Muslim	41

Before travelling to Abuja, I contacted the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) office by phone. Although they had no direct link to IDPs in the city, an officer provided me with a list of locations and approximate populations of informal camps. Additionally, I reached out to the founder of an NGO, Jessicare Foundation, who connected me with Women Leaders in various locations. Upon my arrival in Abuja, I met with Karon Majiji and New Kuchigoro camp officials, with whom I had previously established contact. These initial interactions with officials and IDP leaders helped me familiarise myself with the local system and develop links to potential participants for focus groups and subsequent in-depth interviews. Engaging with community groups and familiar organisations was instrumental in overcoming mistrust, a common barrier to recruiting research participants in urban and rural areas (Friedman et al., 2015). My approach facilitated recruitment by establishing trust and rapport with the participants. I collaborated with the community leaders to distribute research information sheets containing my contact details. I also spoke to each participant about providing consent, as I found that many displaced women were not particularly interested in reading.

As I regularly visited the camps, the IDP leaders became crucial in referring interested women to me and informing them about the research. I was directed to the Chairman in the Area One and Kabusa camps, but I engaged with the Assistant Chairmen and women's leaders as they were unavailable. The settlement's leadership structures, including the women leaders, were informal and community led. They take on many roles, including women representatives, traditional birth attendants, community coordinators and organisers, teachers and mediators.

The women leaders permitted me to recruit participants in the camps, and one of them even volunteered to participate in the study. Since fewer camp residents could read, the women leaders explained the research and introduced me to those interested in learning more about it.

Initially, the camp residents assumed I was a humanitarian worker offering food or other items during my visits. This facilitated their willingness to participate once I clarified my research intentions and established rapport with them. Each interview and focus group discussion (FGD) was planned to suit the convenience of the participants. During these meetings, I further discussed the contents of the information sheet and answered any questions to ensure that participants fully understood the research process before signing consent forms. I obtained their verbal consent since many women could not sign their names. For inclusion in the study, women had to have lived in any of the displacement settings for at least six months and given informed consent for their voices to be recorded. The six-month duration was chosen to ensure participants had sufficient experience to engage in meaningful discussions about displacement issues. Girls younger than 18 were excluded from the study, even if they were married, pregnant, had children, lived in displacement without parents or guardians, or served as heads of their households. This decision was made because girls younger than 18 are still considered minors in Nigeria. However, if they are married, have children or assume adult roles as heads of households, they are considered emancipated. The sample size of 61 (see Table 3.3) was deemed sufficient as we reached a point where additional interviews were not yielding new themes or insights, indicating data saturation (Saunders et al., 2018).

Initially, I planned to exclude participants who needed help understanding and communicating in English or a level of Pidgin English to avoid needing interpreters, which could compromise confidentiality. However, I realised that a few participants could communicate in English or Pidgin English. Excluding them would have favoured the more educated IDW, so I included those who could speak the Hausa Language. As a native speaker of Hausa, I was confident in communicating effectively with the participants during the meetings. This language flexibility allowed participants to express their thoughts in their chosen language, depending on their

abilities, and enhanced our interactions by minimising language barriers. Some groups of women were left out of the study because they could only communicate in their local languages.

3.8 Positionality in research and Reflexivity in data analysis and interpretation.

In qualitative research, positionality involves acknowledging the researcher's social standing, individual experiences and identities, which inevitably shape the research process and results (Rose, 1997). As Norman Denzin (1997) argues, all research is interpretive, guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. As a female Nigerian researcher, my background significantly impacts how I approach studying the experiences of IDW and IOA in the region. This section delves into how my identity as a researcher affected different aspects of the study, such as participant access, data gathering, analysis and interpretation.

As a female researcher, I encountered unique challenges and advantages in the field. My gender made it easier to connect with participants and build trust during data collection (Sultana, 2007). Women viewed me as relatable and approachable, fostering openness among participants to share their stories and engage in meaningful conversations. Female respondents felt more at ease discussing topics like gender-related challenges with another woman, creating an environment conducive to collecting valuable data.

My identity as a woman with a shared heritage as the participants also influenced my fieldwork. The topic of insurgency and displacement is such a delicate and sensitive one, especially since the northeast region of the country has been disproportionately affected. As a northeasterner from the same state as several participants, our shared cultural and linguistic kinship possibly

influenced the dynamics of data collection (Sultana, 2007). One of the benefits of this similarity was that it facilitated participant trust and cooperation. However, it may have resulted in biases and assumptions, which led me to remain vigilant about maintaining objectivity throughout my time in the field. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that this shared background may have also led to certain biases and assumptions in my interpretation of the data.

As a PhD student from the UK, I faced unique challenges in the field due to my positionality. At first, there was a holdback and a kind of mistrust from the gatekeepers and participants alike. This created barriers to building rapport and, ultimately, data collection (Carling et al., 2014). To mitigate these challenges, I adopted a transparent approach and a commitment to amplify the participants' voices. I achieved this through clear communication of the purpose and the possible impact and benefit of conducting this research, showing respect for the community, and attentively listening to the participants' viewpoints without imposing any preconceived ideas or biases (Hay, 2010). However, it is important to note that complete elimination of personal influence is impossible, as all research is inherently shaped by the researcher's perspective (Denzin, 1997).

To address the potential influence of positionality on data analysis and interpretation, I rigorously applied reflexive practices throughout the research (Rose, 1997). Reflexivity entailed continuously examining and acknowledging my preconceptions, assumptions, and values that might have shaped my perspectives and interpretations of data. By steadfastly maintaining a reflexive stance, I could critically engage with my positionality, ensuring that it did not overshadow the voices and experiences of the IDW. However, in line with the interpretivist approach, I recognise that my interpretations are inevitably coloured by my own experiences and worldview (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). The emphasis on multiple

perspectives and diverse voices was a cornerstone of the research findings, underscoring the importance of reflexivity in maintaining transparency and credibility.

In conclusion, positionality, as shaped by my status and gender as a female researcher from the northeast, had a significant impact on the study of internally displaced women in Nigeria. While it offered advantages in accessing and establishing rapport with female participants, it also brought challenges related to gender-based expectations and potential biases. Engaging in reflexivity and acknowledging my positionality throughout the research was instrumental in maintaining transparency and ensuring the research findings accurately represented the participants' experiences, while recognising the inherently interpretive nature of qualitative research (Denzin, 1997).

3.9 Data Analysis

3.9.1 Searching for Meaning

In our contemporary context, data emerges and finds expression through a tapestry of emerging themes drawn from participants' narratives. The primary source of information was gleaned from interviews conducted at the dwellings of participants residing in four of Abuja's numerous informal displacement communities. These interviews were meticulously formatted throughout our research journey to allow for a specific reading approach, as van Manen (1990) delineated, focusing on isolating essential statements about the phenomenon under scrutiny. These statements were subsequently grouped based on the emergent textual themes. It is crucial to emphasise that participants play a pivotal role in shaping the outcomes of this research. Therefore, it is imperative to preserve their perspectives' authenticity while upholding our investigation's academic rigour.

In reality, the 'analysis of data' represents an ongoing, fluid process characterised by dwelling upon, opening up to, contemplating, creating, and referring back to the subject matter. This iterative process entails a continual fluctuation between establishing a framework for analysis and unveiling the unique meaning structures inherent to this phenomenon. Hence, it is worth emphasising that the phenomenon shapes our methodology; in other words, our method, rooted in phenomenological epistemology, is not solely dictated by the research question but also shaped by the primordial meaning structures resonating within the participants' voices.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2016), the primary aim of analysing data in the phenomenological study is to highlight the patterns and themes shared across the described experiences by the participants. This study used thematic analysis, which aligns with the supposition of Giorgi (2009), to identify significant themes and patterns. According to Creswell (2013), the process entails coding and categorising information from the generated data. As Creswell (2013) attested, qualitative research analysis involves continuous reflection on the collected data, writing notes, and asking analytical questions.

Thematic analysis is a commonly employed method in qualitative research to detect, interpret, and report patterns or themes within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The approach consists of a thorough procedure of becoming acquainted with the data, categorising it, identifying patterns, evaluating those patterns, defining and labelling them, and generating a report (Nowell et al., 2017). This methodical technique guarantees that the analysis is firmly based on the facts and yields a comprehensive, intricate description of the phenomenon being studied.

Following the interviews, I transcribed them while maintaining strict confidentiality and privacy for the participants. In addition, I examined the transcriptions and listened to the

audiotapes, integrating any supplementary observable details or notes that could augment the study. Coding is a crucial element of qualitative data analysis, as it allows for the methodical organisation and interpretation of the data (Saldaña, 2021). Researchers can compress large amounts of data into digestible units for analysis by using codes, which serve as labels that capture the essence of the data (Miles et al., 2014). The efficient coding process includes systematically assessing the data, assigning codes, improving or merging codes, identifying connections between codes and generating themes (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

The coding procedure was an essential and pivotal stage, which entailed the systematic assignment of labels, categorisation, and orderly arrangement of the gathered data into coherent and significant segments (Mayer, 2015). This methodology facilitated comprehension of the data and extraction of significant insights, as underlined by Creswell (2013). To accomplish this task, I employed NVivo, a computer program designed for coding, to aid in the analysis and interpretation of the data, enhancing its significance (see Appendix VII for the coding directory). Utilising computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), such as NVivo, significantly improved the efficiency and accuracy of the coding and analysis process (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). This technology enabled the effective arrangement, retention, and manipulation of substantial volumes of qualitative data. In addition, it optimised the coding process and facilitated the identification of patterns and themes from different data sources (Zamawe, 2015). To enhance my grasp of the data, I immersed myself in the unprocessed data, meticulously examining it and diligently documenting my observations. Subsequently, I implemented the two-cycle approach proposed by Ryan and Bernard (2003) and conducted iterative coding to discern emergent patterns and themes.

Once the data was coded, I conducted a thematic analysis to identify and develop overarching themes that encapsulated the primary insights and experiences generated by the coded data. This entailed carefully evaluating the codes and looking for links, patterns, and higher-level notions that could help to consolidate and synthesise the data into cohesive themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Through an iterative process of refining and consolidating the themes, I ensured that they appropriately reflected the breadth and depth of the data, providing a deep knowledge of the lived experiences of the displaced populations (Nowell et al., 2017). Through qualitative data analysis and strict adherence to established techniques, the research outcome would yield vital insights into the actual experiences of displaced people. The processes of thematic analysis and iterative coding methodologies ensured that research findings were rigorous and all-encompassing, making a substantial contribution to our comprehension of the intricate challenges encountered by IDW and IOA.

3.9.2 Engaging with the Content

Before we proceed, it is essential to clarify how the reader should interpret the coming empirical chapters. The participants' life experiences, as recounted in the interviews combined with narratives from key informants, have furnished the research with abundant source material from which we have derived the themes. It is crucial to understand that these themes are not arbitrary constructs existing independently of the narratives' meaning; instead, they are co-constituted. Each motif serves as a symbolic action meant to connect with the experiences we are investigating directly. Consequently, these themes should be perceived as constructs intimately tied to the phenomena rather than autonomous entities existing in isolation. They exist inextricably in relation to the phenomenon and have undergone continuous scrutiny to enrich their meaning further. Each reading offers a slightly different perspective in what appears to be an ever-expanding landscape of phenomenological descriptions. The following

chapters are dedicated to elucidating the research findings. Although, for the sake of clarity, I referred to the research process and outcomes as a linear progression – with methods and analysis presented as distinct components – it is imperative to acknowledge that our hermeneutic phenomenological engagement is a dynamic, circular process aimed at comprehensively understanding both the constituent elements and the entirety of the subject matter.

The formation of themes stemmed from a process of 'sensitive listening' to the meaning structures that constitute the experience of displacement for our interviewees. This form of sensitive listening is inevitably influenced by social, aesthetic, and contextual factors, as seen through my established worldview (Barrett-Lennard, 1988; DeVito, 2019; Myers, 2000). As a researcher, it is imperative to be conscious of the interplay between these two modes of comprehension: immersing oneself in and engaging with the phenomena while maintaining a reflective awareness of the dynamics shaping the situation. My perspective, presuppositions, opinions, responses, and conventional conditioned viewpoints are pivotal to understanding the research and will be explored in the forthcoming empirical chapters. Such is the essence of hermeneutic phenomenological research; a different researcher might have unearthed themes distinct from those under discussion. However, these variations do not imply that the themes are arbitrary or disconnected from the material; quite the opposite holds true. The goal is not just to copy data in a simplified way but to explore and understand the experiences in a broader context.

Consistent with the conventions of hermeneutic phenomenology, the examination of themes in the next chapters leans towards descriptive analysis, preserving proximity to the phenomena. Our focal point is the essence of the participants' intended meanings. This is accomplished

through a spectrum of communication modalities, with spoken language (emphasised in our transcript analysis) occupying a central position. Silence should not be regarded simply as the absence of words or text; it conveys essence and significance. Throughout the interviews, silences and other forms of expression, including embodied communication, played a substantive role, as we will delve into more extensively in the forthcoming chapters (Burns, 2003; Cook and Tanenhaus, 2009).

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter presents a detailed methodological approach that was carefully chosen to examine the intricate and multifaceted life experiences of IDW and IOA in Abuja, Nigeria. With the research objectives in mind, the methodological approaches offered a strong foundation for grasping the personal and shared stories of IDW and IOA, guaranteeing that their voices were at the narrative's core.

The incorporation of triangulation within the research process enhanced the depth and reliability of the data collected. Integrating the chosen qualitative techniques, such as IDI, FGDs and thematic analysis, to capture participants' lived realities allowed for a richer understanding of the complexities of the phenomenon of focus. Robust ethical considerations have guided the research process, assuring participants' dignity, respect, and sensitivities as they continue to face the challenges of displacement. The meticulous ethical standards and methodology aim to generate knowledge that is both academically and practically applicable to enhance the condition and promote understanding of the displaced groups.

As we move into the empirical chapters, the approaches considered here provide the foundation for thoroughly presenting and discussing the research findings in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. They

will give a thorough account of the experiences, difficulties, environmental health conditions, and strategies for coping with adversity that the study participants are experiencing within the framework of current literature, offering a discerning evaluation that enhances the understanding of the consequences for policy and practice.

CHAPTER 4:

VOICES FROM THE MARGINS: UNVEILING THE EXPERIENCES FROM DISPLACEMENT

4.1 Introductions

Displacement experiences are complex, and each person's path is influenced by their particular circumstances and obstacles. Building upon the theoretical underpinnings of the chosen methodology, this chapter explores the experiences of individuals who have undergone the distressing process of forced migration, revealing the challenges, strength, and ability to change that arise from marginalised circumstances. By exploring the interconnected stories of displaced women and older adults, we get a deep and personal comprehension of the intricate and multifaceted aspects that shape their everyday experiences. Their narratives surpass simple descriptions of physical displacement; they shed light on the significant influence on their perception of self, connection, and psychological welfare. By magnifying these frequently disregarded voices, we observe the extraordinary resilience of the human spirit in overcoming challenges and creating fresh significance from the aftermath of displacement.

4.2 Suffering and Struggle

4.2.1 Pre-Displacement and Flight

It is impossible to define a single facet that served as the major component of the experience of being displaced. It would be an oversimplification to attempt to do so. The ability to travel from one location to another was prominently and frequently featured. This journey is unique in that its' sharp confrontation with death compelled the individual to confront problems of

freedom, home, and belonging. However, the issue was originally primal: the need to keep one's flesh and blood intact at whatever cost.

Participants in this study reported multiple BH attacks on their families and communities, including bombings, torture, random gunfire, and arson. They noted that the attacks were frequently abrupt and unexpected, revealing the typical hit-and-run strategy adopted by most terrorists (Okoli and Lortyer, 2014). The unpredictable nature of the incidents and the subsequent loss of life was evident in the accounts of many participants. Maryam described how major attacks involving shootings, bombings, and arson left their communities littered with corpses. She said, *"We woke up, and everyone ran for their lives. There was no time to see who was safe or not. Death was all around. There was no time to mourn the dead or even bury the bodies. Running to safety."*

Talatu found it difficult to describe the killings that pursued the attack she experienced in her community. She managed to say with sighing and hissing: *"By God! When this thing started, people lost their lives. Our house near the market was full of dead bodies. I have never seen and would never like to experience that again [sighs]."* When conducting the interviews, many participants showed visible signs of distress, especially when talking about traumatic events. Some observed signs include averted gazes, trembling hands, and long pauses, signifying deep emotional impact. These non-verbal cues have reinforced the severity of what they have endured (Phillimore, 2021).

It has been estimated that Boko Haram has killed more than 66,000 people since the conflict began (Statista, 2023. See figure 4.1). This can be considered a gross underestimate, as most communities are still scattered and inaccessible. At the time of these interviews, some of

the study participants recounted that they had relatives who were missing and had no word on their whereabouts. In contrast, others were fortunate to be reunited with friends and families after a long time.

Further to losing their loved ones, the women also lost their means of subsistence when the insurgents invaded and took their clothing, food, and livestock. In addition, they ransacked stores and burned homes, churches, and mosques. The structures that were not destroyed were eventually occupied by the insurgents, who used them as living quarters, storage facilities for looted goods, or prisons for their captives.

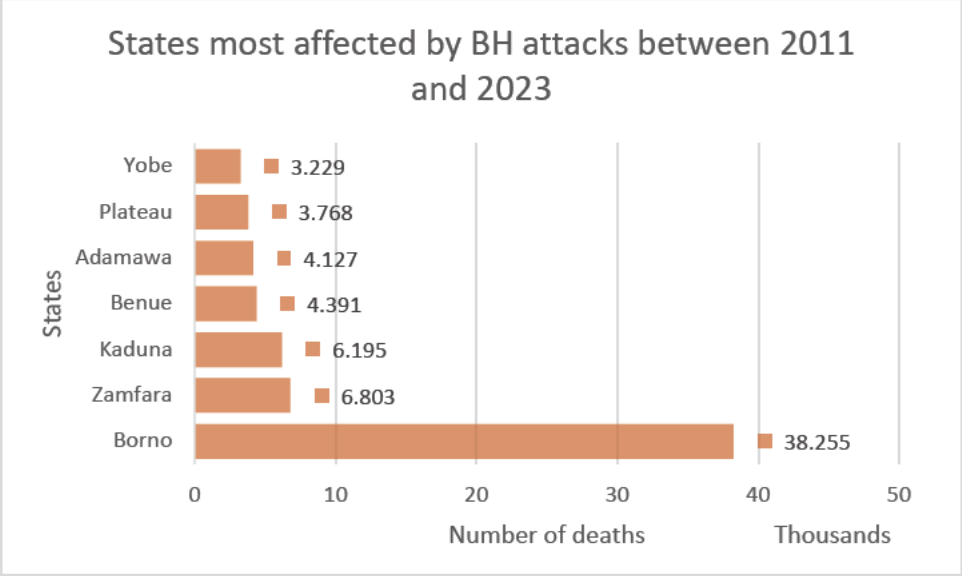


Figure 4.1: *Graph showing states most affected by BH from 2011 to 2023 (Statista, 2023).*

4.2.2 Settlement

Several participants confirmed that they knew about the existence of official IDP camps established for those affected by displacement. Others claimed there were no official refugee camps in the areas where they had looked for safety. Additionally, some respondents mentioned that the few available camps were either hard to reach or were already at capacity when they

arrived. Furthermore, they were compelled to self-settle due to a lack of identity documents verifying their IDP status. Overcrowding and the unfavourable environment of the camps are additional reasons why some IDPs choose self-settlement. Some self-settled IDPs have a negative view of camps because they perceive them to be under-resourced, unsanitary, unsafe, and overpopulated (Haver, 2008; Rohwerder, 2013). As Magda described, *"In the early days, the camps were not open. I stayed with some family relatives in Maiduguri. After my family joined me, I had to look for a place for us. That was when some friends told me about the communities in Abuja, and we came here."* This was reflected by Aina, who said: *"We couldn't find a place in the camp; the place is overcrowded."*

The participants experienced multiple displacement cycles until they arrived at their present location. Every attack-flight experience was accompanied by a period of misery and hardship, as well as the uncertainty and apprehension of further attack and displacement. Some participants reported being chased from wherever they considered it safe, bushes and forests. They frequently travelled great distances on foot in difficult weather conditions and were exposed to dangerous animals, starvation, and constant fear of assault. Sometimes, they fled without suitable attire for themselves or their children. "*We thank God for our life here as we suffered greatly before coming here. Life is not easy here, but when I remember how we stayed in the bushes for days while escaping, I do not complain. Just like when we were in the bush, we go for days here without food. The only difference is at least we are safe in the camp. What you get you have to manage it for some days. There are no jobs for people like me to do to earn a living."* (Habiba). Another participant, Sarauniya, said, *"My husband used to trade here since before the insurgency. When we left our village, I was pregnant. I went to Gombe first. There was always the threat that Boko Haram would attack the village there, so we moved again to Maiduguri, where I gave birth. After some time, my husband asked if I could join him in Abuja*

to relieve the burden on my family. Everyone was struggling to survive then." With this in mind, it is clear that some factors that influenced the move to Abuja include the perception of more safety, availability of better opportunities for self and family, and closeness to the support system and family.

According to OCHA (2015:6), the majority of global IDPs have chosen to self-settle within host communities for safety. Others stated that they decided to self-settle to remain close to family because doing so afforded them significant psychological, social, financial, and physical safety. Consequently, this makes it easier for them to endure the difficulties of displacement. Self-settlement within host communities provides additional opportunities to find work, advance one's education, cultivate food, and make new friends (Davies, 2021). International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported that IDPs in Northeast Nigeria who opted to self-settle do so because it provides them with greater autonomy, better employment opportunities, and easier access to public services (ICRC, 2016). Several examples are provided below. One of the participants, Amina, explained, "*I never planned to come to Abuja. We first moved to Madagali and then Mubi before finally coming here. We used to hear the news about Abuja, and some of our people came here for business. They told us that the government supports IDPs, so we decided to come."* Other participants have similar experiences. As Maman Baby narrated that also, "*After we were displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency, we went to Madagali. There was still unrest, and I didn't know what to do. We went back home, where I finished my mourning period after losing my husband. Life wasn't easy as all the responsibility was on me, including my aged mother. I soon realised that if I don't do something to support all of us, we will all suffer. That's when I decided to move to Abuja because there are more opportunities here."*

Another observation that emerges from interviews is the distinction between the group of self-settled IDPs who prefer self-settlement and those who were forced to self-settle. Those who fled their LGA at the outset of the insurgency, before it spiralled out of control, make up the group that opted for self-settlement. This allowed them to relocate with a substantial amount of their personal possessions and financial wealth and with less urgency. Some of them also had family and friends who encouraged them to relocate and helped throughout the process. This group has successfully integrated into the community with minimal marginalisation.

In contrast, those who were forced to self-settle were IDPs who arrived in Maiduguri later. Some of them had been displaced as refugees outside Nigeria and then as IDPs inside Nigeria. The majority of this group's IDPs discovered already overpopulated camps or camps in which nobody from their villages resided. They were compelled to self-settle due to the shortage of space in organised camps and their desire to be closer to familiar faces.

Moving beyond their captivity and departing from the mountainous and wooded areas initiated a new phase in their experience of displacement, introducing a distinct set of challenges and struggles for survival. In the forthcoming section, I will delve into the accounts of these women, focusing on their encounters with poverty, government negligence, and oppression (Ekezie et. al, 2020), as well as the conflicts they faced from other marginalised citizens and the exploitation and dehumanisation inflicted by humanitarian agencies (Johnson, 2021). This exploration will underscore the women's remarkable resilience as they resisted oppression, reclaimed their identities, and provided mutual support to each other, enabling them to persevere and maintain their sense of belonging amid displacement (Brown, 2019).

4.2.3 Exodus: Mass displacement

Researching IDP journeys presents conceptual and methodological issues that several experts have tackled. BenEzer and Zetter (2015) have observed that capturing the intricate and multidimensional structure of these movements is highly challenging, which frequently entails lengthy transitions and non-linear routes. Individuals who come to host communities to develop themselves must travel from one region to another and undergo an emotional and mental shift as they adjust to their new surroundings. While these voyages share similarities with other life transitions, it is unique due to several distinguishing characteristics.

While the decision to travel itself can be viewed as an exercise in agency, the circumstances that cause people to move frequently severely limit their options and autonomy. There is neither a sense of voluntary searching (as with existential migrants) nor an allure of a promising land (as with economic migrants). Refugees and IDPs are compelled to migrate by external forces; they are no longer able to sustain their commitment to a particular place and location because they no longer have the option to choose where to reside. Several participants characterised this "choice" as follows: They were given the ultimatum to remain in their homes and risk death or to flee to a safer location by government soldiers. This indicates that staying or leaving was a matter of life and death.

As Delaney (2004) suggests, displacement can be seen as a mode of de-subjectification, where the bodies of the displaced are objectified and acted upon by outside hostile forces. In such circumstances, individuals are stripped of their agency and autonomy, reduced to mere objects to be acted upon by powerful entities like states or armed groups. Their position as political beings with rights and self-determination is effectively undermined when they are forcibly uprooted and expelled from their homes and communities (Nyers,

2006). The decision to flee, while nominally a choice, is fundamentally coerced, with the threat of violence or death as the only alternative. Forced migration is characterised by the absence of autonomy and coercion, which sets it apart from alternative types of voluntary movement (Turton, 2003). Therefore, the displaced person's journey is not merely a vacation or an act of exploration; it is an act of flight and escape. It is not motivated by the allure of a new location but rather by the necessity of fleeing an invaded, occupied, and assaulted area. As they are forcibly uprooted and objectified by forces outside their control, their journey is marked by a severe loss of agency, political subjectivity, and power (Nyers, 2006; Delaney, 2004).

One of the participants, Fatima, described her journey from her residence to the camp and the dangers she encountered. Her physical voyage was determined by external factors, separating her from her home. In addition, she was exiled from the land she once called home due to the BH insurgents' menacing threats. This violent rejection from a once-meaningful location is her narrative's focal point: "*We were going in the bush, from the bush there actually they did not get us in the bush, but they got those near us, and we were crying…They abducted the young ones; they said: 'We are doing recruitment; give us these young boys, and we are going with them'. They took to girls and women. Even if they are not moving, when they got people in the village there, they just kill you, they just kill you, they look at you and say 'no, this man will not live'. So, when they came, they said, 'All must come today, whether you like it or not".*

In every interview, participants similarly described these arduous physical conditions. *Our lives were sorrowful in those days. We left our home, some on foot and the lucky ones in long vehicles packed inside like animals…We left our possessions, and most of our houses burned to the ground.* (Mairo). She detailed the journey's logistics, vividly describing what was abandoned, how the journey unfolded, and why she had to flee. The majority of those who fled paid a price

for their decision. Leaving a place with deep historical and cultural origins necessitated significant sacrifices. In addition to losing a vital connection to their communities and the land, they also lost ownership of their residences. The disruption of life's predictability and the security it once provided, coupled with the pervasiveness of uprootedness, started the separation of their sense of meaning. The journey had begun. The journey was also characterised by threat. Threat from all sides.

4.3 Danger from Every Direction: Persecutors or Protectors?

The lack of security emerged as a predominant motif among the participants, with GBV a particularly grave concern. The unrelenting struggle to survive in dire circumstances illuminated the human spirit's resilience, grit, and capacity for transformation. However, it made clear the vulnerability that women and girls, who were frequently being targeted for sexual assault and exploitation, faced (Ferris and Winthrop, 2010; Phillimore, 2020). For many displaced people, GBV, including rape, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence, was a common and horrific experience that made it more difficult for them to find safety and rebuild their lives (Phillimore, 2022). In this context, the battle was not a weapon-based retaliation but a struggle for survival in highly adverse conditions. Those who were once members of the community became violent offenders (Ferris and Winthrop, 2010). Government-assigned soldiers, who were tasked with protecting civilians from insurgents, allegedly murdered, tortured, and perpetrated acts of sexual violence, including rape, against the very people they were tasked with protecting (Amnesty International, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2016; Phillimore, 2021). The thefts committed by members of other tribal communities exacerbated the losses. Most participants shared these experiences, which manifested in various forms and intensities. Yar Fulani mentioned, "*We lived with fear of meeting the bad people as we made our way to safety. The soldiers who are meant to be protecting us mistreat us and force*

themselves on the women and girls. Among ourselves, we did not trust anyone…thieves everywhere. Leave your food; if you go to ease yourself, it's gone." The atmosphere during conversations about GBV was particularly fraught. Participants frequently spoke in quiet tones and looked about anxiously, indicating a persistent dread of retribution even in their current circumstances. This behaviour demonstrated the pervasiveness of the trauma and the continued difficulties in generating a sense of security. (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

GBV, perpetrated by both armed groups and those meant to provide protection, was a pervasive and traumatic reality, compounding the challenges faced by displaced individuals (Phillimore, 2021). In this context, the concept of security was severely challenged, fracturing meaning constructs and necessitating a rethinking of how participants related to individuals and groups. Friends became foes when they joined the BH group, and those who were initially perceived as protectors had to be viewed as perpetrators due to the altering power dynamics. The experience of displacement, coupled with the constant threat of GBV, compelled individuals to recalibrate their perceptions of safety and trustworthiness. *We ran up and down; no place was safe. Go into the town, Boko Haram, stay in camp, soldiers [frustrated]. People in the camps are too much in tents, so nothing is safe.* (Mairo).

Other participants, like Mairo, were confronted with an existential dilemma with only two possible answers: life or death. Their daily lives were marred by an ongoing personal struggle for survival, which disrupted the meaning structures that had previously supported them and demanded resilience and resourcefulness. However, the pervasive threat of GBV added an additional layer of trauma and insecurity, particularly for women and girls, who were often targeted due to their gender and vulnerability (Phillimore, 2021).

4.4 The Forgotten Voices: Challenges of Older Adults in Displacement

Older persons' distinctive difficulties are sometimes overlooked in the chaos of displacement; their voices are drowned out by the immense battles to survive. The upheaval of displacement can be particularly tough for this vulnerable demographic, who may suffer from physical restrictions, social isolation, and a lack of access to crucial services (Amnesty International, 2022). As Tsohuwa, an older participant, poignantly expressed with deep emotion, *"I feel completely isolated in this place. All my body aches and pains trying to maintain daily life. My children are scattered; therefore, there is no available assistance."*

IOA face a heightened vulnerability to social exclusion, feelings of isolation, and mental health disorders (Alzain and Outin, 2022). The absence of familial and societal support structures, combined with the difficulties of adapting to unfamiliar surroundings, can intensify sensations of seclusion and despair. Philipa, another older participant, expressed her solitude, stating, *"I spend my days in isolation within my tent, with no companionship or the opportunity to do any activity myself. When people like you visit, they only speak to the younger ones. It is like we don't exist."* Many older persons have deep feelings of loneliness and despair due to the erosion of social relationships and the dissolution of conventional support mechanisms.

Access to healthcare and vital services is frequently restricted in displacement contexts, exacerbating the difficulties experienced by older persons (Amnesty International, 2022). Many deal with chronic illnesses and mobility challenges, making it difficult to receive medical treatment or participate in community activities. Sendy, whose aged mother accompanied her during displacement, recalled, *"My mother's health has become worse since we left our village. The cold and dampness during the rainy season affect her. Her health has been affected. But the inadequate medical services or high cost put some strain on our circumstances."* Faiza,

another participant, expressed similar apprehensions, stating, *"Due to my father's bedridden condition, I face difficulties in adequately tending to his care. There is a shortage of heart [referring to high blood pressure] medicines, and the facilities in this place are not properly suited to manage his condition."*

The perspectives of IOA sometimes remain unnoticed since their difficulties are often eclipsed by the more pressing and conspicuous obstacles others encounter. However, their experiences are a clear and striking reminder of displacement's complex and diverse nature and the necessity for inclusive and comprehensive support systems.

4.5 The Wounds Within: Mental Well-being of IDW and IOA

Displacement trauma can have a significant and long-lasting effect on a person's mental and emotional health, especially in women and older persons. Displacement is frequently accompanied by violent, tragic, and upsetting situations that can be highly damaging, permanently altering one's mental state and causing emotional scars (Caruth, 1995; Nikro, 2014). These psychological wounds can show up as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other mental health conditions (Shultz et al., 2016; Phillimore, 2021; Mooren et al., 2020; Zena and Andharia, 2018).

Rose, a young mother, shared her struggles with PTSD and anxiety, stating*, "I can still remember my experience with BH. Some days are better than others, though. On the bad days, I find sleeping difficult, even while in the safety of this community. There is no running away from the memories."* Another participant, Aisha, expressed her constant fear and hypervigilance: *"When we arrived here, it was like we were waiting for something bad to*

happen. It took a while to settle down, but there are still days that feeling comes back… The slightest noise makes me remember."

Furthermore, the disruption of typical gender roles, as well as the additional strain of caring for responsibilities in challenging situations, might exacerbate psychological suffering and burden (Phillimore, 2022; Sossou et al., 2008; Zena and Andharia, 2018). Laraba, a participant who fled with her young children, expressed, *"All our thoughts are about our children. We worry about what they have eaten, who they are making friends with, their safety and their future living with this stigma of IDP name. Will their future be better than ours?"* Maman Balki echoed similar sentiments, *"Their fitrah (innocence) is gone. No child should experience what we have experienced. I always pray we forget, heal from our past, and find a way through our current situation. Allah will not leave us."* Throughout the interviews, I noticed several instances of individuals being emotionally overwhelmed. Tears, quiet moments, and pauses were typical, especially when discussing issues involving children. These responses underscored the enduring psychological scars that displacement inflicts, a phenomenon also observed by Shultz et al. (2016) in their research on displaced populations.

Older adults, too, carry the emotional weight of displacement, grappling with the loss of their homes, identities, and way of life. Hajjo, an older participant mentioned earlier, lamented, *"My chest is tight and heavy with grief for what we have lost. Not only the physical possessions but the memories of our village. We are here now strangers without traditions."*

Mental health support and counselling services are often scarce or non-existent in displacement settings, leaving those struggling with emotional and psychological trauma to cope alone (Shultz et al., 2016). Hajjo continued, ***"****Hmmm, who will talk to an old woman? I can't share*

my pain with anyone. Can you understand?" Another older participant, Kaka, echoed this sentiment: "*We are left to fend for ourselves. No one has ever asked me how I feel. There is no one to guide us in this new place. I fear for our future."*

The narratives of displaced women and older adults resonate with the profound impact of their ordeals, imbued with anguish, fortitude, and an ardent desire for rebuilding. The accounts they provide emphasise the critical nature of providing comprehensive mental health assistance and trauma-informed care in contexts of displacement, where the consequences of displacement frequently extend beyond superficial observations.

Conversely, due to their advanced age and physical constraints, older individuals encounter distinct obstacles that may exacerbate the psychological repercussions of displacement. Isolation, helplessness, and a loss of identity can result from the absence of familiar environments, social connections, and autonomy (Hugman et al., 2011; Sossou et al., 2008). In addition, in displacement contexts, inadequate healthcare and support services can worsen pre-existing health conditions and exacerbate the psychological distress of individuals (Sossou et al., 2008; Zena and Andharia, 2018).

Not only among the afflicted individuals but also among their families and communities, the psychological toll of displacement can have extensive repercussions. Displaced individuals' capacity to re-establish themselves, assimilate into new societies, and contribute positively to the collective welfare may be impeded by unattended mental health concerns (Mooren et al., 2020; Vu et al., 2014). Hence, it is imperative to acknowledge the distinct susceptibilities and encounters of older adults and women residing in displacement environments and to furnish

them with suitable psychological assistance and interventions that cater to their particular requirements (Hugman et al., 2011; Sossou et al., 2008).

4.6 The Toll of Displacement: Economic Hardship, Gender Roles, and Marital Dissolution

The strain of being on the move and the challenges in providing for basic needs can significantly affect marriage and family interactions. Supporting the family can be a significant source of stress and conflict within the framework of internally displaced communities when living conditions are often precarious and resources are short (Salihu et al., 2022; Amodu et al., 2020). As such, there is a higher chance of a divorce and a decline in spousal ties (Samuel and Ezeah, 2020; Salihu et al., 2022). The participant's accounts shed light on the complex interplay among gender conventions, financial hardships, and marriage dissolution in displaced people.

Divorce among the displaced communities was primarily associated with challenges in meeting family needs. Men often initiated divorce proceedings when women failed to provide for the family's sustenance. Conflicts mainly stemmed from the husbands' inability to work and contribute financially, leading them to depend on their wives as the primary or equal providers. Amina shared her experience, *"Our husbands cannot go to work to earn for the family. My husband has tried to get a job, but nothing. He started a commercial motorcycle business, but the owner returned it because my husband could not make the agreed weekly payments. We suffered a lot. As for food, we do not buy food monthly; it is daily. We must go out to work before we can feed our families".* Notably, the burden of providing for the family fell disproportionately on the women, as dictated by their husbands. Failure to fulfil this role often led to conflicts and, if unresolved, eventually resulted in divorce. This evidence is consistent

with findings from Samuel and Ezeah (2020), which revealed that most men and women in displacement camps in Nigeria divorced due to challenges in meeting basic needs while living together. Results from Salihu et al. (2022) also demonstrated increased rates of divorce among internally displaced families.

Women had to step up as providers since their husbands were either unemployed or their income was insufficient for the household's needs. Family sustenance was a primary source of conflicts that often culminated in divorce. As Hannatu shared, *"If I say we didn't suffer, I would be lying. For almost three months, we were living like this. Disagreements between husbands and wives were more frequent. In some cases, it led to divorce".* While discussing marital difficulties and divorce, many participants conveyed a mix of resignation and determination. Their body language often changed from slouched shoulders when they talked about how hard things were to more upright positions when they talked about the efforts they made to support their families. These signs of non-verbal communication reinforced the difficult emotional terrain that displaced women must negotiate (Samuel and Ezeah, 2020).

Although these situations frequently result in heightened difficulties and disagreements inside marriages, it is crucial to acknowledge that women's roles during and after conflicts can be complicated. As Yadav (2020) contends, women can occasionally receive new opportunities for agency and empowerment when conventional gender roles are disrupted in conflict and post-conflict settings. In the case of this study, nevertheless, the extra duties frequently came with more difficulties and hardships than with obvious advantages. These responses consistently show that a woman's failure to provide for the family was leveraged by her husband as grounds for divorce. The findings demonstrate that marital conflicts were rising due to frustration, stress, and tension between spouses, particularly undermining their well-

being. Equally, findings by Salihu et al. (2022) and Amodu, Richter, and Salami (2020) suggest that divorce in displacement camps in Nigeria often occurs due to the limited capacity of partners to cope with stress, anxiety and post-traumatic disorders. Divorce is considered a last resort for averting risks of harm or intensified conflicts between partners (Salihu et al., 2022). Interventions designed to address these problems must be tailored to address the mental health needs and socioeconomic conditions of internally displaced persons, fostering a supportive environment for family stability and well-being.

The problem of divorce within displaced groups is complex. It has its origins in the convergence of socioeconomic difficulties, mental health issues, and the difficulties of adjusting to life in displacement camps. This serves as a clear reminder of the extensive repercussions of forced displacement, which go beyond the immediate physical and material needs of those impacted.

4.7 Conclusion

The stories shared in this chapter are a powerful reminder of the complex difficulties displaced individuals face, especially women and older adults. Although each individual's experiences are distinct, they all have a shared quality of perseverance, fortitude, and an unwavering will to find purpose while uprooted. The voices from marginalised groups emphasise the immediate necessity for comprehensive support systems that tackle the physical aspects of displacement and the profound psychological and emotional effects. We may cultivate heightened empathy, comprehension, and support for developing inclusive and trauma-informed therapies by magnifying these narratives. In essence, this chapter encourages us to fully accept and appreciate the profound impact of these stories, motivating us to envision a world where those forced to leave their homes are not simply survivors but agents of positive transformation.

Their voices serve as a powerful plea for fairness, respect, and a collective sense of being human.

CHAPTER 5:

LIVING IN THE MARGINS: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REALITIES FOR THE DISPLACED

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main results and analysis of an empirical study investigating the environmental health of living situations for internally displaced women and older adults living in informal settlements. The chapter discusses how various elements, such as housing, sanitation, hygiene, waste management, and pest control, impact the health and well-being of disadvantaged groups, in line with the Social Determinants of Health (SDH) framework. A vital concern defined by international standards and human rights principles is guaranteeing displaced people access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. Drawn from the human right to water and sanitation, the Sphere Minimum Standards include standards like giving each person a minimum of 15-20 litres of safe water per day and a maximum of 20 people per toilet/latrine in an emergency (The Sphere Project, 2018). National governments and humanitarian agencies have the obligation to comply with these WASH criteria. They are also responsible for advocating for good hygiene practices and including displaced people, particularly women, in the planning and administration of WASH facilities (UNHCR, 2008; Reed, 2011). Noncompliance with these WASH laws might result in significant public health ramifications for susceptible populations such as IDPs living in informal settlements (Ramesh et al., 2015).

The results illustrate the problematic living conditions experienced by participants, including overcrowded and substandard housing, lack of privacy, shared sanitation facilities,

inappropriate waste disposal, and bug infestations. The deteriorated quality of temporary housing provides minimal defence against severe weather, while damaged infrastructure heightens security risks. Restrictions on toilet access and hygiene cause many people to resort to open defecation, increasing the likelihood of infectious diseases. Unsanitary waste disposal practices, such as depositing garbage in neighbouring rivers, lead to water contamination and related health problems. Pest disruptions worsen comfort and increase mental stress, an overall threat to health.

The debate places these findings in the broader conversation about vulnerabilities associated with displacement and examines how unstable living conditions hinder the well-being of marginalised populations. It highlights how sanitation difficulties are influenced by gender, leading to higher chances of harassment and violence. Previous studies regarding the effects of insufficient housing, sanitation, and waste disposal on physical and mental health are referenced. More specialised interventions and policy initiatives are needed to improve the living standards of displaced communities.

5.2 Living Conditions

5.2.1 Housing and Shelter

The participants` responses demonstrate that they live under disturbing conditions. The living conditions were also linked to suffering due to limited facilities, a situation that forced families to share basic facilities such as toilets. For instance, Habiba said, *"There is only suffering in this rented house,"* suggesting they are under distressing conditions. Arguably, the conditions undermined their well-being, as demonstrated by the reference to suffering. The response is corroborated by sentiments from Saratu, who said, *"There are five families where we stay, and*

we use the same facilities. Maybe in the future, it will be separated as there is provision for expansion".

However, unlike Habiba, Saratu expressed optimism by suggesting that more facilities can be constructed to provide extra room for their use. Nonetheless, further evidence from Badiya reiterates that the displaced families live under strained and devastating conditions characterised by limited living space. *"We rent it. Five other families live within the compound. We have one room, and towards the front, we extended it with bacha*[1] *(cement bags sewn together) to make a living room."* Likewise, Mami said, *"We all live in cramped spaces, no privacy…We have so many people living in a small space. Parents living with their older children in one room. It is not ideal"*. This confirms the inadequacy of the living space, which needs to be more significant to accommodate all the families. Sharing a compound also implies that the living space is likely congested. For example, as stated by Favour, sharing facilities undermines the families' privacy, especially in cases where they live with their children. It is also important to consider the unique challenges faced by vulnerable groups, such as women and children, in environments with limited privacy. The evidence is supported by Larai, who said, *"Living here as a young woman is difficult and stressful. Everything we have does not come easy. I would not say I like it. Our rooms are small and crowded, making keeping things clean and tidy difficult. You have no privacy"*.

[1]Bacha is the Hausa term for temporary structures made with empty cement bags, tarps, cardboard, or other such materials held up by branches or pieces of wood and zinc sheet. See Figure 5.3 for an example.



Figure 5.1: *One room bacha for a family of 8 without privacy for parents and children. Source Author*

Privacy is a notable worry for participants and their families living in confined and congested conditions (see Figure 5.1). The inadequacy of suitable living accommodations and the requirement to share amenities with many homes significantly diminish their privacy and dignity. This discovery is consistent with the findings of various studies on the obstacles that displaced communities confront in such contexts. The lack of privacy in packed camps and shelters can be harmful to the protection and well-being of displaced people, particularly women and girls who are more vulnerable to GBV and exploitation (Corsellis and Vitale, 2005; Newell, 1995). As a cornerstone of guaranteeing the safety and dignity of displaced people, the writers stress the need to offer sufficient living space and protect privacy. Similar effects of crowding and lack of privacy on IDPs' mental health and psychosocial well-being are highlighted in a 2008 report by the Norwegian Refugee Council and the research of Evans (2003), especially in circumstances of prolonged displacement.

Furthermore, the inability to escape the constant scrutiny of others can hinder personal growth, self-expression, and the development of individual identity, which are crucial aspects of healthy psychological development (Altman, 1975). The research highlights the need for humanitarian interventions, giving the provision of sufficient housing and living conditions that protect the privacy and dignity of displaced people a top priority. Additionally, a Sphere Association (2018) study emphasises the need to follow the Sphere minimal Standards for shelter and settlement. These standards outline the minimal requirements for covered living space and privacy that must be met for populations who have been displaced. The study emphasises the harmful consequences of insufficient living circumstances on the health, safety, and general welfare of IDPs, especially women, children, and other susceptible populations.

The participants' sentiments consistently show that the living space is not ideal but also highlight that communal living has benefits, like added security and childcare; as Larai added, "*Everyone in the compound can see what you do. In other ways, this is helpful as your neighbours can monitor your things when you are not around"*. Further evidence suggests that the dilapidated nature of the house they live in. The inadequate living space, as evidenced by shared facilities and makeshift shelters, aligns with the existing literature on the impact of internal displacement on living conditions (Ekezie, 2022; Cernea, 1997).

The respondents expressed concerns over the ventilation of the room and the fact that it lacked a door. "*We do not have a door to our house. Others in our compound have doors, and they always ask how we manage them. It gets too hot if we close the door, and no air comes in. Life is tough. The houses here are not good, and the rent is so expensive. We pay N70000 [approximately GBP 130] per year for one room only; it is too small for us,"* Hamma said. The response demonstrates the challenging living conditions. In particular, the house seems to need

more proper ventilation despite being small. This risks inhabitants' health and well-being and encourages disease spread (Grafiati, 2022; Claudio, 2007). Wachika said, "*Our homes are made of sacks and cardboard, offering little protection against the natural environment. When it rains, our bedding gets soaked. During the dry season, it gets so hot…It is also challenging during rainy season due to leaking roof".*



Figure 5.2: *A typical camp-like dwelling made from tarp, branches and wood. Source Author*

Equally, Maman Yusuf from a different settlement asserted, *"During the rainy season, we suffer as our rooms leak. As you can see, the houses here are bacha (makeshift homes). The sacks, board, and zinc cannot withstand harsh weather."* The responses indicate that the temporary houses do not protect them against adverse weather conditions. These sentiments resonate with a reaction from Hafsa: "*I sleep well most of the time. But during the rainy season, I do not sleep. The strong winds feel like they will blow down the room. The roofs leak, and water seeps from the sides of the bacha*." On the other hand, the lack of a door on the temporary

houses predisposes the occupants to insecurity and even property loss. These reports of fear and insecurity described by those living in homes with no or damaged doors (see figure 5.2) underscore the importance of secure and stable shelter for mental well-being (Okon, 2018; HelpAge, 2012).

Hajiya also described a precarious situation concerning their housing. *"We paid N5000 [GBP 9] for a plot of land to build a bacha with the agreement that when the owners want their land back, we will move."* Like Hajiya, Hamma paid for space they would only use for a temporary house, increasing their vulnerability and uncertainty. Moreover, the disparity in housing conditions between those living in formal block houses and those in makeshift shelters highlights the unequal distribution of resources among displaced populations. The fear and insecurity reported by those living in dilapidated block houses due to broken doors underscore the importance of secure and stable shelter for mental well-being (Okon, 2018; HelpAge, 2012). The uncertainty regarding the permanence of their housing arrangements adds a layer of stress to the lives of IDPs, aligning with previous research on the challenges of displacement-induced insecurity (Cernea, 1997).

This insufficient and unsafe housing may potentially contribute to a phenomenon referred to as the "geography of fear," in which residents feel more susceptible to anxiety and a feeling of helplessness as a result of their surroundings (Pain, 2000). The combination of deteriorating housing conditions and the persistent risk of being evicted or displaced again can intensify sentiments of apprehension, lack of control, and instability, thereby exacerbating the decline in psychological health (Tulloch, 2008). The "geography of fear" notion emphasises how geographical locations and residential surroundings can influence individuals' emotional and psychological encounters. Within the framework of displacement and substandard housing, the

apprehension of crime, violence, or additional disruption can permeate everyday existence, constraining the ability to move freely and negatively affecting mental well-being (Pain, 2001). To tackle the issue of the "geography of fear," it is necessary to enhance both the physical infrastructure and the development of a feeling of safety, stability, and authority over one's living surroundings (Bannister and Fyfe, 2001).

Further response also demonstrated that their houses were unsafe since they could easily be destroyed by fire, given that they were built from cardboard, wood and cement bags. *"There were electricity sparks recently because of strong winds, and almost 16 Bacha houses burned. Thankfully, no one was harmed, but the families lost everything…again"* (Jummai). Thus, their homes are susceptible to damage by natural elements. The vulnerability of these informal settlements to environmental risks, such as fire outbreaks, further exacerbates the precarious living situation (Grafiati, 2022; Claudio, 2007).

Although bacha housing is more prevalent, some participants reported having houses made from clay bricks and concrete blocks. Rabi said*, "It is made up of traditional clay blocks and modern-day cinder blocks. We used zinc sheets for the roofing."* Participants who lived in homes made of blocks and zinc sheets considered themselves fortunate for having a better shelter*. "We are fortunate to have block housing. We do not worry about the rains, cold nights, or the winds. It is made up of blocks."* Beeba. Nonetheless, upon viewing the block houses, these are also in decrepit conditions, as evidenced by broken doors that predispose families to fear of attacks, robbery, and property loss. *"We live in constant fear, mostly for our lives and the little property. Our door is broken so we cannot lock it. Every day, I fear someone can enter the house at night. The main entrance into our house does not have a door either. We use sheets and sacks sewn together to cover it"* (Noor).

The evidence reveals that despite some families living in formal houses with better structures made from blocks, the homes are dilapidated to the extent of failing to offer occupants the desired level of security and comfort. The displaced persons live in uncertainty, given the challenges they experience in their residences. For instance, temporary living spaces indicate limited surety and increase the precarity and vulnerability of their situation. MU said in one of the settlements, ' "*As people arrive, we provide them with an empty plot of land. They can then build and settle their families. The land is available for us, but we warn them that it is not permanent and that the government can demolish and take back it anytime".*



Figure 5.3: *Entrance to communal living arrangement for several families. Source Author*

The lives of the displaced families were uncertain because they remained at risk of further displacement and loss of their shelter. For example, the women leader substantiated that, *"We first lived in Bacha before we got to build a house. Our house was demolished a month ago, and we moved into another Bacha. If an individual is opportune financially, they can build a house"*. Their response cements the evidence that the housing and shelter for the displaced

families are temporary; thus, they lived in uncertainty and scepticism about having a shelter in the future (see figure 5.3).

5.2.2 Toilet Access and Use

A notable challenge from participants at the sites visited was the need for more toilets and facilities to be shared. "*There are five families where we stay, and we use the same facilities"* (Esther). Communal living (see figure 5.3) means that families and neighbours share all the basic facilities, but participants were more particular by referring specifically to sharing a toilet. As stated by Mairo, *"Several families come together to share the toilet. All the families use it. We then take turns keeping it clean"*. Likewise, Tsigai substantiated that. *"We have a general toilet here. One for males and the other for females…We share the facilities, but ideally, we need more. But we are satisfied with having the one to use".*

The findings regarding toilet access and use emphasise the challenges displaced individuals face, particularly regarding hygiene and sanitation. Shared toilet facilities, as reported by participants, contribute to privacy concerns, increased vulnerability to infections, and even GBV during toilet use. The reluctance to use communal toilets due to cleanliness issues reflects the inadequacy of existing sanitation infrastructure, consistent with studies highlighting the importance of proper sanitation in displacement settings (WHO, 2018; UNHCR, 2020b). Their responses suggest that several families of adults and children shared a toilet in a community. Sharing in such numbers increases the likelihood of poor hygiene and likely vulnerability to contagious infections (Adesina, 2021).

On the contrary, some participants had personal family toilets within houses. Therefore, they only shared among family members, which was better than cases where different families

shared a toilet. *"We share a toilet in the house. My family and I alone occupy the house. We have a toilet by the side over there"*. Laraba. The response resonates with sentiments from a few other participants. One shared, *"My family has a toilet for our use. It is not much, but at least it serves the purpose"*. (Inna).

However, unlike other respondents, Maman Baby expressed the desire to have separate toilets—the lack of personal family toilets for some participants further compounds privacy issues. "*We prefer to have separate toilets from our children as we did back home to provide privacy"*. In essence, sharing a toilet undermined parents' privacy. Nonetheless, some completely lacked toilets, suggesting the families' sharing was better. The older participants, like Zainab, added, *"I do not have a toilet. I used to go to my son's house to ease myself. Before, I would feel uncomfortable, but now it has become okay"*. Like Zainab, Momi's family had no toilet but instead practised open defecation. *"We do not have access to a toilet here. We usually go to the bush to ease ourselves"*.

The inadequate toilet facilities, reliance on communal WASH facilities (see figure 5.6), and open defecation practices observed in communities have been shown to harm health and well-being (WHO, 2021b). These conditions increase the risk of communicable diseases such as cholera and typhoid due to unhygienic living conditions (CDC, 2023) and lead to limited utilisation of available toilets due to poor hygiene practices and misuse. Furthermore, instances of women experiencing abuse while using or cleaning toilets further impede access to these essential facilities. *"We usually go to the bush to ease ourselves. A toilet is built purposely for our people but is not very pleasant. It is difficult to keep clean; there is a risk of getting infections. They make it the women's responsibility to clean the toilets. It is also far away from the settlement. We have heard of girls getting abused there. So we prefer going to the bushes,"*

Safiya said. Her remark emphasises the alarming fact that girls and women are at risk of abuse not only in designated toilet facilities but also in outdoor areas where they are compelled to relieve themselves due to the insufficient and unhygienic conditions of the existing toilets. The absence of secure and private sanitation choices exposes people to potential instances of physical and sexual abuse, hence increasing their susceptibility (Sommer et al., 2015).



Figure 5 4: *Bushes used for Indiscriminate dumping of refuse and open defecation. Source Author*

The apprehension of being subjected to abuse in restrooms and outside areas contributes to the "geography of fear" (Pain, 2000), which limits the movement and autonomy of vulnerable groups. This confinement limits them to settings viewed as more secure but may possibly undermine their sense of self-worth and overall welfare. This scenario illustrates the intersectionality of GBV, insufficient infrastructure, and the preservation of societal norms that unfairly assign a greater responsibility for sanitary activities to women (Sweetman and Medland, 2017).

Gender-specific vulnerabilities, such as the risk of abuse during toilet use, align with the broader literature on the unique challenges faced by displaced women (Adesina, 2021; Save the Children, 2019). The preference for using bushes instead of communal toilets due to cleanliness concerns reveals a critical gap in sanitation facilities' adequacy. It highlights the need for targeted interventions to ensure dignified and safe toilet access for displaced populations. Therefore, the displaced people are at a higher risk of hygiene-related ailments that might further undermine their well-being. For instance, Mary said, *"We have our bathroom around that place, but we do not have a toilet. We go to the bushes to ease ourselves. We go in groups because sometimes the boys from the nearby settlements can attack us*". Falmata added*, "The toilet is for the whole camp, so you can imagine how dirty it is. Most people prefer to use the bushes. We try to wash it often, but still not enough*". The responses consistently show that sharing has made it challenging to use toilets despite their availability since they are usually dirty (UNHCR, 2020b). The participants from the FGD specifically expressed concerns about the challenge of maintaining the cleanliness of the bathrooms. *"We use the communal toilets. Some donors used to supply Izal (disinfectants) to clean the bathrooms. Without the Izal, we cannot use it. The odour is bad, and we fear all sorts of infections and diseases. To make it bearable, some of the women come together to clean*". (Binta).

These findings align with Asabe et al. (2022), who found that the lack of pit latrines and poor water hygiene practices in camps/camp-like settings predispose individuals to waterborne diseases. However, in contrast to the present study's findings of an available water supply, Ekezie et al. (2019) reported that most displaced camps face water scarcity. Additionally, Ifeanyichukwu et al. (2022) highlighted that water shortages pose a significant challenge in camps/camp-like settings in desert areas. The evidence demonstrates that water scarcity in

camps impedes hygiene practices, such as routine cleanliness and using clean water for food preparation.

Two important factors related to the upkeep and usability of shared lavatory facilities are highlighted in the response: the cooperation of women in cleaning the toilets and the support given by donors in providing cleaning materials. The accessibility of sanitation materials, including disinfectants denoted as "Izal" in the quotation, is critical for maintaining the cleanliness and functionality of communal restrooms. The participants expressed their dependence on the benevolent supplies, affirming, *"We are unable to use it without the Izal."* The aforementioned reliance on external assistance highlights the inadequate resources and how difficult it is to maintain even the most basic hygienic amenities (Sphere Association, 2018). This calls into question the long-term viability of these arrangements because donor funding may sporadically or cease altogether, depriving communities of the resources they need to keep their environments clean.

In addition, the responses highlight the women's cooperative efforts to clean the shared restrooms. *"Some of the women come together to clean,"* as Binta put it, emphasises the informal networks of support and group strategies used to deal with the difficulties of upholding hygiene. This group effort exposes the gendered aspect of sanitation tasks in addition to the community's resiliency and resourcefulness (Sweetman and Medland, 2017). According to Amnesty International (2010), women appear to bear a disproportionate amount of the responsibility of cleaning communal facilities, which contributes to gender inequality by increasing their already heavy labour and responsibilities.

In essence, most communal toilets are often untidy and smelly, discouraging people from using them due to the fear of contracting infections. The same sentiments were echoed by Asabe, who said, *"To be honest, flushing toilets do not last long because many use them. Before you know it, they get broken. It is also impossible to keep them clean. So now, the majority of us use the bushes to ease ourselves. Due to congestion and overpopulation, the condition of the toilet is unbearable."*. Nonetheless, using bushes as an alternative to toilets also predicts a likelihood of deadly outbreaks that might affect all displaced persons (Adesina, 2021).

5.3 Interaction with the Environment

5.3.1 Waste Management and use of chemicals

The central emphasis of this research was the administration of domestic refuse, particularly the methods of disposing of solid and effluent waste in displacement environments. Ensuring the appropriate management and elimination of household waste—including solid refuse resulting from daily domestic activities and wastewater from washing and food preparation—is of paramount importance in safeguarding environmental integrity and minimising potential hazards to the welfare of displaced and surrounding communities. Effective waste management is crucial for maintaining environmental health in these areas, as different methods can have an impact on the well-being of displaced communities. Although certain individuals are able to manage wastewater disposal via gutters efficiently, others encounter difficulties that may result in water pollution and the subsequent health hazards that accompany open dumping, including the breeding of vectors and pests (WHO, 2020; UNHCR, 2007). This highlights the importance of implementing comprehensive waste management plans in areas where people have been displaced (UN-Habitat, 2015; WHO, 2020).

Evidence on waste management proved inadequate since the majority acknowledged using gutters to dispose of wastewater (see figure 5.5). Respondents declared that they had pipes for the disposal of wastewater, which connects to gutters by the roads. They dispose of the trash in bags or containers for collection by *Mai bola*[2]. For example, Sikira said, *"The dirty water from our washing and food preparation is then poured into pipes that lead to the gutter outside"* Likewise, Mary pointed out, "*Like after washing our clothes or plates, we pour the dirty water down the drain that empties into the gutter outside"*.



Figure 5.5: Dishwashing area in participant's home with drainpipe to the back of the property. Source *Author*

In Kabusa and New Kuchigoro, wastewater is poured into the open space. Indo from New Kuchigoro said, "*We usually pour it (wastewater) in the open space where we wash"*. Her response is consistent with other shared sentiments, like from Sendy: *"We pour dirty water in the open space at the back. The other household waste, we dump it at the forest where we ease*

[2] Local refuse collectors that go house to house and collect household waste for a fee.

ourselves". In essence, managing wastewater in all sites visited was a significant problem because they needed a designated place to dispose of it. Despite the challenge, participants' sentiments regarding bathroom wastewater disposal proved promising. One remarked that waste management had been improved among the displaced families at Area 1. Controlling wastewater run-off is no longer a problem due to the availability of gutters. "*Bathrooms have been renovated so there is proper drainage for the wastewater. Not all of us use the bathroom, though; there are few bath stalls and many of us. Most of us still use the improvised bathrooms. For that one, the wastewater flows out into the open gutter."* Zara (See Figure 5.6). Accordingly, it can be inferred that managing wastewater at Kabusa and New Kuchigoro was a significant problem that predicted land pollution and contagious outbreaks (UNEP, 2022).



Figure 5.6: *Washroom made from cement bags and branches with bath runoff directly into the streets.* *Source Author*

Solid waste management improved since the waste was not dumped within residential areas. Instead, solid waste is collected by households and disposed of away from residential areas.

"We keep the refuse in a bag (empty cement bags), sacks, or dustbin. We pay refuse collectors money to dispose of the refuse, and they used to come around often. The quantity of your refuse determines the amount you will pay for it" (Talatu). The response is consistent with Shatu's sentiments*: "We usually sweep, wash the veranda, and wipe it dry. As for rubbish, we put it in sacks, plastic containers, or dustbins. Some young people collect it and dispose of it. They take the rubbish away for a price."*

On the contrary, waste disposal envisages land and water pollution. However, some respondents did not mention where solid waste is disposed of; most mentioned that the waste is dumped in nearby rivers and open landfills close to a water source. *"The Mai Bola takes the waste to the river. As for me, I take my trash myself. I cannot afford to pay them all the time. It is not very far from here."* Sadiya. Similarly, another participant asserted, "*There is an empty plot of land where it is dumped beside a stream. They then set fire to it when it gets big*" (Amina). The inappropriate disposal of solid waste, including the act of depositing waste in rivers, establishing landfills in close proximity to water sources, and engaging in open burning, gives rise to considerable apprehensions over air pollution and its related health consequences. Open waste burning emits dangerous pollutants into the air, including particulate matter, dioxins, and other toxic compounds, putting local inhabitants' respiratory health at risk (Wiedinmyer et al., 2014). Furthermore, the proximity of these dumping sites to water bodies raises the risk of water pollution, which can spread waterborne diseases and exacerbate environmental deterioration (UN Environment, 2019).

Per the evidence, the displaced community embraces some solid waste management. However, there are water pollution risks as the waste is disposed of along and inside rivers near their residence (IOM, 2021; WHO, 2020; Gouda et al., 2019; UNEP, 2018). All site two respondents

confirmed that they collected their solid waste and disposed of it in the forest (refer to figure 5.4 and 5.8) from where it was burnt upon accumulating. "*We usually dispose of all rubbish in the forest, and someone sets it on fire occasionally*", (Kemi). Further evidence buttresses that site two residents dumped their solid waste in the forest, where it was burnt. *"After sweeping and tidying up for the day, we take any rubbish into the forest. We pile it there, and sometimes, we set fire to it"* (Christy).

While the approaches used by the displaced families prove reliable in tidying their living space, they have profound negative implications on the surroundings, with a likelihood of the effects undermining their well-being. For instance, burning wastes produces greenhouse gases that might affect their respiration (EPA, 2023; WHO, 2021b). On the other hand, waste disposal in streams predicts water pollution that is likely to cause waterborne diseases among the population (UNEP, 2022; CDC, 2023). Therefore, the people live under intense vulnerability, predicting increased uncertainty about their survival upon settlement in temporary residential areas (UNHCR, 2021b; IOM, 2022).

During field observations, significant accumulations of unattended refuse were noted in multiple locations throughout the settlements, frequently in proximity to residential zones. The pervasive odour of burning refuse could be smelled, signifying the prevalent practice of open burning. Stagnant water accumulates in pools around trash dump sites, potentially acting as breeding grounds for disease vectors. These observations align with the results of a study conducted by UN Environment (2019), which emphasised the environmental and health hazards linked to inadequate waste management in settlements of displaced individuals.

5.3.2 Pest Management and Control

Pest infestations, particularly rodents like rats and bedbugs, add another layer of complexity to the challenges faced by the inhabitants. Rats and mice are known to spread diseases like leptospirosis, salmonellosis, and hantavirus infections (WHO, 2023). These pests are typically connected with filthy circumstances and improper waste management, which create ideal conditions for their proliferation (Battersby, 2004). The problems participants described in controlling pests underline the necessity for appropriate pest management measures in informal settlements. The disruptive influence of pests on daily life, particularly sleep problems, highlights the mental health consequences of living in such situations (Jones and Brown, 2020; James et al., 2014). The unpleasant presence of bugs reduces comfort levels in their temporary quarters, often demanding intensive pest control techniques that may involve the using harmful chemicals for health.

There were concerns about pests and their impact on the well-being of women and their families. They cannot control rodents such as rats in their living area as they eat into the houses. *"Also, the way the living room structure is, we cannot prevent the rats from coming in. They simply eat their way in. It makes me worry if our food or water has been contaminated."*(Aina). Pests posed a considerable threat at both study sites, with cockroaches, rats, and bedbugs particularly problematic. Cockroaches have the ability to transmit a range of diseases, such as gastroenteritis, dysentery, and poliomyelitis, via contaminating food and surfaces (Baumholtz et al., 1997). Rats serve as carriers for diseases like as leptospirosis, salmonellosis, and hantavirus infections, which present substantial health hazards (WHO, 2023). Although bedbugs are not recognised as disease vectors, they can elicit allergic reactions, skin rashes, and psychological anguish (Doggett et al., 2018). These pests compelled the majority of residents to employ pesticides and insecticides. However, these measures were ineffective as

the pests developed resistance and quickly reappeared after treatments. This finding aligns with research by White (2019), Okwa and Omoniyi (2010), and Onyima (2013), which similarly reports on the challenges of controlling pests in such environments. Specifically, rats, which are particularly difficult to control, have been shown to destroy food and other property, exacerbating the hardship faced by IDPs.

Table 5.1: Summary of Pest Presence regarded as an issue from IDI.

Site	Total number Interviewees	Mentions of Rats	Mentions of Bedbugs	Mentions of Cockroaches	Combinations Mentioned
Site 1	10	6	4	3	Rats, bedbugs, cockroaches (2); Rats and bedbugs (1); Cockroaches only (1)
Site 2	10	6	1	2	Not detailed
Site 3	7	7	0	0	Not detailed
Site 4	5	2	0	1	Not detailed

Table 5.1 outlines the results from individual interviews, detailing the number of mentions for each type of pest per site. In Site 1, out of ten interviews, six participants noted rats as a nuisance, bedbugs by four, and cockroaches by three. Intriguingly, individual reports had overlapping pest concerns: two participants mentioned all three pests, one discussed rats and bedbugs, and one noted only cockroaches (Doggett et al., 2012). Sites 2, 3, and 4 showed varying levels of pest mentions, with rats consistently identified across all sites, indicating a widespread issue with this particular pest (Deutsch et al., 2020).

Table 5.2: Summary of Pest Presence from FGD

Site	Pests Regarded as an Issue
Site 1	Rats, Bedbugs
Site 2	Rats
Site 3	Rats
Site 4	Rats, Bedbugs, Cockroaches

The focus group discussions (Table 5.2) further emphasised the findings from the individual interviews. In Site 1, rats and bedbugs were repeatedly highlighted as significant problems, aligning with personal responses (Robinson, 2011). Site 2 and Site 3 focus groups identified rats as the sole pest concern, supporting the fact that the interview data showed a high mention of rats (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2016). Site 4's discussions identified issues with all three studied pests—rats, bedbugs, and cockroaches—suggesting a more diverse pest problem (Portnoy et al., 2019).

The participants expressed challenges in the management of pests. Among the uncontrollable pests are rats, bedbugs, and cockroaches. Participants cited difficulties in controlling the pests because they eventually return even after applying poisonous chemicals that kill them. Rats were considered especially troublesome as they destroyed their belongings and contaminated food. According to Larai, rats were a menace to them, and they had limited control over them. *"My main problem is with rats. I hear them moving around in the ceiling, sometimes keeping me awake. If our resources allow, we use rat poison. This is helpful for a while," Larai said.*

Likewise, Bola acknowledged disruption by pests that they found hard to control due to the structural makeup of their housing: *"We had the problem with bedbugs before. I was then told about a chemical called Sniper, which we mix with kerosene and apply inside the room. I had to peel off the carton lining of the room, spray the chemical mixture and put in the new lining before we could get rid of the bugs. The rats are everywhere. They do not come out in the afternoon, but we hear them on the ceilings and moving about at night. It gets scary sometimes and keeps us awake"*. When insecticides and kerosene are mixed and applied indoors, significant health risks are associated with inhaling poisonous fumes and possible flammability issues (Owens, 2015). Concerns have been expressed regarding the application of hazardous pesticide mixtures in displacement settings, as evidenced by a case study conducted in refugee camps in Thailand (Ecology Asia, 2018). In temporary shelters, refugees have been documented to have employed extremely hazardous chemicals for pest control, such as malathion and permethrin. These chemicals were frequently used without adequate ventilation or protective gear, resulting in instances of acute pesticide toxicity and enduring health hazards.

Essentially, the rat poison used to control the rats in their house was not a long-term pest management remedy. Likewise, the response from Kuluwa also demonstrated that rats were a significant menace despite mosquitoes also proving to be a nuisance to them. They also expressed concerns over difficulties in controlling rats as they eventually emerged even after baiting them with poison. *"We have all sorts of insects like mosquitoes, but rats are the most disturbing. We use chemicals to treat them. Even when we treat our house and others don't, it is like we have done nothing. Also, the way the living room structure is, we cannot prevent the rats coming in"*. A significant challenge is that even if they apply rat poison to bait the pests, rats from neighbourhoods where they are not managed still enter their homes. As another participant expressed, "*I try to use rat bombs (rat poison) whenever I can afford it. It keeps*

them away for a while. Sometimes, the rats know what we are trying to do and avoid the poisoned food (laughing) (Sarauniya).

In addition, other participants acknowledged that bedbugs were also in their houses, severely undermining their well-being. *"The bed bugs are disturbing us, but I use kerosene and sniper (insecticide) to kill them. I have never known about bedbugs until we came here," Joy said*. Others were more successful in managing the bedbug population in their homes. Per the responses, in some cases, controlling the bedbug population was more straightforward than managing the rats.

Rodent management is a persistent issue reported across all sites that is proving challenging to control. *"Yes. We usually use pia-pia[3] to control the rats. They eat and die. After some time, the rats return, and we cannot always afford to buy rat poison," Aisha said*. Shala noted that some rats avoid poison. *"The rats are something else; they destroy our clothes. The rats are clever and sometimes do not eat the poisoned food we keep out. The chemicals are not always successful"*. Accordingly, this destruction leads to a direct loss of provisions and increases vulnerability to infections, further degrading the quality of life within the camps. Moreover, Okwa and Omoniyi (2010) highlight that lice also represent a significant challenge in IDP settlements in Nigeria. Thus, effective pest management remains a critical but unresolved issue in these settings, leaving IDPs susceptible to pest-related infections and losing essential resources, such as food, significantly undermining their quality of life. It is worth mentioning that storing rat poisons or other chemicals in the house is hazardous. Some women reported *"putting the chemicals out of reach"* of their children. This is a significant hazard for children

[3] Pia-pia is the Hausa term used for a chemical formulation used as a rat and rodent poison.

since they may unintentionally consume or come into contact with these poisonous substances, resulting in potential incidences of poisoning (Rother, 2010).

They also acknowledged the importance of maintaining good environmental hygiene but reported that it took more work to maintain cleanliness in their situations. "*Keeping our home clean brings me joy and reminds me of how I care for my big house in the village. Here, it can be challenging. All our belongings and food are in the same place. We sweep and air our beddings in the sun. During the rainy season, we have more bedbugs because everywhere is damp, and I cannot take out our things air".* Badiya.

These findings highlight the different pest dynamics across the sites and underscore the need for targeted pest management strategies. The consistency between individual interview data and focus group discussions enhances the reliability of the findings and provides a solid foundation for future interventions to address these pest issues effectively (Williams and Horwood, 2008).

5.3.3 Examining Water Sources, Costs, and Hygiene

The access to water and hygiene practices among the IDPs is a critical issue impacting their health and living conditions. These findings examine the water sources and availability, costs associated with obtaining water, and hygiene practices related to water usage in the site visited. It highlights camp residents' challenges, such as having to purchase expensive water, intermittent water supply disruptions due to electricity outages, lack of proper sanitation facilities, and the need to share limited resources like toilets. While some residents had access to free borehole water, others needed help with the financial burden of paying for water, which strained their already tricky living circumstances. The results reveal disparities in hygiene

practices between the four sites, with some sites exhibiting better cleanliness and food preparation hygiene compared to the other sites with poorer sanitation and open defecation concerns.



Figure 5.7: *Purposely built water source connected to the borehole and pump with wastewater runoff nearby. Source Author*

The participants across all sites reported having access to boreholes (see Figure 5.7), which provided reliable potable water sources. However, their main challenge was the cost of purchasing this water, as it proved expensive in certain areas. In addition to the financial burden of paying for water, the participants also faced difficulties accessing water due to a lack of electricity, which disrupted the water supply. Despite the availability of boreholes, the combined issues of high-water costs and intermittent supply due to power outages posed significant obstacles for the displaced individuals in meeting their water needs consistently.

Rose said, *“We buy water as we cannot access water elsewhere. Who will give you tap water? There is only suffering in this rented house. We use the water to wash our clothes and cook. How much water can I buy to keep my home clean?".* The fact that they buy water makes it difficult to maintain hygiene. The need to purchase water added a significant financial burden to the displaced people's already strained circumstances. Laraba lamented, *"Water is expensive here but readily available."* The high cost of buying water was a significant challenge, contributing to the overall expensive cost of living they could barely afford. Arziki corroborated this: "*We fetch it from a nearby borehole. We used to pay N5 [less than GBP 1], and sometimes we pay N10 [less than GBP 1] when they are using the generator to pump."* Having to pay for basic necessities like water made life exceedingly difficult and unbearable for displaced individuals. However, not all participants faced this financial obstacle. Those in sites 2 and 4 have a purposely built borehole for their use, providing some access to free water. Aunty M, for instance, noted, *"We fetch it from the borehole built for IDPs. We don't pay to fetch water there."* Despite this, hygiene practices remained a concern, with one participant reporting boiling water before drinking, stating, *"I usually boil the water from the well before drinking it, but from the borehole, we drink it as it is."* (Happiness). This evidence suggests low levels of water treatment and hygiene practices among the residents.

Furthermore, the lack of access to potable water presented a substantial obstacle to upholding appropriate hygiene practices. As Mairo put it, *"There are times when water is completely inaccessible, irrespective of one's financial situation,"* implying that there were circumstances in which water was unattainable despite sufficient funds. The displaced individuals were consequently unable to maintain hygiene and perform routine sanitation practices due to the unreliable water supply.

Despite the challenges with water access, the residents of site one demonstrated a commitment to maintaining proper hygiene practices in food preparation, wastewater disposal, and personal cleanliness. According to the participants, good hygiene standards were upheld at this site. Hauwa stated, *"We have separate cooking areas and different pots. The kitchen is clean as we sweep and clean it morning and afternoon,"* indicating adherence to hygienic food preparation methods. Fatima echoed similar sentiments, affirming, *"Everyone has an area they use as a kitchen, and we tidy it always. I don't like dirty environments."* Lami (FGD 4) consistently shared these views. Momi elaborated, *"We pour all dirty water from washing and cleaning down the drain. We sweep everywhere daily and put out all refuse collected around the compound, ready for our friends to visit after the children are in school. It is a small space, so we keep it tidy."* These accounts demonstrate the residents' efforts to maintain high hygiene standards within their living quarters.

However, the situation at site 2 presented stark contrasts. Lacking formal washing facilities, most residents were forced to bathe outside with Bagco[4] bags (see Figure 5.8) used as privacy screens—the shared use of facilities, including toilets, further compromised hygienic practices. An older adult, Jummai, lamented, *"We just sweep it. It is bare earth, so there is not much we can do,"* highlighting the dilapidated conditions of the housing structures and the subsequent impediments to cleanliness and hygiene. As earlier presented, Binta mentioned the barriers to maintaining hygiene. These sentiments consistently illustrate the dire living conditions and challenges in upholding proper hygiene standards.

[4] These are empty bags of construction cement. It is a popular choice for building temporary housing because of its waterproof nature. See Figure 5.9.



Figure 5.8: *Enclosed bathing area situated within the waste dumping site. Source Author*

Moreover, as cited by WL, *"the inadequate toileting facilities also make almost everyone go to the bushes to ease themselves. This makes us vulnerable to diseases and infections, especially cholera and typhoid."* WL, KII. The prevalence of open defecation further exacerbated poor hygiene practices at site two. Consequently, strategic interventions are crucial to improve living conditions and promote higher hygiene standards across all sites. One of the participants, a young female, noted that *"even if we rent the house in communal living, they (owners) refuse us access to the toilets. They assume we will transmit infections and diseases by using it, so there is stigmatisation".* Yar Fulani.

The findings indicate that the participants had access to reliable water sources, primarily boreholes and wells. However, the primary challenge limiting water accessibility was the associated costs incurred at specific water points. Despite the availability of water sources,

sanitation and hygiene levels were generally poor, as only one respondent reported boiling their water before consumption. Some residents' open wastewater disposal, mainly within the living compounds, heightened the risks of water contamination and pollution. Consequently, the IDPs living in camps and informal settings in Nigeria were rendered susceptible to hygiene-related diseases due to inadequate wastewater management and water treatment practices.

While this study's results indicate that IDPs had access to water, albeit at a cost, other research by Macleod et al. (2019) and Kamta, Schilling, and Scheffran (2020) suggests that most displaced individuals or refugees receive free water provisions from donors and host country governments, alleviating the financial burden of water access. These inconsistencies in the evidence regarding water accessibility for displaced populations necessitate further research to provide comprehensive insights into how refugees acquire water while residing in camps. Additionally, investigating hygiene practices related to water treatment before consumption in informal settings could shed light on the safety levels of the water consumed by those affected by forced displacement.

5.4 Food Hygiene and Security

5.4.1 Hunger and Nutrition

Despite the participants embracing hygienic food handling practices, they acknowledged the prevalence of food insecurity, as they heavily relied on donations. Zakari et al. (2014) conducted a study which revealed that displaced families in Nigeria relied extensively on food assistance and had restricted availability of sustainable food resources. Participants from all sites recognised the importance of storing food in clean places but raised concerns over the limitation and availability of food. Hadiza expressed, *"All of us here are poor and hungry... every day we are worried about where the next meal will come from or if we have enough to*

feed our families", suggesting a pervasive state of food insecurity. However, they added that despite their limited resources, they maintained cleanliness in their cooking areas and surroundings, demonstrating good hygiene standards. Ralia, from the same site, elaborated, *"We have a place where we store food, like when we receive donations. We usually buy foodstuff on the day and cook immediately, which is not the best as it means we don't get fair prices on buying in bulk. We have separate areas for food and sleep".*

Notwithstanding their constrained financial means, the displaced households endeavoured to cultivate several crops for sustenance. Fatima shared, *"We have a small garden where we grow vegetables like spinach and tomatoes to supplement our diet."* Nevertheless, productivity was frequently low as a result of insufficient agricultural resources and skills. Additionally, few households endeavoured to engage in modest animal husbandry. Philipa reminisced, *"Several years ago, an NGO arrived and provided training to a select group of individuals on fish farming. We were provided with fingerlings to establish our own ponds. But it wasn't easy to maintain without proper feed and equipment, and the project wasn't sustainable."*



Figure 5.9: *Food preparation area close to the living area, increasing the risk of fire and smoke inhalation. Source Author*

This evidence is supported by further responses from sites 1 and 4 participants, who expressed inadequate food supply while exemplifying food hygiene practices. Wachika stated*, "The food is not enough, and everyone is hungry".* Similarly, Esther shared*, "We don't usually have a lot of food at a time. We buy fresh ingredients as and when needed, provided there is money. Dry foods like rice and maize are stored in closed containers and used for the coming days."* The statement consistently demonstrates the uncertainty surrounding food sources and a conscious effort to practice good food storage practices. Most of the participants' income came from menial work and irregular labour, which gave them inconsistent incomes that were only sufficient to cover their fundamental necessities (IOM, 2018). Hannatu expressed her frustration, stating, *"Although my husband occasionally secures odd jobs, the income is never enough. We rely heavily on food assistance from humanitarian organisations."* Undoubtedly, humanitarian food assistance had a pivotal role in mitigating the food insecurity experienced

by the displaced households (WHO, 2018). Nevertheless, the time and amount of food shipments frequently lacked predictability, resulting in intermittent shortages (Andersen et al., 2021).

These findings align with results from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2018), which revealed that internally displaced people in countries like Nigeria remain vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. A report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2018) also revealed that internally displaced families affected by civil wars were at increased risk of food insecurity following difficulties in access to income-generating opportunities and timely provision of food donations. Likewise, findings from Andersen et al. (2021) show that internally displaced families have limited income that predisposes them to food insecurity and malnutrition.

On the other hand, Binta added, *"We normally store cooked food in a food warmer, and if we have leftovers, we reheat it for the children to eat before school the following day. We put raw food like yam or rice in plastic containers with covers".* The practice indicates that cooked food is left overnight without proper temperature controls, which may encourage contamination and increase disease risk. Thus, regardless of their food insecurity, they know the benefits of practising good food hygiene and storage. Still, their efforts may not be enough to mitigate the risks associated with poor cooked food storage. However, there needs to be more evidence to demonstrate the overall level of hygiene in these settings, particularly regarding food preparation practices.

5.5 Conclusion

The harsh environmental health challenges encountered by IDPs living on the fringes are clearly depicted. This chapter has delved into the intricate ways in which substandard living conditions, insufficient sanitation, unreliable access to clean water, and inadequate waste management systems profoundly affect the health and well-being of displaced populations, using vivid accounts of their daily experiences. The findings underscore the pressing need for more effective policy interventions, infrastructure enhancements, and inclusive community planning to address these severe issues.

As we continue to the following chapter, we will look at the complex terrain of reproductive health, which presents specific issues for displaced populations. This chapter will examine the accessibility of reproductive health care, the increased risk of illness, and the alternative healing methods that many people choose to find relief. Understanding these factors can help us understand better the health challenges that displaced communities' experience. This investigation will focus on these communities' ongoing resilience and the crucial role that informed and inclusive healthcare policy and practice play in improving the lives of the displaced.

CHAPTER 6:

HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOUR: REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND DISEASE CHALLENGES

6.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an empirical analysis focused on the particular difficulties of research participants in relation to reproductive and maternity healthcare in displacement contexts. This study conducts a thorough analysis of various topics, including contraception, family planning, and the wider consequences of displacement on the health, economic stability, and social dynamics of these vulnerable populations. The discussion emphasises the urgent requirement for easily available healthcare services that encompass vital topics such as family planning, safe abortion procedures, menstrual hygiene, and the control of communicable diseases among displaced populations.

Women and older adults in displacement settings are particularly susceptible to harm, experiencing a multitude of health difficulties that are worsened by unstable living arrangements and restricted availability of medical services. These issues are exacerbated by disrupting conventional social support structures and the complex interaction of cultural norms, gender roles, and economic woes. This chapter highlights the significance of implementing a comprehensive strategy for healthcare that considers not just the immediate medical requirements but also considers the socio-economic and cultural factors that influence health outcomes for these populations.

6.2 Reproductive and Maternal Healthcare

6.2.1 Contraception and Family Planning

Access to family planning services and contraception education is a critical issue affecting the health and well-being of individuals and communities worldwide (Starbird et al., 2016; Singh et al., 2018a). Numerous studies have demonstrated the significance of these services in empowering women by giving them reproductive autonomy and giving them control over their bodies. It provides women with choices in terms of child spacing and family size, breaking the cycle of poverty so that parents can invest in the well-being of their children. Women can pursue opportunities without the constraints of unexpected pregnancies. Moreover, family planning and contraceptive education improve the health outcomes of mother and child by reducing the risks of teen pregnancy and unsafe termination of pregnancies, promoting gender equality and fostering a move away from traditional gender norms and societal structures (Ivanova et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2018a; Starbird et al., 2016).

The World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledges family planning as a fundamental human right and underscores the imperative of guaranteeing the widespread availability of comprehensive and voluntary family planning services (WHO, 2022). Nevertheless, certain regions, especially in low—and middle-income nations, still face substantial obstacles to obtaining these services (Darroch et al., 2017).

Access to healthcare services, particularly family planning and contraceptive commodities and education, was found to be generally lacking, with women expressing a willingness to embrace these services if available. Beeba stated, *"Yes, we all are open to family planning; some time ago, some people came and educated us and gave us the pills; they promised to return. Those*

have since finished, and we are hoping that they will come back again." Beeba's response not only demonstrates the women's openness to family planning services but also highlights the absence of consistent access to such services despite previous education efforts and the provision of contraceptives.

Multiple factors contributed to the women's desire for family planning. A significant concern raised by the women was the burden of giving birth at a high frequency, which increased the overall family responsibilities in meeting the basic needs of multiple children and increasing the overall cost of living, which were cited as significant motivators. Like Beeba, Dada expressed her willingness to use family planning to control the birth rate, saying*, "We do not like the frequency at which we give birth without spacing. Look at me now; I am 45 and still have babies. I will be happy to have access to family planning."* Noor further demonstrated the willingness to use family planning to manage the burden of providing for children, stating, *"Almost all of us here are giving birth; people will think we just want to keep giving birth. The more you have children, the more mouths to feed."*

However, the women identified their husbands' joblessness and the resultant increase in sexual demands as hindrance to effective family planning practices. Rabi explained*, "What do you expect? They (the husbands) are home all the time; they demand sex a lot to ease their frustrations, and if we are not careful and you refuse them, it is wahala o (meaning trouble)."* This suggests that the men's idleness and subsequent demands for sexual intimacy posed a significant impediment to effective family planning. One participant echoed*, "The more you give birth, the more mouths to feed. If you don't give your husband sex, then it can cause fighting in the house."* These opinions indicate that women perceive family planning and contraception as solutions to frequent intercourse and high birth rates, driven in part by their

husbands' behaviour and the potential for domestic disputes, which can escalate into domestic violence. This is consistent with the premise that a lack of access to family planning services might worsen gender power imbalances within households, giving women less control over choices regarding reproduction. According to the quote, women are pressured by their spouses to have frequent unprotected sex, which can lead to unwanted pregnancies, and domestic tensions can ensue when they decline sex. This evidence agrees with similar findings from Soeiro et al. (2023) and Bendavid et al. (2021), which attribute challenges in family planning to limited contraceptive availability and inaccessibility of facilities offering such services for forcibly displaced women. Domestic arguments over family planning and reproductive choices can escalate into domestic violence, endangering women's safety and well-being (Emenari et al., 2021; Tappis et al., 2015). Lack of access to family planning services has an influence not only on reproductive health but also on GBV and power imbalances in households (Ivanova et al., 2022; Onyango et al., 2019).

The challenges that women in displaced settlements face in obtaining family planning services and maintaining menstrual hygiene indicate more extensive challenges in safeguarding the reproductive health of this population. As a result, rigorous advocacy and interventions targeting the improvement of access to family planning services and reproductive hygiene necessities are imperative to encourage healthy lifestyles among the girls and women residing in these camps.

6.2.2. Safe Abortion.

The topic of unsafe abortion procedures among participants arose as a key concern during the interviews. Multiple studies have recorded the frequency and dangers linked to unsafe abortions in situations of humanitarian crises. McGinn et al. (2017) conducted a multi-country

study in 14 conflict-affected countries and discovered that women and teenage girls who have been displaced encounter substantial obstacles when trying to obtain safe abortion services. These hurdles include legislative limitations, financial burdens, social disapproval, and insufficiently skilled healthcare professionals. Phelan et al. (2021) also conducted a multi-country investigation that found forcefully displaced populations have greater rates of unsafe abortions compared to those who are not.

Insufficient availability of comprehensive abortion services compels women and girls to turn to dangerous procedures conducted by unqualified practitioners or attempt self-induced abortions, so endangering their lives (Singh et al., 2018b; Baba et al., 2020). A study conducted in South Sudan by Mugo et al. (2020) revealed that more than 60% of women seeking post-abortion care had made attempts to induce abortion themselves using instruments or consuming poisonous substances. This underscores the extreme desperation and the potentially fatal actions done by these women.

The interview responses revealed evidence of unsafe abortion practices increasing the vulnerability and marginalisation of women in the displaced communities. Some of the women have had to endure pain and infections contracted during unsafe abortion procedures. Kaka, one of the older adults, noted with concern, *"A girl here nearly lost her life due to infection. The family later found that she went for an abortion. Many of that is happening, but people don't discuss these issues; it's always hush-hush."* This response highlights the vulnerability of girls and women to complications stemming from unsafe abortion practices, which often remain unreported and shrouded in secrecy. The issue of unsafe abortion was also reported in studies by Marlow et al. (2022), Oladeji et al. (2021), and Yusuf, Gazali, and Abdullahi (2020), which found that some women and girls living in camps in Nigeria resort to unsafe abortion

methods to terminate pregnancies resulting from engagement in indiscriminate sexual activities.

Moreover, there are high risks associated with frequent abortions, which can undermine reproductive health. As Rabi stated, *"Some of these children (pointing around) are born out of marriage; the girls that can afford it will have abortions."* This suggests that girls from the settlements embrace abortion as a means to avoid bearing children out of wedlock, a practice that can have severe consequences on their well-being. Findings from Oladeji et al. (2021) indicate that women resort to unsafe abortion because abortion is prohibited in Nigeria. Seeking and providing abortion services in Nigeria is illegal. In Nigeria, a woman can face a 7-year jail term and provide twice as much under the Criminal Code Act in southern Nigeria and the Penal Code in northern Nigeria (Oladeji et al., 2021). Abortion services are allowed only in situations where there is an inherent health risk to the mother. Despite these steep penalties, abortion remains a major contributor to maternal mortality in Nigeria, one of the highest in the world (Bankole et al.., 2015). As a result, they opt for cheap and readily available alternatives offered by untrained individuals (Oladeji et al., 2021; Ikenye, 2021).

This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that many girls have turned to prostitution, making them vulnerable to exploitation by wealthy men. Philipa posited, *"At night, you see different men with cars come and pick up the girls...the girls are prostituting."* This statement reveals the vulnerability of these girls and the likelihood of increased rates of unsafe abortion to avoid having children out of wedlock. Prostitution and having children out of wedlock can entail significant stigma, leading to social isolation and marginalisation (Goldberg et al., 2019; Relander et al., 2022). However, for those who cannot afford abortion, whether married or unmarried, the consequence is often giving birth to children, further increasing the family

burden in meeting basic needs. Further evidence from Aham-Chiabuotu, Abel, and Thompson (2021) shows that the rampant prostitution in camps has predisposed most girls and women to unplanned pregnancies, which generally predicts a high incidence of unsafe abortion practices.

Based on these findings, it is evident that unsafe abortion practices within displacement camps are unlikely to end soon unless the underlying issue of prostitution and the lack of access to safe abortion services are addressed. Comprehensive interventions are needed to protect the reproductive health and well-being of women and girls in these vulnerable communities.

6.2.3. Menstruation

Menstrual hygiene is a critical issue, yet often not given the proper attention for women and adolescent girls, especially in displaced settings (Sommer et al., 2016; VanLeeuwen and Torondel, 2018). Despite being a critical public health risk, the women lacked essential menstrual hygiene products, forcing some to use unusual ways, such as rags, to control their menstruation. Mainly, menstruation is considered shameful due to the lack of sanitary pads and the use of informal methods for menstrual hygiene. This condition promotes the stigma around menstruation by forcing women and girls to utilise unsanitary materials, which can contribute to feelings of embarrassment and social exclusion (Sumpter and Torondel, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2017). All the responses expressed concern over menstrual hygiene and health, as it was more challenging for them to access proper care for the management of their menses. Tsigai said, "*It is such a shameful time. I don't like to go out when I see my menses"*. These findings align with evidence from Soeiro et al. (2023), Ene, Nwosu, and Adedigba (2023), and Schmitt et al. (2022), which highlight the lack of menstrual hygiene requirements faced by women and girls living in camps. However, it is worth noting that attempts have been made to reduce period poverty in displaced communities, albeit more work is needed. Sumpter and Torondel (2013)

discovered that while some humanitarian organisations donated sanitary pads, the quantity was frequently insufficient, and there were gaps in addressing menstrual hygiene needs adequately. Mukhopadhyay et al. (2022) emphasises the relevance of menstrual hygiene management interventions in humanitarian settings, such as culturally appropriate menstrual products, education, and safe disposal facilities. Schmitt et al. (2022) and Ene, Nwosu, and Adedigba (2023) provide empirical evidence that the lack of consistent access to sanitary towels and pads among forcibly displaced women residing in Nigerian settlements compromises their adherence to menstrual hygiene practices.

The maintenance of adequate menstrual hygiene continues to be a substantial obstacle for females and adolescent girls residing in displaced environments. The participants' narratives serve to underscore the harsh realities that these individuals encountered. Without access to essential menstrual hygiene items such as sanitary pads and the financial means to purchase them, women are forced to resort to unsanitary alternatives such as using bits of cloth throughout their menstrual periods. *"We use cut pieces of rags from old clothes and wrappers. It is easy to get soaked and spoil my body. Sometimes, I add poly bags under the cloth pieces before putting my pants on. I try to keep as clean as possible whenever it is the time"* (Mary). This negatively affects their mental and physical well-being and self-respect; as Magda reported, *"We are losing our dignity; we go through this every month, and it is always the same. We can't afford to buy pads. I can't remember the last time I used one. We use whatever is available, mostly old rags. Sometimes you don't want it to come because you have to take extra care of yourself"*. These testimonies emphasise the critical nature of humanitarian interventions, which should prioritise supplying displaced women and girls with reproductive hygiene supplies and providing support.

Their responses consistently demonstrate that they lack access to sanitary products to manage their menses. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that they still have to engage in routine activities despite experiencing menstrual pain. The findings are substantiated by opinions from Hafsa, who maintained, "*I sometimes get pain and weakness, but that doesn't stop me from gathering firewood for sale. If I don't go out, my family will go without".*

Displacement crises, whether precipitated by natural disasters or armed conflict, further complicate the tasks of upholding personal and menstrual hygiene, thereby increasing the vulnerability of women to detrimental health outcomes (UNFPA, 2021; Hirani, 2024). Disasters that result in displacement present considerable challenges in maintaining personal and menstrual hygiene. Such circumstances also heighten the risk of women contracting infections, toxic shock syndrome, and other potentially fatal conditions (Sohail, 2022). The study identified critical obstacles encompassing inadequate humanitarian aid, insufficient infrastructure, non-existent refuse disposal systems, and a scarcity of women-friendly spaces within disaster-relief camps. The significance of gender-responsive and all-encompassing humanitarian initiatives to guarantee the provision of vital sanitation facilities and resources in areas affected by displacement is underscored by these results.

In addition, the infrastructure deficiencies and unfavourable environmental conditions in specific IDP camps worsen the difficulties associated with upholding appropriate menstrual hygiene. According to a report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2020a), considerable challenges have been identified for numerous women residing in these sites, including inadequate access to water and restricted areas for drying menstrual materials. Additionally, the report brought attention to issues about the insufficiency of lavatory facilities designed to accommodate women. Inadequate gender segregation and privacy

concerns, among others, can discourage women from using such facilities out of respect for cultural and safety considerations hygiene (Schmitt et al., 2021; Hirani, 2024)). As mentioned above, the results highlight the complex and diverse obstacles displaced women encounter regarding menstrual hygiene. Such obstacles necessitate all-encompassing resolutions surrounding the provision of menstrual hygiene supplies and broader environmental, infrastructure, and cultural factors.

6.3. Disease Challenges

Infectious diseases and malaria pose significant health challenges in the displaced communities. Internally displaced persons frequently reside in informal settlements or overcrowded camps that lack access to clean water sources, adequate sanitation facilities, and healthcare services, consequently increasing their susceptibility to infectious diseases (UNHCR, 2020a).

According to the responses from interviewees from both sites, no accident incidents were reported. However, all the responses suggested a high prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases. In the first site, an older adult, Maryam, expressed her struggle with an eye condition, stating, *"This eye problem disturbs me at night and leaves me in so much pain. This disturbs my sleep every night. It was here that I had the eye surgery. In the beginning, there was no pain, but nowadays, there is so much pain."*

Similarly, Hajjo, one of the older participants, highlighted her challenges with hypertension, stating, *"My hypertension causes a sleeping challenge for me. I was diagnosed by one of the NGOs when they came for health checks after we newly arrived. They gave me some medicines, but it has since finished. When I can afford it, I buy the drugs at the Chemist, and I feel better."*

These sentiments suggest that the displaced individuals suffer from health conditions that undermine their well-being.

Infectious diseases were also reported as a threat to the well-being and welfare of the displaced, especially children. Maria stated*, "My son is sick with chickenpox now. Chickenpox and measles are rampant."* This sentiment aligns with the response from Maman Baby, who sadly lost her child, narrating, *"Measles is going around the community. Some of the children have been lucky to recover fully from it, but sadly, I lost my child two weeks ago (very emotional with tears)."* An older adult, Tsohuwa, also acknowledged the prevalence of fatal measles, stating, *"I have heard of Bakon Doro (measles) among my neighbours' children. They lost their child to it."* These responses consistently demonstrate a high prevalence of disease burden that has caused the people unbearable grief. Displaced populations are also more susceptible to vaccine-preventable infections, such as measles, chickenpox, and cholera. Factors such as the disruption of routine immunisation programs and the high population density in displacement camps might trigger these epidemics, which can have severe implications, especially for young children (Lessler et al., 2021). Moreover, the presence of pre-existing health conditions such as HIV/AIDS can worsen the impact of measles on susceptible groups, such as internally displaced persons (Lessler et al., 2021).

At site 2, the participants reported a high malaria burden. The community is surrounded by cashew trees, with rubbish and stagnant water close to the sleeping quarters. Ummi stated, *"It is always malaria. As soon as one person starts, we will all get it in the house. There are a lot of mosquitoes, which is why we are always sick."* Likewise, Maman Balki noted that malaria was a widespread disease, stating, *"There is also the spread of disease, especially malaria, that can easily be prevented using insecticide-treated nets. Unfortunately, not everyone has one. I*

got mine about three years ago, and it is already old and torn". There is a heightened burden of malaria among children under the age of five who have been displaced compared to children who have not been displaced (Monaghan et al., 2016; Wimberly et al., 2018). Similar findings were reported in studies by the WHO (2013) and Wagstaff et al. (2007), which established that malaria and other infectious diseases troubled IDPs in displacement camps in the region. However, evidence from Gouda et al. (2019) suggests that the burden of infectious diseases and malaria is not unique to informal or displaced settings. According to Gouda et al. (2019) and Solar and Irwin (2010), malaria and infectious diseases generally burden African populations. Furthermore, despite findings showing disparities in access to healthcare among IDPs, research from Wagstaff et al. (2007) and Braveman and Gottlieb (2014) indicate that health inequalities prevail in African countries, including Nigeria, even in the absence of displacement.

The situation is exacerbated by the sharing of facilities linked to infections. For instance, Billy said, *"Yes, we use the communal toilets, which are always dirty...The odour is bad...we fear all sorts of infections and diseases."* Essentially, sharing toilets predisposes them to infections, which are also a threat to their welfare and well-being. Some women reported that their children were disturbed by worm infestations. As Asiya lamented, *"My daughter has been battling worms for the past three weeks. Most especially at night, the worms disturb her around her anus. It's so bad sometimes that I must physically remove them with my hand. Only then does she get relief, and I can also sleep."* It was also observed that most of the children who accompanied their parents had some skin disease. One mother, Salma, commented, *"Sometimes the baby gets uncomfortable and itches. I put red oil, and it seems to ease the itch."* In displacement contexts, the prevalence of parasitic infections, such as intestinal helminth infestations, is an additional significant health concern. The transmission of these infections

can be considerably exacerbated by the lack of access to clean water sources, adequate sanitation infrastructure, and hygiene facilities, resulting in severe health and well-being implications for displaced individuals, especially children (Brooker et al., 2006).

In research on South Sudanese refugees in Uganda, almost 60% of the young children had at least one helminth species, suggesting a high prevalence of infections spread by soil (Cano et al., 2016). These infections can cause malnutrition, anaemia, and poor growth and cognitive development in children (Narra et al., 2017). These parasite infections can cause malnutrition, anaemia, and stunted growth and cognitive development in children (Anik et al., 2022). Furthermore, chronic intestinal worm infections have been linked to increased vulnerability to various infectious diseases, exacerbating the health issues faced by displaced communities (Narra et al., 2022). The results indicate that several displaced women documented instances in which their children suffered from severe worm infestations, causing substantial distress and disruptions to their routine activities.

The results of this study emphasise the critical need for comprehensive interventions to address the complex health issues internally displaced communities face. Improving access to sanitation facilities and clean water sources, strengthening the provision of essential health services, and executing targeted disease prevention and control strategies are imperative for alleviating the disproportionate impact of infectious diseases in displacement settings (UNHCR, 2020b).

6.4. Conclusion

The insights reported in this chapter demonstrate the complex problems that IDW and IOA encounter, including problems with reproduction, the burden of disease, and the wider

socioeconomic effects of displacement. Obtaining safe abortion services, menstrual hygiene management, and family planning services becomes an urgent issue, highlighting the necessity of all-encompassing measures to protect these vulnerable groups' reproductive health and autonomy.

Furthermore, the prevalence of infectious diseases, malaria, and parasitic infestations among internally displaced communities demands immediate attention and targeted disease prevention and control strategies. Improving access to clean water sources, adequate sanitation infrastructure, and essential health services is imperative to alleviate the disproportionate impact of these health challenges on displaced individuals, particularly women and children. In this situation, leveraging on the stronghold of community midwives in providing maternal and care services, health education, and first aid can serve as a link between the communities and official health care providers.

Addressing the multi-layered needs of IDW and IOA requires a holistic approach encompassing healthcare interventions, socioeconomic empowerment, and establishing a supportive environment that fosters family stability and overall well-being. Collaborative efforts from government agencies, non-governmental organisations, international aid organisations and community midwives are crucial in developing and implementing culturally appropriate and sustainable solutions to mitigate the profound challenges faced by these marginalised communities.

CHAPTER 7:

AGENCY AND RESTORATION: COPING IN DISPLACEMENT AND SEEKING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

7.1. Coping and Agency

7.1.1. Introduction

Coping strategies play a crucial role in enabling IDPs to navigate the challenges and adversities they face during displacement and settlement. Understanding these strategies is vital for developing effective interventions and support systems that address this population's unique needs and vulnerabilities. This chapter is presented in two main sections, shedding light on how they navigate their current situation and shape their future prospects. agency and determination to survive and rebuild their lives.

The first section focuses on the different mechanisms IDW and IOA employ to cope with the immediate hardships that are their reality. It begins with emotion and problem-focused strategies, aspirations and optimism for the future, support-seeking mechanisms and hope for resettlement and rebuilding their lives. The second section looks at the long-term aspirations, reasons and preferences regarding durable solutions to their displacement. This chapter provides valuable insights by exploring the multifaceted dimensions of coping mechanisms and thinking behind what durable solutions look like for IDPs in Nigeria.

7.1.2. Coping with Displacement: Emotion and Problem-Focused Strategies

Conflict, violence, or natural disasters cause people to flee from their homes and communities, causing them to endure enormous struggles and turmoil. They need to use a variety of coping

mechanisms to manage the mental and physical difficulties they face in such difficult situations. This section will examine how IDW and IOA in Nigeria have adjusted to their new circumstances.

Emotion-focused coping strategies focus on how people manage and regulate their response to stressful and difficult experiences, in this case, displacement. According to Ager et al. (2015) and Seguin and Roberts (2017), some tactics that can be used include reaching out to social support, engaging in mindfulness or spiritual practices, and changing negative ideas into more positive ones. One KII participant, Joy, shared, *"My neighbours and I pray together every evening. It gives us strength and comfort to face each new day."* Amuria and Mvungi's (2021) research on IDPs in Nigeria found that emotional support from family and community members was critical in coping with trauma and distress. *"Without my family, I don't know how I would have made it through. They insisted I come with them, and I am glad I agreed,"* said Hajjo, one of the older participants. Other members of the FGD agreed with this way of thinking. Furthermore, according to Hassan et al. (2018), people who regularly engage in religious or spiritual practices report higher levels of resilience and comfort. These methods help IDPs cope with psychological discomfort, trauma, and uncertainty.

Conversely, problem-focused coping mechanisms include purposefully addressing and overcoming the practical issues and problems brought on by displacement and settlement. According to Umar et al. (2020) study, IDPs in Nigeria are engaged in farming, petty trading or unskilled labour to cover their day-to-day needs. Ejiogu et al. (2019) also found that prominent problem-focused tactics utilised by IDPs were accessing help and support resources combined with seeking guidance and information. IDPs can reclaim some control and dignity

over their situation by being proactive in meeting both their short- and long-term needs (Seguin and Roberts, 2017).

Findings from Seguin and Roberts (2017) show that forcibly displaced people often exhibit support-seeking behaviour in attempts to cope with problems they face while living in settlement camps. Like the responses from the displaced families, findings from Seguin and Roberts (2017) show that displaced people often live in the hope of finding permanent settlements to avert adverse mental health problems. Similarly, results from Murray and Ali (2017) show that refugees embrace 'cognitive restructuring' through a positive mindset and the hope of meeting basic needs amidst challenges as a coping strategy. Cognitive restructuring refers to the deliberate process of altering one's perception of a stressful circumstance in order to perceive it in a more positive manner (Skinner et al., 2003). "*Even with all the suffering and loss we have experienced, we still count our blessings, food, peace, a place to call home,"* remarked Happiness, displaying cognitive restructuring. For displaced people, this can take the form of maintaining hope and optimism, comparing their current circumstances to their past experiences or envisioning a better future, favouring their own cultural heritage to maintain a sense of identity, or comparing themselves to others in worse situations (Seguin and Roberts, 2017; Abi-Hashem, 2006; Doggett, 2012; Cuthill et al., 2013). Through the process of cognitive restructuring, forcefully displaced individuals can alter their perception of displacement, allowing them to derive strength and resilience from their cultural identity, social comparisons, and future goals. This enables them to effectively manage the stress and adversity they encounter.

7.1.3 Support-Seeking and Collaboration

Coping strategies were primarily problem-focused and emotion-focused, including turning to God as the only solution to their problems. Respectively, they live in the hope and motivation of God's favour in providence for their basic needs. The study findings showed that most internally displaced women and older adults survived through mutual support and support from the host community in everyday life. For example, Hafsa mentioned, "*When something happens in the community, we visit one another"*. This mutual support provides practical assistance and a sense of belonging, which are crucial in challenging circumstances. Sendy also commented on the support offered by the host community. She said, "*I have nothing but good things to say about this community. They welcomed us with open arms. You know that when I'm not around, and my children get in trouble, they discipline them until I return. This makes me happy; they look out for my children. My fellow migrants, we take care and look after each other."* During times of loss and grief, members of the community offer support and donate food items as Hadiza, an older participant, relived her experience. She recalled saying, "*That period I had just lost my husband. I was in mourning, so I was not going anywhere. People would offer to help me get provisions and my ulcer medicines. We had received some food donations then, and the others helped me.*

7.1.4 Income-Generating Activities

In displacement and settlement, IDW and IOA engage in income-generation activities that range from small businesses and informal work. This provides them with a sense of self-worth and empowerment, giving them the opportunities to not only take care of their families but also keep them occupied. Studies from Akpan et al. (2020) reported that IDW engage in activities like hairdressing, sewing and mending to provide income for their families. Similarly, Oladeji

and Oladeji (2021) affirmed that most IDW engages in petty trading, selling snacks and food or handicrafts to earn a living.

Larai shared her experience: *"When I get financial assistance, I use the money to grow my business. I fry groundnut and package it in a leather. I then distribute it to our local provision shops for them to sell it for me"*. One of the young mothers, Amina, at an FGD, contributed, stating, "*I have small children, and I won't be able to leave them to go to work, no one to take care of them. That is why I decided to open a provision store in my house so I can stay home with them. To get a job today, you must know someone; who do I know?"* Their narratives were corroborated during a KII, *"Women engage in petty trading like selling hijabs (Islamic head-cover), provisions and other stuff. Anything to make ends meet."* (Shaima)

The findings that IDPs engage in businesses as a means of their livelihood corroborate results from Olanrewaju, Omotoso, and Alabi (2018) that displaced people in Nigeria seek economic opportunities that they leverage in generating income to meet their basic needs. This aligns with the broader concept of "livelihood strategies" adopted by displaced populations, as Khawaja et al. (2008) discussed, which involve engaging in income-generating activities to ensure self-reliance and address practical challenges.

7.1.5 Accessing Basic Needs

The findings of the study are consistent with those of Seguin et al. (2017) and Sohne (2006), who established that IDPs focus on problem-solving and support-seeking to navigate challenging camp situations. Sohne (2006) reiterates that adaptive coping is common in displacement settings because it helps the displaced cope with the conditions within their living

settings while seeking assistance from relevant agencies and authorities. Striving to adapt to every situation is a crucial survival technique that IDPs embrace.

A focus on survival was also a critical coping strategy. *"The documents we lost are not our main concern. It is about how to eat and survive now"* (Christy). The attitude focuses on access to basic needs as a coping method. For example, Kuluwa emphasised the importance of securing shelter and generating income, saying, "*After securing a Bacha for my children and me, I got a place to fry Kosai (beans cake) to support us by the roadside with the little money I came with. We cannot be a burden"*. Per the responses, coping was used to reduce vulnerability and promote their livelihood.

7.1.6 Embracing New Experiences and Maintaining Positivity

While addressing practical concerns is crucial, IDPs also employ emotion-focused coping strategies to manage the psychological and emotional challenges of displacement. Emotion-focused strategies primarily relate to positivity about life and optimism for the future despite past and current challenges. *"I wish that the government could help us leave this place. They can make some kind of program so that little by little, we can go back home and rebuild our lives."* (Mai-Masa) Hajara, on the other hand, noted, *"Here I am at peace and managing my life because even back home, we are just managing day to day"*. Like Hajara, Tsigai reflected' "*Even among the hardship we face here, we get to experience a new environment and different way of life. Some years back, we went to visit Shoprite on Eid! It was so big and glamorous. I even tasted ice cream".*

On the other hand, members of the host communities shared the benefits they enjoyed as a direct result of the settlement of the displaced populations. "*As a result of the migrants' coming,*

we benefitted from the different grants and support. Before their arrival, support was lacking here, but thankfully, their arrival was a blessing to us. A new borehole was sunk when they arrived. No one would visit us or bring development to this area. You are here now because of them; in turn, you are talking to me" (Haruna, KII). Their shared perspectives of managing their lives and experiencing new environments reflect a positive outlook for displaced and host communities.

7.1.7 Hope for Resettlement and Rebuilding Lives and Striving to Create a Better Future

Hope is a constructive and inspiring mental state characterised by the recognition of potential goal realisation and the determination and drive to actively pursue those goals (Snyder et al., 1991). It is a vital coping resource that helps people persevere and preserve their emotional well-being in the face of hardship. Hope can imbue displaced populations with a sense of significance, direction, and conviction that their present difficulties are transitory (Seguin and Roberts, 2017). Sustaining optimism is vital for mental fortitude and the capacity to imagine an improved future.

Kemi also said, *"We never lose hope that one day we will return home."* The responses consistently show that the migrants were hopeful of maintaining their well-being and optimistic that they would be resettled in their homes. The responses repeatedly indicate that the migrants were enthusiastic about preserving their welfare and confident in their prospects of being resettled in their original houses or finding a new place to reside. As one of the mothers, Sikira, remarked, *"It does not matter what we have gone through to get here. I hope that one day, our children's lives will be better than ours, here or if we return. That is why we try our best to give*

them a good education". As a result, their management of their emotions was pegged on the hope of managing their lives despite their challenges.

The findings demonstrate a multifaceted approach to coping with problems in the camps. Suggestively, addressing fundamental issues, including meeting basic needs through income generation and getting adequate support for survival, are priorities in attempts to survive. This resonates with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, wherein physiological and safety needs must be met before individuals effectively address higher-level needs like self-fulfilment and esteem (Maslow, 1943; Taormina and Gao, 2013). Nevertheless, the narratives also emphasise the significance of preserving hope, optimism, and future aspirations as psychological strategies for dealing with challenges. These findings support Seguin and Roberts' (2017) research, which suggests that displaced individuals frequently use cognitive restructuring techniques, such as visualising a more favourable future, to deal with their situation.

Although internally displaced individuals encountered many difficulties, their responses demonstrated an optimistic perspective and an unwavering commitment to building a more promising future for themselves and their families. This result is consistent with the "constructive narratives" concept presented by Hutchinson and Dorsett (2012), in which displaced persons actively develop optimistic narratives about their prospects as a coping tool. The importance of maintaining a positive mindset and embracing cognitive restructuring as a coping strategy is further supported by the findings of Murray and Ali (2017) and Olanrewaju et al. (2018), who identified these as crucial mechanisms adopted by displaced persons and refugees embrace cognitive restructuring through a positive mindset and the hope of meeting basic needs amidst challenges as a coping strategy. Optimism and positivity about life in the settlement are expressed by Tsohuwa in the statement, *"I am very happy and content here. Even*

though life is generally difficult, I get to meet different visitors like you. You asked me how I feel today, which made me feel good. This does not happen often as I am alone here with nobody".

One positive aspect the participants highlighted was their children's access to education. Dada expressed optimism, stating*, "Schools in the village and city are different; it is better here. You want your children's lives to change for the better than we had."* This suggests that the participants viewed education as a means to improve their collective prospects, aligning with Olanrewaju et al.'s (2018) findings, which identified economic opportunities, including education, as a significant coping strategy for displaced women in IDP camps in Nigeria.
Similarly, Sendy expressed gratitude for the opportunity to enrol their children in school, stating, *"My children were enrolled on school as a result of them residing here. I am grateful to the chairman for this effort"*. The importance placed on education by the participants highlights their resilience and determination to create a better future for their children despite the adversities they face. In addition to education, the participants also expressed a sense of personal growth and development. Aina remarked, *"Now I am more enlightened through interacting with people of various cultures"*. This statement suggests that the experience of displacement and interaction with diverse communities has contributed to their personal growth and adaptation, which can be seen as a positive coping mechanism.

The participants also acknowledged the sense of security and freedom they experienced in their current settlements. Sarauniya stated, *"I have spent eight years here and have not experienced any security problems. I feel safe, and we move freely without fear"*. Studies on the experiences of IDPs in Nigeria have shown that this feeling of independence and security is vital to their well-being and resilience (Shehu and Abba, 2020; Adeola, 2019).

Furthermore, the responses demonstrated a strong sense of optimism and hope for the future. Bola expressed the desire for their children to have better lives, stating, *"We hope that when they have better lives, they can help their parents by God's grace".* This attitude reflects the participants' determination to create a better future for their families despite their challenges. It aligns with the findings of Puvimanasinghe et al. (2015), which highlighted the role of religiosity and faith as a coping mechanism for displaced populations.

Despite their optimistic perspective and effective methods for dealing with challenges, the individuals conveyed a need for permanent displacement and the chance of rebuilding their lives in their home states. Christy expressed this opinion, stating, *"I wish that the government can help us to leave this place. They can make some kind of program that little by little we can go back home and rebuild our lives".* This desire for resettlement and integration into their communities aligns with the findings of various studies on the preferences and aspirations of IDPs in Nigeria (Shehu and Abba, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2022).

7.1.8 Role of Faith in Coping Strategies

Spirituality is the "very essence of the African people, regardless of their geographical location" (Dillard, 2008, p. 83). It unites African communities, values every life, and inspires African women to serve (Dillard, 2008; Karenga and Tembo, 2012; Ngunjiri, 2016). This study found that faith-mediated interpretations of their situations gave women hope and resilience to overcome the precarity and vulnerability that arise in displacement. In this time, they ascribed every opportunity to God and their relationship with Him.

Several mentions specifically refer to managing anger, as evidenced in the statement, *"I feel at ease now, but whenever I feel bad, angry, or stressed, I turn to God and make supplications to*

Him, and I feel alright. He is in control of your affairs. This is part of life" (Arziki). Another participant, Hannatu, reasoned, "*The truth is wherever you are, if you don't have money to take care of yourself and your family, it becomes a problem. Since I have my business and see how others try to help themselves, no one needs to tell me to step up. I thank God that I have food and do not sleep hungry. I never thought I would be in such conditions, so I am grateful. I have relatives who are suffering beyond your imagination and others who have lost their lives because of poverty and nothing to eat. Some people have lost their livelihoods, so why do I complain? To God be the glory."*

The participants' frequent references to God indicate a strong sense of religiosity and faith that sustained them through the adversity of displacement. This finding aligns with Puvimanasinghe et al. (2015) research, which highlighted the crucial role of spiritual and religious coping in regulating emotions and finding meaning amidst the challenges faced by displaced populations. The participants' reliance on prayer and attribution of well-being to God's intervention is consistent with the coping mechanisms observed among IDPs in northeastern Nigeria (Shehu and Abba, 2020). For instance, Habiba stated, *"We thank God for sparing our lives to live here peacefully. Even though we don't have much here, the peaceful life makes it better."* This response expresses gratitude to God for preserving their lives and providing a sense of tranquillity despite their hardships. Similarly, Jummai remarked, *"I thank God that I have food to eat, not sleeping hungry,"* demonstrating an acknowledgement of their faith in God for fulfilling their basic needs.

Religiosity was also evident in the participants' reliance on prayer, as exemplified by Kuluwa's statement: *"We usually pray for God's protection against any danger before going out."* This approach suggests that displaced individuals cope with difficulties by placing their trust in God

and seeking divine protection through prayers. Furthermore, the participants attributed their well-being and safety to God's intervention. Hauwa expressed, *"Thank God it is a thing of the past. We also received food donations twice during the period. I always prayed to God to save and protect me since I always go about in the forest. If something happens to me, what will become of my children? That was my major concern during this time."* In keeping with the research of Adekunle et al. (2021) on the coping mechanisms IDPs use, this remark not only recognises God's role in their survival but also emphasises the need for prayer as a coping mechanism during difficult times.

Similarly, during an FGD, two participants remarked, *"Alhamdulillah*[5]*. After what our eyes saw and the horror we witnessed, hmm, there is nothing but to say thank God."* (Magda), and "*Living here is not easy. But relationships with other people are good. God sent us here for a reason, and He made for us a place among this community. God is good."* (Esther). This view reflects a sense of gratitude towards God for enabling their safe escape and arrival at their current location despite their challenges. The experiences of these displaced women and older adults in Abuja underscore the need for adequate legal frameworks and mechanisms to protect their rights and address their vulnerabilities, as Adeola (2019) highlighted in the context of conflict-induced internally displaced women in Nigeria. However, it is vital to remember that IDPs in Nigeria endure issues beyond the initial displacement. Human Rights Watch's (2022) report addresses the impact of camp closures on displaced persons in Borno State, Nigeria, which may apply to the experiences of displaced women and older adults in Abuja, particularly regarding a lack of proper support and resettlement opportunities.

[5] Arabic term for 'Praise be to God' is commonly used among Hausa speakers in Nigeria.

Religiosity is used as a tool to cope with negative emotions. As opined by one of the older adults, "*We have to remain thankful after what we endured at the hands of Boko Haram. We need to be strong. What has happened cannot be changed. I try not to think about the suffering and negative experiences we went through so I can get to sleep and move on with my life."* (Kaka). The participants' replies emphasise the significant influence of personal religiosity and spirituality in motivating and maintaining them amongst the difficulties of relocating. Despite enduring challenging living conditions, including leaky shelters during the rainy season, as reported by one participant, their unwavering trust in God acts as a wellspring of resilience and appreciation: *"Thank God for the help of people like you who offer to us help."* (Maman Balk). The common thread throughout the responses is the expression of gratitude and appreciation for their circumstances, even if they are unfavourable. Another person conveyed their gratitude for surviving the horrors inflicted by Boko Haram, affirming the need to *"remain thankful after what we endured at the hands of Boko Haram."* Their religious beliefs are the foundation for their gratefulness, enabling them to maintain a positive perspective and be determined to continue.

Moreover, religiosity serves as a mechanism for emotional control and dealing with the horrific experiences they have undergone. Philipa expressed their strategy of avoiding contemplation of the agony and adverse encounters they have endured. She stated, *"I try not to think about the suffering and negative experiences we went through so I can get to sleep and move on with my life."* Their spiritual beliefs and practices enable them to effectively regulate their emotions and maintain a present-focused mindset rather than dwelling on past events.

The responses also suggest that personal religiosity helps the participants find meaning and purpose in their struggles. One participant poignantly stated, *"We thank God. Since we were*

able to flee the insurgents and arrive here in one piece, we cannot complain." (Joy) This expression of gratitude for surviving and finding refuge, despite the "ugliness" they witnessed, demonstrates how their faith is a source of resilience and a motivation to continue living.

These narratives align with existing literature on the role of religious coping in promoting psychological adjustment and emotional regulation among individuals facing stressful situations (Ano and Vasconcelles, 2005; Puvimanasinghe et al., 2015). Religious beliefs and practices can provide a sense of meaning, control, and emotional support, which are particularly crucial for IDPs who have experienced trauma and upheaval (Puvimanasinghe et al., 2015).

Theoretical and empirical evidence suggests that people turn to religion to find meaning in life and make sense of difficult, traumatic experiences, uncertainty, and social exclusion. Violent losses increase feelings of closeness, religiosity, and spiritual progress (Currier et al., 2013). According to Norenzayan and Lee (2010), Christians often blame fate for complex events. This study's participants interpreted their experiences beyond fatalistic theories. Instead, they highlighted the actual benefits and opportunities of displacement. The meanings of their displacement were anchored in the tangible reality of their life during this time, mediated by their religion. The responses underscore the profound impact of personal religiosity on the lived experiences of these internally displaced individuals. Their faith is a driving force that helps them overcome challenges by bringing them thankfulness, emotional regulation, and a sense of purpose. By adopting their religious beliefs and practices, individuals are more prepared to deal with the difficulties of being displaced and uphold a feeling of hope and resilience.

7.2. Future Aspirations and Restoration of Livelihood

7.2.1. Introduction

In this section, long-lasting solutions to the complex realities that displaced people face as they seek some form of stability are discussed. The presented findings reflect a deep longing for home intertwined with a pragmatic apprehension about return, thereby highlighting the multifaceted nature of migration discourse. The three main categories of durable solution preferences are local integration and resettlement, return, and passivity. Local integration and resettlement are the solutions chosen the most across the 8led population. They will be reported under the same heading and followed by voluntary return. This group also gave similar reasons for the preference of local integration and resettlement.

7.2.2. Preferences for Desired Outcomes

IDPs preferred to integrate at their place of displacement or resettle elsewhere in the country due to security and safety concerns back home. Previous experiences of violence and trauma prompted this concern. Another reason this group gives is the loss of livelihoods in their areas. This makes them assume local integration or relocation offers better social and economic empowerment than a voluntary return.

7.2.2.1. Personal Experience of Violence

The views expressed by the research participants reflect a profound divide between the desire to return home and the practical realities that complicate such aspirations. One participant vividly articulates this dilemma: "*Our house back home is destroyed. Where do we get money to rebuild? Even if we can fix the house, where do we get money to transport ourselves from here? We are a lot in my family. So, for these reasons, I think we should remain even though life is tough here."* (Rabi). This juxtaposition underscores the transient nature of refuge and the

persistent uncertainty that defines their existence, a phenomenon observed in studies on internal displacement in Nigeria (Adeola, 2019; Olanrewaju et al., 2018).

Another participant said she would rather live locally than return because of the fear and suffering she experienced from Boko Haram's brutality and their journey to safety: *"We ran for days in the bush without knowing what would happen to us. There was no food or water, hmmm. Some of us got separated, never to be seen, and others we were lucky to reunite. God has saved me; I don't want to go back again with what my eyes have seen"* (Maria). Others stated that while they wanted to return home, local integration or resettlement was more feasible due to security issues in their home communities. They refused to repeat the ordeal of violence and trauma: *"We receive news that our hometown is still unsafe. There are still attacks, and they keep destroying the little that people have rebuilt. Gwoza is still a no-go area"* (Hamma).

Nevertheless, for some participants, the choice to stay or return is only partially up to them. As Sadiya said, she would follow her husband's wishes even if they were against hers: *"Does it matter what I choose? Let me tell you, I would prefer to stay here. We are used to it now, but if my husband says let's go, I will follow him…no place like home, but the situation there has to be better."* This suggests gendered decision-making during displacement and exile. Androcentric norms, which give men dominance in the home, also affect family decisions, even in emergency situations (Adeola, 2019). The notion of a durable solution requires displaced persons to make voluntary decisions about whether or not to return home; however, some displaced women lack decision-making authority (IASC, 2010).

7.2.2.2. Loss of Livelihood

The loss of economic livelihood after the conflict and resulting displacement was another reason participants preferred local integration over voluntary return. During the interview, Beeba said, "*How can I rebuild my life when I return? When I remember my life before the insurgency [her eyes fill with tears and become emotional], I don't wish to go back. It will only remind me of the things we lost…There is no help from the government to help us go back, so we should continue living here."* Participants believe returning home would not help them re-establish their livelihoods. They feel that rebuilding their life in their displacement site is simpler than in the war-torn villages they fled. In addition to the loss of livelihood and support structures after displacement, some participants cited the availability of immediate necessities and safety as grounds for local integration.

In one of the FGDs, the group expressed their desire to return. Still, it was clear that they would need to do some income-generating work to achieve that, *"We have plans to relocate home, but first, we need to be empowered or engage in business to take care of our needs even when we return home (all in agreement)."* (Happiness). Many participants saw displacement and expulsion as a loss of livelihood and essential life support. Thus, they believed returning to their place of origin may guarantee self-sufficiency and sustainable income, ending their 'dependency' and 'helplessness', according to participants. They need a sustainable income solution based on self-reliance and economic independence.

7.2.2.3. Disillusionment with Resettlement Promises

Local integration or resettlement advocates voiced vulnerability, impotence, and uncertainty. Vulnerability may impede their return (IDMC 2021). IDPs' powerlessness (Muggah 2003) and worry about the future have often been used to justify local integration over return (UNHCR

2004). Most of the reported uncertainty was regarding the government and NGO moves to send them back to their homes, as evidenced by responses from the respondents from both sites. *"There has been a lot of talk of returning IDPs home. They [the government] say that hijra [migration] has ended and that they will settle families with money and food items as they did in Borno… We are tired of talking about this. Anytime the NGOs come to talk to us, they ask us if we want to return home, and we tell them we want to. We are still waiting"* (Hafsa). *Badiya further corroborates this statement*: *"At the end of 2021, the senator representing Southern Borno came here, and we discussed the issue. We even filled out forms regarding relocating back home but have nothing to show for now. Some think it is a political mind game."* These narratives highlight the palpable frustration with the mechanisms of aid and promises unfulfilled. The repeated references to interactions with NGOs, where displaced persons feel "angry and used," point to a broader critique of the humanitarian aid system. This sentiment is encapsulated in the disillusioned voice of a participant: *"We open up to them full of hope, they make promises, and we never hear back."* (Asiya). Such experiences contribute to a sense of abandonment and scepticism towards efforts to facilitate their return or resettlement, a phenomenon observed in the report by Human Rights Watch (2022).

7.2.3. Voluntary Return

Socioeconomic reasons, including family reunions and re-establishing social and community networks, were the main reasons study participants preferred voluntary repatriation/return to their hometown. Participants who chose voluntary repatriation also worry about livelihood reconstruction. Participants also cited 'attachment to home' as a return motivator. However, all participants who want to return have specified peace and safety prerequisites. As Zara narrated, "*Look at our lives here. If today we hear that there is peace at home, not the lies we hear now,*

no more Boko Haram…, you will not find a single person in these camps. Everybody will pack and go home. We do not belong in this place."

Most participants reflected on their current situation and found relocation to their place of origin a primary solution. Acknowledging the precarity of their current situation and the conflict's volatility, Kuluwa stated, "*I would love to, but the situation has to improve first. At home, we engage in activities to earn a living and buy food. Here, it is tough to get food to eat.*" Momi echoed a similar thought: *"All we pray for is to go back home to have peace of mind,"* yet acknowledges the precariousness of their current shelter, which could be demolished at any time.

7.2.3.1. Reunion with Families

All research participants mention family reunification as the primary motivation for returning (IDMC 2021). Family members include aged parents, husbands, children and broader extended family members. Of the three classic durable displacement remedies, voluntary return is considered the best (Mooney 2005). The participants suggest a sustainable return home to reconcile with family involves capital, skills, and safety (Brun and Lund 2008). In her interview, Maman Yusuf explained her situation: "*I would love to. I miss my relatives over there. Travelling to Maiduguri is expensive now, so that is not an option; you must have at least N20,000 [GBP 37]. There have been weddings and naming ceremonies, but we can't go. We usually send our money contributions here and there."*

These women stressed the value of social and community links severed during displacement and exile. Participants believed that returning would be a better and more sustainable option if they were safe and protected since it would allow them to rebuild their social and community

network, as evidenced by Aisha: "*Yeah, I would love to. We have relatives there. They can take care of you when the need arises. They help ease the burden of caring for the children and other responsibilities. They know all about my childhood background, and we discussed various issues. Life was so much fun and entertaining then.* This feeling was echoed by Wachika *saying; I miss my family. I haven't seen my mother for three years now. We speak over the phone only."*

7.2.3.2. The promise of hope: Rebuilding livelihood and restoring social and community network

Participants seemed to have embraced making their current communities their home, expressing contentment with being locally integrated into their current communities of displacement. As Mai-Masa stated, I enjoy it here with my relatives (the Glavda tribe). *"Home is here now. We have left no one in our villages. We need to find a way to become city people (laughing)."*

The concept of "home" emerges as both a physical and psychological construct, deeply embedded in the social cohesion of the displaced. Laraba's lament reflects this duality: *"Most of our houses back home are burnt to the ground. There are still cases of fresh attacks in our villages, but overall, the insurgency is gradually declining."* Another resident, Christy, ponders the link to their roots, saying, *"We may be poor, but back home, there is no fear of going hungry as we can farm and feed our families. Life is uncomplicated in the village."* This comment demonstrates their fundamental connection to their land and livelihood. It underlines an important component of displacement: the loss of self-sufficiency and independence, as Adebowale et al. (2023) reported in their study of the experiences of older displaced adults in Nigeria.

Furthermore, moving to cities such as Abuja has added aspects to their identities and goals. Exposure to urban life has not been totally bad; as Talatu commented, *"I have gained so much... We go to the mall during sallah*[6] *and buy ice cream. We have never seen this before coming here."* This preference for local integration or resettlement can be attributed to factors such as economic and social empowerment opportunities, which were significant considerations. This result is consistent with the study of Shehu and Abba (2020) on the viewpoint and preferences of IDPs in northeastern Nigeria. Their research revealed that, like participants like Talatu, many IDPs favoured local integration because of the perceived economic prospects and service availability in metropolitan locations. The work of Baban, Ilcan and Rygiel (2017) and Bradley (2018b) on Syrian refugees in Turkey revealed that refugees frequently preferred local integration over return, motivated by incentives such as access to better economic prospects, education, and healthcare in their host communities. This corresponds to the social empowerment opportunities sought by the participants in this study through local integration or resettlement.

According to Magda, most migrants *"would not like to return to the villages after tasting Abuja"*. Likewise, Faiza stated, *"I want to go back home, and I also want to stay here. If we leave, my children will lose out on the education. The schools they attend are better than what we have back home"*. The findings consistently show that while some migrants wished to return back home, some wanted to be settled permanently in Abuja. However, there needed to be more certainty about a permanent solution regarding their resettlement, as was highlighted in other studies (Zetter, 2019; Ferris, 2011; Crisp, 2004), providing a conceptual and historical analysis of local integration and settlement as durable solutions.

[6] Hausa term for Muslim celebration of Eid.

Even for adults, living in the city means learning new ways of being. Tsigai happily told me, *"When we came here, I didn't know what they were saying in English, but gradually, I am picking one or two words because that's the language people communicate here."* The desire for durable solutions and the restoration of livelihoods is not merely about physical relocation but involves a comprehensive restoration of dignity, autonomy, and community. The studies of Shehu and Abba (2020) and Jacobsen (2002) highlight the importance of livelihood recovery and self-reliance as durable solutions to address the vulnerability of IDPs.

7.2.4 Indecision: a case of indifference and resignation

Several IDPs interviewed said they would welcome any solution. This group indicated apathy, resignation, and pessimism in interviews and FGDs. The first position holds that 'everything is governed by God', including their sustenance and future. This concept leads to "submission" to God's will to cope with tough choices and decisions. Some individuals expressed their indifference and passivity towards durable solutions using the belief, which was prevalent throughout the data. Even though participants like Mami have surrendered their affairs to God, they still acknowledge the importance of having life-supporting resources. She said, "*Surely, to Allah, we belong, and to Him, we will all return. This is my belief, so it doesn't matter where you live; what matters is the quality of your life. That is why we go out daily to provide for our families."* Another participant alluded to the need for food and means of sustenance wherever she finds herself, *"Here or there, does it matter? I am not strong anymore, and I am getting older and weaker. On good days, I go to the forest to gather cashew fruits and firewood. I eat some fruits and sell off the rest with the firewood. That is how I manage day-to-day. As long as I am safe and have food to eat, it is all the same."* (Maman Balki)

Some participants say they are happy for any intervention from the government. However, there is significant doubt in the government's dedication and commitment to taking them back. Yar Fulani says, "*We sometimes hear rumours that the government plans to send us back. I heard that some people were relocated home to Maiduguri recently. So, hopefully, it will get to us."* Another participant expressed a similar view, "*Some time ago, our camp officials took down the names of all the IDP families. They said they are putting the names together because the government wants to take us back home. But till now, I haven't heard any news."* (Noor).

All contributors' narratives focus on peace, security, and an end to the insurgency, regardless of their preferred solutions. Both voluntary repatriation IDPs cited instability and warfare as the major obstacles to their ambition of returning home. Aloyo and Briceno-Garmendia (2020) underscore the need for integrated humanitarian-development approaches and addressing root causes like poverty for sustainable peace and solutions. Adeola (2019) also emphasises in her thesis on the legal structures protecting internally displaced women in Nigeria as a result of conflict that any effort to address displacement must consider the diverse aspirations and needs of displaced communities, including but not limited to their rights, security, and access to essential services.

These findings are in line with the broader discourse that highlights the need for durable solutions to address IDPs' vulnerability, poverty, and lack of livelihoods and integrate their long-term needs into overall development programs (Adebowale et al., 2023; Shehu and Abba, 2020; Aloyo and Briceno-Garmendia (2020; Zetter, 2019)

7.3 Conclusion

The accounts in this chapter provide valuable insights into the various coping strategies and

future goals of IDW and IOA in Abuja, Nigeria. When faced with the hardships of displacement, they demonstrate incredible tenacity and resolve to survive and rebuild their lives. The results indicate that individuals use both emotion-focused strategies which providing them with psychological resilience and a feeling of purpose in the face of adversity and problem-focused coping strategies to tackle practical issues and encourage self-sufficiency.

As these displaced individuals look toward the future, their preferences for sustainable solutions are shaped by a complex interplay of factors, including personal experiences of violence, loss of livelihood, vulnerability, and uncertainty. While some express a desire to return to their home communities, contingent upon restored peace and security, others favour local integration or resettlement, driven by perceived economic and social empowerment opportunities. A third group remains indifferent or resigned, submitting their fate to divine will. The different viewpoints expressed share a common trait: a yearning for security, stability, dignity, and the restoration of self-sufficiency. The ultimate goal is to rebuild livelihoods, reconnect with social and community networks, and reclaim a sense of belonging and autonomy regardless of where they call home.

The next section provides a synopsis of the research, drawing together the main points and implications from several chapters.

CHAPTER 8

SYNTHESIS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS: ADVANCING RIGHTS-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR THE DISPLACED

The primary merit of this thesis resides in its detailed and comprehensive analysis of the lived experiences of IDW and IOA in informal settlements, providing a novel and much-needed perspective on the unique challenges and resilience of these often-overlooked populations in the Nigerian context. It provides valuable insights into their distinct susceptibilities, methods of dealing with challenges, and ambitions. The research, pioneering in its approach in Nigeria, revealed displacement challenges, resilience, and durable solutions by prioritising the voices and agency of marginalised women and older adults. It provides valuable empirical insights that not only support but significantly expand upon existing knowledge in this field. The results emphasise the necessity for humanitarian interventions that are more inclusive and responsive to the age and gender of displaced communities. These interventions should also target these different populations' individual needs and abilities. In conclusion, the thesis presents a compelling and original argument for adopting an intersectional and multidisciplinary approach in the study to develop fair and lasting solutions that respect the dignity and rights of all individuals involved.

This study is particularly notable for its distinctive interpretivist methodology, recognising the subjective and socially constructed quality of the groups' lived experiences. The women's perceptions and analyses of occurrences in their lives were perceived as being influenced by their affiliation with families, communities, and a collective societal structure. By acknowledging the impact of their social circumstances on their viewpoints and actual

experiences, this approach provides a robust foundation for the research's findings, instilling confidence in the validity of the results. We will first review this study's findings, highlight implications for theory, discuss policy suggestions, and offer future research options for assisting internally displaced women, older adults, and all IDPs in Nigeria. These recommendations have the potential to significantly reshape policy and practice in the field of internal displacement in Nigeria and beyond.

8.1 Summary of Findings

This thesis employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to investigate the research objectives that drove the study, utilising extensive and meaningful empirical data. The study is distinguished by its interdisciplinary approach, which integrates insights from human geography, migration studies, and public and environmental health sciences. This combination of disciplines has enabled a more sophisticated comprehension of the complex nature of internal displacement. The four empirical chapters have collectively examined various aspects of the displacement experience for IDW and IOA within the study's specific context, thereby contributing to the broader research objectives. This interdisciplinary research has yielded significant benefits enumerated below:

Holistic viewpoint: Through the integration of knowledge from several disciplines, the research offers a more comprehensive understanding of the displacement experience, taking into account health, environmental, geographical, and social factors simultaneously.

Novel methodological approach: By integrating multiple disciplines, a unique framework has been created that better represents the complex character of displacement compared to approaches that rely on a single discipline.

Policy implications: The interdisciplinary approach has allowed for the development of more thorough and efficient policy suggestions that tackle the intricate interaction of factors influencing IDW and IOA.

Interdisciplinary connection: This research acts as a link between traditionally distinct academic domains, perhaps paving the way for future collaborative research.

The study embraced a broader meaning and interdisciplinary approach due to the complex nature of the internal displacement. As a result, there are overlaps in how the findings presented in the various empirical chapters address the different research questions, even though the empirical chapters were primarily focused on specific research questions. The research objectives and questions address a variety of issues linked to lived experiences, problems, coping mechanisms, and livelihood restoration in informal settlements. The empirical chapters primarily focused on specific research questions and frequently touched upon or partially tackled other research inquiries.

Addressing Research Objective 1: ***To evidence the life experiences and evaluate the perceived standard of living of IDW and IOA living in informal environments.***

Research Question 1: *What are the life experiences and perceived quality of life of IDW and IOA living in informal settings?*

Chapter 4 delves into the intricate and diverse factors that influence the daily experiences of these marginalised groups. It goes beyond just the physical displacement to reveal the significant effects on their identity, relationships, and mental well-being. The accounts provided by the participants elucidate the considerable obstacles and hardships they encountered along their journey of displacement. The pre-displacement and flight experiences were characterised by the sudden and unforeseen nature of the attacks, the loss of life, and the devastation of their livelihoods. During the settlement phase, several additional obstacles emerged, including the absence of authorised IDP camps, overpopulation, and unfavourable conditions in the existing camps. As a result, many individuals were compelled to settle on their own.

The exodus or mass displacement was marked by the lack of self-governance and the use of force, resulting in the displaced individuals being deprived of their ability to act independently and exercise political identity. The journey was not undertaken willingly as an act of exploration but rather as a compelled escape from a place that had been invaded and attacked. The participants encountered hazards from various sources, including those tasked with the role of providing protection and safeguarding them.

The chapter also emphasises the distinct difficulties that older persons encounter in displacement, as their voices are sometimes overshadowed by the overwhelming battle for survival. The deterioration of social connections, the breakdown of conventional support systems, and the restricted availability of healthcare and vital services intensify their sense of seclusion and hopelessness. Furthermore, displacement-related trauma has a significant impact on the mental health of IDW and IOA. The scarcity of mental health support and counselling

services in displacement contexts often results in psychological wounds being left unaddressed, which manifest as anxiety, depression, PTSD, and other mental health conditions.

The findings clearly answer the research question by offering a thorough understanding of the daily experiences and perceived quality of life of IDW and IOA residing in informal settings. The accounts provided by the participants emphasise the significant influence of displacement on their physical, emotional, and psychological health, as well as the distinct difficulties experienced by women and older individuals in these circumstances (Ezard et al., 2011; Singh et al., 2018).

Addressing objective 2: ***To identify the difficulties these vulnerable groups encounter when obtaining essential assistance and basic necessities.***

Research questions 2, *"How have their livelihoods been affected by environmental health conditions?"* and **research question 3** ", *What challenges exist in accessing lifesaving support and basic amenities within these informal settlements?"* align with the research objective of identifying the difficulties these vulnerable groups encounter when obtaining essential assistance and basic necessities. Chapter 5 primarily responded to research question 2 by exploring the impact of environmental health conditions on the livelihoods of IDW and IOA. Meanwhile, Chapter 6 primarily addressed research question 3 by examining the challenges these groups face in accessing lifesaving support and basic amenities within the informal settlements where they reside.

A thorough examination of the living circumstances and environmental health issues faced by displaced people living in informal settlements is given in Chapter 5. In keeping with the SDH

framework, the chapter emphasises the different factors that have an impact on these marginalised populations' health and well-being. Below are the highlights in Chapter 5 that specifically address the research question:

Poor housing and overcrowding: Participants described residing in small, dilapidated, makeshift housing with several families sharing a small amount of space. Their improvised shelters, which consisted of cardboard and cement bags, were transient and provided little defence against inclement weather. This substandard housing not only compromised their physical health but also impacted their mental well-being and ability to sustain a reasonable livelihood.

Poor sanitation and hygiene: Inadequate sanitation facilities, including few toilets and the necessity of sharing them among numerous people, caused major health hazards. Open defecation was the preferred choice because communal facilities were inadequate and poorly maintained, resulting in the spread of infectious diseases within and outside the communities. This is a significant obstacle to their chances of a decent living.

Inadequate waste management: The environment was physically polluted, and related health risks, like the prevalence of malaria, were present as a result of improper waste disposal methods. The absence of efficient waste management systems in the sites visited posed a threat to the displaced communities and their hosts. It is like a domino effect—with higher chances of disease transmission and contamination, which in turn impact their health and capacity to support a good life.

Pest infestations: Participants talked of their struggles with pest infestations, especially with rodents such as rats and bedbugs. These pests worsened their living conditions by damaging their homes, contaminating food, and disrupting sleep. Therefore, they took additional measures to ensure that the consequences of pest activities were contained or reduced to a minimum.

Limited access to clean water: Although the majority of participants had access to water sources such as boreholes, the expenses incurred in buying water significantly increased their already precarious financial situation. The irregular water supply brought on by power outages and improper water storage and treatment methods negatively impacted their general well-being and prospects for a living.

These results unequivocally show how the above-listed factors affect the livelihoods of the displaced people. These factors feed into a vicious cycle of ill health, decreased productivity, and fewer chances of making a decent livelihood. The data presented emphasises the critical need for focused interventions and legislative efforts to address the environmental health issues that IDPs confront. Enhancing living conditions, implementing efficient waste management systems, ensuring clean water is accessible, and improving sanitation infrastructure are all critical steps towards improving the health and well-being of displaced communities, which will ultimately help them rebuild their lives and lead better lives.

Continuing, Chapter 6 gives in-depth insights into the numerous challenges faced by these vulnerable populations, particularly in terms of reproductive health, illness burden, and the larger socioeconomic consequences of migration.

The findings in this chapter directly address Research Question 3, which sought to identify the barriers to getting lifesaving support and essential utilities in these informal settlements. The chapter brings to the fore the criticality of gaps in accessing services such as family planning, menstrual hygiene management, and safe abortion services, all of which are critical to IDW and IOA survival and well-being. The low availability and accessibility of these services jeopardise these individuals' reproductive health and rights while also contributing to the maintenance of structural violence against them.

Furthermore, the significant occurrence of preventable illnesses like malaria and parasitic infections, as well as deadly childhood diseases among internally displaced populations, as explained in Chapter 6, emphasises the difficulties in obtaining adequate care and support and crucial healthcare services. Services like routine immunisations and ante and post-natal care remain unattainable for most participants. The unequal effect of these health problems on vulnerable groups emphasises the immediate necessity for focused treatments and assistance to alleviate their distress and promote their survival.

Looking at the theoretical underpinnings, the experiences of IDW and IOA's marginalisation and vulnerability are exacerbated by institutional barriers and disparities in receiving vital support and fundamental necessities, which can be viewed as a type of structural violence because it violates their basic rights and exposes them to avoidable health risks. The SDH framework emphasises the need to address the larger socioeconomic variables that influence health outcomes. The socioeconomic issues highlighted in Chapter 6, such as economic hardship, changing gender roles, and marriage dissolution, reflect the complex interplay of social determinants that influence IDW and IOA health and well-being. These factors, together

with restricted access to healthcare and basic requirements, contribute to the persistence of health disparities among these vulnerable populations.

Addressing objective 3: ***To examine the coping methods and social support systems utilised by IDPs to handle their challenging situations effectively and sustainably and non-discriminatorily restore livelihoods for IDW and IOA in informal environments.***

Research Objective 3 raised two crucial research questions that were examined in Chapter 7, offering a detailed and persuasive understanding of the complex experiences of IDW and IOA in managing the difficulties of displacement and pursuing long-lasting solutions for the restoration of their livelihoods. The first section of the chapter addressed Research Question 4, which aimed to investigate the coping strategies and social support mechanisms used by individuals to find meaning in their situations. The second section of the chapter focused on Research Question 5, which explored how these vulnerable groups' livelihoods can be restored sustainably and non-discriminatively.

Research Question 4*: What coping strategies and social support mechanisms do individuals employ to make meaning of their situations?*

The first section of the chapter outlined the approaches to dealing with difficulties, which include both problem-solving and emotion-regulating tactics. The participants displayed remarkable resilience and initiative in the midst of challenges, actively seeking assistance from their communities, participating in income-generating endeavours, and prioritising access to fundamental necessities. The results emphasise the significance of mutual support among the displaced community and the care offered by host communities. This social support not only

provided physical aid but also promoted a feeling of belonging and unity, which is consistent with the theoretical foundations of social support as an essential coping strategy.

The section also highlights the significant influence of spirituality and religiosity on the participants' capacity to manage their emotions, come to terms with their situation and discover purpose in the face of the difficulties caused by displacement. The participants' steadfast belief in God acted as a source of hope, resilience, and gratitude, allowing them to handle the uncertainty and fragility of their situations. This finding aligns with the theoretical paradigm of religious coping, which highlights the significance of spiritual beliefs and practices in facilitating psychological adaptation and emotional control when confronted with challenges.

Although facing hardships, the participants showed an impressive ability to maintain a positive outlook and a strong resolve to build a more promising future for themselves and their families. The importance given to education as a way to enhance group opportunities and the sense of personal development through interactions with many cultures highlights the agency and resiliency of the group. These findings support the idea of "constructive narratives" and highlight the significance of cognitive restructuring as a coping mechanism.

Research Question 5*: How can the livelihood opportunities be re-established for internally displaced women and older adults in a manner that promotes long-term sustainability and ensures non-discriminatory access to resources and support systems?*

The second section of Chapter 7, on seeking sustainable solutions and restoring livelihoods, offers valuable insights that directly tackle this subject and are in line with the main research objective of examining coping strategies and social support networks used by IDPs.

The section elucidates the intricate challenges encountered by displaced individuals as they strive to attain stability and a semblance of normality in their lives. The narratives of the participants demonstrate a strong desire for home, along with practical concerns about returning, highlighting the multifaceted nature of displacement discourse. There were three primary categories of durable solution preferences identified in the study: local integration and resettlement, voluntary return, and passivity. These categories accurately represent the varied goals and requirements of the displaced groups.

The results indicated that, mostly because of security concerns and the loss of livelihoods in their places of origin, local integration and resettlement appeared as the most preferred choices among the focus population. Participants expressed the belief that it could be more practical to rebuild their lives in the places where they were displaced rather than going back to villages that were destroyed by war.

Moreover, the chapter provides insight into the socioeconomic elements that drive voluntary return, such as the desire to reunite with family and the need to rebuild social and communal connections. The accounts provided by the participants emphasise the significant importance attached to these broken connections and the desire for a familiar setting. However, the requirement for peace and safety for any lasting return highlights the importance of comprehensive initiatives that address the leading causes of displacement, such as poverty and instability.

The findings also demonstrate the significance of rebuilding one's means of living and restoring a sense of self-worth, independence, and social cohesion as essential elements of long-lasting resolutions. The findings also highlight the significance of livelihood reconstruction and the

restoration of dignity, autonomy, and community as key components of long-term solutions. The participants' experiences highlight the loss of self-sufficiency and independence that comes with displacement, emphasising the need for initiatives that promote economic empowerment and social inclusion.

8.2 Contribution of Study to Knowledge

This thesis has made a significant contribution to the growing understanding of the complexity of internal displacement around the world, particularly in Nigeria. Using thorough qualitative research methodologies, the study has added to the current body of knowledge by giving detailed insights into how certain social and environmental factors influence vulnerable groups within displaced populations, such as women and older persons. This thesis has contributed to the following fields:

Public and Environmental Health: This thesis builds upon previous studies, such as Hunter (2016), by conducting a thorough analysis of how specific environmental health factors impact vulnerable displaced populations while living in informal settlements. Though earlier research has identified links between inadequate sanitation, water quality and health issues, this study delves deeper into these connections for a more nuanced understanding.

The research focuses specifically on how issues like waste disposal, inadequate sewage systems and polluted water sources contribute to the spread of waterborne diseases (such as cholera and typhoid), vector-borne illnesses (like malaria) and respiratory infections among internally displaced individuals. The study also delves into the vulnerabilities of these communities to environmental health risks, such as the

increased likelihood of older individuals experiencing falls due to inadequate infrastructure and the heightened exposure of women and family members to indoor air pollution from using solid fuels. Additionally, it examines how malnutrition and weakened immune systems result from poor living conditions, compounding the effects of these environmental health issues on displaced populations, young and old.

Human Geography: The study has broadened our knowledge of how spatial dynamics in informal settlements especially in terms of how the physical surroundings intersect with social vulnerabilities. It has brought new perspectives on how people who have been displaced navigate and adjust to unfamiliar urban spaces, adding to our understanding of place-making and justice in spatial contexts amid difficult situations of displacement. The research emphasises the significance of how the built environment and geographies of displacement influence the day-to-day realities of internally displaced persons.

Migration and Displacement Studies: This research has pushed the boundaries of the field by taking a qualitative approach that offers substantial empirical evidence on the decision-making processes, coping mechanisms, and aspirations of displaced individuals in the Nigerian context. It also provides insights into the migration paths and settlement patterns of internally displaced persons in the country. The work contributes to our comprehension of how internal displacement differs from other types of migration particularly its effects on vulnerable populations like women and older individuals. Also, incorporating an intersectionality lens into displacement studies has provided a more comprehensive analytical framework, shedding light on how

overlapping social categories, such as gender, age, and socioeconomic position, can heighten vulnerabilities in Nigeria (Crenshaw, 1991).

In general, this thesis has:

- Advanced a theoretical understanding of how gender, age, and socioeconomic status affect intersectional vulnerabilities and experiences in displacement contexts, highlighting the problems experienced by marginalised groups.

- Highlighted the interconnectedness of poor environmental health conditions, precarity, and socioeconomic marginalisation in the context of informal settlements of internally displaced people in the Global South by providing a more nuanced intersectional analysis of how these factors disproportionately impact marginalised groups within displaced populations. D

- Demonstrated the importance of community-driven programmes that build resilience and coping skills in displaced populations.

- Underscored the importance of multi-sectoral policy responses that prioritise vulnerable IDPs' rights, protection, and long-term livelihood support, highlighting the need for a comprehensive and rights-based approach.

This work calls for continued investment in rigorous, ethical displacement research that centres on historically marginalised voices and experiences. Only by persistently advancing empirical understanding of diverse displacement realities can we engender innovative, rights-based policies and coordinated multi-sectoral action to uphold human dignity and enable the meaningful socio-economic inclusion of all displaced people across the globe.

8.3 Implications for Policy and Practice

The study's empirical evidence also carries vital implications to inform more equity-oriented, community-centred policies and practices related to displacement prevention, humanitarian response, and durable solutions:

I. **Rights-Based Displacement Prevention:** Findings on drivers and traumas of displacement underscore the fundamental imperative of fulfilling human rights obligations and addressing systemic injustices through conflict resolution, transitional justice, climate resilience and inclusive development to prevent displacement crises at their roots.

II. **Environmental Health in Humanitarian Response:** The research highlights an urgent need for humanitarian actors to actively prioritise environmental health interventions such as improved water/sanitation, housing, waste management and vector control as core components of displacement response, not supplementary after-thoughts.

III. **Sexual/Reproductive Health and Gender Safety:** Findings on sexual health barriers and GBV risks among displaced women specifically indicate the criticality of universally integrating sexual/reproductive health services, family planning, safe abortion provisions and GBV prevention/response as standard essentials within displacement programming.

IV. **Community-Driven Design and Implementation**: The documentation of grassroots resilience, coping capacities, and ecological knowledge among displaced communities powerfully demonstrates the imperative of shifting towards more participatory, community-led program design and facilitated implementation that honours local assets and leadership as best practice.

V. **Livelihoods Enabling Rights-Based Durable Solutions:** To sustainably resolve protracted displacement, authorities and humanitarian agencies must systematically invest in comprehensive livelihood support, transitional justice processes and bottom-up community development. This will enable displaced individuals' meaningful, free choice in pursuing local integration, return or third-location resettlement based on their specific needs and preferences.

8.4 Policy implications and recommendations

The results of this study have important policy implications and emphasise the necessity for specific recommendations in different areas to effectively support internally displaced women, older individuals, and other vulnerable groups living in informal settlements. It is crucial to have organised collaboration across various sectors, based on human rights policies, and with strong global cooperation in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to effectively and equitably address long-lasting displacement in an environmentally and socially sustainable way. The specific areas of concentration will encompass:

I. **Housing, Infrastructure, and Environmental Health:** National and local governments, in collaboration with developmental and humanitarian actors, should promote environmental health awareness, invest in vector control measures that are designed explicitly for displacement contexts, as well as in enhanced housing, water/sanitation facilities, and waste management systems. It is also imperative for national authorities to enforce minimum standards and guidelines for safe, dignified shelter and environmental health in informal IDP settlements (Sphere Association, 2018) and to develop long-term affordable housing strategies that facilitate transitional and permanent integration solutions for the displaced.

II. **Healthcare Access and Service Provision:** It is essential for health ministries and service providers, with support from donor agencies, to increase the quality and quantity of primary healthcare services, concentrating on routine immunisation for disease prevention, sexual and reproductive health requirements such as family planning, safe abortion, and pre/postnatal care. It is also advised for health authorities to provide inclusive, culturally competent mental health and psychosocial support services, as well as targeted programmes for the prevention and control of infectious diseases and health outreach to marginalised IDP populations.

III. **Protection and Security**: The national government, in collaboration with a security agencies and assistance from human rights organisations, should proffer stronger policies and enforcement mechanisms to prevent GBV and safeguard human rights in displacement contexts (Freedman, 2016). In addition to the systematic inclusion of IDP voices in security, governance and camp management structures, transitional justice measures and comprehensive security sector reform led by national authorities to address fundamental drivers of conflict and displacement are also essential.

IV. **Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Inclusion:** Private sector and developmental partner agencies, in conjunction with displaced communities, should provide targeted vocational training, entrepreneurship support, and job creation opportunities for displaced people. National and local governments should expand the social protection coverage, including cash transfers to IDPs to promote self-sufficiency, and removing administrative/legal barriers to IDPs' access to formal jobs, financial services, and property ownership is also recommended.

V. **Community Resilience and Participation**: Humanitarian and development actors, working closely with displaced communities, should conduct systematic participatory needs assessments and programme co-design with displaced communities, particularly marginalised groups. Additionally, NGOs and international donors are advised to invest in grassroots IDP networks' capacity-building and community-driven protection mechanisms and the expansion of humanitarian partnership models that position IDPs as leaders and strategic decision-makers (Wake and Yu, 2018).

8.5 Limitations of the Study and Direction for Future Research

Although this research offers significant insights into the lived experiences of IDW and IOA, it is not without limitations:

I. **Geographic Scope:** The research was restricted to informal IDP settlements in Abuja, Nigeria. Although the results provide critical context-specific insights, geographic boundaries may restrict their generalisability. Displacement dynamics can differ across regions due to unique socio-political, cultural, and environmental factors.

II. **Sample Limitations:** The qualitative methodology was predicated on the non-random, purposive sampling of participants from the target populations. Although this sampling approach was suitable for the study's objectives, it may have led to a certain degree of self-selection bias.

III. **Cross-Sectional Nature:** As a cross-sectional study that collects data at a single point in time, the findings only offer a brief glimpse into the participants' experiences, coping mechanisms, and objectives. Conducting a longitudinal study that follows displaced individuals for long periods could provide a more thorough understanding of how their situations change over time.

IV. **Positionality and Subjectivity:** The knowledge co-creation process and the participant-researcher relationship may have been influenced by the researchers' positionalities as non-displaced individuals despite efforts to promote reflexivity. Power dynamics and cultural subjectivities can influence what is voiced or unvoiced.

V. **Language and Translation:** Although efforts were made to guarantee precise translation between English and Hausa language, it is possible that certain subtleties were not fully conveyed during the interpretation process. It is difficult to capture completely the subtle context-specific meanings and cultural idioms that are present across language boundaries.

VI. **Exclusion of Other Groups:** The study's findings may not accurately represent the displacement experiences of other groups, such as children, youth, persons with disabilities, or LGBTQI+ individuals, who encounter unique adversities.

Nevertheless, there are still areas that provide great potential for further academic research. Subsequent investigations that consider these constraints can enhance and expand upon the study's findings. Conducting thorough and long-term studies that follow displaced individuals over more extended periods of time would provide valuable information about their changing experiences, coping mechanisms, and long-lasting solutions. Increasing the scope of study to other geographical settings would make it possible to do an interesting comparison analysis of many displacement situations. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) models that directly involve displaced communities to co-lead and co-create knowledge development and solution generation processes also have revolutionary potential. Adopting the fundamental principles of CBPR, such as fairness, collaborative learning, skill development, and empowerment, has great potential for promoting long-lasting, morally sound, and influential transformation. Although these limits are acknowledged, this study's robust methodology, extensive qualitative data, and use of several sources of evidence enable analytical generalisations and the transfer of ideas to enrich theory and practice in displacement contexts.

8.6 Final Thoughts

As we come to the end of this journey, we must weigh in on the relevance of the findings and their potential to promote meaningful change in the lives of IDPs in Nigeria and beyond. This thesis focuses on the various realities and barriers these vulnerable groups experience, which are frequently disguised by the larger narrative of displacement and poverty. Putting participant voices at the centre revealed the significant impact of intersectional characteristics such as gender, age, and socioeconomic position on IDPs' vulnerabilities, coping methods, and goals in informal settlements.

The findings highlight the criticality for more inclusive, responsive, age—and gender-sensitive humanitarian initiatives that meet the specific needs and capacities of varied displaced populations. The study's suggestions, which range from prioritising environmental health and sexual and reproductive healthcare to investing in community-driven livelihood support and psychosocial well-being projects, provide specific avenues for improving IDPs' dignity, rights, and agency. In addition, the study emphasises the transformative potential of incorporating participatory, interdisciplinary approaches in displacement scholarship and practice. By actively engaging displaced populations as partners and knowledge co-creators, we can promote more equitable, culturally relevant solutions that draw on local assets and leadership.

With forced displacement rates at all-time highs, this study's results are crucial to developing more efficient and empathetic responses to humanitarian emergencies. This study contributes to the expanding body of evidence arguing for a paradigm shift in understanding and dealing with the complicated dynamics of internal displacement. However, the effort doesn't stop here. This study's findings and suggestions must serve as a catalyst for future action and advocacy. It invites researchers to continue investigating the complexities of displacement experiences through participative, intersectional lenses. It calls on policymakers to prioritise the creation and implementation of inclusive, rights-based frameworks that emphasise IDPs' agency and dignity. It also encourages practitioners to embrace community-driven, adaptive techniques that address the changing needs and ambitions of displaced communities.

Finally, this thesis demonstrates the perseverance, fortitude, and hope reflected by the internally displaced women and older adults who graciously shared their experiences. May their voices continue to lead us as we work towards a future in which no one is left behind in the fight for safety, dignity, and sustainable livelihoods in the face of displacement. Let us

answer their call to action and collaborate to create a more just and compassionate society for all those forced to escape their homes.

POSTSCRIPT

This research journey has been profoundly transformative, both professionally and personally. As a public and environmental health practitioner, I embarked on this study with a foundational understanding of health systems and environmental impacts. However, immersing myself in the lived experiences of the research participants has deepened and expanded my perspective in ways I could not have anticipated.

With my background, exploring human geography theories and migration studies was a fresh and intriguing task. I found myself struggling with ideas like structural violence, place-making, and the complex relationship between forced migration and health outcomes. This multidisciplinary approach required me to bridge the gap between my prior knowledge of health systems and the complex socio-spatial dynamics of migration, which enriched my understanding and broadened the scope of my research. Also, coming from a quantitative background, the move to learning qualitative analysis proved challenging. This learning curve was hard but ultimately gratifying because it revealed new depths of understanding in my field.

Being the first in my family to seek a PhD, I felt the weight of expectations heavy on my shoulders. This scholastic path reflected not only my personal achievements but also the goals and dreams of generations before me. Moreover, as a mother, I was constantly juggling several duties. The difficulties of academia were compounded by societal expectations and familial obligations. There were occasions when I doubted my abilities. However, with my supervisors' constant support and guidance, I eventually gained the confidence to appreciate the distinct perspective I provided to the research.

Bonding with participants presented significant ethical dilemmas throughout the fieldwork. There were numerous occasions when I left interview sessions feeling overwhelmed with guilt for not being able to address the dire situations I encountered immediately. The mother with children suffering from intestinal worm infections, mothers who had lost children to measles, and a heavily pregnant woman who had never received antenatal care - these stories weighed heavily on my conscience. The activities of traditional birth attendants (TBAs) working with limited resources also highlighted the urgent need for intervention.

Driven by a sense of responsibility, I leveraged my professional connections with the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) to arrange medical outreach services for these communities. Through these efforts, we were able to provide albendazole and Vitamin A supplements to one of the communities. In another community, I facilitated connections between pregnant mothers and local primary health centres to ensure they received appropriate care. While these actions went beyond my role as a researcher, they felt essential from both a human and public health perspective. I also acknowledge my limited resources, power and influence. Therefore, I was careful not to make promises and refrained from focusing on the problems which are beyond the scope of my research.

The emotional struggles during and after fieldwork were intense and lasting. Bearing witness to such profound suffering and vulnerability often left me feeling helpless and frustrated. Processing these emotions while maintaining professional boundaries was a constant challenge, one that continued long after leaving the field. A pivotal moment came when one participant candidly expressed, "You people have come again. After you get what you want, we won't see you again." This statement deeply affected me, prompting serious reflection on

the nature of research with vulnerable populations and my responsibilities as both a researcher and a health practitioner.

In response, I initiated a grassroots effort to give back to the communities that had shared their stories with me. Starting with my family and expanding to friends and colleagues, I raised awareness and funds to support these displaced communities. Through this drive, we purchased sanitary products, disinfectants, and cleaning supplies for the TBAs. Most significantly, we were able to relocate 10 families out of informal settlements, providing them with funds to rent accommodation and farmland in satellite towns around Abuja, offering a path towards sustainable livelihoods.

Reflecting on this journey, I am struck by how much I have learned and how much there is still to understand. This study has also profoundly shaped my own practice and perspective as a public and environmental health professional. Moving forward, I am committed to incorporating these insights into my work, advocating for more nuanced, context-sensitive approaches to health interventions for displaced populations, and finding ethical ways to give back to the communities we study.

As I conclude this research, I am filled with a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper appreciation for the resilience and strength of those who navigate the challenges of displacement. Their stories will continue to inform and inspire my work in public and environmental health for years to come, reminding me always of the human faces behind the data and the ongoing responsibility we have to the communities we engage with in research.

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APPENDIX I:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Thesis title: Navigating Uncertainty: A Phenomenological Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Internally Displaced Women and Older Adults in Nigeria.

Organisers: School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Science of the University of Birmingham

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it involves. This Participant Information Sheet will help you decide if you would like to take part. It sets out why we are doing the study and what your participation would involve. We will go through this information with you and answer any questions you may have. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in this study. Before you decide you may want to talk about the study with other people. Feel free to do this.

I am conducting this research as part of my doctoral study.

What are the objectives of this research?

The aim of this study is to explore the lived experiences (human experiences, choices, and options and how those factors influence one's perception) and quality of life of women and the elderly living in informal settlements as a result of displacement. This displacement may be because of conflict, natural disasters, urban development, and/or other factors. This research will focus on individuals living in Abuja, Nigeria.

The investigation will cover areas such a food security, access to basic health care, sanitation and hygiene. The research will also examine the safety of the environment, risky lifestyles and unsafe living conditions. I will also be exploring the coping mechanisms adopted by the group and how non-government organisations, civil societies and local and national authorities have attempted to assist you as well as the barriers encountered in doing so. It is my hope that the findings from the research will provide a deep understanding of the problems and uncertainty faced by internally displaced persons in informal settlements and, consequently, help inform social policy reforms by relevant stakeholders by way of providing durable solutions.

What kinds of questions will be in the interview?

I would like to hear about your everyday living experiences, choices and options and how they affect your quality of life and coping strategies. I will also ask about your sanitation and hygiene, including access to water, in addition to experiences during the Coronavirus pandemic.

With your consent, I would like to take photographs of your living environment. This will not include any identifying images.

What will you have to do if you agree to take part?

1. The research team will arrange a time and a place to meet which is convenient for you.
2. There will be one focus group discussion with me, during which I will ask you some questions. The interview is expected to last 40-60 minutes and is a one-off event.

How much of your time will participation involve?

One interview lasting 40-60 minutes.

Will your participation in the project remain anonymous?

If you agree to take part, your identity will remain unknown. The information which you provide and that which may be collected as part of the research project will be entered into a secure filing system or database and will only be accessed by authorised personnel involved in the project. The information will be retained by the University of Birmingham and will only be used for the purpose of research and statistical and audit purposes.

In the event that participants disclose an intention to harm themselves or others during interviews, such persons will be referred to the appropriate support body/social worker in the area for assistance. Or if that potentially can be a criminal act, the police will be informed.

Below is the contact of supports services in your area

Name/organization	Address	Contact
Africa Disease Prevention and Research Development Initiative	No. 49B Kado District, Cadastral Zone B09, Kado Abuja, Nigeria.	Joseph Enegela Chief Executive Officer Jenegela@ardap.org
International Rescue Committee	Plot 902 Olu Awotesu Street, Jabi, Abuja, Nigeria	Not available
ActionAid Nigeria	Plot 477, 41 Crescent, off Sa'adu Zungur Avenue, Gwarinpa Abuja.	+234 (0) 812 8888 825-7 info.nigeria@actionaid.org
International Committee of the Red Cross	Not available	+234 700 500 0400 abuja@icrc.org

Will data collected during interview be published?

Results obtained from the research will form part of my thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham as part of my programme requirements. It may also be published in academic journals and policy papers.

What are the advantages of taking part?

You may find the project interesting and be keen on answering questions about your life experiences. After analyses, findings from the research will inform the social policy recommendations for local and national authorities and international organisations on how to improve the situation of persons living in informal settlements. We would appreciate it if you would recommend anything you think needs to be improved on concerning displaced persons in Nigeria.

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

It could be that you are not comfortable talking about your life experience, but if you feel so, you can withdraw at any time during the interview. You may also choose not to answer questions that you find sensitive or make you uncomfortable.

Do you have to take part in the study?

No, your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to take part. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to give a reason, and you will not be contacted again.

Would I receive any reward for taking part in research?

Participants will be provided with light refreshments during sessions. After the exercise, a measure of raw grains or cooking oil will be given as a token of appreciation.

If I change my mind, can I withdraw from the interview?

Yes. You are free to withdraw before the start and during the interview.

What will happen if I withdraw?

If you withdraw from the study all the information and data collected from you, to date, will be destroyed. It will not be possible to withdraw after the interview, as the data collected is anonymised.

How will the interview be recorded?

I will take your permission to record or interview into a voice recorder because it is important for us maximally follow the interview and reduce the possibility of missing out on important discussions. After the recordings are transcribed, it will be deleted, and the transcripts securely stored on the University of Birmingham server.

Where can I find more detailed information about your project and research team?

You can find more information on the research and researcher by contacting the University of Birmingham.

Researcher	Jamila Musa Wakawa Zanna

Mobile	[redacted]
Email	[redacted]

What can I do if I am unhappy with any aspect of the study?

If you have concerns about the study in general, you can contact my supervisor on phone or email below.

Supervisor	Dr Surindar Dhesi
Email	[redacted]

APPENDIX II:

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

(Can also be audio recorded instead of the paper form)
**Two copies to be completed- one for the researcher and one for the participant to keep*

This information is being collected as part of a doctoral research project, **"Navigating Uncertainty: A Phenomenological Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Internally Displaced Women and Older Adults in Nigeria,"** conducted by a research student at the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Science of the University of Birmingham.

The information which you supply and that which may be collected as part of the research project will be entered and stored into a secure filing system or database. It will only be accessed by authorised personnel involved in the project. The information will be retained by the University of Birmingham and will only be used for the purpose of research and statistical and audit purposes. By supplying this information, you are consenting to the University storing your information for the purposes stated above. The information will be processed by the University of Birmingham in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018. Please answer the following:

1. I am willing to give an interview about my everyday life experiences and other environmental health factors.	☐
2. I understand that the information provided by me in this interview/ focus group discussions/ observations will be anonymised and used only for research purposes.	☐
3. I agree for a researcher to make an observation of my living conditions.	☐
4. I agree for the researcher to take photographs of my living environment.	☐
5. I understand that my data cannot be withdrawn from the study after the interview/ focus group discussions/observations.	☐
6. I consent the data from my interview/ focus group discussions/ observations will be stored securely by the University of Birmingham for 10 years.	☐

7. I agree the interview/ focus group discussions will be electronically recorded.	☐
8. I consent to take part in this study.	☐

Signed:

_____ _____

Participant's name Signature and date

In the presence of:

_____ _____

Researcher's name Signature and date

APPENDIX III:

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. **Welcome**

   Introduce myself stating my name and the reason for the exercise. Use this opportunity to remind about options for participation. Give out sign-in sheet (demographic information sheets to be handed alongside interview guide. Ask if participant require help filling in the form).

2. **Explanation of the process**

   Enquire if the participant has done an interview before or if the experience is new to them. Remind participant that discussion will be anonymous and kept securely.

3. **Turn on the recorder.**

4. **Begin interview.**

   a. Ensure participant has time to think and express their views.
   b. Avoid pressurising participants.
   c. Use gentle probes to ensure all aspects of questions are addressed.

Administer the demographic questionnaire.

Questions	**Probes/checklist for discussion**
Opening	- Can you tell me how you are feeling today? - Can you tell me about your day-to-day life? What do you do on a typical day? - Can you tell me about your experience of being displaced? - What were the main challenges you faced when you first arrived here? - How do you earn a living or support yourself and your family?
Why did you decide to move to Abuja?	- Can you describe the events that led to your displacement? - What was your experience during the initial phase of fleeing your home? - How did you choose your current location? - What challenges did you face in finding a place to settle?
Can you tell me your experiences since moving to this settlement? Tell me about the conditions of your home?	- Can you describe your current living conditions? - How many people share your living space? - What challenges do you face with your housing? - How does your current shelter compare to your previous home? - Where do you get your water from? - Is there a cost associated with accessing water? - How do you ensure the water is safe for drinking?

	- How do you access toilets and washing facilities? - What challenges do you face in maintaining personal hygiene? - How do you manage waste disposal in your living area? - What types of pests do you encounter in your living area? - How do you manage pest problems? - What impact do pests have on your daily life? - How do you store and prepare food? - Do you face any challenges in accessing or affording food? How do you maintain food hygiene? - What are your main concerns about the health of your living environment? - Have you or your family experienced any health issues related to your living conditions
Let us talk about healthcare; how do you access healthcare?	- Where do you get health care when you are ill? - How far is the health care facility from your home? what services are available? - Can you describe your experiences with accessing family planning services and contraception? - What challenges do you face in managing your reproductive health? - How do you handle menstrual hygiene? - Can you share more about this? - How do you typically seek medical care when you or your family members are ill? What are the alternatives if needed? - What barriers do you face in accessing healthcare services? - Have you received any support from NGOs or other organisations for your health needs? - What are the most common health issues you face in your community? How do you manage infectious diseases like malaria, chickenpox, or measles? Can you tell me more? - Have you or any member of your household affected? - If yes, how did you cope? - Did you receive any support from health services? - (For older participants) What specific challenges have you faced as an older person in displacement? - How has displacement affected your health and access to healthcare?
Security, Economic Hardship, livelihood,	- How does living here make you feel? And home where you came from? - Do you feel safe in your home? If not, why?

Education and development	- How would you describe your sense of safety in your current situation? - Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of violence or exploitation? - How has the displacement experience affected your emotional and mental state? - What coping mechanisms have you developed to deal with stress and trauma? - How has displacement affected your ability to earn a living? - Have you noticed any changes in family dynamics or gender roles since being displaced? - Have you learned any new skills since being displaced? - If you have children, are they able to attend school here? - How does you feel about the education?
Relationships, Support Systems and Services Extent of support and integration?	- How has displacement affected relationships within families, particularly between spouses? - Have you observed any trends in marital stability or dissolution in the displaced community? - What kind of support or services have you received since being displaced? - How would you describe your relationship with other displaced people here? - What additional support do you feel is needed for displaced individuals? - Do you feel that your participation in public affairs at all levels is on an equal basis with the resident population? - Are you able to replace any lost personal and other documentation since settling here? What are the challenges, if any? - Are you receiving any fund support from any donor? - Have you had any discussing with government or NGOs about? ▪ returning home ▪ finding a means of sustainable livelihood ▪ how do you feel about returning back home?
Coping and future aspirations	- What gives you strength or hope in your current situation? - How have you managed to adapt to your new circumstances? - How do you cope with the challenges of your current living situation? - What support, if any, do you receive to improve your living conditions? - What are your hopes for the future?

	- Do you wish to return to your home area, stay here, or be resettled elsewhere? Why? - What would you need to rebuild your life, either here or if you return home? - Are there any positive aspects or opportunities you've encountered despite the challenges you face?
• Is there anything else you would like to add on these topics?	

APPENDIX IV:

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Introduction

Introduce myself stating my name and the reason for the exercise. Hand out participant information leaflet and consent form sign-in sheet.

2. Explanation of the process

Enquire if anyone has participated in such a session before. Remind them that discussion will be confidential and treated as such.

3. Turn on the recorder

4. Administer the demographic questionnaire

Begin discussions.

Questions and probe/checklist for discussions
• Can you tell me about your role or organisation's role in supporting IDPs?
• What services do you provide for the IDPs specifically women and the elderly?
• Do you think that the support provided is adequate? Housing, education, health services, personal development, job opportunities If not, why
• Can you tell me the type of support provided for women and the older people? How do you ensure that the intended support reaches the target population?
• Do you provide special support separately for men, women and the elderly?
• What are the major challenges faced in carrying out your duties? How do you overcome these challenges? What are the main challenges/problem faced by women and elderly?
• What are the impacts of the Covid-19 on service delivery?
• Do you have plans for sustainable social integration of IDPs in the local community?

• Is there an effective mechanism that is put in place to ensure restoration of IDP livelihoods?
• In your opinion, what are the obstacles stopping the achievement of reintegration of IDPs living in informal settlements?
• Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX V:

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome

Introduce myself, stating my name and the reason for the exercise. Use this opportunity to remind participants of the options. Distribute sign-in sheets (demographic information sheets handed to each participant). Ask if anyone needs help filling in the form.

2. Explanation of the process

Enquire if anyone has participated in such a session before. Remind them that the discussion will be confidential and treated as such.

Ask participants to discuss within them and come up with ground rules as a way to warm up to discussions. These should include.

a. Take turns talking.
b. Everyone should contribute.
c. Feel free with one another.
d. Respect each other's views. No use of abusive/offensive languages
e. Remember that everyone's experience is unique, and we are here to have a discussion.
f. All discussions should remain within the group.
g. Avoid distractions; put phones on silent.

3. Turn on the recorder

4. Administer the demographic questionnaire

Begin discussions.

a. Ensure participants have time to think.
b. Avoid pressurising participants.
c. Give each participant adequate time to express their views.
d. Use probes to ensure all aspects of questions are addressed.

	Questions	**Probe/checklist for discussions**
	Opening / ice breaker	- Can you tell me about your family dynamics? - Ask more questions based on observations/environment.
1	Exploring experiences of living in displacement	- Why did you choose to settle in this community? - Work - better opportunities - proximity to family members etc - How do you currently maintain your livelihood?

		- What are your opinions about challenges associated with living in displacement?
		- Do you face challenges in getting clean water for your day-to-day activities?
		  • Meaning and interpretation of displacement and the perceived impacts on their lives
		  • Has anything changed in terms of your values, beliefs and customs before you arrived here?

2	Can you tell me your experiences since moving to this settlement?	- How many are you in your host residence/makeshift home? - What are the attitudes of host community members towards your presence? Are they welcoming or not? - Do you share facilities? How do you feel about sharing - How are these kept clean? What are your main concerns when it comes to hygiene? - How do you prepare food? - What are your thoughts about risk of indoor smoke? - Do you worry about food contamination? - Do you feel waste produced in the community is managed adequately? - Do you have concerns about pests? - Do you get electricity to your homes? - How do you care for the elderly amongst you? Do you think they require separate treatment and support? - Do you feel like there is a difference in experiencing displacement for women, men and the elderly? How?
3	Tell me about your experiences with education in your community.	- Ask about accessibility for adult and children. - Are you able to enrol your child/children in schools? - Who pays for tuition? - How far is the school from your home? - Is there an arrangement for school feeding?
4	Tell me about security in your community?	- Do you feel the environment is unsafe? - What are your major concerns when it comes to safety in your community? - In your opinion, what should be put in place to make you feel safer? - If food security is concern for you? - Who provides security in your settlement? - What bad habits/vices do you fear yourself or members of your household can pick up?

		- Have you faced eviction or treat to vacate your settlement?
5	What is the extent of support received?	- Where does most of your support come from? Family, government, NGO, religious organisations etc - In your opinion, do you think the support received is adequate? - Generally, what support do you think should be given to you to make life better?
6	What are your collective hopes for the future? If you had the choice, would most of you prefer to return home, integrate locally, or be resettled elsewhere? Why?	

APPENDIX VI:

QUALITATIVE OBSERVATIONS

Observations	Notes
1. Standard of housing	
2. Accessibility to clean water	
3. Accessibility to WASH facilities	
4. Presence of healthcare facilities in or around communities	
5. Measures of general welfare within community	
6. Living conditions	
7. Environment conditions	
8. Larger environment/surroundings of the settlements	

Descriptions

APPENDIX VII:

RESPONDENTS SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

1. Gender
   Male []Female [ ] Prefer not to say [ ]

2. Place of birth .....

3. Place of displacement .....

4. Name of your current community .....

5. How old are you?
   a. 18 – 29 years [ ]
   b. 30 – 44 years [ ]
   c. 45 – 59 years [ ]
   d. 60 years and older [ ]
   e. Prefer not to answer [ ]

6. What is your level of education?
   a. None [ ]
   b. Primary [ ]
   c. Secondary [ ]
   d. University [ ]
   e. Other [ ] please specify.....
   f. Prefer not to answer [ ]

7. Are you currently employed/working?
   Yes[ ] No[ ]
   If No, please proceed to question 10.

8. If yes, what type of work
   Civil servant [ ]
   Trading/buying and selling [ ]
   Artisan [ ]
   Labourer/construction worker [ ]
   Other [ ] please specify .....
   Prefer not to answer [ ]

9. Is your work .....
   a. Secure [ ]
   b. Temporary [ ]

10. When did you leave your home (original place of displacement)?
    .....

11. What is the primary reason for your displacement?
    Conflict induced [ ]

Man-made (e.g. urban development) [ ]
Natural disaster (e.g. flooding) [ ]

12. How many accommodations (houses, rooms, camps or makeshift shelter) have you had to change since being displaced?
    a. None [ ]
    b. 1 [ ]
    c. 2 [ ]
    d. 3 [ ]
    a. Other [ ] please specify …….

13. How long have you lived in this city?
    a. Less than a year [ ]
    b. 1 – 2 years [ ]
    c. 3 – 5 years [ ]
    d. 5 years and above [ ]

14. Which ethnic group do you belong in Nigeria?
    b. Igbo [ ]
    c. Hausa [ ]
    d. Yoruba [ ]
    e. Other [ ] please specify …….

15. What is your religion?
    a. Christianity [ ]
    b. Islam [ ]
    c. Traditional Religion [ ]
    d. Other [ ] please specify .....

16. Number of dependents under the age of 18 ……..

17. Number of elderly dependants (60 years and above) ……..

18. Number of people in your household ……..

19. How many rooms in your home……

APPENDIX VIII:

CODING DIRECTORY

S/No	Theme and sub-themes	Description of codes (any mention of or reference to…)
1	**Displacement, settlement, struggles and challenges**	
a)	Migration to Abuja	Any mention of - initial migration - secondary displacement - demolition - temporary housing - re/settlement
b)	Better opportunities, for family, safety	- Economic - education – work - Husband - sister - brother - son - daughter – relatives - feeling of security and safety
c)	Structural violence	Any mention of - neglect - not being cared for - no being seen - not being heard - feeling used - marginalisation
d)	Cost of living	- Living expenses - Lack of means to access basic amenities • - Earnings employment
e)	Sense of security	- Fear of crime - Fear of corruption - Burglary - Feeling secure

S/No	Theme and sub-themes	Description of codes (any mention of or reference to…)
		- peer influence - cultural influence - environmental influence - Drug use and illicit activities, Involvement of children in criminal activities, Presence of security personnel,
f)	Mental wellbeing	Any reference to - Anger - Mood changes -Un/happiness - Stress, Hope - change in sleep patterns - Loneliness
2	**Restoration of livelihood**	
a)	Integrate, return	Any mention - Within the host community - other areas in the state - original place of displacement – home - access - quality - un/satisfaction - cost
b)	Empowerment	- work, business, trading, handwork/artisan, applications
c)	future plans	- hopes - aspirations - plans - goals - wishes
3	**Environmental health**	
a)	Living conditions	Any mention of housing, shelter, home, temporary shelter, interaction with the environment
b)	Cooking	any mention - source of cooking fuel
c)	energy access and use	- electricity - illegal connection - light

S/No	Theme and sub-themes	Description of codes (any mention of or reference to…)
d)	fire hazard and smoke inhalation	- charcoal - firewood - illegal connection of electricity - open cooking
e)	food hygiene and security	- storage conditions - contamination - cooking environment - temperature control - preparation
f)	food security	any reference to food shortage and inadequacy
g)	pest management and control	- bed bugs - mosquitoes - cockroaches - rats - use of insecticides - use of rodenticide - use of chemical cocktail - air drying garments, beddings - sun drying garments, beddings
h)	Sanitation	any reference to WASH, toilet access and use
i)	use of chemicals	Any mention of • Pia pia • Insecticide • Kerosine • rodenticide • chemical for dye, making soaps and washing up liquids • hazardous and non-hazardous chemicals
j)	waste management and disposal	- include wastewater - rubbish removal - place of dumping refuse - storage
k)	water access and use	- source - treatments if any - storage - availability
4	**Reproductive health and disease burden**	
a)	External providers	- Access - Quality - Satisfaction - Proximity - Participation - Training
b)	Traditional birth attendants	- Access - Quality - Satisfaction - Proximity - Participation - Training
c)	Within the community	- Access - Quality - Satisfaction - Proximity - Participation - Training
d)	Death	any mention of death during displacement from any cause

S/No	Theme and sub-themes	Description of codes (any mention of or reference to…)
e)	Diseases and accidents	any reference to diseases, sickness and accidents
5	**Gender matters**	
a)	Sexual violence	Any mention of - abortion - illicit sexual activities - rape and molestation - teen pregnancy - early marriage - domestic violence and abuse - non/partner violence
b)	Gender roles	Any mention of - changing roles - marital relationship - burden of care - employment - non/supporting behaviour of spouse
6	**Coping, agency, integration**	
a)	emotion focused	- Acceptance -Turn to religion, God - Denial - Mentally disengagement - Behavioural disengagement
b)	problem focused	- Active coping - Planning - Seeking social support
c)	Empowerment	- training - Vocational skills – self-reliance - engagement
d)	human agency	Any reference to

S/No	Theme and sub-themes	Description of codes (any mention of or reference to…)
		- intentionality - forethought - self-reactiveness - self-reflectiveness
7	**Support**	
a)	faith based organisations	Any mention of support or lack of support from any religious groups or house
b)	government	mention of support or lack of support from national, state, local and legislative arms of government
c)	individuals	mention of support or lack of support from individuals
d)	NGOs	mention of support or lack of support from non-government organisation
e)	support from the host community	This includes support and lack of support from • host communities • Community based organisations
f)	support within the displaced community	Any remark about • Friendship • Role of family/relative