



BEYOND THE INNER CITY: UNDERSTANDING THE PREFERENCE FOR PERI-URBAN AREAS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study explores the growing preference for peri-urban areas in Ibadan, Nigeria, as a response to urbanization pressures, lifestyle changes, and socio-economic factors. As cities expand, the peri-urban interface—characterized by the convergence of urban and rural features—emerges as an attractive alternative for many residents. The research aims at understanding the motivations driving people's choices to migrate from densely populated inner-city areas to the peri-urban fringes. Key factors influencing this preference include the pursuit of improved living conditions, such as access to larger housing, enhanced amenities, and a less congested environment. The peri-urban regions often present opportunities for agricultural engagement, fostering a connection to rural livelihoods that inner-city living cannot provide. Economic considerations, including lower property costs and potential for future investment, further attract individuals and families seeking a balance between urban conveniences and rural serenity. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study integrates qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to capture diverse perspectives from recent migrants to peri-urban Ibadan. Findings revealed that more than two-thirds (87.6%) of the respondents opined to have been satisfied with living in the peri-urban communities. This shows a significant desire for improved quality of life and economic opportunities, underscored by a diverse range of demographic factors, such as age, income, and educational background. The research highlights the implications of these preferences on urban planning and policy, emphasizing the need for strategic development that addresses infrastructural needs, service provision, and environmental sustainability in peri-urban areas. Ultimately, understanding the factors driving the shift towards peri-urban living in Ibadan provides valuable insights for policymakers, urban planners, and local governments, facilitating better responses to the challenges posed by rapid urbanization and ensuring balanced urban-rural development in the region.

Keywords: Infrastructure Development, Land Use Change, Preference, Suburbanization

Introduction

The rapid urbanization occurring across the globe, particularly within developing countries like Nigeria, has generated significant shifts in population dynamics and land use patterns. (Nuissl, 2021). As cities expand, people increasingly seek alternatives to traditional urban centers, giving rise to the phenomenon of peri-urbanisation. (Rajendra, 2024). The peri-urban interface, situated between urban and rural

spaces, presents unique characteristics that appeal to a diverse demographic variables seeking to balance urban amenities with a more tranquil lifestyle. Understanding the preference for peri-urban areas has critical implications for urban planning and policy formulation, especially in burgeoning cities like Ibadan. (Follman, 2022).

The world is witnessing a significant shift in urbanization patterns, with a growing trend of people moving beyond the inner city to peri-urban areas. (Pratomo, 2022). Peri-urbanisation, a phenomenon characterized by the expansion of urban areas into surrounding rural landscapes, is transforming the way we live, work, and interact. Ibadan, Nigeria, is no exception, with its peri-urban areas experiencing rapid growth and development. (Adewoyin, 2024).

Historically, cities have been viewed as centers of opportunity, attracting individuals in search of better employment prospects, education, and social services. (Mondal, 2021). However, with population growth and urban congestion, many inner-city areas have become overpopulated, resulting in inadequate infrastructure, limited access to essential services, and declining living conditions. As a response to these challenges, an increasing number of residents are exploring peri-urban neighborhoods, which often offer larger living spaces, lower housing costs, and a perceived improvement in quality of life. (Angel, 2023). The benefits of inner-city living is enticing, such as proximity to amenities and services, notwithstanding, many individuals are opting for peri-urban areas. (Battershill, 2021). This preference raises important questions about the factors driving this trend. Is it the desire for more affordable housing, access to green spaces, or a need for a sense of community? Or is it driven by economic opportunities, infrastructure development, or policy and governance factors? (Abdulai, 2020).

The peri-urban areas can offer a mix of benefits, ranging from agricultural opportunities to more spacious living environments, which appeal to diverse groups, including young professionals, families, and retirees. (Sahana, 2023). This preference is further fueled by the desire for a sustainable lifestyle and increased environmental awareness, as more individuals recognize the importance of greenery, open spaces, and the potential to engage in local food production. (Barbosa, 2022).

Despite the increasing interest in peri-urban living, it is essential to examine the socio-economic implications and challenges that arise as populations shift to these areas. (Mortoja, 2022). Issues such as the provision of adequate infrastructure, access to public services, and the environmental sustainability of rapidly developing peri-urban regions warrant thorough investigation, making this study critical for understanding the broader dynamics of urban growth and the future of cities like Ibadan. Through this exploration, it is necessary to venture beyond the inner city to uncover the motivations, challenges, and opportunities presented by the peri-urban experience. (Varkey, 2019).

Understanding the preference for peri-urban areas is crucial for urban planners, policymakers, and other stakeholders seeking to create sustainable and livable cities. (Morenikeji, 2023). By examining the complex interplay of factors driving peri-urbanization, this study aims to provide insights into the motivations and priorities of individuals choosing to live beyond the inner city. This knowledge can inform strategies to manage urban growth, promote equitable development, and enhance the quality of life for residents in peri-urban areas.

In Ibadan, Nigeria, the peri-urban phenomenon presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, it offers a chance for economic growth, innovation, and cultural exchange. On the other hand, it poses risks of environmental degradation, social inequality, and infrastructure strain. (Babalola, 2023). By exploring the preference for peri-urban areas, this study contributes to our understanding of the

complex dynamics of urbanization in Ibadan and sheds light on the implications for sustainable urban development.

Literature Review

The trend towards —where populations increasingly shift from densely populated urban centers to the peripheral or semi-rural areas surrounding cities—has been a significant subject of study in recent years. (Biegariska, 2018), (Loopmans, 2023). This shift is driven by a combination of economic, social, environmental, and policy factors. (Aguilar, 2022). This review synthesizes the most current research on the preference for peri-urban areas, exploring its causes, impacts, and implications for urban planning.

Urbanization has been a defining process of the 21st century, with over half of the world's population now residing in urban areas (United Nations., 2018). This phenomenon has led to the expansion of urban boundaries, creating peri-urban zones characterized by mixed land uses and transitional land management practices. The peri-urban areas often serve as critical zones where urban and rural systems meet, highlighting their socio-economic importance. (McGregor, 2006), (Panachalingam, 2021).

Peri-urban areas are transitional zones located between urban and rural settings. (Oteng-Ababio, 2024). These areas exhibit characteristics of both, often encompassing residential, industrial, and agricultural uses. Peri-urban regions are characterized by lower population densities compared to inner cities but higher than rural areas. This blending creates unique challenges and opportunities for development (Baker, 2023).

Economic incentives are a primary driver behind migration to peri-urban areas. (Falegan, 2024). Lower land and property prices compared to inner cities make these areas attractive for individuals and businesses. As urban centers become increasingly expensive, both residential and commercial developers are seeking more affordable land in peri-urban zones. (Zhang, 2024). Moreover, the expansion of transportation infrastructure, such as highways and public transit, has facilitated this shift. (Smith, 2023). Quality of life is a significant factor influencing the preference for peri-urban areas. (Alabi, 2021). Many residents seek the balance between urban amenities and a quieter, less congested environment. Peri-urban areas often offer more green space, better air quality, and a perceived safer environment, which appeal to families and retirees. (Moreno, 2024). Furthermore, the desire for larger living spaces and private gardens drives this trend. (Johnson, 2023).

Environmental concerns also play a role in the preference for peri-urban areas. (Lawanson, 2012). Increasing awareness of urban pollution and the impacts of climate change have led to a greater appreciation for the ecological benefits of peri-urban living. Environmental advantages of peri-urban areas, such as reduced urban heat island effects and better integration of natural landscapes cannot be overstated. (Harris, 2023).

The shift towards peri-urban areas has significant implications for urban planning and policy. Planners must address issues such as infrastructure development, land use, and sustainability. (Jimoh, 2022). The need for integrated planning approaches that consider both urban and peri-urban dynamics must be emphasized. (Chen, 2023). Effective governance and strategic planning are crucial to managing growth, preventing urban sprawl, and ensuring that peri-urban areas develop in a sustainable manner.

Despite the benefits, peri-urbanization presents challenges. Critics argue that rapid expansion can lead to urban sprawl, increased dependency on automobiles, and strain on local resources. (Lee, 2024). Additionally, there are concerns about the potential loss of agricultural land and biodiversity. Addressing these issues requires careful planning and policies that promote sustainable development and community resilience. (Wilson, 2023).

The preference for peri-urban areas is shaped by a complex interplay of economic, social, environmental, and policy factors. (Shen, 2024). While peri-urban areas offer many advantages, including lower costs

and improved quality of life, they also pose challenges that must be managed through thoughtful planning and policy interventions. As urban and peri-urban dynamics continue to evolve, ongoing research and adaptive strategies will be essential in addressing the needs and impacts of peri-urban growth.

Given the multifaceted nature of peri-urbanization, policymakers face complex challenges. This is an indication that successful policy initiatives must consider the unique characteristics of peri-urban areas, promoting sustainable development while providing essential services (Baker, 2020). Instruments such as smart growth principles and integrated land-use planning frameworks are critical for managing the growing peri-urban landscape.

The increasing preference for peri-urban areas represents a global trend shaped by diverse socio-economic, demographic, and ecological factors. While these regions promise improved living conditions and enhanced quality of life, they also present distinct challenges that require careful consideration. (Schneider, 2020). Future research should aim to explore the implications of peri-urban living and develop strategies that foster sustainable development in these vital transitional zones. Understanding the motivations and constraints associated with peri-urban living is essential for crafting effective urban policies and promoting balanced urban-rural integration.

Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, seamlessly integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods to explore the preference for peri-urban areas. The quantitative method involved survey research, where structured questionnaire were administered to a sample of 346 residents living in Eleyele, Adetokun, Alafara and Ologuneru peri-urban areas of Ibadan, Nigeria. Stratified random sampling was used to select participants based on age, gender, income, and occupation, ensuring a representative sample. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including regression analysis, were employed to identify the factors influencing the preference for these peri-urban areas.

In addition to the quantitative approach, qualitative method was used to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and motivations of residents living in the study areas. Thirty six in-depth interviews was conducted with residents, providing rich and detailed insights into their lives. Furthermore, five focus group discussions were held with community leaders, urban planners, and policymakers to explore their perspectives on peri-urbanisation. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes in the qualitative data.

Data Collection was facilitated through a questionnaire, interview guide, and focus group discussion guide developed. The data were analyzed using SPSS software package. The study was commenced with a comprehensive literature review, to provide a solid foundation for the research. Instrument development followed, during which the questionnaire, interview guide, and focus group discussion guide were crafted. A pilot study was conducted to test the instruments and refine the methodology.

Data were collected through questionnaire administration, in-depth interviews conducted, and focus group discussions held. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis ensued, followed by the presentation of findings and a conclusion summarizing key findings, implications, and recommendations.

Discussion

By examining the complex interplay of factors driving peri-urbanization, this study aim at providing insights into the motivations and priorities of individuals choosing to live beyond the inner city. This knowledge can inform strategies to manage urban growth, promote equitable development, and enhance the quality of life for residents in peri-urban areas. The analyzed data was a product of research variables from the objective that are measured using a Likert Scale tool.

The reconnaissance survey and key informants' interview results revealed pertinent factors contributing to the shift by the people from the inner city to peri-urban areas. Notably, the government quest to end housing deficit resulting into concession of land to private housing developers in the location, siting of

institutional infrastructure in the area, newly constructed rail line that traverses the study area, new road construction (ongoing Ibadan Outer Ring Road project) and other facilities that enhances access to new location like oil pipelines, and power lines that are existing in the study area.

Respondents' Preference and Satisfaction of the Peri-Urban Environment

The preference of the respondents to the development of the community with other developed inner city was examined and the finding is summarized in Table 4.1. It was established that 52.0% of the respondents preferred the rate of development experienced in the current neighbourhood in comparison with developed inner city. On the other hand, 48.0% of the respondents disagreed with the level of development of the current neighbourhood in relation with the developed inner city.

Table 4.1: Preference of Peri-Urban Environment to Developed Inner City

	Residential communities				Total
	Eleyele	Adetokun	Alafara	Ologuneru	
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Strongly Agree	9 (12.9)	29 (19.6)	22 (25.6)	7 (16.7)	67 (19.4)
Agree	22 (31.4)	49 (33.1)	27 (31.4)	14 (33.3)	112 (32.4)
Neutral	-	1 (0.7)	-	-	1 (0.3)
Disagree	32 (45.7)	64 (43.2)	35 (40.7)	21 (50.0)	152 (43.9)
Strongly Disagree	7 (10.0)	5 (3.4)	2 (2.3)	-	14 (4.0)
Total	70 (100.0)	148 (100.0)	86 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	346 (100.0)

Source: Fieldwork 2023

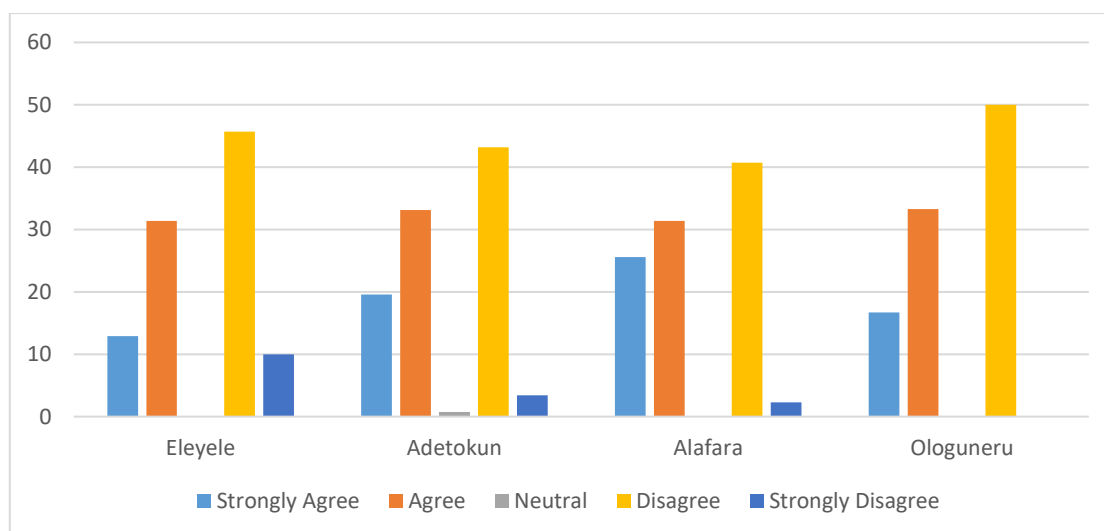


Figure 4.1 Residents' Preference of Peri-Urban to Inner City

Source: Fieldwork 2023

This finding was also similar to respondents' perceived satisfaction level with living in the community. As summarized in Table 4.2, more than two-third (87.6%) of the respondents opined to have been satisfied with living in the peri-urban communities. A comparison across the sampled communities showed that respondents in Ologuneru community (95.2%) were more satisfied with their community compared to respondents in Adetokun (89.9%), Alafara (89.6%) and Eleyele (75.7%) respectively.

Table 4.2: Residents' Satisfaction with Living in the Community

Residential Type	Residential communities				Total
	Eleyele	Adetokun	Alafara	Ologuneru	
	<i>Freq. (%)</i>	<i>Freq. (%)</i>	<i>Freq. (%)</i>	<i>Freq. (%)</i>	<i>Freq. (%)</i>
Very Satisfied	8 (11.4)	30 (20.3)	20 (23.3)	10 (23.8)	68 (19.7)
Satisfied	45 (64.3)	103 (69.6)	57 (66.3)	30 (71.4)	235 (67.9)
Neutral	3 (4.3)	-	-	-	3 (0.9)
Dissatisfied	12 (17.1)	14 (9.5)	9 (10.5)	2 (4.8)	37 (10.7)
Very dissatisfied	2 (2.9)	1 (0.7)	-	-	3 (0.9)
Total	70 (100.0)	148 (100.0)	86 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	346 (100.0)

Source: Fieldwork 2023

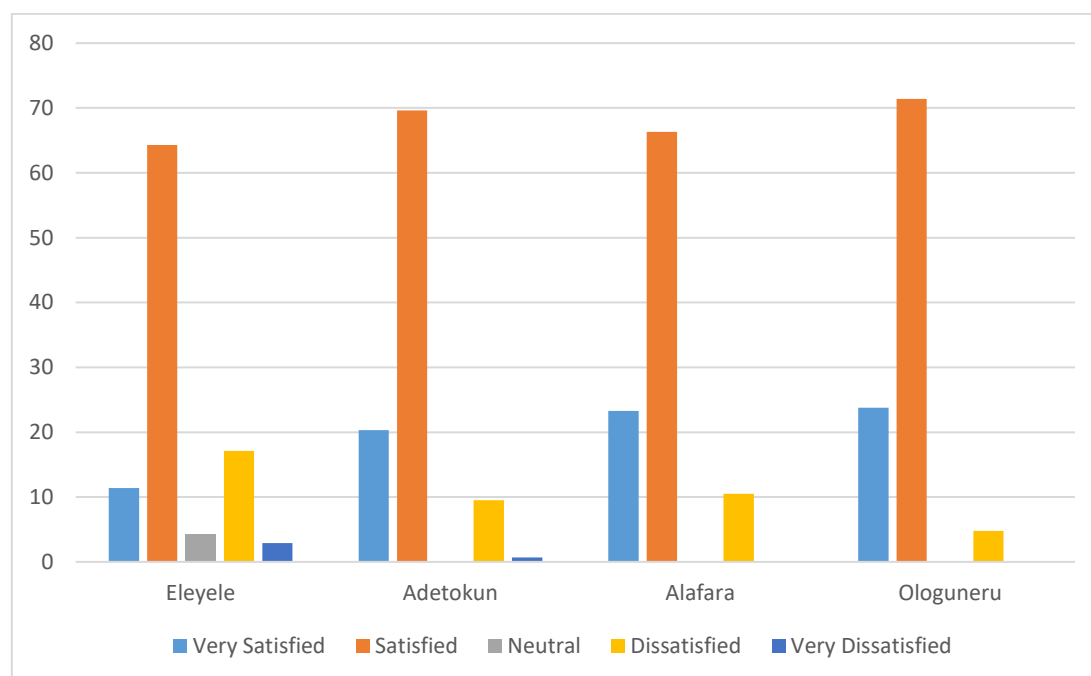


Figure 4.2. Respondents' Satisfaction with Living in the Community

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Respondents' Perception of New Infrastructure Contributing to the Neighbourhood Growth

Respondents in the study area agreed that with the construction of new infrastructure such as rail lines and road networks, there has been growth and development experienced at the neighbourhood level. Findings in Table 4.3 revealed that more than half (52.2%) of the respondents in the study affirmed to the development of the neighbourhood as a result of the construction of new infrastructure. However, respondents with indifferent (neither agree nor disagree) perception were observed to be higher in Adetokun community compared to 31.4%, 29.1% and 9.5% in Eleyele, Alafara and Ologuneru communities respectively.

Table 4.3: Residents' Perception of New Infrastructure Contributing to Neighbourhood Development

	Residential communities				Total
	Eleyele	Adetokun	Alafara	Ologuneru	
	<i>Freq. (%)</i>	<i>Freq. (%)</i>	<i>Freq. (%)</i>	<i>Freq. (%)</i>	<i>Freq. (%)</i>
Strongly Agree	14 (20.0)	40 (27.0)	35 (40.7)	22 (52.4)	111 (32.2)
Agree	9 (12.9)	31 (20.9)	15 (17.4)	14 (33.3)	69 (20.0)
Neutral	22 (31.4)	49 (33.1)	25 (29.1)	4 (9.5)	99 (28.7)
Disagree	12 (17.1)	20 (13.5)	9 (10.5)	2 (4.8)	43 (12.5)
Strongly Disagree	13 (18.6)	8 (5.4)	2 (2.3)	-	23 (6.7)
Total	70 (100.0)	148 (100.0)	86 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	346 (100.0)

Source: Fieldwork 2023

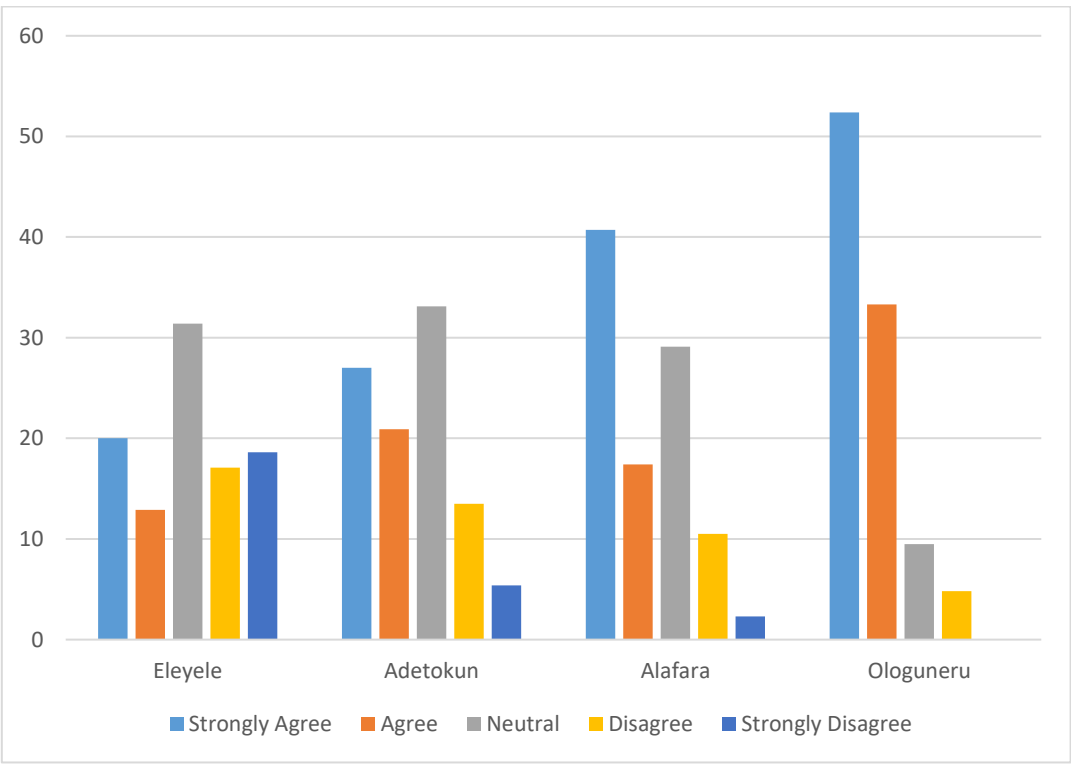


Figure 4.3 Perception about New Infrastructure Contribution to Development

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Drivers of Peri-Urbanization

Peri-urbanization of Eleyele, Adetokun, Alafara, & Ologuneru areas of Ibadan is driven by a confluence of factors related to infrastructure development, institutional changes, and broader economic trends. The push factors driving residents away from inner-city areas, including overcrowding, traffic congestion, and high cost of living were also identified. The introduction of a new rail line that traverses some parts of the study area enhances rapid developments of both residential and commercial concerns

along the corridor. See Figures 4.4. The rail line that daily commute passengers from Lagos to Ibadan has been a sight to behold whenever the rail passes. This attraction enhances rapid development of residential developments. See Figure 4.5.

The growth of institutional facilities such as educational institutions, healthcare centers, and government offices in the study boosts their appeal as desirable places for residential and business investments. Nigeria Horticultural Research Institute located in the study has enhanced rapid developments of its immediate vicinity. See Figure 4.6. In the same vein, the state government's concession of lands to private developers for housing estates significantly accelerates the study growth. These developments offer modern amenities and attract middle and upper-income residents seeking more spacious and less congested living environments compared to the city center. See Figure 4.7.

The Ibadan Outer Ring Road is another project driving developments to the study area. This ongoing infrastructure project improves accessibility around the city, reducing travel time and increasing the attractiveness of peri-urban areas as viable alternatives for residential and commercial purposes. The extension of national power grids and installation of power lines in some parts of the study areas ensure rapid development along the grids corridors. The presence of oil pipelines and associated infrastructure also stimulate economic activity and support peri-urbanization by creating job opportunities and fostering related industries.

Economic growth, including increased job opportunities and improved living standards, drives demand for residential expansion beyond city limits. Social factors, such as the desire for a quieter lifestyle and more space, also contribute to the spread of urban activities into peri-urban areas. The burgeoning interest in real estate investments in peri-urban zones, driven by rising property values and the promise of future urban expansion, further fuels peri-urbanization. These factors together contribute to the dynamic growth of peri-urban areas around Ibadan, shaping the city's spatial and socio-economic landscape.



Figure 4.4. Railway Infrastructure and Rapid Development in Idi Igbaro Ologuneru Area
Source: Fieldwork 2023



Figure 4.5 New Railway Infrastructure in the Study Area

Source: Fieldwork 2023



Figure 4.6. Institutional Project as a Driver of Housing Developments in the Study Area

Source: Fieldwork 2023



Figure 4.7. Similar Land Use Change Effect on Residential Housing Development in Alafara

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Conclusion

This study on “Beyond the Inner City: Understanding the Preference for Peri-Urban Areas in Ibadan, Nigeria” reveals that the increasing preference for peri-urban areas is driven by multiple factors. (Mortoja, 2022). These include the quest for improved living conditions, reduced congestion, better access to amenities, and perceived safety. Peri-urban areas offer a blend of urban convenience and rural tranquility, making them attractive to residents seeking a balance between the hustle of city life and the serenity of less developed regions. (Torquati, 2020).

The findings reveal that a significant number of residents prefer peri-urban areas due to various factors, including affordability, accessibility, and amenities. The quantitative results show that 87.6% of respondents prefer peri-urban areas due to lower housing costs, while 52.2% cited new infrastructural development in the area as a major factor. The qualitative findings further reveal that residents value the sense of community, security, and environmental quality in peri-urban areas.

The study also identifies push factors driving residents away from inner-city areas, including overcrowding, traffic congestion, and high cost of living. Additionally, the research highlights the role of urban planning and policy in shaping peri-urbanisation, with respondents calling for improved infrastructure and services in the study area. (Adedire, 2017).

To effectively address and leverage the trends observed in this study, it is recommended that urban policymakers focus on the following strategies. Investment in infrastructure improvements in the peri-urban areas would ensure the sustainability of the growing population. This includes better road networks, reliable public transport, and efficient waste management systems. (Filyushkina, 2022).

There is a need to implement balanced land use planning policies that accommodate residential growth while preserving green spaces and agricultural areas. This will help maintain the quality of life and environmental sustainability in the regions. (Soares, 2022). Improve access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and recreational facilities in peri-urban areas to meet the needs of new residents and avoid overburdening the inner city. (Sunardi, 2021). Community engagement to foster and involve local residents in the planning process to ensure that development meets their needs and preserves the unique character of peri-urban areas. (Raju, 2022).

By addressing these key areas, policymakers can support sustainable peri-urban development, enhancing the quality of life for residents and ensuring that growth is managed in a way that benefits both peri-urban and urban areas of Ibadan.

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