

Understanding the Importance of Participation in the City Planning Process and Its Influencing Factors

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Abstract : Urban planning systems in most countries still rely on expert-driven, top-down technocratic plan-making processes rather than a public and people-led process. This paper set out to evaluate the need for public participation in the plan-making process and to highlight the factors that affect public participation in the plan-making process. In doing this, it adopted a qualitative approach based on document review and interviews taken from real-world phenomena. A case study strategy using the Metropolitan Area of Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, as the study sample was used in carrying out the research. The research finds that participation is an important tool in the plan-making process and that public engagement in the process contributes to the identification of key urban issues that are unique to the specific local areas, thereby contributing to the establishment of priorities and, in turn, to the mobilization of resources to meet the identified needs. It also finds that the development of a participation model by city authorities encourages public engagement and helps to develop trust between those in authority and the different key stakeholder groups involved in the plan-making process.

Keywords : plan-making, participation, urban planning, city

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