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**Factors Inhibiting the Government from Realizing the Full Potential of Greening the Open Spaces in Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri Cities in Nigeria.****Officha Maurice Chika, Egolum C. C. and Nnodu V. C.**

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**ABSTRACT**

This work was designed to proffer sustainable management strategies for green open spaces in Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri located in Enugu, Anambra and Imo States respectively, in the South-Eastern Region of Nigeria. Survey design was applied for this study. Data for this study was gotten from primary and secondary sources. The targeted population for this study includes open space users, developers, visitors, and managers. Total of 400 samples were used for the study. Purposive sampling and accidental sampling technique were used for the data collection. Open spaces selected included parks, amusement and recreational spaces. The major instruments applied to solicit information (data) used for this study include, In-depth interview, Questionnaire and Field observations. The greater proportions of the residents are within the working force age ranging from 20 to 59 years in the three study cities. The result showed that there are high number of males in Enugu and Onitsha; while females are more in Owerri among the sampled population. It also indicated that majority of the people within the three cities are educated. The result indicates that culture, over population, economic activities, urbanization and climate changes inhabit the government effort in realizing its full potentials in the provision of open spaces in the study areas. Majority agree that the major reason why they did not usually visit open spaces include the following, poor equipment, crime, too crowded, limited working hours, lack of facilities in the open spaces, poor maintenance of the existing equipment and lack of information on the existing open spaces. The respondents from Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri strongly agreed that the law guiding the use of open spaces in their locality was effective with 4.22%, 4.07% and 4.04% for Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri respectively. The result equally showed that the environmental effects of open spaces identified from the study include damage and loss of ecosystem, loss of ecosystem services, loss of reserves, reduced photosynthesis, increases synthetic surface and traffic congestion. The political situation, the economy, the social status of the users and the local culture of the people are all connected to the use of urban open spaces. Provision, rehabilitation and use of master plan for development and other activities in the state is vital and should be encouraged.

**Keywords:** Potential, Greening, Open spaces, Enugu cities, Onitsha cities and Owerri cities.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the world of today, urban planning and design has shifted into a new concept that incorporates the safe usage of the environment in a way that is sustainable. In urban planning and design projects around the world, the quality of urban life is given much attention than ever. It is understood that the health of a city, its economy and environment is improved more by a properly designed and implemented master plan incorporating environmental issues Mensah (2014)[1]. One of the ways to increase the quality of urban life is the introduction of urban open spaces and green areas in cities. These include parks, green corridors, urban parks, urban zoos and street greeneries. Studies show that cities which are designed with the above elements in consideration have improved health status in the public, low stress level in the society, decrease pollution and generally enhanced quality of life [2].

Nigerian cities have undergone profound reforms over recent decades, as politicians, decision makers and planners have sought to ensure that the built environment remains livable and can adapt to new lifestyles and demographic trends Mensah (2014)[1]. It is now abundantly clear that rapid urbanization is greatly transforming the spatial pattern of urban land use. Consequently, the resulting losses of urban open spaces at the local to the global level are continuously altering urban ecosystems. Open spaces are recognized as one of the most popular resources of the urban ecosystems today. The increasing urbanization and human population growth during recent decades have resulted in significant loss of habitats in the urban landscape [3].

Because of urbanization and gentrification, the physical development which has been taking place in most cities of the World is associated with greater loss of open spaces and green space [1]. The loss or degradation of green space destroys the habitats of creatures, reduces biodiversity and disrupts the structure and process of the urban ecosystem. This situation results in the decimation of green spaces Akamani (2006)[4]. Therefore, there is the need for an urban open space development framework to protect urban open spaces by identifying the challenges facing development and management of open spaces in order to contribute meaningfully to urban ecosystems. Open space contribute towards healthy ecosystems which underpin many natural processes supporting a range of services including pollination, soil fertility, flood defence, air filtration and carbon capture and storage [5].

Urban open spaces could perform many functions in the urban context that benefits people's quality of life. There is a growing consensus about the importance and value of urban open spaces in cities. Therefore planning towards constructing sustainable or eco-cities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is highly appreciated Bayram and Ercan(2006)[5]. However, without careful production of knowledge and the linkage of that knowledge to action on developing and maintaining the urban open spaces, cities of the World will be overwhelmed with many challenges Vijaya, Iniyamb and Goicc (2012) [6]. This in turn will result in the deterioration of the quality of life in urban areas in many aspects including social, economic, health and the environment.

Physical activity in green spaces like walking or cycling is attributed to many factors such as easy access in terms of routes and entry point, distance, connectivity to residential and commercial areas, size of green spaces in terms of population use, attractiveness, including biodiversity habitat and absence of graffiti and litter and a range of amenities. Both policy and science now emphasize the critical necessity of green areas within urban social and ecological systems [4].

Moreover, open spaces are beneficial due to their ability to facilitate hydrological processes in areas where development has interfered with urban hydrology (i.e. the movement, distribution and quality of water Vijaya, Iniyamb and Goicc (2012)[6]. These permeable spaces provide important ecosystem service such as filtering water pollutants, reducing storm water runoff and flooding, and enhancing groundwater recharge [7].

Also, as the amount of permeable surfaces decreases, a shift occurs in water distribution from partial subsurface flow to almost all surface runoff (Ulrich *et al.*, 1999a)[7]. These processes always bring about severe flooding in cities and if drainage infrastructure is not well developed, it might result in unanticipated calamities. Therefore, it's better to maintain the nature and ecology of urban forests and vegetation in the city in order to prevent both human and property losses.

The development of open spaces plays a great role in achieving various socio-economic development targets in any country. Urban green spaces generates tangible ecosystem services including outdoor recreational opportunities, amenities, air pollutant removal, balancing atmospheric oxygen and carbon dioxide contents, micro climatic regulation, soil moisture and groundwater recharge, flood control, wildlife habitat and physical and mental

health promotion. There is a need to allocate enough resource to support the day to day monitoring of urban green spaces against encroachers and to provide guidelines with ensure sustainable land uses which prevent any kind of physical and economic development in the green belt. Also, there must be a continuing effort to ensure the accessibility, availability and usability of green space facilities open to all residents [8]. Intensification of activities without proper planning and coordination leads to wear and tear of green spaces and structures resulting in poor quality of urban life Giorghis and Gerard (2007)[2]. Hence, management of urban green spaces which include among others; planning, coordinating and controlling of socio-economic activities that take place in the city is critical to every urban ecosystem.

Most cities in Nigeria especially Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri have a small percentage of open spaces as a result of rapid urbanization, natural population growth and also because of lack of proper spatial planning and control mechanisms, lack of coherent approach to management, poor designing and most of them offer very little services to open space users. Unfortunately, efforts aimed at solving these problems have not yielded the intended results, thus, making it a major problem in selected cities. In managing and maintaining green spaces, most urban cities have a number of planning regulations instituted to guide the development of structures in both urban and rural areas. For instance, in most Nigerian cities Federal, State and Local Government has provisions for unauthorized structures on any public properties (land) such as schools, market and sanitation sites, open spaces, nature reserves, parks and roads, could be stopped and even demolished without notice, and the developer(s) surcharged with the cost of demolition [9]. But in most cities the law made are not been followed such as in Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri, hence the problem of development and poor maintenance and development of green spaces in these areas.

#### **AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to investigate the factors inhibiting the government from realizing the full potential of greening the urban green space in Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri cities.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

What are the factors inhibiting the government from realizing its full potential of greening the urban green space in Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri cities?

### RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

**Ho:** There is no significant difference between the causative factors and non utilization of green open spaces in the three areas.

### STUDY AREA

This study covers three towns namely: Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri located in Enugu, Anambra and Imo States respectively, in the South-Eastern Region of Nigeria.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

The type of research design applied for this study is survey design. This study sought opinions and perception of the occupants, staff of urban and regional planning, town planners, private developers and the general public in Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri on the challenges facing the development and management of open spaces in Owerri (specifically at Aladinma, Ikenegbu, Amakohia, Owerri Municipal and New Owerri for Owerri) in Onitsha (specifically at Omagba, American Quarters, In-land Town and Government Reserved Area (GRA)) and finally, in Enugu (specifically at Independent Layout, Ogui new Layout, Uwani, New haven and GRA). The study portrayed the current physical and environmental management of open spaces with challenges facing their development and management in Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri cities.

#### SOURCE OF DATA

Data for this study was sourced from two major areas, namely; primary and secondary sources.

**Research question that is, assess the factors inhibiting the government from realizing its full potential of greening the three cities,** the data were collected using questionnaire designed for local government department, town planners, environmental managers, the general public that make use of the open spaces and other government parastatals.

- **Questionnaire Method:** Copies of questionnaire were distributed to the residents of the selected study areas in order to elicit information from them.

### TARGET POPULATION FOR THE STUDY AREAS

The targeted population for this study includes open space users, developers, visitors, and managers. Since in this study, it is impossible to observe the entire statistical population, that is, the total number of open space users, developers and managers in the three selected urban areas due to some constraints such as geographical accessibility and researcher's resources, statistical sample from the population is necessary in order to study the population as a whole provided the sample size is considerably large.

### SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

In order to determine the sample size used in this study, Bourley's formula was used as shown below:

$$S = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where

- S = sample size
- N = the population size
- E = is the margin of error assumed
- 1 = is the theoretical constant

#### For Onitsha

$$N = 261,604$$

$$e = 10\% = 0.5(\text{assumed}) \text{ error margin}$$

$$S = \frac{261,604}{1 + 261,604 (0.5)^2}$$

$$S = \frac{261,604}{1 + 261,604 (0.0025)}$$

$$S = \frac{261,604}{654.0125}$$

$$S = 398.9$$

**Approximate to 400.**

**For Owerri the sample size is**

$$N = 1,620,214$$

$$e = 10\% = 0.5 \text{ (assumed) error margin}$$

$$S = \frac{1,620,214}{1 + 1,620,214(0.5)^2}$$

$$S = \frac{1,620,214}{1 + 1,620,214(0.0025)}$$

$$S = \frac{1,620,214}{4051.535}$$

$$S = 398.9$$

**Approximately 400**

**For Enugu the sample size is**

$$N = 722,664$$

$$e = 10\% = 0.5 \text{ (assumed) error margin}$$

$$S = \frac{722,664}{1 + 722,664 (0.5)^2}$$

$$S = \frac{722,664}{1 + 722,664 (0.0025)}$$

$$S = \frac{722,664}{1806.6625}$$

S = 398.9 **Approximately = 400.**

According to 2006 census conducted in Nigeria, the population of the selected locations was reported as Onitsha 261, 604, Owerri 1,620,214, and Enugu 722,664. Based on the population, the sample size was calculated and chosen to be four hundred (400).

### SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sampling techniques adopted in the study were purposive sampling and accidental sampling based on the nature of the data collected. Purposive sampling is used in the selection of relevant respondents for the study as under age and non-users of open space would not be relevant in the study. The respondents were basically the open space users, as well as, the management of the spaces.

Accidental sampling is non-probabilistic sampling technique in which the probability of a particular element in the study is unknown. The respondents were selected as met accidentally during field survey at the locations [10].

### SELECTION OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES IN THE THREE URBAN AREAS

Open spaces selected included parks, amusement and recreational spaces. The streets on which the open spaces were situated were selected based on accessibility and usage by the occupants of the locations. In Enugu, Ejindu park at Coal Camp, Polo Park at GRA, Nnaji park at New Market, Michael Okpara Square at Independence Layout, Osadebe park (Tickless) at Ogui New Layout, Ahamijah park at Trans Ekulu, Ngwo park at Uwani and Murtala Mohammed park at New Haven were selected for the study using purposive sampling techniques.

In Onitsha, Ojukwu Park at Fegge, Rojenny Tourist and Game Inland Town, Milky Park at Woliwo South, and Egboma Park Omagba phase II were selected for the study and in Owerri, the parks and open space selected are: Owerri Amusement Park at Ikemba Ojukwu center, Children Parks at Nekede, Nekede Zoo and Garden at Nekede, Concorde Park and Water View at Owerri were selected for the study using purposive sampling techniques.

### INSTRUMENTS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The major instruments applied to solicit information (data) used for this study include

- (a) In-depth interview

(b) Questionnaire and

(c) Field observations

(i) **In-depth Interview (IDI):** This involved one-on-one interview with key users of the parks. They involved local stakeholders who take care of the day to day running of the park to ensure that the parks were not turned into a space for thieves, robbers and hoodlums. They provided information to the usage, constraints to the park usage and needs for park development. Park management staffs were also involved in IDI to solicit information on park management.

(ii) **Questionnaire:** As already stated all the respondents involved open spaces, park users, and recreational park users for instance at Polo park, Enugu, Amusement park at Owerri. Questionnaire were distributed and collected immediately. The researcher and two research assistants guided the respondents through the questionnaire. The method of questionnaire distribution ensured 100% rate of return for Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri respectively since the respondents answered the question items while they were relaxing.

(iii) **Field Observations:** This was carried out by the researcher to ensure the physical conditions of the open spaces, green spaces, parks and recreational spaces. This should ensure a firsthand assessment of the physical conditions of the parks at the time of the field study.

### STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES AND DATA ANALYSIS

The Statistical tests conducted in this research include weighted mean, Principal Component Analysis, Shapiro-Wilk normality test and One-Way Analysis of Variance. Descriptive statistics and charts were used for better understanding of the collected data (information).

### METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents at the parks, since they were considered to be the open spaces users. Respondents considered for the study were those above the age of 15. Both males and females were involved in the study. Open space users above the age of 15 were selected randomly. The officials responsible for the management

of the open spaces were also involved in the study. Questionnaires were distributed to management staffs based on judgmental sampling techniques.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

In the distribution of research instrument, 400 questionnaires were distributed in each of the three cities and the whole questionnaires were retrieved.

### DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE

The demographic characteristics investigated include the age structure, gender and literacy status of the respondents (Table 1, 2 and 3).

**TABLE 1: AGE STRUCTURE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Three Urban Areas Studied			
Frequencies of Respondents			
Options on age interval	Enugu	Onitsha	Owerri
15-19	29	31	21
20-24	42	35	37
25-29	45	58	45
30-34	58	47	43
35-39	46	40	54
40-44	39	32	47
45-49	45	43	56
50-54	32	53	46
55-59	43	41	29
60 and above	30	20	21

Source: Field Survey, 2014

The outcome in table 1 shows the age structure of the respondents studied. The greater proportions of the residents are within the working force age ranging from 20 to 59 years in the three study cities. This implies that the respondents studied are adequately aware of the subject matter.

**TABLE 2: GENDER STRUCTURE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

S/N	Study Locations	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
1	Enugu	274	68.5	126	31.5
2	Onitsha	207	51.75	193	48.25
	Owerri	157	39.72	226	60.75

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 2 shows the number of males and females in the three urban areas. The percentage of male and female were also shown in the Table 2. The value in the Table 2 shows high number of males in Enugu and Onitsha; while females are more in Owerri among the sampled population. The implication is that in Enugu and Onitsha more males use open space, while at Owerri more females use the open spaces.

**TABLE 3: LITERACY STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS**

S/No	Literacy option	Three Urban Areas Studied					
		Enugu		Onitsha		Owerri	
1	No formal education	7	1.75	19	4.75	4	1
2	FSLC	53	13.25	94	23.5	67	16.75
3	GCE/WAEC/WASSC	116	29	162	40.5	102	25.5
4	OND/NCE	92	23	75	18.75	95	23.75
5	HND/DEGREE	55	13.75	33	8.25	83	20.75
6	Higher Degree (M.Sc/Ph.D)	47	11.75	17	4.25	49	12.25
7	Total	400	100	400	100	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 3 shows the education level of residents' surveyed in the study areas. The information in the Table indicates that majority of the people within the three cities are educated. The implication is that the population studied is knowledgeable to the concept of information contained in the questionnaire. Hence the information supplied is correct and accurate from their points of view.

#### **FACTORS INHIBITING THE GOVERNMENT FROM REALIZING ITS FULL POTENTIAL OF PROVISION OF OPEN SPACES IN ENUGU, ONITSHA AND OWERRI**

The data on perception of residents on the factors inhibiting the government from realizing its full potential in the provision of open spaces in the three urban areas are presented in Tables 4.

**TABLE 4: FACTORS INHIBITING THE GOVERNMENT FROM REALIZING ITS FULL POTENTIAL OF PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE IN THE STUDY AREAS**

<b>Option Investigated</b>	<b>Enugu</b>	<b>Onitsha</b>	<b>Owerri</b>
<b>Culture</b>	4.04	4.31	4.43
<b>Over Population</b>	3.65	3.87	4.32
<b>Economic Activities</b>	4.04	4.22	4.32
<b>Urbanization</b>	3.87	4.32	3.65
<b>Help to Reduce Climate Change and Ozone Depletion and Lack of Plans for Development in Master Plan</b>	3.91	4.01	3.76

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 4 was designed to get information on the factors that inhibit the government from realizing its full potential of provision of open spaces in Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri respectively. From the responses, culture, over population, economic activities, urbanization and climate changes inhabit the government effort in realizing its full potentials in the provision of open spaces in the study areas.

#### **CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES THAT PREVENT PEOPLE FROM USING OPEN SPACES**

The data of constraints and challenges of development of open space in the study area was presented in table 5, 6 and 7.

**TABLE 5: CONSTRAINTS THAT PREVENT PEOPLE FROM USING OPEN SPACES AND PUBLIC PARKS**

Option Investigated	Enugu	Onitsha	Owerri
<b>Fear of Crime</b>	53	59	47
<b>Too Crowded</b>	18	15	25
<b>No one to go the Park With</b>	16	19	21
<b>Staff is Unfriendly</b>	19	14	22
<b>Poor Program</b>	17	10	13
<b>Poor Equipment/Facilities</b>	15	13	18
<b>Poor Health</b>	14	15	12
<b>Location Too Far</b>	29	25	22
<b>Working Hours are Limited</b>	28	24	37
<b>Lack of Activities and Program</b>	21	23	14
<b>Lack of Facilities and Equipment</b>	20	17	21
<b>Poor Maintenance of Equipment</b>	19	23	21
<b>Negative Perception of Other Users</b>	21	26	14
<b>No Way to go the Facilities</b>	24	27	29
<b>Lack of Time for Leisure</b>	30	34	37
<b>Lack of Information on Existing Open Space in my Area</b>	37	34	32
<b>Utilization Cost is too High</b>	19	22	15

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 5 indicates that majority of the respondent from Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri strongly agree that there are some constraints that prevent them from visiting open spaces and public parks in their localities. Their responses were shown above. From Table 5, majority agree that the major reason why they did not usually visit open spaces include the following, poor equipment, crime, too crowded, limited working hours, lack of facilities in the open spaces, poor maintenance of the existing equipment and lack of information on the existing open spaces.

**TABLE 6: LAW GUIDING THE USE OF OPEN SPACES**

Option Investigated	Enugu	Onitsha	Owerri
<b>How Effective is the Law Guiding Open Space</b>	4.22	4.07	4.04

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 6 shows the response on effectiveness of the law guiding the use of open space in the three selected urban areas. From Table 6, respondents from Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri strongly agreed that the law guiding the use of open spaces in their locality was effective with 4.22%, 4.07% and 4.04% for Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri respectively. This shows that there is strong law guiding the use of open space for different activities and that the law is strong to guide the activities.

**TABLE 7: ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF OPEN SPACES**

Option Investigated	Enugu	Onitsha	Owerri
<b>High Biological Diversity</b>	2.07	1.24	3.41
<b>Damage and Loss of Ecosystem</b>	3.65	3.76	3.87
<b>Loss of Ecosystem Services</b>	4.32	3.87	4.04
<b>Loss of Reserves</b>	4.01	3.01	3.86
<b>Reduced Photosynthesis</b>	4.22	3.91	4.31
<b>Reduces the Risk of Flooding and Erosion</b>	1.39	1.04	2.22
<b>Increases Synthetic Surfaces</b>	4.32	3.87	4.04
<b>Traffic Congestion</b>	3.07	3.91	3.91

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 7 shows the information on the Environmental Effects of Open Spaces in the three urban areas. From Table 7, there are so many environmental effects of open spaces identified from the study which include damage and loss of ecosystem, loss of ecosystem services, loss of reserves, reduced photosynthesis, increases synthetic surface and traffic congestion.

## DISCUSSION

From the analysed data, it was observed that open space remained an essential part of any urban development and it serves several functions that are expedient for basic living. However, the continuous growth of urban areas without effective management and monitoring of open space uses had led to dilapidated parks that have become hideouts for criminals, illegal structures, lack of adequate facilities/amenities, open space policies, lack of a capable agency in handling development and maintenance, poor intergovernmental relationships, shortage of landscape, financial constraints and lack of citizen inclusiveness in participation to mention but few. Simply put, these negative effects of mismanagement of open spaces have resulted in the poor quality and further decay of the built environment.

As this research has observed, these setbacks in open space management and thus suggested better and effective strategies in dealing with the problems, which will mark a journey to better prioritizing, channeling of human, finance and functional institutional resources to abate the dire consequences of a nation's dwindling open space reserve especially in a developing nation like Nigeria.

In this study, three urban areas were selected, Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents who are users of open spaces in the urban areas of interest. The socio-economic factors of the respondents were shown in table 1 which reveals that most of the respondents are female (54.044%). In terms of age, the respondents in the age bracket 21-25 (15.661%) were more than every other age brackets among the respondents. Also, most of the respondents are first leaving school certificate holders, although higher qualification holders were also identified.

In the usage of the open space, it was found that the prevailing purpose was marketing, which implies in the three urban areas, most people are using open spaces for market purpose. Factors that inhibit the government from realizing its full potential of provision of open spaces in Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri respectively were also investigated as shown in Table 4. From the responses, culture, over population, economic activities, urbanization and climate changes inhabit the government effort in realizing its full potentials in the provision of open spaces in the study areas.

In evaluating the constraints that prevent them from visiting open spaces and public parks in their localities, majority of the respondent from Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri strongly agree that there are some constraints that prevent them from visiting open spaces and public parks in their localities. Their responses were shown in Table 5 above. Majority agree that the major reason why they did not usually visit open spaces include the following, poor equipment, crime, too crowded, limited working hours, lack of facilities in the open spaces, poor maintenance of the existing equipment and lack of information on the existing open spaces.

Table 6 shows the response on effectiveness of the law guiding the use of open space in the three selected urban areas. It showed that the respondents from Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri strongly agreed that the law guiding the use of open spaces in their locality was effective with 4.22%, 4.07% and 4.04% for Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri respectively. This shows that there is strong law guiding the use of open space for different activities and that the law is strong to guide the activities.

The result of evaluating the environmental effects of open spaces showed that there are so many environmental effects of open spaces identified from the study which include damage and loss of ecosystem, loss of ecosystem services, loss of reserves, reduced photosynthesis, increases synthetic surface and traffic congestion.

## CONCLUSION

The issue of urban open space in urban planning and design is a contemporary issue. Urban open spaces are very important elements in a city. Their benefits have many dimensions: economic, social, political and many more. Preserving and maintaining open spaces in urban environments is considered a crucial aspect of fulfilling environmental quality goals and attaining a livable city. Urban areas like Enugu, Onitsha and Owerri which are among the important cities in the country need to have proper recreational open spaces which enhance the quality of its city life. It needs places that boost its aesthetics. From the findings of this study, the basic trends in the usage of urban recreational open spaces in the three selected urban areas were understood. The overall study leads to the understanding that there is a low attitude towards the open space in general. Even though there are some recreational open spaces being utilized in these urban areas, they are not given the attention they deserve.

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