



Mukaila El-Hussain Abdulrahman

Assessment of Spontaneous Physical Housing Changes

in Southwest Nigeria

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Imprint

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The societal wellbeing does not depend only on the quantity and quality of food alone, but also on the quality of the physical environment. The physical environment of urban centres is the landscape for both tangible and intangible things. Among the tangible things in the urban landscape are various typologies of buildings. Among the buildings in the physical environment, none is more central to man than the domestic or residential buildings. The residential building in the physical environment is the physical structure that accommodates the social content of the housing i.e. the man. The quality of housing affects the physical, intellectual and attitude of individuals (Vendivere *et al*, 2006 and Doling *et al*, 2013). Housing conditions impact significantly on all individuals regardless of whether it is rented or owned by the residents (Vendivere *et al*, 2006). Poor housing conditions are more apparent in the urban centres of developing countries principal due to population growth and lack of adequate infrastructures (Olotuah, 2005). Due to housing conditions urban housing in developing countries is categorised into formal, informal and organic housing (Gibson, 2007). The formal housing sectors are government and its agencies sponsored housing. The organic housing is by the indigenous homogenous groups of an urban milieu while the informal housing is by the heterogeneous groups of the urban residents (Gibson, 2007).

The study of different aspect of housing problems is on the increase, especially low-income housing in urban centres in developing countries including Nigeria. The social content of housing has been said to be different and diverse (Kent, 1990). This attests to reason why housing typologies are different among a given milieu. The housing need of

the people varies from place to place over a given period of time. These reveal the complex nature of the housing problem. Observations of Southwest Nigeria urban physical environment depict a composition of a variety of housing typology. Literature on different aspects of government owned houses, especially in the formal housing sectors abounds (Adedayo, 2011 and Aduwo, 2011). Studies of different aspects of informal housing sector have not been popular among the informal housing in southwest Nigeria.

This study assesses the spontaneous housing transformation with private residential houses in southwest Nigeria. Housing transformation is a work in progress on an existing building (Tipple, 2000). Housing as an asset undergoes several processes of transformation in the life time of the building. The transformations are for different purposes over time. Spontaneous physical housing changes are transformation practices where house owners carried out alterations, extensions, modifications or additions to the original patterns of their houses, including the immediate environment in an unorganised manner without recourse to how the transformation impacts on the urban residents.

In Nigeria like most developing nations government sponsor houses have not been effective in the provision of housing needs of the urban populace (Kalu *et al*, 2014). The informal housing is the alternative means of providing the housing needs of the urban residents. Rapid urbanisation has been identified as key factor responsible for the high demand of houses in the urban centres (Doling *et al*, 2013). The world urban population has been projected to increase by 1.7 billion over the next 40 years (United Nations 2010). Urbanisation therefore remains a major challenge of urban centres in developing countries including Nigeria. Inadequate accommodation for the teeming urban

population creates pressure on the existing stocks, thereby necessitating the emergence of physical housing transformations in the urban centres of developing countries.

Rapid urbanisation has been responsible for the deplorable housing and environmental conditions in most urban centres (Olotuah, 2005). The government and other corporate agencies have been finding it difficult to cope with the high demand of houses, especially in the urban centres and consequently affordable urban housing is increasingly difficult to achieve through the formal housing programmes. The informal housing sector is characterized by many identities; it is described as self-help housing, private residential or self-built housing (Tipple, 2000). This study describes it as private residential housing. It is usually realized by incremental process due to paucity of resources among the low income group in southwest Nigeria. The contribution of the private housing sector to urban housing provision has been complementary to the formal housing provision.

A study conducted by Ikejiofor (2006) shows that Private residential housing constitutes the major dominance of the urban built environment. The same study reported that the quantity of private housing is more than the quantity of the government sponsored housing in most of the urban centres. Similarly, study by Olatubara and Olatoye (2007) shows that the private residents constitute about 80% of the urban housing population in Nigeria. Therefore the private housing sector contribution has been an alternative means of providing the housing demands in the urban centres. The bulk parts of houses in southwest Nigeria are houses in the private sector. The impact of housing transformations in this housing sector therefore required investigation.

The studies by Nguluma (2003) and Aduwo (2011) on housing transformations explained that physical characteristic of housing, the nature of neighbourhood environment and the need for the social composition of the housing determine the pattern of housing transformation. Housing transformation affects house typologies, the urban milieu and the lifestyle of the people. Consequently, different people transform their houses for different reasons. Understanding the underlying reason for housing transformation explains the relationship that exists between urban residents and the houses they occupy. This research therefore is a study of spontaneous physical housing transformation with particular interest on how the attitude impacts on the urban residents of southwest Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Research on qualitative aspects of housing problem abounds. Prominent among these are the provision of adequate housing, satisfactory housing, housing affordability and more importantly housing transformations. General observation suggests that private residential housing in the urban centres of southwest Nigeria is extended and transformed in an unplanned manner without recourse to how it affects the primary functions of the transformed building as well as the urban residents. This kind of spontaneous transformations characterised the urban landscape of the private housing neighbourhoods of southwest Nigeria. This transformation activity reveals elements of modifications that do not conform to the existing houses. The resulting spontaneous physical structures give complex housing patterns, hybrid and unsightly housing appearance around the neighbourhood of the urban centres, thereby creating congestions, visual and other kinds of pollutions that alter the urban landscape feature. All these affect the primary functions of the affected building.

A large number of studies on housing transformations on public housing in different parts of Nigeria are available. Nevertheless, housing transformation in the private housing sector of southwest Nigeria has received little attention at the empirical inquiry. Some of these studies, like Aduwo (2011), Adegbehingbe (2011) and Adedayo (2013) agree that lack of inputs by the end-users formed the basis for different kinds of alteration that follow the occupation of the transformed houses. All the studies agree that patterns of housing transformations differ by settings, between urban centres and geographical locations. The studies constantly show that housing transformation is more in the urban centres than the rural areas. However, housing transformations are carried out by individuals for different reasons and identifying the impact on socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the urban households is necessary for effective policy formulation in urban centres of southwest Nigeria.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to evaluate spontaneous physical housing changes with a view to developing models for the impacts on the urban residents of southwest Nigeria.

1.3.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives for achieving this aim are to:

1. Examine the socioeconomic characteristics of the residents of urban centres of southwest Nigeria.
2. Analyse the spontaneous physical change patterns of the housing in southwest Nigeria.

3. Examine the factors that influence spontaneous physical changes in the houses studied and
4. Develop models for the impact of housing transformation on the urban residents of southwest Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the socioeconomic characteristics of the residents in the urban centres of southwest Nigeria?
2. What are the physical characteristics of spontaneous physical changes?
3. What are the factors responsible for physical changes in the houses?
4. How can the impacts of spontaneous physical housing changes on the urban residents of southwest Nigeria be predicted?

1.5 Hypothesis

The null hypothesis is formulated as;

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between housing typologies and social characteristics of urban residents

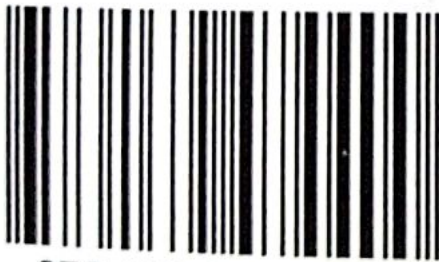
1.6 Scope of the Study.

The urban centres of Ibadan, Abeokuta and Akure are the geographical coverage of the study. The focus is on the residential buildings in the housing neighbourhoods of these urban centres that had undergone any form of modifications in the lifetime of the building. The study examined the physical changes in the structural alterations of the walls, windows, roof and conversion of open space to various uses by the residents. Low – income prototype housing estates were not within the scope of the study.

This study assesses the spontaneous housing transformation with private residential houses in southwest Nigeria. Housing transformation is a work in progress on an existing building (Tipple, 2000). Housing as an asset undergoes several processes of transformation in the life time of the building. The transformations are for different purposes over time. Spontaneous physical housing changes are transformation practices where house owners carried out alterations, extensions, modifications or additions to the original patterns of their houses, including the immediate environment in an unorganised manner without recourse to how the transformation impacts on the urban residents.



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