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2014-11-23
Canadian Center of Science and Education
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/16927
Ijasan, K. C. & V. O. Ogunro, V. O. 2014. How Rapid Urbanisation, Neighbourhood Management Affects Living Conditions. A Survey of Agege Local Government Area, Lagos, Nigeria. Canadian Center of Science and Education. URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jsd.v7n6p110

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Journal of Sustainable Development; Vol. 7, No. 6; 2014
ISSN 1913-9063 E-ISSN 1913-9071
Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education

How Rapid Urbanisation, Neighbourhood Management Affects Living Conditions. A Survey of Agege Local Government Area, Lagos, Nigeria

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Received: October 7, 2014 Accepted: October 16, 2014 Online Published: November 23, 2014

doi:10.5539/jsd.v7n6p110 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jsd.v7n6p110

Abstract

This paper explores the issues around urbanisation, neighbourhood degeneration and its effects on the living condition on the residents of Agege area of Lagos, Nigeria. This paper traces the historical background of the area, examines the meaning of neighbourhood degeneration and explores factors responsible for neighbourhood degeneration.

The paper adopts quantitative data collection strategies of investigation, and compares these with past literature on the issue. From the survey of 120 households in the area, the study realized street hooliganism; destitution, bad roads and considerable inequality in the distribution of wealth as the greatest problems in the area. It concluded on the need for holistic approach by government to fast-track housing conditions improvement in the entire areas. Moreover, the redevelopment of the area needs to be community-led participatory planning where all stakeholders harness ideas that can be used to improve the present situation of the area.

Keywords: Agege LGA, degeneration, Lagos state, neighbourhood management, and rapid urbanization

1. Introduction

Urbanization in African cities can be seen as good news as literature shows that there is a positive correlation between development and urbanization. Rapid urbanization implies an 'uncontrolled' increase in the population of people living in urban centres is according to Allen (2009) arguably the most complex and important socio-economic phenomenon of the 20th and 21st centuries. This uncontrolled increase seems to be the current situation of many African cities.

Sustainable urbanization on the other hand is, 'a holistic approach to urban development and human settlements that provides for affordable housing and infrastructure and prioritizes slum upgrading and urban regeneration mobility' Memoire (2013). Allen (2009) identified Five (5) dimensions of urban sustainability as including social, economic, ecological, physical and political sustainability. According to the author, 'physical' sustainability can also be referred to as 'built environment sustainability'. This concerns the capacity of an intervention to enhance the liveability of buildings and urban infrastructures or 'all' city dwellers without damaging or disrupting the urban region environment.

In the Nigerian context, Jiboye (2011) ascertained that various national programs such as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy NEEDS and other home grown interventions have yielded insignificant results at best as existing realities show a lot of disparities between policy and reality. The urbanization challenges have worsened the living environment in many cities in Nigeria just like it exists in many African countries. Onibokun and Faniran (1995) highlighted some of the problems of urbanization in Nigeria. They particularly emphasized 'declining quality of life' and lack of infrastructure in urban areas. Henderson (2002) also observed that whereas in developed countries, urbanization is usually at a comparatively slow pace, in the developing nations, urbanization occurs at galloping pace. In recent times, the UN Systems Task Team (2014) proposes that major concerns of urbanization are shifting to issues like urban poverty,

compounded by the rise of the 'new poor' particularly in cities of industrial economies. Also that the rising inequality in many parts of the world will generate tension and even conflict whose focus will be in cities and towns. In the light of the aforementioned, this work narrows down on the problem of neighbourhood degeneration and its effects on residents. It focuses on the perception of residents of a degenerated neighbourhood and explores how the physical condition of their community impacts on their lives. According to Oshinubi (2003), there is a connection between urban poverty, unplanned urbanization and other critical problems such as deteriorating living conditions, increasing rates of deaths and diseases caused by pollution and poor sanitation which are results of neighbourhood degeneration. Though it may be argued that different regions in Nigeria are endowed with diverse economic opportunities that can lead to better living conditions of the citizens in those zones, but the Nigerian experience as a nation has negated this norm. The urbanization process in Nigeria as it is in the Indian situation (see Chandra, 2005) has not been accompanied with a corresponding supply of adequate housing, basic infrastructures and amenities; instead it has resulted to the development of informal settlements and slums.

Lagos represents the epitome of urban decay; according to Oduwaye and Lawanson (2007) as the metropolis is replete with environmental problems ranging from slums and squatter settlements, to crime and delinquency. Focusing on one of such communities experiencing neighbourhood decay as a result of rapid urbanization in Nigeria is the urban district of New Oko-Oba, Agege in Lagos State. Against this background, this study is carried to determine the conditions under which the urban individuals live in order to provide information, which will help the city and state administrators, develop more positive policies and actions towards the area.

The rapid population growth and economic development of the area can be said to be degrading the area environmentally through uncontrolled urbanization and industrialization, expansion and the destruction of natural environment. It is on this premise that this work is out to discuss neighbourhood degeneration and its effects on residential living conditions in the New Oko Oba area of Agege Local Government Area. In the course of this study, this paper gathers evidences from the case area, using the residents' perspective to answer the question of 'how does neighbourhood degeneration affect residential living conditions in the area'?

1.2 The Study Area (Agege Local Government Area)

The study area for this research is Agege Local Government Area (also referred to as ALGA). It would be mostly remembered for the deadly plane crash on 3rd June 2013 when an aircraft carrying 153 passengers crashed killing all on board while attempting to land at the nearby Muritala Mohammed International Airport in Ikeja. ALGA currently occupies a landmass of about eighteen square kilometres (18sq.km) and shares boundaries with three other local government areas viz: Ifako/Ijaiye in the north, Alimosho in the west and Ikeja in the east. Historically, Agege community is said to be the oldest among the numerous communities that constitute ALGA, having been inhabited since the seventeenth century by Yoruba ethnic group of *Awori* extraction. It was from there that some elements moved to Orile-Agege, the original homestead of the Agege community. Established in 1770 by Awori-Yoruba, a new settlement emerged as a result of the Lagos Abeokuta Railway line constructed between 1895 and 1911. This settlement has metamorphosed to what has come to be known as Agege.

Agege is one of 16 Local Government Areas of Metropolitan Lagos. Located in 11 square kilometres area in northern Lagos has over 1 Million (citypopulation.de 2013). As at 2006, the population density of Agege was put at 60,768 inhabitants per square kilometre. Poverty in Agege is manifest in the types of housing and average family size, both of which are indicators of ability to afford basic needs. Family size in Agege ranges from 2 to 13, with 63% of families averaging between 6 and 9. Residents are mostly self-employed making precarious livelihoods from petty trades or other low-level occupations that require limited skills. Today, ALGA comprises of eleven electoral wards, which includes Isale Oja, Dopemu, Papu-uku, Asafa, Alagba/Oyewole, Okekoto, Keke, Dawodu, Isale-odo, Orile-Agege and Oko oba. Due to the fast rate of development in Oko-Oba, in no time there were great expansions in the area's physical and economic base. This sudden transformation is now being called the 'New Oko-Oba', which is characterized by commercial, residential, a few industrial users with structures that are put in mixed residential and commercial activities, and other emerging informal urban activities such as carpentry and auto-mechanic workshops.

2. Literature Review

Urban development problems in Nigeria could be viewed from both socio-economic and environmental perspectives (Lawanson, 2006). It is a very crucial issue especially in a developing country as Nigeria. According to Mabogunje (20002), urbanization is the root cause of the high rate of environmental degradation, pollution and breakdown of social order.

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness among human environment researchers on some related

problems of neighbourhood center as a vital arena where critical urban problems are generated and worked on. Analytical unit for the understanding of these problems are also being constantly developed. For many years, especially in the developing countries, issues like design concept, infrastructural facilities decay *et cetera* predominate discussions among community stakeholders and professional alike. While most of the neighbourhood problems are being addressed especially in the developed cities, the developing cities (grossly found in low economy nations) are yet to experience any fundamental solution to the problems of this vital aspect of human habitat.

According to Samson and Raudenbush (2004), the degeneration observed in neighbourhoods which sometimes have some degrees of effects on the physical structures of buildings, often lead to abandonment, neighbourhood stigma, wrecked and burned out situations.

Rothenberg as early as 1979 proposed that the neighbourhood is the matrix of some of the most important values and attitudes of man and, as such, it is at the base of much of an individual's (e) valuation of non-neighbourhood commodities and/ or opportunities and of the degree of his own well-being. Consequently, the 'neighbourhood' is hence significant, and changes in the quality of neighbourhood units can considerably influence a better or worse the welfare of its inhabitants (Chesire, 2007). An in-depth understanding of a continuous need for improvement in this fabric of the community is therefore expected to stir all researchers to keep making enquiry concerning the nature, causes, consequences, and solution to neighbourhood deterioration, or as described in this paper, 'neighbourhood degeneration'.

Most Nigerian cities, with the exception of the newly developed Federal Capital City of Abuja, largely experienced decay in both housing and physical infrastructural facilities over the past few decades. This is possibly due to economic downturn in the nation (Coker et al., 2007). The factors responsible for this can be attributed to rapid urbanization, rural-urban migration, and decades of steady economic downturn, decay of urban infrastructure and negligent urban organization. Dimuna and Omatsone (2010) noted that the urbanization process in many developing countries particularly Nigeria, has not been accompanied with a corresponding supply of adequate houses, basic amenities and infrastructures and so on. This means the rate of urbanization is much faster than infrastructure development and provision.

These have created among other things, a rising demand on housing stocks (irrespective of quality or suitability) leading to high rents, overcrowding and development of slums and squatter settlements. These have inflicted negative impacts on the neighbourhood and severe consequences on health of city residents. Looking more critically at the aged problem of degeneration in the two areas of the Lagos Mega City, certain causative factors have outplayed more vigorously. Just as it has been affirmed that neighbourhood degeneration is a result of the dynamic interplay of many factors such socio-economic, institutional or technological activities, Leitmann (2005) has identified the two major causes as immediate and long-term causes. He emphasized that attention must be paid to the underlying causes of urban environmental issues; these include lack of public awareness and participation, inadequate governance, poor policies, and insufficient knowledge. It is a clean fact, that poverty remains dominant at the root of several environmental problems. According to Beckhoven et al (2005), the problem of neighbourhood decline can be divided into three categories: Firstly, problems related to the housing stock, secondly, problems related to management, and finally problems related to residents themselves.

The process of neighbourhood slum formation in developing countries is generally more complex than in the Western world (Giok & Kai, 2010). One of the most important differences being the roles played by the third tier (or local) government and the chief tenants in the leasing system. The wide spread use of rent control in the third world has meant that the minor landlords, particularly of older buildings, often receive insufficient returns to maintain their property in an adequate state of repair. On the other hand, subletting is usually unaffected by the government legislation so that the bulk of residents are still subject to profiteering despite the deteriorating condition of their housing environment.

In Johannesburg, the situation is quite similar to Lagos mega city on the scale of pockets of neighbourhood degeneration. Inner city Johannesburg was renowned for issues such as crime, (see Charlton and Karam 2003; CrimestatSA, 2013) housing shortage (see NASHO, 2012) and other sundry social and economic problems (Ngwabi, 2009). Winkler (2009) painted the picture of downtown Johannesburg as a place needing regeneration; more so as it is a place that has witnessed over 25 years of capital and 'white flight'. Also, the author added that the City's plan of reversing its negative image seems to be much focused on economic revitalization with little attention on the needs of the actual community members themselves. The situation is arguably gradually getting better; according to the City of Johannesburg CoJ (2011). M any areas such as Hillbrow, Jeppe, Maboneng, Berea and Yeoville etc. in Johannesburg are increasingly adopting the benefits of 'community involvement'. For

instance, the launch of the Ekhaya Neighbourhood program is being put in place in neighbourhoods like Hillbrow. Slowly, community participation is being encouraged in the regeneration process. The Ekhaya program's slogan is 'making hillbrow home'. Ekhaya means 'at home'. According to the CoJ (2011), 171 Million Rand (approx. $17M) is currently being contributed to the various projects in the inner city and volunteers are always sought in each project.

Comparatively, the Nigerian experience has been drawn absolutely from Lagos Mega city where this study is being carried out. A case study analysis by the Stimson center in 2009 puts the population density of Lagos at 18,150 per square kilometer (that's the 4th highest in the world).

Essentially most past works on this issue has needed to reveal specific findings that can help in the city restoration. Olanrewaju (2003) concluded on the link between urban living and starvation. Agunbiade and Agbola (2007), in their work, used a case study methodology to examine the issue of land tenure in the informal settlements of Lagos. The research reveals by conscious estimation using previous statistic that about two-thirds of the city population currently live in degenerated area; most of the developable land in the selected areas have undergone significant development and urbanization, and the residual pockets of mash and poorly drained plots are rapidly being filled and developed. The tenure status in the study area had a major impact on poverty and the overall environmental quality as a threat of forced eviction results in a negative attitude among residents towards improving their environment. Among the numerous problems that were identified in ALGA (study areas) includes the followings: air pollution, poor method of waste disposal, noise pollution, water pollution, all of which are hazardous to human health and also degrade the environment. This has a significant effect on property values as it reduces its attractive propensity.

Inadequate Urban Utility Services that made many people struggling over a limited supply of utility service, it also degrades the environment physically (Aribigbola and Omosule 2012). This is why most of ALGA's utility centers are either malfunctioning or totally nonexistent. Rapid population growth in ALGA therefore has placed immense pressure on solid waste management systems. Solid waste though generated in both urban and rural areas, has become far more complicated in bigger cities. (Aluko and Gbadegesin, 2010). It is difficult to see any holistic community regeneration intiatives in place in Lagos as a city, rather, there are pockets of plans as the need arises.

Key Features of ALGA Environmental Condition

Many studies internationally shows that there are different types of residential properties that can be found in any urban set up. The street survey carried out in the area under study confirmed this, the common housing types n Agege can be described as: *Detached Houses, Semi-Detached Houses, Row Houses, Single Family Residencies, e. Investment Properties, Duplex, Triplex, Quardraplex and Apartment/Apartment Flats*. The general living conditions and features of the neighbourhood can be summarised as follows:

- ***Housing Conditions*** –that is housing deterioration and abandonment. This has remained an unresolved problem in the cities. Substandard housing in this area is a major problem. Figure 1 depicts more conspicuously the devastation level of the area under study.
- ***Traffic Congestion*** - The rapid expansion of cities and improper transport planning has produced significant traffic congestion in Agege. This has resulted in financial costs for urban residents due to lengthy travel times to work and time wasted and higher transaction costs to business in moving goods and services. Others are:
- **Salaries and Income**- Lower residential incomes and Purchasing power
- **Retail** - Growth in supermarkets and Suburban shopping centres
- Loss of urban jobs, especially in manufacturing
- **Safety** - Increased disorder and crime

Conventional Residential Property Values determinants

According to Housing Prices UK, we are to understand that property values as we may conceive do not increase just because investment in a property is good, on the contrary they do so for a number of reasons (or factors) which may be positive or negative. These factors, though may have a universal application, intrinsic conditions of a place may show otherwise. They key property values determinants in the study area are as highlighted below:

Location - Location is one of the crucial factors in determining the value of a property. For instance, it's been proved that a property that is located near commercial activities tends to have a higher value or rent.

Accessibility - All Residential property needs to be readily accessibility. Adequate roads networks have a higher premium bid. According to Sector's model of city structure, Properties that are situated along commercial transportation routes often command a higher value. However in Lagos, a property needs more than just good roads, there is also a need for the location of the property to be secured by not being too accessible or close to the major highways.

Infrastructures - Aside from the location, and accessibility factors, it is also important to consider the built-in amenities and features, as they will influence the total value of a property. For instance, if someone's house is equipped with security features and is maintained well, it will have a higher value compared to a house with basic features. A property with a good view may also cost more than a similar property that does not offer a similar view. An example is Magodo in Lagos state.

Relative Pricing - The value of a property is mainly dictated not by its absolute value or worth, but by how similar properties are priced. If an investor is lucky enough, he may sell his property at a price he has chosen based on intuition. In most cases, however, the only proof of the value of one's property is if someone was willing to pay a similar property for the same price.

Demand: it is logical that property in high demand gives real estate a sense of positive value. In real sense demand may have been triggered by many factors: either due to the property's unique characteristics, or simply because there is an overall desire for home-ownership, or both. Nonetheless, the market participants must have purchasing power, that is having the desire to buy, and the ability to fill that desire is referred to as **effective demand**.

Availability of substitutes -Property values go down literally, when there are available substitutes. When a prospective investor realizes that the property he wants to invest in might take time before giving him his expected returns, he ventures into other businesses if this is an occurrence in an area, the property that is experiencing this will lose its value.

Neighbourhood degeneration - properties that are situated in thickly populated and urbanized areas will always have a higher value compared to a property in the suburbs or in a rural setting. Therefore, if a property is situated in a highly deteriorated or degenerated neighbourhood, the value of such property will reduce even than the full rental value.

There are however other factors that may be considered to possess great influence on property values, these are factors such as the Interest rate, individual taste, security, cost of construction and security on the land or general security guarantee.

3. Materials and Methods

The entirety of this study, which borders on neighbourhood degeneration and its effects on residential property values in Agege, requires the employment of qualitative and quantitative methods of research. Moreover, the descriptive and explanatory research approaches were adequately engaged in its fullest and all these are discussed here.

The study population of the study area is based on the 2006 census figure of ALGA, which is put at 1,033,064 people (NPC, 2006). The goal becomes finding a representative sample (or subset) of that population.

The sample frame was derived from total population of ALGA that was further divided into 10 neighbourhood (see table 1) but for the independent simple random sample is drawn from each group. The researcher employed the 'lottery system' of random sampling to get the study the areas. Ordinarily, lottery system occurs when the researcher writes all the streets in the case study in different pieces of paper and puts them collectively in a jar then juggled and researcher finally pick up the sheet of papers one after the other until the ten streets are chosen.

The result of this sampling technique is documented in Table 3.1(the 10 Neighborhoods in the study area -New Oko-Oba)

Table 1. Randomly sampled area in New-Oko Oba and types of neighborhood degeneration

S/NO.	Names of neighbourhoods	Types of degeneration
1.	Olaniyi street	
2.	Pupoosola street	
3.	Babs Ogunwole street	
4.	Morin street	Bad roads, dilapidated buildings, epileptic power supply, presence
5.	Sola martins street	of refuse in front of buildings, noise pollution, sparse presence of
6.	Dele Ojo close	infrastructural facilities, cluster of commercial buildings,
7.	Amusan street	non-availability of relaxation areas, presence of hoodlums.
8.	Charity road	
9.	Funsho George	
10.	Sango Jinmi	

Source: Author's field survey 2011

4. Results and Discussion

Primarily the data collection was through structured questionnaires that were administered to the sampled population in the study area and on the basis of the primary data obtained from the sample, generalizations or inferences about the population are made and analyzed as stated in the next section of this work. Secondary data are drawn from previous related works and official sources such as archives etc. 120 households were surveyed in the area. 93 (77.5%) responded. Also, ten (10) questionnaires were administered to Estate Surveyor and Valuers' and all were retrieved representing 100%.

Information obtained from the questionnaire administration constitutes the basis for the analysis presented in this work. Multiple approaches or analytical techniques/tools are used here. They include: Relative Importance Index RII, chi square test and simple frequency tables.

Length of Stay in the Study Area

From the survey, it was observed that 34.4% have lived at the area for a period ranging from 2-5yrs, 33.3% (6-10yrs) and 20.4% (11-20yrs) 7% have lived there for more than 20 years and 3% of the responses were missing. This shows that we can rely on the responses given by the population as it can be deduced that they are relatively conversant with the area under study.

Awareness of community regeneration projects by the government.

Having ascertained the 'length of stay' and 'level of education' of the respondent, they were asked if they were aware of any planned or ongoing regeneration or renewal plans in Agege, the results show that none of the respondents were aware of any such plans either by the local or state government.

Type of Building or Property occupied by Respondents

The types of buildings the respondents occupy were investigated. This is considered very important as it aids the researcher to know the level of degeneration on buildings being experienced in the study area. The type of buildings common in New Oko Oba include Storey buildings, bungalows, Tenements, duplexes, semi-detached buildings and so on. The survey revealed that 41.2% of the residents reside in multi-tenanted flats while only 9.7% live in single-family bungalows

Housing Density

Having ascertained earlier that overcrowding is one of the contributing factors to degeneration, it becomes necessary to explore this within the study area. It was seen that 83 respondents representing (89.1%) have 5-20 people living in the same building or compound while just 8.7% live with less than 4 people. This is highly

suggestive of chronic levels of overcrowding

Types of Degeneration in the Building by the Residents

Degeneration/defects that occur in a building gives an insight to the type of interventions, policy or guideline needed in the affected area. It also assists the regeneration provider in determining the level of degeneration that has occurred in the buildings or overall community, so as to determine the overall effects on the properties. During the survey, residents were asked to classify the type of defects or degeneration suffered in their property and the results are shown in table 2 below.

Table 2. Classification of housing defect/ neighborhood degeneration

S/N	DEFECT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1.	Leaking roof	35	37.0
2.	Poor drainage system	49	53.3
3.	Poor sanitation	42	45.6
4.	Lack of portable water	26	28.4
5.	Poor power supply	52	56.3
6.	Noise pollution	1	1.1
7.	None	2	2.2
8.	Peeling paint	2	2.2
9.	No security	1	1.1
10.	Missing	3	3.3

Source: Field survey, 2012

The respondents chose more than one form of degeneration as shown on Table 2. With the exception of leaking roofs, it was realized that the respondents tended to complain more about issues relating to lack of public infrastructure rather than amenities they could have provided for themselves. For instance, poor drainage and poor power supply were the most frequently ticked defect of degeneration whereas; just 2% of residents chose elements like peeling paints as a problem. This shows that the residents are not trying to pass blames to the government, but are ever ready to sort their personal housing problems within their means. In comparing these results with those of the housing density enquiry, it is somewhat strange that the respondents did not really complain about noise pollution considering the fact that most people live within close proximity to many other residents.

A chi-squared test is any statistical hypothesis test in which the sampling distribution of the test statistic is a chi-squared distribution when the null hypothesis is true, or any in which this is asymptotically true (ETH Zurich circa, 2010). It allows for testing whether the observed proportions for a categorical variable differ from hypothesized proportions; it is used to see if there is a relationship between two categorical variables (Corder & Foreman, 2009). Table 3 gives further explanation of this.

Table 3. Chi squared test

S/N	PARAMETERS	CHI SQUARE	SIG.
1	Is there no good drinking water in the building you live in?	18.075	.000
2	Is there poor parking space in the building you live in?	30.204	.000
3	Do you have leaking roof in your apartment?	5.688	.017
4	Is your drainage system poor?	.269	.604
5	Do you have poor sanitation?	.871	.351
6	What is your source of water supply?	52.196	.000
7	How do you dispose of your refuse	72.957	.000
8	How regular is power supply	39.161	.000
9	Has supply of good drinking water affected rent paid yearly?	2.419	.120
10	Has good roads affected rent paid yearly?	2.419	.120
11	Has frequency in power supply affected rent paid yearly?	25.817	.000
12	Has good drainage system affected rent paid yearly?	10.333	.001
13	Frequency of robbery attacks	16.065	.000

Table 3 illustrates that some of the responses given concerning the said parameters are valid because the significance of the responses are less than 0.05. This means that the respondents gave the questions some thought before choosing their answers. However, some of the responses to the following questions: Is your drainage system poor? Do you have poor sanitation? Has supply of good drinking water affected rent paid yearly? And has good roads affected rent paid yearly, are not valid because their significances are greater than 0.05, which means the respondents just chose their options without giving the questions adequate thought.

Having identified insignificant responses, the next inferential step was to determine which factors contributed to the respondent's choices of the significant variable. This is done with the aid of the Kruskal Wallis Anova which is a tool used to determine dependencies of responses. The results are shown in table 4

Table 4. Kruskal Wallis ANOVA of dependence on basic independent responses *Source: SPSS 15.0*

Tested Parameters	**Profile**			
	Length of Stay	**Building Type**	**Housing Density**	**Housing Defect**
Is there portable water in the building you live in?	0.000	0.034	0.007	0.821
Is there poor parking space in the building you live in?	0.011	0.065	0.002	0.287
What is your source of water supply?	0.456	0.063	0.467	0.390
How do you dispose of your refuse	0.002	0.227	0.575	0.765
How regular is power supply	0.003	0.956	0.350	0.326
Has stability of power supply affected rent paid yearly?	0.000	0.004	0.009	0.023
Has good drainage system affected rent paid yearly?	0.003	0.849	0.837	0.540
Frequency of robbery attacks	0.032	0.542	0.649	0.158

Table 4 shows relationship between the eight (8) valid parameters from the chi squared test and the sum of the independent variable questions from the respondents, which are: length of stay, building type, housing defect and housing density. It is seen from the table that 'length of stay' and 'housing density' are crucial factors that affected the responses to the survey. It is clear that there is some relationship/ dependence between length of stay and how respondents view whether or not there is 'portable water' in the area. Same goes for refuse disposal and

power availability issues. None of the tested parameters depended on the housing defect while only 'stability of power supply' and 'availability of portable water' depended on the type of building.

Table 5. Ranking of the level of degeneration in each neighbourhood

S/N	VARIABLES	1 (F/ %)	2 (F/ %)	3 (F/ %)	4 (F/ %)	5 (F/ %)	Missing (F/ %)
1	Crime rate	32/45.2	16/17.2	17/18.3	10/10.8	8/8.6	Nil
2	Bad roads	31/33.3	28/30.1	20/21.5	9/9.7	4/4.3	1/1.1
3	Pollution of air, water etc.	25/26.9	28/30.1	21/22.6	14/15.1	2/2.2	3/3.2
4	Shortage of infrastructure	29/31.2	17/18.3	34/3.6	2/2.2	6/6.5	Nil
5	Poor housing conditions	23/44.1	34/36.6	29/31.2	6/6.5	2/2.2	Nil
6	Traffic congestions	38/40.8	20/21.5	16/17.2	7/7.5	9/9.7	3/3.2
7	Poor waste management	41/44.1	15/16.1	15/16.1	13/14.0	5/5.4	4/4.3
8	Hooliganism & destitution	35/37.7	13/14.0	27/29.0	12/12.9	5/5.4	1/1.1
9	Poor power supply	23/24.7	35/37.6	22/23.7	7/7.5	6/6.5	Nil
10	Poor drainage	29/31.2	23/24.7	22/23.7	12/12.9	6/6.5	1/1.1
11	Water supply	25/26.9	19/20.4	30/32.3	9/9.7	9/9.7	1/1/15
12	Poor security	25/26.9	13/14.0	28/30.1	14/15.1	11/11.8	2/2.2

*1=Always, 2=quite frequently, 3= sometimes, 4= rarely, 5=never. F- Frequency

Source: Field Survey 2012

Table 5 shows the responses to how the residents of New Oko Oba rank the neighbourhood problems in their area. Modal responses are highlighted in bold. A quick look at Table 5 shows that nearly all the degeneration variable listed are occurring quite frequently. This shows that degeneration has eaten deeply into and eroded the core amenities of the study area.

Table 6. Relative importance index RII of the degeneration variables

SN	VARIABLE	5(F / RF)	4(F / RF)	3 (F / RF)	2 (F / RF)	1 (F / RF)	
1	Crime rate	32	16	17	10	8	
		A_in_i= 160	A_in_i = 64	A_in_i =51	A_in_i = 20	A_in_i = 8	
ƐRF = 303			ƐF= 83		RII= 3.65		POSITION= 6th
2	Bad roads	31	28	20	9	4	
		A_in_i =155	A_in_i = 112	A_in_i = 60	A_in_i = 18	A_in_i =4	
ƐRF = 349			ƐF= 92		RII= 3.79		POSITION= 2nd
3	Pollution of air, water etc	25	28	21	14	2	
		A_in_i = 125	A_in_i =112	A_in_i = 63	A_in_i = 28	A_in_i =2	
ƐRF = 330			ƐF= 90		RII= 3.67		POSITION= 5th
4	Shortage in infrastructure	29	17	34	2	6	
		A_in_i =145	A_in_i = 68	A_in_i = 102	A_in_i =4	A_in_i =6	
ƐRF = 325			ƐF= 88		RII=3.69		POSITION= 4th
5	Poor housing conditions	23	34	29	6	2	
		A_in_i =115	A_in_i=136	A_in_i=87	A_in_i=12	A_in_i=2	
ƐRF = 352			ƐF= 94		RII= 3.74		POSITION= 3rd
6	Traffic congestions	38	20	16	7	9	
		A_in_i= 190	A_in_i=40	A_in_i=48	A_in_i=14	A_in_i=1	
ƐRF = 293			ƐF=89		RII= 3.29		POSITION= 9th
7	Poor waste management	41	15	15	13	5	
		A_in_i =85	A_in_i =60	A_in_i=45	A_in_i=26	A_in_i=5	
ƐRF = 221			ƐF= 89		RII= 2.37		POSITION= 12th
8	Hooligans and destitution	35	13	27	12	5	
		A_in_i=175	A_in_i=52	A_in_i=81	A_in_i=24	A_in_i=5	
ƐRF = 337			ƐF= 82		RII= 4.1		POSITION= 1st
9	Poor power supply	16	35	22	7	6	
		A_in_i=16	A_in_i=70	A_in_i=66	A_in_i=28	A_in_i=30	
ƐRF = 252			ƐF= 93		RII= 2.71		POSITION= 11th
10	Poor drainage and sanitation	27	23	22	12	6	
		A_in_i=135	A_in_i=92	A_in_i=66	A_in_i=24	A_in_i=6	
ƐRF =323			ƐF= 90		RII= 3.59		POSITION= 7th
11	Water supply	25	19	30	9	9	
		A_in_i=125	A_in_i=76	A_in_i=90	A_in_i=18	A_in_i=9	
ƐRF = 318			ƐF= 92		RII= 3.46		POSITION= 8th
12	Poor security system	25	13	28	14	11	
		A_in_i=125	A_in_i=52	A_in_i=84	A_in_i=28	A_in_i=11	
ƐRF = 300			ƐF= 92		RII= 3.23		POSITION= 10th

Source: Field survey, 2012

Relative Importance Index, RII, is a ratio of the summation of 'no of rank' x frequency to summation of frequency. From the data given in Table 4.5, the form of degeneration with the highest RII is the most important, while the degeneration with the least RII is the least important. It can be seen as illustrated in table that by a wide margin, 'hooliganism and destitution/begging' was the most highly ranked form of degeneration in the study area

with RII of 4.1. This is however followed by 'bad roads' with a ranking of 3.79. This shows the level of decadence felt in the area. It further corroborates Beckenhoven et al (2005), which identified acute internal social problems as a critical sign of neighborhood decay and also the work of Leitmann (2005), which emphasized the impact of poor policies in degenerated communities.

5. Summary of Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

This study has shown the effects of neighbourhood degeneration on living conditions of residents of ALGA. From the field work carried out and the analysis of data collected, the following deductions were made. This study in summary has shown that most of the respondents are literates who earn relative well to reside or afford good accommodations within the habitable and conducive neighborhoods. Also, it is well established by this study that most of the respondents' buildings have one or more defects ranging from leaking roofs to poor power supply, with poor power supply, source of water supply and disposal of refuse taking the lead.

Furthermore, the study has identified the very problems peculiar to each neighborhood within Agege; these are - hooliganism, bad roads, crime rate, pollution of air, water etc., shortage in infrastructural facilities, poor housing conditions, traffic congestions, poor waste management and others, with hooliganism taking a conspicuous lead among the problems peculiar in the neighbourhood. Poor drainage and sanitation was not ranked so highly by the respondents. This is particularly surprising giving the fact that proper waste disposal is much needed in order to prevent epidemic diseases and that a survey by Stimson (2009) showed that only 1% of Lagos residents were connected to any form of closed sewage system

Finally, the study found that there is no specific neighbourhood renewal or regeneration project in place in ALGA; at least not any that the residents are aware of. What exist at best are pockets of local government interventions, which are ineffective. It can be deduced from this that community participation is not effectively implemented in the study area.

After a careful study and analyses of neighbourhood degeneration impacts on the living conditions in Agege area of Lagos state, the following recommendations are appropriately considered timely. First, a holistic approach should be made by the government to improve housing conditions of study areas. This approach should involve all stakeholders, the citizens or residents including the major sectors of health, law, social development, housing and urban economics. This becomes imperative because the societal components, which find expression in neighborhood system, are so interwoven that the neglect of one would always result to negative consequence on the others. Secondly, affirmative action's that support unemployed youths and street destitutes should be quickly implemented in the study area so that these street urchins do not degenerate into full blown armed criminal especially with the current security challenges been faced in Nigeria presently. Thirdly, the tenets of the 'sustainability of the built environment' as described by Allen (2009) should be adopted, as any rash or hurried intervention to address the prevalent problems in the neighbourhood should be weighed ultimately against the gains of sustainable urbanization.

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