

## BOOK REVIEW

Joseph .A. Fadamiro, Julius .A.B. Olujimi and Olaniyi Okedele, 2014. *Urban Environmental Sustainability: Liveable Cities, Nigeria*: Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State. ISBN: 978-978-768-250-4 (hbk).

The book is a collection of original researches that discussed various environmental challenges and proffer solutions to the environmental challenges in Nigeria based on empirical studies carried out by various contributors. The central theme of the book explores the concepts of liveability and sustainability as the overall goal of urban design. “urban design” is referred to as a place making for people and it fosters sustainable environment-behaviour relationships. In the process of making especially in the “contemporary city development and in the built-environment in general” (p.9), the professionals in all related disciplines have to work together in a ‘common space’ in order to realise the vision of good quality environment. Hence, articles in the book cut-across various disciplines and the research approaches are inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary in nature. The book is divided into twenty-one chapters.

Chapter one provides an overview of the concept and perception of urban design in contemporary city development. It traces urban design origin to North America in the fifties and acknowledge several authors in defining urban design such authors like Cook, 1980, Lai, 1988, Lang, 2001. The author of this chapter explores the Mackay’s 2003 model of urban design which situates urban design between architect, landscape architect and planner. However, the study established what has evolved overtime that, the list of contributors to urban design is endless, and hence, the integration of the inputs from other professionals into the Mackay’s model of urban designs (p.10). The study also highlights 13 urban design participants and their job descriptions in order to bring about the desire living environments in the interdisciplinary context.

Chapter two of the book deals with the urban conservation issues in Nigeria. the authors of this chapter examined the design for deconstruction and material reuse with a case study of Abuja, the nation’s capital. Introducing the concept of design for deconstruction as a “selective and systematic dismantlement of building components, specifically for re-use, recycling and waste management” (p.21). It is an emerging concept in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that insists on the alternative to demolition which is considered an unsustainable act. Demolition brings about waste which is hazardous to both human and the earth. The finding of the empirical study by the authors shows that the Nigeria building industry with respect to design for the deconstruction and material reuse is at best far low due to lack of training or quality education. The authors advocate for an enlighten program for the general citizens on the necessity and advantages of the new concept to citizens and the environment. The authors opined that, appropriate legislation and policy should be put in place to encourage the adoption and practice of design for deconstruction in Nigeria.

In Chapter three, Adedeji and Odufuwa examined the challenges of the low-income informal settlement in Abeokuta metropolis, Nigeria with a view of assessing the liveability of the city. The empirical study focused on the following dimensions; environmental conditions, socio-economic characteristics, housing types and density, building conditions and infrastructural facilities. The study methods involved survey, interview and direct observation of the community which includes housing and infrastructure as well as income generating activities and livelihood of the residents. The major finding shows that the residents are poor and as a result, they lived in an unhealthy and difficult situation. The four areas examined by the authors namely: Obantoko, Aregbe, Gbonagun and Kotopo were devoid of elements of liveability. And to improve such areas, the paper called for urban renewal/regeneration and good governance (p.36).

Chapter four focuses on the residential choice optimality (RCO) ‘as a utility-based index for assessing the level of housing specific well-being that a household stands to experience arising from a stated residential choice’(p.60). The empirical study raised pertinent questions of residential accommodation choices by house seekers when face with multiple choices. This again raises the question of liveability of the available housing. The study stimulates public discourse and generates interest in issue relating to housing choice problems. The author recommends the development of a decision support guide for housing choice.

Chapter five analyses some low impact development approaches within and outside Nigeria with the aim of establishing urban developmental principles for regenerating decaying urban environments. The author presents the elements of low impact development (LID) framework for urban regeneration (p.84). The author assessed two case studies and find out that natural landscape element enhances certain levels of erosion and flood control while artificial landscape is the key to environmental adaptability to high impact processes such as human and vehicular movement.

In chapter six, Ayanrinde and Olujimi examined the private firm performance in waste management in Ibadan, Nigeria. Their study focused on the core residential and government residential areas in Ibadan. The authors provide review on urban management, waste management and highlights types of solid waste such as domestic, commercial, municipal and industrial solid waste. Further review was provided on waste management principles to include; generation, collection and disposal. Furthermore, five methods of disposal was discussed which include; open dump, sanitary land filling, composting, incineration and recycling (p.107-109). The empirical study was based on perceptual analysis to uncover the performance of the private firms in managing waste in the study areas, this involved the distribution of structure questionnaire on randomly selected residents, also private firms and government agencies were also interviewed. The findings include; in-access to the core areas, non-availability of authorized dumping sites, and lack of funds and high rate of default among the beneficiaries of the services hindered their performance therefore, making the environment looking shabby.

A study on the evaluation of environmental impact of landscape and open space development in Enugu State, Nigeria, was initiated in chapter seven. The study was a survey type and the researchers were guided with the checklist of items/indicators based on six point scale (0-5). The non-parametric chi-square test was conducted and the result of the study shows the bad state of the landscape of the existing open spaces in Enugu

which also bothers on location, type, size and it therefore affected their uses. These are government managed open spaces. The authors recommend inclusive policies by the state government for the development of open spaces.

The authors of chapter eight stressed the importance of landscaping in curbing the unpleasant quality of the physical environment in Nigeria. They provide background to urban sprawl as an effect of urbanization that is 'increasing rapidly worldwide with some cities exceeding their carrying capacities' (p. 149). The study explores some of the existing spaces in cities which include; Ibadan, Lagos and other few cities. Findings revealed the causes of urban sprawl which include rapid population growth, uncontrolled planning and development, inadequate sanitary infrastructure, limited access to basic infrastructure and municipal services. Focusing on some case studies, such as abandon open spaces under overhead bridge, road median spaces, the study provide evidence for sustainable landscaping as a panacea to urban sprawl.

Chapter nine presents the important role colour(s) plays in creating a visually aesthetic environment. From time immemorial, 'man used paint to express their feelings and emotions on cave surface' (p.173). The author studied the choice of colour for external wall of the buildings of Obanla campus of Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) and the revealed a particular dominant colour for the buildings on the campus which shows that the choice of colour for the building were not for identification. The author therefore, opined that, buildings should be grouped base on their function(s) and approved colour scheme should be applied to various buildings for easy identification and pleasing world view.

Chapter ten, ferry transportation services of Lagos state metropolis was examined and the study shows that ferry transportation service potential of Lagos state is not fully harnessed and the government needs to take good advantage of water transportation for easy movement of people, goods and other services. More ferries need to be provided, creation of more routes and building enough jetties at appropriate locations in the metropolis.

In Chapter eleven, the environmental challenges in the world and in Nigeria in particular includes; population explosion, environmental pollution, climate change, energy and city, flood and soil erosion. However, the authors of this chapter assessed the mitigating efforts at both national and United Nations levels in the area of knowledge and technology in urban development, climate change, resource use and urban adaptation, community development, migration and integration in urban areas, urban governance and city planning in an international era, planning and the design of the public realm. The authors posit that the role of the built environment professionals in city sustainability if well harnessed will avert the doom for the present and future occupants of the world.

Chapter twelve presents a case of urban renewal/reconstruction of a neighbourhood market (Isikan market) in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. unlike the typical neighbourhood markets in Nigeria that are characterized with unkempt environment and lacking market infrastructure, the reconstructed market has what it takes. The study focused on the post occupancy evaluation of the market after few years of reconstruction from the perception of the users and some officials of the market. Findings revealed that the market offers a good working/shopping environment serviced with necessary facilities. The study advocates for sustainability strategies for the upkeep of such markets.

The article in Chapter thirteen examined the urban residential environment planning and crime prevention elements using off-campus students' residence of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Oyo state, Nigeria as a case study. Exploring the urban design and crime prevention nature of urban fabric, the analysis in the study shows significant statistical association among the various crimes, self-reported perception of fear of crime variables and architectural responses. The architectural responses to urban insecurity as highlighted in the article includes; gated communities, plot fencing and gating, building elements (security doors, locks and windows using steel), secret/security spaces, space surveillance, modernist planning approach and electronic security devices. The study, therefore, recommends inclusion of security plan into design briefs for any housing projects.

The article in Chapter fourteen examined the informal workers activities in a planned residential estate of Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria and how their activities affects liveability and land use in the estate. The study findings show that, the lack of provisions of shopping/kiosk space within the estate responsible for the uncoordinated use of land in the estate for various businesses. Further, lack of tarred road beyond the entrance of the estate was also identified as the cause of rowdiness at the estate entrance for the activities of commercial motorbikes. Adherence to planning standards in land use and provision of shopping/kiosk spaces in Aule government residential estate is necessary in order to enhance its liveability.

Chapter fifteen presents an empirical study that investigates the level of infrastructure provisions in the selected residential neighbourhood of Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria and its effects on quality of life. The study discusses the concept of infrastructure, neighbourhood and sustainability (p.303-306). However, the analysis and findings revealed that infrastructure facilities in the study area are grossly inadequate to support well-being of the inhabitants.

Similarly, in chapter sixteen, the authors recommend provision of facilities in the neighbourhoods of Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria through public private partnership to relieve the hardship of those living in traditional compound and rooming houses. The study uncovers their in-access to basic amenities and other characteristics of such areas include noise, lack of privacy and quarrelling among others.

In chapter seventeen, the activities of some cooperatives societies in Oyo State, Nigeria was examined in relation to provision of housing for low-income earners. The focus was on the delivery capability of the cooperative societies against the demand of their members and the study shows that the cooperatives have been able to deliver housing to members. The author, therefore, calls for strengthening of cooperatives societies through mortgage sector reforms and provide incentives that will expand the scope of delivery of housing cooperatives.

Still on housing issues, in chapter eighteen, the author examined the factors that hindered the production of housing from the informal actors (house owners and building artisan association). Leaning on the literature, the author identify eight factors that have great impact on the production of housing. However, the result of the case study of Ile-ife in Osun State showed that, access to finance, national economy and inflation were major challenges to house-building in the urban area studied. Therefore, there is need for formal

credit facilities without any ambiguities and a stable economy is required so as to guide against unnecessary inflation that push away people from accessing the credit facilities.

In Chapter nineteen the study assessed the hostel accommodation for the students of Ekiti State University, Nigeria. The study draws samples from those living in the hall of residence inside the university and those living outside the school. Findings show inadequate hall of residence, poor quality of existing accommodation and students faced with act of squatting and transportation problems resulted from far distance for those staying outside the school. The study recommends a holistic policy approach that will give room for partnership in building hall of residence within the university premises. Also, proper maintenance strategies for the sustenance of the hall of residence should be put in place.

The authors in Chapter twenty investigate the role of green infrastructure in the sustainability of urban neighbourhoods in Nigeria. According to Campbell and Walter (1997), sustainable development is the developments that balance the relationship between ecological vitality, economical feasibility and social desirability (p.398). The paper highlighted green facilities to include; good quality parks, street trees, lakes, fountains, urban agriculture and other green spaces (p.394-395). The review in the paper covers urbanization and its attendant's problems such as: land degradation, depletion of natural resources, etc. the exploratory study revealed that, to tackle the menace of urbanization problems, the role of green infrastructure provision is inestimable. The study asserts that green infrastructure in the urban neighbourhoods will enhance the quality of life through air quality, reducing noise pollution from traffic, and control of erosion. Also, it will enhance community interaction by providing social outing/gathering and green infrastructures add value to property due to proximity to the facilities.

Chapter twenty-one presents the post occupancy evaluation (POE) of renovated primary health care institution buildings Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria. The authors explained the concept of post occupancy evaluation (POE), Building performance evaluation (BPE) as a tool for understanding the significance of the dynamism in the life cycle of the building (p.410). However, the perception of all the categories of users of the renovated primary health care institution buildings in Ogbomosho was assessed based on the seven conditions framework of the building-in-use (BIU) assessment scale. The result shows that the renovation improved the elemental and overall performance of the selected buildings and as a result, the users express high level of satisfaction. Therefore, regular funding of public health institutions for maintenance is crucial, and the feedback from POE will continue to assist government in policy decision making.

The book is a collection of novel researches that addresses various environmental challenges in the context of Nigeria. All researches reported in the book covers a wide spectrum of the built environment aspects which includes; urban design, architecture/landscape architecture, visual art (colour), transportation planning, housing issues- crime prevention, city management, urban conservation issues, building life-cycle and green infrastructure. The book is valuable for the professionals in built environment studies, students and lecturers will find the collection very useful in their reading and reference for research works.

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