

Inter-ethnic Mix and Housing Unit Allocation in the Lagos State Development and Property Corporation Estates in Lagos Metropolis

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Abstract

Although the Lagos State Development and Property Corporation (LSDPC)'s housing estates are characterized by mixed ethnicity, there is no strategic pursuit of appropriate ethnic-mixing as a policy instrument to integrate the multi-ethnic population of Lagos spatially. This study appraises the inter-ethnic mix in LSDPC's estates as a starting point in enunciating policies that can be used to ensure ethnic mixing in Lagos, thereby reducing ethnic enclaves, divisiveness, tribalism and communal agitation. Seven estates in diverse locations at Abesan, Amuwo-Odofin, Dolphin-Ikoyi, Ebute-Metta, Iba, Ijaiye and Iponri; all containing 12,433 apartments were purposively selected. These constitute the frame from which a 7.5% (867) sample was chosen. Systematic random technique and a pre-test questionnaire instrument were used. Data were analysed using non-parametric descriptive statistical tools. Results show that LSDPC estates are dominated by fifteen ethnic groups, contrary to speculations that Lagos contains over 250 ethnic groups. Furthermore, Yorubas are dominant in five locations (Abesan, Dolphin, Amuwo-Odofin, Iponri and Agege); while Igbos are dominant in Iba and Ebute-Metta. Claims that public housing estates in Lagos contain a mix of ethnic nationalities are partly supported. However, the mix is highly skewed in favour of Yoruba (58.8%), Igbo (28.8%) and Edo (6.6%).

Keywords: Ethnic groups, ethnicity, ethnic mix, multifamily apartments, public housing estates.

Introduction

Ethnicity is rated as one of the powerful forces for social change, as a means for tremendous celebration and as a channel for horrendous conflicts in heterogeneous populations (Martin, 2004). The recent increase in the profile of Lagos as an emerging megacity and global city carries with it the toga of accommodating over 250 ethnic groups that make up Nigeria. As in several other large cities in the 1950s and 1960s various immigrant ethnic groups were concentrated in different parts of Lagos, forming enclaves that were clearly distinguishable. A number of scholars have researched into the plurality of ethnic groups in Lagos (Mabogunje, 1968; Odumosu, 1999; Oduwaye, 2008; Iweka, 2012). For example, Odumosu established that the Yoruba constitute (61.31%), Igbos (11.5%), Edos (3.14%) Ijaws (2.1%), Hausa-Fulani (3.14%), and others 2.1%. Makinde (2015) on the other hand, stated that among the predominant ethnic composition of Lagos, the Yoruba constitute (59.0%), Igbos (28.7%), Hausa (4.9%), others 6.6%. The study by Oduwaye (2008) in addition to acknowledging the existence of various ethnic groups in Lagos, further stated that the proportions of certain

groups are greater in particular locations, resulting in unevenness in the regional distribution of ethnicity across Lagos. Thus the Igbos are clustered in Festac Town and Ajegunle, while the Hausas are found in Obalende, Itire and Agege. The Yorubas on the other hand are concentrated around Abule-Egba, Ojokoro, Agege, Ipaja, Egbeda, Igando, Mafoluku and Somolu. All of these areas are high and medium density residential settlements.

This type of spatial segregation has been known to instigate ethnic prejudices, distress, divisiveness and unhealthy clashes in Lagos. A recurring experience is the frequent clashes between Mushin residents who are predominantly Yoruba and their nearby neighbours in Idi-Araba, who are predominantly Hausa-Fulani. The formation of traditional ethnic enclaves in different parts of a city is not limited to Lagos. According to Sim, Yu, and Han (2003), the concentration of immigrant ethnic groups in different parts of Singapore was one of the big problems that the island country had to face. In its quest for solution, the government of Singapore adopted public housing provision as a policy instrument to integrate the multi-ethnic population

spatially. The policy thrust was to pursue a goal of nation-building through the integration of all the ethnic groups. Gradually, but consistently over the years, public housing in Singapore has succeeded in reducing the intensity of ethnic enclaves while increasing social integration.

Oduwaye (2008) identified some areas in Lagos that are of mixed ethnic composition. Examples are the neighbourhoods laid out by the government. All the low density residential areas like Ikoyi, Victoria Island, and Lekki, schemes belong to this category. Similarly, all the public housing estates built by the government are fairly mixed in terms of ethnic and cultural composition of the residents. Such ethnic dispersal is seen as an antidote to the challenges of regionalism, tribalism and communal agitation that pervade the landscape of Lagos.

However, the prevalence of each of the diverse ethnic groups in government built estates is yet to attract considerable policy interest. There is no conscious effort by the metropolitan urban management to attain a balance of ethnic representation in the allocation of plots or apartments by the government. Consequently, the program and policies of housing allocation are not strategic to the larger national agenda of reducing urban unrest by breaking up ethnic enclaves.

In the case of LSDPC which has a plethora of multifamily apartments for allocation, the treatment of ethnicity in its policy and practice is largely peripheral. There is no evidence of any empirical study that provides guidance on the right ethnic-mixing in LSDPC's estates as a policy instrument to integrate the multi-ethnic population of Lagos spatially. The mixing of the different ethnic groups in the housing estates in proportions that approximate to the general population profile is yet to be determined. This gap is the focus of the present research. If a balanced social and ethnic mix in LSDPC's estates is not pursued strategically, there is the danger that the estates will turn out to become ethnic enclaves and seed-beds for divisiveness, tribalism and communal agitation. Previous efforts in this direction have been made in Singapore, France and the United States, resulting in the deployment of ethnic mix to re-engineer societal relation and social behaviour through housing provision. Clearly, the agencies responsible for housing provision in these countries hold the view that a balanced social and ethnic mix in housing estates leads to harmonious living and better understanding among diverse ethnic nationalities.

Therefore, an appraisal of the inter-ethnic mix in LSDPC's residential estates is a starting point in enunciating public housing policies that can be used to

break-up ethnic enclaves and ensure ethnic mixing in public housing estates in Lagos metropolis.

Literature Review

Ethnicity

Ethnicity has been defined in different ways by different researchers. Two of the most frequently cited definitions are that of Bulmer (1996) and Modood, Berthoud and Lakey (1997). Bulmer's definition of ethnic group as quoted in Martin (2004), Adeyemi (2012) and Llangco (2013) is a collectivity within a larger population having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past and a cultural focus upon one or more symbolic elements which define its identity such as kinship, religious affiliation, language, shared territory, nationality, physical contiguity or any combination of these.

The general understanding is that members of an ethnic group are conscious of belonging to such a group. Essentially, a list of features or attributes can be extracted from the above definition of ethnic groups:

- i. a common proper name, to identify and express the *essence* of the community;
- ii. a myth of common ancestry, a myth (rather than a fact) that includes the idea of common origin in time and place and that gives an ethnic group a sense of fictive kinship;
- iii. shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events and their commemoration;
- iv. one or more elements of common culture, which need not be specified but normally include religion, customs, or language;
- v. a link with a homeland, not necessarily its physical occupation by the ethnic group, but a symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples;
- vi. a sense of solidarity on the part of the Population (Martin, 2004; Adeyemi, 2012)

The second definition by Modood et al (1997) gave further clarifications and emphasized the importance of shared characteristics in distinguishing one ethnic group from another. They explained that an ethnic group is a community whose heritage offers important characteristics in common between its members and which distinguishes them from other communities. This second definition focuses attention more or less on boundary maintenance and relations between ethnic groups. Hence an ethnic group is not a mere assemblage of individuals or a segment of a population, but a self-conscious aggregation of people who are united by shared experiences. Such shared characteristics could be biological, in which case it gives the ethnic origin a sense

ancestry and nativity. Salient features of a group's shared characteristics can also be distinct cultural and social aspects in the realms of languages, religious beliefs and political institutions.

In Nigeria, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa-Fulani, Tiv, Igala, Edo, Urhobo, Efik, etc are some notable examples of ethnic group categories that are culturally defined and whose members share a sense of boundary between them and others.

Ethnic Considerations in Housing

One major consequence of growth in the population rate of Lagos and similar cities is the high demand for housing. Regrettably, the demand for housing is usually in excess of supply. A higher level of problem also occurs in the sense that for multi-ethnic towns like Lagos, attainment of satisfaction and fulfilment depends on whether or not residents' expectations as expressed in the socio-cultural and physical aspects of the housing are met (Okewole, 1998).

The focus of this study is on the ethnicity of residents of housing estates built by LSDPC in Lagos. Contrary to what obtains in other parts of the city where different ethnic groups tend to form enclaves in different areas, the public housing sector to which LSDPC estates belong is characterized by a mixture of ethnic groups. According to Makinde (2015), the existence of multi-ethnic groups in estates that are made up of apartments with striking uniformity and sameness is regarded as a key variable associated with residential satisfaction. Under this circumstance, the housing forms and characteristics that are sympathetic to the cultural identity of each ethnic group subsumed. This compels residents to indulge in adjustment mechanisms and transformations.

In the case of LSDPC, there is no evidence that there is a conscious effort to attain a balance of ethnic representation in the allocation of its apartments. Hence there is no assurance that LSDPC is not perpetrating the formation of ethnic enclaves in its residential estates. This approach to ethnicity consideration in LSDPC contrasts sharply with the practice in France and Singapore. Blanc (1993) states that in France, an applicant into a block of public housing apartments can only be allowed when an occupant that bears same ethnic identity vacates. This was referred to as a quota of one-for-one. Similarly, public housing in Singapore has been used as a policy instrument to disperse ethnic enclaves and increase the social integration of the multi-ethnic population spatially (Sim, Yu and Han, 2003). The massive public housing development programmes embarked upon by the Housing Development Board (HDB) were aimed at achieving four major goals. These

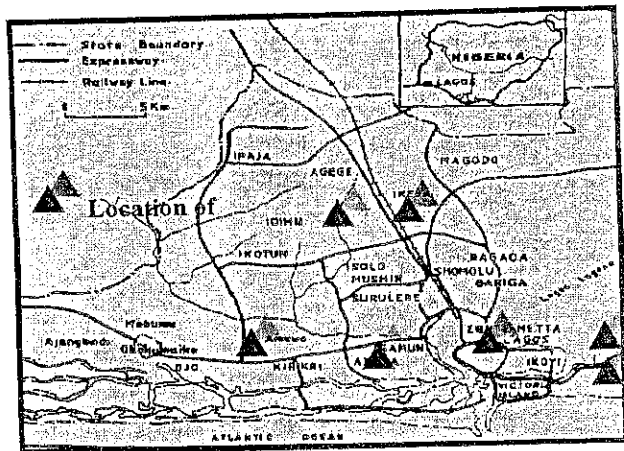
are: the provision of shelter, stakeholdership (home ownership), community bonding, and building a vibrant community. Therefore it is clear that in addition to shelter provision, the target of HDB in Singapore was to achieve a balanced distribution of the various ethnic groups in each new housing estate or town.

According to Sim, Yu and Han (2003), the achievement of this objective was facilitated through HDB's Neighbourhood Racial Limits (NRL) policy which was introduced in 1989. This policy requires that each block and neighbourhood in all public housing estates should be assigned "ethnic proportions" that should not be exceeded. This institutional arrangement for ensuring the integration of different ethnic groups by housing them in the same block of HDB flats is considered as one of the key success factors that promote nation-building in Singapore. A major criticism is that in all of these countries, the apartments were designed using a strategy of one-size-fits-all. Hence the enjoyment or satisfaction derivable from the apartments varies according to level of conformance with the unique housing elements that were in harmony with their cultural identity.

Methodology

This research provided an in-depth investigation of inter-ethnic mix in public housing estates belonging to Lagos State Development and Property Cooperation (LSDPC) in metropolitan Lagos. A case study research design with survey research component was adopted. The case study approach permits the researcher to focus on an in-depth investigation of a specific issue, the inter-ethnic mix in LSDPC's estates. Illesanmi (2005) and Iweka (2012) justified the use of case study approach in this type of study on the grounds that it focuses on information specific to a particular context of LSDPC.

The population for this study was all multifamily apartments built by LSDPC in metropolitan Lagos in the low income and medium income category. There were 17,679 of such apartments, comprising two-bedroom, three-bedroom and four-bedroom (Iweka, 2012). There are twelve estates in these two income groups. These are: Abesan, Amuwo-Odofin, Anikantamo, Dairy-Farm/Ijaiye, Dolphin II, Iba, Iponri, Isolo, Ojokoro, Ebute-Metta, Femi-Okunnu and Ijaiye. Location was a prominent consideration in this study, rather than income level categorization. Hence, seven housing estates in diverse locations were purposively selected from the list of twelve, for in-depth study. These are the estates located at (1) Abesan with 4,272 apartments; (2) Amuwo-Odofin, with 2,068 apartments; (3) Dolphin, Ikoyi, with 576 apartments; (4) Ebute-Metta with 528 apartments; (5) Iba with 2,388 apartments (6) Ijaiye with 708 apartments; (7) Iponri with 1,026 apartments.



These seven estates were considered to be rich in information that will meet the distinctive criteria regarding resident's ethnicity in LSPDC'S estates in Lagos. The total number of apartments in the seven selected estates is 12, 433. This constitutes the sample frame from which a probability sample design was employed to identify house units that were sampled. In all, a sample of 7.5% of the housing units were chosen, amounting to 867 units. The fairly large sample was aimed at increasing the reliability of the results. Care was taken to ensure that categories and properties existing in some of the selected estates were matched into the sample. A systematic random technique was adopted in selecting the specific apartments for detailed survey using a pre-test questionnaire instrument. The survey questionnaire was distributed to and retrieved from household heads. Nominal scale was used for counting and categorising household heads of different ethnicities and for easy identification and distinction.

In this study, ethnicity was derived from the native language spoken in the respondent's local government area of origin. The response categories were fifteen ethnic groups which are of the languages spoken.

Among these, the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba, and the Igbo constitute 68% of Nigeria; while the Ijaw, Edo, Ibibio, Kanuri, Tiv, Ebira-Nupe account for 27%. The other minority groups comprise the rest 5%. Respondents were required to select one language.

Discussion of Results

The total number of respondents was 362, resulting in 40.3% response rate. Non-parametric descriptive statistical tools of frequency, percentages and tables provided a basis for proper understanding of ethnic leanings of the respondents.

It should be noted that the ethnicity of the household head was taken as a measure of the ethnicity of the

In this study, the distribution of the respondents shows that the Yoruba ethnic group constituted the largest number 58.8% (213) – Table 1.0. The respondents who are of Igbo ethnic extraction ($n = 79$, 21.8%) and those from Edo ($n = 24$, 6.6%) were second and third respectively. Respondents from four ethnic groups fall within the range of 1.1 – 3.3%. These are Berom, Ebira-Nupe, Ibibio, Ijaw and Hausa- Fulani. Ordinarily, the Hausa-Fulani is among the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, but their dispersal in LSDPC's estates does not reflect this. Similarly, the Edo ethnic group belong to the minority in Nigeria, but the evidence from this study shows the likelihood that that Edo ethnic group is more available in LSDPC's estates than the Hausa-Fulani group. In all, out of the fifteen ethnic groups that responded to the questionnaire, eight scored 1.1% and more while seven scored below 1.0%. Three other categories were evident. The first are ethnic groups that constitute 3.0% and above. These are the Yoruba, Igbo, Edo and Hausa-Fulani. Collectively, they are the most dominant ethnic groups and constitute 90.5%. The second category are ethnic groups in the range of 1.0% to 3.0%. Among these are Ijaw, Ebira-Nupe, Ibibio and Urhobo which collectively constitute 5.7%. The third category are ethnic groups that are below 1.0% of the study population. There are seven groups in this category and they constitute 3.8% of the total number of respondents. These are Kanuri, Tiv, Igala, Efik, Isoko, Berom, and Okrika. Interestingly, all the seven are from the enclaves described as ethnic minorities in Nigeria.

Table 1.0: Ethnicity of residents of LSDPC's estates at different locations in Lagos.

| | Abesan | Dolphin | Iba | Ebute-Metta | Amuwo-Odofin | Iponri | Agege | Total |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Yoruba | 72 (80.0%) | 25 (59.5%) | 3 (18.3%) | 13 (32.5%) | 29 (43.9%) | 42 (70.0%) | 39 (60.4%) | 213 (38.8%) |
| Hausa-Fulani | 2 (2.2%) | 3 (7.1%) | - | 3 (7.5%) | 2 (6.0%) | - | 2 (4.2%) | 12 (3.3%) |
| Igbo | 7 (7.8%) | 4 (9.5%) | 12 (75%) | 15 (37.5%) | 21 (31.8%) | 11 (18.3%) | 9 (18.8%) | 79 (28.8%) |
| Ijaw | - | 1 (2.4%) | - | 1 (2.5%) | 4 (6.6%) | 1 (1.7%) | - | 7 (1.0%) |
| Edo | 5 (5.6%) | 3 (7.1%) | 1 (6.3%) | 4 (10.0%) | 3 (4.5%) | 3 (5.0%) | 5 (10.4%) | 24 (6.6%) |
| Ibibio | 1 (1.1%) | 2 (4.8%) | - | - | 1 (3.3%) | - | 1 (2.1%) | 6 (1.6%) |
| Kanuri | 1 (1.1%) | 1 (2.4%) | - | - | - | - | - | 2 (0.6%) |
| Tiv | - | 1 (2.4%) | - | 1 (2.5%) | - | - | - | 2 (0.6%) |
| Ebira-Nupe | 1 (1.1%) | - | - | - | 1 (1.5%) | 2 (3.4%) | - | 4 (1.1%) |
| Igala | - | 1 (2.4%) | - | 1 (2.5%) | - | - | - | 2 (0.6%) |
| Efik | - | - | - | 1 (2.5%) | 1 (1.5%) | - | - | 2 (0.6%) |
| Isoko | 1 (1.1%) | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 (0.3%) |
| Urhobo | - | - | - | - | 1 (1.5%) | 1 (1.7%) | 2 (2.1) | 4 (1.1%) |
| Berom | - | - | - | 1 (2.5%) | - | - | - | 1 (0.3%) |
| Okrika | - | 1 (2.4%) | - | - | 2 (3.0%) | - | - | 3 (0.8%) |
| | 90 | 42 | 16 | 40 | 66 | 60 | 48 | 362 |

In terms of spread, only three ethnic groups are represented in the seven locations chosen for this study. These are Yoruba, Igbo and Edo. However, the intensity varies according to location. The Yorubas are most dominant in five locations – Abesan, Dolphin, Amuwo-Odofin, Iponri and Agege. The Ibos are most dominant in Iba and Ebute-Metta. The situation in Amuwo-Odofin contrasts with findings by Oduwaye (2008) that Amuwo-Odofin is populated by Igbos. Oduwaye's findings appear to be true for Festac Town, a large estate belonging to Federal Housing Authority (FHA) also in Amuwo-Odofin.

Further on spread, the highest number of ethnic groups found in any single estate is ten and this occurs in Dolphin and Amuwo-Odofin. The estates located at Ebute-Metta and Abesan harbour nine and eight ethnic groups respectively. Only six ethnic groups can be found in each of the two estates located at Iponri and Agege. The estate at Iba contains the minimum number of ethnic representation – three. In all the seven locations investigated, the dominance of the Yoruba, Igbo and Edo is evident. However, the mix appears skewed among the other twelve ethnic groups represented in the study, which are largely seen as the minorities. Five of the ethnic groups are only found in two states. These are Kanuri, Igala, Efik, Okrika and Tiv. Efik and Berom are found in one estate each, while Ebira-Nupe and Urhobo are available in three locations.

Recommendations

1. LSDPC's management should learn from the experiences of France and Singapore and ensure that beyond mere provision of physical shelter, emphasis is placed on social, cultural and behavioural characteristics of users. This is in line with the recommendation of researchers like Oladapo (2006) and Jiboye (2010).
2. LSDPC should identify the ethnicity of end-users as a key factor in determining the cultural traditions and attitudes towards space-use. Hence, the agency should ensure that its housing estates and units are inundated with features that reflect ethnic and cultural diversity of its residents.
3. Subsequent housing development programmes by LSDPC aimed at accommodating the rapidly expanding population of Lagos should be packaged to serve as a policy instrument to disperse ethnic concentrations and integrate the multi-ethnic population spatially.
4. The future design and development of different apartment types should deliberately target to meet varying home-space needs of all ethnic groups in Lagos, in balanced proportions. In this way, unique modes of housing which are sensitive to ethno-cultural issues will be addressed.
5. An ethnic-mix policy that recognizes the existence of three categories identified in this research may serve as a guide for allocation of apartments by LSDPC to beneficiaries in its new housing estates. These are: (a) Four ethnic groups that constitute 90.5% (Yoruba, Igbo, Edo and Hausa-Fulani); (b) Four ethnic groups that constitute 5.7% (Ijaw, Ebira-Nupe, Ibibio and Urhobo). (c) Seven ethnic groups that constitute 3.8% (Kanuri, Tiv, Igala, Efik, Isoko, Berom, and Okrika) Consideration should also recognize that the Yoruba, Igbo and Edo are spread in nearly all locations.

Conclusion

Results from this study show that residents of LSDPC's estates are likely to be dominated by fifteen ethnic groups. This contradicts the widespread speculation that more than 250 ethnic nationalities are resident in Lagos. It could be more appropriate to exclude LSDPC's estates from that assertion. It seems obvious that the adjacency of LSDPC's estates to certain ethnic enclaves does not have any significant influence in the mix of such estates. Furthermore, this study reveals that the Yoruba are dominant in five locations, while the Igbo are dominant in two locations.

Claims by researchers like Oduwaye (2008) that public housing estates contain a mix of ethnic nationalities is supported by this study. However, the present research found that the mix is highly skewed in favour of Yoruba, Igbo and Edo. There is no evidence of ethnic-based differentiation in how the different apartment units were allocated. The ethnic distribution found in this study therefore confirmed the overall ethnic population structure in Lagos generally.

Ethnic considerations by LSDPC in its housing unit allocation policy and practice should be strategically utilized to re-engineer inter-ethnic interactions and better social integration like the situation in Singapore, France and the United States. It is recommended that this can be achieved if LSDPC's apartments are deliberately mixed by design to meet the varying home-space needs of different ethnic groups in order to give a balanced distribution and promote social integration.

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