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British Colonial Land Use Policies and Housing Development in Lagos

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Abstract

This paper highlights the changing pattern of town planning and housing development in Lagos between 1900 and 1960, a period that witnessed the implementation of several colonial housing policies. Existing scholarship has overlooked the role that colonial land use policies played in the uneven town planning and housing development in Lagos. Drawing on a large body of colonial records and secondary sources, this paper analyses the impact of the British colonial government policies on housing development in colonial Lagos. Archival sources collected from the National Archive of Nigeria, Ibadan, and The National Archive (TNA), Kew, and secondary sources were critically engaged through a qualitative historical method. The *uneven and combined development* concept is deployed in depicting the biased housing development policies of the British government in Lagos. The British colonial land use policies impacted negatively on physical planning and housing development in Lagos. Colonial town planning schemes, sanitation regulations, and building laws precipitated the contemporary problem of uneven development that has impeded inclusive development in Lagos.

Keywords: Colonial Lagos; Colonial planning; Combined development; Housing development; Land use policies; Urbanization.

1. Introduction

In central Lagos the drains are open, often a shallow channel running down the middle of the lane in which refuse float and odour emanate. In wet weather, the drains overflow. Apart from the suburbs where expatriates and indigenous capitalists live, housing in every part of Lagos mainland is congested and not well planned. (National Archive Ibadan, RG/W4, 1950)

Urbanization in the developing world is manifested mainly in a lopsided urban renewal strategy and uneven distribution of social infrastructure. It has become generally accepted that most

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human settlements in Sub-Saharan Africa are in the grip of uneven urban development. Major constraints to combined development in many African cities include poor land use planning, inefficient environmental protection measures, and uneven housing development regulations. The result is an unregulated town planning framework, substandard housing amenities, and disjointed urban configuration. These problems have developed since the colonial period but were exacerbated in the post-colonial era as a consequence of the continuous adoption of colonial development strategies. Despite the gargantuan economic resources embedded in Lagos since the colonial period, the contemporary state of the social infrastructure and urbanization in the state is a poor representation of what a 21st-century urban city should be. Existing literature on the impact of colonial capitalism on urbanization in the developing world is silent on the role played by the British government in the contemporary uneven infrastructure development in Lagos. One of the possibilities for this could be linked to the received assumption that European incursion into the colonial territories in Africa was predicated on the need to mainly influence the '*uncivilised'* people with the '*superior'* essence of Western modernity (Keylor & Bannister, 2005).

The analysis in this paper depicts the impact of the British colonial land use policies on housing development and town planning in Lagos. Since the advent of colonial capitalism, there has been a great disparity between metropolitan areas assigned by the colonial authorities for the Europeans and the indigenous elites on the one hand, and on the other hand, the core mainland; an undeveloped space for the burgeoning peasant population in the colony. While it is difficult to insulate the contemporary housing crisis that is attributable to the increasing urban population, both colonial land use and housing regulations had a far-reaching impact on the combined development in Lagos (See Table 1).

Increasing migration from several parts of Nigeria over the decades has exacerbated housing-related problems and urban planning, with concomitant qualitative and quantitative deficits in public housing infrastructure (National Archive Ibadan (NAI), 1950; Whiteman, 2014; Olukoju, 2003). The abolition of the slave trade and emergence of Lagos as a British colony and port city orchestrated unprecedented population growth. This reflected also in the volume of trade which developed from 6,000 to 20,000 between 1800 and 1861. Trade in the port city further increased from 40,000 to 230,000 between 1900 and 1950 (Adagun, 2018). Population in Lagos increased demonstrably, such that the colonial authorities began to prevent migrants from the hinterlands from settling in the city. The elastic demography culminated in the expansion of poorly-built and overcrowded houses in the colony (See Table 2).

Table 1: Population trends in Lagos since colonial

Year	Population
1871	28,518
1931	126,108
1963	1.4 million
1975	3.5 million
1978	3.8 million
1979	4.13 million
1985	5.8 million
1990	7.7 million
1995	10.28 million
2000	13.42 million
2006	17.55 million
2016	21 million
2019	23 million

Source: Muritala M. (2011). Urban Livelihood in Lagos 1861-1960, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, p. 20.

Table 2: Population and Spatial Growth of Lagos (1866-2010)

Year	Area Km	Total population	Inter -census increase	Annual Growth Rate
1866	3.97	25, 083	---	-----
1871	3.97	28, 518	1.7	0.6
1881	3.97	37, 452	46.8	3.9
1891	3.97	32, 508	33.2	1.4
1901	3.97	41, 847	28.7	2.5
1911	46.08	73. 766	76.3	5.8
1921	51.64	99, 690	35.1	31.1
1931	65,51	126, 108	26.5	2.4
1950	69.68	230, 256	82.6	3.3
1952	69.95	341, 569	232.6	11.5
1963	------	1, 136, 154	---	---
1965	112.70	----	---	---
1976	347.47	3, 519,000	---	---
1985	347.47	5, 801, 000	---	---
2005	818.73	16, 580, 000	---	---
2010	1085.9	20, 191, 100	---	---

Source: Adagun, R. O. (2018). *Slums and the Challenges of Housing in Urban Lagos, 1917-1999*, p. 7

To effectively control the growing influx and settlements of migrants and peasant workers on the Island, the British colonial authorities discouraged the development of new housing facilities by the proletarians. The government promulgated laws that prevented the urban poor and masses from acquiring land, erecting buildings, or any immovable property without due permission from the colonial governor (NAI, 1921; NAI, 1950; Oni 2004; Decker, 2012). The colonial authorities also enacted several policies, such as the reclamation of the land, land allocation, and township ordinances to curtail the building of shanty buildings in the metropolis (The National Archive (TNA), Kew 1938). Through these regulations, large urban lands were set aside for the development of residential quarters for the European officials, expatriates, and indigenous elites. A considerable portion of land was also kept for the building of administrative structures and industrial centres such as offices, stores, quarters, factories, and stone crushing sites (NAI, 1950; Davies, 2014). This development, subsequently, precipitated uneven development in Lagos. Colonial agencies and ordinances bequeathed an uneven urban development structure to the post-colonial governments.

This study, therefore, addresses this historiographical imbalance by examining how the British colonial land use, housing, and town planning policies orchestrated uneven infrastructure development in Lagos. It specifically deals with the land use regulations and housing schemes implemented by the British government during the period of colonial rule in Lagos. The study argues that the colonial land use and housing policies were influenced by racial, class, and political considerations, thereby sketching the suburban areas out of the colonial development policy framework. The significance of this study is not only in its contribution to the literature on urbanization, sustainable development and habitable cities in Africa. It also extends the conversation on the impact of colonial capitalism beyond the frames of capital expropriation, mineral exploitation, and socio-cultural degradation in Africa, which had been the focus and domain of earlier studies on British colonial presence in Africa.

2. Land Use Acts: Housing Infrastructure and Urbanization in Africanist Literature

Extant studies on the impact of European colonial interventions on urbanization and development in Africa demonstrate the centrality of this subject to contemporary discourse on sustainable development. Different studies have underlined how the colonial government, through several agencies, deployed the insignia of imperial authority to deal with the development of unstructured housing infrastructure in colonial Lagos. Notable among the dominant historical studies on urbanization and socioeconomic transformation in urban Lagos are the works of Mabogunje (1990, 1992), Olukoju (1993, 1994, 2003; Davies, 2009, 2014; Muritala, 2011, 2015; Decker, 2012; TNA, 1938). Drawing parallels between the British colonial policies and infrastructure development, these studies have shown how colonial agencies and ordinances accentuated inequalities and unevenness within social and political landscapes in Lagos. Contemporary paralysis of urban town planning in developing countries derives from a fundamental contradiction between the reality of the urbanization process and the paradigmatic underpinning planning framework in which most post-colonial urban planners and policymakers adopt colonial organisational and developmental praxis (Mabogunje, 1992; Davies, 2014; Olukoju, 2003).

The improvement in the general sanitary conditions of the European populations and other expatriates who were the principal agents of colonial capitalism in Lagos explains the concentration of colonial renewal policies in urban areas of Lagos (Davies, 2009, 2014; Muritala, 2011). Although, the massive population drift to urban Lagos impelled the colonial authorities to preserve the metropolitan areas exclusively for the Europeans, expatriates, and African elites, rural-urban migration thus contributed immensely to the problems of urban planning in colonial and post-colonial Lagos (Muritala, 2019; Nwana, 2004; Olukoju, 1996). Muritala (2019) traces the origin of contemporary urban misery, inequality, poverty, social exclusion, and infrastructural defect to an unprecedented demographic surge during the Great Depression in the 1930s. Racial, class, and capitalist-driven economic policies of the British colonial government and inadequate provision of social amenities for the growing population, coupled with a lack of inclusive urban planning, paved the way for the emergence of slums in colonial Lagos (Decker, 2012; Muritala, 2019).

Another category of relevant pieces of literature are studies on the relationship between legislative regulations and urban environment and infrastructure development (Crane, 1977; Jayeola, 2012; Adenugba & Ogechi 2013). Legislative regulations provide a legal framework and systemic management of urban renewal strategies and urbanization. Crane (1977) identifies three major ways in which legislative formulations could impart urbanization and inclusive development. These include strategic planning, institutional interventions, and system implementation of extant planning regulations. Despite several legislative promulgations and government's deployments of various environmental and town planning agencies, 'uneven development continues to impede the possibility of achieving sustainable development in Lagos State' (Oyefara, 2013; Adenugba & Ogechi 2013). The deplorable state of public urban infrastructure, according to Adenugba and Ogechi (2013) could be attributed to the miscorrelation between the enormous resources and public infrastructures in the state. Oyefara (2013) demonstrates the need for the government to incorporate environmental sustainability programmes into the state's urban planning framework and reverse some unregulated land uses and development in the ungoverned rural and urban spaces.

The foregoing review clearly shows that an engagement with the British colonial land use policies and uneven housing development in Lagos are lacking in existing Africanist literature. It is common knowledge that the majority of the public urban infrastructures and environmental regulatory policies in contemporary Lagos are concentrated in the metropolitan areas, neglecting the suburb areas. What is less obvious is the degree to which colonial racial, class and capitalist orientation created uneven development in the city. The paper complements the dominant perspectives in the literature on colonial land use policies, and urban planning in the developing world. It argues that the British colonial land use policies laid the foundation of the contemporary rural-urban dichotomy in Lagos.

3. Study Area

Lagos is presently referred to as Lagos State; a state in the south-western geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The smallest in area of Nigeria's thirty-six states (Whiteman, 2014). The state is the most economically viable in the country, hosting Lagos Island, arguably the nation's finest urban centre. The city has been the heartbeat of transnational business corporations and foreign direct investment in Nigeria. Lagos is the major financial hub and rapidly transforming into the single largest economy in Africa. With approximately twenty-two to twenty-five million people, Lagos has the highest population density in Nigeria (Olukoju, 1994; Davies, 2014; Whiteman, 2014). It is the fastest-growing city in West Africa and the fifth largest economy in Africa generating about 80 percent of Nigeria's trade flow. The state produces about ten percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (Osumah & Taiwo, 2017). The city has been the heartbeat of transnational business corporations and foreign direct investment in Nigeria. (Olukoju 1993; Ajetunmobi, 2003; Muritala, 2011, Whiteman, 2014). However, despite these enormous resources, about sixty percent of its population lives in deplorable social and economic conditions; lacking decent housing facilities, habitable environments, and other basic infrastructure (Whiteman, 2014).

Lagos is bounded on the north and east by Ogun State. In the west, it shares boundaries with the Republic of Benin. Behind its southern borders lies the Atlantic Ocean. About twenty-two percent of Lagos 33,557 km are lagoons and creeks. Victoria Island, the financial centre of the metropolis is famous for its beaches resort, boutiques, nightlife, and culinary cultures. Lagos, as a state came into being in May 1967 with five administrative sections of Ikeja, Badagry, Ikorodu, Lagos Island, and Epe, all of which occupy an area of 33,557 square kilometres (Whiteman, 2014).

Technically, Lagos is a kaleidoscope of cultural expressions and innovation and the melting pot of heterogeneous groups; a geographical core and an open society around which identities, boundaries, and definitions of purpose have shifted and have been adjusted for the past two centuries. Historically, Lagos was founded by Olofin Ogunfunminire, who migrated from Ile-Ife during the 14th century. The Olofin and his entourage were referred to as the Awori. They are a Yoruba-speaking sub-group occupying various communities in modern Lagos State and part of Ogun State in southwest Nigeria. The Awori's occupation was subsequently followed by Benin's imperial expansion during the 16th and 17th centuries. By this time, Lagos Island had emerged as a major port for the Trans-Atlantic trade in West Africa (Mann, 2007; Danmole, 2017; Muritala, 2011; Whiteman, 2014). Despite the Benin and European's imperial occupation of Lagos, the land was owned by descendants of the Ogunfunmire known as *Idejo*. The *Idejo* allocated lands to members of the community and controlled physical planning in the town (Animashaun, 2015; Muritala, 2011). Mann (2007) notes, "The Idejo chiefs distributed land to indigenous families, including women and influential migrants." The Idejo family held control of the land until the

mid-nineteenth century when Lagos had come under the sway of the British colonial enterprise (Animashaun, 2015).

It is important to note, that by the end of the nineteenth century, there had been a great influx of migrants from the hinterland, in addition to the increasing number of repatriated slaves in Lagos. The protracted Yoruba Civil War and global economic decline in the 1890s precipitated a rapid demographic surge in Lagos (NAI Government Gazette, 1886; Lloyd, 1962; Berry, 1985; Smith, 1978). By the opening of the 20th century, the colonial government had conceived the idea of developing the city along with racial and class considerations. Thus, with a growing population in the colony, the colonial authorities began to regulate the building of multi-tenanted housing in Lagos (Olukoju, 2003). This led to the enactment of several land use policies initiated to control the influx of people and manage the sanitation problems in the municipality. (Fig 1: below shows the major areas affected by the colonial town planning and regulations) Following the eruption of the Lagos Influenza outbreak and the Bubonic Plague in 1918 and 1924 respectively, the Lagos Executive Development Board (L.E.D.B), a colonial agency was established in 1928 (TNA, 1938; Davies, 2014; Faleye, 2018). The establishment and operations of the L.E.D.B. were a watershed in the development of Lagos metropolitan areas and the neglect of the suburb areas of the city.



Figure 1: Towns and Islands in colonial Lagos in the 1860s.

Source: TNA, M.P /C.0/700/N/72

4. Method

This study is founded on a body of primary sources generated from relevant archives which were augmented with secondary materials obtained from various libraries. Copious use of government's

records exists in this study. These include colonial housing reports, gazettes, newspapers, bulletins, correspondences, and other government sources collected from various archives in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. Content analysis of related literature such as books, journals and monographs on the theme was also carried out to establish the conceptual length and discursive breath on land use laws and housing development in Africanist literature. The mode of analysis involved is coterminous with *Uneven and Combined Development* exemplified by Leon Trotsky in *The Third International after Lenin*, where he offers his most systematic exposition of the conception of uneven and combined development on which several Neo-Marxists heavily draws.

The 'uneven and combined development' illuminates the understanding of the dynamics and consequences of British colonial capitalism in relation to urbanization and social transformation in the colonial state (Callinicox, 2005). The uneven and combined development concept is a fusion of closely related laws that bear contradictory effects in the process of historical development. It explains the paradox of development between the core and periphery social formations. Since the Uneven and Combined Development concept deals with varying rates of growth in human social formations (Romangnolo, 1975), it becomes a useful analytical tool in unveiling the nature and impact of the colonial regulations in the context of urban planning and housing development in Lagos

5. Findings: Colonial Town Planning and Uneven Development in Lagos

Land ownership in African societies is rooted in ancient customs. Prior to British colonialism, crown land had been vested in land-owning chieftaincy families (the idejos). Both indigenes and migrants obtained land from members of the *Idejo* either for building or agrarian purposes (Adagun 2018; Animashaun, 2015). However, one of the significant episodes in the history of Lagos was the Treaty of Cession of 1861 which empowered the British to control land use throughout the period of colonial rule. Following the British annexation and colonisation, the British Colonial Office began to enact laws for effective physical planning and infrastructure development in Lagos (Edo & Muritala, 2014; Animashaun, 2015). For instance, the colonial authorities ensured that no person erected housing facilities, or do anything with any immovable property in Lagos without the approval of the Governor (Public Record Office, London, 1954).

The British colonial capitalism in Nigeria was not a humanitarian venture. Therefore, efforts were made to concentrate development in the areas which had a direct impact on the business of colonial administration (Danmole, 2017). Broad physical planning of Lagos did not commence until 1928 after the establishment of the Lagos Executive Development Board (L.E.D.B.). In 1928, the L.E.D.B. was empowered by the colonial government to ensure effective land use and physical planning in the state (Public Record Office, 1928). This became inevitable because of the burgeoning peasant population and the occurrences of many outbreaks of infectious diseases on the Island. The British colonial agencies wielded enormous influence on housing development in Lagos.

In addition, several colonial agencies such as the Town Council, Health Department, Native Authority, and Physical Planning Unit were deployed to regulate housing development in the colony. Colonial land use policies and segregation fuelled urbanization that led to the emergence of slums coupled with the haphazard planning in the suburban residential areas (Adagun 2018). Apart from the herculean processes of land acquisition, colonial agencies enforced stringent guidelines on existing and prospective landowners in the colony. For instance, the Town Council

and the Lagos Municipal Board of Health were empowered to embark on land reclamation and sales of land in the municipality (NAI, LTC, 1921).

In 1907, a colonial land and township ordinance stated that unoccupied lands belonging to an indigene be converted to 'Crown Land' and used for the construction of administrative offices. The law further stipulated that Marina, Ikoyi, Victoria Island, and Apapa, among others, should be developed for industrial activities such as offices, stores, quarters, factories, stone crushing sites, and residential areas for the growing colonial staff – including some expatriates and the indigenous elites. Subsequently, new ordinances were enacted to monitor street mapping and the building of residential houses on the Island (NAI, Comcol, 1930) Such measures were undertaken to curtail the influx of migrants from the hinterland and peasants from the mainland to the Island.

In 1910, a Native Land Acquisition Proclamation was announced to prevent foreigners from acquiring land from the indigenes, except through the office of the colonial Governor (Oluwasanmi, 1966). Following this was a "Town Improvement Ordinance" introduced in 1917. The 1917 Land Use Law which was a decisive response to the unsanitary problems and public health crises was the first major law that shaped housing and town planning in Lagos. The Township Ordinance of 1917 led to the overhauling of defective housing structures in the colony. The ordinance, more or less, was to distance European residential areas from the growing local overcrowded houses – creating racial and class segregation. (Figure 2 shows the areas captured by the colonial ordinances).

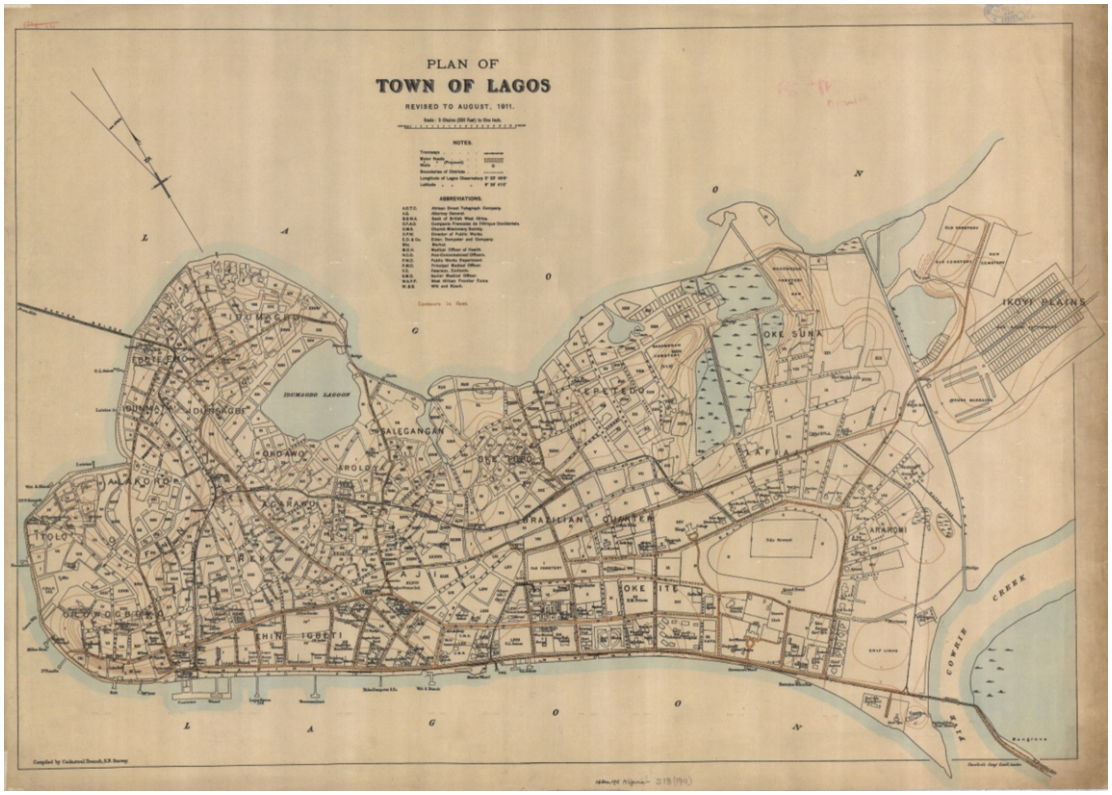


Figure 2: Areas captured by the Colonial Ordinances

Source: TNA, Kew, M.P /C.0/700/N/72

Through the ordinance of 1917, the Town Council mapped settlements on the river banks, seaports, and rail lines as "Second-class Townships" and placed them under Native Authorities for effective collection of taxes (NAI, CSO 26, 1926; NAI PWD, 1927). In addition, the local Advisory Board and District Officers were assigned to the areas classified as second-class towns and charged with the physical planning such as examining building plans. As aforementioned, the Lagos Executive Development Board (L.E.D.B.) was established through the Lagos Town Planning Ordinance in 1928. The function of the L.E.D.B. was to monitor the development of housing infrastructure and sewage systems in the colony. The board was mandated to ensure absolute compliance with the colonial land use and physical planning laws (NAI PWD, 1927). However, the scope of operation of the L.E.D.B. from 1928 to the 1950s was restricted to Lagos Island, Ikoyi, and Victoria Island as shown in map 2. The communities in the suburbs were not influenced by the regulatory operations of the L.E.D.B.

Owing to several devastating public health crises such as the Influenza of 1918-1919, and Bubonic Plague of 1924-1928 in Lagos, the colonial authorities, from 1930, became strict with the laws relating to the building of residential houses, digging of wells and sewages (Jimoh, 2017; Faleye, 2017). Indeed, the bubonic plague was a result of the insanitary condition of the multi-tenanted houses. To decongest Ikoyi and Victoria Island, where the majority of the Europeans and expatriates resided following the bubonic plague, the government acquired acres of land at Ebute Meta to accommodate junior colonial staff, largely Africans and the peasant workers and traders living on the Island (NAI Standard Building Rules, 1933; Davies, 2014). Though new settlements were developed in Ebute Meta, colonial agencies such as the L.E.D.B. did not extend their operations to the emerging settlements on the mainland. The ordnances had no impact on the pattern of housing and infrastructural development of the areas designated for the masses. Holistic measures were adopted by the British government to eradicate rats and rodents in overcrowded houses on the Island while paying scant attention to the deplorable housing and environmental crisis in Ijora, Ebute Meta, Yaba, and Surulere (NAI CSO, 1933; Imouh, 2015). Although the re-housing scheme led to the acquisition of over 500 acres of land at Ebute Meta and Yaba in the 1930s, the new settlements lacked effective housing regulation and town planning (NAI, CSO, 1933; Davies, 2014).



Figure 3: Changes in Lagos through the L.E.D.B.

Source: TNA, Kew, M.P /C.0/700/N/72

The Market Ordinance was enacted in August 1931 to empower the Lagos Town Council to prosecute anyone found squatting or those who had erected living tents in the markets due to the demolition of their overcrowded houses by the L.E.D.B. on the Island. While the effort of the Lagos Town Council was laudable on the Island, no such operation was carried out on the Mainland. Also, the Lagos Town Council instructed all landowners on the Island to submit building plans to the administrator of the colony through the Town Council for approval in 1931, ignoring the settlements in the suburbs (NAI, 1946; NAI, 1933). Like the Lagos Town Council, the L.E.B.D. reclaimed, redeveloped and implemented several programmes that enhanced compliance with colonial land use and housing development plans in Lagos Island, with little or no priority for the hinterland (NAI, 1933; Imouh, 2015). The absence of government regulation in the rural areas facilitated the development of multi-tenanted houses in the mainland of the city. The indigenous elite acquired swampy lands and erected rented apartments at Oko-Awo, Sangrouse, Elegbata and other areas in the interior. Though these housing facilities reduced the rate of squatting and congestion in the municipality, they widened the rural and urban gaps (Muritala, 2011).

The colonial authorities strongly regulated the building of residential houses on the Island. The government ensured that the construction of residential apartments was not carried out without the approval of the relevant government agencies such as the Health Office, District Office, and the Native Authority (NAI CSO, 1933). The government insisted that building projects not completed within one year were forfeited to the government. Prospective landlords were obliged to submit a building design with adequate space for latrines to the Health Office. The health officer inspected houses under construction and approved the design for the construction of toilets and sewages (NAI CSO, 1933). Residential houses that covered more than half the area of a plot were sanctioned. The building regulation also stipulated that about 5-foot length be provided between a building and the fence. Cap 43 of the Native Authority Ordinance of 1933 also had clauses for the construction of drainages. It was prohibitive for drains to flow through a building in the Metropolis.

Furthermore, the minimum size of a room in a residential apartment was 120 square feet, while the average height of a room was between eight and ten feet. Colonial Health Officers ensured that every room had proper ventilation, not less than one-eighth of the floor area of a room. The approved design for kitchens was between six and eight feet outside the main building (Davies, 2009; NAI Standard Building Rules, 1933). Property developers and landowners were compelled to submit building plans before commencement of construction works. Standard building rules were strongly enforced throughout the Island. Buildings that contravened the guidelines enshrined in the ordinances were demolished. Demolition exercises were carried out by the Native Authority which also sanctioned offenders with £5 or three months imprisonment (NAI Standard Building Rules, 1933). However, this policy was only effective in Ikoyi and Victoria Island where the expatriates and some indigenous elite resided.



Figure 4: Areas covered by the Standard Building Rules

Source: TNA, Kew, M.P /C.0/700/N/72

6. Discussion

The gap between policies and implementation vis-à-vis the politics with which colonial land use laws were executed exacerbated the problem of housing in colonial Lagos. Colonial racial and class segregation created the contemporary uneven infrastructure development in Lagos. The British land use acts and housing regulations focused exclusively on the areas dominated by the Europeans and African elite (NAI Standard Building Rules, 1933; Olukoju, 2003). Contemporary housing and land use policies are also a reflection of the uneven development created by the British colonial authorities. The urban areas are developed for the cream of business, political and social elites in the Nigerian society, while the mainland communities are neglected by the post-colonial state government. Since the return to democracy in 1999, many roads and housing amenities in the city are deteriorating. Drainage, canals, and other basic amenities are constructed by community development associations and individuals in many rural communities. In the suburban areas, land use and housing development are largely coordinated by the 'capitalist investors and town planners who exploit the government's inadequacies for personal profit. In most cases, these capitalist property developers acquired untitled lands through "land-owning families" popularly referred to as *Omo-Onile* (son of the soil or owners of the land). They unilaterally develop the properties and construct roads, borehole facilities, and other basic amenities in the absence of government regulation and intervention (Omole, 2012).

Consequently, this has had inflationary effects on the cost of land and housing in the suburban areas of Lagos. This explains why urban residents increasingly relocate for affordable housing facilities in neighbouring states such as Ogun and Oyo states and in the Republic of Benin. Although several housing and land use schemes have been implemented by the Lagos State government since 1967, there is little evidence of inclusive development in terms of the provision of basic social amenities and improvement in the quality of life of the rural dwellers. One of the reasons for the contemporary urban crisis in Lagos is that the Lagos State government is yet to jettison the colonial legacy of segregation and uneven development policies. The paucity of land has also impeded the development of housing facilities in the city.

Lagos is constrained by a small land area relative to its population and a large pool of water covering about 22% of the entire land area.

Several efforts have been made by the government to reclaim lands from the lagoons since the colonial period. The first major land reclamation was carried out under the colonial Governor William Macgregor who partitioned Lagos Island and Ikoyi. Since the creation of Lagos State in 1967, there has been a number of land reclamation for housing development in the city. Some of the reclaimed areas over the years include Maroko, Iponri, Iganmu, Victoria Garden City, Ilubirin, Ogudu, Lekki Peninsula, Osborne Road, Ajah, Amuwo Odofin, Abule Nla, Herbert Macaulay, and recently the new Eko Atlantic City. With the geometric increases in population in Lagos, urban housing infrastructure has declined geometrically. In 2020, Lagos accounted for about five million housing deficits representing 31% of the estimated national housing deficit of 18 million. The Lagos Executive Development Board delivered 4,502 housing units between 1955 and 1972. The Lagos State Property Development Corporation (LSDPC) delivered 20,120 housing units between 1972 and 1999 and 1,818 housing units from 2000 to 2010. However, there has been a palpable shortage of housing facilities for all categories of urban residents in the past decades. Rural and urban residents are confronted with the high cost of living (Nwanna, 2015). The proletarians and peasants who constitute the major percentage of the population lack decent housing amenities.

In response to the increasing problem of urban housing, the Lagos State Government has adopted a number of strategies such as slum clearances and the development of mega-housing amenities for the urban elites. Nevertheless, there has been little improvement in the supply of housing infrastructure for the masses in the state. The result has been the lack of inclusive development in the state. The majority of the low-income groups live in poorly built rented multi-tenanted houses and untidy environments. The upper and middle classes and other elites in the state live in organised environments mostly on the Island and in costly urban areas on the mainland. Thus, the housing problem in urban Lagos is both quantitative and qualitative; even those households with shelter are woefully deficient in terms of planning.

The British colonial housing and physical planning regulations had a great impact on Marina, Ikoyi and Victoria Island, and other areas such as Olowogbowo and Popo Aguda which were exclusively developed for the European and the Brazilians in the state. The core areas of modern Lagos Mainland were excluded from the colonial regulations and this created the uneven development that has impeded sustainable development in contemporary Lagos. Colonial housing and infrastructural development policies in Lagos were characterised by racist and class considerations. This was reflected in the effective implementation of town planning schemes in the areas reserved for the Europeans, expatriates, and the indigenous elites on the Island. The

British government regulated physical planning and housing development in Lagos in a manner that created uneven development (Omole, 2012; Whiteman, 2014; Davies, 2014).

As noted, the colonial government introduced an ordinance that stated the rules regarding the building of residential houses, industrial estates, and public health in 1898. Unfortunately , the laws had effects on the areas dominated by the Europeans and African elites (NAI, 1946). In the same way, despite the laudable policies executed by the Lagos Executive Development Board in colonial Lagos, little or nothing was done on the mainland areas of Lagos. The operations of the L.E.D.B. rather led to the proliferation of "ghettos" in many native areas, including but not limited to Makoko, Ijora Mushin, Apapa, Ajeromi among others (NAI, 1946). The Mainland of the city was largely excluded from the development programmes of the British colonial and this laid the foundation for the contemporary rural-urban dichotomy in Lagos. This has, in recent times, metamorphosized into differing clusters of residential neighbourhoods. Whiteman (2014) notes that:

> The Island during McGregor's five years saw more advances in health, infrastructure, and sanitary reforms than it had known since the beginning of colonisation. Though massive waterworks were built on the Ogun River which introduced piped water and contributed to the eradication of guinea worm, most swamp drainage and land reclamation for coordinated physical planning coupled with improved refuses disposal facilities using the 'new steam tramway were concentrated on the Island. (p. 81)

This uneven development continued through the post-colonial era, as the short-sighted government officials continue to imbibe colonial bias policies. Peter Naris notes that in the 1950s, "in central Lagos, the drains are open – often a shallow channel running down the middle of the lane in which refuse floats and odor emanates", this remains a reoccurring problem in the contemporary rural areas in Lagos (NAI, RG/W4, 1958). During the rainy season, the drains often overflow into the streets, and apart from Ikoyi, Victoria Island, Banana Island, and Lekki where the upper and increasingly diminishing ranks of the middle classes now live, Lagos Mainland is congested and not well planned. Another observer in 1968 also noted, that "Lagos was a city of squatters, street sleepers, with agonizing congestion" (*Daily Times*, May 1958). The British colonial government recorded minimal achievement in terms of inclusive housing development in Lagos. Colonial urban planning policies in Lagos were racially and class inclined. Thus, housing constitutes a major challenge to the low-income people in contemporary Lagos. The majority of the low-income families live in overcrowded houses with poor basic infrastructure (Oladepo, 1988). The contemporary housing deficit in Lagos is exacerbated by the lack of strategic housing development policies and plans for inclusive development.

7. Conclusion

This study has shown that uneven physical planning regulations and pollution growth in Lagos led to the massive development of multi-tenanted housing facilities locally described as face-me-I-face-you. The role played by the British colonial authorities was significant in the understanding of urbanization and the development of housing infrastructure in Lagos. The British acquisition of Ikoyi, Victoria Beach, and a chain of communities on the Island dispersed many low-income workers and peasants to the interior of Lagos. This marked the beginning of the uneven development in Lagos.

There is no doubt that the colonial authorities introduced a number of housing development laws

in Lagos, but these policies laid the foundation for the contemporary rural and urban infrastructural development gap. Lagos Island, Ikoyi, and Victoria were the major areas where colonial land use and housing policies were implemented throughout the period of colonial rule. This perhaps happened because the Europeans and the African elites predominantly resided in these areas throughout the period of colonial enterprise and beyond. With the creation of Lagos state in 1967, the successive governments in the state have maintained the uneven development strategies of colonial authorities in Lagos. This explains why many parts of the Mainland suffer demonstrably from a lack of physical planning and provision of basic amenities.

Despite the enormous wealth generated by the Lagos State Government, it has been impossible to embark on proper physical planning and provide social housing for the citizens. It has also been noted that the government's land reclamation programmes and slum clearances have exacerbated the problem of urban housing in Lagos since the colonial period. Some of the major areas where indigenous land has been reclaimed for the development of capitalist housing schemes include but are not limited to Maroko, Iponri, Victoria Garden City, Ilubirin, Ogudu, Lekki Peninsula, Osborne Road, Ajah, Amuwo Odofin, Abule Nla, Herbert Macaulay, and recently the new Eko Atlantic City.

The on-going goal of transforming Lagos from a mega-city into a smart city must incorporate into its cardinal agenda – the overall wellbeing of the citizens. This should include a proper land use regulation, inclusive town planning schemes, rural environmental programmes, heritage preservation, green culture, and sustainable livelihoods strategies for the rural and urban poor in the city. Indeed, achieving a combined development as regards urban renewal strategy and infrastructure, in Lagos requires an inclusive structural, economic, political, environmental, and institutional regulation of land use and housing development policies. It is imperative for the Lagos State Government to adopt a policy intervention at the grassroots in controlling the alarming misallocation of land and the illegal structures resulting in diverse environmental problems in the state. The provision of decent social housing for the burgeoning working masses in Lagos has become expedient in the 21st century. Thus, the state government must effectively maximise its limited land and public resources for the development of affordable housing facilities for its increasing population (Muritala, 2011).

Moreover, the Lagos State Ministry of Housing should foster viable partnerships with the local governments to enhance the proper utilisation of land especially, for the construction of housing facilities. Private developers and individuals should submit a building plan to relevant local and state government agencies prior to the construction of housing facilities. The government should deploy adequate budgetary allocation for inclusive town planning and urban renewal strategy.

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