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Housing aspiration in an informal urban settlement: A case study

Housing aspiration is an important aspect of housing market analysis. However, there is a paucity of empirical research on housing aspiration among residents in informal settlements in developing countries. This study therefore investigated housing aspiration among the residents of Ayobo, Lagos, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey of 1,151 households in Ayobo was conducted using a structured questionnaire as the data-collection instrument. The data were analysed using descriptive statistical and categorical regression analyses. The results show that a majority of the respondents were low-income earners living in rented and rooming-house types of accommodation. Around 73% of them expressed an intention to move to another residence, and 56% of this category of respondents intend to move into self-contained flats. The reasons for the planned relocation include poor condition of their present dwellings, changes in tenure status

and household size, and the desire for exclusive use of facilities in their homes. In addition to these reasons, the waste-disposal method, sharing facilities, employment, and age and marital status of the residents emerged as the strongest predictors of housing aspiration among the respondents in the survey. This implies that, in order to meet the housing preferences and aspirations of residents in informal urban settlements in Nigeria, housing developers need to give adequate attention to the marital, age, employment and tenure status of the residents and place emphasis on developing affordable single-family houses and block of flats, as well as strategies for improving access to basic social amenities and services.

Keywords: informal settlements, housing aspirations, housing preferences, intention to move, Lagos

1 Introduction

Housing plays significant cultural, socioeconomic, environmental and political roles in the lives of individuals, households and nations. Consequently, Akunnaya P. Opoko et al. (2014) observed that the aspiration of Nigerians for homeownership has been overwhelming in recent times. Constrained by resources and in some cases lack of foresight, governments in many rapidly growing megacities like Lagos have failed to meet the housing aspirations of the majority of residents, especially those living in informal settlements (UN-HABITAT, 2006). Consequently low-income households have been left to fend for themselves, often through an informal housing market that has been described by Ashley Gunter (2014) as a classical neoliberal market, where housing supply is weak and demand is constantly high, and people are concerned about the quality, price and security of tenure. As a result, Somik V. Lall et al. (2005) noted, for most such households, living in informal settlements is temporary, with many aspiring to secure better housing conditions in the future.

Recent steps taken by the Nigerian government towards satisfying Nigerians' housing aspirations include reorganising the Federal Housing Authority to supply more housing units; establishing the Nigerian Mortgage Refinancing Corporation with the mandate of increasing Nigerians' access to mortgage finance (Kolawole, 2015) and engaging in public-private partnerships in housing (Ibem, 2011). Regrettably, the majority of housing units resulting from private sector-led strategies have been found to be too expensive for the poor (Ibem, 2011) and out of tune with their aspirations (Jiboye, 2009). This implies that there is an apparent mismatch between what people desire and what is provided.

The literature shows that aspiration is a concept that has enjoyed wide attention across many disciplines. However, housing aspiration appears to be a more recent interest of researchers (Edwards, 2005) and has generally focused on residents of developed economies (Croucher, 2008; Steele, 2010). The low level of housing aspiration research in less-developed countries, including Nigeria, has contributed to obscuring the understanding of the housing aspirations of urban residents in developing countries. In addition to Julius O. Gbakeji and Ojeifo O. Magnus (2007), who examined aspects of residential neighbourhood preferences in the city of Warri, several Nigerian studies (Jiboye, 2009; Ibem & Aduwo, 2013) have focused on residential satisfaction as a measure of housing aspiration and preferences. This suggests a need for more research on housing aspiration in Nigeria as part of the efforts to address the burgeoning urban housing challenge in this country.

It is against this background that this study investigated the housing aspiration of households in Ayobo, an informal settlement on the outskirts of Lagos, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to examine housing characteristics, explore the residential history and aspiration of residents, and identify factors influencing housing aspirations of Ayobo residents. The choice of Ayobo was informed by the need to gain fresh insight into the housing aspiration of low-income households, which is crucial in the quest to improve housing conditions in informal settlements in urban areas in developing countries.

A key argument in this article is that an adequate understanding of housing aspirations and preferences is essential for achieving an efficient urban housing market that meets the expectations and aspirations of all categories of households. Therefore, this paper seeks to contribute to achieving a vibrant housing market by providing relevant information needed by housing developers in providing housing in line with the preferences of residents in the study area in particular, and in other informal urban settlements in Nigeria where informal settlement housing remains a major challenge to sustainable urban growth and development.

2 Literature review

The review of literature is divided into three main sub-sections: informal urban housing, housing aspiration and previous studies on housing aspirations.

2.1 Informal urban housing

Before delving into the review of literature on housing aspiration, it is important to briefly explain the context of informal urban housing. The informal sector is generally described as the untaxed part of the economy that is often unregulated by government. Up to 60% of the working population is engaged in this sector in developing countries (Fapohunda, 2012). The informal sector is known to sustain family and community economies in towns in the global south, and so researchers have argued that the informal economy is local, with limited connections to the formal economy, and is organised around subsistence practices that are understood as broadly uncompetitive (Oldfield, 2014). Consequently, Sasha Tsenkova (2014) described the informal housing sector as having little government regulation, having poor access to services, being substandard and serving as the home of poor communities, refugees or recent migrants to the cities. Previous studies (Morka, 2007; Gunter, 2014) have noted that, in cities in the global south, the ever-increasing housing shortage and the lack of low-cost housing stock in the formal housing market to meet the demand have resulted in a proliferation of infor-

mal settlements and informal dwellings. Hence, the housing market in many cities in the global south is the informal housing market (Gunter, 2014) and in many cases the processes initiated to transform informality to formality through tenure formalisation have merely resulted in more new forms of informality, as observed by Lochner Marais et al. (2014). This implies that the informal housing subsector plays a crucial role in housing provision in most cities across the world (Shapurjee & Charlton, 2013). This helps explain why research on housing aspiration among residents of informal settlements has become important to housing researchers and urban development experts.

2.2 Housing aspiration

Aspiration has been defined by Sue Clegg et al. (2007: 10) as “a realisable goal or target, which will influence behaviour and affect choices.” Consequently, most people consider their aspirations achievable (see Clegg et al., 2007). However, this is not always so because aspirations may vary from realistic to absurd wishes. Whereas realistic aspirations are achievable, wishes on the other hand are mere desires that may never be achieved due to resource constraints. Aspiration consists of cognitive, affective and behavioural components (Baum & Wulff, 2003). It represents the choice in an ideal world and an indication and motivation for future desired outcomes (DTZ New Zealand, 2005). Daniel Chi Wing Ho et al. (2012) have described aspiration as individual attitudes towards a place, thing or process. These authors further explained that, in the context of the residential environment, individuals’ aspirations determines the way they intervene in their built environment in terms of redevelopment or rehabilitation. How realisable aspirations are depends on a number of factors, including the relationship between them, reality and the availability of needed ingredients such as funds, time and personal values (such as ambition, motivation, sacrifice, commitment and perseverance to achieve them; Baum & Wulff, 2003; Jasen, 2012). Therefore, when there are differences between what is desired and what is obtainable, an aspiration gap is said to exist. Caroline W. Kabiru et al. (2014) state that such unmet aspirations may lead to frustrations and crime.

Regarding housing needs and aspirations, Andy Steele (2010) noted that whereas needs refer to requirements, aspirations refer to preferences. Aspiration is conditioned by associations, role models and consumption of technologies (Hyll & Schneider, 2012). Scott Baum and Maryann Wulff (2003) identified two concepts in understanding aspiration especially with reference to homeownership. These are housing career and life course. The former refers to the movement of an individual from the time of leaving the parental home through renting and ultimately culminating in homeownership, and the lat-

ter is the sum total of the series of social events and roles an individual experiences during his or her lifetime (Giele & Elder, 1998). The sequence of these age-differentiated social experiences may vary from one individual to another. These views are indicative that aspiration is not static but dynamic; and thus varies with the changing life circumstances and social roles of individuals in the society.

From the foregoing, it is evident that housing aspiration can be described as desires or ambitions that are born out of individuals’ emotions and assessments of expectations and perceived needs as well as reactions to the attributes of the immediate and surrounding housing environment. In other words, housing aspiration is a behavioural response to an individual’s residential environment resulting from a combination of personal feelings and mental assessment of his or her housing situation. The implication of this is that housing aspiration is closely related to peoples’ housing preferences and can influence their attitudes towards their residential environment. This may help explain why individuals and households try to realise their housing aspirations by moving (mobility; Clegg et al., 2007) or modifying their current housing environment (Croucher, 2008).

2.3 Previous studies

Although housing has been the focus of several studies in Nigeria, an extensive literature search reveals very scant literature on housing aspiration in this country. Most studies focused on qualitative and quantitative evaluations of the housing schemes, often from users’ perspectives. Several of these studies, such as those by Adesoji David Jiboye (2009), Eziyi O. Ibem and Egidario B. Aduwo (2013) and Cliton Aigbavboa and Wellington Thwala (2014), have indicated various levels of discontent and satisfaction with existing housing, revealing a wide gap between current housing conditions and people’s aspirations in Nigeria and South Africa. Specifically, these studies are in agreement that the extent to which occupants are satisfied with their housing situation is a measure of fit between their housing consumption experience, preferences and aspirations.

Kathy Arthurson et al. (2007) investigated the housing experiences and preferences of people with psychiatric disabilities in the Australian context and concluded that owner-occupier was the preferred choice. Sanna Markkanen (2009) examined the housing needs and aspirations of England’s largest black and minority ethnic populations, and Outside Consultants (2009) explored young people’s housing needs and aspirations. In Leicestershire, Steele (2010) investigated housing aspirations of the elderly and found that they desired private self-contained dwelling units close to facilities and within small, non-segregated neighbourhoods. Burmaa Jamiyansuren and Dana-

Nicoleta Lascu's (2012) exploratory study focused on identifying the functional considerations that Mongolian middle-class households made prior to purchasing a home. Simon Pinnegar et al.'s (2012) review examined factors that influenced housing decisions and outcomes of the "baby boom" generation. Using qualitative methods, Tahmina Rahman (2011) explored how post-disaster relief housing eventually matches the aspirations of poor occupants.

Although Raimi A. Asiyambola (2012) argued that articulation of households' housing aspirations is usually a culturally influenced male affair, there seem to be similarities in housing aspirations in different socioeconomic, cultural, demographic and geographic contexts. For instance, with respect to tenure, homeownership is the aspiration of most people (Pinnegar et al., 2012), for which households are willing to make sacrifices (University of the Sunshine Coast, 2011). For many renters, however, Clegg et al. (2007) identified location/neighbourhood and property type as the main motivations for a future move. For the poor, Laura Edwards (2005) observed that homeownership was not a first priority. Other studies indicated that, despite a decline in homeownership in late 1970s in Australia (Baum & Wulff, 2003) and since 1991 in New Zealand (Morrison, 2005), the actual number of households with homeownership aspirations has continued to rise. Employing the life course approach, Rosangela Merlo and Peter McDonald (2004) found employment status to be the most significant factor motivating households to realise their homeownership aspirations. Their finding aligns with William Clark and Suzanne Davies Withers' (1999) earlier identification of income growth and job as major reasons for transitioning to homeownership. The importance of employment can be seen in the promise of not only sustaining income but also improving income and consequently affordability, which is considered defining in translating dreams into reality for most households (University of the Sunshine Coast, 2011). Other factors include lifestyle changes (Baum & Wulff, 2003), age and income (Outside Consultants, 2009), and marriage (Baxter & McDonald, 2004).

Furthermore, location seems to be a critical factor that influences housing aspirations. In fact, the literature shows that people aspire to live in locations that are safe, secure and accessible to facilities and close to social networks (Edwards, 2005). Trade-offs to achieve desired locations often depend on household characteristics (DTZ New Zealand, 2005). Households with small children tend to prefer safe and secure locations close to schools, whereas for working-class singles proximity to jobs is more critical (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2004). ABS (1998) noted that location choice was influenced by familiarity, attractiveness, prospects of a better lifestyle, quietness

and proximity to attractive geographical features. Although previous studies (Hall, 2008; Harries et al., 2008) identified the importance of sociocultural/ethnic ties and familiarity in influencing location aspirations, these could easily be traded for stronger motivations such as "better locations" (Markkanen, 2009). On the other hand, many households sampled in Ljubljana, Slovenia desired to remain in their current locations (Uršič, 2005). This is particularly so with older people and homeowners (Steele, 2010). Bethan Harries et al. (2008) also identified social networking and sense of community as important factors that encourage households to remain in a particular location. The foregoing suggests that, in addition to the physical and spatial attributes of houses, the location of housing in relation to services, employment, schools, sociocultural ties and geographical features constitutes a major determinant of residents' relocation aspirations.

Regarding factors influencing future housing aspirations, several studies, including Steele (2010) and University of the Sunshine Coast (2011), have identified secured tenure, ease of movement within the dwelling unit, adequate space for household activities, privacy and neighbourhood safety as very important considerations, especially for the elderly. An earlier study on the influence of slow rehabilitation and diminishment of living qualities on residential mobility among the residents of several housing estates in Ljubljana, Slovenia, by Matjaž Uršič (2005) revealed that the need for more space, homeownership and anticipated changes in household demographics were major reasons why households intended to move from their current residences. That study concluded that improving the living quality and accelerating rehabilitation of housing estates can contribute to a decline in residential mobility. There is also an overwhelming desire for detached homes (Curtin University, 2013) and easy-to-maintain bungalows (The Community Council of Devon, 2011) as opposed to flats, which are considered compact, unimaginative, low-quality, high-density and negatively impacting the quality of social life (Rankin, 1983). Nonetheless, Outside Consultants (2009) showed a high preference for shared rented flats among young people. Other considerations identified in the literature are house type, layout, cost, size, design and construction quality (Edwards, 2005; Outside Consultants, 2009). The need for additional space increases with age (Outside Consultants, 2009) and appears critical for new or growing households (DTZ New Zealand, 2005) needing additional space for beds and children to play (Edwards, 2005). This is obviously contrary to Mongolian middle-class households' aspiration for small units, as reported by Jamiyansuren and Lascu (2012). In addition, hobby and lifestyle were found to be key considerations for households in the UK and Australia (Markkanen, 2009; Pinnegar et al., 2012). Specific design features

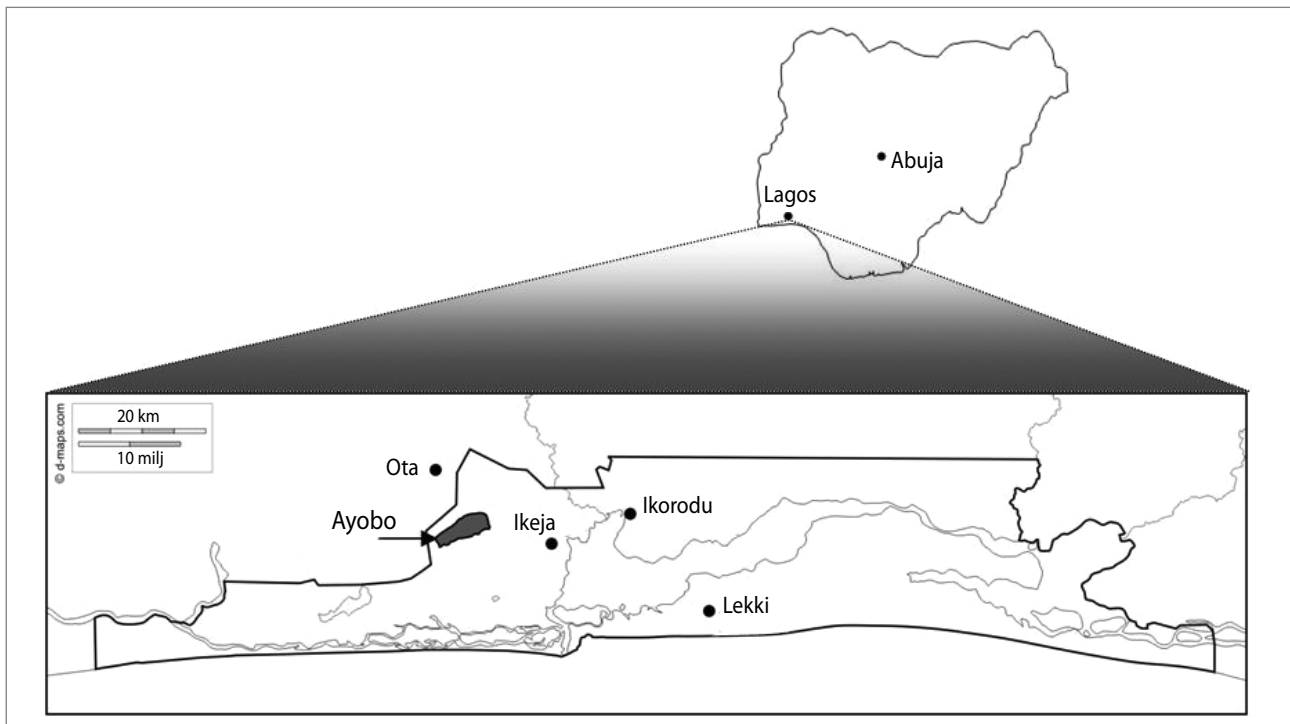


Figure 1: Location map of the Ayobo study area (adapted from Opoko, 2013).

identified by Markkanen (2009) and Steele (2010) that influenced housing aspiration include aesthetics, satisfaction with functional and lifestyle requirements, wheelchair access and appropriate furnishings. A study by Bojan Grum and Darja Kobal Grum (2015) investigated the factors that households consider when deciding to buy real estate. The study found that property factors and psychological factors of prospective buyers were the two main sets of factors that influence the decision to buy real estate. This means that the characteristics of housing and its surrounding environment as well as people's personality influence their expectations and aspirations when deciding on the type and location of residential property.

From the works reviewed in this paper, it can be inferred that various factors generally influence housing aspirations. These include households' needs and socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. It is also evident that the context of most previous housing aspiration studies is western and very insignificant research attention has thus far been given to developing countries and particularly informal urban settlements. This study attempted to fill these gaps.

3 Research methods

Ayobo is an informal settlement on the outskirts of Lagos, Nigeria (see Figure 1). It is part of Alimosho, the most populous local government area of Lagos State, which had a popula-

tion of about 1,319,571 in 2006 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Ayobo is currently one of the few axes of growth in land-strapped Lagos. Like many Nigerian informal settlements, Ayobo is located on the city periphery, lacking basic services and infrastructural facilities. Land is relatively cheap there compared to other parts of Lagos. Over the years, many Lagos residents that could not afford land in other parts of the city have come to Ayobo, resulting in rapid expansion and fusion of this settlement with the city of Lagos.

The data used in this paper were derived from a larger study that investigated the housing tenure structure of households in Ayobo between November, 2011 and March, 2012. The survey approach was considered an appropriate design to guide the research process because of its advantages in allowing for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data that describe trends, attitudes or opinions of a population on specific issues by studying a sample of that population, as explained by Creswell (2009). The key data-collection instrument was a structured questionnaire, and a combination of multistage stratified and random sampling methods was adopted in selecting respondents. Data collection involved three key stages: identifying and coding all occupied buildings in Ayobo at the time of the survey using a Google map of Ayobo, verified and updated during a walk-through survey; selecting every eighth occupied building on each street; and random selection of one household per building. Heads of selected households constituted the unit of data collection and analysis. The Google

Table 1: Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	618	53.7
Female	533	46.3
Age (years)		
Below 25	107	9.3
25–40	375	32.6
41–50	468	40.6
51–60	156	13.5
61–70	31	2.7
Above 70	14	1.2
Marital status		
Single	169	14.7
Married	919	79.9
Widowed/divorced/separated	63	5.5
Highest educational attainment		
None	53	4.6
Primary	226	19.6
Secondary	388	33.7
Ordinary national diploma (OND)	298	25.9
First degree (HND/BSc/BA)	144	12.5
Graduate	42	3.7
Employment status		
Retired	257	22.4
Self-employed	596	51.8
Salary-earner	175	15.2
Unemployed	69	6.0
Others	54	4.7
Monthly income of household heads (NGN)*		
None	10	0.9
Below 17,000	362	31.5
17,000–40,000	417	36.2
41,000–100,000	213	18.5
101,000–250,000	81	7.0
Above 251,000	68	5.9
Current household size (persons)		
1–2	299	26.0
3–4	353	30.7
5–6	242	21.0
7–8	96	8.3
Above 8	161	14.0

Note: *USD 1 = NGN 199.2 as of July, 2015

map was preferred to maps obtained from government agencies because it was more recent and more detailed.

The questionnaire used was designed by the lead author and contained questions on residents' personal characteristics (e.g., sex, age, income, marital status, number of wives,

educational qualification, household size and tenure type), residential history (e.g. previous residence, length of stay in current residence and Ayobo, reason for living in Ayobo), current housing characteristics (type of house, toilet, water source, waste disposal method, number of bedrooms, number of households living in the same building and sharing facilities, facilities shared, provision for play areas), and housing aspirations (need for more bedrooms, transition to homeownership, time of proposed relocation, proposed location, reason(s) for proposed relocation and proposed house type). Data were also collected on neighbourhood characteristics by asking the residents to rate the adequacy of facilities such as schools, shopping, health, recreation, access roads, waste disposal, and streetlights based on a Likert scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree". Similarly, residents were asked to rate the levels of crime and community ties in Ayobo using this scale. The questionnaire was pre-tested among selected residents in the area, and feedback resulted in the adjustment of some questions before the actual field survey. Administration of the questionnaire was done by hand during a series of visits to the neighbourhood by the lead author and trained research assistants. A total of 1,200 questionnaires were administered, out of which 1,151 were completed. This represents a 96% response rate.

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 17.0). The first analysis conducted was descriptive statistical analysis, which involved calculating the number and percentages of respondents' characteristics and responses to some of the questions asked. The second was categorical regression analysis, with the optimal scaling technique also known as CATREG in SPSS. The choice of CATREG was based on its advantages over general linear models (GLMs) in analysing nominal, ordinal and numerical data and its appropriateness for small samples and with least assumptions as explained by Shrestha (2009). CATREG was used to explore the variance explained by R^2 and in identifying the predictors of housing aspiration among respondents in the study. The dependent variable was respondents' intention to move. Data on this were collected by asking respondents: "Do you intend to move to another house in future?" Respondents were expected to answer 2 for *yes* or 1 for *no*. The dependent variable was dummy-coded with the value 0. Thirty-two independent variables were identified from the review of literature and classified into three groups: personal characteristics of respondents (eleven variables), residential history (nine variables) and characteristics of current residence (twelve variables). Regarding the reasons for planned relocation, the following reasons were investigated: a) "Moving to my own house"; b) "Poor conditions of the present dwelling including inadequate infrastructure"; c) "Anticipated changes in household size"; d) "Desire for more exclusive use of facilities"; e) "Proximity to friends and loved ones"

Table 2: Respondents' rating of neighbourhood facilities

Statements	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
"There are enough good schools"		
Strongly disagree	97	8.4
Disagree	545	47.3
Uncertain	34	3.0
Agree	107	9.3
Strongly agree	230	20.0
No response	138	12.0
"Shopping facilities are adequate"		
Strongly disagree	99	8.6
Disagree	576	50.0
Uncertain	50	4.3
Agree	193	16.8
Strongly agree	117	10.2
No response	116	10.1
"Public transportation is adequate"		
Strongly disagree	65	5.6
Disagree	286	24.8
Uncertain	108	9.8
Agree	171	14.8
Strongly agree	402	34.9
No response	119	10.1
"The crime rate is high"		
Strongly disagree	67	5.8
Disagree	587	51.0
Uncertain	170	14.8
Agree	147	12.8
Strongly agree	60	5.2
No response	120	10.4
"Waste is collected regularly"		
Strongly disagree	53	4.6
Disagree	360	31.3
Uncertain	150	13.0
Agree	373	32.4
Strongly agree	92	8.0
No response	123	10.7
"Health facilities are adequate"		
Strongly disagree	114	9.9
Disagree	455	39.5
Uncertain	144	12.5
Agree	84	7.3
Strongly agree	225	19.6
No response	129	11.2
"There are enough recreational facilities"		
Strongly disagree	240	20.9
Disagree	635	55.2
Uncertain	73	6.3
Agree	42	3.6

Statements	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
"The roads are good"		
Strongly agree	26	2.3
No response	135	11.7
"There are enough functional street lights"		
Strongly disagree	589	51.2
Disagree	381	33.1
Uncertain	40	3.5
Agree	13	1.1
Strongly agree	8	0.7
No response	120	10.4
"Sense of community is high"		
Strongly disagree	148	12.9
Disagree	109	9.5
Uncertain	210	18.2
Agree	253	22.0
Strongly agree	304	26.4
No response	127	11.0

and f) "other reasons", coded 1–6, respectively. In carrying out the CATREG, the mean score obtained from the responses of those that expressed a desire to move and provided reason(s) for the planned relocation was used as the variable "reasons for the proposed relocation". All of the categorical variables used with more than two categories were also dummy-coded. The results are presented below.

4 Study findings

4.1 Personal characteristics of respondents

The socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents presented in Table 1 show that a majority of them were self-employed males aged between 25 years and 60 years and had secondary school as the highest educational attainment. The monthly income of the household heads sampled was less than NGN 41,000.00 per month^[1] and the majority of households had at least three persons. The study also found that around a quarter of male respondents were polygamous. The existence of a large and extended family type consisting of spouses, children, in-laws, sisters/brothers, grandchildren, other relatives, friends and domestic staff was observed. However, around 38% of the respondents lived alone or with nuclear family members only.

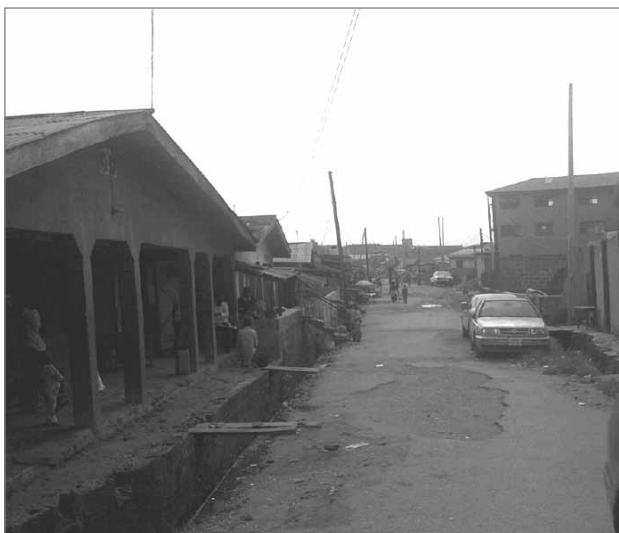


Figure 2: A typical street in Ayobo (adapted from Opoko, 2013).



Figure 3: Dilapidated road in Ayobo (adapted from Opoko, 2013).



Figure 4: Storm-water drainage in Ayobo (adapted from Opoko, 2013).

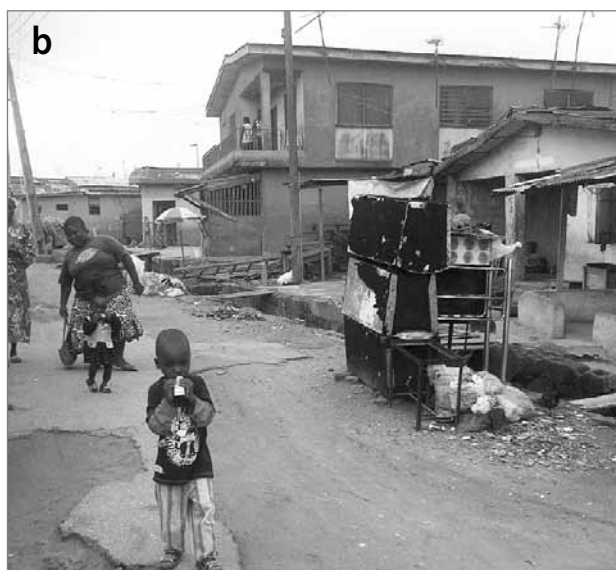


Figure 5: Housing types in Ayobo (adapted from Opoko, 2013).

4.2 Housing characteristics

Housing characteristics were examined at the neighbourhood and dwelling unit levels. The results of the analysis at the neighbourhood level presented in Table 2 reveal the inadequacy of communal facilities including healthcare, shopping, educational, recreational and religious facilities, most of which were provided by profit-oriented private entrepreneurs. During the fieldwork, the roads and storm-water drainage system were found to be in a state of disrepair, as shown in Figures 2 and 3.

The findings at the dwelling level (Table 3) show that the majority (63%) of respondents were renting, and 30% were owner-occupiers. Whereas 40% of the respondents lived in rooming houses, 34.3% and 24.1% lived in flats and single-family houses, respectively. The majority of the households shared the same buildings and facilities in them with other households. It was found that sharing facilities by households was the main source of conflict among the residents sampled. Table 3 also shows that 33% and 34% of the respondents occupied one and two bedrooms, respectively, compared to 3.9% with four bedrooms and 4.0% with five bedrooms.

Around 71% of the respondents used private-sector waste-management organisations in compliance with government directives. However, about one-third of the households sampled disposed of domestic waste through unacceptable means. The results (see Table 3) indicate that around 4% of the respondents had no toilets, 4% used ventilated improved pit latrines and 26% used pit latrines, whereas 67% had in-house water closet installations. However, due to either lack of constant running water or damage, many of the water closets were not functional. The use of a pail system was not reported by any respondent, indicating the successful eradication of this system of human waste disposal in Ayobo. In addition, around 65% of respondents indicated that play areas for children were not provided around their residences.

4.3 Residential history and aspiration of residents

The results (see Table 4) show that 11% of the respondents were born in Ayobo, whereas around 34% moved to Ayobo from other parts of Lagos. It is also evident from Table 4 that around 72% of the respondents had spent less than ten years in Ayobo, whereas 28.3% had lived there for at least ten years. Many respondents (28%) chose to live in Ayobo because of the affordable housing options, and 23.2% lived in Ayobo because they owned houses in this neighbourhood. The results also showed that most (73%) of the respondents desired to relocate to another residence someday. Of these, 56% desired to

Table 3: Dwelling unit attributes

Attributes	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
House type		
Self-contained flat	395	34.3
Single-family house	277	24.1
Rooming house	460	40.0
Others	19	1.6
Number of bedrooms		
1	377	32.8
2	391	34.0
3	162	14.1
4	45	3.9
5	46	4.0
Above 5	130	11.3
Tenure		
Renter	720	62.6
Owner-occupier	342	29.7
Family house	70	6.1
Others	19	1.7
Source of water		
Piped water (in house)	188	16.3
Public tap	198	17.2
Well	350	30.4
Water vendors	318	27.6
Rain/stream	12	1.0
Others	84	7.3
Borehole	1	0.1
Waste disposal		
PSP	817	71.0
Burning	274	23.8
Burying	23	2.0
Field/river/vacant plot	22	1.9
Others	15	1.3
Type of toilet		
None	40	3.5
Water closet	770	66.9
Ventilated improved pit latrine	46	4.0
Pit latrine	295	25.6
Number of households sharing facilities		
1	159	13.8
2	257	22.3
3–4	166	14.4
5–6	169	14.7
7–9	169	14.7
Above 9	231	20.1

Table 4: Residential history and housing aspiration

Variables	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Prior residence		
Born in Ayobo	123	10.7
Elsewhere in Ayobo	476	41.3
Lagos (outside Ayobo)	390	33.9
Another city	112	9.7
Rural area	50	4.3
Length of stay in Ayobo (years)		
Below 5	432	37.5
5–9	397	34.5
10–19	185	16.1
20–29	83	7.2
Above 29	54	4.7
Reason for living in Ayobo		
Good location	74	6.4
Nearness to friends and family	228	19.8
Nearness to amenities	145	12.6
Affordable housing options	318	27.6
Owner-occupier	331	28.7
Others	55	4.8
Ownership of other houses		
Yes	214	18.6
No	937	81.4
Desire to move to another house in future		
Yes	838	72.8
No	313	27.2

move into self-contained flats, 36% into single-family houses and only 8% into rooming houses. Interestingly, 40% of the proposed relocation would still be within Ayobo. Regarding the most pressing reason for their planned relocation, around 31% of the respondents claimed that the poor condition of their present dwellings was responsible, whereas 23.3% and 18% of respondents reported a transition to homeownership and anticipated changes in household size, respectively, as the main reasons. Other reasons included the desire for exclusive use of facilities (13%) and proximity to social networks (8%). Interestingly, around 52% of respondents felt that homeownership would inhibit their mobility, around 45% of the respondents indicated that they rent because of frequent moves, and around 75% were optimistic that their income would improve over time, thereby facilitating the fulfilment of their homeownership dreams.

4.4 Factors influencing housing aspiration

To identify the variables that influenced housing aspiration among the respondents in the survey, CATREG was carried out with “intention to move” as the dependent variable and

the other thirty-two variables identified in Table 5 were the independent variables. The results reveal that a significant proportion of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the regression model with multiple $R = 0.769$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.346$ and $R^2 = 0.591$. This indicates that the regression model explains about 59% of the variance in housing aspiration among the respondents in the survey. The result ($F = 2.408$, $p = 0.000$) suggests that the result of the regression model is statistically significant at $p < 0.005$. Table 5 also shows that seven of the thirty-two variables included in the regression model significantly predicted housing aspiration. These include reasons for proposed relocation, waste-disposal method, shared facilities, employment status, age, marital status and reasons for living in Ayobo. In terms of contribution, it is evident that, based on the beta values, shared facilities with the highest beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.467$; $F = 5.239$; p -value = 0.001) contributed most to predicting housing aspiration, followed by waste-disposal method ($\beta = 0.389$; $F = 4.140$; p -value = 0.003), marital status ($\beta = 0.302$; $F = 4.196$; p -value = 0.003) and reasons for proposed relocation ($\beta = 0.211$; $F = 3.777$; p -value = 0.000), respectively.

5 Discussion

The objectives of the current study were to examine the housing characteristics, explore the residential history and aspirations of the residents, and identify factors influencing housing aspirations of residents in Ayobo, Lagos. The discussion of the findings thus centres on these three issues. First, from the result of the analysis, it was found that most respondents in the survey felt that access to healthcare, shopping, education, recreation, good roads, street lighting and other facilities in the neighbourhood was inadequate. The frequency of collection and disposal of domestic waste was also rated low by the respondents. This was to be expected based on the fact that Ayobo is an informal settlement and that previous research (Morka, 2007; Gunter, 2014) showed that there was disequilibrium in the distribution of basic social amenities in informal settlements in cities areas in the global south. Most residents surveyed also lived in rented rooming houses and one or two rooms, with wells and water vendors being their main sources of water supply. This is likely to create overcrowding and a lack of privacy, a situation that is exacerbated by the high level of multifamily residential housing and sharing of dwelling facilities. These findings on housing characteristics in Ayobo provide insight into the typical features of housing in informal settlements in rapidly growing cities in many developing countries.

Second, the findings that a majority of those encountered in our survey were self-employed, low-income people living in rented apartments are consistent with the socioeconomic

Table 5: Factors influencing housing aspiration

Variables	Standardised coefficients				
	Beta (β)	SE	df	F	Sig
Time of proposed relocation	0.090	0.175	1	0.264	0.608
Proposed relocation	0.182	0.144	4	1.589	0.180
Reasons for proposed relocation	0.211	0.109	8	3.777	0.000*
Proposed house-type	0.319	0.196	3	2.652	0.051
Source of water	0.226	0.154	5	2.160	0.061
Waste-disposal method	0.389	0.191	4	4.140	0.003*
Type of toilet	0.147	0.112	3	1.723	0.164
Shared facilities	0.467	0.204	4	5.239	0.001*
Number of households sharing facilities with respondent	0.339	0.237	3	2.039	0.111
Frequency of conflicts	0.057	0.235	2	0.059	0.943
Likely time of transition to homeownership	-0.029	0.266	1	0.012	0.913
Employment status	0.184	0.107	4	2.980	0.021*
Sex	0.046	0.052	1	0.797	0.373
Age	0.259	0.119	2	4.753	0.010*
Marital status	0.302	0.148	4	4.196	0.003*
Number of wives	-0.087	0.151	2	0.333	0.717
Highest educational qualification	-0.085	0.224	2	0.143	0.867
Monthly income	0.090	0.180	3	0.249	0.862
Household size	0.110	0.269	2	0.167	0.846
Number of children under 18	-0.250	0.278	3	0.806	0.492
Relationship with other household members	0.045	0.063	4	0.501	0.735
Previous residence	0.077	0.081	4	0.894	0.469
Length of stay in Ayobo	0.268	0.184	1	2.129	0.147
Current house type	0.137	0.124	3	1.232	0.300
Reason for choosing to live in Ayobo	0.145	0.091	6	2.525	0.023*
Length of stay in current house	-0.106	0.143	2	0.546	0.581
Number of bedrooms occupied	0.191	0.165	3	1.342	0.263
Other income earners in the household	-0.221	0.176	3	1.571	0.199
Number of households sharing building with respondent	-0.115	0.158	4	0.536	0.709
Need for more bedrooms	0.070	0.090	1	0.595	0.441
Current tenure	0.208	0.152	2	1.873	0.157
Provision of play area	0.098	0.134	1	0.541	0.463

Note: *Significant at 0.05 level.

profile of Lagos State and other urban centres in Nigeria (UN-HABITAT, 2006). It was observed that major proportion of respondents indicated their desire to move out of their current residences, suggesting their dissatisfaction with their current residences. In fact, our survey data reveal that the main reasons for proposed mobility included poor conditions of present dwelling units, including inadequate infrastructure, transition to homeownership, anticipated changes in household size, desire for exclusive use of facilities and the need to be closer to social networks. These are no doubt good reasons for residential mobility, previously highlighted by Edwards (2005) and Uršič (2005). Furthermore, the study shows that two-thirds of those that desired to relocate intend

to move into self-contained flats. The preference for flats may be due to the benefits of privacy and income generation that this housing type offers. On the other hand, it provides support for the study by Outside Consultants (2009) indicating a preference for flats by young people, but contradicts evidence in the literature suggesting a preference by the elderly for single detached houses in other countries (Curtin University, 2013). This variation in results can be linked to differences in the socioeconomic and cultural contexts of these studies. This is because the studies reviewed focus on western societies, where housing markets are well developed and households have easier access to mortgage facilities to acquire houses already built. In the Nigerian context, a majority of households develop their

own houses funded by personal savings, and thus ownership of a block of flats makes economic sense because owners may occupy one flat and rent out the others. However, our data indicate that the residents sampled preferred self-contained apartments, where facilities are not necessarily shared like the rooming house type.

Notably, the finding presented in the previous paragraph is in line with evidence in the literature (Lall et al., 2005) indicating that residents in informal settlements see their neighbourhoods as temporary residences from which they aspire to better housing conditions. Although studies (Ibem & Aduwo, 2013; Jasen, 2012) show that households that are dissatisfied with their residences have three options (endure, modify or relocate), it seems evident from our data that most respondents in this study opted for relocation. This seems to corroborate earlier results indicating that the majority of respondents in our survey were renters that do not have the authority to modify their current residences to meet their housing aspirations. On the other hand, it can also be inferred that many of those that intend to move are currently enduring their current housing situation until their income status improves enough to support the fulfilment of their housing aspirations, as indicated by 75% of those that aspire to move out of their current residences.

The study also found that some respondents desired to remain within the study area. This suggests that, in spite of the inadequacies in the provision of neighbourhood facilities and poor housing conditions, the residents have found fulfilment in Ayobo. This set of households includes the elderly, those that have their own houses and people native to Ayobo. In addition, the reluctance to relocate from Ayobo may also be due to the relatively low level of crime, the length of stay in the area and the fact that some respondents indicated that one reason for choosing to live in Ayobo was to be closer to family members and friends (see Tables 2 and 4). These findings appear to support previous studies (Steele, 2010; Croucher, 2008; Oldfield, 2014) indicating that people are generally reluctant to move to new locations due to factors such as established social networks, identity they have gained and place attachment. The fact that a majority (63%) of the respondents had stayed in Ayobo for over five years and 85.9% were either born in Ayobo or lived in Lagos prior to moving to their current residence (Table 4) also corroborates the finding by Philippe Guillaume and Myriam Houssay-Holzschuch (2002) suggesting that residents of low-income settlements are not necessarily newcomers to the urban environment.

Finally, regarding the predictors of housing aspiration in Ayobo, our survey data reveal that seven factors significantly predicted housing aspiration among the respondents. Of these, three (marital status, age and employment status) are related

to the socioeconomic characteristics of the residents. This result supports previous studies (Hall, 2008; Outside Consultants, 2009) showing the role of socioeconomic characteristics such as age, employment and marital status in housing aspirations, as previously highlighted. One of the predictors identified is related to the reasons for proposed relocation. From our data, the reasons are linked to a) poor conditions of current residences, b) the need to change tenure status from renter to owner-occupier, c) anticipated changes in household size, d) the desire to have exclusive use of facilities, and e) the need to be closer to friends and loved ones. These reasons are related to the factors identified by previous studies (Croucher, 2008; Steele, 2010) as influencing housing aspiration. The remaining three factors (waste-disposal method, shared facilities and reasons for choosing to live in Ayobo) are all related to housing and neighbourhood characteristics in Ayobo. Specifically, the result for the domestic waste-disposal method shows that the majority of households relied on the PSP for domestic waste management. However, dissatisfaction with PSP services has been linked to the poor service delivery evidenced by irregular collection and disposal of refuse. Also as it relates to sharing facilities, the result revealed that the majority of respondents lived in rooming-house type dwellings, where the households shared facilities and the tendency for conflicts is usually high. Consequently, the desire to have exclusive use of facilities was identified as one of the reasons for the desire to relocate from current residences. Further, the reasons for choosing to live in Ayobo are based on a number of factors, including good location, closeness to friends and family, affordability of housing, nearness to amenities and tenure. These are some of the factors identified by the ABS (1998) and Edwards (2005) as having significant influence on housing aspiration. Hence, this may help to explain why the reasons for choosing to live in Ayobo emerged as one of the significant predictors of housing aspiration in our survey.

6 Conclusion

This paper examined and analysed the housing aspiration of residents in the informal settlement of Ayobo on the outskirts of Lagos, Nigeria. The following conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the study. First, the housing characteristics of Ayobo can be described as predominantly rooming-house type, in which most household heads are poorly educated self-employed persons, and households are renters sharing common facilities. The neighbourhood is characterised by inadequate access to basic social amenities. Second, although the rooming house is currently the predominant housing type in Ayobo, because it is relatively affordable for low-income earners compared with other housing types, it was found not to be the preferred housing type by the majority of those sampled. Consequently, the majority of respondents aspired to live in self-

contained flats and single-family houses where there is little or no sharing of housing facilities. The last conclusion is that our survey data provide support to existing studies indicating that the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of residents, housing conditions, neighbourhood characteristics and other tangible considerations are significant predictors of housing aspiration among residents in informal urban settlements.

The findings of this study have a number of implications for policy and practice. First among these is that there is a need for a close partnership between residents in informal urban settlements and the government in addressing the infrastructure supply deficit in such areas. The fact that some residents are unwilling to move from the study area indicates that there is a considerable level of social capital and sense of community that can aid the development of partnerships between the government and community in improving access to basic social infrastructure by residents in the area. This can be achieved through community-based upgrading initiatives and programmes with active participation of the residents in the neighbourhood.

The second implication is that, in order to meet the current housing needs, expectations and aspirations of residents in the study area, there is a need for property developers to invest more in developing affordable single-family apartments and self-contained blocks of flats than rooming-house type accommodation. Therefore, when formulating housing policies and designing housing programmes that seek to address the housing needs of residents of informal urban settlements in developing countries, it has become imperative to go beyond the physical, technical and economic considerations to include sociocultural aspects of housing needs, including privacy.

The third implication is that, despite differences in socioeconomic status, demographic characteristics and cultural backgrounds of households, the factors influencing housing aspiration as reported in the developed countries are similar to those identified in our survey. This simply means that there are similarities in housing aspiration across different cultures and societies. Therefore, factors such as people's marital status, age, employment and tenure status, their current housing condition, access to basic amenities and services, social networks and housing affordability can result in significant changes in housing aspirations among individuals and households in Nigeria and globally.

This study is limited in a number of ways. First, the study reported in this paper was conducted in one of many informal settlements, meaning that the findings may not be generalisable to all other informal settlements in Lagos, Nigeria.

Second, the study is also limited by not comparing housing aspirations of the various income groups identified in the study area. Finally, only thirty-two variables were investigated in this study, suggesting that some variables associated with housing aspiration are not included in the current study. These limitations notwithstanding, by providing new insight into housing aspiration among residents in an informal settlement in one of the fastest-growing megacities in the world, the study has contributed to the current discourse on housing in informal urban settlements in developing countries.

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Notes

[1] USD 1 = NGN 199.2 as of July, 2015.

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