THROUGH THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC: The Promotion of Social Rental Housing (SRH) as a Focal Point in Addressing Housing Resilience

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ABSTRACT: Comparable with the word 'sustainable' in the late 1980s, over the last decade, the word *resilience* has been used extravagantly. Resilience is deployed most popularly when enquiring about the ability of a city to assume this trait but is also invoked while exploring same in communities, institutions, systems, and infrastructure. Within the latter is housing, where recurring estimations signal the need to address the enhancement of people's lives via holistic housing solutions – specifically as it pertains to social rental housing (SRH). The challenge we tackle in this paper attempts to minimize the continued loss of SRH; first by advocating the need for its relocation from city fringes to non-poor neighborhoods, and secondly, by identifying the chief causative factors of opposition within such neighborhoods and determining the viability of operational guiding principles to aid their successful integration.

The research builds upon select pillars of resilience such as collaboration, flexibility/adaptability, transformability, and consolidation. Incorporating a case study methodology, with a mixed methods approach including literature review, phenomenology, and survey, our study discovered (amongst other things) that (I) utilizing the knowledge of the residents/public as a key source of information to create the guidelines is necessary to ensuring its applicability following completion, and (II) understanding existing governance structures, policymaking processes (on localization), and possible entry and impacts points to allow the smooth translation of the guidelines into policy, and integration of the guidelines to current strategies.

Moving beyond critical analysis, the work culminated in the design of the guidelines which the authors anticipate will see conversion to policy, thereby improving institutional structure, capacity and performance. Further, the authors aim to enhance resource management, and build public participation, to more potently address urgent SRH issues. This study highlights the need for a more involved local government, which proves an indispensable network in building resilience in cities across Africa and beyond.

KEYWORDS**:** resilience, social housing, siting, maintenance, guidelines

INTRODUCTION

"A man is not a man until he has a house of his own."
Nelson Mandela (in his book, *Long Walk to Freedom*)

Jones (2017, 129) defines city resilience as the ability of cities to "manage and adapt to change, and exhibit robustness, mitigation and adjustment at all levels". The quality of resilience in cities is identified by three keywords: absorption, recovery and preparation, and driven via four areas: its economy, society, governance and environment (OECD 2021). Within the second, the area that deals with society, there is the issue of inclusivity and cohesiveness, active networks within communities, and the citizens' overall pleasure from access to a healthy life(style); while the aspect that focuses on the environment, is seen in the provision of infrastructure to meet basic needs, and the development of coherent policy towards land use and allocation. These two areas address myriad elements, among which is the city's housing and its ability to shelter its inhabitants. In this paper, we deem housing to be foremost amongst the elements that can guarantee urban resilience, which is in alignment with Ernst & Young's (EY) argument in 2018, that any kind of urban resilience discussion should commence at home/house building.

Looking at housing through the lens of resilience implies considering at least three (of its) characteristics: supply, diversity and affordability. According to O'Toole (2017), affordability in housing which refers to the

general level of housing prices relative to the general level of household or family incomes, often measured by dividing median home prices by median family incomes,

is most manifested in affordable housing. Although affordable housing is an umbrella term for a large group of housing types that are

available at a cost that does not compromise a household's ability to attain other basic needs of life (AUMA 2017),

the specific type that we focus on is social housing (SH), which represents secure affordable rental housing - a "category of non-market housing where the cost is subsidized by the government" (AUMA 2021) so that the housing needs of the low-income earning population can be satisfied. Amongst the myriad tenures and types of affordable housing, SH is not only named the housing of the future (Harloe, 1994; Maclennan & More, 1997), but the housing for resilience, "the most essential component for urban resilience" (EY 2018, 5). The EY article establishes its (SH) place as a requirement for the interconnection of systems within the urban environment (2018, 5). The article refers to SH as *resilient* in its ability to provide support physically and socially to prepare for and withstand "increasingly frequent shocks and stresses of the century" (EY 2018, 8). Also, for its ability to make the most of opportunities to champion resilience in the larger community. Via EY's (2018) extensive study, the researchers determined that there are three considerations and ten principles that essentially furnish SH with its characteristic resilience. Among these two lisrets is a strong reference to two elements: (I) (the quality of) the physical asset/infrastructure (8, 10), and (II) connection to the larger community in terms of suitability to the current neighborhood fabric and quality of life for the residents (8, 10). In other words, materiality but more so, the maintainability of the materials utilized, and two, siting.

The fear of increase in crime, fear of destruction of neighborhood facilities/amenities and property, fear of decrease in property value, the belief that pro-poor housing properties (such as SH) are unattractive and poorly maintained, the ideology that the poor generally have larger families with all of whom they typically move into their allocated housing (resulting in supplementary burden on amenities), and an ideological view that pro-poor housing recipients do not deserve assistance, are a few reasons why SH continues to be resisted by intending neighborhoods. In addition to the above, Pendall (1999) and Tighe (2010) discuss another factor responsible for eliciting negative perceptions and/or responses to the diverse forms of pro-poor housing, which is (related to) the disconnect between the housing design and its occupants. This is manifested in the design phase of pro-poor housing where little to no consideration for what is preferred is accorded its residents. Thus, it is common for residents who overtime find the premises and accommodation unpleasant to become dissatisfied and move away resulting in high rates of building abandonment. Also, in a bid to assume very little expenses, the bare minimum is chosen in the design and execution of pro-poor housing, which brings about unsightly buildings that has become synonymous with pro-poor housing today. These above-named reasons have recurrently been captured in the context of the developing region.

Within the same context, in a country such as Nigeria, just as the reasons for SH opposition are similar irrespective of location, so also is the case with the factors/conditions that impede its resilience. Not engaging with all (concerned) citizens, failure to consider the performance of the housing solution from multiple perspectives/sectors, failure to identify, mobilize and sustain a pro-active response team to the (most significant) risks, as well as less tangible conditions such as: non-feeling of community life, that is, connection between neighbors, sense of belonging, respect for diversity and inclusion, and neighbourhood attitudes. Two elements however, siting and maintenance, are chief among reasons why SH developments fail in terms of competence and longevity and continue to be met with resistance and therefore also failing to be preserved. If SH must be resilient, the issues that contest/combat its durability need to be tackled.

In this paper, the general idea of SH resilience will imply the following: (I) ensuring that SH developments are conserved, (II) revisiting and rethinking age-old/current SH siting and maintenance strategies, (III) guaranteeing the acceptance of such developments (specifically) within neighborhoods of opportunity (*that is,* non-poor neighborhoods). This paper will attempt to answer the following questions: (I) why resilient SH is particularly important in Nigeria, (II) what the current issues associated with SRH siting and maintenance in Nigeria are, (III) why it is necessary to both *see* and *resolve* the issues "through the eyes of the public", and (IV) the solution to better siting and maintenance, and conservation of SH supply based on public participation. While we aim to address all the above, the primary objective of this study is to propose a viable comprehensive SRH siting and maintenance guidebook for Lagos by speaking to issues highlighted from a diverse group of participants. Using Lagos as the focal point of this intervention and exploring the potential for bottom-up community engagement in the creation of this guidebook, specifically: practitioners, planning officials, and government officials with the necessary information and evidence base to make decisions that promote viability and sustainability in the development of the document. To elicit the responses from participants that would prove instrumental to creating the proposed document, questions centered around the following will be developed: (I) how SH, in terms of the development process (from planning to occupancy), is experienced/perceived by members of non-poor neighborhoods, (II) what factors inhibit or facilitate acceptance of SH developments, and (III) what planners/governments can do to influence the experience/perception of members of non-poor neighborhoods towards SH developments. Investigating how residents of non-poor neighborhoods perceive (the idea of) SH through the development process is the underpinning of my research.

1.0 UNDERSTANDING THE *'WHY'*

Housing, irrespective of type, already plays an essential role for mankind; its "impact on the health, wealth and output of man is profound" (Ezeanah 2021, para. 1) such that without it, a person's place in the society Is uncertain. This is why affordable housing, and its variations; SH included, is critical, so that everyone, notwithstanding societal status, can have access to (and obtain) housing. Housing is not only beneficial to the overall well-being of the individual but to the nation's health, in its ability to pull economies from depression, and serve (via housing construction and markets) as an engine of growth (Moore 2019, 22).

Housing in Nigeria is fundamentally informal and therefore, precarious. There is, however, a small percentage according to Housing Finance Africa (Razwani & Nielsen 2021) that constitutes the formal housing market; at least, 80% of which is self-built and affordable only by the wealthiest 5-10% of the population – *even at its cheapest.* Housing therefore continues to elude the general populace. As a result of the unavailability of and inaccessibility to SH, which is the specific housing type most needed, the effect that housing should have on an(y) economy is yet to be manifested in Nigeria.

1.1 The impact of a severe lack of SH on Nigerians and the Nigerian economy

Nigeria continues to suffer from a lack of SH. While the Nigerian government acknowledges that increasing housing supply and reinforcing protection policies for those with special circumstances (renters, low-income earners, disadvantaged etc.) are important, the depth of the housing challenge is one that seems to be beyond their abilities (Florida & Schneider 2018). According to Florida & Schneider (2018), it has devolved to the point that "international development organizations will need to step in to… provide the housing that is so badly needed" (para. 4).

The economic impact from the continued shortage of SH is equally dire. Economic experts acknowledge that the lack of housing is chief among the problems with the economy today. Not to mention the impact of the lack of SH in the "expensive and productive locations that drive the economy", which they conclude is an even bigger problem (Florida & Schneider, 2019). The huge negative economic impact is both direct and indirect; direct in the way that it impacts businesses and indirect, in the way that it impacts individuals and families, and their level of productivity and thus, the economy (Florida, 2019). With regards to the former, poorer/lower-income families have less disposable income, which implies less money spent on the goods and services offered by local businesses, and therefore, no/slower business growth. Also, for businesses that rely on employing poorer/lower-income workers such as manufacturing companies, which compensate with meagre wages, inaccessibility to cheap housing is critical for the success of the business. With regards to the latter (that is, indirect negative economic impact of lack of SH), if an unskilled individual, who seeks a decent job, is unable to secure it because of unavailability of adequate and affordable housing (SH), it is equal to a substantial amount of productivity lost. Many newcomers, immigrants and refugees experience this upon arrival into a new community; a lack of housing creates barriers to allow these groups integrate and begin to add value to the economy. Fundamentally, if people are unable to secure housing, there is a level of instability that they are confronted with that impacts other facets of their lives such as: education, health, transportation cost, etc. that ultimately affects the economy (Garrison, 2014). Without sufficient (social) housing, the economic stimulation driven by boosting demand that enabled countries grow such as the US in the industrial 20th century is not attained.

1.2 Why SH is particularly important in Nigeria

The Nigerian climate is a rather unique one. This year, *Worldometer,* a population ranking website, that depends on estimates provided by the United Nations, ranked Nigeria as the 7th most populous nation, with about 206 million-plus inhabitants (Worldometer 2021). Of this population, almost 50% is poor – and this is a huge improvement from the 61% recorded in 2012 by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC 2012). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS in Nigeria), this percentage (almost 50%) lives on USD335.19 (NGN137,430) per year. While the number, percentagewise may have declined, the poverty situation has only gotten grimmer; such that in 2018, Nigeria overtook India as the country with the largest number of people living in extreme poverty (Adebayo 2018). Now, in 2021, Nigeria is said to be the poverty capital of the world (Fry 2020; Panchal 2020).

1.3 Why the SH needed should be RESILIENT

With such a large poor population, SH needs to – in addition to being available - be resilient. Addressing resilience means that: (I) investing in this housing type becomes attractive to investors who can be guaranteed that the housing developments being financed are built to last, and (II) construction costs and consequently, rental costs, will be reduced thereby increasing accessibility and affordability of SH. Ultimately, those who are most at risk for homelessness due to their economic status, are presented an opportunity to secure accommodation, have access to the region's amenities/services, and rise on the economic ladder within the society. This is based on Bank's (2019) study where he states that improving resilience in SH does not impact only the housing asset, but the economic resiliency of its occupants as well.

2.0 Why siting and maintenance are focal issues + what are the current issues associated with SRH siting and maintenance in Nigeria

In terms of SH siting, studies show that over 70% of all SH units are unplanned and located in poor, and blighted fringe neighborhoods (Ajayi et al. 2014). In part, the placement of these units in such neighborhoods reflects: (I) the availability of land in these areas and therefore the ease of locating them without much thought, (II) the disregard for the outcome of the development and well-being of its occupants, (III) the disinterest of the government and planning authorities in upsetting other, more adequate neighborhoods, and (IV) the conflict concerning allocating greenfield to such land uses etc. (Keating et al. 1995, p. 230-232). Jackson et al. (1994) opines that land should very seldom be allocated because of availability but rather for more reasonable motivations such as: potential, profitability, and level of demand etc. This, however, has often proved difficult because private developers, who are very possibly the project owners, are unlikely to site SH developments on land where market appraisals indicate high demand (Carmona et al. 2003, p. 72-73).

A review of literature on SH siting reveals that initially, between the 70s and 90s, the Nigerian government built SH developments in non-poor neighborhoods (Waziri & Roosli, 2013). Examples such as: Shagari low-cost housing (built across 19 states in predominantly prime urban locations), and Jakande low-cost housing estates (over 30,000 housing units spread across both prime urban areas and urban suburbs/hinterland in Lagos) (Waziri, 2014). At the time, chief among the factors impacting social housing siting decisions was the need to close the distance between its residents and community facilities hence more of the housing developments were constructed in neighborhoods closer to city centers (Makinde, 2014). Although, the developments in prime areas were more expensive than those farther away from city centres (Olotuah, 2000; Olotuah & Bobadoye, 2009). The 90s and the twenty-first century however, ushered in a completely different scenario. Driven by inflation, the need for less capital-intensive projects, and availability of larger parcels of land – both of which are met when building at the outskirts – the government focused most of its attention on constructing SH developments within these parts of the city (Ikejiofor, 1999; Isah, 2016). Despite the diverse adjustments and changes to the processes involved in constructing SH, the decision on where to site the development has always been political - reserved for a government official well-suited to the prominence/significance associated with the development (Isah, 2016). Literature implies that there is no slated location for siting SH on record; rather it is an economic decision because if a developer can purchase land; get approval from the responsible government authority and the support of planning officials, afford titling, registration expenses and construction costs, then the government is satisfied with the prospect of a reduction in the housing deficit.

Maintenance is not less problematic. Like land allocation and siting, the maintenance (and management) of SH was the responsibility of the government (Isah, 2016). This duty of management was executed by specific authorities selected by the government (Isah, 2016). Currently, SH in Nigeria may be owned and managed by the state, by non-profit organizations or by a combination of the two (Adejumo, 2009). Management and maintenance of SH are considered to be so burdensome that developments "are abandoned either halfway to completion, after completion, or not even embarked on as a result of there being no framework" to address both these activities/programs (Fatoye & Odusami, 2009; Fatoye, 2009 cited in Ihuah & Fortune, 2013, p. 902). Ihuah & Fortune (2013) opine that the rationale behind abandoning projects for lack of a maintenance plan is because the role of maintenance in a building spans beyond the building itself (that is, functionality, physical appearance, and economic returns/value) and its users to the built environment (p. 908). Despite the enactment of several housing policies that emphasize the need for both a planned and an unplanned maintenance policy, Nigeria's notoriety for having a poor maintenance culture remains unchanged (Ihuah et al., 2014). As far back as in 1991, a review completed by the Federal Government indicated that the backlog of maintenance required to bring the existing units to acceptable standards was equivalent to the cost of three million new units (FRN[1], 1991). Researchers (Ozdemir, 2002; Fatoye, 2009; Ihuah & Fortune, 2013) have indicated that the lack of a maintenance culture in the Nigerian housing sector may be the sectors number one challenge. To limit the challenge of maintenance, recent policy discussion papers have suggested the transference of the responsibility of maintenance to the inhabitants of the development as part of the government's plan for an operational subsidy (Isah, 2016).

3.0 Why it is necessary to both *see* and *resolve* these issues "through the eyes of the public",

"Pro-poor housing is about people."
(City of Calgary 2021)

In exploring the resilience component that this paper addresses[2], a key fragment involves engaging the public towards capturing their idea of what resilience 'looks like' and how it can be represented with regards to siting and maintenance. The reason being that we utilize two theoretical pillars to frame the study - affordable housing theory, and social theory of housing design. The former draws attention to the relationship between features of housing and features of society (Salama, 2006; Ruonavaara, 2018) by addressing "underlying concepts including visual preferences, people satisfaction (of their current houses and residential environments), place attachment, and appropriation (this addresses

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[1] Federal Republic of Nigeria

[2] Ensure conservation of SH developments, (II) revisit and rethink age-old/current SH siting and maintenance strategies, (III) guarantee the acceptance of such developments (specifically) within neighborhoods of opportunity (that is, non-poor neighborhoods).

the physical characteristics of a housing development, which needs to be seen from a 'home' perspective" (Salama, 2006, p. 72), the perspective of those who are part of the existing home environment (Salama, 2006), while social theory of housing design, which speaks to a

"study of design based on a theory of what kind of structure is desirable in a project and how to use design to get it" (Wood, 1961)

The latter is almost exclusive to the exterior of the building, its grounds and the treatment of external spaces (King, 1984; Salingaros et al., 2019). Therefore, based on public perception, decisions around both siting and maintenance that are instrumental in guaranteeing the longevity, durability, and adaptability of the SH development will be compiled in a format that allows for easy operationalization. Chief among the reasons why resolving these issues through the lens of the public is essential is because: (I) research indicates that the public are more accommodating of public housing (pro-poor housing types) when they are involved with the key decisions surrounding its construction (Scally 2014), (II) without the input of the public, it is difficult to gather a comprehensive list of the elements and factors to be considered (within the boundaries of these two issues) that would be instrumental to ensuring the resilience of the SH development, and (III) in order to allow the involvement of any willing, qualified (in terms of basic criteria for participation in the study) participant, and ensure operationalizability, the individual should be able to speak to external factors [i.e. siting, building features/elements, and treatment of surrounding area (maintenance) etc.].

In creating pro-poor housing policies, specifically SH policies, the starting point is typically, deciding and categorizing what issues to address and those that would be disregarded (Hansson & Lundgren, 2019). This decision is contingent on how the term is defined within the specific context. For example, in Canada and Australia, their SH policies constitute a variety of different programs, used to address a similar number of goals defined in their definitions (Cowans & Maclennan, 2008). Unlike, what typically obtains in several countries, where SH is reserved/allocated for/to the most disadvantaged in the society, in Ireland; SH is a "steppingstone to owner-occupation" (p. 66). In the Netherlands, SH is defined by rents. Because SH in the Netherlands is considered a service of general economic interest (SGEI), eligibility is bound by an annual adjustment to household income ceiling (Czischke & van Bortel, 2018). In Italy, the terms affordable housing and social housing imply the same idea, but differ from public housing, which refers to housing for low-income households (ibid.), while in Poland, according to the Rosenfeld (2015, p. 8), there is no official definition for social housing. However, the Polish housing market provides two housing types that cater to the population with income level below average (Czischke & van Bortel, 2018). Based on the definition of the term per context, policies are created. Typically, SH policy constitutes a number of elements; a system, target group, form of tenure, responsibility of provision/type of provider, subsidies, and public intervention (Hansson & Lundgren, 2019). The last element listed, which should constitute any SH policy, and is particularly important to this study, is public intervention (ibid.). Public intervention discussed here is two-sided: one refers to the role of public bodies, which typically takes three main forms: (I) regulatory, (II) subsidization, and (III) "direct provision of SH either through public bodies or publicly owned companies" (p. 161). The other side, which speaks to usefulness and operationalization of the policy, refers to building a strong, robust policy at the local level that accommodates the contribution, and consideration of the expression and participation of citizens towards decision-making. While the former is common in numerous countries; the latter, is not, including Nigeria. (For this study, we found this side to be a much more meaningful route to the sort of information we sought.) All the nation's housing policies, SH policies included, exclude public participation, not to mention public intervention (Festus & Amos, 2015; Ocholi et al., 2015; Olawale et al., 2015). Its exclusion does not imply unimportance though because researchers, including Braga & Palvarini (2013) indicate that SH as should its policies be about the overall concern of the public. To achieve this, they suggest a responsibility by the government to include the public. The reason however, why public intervention by members of the populace has not become commonplace is because research that support its utilization and highlight its importance, are unable to demonstrate a persuasive relationship between (successful siting and maintenance programs for) SH and public contribution.

4.0 METHODOLOGY
The study utilized a mixed-methods approach to analyze the cases (SH projects) that were selected. The qualitative and quantitative methods applied are as follows: first, we reviewed the literature, then formulated and tested the research questions. The next step was exploratory and descriptive case study because there is limited existing literature about the topic under investigation in my context. This research examined the research questions from the various perspectives of the neighbourhood residents and stakeholders in selected neighborhoods in the Lagos Metropolis Area. It employed the use of an embedded case study that applied both qualitative and quantitative strategies. The qualitative methods included literature review, field/personal observation, semi-structured interviews and phenomenology, and focus group, while survey was the singular quantitative method applied.

Our study obtained descriptions of experiences of community members who witnessed specifically: (I) the discovery/observation of the decision of the government to build the SH development, (II) the identification and (final) selection of the location(s) that were considered suitable, (III) commencement of actual planning and design process (demonstrated by visitations of planning and government officials to the project site), (IV) implementation of the design of the development or commencement and completion of construction, (V) occupancy of the development, (VI) observed change to neighbourhood between existing and new communities, and (VII) the dilapidation, and consequent

abandonment. Obtaining this information was helpful in discovering the unique perspectives of the members of the non-poor neighbourhood on how the process of siting SH developments can be (better) facilitated, and which elements of the development are able to deface/damage the development, its vicinity, and by extension, the larger area around the development if not maintained.

5.0 THE SOLUTION TO BETTER SITING AND MAINTENANCE, AND CONSERVATION OF SH SUPPLY BASED ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 The Guidelines
The results shared here were obtained from the phenomenological study by way of interviews with selected participants, who had proven to meet the criteria to quality them as suitable sources of information for the study. The 51-member interviewee pool (as indicated above) required a group of participants that included residents of the non-poor neighborhood, planners, property developers, and government officials.
The following criteria guided participant selection for each of the groups:
- Nine government officials (stationed across four Local Government offices in Lagos) who are involved in and aware of public housing and planning history in either of the four neighborhoods where a SH development of interest to the study is located.
- Six (property) developers who have worked in or have affiliation with development companies with history of constructing low-cost housing/SH across Nigeria. Information on the development/construction companies that were responsible for the construction of the four SH projects selected was sourced from both the planning offices and local government offices charged with monitoring and supervising the activities that occur in the neighborhoods where the selected projects are located.
- Eight planners who (have worked in and/or continue to work in a Planning office located across one of the four neighborhoods) are aware of the planning and development processes involved in siting and constructing the four projects and who are currently involved in or aware of the existing situation and state of these projects as well as the on-going programs (if any) instituted towards maintenance.
- Twenty-nine residents, including both young and old, who check several boxes: (I) genuine interest in the phenomenon, (II) good grasp of the study's investigation, information that is to be collected, and objectives, [that is, (a) have witnessed the construction of and subsequent abandonment/dilapidation of the SH development, or (b) have been of an age that allowed them to be aware of the situation with the development from inception through till abandonment, (c) have been of an age that allowed them to form an opinion about the situation with the development and its impact on the neighbourhood, and (d) currently be able to communicate clear and detailed accounts of their experiences during the period of the occurrence], and (III) duration of period of residency within the neighbourhood.

The information derived centered around the participants' subjective experience; their perception and understanding of the specific issues around the two themes related to SH. Because of the sort of information sought in the study, participants were from different levels: the public, private and government levels. At the public level, residents from non-poor neighborhoods who own and live in their residential properties (and have done so for long periods) were selected for their knowledge and observation of everyday life (in and) around select SRH developments. The information at this level provides a fundamental bottom-up perspective critical to providing the best solutions tailored to context, and as earlier determined, preparing a housing policy document aimed at improving the living situation of the public requires beginning at the level of need upwards (Daniels-Akunekwe & Sinclair, 2019). A mixed methods approach was taken, which included field observation, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and survey.

4.2 The Guidelines
The section details one way to address both issues collectively, that is, the creation of an operationalized siting and maintenance guidebook via a set of guidelines. While the guidelines do not tackle the provision of SH units, it aims to ensure that every unit produced is not lost but rather, is safeguarded so that waste and loss caused by poor siting decisions of the estate (resulting in vandalism and abandonment), and the effect of little to no maintenance (evident in the eventual dilapidation) is minimized or eliminated.

The document (guidelines) the author proposes is a viable comprehensive series of questions on SH siting and maintenance decisions that form a set of guidelines. The guidelines will constitute a tool to convey guiding principles and specifications for the siting and maintenance of SH. It will outline minimum standards required by the city where it is to be adopted and which can be adapted (to varying contexts) in order to address these two challenges. While it does not aim to specifically assign tasks to the different groups of government officials and (design & construction) professional that will utilize it, it will generally provide direction to housing maintenance (and management) bodies, building developers/contractors (and possibly, designers), as well as other groups involved in the process of pro-poor (and public) housing siting and maintenance.
This document both responds to and builds on complaints and suggestions received/collected over time by local government officials and field officers within the neighborhood-specific planning offices. In addition to the complaints

by the population grounded in personal reasons, certain macroeconomic elements such as the rapid population growth, increasing socioeconomic income/status gap, widening supply-demand gap for pro-poor housing (particularly SH), and demographic factors, are some of the reasons why developing the guidelines remains necessary. The guidelines will constitute an important part of attending to these issues as they relate to SH.

For the guidelines to provide the anticipated benefits, particularly that of transferability so that several (if not all) cities and states in the country, which are also confronted with similar challenges, can be improved by utilizing the guidelines, the unique characteristics per city/state should be taken into consideration in order to tailor the guidelines to the context. However, in this case, the author suggests that with SRH in the country being problematic, following the utilization and implementation, and effectiveness of the guidelines in Lagos, the government should contemplate the SRH situation in other cities/states, file them accordingly, and commence adapting the guidelines so that rather than a reactive approach, an anticipatory one is taken. Also, although the communication and coordination between the different actors and resources is advocated, there is general fear evident among the general population regarding in the notorious inability of the government to administer and accomplish the intricacies of managing the various institutions, in terms of outlining responsibility, institutional mechanisms, development of new skills and capacity, and funding provision and allocation.

In terms of the specific intentions of these guidelines, they are to:
I. constitute a portion of the nation's (current) Social Housing Bill,
II. be applied to the construction, renovation and conversion of any pro-poor housing development either developed or secured by the government and located within non-poor neighborhoods,
III. provide a plan for the built form, as well as its design and the requirements for all public pro-poor housing development owned by the National Government,
IV. provide a minimum standard required by cities across the country for building elements such as: materials, finishes, and additional elements that could ensure long-term efficiency and durability, minimizing maintenance and operational costs during the lifetime/through the period of life expectancy of the building,
V. be used as a tool by consultants in developing their strategies for taking care of public pro-poor housing estates,
VI. ensure that the standards across all the public pro-poor housing developments in the city/country maintain consistency in the decisions and outcomes related to their siting and maintenance, and
VII. ensure that although variation to the guidelines may be considered, they are not to proceed without prior discussion, acceptance, and approval by the cities in the country

The authors ensured that certain characteristic elements were reflected in the document such as: flexibility, adaptability, clarity and rigor. *Flexibility and adaptability* because they are key components of resilience, and as contexts and users change, and the guidelines are applied to solve these challenges across multiple scenarios, new or differing ideas/perceptions/suggestions could be introduced based on the assortment of problems that would emerge. Also, because housing is not an isolated event but rather part of a larger network of land, urban development, and works within the country.

4.3 The Siting Guidelines

The criteria established ensures that the: (I) guidelines are efficient, (II) decisions made based on the criteria will allow the site selection process progress smoothly, and (III) all decisions made can both be defended and traced so that adjustments can be made as required.
(I) Planning the site selection process
   a. Defining the search area
      i. Zoning and land use
   b. Site capacity, size of site and/or basic site adequacy
   c. Identifying, listing and assessing potential sites
   d. Site accessibility
(II) PART A: Putting together the project team
   a. Public consultation
(III) PART B: Involvement of public community groups
(IV) Planning approval (seeking planning approval on the siting process and criteria

4.4 The Maintenance Guidelines

The objective is to ensure that the development continues to meet the requirements of the neighbourhood, its residents, the occupants and all other impacted parties in a more-than satisfactory manner by developing a document that is: (I) sufficiently comprehensive without being burdensome, (II) able to be updated, improved, altered, and adapted as required, (III) easy to read, understand, and allows users to locate information quickly, and (IV) clear on the roles and responsibilities of all the individuals who are expected to play a part in the implementation of the document.
(I) Initial inspection
   a. Identify the elements requiring maintenance

(II)   Set up a directory/catalogue
- a. Detailed record-keeping
- b. Setting a standard and maintaining standardization
- c. Scheduling and regular inspection

(III)   Prioritization of items requiring maintenance
- a. Establish and prioritize the items for maintenance.
- b. Determine the frequency of maintenance

(IV)   Set parameters

(V)   Maintenance service planning

(VI)   Designated technicians + worker relations

(VII)   Maintenance budgeting and financial control

(VIII) Documentation

(IX)   Modify the maintenance program

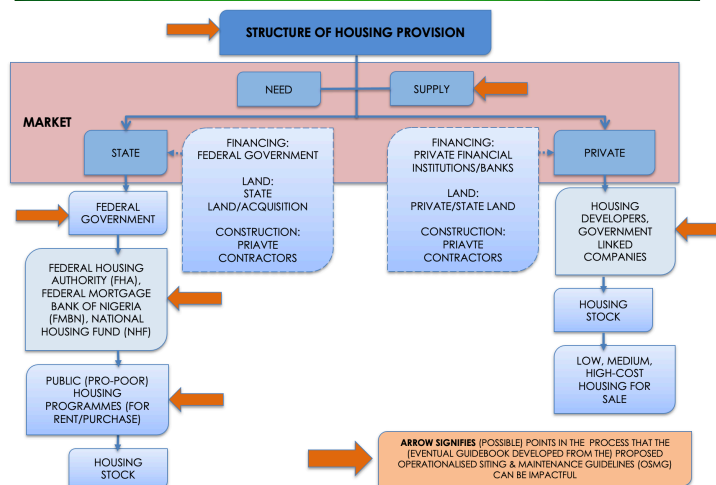## Application/Impact points for the OSMG

Figure 1: Diagram of the current structure for housing provision with possible application/impact points for the proposed OSMG (Daniels-Akunekwe, C. C. 2021)

CONCLUSION

The study establishes that the proposed guidelines is indeed one viable answer to resolving both siting and maintenance issues associated with SH for the following reasons: (I) because the local government, which operates at the level of implementation and operation and are unconnected and have no control over policymaking and decision-making processes, yet still applaud the efficiency and adequacy of the guidelines, (II) there may be other suggestions in terms of equally viable options, but this solution presents an opportunity to address additionally urgent and important issues under the overarching reason of improving synergies and coordination among the parties involved in both the policy-making process for housing as well as for planning generally. Despite these advantages, the study uncovered, highlighted and confirmed many factors that could hinder its smooth integration and implementation including the poor institutional structures and capacity and limited role of the local government.

Based on the robust information derived from the study, the following were determined, which were essential to conceptualizing the framework, developing the guidelines as well as adopting the structure to enable the integration of the guidelines into policy and the capacity to ensure that the support to aid implementation is instituted/established.

- By gaining information from interviewees regarding not only the neighbourhood but the larger setting, the city, it provides the platform to exploring the nationwide context and determining the applicability of the guidelines in other cities,
- Developing the guidelines provided a window into:
  - o Understanding the existing governance structures, and policymaking process on localizing the guidelines. Entry and impact points in this process was also identified.
  - o The current practices with planning in Nigeria, siting and maintenance strategies related to public housing/SRH. It revealed the issues, how they can be overcome, and approaches to addressing them that could advance the implementation and integration of the guidelines (as policy).
  - o At the local government (area) and neighbourhood levels, practices, tools, skills, and capacity of the offices through which planning related exercises are currently executed, and the perceptions of the (non-poor) neighbourhood were explored and captured respectively.

The findings are very likely applicable to other cities that are confronted with similar issues and are seeking similar solutions. While there may be huge disparities *even* across African cities and in developing countries' cities in terms of their macroeconomics, there could be similarities that can *still* aid transferability such as government structure (top-down, rational approach), poor community involvement, socio-economic conditions, etc. Therefore, at least, while in certain scenarios, the findings here may neither be wholly nor partially transferrable, it could aid in framework conceptualization for such cities. In terms of non-African cities and in developed countries' cities, while the findings may not be directly applicable as a result of the disparities in macroeconomics and diverse other ways, the data collection strategies and framework, which are effective tools, can be transferred and applied towards necessary policymaking.

In 2016, Massengale wrote that if Jane Jacobs were still here, chief among the issues she would be championing now, is *not* just affordable housing but housing that could be substitute accommodation for the most disadvantaged group of people in any city, which is essentially SH. Massengale (2016) alludes to this because in her first book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* Jacobs already begins to hint at such (most probably social) housing, when she entreated that cities cease demolishing old(er)/aged buildings in order to eliminate the cost of new construction that constitutes a huge part of dissuading developers from erecting pro-poor developments. This was in reference to developments that were already located in good neighborhoods in the city, and that would be renovated with cheap maintenance and longevity in mind.

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