

Attie S. van Niekerk - The Broken Circle: The Prevalence of Fear in Low-Cost Housing in South Africa



The South African township is characterised by low-cost houses as well as the so-called '*shack*' that consists of corrugated iron, plastic and cardboard. In several research projects high levels of fear have been encountered among residents of these low-cost houses, in both rural and urban contexts (Holm, Murray and Pauw, 2005).

The high levels of fear among residents of low-cost housing present us with a combination of problems of a technical, socio-cultural and religious nature. Modern science, as it has developed since the time of the European Renaissance, has not been very successful in addressing this type of problem. Modern science has been remarkably successful in unlocking the secrets of nature and in utilising the potentialities of nature, through a strong emphasis on the superiority of reason. But this emphasis has had a reverse side: scientists tended to dismiss all the non-rational, yet vital elements of human life and reality, such as the destiny of humanity, human freedom and spontaneity (Prigogine and Stengers, 1984: 34-5).

From early on, African writers have pointed out that the rationalism of Western culture - also of Western missionaries - was alien to the African experience. Africans combine political, cultural and religious resistance to Western rationalism; maybe because Western rationalism seems to be closely associated with the desire to control and dominate. Such resistance can be traced back to African writers early in the twentieth century.

African writers have repeatedly pointed out that there are important differences between Western and African thought patterns: in African tradition, causality may

be understood in a magical way, because spirit permeates the whole universe to such an extent that the self and the world, mind and matter interpenetrate each other and cannot be distinguished (Anyanwu, 1984: 87-93); Ibe Nwoga (1976: 17-8, 21) contrasts traditional Western man's more detached, analytical mode of understanding with traditional African man's more holistic, instinctive mode of understanding.

In this essay I will argue that the prevalence of fear in low-cost housing is a result of the dysfunctional interaction between the modern, Western or global worldview and the traditional African worldview. The different worldviews meet, interact and combine in the household (*household can be seen as a micro-system formed by numerous elements that interact and combine to form a whole, showing properties that are properties of the whole, rather than properties of its component parts*), and the end result is a rather chaotic manifestation in the household: in the architecture, the social relations, and the interpretation of illness. These aspects are so intertwined that an architectural problem (how to design an energy-efficient house) is related to a religious problem (why do Christians fear that witches will fly through the window?) or maybe to a psychological problem (is such fear a function of conflict with other people?).

Read more: <http://rozenbergquarterly.com>

Dr. Adetokunbo O. Ilesanmi - The Legacy and Challenge of Public Housing Provision in Lagos, Nigeria

Dr. Adetokunbo O. ILESANMI (BSc, MSc, PhD, MNIA) - *Department of Architecture, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria*

This paper is based on an evaluation of public housing provision through the

Lagos State Development and Property Corporation (LSDPC), which is utilized as a case study to examine and discuss the legacy and challenge of public housing provision in Lagos, Nigeria.

The paper reviews the existing literature on public housing and the role of the state, including an overview of housing research in Nigeria. It describes the context of Lagos, as an emerging mega-city. It also examines housing development through the LSDPC which was established in 1972 as the government institution for public housing provision. Specific attention is given to housing during the first civilian administration (1979-1983) which emphasized low-income housing. The period represents the most dynamic in the legacy of public housing provision in Lagos State. Primary qualitative data was derived from structured interviews conducted on key officers of the corporation. Quantitative data was obtained through questionnaire administration on a systematic sample of 806 household-heads from a sampling frame of 8,060 housing units, based on a purposive sample of eight LSDPC estates.

Findings indicate decreasing emphasis on low-income housing and increasing commercialization. However, the survey shows residents responding satisfactorily to the physical and social environments of their housing. The majority perceived access to their housing to be equitable and the housing density of their blocks and estates to be tolerable; and about 60 percent reported satisfaction with their estates and apartments. These findings are at variance with the popular notion of public housing as both physically inadequate and socially inequitable.

The paper in conclusion makes a case for mixed public housing schemes, given enhanced institutional frameworks, innovative public-private partnerships and home-ownership schemes. The tendency toward total neglect of low-income housing provision is considered inequitable and undesirable.

Full text: [Dr. A.O. Ilesanmi - The Legacy and Challenge of Public Housing Provision in Lagos, Nigeria](#)

Kelly Chan - Learning From Lagos: Contemporary Architects Harvest the Slums for Design Inspiration

artinfo.com - June 2012 - A few days ago, architecture and design magazine [eVolo](#) published a conceptual proposal called “Favela Cloud,” a formal scheme to redevelop the Brazilian slums of Santa Marta. Renderings for the master thesis project by **Aalborg University** graduate students **Johan Kure**, **Thiru Manickam**, and **Kemo Usto** depict a massive, porous steel “cloud” made from interconnected polyhedral modules. The amorphous form is raised upon a forest of intersecting poles and made accessible by lift or by whimsically off-kilter spiral staircases. Perched high above the cinderblock shanties of Santa Marta and basking in the midday sun, “Favela Cloud” is meant to proclaim the dawn of a new age, one in which the long-neglected urban poor are both entitled to and empowered by progressive architecture.

Read more: [Learning From Lagos: Contemporary Architects Harvest the Slums for Design Inspiration](#)

Neil Brenner - The Urbanization Question, or, the Field Formerly Known as Urban Studies

Tim Moore - Could Sustainability Break Social Housing Stigma?



ACXT Architects - Salburua

designbuildsource.com.au. May, 21, 2012. Social housing - and the [architecture](#) and design behind it - is a sensitive and important topic for those both inside and out of this industry.

The limited resources mean that architects are faced with hefty monetary and logistical constraints and challenges when it comes to designing social housing for low-income residents that is cost effective, easily maintainable and perhaps most importantly, free of the components that create the social housing aesthetic stigma.

In what was obviously a sensitive topic for many reasons, our previous [social housing](#) exploration sparked debate as to the various reasons that truly contribute to the stigma associated with social housing. While these reasons are all valid, there is no questioning the power of aesthetics in contributing to, or decreasing, the stigma associated with social housing.

Spanish architectural firm ACXT is looking to break the stigma with its social housing development in Salburua. It is overwhelmingly clear that this building does not share the same traits that characterises dated social housing developments. In short, it does not look like a development for low-income residents.

[Tim Moore - Could Sustainability Break Social Housing Stigma](#)

Katy Fentress - Kenya Vision 2030: Slum Upgrading in Soweto

urb.im - 2012, July, 17 - In September 2000, Kenya was one of 189 countries that signed an international treaty called the Millennium Declaration. The object of the declaration was to define a common worldwide vision for development that was to be achieved by the year 2015.

The Kenyan government drafted these resolutions into a development paper of its own, entitled "Kenya Vision 2030." The paper spells out how the government intends to turn Kenya into "a globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life by 2030."

Kenya Vision 2030 is anchored on three key pillars: economic, social, and political governance. It contains a pledge to improve the quality of life of all Kenyans, including those living in substandard conditions within the major city slums.

Katy Fentress, Nairobi Bureau Chief and Community Manager

Read more: [Kenya Vision 2030](#)

The **urb.im** network is a global community working for just and inclusive cities. It connects practitioners in six cities and throughout the world to establish an international community of practice and learning, sharing ideas and experiences in order to innovate, replicate, and scale working solutions to the problem of urban poverty. **urb.im** is a project of **Dallant Networks** and the **Ford Foundation**.