



Tenement Housing and Domestic Conflict in Diobu Port Harcourt, Rivers State

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Aims: To examine Tenement housing and domestic conflict among Residents in Rivers State, Nigeria
Study Design: Cross-sectional survey design
Place and Duration of Study: The study was carried out in Mile 1 and Mile 2 Diobu, Port Harcourt
Methodology: Triangulation methodology was used in this study to obtain insight into the problem. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. With the quantitative method data were collected using questionnaire and with the qualitative method data was collected using FGM and interviews with respondents. Probability design involving a simple random sampling technique was used.
Results: The result revealed an existing relationship between the common use of the toilet, bathroom, kitchen etc. and conflict among dwellers of tenement houses Furthermore it was revealed that there was a relationship between overpopulation and conflict among tenement house dwellers and that there is a relationship between tenement house pattern and conflict among dwellers.
Conclusion: It was concluded that a comprehensive approach should be employed to continuously check quality in housing structures and allocation. Also, realistic policies that will alleviate the suffering of Nigerians as it pertains to housing should be enacted and implemented.

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Keywords: Tenement; conflict; resident.

1. INTRODUCTION

Akintokunbo [1] asserts that shelter or housing is a basic human necessity. In advanced countries globally, the governments spend more of its budget on housing provision for their people, through different channels like public-private financing or even directly. [2] further buttresses that, in most Third World countries, the regard for housing is supposed to lie with the numerous governments, resulting from the mode of governance, socio-economic considerations and partly, the populace's tradition. He further notes that in many African societies long before colonialism, housing or shelter provision was an individual responsibility, and this trend obtains presently. The government owes its citizenry the provision and delivery of good housing and security. In Nigeria, for diverse reasons, the reverse is the case [3]. The pattern of having the citizens bear the responsibility of providing their accommodation has been recurrent. Lack of capital investment, corruption and uncaring attitude for the citizens could be other factors why the government has not taken responsibility [4].

For clarity purposes, this study is aimed at the tenement nature of housing. The term tenement means tenancy and/or any accommodation rented. The New York State Legislature defined it in the Tenement House Act of 1867 in regards to rental occupancy by multiple households, as "an apartment, which is rented, or hired out to be used, as the residence of many families upon a floor, living, cooking and having a common right in the halls, stairways, yards, water-closets, or privies [5,6,7,8].

The tenement is a low-grade multi-family urban core accommodation, commonly taken by the underprivileged. In Scotland, it is a multi-occupancy building of any sort, and in England, especially Cornwall and Devon, it connotes an outshot part at the rear of a terraced house, having a roof of its own [9].

1.1 Aim of the Study

The investigation examined the rate to which tenement housing induces domestic conflict among residents. Clear-cut objectives were considered to examine the aim which included:

- i. To determine if the use of privies contribute to conflict among tenement houses dwellers.
- ii. To determine if overpopulation contributes to conflict among tenement house dwellers.
- iii. To discover if the tenement house pattern contributes to conflict among dwellers.

1.2 Study Area

The study area was tenement settlement areas in Mile 1 and Mile 2, Diobu, Port Harcourt. Diobu is a densely populated neighbourhood of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, within the Port Harcourt metropolis. According to Fred (2013), the locality is known for its soccer talents and has produced locally and internationally known players like Finidi George, Taribo West and Joseph Yobo. Diobu hosted on March 29, 2012, the 25th Most Beautiful Girl in Nigeria Zonal screening [10].

Diobu comprises of three main extensions, which are: Mile 1, Mile 2 and Mile 3. It is surrounded by New Government Residential Area (GRA) to the north, D-line to the northeast, Rivers State University of Science and Technology to the north-west, Old GRA to the east, Kidney Island to the south-east, and Eagle Island to the south-west. Diobu coordinates are: 4°47'24"N, 6°59'36"E (Latitude: 4.772152; Longitude: 6.994514) [10].

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Population of the Study

The study population comprised of adult men and women between the ages of 18 and 60 years who live in tenement residential houses in Diobu, Port Harcourt. The populace of Diobu concerning the 2006 census figure stands at 5,000.

2.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

A mixed methodology was adopted by the researcher to conduct the study. The quantitative data was collected deploying questionnaires and qualitative data was collected using interviews and focus group meetings with people selected by simple random sampling method (controlled conditions were created to see that everybody in the population had the same opportunity or chance of being captured in the sample, e.g. by

way of writing names of the elements on pieces of paper, folding the papers and putting them in one container and making the people pick them, i.e. balloting [4]. The sampling procedure adopted involved developing a questionnaire defined by the residents of the selected areas based on the years of residence, size/number of rooms, family size, the population of the compound, common use of facilities and challenges emanating from individual/family differences among residents. The respondents interviewed from the selected areas cut across the different socioeconomic levels and ethnic/religious affinities. Their responses to the interview and replies to the questionnaires of the researcher were gathered and the results collated and reviewed.

The minimum sample size for the study was estimated using a simple percentage. As Diobu's population is 5,000; we took 14% of that population. Thus,

$$\frac{14}{100} \times 5,000 = 700$$

Sample size is = 700 persons

This sample size of 700 was considered robust enough to justify a 14% non-response or inappropriate entry and for the conduct of additional statistical analysis that was needed in the study. Out of 700, only 673 were correctly filled and retrieved.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: How can common use of the toilet, bathroom, kitchen etc. contribute to conflict among dwellers of tenement houses?

Data in Table 1 presents the mean scores and standard deviation (SD) of participants on how common use of the toilet, bathroom, kitchen etc. contribute to conflict among dwellers of tenement houses. The respondents agreed to all the items with mean scores greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The aggregate mean scores of 3.57 for men and 3.75 for women showed that common use of toilet, bathroom, kitchen etc. could add to conflict among dwellers of tenement houses and this is Mingling with dissimilar types of characters; lack of privacy, noise pollution e.g. blasting of music at odd hours, children's noise and generator sounds, child vulnerability to abuse and limited number of conveniences respectively.

Research Question 2: How can overpopulation contribute to conflict among tenement house dwellers?

Data in Table 2 presents the mean scores and standard deviation (SD) of participants on how overpopulation could contribute to conflict among tenement house dwellers. The respondents agreed to all the items with mean scores greater than the criterion means of 2.5 except for item one which is: Inadequate infra-structure: bathroom, toilet, kitchen, etc.). However, the aggregate mean scores of 3.34 for men and 3.33 for women showed that overpopulation could add to conflict among tenement house dwellers in ways such as Misrepresentation, Back-biting, Clashes between children, threat to parties' concerns and interests (e.g. amorous relationships); envy, uncooperative attitudes and non-settlement of bills.

Table 1. Mean scores of participants on how common use of the toilet, bathroom, kitchen etc. could contribute to conflict among dwellers of tenement houses

S/N	How common use of privies contribute to conflict among dwellers of tenement houses?	Men		Women		Mean set	Decision
		\bar{x}	SD ₁	\bar{x}	SD ₂		
1.	Mingling with different types of characters	3.98	0.134	3.93	0.259	3.96	Agreed
2.	No privacy	3.60	0.490	3.90	0.295	3.75	Agreed
3	Noise pollution e.g. blasting of music at odd hours, children's noise and generator sounds	3.60	0.490	3.90	0.295	3.75	Agreed
4	Child vulnerability to abuse	2.70	0.557	3.09	0.665	2.89	Agreed
5	A limited number of conveniences	3.98	0.134	3.93	0.460	3.96	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean	3.57	0.361	3.75	0.388	3.57	Agreed

Source: [11]

Research Question 3: How can the tenement house pattern contribute to conflict among residents?

Data in Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviation (SD) of women and men on how tenement house pattern contributes to conflict among residents. The respondents agreed to all the items with mean scores greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The aggregate mean scores of 3.41 for men and 3.49 for women displayed the rate to which tenement house pattern contributes to conflict among residents are through: Parents overreaction towards child protection; exposure to immoral and delinquent behaviours; problems of joint payment of utility bill e.g. NEPA; non-cooperation from some tenants toward cleaning of conveniences and sweeping of the compound; gossips from nosy neighbours and over-dependent neighbours respectively.

3.1 Summary of Findings

1. Common use of toilet, bathroom, kitchen etc. contributes to conflict among dwellers of tenement houses in different ways and they include mingling with various kinds of characters; absence of privacy, noise pollution, for example, blasting of music at odd hours, children's noise and generator sounds, child vulnerability to abuse and inadequate places of conveniences .
2. Over-population could contribute to conflict among tenement house dwellers in many ways which include: misrepresentation, clashes amongst children, threat to parties' concerns and interests (e.g. amorous relationships)
3. Tenement house pattern contributes to conflict among residents through Parents overreaction towards child protection; exposure to immoral and delinquent behaviours; problems of joint payment of utility bill, e.g. to Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHED); non-cooperation of some tenants in cleaning of places of convenience (toilets/washrooms) and sweeping of the compound; gossips from nosy neighbours and over-dependent neighbours.
4. There is an existing relationship between the common use of the toilet, bathroom, kitchen etc. toilet, bathroom, kitchen etc. and conflict among dwellers of tenement houses.

5. There is a relationship between overpopulation and conflict among tenement house dwellers.
6. There is a relationship between tenement house pattern and conflict among residents.

3.2 Focus Group Discussion and KII

The section below is a detailed transcription of the Focus Group discussion/interview done by the investigator with a group of residents, KII.

3.2.1 Section A. Common use of toilets, bathrooms and kitchens and contribution to conflict among dwellers of tenement houses

It should be noted that living in tenement apartments come with challenges of various categories. Findings from this study go further to emphasize that in tenement houses, challenges of loss of privacy, overpopulation and house pattern faced by dwellers exist. Discussants in an FGD affirmed:

There are challenges we encounter living in apartments as we have in Diobu. This range from interacting with and managing difficult neighbours to as little as airing our opinions to ourselves outside.

FGD 1, 2-Males and 1-Female Compound Residents Aged 18 years and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.

Another group goes further to affirm:

You are not at liberty to speak your mind freely outside (compound) owing to the speed at which information moves via the gossip channel.

FGD 2, 2-Males Compound Residents Age 18 and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu. Another discussant noted on utilities:

Getting water – fetching water for home use is a challenge. The tap within works only when someone remembers to on the water pump when light is on because the pump is manually operated not automatic. If the light is available, and water does not get pumped, and they run out of the water, and the light is off, they are left with no choice but to buy water from a public tap. it is stressful buying frequently since the frequent power supply is already an issue in many parts of Nigeria.

FGD 3, 4-Males and 2-Females Compound Residents Age 18 years and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.;

Low sense of privacy among residents as a challenge they face living in tenement houses has ensued in indifference among them as elucidated by respondents, below:

A care-free attitude displayed by landlords and tenement housing owners towards the repeated complaints of their tenants also spurs up booths of conflict. Respondents confirm as follows:

People especially jobless females sit down all day gossiping and spreading rumours about others. Residents who are returning from their primary places of assignments in the evenings are monitored closely by this group (mostly when they have handy packages).

Reports about non-complaint tenants have often been presented to the brought to the disciplinary committee and landlord for disciplinary actions but all these have fallen on deaf ears. Dem no cares.

FGD 3, 4-Males and 2-Females Compound Residents Age 18 years and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.

FGD 3, 4-Males and 2-Females Compound Residents Age 18 years and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.

Table 2. Mean scores of participants on how overpopulation could contribute to conflict among tenement house dwellers

S/N	How overpopulation could contribute to conflict among tenement house dwellers	Men		Women		Mean set	Decision
		\bar{x}	SD ₁	\bar{x}	SD ₂		
1.	Inadequate infrastructure	1.59	0.758	1.56	0.732	1.58	Disagreed
2	Misrepresentation	3.78	0.456	3.58	0.495	3.68	Agreed
3	Back-biting	3.88	0.329	3.63	0.483	3.76	Agreed
4	Clashes between children	3.09	0.289	3.02	0.268	3.06	Agreed
5	The threat to parties' interests and concerns (e.g. amorous relationships)	3.90	0.307	3.68	0.467	3.79	Agreed
6	Envy	3.22	1.262	3.69	0.834	3.46	Agreed
7.	Uncooperative attitudes	3.51	0.501	3.63	0.484	3.57	Agreed
8	Non-settlement of bills	3.72	0.447	3.83	0.374	3.78	Agreed
	Aggregate mean	3.34	0.544	3.33	0.517	3.34	Agreed

Source: [11]

Table 3. Mean scores of participants on how tenement house pattern contributes to conflict among residents

S/N	How tenement house pattern contributes to conflict among residents	Men		Women		Mean set	Decision
		\bar{x}	SD ₁	\bar{x}	SD ₂		
1	Parents overreaction towards child protection	3.67	0.507	3.61	0.536	3.64	Agreed
2	Exposure to immoral and delinquent behaviours	3.38	0.522	3.51	0.501	3.45	Agreed
3	Problems of joint payment of utility bill e.g. NEPA	3.80	0.404	3.77	0.419	3.79	Agreed
4	Non-cooperation from some tenants toward cleaning of conveniences and sweeping of the compound.	3.64	0.518	3.59	0.492	3.62	Agreed
5	Gossips from nosy neighbours	3.04	0.871	3.17	0.798	3.11	Agreed
6	Over dependent neighbours	2.92	0.599	3.28	0.608	3.1	Agreed
	Aggregate mean	3.41	0.652	3.49	0.637	3.45	Agreed

Source: [11]

None payment of utility bills as at when due is a challenge to the complaint tenants and thus a root cause of conflict. Respondents affirm this as is seen below:

If a tenant cannot meet up with payment of NEPA bills, these NEPA workers just come at a time of the day when those who can represent the compound are at our work stations. They go ahead and disconnect the light from the general source.

3.2.2 Section B. Overpopulation and conflict among tenement house dwellers

It is a fact that conflict may occur when there are people from different backgrounds living together or coming together for the same purpose. What can you say are the causes of conflict in your compound of residence? The following responses ensued from discussants:

For here wey we dey live, plenty things dey cause problem. We disagree and sometimes even fight when our rights as tenants are trampled upon or not respected.

FGD 1, 2-Males and 1-Female Compound Residents Age 18 years and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.

Overcrowding in tenement houses cannot be under-emphasized as a major fuel for conflict among tenement housing dwellers. The natural craves for space for human day-to-day activities showcases this need. Hence the fight over a crowded living space. Discussants reiterated as follows:

The standard of living experienced here is really poor as there are not less than 8 persons on the average living in poorly ventilated apartments with not enough living space to express their personal needs.

FGD 1, 2-Males and 1-Female Compound Residents Age 18 and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.

One discussant particularly expatiated on the overcrowding dilemma:

The government has a low-cost housing scheme that was prepared for government workers at a particular service grade/level but these houses have not been given to those persons that are entitled to them. This

has led to overcrowding of the vicinity we live in while we wait for when the administration will ask us to occupy these houses.

FGD 1, 1-Female Compound Resident Age 18 years and above, Dweller of tenement houses in Diobu.

Going directly to defaulters to question them about an inappropriate act leads to conflict among dwellers especially when one lacks the authority to question them.

Insults arise from my neighbours once directly asked the reasons for non-complying with set regulations and rules. Abusive names like – busybody have been employed to classify those well-meaning neighbours who go to ask their defaulting neighbour's questions.

FGD 2, 2-Males and 4-Females Compound Residents Age 18 years and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.

So the method/approach used in addressing issues of the negligence of duties and non-compliance has an active duty to play in fueling conflict among dwellers. Also not complying with the set rules the compound regulations is usually the major cause of conflict among tenement housing residents.

Conflicts among dwellers also arise in the way of carrying out sanitation and Cleaning of utilities according to set down schedules. According to discussants:

Challenges arise when people refuse to do what they are expected to do. Example, if the turn comes for a certain household in the compound to carry out sanitation (cleaning the toilet/bathroom and toilets) and they default, the gossip rate among others is increased and which thus lead to heated arguments.

FGD 1, 2-Males and 1-Female Compound Residents Age 18 and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.

Though on the opposing, other tenants had this to say:

Sharing these conveniences do not lead to any form of quarrel because duty roasters are

appropriately followed by persons responsible for clean-up.

FGD 3, 1-Male and 1-Female Compound residents, Age 18 years and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.

Religious/Inter-denominational wars are being fought around the world as evidenced among residents of this sort of housing. They said:

Some mini church services called "home cells" belonging to different churches hold in some houses within our area of residence and they sometimes constitute a kind of noise pollution as when one is to be resting, the echo of musical instruments and raised voices tend to dispel the sleep.

FGD 2, 4-Males and 2-Females Compound Residents Age 18 years and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.

Findings from this research emphasize that their offsprings are also a cause of conflicts among parents in tenement houses. This is described by the replies of few discussants:

Children are known to play a lot and sometimes be rough towards themselves but some are well trained with proper upbringing. So correcting younger persons in a manner that shows no love can attract the wrath of their owners (parents).

FGD 2, 2-Females Compound Residents, Aged 18 years and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.

Of interest is the practice of hanging clothes out on the clothesline to dry after they are washed. This has added to inducing conflict among tenement housing residents. As affirmed by some interviewees:

Touching of other people's clothing hung on the clothesline to dry after being washed is not an experience to be smiled at. It has been frowned on because this causes staining of the clothes, especially the whites.

FGD 1, 2-Males and 4-Females Compound residents, Aged 18 and above, Dwellers of tenement houses in Diobu.

If I dry my clothes on the rope and someone pushes them (my clothes) to the side to spread theirs, I just throw theirs on the ground, re-spread mine and go my way.

FGD 1, 1-Male Compound resident, Age 18 years and above, Dweller of tenement houses in Diobu:

Some victims of this practice go to the extent as calling the awareness of family members to witness the ill-treatment they are receiving from fellow tenants.

If I discover that such has been done to the clothes I hang to dry, I just tap on the individual's door who mal-handled my clothes and calls their attention to it, hoping it was an oversight. I try to have a conversation to such person to the best of my ability and if he/she proves to be stubborn, I would immediately call their family members to witness the ill-treatment but in a very aggressive manner this time.

FGD 1, 1-Female Compound resident, Age 18 and above, Dweller of tenement houses in Diobu.

3.2.3 Section C. Tenement house pattern contributing to conflicts among residents

From previous literature, it has been an observed trend that housing patterns have a major contributory role to play in fueling conflict among tenants. This research goes further to buttress this fact as discussants in the FGD gave their various views:

12 households live in this compound; each household has its own space in a commonly shared kitchen. There are 3 toilets and 3 bathrooms of which 4 households use the same toilet/bathroom and crisis arise on the occasion of misuse of the facilities.

FGD 3, 1 Male, Compound resident, Age 18 and above, Dweller of tenement houses in Diobu.

Repair/replacement of dilapidated housing accessories by the landlord or property owner has been mentioned to be a major frontier to sparking conflicts among residents and both their respective landlords. A respondent particularly affirmed this:

Our landlord is particularly interested in collecting his rent alone. The dilapidated condition of the toilets and housing amenities do not move him. We the occupant carry out repairs of these amenities on our own and we are never refunded.

FGD 3, 1 Female, Compound resident, Age 18 years and above, Dweller of tenement houses in Diobu

Compound tightly structured with no spaces to park cars have been a contributory factor to conflicts caused resulting in the housing pattern.

Of the 11 households who reside in this compound, only 2 of our car owners and the space designated as the car park can only contain one car at a time. So whoever comes home first gets to park his car in that space. The other person has no choice but to park on the side of the road which attracts the thieves and property vandalized.

FGD 3, 1 Male, Compound resident, Age 18 years and above, Dweller of tenement houses in Diobu.

4. CONCLUSION

It was concluded that a comprehensive approach should be employed to continuously check quality in housing structures and allocation and also realistic policies that will alleviate the suffering of Nigerians as it pertains to housing should be enacted and implemented

CONSENT

As per international standard or University standard, Respondents written consent has been collected and preserved by the author.

COMPETING INTEREST

The author declares that no competing interest exists.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire Items

Section A. Demographic data

Instruction: Kindly tick (√) the right answers

1. Marital status:(a)Unmarried (b) Married (c) Widowed (d) Divorced
2. How old are you? How old are you? (a) Less than 20 years (b) 20– 29 years
(c) 30 – 39 years (d) 40 – 60 years (e) More than 60 year
3. What is your gender? (a) Male (b) Female
4. Religion: (a) Christianity (b) Islam (c) African traditional religion
(d) Atheist/non-religious (e) Others (please specify) _____
5. Social class: (a) Social class 1 (senior public servants, highly skilled professional e.g. doctors, engineers, lecturers, managers, top government and business executives) (b) Social class 2 (Intermediate grade public servants e.g. senior school teachers, nurses technicians) (c) Social class 3 (semi-skilled junior grade public servants e.g. drivers, artisans, junior clerks, rank and files of the police) (d) Social class 4 (Unskilled e.g. petty traders, labourers, messengers etc.) (e) Social class 5 (Unemployed e.g. full time house wives, students, subsistence farmers)
6. Tribe: (a)Yoruba (b) Ikwerre (c) Hausa (d) Ibo (e) Others (Please Specify): _____

Section B. Questionnaire items

S/N	Challenges encountered by residents of tenement houses	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Mingling with different types of characters				
2.	No privacy				
3.	Noise pollution e.g. blasting of music at odd hours, children and generator sounds				
4.	child vulnerability to abuse				
5.	A limited number of conveniences				

S/N	Causes of conflict among tenement house residents	SA	A	SD	D
1	Inadequate infrastructure: bathroom, kitchen, toilet, etc.)				
2	Misrepresentation (carrying rumours, and unfounded stories)				
3	Back-biting (the group of people maliciously discussing others)				
4	Clashes between children (disagreement between children leading to conflicts amongst their parents)				
5	The threat to parties' interests and concerns (e.g. amorous relationships)				
6.	Envy (jealous of little success or better assets)				
7.	Uncooperative attitudes (in cleaning the common parts, etc)				
8.	Non-settlement of bills (electricity, and community levies)				

S/N	How tenement house pattern contributes to conflict among residents	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Parents overreaction towards child protection				
2.	Exposure to immoral and delinquent behaviours				
3.	Problems of joint payment of utility bill eg NEPA				
4.	Non-cooperation from some tenants toward cleaning of conveniences and sweeping of the compound.				
5.	Gossips from nosy neighbours				
6.	Over dependent neighbours				

SA= strongly agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=strongly disagree



Plate 1. A picture of typical tenement houses (face me I face you) in Diobu, Port Harcourt
Photo Credit. Alagbogu, Gloria Ifeyinwa
19th April 2017



Plate 2. A picture of a typical narrow corridor of tenement houses (face me i face you) in
Diobu, Port Harcourt
Photo credit. Alagbogu, Gloria Ifeyinwa, 19th April 2017



Plate 3. Another overview of tenement houses in mile 2, Diobu, Port Harcourt
Photo credit. Alagbogu, Gloria Ifeyinwa
19th April 2017

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