



## Challenges in public housing provision in the post-independence era in Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study investigated the contextual and organizational challenges in public housing provision in Nigeria in the post independence era. It was motivated by dearth of empirical studies on organizational challenges in public housing in this country. Using data derived from a survey of fifteen public housing agencies in southern Nigeria, the study found that scarcity of housing finance, lack of consistency and continuity in housing policy formulation and poor implementation strategies, unfavorable political environment and declining population of tradesmen in the construction industry were key contextual challenges militating against public housing provision. In addition, low level of inter-agencies collaborations, poor staff motivation and rewarding system as well as inadequate operational equipment and vehicles were responsible for the inability of public housing agencies to deliver on their housing mandate in the study area. The paper suggests that stable polity, consistency in housing policies and programs and capacity building in public housing agencies through public-private partnerships are needed to improve on the quantity and quality of public housing in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Challenges; Public Housing; Public Housing Agencies; Post independence Era; Nigeria

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## Introduction

In many developing countries, including Nigeria, urban housing crisis is escalating unabated despite a number of new policies, programs and strategies being engaged in by public and private sectors in addressing this problem. Government has recognized that the majority of those in need of housing in many less-developed nations in Africa, Asia and South America are in the low income categories and that some require special housing programs to be able to live in decent housing. Since market solutions and funds may not be suitable for housing this category of people and in view of the vital role housing plays in the socio-economic and political development of any nation; governments in these countries have over the years been engaged in public housing provision. In Nigeria however, from the debut efforts of the Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB) in 1928 to date, public housing provision in this country has continued to lag behind the demand for housing, as almost 90% of the nation's housing stock is provided by the informal sector (UN-HABITAT, 2006).

As is true in other developing countries, a number of challenges are militating against the optimum performance of public housing in Nigeria. These challenges which are both contextual and organizational have shown manifestations in low productivity and provision of poor quality and expensive housing (Awotona, 1990; Olotuah and Bobadoye, 2009) are escalating by each passing day due to a number of reasons. These include high rates of urbanization and population growth (Akinmoladun and Oluwoye, 2007; Olotuah, 2010), absence of proper monitoring and evaluation of public housing policies and programs (Awotona, 1990; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1991), lack of easy access to land and other housing inputs (Ikejiofor, 1999; UN-HABITAT, 2006) and low capacity of public housing agencies (Bana, 1991; Emerole, 2002). As a result, public housing in Nigeria has been criticized for failing to generate tangible and sustainable housing production, distribution and acquisition mechanisms to meet increasing housing demand, particularly by low-income earners (Mba, 1992; Olotuah and Bobadoye, 2009).

The review of literature (Onibokun, 1985; Awotona, 1990; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1991; Ali 1996; Mustapha 2002; Akinmoladun and Oluwoye, 2007; Ademiluyi, 2010) shows different reviews, appraisals, and assessments of the performance and challenges of past public housing policies and programs in Nigeria. But the broad and superficial perspectives many of these previous studies have assumed contributed to

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obscuring our understanding of the genesis of the challenges confronting public housing delivery system in Nigeria. This development is also partly responsible for forestalling the evolution of pragmatic solutions to the lingering urban housing crisis in Nigeria.

Since public housing provision is principally carried out by government agencies and their collaborators, the paper argues that one vital step to addressing myriads of challenges in public housing provisions in Nigeria is to identify areas of weakness in public housing agencies and subsequently address such weakness for enhanced productivity. It is for this reason that the study investigated the contextual and organizational challenges related to public housing provisions in Nigeria in the post-independence era. The focus on post-independence era is based on evidence in the review of literature showing that conscious effort by governments in Nigeria to construct houses for the general public and formulate National Housing Policies started after independence from the Great Britain in 1960 (Onibokun, 1985) . The study attempted at using key organizational components to assess areas of challenges in public housing provision among government agencies in the study area. This is with a view to assisting public-sector housing policy makers and program managers chart future pathways for improved performance in public housing provision and management in Nigeria.

### **Review of Related Literature**

A survey of literature vividly shows that public housing connotes different meanings in different countries (Oxley, 1999; Parson, 2007). But in the context of this study, public housing describes housing provided, owned or managed independently by government or in collaboration with private sector for the purpose of providing mass housing to citizens and some key top government officials on owner-occupied or rental bases (Ibem and Amole, 2010). In spite of the different meanings and connotations of public housing in literature, there is consensus among authors and researchers that the goal of public housing provision in most countries of the world is the provision of subsidized housing to households and individuals who are unable to gain access to decent housing at market prices (Balchin et al., 2000; Liu, 2007). This is particularly very important in improving public health; reducing societal injustice and poverty; ensuring social order and accommodating population growth (Grigsby and Bourassa, 2003).

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Several studies have indicated that public housing provision involves policy formulation, institutional development, actual housing provision, allocation and management (Omole, 2001; Valenca, 2007; Sengupta and Tipple, 2007). This goes to suggest that challenges in public housing provision are related to policy formulation, institutional growth and development as well as actual production and consumption of housing units and services. In fact, Sengupta and Tipple (2007) noted that the performance of public-sector housing in terms of total supply and quality, price and affordability of housing and services depends on these key areas and perhaps on other intervening factors. Specifically, the actual production of housing units and associated services is one of the key objectives of public housing provision which aims at increasing decent and affordable housing stock within a country, state or locality. However, evidence from literature review clearly shows that public housing provision in many developing countries, including Nigeria, has not recorded any impressive result in marching housing production to housing demand, as there are huge housing supply deficits in many less developed countries (Rondinelli, 1990; Mukhija, 2004; Sengupta and Ganesan, 2004; Olotuah, 2010). It is on this basis that this paper contends that the myriad of challenges militating against optimum performance of public housing in developing countries deserve proper investigation for appropriate solutions.

The burgeoning housing supply deficit in Nigerian which as at 2008 was put at over 15 million housing units (Onwuemenyi, 2008) for instance, has been blamed on low productivity in public-sector housing. Table 1 shows the planned and constructed number of housing units in the different public housing programs initiated between 1962 and 1999. Examination of Table 1 reveals that a total of 618,498 housing units were planned for production in the various public housing schemes across the country. However, around 85,812 housing units representing around 14% of the planned housing units were actually completed. This achievement level clearly shows that many of the public housing programs initiated by government within that period failed to meet the targeted number of housing units. The cumulative effect of this failure is that an estimated 75% of Nigeria's 60 million urban population live in slums, and not less than 700,000 housing units are required annually to improve on this appalling housing situation across the country (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1991; Olotuah, 2010). If the recent revelation by the Federal

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Ministry of Housing is anything to go by, the current national annual production of 10,000 housing units fall short of the estimated yearly housing demand in Nigeria. This implies that adequate measures need to be urgently put in place to combat the challenge of low productivity in public-sector housing in this country.

In view of the foregoing, many authors have argued that the challenge of low productivity in public housing in Nigeria is rooted in mismanagement of funds and politicization of housing program (Bana, 1991; Mustapha, 2002) while others are of the opinion that poor implementation of housing policies as well as lack of proper co-ordination of activities of public housing agencies were the key challenges of public housing in Nigeria (Ikejiofor, 1999; UN-HABITAT, 2006; Akinmoladun and Oluwoye, 2007; Ademiluyi and Raji, 2008). Another school of thought believes that low capacity of public housing agencies in delivering their housing mandate is responsible for the failure of past public housing schemes to achieve set targets in Nigeria (Bana, 1991; Emerole, 2002). These views are no doubt very incisive as they attempt to identify the possible reasons why many past public housing schemes failed to achieve targeted number of housing units in the country. They are however, deficient in revealing why this challenge has persisted over the years. Specifically, the reasons why previous public housing programs were politicised and poorly implemented as well as the areas of weakness in organizational capacity in public housing agencies have not been addressed. These are vital areas of research deficiency which this study will attempt to address.

Interestingly, contemporary literature on organizational studies has shown that performance of organizations in product and service delivery depends on a number of factors. These include availability of requisite human resource, staff morale, work environment, equipment, technological know-how and funding (Lusthaus et al., 2002). Others are leadership style, role assignment to staff, information management strategies, process management and monitoring strategies, innovation, communication channel, staff evaluation and reward system, capacity building process and others (Wachira, 2009). Therefore, an investigation into these vital components of organizational performance can help to uncover the actual areas of deficiencies in organizational capacity in public housing agencies in Nigeria.

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**Table 1: Performance of Public Housing in Nigeria (1960- 2010)**

PERIOD	PROGRAMME TARGET	ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL
<b>First National Development Plan(1962-1968)</b>	- Planned construction of 61,000 housing units.	- Only 500 units less than 1% of the planned units were constructed. The political chaos and the resulting civil war (1966-1970) contributed to the marginal progress recorded during this period.
<b>Second National Development Plan(1971-74)</b>	-Establishment of National Council of Housing (1972) to advise the government on housing matters and Federal Housing Authority (FHA) in 1973 to co-ordinate public housing provisions -Plan direct construction of 59,000 'low-cost' housing units across the Federation.	-7,080 housing units representing 12% of planned houses were actually built.
<b>Third National Development Plan (1975-1980)</b>	-Creation of Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Environment and conversion of Nigerian Building Society to Federal Mortgage bank of Nigeria (FMBN). -Promulgation of the Land Use Decree (1978) -Planned construction of 202,000 low-cost housing units nationwide.	30,000 housing units representing less than 15% of planned houses were actually completed
<b>4<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan (1981-1985)</b>	-National Housing Program launched for the first time in 1980. Earmarked ₦1.9 billion for the construction of 160,000 housing units, for low-income people -The second phase of the housing program set out to construct 20,000 housing units across the country	A total of 47,234 housing units representing about 23.6% of planned housing units were constructed in the first phase. The second phase was cut short by the military coup of 1983

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<p><b>Military Governments (1986-1999)</b></p>	<p>-National Housing program planned 121,000 houses on Site-and-Services housing program between 1993 and 1995</p> <p>-1988 National Housing Policy launched to <i>provide Nigerians access to quality housing and basic infrastructure</i>.</p> <p>-1991 National Housing Policy was launched with the goal of <i>granting all Nigerians access to decent housing by 2000</i> in response to the slogan “Housing for All by the year 2000” of the United Nations.</p>	<p>- 5,500 housing units (less than 5%) of planned houses were actually constructed.</p> <p>-Provision of rural infrastructure through the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI)</p>
<p><b>Civilian Governments (1999-2010)</b></p>	<p>-The New National Housing and Urban Development Policy (NHUDP) launched in 2002 with the goal of ensuring that “<i>all Nigerians own or have access to decent housing through private sector-led initiatives</i>”.</p> <p>-Planned construct about 10,271 housing units through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements in different PPP housing schemes across the country.</p> <p>-Planned construction of 500 housing units in the Presidential Mandate Housing Scheme in all 36 State capitals and Abuja.</p> <p>-Government planned a pilot project involving the construction of 40,000 housing units per annum nationwide.</p>	<p>- 2000 serviced plot through PPP site and service in Ikorodu, Lagos.</p> <p>-4,440 housing units completed in Abuja, Port Harcourt, Akure and Abeokuta, through PPP.</p> <p>-The Presidential Mandate Housing Scheme did not take off in many States. In Ogun State about 100 housing units representing 20% of the planned units were constructed.</p> <p>- Records of the achievement level of the pilot projects are not available.</p>

*Source:* Compiled by the authors from various sources. Ali (1996); Omole (2001), Ajanlekoko (2002); Mustapha (2002); Bello and Bello (2006); UN-HABITAT, (2006); Olotuah (2010)

Apart from the failure of public-sector housing to provide planned number of housing units as Table 1 suggests, unimpressive result has also been recorded in the provision of quality housing in Nigeria. Although each of the 1988, 1991, 2002 and 2006 National Housing Policies set out to provide Nigerians access to qualitative and satisfactory housing at affordable cost; several studies have succinctly shown that these policies and the

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housing schemes derived from them achieved minimal success in this area (Awotona, 1978; Ukoha and Beamish, 1997; Fatoye and Odusami, 2009; Olatubara and Fatoye, 2007; Jiboye, 2009; Ibem and Amole, 2010). Each of the above cited works identified lack of consideration of end users' socio-economic and cultural attributes and personal preferences as being responsible for unsatisfactory public housing as perceived by the users. Moreover, there is the general notion that this development is due to lack of proper monitoring and evaluation of housing policies and programs in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1991). Evidence in existing literature suggests that one of the key criteria for enhancing product and service quality is a good information infrastructure that allows for feedback loops, performance appraisals and benchmarking against self and others (Kellecher, 2010). The reality is that there is dearth of good information infrastructure that allows for feedback mechanism in public housing delivery system in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1991). This is probably why there appear to be no adequate and reliable information base for effective housing policy formulation, program design and implementation strategies in the country, which is inimical to effective and efficient public housing delivery system. It is very obvious from the review of literature that the very reason why this problem exists in the country has not been properly investigated.

With respect to affordable housing provision, the UN-HABITAT (2006) report on Nigeria noted that past public housing policies and programs in the country were aimed at enabling low-income earners gain access to decent housing at affordable cost. According to Aribigbola (2008), the 2002 New National Housing and Urban Development Policy (NNHUDP) for instance, asserted that no Nigerian is expected to pay more than 20% of his or her monthly income on housing. But to the contrary, prior studies (Onibokun, 1985; Awotona, 1990; Mba 1992; Olotuah and Bobadoye, 2009; Ibem, 2010) have shown that the targeted population of many past public housing schemes in Nigeria did not benefit from such schemes. This was due to high cost of housing units provided. Consequently, several authors have contended that the constraints in accessing housing inputs (land, building materials and finance) as well as cost of providing infrastructure were partly responsible for the hike in the cost of public housing beyond the reach of an average Nigerian (Ikejiofor, 1999; UN-HABITAT, 2006; Aribigbola, 2008). In addition, it can also be deduced from literature that poor management of those housing schemes and the use of inappropriate



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design standards contributed to high cost of public housing in the last few decades in Nigeria (Onibokun, 1985; Mustapha, 2002; Ademiluyi, 2010).

From the foregoing, it is evident that there are challenges in the provision of affordable housing that is quantitative and qualitative adequate by public sector in Nigeria since independence in 1960. Some of these challenges are contextual and are primarily due to the external social, economic and political environment in which public housing schemes were conceived, designed and implemented while others are organizational challenges within public housing agencies. The current study is primarily concerned with the causes of, and possible solutions to these challenges.

### **Research Methods**

The data used in this paper were derived from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was obtained through the survey and qualitative research methods, while the secondary data was derived from the review of literature and archival records. The primary data was collected through key informant interviews with personnel of selected public housing agencies in Lagos, Abeokuta, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Owerri and Umuahia in southern Nigeria. These cities were selected based on geo-political representation and as administrative headquarters of Lagos, Ogun, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Imo and Abia States respectively. Thirteen representing about 43.3% of 28 Federal and State government housing agencies in the study area were randomly selected for investigation (see Table 2). A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting key informants. The choice of this sampling technique was based on its merit in allowing the selection of respondents to be narrowed down to specific group(s) of people who can provide the desired information on the subject matter. An interview guide containing both structured and open-ended questions was used to reduce variation and ensure flexibility in the interviews. A total of 22 public servants of grade levels 14 and above in both Federal and State public housing agencies were interviewed between November 2007 and December 2010. The key themes of the interviews were on the contextual (environmental) challenges in public housing provision. This was aimed at identifying specific contextual factors responsible for the level of success and or failure of public housing provision in the study area. The interviews were manually recorded by the researchers.

Since evidence in literature (Bana, 1991 and Emerole, 2002) suggests that low capacity of public housing agencies was responsible for the failure of public housing agencies in Nigeria to deliver on their housing mandate; a survey of four key public housing agencies in Ogun State, namely: the Ogun State Ministry of Housing, Ogun State Housing Corporation (OSHC), Ogun State Property Investment Corporation (OPIC) and Gateway City Development Company Limited (GCDCL) was carried out as case studies to identify areas of deficiencies in organizational capacity in public housing agencies. The choice of these government agencies for the survey was based on findings of preliminary investigation by the researchers which revealed that these agencies show typical characteristics of four main classes of government agencies involved in public housing provision in contemporary Nigeria. To ensure that reliable data was obtained for this aspect of the research, the study population was restricted staff members directly involved in the design, planning and execution of public housing schemes in Ogun State, south-west Nigeria. The human resource departments of the four government agencies assisted in the identification of this category of staff members for sampling.

The survey was carried out in December, 2010 using the questionnaire as the primary instrument of data collection. This instrument was designed by the first author and had two main sections. The first section contained information related to personal profiles of the respondents -including age, income, educational qualifications, job status, and gender as well as work experience. The second section of the questionnaire comprised questions on adequacy levels of the different components of organizational performance as identified in literature (see Lusthaus et al., 2002; Wachira, 2009; Kellecher, 2010).

The administration of questionnaire was by drop and pick method, and this was conducted by the first author. Twenty five staff members were randomly selected from each of the four organizations. In all a total of 100 staff members representing around 19% of the overall staff strength and 77% of the target population in the four organizations put together were sampled. The respondents were asked to rate the adequacy levels of the different aspects of organizational capacity in public housing provision based on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 = very inadequate, 2 = inadequate, 3 = fair, 4 = adequate, and 5 = very adequate. A total of 92 questionnaires representing 92% of the questionnaires distributed were retrieved. However, two of the questionnaires retrieved were invalid and were not used in the analysis.

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Using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences 15 for windows) the data obtained through the questionnaire was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis, and this involved grouping the data, computation of frequencies, percentages and scores as well as the presentation of result using tables. Specifically, the Adequacy Score (AS) which represents the total score given by all the respondents on each of the different organizational components was used in identifying areas of strength and weakness in organizational capacity in public housing provision. Data obtained from the review of literature and interviews were coded and analyzed manually using content analysis. Coded data were organized according to common themes to identify patterns and highlight crucial ideas as expressed by the respondents. The result of the analysis is presented in the subsequent section of this paper.

**Table 2: Government Agencies where Oral Interviews were Conducted.**

<b>Agencies and Institutions</b>	<b>Locations</b>
Lagos State Development and Property Corporation (LSDPC)	Lagos
Lagos Building Investment Company Limited (LBICI)	Lagos
Federal Housing Authority (FHA)	Lagos, Port Harcourt , Owerri
Federal Ministry Of Environment Housing and Urban Development (FMEHUD)	Lagos , Port Harcourt
Federal Mortgage Bank Of Nigeria (FMBN)	Lagos , Port Harcourt
Abia State Housing and Property Development Corporation (ASHPDC)	Umuahia
Imo State Housing Corporation (ISHC)	Owerri
Rivers State Housing & Property Development Authority (RSHFDA)	Port Harcourt
Akwa Ibom Property and Investment Company Limited (APICO)	Uyo
Akwa Saving and Loans Limited (ASLL)	Uyo
Ogun State Housing Corporation (OSHC)	Abeokuta
Gateway City Development Company Limited (GCDCL)	Lagos-Ibadan Express Road, Lagos
Gateway Saving and Loans Limited	Abeokuta

Source: Authors' Research Design (2008)

## **Result and Discussion**

### ***(a) Personal Profiles of the Respondents in the Questionnaire survey***

The personal profile of respondents in the questionnaire survey shows that 73.3% of them were males, 26.7% were females and majority (81.1%) was married. This underscores

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the dominance of male population over female in building design and construction related activities in government agencies in the study area. Table 3 shows detail distribution of the personal profiles of the respondents. Examination of Table 3 will reveal that majority of the staff members involved in designing, planning and executing public housing projects in the organizations sampled were mainly senior technical officers -including architects, builders , civil engineers, estate mangers, urban and regional planners, quantity surveyors and management staff within productive ages of between 31years and 50 years. This result goes to suggest that middle-aged workers dominated public housing agencies in the study area. Although, the result (Table 3) shows that around 46% of the respondents had less than 10 years of work experience, this is probably due to the observation that many of them were within the age brackets of between 31years and 45 years. However, it is evident from the result that the proportion of those with over 10 years of work experience is more than those with less than 10 years of work experience. This goes to show that the organizations had experienced personnel involved in the design, construction, and management of public housing schemes in the study area. Similarly, the large proportion of relatively younger staff members involved in the organizations' housing projects also suggests that the human resource capacity of these agencies in public housing provision is not characterized by a large proportion of ageing work force.

It is also evident from Table 3 that around 51% of the respondents claimed that they were middle-income earners. Again this suggests that despite the observation that most of the respondents had a minimum academic qualification of Higher National Diploma (HND), they were average income earners. This may have implications for staff motivation and morale as well as level of commitment to work. In all, the result vividly shows that most staff members engaged in public housing provision schemes by government agencies in the study area were experienced, middle-aged and middle-income professionals in different fields.

**Table 3: Personal Profile of the Respondents in the Questionnaire Survey**

<b>Personal Attributes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age (Years)</b>		
18-30	9	10.0
31-45	54	59.8
46-50	14	15.0
51-60	13	14.0

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<b>Average Monthly Income (Naira)</b>		
No Response	1	1.1
Below N37,000 (Low-Income)	37	41.1
N38,000-N145,000 (Middle-Income)	46	51.2
Above N145,000 (High Income)	6	6.6
<b>Highest Educational Qualifications</b>		
No Response	1	1.1
National Diploma (ND)	7	7.8
National Certificate of Education	22	24.4
Higher National Diploma	38	42.2
Bachelor Degree	22	24.4
Masters Degree	18	20.0
Other qualifications	2	2.2
<b>Areas of Specialization</b>		
Accounting /Finance	12	13.3
Administration	10	11.1
Architecture	14	15.6
Building Technology	8	8.9
Civil Engineering	8	8.9
Information & Communication Technology	1	1.1
Estate Management	9	10.0
Land Surveying	5	5.6
Law	3	3.3
Marketing	4	4.4
Mechanical Engineering	1	1.1
Public Relations	1	1.1
Purchasing and Supply	1	1.1
Quantity Surveying	4	4.4
Research and Documentation	1	1.1
Urban and Regional Planning	8	8.9
<b>Job Status</b>		
Directors	8	8.9
Deputy Directors	8	8.9
Heads of Departments	6	6.7
Senior Technical Staff	32	35.6
Management/Administrative Staff	20	22.2
Deputy Heads of Departments	6	6.7
Estate Officers	5	5.0
Permanent Secretary	1	1.0
Others	4	4.4
<b>Work Experience (Years)</b>		
Less than 10	41	45.6
10-15	19	21.1
16-25	17	18.9
More than 25	13	14.4

Source: Field Work (2010)

***(b) Contextual (Environmental) Challenges in Public Housing Provisions***

From the analysis of responses made by officers interviewed in the public housing agencies listed on Table 2, a number of contextual (environmental) challenges militating against public housing provision in the study area were identified. First, as expected, all the interviewees noted that inadequate supply of housing finance was a critical challenge in public housing provisions in the study area. They indicated that beginning from the post independence era, public housing schemes in the country were funded mainly through revenue allocations from government. They observed that scarcity of housing finance has become more critical now that fiscal and budgetary constraints have forced government to reduce drastically the level of financial support given to its agencies to execute public housing projects. They also noted that high interest rates on loans from commercial banks and inability of the Federal Mortgage Bank (FMBN) to provide adequate mortgage facilities have further compounded this problem. Indeed, scarcity of housing finance has shown manifestations in the inability of public housing agencies to complete a number of ongoing housing projects on record time and initiate new ones. In addition, it has reduced the chances of many of the agencies in acquiring modern operational equipment and infrastructure, hiring and retaining more experienced high profile professionals and skilled labor for efficient public housing provision. This is to be expected going by current global economic meltdown and competing demands in other sectors of the national economy as well as the over dependence of public housing agencies on government subventions as the principal source of housing finance over the years. This finding therefore provides support to the general notion that inadequate funding is partly responsible for low human and material resources base that can hardly support large scale public housing projects necessary for improving the quantity and quality of Nigeria's public housing stock.

Second, lack of continuity in government policies and programs was another key challenge confronting public housing provisions in the study area as identified by the respondents. All those interviewed noted that lack of consistency and continuity in housing policies and programs has contributed to low productivity in public-sector housing and politicization of public housing programs in Nigeria. A Senior Architect with the Abia State Housing Corporation interviewed commented: *".....the practice where every new administration comes with new policies and programs without recourse to what previous administrations had done was not helping matters in our quest to address the housing*

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*problem in this country*". The Director of Estate of the Gateway City Company Limited corroborated this view by asserting that lack of continuity in government policies and programs has resulted to poor implementation of housing programs leading to large scale wastage of state resources. Instances of lack of continuity and poor implementation of public housing programs are the increasing number of abandoned public housing schemes across the length and breadth of Nigeria including the Shagari's Low-Cost Housing Schemes (1979-1983). Moreover, the general opinion of the officers interviewed was that consistency and continuity in housing policies and programs was a basic ingredient of sustainable public housing delivery system as it engenders proper evaluation and monitoring of the performance of past housing policies, programs and strategies. The foregoing views cannot be dismissed as not having merit as available evidence in literature (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1991; Nwaka, 2005) shows that within the period under review, the Federal Government of Nigerian has experimented on not less than four National Housing Policies and a number of different housing delivery strategies. Regrettably, none of these succeeded in meeting the aspirations of most Nigerians in the delivery of decent and affordable housing. In the words of the Permanent Secretary of Ogun State Ministry of Housing "...we have tried many housing delivery strategies in the past few years with a number of useful lessons, but now we are working towards ensuring that each housing agency in the State specializes in one housing delivery strategy". This submission goes to suggest that there is no consensus on the most appropriate housing delivery strategies best suited for the socio-economic and cultural context of contemporary Nigerian society. This is probably because most past housing policies and programs in the country were not properly evaluated or monitored. As some of the respondents also observed, this development was as a result of inadequate funding and shortage of personnel needed for proper monitoring and evaluation of past public housing schemes. Therefore, there is dearth of reliable data on end users' characteristics and preferences in the country. This development necessitated the adoption of inappropriate data and design practice in the conception and design of many previous public housing policies and schemes in Nigeria. One of the consequences of this is the high level of users' dissatisfaction with the quality of many public housing schemes as indicated in the review of literature. Indeed, this is considered a critical factor responsible for lack of consistency and continuity in policies and programs, and failure of public housing to provide

adequate and satisfactory housing that meets the needs and preferences of target population in this country.

Another challenge confronting public housing provision in the study area is linked to unfriendly political environment. The respondents were of the opinion that the post independence era in Nigeria which is characterized by unpredictable political atmosphere has a lot of deleterious effect on public housing provision in this country. Apart from retarding speedy evolution of appropriate institutional framework and housing delivery strategies, it also contributed to reduction in the level of local and foreign direct investments in the sector. This is in view of the fact that unstable political and economic climate does not provide very conducive environment for reasonable investment and proper monitoring and evaluation of public policies and programs which aid the identification of appropriate program design and implementation strategies that meet the desires and aspirations of target population. It is also noted that politicization of public housing programs which has been identified as one of the root causes of low productivity in the public-sector housing in Nigeria has its root in frequent change of government from civilians and military vice versa as well as the nature of party politics in the country. This development ensured that public housing programs in the country were conceived of as political projects used by ruling political parties and groups to secure political patronage from the citizens and reward political loyalists by locating and awarding contracts for housing projects on political basis. As a result, many state governments and their agents were not willing to provide adequate support to the implementation of some housing programs initiated by federal governments that were not of the same political party as theirs. Hence, such schemes were not properly implemented, and in some cases were abandoned.

Finally, dearth of tradesmen in the employment of public housing agencies was another challenge identified by the officers interviewed. The respondents observed that the number of tradesmen including bricklayers, carpenters, tillers, plumbers, electricians, iron benders and others in the employment of government has continuously declined over the years. According to the Director of Engineering Services of the Ogun State Property and Investment Corporation (OPIC), this category of manpower is generally becoming very scarce in the building construction industry in Nigeria. This view was corroborated by the officer with Lagos State Development and Property Corporation (LSDPC) interviewed who pointed out that the scarcity of tradesmen in Nigeria was becoming critical in most recent



times. He noted for instance, that most good tillers in the Lagos area were immigrants from neighboring countries. Relating this view to the data in Table 3, it is evident that that none of the 90 staff members sampled in the four housing agencies was a tradesman, suggesting that the claim by the senior officers interviewed has merit. This finding is not unconnected with the increasing quest for University education and neglect of technical education by most Nigerians. However, the scarcity of tradesmen as employees of public housing agencies may be due to relatively low remuneration offered by government compared with what is obtainable in the private sector. Thus, most tradesmen would prefer to work in private sector organizations where they can earn better wages rather than in government agencies. The implication of this is that public housing agencies and indeed public housing provision in Nigeria are at the mercies of informal sector for the supply of this category of skilled workmen. This is detrimental to the quest for enhanced productivity in this vital sector of our national economy.

### ***(c) Organizational Challenges in Public Housing Provision***

With regards to organizational challenges, Table 4 shows the result of analysis of the adequacy levels of the different organizational components in the four public housing agencies sampled in Ogun State. Areas of strength and weakness in organizational capacity in the public housing agencies investigated were assessed using the adequacy scores. Since the maximum and minimum possible adequacy scores by all the respondents on each of the 20 components are 450 and 90 respectively; arranging the adequacy scores in descending order will reveal that components on top of Table 4 with high adequacy scores are considered as areas of strength while those at the bottom of the table with relatively low adequacy scores are considered as areas of weakness in the public housing agencies.

Based on the foregoing, it is evident from Table 4 that the respondents in the questionnaire survey felt that the four agencies sampled had strength in areas of Leadership, Clarity of Organizational Goal in Public Housing Delivery, Housing Project Process Management and Monitoring Strategies and Level of Innovation in Public Housing Delivery and others. This is because each of these components has high adequacy scores (see Table 4). On the other hand, the respondents rated the agencies as being weak in the areas of Funding, Staff Motivation, Staff Incentives and Reward System. The low rating of

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the agencies in the aforementioned areas is evident from the result (Table 4) which shows that the Level of Staff Motivation and Staff Incentives and Reward System have relatively low adequacy scores of 252 and 263 respectively. This result is based on the opinion some of the staff members sampled who felt that they were not adequately motivated in remuneration and associated fringe benefits by their employers- the government. This is to be expected as the result (Table 3) shows that around 41.1% of the staff members sampled were of low income category. It is also possible that among the 51.2% of the respondents who claimed to be middle-income earners felt that they were also not well remunerated according to their academic and professional qualifications. This development cannot be disassociated from the earlier finding which shows that most public housing agencies in Nigeria were underfunded, which is why they are unable to offer competitive wages and attract, hire and retain more high profile professionals and consultants as well as skilled tradesmen.

**Table 4: Adequacy Level of Components of Organizational Capacity in Housing Provision**

S/N	Organizational Components	Adequacy Scores (AS)
1	Leadership Style	348
2	Clarity of Organizations' Goal in Public Housing Delivery	335
3	Housing Project Process Management and Monitoring Strategies	322
4	Level of Innovation in Public Housing Delivery	316
5	Communication Channel	315
6	Working Environment	313
7	Methods of Role Assignment to Staff	313
8	Level of Technology and Know -how in Public Housing	301
9	Office Spaces and Furniture	300
10	Human Resource Capacity	299
11	Staff Morale and Attitude to work	298
12	Institutional Capacity Building Process	297
13	Information Management System	294
14	Staff Performance Appraisal Procedure	283
15	Operational Equipment and Vehicles	274
16	Staff Development Programs	268
17	Fund for Housing Projects	266
18	Staff Incentives and Reward System	263
19	Level of Staff Motivation	252
20	Level of Collaborations with other Organizations	220

Source: Field Work (2010)

The result also shows that the four public agencies sampled were deficient in the level of collaboration or partnerships with other organizations in public housing delivery. This claim is based on the rating by the respondents who felt that the level of inter-agency collaborations and partnerships among the agencies was not adequate to engender efficient public housing provision in the study area. Thus, the Level of Collaborations with other Organizations had the least adequacy score of 220 and it is at the bottom of Table 4. This finding is in line with evidence in literature (UN-HABITAT, 2006; Akinmoladun and Oluwoye, 2007) indicating that lack of inter-agencies collaborations was responsible for low productivity in public sector housing in Nigeria. Although, there has been remarkable growth in the number of public housing agencies in Nigeria in the past 50 years, it has however been observed that there are dearth of evidence showing any form of inter-agencies collaborations within and without the public sector domain. This development may be as a result of differences in political alignment between Federal and State governments in Nigeria, which has created a dichotomy between their agencies and ensured that public housing programs were designed as politically-oriented projects. As a result, public housing agencies at Federal and State levels have over the years found it increasingly difficult to collaborate on key aspects of public housing provision. Apart from increasing the level of duplication of efforts among the agencies, it has denied public housing delivery system the benefits of comparative advantage, and thus considered as a clog in the wheel of progress in sustainable solution to urban housing crisis in Nigeria.

## **Conclusions**

The study has examined the contextual and organizational challenges in public housing provision in Nigeria. Findings show that since independence in 1960, governments in Nigeria have demonstrated commitment to addressing the housing problem in several ways. But due to funding, political and organizational challenges public housing agencies have so far provided insufficient number of poor quality and unaffordable housing units in the country. To address these challenges this paper makes the following recommendations.

First, National Housing Policy should provide adequate and workable framework for the monitoring and evaluation of housing policy implementation and development of housing database to provide adequate information base for future housing policy

formulation, program design and implementation. This will enhance the provision of user responsive public housing.

Second, since public policies and programs are known to achieve better results under favourable political atmosphere. There is need for concerted efforts by the political leaders at all levels of government to ensure stable political climate in the country. This will among other benefits ensure that housing programs are devoid of unnecessary political interference, and thus engender consistency and continuity in public housing policies and programmes and the emergence of appropriate institutional framework for effective public housing delivery system in Nigeria

Third, institutional capacity building in public housing sector is required in line with changing local and global environment. Hence, public housing agencies should take advantage of the opportunities in inter-agencies collaborations to rely less on government for funding and engage in Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs) so as to attract private sector funds and expertise into public housing delivery system.

Finally, the re-orientation of Nigerians towards embracing technical education has become expedient. In this regard, the review of the curriculum for technical education has become imperative. Products of this level of education should be encouraged to pick up employment in the public sector through attractive remuneration and fringe benefits. Also public housing agencies should be empowered financially by government to engage the services of more experienced professionals and consultants who will bring to bear their wealth of experience into the design, implementation and monitoring of public housing policies and programmes.

In conclusion, it is clear from the study that the challenges militating against public-sector housing in Nigeria are multifaceted. However much time can be wasted on policy documents and program designs if the political will, astuteness and capacity to make them work are absent. It is therefore expected the findings and recommendations emanating from the study have advanced our understanding of the challenges and solutions to public-sector housing in Nigeria.

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