

***Exploring the Bearing of Urban Geography on Physical Well-Being of Communities
in Ibadan, Southwest Nigeria***

Mokolade Johnson, University of Lagos, Nigeria
Shittu Adewale, University of Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

Due to increasing human activities in cities, occurrences widely known as pollution, residential inadequacy, congestion and related challenges like slums, deplorable neighborhoods impinge directly or indirectly on people's quality of life and well-being. Nonetheless, the range of the influences of urban geography on citizen's health and well-being remains largely unexplored. This paper is aimed at reconnoitering the bearings of urban geography on city dweller's health and well-being. With the backdrop of UN forecast that 75% of the world's population will reside in cities by year 2050. Ibadan, a provincial capital and commercial hub was selected as a culturally rich conurbation in Southwest Nigeria with historical antecedents in its evolution as a metropolis with over 3 million aggregate inhabitants. The highlights of a qualitative and exploratory technique of evaluation on the old city centers of Beere, Oje and Mapo are elucidated. This morphological investigation showed that except for demographic and territorial expansion in the last sixty years, Ibadan remains a predominantly 'rural city' characterized by the kaleidoscopic rusty-brown tin roof unique to this urban landscape affected by British colonial heritage. Contrary to predictions, the historical-cultural inclination and antecedents of this municipal seem not give credence to the UN conception of cities as the major or viable settlements for urbanite's well-being in future. The study advocates that planning professionals and stakeholders should pay attention to people-oriented urban geographical concerns supported by architectural planning inventiveness with cultural inclinations in promoting the health and well-being of urban communities.

Keywords: impact, health, heritage, urban geography, well-being

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Introduction

The two central dimensions of well-being and the environment are people and places. To understand this relationship, it is important to understand how people engage sensorially with the environment and its impact on their well-being over time by Cooper et.al. (2013). Urban geography is the stand-in discipline of geography which focuses on the portions of the globe's surface that have a high concentration of several building typologies and infrastructures. This suggests that this is an area of study concerned with the products of other disciplines such as Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Building Construction, Urban Planning, Environmental Psychology and Human Ecology Human Ecology and their contributions to the urban milieu and its populations. Katcher & Beck, (1987); Axelrod & Suedfeld, (1995). (Maller et al., (2005); Groenewegen et al., (2006) However, there is paucity of knowledge and information in this area of study in the Nigerian context and Ibadan municipal in particular. Ibadan (Yoruba: Ìbàdàn) is the capital of Oyo State, Southwest Nigeria and the most populous city in the region with a population of over 3 million. It is the third most populous city in Nigeria, after Lagos and Kano, the country's largest city by geographical area. Based on literature in the study of Western cities, theories opined that the way in which communities are designed and built for living has significant impacts on physical, mental, social, environmental, and economic well-being of people. Dannenberg, Frumkin & Jackson(2011).

Background to the Study

Ibadan is about 120km east of the border with the Republic of Benin and the city elevation ranges from 15.0m in valley to 27.5m above the sea level at the central part of the city. The city has an approximate area of 1,190sqmi (3,080km²), a city naturally drained by four major River at the center with other three at the outskirt making a total of seven. The rivers that drain the central city are River Ona from the north, Ogunpa River flows through the city, Kudeti River in the Central, Ogbere River to the East. The Rivers that drain the outskirt are Egberi River to the Eastern part, Omi River also to the Eastern part and Omi River (Omi Adio) western part of the city.

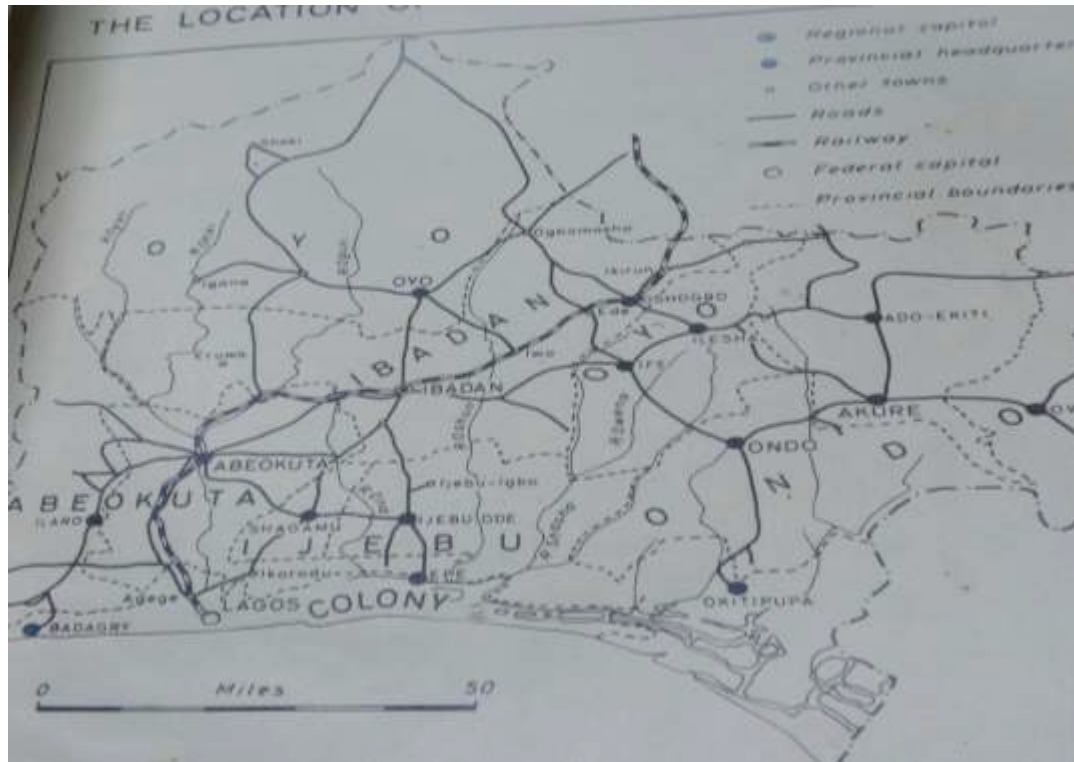


Fig.1.Location of Ibadan in Yorubaland: source Akinola (1963).

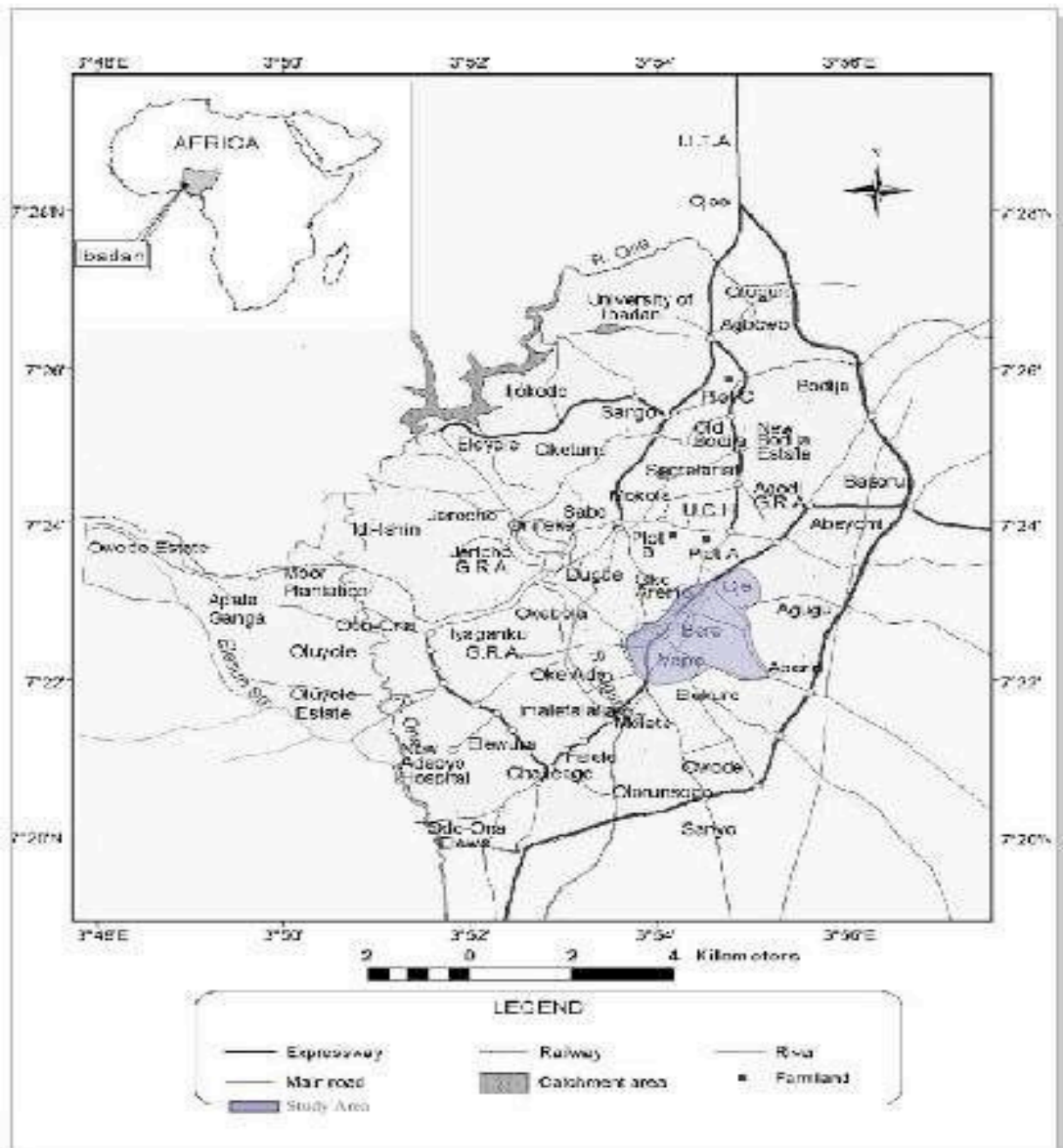


Fig. 2. Map of Ibadan showing the study area: source-Oyo State Ministry of Information (2017)

Historical Evolution of Ibadan City

The city was established in the 1820s following the collapse of old Oyo Empire and the influx of migrants. It served as a military base during the raids of Fulani warriors. It came under British protectorate in the year 1893 with the establishment of Ibadan Town Council in the year 1897. The aim of the town council was to allow indigenous chiefs to oversee the administration of the town. The council established consists of Baale, Otun Baale, Osi Baale, Balogun and eight to twelve other high chiefs.

There has been a tremendous expansion in the size of the city in the last five decades. Rapid and persistent growth resulted in speedy and sustained urbanization. This mishandled and unprecedented growth of the city is associated with problems that disrupted progress. Spence, Clarke Annez, & Buckley (2009). Khandaker (2016). With an expanding geographical area, population distribution, industrialization, business, and lately computerization, high technology and other urban components are factors that shaped the physical characteristics and determine the fundamental reorganization in operation concerning the growth of urban communities. Hawley (1969), Mabogunje (2002). According to Amos Hawley (1971), the impossibility of separating the city from the societal context in which it is rooted had a significant bearing on its growth or sprawl. The city development was a convoluted process which directly affected the development of the municipal as a whole.



Spatial Growth of Ibadan, 1988



Spatial Growth of Ibadan, 1998



Spatial Growth of Ibadan, 2008



Spatial Growth of Ibadan, 2018

Fig.3.

Time series analysis of Ibadan spatial growth

Year	Population	% Increase Population	Land Area sq. km.	% Increase Land Area	Important Landmarks
1951	100,000		10.0		
1931	387,133	287.0	12.5	25.0	Railway Line, Gbagi Market
1963	625,000	82.9	30	140.0	Establishment of University College & its Teaching Hospital Ibadan becomes the Capital of Old Western Region Commissioning of the City Bypass (Ring Rd.)
1973	1,119,280	79.1	112	273.3	Effects of Ring Road Construction of the Expressway IITA Ibadan Polytechnic Sango Road
1981	1,783,962	59.4	136	218.2	New Airport, Breweries, Ajoda New Town, Oluyole Estate, New Gbagi Market, Agbowo Shopping Complex, Adamasingba Recreation Centres, Leyland Motors
1984	2,033,200	14.0	176	29.4	
1988	2,158,688	6.2	214	21.6	

Table 1: Spatial Growth of Ibadan at Different Time Periods, 1931-1988. Source: Onibokun, 1988a.

The last known population of Ibadan according to the Oyo State Government Administrative unit is approximately 3,160, 200 in 2015. This is representing 1.734% of total Nigeria population assuming a population growth rate would be same as in period 2006-2015, (+4.14% per annum. The population in 2018 is unofficially calculated to be approximately 3,569, 507. Until 1970, Ibadan was the largest city in sub-Saharan Africa. Lloyd, Mabogunje & Awe (1967).

The Physical Characteristics of Ibadan City

Ibadan is a city categorized into two major forms based on the physical characteristics. The first is the core area which is the traditional area like. Mapo, Beere, Oje amongst others as a sub-urban largely inhabited by the migrants. Ibadan city, specifically the core area (traditional city) is synonymous with the brown tin roof especially when viewed from Mapo hill. The traditional compound system of housing has disintegrated over time, this reflected changes in socio-economic and cultural disintegration of the city. The traditional city-center consists of oldest, lowest quality and high-density residential buildings made with construction materials such as mud, timber rafters covered initially with thatched roof which was later replaced with

the modern zinc-tin roof commonly used during the independence. These old neighborhoods lack basic amenities and sanitary facilities beneficial to good health and well-being. Other major challenges include poor basic infrastructure such as good accessibility to houses, portable water, and poor waste collection infrastructure. Abdu M.S (1997). Due to the Yorubaic world belief systems rooted in cultural philosophy and earth worship mythologies of “*Ibadan omo a joro sun*”, investigations showed that many residential building and neighborhood structure in the Beere and Oje city centers remained untouched for cultural and traditional reasons for the past six decades despite the technological innovations for a global smart city agenda. The buildings and lands were sacred to the indigenous families that own them, therefore urban renewal resourcefulness supported by municipal administration became difficult to achieve in the land use of the area. Hence these physical characteristics remained largely unchanged for past sixty years. Poor residential conditions and a high concentration of dilapidated houses ascending from the high cost of maintenance of Brazilian style houses (residences with one or two floors and a verandah). Lloyd et.al. 1967).



Plate 1: Typical Ibadan narrow streets with no sidewalk, showing mud houses with brown tin roofs: source- Oyo State Ministry of Information 2017.



Pate 2: deteriorating inner cities.-Bere and Oje. Source- Fourchard(2003).

The study confirms that the city still has the following characteristics. It is the highest density area of the city because it has a high percentage of the population by households. It has a very high percentage of land devoted to residential land use, as high as 90% in some wards. The presence of many old markets. Due to place-making attachments, indigenous beliefs does not agree with the notion by past reseaserch studies that categorized a large part of the inner city is an urban commercial purlieu. Kumuyi, (1987). There is a complete lack of urban management and urban planning; no waste disposal, no gutters and inadequate number of roads. There is a general lack of basic facilities like water and electricity supply. Access to health centers is also limited. In 1983, “not a single hospital was located in the traditional core areas of Ibadan. With majority located in the peri-urban areas. (Iyun 1983: 601-616) It has a very high percentage of indigenous populations, the presence of non-Yorubas in this part of the city is uncommon. There is a strong cultural identity, characterized notably by a strong attachment to the ancestral land ownership of the grandfathers, forefathers of the city. Khandaker (2016)

Findings on the Genius Loci of Ibadan as a Typical Yoruba ‘City’

The pervading spirit of Ibadan as a place rich in Yoruba culture, its historic location and significance is relevant to its growth as a city. Onibokun(1988). The guardianship deity of the Ibadan people as enshrined in the Oke-Ibadan Earth worship and “hometown” belief seems to be responsible for its processes of urbanization. The Yoruba village or town growth is essentially a product of the belief system of the Oba’s Palace as the center of ‘power’ around which development and expansion revolves. Mabogunje, (1962); Akinola, (1963).

The definition that town people are primarily engaged in non-agricultural activities and that their economy is different from that of the rural population has no relevance in Yorubaland. See Fig.4. The oldest and largest deteriorating neighborhoods are the core area of the city, which covers the entire pre-colonial town. A large part of the ancient walled city can be seen as a slum, even if the inhabitants do not agree that they live in a slum for historical reasons. (Mabogunje, 1968).

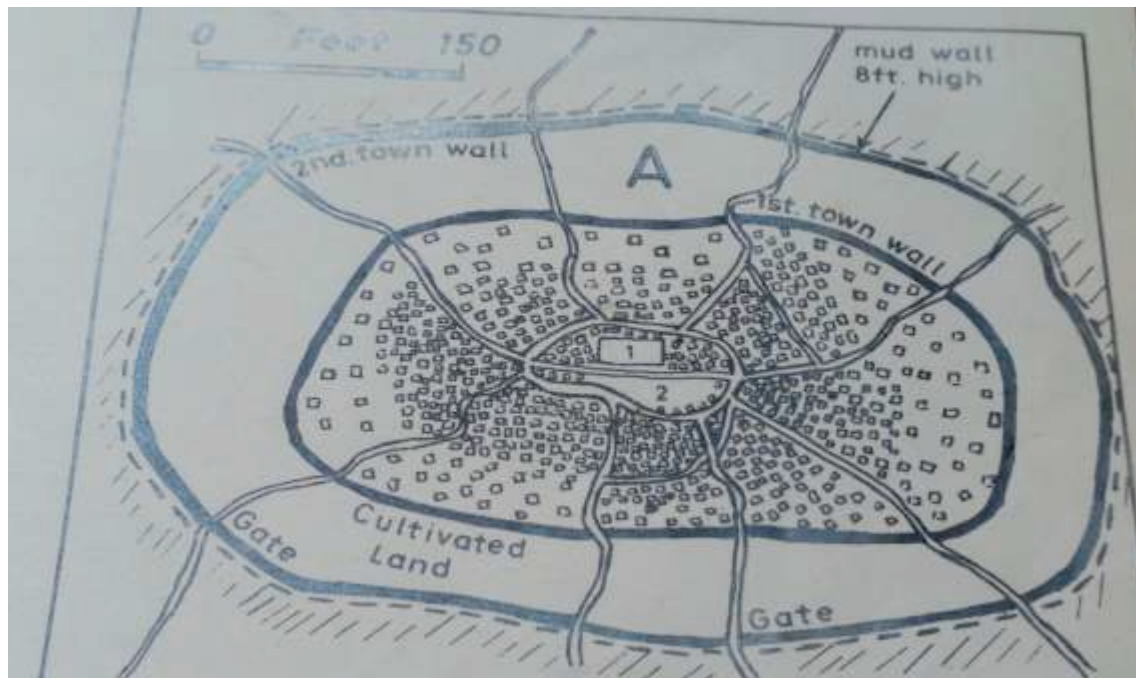


Fig. 4 A typical form of a Yoruba Town plan: source Akinola (1963)

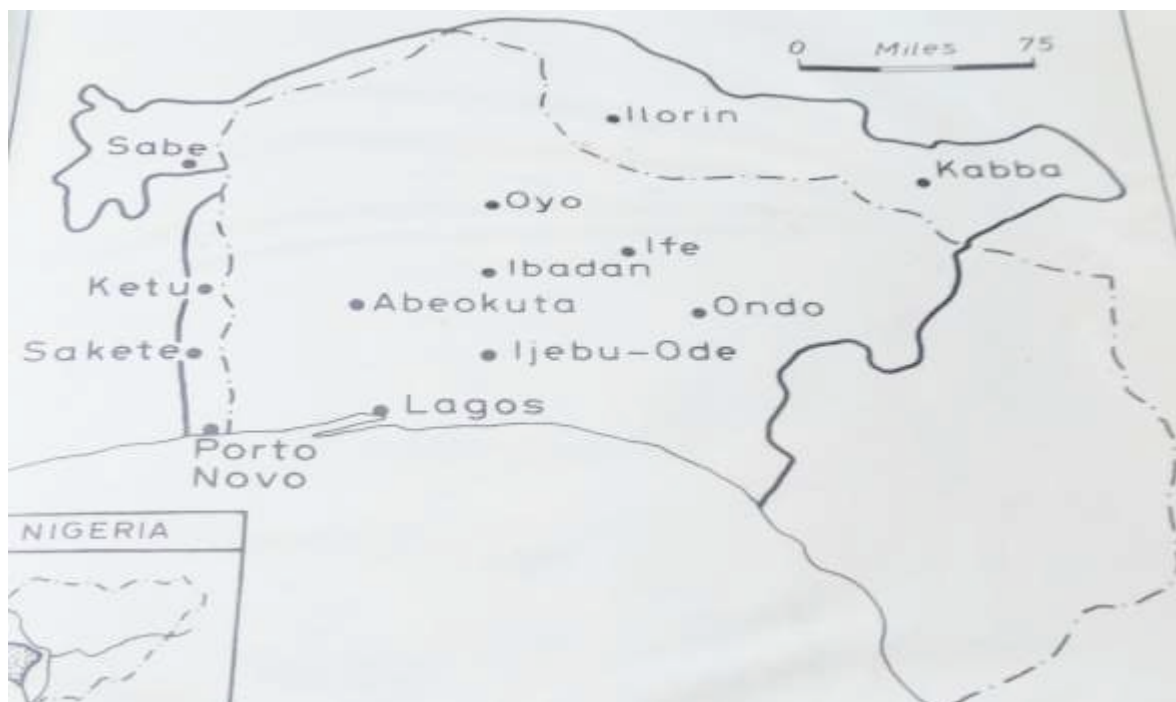


Fig.5: Unscaled map showing extent of the Yoruba speaking nation: source Akinola (1963).

The clear-cut distinction between town dwellers and villagers, which for centuries has been so well developed in Western Europe is not pronounced in Yorubaland. The population of Ibadan, a prominent city varies according to the seasons and to the interest of populations in surrounding peri-urban areas. The constant influx and outflow of populations between the towns and villages is still conspicuous and

consequently the distinctions and criteria of urban geography in Western countries cannot be directly applied to the study of Ibadan as atypical Yoruba city with its peculiar historical antecedents, social and economic backgrounds.

The chief occupation is farming and Ibadan core neighborhoods of Bere, Oje, and Mapo still have a traditionally rural character Mabogunje (1962). Mabogunje argued that despite the fact that the economic and functional specialization in most Yoruba towns is at a low level and largely pre-industrial in the 1960s, most of these settlements are towns in the real sense. He further states that towns and invariably cities are products of their time and culture and must be appreciated within that context. Akinola (1963); Mabogunje (2002), Jiboye (2010).

Open Spaces and Dweller's Well-being.

Recreational needs and the satisfaction derived are age long desires, the provision for leisure and recreation supports sustenance of quality of life and well-being. Consequently, Candilis (1967) argued that it is not possible to separate the problem of leisure from the concept of man's life. In Nigeria, although, there are various potentials for the development of the recreation industry, this sector has remained largely under-developed Ikporukpo (1993). The inadequacy of these recreational facilities in Ibadan was pertinently estimated by Obateru (1981) who posits that ideally, Ibadan should have at least 500 children playgrounds, but has none, 125 neighborhood playgrounds, but has only a small one: 125 neighborhood parks but none. 31 district parks but none: of the 10 city parks it should have, it possesses only two: the city has two stadia although one expects the city to have at least 10. This is not to say that forest reserves in Ibadan did not have recreation component. The pond at "Agbadagbudu" (Edward Price Park was acquired by the city council and developed in memory of Edward Price, the Resident, Officer who ensured that Ibadan had an Independent Native authority in 1934 while the capital returned to Ibadan from Oyo. The spring had been serving the core area of Ibadan especially Oke-Aremo, Odoeye, Oke-Are, Beere and Mapo. The popular "Alalubosa Lake" which used to be flourishing recreation center during the Easter Holiday is no more. The site was acquired for redevelopment by the Federal Government but it is now sand filled as a result of deforestation and development of GRA plots. There is an "Ogunpa Lake" (called Dandaru by the Indigenes) at the upper course of Ogunpa River. The State Government (Ministry of Agriculture) had established Agodi Gardens near the lake for recreational activities during the public holidays.

Conclusions

The development of cities in the Western world has been guided by evolution of cultural and historical precedents over many centuries. There is cultural difference that separates the growth of cities in the Geo-political Southwest of Nigeria from the concepts of colonial cities. This difference is rooted in the earth worship culture prevalent in the communities. Consequent on this major differences, the study advocates that planning professionals and stakeholders should pay attention to people-oriented urban geographical concerns supported by architectural planning inventiveness with cultural inclinations in promoting the health and well-being of urban communities.

Urban Management framework that will integrate and provide for basic infrastructures such as people-centered open spaces, accessible civic centers, trading places and efficient sanitary structure in order to improve well-being of the vulnerable communities in these core of Ibadan City. The city center as constituted by Bere, Oje and Mapo can be preserved as a local heritage neighborhood in scale, material, building and landscape as a glimpse into the richness of its cultural history.

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Contact email: mbjohnson@unilag.edu.ng. tel.+234-8056295050,+234-08082223779