YORUBA HOUSEFORM

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ABSTRACT

Yoruba houses, like those of the various cultural groups in tropical Africa, are generally thought to be a mere place of abode and shelter from the tropical downpour and the sun. This is a physical environmental view which underestimates the importance of the socio-cultural values of the Yoruba in house formation.

The Yoruba household is considered in this paper to be a structured, socio-cultural institution which has three important components. The over-riding influence of the lineage ancestor on the household makes up the first component, and this is considered to be the spiritual foundation of the institution. The head of the lineage forms a link between the ancestor and the living members. He ensures maximum cohesion among the extended family members through the exercise of his legislative, judicial and administrative powers. The roles of the lineage head constitute the second component of the institution, i.e., the administrative component. The complex socio-economic interactions among the members of the extended family make up the third component.

These three main components jointly determine the siting of Yoruba houses, the various building and space-formation elements of the house, the processes of construction and the materials used for building. Thus socio-cultural factors, as opposed to physical environmental ones, are considered to be the primary forces that create Yoruba house forms.

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INTRODUCTION

The Yoruba, who number some 12 million (1963 census), comprise the second largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are mostly found in the south-western part of the country. However, there are a few thousand members of this ethnic group in the adjacent countries, particularly in parts of Dahomey and Togo. In Nigeria, the Yoruba ethnic home is fairly continuous, extending from Lagos on the coast to Jebba on the River Niger. This area constitutes the ethnic home of the Yoruba. (Fig. 1).

Yorubaland, like other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, lies within the tropics, with high temperatures and heavy rainfall all year round. The southern parts are thickly forested, and the coastline is fringed with lagoons. The tropical forest gives way to the dense Guinea Savannah in the interior parts. Soils are predominantly reddish laterites. These tropical woods and the various laterite soils are extensively utilized to furnish materials for building houses.

The Yoruba are traditionally subsistence farmers, a role implying a way of life that places heavy emphasis on agricultural production for family consumption. Some of the subsistence crops produced are yams, cassava, cocoyam, maize and guinea corn. Farming is generally considered as a way of life and not necessarily a way of earning a living. However, there has been a change in this attitude to agricultural production since the introduction of cocoa, rubber and other cash crops in the early part of this century. These relatively new crops are now the main source of family income; in a few instances, a substantial amount of wealth has accumulated.

This paper attempts to identify the major factors that determine the Yoruba houseforms, past and present. It has often been asserted that Yoruba houses, which are also known as compounds, and indeed houses of other ethnic groups in sub-Saharan Africa, are built primarily to shelter people from the rains. Furthermore, the houseforms are thought to be of secondary importance so long as the people are effectively sheltered from the environmental hazards of the tropics. This approach assumes that it is the building materials and technology that create the Yoruba houseform to which the householders have no choice but to adapt. This is far from the truth.

The approach used in isolating the complex forces that influence Yoruba houseform is by examining the socio-cultural systems of the Yoruba and enquires how this in turn affects the utilization of the environmental forces. The family pattern, which is variously referred to as the extended family, the lineage system, or the kinship system is examined since this is the most important socio-cultural factor influencing houseform.

There is a technical difference between the three terminologies of the family pattern; this will be briefly clarified. The extended family according to Murdock, consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of the parent-child relationship rather than of the husband-wife relationship. It typically embraces an older man, his wife or wives, his unmarried children, his married sons, and the wives and children of the latter.[1]

A kinship system, in contrast to the extended family, is not a social group, and neither does it correspond to an organised aggregation of individuals. This system is defined by Murdock as:

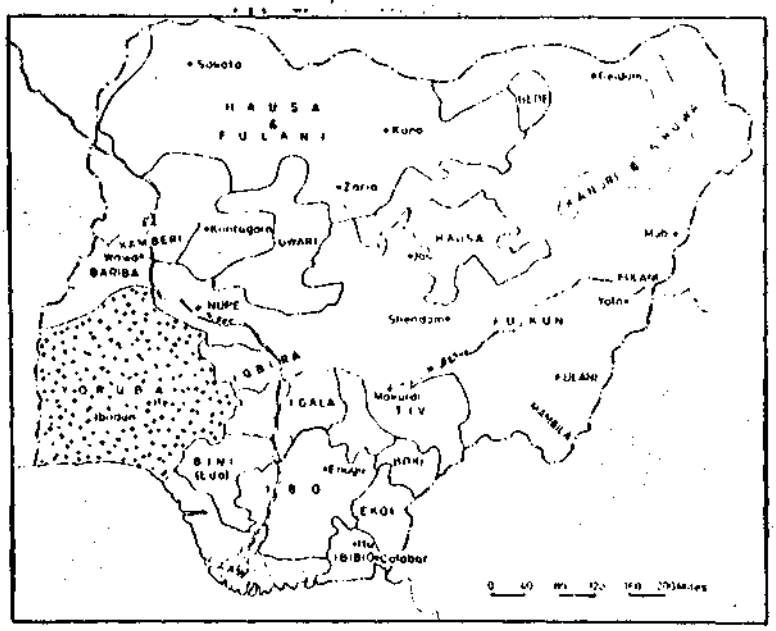


Fig. 1

The main ethnic groups of Nigeria.

Source: Udoh, Geographical Regions of Nigeria.

> "...a structured system of relationships, in which individuals are bound to one another by complex interlocking and ramifying ties. Particular kinship bonds, isolated from one another, may and often do serve to unite individuals into social groups such as a nuclear family or a lineage, but kinship systems or wholes are not, and do not produce social aggregates".[2]

Thus the kinship system, while not itself a social grouping, is essential to social organisation, referring as it does to the complex of rules governing descent, succession, inheritance, marriage, extra-marital sexual relations and resistance in the society.

The lineage system differs from both these designations in that it is a patrilineal descent group in which membership carries with it certain distinctive attributes. Examples of such attributes are facial marks, totemic names that are sometimes used in greetings or in praise-songs, food taboos and the possession of a common deity.[3] While the lineage system is made up of both sexes, it is the male members who form the de facto lineage group, as expressed, for example, in the practice whereby women move to their husbands' compounds on marriage but retain their lineage affiliations. Lloyd considers the lineage to be a strong feature of the Yoruba social structure in which a man regards his position in two ways:

> "...firstly, as a lineage member descended in the male line from the lineage founder and entitled to inherit movable property, land and titles belonging to the lineage members as a group; secondly, as an individual descended from parents and grand-parents belonging to other lineages, forming a corporate group only in relation to himself and from whom he has no rights to inheritance (except in so far as they are members of his own lineage) but whose aid we may ultimately seek in certain situations".[4]

Schwab differentiates between "lineage" and "lineage group"; the former refers to both the dead as well as living members while the latter refers only

to members living at any given moment.[5] This distinction is followed in the present study.

The Yoruba family pattern is considered in this paper to match most closely the framework of the lineage system as described above. The strong influences of the lineage ancestor, orisun, on his descendants are taken into account; also the intricate socio-cultural relationships among the lineage group, and the role of the lineage head of spiritual link between the ancestor and the living members of the group are discussed. The influence of the family pattern on the form of the house, the choice of materials used for construction, and the process of construction itself are all indicated. The physical environment, particularly the rainfall and temperature patterns, is discussed in relation to houseform. This approach facilitates linking houseform to the life patterns and religious beliefs of the Yoruba and thus gives an understanding of the meaning of the various houseforms.

It becomes apparent that socio-cultural factors are the primary form-creating forces while the physical environmental ones are secondary. The former forces are of such importance that this author considers the house to be a structured institution. The house as an institution has significant components that strongly influence the various physical elements of the house and the construction process. These components are also responsible for the existence of separate lineage residential quarters in both Yoruba villages and urban centres and these indicate a strong relationship between social structure and space. This relationship is apparently characteristic of many West African ethnic groups[6] but the present focus is limited to the

Yoruba. The ranking of the forces into primary and secondary ones is not intended to de-emphasize the fact that the two groups of forces operate jointly to create the ideal environment that is culturally comfortable, spiritually meaningful and socially acceptable. Even the introduction of new building materials and new house styles in the last one hundred years does not change the cultural yardstick for measuring the significance of a house, and this again shows the inadequacy of the environmental deterministic framework for analysing Yoruba houses.

I THE CORPORATE COMPOUND

A. The Elements of the House

The traditional Yoruba housing unit is a compound, agbo ile, which literally means a flock of houses. The architecture of the compound fully takes into consideration the "circumstance of life"[7] in Yorubaland. Thus the physical form of the house can be explained in terms of the socio-cultural factors and the major elements of climate, rain and heat. The former are the primary form-creating forces. However, it must be pointed out that these two groups of factors are not mutually exclusive since the building technology, though complex in the context of other cultures in the tropics, has not been able to 'conquer' the environmental forces.

This corporate residential unit is made up of a rectangular mud structure of adjoining rooms, facing inwards onto a common veranda, which in turn surrounds a courtyard in the center. (Fib. 2a). The compound houses three groups of people: omo ile, the male and the unmarried female members of the patrilineal sib who are collectively known as the 'children of the house', aya ile, the wives of the male members of the lineage, and

the non-lineage members, alejo, who live there as a result of the hospitality of the sib members,[8] and so any vacant room could be allocated to them. Lloyd observed the proximity of alejo's quarters near the main gate to the compound in his study of Shaki in northern Yorubaland.[9] The need for space allocation to enhance the cultural values, norms, and the effective social interactions among the members of the lineage primarily determines the house form.

The compound is the basic unit of the society, and the Yoruba considers the idile, the lineage, that normally inhabits the compound, to be eternal, whatever the internal differentiation or dynamics.[10] The head of the lineage is the bale (lit. father of the house) who has his own separate house in the compound. This is usually of higher elevation, and it faces the main entrance gate.[11] His is the largest apartment of the compound, and it is made up of two rooms; one of these is used as a parlour for receiving visitors, a family court where, among the other functions he has to perform for the lineage group, intra-family disputes are settled by him and where important decisions which affect the whole family are taken. The location of the bale's apartment relative to the main gate is due to the role he is expected to perform as the custodian of the lineage members. His apartment is isolated from others in the compound because, as the oldest member of the lineage, he is the first in order in the lineage hierarchy, a hierarchy solely based on age seniority.[12] As a result the social distance that the age hierarchy establishes is incorporated in the houseform by the separation of the baba ile's house from the other apartments of the compound.

One of the functions of the bale is the assignment of "living quarters

within the compound"[13] to the members of the lineage. In this way, the apparently single, undivided compound which a visitor observes is internally segmented, with each single family (i.e. a male member of the lineage and his wife or wives and children) having an apartment to itself. This is usually a room of about ten feet square[14] which affords shelter and safety for the belongings of the family. Thus each "wife of the compound", ava ile, has a room assigned to her and her children; a room is also allocated to the unmarried youths for communal use, or else "they may share with a father or elder married brother".[15] The bale also assigns rooms to the adult married men of the compound, but some of them may have to share with their wives if there is not enough space. Each room opens onto a veranda which runs throughout the building on the inner side of the compound, and there is a common wall between adjacent rooms. The rooms function as retreats for sleeping at night after the day's work on the farms, for lying in during a period of illness, and for confinement in childbirth.[16] The allocation of space for the two sexes, the adults, and youths of the compound reflects the culturally constrained patterns of behaviour within the family. Women are generally "owned" by their husbands, who see marriage primarily as a means for procreation, and a woman's social standing is mainly dependent on the number of children she bears.[17] As a result of the men's perception of their wives, the latter usually live with the children. Thus the children form very close ties with their mothers from the early part of life and this bond remains "one of the most potent effects throughout life".[18]

The veranda that runs throughout the compound is a multifunctional unit (Fig. 2a) where most of the compound has to be passed, and Ojo likens

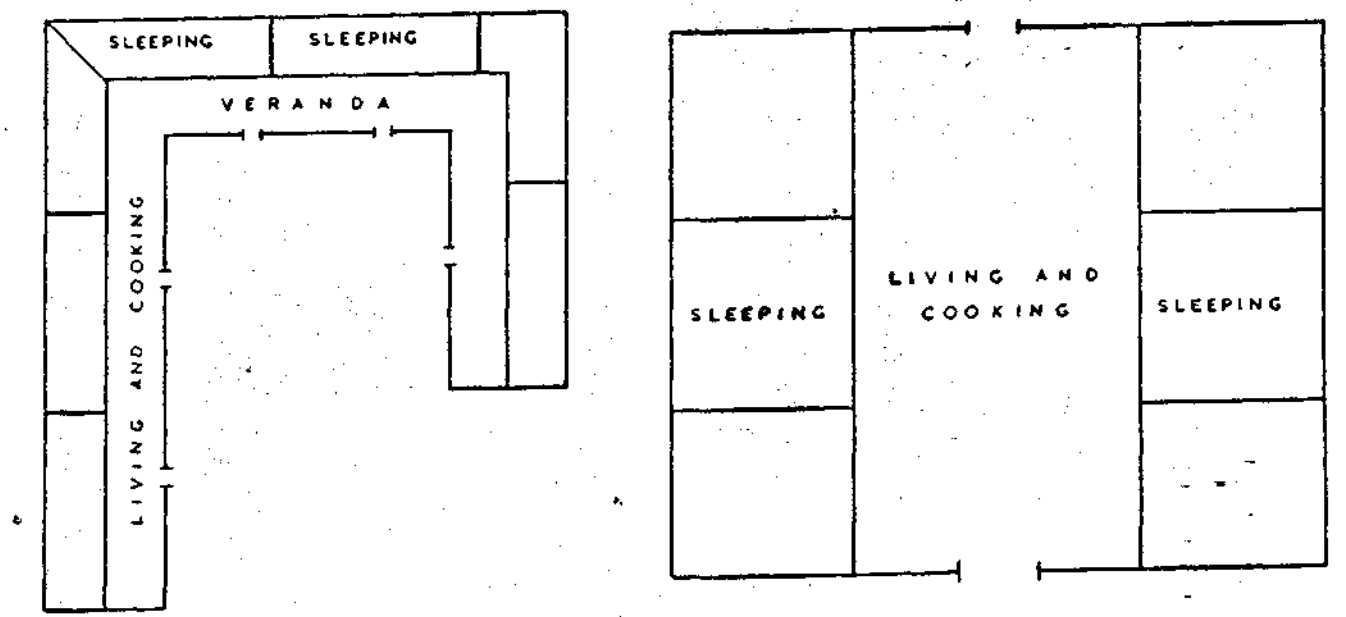


Fig. 2

Old and new house plans.

Source: Barber, Igbo-Ora.

it to a living room of modern houses in that all visitors are received here.[19] This is a place of social interaction among members of the lineage group in that it is here that "everyone eats and drinks and talks in the full view of everyone else"[20] (Fig. 3). Yoruba traditional craft industries which are not completely carried on in open spaces away from the compound take place in the veranda. Basket weaving, leather working and wood or calabash carving by men, hair-dressing, ginning, carving, and vertical-loom weaving by women are examples of such activities which take place here. Traditional seating stools such as mats, and skins of animals are normally hung on the walls along the veranda and they are brought down and set on the floor to seat important guests such as in-laws, elderly relatives from within or without the town. On the veranda every single family has a fire-place for cooking and this is made up of two or more hearths immediately adjoining the wall. The various cooking utensils - a mortar, grindstone, earthenware pots, and dishes of various kinds for cooking and serving food[21] - are also kept near the fireplace. The domestic fowls, chicken (adie), guinea fowl (awo), pigeons (eiyele), ducks (pepeye) and turkeys (tolotolo) - as well as the domestic animals - goats (ewure), sheep (agutan), dogs (aja), horse[22] - are kept here in the evenings. The fowls are usually kept in pens made of mud, or a basket with a lid which is placed on the veranda. However, they wander in the courtyard and to other parts of the town in the daytime and are therefore not in any way obstructive when the householders are using the veranda for other purposes. The dry season, which varies from three to five months in Yorubaland, can be unbearably hot at times, and at this time of the year, the veranda acquires another function of being a comfortable sleeping place for the householders.[23] This is certainly the most

intensively used part of the compound. Although it is not normally more than eight feet in width,[24] care is taken during the construction stage to ensure that it has plenty of air and sunshine while the roofing type is designed in such a way to shade it from the direct rays of the tropical sun.[25] The part of the veranda alongside a woman's room is for her use as an important adjunct to her room and she is normally responsible for keeping that part of the veranda clean. Sweeping both the courtyard and the veranda is one of the morning duties of the "wives of the house".

The typical traditional houses had no windows, and so the rooms "had to be illuminated by lamplight even when the sun was at its highest outside".[26] However, a few did have small, round holes of about nine inches in diameter and they were usually stuffed with rags so that a limited amount of light would be allowed inside. Windows, which in modern houses allow free movement of air inside the room, were not considered necessary since the rooms were primarily used as a night retreat and storage. Thus the day-time uses of the rooms are relatively insignificant and the discomfort that accompanies the very hot day temperatures is not experienced. Moreover, the building materials, particularly the thick mud walls, and the ceilings which are made of mud, have the physical property of being both heat retentive and a poor conductor of heat and so the compound is neither too cold at night nor too hot during the day. Windows were therefore considered unnecessary since the maximum level of human comfort defined in terms of heat and air supply inside the rooms is achieved through the choice of materials and air circulation between the room and the veranda.

The door frames of Yoruba houses are of small dimensions; they are about one-and-one-half feet in width by about four feet in height.[27] Ojo

classified the traditional doors into three: (i) a curtain woven with the inner soft part of palm-branches; (ii) that made from a number of palm branches held together with two or three sticks driven through them; (iii) a wooden panel usually of one piece.[28] These door-types show the influence of the environment in the choice of building materials, whose durability is an important decisional variable. Palm trees grow abundantly throughout most of Yorubaland and, if the branches are allowed to dry a bit before being made into a curtain of various types, they can last at least six years.

The last class of doors is considered to be the most superior so that its use signified distinct considerations of rank and prestige.[29] It was usually elaborately carved and brightly painted. The tropical hardwoods were used to carve this type of door in order to resist the ravages of insects. Here again, the environmental factor, durability as well as social prestige and level of technology are variables which justify the use of this door. The Yoruba door is not meant to lock out thieves and intruders into the single family's privacy, but rather it is intended to prevent the domestic fowl and animals from entering the sleeping rooms. In fact life in the compound is corporate; the feeling of solidarity is very strongly developed among the members, who not only lend goods but offer free services to one another, and the children move freely from one part of the compound to the other.

The rooms have strong ceilings which are made of rafters of palms arranged in a lattice and plastered with thick mud. As a result of this, the room remains dark both day and night. The ceilings, like all the other

elements of Yoruba houses, function in various ways that reflect both the economic, climatic and social variables that in sum total determine a houseform. Thus the space between the roof and the ceiling is used for storing agricultural produce such as yam (isu), cassava (paki), maize (agbado) and cotton (owu) which will be consumed during the famine season that lasts from April until July. Some of these are stored until the time when maximum profits may be made and this again is during the famine season. The access to this important store is from the veranda side, where the "roof slants to rest on supporting pillars placed in front of the inner walls of the room".[30]

The mud, being a poor heat conductor slowly releases at night the heat it has absorbed during the day and consequently rooms remain comfortably warm even during the cold harmattan season. The same property of the ceiling makes heating by log fires very effective during the cold season, at childbirth, or a time of sickness that necessitates confinement in the room. It is also capable of keeping off whatever small amounts of rain leak through the roof.

The compound is built of mud; lateric soil which bakes under the heat of the sun is normally the choicest soil-type for the mud. The compound walls are seven feet high on the average, and there are seven layers (Fig. 5a), each being about a foot thick.[31] These walls have mud foundations, and the structure looks solid since the compounds are built to last about one hundred years.[32] However, the compounds of the swampy, coastal parts of Yorubaland are built with rafia poles. Walls are usually built of a timber framework that is then doubled and rendered with mud. In spite



Fig. 3

The inside of a Yoruba compound, showing a section of the veranda and the courtyard.

Source: Mabogunje, Urbanization in Nigeria.

of the use of rafia poles, the compound in this part has the same form as those in other drier areas. Thus the form of the house may be seen to be characteristically Yoruba, with building materials varying with locality and availability. To this extent, "they make certain forms impossible, and, in acting as a tool, they modify forms".[33]

The effect of the environment is further evident in the roofing and thatching materials which some scholars use as a criterion for the zonation of houses in Yorubaland.[34] In the coastal lagoons, palms are used for roofing and thatching; the hardwoods of the tropical forests are used in the forest zone while the grasses of the savannah area serve the same end in the northern parts of Yorubaland. However, houseform is not drastically altered because of variations in the roofing and thatching materials. The roofs are all saddle-shaped with a side slanting outwards away from the courtyard and the other inwards to the courtyard. This is what Ojo called "impluvial or rain-collecting architecture".[35]

The rectangular or circular-shaped open space within the compound is known as the courtyard (Fig. 2a) (agbala) and this varies in size from one part of Yorubaland to the other. In fact it is a function of the numerical size of the lineage group that lives in the compound. The household density varies greatly; in Oshogbo,it ranges from fifteen for the smaller lineages to 500 in the larger ones;[36] Igbo-Ora has an average of from five to twenty,[37] Fadipe suggests an average of 40, Bascom, for Ife, a range of 70 to 140.[38] There is a clear relationship between the household population and the areal extent of the courtyard. This space is used for tethering the domestic animals, particularly the sheep and the goats, and as a poultry run.[39]

Some of the indoor activities which normally take place on the veranda may also be carried on in this open space; and it may contain a well for the supply of water for the domestic consumption of the householders.[40] The courtyard usually contains a drought-resisting shrub and wooden supports for pots containing potions. The shrub serves as a time indicator through the variations in its shadow length; the potions are kept ostensibly for the wellbeing of the lineage by the bale, whose duties include nursing the sick members of the compound,[41] and taking remedial measures to prevent an outbreak of epidemics. The area of the courtyard decreases with time since it is often used for constructing more rooms when the need arises. This may come about as a result of male members of the lineage getting married and therefore requiring more privacy. This is an aspect of growth by internal fission that is characteristic of Yoruba rural settlements and urban growth.[42]

This growth process involves the piece-meal demolition of the compound and the erection of new ones on the old site, where the great grandfather was buried. Erecting a house on the burial ground of the lineage ancestors is considered "a great achievement, a sign of gratitude to the father's spirit, and an evidence of pride in one's paternal heritage".[43]

There is a major entrance gate to the compound and this is located opposite the section of the compound that is occupied by the head of the family. The strategic location of the bale's apartment in relation to this main gate enables him to know who is coming in or going out of the compound. This is one of his numerous responsibilities to the compound members. There is occasionally a minor outlet gate located along the side. At night and

in times of danger the gates are closed by strong double wooden doors.[44] Yoruba houseforms can be classified into three types on the basis of their architectural complexity. The analysis given above refers to commoners' compounds, which constitute the objective of this paper. The second class is the compound of the quarter chief, which is generally built on the same pattern as those of the ordinary extended families. However, there are two or three courtyards, but the number depends very much on the chief's rank in the traditional government headed by the Oba, King. There were in the past usually two courtyards, an inner and an outer; the chief and his wives had the former to themselves while the latter was used for receiving the inhabitants of the compound, more especially on ceremonial occasions such as the religious celebrations. The compound of the chief forms the nucleus of the lineage residential quarter, adugbo. The traditional palace, the Afin,[45] is the third class and it is the most complex; this was designed to conform to the belief that the Oba was "the archpriest of the living members of the society,[46] and he was expected to live in the Afin "unseen, unheard and untouched except on the few but important occasions when he performed his spiritual and political duties".[47]

Yoruba houses of all classes are an institution wherein the bale has legislative, executive and judicial powers which he wisely uses to ensure maximum and, ideally, frictionless interaction among all the members of the lineage living in the compound. The pattern of behaviour within the compound is culturally determined, and the forms of social intercourse strongly influence the elements of house discussed above.

B. Building Materials

Yoruba houses are constructed through the judicious use of the resources of the environment, more particularly the soil and the trees of the forest and the grasses of the savannah. The use of materials is decided by tradition, religious proscription, concern for durability, and location within Yorubaland. Traditional use of environmental resources is based on centuries of experience which has taught householders the most appropriate materials for the various parts. The durability of these is equally important since compounds are meant to last for a long period of time during which only minor repairs are expected to be made. The religious taboo on some materials is partly derived from these factors and partly from the medicinal perception of the resources. Thus the use of some tree-types, or grass-types is not only considered unwise because they do not last for a long time, but because they are a lineage taboo, or they are believed to bring bad luck to householders who use them.

The compound walls are built of mud, the lateric soil is the choicest soil-type for this. With the exception of the swampy coastal south, lateritic soil of various qualities is everywhere common in Yorubaland. The coastal area has soil-types that vary from dark saline to dark fresh-water mud, sands and clays and these are not particularly good for building purposes. The compound walls have seven layers, and each is roughly one foot high and one foot thick (Fig. 5a). The choice of this type of soil is due to the fact that it is relatively more resistant to the weathering processes of the tropics, where the total annual rainfall varies from 72 inches in the coastal area to about 50 inches in the northern part. The height of approximately seven feet is a convenient one since it creates enough vertical space between

the floor and the ceiling. This allows free, erect movement of the householders without being hindered by the mats and the skins of animals, meant for sitting and lying upon, which are rolled up when not in use and placed on pegs which project from the ceiling.[48] The thickness of the wall is meant to make it strong, and this also ensures that both the erosive and weathering processes cannot significantly weaken it in a short span of time. The climatic effect of this material is that both the sun and the rain are effectively kept out with the result that the interiors remain cool and dark all day.

The same material is also used for plastering the lattice of palm rafters of the traditional ceiling. This is allowed some two weeks to dry before the compound is roofed, so that the material will be hardened. It will then be effective for storage of farm products, as well as giving a strong protection against fire which was a great threat in the past.[49]

Local materials are also used for roofing and thatching the houses; the materials used depend very much on availability. In the relatively drier, northern parts, the predominant material is grass, especially guinea grass, ikin, but the resources of the adjacent forests are also utilised. (Fig. 5a). Roofing materials within the rainforest zone consist of wooden poles of varying sizes which are commonly used as girders, beams, rafters and joists. The lattice that holds the thatch is plaited from mid-rib poles of the oil palm and wine palm (Fig. 5b). Some of the climbers of the flora are used as plaiting ropes. Ewe eron (leaves of the phrynium plant), and ewe gbodogi (leaves of the sarco phrynium species) are commonly used as the thatching materials.[50] In the southern, lagoon-fringed parts, rafia palms of various types are used extensively. Their thick mid-ribs are used along with wood

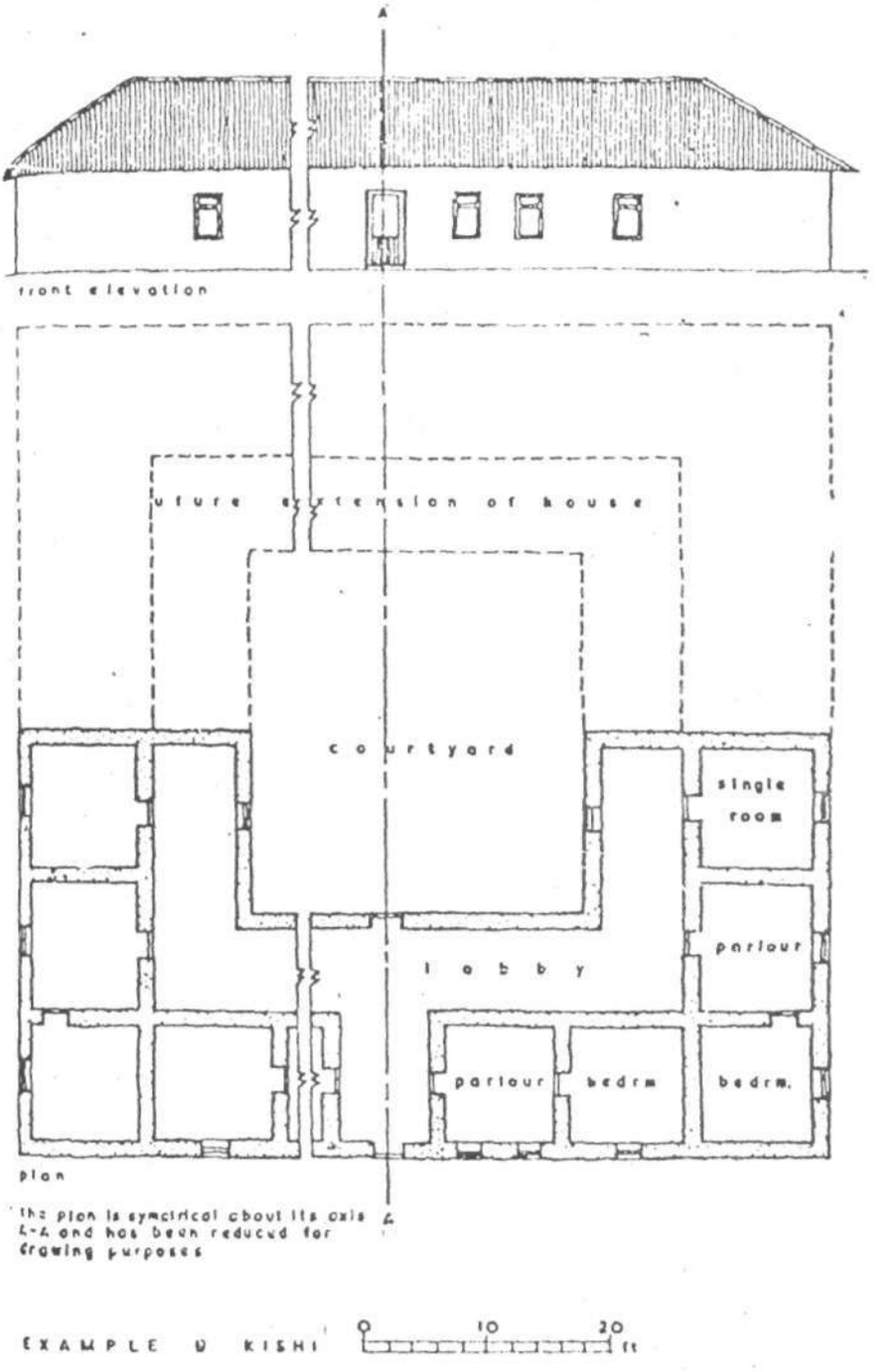


Fig. 4.

A new house style thatis based on the age-long Yoruba concept of a house as a social institution.

Source: Crooke, "Sample Survey of Yoruba Rural Building."

as beams, joists and rafters. The distinction among the three zones of roofing and thatching materials identified is only true to a certain degree, because it is possible to have two roofing materials being utilized within a single vegetation zone. In any case there is a strong correspondence between traditional roofing materials and vegetative cover of the locality (Fig. 6). The choice of roofing materials within a given area depends on hardness, durability, and high resistance to insects so that the various house elements are well protected. Furthermore, the householders feel protected from climatic hazards.

While the Yoruba way of life, shared group values, and the search for culturally ideal environments are the major decisional variables that determine the rectangular, or semi-circular form of the compound and its elements, the materials used for the walls, thatching and roofing certainly modify this basic form. The building materials are in essence a means to an end irrespective of location within Yorubaland.

C. The Processes of House Construction

Houses are constructed after a number of factors-physical, spiritual, social, and economic are seriously considered so that the rigid structure can be of value for a long period of time. The importance of these can be better perceived if it is remembered that the ensuring of lineage continuity is the main reason for the existence of Yoruba compounds.

Site Selection

The site of a new compound is carefully selected, first on cultural grounds which Onibokun vividly describes thus:

> "...members of the extended family have a strong cultural and sentimental attachment to the "fatherland" (i.e. the portion of the urbanland traditionally belonging to the family). Underlying this conception is the belief that a person must be buried under his own roof. As a result, surviving children of deceased heads of households jealously and sentimentally safeguard the burial grounds of their fathers. In cases where the compound house inside which the great grandfathers were buried are now in ruins, the children strive to rebuild on the ruins".[51]

Thus having a house on the ruins of the old compound, or continuous with those of other members of the lineage, is an achievement and a manifestation of an identification with the lineage group. This desire to identify with one's lineage is what Lloyd called an obligation to build a house on the family land, regardless of one's wealth. In his studies of two large Yoruba towns, Ondo and Ijebu Ode, he observed that:

> "...the rich trader builds his house on the land of his kin group adjacent to those of the poorest members of his family".[52]

Non-conformity with the cultural variables in the choice of a site is attributed to the shortage of land for further expansion within the old compound areas, and the wish for greater independence on the part of the younger generation.[53] but then "each man returns to his own compound within the town to exercise his social, traditional and political rights".[54]

A secondary factor of site selection is physical. Compounds are built on natural flat plots within the site. Such physical irregularities as the mole-hills, depressions, ant-hills marches and exposed rock mass[55] are avoided. Consideration is also given to the drainage of the site so that the courtyard could be maximally used all the year round. Thus a suitable gradient for the compound will be such that the subsurface channel through which the water that collects in the courtyard finds its way out.

Orientation of traditional houses is also related to the cultural factors that determine houseforms. There is a general tendency towards

compactness rather than dispersal and this helps to emphasize the blood relationship of the inmates of a group of compounds known as adugbo, quarters or ward. This reflects the tendency for members of a compound to be inward looking and this is equally true of the people who inhabit the wards. This compactness of compounds with little space between gives the impression of disorderliness, but in reality a subtle order based on socio-political structure of the society binds the compounds together. This structure makes the quarter chief's compound a local focus, and the Oba's palace a town's center of socio-cultural gravity.

There is no ideal pattern for orientating the houses in response to the environmental forces, particularly the climate, but instead strong ceilings and roofing help to shield compound inmates from rain and the direct rays of the sun. The orientation pattern is therefore mainly due to the hierarchy of the traditional government, which is made up, starting with the lowest order, the head of the lineage, bale, the quarter chief, Olori Adugbo, and the Oba, the crowned King, whose centrally located palace can be regarded "as the emblem of Yoruba architecture".[56]

Until recently house building was usually carried out communally in such a fashion that a "man can invite his relatives, his friends, or members of his club to form a working bee, Owe.[57] It is the lineage group that is the primary work group, however. The members of the working bee are normally repaid with food (such as amola, iyan, isu, etc.) drinks (emu, palm wine, burukutu, beer brewed from maize and guinea corn, and refreshments crombo, oranges, obi, and gbania, kola nuts). However, the working bee concept is fast dying out now because of the prevalence of wage labourers, and the

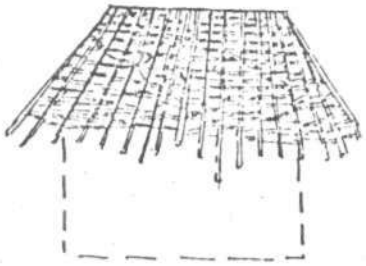
availability of money to hire them. This is a recent development consequent on the introduction of cocoa as the main cash export crop in the greater part of Yorubaland.[58]

There is labour specialization based on sex at the various stages of house construction. Male members are much more involved than the females; the former clear the site, mix the mud, erect the walls, provide the thatching and roofing materials, for the ceiling, and finally roof the house. Men and male youths are all involved in various ways. Walling specialists are now available but their technical knowledge is not of a high enough degree that they could be clearly classified as a social group. Most walling tradesmen work free for their kinsmen or are paid a token amount.[59] The women's role is chiefly in the preparation of food for the working bee, and they get water from either a nearby well or from a stream for mixing the mud.

The convenient time for the construction of the traditional house is the dry months of November to April. This is another effect on the Yoruba house building process of both the climate and the subsistence economic system. This period is the most convenient because the main lull in the farming year is during this season and this makes it less difficult for many people to combine farming and building activities with little serious overlap.[60] The wall of the new building is normally erected a short while after the rains "when collections of water can still be found in pools, potholes and depressions or nearby streams".[61] With little overcast at this time of the year, the layers of the mudwall that are piled on one another at an interval of four days have the best prospect of continuous sunshine which bakes them.



(a) A small rectangular model house with layered walls and grass roof.



(b) The thatching lattice prior to roofing.

Roofing Materials



(c) Leaves



(d) Grass

This is also the time when the roofing and thatching materials are abundantly available and more readily accessible because of the relative ease with which both the forest and the tall savannah grass can be penetrated.

There is a time sequence in the construction processes, starting with the erection of the layered, mud-walls, with the preceding layer being allowed to be sun-dried before another was added. The time interval is usually four days, which means that the building stage takes over a month to complete. The ceiling is next worked upon and, depending upon the size of the compound, it may take two to three weeks to complete, after which it is allowed to be sun-dried for some ten days. Roofing and thatching follow as soon as the walls and ceiling are thoroughly dried and this does not normally take more than a few hours to two or three days;[62] the amount of time spent depends on the size of the compound and the number of people working on it. The floors of the rooms are filled with reddish lateric mud, and this is allowed to harden after several days of floor "beating" with flattened sticks. Mud beds are also erected at this time. The floors are then polished with dark green material that results from the fermentatin of leaves, ilinrin: This is extended as background to the bright colours of the white designs on the wall. This last stage, before occupation, is carried out by the "wives of the house". The occupation of the house is normally preceded by a sacrifice to the lineage ancestor, who are believed to have influence on the relations of living persons to one another. As a result of this, there are:

> "...elements of both fear and veneration in the Yoruba attitude towards their ancestors for, in addition to blessing, the ancestral spirits can bring misfortune, temporary or eternal, to their descendants".[63]

The various stages of the building processes may not necessarily be completed during a single building season. It may take two or more seasons before the compound is occupied; much depends on the labour force available and the speed of work, and, in the present day, on the financial resources.

The use of domestic (family) and community (village or towns) labour, and the need to invoke the spirit of the ancestors for protection for all members of the lineage, imparts meaning to the traditional compound as a social institution.

II. HOUSE FORM - CREATING FACTORS

A. Socio-Cultural Factors

Yoruba compounds are built for members of the lineage who have a common ancestor. The inhabitants are collectively known as the idile. The lineage reckoning is patrilineal, which means that affiliation is through the male line, a child becoming a member of his father's lineage whose taboos he respects.[64]

Three types of lineage membership have been identified in Yoruba society by Fadipe; these are blood membership, relationship by marriage and the non-legal secondary membership.[65] The blood membership refers to all to whom relationship by blood can be traced both in the paternal line as well as in the maternal. Patrilineal reckoning is much more common over the greater part of the society, although Lloyd regionalised the cultural realm into two with the northern half reckoning through the father's line, while the southern half have matrilineal descent.[66] Marriage by and large is virilocal so that a woman goes to live with her husband; this is the basis of Fadipe's second type of kinship. Non-legal secondary lineage membership is relation-

ship neither by blood nor by marriage, but by the choice either of both parties or of one with the tacit concurrence of the other. This type corresponds to Bascom's foreigners of the compound, Alejo, who are considered members of the lineage for most practical purposes. However, they, and their children cannot inherit the headship of the lineage.

Members of an adile have certain rights, duties, and privileges, some of which are the rights of residence in the lineage compound and to work idile farmland outside the settlement. Members are expected to exchange economic goods and services, to adhere to the lineage occupation, and to make contributions to the marriage ceremonies of members as well as to the burial expenses of the lineage elders.[67] It is therefore a corporate residential group defined by reference to the most distant ancestor, Orisun, (literally, progenitor) who is the symbolic figure of the lineage unity and who gives his name to the lineage. Functions performed by public and formal arrangements such as the old age pension scheme, health insurance, and the social security scheme[68] in the developed countries are performed in Yoruba society by, and for, the members of the extended family. The compound, a common residence of the lineage group, functions as a place where its members can share daily personal intimacy and its unity is strengthened by economic and spiritual bonds through the ancestral worship.

The corporate spirit that prevails within the lineage group is primarily due to the influence of the ancestor, who is considered immortal and to whom all members owe allegiance. The ancestor is believed to:

> "... provide sanctions reinforcing accepted social behaviour and generates a series of reciprocal rights and duties among members that are paramount factors in the corporate unity and solidarity of a lineage".[69]

The ancestor is worshipped by all members of the compound hence Fadipe's

claim that this worship is the "most ancient and the most universal"[70] and is very prominent during funeral ceremonies. He is therefore the main focus of the compound.

The bale is the most important and the eldest male living member of the compound, whose status is prescribed because of his age, and whose position is traditionally considered sacred. It is on this basis, age, the ordering principle in the compound and in the society at large, that the bale is able to command the respect of the householders. He has a number of duties to perform to the lineage members, and seven of these were enumerated by Fadipe.[71] The bale is expected to preserve peace and order within the compound so that there could be maximum interaction among members with a minimum of friction. As the chief law-giver and magistrate of his compound, he is expected to settle quarrels between husband and wife, between co-wives of the same polygymous husband, and between other members of the compound. He punishes anti-social behaviour such as theft, incest, disrespect for elders, and the misdeeds of young people who break the peace of the compound. His legislative powers include the fixing of the time to return to the compound at night, and issuing such orders from time to time as to what is to be done in cleaning the compound or in cleaning its surroundings.

These functions are considered in the design stages of the compound, hence his apartment is set apart in the compound with one of his rooms serving as a "court" of family "justice", as well as being the "sick bay" for members of the compound. The compound is the smallest unit of the traditional government in that the bale represents the Oba in that section

of the town. The compound is therefore an important primary group, albeit the smallest political unit in the society and its government is like that of the town or village at the micro level. Thus the bale is a member of the socio-political hierarchy of authority in the society at large.

The second component of the lineage are the male members who belong to it through blood relationship. The males individually constitute the second level of authority within the compound in that they are heads of the single families, whose sum total make up the greater proportion of the lineage membership. Their rooms and those of their wives are allocated to them by the bale according to the possibilities offered by the building. The single families are individually and collectively responsible to the bale, the head of the lineage government who in the past was "responsible to the town or village authorities for raising the taxes imposed upon his compound and for raising the levy of men either for public works or for military purposes".[72] Each family confines its attention to its own part of the compound, hence the more intensive use of the veranda per family. However, this does not mean there is not much free communication. In fact most of the life of the compound is passed on the veranda so that it is only a limited amount of privacy that is possible.

Women members of the compound belong to the extended family through marriage but it is the male members who form the de facto extended family group. The women members are primarily perceived as rearers of children who ensure family continuity. They are therefore a decisional variable in the design of compounds which must be spacious enough to have a room for a woman and her children, and an access to the part of the veranda

adjacent to her room to be used, among other things, as the kitchen. The role of women is further seen in the fact that they are responsible for the welfare of their daughters and their sons, at least until the latter are old enough to work with their fathers in the field.

The inclusion of the courtyard and the veranda as the medium of effective social intercourse among the lineage members is due to an element of the psychology of the Yoruba, which Fadipe describes:

> "The Yoruba derives a great deal of strength from being in company as contrasted with being left to himself. Being far more of an extrovert than an introvert, he feels his pain relieved by the expression of concern and sympathy on the part of others and his labours are lightened by the same process".[73]

Thus while the ancestral worship reinforces social behaviour in the lineage and its government headed by its eldest and, according to custom, wisest male member, strives to ensure the prevalence of corporate spirit among members; the psychological desire for meaningful interactions in part contribute to the creation of an open space within the compound. The courtyard serves as the place of worship of the ancestors. It is also the recreational ground for everyone to play the game of avo either under the shade of the shrub or under the shadow of the roof. An aspect of this recreational function is the evening story telling to the children by the elders, and this is meant to instill morals and ensure cultural constancy.

The compound is therefore a multifunctional institution that caters for residence, storage, recreation, religion, and meaningful social interactions among the lineage members. These functions are under the direct control of the bale through the judicious execution of his legislative,

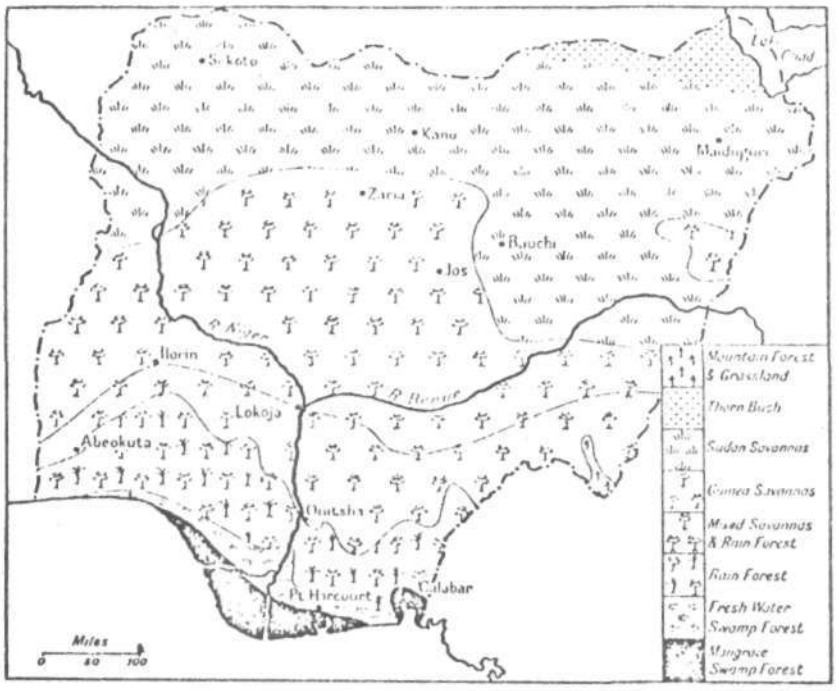


Fig. 6

Vegetation Zones of Nigeria.

Source: Perkins and Stembridge, Nigeria: A Descriptive Geography.

judicial and executive powers invested in him by tradition. These functions of the house account for the Yoruba attitude towards the house; thus it is with pride that one refers to ile temi (my house) agbo ile wa, the family compound and ile baba mi, my father's house. This is proudly carried a degree further by the different attitudes towards one's own town and a town where one earns his living. To an immigrant Yoruba,

> "...the new place, whether a large city or a metropolitan center, is a "farm", and his original home town, whether it is a village or a hamlet, is a home".[74]

Thus the socio-cultural factors are very significant ones in the analysis of the determinants of Yoruba houseform.

In what ways does the climate affect the houseform? How is the perception of the house influenced by the environmental factors which are a part of the variables to be considered in a house that caters for all the circumstances of life? The next section focuses upon the question of the influence of environmental factors upon the Yoruba houseform.

B. Physical Environmental Factors

While Yoruba compounds have a physical form that ensures their function as a socio-cultural institution, the importance of climate appears to be that of a modifying factor. It is a secondary factor of the form-generating forces to which houses respond through the use of certain materials, orientation and structure.

The degree to which the Yoruba utilizes the resources of the environment in building his house has been analysed elsewhere in this paper. This section will point out the pertinent relationships between these and the climate. Yorubaland lies between six and ten degrees north of the equator; it is therefore characterised by all-year-round high temperatures, with the

annual average being 80°F. Both the diurnal and annual ranges are small. The annual rainfall ranges from 72" to about 50"; the rainy season decreases in length from twelve months on the coast to about 9 months in the northern parts. Relative humidity is high all the year round in the southern parts, but it is only so during the rainy season in the interior. The cold, dry season increases in length from the coast to the interior. Climatic elements to which Yoruba houses respond are rain, heat, wind and solar radiation. As a result of this response, the various parts of the building may be considered environmental control devices which make houses function effectively to protect the way of life being carried on in the compounds. The deliberate choice of mud as a building material is due to its great capacity to retain heat and to its relatively high degree of resistance to the erosive work of the tropical downpour. It is capable of absorbing heat during the day and releasing it during the night. Inhabitants are also sheltered from rain and the direct sunlight. The universal saddle-shaped roofs (i.e. a roof pitching from a central beam downwards on four sides) of Yoruba houses is a response to the climatic elements, particularly rain. The importance of this response may be associated with the environmentalist view of the Yoruba house, but this would be a wrong interpretation. The environmental adaptation that is so evident in the houses could be viewed as expressive of the level of building technology.

Strong winds characterise the rainy season, so long eaves are deliberately designed to shelter the very intensively used veranda. The eaves also help to protect the wall from the strong, violent winds that precede this season.

The building materials and design do take account of the major climatic stresses, nevertheless the primary influence on architectural design remains socio-cultural. This influence provides the perceptual framework of a house as an ideal social environment that is institutionalised whereas the climate is a modifying factor.

III. RECENT INNOVATIONS TO HOUSEFORMS

Changes which have taken place in Yoruba houseform may be viewed in evolutionary perspective. Changes now seen are consequent on the cultural-contacts with the western world. The chief cultural agents have been the missionaries, the colonial administrators and the repatriated slaves from Brazil, who returned to Lagos and Abeokuta in the last century. However, the new architectural concepts were adapted to the cultural environment, and this plus the phenomenal changes in the other cultural variables caused Schwab to consider the whole of Yoruba society to be transitional:

> "...in the sense that the old is in the process of disintegration and new forms are rapidly emerging. However, it is the internal and traditional patterns that determine the particular form and direction of the effects which the external alien forces of change exert".[75]

The Main Factors of Change

The "external alien forces" that Schwab referred to are the introduction of new religions, Christianity,and Islam, and an economic system which, collectively, work towards weakening the socio-cultural factors, i.e. the lineage system as a houseform determinant. The Yoruba lineage system is being seriously weakened, according to Bascom, by four major forces.[76] Increased mobility, consequent upon the end of the intra-ethnic war in the last century, is considered to be one of these factors. This is facilitated by the development of new forms of transportation, particularly by road and

position, role and prestige have been very seriously undermined. This effect results from the introduction of party politics which made the Obas "become the pawns on the chessboard of the politicians".[78] The head of the lineage is no longer an effective representative of his family, and his ritual role is now being performed by the churches and mosques.

Christianity and Islam are relatively new in Yoruba culture; they were both introduced only in the last century. These,along with western education, are components of the agents of cultural erosion which lead to the breakdown in the importance of compounds as the basic unit of the society. The two religions strongly preach the concept of a nuclear family to their new converts. This idea of "one man, one wife" was expressed in terms of ownership of building as "one simple family, one house".[79] In accordance with the doctrines of the new faiths, a convert builds a house separate from the compound of his lineage group, he has full authority over the members of his immediate family and often has his parents, brothers and sisters living with him, but he does not live entirely outside the intercourse of members of his lineage.[80]

Yoruba architecture is therefore very strongly influenced as a result of socio-economic developments that accompanied contact with the western world. The effects of these changes are through the use of new building materials, and the introduction of a new architectural style.

New Materials for New House Styles

The resources of the environment which were considered important for building purposes in the past are now generally thought of as being inferior. This change of perception is due to the main factors of change



Fig. 7

A "Brazilian" house.

Source: Mabogunje, Urbanization in Nigeria.

rail, which the British Colonial government designed to establish Pax Britannica as a means to full access to economic and political domination of Yorubaland and other parts of Nigeria.

Money economy, through the introduction of cocoa about 1900, is another weakening factor. This important export crop is dominant in the forest section of Yorubaland, and, along with palm oil and palm kernel, served to put substantial sums of money in the hands of many individuals, both the farmers and the traders, the latter an economic class that emerged from the new economic system. Differences in income and wealth give rise to individual differences in tastes and expectations; the effect of this development was felt on kinship ties and family authority. However, major impacts were the strains and stresses which were imposed on the form and design of the compounds, in that the 'improving' members of the lineage were anxious to break up the compound and to enclose and improve their portion of it.[77] This compound disintegration and its replacement by modern, single-family units gives rise to growth by fission, or in situ growth in urban centres. The economic factor of disintegration is also responsible for building new, single family houses in places outside the sacred, family land; this is more so in towns where there is a shortage of land. In the rural areas, this leads to "elongated growth" along the approach roads, but away from the other members of the lineage in the old compound. However, contact is still maintained with other lineage members.

The imposition of British political ethics also has destructive influences on the society, especially over the Yoruba traditional elites, i.e. the head of the lineage, the quarter chiefs, and the Oba, whose status,

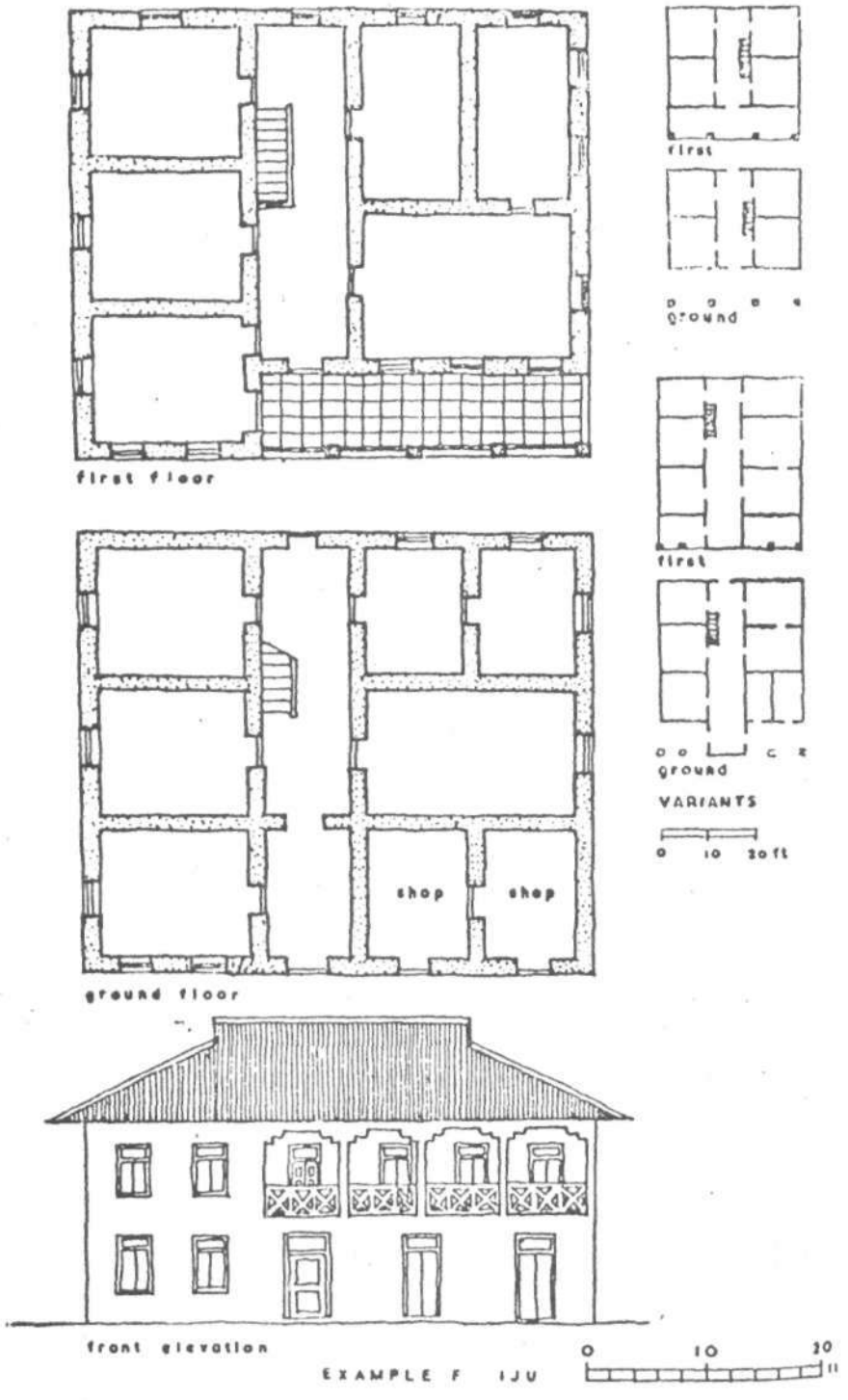


Fig. 8.

A variant of "Brazilian" architecture; this is a popular variant in both the urban centres and rural areas of Yorubaland.

Source: Crooke, "Sample Survey of Yoruba Rural Building."

noted earlier which introduced new and better alternatives. Lagos, a Yoruba town that is now the capital of Nigeria, is the major point of contact with the outside world. It is through here that innovations were received, adopted and diffused to the hinterland. In this respect, Lagos is the gateway not only to Yorubaland but to the whole country.

The replacement of the mud wall by baked-brick wall was the first change introduced in the second half of the last century by the American Baptist Mission.[81] This was soon adapted by the other missions, and both the colonial government and wealthy individuals. It was followed by the use of cement to plaster mud and brick houses, which enable the new houses to better withstand the tropical climate. This is a new form of response to the environmental factors and also a means of ensuring a long-lasting house. The new materials were adopted because of these reasons. Cement blocks and stones were later introduced as building materials and so houses in Yoruba towns can be classified now on the basis of the material used to build the walls. A number of these materials are locally available in the raw form, but will have to be "transformed" with the help of industrial technology before being used. Mud, the raw material for brick making, and stones are readily available throughout Yorubaland. Limestone is another local resource that is being used for cement production near Lagos.

Corrugated iron sheets replaced leaves and grass as the roofing material of houses. The material was first used in Lagos, as a means of overcoming the "incessant hazard of fire which was becoming a real threat to the commercial life of Lagos in the mid-nineteenth century"[82] Sawn timber is now used for the framework of the roof instead of flexible poles and sticks.

This material is both fire and rain proof, and so now commonly used in all parts of Yorubaland especially since the end of the second world war. The shape and pattern of compounds and the new, single family houses are still basically what it was in former days. There was a post war boom that resulted from the accumulated profits from the sale of cocoa. This is the major reason for the diffusion both further and further geographically and lower and lower on the economic scale of these new materials and houseforms.[83]

The traditional even skyline which was so characteristic of Yoruba settlements, is now a thing of the past because of the new building designs for both private, public and religious uses. The new building types that have recently changed the townscape are the government offices, churches, mosques, and privately-owned houses. The commoners' houses have two basic designs: a rectangular one-storey house with a central communal space from which sleeping rooms lead off on either side, and the "Brazilian" - style storey houses, petesi or ile oke.

The first type of housing design is more widespread in the rural areas. New building materials are used and there are windows, and doors that can be padlocked. The corridor is used in some areas as the kitchen(Fig. 2b). In the case of the latter, there is an open space between the main house and the kitchen and this serves the same functions as the courtyard of the old compound. Most of the old compound courtyard functions can also be performed in the common corridor. The kitchen is regarded as the domain of the women and a self-respecting male member will not frequent it. The new house type is essentially a compound on a different scale, and neither the use of the new, more durable materials, nor the design to accommodate a nuclear family have changed its meaning in an institutional sense.

The second model was introduced by the ex-slave returnees from Brazil, hence its name, the "Brazilian Style". (Fig. 7). This design "involved the use of numerous ornamental frills to doorways, pillars, balconies and verandas, as well as the application of bright colours to the house".[84] Like the first model, it has a common corridor onto which rooms open from both sides (Fig. 8). The model is an adaptation of the compound pattern to a new architectural style in that it houses a group of closely related people, it has a backyard for cooking and storage, and in which the domestic fowl are also penned. In some cases, it forms just a section of the larger compound which may serve as the residence of the male members of the family, or only that of the bale (Fig. 4); it faces the street while the compound is partially hidden behind it.[85]

The rate of adoption of any of these models depends considerably on the wealth of individuals. A poor farmer who cannot afford all the new materials may adapt the rectangular model, and use the traditional building materials. The storey house is a sign of affluence and "the greater the number of storeys, the higher the regard for the owners' command in the society".[86]

CONCLUSION

The Yoruba house is a cultural institution which is expressed by its physical structure. The spiritual focus of this institution is the ancestor, whose worship was formerly much more important than at present. All members of the lineage are emotionally tied to each other through having a common ancestor and this strongly influences all the other aspects of life within the compound. This particular component of the institution can

be considered as the spiritual foundation.

The existence of family residential quarters in Yoruba towns and villages is due to the influence of the ancestor because all members of the family are obliged to build on the family land. Thus the site of a compound is determined by this component. Further direct influences of the ancestor are manifested in the building labour force, which is mainly made up of the lineage group, and the family religion. The latter is, of course, the cult of the ancestor to whom sacrifices have to be made annually for his protection over, and blessings on, his descendants. As a result of his significant influences in the family, the day-to-day relationships among members of the lineage are also affected by him.

The compound has an organizational form which is fully incorporated with the other levels of administration in the society at large. The lineage head, whose ultimate source of authority is in the ancestor, heads the compound's government. His energies are therefore devoted to building on the spiritual foundation through the exercise of his legislative and judicial powers. In performing this role, the lineage head technically functions as the link between the family ancestor and the living members of the lineage. This explains why he has a separate and spiritually dignified apartment in the compound which facilitates carrying out his numerous roles that are significant to all the members of the compound. He also has profound influences on the architectural conventions of the compound such as the size of the individual elements of the compound, and he oversees all the states of the building operation. This institutional component can be viewed as an administrative one which ensures the prevalence

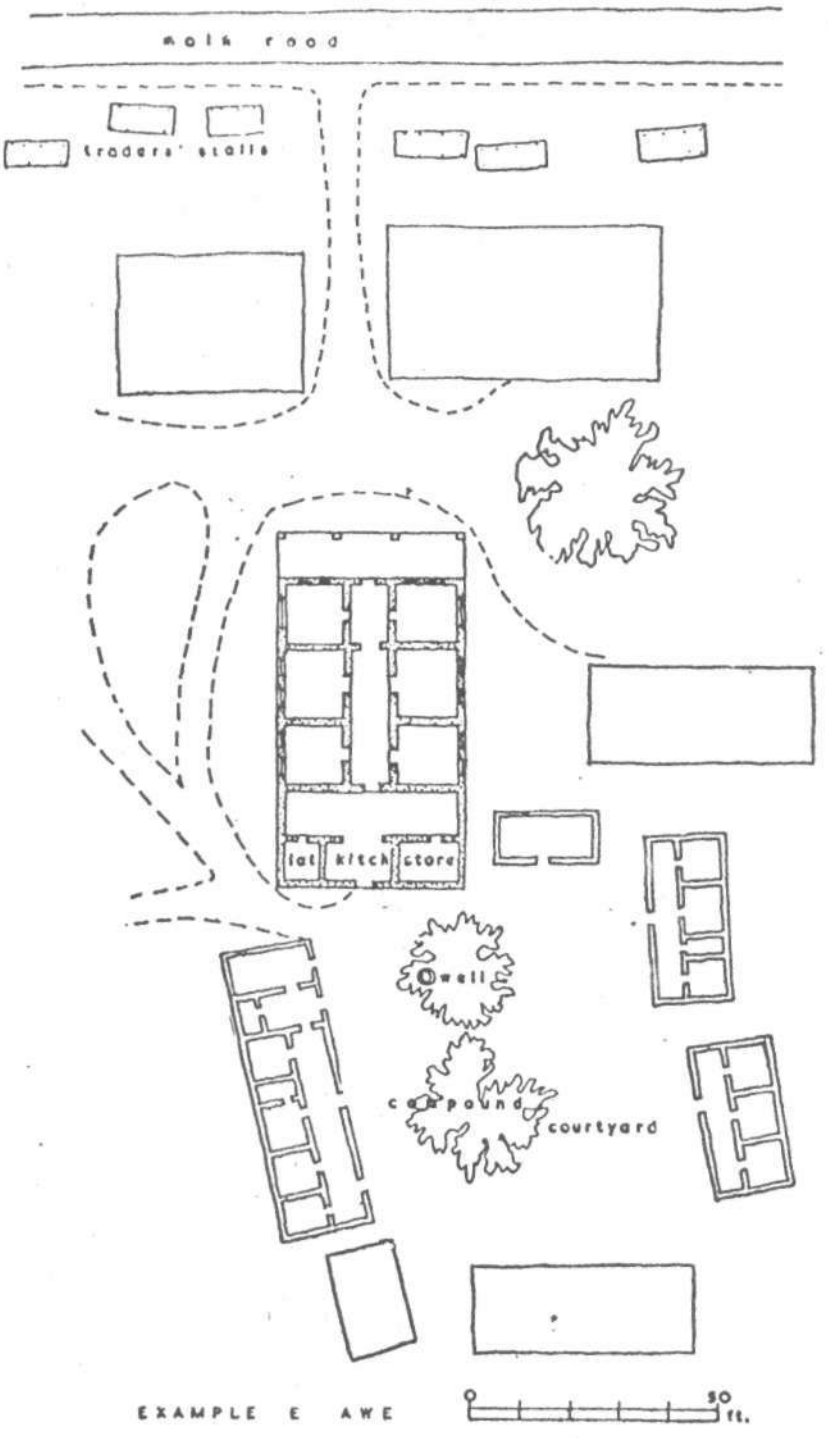


Fig. 9.

Another variant of "Brazilian" house with a courtyard that indicates a strong relationship between old and new Yoruba house styles.

Source: Crooke, "Sample Survey of Yoruba Rural Building."

of the corporate spirit among all members of the lineage as well as the non-members living in the compound.

Through good administration of the head of the extended family and the constant invocation of the ancestor's name, the compound is one of _la coexistence paisible_. This is because meaningful social intercourse among all lineage members is facilitated by the two components discussed above. The intercourse is not only verbal, but it is also in terms of exchange of free service and economic goods. The free exchanges lead to the acceptance of a philosophy of interpersonal relationship that can be summed up as a collective ownership of goods and a collective responsibility for the socio-economic welfare of all members of the family.

This explains the general attitude of the male members of the lineage towards the "wives of the house". The latter group are individually regarded as "our wives", the "wives", in turn, regard all the individual male members, both adults, married or not, and the children, as "our husbands". Furthermore, the "wives of the house" regard the female members, who are married and therefore living outside of the family compound, as "husband". This attitude is primarily enjoined by the direct and indirect influences of the spiritual foundation of the compound, whose head ensures that the corporate spirit prevails without much friction. These complex relationships within the compound inmates constitute the third major component of this Yoruba institution, that is _social intercourse_. This is an important variable that is taken into account in the planning stage of the Yoruba compound. The intensively used veranda and the courtyard are two major elements of the compound that facilitate uninhibited social

interactions among members of the lineage.

The spiritual foundation, and the administrative and social intercourse components make up the institutionalisation of the Yoruba compound. These structural components are very intricately interwoven and therefore not separable in reality. They constitute the socio-cultural factors that determine the Yoruba compound in terms of site choice, position relative to other parts of the town, orientation, building materials, and the individual elements of the building. Since they define what the architectural design of the compound is, it could be said that they create the ideal environment which makes possible the eternal existence of the institution.

The environmental deterministic view of the Yoruba compound as a mere place of shelter appears to be one based on lack of full understanding of what the compound represents. The evident influences of the environmental resources on the house do not justify the perception of it in this framework. As a structured institution, the compound puts into consideration all circumstances of life of the Yoruba, hence its multifunctional purpose. In view of the analysis in this paper, it is quite apparent that a meaningful approach to the study of the Yoruba compound in this particular respect is that it adapts to socio-cultural as well as the physical environment. The adaptation process involves making possible the creation of the ideal form as well as its modification. These in turn facilitate the efficient functioning of the compound as it is socio-culturally designed.

The exposure to outside influences has a lot of impact on the coherence of the lineage and hence on the houseform. However, these influences in sum total amount to putting "new wine in old bottles". Thus the use of new

materials and the introduction of new house styles do not radically alter the Yoruba's conception of a house as an institution. The use of new materials is a new way of responding to the physical environment. The newly introduced styles are in many cases a compound on a lower level from the old, traditional one because they are similarly structured and are still multifunctional.

It is this institutionalisation of the compound that accounts for the Yoruba's pride in it. The compound has an emotional meaning: the physical expression of the organic nature of the lineage that, until very recently, defined an individual's social, economic and spiritual life.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Murdock, G.P., Social Structure, (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1949), p. 3.

[2]Ibid., p. 92.

[3]Lloyd, P.C., "The Yoruba Lineage", Africa, vol 25, 1955, p. 242.

[4]Ibid., p. 241

[5]Schwab, W.B., "Kinship and Lineage Among the Yoruba", Africa, vol. 35-36, 1955, p. 353.

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[47]Ibid., p. 134.

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[69]Schwab, W.B., op. cit., p. 351.

[70]Fadipe, N.A., op. cit., p. 116.

[71]This section is largely based on Fadipe's detailed analysis of the bale's qualifications, duties, and responsibilities on pp. 106-109 in The Sociology of the Yoruba.

[72]Fadipe, N.A., Ibid., p. 109.

[73] _____., Ibid., p. 107.

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[79] _____, Yoruba Culture, op. cit., p.155.

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