Indigenous Architectural Knowledge and Urban Informality: A Qualitative Study of Climate Resilience in Self-Built Settlements of Addis Ababa and Dar es Salaam, 2004

J, u, a, n, N, d, o, n, g, M, i, k, o, ,, J, o, s, é, E, l, á, N, s, u, e, ,, M, a, r, í, a, N, s, u, é, A, n, g, ü, e

Abstract

Background: A research gap exists in African studies regarding the role of indigenous architectural knowledge in fostering climate resilience within urban informal settlements. This study focuses on self-built settlements in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, during 2004. Purpose and objectives: The purpose was to explore how indigenous architectural practices contribute to climate resilience in these specific urban informal contexts. The objectives were to document these practices, analyse their adaptive mechanisms, and understand the constraints affecting their implementation. Methodology: A qualitative, comparative case study methodology was employed. Data collection in 2004 involved semi-structured interviews with residents and builders, direct observation of housing, and analysis of settlement layouts in selected areas of both cities. Findings: Findings indicate that residents employed specific indigenous knowledge to moderate local climate effects. Practices included strategic building orientation for ventilation, use of locally sourced, permeable materials, and raised foundations for moisture management. However, the efficacy of these practices was consistently constrained by land tenure insecurity, material cost, and spatial density. Conclusion: The study concludes that indigenous architectural knowledge constitutes a significant, yet under-recognised, resource for climate adaptation in these settlements. Its potential is limited without addressing the structural

precarity of urban informality. Recommendations: Urban policymakers and planners should recognise and integrate context-specific indigenous knowledge into upgrading programmes. Priorities for 2004 included securing tenure to encourage investment in resilient housing and supporting access to affordable, suitable building materials. Key words: urban informality, climate resilience, indigenous knowledge, architectural practices, self-built settlements, Addis Ababa, Dar es Salaam, qualitative study, 2004 Contribution statement: This study provides empirical, comparative evidence from 2004 on the specific mechanisms linking indigenous architectural knowledge to climate resilience in two major African cities, offering a grounded perspective for urban studies and policy discourse.