

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (21393) - UNDERSTANDING SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN INDIGENOUS ARCHITECTURE BY SETTLEMENT FORMS AND DESIGN APPROACHES OF KHOISAN AND BANTU PEOPLES

Hasan Basri Kartal¹; Mehmet Emin Şalgamcıoğlu²

1 - Istanbul Technical University PhD student; 2 - Associate Professor in Istanbul Technical University

Background and objectives

Diversification of architectural products among indigenous cultures shows self-organisation and self-adaptation patterns embedded within each culture. Investigating these patterns and their evolution is essential for promoting local, ecologically adaptive, sustainable and energy-efficient architecture and planning. Conventional approaches and universalist attitudes in architecture, urbanism and urban planning tended to ignore the characteristics of architectural morphology in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study examined the forms of indigenous dwelling and evolution of traditional housing of Khoisan and Bantu peoples, two big ethnic groups of sub-Saharan Africa that live relatively isolated and non-industrialized rural lifestyles today. The study aimed to fill the lack of literature on indigenous dwelling principles and housing form development of the local tribes in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

The primary method is qualitative research that focuses on settlement morphology investigation, theoretical conceptualizing and discussion based on the studies of researchers Ambe J. Njoh, Susan Denyer, Richard W. Hull and Labelle Prussin.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

The outcomes showed the materials and techniques used in local architecture vary according to climatic conditions. The indigenous housing design uses light frames, round plans, and natural materials, requiring less labour and energy. The African indigenous and traditional dwellings and settlement patterns sit a particular African architectural thought. The most important finding is that circular-planned houses have been used more than rectangular-planned houses in African local architecture due to the functionality and aesthetic concerns.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

The study contributed to overcoming the one-sided perspective within the architectural historiography's tradition, as examining the African indigenous architecture would be highly productive for architectural design, architectural theory, urban planning and sustainable urban studies. The discussion would support the idea that the architectural knowledge of the Sub-Saharan indigenous and traditional architecture would also be invaluable for new interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary fields of study centred on architectural anthropology and ethnography.

Palavras-chave : African Indigenous Architecture, African Indigenous Planning Attitudes, Sub-Saharan Indigenous Tribes, Housing Forms, Settlement Morphology