Socio-ecological Perspective on National Building Codes and the Missing Requirements for Disabled Persons in Nigeria

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Abstract
A single factor is not sufficient to give a holistic picture of disablement practices and experiences. Using a socio-ecological model, the purpose of the study is to identify the requirements of disabled persons in the national building codes (NBC) in Nigeria, and determine whether the requirements are officially excluded or included. This paper studies the requirements of disabled persons at the policy level and their impact on individuals with impairments. We review the document of the NBC to identify the policy requirements of disabled persons in the 21st century. In addition, a qualitative method is used to collect data on the experiences of disabled persons in an institution of higher education. To improve the validity of the content analysis, 19 disabled students and staff in tertiary institutions are interviewed. The analysis of the collected data reveals that there are missing requirements for disabled persons in the NBC, and that the built environment presents a barrier to disabled persons. Thus, converging evidence exposes a yawning gap between the policy provisions and the requirements for the attention of policymakers. The need for an urgent review of the decades-old policies is in conformity with the wishes and needs of disabled persons as potential users of the built environment. Revealing a holistic picture of disablement practices and the experiences of disabled persons is connected to bridging the gap between inequality and disability in developing countries with comparative predicaments.

Keywords: Accessibility; Disabled Persons; Disability; National Building Codes; Policy; Social-ecological Model;

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Dear Mr. Ahmed,

Thank you for submitting your manuscript to Habitat International. I have completed the review of your manuscript and a summary is appended below. The reviewers recommend reconsideration of your paper following major revision. I invite you to resubmit your manuscript after addressing all reviewer comments.

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Comments from the editors and reviewers:

Reviewer 1

The manuscript addresses a highly relevant topic: the relationship between building codes on the one hand, and disabled people's experience on the other hand. The manuscript adds to the existing knowledge by documenting the gap existing between these two in the specific context of Nigeria.

There are several points at which the manuscript shows room for improvement: addressing these points would considerably strengthen the manuscript:

- the manuscript mentions that "very few studies examined the policies in relation to the integration of PW in the built environment," If there are studies who examined this (however few), I would expect (a) references to these studies and (b) a discussion of their findings (by way of related work/state-of-the-art for the presented study);
- the manuscript starts by presenting 3 models of disability. The description of the social model is rather high-level and doesn’t entirely correspond to how other authors tend to understand this model; I would recommend the author(s) to have a look at the following sources:

The social ecological perspective seems to be the most important one for this manuscript, yet it is discussed only very briefly (with 1 references that doesn’t seem to match). If this perspective is so important for this study, I would expect a more thorough discussion of it.

- It is unclear to me where Figure 1 comes from or what it is based upon. Is it taken from another publication, or is it made by the author(s)? In the latter case, based on what?
- The methodology section is structured in an unusual way, and is missing crucial parts; a more common (and more logical) way to structure it goes as follows: design; setting; sampling; data collection; data analysis; reliability of the analysis; ethics. While the order is not that important, it is important that all elements are addressed.

As to the setting, it’s not entirely clear to me why the author(s) chose to collect data in an institution of higher education offering special education for disabled people. In the findings, the suggestion is made that this setting was chosen because of the expectation that it would be more considerate of disabled people’s perspective than other settings. If this is the case, the author(s) may want to mention this motivation more explicitly.

Regarding the sampling: what were the inclusion and exclusion criteria?

The part on data collection is now partly describes the data analysis (for the document reviews). For the interviews a description of the data analysis is missing (the only thing that's mentioned is that it was analyzed using software).

Any information on ethics is missing entirely (e.g., was approval from an ethical committee obtained; what measures did the author(s) take to ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical way).

- In table 1 and 2 it's unclear to me whose 'remarks' are listed in the last column; the authors? the participants?
- In the discussion section there are a few elements missing (e.g., how do the findings relate to other studies (see comment above)? What are limitations of the study that might have affected the results? What are directions for future research?

Language use:

- the text would benefit considerably from proofreading by a native English speaker;
- any language used to describe issues of disability is understandably politically charged. In this manuscript, the term ‘people with disabilities (PWD)’ is used. Given that the manuscript adopts a social ecological perspective on disability, I find this choice a bit puzzling. This phrase suggests that disability lies in the person, which corresponds more to an individual/medical model of disability. At some points, the author(s) use ‘disabled people’ which I find more logical and more in line with the notion that one becomes disabled by several factors in a given environment. Also, I’d be careful with labelling certain language use as ‘wrong’; conventions vary between countries and cultures, and evolve over time. Moreover, controversies about language use exist even among disabled people themselves.

In summary, the manuscript addresses a highly relevant topic and promises to make an important contribution to the state-of-the-art. However, several points need to be addressed before it can be published as journal article.