

THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE VALUES OF A NUPE COMMUNITY IN NIGERIA

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This thesis is dedicated to my beloved wife Hajara and the children, Munir, Nabil, Khalil & Safira for their endless love, support and encouragement.

“Thank you for your sacrifice during this PhD journey”

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ABSTRACT

Cultural landscape is the way of life of people as they relate to their environment. Over time, values are culturally developed by people as they relate to the environment in both tangible and intangible forms. However, preconceived western concepts have continued to influence policies on cultural landscapes which have led to unsuitable physical planning especially in developing nations including Nigeria. Furthermore, minority ethnic groups such as the Nupe in central Nigeria have been subsumed under the major ethnic groups of Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo especially on literature and government policies. This has thus undermined the livelihoods and culture of the Nupe as a minority ethnic group. Correspondingly, there exists a global call in which UNESCO is at the forefront advocating for the need in the preservation of values and identities of cultural landscapes. The thesis, therefore, sets out to study the cultural landscape values of a Nupe community in Nigeria through the perspectives of the inhabitants. Consequently, due to the phenomenological nature of the research, ethnography was employed in the solicitation of data. This involved an eight-month participatory stay with the Nupe community. The data gathered were through four sources which include participant observation, photographs, field notes and interviews. The data gathered were content analysed using QSR Nvivo 10 software towards the generation of categories and factoring into comparative groups of themes. In addition, the transcribed data were subjected to word frequency counts for contrast and comparison of all the data collected. It was then followed by contextual mapping of words to generate the cultural values. The results show that the cultural values associated with the key attributes of the landscape which include the professions of the Nupe people, the family structure, the architecture, and the natural landscape. The findings were the loading of cultural values in both the tangible and intangible forms leading to the formulation a grounded theory. The nexus of the theory stipulates that the leadership of *Dazhi*, the natural landscape feature of the hill, the fruit trees, and the courtyards defined cultural values of the Nupe community. Most importantly, the findings have policy implications of spatial planning, designs and social transactions of the Nupe ethnic group.

ABSTRAK

Landskap budaya adalah cara hidup manusia hasil perhubungan mereka dengan persekitaran. Lama kelamaan manusia akan membangunkan nilai-nilai berdasarkan budaya dalam bentuk ketara dan bukan ketara hasil perhubungan mereka dengan persekitaran. Namun, konsep barat yang dianggap terus mempengaruhi dasar-dasar berkaitan landskap budaya yang telah membawa kepada perancangan fizikal yang tidak sesuai, terutama sekali di negara-negara membangun seperti Nigeria. Lagipun, kumpulan minoriti etnik seperti Nupe di Nigeria Tengah telah di dominasi oleh kumpulan etnik utama seperti Hausa, Yoruba dan Igbo, terutamanya berkaitan dengan kesusteraan dan dasar kerajaan. Keadaan ini telah menjejaskan kehidupan dan budaya Nupe sebagai satu kumpulan etnik minoriti. Sehubungan dengan itu, wujudnya suatu suara global dimana UNESCO menyokong keperluannya untuk memulihara nilai-nilai dan identiti landskap budaya. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji nilai-nilai landskap budaya komuniti Nupe di Nigeria dari perspektif penduduknya. Oleh sebab kajian ini bersifat fenomenologi, kaedah etnografi digunakan untuk memperolehi data. Kaedah ini telah melibatkan kehidupan bersama dengan komuniti Nupe di Nigeria Tengah selama lapan bulan dimana data tersebut dikumpul melalui empat sumber termasuk pencerapan oleh pengkaji, gambar, nota lapangan dan temubual. Data yang dikumpul telah melalui analisis kandungan dengan menggunakan perisian QSR NVIVO 10 untuk menjana kategori dan perbandingan kumpulan yang bertema. Tambahan pula, data yang telah di salin juga telah melalui pengiraan kekerapan perkataan untuk tujuan membeza dan membanding data yang telah dikumpulkan. Ini diikuti dengan pemetaan konteks perkataan untuk menjana nilai-nilai budaya. Keputusannya menunjukkan bahawa nilai-nilai budaya dihubungkan dengan ciri-ciri penting landskap termasuk kerjaya orang-orang Nupe, struktur keluarga, seni bina and lanskap semulajadi. Penemuan kajian menunjukkan bahawa nilai-nilai budaya dibentuk dalam secara ketara dan tidak ketara yang seterusnya membawa kepada pembentukan suatu teori yang kukuh. Intipati teori menegaskan bahawa kepimpinan *Dazhi*, ciri landskap semulajadi bukit, pokok buah-buahan dan halaman rumah telah mendefinisikan nilai-nilai budaya komuniti Nupe. Yang penting sekali, penemuan kajian memberi implikasi kepada pembentukan dasar berhubung dengan perancangan ruang, rekabentuk dan transaksi sosial yang berkaitan dengan kumpulan etnik Nupe.

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GLOSSARY OF NUPE TERMS

- Asali* - Place of origin and also used as being indigenous
- Chigbe* - Medicinal Herb, remedy and medications mostly from tree roots, leaves and barks
- Dangi* - Kin and blood relations
- Dango* - Soft grass used for reinforcing the mixture of mud in construction
- Dazhi* - The name of the village head of Doko and also the name of a clan in whose lineage have been leading the community.
- Dende* - The native name for the telecommunication mast found on the hill which was installed by the British engineers during colonial rule.
- Dzoro* - Collective and also a cooperative farm work organized on a rotational basis within a given age group of friends
- Dzuko* - Market space and also commercial transactions
- Dzungi* - Small private side entrance into the compounds and also a link from one courtyard to another
- Edo* - The granary mostly build of mud and used for the storage of grains
- Edoko* - Old name of Doko
- Efako* - A family system of the Nupe community which is based on the collective work on a large parcel of land for the collective good of the family. Members of this family could also be non-biological and all have equal rights social transactions
- Efo* - This has various uses which include its use to mean time and period in relation to events
- Ega* - A mud pen usually built of mud to house chickens, goats, and pigeons, they are usually located within the

	-	compounds
<i>Egba</i>	-	The name of the master mansion
<i>Egbangi</i>	-	Named from <i>egban</i> (congregation space)
<i>Egbe</i>	-	The calling of associations and relationship of group to collectively work on a project. It usually involves physical labour such as clearing of the roads, farm projects for the community or even the village head
<i>Eguko</i>	-	A place of convergence for ritual
<i>Ejegi</i>	-	Name of a stream
<i>Eka</i>	-	Multiple contextual uses to mean season or period
<i>Emi</i>	-	Home
<i>Emitso</i>	-	Literally means the owner of the house, but mostly refer to the leadership of the compound
<i>Enunu</i>	-	Farming
<i>Etsu dzuko</i>	-	The market chief as well as leader
<i>Ewon</i>	-	A large depression of land that gets flooded annually and used for fishing
<i>Eya</i>	-	It means age and also a year
<i>Gbagbako</i>	-	Manually plowed ridge of 30-60cm thick made across as embankments at the rice farm to control the level of water.
<i>Gbanchi</i>	-	A fig tree, of which there are two species found in the Nupe community (<i>Ficus platyphylla</i>) grown to provide shade in compounds
<i>Gbara</i>	-	Manually plowed ridge of about 15-20cm thick
<i>Gbigba</i>	-	It means praise, reverence, glorification and worship
<i>Gozan</i>	-	A name given to the person whom collectively offer multiple services of haircut, native medicine, circumcisions, manicure, and tattooing
<i>Gunnu</i>	-	An old Nupe traditional religious practice which involves rituals of anti-witchcraft, anti-crime, and also fertility of the women.
<i>Kata</i>	-	Bedroom

- Katagi* - Literally means a small room for cooking, kitchen
- Katamba* - An entrance hall builds original of circular form, it serves as an entrance and also a place for receiving guests
- Kin* - Motherland or region
- Kintsozhi* - The upland Nupe people
- Konufu* - The name of a compound whose profession is mainly of gozan.
- Kukpe* - A system of building of mud wall in which the base is made thick of about 600mm and thins out as it reaches the roofing level to about 300mm
- Kuti* - God, idol, cult, masquerade, oracle and also communication with the deity
- Kyadya* - The riverine Nupe man and also the canoe man
- Lati yan efo* - The period of farm activity from sunrise to afternoon last for about 6 hours (10am to 4pm)
- Lozungi* - The period of farm activity from in the evening two hours before sunset (4pm to 6pm)
- Manfu* - The Islamic cleric's house
- Nanche* - A cooking spot mostly open and within the courtyard. It is made of three large stones in which fuel wood is utilised for cooking
- Ndamitso* - The owner of the compound which also means the head of the compound
- Ndasonkyra* - The title of the person elected to head a group who serve as a comforter of misfortune or tragedy in the community.
- Pafi* - A system of building mud walls in which dried mud blocks are laid one after the other using wet mud as the binder
- Pati* - The hill surrounding the Doko community which also served as the first place of settlement for the community.
- Sakafugi* - A period of going to the farm before the break of dawn to the rise of the sun, it takes about two hours of work.
- Shegi* - A mat made of reed grass which serves as a blind for the

		doorway
<i>Shikpata</i>	-	Toilet
<i>Takogi</i>	-	A section of the village located down the valley
<i>Toro</i>	-	A ditch excavated on a mud quarry, which is continually filled with water during the dry seasons to soften the surrounding mud for easy digging
<i>Tsoede</i>	-	The cultural hero of the Nupe people, who was born in ca 1500 and referred to as the founder of the Nupe kingdom
<i>Tswata</i>	-	The name of a compound whose profession is Blacksmithing
<i>Wasa</i>	-	Anti-snake portion which is placed in little sacks or suitable containers around the premises to protect such places from dangerous reptile. It is also used as an antidote of snake bites and sometimes used also as an antidote for witchcrafts. It is also a ritual associated with the performance of the anti-snake portion
<i>Wuru</i>	-	Shade
<i>Yekun</i>	-	A cylindrically shaped oven built to a height of about 1200mm and a diameter of 900mm split in the middle with a sieve-like decking used for quicker drying of grains during the raining season.
<i>Zaman</i>	-	Period
<i>Zhempa,</i>	-	A courtyard
<i>Zhitsu</i>	-	Old name for the village head of the community

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The chapter introduces culture, cultural landscape development and how it has been pioneered by the geographers. This is followed by an overview of the paradigm of thoughts which looks at values in both tangible and intangible forms. It further deals with the problem statement, aims and objectives of the research, and significant of the research. Furthermore, the scope of the study was discussed while the concluding part of the chapter gives an outline of the structure of the thesis which is made up of 8 chapters.

1.2 Research Background

The cultural landscape is composed of culture, the landscape and the people. Each of these three components on their own are not without complexity of definition as such, they are operationalised for this research in the following sections.

1.3 Landscape

Culture involves social transactions, endless history of social transactions of people living within a community. It is the collective perspective and a way of living of the members of a given community (De Aranzabal *et al.*, 2008; Palang *et al.*, 2011). Culture is a complex web of beliefs and values constituted by people living within a community (Marcucci, 2000). The transactions of these people are shaped by the landscape and culture (Stephenson, 2008).

Communities have over time learned to live with the landscape to provide what they need in form of gathering, hunting and agricultural practices. In doing so, traditional knowledge is developed towards an adaptive management and resilience of living in a given landscape (Adams, 2010; Berkes *et al.*, 2000). Adaptive management stems from the culture of the people who used such landscape and with an inherent strong cultural landscape value developed. Historically, the dictation of how landscapes are to be read and understood were dictated by the Europeans ideologies and thus forced on colonized territories (Njoh 2008). However, in recent times those landscapes that escape the onslaught of Europeans are seen as the 20th century wild places of great natural values. This transcends into the way people have lived such that indigenous knowledge are developed in activities such as building construction, the management of livestock and the use of energy (Adams, 2010). It therefore means that, traditional knowledge and how indigenous people transact with their landscape is important towards the attainment sustainable development (Kim 1998).

However, the pioneers of landscape studies were the geographers and the focus of the early studies, was mostly on the tangible and biophysical aspects of the landscape. The developments of rural landscape by geographers were structural and archaeological such as mapping of rural population distribution Yang *et al.*, (2012). Similarly is the study of bioclimatic effects of landscape features such as the study of the Influence of Mountains on precipitation (Cotton, 2011). It is termed structural because emphases of these researches are more on how the landscape has been shaped, its features and past histories. Similarly, the landscape has over time evolved

and got adopted into various fields such as psychology, sociology and ecology. This has further increased the diversity in the interpretation of landscape and its application.

However, for this research the definition is on the transaction of people with their landscape and the meaning and values they derive from such landscapes in both tangible and intangible forms (Lemelin *et al.*, 2015; Vejre *et al.*, 2010). Accordingly, the transactions of communities with their landscape over time get clearly articulated with proper names during a long period of people's transactions with the environment (Antrop, 1997; Douglas, 2014). These names are generated and embedded with meanings which define the values associated with them by the people. Furthermore, in such transactions, the cultural landscapes are heavily affected by socioeconomic activities that take place in the respective environments (Torquati *et al.*, 2015). The socioeconomic activity of most rural African communities is farming. It is expected that farming activities would have an influence on the cultural landscape of Nupe community. The extent to which, it will have some effects on their values, beliefs and spatial transactions.

1.4 Problem Statement

Cultural landscapes are characterised by uniqueness while globalization and the adaptation of western cultural landscape concepts is becoming a threat to the uniqueness of cultural landscapes (Antrop, 2005). This problem is more in the developing countries such as Nigeria, where cultural studies are not carried out, especially in the minority ethnic groups, (Nasongkhla, 2010). Furthermore, in a general perspective the researches carried out on cultural landscapes have been done on western landscapes. This can be seen in the works of Bender *et al.* (2005); Lee, (2007); Palang, *et al.*, (2011); Ruiz and Domon, (2012); Sevenant and Antrop, (2007).

The African continent has little cultural landscape studies directed at it despite its richness in cultural heritage. For instance, Nigeria with a population of

over 160 million people (NPC, 2006), and with over 250 ethnic groups has government policies focused on the three ethnic groups of Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo, (Adegbija, 2004). This is what Audu (2014) referred to as a conspiracy against minority ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Nupe ethnic group is amongst the second tier of major ethnic group in Nigeria (Adegbija, 2004). They have a population of over 1.5 million and also have major settlements in two states of the Niger and Kwara. Furthermore the importance of the Nupe ethnic group has seen it being noted amongst the fourteen communities celebrated by the Muslim reformer Sheik Usman fondue in the early 18th century (Musa, 2004; Sarki, 2010).

However, despite this historic significance, only few scholarly works have been carried out. And the few studies on the Nupe ethnic group were by the expatriate scholars, Christian missionaries and the Muslim clerics and the end of the mission of these people in Nupeland also brought about an end to the scholarly works on the Nupe people. The effect of this is the gradual loss of identity and cultural heritage of the Nupe people. The Nupeland is further made vulnerable due to its location within the center of two major ethnic groups, the Hausa of the North and the Yoruba of the south of Nigeria. For these reasons, the lack of extension on the previous studies leaves an academic and policy gap on the Nupe ethnic group.

The importance of studies on minority ethnic group has continued to be in the forefront of intergovernmental organisations such as UNESCO. The director general of UNESCO, Bokova (2015) stated this:

“Cultural sites have a universal value - they belong to all and must be protected by all. We are not just talking about stones and buildings. We are talking about values, identities and belonging”

This suggests that cultural heritage is not limited to the physical structure but also include the values people ascribe to their landscape and what it means to them. And when this view of the people is understood then the identity of the people can be documented and thus lead to preservation both in its tangible and intangible forms.

As such the preservation of these cultural identities, especially those of the Nupe ethnic group which is devoid of research on its cultural landscape, calls for an exploratory study (Glaser and Strauss, 2009). This is because of the scanty nature of literature about the Nupe social transactions on which to build upon. And for an exploratory study on people's perceptions, beliefs and values, ethnography therefore becomes a good medium for the elicitation of such type of phenomenological data (Biklen, 2010; Blasco and Wardle, 2007). Consequent upon this, ethnography is therefore chosen for the gathering of data in this research about the Nupe cultural landscape transactions.

1.5 Research Aim and Objectives

It is established that much study does not exist on the cultural landscape transactions of the Nupe people. Thus, it behooves that the Nupe ethnic group grounded theory is developed towards fostering the understanding of the Nupe people's transactions with their landscape.

Cultural landscape transaction is mainly composed of the people and their landscapes. The proposition guiding people and landscape transactions are in the fulfillment of the biological needs of food and shelter. As such people's transactions extend beyond the immediate space of abode to include places where such biological needs are fulfilled (Appleton 1975). The primary unit of social transactions is the family unit (Hareven, 2015). As such, it became imperative to include the Nupe family structure as well as their basic transactions with the landscape. While, the boundary of spatial transactions is guided by the extent to which the daily needs of the people in the community is fulfilled.

Furthermore, the theoretical stance for this study is that there exist a strong relationship between landscape character and the socio-cultural life of the people who occupy such landscapes (Cieraad, 2006). Thus the culture and occupation of the Nupe people is expected to influence how spaces are configured and also how transactions occur. It is to be considered that the elements of the cultural landscape include both man-made and the natural landscape features such as the streams and vegetations. The summation of all the foregoing thus leads to the understanding of

the cultural landscape values of the nupe community, which thus informs the aim of the research.

1.5.1 The Research Aim

The aim of this research is to develop a grounded theory that defines the cultural landscape values of the Nupe community.

1.5.2 Research Objectives

It is to be noted that the objectives of the research are guided towards the fulfillment of the research aim which is the development of grounded theory. As such three factors needed to be considered as they constitute the basics of the cultural landscape transaction, occupation, the family and domestic space as well as the landscape.

1. To determine the basic family structure of the Nupe people and the cultural landscape transactions within the domestic space,
2. To determine the spatial transactions of the indigenous professions of the Nupe community with the landscape; and
3. To determine the tangible and intangible values of indigenous professions' transaction within the Nupe community.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

Ethnographic approach to cultural landscape studies requires a lot of time to be spent with the people (Hammersley, 2010). As such, for an effective ethnographic work to be carried out within the span of the time available for this work, only one

Nupe community is chosen for the cultural landscape studies. Although in the present time, it has been documented that there exists over 78 well established Nupe communities in Nigeria (Yahaya, 2003). However Nadel (1942) anthropological work outlined 12 towns to have been those that formed the nucleus of Nupeland. As such a choice amongst this town would be a good representation of the cultural heritage of the Nupe ethnic group. Doko town belongs to one of the historic towns that constituted the nucleus of the Nupeland. As such, it is chosen for this study. Furthermore, for an ethnographic study, it suffices that only one case study can be carried out for an in depth understanding of the cultural landscape values (Biklen 2010). Hence, in this research, all references made to Nupe community are ascribed to only one case study, which is Doko town and not to the entire Nupeland.

1.7 Significance of Research

The faith of each landscape lies in the hands of the people who inhabit them. It has therefore become necessary to move beyond external description, to how people value, understand, perceive, and derive meaning from their landscapes, (Taylor and Lennon, 2011). The multi diversity and cultural relationship of local people makes it paramount to have cultural landscapes studied in various settings (Ruiz and Domon, 2012). The cultural landscape studies of Nupe community will bridge the void created in literature of the Nupe ethnic group. Furthermore, ethnographic approach to the cultural landscape studies will give an additional dimension because most studies carried out on cultural landscape are quantitative in nature as exemplified in (Brown and Raymond, (2007); Calvin, (1972); and Houehanou *et al.*, (2011). Similarly, the ethnographic dimension will allow data to be gathered based on the perception of the people and thus towards the formulation of theory. Likewise, the protection of the indigenous cultural landscape of minority ethnic group will help in the preservation of cultural identity and heritage (Bokova, 2015). Furthermore the documentation of the transactions of the Nupe ethnic group with the cultural landscape will help in the integration of Nupe ethnic group cultural values in Nigerian government policies.

1.8 Structure of Thesis

The thesis is structured into eight chapters. Chapter 1 is already captured in the foregoing sections of this introduction. Chapter 2 introduces culture and its definitions. It is then followed by the description of the cultural landscape and the scales in which various professionals assess cultural landscape. The chapter further looked at cultural landscape value dimensions which include the tangible and intangible forms. Furthermore, people's space and place relationship were explained, followed by the constituents of phenomenological study as it relates to Prospect and Refuge Theory. A substantial part of this chapter, which is also the concluding part delved into the mythology, history, political system, the landscape character and the family social system of the Nupe community as a whole.

Chapter 3 deals with the method use in this research. The first part of this chapter focused on the philosophical paradigm and the theoretical framework applied for the research. Positivism and constructivism were discussed and the inclination towards constructivism was explained. Furthermore grounded theory was discussed as a frame for guiding the explorative research as well as its connection with the use of ethnography for the elicitation of data from the field. It further discussed how such ethnographic data are elicited through participant observations and the conduct of interviews. The concluding part looked at how the data are analysed. This thus paved for the results and discussion Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Chapter 4 starts with an overview of the study community and its landscape character. It then delved to discussion on the Nupe people basic family structure, values and its relationship with the domestic space. In this chapter discussion include family leadership and its influence on the use of space. It also discussed the cultural values of the Nupe people and the influences it has on how the male, the female and children transact within the domestic space. Concluding this chapter is the synthesis of what constitutes the most essential domestic space and architecture of the Nupe community.

Chapter 5 discussed the indigenous professions in the community which are the farmers, the *gozan* (local barbers) and the traders. It also describes how cultural values are exhibited by these professions in relation to the landscape features of the hill, water, trees and the market space. The role of the leadership *Dazhi* and its cultural significance in the whole transactions is also narrated.

Chapter 6 discusses the community cultural values in its intangible forms and how it shapes the activities of the people in farming, trading and the traditional barber's practice by *gozan*. This is followed by a discussion on the values of the community which is embedded in leadership, security, local names (toponym), marriage, and the concept of time. The matrix of these values and the practice of these indigenous professions were discussed towards the emergence of the cultural values. Such values include the concept of time and the effect of old traditions of idol worship on the transactions of the people. Similarly, cultural values associated with security in its tangible and intangible forms were discussed. This is then followed by toponym, which elaborated on the cultural naming of spaces and their meanings. In addition the annual ritual of *wasa*, its values and the role played by each member of the community are also discussed. The concluding part looked at the values associated with the conduct of marriage and its influence on spatial transactions.

Chapter 7 deals with the analytical process which leads to the formulation of the grounded theory. It describes how the thematic process evolves towards the choice of the core category for the grounded theory. This is followed by how the core category was validated through another analytical process using the word frequency count. The section further showed how the output of the second analytical process justified and validated the core category chosen for the formulation of grounded theory. Thereupon, a pedestal for the formulation of the grounded theory is built for discussion in chapter 8, the conclusion chapter.

Chapter 8 is the conclusion chapter and it gave an overview of the research. This is then followed by inferences made about what constitutes the basic family structure, its cultural value influence on the domestic space. The chapter further

made deductions on the values of the indigenous professions and their contributory role in the cultural landscape values of the community. Consequently, the formulation of grounded theory was discussed and its implication for the designs and policy of the Nupe ethnic group. The concluding statement was for the application of the method in more cultural landscapes.

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