THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE VALUES OF A NUPE COMMUNITY IN NIGERIA

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Architecture)

Faculty of Built Environment
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

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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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Alhamdulillahi Rabil Aalamin, for granting me good health, strength, wisdom and the completion of this thesis.

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Isa Bala Muhammad
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

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>iv</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td>vi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>vii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xxiii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xiv</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</td>
<td>xviii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF APPENDICES</td>
<td>xxii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Research Background 1

1.3 Landscape 1

1.4 Problem Statement 3

1.5 Research Aim and Objectives 5

1.5.1 The Research Aim 6

1.5.2 Research Objectives 6

1.6 Scope and Limitations 6

1.7 Significance of Research 7

1.8 Structure of Thesis 8

2 CULTURE AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE 11

2.1 Introduction 11

2.2 Culture 11

2.3 Cultural Landscape 12
2.4 Cultural Landscape Scale 13
2.5 Cultural Landscape Value 14
   2.5.1 Tangible and Intangible Values of Landscape 16
2.6 Space, Place and Landscape Character 17
   2.6.1 Family and Domestic Space Transactions 17
   2.6.2 Components of the Built Up Space 18
   2.6.3 Architecture and Segmentation of Space 19
   2.6.4 Toponym and Cultural Landscapes 21
      2.6.4.1 Toponym Ontology 22
2.7 Theoretical Framework 23
2.8 Phenomenological Study 24
   2.8.1 Time Space Routines 26
2.9 Prospect-Refuge Theory and Cultural Landscape 27
2.10 Grounded Theory Application 29
2.11 Nupe Community and Landscape 31
   2.11.1 Nupe Mythology of Origin and Leadership 33
   2.11.2 The Nupe Landscape 42
   2.11.3 Nupe Religion 46
   2.11.4 Cultural Myths and Beliefs 48
2.12 The importance of Nupe cultural Landscape 49

3 RESEARCH METHOD 51
3.1 Introduction 51
3.2 Philosophical Paradigm 51
3.3 Positivism 52
3.4 Constructivism 53
3.5 Ethnography Data Collection Process 54
   3.5.1 Observation of Domestic Space Transaction 56
3.5.2 Observations of the Community’s Transactions 58
3.6 The Conduct of Interviews 61
  3.6.1 The compound Heads Interview Process 62
3.7 Mapping 64
3.8 Data Analysis 65
  3.8.1 Coding Process 66
3.9 Enriching Data Analysis Towards Grounded Theory 67
3.10 Grounded Theory Approach 69
  3.10.1 Emerging Design 69
  3.10.2 Constructivist Approach 70
  3.10.3 The Systematic Design 70
3.11 Reliability and Validity 71

4 FAMILY STRUCTURE AND DOMESTIC SPACE 76
4.1 Introduction 76
4.2 The Study community 76
4.3 The themes Answering Research Objectives 78
4.4 Space and Architecture 81
4.5 Nupe Family Structure 83
4.6 Family Leadership and Space 86
4.7 Family Spatial Transactions 92
  4.7.1 The Children and Domestic Space Transaction 93
  4.7.2 Zhempa (Courtyard) and Family Transaction 96
  4.7.3 Spatial Structure of Courtyard 101
  4.7.4 Katamba- Entrance Hut Transaction 104
  4.7.5 Kata (Bedroom) transactions 107
  4.7.6 Transactions inside the Kata (Bedroom) 110
4.8 The Spatial Character of Kata (Bedroom) 113
5 TRANSACTIONS OF INDIGENOUS PROFESSION WITH THE LANDSCAPE

5.1 Introduction 125
5.2 Farming Transactions in the Community 129
5.3 Traders and Landscape Transactions 137
5.4 Gozan Transactions 138
   5.4.1 The Role of Gozan in the Community 139
5.5 Natural landscape 142
5.6 The Hill 142
5.7 The Cultural Landscape Values of Tree 145
   5.7.1 Spatial Distribution of Trees 146
   5.7.2 The Intangible Values of Trees 149
5.8 The cultural Values of Water 154
5.9 Market Transactions 157

6 TRANSACTIONS OF INDIGENOUS PROFESSIONS AND CULTURAL VALUES

6.1 Introduction 160
6.2 Leadership History and Cultural Values 163
6.3 The Values of Farming and Leadership 166
6.4 Transactions of a Typical Farmer in the Cultural Landscape 167
   6.4.1 Traders, the market scene, and leadership 169
6.5 Gozan and Leadership 171
6.6 The Embedded Values of Nupe Community In Narrations 173
6.7 Community as the Representation of Social
Bond

6.8 Period as a Concept of Time in the Nupe Cultural Landscape 173

6.9 Idol as Represented In the Cultural Landscape 175

6.10 The Intangible Security 178

6.11 Names and Toponym 179

6.12 Rituals of The Community 184

6.13 Marriage in the Community 188

7 THE GROUNDED THEORY OF NUPE COMMUNITY 189

7.1 Introduction 189

7.2 The Process of Grounded Theory 189

7.3 Word Frequency Output 192

7.4 Triangulation of Analysis 200

8 CONCLUSION 202

8.1 Overview 202

8.2 Family Structure and Domestic Space Transactions 203

8.3 Professions and Landscape Transactions 206

8.4 Cultural Values of the Community 207

8.4.1 Farmers and Cultural Values 207

8.4.2 Gozan Values 209

8.4.3 The Women's Role as Traders 210

8.4.4 The Role of Leadership 211

8.5 Summary 211

8.6 The Grounded Theory of Nupe Cultural Landscape 212

8.7 Design Implications 213

8.8 Planning and Policy Implication 214

8.9 Theoretical Implications 214

8.10 Suggestion for Future Studies 215
REFERENCES

Appendices A-F
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE NO.</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Major Nupe Towns in Niger State, Central Nigeria</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Indigenous leaders of Nupe kingdom from Tsoede</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>The Chronology of Fulani Etsu Nupe And Their Reign in Nupeland</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>The Thematic output of themes and codes of the Nupe Cultural Landscape</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>A 24 hour courtyard spatial transactions of families</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>The ratio of built up spaces and courtyards</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>The time schedule of dzoro, daily farming periods</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Doko Nupe Community Farming Calendar and Landscape Indicators</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Species of Trees Found in the Compounds</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>The Intangible values of trees in Doko community</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Toponym of Places and their Meaning</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Word Frequency Count of People, Landscape and Architecture</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>The Frequency Table of Place, Time and Values</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE NO.</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>A Hausa Compound layout</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>The three component of landscape disciplinary interest</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>The location of Nupeland in Central Nigeria</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>The Gbangbara gate and Bangaye Gate</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>The Esso gate and Emitsu Gate</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Etsu Usman Zaki and Etsu Masaba Place</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Etsu Umaru Majigi Palace and the Official Palace</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Nupe Settlement along River Niger and Kaduna</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>The transaction territory of the Kyadya and Kintsozhi Nupe</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Dimension for the conduct of the field work on Nupe Cultural Landscape</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Variables of cultural landscape values</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Spatial layout creation process for the community</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Multiple Sources of Ethnographic data Collection</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>The five node categories of the cultural landscape</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Grounded theory from open coding to axial coding through systematic approach</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>The Research Frame work on cultural landscape values of Nupe Community</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>The hill surrounding the Doko community landscape</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Family and domestic space transactions Diagram answering Research Objective 1</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 The Transactions connectivity map of domestic spaces 82
4.4 A four generation family structure diagram of the Nupe community 84
4.5 Doko community layout 87
4.6 A typical compound made up a common entrance hut (katamba) with several individual courtyards 87
4.7 A ancestral compound layout before expansion 89
4.8 A layout showing change from circular to squared shaped bedrooms 91
4.9 Children, about the age of 2 to 4 years playing under a tree in front of a compound 94
4.10 Children age 4 to 6 playing under the tree with corn stalk in front of a compound 94
4.11 Children observing the landscape and study the tracts left by rodents in the field. 95
4.12 Women sitting under the shade of buildings to perform domestic chores within the courtyard 97
4.13 Women resting under the shade provided by the buildings and the farm products under the sun 98
4.14 Courtyard activity diagram based on time of the day 99
4.15 The shegi blind, a view from inside the room 102
4.16 An illustration of the visual connections of the rooms to the courtyard through the door opening orientations 103
4.17 A courtyard shaped to encourage storm water drainage 104
4.18 Types of katamba configurations 105
4.19 The squared shaped katamba (entrance hut) without windows 106
4.20 Transformation stages of bedrooms from circular to rectangular forms 108
4.21 Pots used as part of the interior furniture of a Nupe
woman’s room

4.22 Pots stacked up from the smallest size on top down to the largest size below.

4.23 The concept of pot décor replaced with enamelled wares

4.24 Circular rooms and shegi blind over the door entrance

4.25 The plan and cross section of yekun (traditional Oven)

4.26 The elevation and interior view of the yekun traditional hearth

4.27 Cross section of pafi (section a) and kukpe (section b) wall

4.28 possibilities of the thatch roof covering on squared and circular floor plan

4.29 Front and rear elevation of the granary

4.30 The plan and cross section of a granary

5.1 The indigenous profession and landscape transactions diagram

5.2 Nodes comparison query of indigenous professions and strength of integration of community’s Transactions

5.3 Nodes comparison query of landscape features and strength of integration in the community’s transactions

5.4 Women washing melon seed in the floods

5.5 A freshly Ploughed ridges awaiting the flood

5.6 The farm ridges gradually getting flooded

5.7 The researcher and the guide on Doko hill

5.8 The diagram of the hierarchy of needs in the establishment of the Nupe community

5.9 Spatial Locations of Trees in a Compound Layout

5.10 People sitting under the shade of a mango for social Transaction

5.11 Youths gather under the shade of Ficus platyphylla for
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>The contextual word map of water</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>The dried gully, supposedly an old river path</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>The scene of the daily evening market for groceries</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Indigenous profession transactions and cultural values relationship</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Nvivo nodes comparison query for cultural values</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>A Sketch illustrating the direction of ridges defining the boundary</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>The sugar cane section of the market</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>The vegetable section of the market</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>The contextual word tree map for community</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>The contextual mapping of the word “period”</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>The contextual word tree map of “idol”</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>Toponym representations in Nupe Community</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>The Dende (telecommunication mast) man-made landmark</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>The thematic diagram of the grounded theory with the core category highlighted</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>The grounded theory core category thematic diagram</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>The triangulation output of word frequency count and thematic coding output.</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>The Spatial Transactions of the Nupe family within the Domestic Space</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Diagram showing the katamba as a geographic reference point for a Nupe compound</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>The graphic representation of the grounded theory of Nupe Community</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### GLOSSARY OF NUPE TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asali</td>
<td>Place of origin and also used as being indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chigbe</td>
<td>Medicinal Herb, remedy and medications mostly from tree roots, leaves and barks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangi</td>
<td>Kin and blood relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dango</td>
<td>Soft grass used for reinforcing the mixture of mud in construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dazhi</td>
<td>The name of the village head of Doko and also the name of a clan in whose lineage have been leading the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dende</td>
<td>The native name for the telecommunication mast found on the hill which was installed by the British engineers during colonial rule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzoro</td>
<td>Collective and also a cooperative farm work organized on a rotational basis within a given age group of friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzuko</td>
<td>Market space and also commercial transactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzungi</td>
<td>Small private side entrance into the compounds and also a link from one courtyard to another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>The granary mostly built of mud and used for the storage of grains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edoko</td>
<td>Old name of Doko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efako</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efo</td>
<td>This has various uses which include its use to mean time and period in relation to events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ega</td>
<td>A mud pen usually built of mud to house chickens, goats, and pigeons, they are usually located within the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
compounds

Egba - The name of the master mansion

Egbangi - Named from egban (congregation space)

Egbe - 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

Eguko - A place of convergence for ritual

Ejegi - Name of a stream

Eka - Multiple contextual uses to mean season or period

Emi - Home

Emitso - Literally means the owner of the house, but mostly refer to the leadership of the compound

Enunu - Farming

Etsu dzuko - The market chief as well as leader

Ewon - A large depression of land that gets flooded annually and used for fishing

Eya - It means age and also a year

Gbaggako - Manually plowed ridge of 30-60cm thick made across as embankments at the rice farm to control the level of water.

Gbanchi - A fig tree, of which there are two species found in the Nupe community (Ficus platyphylla) grown to provide shade in compounds

Gbara - Manually plowed ridge of about 15-20cm thick

Gbigha - It means praise, reverence, glorification and worship

Gozan - A name given to the person whom collectively offer multiple services of haircut, native medicine, circumcisions, manicure, and tattooing

Gunnu - An old Nupe traditional religious practice which involves rituals of anti-witchcraft, anti-crime, and also fertility of the women.

Kata - Bedroom
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katagi</td>
<td>Literally means a small room for cooking, kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katamba</td>
<td>An entrance hall builds original of circular form, it serves as an entrance and also a place for receiving guests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kin</td>
<td>Motherland or region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kintsozhi</td>
<td>The upland Nupe people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konufu</td>
<td>The name of a compound whose profession is mainly of gozan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kukpe</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuti</td>
<td>God, idol, cult, masquerade, oracle and also communication with the deity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyadya</td>
<td>The riverine Nupe man and also the canoe man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lati yan efo</td>
<td>The period of farm activity from sunrise to afternoon last for about 6 hours (10am to 4pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lozungi</td>
<td>The period of farm activity from in the evening two hours before sunset (4pm to 6pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manfu</td>
<td>The Islamic cleric's house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanche</td>
<td>A cooking spot mostly open and within the courtyard. It is made of three large stones in which fuel wood is utilised for cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndamitso</td>
<td>The owner of the compound which also means the head of the compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndasonkyra</td>
<td>The title of the person elected to head a group who serve as a comforter of misfortune or tragedy in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pati</td>
<td>The hill surrounding the Doko community which also served as the first place of settlement for the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakafugi</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shegi</td>
<td>A mat made of reed grass which serves as a blind for the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
doorway

**Shikpata** - Toilet

**Takogi** - A section of the village located down the valley

**Toro** - 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

**Tsoede** - The cultural hero of the Nupe people, who was born in ca 1500 and refer to as the founder of the Nupe kingdom

**Tswata** - The name of a compound whose profession is Blacksmithing

**Wasa** - 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

**Wuru** - Shade

**Yekun** - 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.

**Zaman** - Period

**Zhempa** - A courtyard

**Zhitsu** - Old name for the village head of the community
# LIST OF APPENDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPENDIX</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Research Assistants</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Acknowledgement List</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Profile of Key Respondents</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Observation Guide on the Domestic Space Transactions</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Observation Guide on the Community’s Transactions</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Interview Guide for the Compound Heads and Elders of the Community</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Questionnaire on Cultural Values of the Community</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Google Satellite Image of Doko Community</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Sketches of Compound Layout</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Word frequency Analysis Output</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>A sample of Transcribed Interview with Compound’ Head</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>A sample of Transcribed interview with Community’s Council Member</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>A Sample of Transcribed Interview Focused on Traditional Architecture</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A sample of Transcribed Interview Focused on the</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Gozan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>A Sample of Transcribed Interview on the bedroom Interior</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>A sample of Transcribed interview on Farming activities</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Dachi 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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