The Cultural Landscape Values of a Nupe Community in Nigeria

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Introduction

Cultural Landscape

Culture is the acquired and shared belief, social interaction and history of any given community or group.

The cultural landscape is the total interaction of people with the landscape, it also include man made features and transactions such as buildings, streams, footpaths and roads. (Appleton 1975, Anthrop 1997, Taylor 2002 Rapoport 2004)

It is also the meaning people associate to their environment (Line and gross, 1998; Stephenson 2007)
Problem Statement

- A lot of researches have been conducted and most of them were focused on the biophysical aspects of landscape rather than the cultural aspect (Zube et-al 1982; John 1995; Giuliani & Scopelliti 2009; Wu, 2010).

- Landscape are mostly based on the way they are conceived by architects and designers, seldom are they based on how the landscape is used by people (Claval, 2005).

- Western cultural landscape concepts are becoming a threat to the uniqueness of cultural landscapes (Nasonkhla, 2010).

- However, there is the need to conserve culture, nature and natural landscape (Kuo, 2010 Monica, 2010).
Research Gap

- Most studies focus on external description however, it is important to understand the cultural landscape through the perspectives of the indigenous people (Linehan and Gross, 1998).

- Most studies have focused more on the western cultural landscape, there is no much study on cultural landscape studies from developing countries such as Nigeria.

- Furthermore, Nigerian cultural studies have concentrated on the major ethnic groups, Little is done on the other minority ethnic groups such as the Nupe.

- Nupe ethnic as a whole has only one anthropological study that dates back to 1942 (Nadel, 1942)
Research Aim and Objectives

Aim

The aim of this research is to determine the Nupe ethnic group values, and perceptions associated with their transactions with the cultural landscape.

The Objectives

- To identify the basic family structure of the Nupe people and the cultural value relationship with domestic space;
- To determine the relationship between the indigenous professions of the Nupe community with the landscape and the cultural values associated with such relationship;
- To determine the transactions of the indigenous professions and their relationship with the landscape; and
- To develop a grounded theory that defines the cultural landscape values of the Nupe community.
Cultural Landscape Paradigm

There exist 4 poles of cultural landscape studies, the subjective, symbolic, the intersubjective and the physical paradigm (Backhaus 2011)

My study is the combination of phenomenology such as perception, feelings meaning and symbolic such as how the landscape is culturally embedded in the transactions of the people.
Research Underpinning

- Prospect Refuge Theory stipulates that people establish community base of the following factors which are:
  - Ability to see and not to be seen
  - Security and protection
  - Biological needs such as food and reproduction
    - Appleton 1975, Lovett, 2003

- The variables for measurement of prospect and refuge are:
  - Objects provided for prospects and refuge;
  - Manner and intensity within which they are symbolized;
  - Equilibrium of refuge and prospects symbols and;
  - The physical media in which the symbols are communicated to the observer.

- The theory offers pedestal for the study of all cultural landscapes
  - Hudson, 1992; Singh and Ellard, 2012; Phillips and Pohl, 2014
Cultural landscape variables

The review of cultural landscape variables shows the point of convergence to be on form practice and relationship.

Also, form, practice and relationship is in tune with the Prospect-refuge Theory.
The main premise for the delineation of the Nupe ethnic group is based on their settlement and profession. The Nupe ethnic group is divided into the Kyadya and the Kintsozhi meaning the riverine people and the inland people respectively.
The Choice of Study Community, Doko

- Doko belongs to one of the 12 historic towns that constituted the nucleus of Nupe community in Nigeria (Nadel 1942; Idrees 1998)
- Its location of not being a transit settlement thus limits drastic cultural influences from other cultures.
- It still maintains its rural and old tradition of farming, unlike most Nupe towns that have become cosmopolitan
Research Approach

❖ **Positivist**
  - The Cartesian duality of existence of reality which stipulates that there are observable facts out there in the field that can be measured by an observer (Creswell 2012, Miles, et al., 2013).
  - Not suitable as cultural landscapes do not exist to be measured with absolute reality, each landscape differs (Stephenson, 2007).

❖ **Constructivist**
  - The constructivist paradigm posits that construct realities are bound and that, time and context are free from generalization (Miles, et al., 2013).
  - It also advocates that the truth and reality are attained through the perspectives of the participants (Maxwell and Reybold, 2015).

❖ Thus the inclination of this study is on the constructivist philosophical paradigm.
Research Design

Methodology

Data collection

Analysis Instrument

Findings/Results

Grounded theory

Cultural Landscape

Subjective

Physical pole

Inter-subjective

Symbolic pole

ETHNOGRAPHY

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Prospect & refuge theory

Habitat Theory

ArcGIS

- Spatial layout of activities and features

Nvivo (content analysis)

- Creation of themes
- Content query
- Word contextual tree map

Appleton 1975

Terkenli 2001

Rapoport 2004

Stephenson 2008

Brewer 2000

Risjord 2007

Stephenson 2008
# Measurement Strategies

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<td>• Behavioural mapping&lt;br&gt;• Photographs&lt;br&gt;• Interviews&lt;br&gt;• Field notes and sketches</td>
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<td>• Thematic analysis and choice of core category&lt;br&gt;• Triangulation of the core category using word frequency count</td>
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Ethnographic Strategy

The data collection entailed staying with the community for 8 months.

The focus of the data collection was broad based view of the entire community system of transactions and the features of both man made and natural landscape.
A Typical Nupe Compound Layout

- The compounds are made up of several courtyards for nucleus families.
- Each compound has at least one *katamba*, the entrance Hut.
Grounded Theory Approach to Data Analysis

The emerging,
- Letting the theory emerge from the data rather than using specific pre-set categories
- It can lead to irrelevant information and no clue is given on how data were generated

The constructivist
- The gathering of facts based on the perception of people, but without the reflections from the researcher
- It is thus left open which could be inconclusive

The systematic design
- Emphasises the use of open coding and the development of a visual picture of the theory generated
- The researcher gives a detail graphical step by step account of how the data are collected, it is therefore replicable
- Thus systematic approach was chosen for the data analysis because it allows for verification and replicability
Some spaces play more vital roles than others in the functioning of the system (Hillier et al., 1987). Thus the cluster analysis shows the most important spaces of transactions out of 9 spaces identified in the connectivity map to be Zhempa, Kata and katamba.

- Zhempa (courtyard)
- Kata (bedroom)
- Katamba (entrance hut)
Results and Discussion

Research Objective 1 on Family Domestic Space Transactions

The family spatial transactions dominance

- The male preferred space of transactions is the Katamba
- The female preferred spaces are the courtyard and rooms
- The transaction of children is all over the compound, however the female children were more inclined to the female spaces while the male also inclined to the male space.
The Value of *katamba* transcends beyond its use as a space. It also serves as a geographic reference for a Nupe compound. It is from its locations that the sides and the back of the compound is determined.

*Katamba* also symbolically represents the whole compound.
Results and Discussion

Research Objective 2: Indigenous Professions and Values

The cluster analysis shows the most important indigenous professions out of 6 to be Farmers, Traders and Gozan.
Results and Discussion

Research Objective 3: Transactions of Indigenous Professions and Cultural Landscape

Thus the cluster analysis shows the most important spaces of landscape transactions by the indigenous professions out of 7 spaces are the **Hill**, **Market** and **the trees**.
Results and Discussion
Research Objective 3: Cultural Values and Indigenous Professions

The cluster analysis shows a multi-dimensional connections of values embedded in **Security**, **Rituals**, **Marriage**, **Local Names**, **Toponym**, **Leadership history and Entertainment**

- **Security**- Tangible and intangible form
- **Rituals**- Circumcision, *Wasa*, Space
- **Marriage**- Tied to farming season, construction of room
- **Local Names**, Toponym and History of community.
- **Period**- local concept of time
Results and Discussion

Research Objective 4: The Grounded Theory, Selection of core category

The Value category emerged as the most integrated across all nodes and categories, it thus became more suitable to define the cultural landscape of the Nupe community (Glaser and Strauss, 1968)
The Triangulations of the word frequency output and the Thematic coding ensured that the outputs of themes were adequately captured and discussed. Furthermore the nodes left out in the thematic analysis which are pots, idols, farming, worship and rice were captured in the word frequency count. Also thematic analysis captured rituals, myths, names, landownership food and entertainment which were not captured in the word frequency count. Above all, triangulation is attained for the core category which is used in defining the cultural landscape of the Nupe community.
The most important domestic spaces are the courtyard, the bedroom and the *katamba*; The most important plants within the domestic space are the fruit providing species of trees; The farmers, the *Gozan* and the traders are the most important profession; Transactions of Doko community are tied to local time concepts which are defined by the sequence of activities of the farm; The professions of the Nupe community are gender specific such that the men are the farmers and the women are the traders; The landscape features which define the values of the community are the hill, trees and water an The Nupe community transactions are tied to the leadership of *Dazhi* thus constitutes a sense of collectivism.
Conclusion

The research affirms that the cultural landscape transactions are uniquely characterised some of which are:

1. The uniqueness in the family system which is established on *efako*, a system based on the collective work on the farm rather than biological relationship.

2. The landscape feature of the hill whose values are not tied to its physicality alone but also include *memories* it holds of being the first place where the community sought for refuge.

3. The *courtyard* of the Nupe compound is not limited to the bioclimatic function alone but also serves as a space for domestic chores, a sleeping space and its intangible function of *visual connections* to the surrounding landscape of the hill. It is more of a place than space.

4. Similarly, the transactions of the Nupe community do not rely on the *global time concept*, but on *event time* rather than the clock time.

5. *Change of material* did not necessarily mean a change in concepts, but rather the Nupe people have been able to adapt a new material to suit their *cultural lifestyle*.

6. The Nupe people portray their inclinations towards *collectivism rather than individualistic* tendencies, through various compound representations in the village council.

7. Equally important is the concepts of *security without the use of physical barriers*. Instead, spaces are left open but with *visual connections (prospects)*.

8. Consequently the cultural landscape values of the Nupe community are *uniquely shaped* by their culture and the landscape.
Design Implications

- To accommodate a typical Nupe man, the house must have a *katamba*, and an open space of at least fifty percent of the built up area.
- Equally important in the Nupe compound layout is to allow visual contact with the outside and also prevent the infiltrations of external, effective means for lighting of the rooms and also cross ventilations. This concept of *shegi* blind could also be extended to apply in contemporary designs to suit other hot climatic conditions.
- The Nupe traditional concept of layout also suggests that visual connections can provide security within a build up space without necessarily building of physical barriers.

Planning and Policy Implication

- In afforestation policies of government, fruit producing trees are more likely to protect within the community domestic space and the spiritually valued trees in the wild.
- Furthermore, the establishment of policies about the Nupe community has a strong chance of acceptance when the community is engaged through its leadership of *Dazhi*.

Theoretical Implications

- The research opens up a pedestal for scholars to engage in understanding the Nupe people's perceptions about their cultural landscape.
- This ethnographic method can also be employed towards the understanding other cultural landscapes.
Recommendation

This study focused on the cultural landscape of a Nupe community located on an upland landscape. As such, future research is needed in the riverine Nupe landscape to verify the findings of this research. It is, however, speculated that the use of ethnography on the riverine Nupe community cultural landscape will lead to the formulation of the same grounded theory about Nupe community
Publications and Awards

Journal Indexed publications

Conferences & Proceedings

Awards
1. Second Place Winner. Three-Minute Thesis Competition (Faculty Level). Faculty of Built Environment, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. 12th February 2015.
2. Participant. Three-Minute Thesis Competition (University Level), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. 25th March 2015.
Thank you

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