



Planning valued landscapes as potential tourism attractions for national development: The case of Yoruba, Nigeria

Adedokun Olutoyin Moses¹

¹Department of Geography, Federal College of Education, Zaria, Nigeria

Correspondence: Adedokun Olutoyin Moses (email: toyinadedokun@gmail.com)

Abstract

Researches in environmental planning in developing countries are largely dominated by provision of infrastructures such as housing, transportation, sewage disposal etc. Very few works have examined an important aspect of planning, that is, landscape planning. This work, therefore, examines the importance of landscape planning not only as an avenue for preservation of identity, but as a source of tourist attraction and revenue generation for the country. This is because tourism all over the world is an instrument of socio-economic development, it also promotes peace and stability in developing countries by providing jobs, generating income, diversifying the economy, protecting the environment and promoting cross-cultural awareness.

Keywords: development planning, national development, tourism attraction, tourism potential, valued landscapes, Yoruba

Introduction

Landscape studies have been an important pre-occupation of geographers since the early the early stages of development of geography. Explorers and travelers were interested in reporting landscape types, qualities and variations. In fact this formed the basis for dualism of geography into physical and human. In recent times, much attention has been devoted to environmental planning while not many researches focus on the historical, cultural, aesthetic psychological and economic importance of the environment which provides satisfaction for the people. This paper in essence provides an insight into the nature of Yoruba valued landscape, what and where they are, their types and importance and why and how they can be planned for to make them attractive tourist sites for revenue generation and socio economic development.

Landscapes because of their complexity are difficult to define as well as classify. Landscapes are no substitute for environment or place. Rather they are those accessible portions of the environment which can be observed and felt. They are sceneries of nature and the configuration of the earth surface (Chokor, 1993; Omon, 2014). However, in liberal academic language, the two can be used interchangeably. Landscape comprises the visible features of an area of land, including the physical elements of landforms such as mountains, hills, water bodies such as rivers, lakes, ponds and the sea, living elements of land cover including indigenous vegetation, human elements including different forms of land use, buildings and structures, and transitory elements such as lighting and weather conditions (Olupona, 2012).

Combining both their physical origins and the cultural overlay of human presence, often created over millennia, landscapes reflect the living synthesis of people and place vital to local and national identity. Landscapes, their character and quality, help define the self-image of a region, its sense of place that differentiates it from other regions. It is the dynamic backdrop to people's lives. The Earth has a vast range of landscapes including the icy landscapes of polar regions, mountainous land scapes, vast arid

desert landscapes, islands and coastal landscapes, densely forested or wooded landscapes including past boreal forests and tropical rainforests, and agricultural landscapes of temperate and tropical regions. Landscape may be further reviewed under the following specific categories: landscape art, cultural landscape, landscape ecology, landscape planning, landscape assessment and landscape design. Landscapes have generic connotation. Lowenthal, (1978), identified eight of such meanings:

NATURE	: where natural elements are present
HABITAT	: where man and animal dwell
SYSTEM	: where elements interact
WEALTH	: where landscape generates material and social satisfaction.
IDEOLOGY	: where different policies and forces shape landscape.
AESTHETIC	: where the beauty of landscape is important.
PLACE	: where landscape creates identity for man.
HISTORY	: where historical needs and values transform and change landscape overtime.

Landscapes of the world can be classified as natural and manmade. Natural landscapes include vegetation, relief, drainage, system etc. while manmade or anthropogenic landscapes include ancient or historical buildings, cities, streets, religious houses, ancient walls etc. Valued landscapes, therefore, are manmade landscapes (resources) possessing their own peculiarities which distinguish them from natural landscapes: they are creative objects of man, usually urban based, educative in character and they have both aesthetic and historical meaning to the people. They provide psychological satisfaction and cultural identity for the people (Chokor, 1987).

Tourism

Tourism is currently one of the world's fastest and largest industry (Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008). As a sector of the economy, tourism is used by many countries to advocate economic development (Awang, Hassan and Zahari, 2009) It is also used as a development due to its multiplier effect of generating foreign exchange, creating employment and stimulating local economies (Sindiga, 1999). Tourism industry according to United State Institute of Peace (Honey and Gilpin, 2009), can help promote peace and stability in developing countries by providing jobs, generating income, diversifying the economy, protecting the environment and promoting cross-cultural awareness. Tourism is the fourth largest industry in the global economy Honey and Gilpin, 2009).

Tourism has a pluralistic meaning; hence it has no standard definition. For instance, Pigram (1985) argues that tourism is a component of recreation. The word Tourism is derived from "tour" meaning..... a journey which one returns to the starting point: a circular trip usually for business, pleasure or education during which various places are visited and for which an itinerary is usually planned (Tunde, 2012). Tourism is travel for pleasure; also the theory and practice of touring, the business of attracting, accommodating, and entertaining tourists, and the business of operating tours. Tourism may be international, or within the traveler's country. The World Tourism Organization(1996) defines tourism more generally, in terms which go "beyond the common perception of tourism as being limited to holiday activity only ", as people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes".

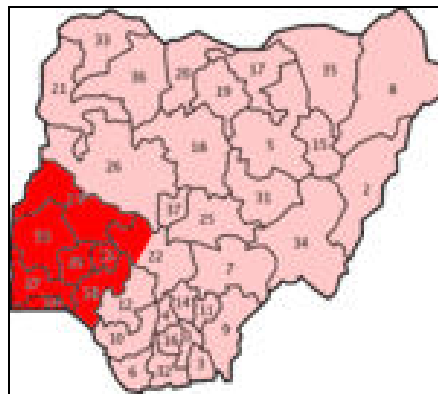
Tourism can be domestic or international, and international tourism has both incoming and outgoing implications on a country's balance of payments. Today, tourism is a major source of income for many countries, and affects the economy of both the source and host countries, generating roughly USD 1 trillion in global receipts in 2008 (USIP, 2009).

The Yoruba people

The Yoruba people are an ethnic group of West Africa. The Yoruba constitute close to 40 million people in total, found predominantly in Nigeria, where they make up around 21% of its population or roughly 35 million in 2012, making them one of the largest ethnic groups of Sub-Saharan Africa (alongside the Akan, the Hausa-Fulani and the Igbo). The majority of the Yoruba speak the Yoruba language.

The Yoruba share borders with the Borgu (variously called "Baruba") in the northwest; the Nupe (whom they often call "Tapa") and Epira in the north; and the Edo, the Eʒan, and the Afemai to the southeast. The Igala and other related groups are found in the northeast, and the Egun, Fon, and others in the southwest. The Itsekiri, who live in the north-west Niger delta, are closely related to the Yoruba but maintain a distinct cultural identity. While the majority of the Yoruba live in western Nigeria, there are also substantial indigenous Yoruba communities in the Republic of Benin. Comparatively numerous Yoruba diaspora communities are found in the United States and the United Kingdom. Also, more than one-third of Afro-Brazilians claim Yoruba ancestry. Yoruba culture is famously visible in Bahia, Brazil, manifesting in everything from its religion to its music.

The Yoruba are the main ethnic group in the Nigerian federal states of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Kwara and Oyo. They also constitute a sizable proportion of Kogi and Edo south west states.



Source: Wikipedia

Fig. 1. Yoruba area in Nigeria

Yoruba valued landscapes

Due to its size, geographical size and historical antecedent, Yorubaland has varied and attractive landscapes that can be categorized into:

(1) Architectural and ethnographic landscapes

These are objects of civilization and culture. They are resultant features of man's ingenious influence on his physical and social environment. For instance, the first storey building in Nigeria and the slave port in Badagry, the first Secondary school in Nigeria (CMS Grammar School, Lagos); the Bower Tower, the first high rise building (cocoa house), the first television station in Africa (The Nigeria Television Authority) the first stadium and the first University in Nigeria (University of Ibadan).



Fig. 2. First storey building in Nigeria



Fig. 3. University of Ibadan

(2) Religious and cult landscape

These are places of worship such as churches: The first church in Nigeria at Badagry, CMS church at Marina and St. James Cathedral at Ibadan, Baptist Seminary, Ogbomosho. Furthermore various historic magnificent mosques exist in Ilorin, Lagos, Ibadan, Iwo, Ede etc. Associated with the mosques and churches are various shrines such as Osun shrine in Osogbo, Ogun shrine in Ondo and Ile-Ife, Orumila, Obatala, Sango, Esu etc and other shrines in various parts of South-west Nigeria. (Idowu, 1969; Ojo, 1966; Olupona, 2012)



Fig. 4. Osun grove, Osogbo



Fig. 5. *University mosque, Ibadan*



Fig. 6. *An ancient church, Ibadan*

(3) Traditional rulers' palaces such as the palaces of obas in Lagos, Ile-Ife, Oyo , Ilesa, Ado-Ekiti, Ila- Orangun, Aramoko, Ijero, Ijebu-Ode, Abeokuta etc. (Ojo, 1966)



Fig. 7. *Oyo Palace*



Fig. 8. Oni Palace, Ile-Ife

(4) Historical and archaeological landscape

Historical sites are usually associated with development and national growth. They can also be associated with wars, national heroes, crafts and paintings etc. Historical landscapes in Yoruba land include, Tinubu square in Lagos, Oranmiyan Staff in Ile-Ife, etc.



Fig. 9 and 10. Oranmiyan staff, Ile-Ife and Orumila house, Ile-Ife

(5) Cultural landscapes

Cultural landscapes form the entertainment sector and cultural exposure of the people. They include: theatres, folklore houses and amphitheatres such as the national art theatre in Lagos. National museum in Lagos, Ile-Ife etc.



Fig. 11. *Ile-Ife museum*



Fig. 12. *National Art theatre, Lagos*

One sad thing about these valued landscapes is the lack of an in-depth study into their nature, type, character, importance etc. This has made effective planning difficult if not impossible. The consequence of this is the neglect of these landscapes. Most of the valued landscapes have been destroyed due to increasing urbanization, religious extremism and ignorance on the part of the people and planners. A lot of reasons account for the negligence and destruction of valued landscape in Nigeria and Yoruba land in particular. They include:

- (a) Low level of research into the composition, character, nature and location of the valued landscape in the country
- (b) Low awareness for environmental attribute. Everybody is preoccupied with making money without due consideration for relaxation and leisure.
- (c) The country is preoccupied with economic development; consequently there is an unchecked destruction of natural and manmade landscape through urbanization and industrialization.

- (d) The government itself is not preoccupied with landscape planning because there is no major institution existing to tackle the issue of landscape planning.
- (e) Financial constraint arising from the general economic recession in the country.

Planning for valued landscapes

Landscape planning involves the preservation and protection of historical and manmade landscape from natural and human destruction because historical landscapes once destroyed, are difficult if not impossible to re-construct given differences in artistic ability, architectural knowledge and construction materials over time (Chokor, 1993). Valued landscape once destroyed implies the destruction of past heritage of the people. Apart from the preservation of identity, according to Chokor, (1993), Bankole and Jegede, (2011) and Ajala and Aliu (2013), other reasons which make planning for landscape imperative include:

- (a) Historical continuity, since landscapes represent the past through the present into the future. For the purpose of continuity in planning, historical landscapes should be observed and preserved during planning.
- (b) Discovering the range of landscapes which people have preference for and to provide for those qualities in them that give people joy, pleasure and psychological satisfaction.
- (c) Provision of framework within which to operate landscape change, design, maintenance or creation of new ones.
- (d) Tourism development, since landscapes reflect the culture of the people. Their preservation would ensure that such places will be available to tourists who may wish to gain an insight into the culture of the people. This will also serve as a source of revenue to government for development instead of depending on revenue from oil alone. Countries which have benefited from landscape tourism include: Egypt (the great pyramids); China (great walls), Israel and Saudi Arabia (holy sites)

Procedures for planning

Procedures for planning for valued landscape vary from society to society and from time to time. In context of Developing countries and Nigeria in particular, Chokor, (1993), Bankole and Jegede, (2011) and Ajala and Aliu (2013) identified the following procedures:

- (a) Identification of valued landscapes in different parts of the country. This is a difficult task because different objects which are significant to people differs from place to place and time to time. To identify these landscapes would entail field research.
- (b) Determination of attitudes, values and meanings that people had for various landscapes from the past till contemporary times. This will involve compilation and grouping of the list of various objects created many years ago.
- (c) Identification of what is to be done to these landscapes in terms of restoration and maintenance, especially the significant ones which have meanings to the people (where they have been destroyed or damaged)
- (d) Setting up a framework for local and national preservation of valued landscapes. This is to be undertaken by agencies, conservation societies and a national trust for conservation. These bodies will comprise of landscape professionals, historians, geographers, public representatives, interest groups and financial groups who are willing to promote landscape planning. Government should also provide financial back up for such projects and programmes.
- (e) Arousing environmental consciousness and awareness in the people. This becomes necessary because Nigerians are not environmentally conscious and they rarely complain about destruction

- of environmental values. Environmental consciousness can be achieved through the formation of environmental pressure groups and movements who will lobby for a better preservation of valued landscapes. This could also be achieved through environmental education such as: house to house campaign, use of mass media and teaching of environmental education at all levels of education.
- (f) Finally there is the need to enact environmental law which will make destruction of identifiable valued landscapes an offence. Individuals, groups and corporate bodies should be held responsible and made to pay for the repairs of damages caused by their actions and activities to valued landscapes.

Conclusion

Attempts have been made in this paper to highlight types, locations importance and abuse of Nigeria's valued landscapes. Reasons have also been adduced for the need to plan for them. Although there are numbers of problems militating against landscapes planning in Nigeria, there is also a number of opportunities for environmental and landscape planning.

What is required is a research or an investigation into these valued landscapes: where they are located, what made them attractive and how they can be preserved from destruction. Landscape planning will not only enhance the quality of the environment and cultural identity of the people, but will also boost the economy through foreign exchange earnings from tourists. It should be noted, however, that landscape planning will be meaningful only if it is carried out within the framework of social justice, equity, and cultural acceptability of the people.

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