

Nigeria's Public Buildings of Early Statehood: Interpreting Their Current Situation and Status

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Abstract

Public buildings are communal property. Thus, the manner in which they are kept is indicative of the priorities of the owning community, society or state. This means that the recognition or value which society places on such buildings is deducible from their situation. In its first two decades of statehood, Nigeria developed public buildings which, for historical reasons, if nothing else, warrant classification and preservation as monuments. However, public commentary suggests that there has been a pervasive neglect of these buildings, possibly implying a loss of interest and memory on the part of government and citizens. In this paper, the major public buildings of that era are identified and the condition and apparent status of three selected structures are evaluated. The findings are that these buildings have mainly been in neglect and ineffectively managed; second, they are not physically identified as memorial monuments; neither are they remarked nor officially recognised as important state symbols. This leads to the inescapable conclusion that there has been a loss of interest and memory by society, particularly on the part of government. It is recommended that Nigeria recognises and discharges its obligation to manage effectively its common patrimony.

Key Words: Nigeria Public buildings; Public monuments; Situation; Status;

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Public buildings serve the purposes of governance and the provision of services to the governed. However, they are not really owned by government. Rather they are collective property. Government simply represents the governed who collectively possess and choose to grant sovereign authority to the former. Where government is truly representative, the status of public buildings would tend to reflect the priorities of State, society and community. The status and condition of such buildings can be seen as indicative of the value which government and society place upon them. This is especially true about buildings which have performed important roles in the evolution of a society or a people. Such buildings are usually seen as having attained the status of monuments and are described as monuments of history.

As representatives of the people, it is the duty of government to keep such buildings in good order through efficient management. This is an obligation owed to society. It is also the duty of citizens to ensure that government discharges this obligation. This would be particularly so where society is enlightened and history is valued. The reasons for preserving such buildings include the need to yield long-term value in service; to foster a sense of community through social interactions and the preservation of memory; for education of the public, for the benefit of visitors and future generations; and for tourism. If such buildings are well-preserved and managed, it is implied that they are valued by society, and therefore, accorded a high status.

If government does not celebrate such buildings, the chances are that the general public would adopt a similar attitude. On the part of foreign visitors, the condition of such facilities reflects the character and priorities of a people. Additionally, it reflects the quality and effectiveness of governance.

This is a study of Nigeria's public buildings of early statehood. The aims are, first, to evaluate the condition of the buildings; and second, to ascertain whether the observed condition, and the status so implied, suggest or do not suggest a loss of interest and memory by government and citizens. Furthermore, the paper aims to identify the factors responsible for the observed situation and perceived status of these public buildings.

The topic is important for the following reasons. It draws attention to the importance of these monuments. Furthermore, it serves to remind government and citizens of their duty to ensure the preservation of the common patrimony which is part of the country's wealth.

The paper argues that abandonment of these important buildings is a failure of duty by government and citizens. In addition, it is indicative of poor service delivery and incapacity in the public sector where systemic challenges have become entrenched over decades of political interference in its affairs. Furthermore, it is argued that neglect of these historical buildings portrays society as lacking a sense of history and being interested more in new things than preserving the old. Lastly, it is posited that if the present generation fails to preserve these legacies of the past, it puts at the risk of neglect whatever legacy it may wish to bequeath to future generations.

A case study approach is adopted in the paper. Three prominent structures, all firsts of their kind, and representative of either the political, social or cultural dimensions of national life, are selected for the study. The historical backgrounds of the structures are appraised in order to put them in the context of their national importance; their physical conditions assessed as well as the manner in which they are managed. This is done with a view to evaluating whether they can be judged as reflecting or not reflecting a loss of interest and memory on the part of government and citizens.

The findings are that general neglect of the buildings, poor management and the failed attempt to sell one them in 2014, suggests that there has been a gradual loss of interest and memory by government. Nonetheless, the resistance of some vocal and concerned citizens to the proposed sale may be counted as a redeeming factor.

The paper is structured such that following this introduction, the major public structures of the era are identified and the case studies selected upon specific criteria. The backgrounds of the case studies are presented; the inspection results are presented and management practices are considered. This is followed by discussion of the findings and identification of the factors which may account for the situation and status of these nationally important structures. Subsequently, implications are identified, followed by the conclusion and recommendations.

2.0 NIGERIA'S POST-INDEPENDENCE PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Nigeria's infrastructural needs as a newly independent country spanned political, economic, social and cultural dimensions. Thus, the country invested significantly in public structures in the first two decades after independence. These investments were in various sectors and locations but were mostly in Lagos as the seat of government. The range of investments is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Major Public Building Investments in Nigeria (1970s-1980s)

Building Type	Name/ Location	Sold Buildings	Off Fair
Exhibition Halls	National Arts Theatre (Lagos); Trade Fair Complex(Lagos; Kaduna); Tafawa Balewa Square(Lagos)	Lagos and Kaduna	Trade Fair Complexes Sold
Stadia	National Stadium(Lagos)	Shut down	
Housing	Legislators' Quarters(Lagos)	Sold	
Secretariats	Federal Secretariat(Lagos)	Sold	
Office Blocks	Independence Building; NECOM House(Lagos)	NECOM Sold	house
Hotels	DurbarHotels(Lagos& Kaduna)	Sold	

The last column of Table 1 shows that many public buildings of the immediate post-independence generation are no longer in public ownership. They were disposed of in the privatisation and commercialisation programme of 2002. In that same exercise, the Lagos Tafawa Balewa Square was commercialised in 2005, and in its aftermath, the Lagos National Arts Theatre was nearly sold off in 2014 whilst the Lagos National Stadium was shut down in 2002 and has remained so ever since.

These major public buildings of the immediate post-independence era were all firsts by Nigeria as a newly independent country. This fact, taken together with their role in the country's history, recommends these structures as monuments. This is a status which demands that adequate and sustainable arrangements be made to keep them in a befitting condition. Public commentary on the condition of these assets suggests that they are not being adequately managed as would be expected of buildings of their historical status. Examples of such commentary are as follows:

"It is no longer news that the National Stadium in Surulere, once a glorious edifice and symbol of national pride, is now a dilapidated monument that is symbolic of the widespread rot that has virtually crippled Nigeria in recent years".

(Ezaga, 2015) on the Lagos National Stadium

"In the late 1990s, the theatre began to face the agony of poor facilities. The sprawling complex was in darkness due to a lack of electricity supply. The structure was also reported to have been sinking and the roof broken at a time. There was equally a lack of comfortable seats for members of the audience who pay to watch performances."

(Nwakunnor et al., 2014) on the Lagos National Arts Theatre

“Neglect and poor management by successive governments turned the elegant edifice into a symbol of ruin and decadence”.

Uhakheme (2013) on the Lagos National Arts Theatre

“In many nations of the world, the Tafawa Balewa Square would have been bedecked with ornaments, garlands and bouquets...Not in Nigeria where the goose that lays the golden eggs is never fed until it goes into extinction”

Nwannekanma and Gbonegun, (2019) on the Lagos Tafawa Balewa Square

Against the backdrop of such typical public commentary, this paper investigates the country's major public buildings of the immediate post-independence era with a view to ascertaining whether or not their present physical condition and deemed status are indicative of recognition by government and society.

3.0 RESEARCH QUESTION

This study is guided by the following research question:

Are the situation and status of Nigeria's public buildings of early statehood indicative of an apparent loss of interest and memory by government and citizens?

To answer the question, the following issues will be addressed:

- (1) In what *physical condition* are the three case-study post-independence public buildings?
- (2) What manner of *recognition* is accorded the case studies?
- (3) What do the physical condition and perceived recognition accorded to these public buildings *suggest* about their importance to the government and citizens of Nigeria?

3.1 Definition of Terms

It is necessary and important to define the terms: “Situation” and “Status” which are central to this study.

3.1.1 Situation

Situation is intended to refer to the present condition of the structures. By the present condition of the structures is meant a combination of physical state as well as management style. These two aspects combine to influence the condition of the structures.

3.1.2 Status

Status is meant to refer to the perceived recognition of the importance of these buildings. It is inferable and inferred from the condition in which the buildings are kept. It is also indicated by evidence such as signboards and plaques which mark out or identify the buildings and publicly announce their importance. Thus, a situation of proper care (i.e. good administration, commemorative notices and physical maintenance) would imply that the State gives a high status (regard) for these structures. In the case of citizens and society, status is reflected by concern shown about the *situation* of these buildings. Concern can be shown by citizens if they demonstrate by protestations and representations to government their non-acceptance of the situation of these buildings. Thus, where citizens are indifferent, status is low and vice versa.

3.2 Scope of the Study

This study is concerned with Nigeria's public buildings of the immediate post-independence era. A case study approach is adopted. The study considers the buildings' present status as

reflected by, and as can be interpreted from, their present condition. Physical condition and management are the main issues investigated and which are used to attempt a reading of whether the inferred attitude of government and society reflect a loss of interest or memory in these public buildings which have performed important roles in Nigeria's developmental story.

4.0 THE CASE STUDIES

Out of the many post-independence public buildings in Nigeria, the Tafawa Balewa Square (LTBS), Lagos National Arts Theatre (LNAT) and the National Stadium (LNS), all in Lagos, are chosen for the following reasons:

(i)The investigation is limited to the 1970s in which period Nigeria was able to embark on developmental activities having overcome the post-independence political crisis and emerged from the consequent civil war which ended in January 1970.

(ii)The selected structures are those specifically developed to serve the national purposes of an independent Nigeria.

(iii)The case studies cover the areas of national culture, politics and sports which are considered to be appropriately reflective of the Nigerian way of life and, therefore, offer a rational basis for the assessment of significance to society.

(iv)The buildings are considered suitable for effectively addressing the research question.

4.1 Lagos Tafawa Balewa Square (LTBS)

Occupying 40 acres of land originally used for horse racing, it is located on Lagos Island. The main structure was built in 1972 with facilities such as an open arena, a multi-purpose hall, shops, office, restaurant and car parking space. The Remembrance Arcade and Nigeria's first parliamentary buildings, the National Assembly Complex, are located in the same precinct.

4.2 Lagos National Arts Theatre (LNAT)

The NATC which is located on the Lagos mainland was commissioned in 1977 for the purposes of the presentation, promotion and propagation of arts and culture and the hosting of national and international events. Information from the NATC website (2015) reveals that the structure is 23,000 square metres in area with an elevation of 31 metres which is equivalent in height to a 7-storey building. The complex accommodates cultural organs like the National Council for Arts and Culture, the Nigeria Gallery of Art and the National Troupe of Nigeria.

4.3 Lagos National Stadium (LNS)

The Lagos mainland is also the location of the LNS commissioned in 1972 as Nigeria's first national sports stadium, a multi-purpose facility consisting of a main bowl, practice pitch, sports halls and other facilities. It hosted many national and international competitions before being officially abandoned in 2002 and losing its status to the Abuja National Stadium which was built for the 2003 All-Africa Games.

4.4 Historical Background of the Case Studies

Table 1 is a summary of the history and high points of the case studies. The intention is to show the roles which they have played in national life since their commissioning. A consideration of the era in which all of the case studies were developed should serve to explain their historical importance.

The 1970s started with Nigeria’s emergence from a 30-month civil war under the political leadership of the military which, desirous of playing a leadership role in African politics as the perceived “giant of Africa”, pursued an Africa-centric foreign policy. This policy was marked by political and material support for the liberation and independence movements in the continent: the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the South West Africa Peoples’ Organisation (SWAPO), the independence struggle in Rhodesia and the Anti-Apartheid struggle. Africa looked up to Nigeria and so did the various liberation movements. Nigeria’s ambitions were enabled by its oil wealth which saw a period of great boom following the scarcity and high prices created by the Arab oil embargo incident upon the Arab-Israeli war of 1972-74. Financially empowered, Nigeria was able to project itself on the African and world stages and set about this in a somewhat grandiose manner. Even though independence had taken place in 1960 at the venue then known as the Lagos Race Course, it set out to rebuild the square in 1972 in a style considered to be befitting. It also set out to host the All-Africa Games for the first time in 1973 and for that reason built the LNS. Again, it became the host in 1977 of the Second World Black and African Festival of the Arts and Culture and this produced the LNAT. Thus, these three edifices are strongly anchored in the post-independence history of the country. Again, the edifices are reminiscent of Nigeria’s aspirations to leadership on the continent of Africa and in the black world.

Table 1: Historical Background of the Case Studies

Case Study	Tafawa Balewa Square	Lagos National Theatre Complex(LNAT)	Lagos National Arts Stadium (LNS)
Developed in:	1972	1976	1972
Highlights:	Nigeria’s first ceremonial venue	Nigeria’s national facility	Nigeria’s first national sports stadium
	Venue of Nigeria’s birth as an independent country on October 1 st , 1960.	Venue of the 1977 2 nd World Black and African Festival of the Arts and Culture	Venue of 1973 2 nd All-Africa Games – Nigeria’s most successful outing as overall second
	Venue for commemoration of Nigeria’s independence anniversaries up to 1990/First Parliament(National Assembly Complex(1960)	*Festival helped to develop global black consciousness-identity & cultural awakening	Venue of Nigeria’s first victory in the African Cup of Nations in 1980, 37 th year of the competition
	SiteofNigeria’s Remembrance Arcade	A national landmark, famous structure & tourist attraction	Venue of the 1999 U-20 World Cup, the first FIFA event hosted by Nigeria

*Tate (2015)

5.0 INSPECTION REPORT

An inspection of the case studies was done for the purpose of gathering information on their physical condition. The case studies show a similarity in design and constructional elements..

5.2 Physical Condition

Inspections reveal that these built assets are not in the best of conditions. The LTBS which is in commercial use is in a better condition than the LNAT and LNS which are totally neglected with their environments are dirty and overgrown. The LNATC and LNS have greatly deteriorated and are either poorly lit at night or in total darkness.

Table 2: Physical Condition of the Case Studies

Building	Internal	External	Environment
LTBS	Not in the best of conditions	In need of adequate maintenance of façade and pot-holed car park	Crowded, noisy, in need of rejuvenation
LNAT	Unsteady electricity supply, fittings, broken down central air-conditioning	Weather bitten façade, roof leaks	Broken sections in driveway, air of neglect, poor night lighting, bushy surroundings
LNS	Overgrown/ no night lighting, broken seats/scoreboard/ tattered stands and terrace roofs, old equipment, / torn tartan tracks, disused toilets, no water supply	Damaged sections, rusted metal railing/disused lighting poles/ fluorescent light fittings	Shabby appearance, poor refuse disposal, squatters/artisans, people poor night lighting, pot-holed landscape with broken kerbstones, uncut grass, overgrown hedges

5.3 Management Objectives and Style

Buildings are prone to deterioration and for that reason measures need to be taken to keep them in a physical condition which enables habitation as well as value delivery in the long-term. Building management takes cognizance of the potential impact of unremedied dilapidation on the life cycle of built assets. Therefore, routine, preventive as well as corrective measures are the *raison d'être* of management.

The approach and effectiveness of management are important for the achievement of results. Public buildings in Nigeria have a history of being managed by the public sector.

Table 3: Management of the Case Studies

Building	Objective/Orientation	Management Entity	Supervising Authority
LT BS	Bureaucratically run for: “important national celebrations, open air rallies, festivals and other similar purposes” (Tafawa Balewa Square Management Act, 1972, section 4); now commercially run	Concessed to a Private Operator in 2006 after many years of under-funding whilst under govt. management since 1972	Ministry of Information & Culture
LNAT	Bureaucratically run for: “the preservation, propagation and the promotion of the arts and culture”(LNAT Website)	General Manager appointed by the supervising Ministry	Ministry of Information & Culture
LNS	Bureaucratically run for: Sports and Sports development	National Sports Commission under the supervising Ministry	Ministry of Sports and Youth Development

The management philosophy of these facilities since their inauguration has been based on bureaucracy and unambitious objectives. There were seen first as government property for meeting government needs. Thus, the commercial income-earning potentials were not given a priority by their being commercialised under a strong commercial management regime. Rather, the supervising ministries handled them as government enterprises. In the manner of government enterprises in Nigeria, maintenance was not given its desired prominence and the consequence inevitably was physical decline in structure, fabric and equipment (both fixed and moveable). In the case of the LNAT, Nwakunnor et al (2014) observe that: “In the late 1990s, the theatre began to face the agony of poor facilities. The sprawling complex was in darkness due to a lack of electricity supply. The structure was reported to have been sinking and the roof broken at a time. There was equally a lack of comfortable seats for members of the audience who pay to watch performances .this gave rise to situations in which members of the audience stand all through productions” yet the bureaucrats in charge saw themselves as effective managers of what at best was a barely functional facility which effective management would have saved from going into great disrepair. The authorities took a sudden decision to shut it down in 2004 upon the completion of the new Abuja stadium. Thereafter, maintenance ceased, leading to a heightened decay. The LTBS’ commercial potential represented by its 375 lettable shop/office spaces and 36,000 square-metre open arena with 58,000 sitting capacity elevated space and a multi-purpose hall which accommodates 800 persons gave it some official attention aimed at exploiting value. This came in the shape of a management board which again had the taint of bureaucracy in being entirely appointed by government. Of course, the outcome was unsurprisingly sub-optimal because it remained a government-controlled project without a vision to look in new directions and seek creative solutions.

6.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the study are as follows.

- (1) The case studies have historical backgrounds which confer historical importance as shown in Table 2.

- (2) The buildings are not in the best physical condition and they reflect evidence of neglect over time. Indeed, the LNAT and LNS have been abandoned for years.
- (3) The facilities have a history of management by the public sector, although the LTBS became concessioned in 2003.
- (4) These buildings are not marked by commemorative plaques or signboards to direct and inform visitors.

The discussion addresses these findings with a view to answering the research question which entails ascertaining what the *condition* of the case studies tell about their *status* in present society, and therefore, what the *condition* and *status* of these structures, taken together, reveal about institutional and public interest and memory. Finally, it considers the factors responsible for the neglect of these buildings and for their perceived status in society.

Three important facts are as follows. First, these buildings are of great historical importance, yet are in physical conditions which are far from ideal. Second, the buildings are managed in a manner which is unreflective of their historical importance. Third, there have been really no noticeable efforts made at recognition of the buildings, either by signposting or other means of publicity. Thus, they appear hardly noticed in the urban landscape of Lagos.

These facts all point inevitably towards abandonment and indifference. This suggests that a low level of recognition is accorded these buildings. In turn, what is suggested by the situation is a waning, if not already lost, interest by society in these monuments. The research question may be answered in the positive sense, thus: that the *now established poor physical condition of the case studies, being indicative of undue neglect, suggests a low level of recognition or appreciation. This can be surmised as implying that government and citizens have lost interest in keeping these buildings. Additionally, it indicates a loss of memory as to their true historical importance.* In the following sections, reasons for the situation are identified and discussed.

6.1 A Poor Appreciation of Heritage

There has clearly been a failure of government to appreciate the continuing historical relevance of these buildings. This can be attributed to certain factors. One of them is that heritage awareness is poor. Long-held perceptions of heritage and resource conservation contribute to this situation. Aside from being associated with antiquity, heritage is seen as being synonymous with artifacts and culture whilst resource conservation has been usually associated with wildlife and wilderness issues. There is, therefore, more awareness of cultural heritage than built heritage; else the idea of selling the LNAT would not have arisen, just as the idea of selling Nigeria's ancient and diverse cultural artifacts has never been contemplated. The TBSQ is already under a concession deal, whilst the NET building has been sold. As a matter of fact, the TBSQ arrangement came up, not under a deliberate heritage management policy, but as part of the government's privatisation and commercialisation policy for unwanted government assets. It was seen as a convenient way of doing away with an inconvenient issue, perhaps. Thus, the realisation of commercial value and the minimisation of government expenditure on maintenance, rather than the protection of heritage, appeared to have informed the TBSQ decision. Additionally, in more than two decades after the NCMM Act of 1990 no effort has been made either to create a body for the exclusive management of built heritage or to amend the Act to accommodate developments in built heritage management and heritage studies.

It is pertinent here to recall the observation of *The Nation* (2013) in reaction to government's 2012 plan to dispose of the LNAT: "It is apt to wonder whether, given the disturbing development at the National Arts Theatre, if indeed the administration is motivated by a positive sense of history...for it takes a genuinely history-conscious administration not only to preserve historical legacies, but also, to build monuments that have historical merit". In a way, by abandoning these celebrated symbols of its early statehood and socio-cultural life Nigeria may be construed as attempting to advance without the benefit of its recent history. This would be an anomaly. Additionally, the absence of history in primary and secondary school curricula suggests that its nexus with heritage, the outcome of history and lived experience, is certain to be missed.

Again, the value placed by society on these facilities is a factor in this neglect, for as stated by the Getty Conservation Institute (2002), "Value has always been the reason underlying heritage conservation. It is self-evident that no society makes an effort to conserve what it does not value". Thus, if these monuments are in neglect, it is because the society does not consider them to be valuable. They are apparently regarded the same way as conventional public buildings. If this were not so, the sale of the LNAT would not have been contemplated in 2014.

A poor appreciation of heritage is symbolised by the absence of commemorative plaques at these three sites. Thus, visitors and the younger generations would find it difficult to identify or appreciate the importance of the structures.

6.2 Poor Capacity in the Public Service

The matter of poor asset maintenance, in respect of which Nigeria has acquired an unflattering reputation, is traceable to public sector capacity because it is the engine room of government. It is the duty of government to ensure the functionality of these structures. However, poor capacity in the public service is a problem which impacts upon service delivery across the board. According to Igbuzor (2015), "There is no doubt that the Nigerian public sector performance is weak despite increased public expenditure. It has been shown that increased expenditure has not translated into service quality and performance. The missing link is a poor public service delivery process". This accounts for the observed trend of public infrastructure losing functionality and coming into disuse, misuse, decay and abandonment without an appropriate response from public officials. The public service problem, according to Onwuanyi (2016, p164), is rooted in its work culture, the political culture of the country and perennial political interference in its affairs. The solution has been identified in a comprehensive reform of the public service for effective service delivery (Igbuzor, 2015; Asiodu, 2015).

Public buildings in Nigeria have a history of being managed by the public sector. However, public sector management has not been associated with competence and effectiveness. This is reflected in the poor reputation of the Nigerian State for the maintenance of its public infrastructure. The approach and effectiveness of management are important for the achievement of results. Buildings are prone to deterioration and for that reason measures need to be taken to keep them in a physical condition which enables habitation as well as value delivery in the long-term. Building management takes cognizance of the potential impact of unremedied dilapidation on the life cycle of built assets. Therefore, routine, preventive as well as corrective measures are the *raison d'être* of management, but this is not adhered to in practice.

Over the years citizens have observed that maintenance and management of all genres of infrastructure is not prioritised, leading to their falling into disrepair a few years after commissioning. Furthermore, it is difficult to come by evidence of any well-managed government enterprise in Nigeria. Managerial incompetence in the public sector was brought to the limelight during the 2002 privatisation exercise. The president's speech at the time stated as follows: "State enterprises suffer from fundamental problems of a defective capital structure, excessive bureaucratic control or intervention, inappropriate technology, gross incompetence and mismanagement, blatant corruption and crippling complacency" (Wordpress, 2007). Further evidence of incapacity in the public sector was gleaned from the Presidential Panel PPAC which after investigating 11,886 abandoned projects across the country, reported that "there is indeed evidence of large scale, widespread, institutional mediocrity, deficiency of vision, and a lack of direction in project management which results in poor conceptualization, poor design and faulty execution"(Idonor,2011). As for maintenance, Nwuba and Salawu (2010) concur in observing that: "Proper planning for infrastructure maintenance is generally lacking, with the corrective system of maintenance predominating. The procedure is to allow failure to occur before rectification. These failures often degenerate into serious deterioration, requiring total rehabilitation and sometimes even abandonment. In the oil refineries, for example, the turnaround maintenance (TAM) are many times left undone long after it has become due and it is sometimes marred by political wrangling".

Associated with this problem is instability of the polity on which Kukah (2012) comments thus: Looking back, "Nigeria is notable for having the world's highest turnover of leadership with 14 heads of state produced since independence, a time frame in which comparable African and Asian countries such as Botswana, Singapore and Malaysia which gained independence at about the same time had an average of 3 or 4 changes in leadership". The consequent lack of policy continuity has impacted on governance in all its ramifications, especially on the placement of square pegs in round holes, the truncation of due process and the emergence of an unsound political culture noted for "the absence of clear criteria for ascent to leadership"(Kukah, 2012). Even with the political stability attained since 1999, the political culture has apparently not been able bring about much change in the work culture of the public service as it still noted for its ineffectiveness (Igbuzor,2015;Asiodu;2015).

6.3 A Cultural Preference for New Things

An observed Nigerian cultural trait is to give greater importance to the pursuit of new projects and new ideas rather than the maintenance of the completed and established. This proclivity, which is responsible for giving rise and fillip to the common saying that the country has a poor culture of maintenance, is observed in official and unofficial circles. For instance, Ja'afar and Bello (2010) remark upon the decline in traditional Hausa architecture in Kano City as an increasing preference is shown for modern designs, leading to the gradual loss of traditional building and maintenance skills as well as a scarcity of traditional building materials. Similarly, with the development of the Abuja National Stadium in 2003, the Lagos National Stadium went into abandonment; and with the relocation of government to Abuja in 1991, all Federal assets in Lagos, fell into neglect.

6.4 An Underdeveloped Urban Culture

A modern urban cultural environment is yet to develop. Thus, the necessity and importance of cultural places and spaces are poorly appreciated. This creates an anomalous situation whereby government allows cultural facilities to decay whilst professing an interest in social, human and cultural development. LNAT, LNS and TBSQ are cultural facilities. Buildings,

particularly public and historical ones, are part of the urban cultural environment. The interactions of people with the urban environment create and enrich the quality of urbanism. A situation in which iconic urban structures are abandoned is suggestive of a lack of knowledge of the importance of thriving public places in the promotion of urban cultural interactions. Furthermore, it displays a disregard for the well-being of urban residents as these facilities serve recreational purposes. The quality of urbanism is shaped by stakeholders in the urban enterprise: officials as well as residents. It can be argued that whilst the former have been remiss, the latter have been silent, inactive and complicit. The custodians of urban culture, the urban way of life, are residents who are the beneficiaries of such investments. They must ensure that officials make these buildings functional and available for use and enjoyment as originally intended.

7.0 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The implications of this study are that the requisite heritage knowledge and managerial capacity for the preservation of these monuments are lacking. This suggests that the Nigerian state has not demonstrated that it values the preservation of its monuments of memory.

8.0 CONCLUSION

This paper set out to establish whether or not the condition and perceived status of Nigeria's public buildings of early statehood reflect a loss of interest and memory by the government and citizens of the country. The conclusion is that these monuments are in conditions which suggest a perceived loss of interest and memory by society.

The findings are that good building management practices have been lacking in the handling of the structures. Thus, the buildings, especially the LNAT and LNS which have been long abandoned, are not being adequately managed. Furthermore, their importance as symbols of early statehood and memorial monuments are hardly remarked or celebrated.

The findings mean that there is an apparent lack of understanding in government, and to a lesser extent, in society, as to the importance of the buildings. Furthermore, there is also a lack of competence in government as to the maintenance of public assets and infrastructure. In addition, memory appears to be fading as to the significance of the buildings.

It is recommended that Nigeria recognises and discharges its obligation to manage effectively its common patrimony and ensure their preservation.

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