

Colonisation, Globalisation and the Nigerian Built Environment

*AINA Omotayo Olugbenga

Department of Building, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife ,Nigeria.

Corresponding Author- *tayoaina@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The paper sought to ascertain the factors that are responsible for foreign inputs in the Nigerian built environment. The premise for this clarification is that globalisation has become the banner under which most foreign inputs in local scenes are classified in spite of other sources, application of this classification to a country like Nigeria, a former colony which has had a long history of having foreign inputs in her built environment shows that there is a mixture of what comes under globalisation and colonisation. The study shows that for the most part, the prevalent practice of housing provision for government workers, which is government's central intervention method, continued to derive from colonial antecedents. And that for a nation which already has high preference for foreign inputs, as evidenced by foreign domination of the construction industry, forces of globalisation may easily swallow much of the domestic industry in the built environment. Though, globalisation also makes best practices in the built environment available to the nation.

KEYWORDS: Globalisation, FDI-Foreign direct investment, LDC-Less developed countries, Comparative advantage, WTO- World trade organisation, Colonisation.

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation is an active economic force that opens national borders to inflow and outflow of goods and services at a faster rate than normal international trade, associated with this economic force are its social and cultural arms. The speedy wings that propel globalisation across the globe are the advancements in communication and transportation technology.

While globalisation operates on the principle of comparative advantage among nations of comparable developments such as the United States and Japan, the same could not be said of globalisation activities between developed nations and their developing counterparts. Drewer (1980) believes that developing nations have to import technologies from developed nations simply because they do not have such technologies. Worse still, developing nations that have colonial history simply import technology because that is what they have done for centuries before

The practice of colonialism itself in most places is predated by slave trade, in both practices , there is a master ,his agents and servants, the slave merchant and the colonialists were the masters, and they were so addressed and treated and perceived as superior. Consequently their values and lifestyles were adjudged to be superior and became goals locals strain to achieve, and those that achieve them were celebrated, for example, the first man that replaced the thatch on his roof with imported corrugated iron sheets , and the first man that travelled by ship to Europe were celebrated. The perception of superiority highlighted above later translated to preference. The locals preferred the colonial lifestyles and goods to theirs'. In Nigeria this preference has percolated through colonial days to more than forty years of independence to the extent that successive governments have conducted public enlightenment programmes to sway the populace back to local goods and values.

As globalisation emerges, it is seen as the most potent force responsible for importing foreign goods and cultures into local scenes, though it is true that globalisation promotes importation, but against the background of colonial legacies explained above, is it true that globalisation is mostly responsible for importations in former colonies?, or indiscriminate importation is what we have always done before globalisation?. These questions make it necessary to evaluate our practices, in order to identify whether we are propagating colonial practices or globalising. The danger inherent in propagating colonial practices is that such practices were designed solely to achieve colonial objectives, they thus become irrelevant and wastage where colonial objectives have become extinct.

GLOBALISATION

The Globalisation refers to the process by which the world is becoming more interdependent, the interdependence comprises notions such as the global village and single global economy , which is the way different parts of the world are becoming politically and socially interdependent. But principally, it refers to the emerging single global economy, which refers to increase international transactions in markets for goods,

services and some factors of production, plus the growth and expanded scope of many institutions that straddle national borders. (Deardorf and Stern, 2000)

In pure economic terms, globalisation refers to the growth of international trade and expansion of related trade activities such as foreign direct investments (FDI), multinational corporations, integration of world capital markets and resulting capital flows; extra territorial reach of government policies, attention by non-governmental organisations (NGOS) to problems that span the globe and the constraints in government policies imposed by international institutions to which they belong. Changes in technology and policies driven by global economic bodies such as General agreement on tariffs and trades (GATT) and World trade organisation (WTO) are principally responsible for these global dynamics, improvement in the technologies of transportation and communication are at the hub of these developments .

The reality of these trends to the regions of the world is increased movement of goods and capital across national traders, integration of international markets which open domestic markets to stiff competition from foreign players. Some of the economic implications of globalisation include comparative advantage, economies of scale, increased competition, access to different variety of products and possible technological growth, loss for different groups, especially in local industries and encroachment of a nations ability to make some policies. However, inspite of some of the negative impacts of globalisation, the primary objectives still remains exploiting the benefits of international trade to the fullest.

PRINCIPLE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

A major propelling force behind the sustained momentum of globalisation, are the benefits of international trade such as comparative advantage, economies of scale and increased competition. These forces make foreign goods that bear their traits to be more attractive to local buyers than their local alternatives. Besides the fundamental comparative advantage enjoyed by countries engaged in international trade, there are other benefits such as a more efficient and increased world production, expansion of potential markets where countries can sell their goods, increase in international demand for a country's goods, which translates to greater production and greater use of raw materials and labour, and consequent growth in domestic employment and wealth creation and distribution. Competition from international trade often also forces domestic firms to become more efficient, through modernisation and innovation. These unending list of advantages of international trade presuppose that countries are hardly ever involved in trades where some advantages will not accrue to them.

Economic globalisation and its cultural and social siblings are offshoots of international trade. History of international trade shows that as trades increased and become more competitive among nations, factors such as government restrictions, import quotas, tariffs and non-tariff barriers led nations to make efforts at coordinating international trades with a view of loosening trade barriers and creating an atmosphere in international trade that is similar to domestic trading within a country, where goods produced in a particular country can relatively freely get to the citizens of all countries of the world. These cooperation came under the banners of the General Agreement on tariffs and trade (GATT) of 1947 and World trade Organisation (WTO) of 1995 which has 128 member countries, including Nigeria.

The instrument that the WTO has largely employed to ensure that member nations complied with the free trade policies and thus freer globalisation is the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism(DSM) which has been strengthened to adjudicate in trade agreement violation and enforce compliance to WTO's positions. The policing effect of the WTO's DSM and the bandwagon effect of the WTO trade policies in IMF, world bank and other nations outside WTO have greatly influenced opening of national borders to free movements of goods, services, capital and men.

The effect of the free movement of goods to the citizens of the world is that they have acces to alternative choices of goods from other nations of the world, these local citizens choose the alternative goods if they have comparative advantages over locally produced ones, where such advantages do not exist, the foreign goods are usually not preferred, hardly are these foreign goods ever directly forced on the local populace. The implication of the basis of choice of goods is that, for globalisation to thrive, goods from abroad must have some ascertained comparative advantages over the local goods and where foreign goods are chosen without these comparative advantages or even lesser advantages below local goods, other forces which may not be globalisation may be at play.

COLONISATION

A probable cause of continuous importation of goods without proper evaluation of possible advantages and disadvantages may be a prolonged history of conquest, colonisation or foreign occupation of a nation, where

such exists, the conquered nation's psyche is usually impelled with subservience, inferiority tendencies towards their master and lack of confidence in their own desecrated values, which usually results in preference of the values and products associated with the colonial masters.

Where colonisation in its various forms exists, host nations often pay dearly with loss of human lives, erasure of their customs, and cultures by colonial forces, and difficulty in regaining desecrated cultures even long after independence from colonial rule.

Colonisation means the acquisition of the territory of a particular country by a foreign country through the use of aggressive force. There are mainly colonies of settlement and colonies of exploitation. Colonies of settlement results when citizens of a foreign country migrates to and eventually take complete control of a new settlement (Encarta 2001). The foreign colonisers usually dominate these areas, and substitute their cultures with the existing ones. The natives of the land are usually killed by newly imported diseases or confrontations or simply driven out of the land. Examples of such colonies are Australia and New Zealand . Colonies of exploitation do not attract large numbers of permanent foreign settlers, the settlers here are planters, administrators, merchants or military officers, they usually establish political control, mostly through the use of force. The economic activity of a colony of exploitation is sustained by the political control, examples of such colonies are Nigeria and Ghana. Unlike in the colonies of settlement where there is cultural substitution, settlers in the colonies of exploitation usually use their political and economic powers to foist and propagate their values over the existing cultures. The economies of colonies of settlement, which usually have European settlers, over time resembled those of European nations, their agricultural and manufacturing industries were well developed, however, the economies of colonies of exploitation remained largely undeveloped and politically and economically dependent on the colonial powers, this is as a result of features of the colonial economy, where most profits and associated developments were in the hands of the exploiting Europeans, who only developed the exploiting industry, without attending to the agriculture and the manufacturing industries of these nations. Therefore most needs for manufactured goods, services, standards and values of life beyond the subsistence level, including inputs in the built environment are imported into these nations, even long after independence.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NIGERIAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT

PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD

The Nigerian built environment in the pre- colonial era was characterised by housing types peculiar to the geographical/ethnic zones of the country. North African inspired mud houses was prevalent among the hausa people of northern Nigeria . The western part of the country had the Yoruba sprawling houses that accommodate several branches of extended family. The igbos in the east were noted for mbari architecture. Lagos also had a distinctive two-storey design known as the Brazilian style because it was introduced by slaves repatriated from Latin America.

COLONIAL PERIOD

During the early colonial period, the housing activities and policies of government which was more amplified in Lagos was focused essentially on the provision of quarters for the expatriate staff and for selected indigenous staff in specialised occupations like Railways, Police, etc. This period saw the establishment of Government Residential Areas (GRAs) as well as a few "African Quarters". No effort was made by Governments to build houses either for sale or rent to the general public and little was done to order the growth of settlements outside business. The Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB) was created in 1928 as a result of the bubonic plague of early 1920 and charged with the effective planning and development of Lagos . After 1951 and with the approval of the Lagos Central Planning Scheme, the Lagos Executive Development Board for the first time attempted to solve the problem of public housing in the metropolis, by establishing nine workers housing estates. (NHP 1991)

POST COLONIAL PERIOD

Provision of housing was not a high priority of the immediate post colonial administration, this near total neglect was further compounded by outbreak of civil war within the same period. Interest in housing was however renewed by a new administration after the civil war. The post civil war era witnessed plans to construct fifty nine thousand housing units, establishment of the Federal housing authority, and staff housing board for the purpose of granting loans to civil servants.

Similarly, the government of Nigeria proposed to build two hundred and two thousand housing units between 1975 and 1980. Only fifteen percent of this proposal was realized at the end of 1980. The government between 1979 and 1980 also embarked on an elaborate housing scheme based on the concept of affordability and citizen participation for the low and medium income earners. The target was two hundred thousand housing units, however, twenty percent achievement was recorded at the end of 1983.

THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Construction practice and technology in Nigeria have witnessed significant foreign participation from colonial era to date. Edmonds (1974) maintained that the few large construction companies who are all expatriate firms carry out 90% of the total construction works in Nigeria. Ogunpola (1984) added that though the numerical strength of big contractors who are expatriates is about 7% of the number of contractors, they accounted for a substantial proportion of construction works. Samuel (1999) identified thirty construction companies from ten countries in Europe and Middle East as some of the multinationals operating in Nigeria. Olateju (1991) in a study of contracts awarded by the Federal and Oyo State Governments between 1974 and 1984 discovered that the value of contracts got by indigenous companies translated to 7% of the total contract value. The Federal Ministry of Works and Housing (1979) reported that foreign construction companies accounted for between 97% and 100% of the value of Federal Government construction contracts between 1974 and 1978. Although recent report is not available however, the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing (2003) report shows that the entire N350.6 billion road projects embarked upon by the Federal Government between 1999 and 2003 was executed by contract. Relying on the foreign companies' share in the past, it is expected that the substantial value of these contracts would have gone to expatriate firms. These reports confirm that the construction industry in Nigeria is indeed dominated by foreign companies. In fact, the problem in Nigeria is not that of attracting foreign participation but rather that of promoting indigenous participation. (Idoro, 2004)

In the same vein provision of infrastructures for social, business, and housing activities in the private and public sectors of Nigeria also witnessed wholesale importation of designs and construction technologies that best suited to other regions of the world with the attendant problems of sustainability.

EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERN IN THE NIGERIAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

The objectives of colonies of exploitation was to maximize profit of the colonial masters, therefore in the colonial period almost all capital and social investment went into the export sector and to developing and maintaining institutions that facilitate the objectives of the colonial masters. (Encarta 2001) claims that the colonies' railways system operated like a funnel, moving goods efficiently outwards to the ports, not primarily for transporting the populace and their goods, and that profits moved in the same direction as the goods on the train-out of the colonies to the colonizing country.

An appraisal of the activities of successive post-colonial Nigerian governments in the built environment would reveal if the mode of development has shifted significantly from the colonial antecedents.

The colonial administration did not engage in developmental efforts for the general populace until the bubonic plague of early 1920, when planning of Lagos was commenced. The administration concentrated efforts on provision of housing to its staff in the railways, police and civil bureaucrats, this led to the formation of government residential areas (G.R.A) and some African quarters. This efforts later led to the development of nine workers housing estates. The later part of the colonial period also witnessed the establishment of similar housing estates for workers in the other regions of the country.

Similarly, Nigerian governments have made the following plans for direct inputs into housing provision; Fifty nine housing units for workers, housing loan board for workers, two hundred and two thousand housing units for workers and two hundred thousand housing units for workers respectively. Only twenty percent of the plans was achieved. Governments in the western world however did not separate provision of accommodation for their civil workers from that of the general populace, these governments have guided and encouraged the private sector of their economy to provide housing for all people.

The difference in the practice of the colonisers and their home countries derives from their objectives of development, the objective in the colonies was to develop only the infrastructures that the exploiting industry needed to thrive, while the developmental objective of the home countries was to have an encompassing development of the whole country. It is however regrettable that practices that amplify the colonial objectives have been the central objective of successive post-colonial governments in Nigeria, who have successively built houses primarily for their workers.

Futhermore, the situation in the construction industry shows that there is domination of that industry by foreigners since the colonial days at the expense of the local industry. And that there have been importation of foreign and unsustainable architecture into the country.

The challenges of globalization in the Nigerian situation is thus enormous, globalization has been identified as a threat to local markets and industry even in a well established and protected economy. The challenge therefore in such an economy that use and prefer substantial foreign inputs is that the whole economy, including the built environment can fall into the hands of global forces, to the detriment of national objectives. Globalisation , however offers positive possibilities, as it can make best practices in the development of the built environment globally available to the former colonies, the effect of this can be seen if the principle of comparative advantage is applied where architecture and construction technologies are to be imported.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that the history of colonization has allowed foreigners to have a significant role in the Nigerian built environment before the advent of globalization, the study further shows that the nation has largely continued propagating the objectives of past colonial masters. The possibility therefore exists to label products of colonialism as that of globalization. The implication of the situation is that it makes the industries related to the built environment in the country to be liable to the vagaries of globalization, which is complete hijack of the local markets. Concerted effort is therefore required to access the benefits of globalization, which makes the best practices in the built environment available locally.

REFERENCES

- Deardoff,A.V and Stern,R.M.(2000) What the public should know about Globalisation and World Trade Organisation, School of Public Policy,University of Michigan.
- Drewer, S. (1980) Construction and Development; A New Perspective, *Habitat International* V.5,3/4,pp 395-428.
- Edmonds, G. A. (1979) Macrofirms; Costruction Firms for the Computer Age. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, Vol. 109 (1). Pg. 13-24.
- Encartar.Encyclopedia.Standard.(2001)
- Federal Ministry of Works & Housing (2003) Report of Federal Road Projects Between June 1999 and January 2003. *Quarterly Construction Progress Report*,The Statistics Division, Federal Ministry of Works & Housing.Pg.5-10
- Federal Ministry of Works & Housing (1979) Annual Shared Value of Construction Contracts in Nigeria Between 1974-1978. *Quarterly Construction Progress Report*, The Statistics Division, Federal Ministry of Works & Housing.
- Idoro,G. I. (2004) The Effect of Globalisation on safety in the Construction Industry in Nigeria. CIB International Symposium on Globalisation and Construction,AIT,Thailand.
- Nigerian National Housing Policy NHP (1991)
- Ogunpola, Akin (1984) The Structure of Building Costs and Implication for Economic Development. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of Nigerian Economic Society*. Nigerian Economic Society, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. Pg. 28.
- Olateju, B. (1991) Enhancing The Contract Management Capabilities of The Indigenous Contractor: Effective Contract Management in the Construction Industry. *Publication of the Nigerian Institute of Building*, Lagos, Nigeria. Pg.132-142
- Samuel, M. O. (1999) *The Causes of Foreign Dominance of the Nigerian Construction Industry & the Prospects for the Indigenous Firms*. An Unpublished M.Sc. Construction Management Thesis, University of Lagos, Nigeria. Pg. 21-22.

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:
<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

