



THE PAST IN OUR FUTURE: Transformed Culture, Transforming Built-scape

*A Presentation at the UIA Great Green Wall
Initiative Webinar*

by

**Professor Cordelia O. OSASONA,
Dept. of Architecture, OAU, Ile-Ife, NIGERIA**

March 26, 2022



Introduction: Nigeria & The GGWI

- Nigeria peripherally indicated, as its northern fringes fall within the GGW Belt;
- Several of the ethnicities in the GGW Belt are also represented in Nigeria;
- These include the Hausa, Fulani & Kanuri;
- Some prevailing climatic conditions in the GGW Belt also true of Northern Nigeria:
 - Very high daytime temperatures (seldom lower than 30-35 degrees Celsius);
 - Low annual rainfall (usually between 500 & 700mm).



The Approach

- A focus on the place of history & cultural dictates in shaping the built environment;
- Changes in histo-cultural progression corresponding to changes in built-scape;
- Case-study highlights of predominant ethnic groups:
 - Hausa
 - Fulani
- The needed developmental (future) perspective.



Approach: History & Culture

- **History:** overview of people's past (socio-cultural experiences, social/ environmental evolution, inter-communal relationships, etc – embedded in corporate psyche;
- **Culture:** encapsulates occupational/ religious/ inter-communal orientations; shelter preferences; social norms & values.

Ultimately, cumulatively affect built environment!



Local Available Resources

■ Materials

- Rich laterite
- Palm-tree timber (*“azara”*)
- Grass
- Cement

■ Building Expertise

- Local building artisans
- Other craftsmen
- Formally trained building professionals.

Case-study: The Hausa (*traditional*)

Occupation

- Farming
- Craftwork
- Trading

Religion

- Islam (major)
- Christianity (minor)
- Other(s)

Settlement Preference

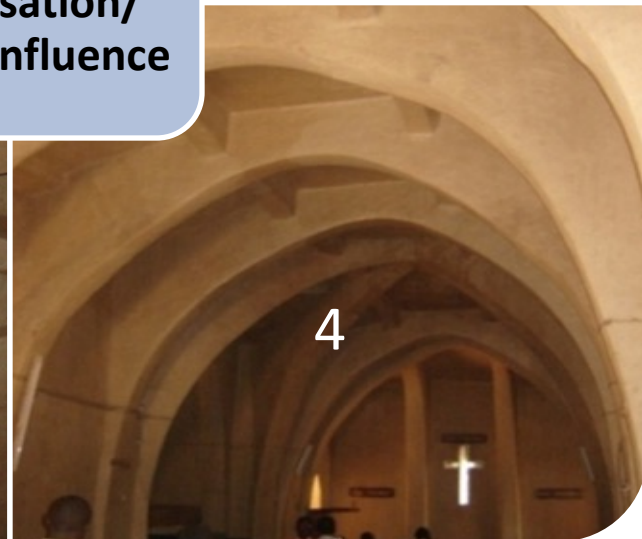
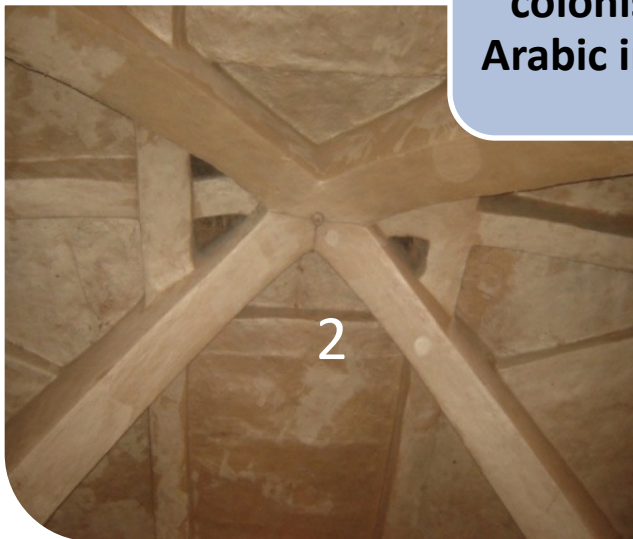
- Large/ closely-knit, polygamous
- Designated farms



Case-study: The Hausa (“urbanising”)

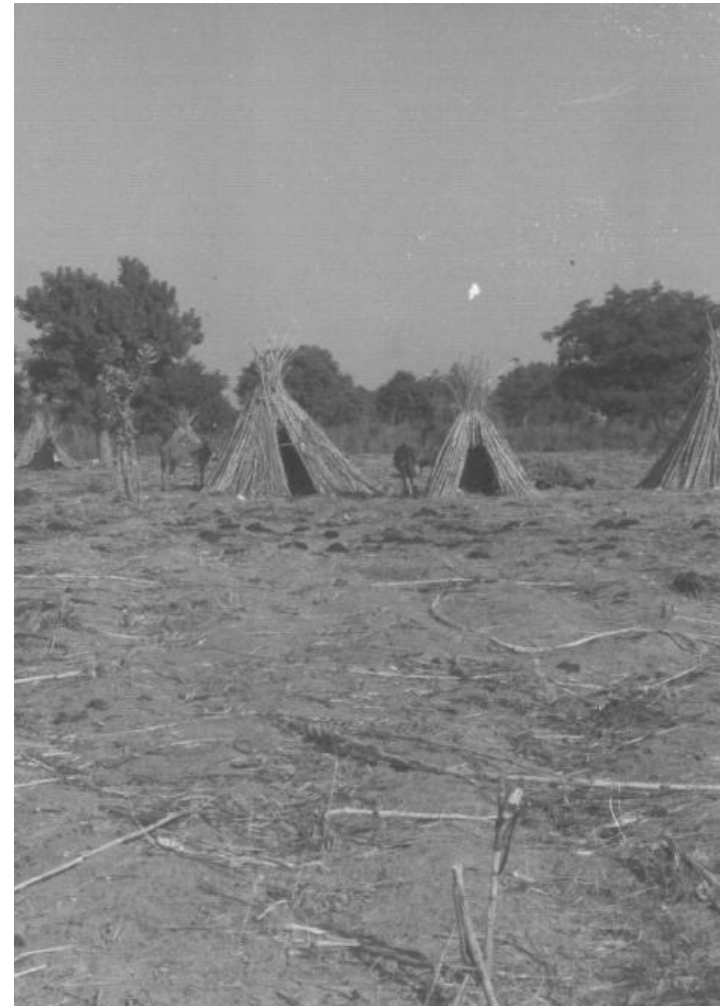


British
colonisation/
Arabic influence



Case-study: The Fulani (*traditional*)

- Nomadic pastoralists;
- Lived in small groups, in temporary settlements;
- Basic “A”-frame huts;
- Easy dismantling/assembly, to favour nomadic lifestyle;
- Grass cladding on stalk (sapling) frame;
- Corrals for livestock.



Case-study: The Fulani (*“urbanising”*)

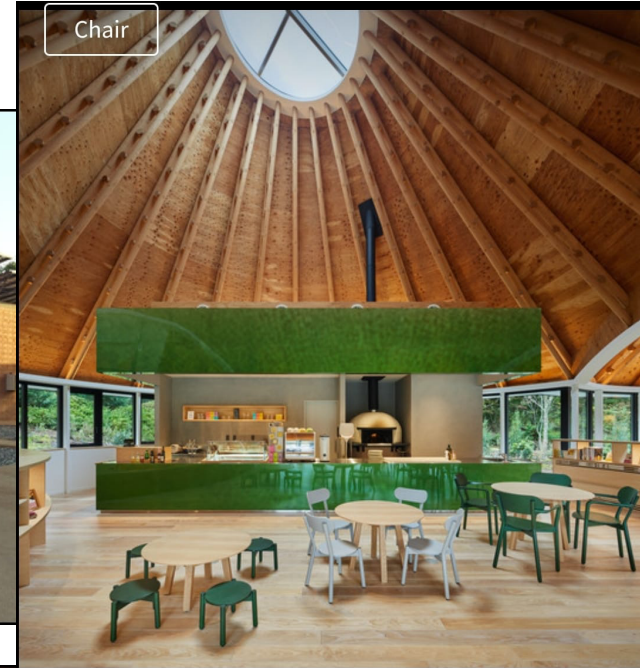


Whither Students' Design???

- Clear expectations of the GGWI:
 - *“To preserve local heritage”;*
 - *“It must inspire the sustainability of the fading cultural and historical landscape”;*
- Since culture progressively changing, settlement design solutions should go beyond “subsistence farming lifestyle”;
- Should cover realities of “global culture” (to include provisions for formal education & greater diversification in lifestyle orientations – with space-use implications);

Architectural “pluralism” thus implied – *in the spirit of overall environmental sustainability!*

“Borrowing a leaf”: Francis Kere



Thank You!

