RESILIENCE AND LIVABLE CITIES IN A WARMING WORLD

A FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOUR OF

TPL. DR. JOSHUA ADEWUMI ADEBISI FNITP, RTP



EDITED BY

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Editors:
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CHAPTER 16

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AND THE RECONFIGURATION OF PUBLIC SPACE IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This chapter examines the dynamics of urban redevelopment and the reconfiguration of public space identity in Ibadan, Nigeria, within the broader context of modernization, urban growth, and socio-cultural transformation. Drawing on historical, conceptual, and contemporary perspectives, the chapter shows how redevelopment initiatives, ranging from road dualization, junction improvement, modern transport terminals, market upgrading, and leisure-space revitalization are reshaping the city's spatial form and altering long-standing patterns of public space use. Ibadan's public spaces, historically rooted in Yoruba cultural practices, informal economic activities, and communal social life, are increasingly being formalized, commercialized, and regulated. The chapter argues that these interventions, while improving aesthetics, mobility, and urban functionality, also pose significant challenges including displacement of informal actors, erosion of cultural landscapes, reduced inclusivity, and loss of collective memory. Through an analysis of historical evolution, conceptual debates on place identity, spatial justice, informality, and place-making, and a review of recent redevelopment projects, the chapter demonstrates that public space identity in Ibadan is being renegotiated at the intersection of modernization pressures and cultural continuity. It concludes that achieving sustainable redevelopment requires integrating heritage preservation, participatory governance, inclusive mobility planning, and equitable access to public spaces to maintain the city's socio-cultural distinctiveness amidst contemporary transformation.

Keywords: Urban Redevelopment, Public Space Identity, Modernization, Informality and Ibadan.

1.0 Introduction

Cities across the world are experiencing profound spatial, socio-economic transformations in diverse ramifications since the advent of 19th century. These transformations, no doubt, became apparent with the industrial revolution, which brought a significant shift to spatial location of production and residences. Specifically, the separation of home from work and the use of machines enabled industrialization and later, modernization which spread across geographical boundaries (Melving & O'Conor, 1974). In other words, urban development driven by the pressures of

industrialization, modernization, globalization, demographic expansion, and policy reforms targeted at improving urban efficiency and competitiveness (UN-Habitat, 2020). Within this global resurgence of urban redevelopment, African cities including Cairo, Algiers, Cape Town, Nairobi, Accra, Lagos and Ibadan among others have increasingly embarked on diverse restructuring initiatives aimed at revitalizing dilapidated and aging environments, expanding critical infrastructure, and projecting new civic images that are aligned with contemporary development aspirations (Akanmu, 2023). As a result, the character of many African urban centres is being reshaped through planned interventions that seek to renew central districts, reorganize informal economic activities, upgrade transportation corridors, and reconfigure public spaces for improved aesthetics and governance efficiency.

The dynamics of urban growth, modernization, and governance have gradually altered the historical fabric of Ibadan in recent decades. Aside from being the administrative nerve of governments since colonial administration, Ibadan has always been the capital of the defunct Western Region Government of Nigeria and remains the capital of old and present Oyo State. This status justified the prioritization of investment in the city by successive government. Since the late 1990s, Oyo State's development agenda in conjunction with International Development Organizations especially, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have increasingly prioritised urban renewal and redevelopment as instruments for improving city aesthetics, stimulating economic development, and repositioning Ibadan as a competitive regional urban centre. For instance, Ibadan benefited from the Sustainable City Projects with urban renewal exercise carried out in Agugu-Oremeji, Mokola, Agbeni and provision of intervention projects. Also, the reconstruction of major roads and road junction improvements, the modernization of transport terminals, the beautification of road corridors, and the upgrading of leisure environments like Agodi Gardens reflect a deliberate attempt to reshape the spatial landscape and redefine public order within the city. These interventions, according to Akanmu & Salisu (2024), while intended to enhance urban functionality, often trigger complex consequences for the identity of public spaces and the social groups that use them. As new structures emerge, informal activities are displaced, cultural markers are erased, and traditional meanings associated with public spaces undergo significant transformation. Hence, spaces that once thrived on openness, cultural spontaneity, and informal sociality are increasingly being regulated, formalized, and commercialized to meet modern planning expectations.

Meanwhile, this chapter situates Ibadan's contemporary redevelopment initiatives within the broader discourse on public space identity, arguing that redevelopment is not merely a physical process but a socio-cultural restructuring that reshapes the lived experiences, meanings, and identities embedded in urban spaces. The chapter provides insights into the complex relationship between urban modernization and identity reconfiguration in one of Nigeria's most historic cities. Ultimately, the chapter contributes to the understanding of how African cities can modernize while retaining the integrity of their cultural and spatial identities.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Background

This paper explores relevant concepts towards establishing the relationship between urban redevelopment and the reconfiguration of public space identity. The concepts not only illuminate the processes occurring in Ibadan but also situate them within broader debates on urban change in African and global contexts. Accordingly, concepts including urban redevelopment, public space, place identity, place-making, spatial justice, and memory provide the theoretical foundation for analysing how physical interventions reshape cultural meanings and everyday social practices. First, urban redevelopment, otherwise known as urban renewal, is a deliberate intervention undertaken to renew, reorganize, or transform existing urban areas towards addressing decay, enhance aesthetics, stimulating economic activity, or improving functionality. It encompasses a range of activities such as regeneration, upgrading, gentrification, infrastructural modernization, and land-use reconfiguration (Akanmu, Gbadamosi & Omole, 2022).

In many developing countries, redevelopment is driven by the desire to make cities more competitive, orderly, and attractive to investors (Myers, 2015). This often means replacing informal or older structures with modern infrastructure, new land uses, and planned environments. Redevelopment carries both material and symbolic implications. Materially, it introduces new buildings, landscapes, and transportation networks, while it symbolically reshapes how people understand, use, and relate to urban spaces. Scholars argue that redevelopment can strengthen economic vitality but may also displace low-income groups, disrupt social networks, and erase cultural landscapes (Harvey, 2008). In African cities, these tensions are amplified due to the coexistence of indigenous urbanism and modern planning frameworks (Simone, 2004).

Meanwhile, public space is widely understood as an open, accessible area where diverse individuals and groups interact, transact, express culture, or engage in civic life (Madanipour, 2003). It includes markets, parks, squares, streets, open grounds, transit hubs, and plazas with multiple functions-economic, social, political, cultural, and symbolic. In African cities, public spaces are particularly significant due to their embeddedness in informal economies, cultural rituals, and social networks (Myers, 2011). They are places where identity is performed and negotiated through everyday practices. Thus, public spaces in Ibadan such as markets, motor parks, and communal squares are not merely physical environments but cultural arenas that reflect Yoruba norms, social relations, and collective memories. Also, the concept of place identity refers to the emotional, symbolic, and cultural meanings individuals or groups attach to specific places (Relph, 1976) which arises from the interaction between physical settings and human experiences.

Public space identity, therefore, is the collective meaning assigned to a public space based on shared memory, cultural heritage, aesthetics, practices, and symbolic representation (Low, 2000). Changes in the built environment such as through redevelopment can reconfigure place identity. Akanmu, Salisu, Gbadamosi & Sonde (2025), and Relph (1976) argues that rapid modernization often creates placelessness or a loss of distinctiveness arising from when local identity is replaced with standardized, globally inspired urban forms. In Ibadan, for instance, the replacement of

informal markets with modern plazas or the relocation of motor parks may weaken the indigenous identity and social memory attached to these spaces.

In addition, place-making is to the process through which people create meanings, social practices, and lived experiences that give a place its distinct identity (Mitchell, 2003). In Yoruba cities like Ibadan, place-making has historically been organic, driven by social practices, communal interactions, and cultural norms rather than formal design. Redevelopment often imposes the conceived space of government and planners onto lived spaces, which may disrupt long-standing cultural practices and meanings. Thus, public spaces become sites of negotiation between top–down planning visions and bottom–up everyday life. Also, informality is a central characteristic of public spaces in African cities (Roy, 2005 & Simone, 2004). It includes street vending, informal transport operations, cultural performances, and unregulated social gatherings. Ibadan's identity is deeply tied to such informal practices including market clustering, "bus stop cultures," social interactions in open spaces, and spontaneous trading activities. Redevelopment often seeks to remove or control informality in favour of orderliness and modern aesthetics. While these interventions may improve urban appearance, they risk erasing informal cultures that form the bedrock of public space identity (Olayiwola et al., 2014).

Finally, spatial justice concerns the equitable distribution of urban resources, opportunities, and access to space (Soja, 2010). Public spaces are critical to spatial justice because they determine who has the right to gather, trade, or express themselves. Lefebvre's Right to the City argues that all urban residents particularly the marginalized should have the right to participate in shaping urban spaces and accessing public goods (Lefebvre, 1991). However, in redevelopment contexts, spatial justice is challenged in diverse ways including when informal traders are displaced, or low-income groups lose access to renewed spaces or public spaces become commercialized or regulated, and when cultural meanings are replaced with political or economic priorities. These concerns are crucial in Ibadan, where many redevelopment projects have altered access patterns in markets, parks, and transport spaces.

Therefore, public spaces serve as repositories of collective memory that embodying historical narratives, cultural symbols, and social memories (Boym, 2001). When redevelopment transforms these spaces, it can weaken or erase cultural heritage leading to the creation of what scholars describe as memory loss or cultural displacement in urban landscapes (Till, 2005). For Ibadan, where traditional markets, palaces, and courtyards are embedded in Yoruba cosmology, redevelopment carries implications for heritage preservation and cultural continuity. In synthesis of concepts in Ibadan, the reconfiguration of public space identity emerges at the intersection of modernization, planning decisions, spatial politics, and cultural memory.

3.0 Materials and Methods

3.1 The Study Area: Ibadan in Historical Perspectives

Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State in southwestern Nigeria, is one of Africa's historically significant urban centres, with origins that trace back to the early 19th century. The city was founded around 1829 by a coalition of Yoruba warriors as a military encampment during the wars of the Yoruba states (Obateru, 2003 &

Mabogunje, 1962). According to Falola & Salm (2004), its strategic location on a network of trade routes connecting the northern savannah, the Yoruba hinterlands, and the southern forest regions contributed to its rapid expansion as both a military and commercial hub. This foundational period established the spatial and social character of Ibadan as a city organized around palaces, communal compounds, and open gathering spaces that facilitated social cohesion and collective defense. Its early urban structure reflected indigenous planning principles that balanced security needs with socio-cultural functions, integrating public squares, marketplaces, and residential quarters in a way that nurtured both communal identity and economic vitality (Areola, 1994).

Throughout the 19th century, Ibadan evolved into a political and military powerhouse within the Yoruba hinterland and the city became the headquarters of a confederation of Yoruba forces and played a central role in regional diplomacy, warfare, and governance. The settlement expanded in concentric patterns, with the palace of the Olubadan at its core, surrounded by the residences of chiefs, warriors, and trading elites (Fourchhand, 2000). Streets radiated from the palace grounds and linked to markets, shrines, and communal spaces, reflecting a social hierarchy in the urban layout (Falola, 2004). Markets such as Oje, Orita-Merin, Oja'ba and later Dugbe (Agbeni/Ogunpa) emerged as focal points for economic exchange, serving not only as centres of trade in agricultural and artisanal goods but also as sites of social interaction and cultural transmission. In this early period, public spaces were multifunctional and embedded with social and symbolic meaning, forming an integral part of Ibadan's identity as a city deeply rooted in Yoruba traditions.

The colonial era introduced profound changes to Ibadan's historical trajectory. Following British conquest and the establishment of indirect rule in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Ibadan's urban landscape began to integrate Western administrative and infrastructural forms. The turning point in Ibadan transformations was the extension of railway to the city in 1906and the subsequent classification of the city as a second-class town through the Township Ordinance of 1917. According to Oyesiku (2014 & 1998), all the classified towns received greater infrastructural and administrative attentions. This led to the modernization of roads, establishment of Government Reservation Areas (GRAs), slum clearance and improve sanitation and hygiene in the classified town with Lagos as the only first-class town and Ibadan ranked as second and a few other towns classified a second-class town.

Subsequent administration at Nigeria' independence and post-independence administration till date continue to initiate and prioritise renewal projects to address decades of infrastructural neglect, rising population pressures, and increasing demands for modern urban lifestyles (Oyesiku, 2010). During the post-independence era, Ibadan became a focal point for political, educational, and cultural development. As the capital of the old Western Region, it housed key regional institutions and attracted elites from across southwestern Nigeria (Mabogunje, 1968). The establishment of the University of Ibadan in 1948, Nigeria's first university, transformed the city into an intellectual hub, fostering interactions between academic communities and urban residents (Falola, 2004). Educational and research institutions introduced new forms of urban settlement and influenced the development of residential neighbourhoods, markets, and transport

systems. The city expanded beyond its historical core, with peri-urban areas absorbing migrant populations from rural hinterlands, leading to the emergence of informal settlements and new socio-economic networks. This period marked the beginning of Ibadan's transformation into a modern metropolis, where historical identity intersected with modernization pressures.

Ibadan's historical spatial form reflects a hybridization of indigenous and introduced urban practices. Traditional compounds, open squares, and markets coexist alongside colonial-era administrative structures and post-independence infrastructural developments. The city's morphology characterized by winding streets in older quarters and grid-like patterns in newer areas illustrates the layering of historical periods and the negotiation between communal, cultural, and modern functional imperatives (Areola, 1994). Public spaces have remained central to social life, with markets, motor parks, and palace grounds serving as arenas for political mobilization, cultural festivities, and social networking. These spaces also embody collective memory, linking contemporary urban experiences to historical legacies. The cultural and social identity of Ibadan has been shaped by its historical role as both a political and economic centre. Yoruba cultural practices, festivals, and religious institutions remain intertwined with urban space, reinforcing the city's distinctiveness in southwestern Nigeria (Falola & Salm, 2004). Annual celebrations, traditional gatherings and installations, and market festivities continue to define rhythms of urban life, embedding communal values and historical narratives within spatial practice. Even as modernization and redevelopment alter the physical form of the city, these cultural practices anchor Ibadan's public space identity in a historical continuum that extends from precolonial military encampments to contemporary urban redevelopment initiatives.

Ibadan's historical development also provides critical insight into contemporary challenges of urban governance and redevelopment. The layering of indigenous, colonial, and post-independence spatial forms complicates efforts to modernize infrastructure while preserving cultural heritage. Redevelopment projects that ignore historical patterns risk eroding the symbolic and social identity of public spaces, disrupting communal networks, and marginalizing long-standing residents (Harvey, 2008; Boym, 2001). Therefore, Ibadan's historical perspectives reveal a city that has continually negotiated the tensions between indigenous tradition, colonial imposition, and modern development. Its origin as a military settlement evolved into a regional political and economic hub, shaped by concentric spatial hierarchies, multifunctional public spaces, and vibrant social networks. Colonial and post-independence interventions introduced new physical and administrative forms that layered additional complexity onto the urban fabric. Throughout these transformations, public spaces have remained critical sites for social interaction, cultural expression, and identity formation. Recognizing this historical trajectory is crucial for understanding contemporary redevelopment trends and their implications for the reconfiguration of public space identity in Ibadan.

3.2 Methodology

The study relies on secondary data including documented records on the public space, spatial development and transformation in Ibadan. Also, personal field observations were used to compliment the various secondary sources deployed for the study.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Contemporary Redevelopment and Reconfiguration of Public Space Identity in Ibadan

Ibadan continues to experience redevelopment programmes and its transformation however, not only the policy of the administrative structure of succeeding State Governments, but also reflect the city's ongoing negotiation between its historical spatial form and pressures of modernization. Since the post-independence era, government agencies especially at Federal and State have intensified efforts to upgrade physical infrastructure, improve environmental quality, and attract new economic investments. These efforts are part of a broader national and regional drive to reposition Nigerian cities for global competitiveness, improve urban governance, and stimulate economic diversification (Akanmu, Salisu & Sanni, 2023 & Myers, 2011). Redevelopment initiatives in Ibadan have concentrated on strategic corridors and public spaces that are central to mobility/transportation, commerce, and civic identity, reflecting a deliberate attempt to modernize key urban nodes while maintaining functional efficiency.

A prominent trend of redevelopment and reconfiguration of public place identity in Ibadan started with the dualization of Bere/Yemetu/University of Ibadan Road corridor, construction of Molete flyover, dualization of Eleyele/Polytechnic/Sango Road and construction of the first Ring Road in Ibadan between 1976 and 1978 by David Jemibewon Military administration, while the Federal Government of Nigeria completed the new Lagos/Ibadan dual carriage way. Also, other dualized road networks by succeeding government include Iwo road/Monatan/Olodo, Mokola/UI/Ojo, Mokola/Dugbe, Dugbe/Molete, Challenge/Bere/Iwo road, Agodi Gate/Gbagi/Alakia, Airport road, while Ijokodo/Apete/Akufo road, Orita/Aperin/Akanran, ongoing Ibadan circular road, and several other urban roads have been rehabilitee or reconstructed to improve socio-economic and public space image of the city (Table 1). In addition, once a modest leisure area, Agodi Gardens has been transformed into a modern recreational complex featuring landscaped lawns, fountains, walkways, and event facilities, while Ibadan now have four modern bus terminals located at Ojo, Challenge and Iwo Road areas of the city.

This redevelopment underscores the institutional emphasis on environmental aesthetics, tourism promotion, and the leisure economy. Similarly, the upgrading of Mapo precinct, including improvements to street paving, junctions and roundabout redesign, lighting, and building facades around Mapo Hall, demonstrates an effort to restore civic pride and reinforce cultural symbolism in the city (Falola & Salm, 2004). These projects exemplify place-making strategies that prioritize visual appeal, functionality, and urban branding while reshaping the perception of public spaces. The private sector is not exempted in the selective renewal efforts and public stage

reconfiguration. For instance, commercial redevelopment of strategic business districts is prevalent in several parts of the city particularly, the Dugbe commercial area, Bodija market, and Challenge/Ring Road, and Ashi/Bashorun corridor. Dugbe (Authors' Survey, 2025).

This is an attestation to the view of Akinyemi (2019) that Ibadan's economic heart has undergone refurbishment of shopping complexes, construction of new plazas, and reorganization of street trading activities. These projects replace the previously informal and spontaneous character of public transport spaces with more regulated and structured urban mobility environments, highlighting a shift toward planned spatial governance in public areas. Thus, the influence of neoliberal urban reforms is evident in the increasing role of private capital in redevelopment, while the proliferation of malls, eateries, gated estates, high-end apartments, and private recreational facilities illustrates how market-driven urbanism is reshaping Ibadan's socio-spatial landscape (Myers, 2015). Also, developments such as Ventura Mall, Item 7 Go, Shoprite, Just Rite, and Heritage Mall etc introduced new shopping and consumption patterns and spatial hierarchies, subtly redefining publicness, accessibility, and the socio-economic profile of users. This trend emphasizes that redevelopment is not only physical but also socio-economic, reshaping the identities of both spaces and their users (Salisu, Fasina, Babatunde, Akanmu, Sanni & Olorunfemi (2025); Salisu, Fasina, Shodunke, Akanmu, Sanni & Olorunfemi (2023).

In Ibadan, public spaces have historically been multifunctional, serving as sites of trade, social interaction, political engagement, and cultural expression. Markets, motor parks, public squares, and recreational grounds were not merely infrastructural elements but living environments where communal identities were expressed and negotiated. Redevelopment, however, is redefining these spaces, raising questions about access, inclusivity, and the preservation of indigenous identity. In other words, contemporary redevelopment trends and public space reconfiguration highlight the tension between modernization and heritage preservation, a recurring theme in rapidly transforming African cities. While modernization introduces paved boulevards, illuminated streetscapes, and contemporary urban aesthetics, it often overlooks the preservation of indigenous architecture, historical landmarks, and cultural landscapes (Harvey, 2008).

Table 1: Selected redevelopment interventions in Ibadan

Intervention	Location	Key Objectives	Implications for Public Space Identity
Junction & Road Improvement (e.g., Agodi Gate, Civic Centre, Idi Ape)	Ibadan urban core (Agodi Gate, Civic Centre, University of Ibadan junction)	Reduce traffic congestion, formalize street trading, improve orderliness	Formalizes previously informal public realms; provides new stalls for displaced traders; shifts identity from spontaneous street-space to regulated plaza/market environment.
Circular Road Expansion (Rashidi Ladoja Circular Road) and key arterial upgrades	16–34 km segments around Ibadan metropolis	Enhance connectivity, stimulate economic development, improve image of city	Transforms outer public spaces and corridors; large infrastructure inserts may overshadow local space identity; roadside public-space character changes (residential/commercial to major corridor).
Urban Market Upgrades (rural & peri-urban) (e.g., Aare-Alasa, Oja-Agbe, Oja-Oba)	Markets in Ona-Ara, Iseyin, Ibarapa, and Ibadan outskirts	Modernize market infrastructure, improve logistics, support traders	Physical upgrade enhances usability but may alter market culture; traditional social networks and spontaneous public-space uses may be constrained by formal layouts.
Urban Township Road Rehabilitation (12 roads totalling ~84.75 km)	Multiple township roads within Ibadan	Improve accessibility, upgrade urban fabric, support mobility	Improves everyday public spaces (streets, footpaths), but standardization may reduce historical character of street spaces and informal settling patterns.

4.2 Challenges of Redevelopment and Reconfiguration of Public Space Identity in Ibadan

The ongoing redevelopment of Ibadan and the reconfiguration of its public space identity present a multifaceted set of challenges, reflecting tensions among modernization, cultural preservation, social inclusion, and urban governance. The most notable challenges are:

i. Conflict between modernization and cultural heritage preservation: Redevelopment initiatives often prioritize aesthetic improvement, functional efficiency, and economic returns at the expense of historic spatial forms, indigenous architecture, and culturally significant landscapes (Falola & Salm, 2004). Traditional markets and public squares that once embodied the city's social memory are sometimes altered or demolished, producing urban spaces that are physically modern but socially and culturally dislocated. Hence, such undermines the continuity of collective memory and diminishes the symbolic identity that historically defined Ibadan's urban spaces.

ii. Social exclusion and inequitable access to redeveloped spaces: Historically, Ibadan's public spaces especially, shopping centres, markets, motor parks, squares, and parks were inclusive, serving as arenas for social interaction, informal economic activities, and cultural practices across diverse socio-economic groups (Obateru, 2003 & Areola, 1994). Contemporary redevelopment projects, however, often formalize these spaces, imposing fees, access restrictions, or physical barriers that privilege middl - and upper-income groups while marginalizing informal traders, low-income residents, and rural migrants and displacement of the previous users/owners. This selective access reduces the multifunctionality of public spaces, erodes social cohesion, and undermines the historical identity of these urban areas.

iii. Displacement of informal economic activities: the redevelopment of key commercial and transport hubs such as Dugbe, Bodija, Iwo Road, Ojo, and Challenge involves restructuring market layouts, formalizing motor parks, and clearing roadside stalls to enhance order and aesthetics. While these interventions improve efficiency and attract investment, they disrupt the livelihoods of traders, transport operators, and small-scale service providers, weakening the social networks and interactions that give public spaces their distinct cultural identity.

iv. Privatization and commercialization of public spaces: This is another growing tension between redevelopment and identity reflecting broader neoliberal urban trends. The proliferation of gated estates, private malls, and exclusive recreational facilities reduces the availability of genuinely public, indigenous and accessible spaces. Hence, privatization limits informal gatherings, spontaneous social interactions, and communal cultural practices, thereby reshaping public space identity around economic logic rather than social and cultural inclusivity (Low, 2000).

v. Transport infrastructure and mobility challenges: The city's historical road network, designed for pre-automobile traffic and organic spatial growth, now struggles to accommodate increasing vehicular volumes, modern public transit, informal transport systems, and population growth. It is evident that redevelopment interventions aimed at improving traffic flow, such as road expansion/ dualization, construction of Ibadan Circular Road, modernized bus terminals (see figures 1, 2 &3), reconstructed intersections (at Challenge, Gate and University of Ibadan/Agbowo junction), and expanded arterial roads, often conflict with pedestrian needs, informal transit operations, and market accessibility. Also, the inadequacy of integrated transport planning, coupled with high reliance on informal and semi-formal transport modes, results in congestion, delays, and reduced mobility, presenting a critical challenge for sustaining both economic activity and social engagement in public spaces.



Figure 1: Ibadan Bus Terminus at Iwo Road



Figure 2: Mokola flyover, Ibadan



Figure 3: Ibadan Circular Road

vi. Urbanization and population pressures: Ibadan has experienced rapid population growth due to rural-urban migration, natural increase, and its historical role as a regional economic, administrative and educational hub (Mabogunje, 1962). This growth places intense pressure on infrastructure, housing, sanitation, and public amenities. Redevelopment efforts often struggle to keep pace with population expansion, leading to overcrowding in markets, motor parks, residential areas, and recreational spaces. Informal settlements expand into peripheral zones, increasing demand for access to public facilities and complicating spatial planning. The combination of population density, informal economic activity, and mobility needs

intensifies conflicts over public space usage, making it difficult to reconcile modernization goals with inclusivity and social equity.

vii. Environmental challenges: While redevelopment often focuses on drainage improvements, road upgrades, and landscaped parks, these interventions may not fully consider the social and cultural functions of public spaces (UN-Habitat, 2020). The problem related to open defecation and dumping of waste/refuse into drains and gutters continue to make the city dirty.

viii. Alienation of local population: Redevelopment projects that prioritize standardized aesthetics, commercial functionality, or traffic efficiency may inadvertently alienate local populations. Typical example of this is the ongoing Ibadan circular road projects which have led to demolition of structures and buildings along the corridors.

ix. Prevalence of informal settlements: A fundamental challenge is the prevalence of informal settlements and the domination of the informal sector in Ibadan. Informal settlements, often located on peri-urban fringes or along transport corridors, accommodate a significant proportion of the city's population and are characterized by limited infrastructure, insecure land tenure, and inadequate service provision (Kombe, 2010). Simultaneously, the informal sector dominates markets, motor parks, street vending, and small-scale enterprises, forming the backbone of Ibadan's urban economy (Simone, 2004). Hence, redevelopment projects that formalize or restructure markets, clear roadside stalls, or upgrade public spaces often displace informal economic actors and residents, disrupting livelihoods and the socio-cultural networks that historically defined the vibrancy and identity of public spaces.

x. Absence of an operative physical development plan: This represents a critical governance challenge that underlies many of the above-mentioned issues. Ibadan, like many rapidly growing African cities, has historically lacked a comprehensive, enforceable plan to guide land use, infrastructure development, and spatial organization (UN-Habitat, 2020). In the absence of such a plan, redevelopment projects are often implemented in a fragmented, ad hoc manner, resulting in mismatched infrastructure, disruption of informal networks, and underutilization or over-concentration of public spaces.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has examined urban redevelopment and reconfiguration of public space identity in Ibadan. It delves into the emergence of the city and the impacts of colonial administration in its modernization and reconfiguration of public space identity in the past and present by succeeding governments. redevelopment of Ibadan and the reconfiguration of its public space identity represent a complex interplay of historical evolution, socio-cultural dynamics, urban growth, and contemporary policy and infrastructural interventions. The study established that Ibadan's public spaces consist of markets, palace grounds, squares, motor parks, and open recreational areas which have served multifunctional purposes, accommodating commerce, social interaction, political gatherings, and cultural expression.

While the colonial and post-independence administration added administrative, infrastructure and institutional layers, producing a hybrid urban morphology that combined indigenous spatial logic with formalized layouts, contemporary redevelopment, led by the Oyo State Government, has focused on urban renewal, road and transport infrastructure upgrades, market modernization, digitization of land records, and flood-resilient infrastructure projects (UN-Habitat, 2020). These interventions improve connectivity, functional efficiency, and urban aesthetics, but also, alter the historical and social character of public spaces, often formalizing formerly informal and multifunctional areas. In other words, redevelopment and transport infrastructure projects like the Circular Road expansion, township road rehabilitation, and modernized motor parks (bus terminals) improve mobility but sometimes conflict with informal transport networks and pedestrian practices, altering the way public spaces are used and experienced by the residents.

In conclusion, the study opines that the contemporary redevelopment in Ibadan presents opportunities for enhanced infrastructure, mobility, and economic growth, but also poses risks to the city's socio-cultural and historical public space identity. Hence, by integrating heritage preservation, social inclusivity, transport and mobility planning, population management, sustainable industrialization, and participatory governance, Ibadan can achieve redevelopment that is both modern and culturally resonant. Such a balanced approach ensures that public spaces continue to function as arenas of social, economic, and cultural life, preserving the city's identity while accommodating the demands of urban growth and modernization.

The following recommendations are made to ensure sustainable redevelopment that preserves Ibadan's public space identity while addressing mobility, urbanization, and industrialization challenges, the following recommendations are proposed:

i. Redevelopment initiatives should incorporate historical, cultural, and indigenous spatial forms in design and planning. Hence, adaptive reuse of markets, squares, and palace grounds can maintain continuity with Ibadan's socio-cultural heritage.
ii. Ensuring that redevelopment projects provide equitable access to public spaces, retaining multifunctionality for informal traders, low-income residents, and marginalized groups. Participatory planning and stakeholder engagement are essential to preserve the social character of public spaces (Purcell, 2002; Low, 2000).
iii. Strengthening transport infrastructure and mobility options by developing integrated transport networks that balance formal roads with pedestrian pathways, bicycle lanes, and informal transit systems, while encouraging non-motorized mobility options, such as walkable streets and cycle-friendly corridors, to enhance environmental sustainability and social interaction in public spaces.
iv. Addressing urbanization and population pressure through planning for population growth with mixed-use zoning, increased provision of public parks and squares, and high-density residential clusters integrated with open spaces.
v. Strengthening governance, coordination, and monitoring through improving inter-agency coordination, policy coherence, and enforcement of urban

regulations, and establish evaluation frameworks to assess social, cultural, and functional impacts of redevelopment projects.

vi. Promotion of awareness campaigns on the importance of preserving public space identity alongside modernization, while encouraging community stewardship and engagement in maintaining parks, squares, and markets.

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