

# ART AND ARCHITECTURE AS SUSTAINABLE TOOLS OF PROPAGANDA: A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE IMPERIAL ROME AND ITS INFLUENCES ON THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY POLITY

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## Review Article

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**ABSTRACT:** Art and Architecture have collectively been used as the historical media of communication and preservation of cultures and values for many civilizations. It is argued that art is an expression of creative human skills and imagination which is usually appreciated for its beauty and emotional power. Architecture on the other hand is perceived to be a component of the art 'you can walk through' that specifically embodies the science of designing and superintending of buildings and other similar structures. However, Rome as a republic and as an empire had greatly explored the phenomena of art and architecture in a variety of ways and elaborations. The Roman emperors and private citizens alike have used buildings, sculptures, paintings, and other art forms as propaganda tools to advertise achievements and mold public opinions on issues of interest. This study therefore, explores on the implications of these phenomena through 'textual' historical review and analysis directed at providing highlights on the significance and power of art and architecture as sustainable factors of propaganda epitomized by the Imperial Rome. Subsequently, the study elucidates on the legacy of its propaganda techniques that has resonated in the 21st century polity with reinforced technological innovations deployed to sustain culture, political power, and economic development. This is evident in the ongoing global developments as typically exemplified by the Gulf States of the Arab world.

**KEYWORDS:** Art, Architecture, Sustainable Tools, Propaganda, Imperial Rome, 21st Century.

## INTRODUCTION

The city of Rome is historically known to be founded around 754 B.C. by Romulus; which in a period of time had become a confederacy of Italian States; and three centuries later became the hub of western world from Euphrates to the Atlantic under spectacular rulers like Pompey, Julius Caesar, Octavian (Augustus) and Trajan [1]. According to Nuttgens [2], the Romans were described as hard-headed, pragmatic people, who excelled at making laws, administering territories, and exhibiting military engineering feats. They built their empire by military aggression rather than by exploring and colonizing expeditions. Therefore, the extension of the Roman state and the spread of their culture was neither by conquest of the mind, through philosophy, spirituality, poetry or art; but by military grandeur and display of engineering feats. They built baths to relax in, fora for conducting law and politics, theatres for drama, circuses for gladiatorial fights, and temples for a not too demanding religion; all with salient propaganda connotations.

Ironically, the birth of Imperial Rome is synonymous with the end of the Roman Republic and the rise to power of Augustus. It describes the period of the Roman Empire (27 B.C. to A.D. 476) which typifies the end of Roman republic following the assassination of Julius Caesar. The Imperial Rome attained its peak in a variety of ways and developments through creative engineering skills accentuated by original vision of arts and architecture. The architecture was profound and eccentric particularly in the development of the public spaces. The *forum* was created and became the social and political hub of the city, serving as meeting place and market. The *temple* was designed and built to be seen from a forum with emphasis on the façade. The *basilicas* signified as halls of justice and commerce were built and later served as models of early Christian churches. The *baths* (thermae) established as public facilities served as meeting-places with facilities for athletics and lectures; established on raised platforms with heating systems underneath. The *amphitheatres/circuses/theatres*

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served as places of entertainment; deadly animals and gladiatorial fights; horse and chariot races; orchestra and drama. The *tombs* were magnificently built as mausoleums and generally placed along the main roads out of town [3]. All these settings and monuments were established to serve primarily as basic civic and entertainment functions; and as memorials or repository, enduring aesthetic values encapsulated with propagandist messages on achievements of the civilization.

The Romans were known to have adopted other foreign cultures including art, - which was specifically influenced by the Greek civilization to some reasonable degree. Nonetheless, the Roman art embraces both the private and public spheres that encompass a wide range of communication media. While the private realm provides the opportunity for the elite Roman home owner to display his wealth, taste and education to the visitors; the public domain is filled with works commissioned by the emperors such as portraits of the imperial family or bath houses decorated with images of important classical statues. There were also commemorative works that indispensably described military life, depicted wars, and marked victories, e.g. the Arch of Titus or the Column of Trajan [4].

The commemoration of private individuals took place in the form of portraits (sculptures) displayed in the homes or in funerary context. Meanwhile, the public figures in the personalities of statesmen, generals, and emperors were usually memorialized through the erection of their portraits in public places. The displayed portraiture basically served as designated propaganda medium for boosting the image of the emperor or any other important personality. It is interesting to stress that the portrayal of the human body in the portraiture with facial features and other subliminal impressions was unequivocally important in the characterization of the personality of the emperor. They were carefully drafted to express and project personality identity in terms of age, experience as well as inner feeling of vigour and responsibility portraying a lack of vanity. In advanced scenarios, the portraits of men were depicted with wrinkles, baldness, and physical imperfections that were thought to convey a sense of their virtue, the quality of selfless duty and sober morality [1].

Emperors had their images depicted on coins as a propaganda tool to showcase fame and power of their influence. The reverse side of coins always pictured deities, temples, military victory or advertised emperor's virtues through inscriptions to serve as reminder of achievements and power. A

typical example according to Thompson [1] is Julius Caesar who had his image depicted on coins during his lifetime to remind his paid troops that he was responsible for their livelihood; and this act was gloriously adopted by Augustus and other emperors of the imperial age.

Augustus built glamorous edifices and constructed grand public spaces in Rome to transform it into a truly majestic city of its time. The posture of the Roman buildings helped to create a Roman culture in parts of the empire beyond Rome. The great palaces built were always richly decorated to give a sense of opulence; and its lavishness was meant to impress viewers and advertise on the wealth, power and the taste of the emperor. Temples were rebuilt to encourage a renewal of pious observance of the old rites. Augustus notably commanded flourished arts as a propaganda tool in his quest to make Rome the new Athens, the cultural as well as political nerve centre of the Mediterranean [3].

Roman public buildings were often styled in relief sculptures to depict special events, such as sacrifices to gods, victories at wars, or addresses by the emperor. Portable paintings on wooden panels were on some occasions displayed in public buildings to depict great military battles and victories. At this point, it is necessary to stress that painting as an element, together with architecture and other art forms had been greatly explored as tools of expression of human creative skills and imagination, sustainably maintained till date.

## **SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPAGANDA IN ART AND ARCHITECTURE**

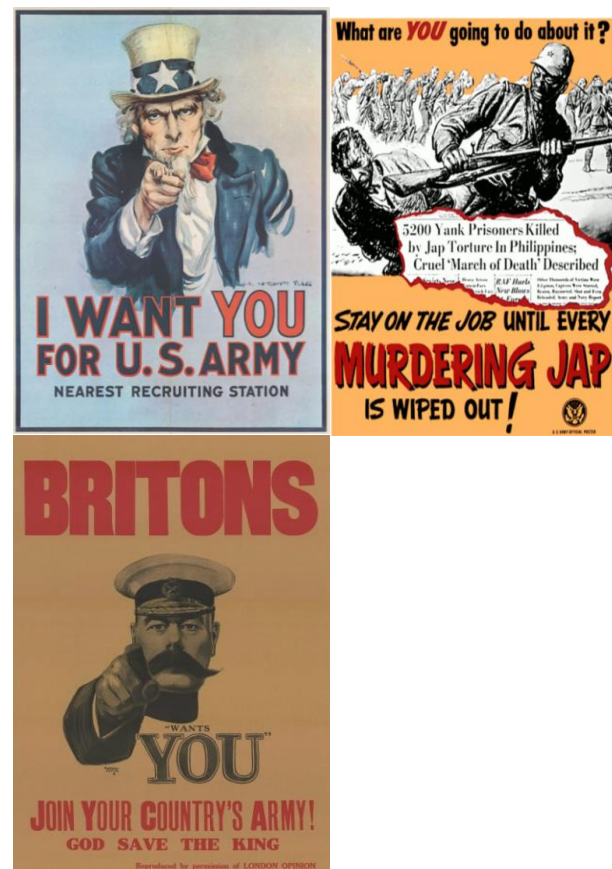
Sustainability as a concept or system is difficult to be defined in one straight perspective, but possible in varied dimensions. In respect of the subject matter of propaganda, sustainability could be referred to as the ability to maintain a system at a certain rate or level to deliver effective results over time. Art and architecture are two known tools that have invariably been used to sustain the propaganda machines of many civilizations in history.

Undoubtedly, propaganda is a communication technique that tends to create emotional appeal in people to accept an opinion leading them to certain behaviours and actions. According to Lysa [5], propaganda has been used in many ways throughout history to broadcast information to give certain ideals and understandings to the people. This act is to promote a particular agenda or viewpoint to shape people's opinion and subsequently their actions. Art

as a propaganda tool can be used to influence public opinion in favour of a political ideal or government policies. This can take the form of posters, political cartoons, commissioned paintings, sculptures, buildings, and literary arts. In literary arts, words are capable of explaining situations, ideas and opinions, but in a lot of times fail to add some desired visual details, references and substance durability to the message. As such, art in imagery in most times presents clearer messages than written words. Although, arts and propaganda are completely different phenomena in context, they are both, forms of communication media. While art explores the mystery of human experience, propaganda seeks to influence intellectual decision by stirring up obscuring clouds of emotionalism. At some points, art becomes propaganda as a tool; and in some other scenario, propaganda becomes art as a medium. The Philosopher, Alain de Botton relates that, 'Art is propaganda for what really matters: the way we live rather than the way we think we should live.' Propaganda in this sense becomes synonymous with furthering ideologies through speeches, writing, and reporting; and has also a powerful history of intentionally manipulating visual art to express political sentiments. It is recorded in history that intentionally propagated images have been used successfully to further states' political sentiments through visual communicating messages. It is notably evident that in World War I, poster art has been used as a propaganda tool to shape public opinion towards states' participation in the war, to encourage community involvement. There were also posters that vilified the enemy. Typical examples are; a political propaganda rallying patriotic support which was expressed in the British Army's 'Your Country Needs You' poster; and also the United States' 'Uncle Sam' poster furthered same sentiments of nationalism to gather recruits for the American army (Figure 1) [6].

In the same vein, architecture has equally been used as propaganda tool to promote an idea or ideology using buildings and structures that are symbolic and would stand the test of time. In fact, architecture as a tool has played a great role in the political and physical developmental growth of many civilizations in world history; such as the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman Empires; and most recently, the western civilizations of Europe and America. Hitler and his Nazi party notably used architecture to promote their programme and ideology with unquestionable emphasis on nationalism [7]. But, in the history of time, only few people have used

propaganda (arts and architecture) effectively as the first emperor of Rome, Augustus Caesar [8].



**Figure 1.** Propaganda art (Wikipedia)

## METHODOLOGY

This study is a review analysis of the propaganda phenomenon of the Imperial Rome with particular reference to the roles of art and architecture in promoting propagandist messages. The study specifically explores on the implications of these propaganda phenomena through 'textual' historical review and analysis on the under listed aspects as provided below. This is directed at providing highlights on the significance and power of art and architecture as sustainable factors of propaganda epitomized by the Imperial Rome that subsequently resonated in the 21<sup>st</sup> century polity. Thus;

### A) The Experience of Imperial Rome

The birth of Imperial Rome is occasioned by the end of the Roman republic and the reign of Emperor Augustus. The Roman Empire of post-republican period used propaganda extensively through art and architecture between 30 BCE – 330 CE. The adopted methods range from 'passed on stories,' or visually pushing certain ideals that are in some instances exaggerated in certain figures or ideas to promote their motives. This was necessary to enliven the

personal status of the people and the rulers; and also to unify the empire and promote Pax Romana (roman peace). Propaganda was used to inform the people of the general happenings and important events that must be to their knowledge, such as the success of the ruler and the army among other things. The art of painting and sculpture were used to promote heroic image of a person or cause [5].

In the words of Pollok [9], ‘...the Roman Empire is arguably the most influential empire that has ever existed.’ This is because, its influences has riddled the entire western civilization in the area of military organization and strategy, law and the political order. It succeeded in conquering and assimilating the entire Mediterranean region, extending to most parts of Britain, North Africa and the Gulf region, creating an impressive historical record of territorial expansion and longevity. It however, endured as eastern Byzantine empire for nearly an additional 1000 years before the fall of Constantinople in the hands of the Ottoman empire in 1453 [10].

The political success of the Roman civilization which was accentuated by the stability of the state is particularly credited to good leadership among other factors. One of such leaders, whose greatness stands alone according to scholars, is the personality of Caesar Augustus.

Emperor Augustus was born in 63 BCE; and was earlier known as Gaius Octavius. His adoptive father Gaius Julius Caesar groomed him for leadership by imparting on him important lessons on many aspects of life; and particularly the artistry of political manipulation to garner popular support [11]. He became the master statesman who never had the privilege of the 20<sup>th</sup> century technology and logistics to underscore public manipulation. However, he was able to make use of the provincial methods of his time, which included some means that are still exploited today – arts, architecture, and the written words. Statues, monuments, coinage and other art works were greatly utilized to solidify and spread his image as; *Augustus* the military commander, *Augustus* the statesman, and *Augustus* the peace keeper. Consequently, Augustus was able to sturdily maintain unabated power in an atmosphere of peace and stability during his reign [9].

## B) The Augustan propaganda

In the words of Charlesworth, M. P. year 1937 in Jeffries [8];

“In any large empire, embracing many languages, nations, and culture, the ruler must somehow persuade his subjects (i) that he is fit to

rule them, and (ii) that they are being ruled for their own good. He must, in fact, use propaganda.”

The era of Augustus the emperor was an epitome of power filled with military triumphs, expansion, peace and prosperity, achievable only with sophisticated propaganda campaign [12]. The physical mode of propagation (statues, monuments and the coinage) were more potent than the ‘literary art’ form because they could be consumed by anyone both read and unread [9]. The propaganda was heavily focused on promoting the messages of military triumphs, his divine connection and recognition by the gods, the prosperity he created by establishing new provincial cities, and the continuity he established via the peaceful succession of power.

The messages occasioned by the images on monuments, statues and art could be received by only a limited number of people, in contrast to the much broader audience for coinage being a portable form of propagandist imagery [12]. Thus, the followings are the details of the various propaganda tools employed by Augustus.

### 1) The statues

The statues of Augustus and the associated art depicted his connection to the gods, his military triumphs, his family succession, his political vigour and the totality of his leadership. They portrayed the image of Augustus in different contexts. Thus, there were two notable depictions of Augustus. The first is Augustus ‘the leader’ which is epitomized in the famous *Prima Porta* statue. The second is the *Via Labicana Augustus* which portrays the emperor as Pontifex Maximus (head of Roman College of Priests and arguably the most exalted title in the Rome).

a. The *Prima Porta* statue depicting Augustus in military garb portrays the image of Rome as a place of great military service and strength (Figures 2a&b).

b. The *Via Labicana Augustus* portraying Augustus as Pontifex Maximus; displaying a veiled Augustus in a toga robe meant for the magistrates and citizens alike whenever they make public appearances (Figure 3). The veiled head being a pontification of the Roman priests engaged in sacred rites.

The *Prima Porta Augustus* is an elaborate statue containing hidden propagandistic messages within it that would help to express to the Roman people on the leadership of Augustus. This statue was located in a house belonging to Augustus’ wife (Livia) which can only be seen by prominent members of the society, but reflects other similar images found in the public realm.





**Figure 2.** a) Augustus Breastplate [12]; b) Augustus of Prima Porta [12]

The Gemma Augustae is another statue that is not shown publicly but has similar propaganda messages showing the emperor surrounded by the gods, as if he had become one (Figure 4). In fact, statues are the physical entities of evocation on the rule as well as accomplishments of Augustus; suggesting a divine favour from the gods, advocating him being the son of a god – Julius Caesar [9, 12].



**Figure 3.** Via Laticana Augustus [12]



**Figure 4.** Image of the Gemma Augustae [12]

## 2) The monuments

There were two monuments that were erected in the name of Augustus. The Ara Pacis and the Res Gestae Divi Augusti.

a. The Ara Pacis (Figure 5) is one of the most famous of Augustan monuments located on the northern outskirts of Rome; and was sanctified on 30 January 9 BCE. In this configuration, the altar is consecrated as a symbol of peace for the people of Rome, occasioned by the authority of Augustus and his family. This establishment is supported by the Augustus statement;

“Pray that the household that is responsible for peace may, together with that peace, last a long time.”

b. The Res Gestae Divi Augusti is not a monument per se, but rather a text that was inscribed on monuments in many locations throughout the empire (Figure 6).



**Figure 5.** Image of Ara Pacis [12]



**Figure 6.** Res Gestae Divi Augustus (Deeds of the Divine Augustus) [12]

Both monuments promoted Augustan propaganda by extolling his greatness and achievements; and as well emphasizing on the importance of his messages. In short, the monuments served as the medium of eulogy of his life, both present and beyond to the people of Rome

and those outside the empire. However, monuments and other luxurious objects were only available to those in the immediate region or those close to the emperor, whereas the coinage was for all ranks in close and distant places. The impact of all other propaganda tools (statues, monuments and other forms of art) was amplified by the use of coinage to send the same set of messages [9, 12].

The propaganda message of the monuments was able to reach a large number of viewers more widely by those who physically visited them. Meanwhile, the coinage was a more successful campaign because it was the fastest in transmission used by all categories of people both inside and outside the Roman Empire daily in the monetized economy of goods and services. The versatility of coinage benefitted Augustus much as new coins are susceptible to carrying new messages or image [12].

### 3) The coinage

Coins have served as prominent and effective means of propaganda in the ancient world because they were part of daily life in business transactions; and could reach farthest corners of the empire and beyond. These coins had inscriptions of important images that help to pass on messages to the people. Such images as the Capricorn, gateways built as triumphal arches, laurel branches, eagles, Victory, crocodiles, bulls, altars, and Augustus' stepson and successor, Tiberius (Figures 7a&b).



**Figure 7. a)** Imperial Aureus with Augustus facing right with Victory on the reverse [12]



**Figure 7. b)** Imperial Aureus with Augustus right with double Laurel branches around a door on the reverse [12]

Coinage was a primeval (inherited from Julius) element in Augustus' propaganda campaign strategy because of its visual imagery, versatility, intrinsic value, portability, and representation of continuity. The images on the coins had no direct reflection on the market value, but the images depictions were important medium of message transmission in the hands of the citizens. The success of coinage as viral propaganda tool is evident in its legacy; a legacy that continues till date as seen in current messages and propaganda in the form of busts, symbols, and inscriptions on currency all around the world [9, 12].

### 4) The forum of Augustus and other public places

Augustus built the forum to promote peace and stability in Rome. It was a courtyard at the entrance of the temple of Mars Ultor, meant to house the statues of earlier kings including Julius Caesar; and with colonnades along the perimeter which Augustus claimed his divine ancestors dwell within. However, it was essentially created to become the social and political hub of the city, serving as meeting place and also as a market [8].

Augustus also built other public places like the basilicas (halls of justice), the temples (for worship), the thermae (baths with public facilities), the amphitheatres/circuses/theatres (for entertainment, gladiatorial fights, horse and chariot races, drama, orchestra), and tombs (as mausoleums) for burial of dignitaries.

### 5) The literary art

Augustus had employed all propaganda tools at his disposal including literature which he used to promote his proclaimed divine lineage. In fact, he was quick to discern on the power of written words as in poems, and the efficacy of the visual content in theatre on the minds of the people. He took advantage of the potency of poetry, and subsequently, many poets facilitated to draw the line from the gods to Augustus [13]. He got involved in the production of poems that would promote his propagandist ideology; leading to stories that buttressed the reception of the subsequent forms of physical propaganda. In a nutshell, the literary works of imperial Rome consigned an enduring impression on the minds of the Roman people [8].

### C) The 21<sup>st</sup> Century (contemporary) Propaganda

The main essence of propaganda in this context is to construct reality according to the interests of specific power structures attainable through



sustainable propagandist messages. Nonetheless, the physical component of arts and architecture according to Hussaini et al. [14] has the potency to denote and symbolize societal and national values in diverse ways. Thus, contemporary propaganda relates to the performance of power in contemporary society derived from contemporary propagandist messages; in which case, art and design are deployed to play a major role in influencing the attitudes of a society.

In the words of Tusa [15];

‘the arts matter because they embrace, express and define the soul of a civilization; and a nation without arts is a nation that has stopped talking to itself, stopped dreaming, and had lost interest in the past and lacked curiosity about the future.’

Arts as a propaganda medium is considered a conscious synthesis and creation of forms, sounds, movements, colours, materials and words to express a human condition; and its characterized by its quality to carry messages which are either clearly stated or deeply hidden [16].

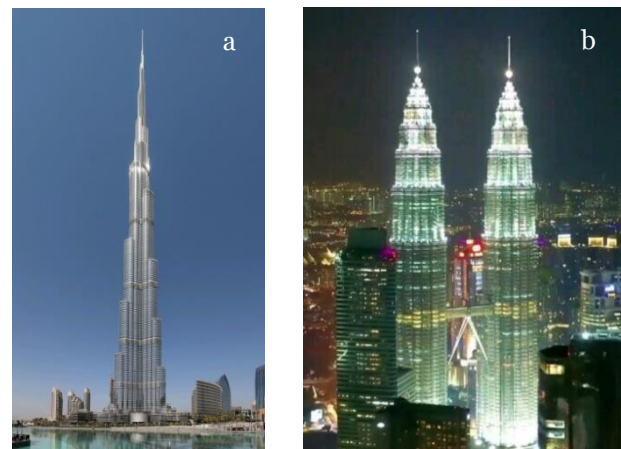
Leaders in history have commissioned art and architecture as vehicles to display the best attributes of their societies and for the posterity of their legacies. Through art and architecture, the nations of the Mesopotamia sought to project military victory and a love of their government; the Egyptian Pharaohs were motivated to prove their relationship with the gods above and their power on Earth; and the Greeks sought to develop civic life and honour their military conquests. Though, propaganda may not always be truthful or realistic, it has become a vital resource that both the government and the common people can procure through art [17].

The current dispensation of secular and democratic society has no place for ambitious militarists and would-be dictators who might desire to perpetually cling on to power on feudal or autocratic domain. Nevertheless, arts and architecture remains a power tool in the hands of political leaders in addition to other important contemporary media for the propagation of ideals of the new civilization.

The newfangled propaganda in art and architecture excogitates tradition and non-traditional societal issues of culture, identity, expression, and aesthetic personality in political campaigns; and a demonstration of the height and strength of development in the new civilization. Typical examples are found in the classical architectural edifices in the modern cities of Dubai, Malaysia, Tokyo, China, etc. (Figures 8a&b). All the

same, postmodern art focuses on public attention and its role in contemporary society by defining, questioning, and examining art’s function, form, content aesthetics, and value [18].

Art is an effective medium to communicate messages to people in politics and as well an inspiration medium of the society through cultivation of new values and ideas which in turn influences the politics of the day. It is the absolute weapon in the hands of politicians which according to Lasswell [19] is the technique of influencing human actions (Figure 9).



**Figure 8.** a) Burj Khalifa, Dubai (Wikipedia); b) Petronas Twin Towers, Kuala Lumpur (Wikipedia)



**Figure 9.** Contemporary Propaganda Art (Wikipedia)

Propaganda thus became the modern force of the 19<sup>th</sup> century politics, and an integral part of the social, political, and economic life of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries with great sophistication and effectiveness. According to the statement of Hussaini et al. [14], ‘beyond the depiction of the power of the state and its influence on the emotions of the citizens, architecture and arts have endured a more sustainable approach in creating enduring values in

our daily experiences in recent times by deploying the advanced technologies.’ This is accentuated by the development of a wide range of new communication technologies of satellites, Wi-Fi networks, computers, cell phones, social media, etc. offering ingenious potentials of spreading propagandist messages across the world.





**THE EMERGENT CASE OF THE GULF STATES OF THE ARAB WORLD**

Culture and traditional values in conjunction with political and economic developments remain the driving forces of societal growth and its sustainability. Cultural resources range from imposing monuments to live performances of traditional art; in most cases drama, music and dance. However, the imposing monuments of the contemporary civilizations in all regions of the world are depicted by the presence of super structures of





monumental heights and grandeur. The emergence of the supertall buildings as widely recognizable icon of the cities is an impetus for future building growth and economic development [20]. In a grandiose show of eminence and propaganda of strength in socio-cultural, political and economic development, the skylines across the major cities of the world have been rising considerably over the past decades.

A typical example of this development is the current trends of supertall and complex building developments in the Gulf States of the Arab world. The art and architectural feat of this region has helped to shape the image of the emerging cities and the national leadership with strong influences on the perception of the inhabitants and the outside world, and traction towards a more sustainable tomorrow. The building’s imagery represents a cultural iconic symbol that depicts societal identities; a reflection of the cultural aspects through historical analysis of the cities [21, 22] as shown in table 1.

**Table 1.** Examples of high-rise buildings with responsive cultural patterns

|  | Description   | The building design   | Inspirative model  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Katara Towers,</b><br>Doha,<br>Qatar          | This tower represents Qatar’s symbol of hospitality and generosity. It demonstrates the modern architectural art and advancements which is reminiscence of contemporary design combined with culture and art (Wikipedia).   |  <p>The design pays homage to Qatar’s iconic scimitar swords, the 2 towers hosting two of Qatar’s most luxurious hotels</p> |  <p><b>National symbol of Qatar</b> – (Dawlat Qatar)</p> <p>The coat of Arms of Qatar depicts a variety of different geographical and cultural connotations. It reflects an interactive and harmonious interface between wild and marine lives. It also depicts the palm tree height and its sense of giving, recalling of Arabs mightiest swords, the sense of dignity and safe haven.</p> |
| <b>Al-Bahr Twin Towers,</b><br>Abu Dhabi,<br>UAE | The twin towers are popularly known as pineapple building. It is characterized with exotic pineapple and honeycomb design as a solution to the Hot Desert Sun. Depending on the position of the Sun and heat, the shades open and close automatically to keep the Sun off the glass building as it moves across the sky but also let in daylight (Wikipedia). |  <p>Also known as pineapple building.</p>   |  <p>Inspired by <i>Mashrabiya</i> – an architectural element characteristic of traditional Islamic architecture. It is used traditionally to catch wind and for passive cooling. Jars and basins of water could be placed in it to cause evaporative cooling.</p>   |



|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Kingdom Centre Building,</b><br/>Riyadh,<br/>Saudi Arabia</p> | <p>The tower is inspired by the growth of folded fronds of a desert plant which represents the formation of new life and growth. It symbolizes the city of Riyadh with simple elliptical tower topped with a curved opening with an observatory bridge spanning an inverted catenary arch. The striking triangular opening is visible from nearly all parts of the capital city, Riyadh (Wikipedia).</p>   |  <p>Symbolizes the capital city of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh</p>                         |  <p>Saudi Arabia desert plant (<i>Birds of Saudi Arabia</i>)</p> |
| <p><b>Museum of the Future,</b><br/>Dubai,<br/>UAE</p>              | <p>This is a torus – shaped (shell) building with windows in the form of a poem about the future, written by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. The goal of the Museum is to be the first to look to the future. It is said that everything in the Museum is predicted to be in 2071. It seeks to foster solutions to the challenges of the future cities. The Sheikh says;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "We won't live for hundreds of years, but the products of our creativity can leave a legacy long after we are gone."</li> <li>• "The future will be for those who will be able to imagine, design and build it, the future does not wait, the future can be designed and built today."</li> <li>• "The secret of the renewal of life, the development of civilization and the progress of humanity is in one word: innovation" (Wikipedia).</li> </ul> |  <p>A global symbol of the future embellished with cultural arabic calligraphy</p> |  <p>Torus-shaped shell</p>                                      |

According to Hollister and Wood [23], “five of the twenty world tallest buildings in 2020 are in three countries in the Middle East; the UAE (United Arab Emirate), Saudi Arabia and Qatar. These projects include the current world’s tallest (Burj Khalifa), the future world’s tallest (Kingdom Tower), and what is soon to become the world’s second tallest (Makkah Royal Clock Tower Hotel).” Nonetheless, it is evident that the motivating factor in these developments has been to push the boundaries of technology and accomplish feats of sustainable political power and socioeconomic strength never before imagined. The Kingdom Centre Building, Katara Towers, Al –Bahr Twin Towers, Museum of the Future, etc. seen in table 1, elaborately exemplified this fact.

Most of these emerging structures have been constructed using sustainable principles to achieve

greater sustainability and reduce energy (cooling) loads in their respective hot climatic regions. Principal among others is the desirability of the supper structures; and the intent of public awareness to raise super buildings to a state of the art environmental agenda in which technology innovation in the adoption of natural energy systems is integrated with innovative structures [21].

### CONCLUSION

Past studies have indicated that propaganda has been an integral part of human history and the driving force of political systems of all civilizations. However, art and architecture have both played significant roles in the spread of propagandist messages heavily deployed by the Imperial Rome and the subsequent civilizations. They have been

commissioned by leaders to showcase the attributes of the society and to project their legacies as exhibited by Augustus.

Augustus was the first emperor of Rome and had demonstrated his worthiness of the title and accomplishments through a successful propaganda machine of which arts and architecture were prominent, and his propagandist strategies worthy of emulation by his successors. On this platform, Augustus was able to consolidate his powers and subsequently became the most powerful man of Imperial Rome. Nonetheless, Augustus left a long lasting legacy of propaganda campaigns in which coinage was a crucial element, not only in Imperial Rome but also in the currencies used around the world today.

It is asserted that mythical figures were the foundation to Augustan propaganda; in which he attempted to link himself to divinity using mythical images with the infused spirit of establishing power, and consolidating peace and stability. This was a great success upon which he ensured that the next ten succeeding Caesars would be from the Julian family, and to buttress that power to the Julian lineage as well as peace and stability of Imperial Rome were all results of the propaganda of the son of the divine Caesar, Augustus Caesar. Successful as this may sound, the propaganda strategy of art and architecture has resonated through technological innovations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to sustain culture, political power, and economic development as typically exemplified by the Gulf States of the Arab world.

## DECLARATIONS

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### Data availability

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

### Authors' contribution

All authors contributed equally to this work.

### Competing interests

The author declares that there is no competing interest.

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