



ARBITRATION AND RESOLUTION OF CONTENDING FORCES OF URBAN LAND POLICY EXPRESSED IN LAND USE IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The beauty of a metropolitan area is efficient separation of different land uses so as to accommodate and ensure the coexistence of various land uses (residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, etc.) in urban centers. This paper examines the complexities of urban land policy and land use in metropolitan areas, with a focus on Lagos. The study adopted qualitative content review to analyze existing literature. The study found that the government understands that land is a treasure; hence, there are land policies on the use of land to control the use and ownership of land in Nigeria. In spite of all these legislations, there are still existing problems and inadequacies in land use and administration of land in metropolitan areas, such as Lagos. This inadequacy are the contending forces of urban land policies expressed in land use in metropolitan areas in Nigeria. However, there are land use approaches which ensure the arbitration and resolution of these contending forces. These land use approaches include but are not limited to comprehensive urban planning, zoning and land use regulation, infrastructural development, etc.*

KEYWORDS: Arbitration, Resolution, Contending Forces, Urban Land Policies, Land Use, Metropolitan Areas.



INTRODUCTION

The arbitration and resolution of contending forces of urban land policy, particularly in metropolitan areas like Lagos, involves addressing complex and often conflicting interests related to land use, development, and urban planning. These areas often experience rapid population growth, economic expansion, and infrastructure demands, which can lead to challenges in managing land resources effectively. Rapid urbanization, even ahead of economic development and industrialization, has brought in its train a host of problems. Haphazard and chaotic growth, urban sprawl, sub-standard development, congestion, slums, traffic bottlenecks, disease and social vices are becoming common in the urban areas. Needless to say, in the plan less development, the provision of community facilities is the inevitable casualty. Land is required for various uses in both the urban and rural areas of the society. It is a major factor of production and a vital element in the socio-economic development of any country or society (FMH & UD, 2006). Thus, as nations grow in size and rural areas become urban centres and urban centres become large metropolitan areas, there is always increased competition as well as demand for land for different purposes. This requires adequate planning and control to ensure harmonious development and functional efficiency of these uses. To achieve this fundamental and acceptable activity, layouts of various land uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, open spaces and recreational, circulation and institutional uses among others are undertaken to standardize and control physical development and ensure harmonious growth (Ugonabo *et al.*, 2020).

Urban Land Policy

Urban land policy refers to the set of principles, regulations, strategies, and decisions established by governmental bodies, institutions, and stakeholders to guide the allocation, management, and use of land resources within urban areas. It encompasses a range of considerations, including zoning regulations, land tenure systems, land use planning, infrastructure development, and the balance between economic, social, and environmental goals. Urban land policy plays a pivotal role in shaping the physical form, functionality, and sustainability of urban environments.

Contending Forces in Urban Land Policy

Contending forces in the context of urban land policy refer to the diverse and often conflicting factors, interests, and demands that exert influence on decisions related to land allocation and use within urban areas. These forces encompass a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including government agencies, private developers, community groups, environmental advocates, and marginalized populations, each pursuing their distinct objectives. Conflicts may arise from disparities between economic growth and social equity, preservation of cultural heritage versus modernization, and competing land use priorities. These forces create a dynamic landscape where interests collide and negotiations are required to arrive at equitable and sustainable outcomes.

Arbitration

Arbitration is a process of dispute resolution in which conflicting parties or interests voluntarily submit their differences to a neutral third party, known as an arbitrator. The arbitrator assesses the arguments and evidence presented by both sides and makes a binding decision to settle the dispute. In the context of urban land policy, arbitration can be applied to resolve conflicts



arising from disagreements over land use decisions, property rights, development plans, and other related issues.

Resolution

Resolution refers to the outcome or settlement of a conflict, dispute, or issue. In the context of urban land policy, resolution entails finding solutions that address the conflicting interests and concerns of various stakeholders. Resolution mechanisms aim to navigate the complexities of contending forces by fostering compromise, consensus, and mutually beneficial outcomes. These mechanisms can encompass the application of proper urban land use approach, all with the aim of achieving harmonious and sustainable land use decisions.

Contending Forces to Urban Land Policies Expressed in Land Use in Metropolitan Area

These are factors that either hinder the legislation or implementation of urban land policies in metropolitan or urban areas which in turn negatively affects the use of land in urban areas. According to Oyesiku (1998), the forms and patterns of distribution of structures in general to promote the health, accessibility, convenience and harmonious land use in the environment are functions, to a considerable extent, of the rights and methods of dealing with land. This simply means that there is a need to address the conflicting interest among the land uses in the urban areas so as to promote convenience, health and harmonious land use in our metropolitan areas.

Most of our cities have grown in an uncontrolled and unmonitored manner. The existing system has failed to provide efficient urban land use administration (Ugonabo *et al.*, 2020). Planning for specific projects is not coordinated to meet fast growing populations now and in the future. The system has failed to indicate land use patterns for population distribution. In Nigeria, most major cities like Lagos, Kaduna, Port Harcourt, Onitsha, Enugu, Aba and some other parts of Niger Delta region have developed with the conventional land use approach (Jiboye, 2005). The rate of growth of Nigerian urban centres has given rise to the increasing problem of traffic congestion, overcrowding, deteriorating environmental qualities and general pressure on urban facilities.

Oduwaye (2013) discussed the contending forces of urban land policies in what he titled: obstacles to far-reaching achievements in urban land use planning in Lagos.

Based on the level of urban planning in Nigeria, major obstacles confronting planning include:

Ignorance on the Part of Government:

The first is ignorance on the part of the government on the process involved in urban planning. This is fundamentally due to lack of a plan upon which the environment should be managed. The use of plan as a basic yardstick for planning has no alternative but this we have failed to accept. Towns and villages in Nigeria have no current master plan. Master plan will make the city efficient, increase economic viability, health, and build into it land use management strategies; it will draw up programmes to prevent flooding, embankment to protect flood plains, how to reduce ocean scourge among other issues on which government dissipates economic and financial resources (Oduwaye & Dekolo, 2005).



Lack of Political Will:

Political will on the part of the ruling class is a basic attitude for successful urban land use planning. The will to implement this plan is of paramount importance.

Lack of Awareness and Apathy:

Most often than not, governments do not carry the public along by way of seeking public opinion in the decision making and execution of urban land policies. This usually leads to apathy on the part of the public as it concerns most government policies. This is also a major contending force to the growth of urban planning awareness, protection and regeneration.

Inadequate Institutional Frameworks:

Inadequate institutional frameworks, whereby there is over concentration of power in the hands of the federal government in determining the direction or evolution of policies for other levels of government, is another problem. There is also a multiplicity of agencies which most often degenerates into jurisdictional overlaps not only among the various levels of government but within the central government itself.

Non-implementation of Existing Planning Laws:

Non-implementation of existing planning laws to their fullest is another problem (Oduwaye & Ogundele, 2007). In many instances, existing laws are implemented based on how suitable they are to those who are in charge of their implementation at a particular point in time. Lack of equipment and funds is another problem. This is a recurrent problem in many areas of endeavor in Nigeria. Perhaps, urban planning is having its own share of this national problem.

Arbitration and Resolution of Contending Forces to Urban Land Policies

In metropolitan areas like Lagos, the arbitration and resolution of contending forces of urban land policy require a collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach involving government agencies, urban planners, architects, economists, environmentalists, community representatives, and other stakeholders. The goal is to create a sustainable, inclusive, and well-functioning urban environment that addresses the diverse needs and aspirations of the population while preserving the city's cultural and natural heritage. Therefore, to address the contending forces that challenge the implementation of urban land policies as it affects land use in metropolitan areas, the following Urban Land Use Approach measures must be adopted.

Urban Land Use Approach

1. **Comprehensive Urban Planning:** Developing and implementing comprehensive urban plans that consider the needs of various stakeholders, including residents, businesses, government agencies, and environmental concerns. These plans should outline a vision for the future development of the metropolitan area, including land use patterns, transportation networks, infrastructure, and open spaces.
2. **Zoning and Land Use Regulations:** Establishing clear zoning regulations and land use policies that guide the types of activities and developments allowed in different parts of the city. Zoning can help balance conflicting interests by designating areas for residential,



commercial, industrial, and recreational purposes, taking into account factors such as environmental protection, heritage preservation, and social equity.

3. **Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging local communities, residents, and other stakeholders in the decision-making process. This can help identify and address concerns, gather feedback, and incorporate diverse perspectives into urban planning and land use policies.
4. **Infrastructure Development:** Ensuring that infrastructure, such as transportation networks, utilities, and public services, is well-planned and aligned with the city's growth. Proper infrastructure development can contribute to more efficient land use and mitigate congestion and environmental issues.
5. **Affordable Housing and Social Equity:** Addressing issues of housing affordability and social equity by incorporating policies that encourage the development of affordable housing units and mixed-income neighborhoods. This can help provide housing options for various income groups and reduce disparities in access to housing and amenities.
6. **Environmental Sustainability:** Integrating environmentally sustainable practices into urban planning and land use policies, including promoting green spaces, minimizing pollution, and conserving natural resources. This can enhance the quality of life for residents and contribute to the overall resilience of the city.
7. **Economic Development and Job Creation:** Balancing the need for economic growth and job creation with responsible land use practices. This might involve designating areas for industrial or commercial development while considering the potential impact on surrounding communities and the environment.
8. **Legal Framework and Enforcement:** Establishing a robust legal framework for land use regulations and enforcing these regulations consistently. This can help prevent unauthorized developments, land grabbing, and other forms of misuse of land.
9. **Data and Technology:** Leveraging data and technology to inform decision-making and monitor urban development. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and data analysis tools can provide valuable insights into trends and patterns that can guide effective land use planning.
10. **Adaptive Management:** Recognizing that urban planning and land use policies need to be adaptable to changing circumstances. Regular reviews and updates of policies based on monitoring and evaluation can help ensure that the city's development remains aligned with its goals.

CONCLUSION

From our discussion, one would discover that the contending forces to urban land policies are majorly man-made obstacles which hinder the successful implementation of our urban land policies to ensure a harmonious and habitable urban environment in our metropolitan areas in Nigeria. However, a proper implementation of the Land Use Approach, as earlier discussed, would correct these errors and give our urban environment its befitting look.



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