

Land Use Procedures and Its Impact on Housing Affordability in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria

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Abstract

The Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria has experienced significant growth and development in recent decades, leading to increasing pressure on the land and resources within the city. In response, the government has implemented a range of land use regulations and zoning policies aimed at managing urban growth and preserving the city's environmental and cultural heritage. However, the effectiveness of these policies in achieving their intended goals has been the subject of ongoing debate and analysis. This paper examined the impact of land use procedures on housing affordability in the federal capital territory of Nigeria. This study reviewed the theory of the new institutional economics theory, Resource-Based View (RBV) theory and the Human Ecology theory. This study is anchored on the RBV theory since it is a more suitable theoretical framework for analysing the impact of land use procedures on housing affordability in the federal capital territory of Nigeria, and it posits that the availability and management of resources, including land, can impact on the competitiveness of a region. This study found among others that strict land use regulations have led to a shortage of affordable housing in the FCT, as developers tend to focus on high-end developments to maximize profits. This study recommends amongst others that streamlining the process of the land use approvals in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, and making it more efficient can encourage developers to invest in the region, which may lead to increased urban development.

Keywords: land use procedures, housing affordability, population growth

I. Introduction

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria is the administrative capital of the country and is located in the central region of Nigeria. The city was created in 1976 and was designed to be a modern, planned city that would serve as the seat of government for Nigeria. The FCT covers an area of approximately 8,000 square kilometers and has a population of over 3 million people, making it one of the fastest growing cities in Africa. In recent years, the FCT has experienced rapid urbanization and population growth, with many people moving to the city in search of employment opportunities and a better quality of life. This has put pressure on the city's infrastructure and has led to a range of environmental and social challenges, including overcrowding, traffic congestion, and air pollution.

To manage this growth and preserve the city's environmental and cultural heritage, the government of Nigeria has implemented a range of land use regulations and zoning policies in the FCT. These policies are designed to manage the use of land within the city and to control the type, location, and density of new developments. The FCT Land Use Act of 1978, for example, vests all lands in the FCT in the Federal Government, giving the government the power to control the use of land within the city. The Abuja Master Plan of 1979 outlines the development framework for the city, including the location of different land uses, such as residential, commercial, and industrial areas. In addition, the FCT has a range of zoning regulations that dictate the allowable land uses for different areas of the city, as well as the density, building height, and other parameters for new developments.

The impact of these land use regulations on urban development in the FCT is a subject of ongoing debate and analysis. While some argue that these regulations are necessary to manage urban growth and protect the city's natural and cultural heritage, others argue that they are overly restrictive and limit the ability of developers to meet the housing and commercial needs of the growing population. Understanding the impact of these regulations on urban development in the FCT is essential for policymakers and urban planners who are responsible for managing the growth and development of the city. This paper aims to examine the impact of land use regulations on urban development in the Federal Capital Territory, using a historical perspective. A historical perspective recognizes that current events and social phenomena are shaped by past events, social structures, and cultural practices. It seeks to understand how the past influences the present, and how historical events and trends have contributed to the development of contemporary social, political, and cultural realities. Specifically, this study will explore the land use patterns, and key indicators of urban development. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing urban planners and policymakers in the FCT, and provide insights into how land use regulations can be leveraged to promote sustainable urban development in Nigeria and beyond.

II. Literature Review

A. Overview of land use regulations in the FCT

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria is governed by a number of land use regulations that are designed to control and manage the use of land in the territory. These regulations include federal laws, policies, and guidelines, as well as local bye-laws and regulations established by the FCT Administration (Federal Capital Territory Administration, 2021).

One of the key federal laws governing land use in the FCT is the Land Use Act of 1978, which vests all lands within the FCT in the Federal Government of Nigeria. The act also establishes the minister of the FCT as the trustee of all lands in the territory and grants him the power to allocate and manage land use in the FCT (Land Use Act, 1978).

In addition to the Land Use Act, the FCTA has also established a number of policies and guidelines to regulate land use in the FCT. These include the FCT Land Use and Allocation Policy (LUP), the FCT Physical Development Plan (PDP), and the FCT Master Plan (FCTA, 2021).

The FCT LUP is designed to guide the allocation and use of land in the FCT, while the Physical Development Plan provides a framework for the physical development of the territory. The FCT Master Plan, on the other hand, is a comprehensive plan that outlines the long-term development goals for the FCT, including land use planning and management (FCTA, 2018).

Local bye-laws and regulations established by the FCTA include the FCT Development Control Regulations, which regulate the development of land in the territory, and the FCT Land Use Regulations, which provide guidelines for the use of land in different parts of the FCT (FCTA, 2021).

B. Theoretical framework for analysing the impact of land use regulations on urban development

The theoretical framework for analysing the impact of land use regulations on urban development in the FCT can be based on three theories identified in this study. The new institutional economics (NIE) theory posits that institutions, including laws, regulations, and norms, play a crucial role in shaping economic behaviour (North, 1990). In the case of land use regulations, these institutions provide a framework for the use and allocation of land, which can impact the economic development of a region.

Additionally, the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory can also be used to analyze the impact of land use regulations on urban development. This theory posits that the availability and management of resources, including land, can impact the competitiveness of a region (Barney, 1991). In the context of land use regulations, the availability and management of land can impact the economic development and competitiveness of the FCT.

Furthermore, the Human Ecology theory can be used to analyse the impact of land use regulations on urban development. This theory emphasizes the relationship between humans and the environment and how the physical and social environment impacts human behaviour (Hawley, 1950). In the context of land use regulations, this theory highlights the impact of land use regulations on the physical and social environment of the FCT and how it impacts the behaviour of its inhabitants.

The RBV theory is a more suitable theoretical framework for analysing the impact of land use regulations on urban development in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria (FCT). This theory posits that the availability and management of resources, including land, can impact the competitiveness of a region. In the context of land use regulations, the availability and management of land can impact the economic development and competitiveness of the FCT. In the FCT, land is a crucial resource for urban development, and its management and allocation are regulated by land use regulations (Pillah, 2022). By adopting the RBV theory, researchers can explore how the availability and management of land resources have influenced the economic development and competitiveness of the FCT. For instance, researchers can investigate how the allocation of land for specific uses, such as commercial or residential purposes, has impacted the growth of businesses and the housing market in the FCT. Moreover, the RBV theory can also provide insights into how the management of land resources has affected the competitiveness of the FCT in comparison to other regions. For example, researchers can examine how effective land use regulations have been in attracting investments and promoting economic growth in the FCT compared to other regions in Nigeria.

Analysis of population growth in the FCT

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria has experienced significant population growth over the years. According to the National Population Commission, the FCT's population increased from 776,298 in 1991 to 1,405,201 in 2006, representing a growth rate of 81.5% in 15 years. Furthermore, the FCT's population was estimated to be 2,489,100 in 2021, indicating a further increase in population growth over the past decade. (Pillah, 2022:3)

Several factors have contributed to the population growth in the FCT. One of the primary drivers is urbanization, as people move from rural areas to urban centers in search of better economic opportunities, education, and social amenities. The FCT is a prime destination for migrants due to its status as Nigeria's capital city and the seat of the federal government.

Another factor is the availability of land, as the FCT is home to vast undeveloped land that has attracted developers and investors seeking to build residential and commercial properties. However, the strict land use regulations in the FCT have limited the supply of affordable housing, leading to a concentration of high-end developments (Pillah, 2022).

The FCT's population growth has also been attributed to the presence of several universities and tertiary institutions that attract students and staff from across the country. The influx of people into the FCT has resulted in the demand for social amenities such as healthcare facilities, schools, and recreational centers, leading to the construction of more facilities to cater to the growing population.

The population growth in the FCT has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, it has increased the demand for goods and services, leading to the creation of employment

opportunities and the growth of the local economy. However, it has also put pressure on the city's infrastructure, resulting in congestion, inadequate housing, and limited access to social amenities in some areas.

Analysis of housing affordability in the FCT

Housing affordability in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria has become a critical issue as the city's population continues to grow rapidly. Despite the abundance of land in the FCT, the cost of housing remains high, making it difficult for low- and middle-income households to access affordable housing (Olawande, 2020).

One of the primary drivers of high housing costs in the FCT is the strict land use regulations that limit the supply of affordable housing. The regulations make it difficult for developers to build affordable housing units, leading to a concentration of high-end developments that cater to the wealthy population.

Another factor contributing to high housing costs is the cost of land, which has been driven up by high demand from investors and developers seeking to build residential and commercial properties. Furthermore, the cost of building materials and labour has also increased, making it expensive to construct new housing units (Pillah, 2022).

The high cost of housing in the FCT has several negative implications. It has led to a shortage of affordable housing units, forcing low- and middle-income households to live in overcrowded and substandard housing conditions (Ademiluyi & Ogunbode, 2019). The lack of affordable housing has also resulted in informal settlements and slums in some areas of the city.

To address the issue of housing affordability in the FCT, the government needs to adopt policies that encourage the development of affordable housing units. This can be achieved through the provision of incentives to developers who build affordable housing, such as tax breaks, land subsidies, and streamlined permit processes (Bako & Abiodun, 2020).

Furthermore, the government can encourage the use of alternative building materials that are affordable and readily available. This will help to reduce the cost of construction and make it possible to build affordable housing units for low- and middle-income households.

Analysis of environmental sustainability in the FCT

Environmental sustainability is a critical issue in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria, as the city continues to experience rapid population growth and urbanization. Some key findings drawn from existing literature shows the following:

1. **Solid waste management:** The FCT generates a significant amount of solid waste, which is a major environmental challenge. A study by Suleiman and Ibrahim (2021) found that inadequate waste management infrastructure, including collection, transportation, and disposal facilities, has led to the accumulation of waste in public spaces, causing pollution and health hazards.
2. **Water resources:** The FCT relies heavily on groundwater resources for domestic, agricultural, and industrial purposes. However, the rapid depletion of groundwater resources due to over-extraction, climate change, and pollution has become a significant environmental concern (Ogunseye et al., 2017).
3. **Air quality:** The FCT experiences poor air quality due to vehicular emissions, industrial activities, and open burning of waste. A study by Okeke et al. (2019) found that air pollution in the FCT exceeds the World Health Organization's guidelines, causing respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

4. Green spaces: The FCT has several green spaces, including national parks, botanical gardens, and recreational parks. However, the rapid urbanization and land use changes have led to the depletion of green spaces, causing ecological imbalances and climate change (Ezenwoke and Njoku, 2017).

To address these environmental challenges, the FCT administration has implemented several policies and programs. For instance, the FCT Environmental Protection Board (FCTEPB) is responsible for waste management, pollution control, and environmental monitoring. The board has also introduced several initiatives, including waste segregation, recycling, and public awareness campaigns, to promote sustainable waste management practices.

Furthermore, the FCT administration has launched programs to increase the supply of clean water, such as the construction of new water treatment plants and the rehabilitation of existing ones. The government has also encouraged the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

III. Existing literature on the impact of land use regulations on urban development in the FCT

Adebayo and Adewole (2017) analyzed the impact of land use regulations on urban development in the FCT. They found that strict land use regulations have led to a shortage of affordable housing in the FCT, as developers tend to focus on high-end developments to maximize profits (Adebayo & Adewole, 2017).

Olayinka and Okunuga (2015) examined the effects of land use regulations on the distribution of urban amenities in the FCT. They found that strict land use regulations have led to the concentration of urban amenities in certain areas, leading to disparities in access to services and infrastructure across the FCT (Olayinka & Okunuga, 2015).

Adegun and Daramola (2019) studied the impact of land use regulations on the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the FCT. They found that restrictive land use regulations have hindered the growth of SMEs by limiting access to affordable land and reducing the supply of commercial properties (Adegun & Daramola, 2019).

Ezenwoke and Njoku (2017) investigated the impact of land use regulations on the development of green spaces in the FCT. They found that inadequate land use regulations have led to the depletion of green spaces and an increase in pollution and urban heat island effects (Ezenwoke & Njoku, 2017).

Ajayi and Fajuyigbe (2018) examined the impact of land use regulations on land use changes in the FCT. They found that strict land use regulations have limited the flexibility of land use changes and have led to unapproved developments in some areas (Ajayi & Fajuyigbe, 2018).

IV. Findings

Drawing from literatures reviewed, this study found that strict land use regulations have led to a shortage of affordable housing in the FCT, as developers tend to focus on high-end developments to maximize profits. The study also found that the high cost of land and limited access to finance have hindered the growth of the housing sector in the FCT.

Moreover, the study identified that the lack of effective enforcement of land use regulations has contributed to the proliferation of informal settlements and unapproved developments in the FCT, which has led to environmental degradation, inadequate provision of basic services, and public health concerns. The study suggests the need for a more integrated approach to land use planning, involving multiple stakeholders and addressing issues of equity, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

V. Conclusion

The implementation of land use procedures can affect the cost of land, development regulations, zoning laws, and other factors that impact the availability and affordability of housing. For example, if land use procedures are overly restrictive or require lengthy bureaucratic processes, developers may be deterred from investing in affordable housing projects, leading to a shortage of affordable housing. On the other hand, if land use procedures are transparent, efficient, and encourage the development of affordable housing, it can lead to an increase in the availability of affordable housing and lower housing costs for low-income families. Therefore, it is important for policymakers and stakeholders to carefully consider the impact of land use procedures on housing affordability in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria and take steps to ensure that the regulatory environment encourages the development of affordable housing.

VI. Recommendations

This study recommends the following:

1. Streamline the land use planning and approval process: The bureaucratic process of obtaining land use approvals in the Federal Capital Territory can be time-consuming and costly. Streamlining the process and making it more efficient can encourage developers to invest in the region, leading to increased urban development.
2. Encourage mixed-use development: Mixed-use development, where residential, commercial, and office spaces are integrated, can create more vibrant, livable communities. Encouraging mixed-use development can also reduce the demand for transportation infrastructure and help to create more sustainable urban areas.
3. Provide incentives for affordable housing: The Federal Capital Territory should provide incentives for developers to build affordable housing, such as tax credits, expedited approvals, or reduced fees. This can increase the supply of affordable housing, which is a critical need in many urban areas.
4. Enhance public participation: Public participation is an important aspect of land use planning and development. The Federal Capital Territory should encourage more public participation in the planning process, including consultations with residents, civic groups, and other stakeholders. This can help to ensure that development is responsive to the needs and desires of the community.
5. Monitor and evaluate the impact of land use regulations: The Federal Capital Territory should regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of land use regulations on urban development. This can help to identify any unintended consequences or areas for improvement and inform future policy decisions.

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