

## Factors Affecting Physical Development of Residential Layouts in Asaba Metropolitan Region of Delta State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

In the absence of functional masterplans in most cities in Nigeria, residential schemes without accompanying statutory planning regulations and standards are now largely being used to promote urban development activities in Asaba metropolitan region. Such private and community layouts are relied upon heavily by various town planning authorities in the region in assessing applications for planning permit. Adopting a trend study of buildings in both government and community and or private layouts as represented by the number of registered building plans in Asaba Area Planning Office between 1997 and 2007 the total number of registered building plans was collected and analyzed. Based on the observed significant differences in the rate of physical development between government and community/private layouts, building developers, staff of the planning authority, staff of the ministry of lands, surveys and urban development, as well as, the general public were surveyed for the factors responsible for the observed variations using a designed questionnaire. Collected data were then analyzed using simple statistics and time-series analysis. The findings reveal that timing of development and management issues rather than lack of access roads, basic infrastructure and social services, disturbances from community youths and leaders, bureaucracy in the approval of building plans, as well as lack of security, were largely responsible for the preference of community or private layouts by prospective developers. Based on these findings the paper recommends that planning authorities in Nigeria need to be restructured to attain greater level of autonomy, openness, transparency, competitiveness and effectiveness in all its operations if they are to effectively cope with the challenges of sustainable development in a transitional urban society like Nigeria. A paradigm shift in development control approach was also canvassed.

### 1.0 Introduction

The reasons for embarking on urban planning activities by town planning authorities have been rationalized to include the need to ensure planned present and future growth; achieve functional, efficient, healthful and aesthetically pleasing environment; secure consistent and balanced landuse development and efficient management of land resources (Essaghah, Monye and Nwodo, 2008 Mba, 1992, Jiriko, 2008, Okeke, 2002 and Chijungu 2011). In order to entrench the planning culture and effectively harness the benefits of physical planning successive governments in Nigeria have developed a number of planning laws, processes and building standards to mainstream, regulate and enforce the physical development process. These laws, regulations and bye-laws include but not limited to the Town and Country Planning Law of 1946, the Building Adoptive Bye-Law Order of 1966, the Building Lines Regulations of 1948, the Landuse Decree of 1978, the Urban and Regional Planning (URP) Law of 1992 (as amended in 1993), as well as, the various adaptations of the 1992 URP law by various State Governments including the Lagos State Urban and Regional Planning law of 1998 and the Delta State Urban and Regional Planning Law of 2005 to mention but a few.

These and other related laws (and or directives) capture the three essential elements of physical planning identified by Adeagbo (2000) as the master plan (or 'planning scheme where applicable'), a set of planning and building standards and regulations, and the development control system. In the absence of workable master plans in many cities in Nigeria, planning schemes (as captured by planned residential layouts prepared by planning agencies and (local communities) have become veritable tools for guiding and controlling physical development in the developing world. It is relied upon heavily by development control officials in many planning authorities in assessing application for planning permit by prospective land developers (Ighoruemufua, 2008). Though, a number of inadequacies have been associated with the physical planning approach (Mabogunji 2002, Oyesiku 2004 and Jiriko 2008), these issues are brought into sharper focus in Asaba capital city where community prepared layouts (rather than government approved planning schemes) have been largely used to guide and control peri-urban developments in the greater part of the metropolis. It is the intention of this paper to examine the factors affecting the level of physical development in government and community/ private layouts in Asaba metropolitan region. The whole discourse is situated within the conceptual framework of the modernist and post-modernist perspectives of physical planning which had guided most cities in urban development in Nigeria and in the developing world. The rest part of the paper is structured into six sections. Section 2 develops a conceptual framework for the study while section 3.0 examines the study area and methodology. Presentation and analysis of collected data and discussion of findings, are discussed in sections 4 and 5 respectively Section 6 examines emerging issues arising from the study findings while recommendations and conclusion is presented in section 7.

## 2.0 Conceptual Framework

Modernism has always been seen by some theorists (such as Beauregard, 1989; and Hall, 1989) as a cultural reaction to the process of modernization associated with the rise of capitalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Chijungu, 2011). Its emergence was seen as a tool that was meant to mediate between the capitalist selfish motives of accumulation and the inefficiently organized production space that was emerging in the form of towns (Chijungu, 2011). As a school of thought in planning, its development was a reaction to the negative challenges of physical degradation, functional chaos and general miseries that characterized the industrial city, while its institutionalization grew out of the need to increasingly establish some level of control into the built environment. As Koenigsberger (1975) and Rivkin (1978) have argued, the forces of a free market cannot be expected to produce a rational, efficient and equitable land use system; a system which can satisfy all legitimate needs for space at a given period of time, and allow for long term accommodation of future growth.

The process of developing modernist planning was driven by universalizing forces whose focus was to allow functionality and efficiency in urban space (Gans, 1968). Resonating from this modernist perspective of planning are a number of themes that can be regarded as the major drivers and these include knowledge, functionality, efficiency of the spatial paradigm and public interest (Robinson, 2006). Knowledge in the form of objective information was to be seen as the basis for development within the modernist planning perspective and it was believed that with knowledge and reason, man would be freed from the fatalism and ideologies that gave rise to the industrial city. Therefore modernist planners were supposed to act as experts who could utilize the laws of development in order to provide societal guidance (Lyotard, 1984). In this connection, the need to maintain functional equilibrium in the functional organization of the city would allow orderliness and efficiency in the operation of the city (Robinson, 2006; Chijungu, 2011). The central ideas of modernist planners were also to be achieved through spatial paradigm; in planning circles this involved the production of grandiose plans (in the form of blue-prints) that were meant to guide development (Preston, 1996, Robin 2000). It is in these plans that knowledge and functional zoning ideas were articulated (Chijungu, 2011). Finally, the ideas of modernist planning were also driven by the belief that the State was progressive; it would do anything consistent with public interest (protection of life and safety) since the state is believed to be an institutional representative of the interest of all citizens. Also that, planners could easily position themselves within the State to play the mediatory role of an umpire in the development process since he was to be void of self-interest, disengaged from the interests of any particular group in society and are value neutral. It can therefore be concluded that the modernist planning paradigm led to the emergence of the scientific mode of legitimizing the concept of an orderly and spatially integrated city that meets the needs of society, and the fostering of an interventionist state (Chijungu, 2011)

This was seen as valid and superior means of making public decisions since it was duly guided by scientifically gathered information expressed spatially through the preparation of grand development plans (Beauregard, 1989). It was these ideas and the ensuing traditions that were exported all over the world at the height of colonisation in the form of master plans. A master plan is a statutory document that set forth in broad terms the

longterm physical, social, economic and environmental resource management goals of a city or community for a period of 15-25 years and it comprise written report(s), drawings and sketches (see Essaghah, Monye and Nwodo 2008; Okeke, 2002; Agwu, 1998; Mabogunje, 2002; Wapwera and Egbu, 2013). In many cases the focus of these plans is on landuse and infrastructure planning (Wekwete, 1995). According to Ilesanmi (2006), the advantage of the master plan lies in its physical components – landuse; circulation, housing, provision of facilities, utilities and services, open space and design. In physical planning, the essential elements of the planning system are the master plan, set of planning and building standards and regulations, and development control mechanism (Aluko, 2011; Adeagbo, 2000; Ilesanmi, 2006). An efficient planning system is dependent an effective development control mechanism(s) which are meant to ensure that those involved in development adhere to the proposals and requirements of the physical development plan (Chijungu, 2011). Development control is an administrative mechanism that cuts across urban development, urban planning and management in a bid to ensure proper and effective recommended proposals and which may involve negotiation in the process of transforming the urban environment in order to achieve the public interest (Prior, 2000; Thompson, 2000; Chijungu 2001).

### 3.0 Study Area and Research Methodology

The Asaba capital territory is located between longitude  $6^{\circ}38' E$  and  $6^{\circ}45' E$  of the meridian and latitude  $6^{\circ}06' N$  and  $6^{\circ}19' N$  of the Equator. It covers an estimated area of 363.175 square kilometers. The territory lies within the green forest belt with vegetation comprising light forest with shrubs spread over areas of low and fairly high relief. The lowest lying area is Asaba capital city is located on the bank of River Niger at a height of 30.3m above sea level (asl) while the highest point is located on 242.4m (asl) towards the western part of the territory. Climatically two main prevailing winds determine the weather of the area; the north-easterly air mass which emanates and blows from the Sahara region between the months of November and April, is responsible for dry season while the southwesterly wind from the Atlantic ocean which blows across the area between the months of May and October brings the raining season. Mean annual rainfall and temperature values are estimated at 1650.lmm and  $30^{\circ}c$  respectively.

Historically the study area comprise Asaba, Anwai, Achalla Ibusa, Okpanam, Ugbolu, Okwe, Oko-Anala, Oko-Amakon and Oko Obio communities but since its making as Delta State capital in 1991 other ethnic nationalities like Ibo, Urhobo, Isoko, Ijaw, Benin have migrated into the town for residential, commercial and administrative purposes. By 2012 the population of Asaba metropolitan region is estimated to be above 110,000 people. Due to its close proximity to Onitsha (the busiest and perhaps the largest commercial city in Nigeria) significant proportion of rich traders and merchants in Onitsha own properties and reside in Asaba. All these have combined to make it a beehive of development activities with a fast expanding property market. In terms of socio-economics Asaba is an commercial town and administrative capital of Delta State with large scale modern retailing shopping outlets and wide range of small scale establishments/industries. A number of 3,4 and 5 star hotels, major educational and health facilities, federal and state government secretariat buildings/complexes and an airport makes the study area a bustling socio-economic hub. The State Ministry of Lands, Surveys and Urban Development, on one hand, and Asaba Area Planning Office, as well as, Ibusa Area Planning Office on the other are the relevant town planning agencies responsible for planning activities and control of development within the territory respectively.

Interms of research methodology, the study adopted the survey research design. A trend study of buildings in planned government and community layouts as represented by the number of registered building plans in the Asaba Area Planning Office between 1997 and 2007 was carried out. The total number of building plans registered in the Area Planning Office within the same period were 8,245 comprising 6,869 plans for community or private lands and 1,376 for government land or layouts (Core Area). The total number of registered building plans (representing the number of land developers), the total number of staff in Delta State Ministry of Lands, Surveys and Urban Development (Government Planning Agency) (put at 255 persons) and the population of Asaba, (estimated to be about 83,745 persons within the time frame) constituted the research population. With the use of a well designed questionnaire 50 staff from the Ministry were surveyed using stratified purposive sampling (25 persons each from junior and senior staff cadres), 75 developers from community and government layouts (or lands) were surveyed using random cluster sampling (40 developers were sampled from community lands and 35 developers from government lands), while 125 members of the general public were surveyed randomly along major arterial roads or streets in Asaba capital city. In all a total of 250 copies of the questionnaires were administered and successfully retrieved. Collected data were analyzed using simple statistics including Time Series Analysis (to establish a regression model between the rate of development in successive years from 1997-2007 on government and community lands),

#### 4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

The rationale for the study was to investigate the causal factors for the building differential rate of development on government and community layouts in the study area. In other words, the study sought to examine the challenges encountered by land developers in Asaba within the context of establishing why and how these challenges interplay in part and in whole to constrain rate of physical development on government approved planning schemes on one hand and fast track and or enhance physical development of buildings in community lands on the other (Table 1.0). Table 1.0 shows the yearly registered building plans in Asaba capital territory between 1997 to 2007. The records of physical development in Asaba show an increase in the total number of buildings in each successive year from 1997 to 2004, before it began to fall from 2005 to 2007. Of the total of 8245 building plans registered within the period in the region, 83% of constructed buildings (6,867 buildings) were on community/ private lands while only 17% of total buildings constructed (1376 buildings) were erected on government acquired lands. 93.6% of all respondents surveyed who had no information on the number of registered buildings plans in both government and community lands affirmed that the rate of development on government layouts is relatively lower compared with the level of building construction activities in private and community layouts.

Table 1.0 Registered Building Plans in Asaba Capital Territory

Year	Private/community lands	Government lands	Total
1997	213	13	226
1998	227	11	238
1999	357	27	384
2000	589	23	612
2001	717	89	806
2002	825	110	936
2003	826	198	1024
2004	876	408	1284
2005	977	234	1211
2006	694	149	843
2007	568	114	682
<b>Total</b>	<b>6869</b>	<b>1376</b>	<b>8245</b>

From table 1.0 it is evident that timing of the development period may have played very significant role in the number of registered building plans in both government and community lands. Whereas the increase in the number of registered building plans rose steadily between 1997 and 1999, the total number of building plans nearly doubled between 1999 and 2000 (612), reaching the peak at 2004 (with 1284 building plans registered) before declining to 682 registered building plans by 2007. On the surface value the influence of time on the number of registered building plans appear significant.

However to further examine the effect of timing on the rate of change of development on both government and private lands, a time series analysis (TSA) (Tables 2.0 and 3.0) was used to establish regression models with the least-square method (LSM) using the data on table 1.0 above. The computation involved in the time series analysis (TSA) yielded two regression equations from where the percentage influence of time on the rate of development on both community and government lands was determined.

Table 2.0: Times – Series Analysis for Buildings on Community Land in Asaba from 1997 - 2007

Year	X	Y	X <sup>2</sup>	Xy	Y	y-y	(y-y) <sup>2</sup>	y-y <sup>%</sup>	(y-y <sup>%</sup> ) <sup>2</sup>	y-y <sup>%</sup>	(y-y <sup>%</sup> ) <sup>2</sup>
1997	-5	213	25	-1065	343.25	-130.25	16965.06	-411.45	169291.10	-281.2	7907.44
1998	-4	227	16	-908	399.49	-172.49	29752.80	-397.45	157966.50	-224.96	50607.00
1999	-3	357	9	-1071	455.73	-98.73	9747.61	-267.45	71529.50	-168.72	28466.44
2000	-2	589	4	-1178	511.97	77.03	5933.62	-35.45	1256.70	-112.48	12651.75
2001	-1	717	1	-717	568.21	148.79	22138.46	92.55	8565.50	-56.24	3162.94
2002	0	825	0	0	624.45	200.55	40220.30	200.55	40220.30	0	0
2003	1	826	1	826	680.69	145.31	21115.00	201.55	40622.40	56.24	3162.94
2004	2	876	4	1752	736.93	139.07	19340.46	251.55	63277.40	112.48	12651.75
2005	3	977	9	2931	783.17	183.83	33793.47	352.55	124291.50	168.72	28466.44
2006	4	694	16	2776	849.41	-155.41	24152.27	69.55	4837.2	224.96	50607.00
2007	5	568	25	2840	905.65	-337.65	114007.52	-56.45	3186.60	281.2	79073.44

Source: Computation from registered building plans obtained from Delta State Ministry of Lands, Surveys and Urban Development Asaba (1997-2007), Ighoruemufua (2008)

The regression equation obtained from the time-series analysis (Table 2.0) for community/private lands was  $y = 624.45 + 56.24x$  – Equation (1).

Similarly the regression equation obtained from the Time-Series Analysis for Government lands (core area layouts) was  $y = 125.0g + 23.25 x$  ..... equation (11)

Table 3.0: Times – Series Analysis for Buildings on Government Land in Asaba from 1997 - 2007

Year	X	Y	X <sup>2</sup>	Xy	Y	y-y	(y-y) <sup>2</sup>	y-y <sup>%</sup>	(y-y <sup>%</sup> ) <sup>2</sup>	y-y <sup>%</sup>	(y-y <sup>%</sup> ) <sup>2</sup>
1997	-5	13	25	-65	8.84	4.16	17.31	-112.09	12564.17	-116.25	13514.06
1998	-4	11	16	-44	32.09	-21.09	444.79	-114.09	13016.53	-93	8649
1999	-3	27	9	-81	55.34	-28.34	803.16	-98.09	9621.65	-69.75	4865.06
2000	-2	23	4	-46	78.59	-55.59	3090.25	-102.09	10422.37	-46.5	2162.25
2001	-1	89	1	-89	101.84	-12.84	164.87	-36.09	1302.49	-23.25	540.56
2002	0	110	0	0	125.09	-1509	227.71	-15.09	227.71	0	0
2003	1	198	1	198	148.34	49.66	2466.12	72.91	5315.87	23.25	540.56
2004	2	408	4	816	171.59	236.41	55889.67	282.91	80038.07	46.5	2162.25
2005	3	234	9	702	194.84	39.16	1533.51	108.91	11851.39	69.75	4865.06
2006	4	149	16	596	218.09	-69.09	4773.43	23.91	571.69	93	8649
2007	5	114	25	570	241.34	-127.34	16215.48	-11.09	122.99	116.25	13514.06

Source: Computation from registered building plans obtained from Delta State Ministry of Lands, Surveys and Urban Development Asaba (1997-2007), Ighoruemufua (2008)

From equations (1) and (2) the values of x are both positive indicating a direct relationship between time and rate of change in the number of building plans registered (which implies that the number of buildings erected on both lands increased or decreased directly with time). However the values of x differ in numerical values signifying that in every year the rate of change in the number of erected or constructed buildings on community and government lands was 56.24 buildings and 23.25 buildings respectively. Since the time variable could only explain certain percentage of the variation of change, the study also sought to determine how much of the variation was explained by equations 1 and 2 (the regression models). The R<sup>2</sup> (co-efficient of determination) obtained from equation (1) was 0.51 which is 51%. while the R<sup>2</sup> obtained from equation 2 was 0.41 which is 41%. Both values of R<sup>2</sup> as indicated above reveals that the time variable or dimension only explained or accounted for 51% and 41% of the factors responsible for the rate of development on private/ community and government lands respectively. This means that 49% of the changes observed in the rate of development on community lands is attributed to other factors. Similarly it means that 59% of the factors responsible for the rate of development on government lands were not related to time, since the time variable or dimension only explained 41% of the changes in physical development on government lands.

## 5.0 Discussion of Findings

The analysis so far have revealed that more people had moved into Asaba capital territory within the eleven year (between 1997–2007) and in response to the increasing demand for accommodation, the numbers of buildings being constructed yearly were on the increase. This increase in the number of buildings is reflected in the records of registered building plans in the Asaba Area Planning Office of the Ministry of Lands, Surveys and Urban Development. The increase in population of the capital city had necessitated increase in physical developmental activities. Consequently the value placed on land (greatly increased and this had given rise to high cost of available land to the extent that there is high demand for government land allocation which is moreso politically influenced. About 86.4% of respondents surveyed acclaimed that government land is not given to those who are ready to build and in need of residential accommodation but rather top management administrative staff and politicians get the bulk of the land which they keep for sale. As such, 93.6% of the respondents said development on government land is slower than development on community land. Supporting this fact, the time-series analysis of physical development on private/ community lands and on government acquired lands for the period considered in this research (1997 — 2007) showed that the annual rate of change of physical development on private/ community lands was 56.24 buildings while those on government lands was 23.25 buildings. For a period of 11 years, 83% of the total houses developed were on the community/ private layouts while only 17% of remaining buildings were on government acquired lands in the metropolis. Although it might be argued that the land mass of community or private lands is larger than the government acquired land, the low rate of physical development is evident from the fact that the core area layout which comprises about 4182 residential plots, only

32.90% of these plots were developed within the same period under review. Field reconnaissance survey clearly revealed that portions of land allocated for educational, commercial, administrative, security, transportation, religious and recreational purposes are either not developed or have already been converted into other uses.

The time series analysis was carried out to examine the role of time as a factor in the rate of change of physical development on community and government land. However, other than the time variable, several other factors were found to be responsible for the rate of change of physical development since only 51% and 41% of the rate of change of building development on community/private lands and government layouts respectively was accounted for by the time variable or dimension. These other factors identified by respondents include lack of access roads and other infrastructural facilities, disturbances from youths and community leaders, political interference, lack of control by government body in charge of physical planning, bureaucracy in the approval of building plans and other land title documents including lack of interest to develop by some plot owners. A significant 85.2% of all respondents interviewed strongly argued that the political interference in the activities of town planning authorities particularly by senior government administrative staff and politicians was largely responsible for the low level of buildings construction in the different phases of core area layout compared to private/community lands within the period under review.

## 6.0 Emerging Issues

The foregoing analysis of data and discussion of findings reveal a number of fundamental issues symptomatic of problems and or challenges of town planning authorities and the entire planning system in the study area in particular and in Nigeria in general.

First and foremost why was the rate of housing formation higher on community lands than government lands? Is it really true that potential developers would really prefer to build on community lands rather than government layouts if both subdivisions have the full complement of functional infrastructure and social services provided in them? Does it not indicate that managers or better put the management of private and community layouts were more responsive to and amenable to the needs and demands of all developers? If that notion or perception is not true, could it be that managers of community lands provided better playing field for all categories or classes of developers to engage in estate market transactions? Perhaps the plot allocation system in private/community lands were more efficient because the managers of such layouts were more accessible and transparent in their dealings with prospective land developers than the ministry who directly arbitrated such issues on government lands. The effectiveness of an organization (planning authority) is in major part a measure of the effectiveness of its master strategy (Wapwera and Egbu, 2013). In a rational system, issues of strategy should derive from fundamental issues of ideology, vision, mission and goals of an organization. If this is so, is the basic ideology of town planning authorities in Nigeria still consistent with what Foley in 1960 observed as characterizing the British town planning profession? Foley (1960) stated that the central function of town planning is to provide a good or better physical environment; a physical environment of such good quality that will support, promote and sustain a healthy and civilized life for the entire citizenry. What is the organizational ideology of town planning authorities in Nigeria that makes it easier for manipulation by corrupt civil servants and politicians? This question raises issues of autonomy, organizational and administrative effectiveness (which must in turn derive from organizational ideology, vision, mission, goal, and strategy). and democratization (a transactional process that brings all stakeholders in the land development process together to truly engage in meaningful dialogue to reach decisions that meet the yearnings and needs of the public) of the entire town planning system in Nigeria.

Related to the first issue above is the question of effectiveness of the urban planning system. The urban planning system is made up of institutional, technical, administrative and legal (laws and ordinances) which is generally an embodiment of regulations to achieve the stated goal of the planning system (Collingsworth, 1982; Hall, 2002). The effectiveness of the urban planning system is related to urban governance (administration of relevant government agencies), urban management (development control goals and measures) which is the technical aspect of the system; while the administrative structure operates using available or existing legal schemes (laws and ordinances). What are the units, departments and agencies of government (national, state and local) whose operations and activities constitute the urban planning system in Nigeria in general and Delta State in particular? What are the levels and or degrees of relationship between and amongst them in terms of administrative system and processes, sharing of information, data, personnel and operational resources (machineries, equipments etc)? Delta State ministry of lands, surveys and urban development is made of departments that are relatively independent in organizational situations with limited areas of professional co-operation. Different organizational situations – pertaining to the performance of the organization's structure, the performance of the organization's human resources, and the impact of the organization's activities differ in effectiveness within the units, sub-

sections, departments and even in the ministry as a whole. The effectiveness of the institutional component of the urban planning system is all about governance and how the planning authorities (within asaba metropolitan region – emphasis mine) bring about good governance at all levels represented in its jurisdiction (Wapwera and Egbu, 2013). The findings of the study strongly indicates that many developers in Asaba had and still have issues with the management of government layouts as reflected in the low rate of building development of the core area layouts.

The third key issue that derives from the findings of the study is the twin issue of plan policy and implementation. Why was it considered easier to purchase a land and successfully complete the building in private and community layouts than in government lands? Community/ private layouts are prepared mainly by land surveyors and to lesser extent by consultant architects and town planners on behalf of the communities and organizations who own such lands. As expected majority of prepared private/ community layouts are not accompanied with necessary landuse policy documents such as subdivision regulations, zoning ordinance and regulations, and to lesser extent design manuals. The planning system in Delta State and in Nigeria at present hardly subject these category of plans or layouts to rigorous scrutiny before approval, rather, they condone these plans with little or no modifications knowing fully well that the planning standards used for preparing these layouts are either compromised (dimensions of plots, width of roads are usually smaller than those existing in government layouts; open spaces (green areas) are hardly provided, central uses are usually not provided at all). As expected the goals and expectations of such plans and related policies are nowhere authoritatively defined, nor are they agreed upon by the actors involved in implementation (Ripley and Franklin, 1982, Elbana, 2007). This is moreso because majority of community layouts are never adopted by the planning authority.

As many researches indicates, diffuse, multiple and competing goal statements are normal conditions, a deliberate product of the conflict, compromise and negotiation that characterized the design and legitimation processes necessary to produce legislation “(Wapwera and Egbu, 2013 Elbana, 2007). By this non-effective systems always remain with no plan (or limited plan) implementation giving rise to haphazard development and urban sprawling conditions (Ripley & Franklin 1982; Elbana 2007). Since a plan (whether a masterplan or subdivision) is a set of decisions meant for future action with definite goals and expectations, these layouts ought to be accompanied with the full complement of implementation tools and instruments such as subdivision regulations, landuse budgets as reflected in the landuse policy, zoning ordinance and or regulations, including design manuals, assessment charges, timelines for approval stages. Ofcourse sanctions for default by developers should form part of the planning permit package conveyed by the planning approval given by town planning authorities. This will Foster better understanding of the development process by those who are developers and regulators (the town planning authorities) on one hand and enhance the possibility of achieving a physical environment that caters for the needs, demands and aspirations of all socio-economic groups in the urban community (which community layouts closely represent in this instance). Against this background, this research strongly argues that existing strictly enforced landuse regulations, planning and building standards on government lands partly constrained developers access to these layouts (core area layouts) for development. While these regulations attempt to ensure citizen health, safety and welfare by strictly controlling land and building standards, the same regulation force the very group they seek to protect into completely unregulated informal sector (Dowall and Clarke, 19996). Unfortunately this is a common experience in many urban centres in Nigeria and indeed many cities in the developing world.

## **7.0 Recommendations and Conclusion.**

### **7.1 Recommendations**

Definite policy reforms in organizational setup and situational settings in the planning system can play significant role in reversing these deplorable developments in Nigeria’s urban phenomenal landscape. It is against this background that we make the following recommendations.

There is an urgent need to promote greater synergy between and among the key planning agencies particularly the departments of town planning, surveys and urban development. These three departments in our view comprise the three tripod of the planning system. There is need for greater collaboration amongst these agencies in the areas of manpower training, organizational and operational procedures, administrative processes, ideology formation, development of common goals, visions, missions and strategies. Although there exist a lot of interface in functions and operational activities between these three all important departments of the planning system there is need to properly synchronize their operational activities to reinforce and strengthen the effectiveness of the both departmental and agency functions rather than the present situation where some of their functions appear to undermine each other activities. It is common knowledge that the department of surveys

prepare layouts, open up new roads and lot-out vacant community lands that the department of town planning has not designated as planning area simply because such communities were desirous of putting up their lands into the open land market.

Such contradictions are expected to be reduced if closer collaborative effort in organizational and administrative activities and processes amongst the tripod departments can be achieved. For greater operational efficiency there would be need to periodically evaluate the organizational effectiveness of the separate departments individually and collectively. The evaluation of the future of planning authorities is required in making correct assumptions about what the planning authorities will be, like the potential for making unique contributions in the future (Eibanna, 2006). Giving to a planning authority a developed mission (emanating from its staff or outside it but within the ministry) on definite issues or problem including considering strategies in phases is necessary. Broad-based involvement in discussing these issues (or problems) is essential to the strategy – development process because success depends on the understanding and conviction of all the stakeholders in making the vision a reality (Elbana, 2009). In order to move beyond the traditional methodology to prepare and ensure effectiveness in urban planning system through strategic planning, there is need for a clear process for planning that involves the use of all relevant tools with necessary skills using all the technical potentials in the planning authorities- personal, instruments, rules, regulations (Ripley and Franklin, 1982; Mabognuji, 2001; Elbanna, 2009). For this to be effectively done, there is need for proper co-ordination of all administrative processes within the planning system. Elbanna (2009) argues that an effective administrative structure is required as it is the co-ordination centre; it shows the appropriate documents to be employed and strategies required to tackle physical planning problems by collecting of feedback from customers, staff and benchmark research results becomes very important. In this connection there is an urgent need to strengthen and re-invigorate the activities of the department of planning, research and statistics (now moribund in many ministries of lands, surveys and urban development) for them to be able to interface between the urban public and the agency through research, while publishing findings as necessary feedback for preparation of time tested, acceptable and more responsive physical planning laws and regulations.

Finally there is need to restructure and completely overhaul present existing development control mechanisms or structures in various town planning authorities in Asaba metropolitan region in particular and Nigeria in general. An efficient planning system is dependent on effective development control mechanisms which are meant to ensure that those involved in development adhere to the proposals and requirements of the general development plan(s) (Chijungn, 2011). The creation of effectiveness operational objectives is very important in making proposed plan goals more specific, prioritization of targets more clearer, target benchmarks more concretely stated and in establishing clear identifiable signposts for effectuation (guiding plans towards completion). This could be used to developed the action plan and measurements to meet the problem identified in an urban area to make it more effective (Chaolin, Xiaohui & Jing, 2010).

The vision of such re-invigorated development control mechanery should be on the “management of development” rather that present focus where development permits are seen by developers as an end in itself. The management of planning approval for which development permits are obtained as an end in itself is a major area that has not been given the needed attention; this aspect should be seen within the context of managing change in order to achieve the greatest benefit (Aluko, 2011). Oduwaye, (2009) sees it as a signifier of this new thinking in that development control (permit) should be changed and practiced as “development management”. If this new thinking about a paradigm shift in the concept and practice of development control from that of a statutory requirement for development to proceed to that of management of change *there is need to see development permit as a contract for continuous engagement between the planning authority and the developer from pre-construction phase through to post-construction period.* For this new approach to development control to be efficient, cost-effective, more performance-driven and democratic (that is more scientific in decision making processes) a strategy need to be developed to promote synergy between town planning authorities and all stakeholders in the development process. Both parties would need to jointly collaborate to set new development control agenda, tools and instruments required for easier enforcement of proposed future plans and policies. Such a system bears attributes of spatial planning which is being canvassed for adoption in African countries in the 21st century. (Chijungu, 2011, Wapwera & Egbu, 2013, Robin, 2000). Spatial planning is characterized by dynamism, timely policy and decision making (as enunciated by the science of muddling-through approach or incrementalism), inclusion and effective community engagement, collaboration, integration and joining-up, positive evidence-based reasoning, outcomes and delivery and urban sustainable development amongst others.



## 7.2 Conclusions

In conclusion, this study has stated the reasons why government agencies embark on town planning activities which include the need to ensure planned present and future growth, achieve functional, efficient, healthful and aesthetically pleasing environment including the need to secure balanced and consistent land use development amongst others. The rationale for the study was predicated on investigating the causal factors responsible for the differential rate of building development on government lands on one hand and private/ community layouts on the other. To this end, a trend study of buildings on both government and private/ community layouts represented by number of registered building plans in Asaba planning office between 1997 and 2007 was conducted and the data statistically analyzed. The findings reveal that the rate of building development on private/ community lands were far higher than development on government lands. It is argued that the case of prospective developers preferring to buy land and build their residential properties on community/private layouts rather than on government layouts (which these research findings clearly represent) illustrates the nature of damage that can happen to a profession when the state usurps the functions of a statutory institution. This is more so when political advantage is sought using professional instruments that are used to advanced the public interest. A situation whereby senior administrative staff of government and or political actors of influence arbitrarily prescribe variety of powers in the form of rules, directives and policies (that interferes with statutory functions of institutions) that are supposed to be implemented by planning institutions is bound to erode its integrity and professional effectiveness. As Chijungu (2011) has rightly argued in the case of Zimbabwean government interference in development circles in recent times should be limited to the provisions of the ideological base upon which professional practice can be built upon. The planning profession (it is for its own good) must seize the opportunity this challenge presents by initiating measures that will eventually lead to the restructuring of planning institutions to attain greater level of autonomy, openness, transparency, competitiveness and effectiveness in all its operations in order to cope with the numerous challenges of sustainable development in a transitional urban society like Nigeria Urban development planning would need to be set within a framework or approach which exude pragmatic planning ethos of thorough problem definition, thorough plan formulation and plan implementation which in turn addresses the core of development problems experienced by diverse urban interest groups in the society. To this end, there is an urgent need to vigorously implement the various states Urban and Regional Planning laws that seek to decentralize and democratize town planning processes in Nigeria.

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