

The Effects of Land Speculation on Urban Planning and Development in Bajabure Area, Girei Local Government, Adamawa State

*Phanuel B. Joshua¹ George Godwin Glanda¹ Felix A. Ilesanmi²

1. Department of Geography, University of Maiduguri, PMB 1069, Maiduguri, along Bama Road, Borno state, Nigeria

2. Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Federal University of Technology, Yola PMB 2076, Yola, Adamawa State-Nigeria

Abstract

The paper examined land speculation and its effects on urban planning and development in Bajabure area in Girei Local Government, Adamawa State. A total of 50 respondents were interviewed comprising professionals like Urban Planners (URP), Land Surveyors (LAS), and Architects (ARC); Residents of the area, and Land Sales Agents. All the respondents (except residents) were purposively sampled. Findings revealed that majority acquired their land through Agents or Village head as 50% of the respondents affirmed that they acquired land through the Agents while 33.3% got their own plot through the Village head (*Mai Unguwa*). Subdivision of land is done without involving professionals or the government as confirmed by 90% of the respondents. Interviews with professionals confirmed that land speculation causes planning problems such as poor land subdivision (100% of respondents), poor access roads (70% of respondents), urban sprawl (90%), incompatibility of land uses (60%), emergence of Cul-de-sacs (50% of respondents), improper setbacks (50%) and dominance of residential land use over other uses (30%). It is recommended that Government takes over land administration as provided in the LUA, 1978 and Development Control department of Urban Planning and Development Authority (ASUPDA) swings into action to curb the haphazard development in the area.

Keywords: Land Speculation, Urban Planning, Sprawl, Development, Land uses, Land Tenure, Land Acquisition, Subdivision, Land Use Act (LUA), Setback

1. Introduction

Land is described as nature's gift to man on which several activities take place which are also beneficial to man. The dictionary defines land as the solid portion of the earth's surface as opposed to sea and water. Yakubu (1985) describes land as defined by the former Western Region of Nigeria Property and Conveyancing Law as land of any tenure, building or parts of building (whether the division is horizontal or vertical or made in any other way) and other corporeal hereditaments, also rent and other incorporeal hereditaments and an easements, right, privilege, or benefit in, over or derived from land. It is defined as a property with legal connotations as to rights of ownership of individuals and rights and responsibilities of ownership and sovereignty of government.

In Nigeria, the ownership of land (Land Tenure) varies from one region to the other and from one religion to the other. The common feature is that land is held in trust by the Chiefs, Emirs, Obas and the Obis under the traditional land tenure system (Yakubu, 1985; Ilesanmi, 1998). Land was vested within traditional leaders, families and communities, and controlled and managed through customary practices (UN-HABITAT, 2013). However, the advent of the Land Use Act 1978 has removed the ownership of land from individuals, families, and communities. Land administration similarly was taken away from the traditional rulers and then it became the sole responsibility of the Government (Land Use Act, 1978). Nigeria Institute of Town Planners (NITP) in its report of the state of planning in Nigeria (2014) observed that in 1978, the Land Use Act was promulgated and designed to curb land speculation, ease the process of land acquisition by government, coordinate and formulate tenurial modernization. Sadly, even this statutory law has failed to be effective in most parts of Nigeria as lands are still owned by individuals who administer and sell to the highest bidder. Land speculation has become the order of the day in all parts of Nigeria. Land has certain characteristics which, however, influences its supply and market. The quantity of available land is fixed. The supply of land can only be increased by converting fringe land to urban uses. Land location is also specific. Increase in demand means a competition for land in the most suitable and accessible location. The result is price increases (Garba and Salisu, 1995). Bahl (1968) is of the opinion that property tax may be used as a check by fiscal and physical planners to discourage the leapfrog pattern of urban development resulting from urban land speculation.

Urban Planning is an activity that is aimed at organizing the urban space for comfort and environmental friendliness. Adeigbe *et al* (1971) cited Keeble's 1969 definition of Town Planning 'as the art and science of ordering the use of land, siting of buildings and communication routes to secure a practicable degree of economy, convenience and beauty'. Land speculation which used to be forbidden act under the native law in both Southern and Northern States of Nigeria has now come to be recognized by both the native law and custom

and the Government (Yakubu, 1985). The pessimism and the fear expressed by the Government that market value would be given to the lands has manifested over the years, hence the emergence of land speculation.

As much as Urban Planning authorities try to order the urban space, land speculation has succeeded in distorting the intended orderliness in most urban centres in Nigeria where haphazard development is a common site. This paper tries to examine the effects of land speculation on urban planning and development in Bajabure area of Girei, Adamawa State with a view to making recommendations to tackle the scourge.

2. Materials and Methods

The study used three categories of respondents from different professions, residents of the study area (Bajabure) and Land sales agents. The Professionals in Urban Planning subsector sampled for this study are derived from Urban and Regional Planning (URP), Land Surveyors (LAS) and Architects (ARC). The professionals (URP, LAS, and ARC) were purposively sampled. Another set of 30 respondents from the residents of Bajabure area were selected at random to obtain information on their views about land acquisition, sales, and administration in their neighbourhood. Ten (10) Land Sales agents were purposively sampled for interview; this makes a total of 50 respondents in all. The third group of respondents (Land Sales Agents) provided information on prices of various plot sizes and subdivision. The structured questionnaire used for the interviews was structured in three (3) sections. Sampling of the existing land uses was also carried out to have a relative percentage of the uses. Residential land uses were randomly sampled, Educational, Industrial and Mixed Uses were purposively sampled.

2.1 Study Area

Bajabure area is under the influence of the Bajabure Satellite Town supplementary Master Plan jurisdiction prepared in 1981 which spelt out the standards for Urban Physical Planning and development as the area is perceived to be where expansion is heading (Garnvwa and Ilesanmi, 1998). This is a Satellite town across the Jimeta Bridge North of the State Capital of Adamawa. Politically, Bajabure is under Girei Local Government Area, Adamawa State and it is within the 3,450 hectares plan area of the Bajabure Satellite Town Master Plan prepared in 1981.



Fig. 1: Aerial View of Bajabure Area showing the unplanned neighbourhood and poor access
Source: Google Map, 2015

3. Findings and Discussion of Results

The Bajabure satellite town has witnessed rapid growth over the last few years due to high demand for land to build houses by the ever increasing population spill from Jimeta-Yola. Findings revealed that the area under review (Bajabure) has developed into a large satellite town over the last seven (7) years. It shares neighbourhood

with Adamawa State Television Station (ATV) and Gotel Communications (Radio and Television). The value of land in the area has rise significantly recently as people’s demand for it kept increasing. However, the high demand for land in the area has triggered serious land speculation to extent that many problems have emerged. Being an area with relatively flat land, Bajabure is witnessing Urban Sprawl which is also an effect of land speculation in the area. A situation (Urban sprawl) described by Ottensmann (1977) as -the scattering of new development on isolated tracts, separated from other areas by vacant land-is frequently cited as one negative consequence of the development process.

Responses on effects of land speculation were generated form various stakeholders in the area and professionals in the Town (Urban) Planning subsector. The composition of the respondents is presented in the table 1.

Table 1: Composition of Respondents and Stakeholders

Category of Respondents	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
URP (Town Planners)	4	8.0
Land Surveyors (LAS)	3	6.0
Architects (ARC)	3	6.0
Residents of Bajabure	30	60
Land Sales Agents	10	20
Total	50	100

3.1 Land Acquisition, Subdivision and perception of Planning in Bajabure area

Land acquisition in Bajabure area is either through a sales agent or the Village head referred to as *Mai Unguwa* in the local dialect. The same groups of individuals are also responsible for subdividing these plots of land before selling to the prospective buyers. Land subdivision is dependent on the prospective buyer’s ability to pay for them. The plots are measured as soon as the buyer pays for it. The responses of the residents of the area interviewed are presented on table 2

Table 2: Land Acquisition, Subdivision and general perception of planning in the Bajabure Satellite area

Method of Land Acquisition	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Through a Land Salesman (Agent)	15	50.0
From a Village head (<i>Mai Unguwa</i>)	10	33.3
Through a Friend	05	16.7
Government	00	00
Land Subdivision by:-	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sales Agent	17	56.7
Village Head (<i>Mai Unguwa</i>)	10	33.3
Land and Survey Staff	03	10.0
Building Plan (Before erecting house)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	02	6.7
No	27	90.0
No Response	01	3.3
Any form of Planning in the neighbourhood?	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	04	13.3
No	20	66.6
Don’t Know	02	6.7
Not sure	02	6.7
No response	02	6.7

Table 2 indicates that 50% of the respondents acquired their plots of land through sales agents and 33.3% acquired their own plots through the Village head (*Mai Unguwa*). However, only 16.7% of the respondents got theirs through a friend.

Land subdivision which is also a critical component of urban planning is generally done in the area without any form of regard for planning principles; it is done haphazardly depending on one’s ability to pay for any size of plot. This is done either by the sales agents or the Village head of the area. Table 2 indicates that 56.7% of the respondents confirmed that land subdivision is done by the sales agents, while 33.3% said that land subdivision is done by the *Mai Unguwa*; the Village head of the area. Only 10% are of the view that land subdivision is carried out by land and survey staff.

The perception of the residents on planning in the area indicated that majority of them are aware that there is poor planning in the area. About 66.6% of the respondents confirmed that there is no form of planning in the area while, only 13.7% are of the view that there is planning in the area. There are about 6.7% of the respondents who do not know whether there is any form of planning in the area, while another 6.7% are not sure.

Majority of the residents (90%) interviewed erected their house without building plans, while only 6.7% of the respondents had building plans before they built their houses.

3.2 Effects of Land Speculation on Planning and Development of Bajabure Satellite Town

The professionals (URP, LAS, and ARC) respondents were interviewed to obtain information on the effects of land speculation on urban planning and development from a professional point of view. The effects of land speculation on urban planning and development consist of poor land subdivision, poor access roads, Urban Sprawl, Lack of proper setbacks, emergence of Cul-de-sac (Dead-end), dominance of residential land uses over other land uses like recreational, commercial and public and semi public as well as presence of incompatible land uses. The responses of the Town Planners, Architects and Land Surveyors on the effects of land speculation on urban planning and development are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Professional responses on effects of Land Speculation on Urban Planning and Development

Effects of Land Speculation on Planning and Development	Category of Respondents (URP, LAS, ARC)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor land subdivision	URP, LAS, ARC	10	100.0
Poor Access Roads	URP, LAS, ARC	07	70.0
Formation of Cul-de-sac (Dead end)	URP, LAS	05	50.0
Incompatibility of Land uses	URP, ARC	06	60.0
Dominance of Residential Land uses over other land uses	URP	03	30.0
Lack of proper Setbacks	URP, LAS	05	50.0
Urban Sprawl	URP, LAS, ARC	09	90.0

3.2.1 Poor Land Subdivision

Land subdivision is the division of a single plot, tract or parcel of land, or a part thereof, into two or more plots, tracts, or parcels of land for the purpose, whether immediate or future, of transfer of ownership for residential, commercial or industrial purposes (Adeigbe *et al*, 1977, Obateru, 2002). In Bajabure area, subdivision of land is so poor due land speculation. A plot of land is bought by individuals from the *mai unguwa*; a traditional village head and is left to appreciate in value before it is subdivided by the owners and sold. Finding revealed that in subdivision of the land, there is a disregard for setbacks between properties, access into abutting properties. Ideally, subdivisions does not include plots less than 100 metre; but in Bajabure, most of the plots are less than 100 ft x 100 ft (31 m x 31 m). Land speculators engage the services of corrupt land and survey staff to further subdivide the plots into smaller plots at higher rates to make more profit. Some plots are less than 15 m x 15 m and this translates into other planning problems.

3.2.2 Poor Access Roads

The activities of land speculators in Bajabure have resulted in poor access roads. This is an effect of indiscriminate land subdivision which eventually leads to the sale of land meant for access roads. The traditional heads (*mai unguwa*) usually connive with corrupt land and survey staff to subdivide lands in the area and even block access roads by selling such lands to prospective buyers. The access roads in the area are single narrow lanes (3-4 metre) less than the ideal 3.4-3.7 metre width double lanes proposed by Obateru, (2003). The implication of this action is that access roads are narrowed and that there are no intersections after 2 or 3 lots. When there are fire outbreaks, access to the affected properties becomes difficult if not impossible.

3.2.3 Emergence of Cul-de-sac (Dead-end Street)

Land speculation in Bajabure area has resulted in a chain of planning problems, one of which is the emergence of Cul-de-sac (dead-end) on some streets in the area. This is caused by corruption and total disregard for planning. These Cul-de-sacs are unconsciously formed because *mai unguwa* allocates or sales land meant for access or circulation. This is because the area has no layout plan that spells out the plot sizes, access roads, setbacks and utilities lines among others.

3.2.4 Incompatibility of Land uses

Land Speculation results in the sale of land to the highest bidder. What use the land will be put to is left to the owner (purchaser). The tendency for this scenario is emergence of incompatible land uses in the same neighbourhood. Bajabure area has witnessed the infiltration of block industries in the residential areas. The noise level and smoke discharge disturbs the residents of the area and therefore these land uses should not to be located together. But because there is no regard for urban planning principles due to high influence of land speculation in the area, there is high level of incompatibility of existing land uses in the area (Bajabure).

3.2.5 Dominance of Residential Land use over other Land uses

Residential land use is dominant over other land uses in the Bajabure area. In an ideal Urban planning, spaces are allocated for different land uses such as commercial, recreational, industrial, educational, public and semi public (Obateru, 2003; Ilesanmi, 1998, George, 1999). There are no lands designated for recreation and market or shopping (commercial) in Bajabure area.

Table 4: Existing Sampled Land uses in Bajabure Area to show Dominance of Residential Land Use

Existing Land uses	Number of Sampled Land Uses	Percentage (%)
Residential	80	82.0
Educational	04	4.0
Industrial (Block industry)	06	6.0
Commercial	-	-
Mixed Uses (Residential and Commercial)	08	8.0
Total	98	100

From table 4, it is clear that residential land use is the dominant (82.0%) land use in the area and that there is no commercial land use (nil) designated or allocated a space as it should be in ideal urban plan and development scheme. Industrial land use in form of block industries is only 6.0%, mixed uses (residential and commercial occurring together) makes up 8.0%, while educational land use is 4.0% only. Physical development is haphazardly done without regard for other vital land uses like recreational, commercial and educational. However, it is worthy to note that the information on table 4 is not representing or indicating the total land uses in the area, rather, it is a reflection of the existing situation obtained through sampling procedure. These are purposively sampled land uses in the area to show the land uses characteristics of the Bajabure satellite area.

3.2.6 Lack of Proper Setbacks

Setbacks are desirable space standards usually between different land uses to allow harmony in the use of human space. In the traditional system of Yola and environs, a minimum of three (3) paces each is desirable between neighbouring residential dwellings (Ilesanmi, 1998). However, Adeigbe *et al.*, (1977) proposed that a normal housing development should have setback of 4.5 metre (front) from the property line (plot line) and the property line should be at least 10 metre from the centre of the service street (access). Setbacks are not properly observed in the Bajabure satellite area as most property lines are not more than one (1) metre from the single lane access roads thereby making vehicular movement difficult in the neighbourhoods. For instance, the left arm of a street named Lagos Street (3.7 m single lane) in the area is so narrow because of improper setbacks of property lines from the access road.

3.2.7 Urban Sprawl

One of the problems associated with land speculation in Bajabure satellite town is that of Urban Sprawl. This phenomenon is described as the scattering of new developments on isolated tracts of land separated from other areas by vacant land (Ottensmann, 1977). The Cambridge Dictionary of American English (2000) also described Urban Sprawl as the spread of a city into the area surrounding it, often without planning. The way and manner buildings spring up in Bajabure area is haphazard and has no element of planning because of the activities of land speculators. People buy plots of land to build houses mostly without minding consequences associated with the location of such plots. There are cases of plots that cannot be accessed from the local street (access road) due to activities of land speculators usually the *mai unguwa* and his agents who subdivides plots without providing access and sale to desperate buyers. Findings from the residents of the area revealed that if an individual buys a piece of land and did not adequately reward the *mai unguwa*, he/she may fall a victim of either a narrow access to his/her property or non at all.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Land Speculation has become the order of the day in all parts of the world with consequent effects on urban space orderliness and friendliness. This scenario coupled with the traditional land tenure and administration has resulted in serious planning and development in Bajabure Satellite area. It is against this backdrop that recommendation as to how this menace can be checked in the society is required. The Government should enforce the use of the existing Land Use Act, 1978 so as to organise how land is acquired by the people for physical development through preparation lay-outs and local plans or even master plans that guard against haphazard development. Adamawa State Urban Planning and Development Authority (ASUPDA) should swing into action through its regulatory department of Development Control to curb the ugly trend in Bajabure area and the state in general.

Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge the contributions of the authors of the materials consulted in writing this paper. We also want thank Google for providing us with the image of the area under review. The various ideas are highly appreciated and acknowledged.

References

Adeigbe, O.O. *et al* (1971). Manual of Space Standards for Urban Developments in the Western States of Nigeria, Technical College, Ibadan.

- Bahl, R. W. (1968). A Land Speculation Model: The role of the Property Tax as a constraint to Urban Sprawl. *Journal of Regional Science*, 8: 199–208. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9787.1968.tb01324.x
- Cambridge Dictionary of American English (2000), Urban Sprawl, Cambridge University Press.
- Dictionary of American History (2003). "Land Speculation." Retrieved April 25, 2015 from Encyclopedia.com: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3401802314.html>
- Garba, S.B. and Salisu, A.S. (1995). Land Management Strategies for Effective Urban Mass Housing in Nigeria, Department of Architecture, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; A Paper presented at the Nigeria Institute of Quantity Surveyors Conference, Kaduna.
- Ilesanmi, F.A. (1998). "The Role Master Plans in Land Administration and Physical Development in Adamawa State: The Case of Greater-Yola Master Plan" In Ilesanmi, F.A (ed), Master Planning approach to physical development: The Nigerian Experience, Yola (Nigeria): paraclete publishers, pp.58-65.
- Land Use Act (1978). *Federal Republic of Nigeria*.
- Max Lock (1976). Greater Yola Master Plan.
- Nigerian Institute of Town Planners [NITP] (2014). State of Planning in Nigeria report, pp. 4.
- Obateru, O. (2003). Space standards for Urban Development, Ibadan: Penthouse Publications (Nig), 32p.
- Ottensmann, J.R. (1977). Urban Sprawl, Land values and the Density of Development, Irvine: University of California (USA), *Program for Social Ecology*, 389-400
- UN-HABITAT (2013). The State of Planning in Africa: An Overview, *Urban Planning and Design Branch*, Nairobi, Kenya, pp. 10.
- Yakubu, M.G. (1985). Land Law in Nigeria, 1st edition, London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd, pp. 2-13, 45-48.