

TOWARDS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE PHYSICAL PLANNING OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study attempts an appraisal of spatial planning as a “State function” in Nigeria, for the past 100 years (1915 – 2015). It made use of secondary data sources obtained from the reports of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP), documentaries and internet sources. The secondary sources were augmented by oral interviews. Findings reveal that two critical factors – scarcity of finance and apathy among Nigerians for government activities both combine to undermine the capacity of the Federal, State and Local Governments to carry out a full spectrum of physical planning activities. As a consequence developments in most towns and cities in the country hitherto manifest planlessness and chaos. The study recommends “Public-Private-Partnerships” (PPPs) in the discharge of physical planning functions to enable the country make in-road into sustainable spatial planning in tandem with global best practices in the new millennium.

Keywords: Nigeria, Public-Private Partnership, Sustainable Physical Planning

Introduction

Physical planning in a general sense was part of local native administration in Nigeria, long before the advent of colonial administration. By the middle of 1800s, many indigenous cities had a pattern of land uses in their domain. For instance, the Sokoto Caliphate and much part of Oyo kingdom seats of governments had one form of deliberate spatial arrangement of land uses around the palaces (Oyesiku, 2010). Therefore, the Nigeria landscape to some extent had some rudimentary elements of planning.

Nevertheless, modern planning as understood in line with Western culture and tradition may be described as a recent phenomenon that emerged in the early 1900s. Since then various legislations and programmes have provided the framework for planning, starting from 1904 to 1946 Ordinances, and the latest at the

national level in 1992 planning law. However, regions and later the States also have some legal framework for guiding physical planning practice and after the promulgation of the Urban and Regional Planning Decree No.88 of 1992, most States in the federation have had their own established planning administration laws (Sanni, 2006).

The Nigerian political and economic scene have had varied experience and consequences on urban and regional planning development in the country. In the first instance, the country experienced almost over 100 years of colonial administration. The country also had a relatively shorter democratically elected post-independence political administration period than the military rule. With specific reference to the period under review (pre-independence to post independence till 1999) the country experienced only 10 years of civilian administration (1960-1966 and 1979-1983),

while the military administration lasted for 28 years (1966-1970 and 1984-1999). Besides, under the military administration of almost three decades, there were seven regimes some lasting about six months. Undoubtedly therefore, the variation in the regimes, policies orientation and objective also affected urban and regional planning development significantly (NITP, 2009).

A history of urban and regional planning in Nigeria must be well positioned not only within planning legislations and politico-economic scene alone, but also in the context of the people being planned for in terms of population growth over time. Urbanization and the process of people living in urban centres in Nigeria predates the colonial adventure in the country. As at 1921, the first Nigeria's population was estimated to be 18.6 million and about 1.5 million were already living in 29 cities whose population was 20,000 and above (Oyesiku, 2010). When the actual census first took place in the country in 1952, the population was 30.4 million with about 10.6 percent of the population (3.3 million) people living in 56 cities across the country (NPC, 1952). By 1963, when the second census took place, the total population of the country was 55.6 million and this increased to 88 million in 1991. The 2006 census put the figures at 150 million which rose to 160 million by 2013, with about half of the population living in cities and about 130 cities whose population exceed 20,000 Nigerians (Oyesiku, 2010).

The import of the urbanization in Nigeria is that the country has a pattern that is unique in Africa, the rate at which it was intensified during and after colonial period. The factors that accentuate urbanization and which attract the attention of physical planning are

those of transportation development, particularly road and rail during and after colonial period, economic development strategies after 1960 till the late 1970s that were based on import substitution strategy, which in turn led to the emergence of economic islands that was favoured by rail and road transportation as well as port and marine transportation development. Further, population growth and urban development were stepped-up through national political decentralization that led to creation of States from the regions in 1967 and subsequent States creation in 1976, 1991, 1992 and 1996. These processes created administrative capitals, rapidly increasing urban population due to both high rates of natural increase in population and rural-urban migration. The physical planning and development response to the pattern of development in the country vis-à-vis the weaknesses of physical planning activity as a "State function" is the thrust of this paper.

Statement of the Problem

The first nationwide framework for urban and Regional Planning in the country under the colonial administration was the Nigerian Town and Country Planning Act of 1946; which was widely adopted throughout the country. The 1946 Act was restricted to the European Reservation Areas to the detriment of those living in native towns and as such it was difficult to see how the Act ever prepared the country for modern Planning scheme in all settlements in the Country (Maduka, 1981). Most parts of the country particularly the urban centres, were unplanned and segregated without access to infrastructure and services, general welfare of the people and organized land use planning (Oyesiku, 2007).

Although the 1946 Act was designed for the improvement and control of development by means of planning schemes to be prepared by Planning Authorities that were established by the “government”, the Act was more elaborate “on the scope and content of the schemes and emphasis on development control that will ensure that “adequate provisions are made for roads, buildings and other social amenities, public utility services, transport communication and other uses to which land is put, harmonized interrelationship among these competing land uses through the principle of zoning” (NITP, 1991). An important area of significance of the 1946 Act was essentially the institutionalization of Local Planning Authorities to be responsible for all aspects of planning through approved planning schemes, and for the administration of existing Town and Country Planning Laws (NITP, 2009).

The 1946 Act, to some extent did not allow for participatory decision making process on planning matters and also unfriendly to the extent that it was difficult for an objection to be raised in respect of planning schemes. In this regard, a new planning law was necessary not only for a new planning order but also to address lingering planning operation and administration challenges carried over from the colonial times. Moreover, the 1946 Act being a nationwide legislation applied to every part of the country also remained in existence for close to fifty years, and was only replaced by the 1992 Urban and Regional Degree No. 88.

In 1992, the Federal Government of Nigeria promulgated the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Act No. 88, as a major advancement aimed at overhauling the old laws and clearly defining the roles of the three tiers of

government in planning of human settlements. However, the governments at all levels in Nigeria are yet to fully implement all the tenets of the Act, the situation has some serious side effects. Thus far, except in Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, planning and plans in the country are yet to be properly organized along the lines of the enabling legislation (Falade, 2003; Agbola, 2006). It is noteworthy that hitherto, 24 years after the passage of this law, the many dividends of good planning that are to result from it are yet to be made manifest. As a consequence, development in most towns and cities in Nigeria today is amorphous and haphazard as though borne of anarchy (Abotutu, 2012). Some of these problems include:

- Protracted neglect of open space, parks, gardens and stadia;
- Protracted delay in gentrification of slum neighbourhoods;
- Delay in extension of infrastructure and social services to new areas or the urban fringe;
- Prevalence of blocked drains which results in flooding when it rains;
- Delay in solid waste evacuation;
- Poor street maintenance culture;
- Building on natural waterways due to weak development control mechanism; and
- Poor maintenance of street lights. Effective and efficient physical planning and resource allocation go hand in hand (Abotutu, 2006). They depend upon the ability of the Federal, State and Local governments to work together to articulate and attain their individual and shared goals, requirements and priorities. Yet, the Federal, State and Local governments in Nigeria, currently face

unprecedented demands for their limited resources. Consequently, they lack the full capacity (adequate resources) to undertake a full spectrum of physical planning activities in their respective territories. Because of these resource limitations, there is a dire need for the three tiers of governments to collaborate more efficiently with the “private sector” and international partners to access funds to finance urban development projects.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

This study is premised on the concept of public-private-partnerships (PPPs) the essential elements of which are discussed herein. Advocacy for PPPs and other forms of government-private sector collaboration has emerged in countries across the globe for a variety of reasons. Neither National nor State/Local governments in most countries have adequate budgetary resources to extend services and infrastructure or to subsidize inefficient State enterprises or agencies. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) observed that in the developing countries “the current and projected revenue base of most municipalities is inadequate to finance capital improvements and associated operating costs ... and many municipalities have large debt obligations, leaving little room for major new loans (UNDP, 2000). Public dissatisfaction with the quality and coverage of government-provided services and the slowness with which National, State and Local governments extend infrastructure often pressure them to seek more private sector participation.

Government and the private sector are cooperating in the provision of services and

infrastructure through a variety of mechanisms including contracts and concessions, build-operate-and-transfer (BOTs) arrangements, public-private joint ventures, and informal and voluntary cooperation (Savas, 1990; 1998). Governments are also deregulating many industries and allowing the private sector to compete with public agencies and State enterprises. They are “corporatizing” State-owned enterprises (SOEs) that are not privatized requiring them to compete with private firms and to cover their costs and manage their operations more efficiently (Dennis, 2002). They are allowing or encouraging businesses, community groups, cooperatives, private voluntary associations, small enterprises, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to offer social services (USAID, 2002). In some countries they use PPPs as an intermediate phase in the process of privatizing SOEs or as an alternative to full-scale privatization.

However, the private sector has not been encouraged to play any significant role in physical planning development in Nigeria. Hitherto, providing physical planning services in the country is still considered a “public function”, and therefore, exclusively the responsibility of governments. Nonetheless, the need for PPPs arrangements, have featured prominently in national debates in the country, in the last decade, and it is being experimented in the telecommunications, oil, power and aviation industries. Yet, other government services-town planning, water supply, housing, etc. can be delivered more efficiently by involving the private sector. Involving the private sector in Nigeria, will bring stronger managerial capacity, access to new technology, and specialized skills that

governments cannot afford to develop on their own.

Literature Review

Attempt was made in this section to look at the role of the private sector in social services provision worldwide to see if there are stimulating lessons that Nigeria can learn from. Governments in countries with both advanced and developing economies are increasing outsourcing the provision of services and infrastructure to private sector firms (Abotutu, 2012).

In the United States, Federal, State and Local governments contract with private organizations to help provide infrastructure and services that public agencies cannot offer efficiently or effectively on their own. In the United States, municipalities contract out 25 percent of their services to the private sector (USAID, 2002). Among the services Local governments in the United States most frequently contract out to private companies are street light maintenance, solid waste collection, street repairs, hospital management, mental health facilities, day care programs, ambulance services, bus operations, and drug and alcohol treatment programs. Canada and most European countries also use private companies as "public service" providers, and an increasing number of developing countries are turning to private sector service contracts as well.

In Brazil, the State government has contracted with private firms to manage new public hospitals that the government constructed and financed (Reb and Simon, 2002). The State government sought management contracts with private sector in order to transfer operational risk, improve the quality of medical care, and increase service efficiency.

Through annual funding contracts that can be extended for five-year periods, the private companies recruit staff, manage facilities, and provide medical services for all public patients coming to the hospitals. The government pays for medical services based on a target volume of patients and the operators receive reimbursement by achieving at least 80 percent of the target. In the United State and Canada, private companies also take contracts to manage municipal or public hospitals; several States and Local governments contract with private companies to manage public utilities.

In Africa, several French-speaking countries embraced PPPs in the 1980s. They developed the "affermage system" through which the municipality constructs a facility and contracts with a private firm to operate and maintain it. In Cote d'Ivoire, the government joined with SODECI (Societe de distribution d'eau de la cote d'Ivoire), a private cooperation to supply piped water to households (Sandra, 1982). The government established rules for price-setting and surcharges on water fees were paid to the municipality to amortize the construction costs of water system.

China has used joint ventures between foreign investors and State enterprises to obtain foreign technology and capital, learn foreign management and marketing techniques, increase foreign exchange-generating capacity, and promote joint research and development projects (UNDP, 2000). The Chinese government also used joint ventures between SOEs and private foreign companies to make new investments in infrastructure and manufacturing facilities. The expansion of telecommunications equipment in the Shanghai area, for example, was financed through joint ventures. Shanghai Bell

Telephone Equipment and Manufacturing Company was taken over by a joint Venture among China's Ministry of posts and Telecommunications, Alcatel Bell, and the Belgian government to produce switches for telephone companies in China (Mohammad, 1997; Michael, 2001).

In many developing countries, governments leave some services entirely to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or allow them to provide services of a higher quality or more comprehensive coverage than those provided by the public sector. For decades, cooperative organizations, trade unions, women's and youth clubs, and religious groups in Asia, have all been involved in some aspects of public service provision (Ralston and Colson,, 1981). Non-government and religious organizations provide health, education, and training programs that supplement those offered by government (Denis et al, 1990).

The experience in the United Kingdom led the government to conclude that for PPPs to work effectively, it must retain responsibility and accountability for deciding among competing objectives; define chosen objectives for services provision, set standards, criteria, and output targets, and safeguard the broader public interest (UNDP, 2000; Dennis and Sylia, 2000).

In spite of potential problems and complexities, public-private partnerships if beneficially tapped in Nigeria, can help the Federal, State and Local Governments to improve the quality, reduce the price, and extend the coverage of services and they can accelerate the construction of infrastructure and facilities that are crucial for economic development and social progress.

Private Sector Actors in physical planning in Nigeria.

Three groups of private sector actors are visible in Nigeria's urban environment. They are the individual, big companies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Individual

Most affluent Nigerians are not interested in physical planning activities. A few of them, however, have helped to extend infrastructure which terminate at the precinct of their property-housing estates or factories. Others engage in philanthropy providing necessities of life for prison and orphanage home inmates. Most Nigerians especially the elites obey town planning rules and regulations.

Big Companies

Multinational oil companies in Nigeria, including Shell, Mobil, Agip and Chevron, among others, have done very little as regard physical planning development in the country. In their community engagement initiatives, these oil conglomerates have carried out skeletal spatial planning projects as part of 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR) to their host communities, to augment the efforts of governments. Usually, these projects include extension of electricity and provision of blocks of classrooms. The companies do comply with planning laws and regulations. However, these oil companies have done fairly well in human capital development through scholarship awards to students in tertiary institutions and the provision of skill acquisition centres.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). NGOs in Nigeria have done very little to promote physical planning activities. NGOs with national outlook and reach in Nigeria include: Lions club, Rotary club, Innerwheel

Club, and Military Officers' Wives Association of Nigeria. There are also numerous local NGOs. The only noticeable physical planning projects these NGOs engage in are reconstruction of “bus stop” along streets with high volumes of traffic in the urban domain and the provision of “road signs” along major thoroughfare. NGOs are more interested in charity work. They are often donors to orphanage homes and refugee camps. Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) obey planning rules and regulations in Nigeria.

Methodology of the Study

The study combined both library research and oral interviews. The library research include secondary data sources-reports of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) on the state of planning in Nigeria in the past

100years (1915 – 2015), documentaries on the dynamics of physical planning in Nigeria, and internet sources. The oral interviews involved extensive travels across the six geopolitical zones and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in Nigeria. In each of the zones and FCT, the researcher held interviews with the Directors of physical planning in the Ministry of Lands, Surveys and Urban development. The purpose of the interviews was to solicit information from the Directors who double as professional planners and decision makers in the Ministry. Issues raised in the interviews include: explanation for the poor state of physical planning in Nigeria, and the way forward. The survey lasted for six months (January-June, 2015). The responses from the interviews are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Critical factors hindering effective physical planning in Nigeria

S/N	Factors	Number of Respondents	Respondents as Percentage of Total
1.	Poor allocation	20	54.1
2.	Citizen apathy	12	32.4
3.	Lack of professional planners	3	8.1
4.	Lack of political will	2	5.4
	Total	37	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Research Findings/Discussion

Two factors were identified in the study as being critical in the explanation of the poor state of physical planning in Nigeria. They are “poor allocation” and “citizen apathy” (see Table 1).

Poor Allocation

Twenty (20) or 54.1 percent of the 37 directors interviewed in the Ministry of lands, surveys and Urban Development in the six zones and

the FCT in Nigeria, observed that governments at the Federal, State and Local levels in Nigeria, are saddled with too much responsibilities so much so that there is “poor allocation” (inadequate finance) to effectively carry out physical planning activities. This finding further affirmed the findings from the works of Obadan (1995; 2002) which established that the “sheer size of government is a constraint on the efficiency of the public sector”.

Citizen Apathy

The study also revealed that “citizen apathy” in Nigeria is a major challenge to the development of physical planning. Twelve (12) or 32.4 percent out of the 37 directors interviewed affirmed that “citizen apathy” (negative mindset towards anything that has to do with government) is inimical to effective physical planning in Nigeria. Hitherto, apathy among most Nigerian youths has constituted a great challenge to development. They see government property as “No Man's Property” and should not be maintained. This explains the widespread vandalism of oil pipe line and electricity cables going on in Nigeria today. In physical planning, open space, parks and gardens in the urban domain are often abused through indiscriminate dumping of refuse. Stadia are left unkempt and often provide habitat for rodents and reptiles including snakes. They are only maintained when there are pending sporting activities or ceremonies.

Conclusion

For the past 100 years, physical planning activity was carried out as a “State function” in Nigeria. This paper attempts to verify the strength and weaknesses of physical planning as a “State function” and identified two factors-“poor allocation” and “citizen apathy” as barriers to effective physical planning development in the country.

Recommendations

The government of Nigeria should partner with the private sector in order to achieve sustainable physical planning development. The researcher is of the view that the role of government should be restricted to creating an appropriate environment for the private sector to thrive, and there should be no

explicit attempt to counter the economic impulses transmitted through price signals. The fundamental argument is that only market-oriented strategies, driven by an efficient private sector can reverse the costly problems inherent in a public sector led economy. Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs) will not only make adequate finance available to carry out a full spectrum of physical planning activities, but will also eliminate “apathy” which most Nigerians have for government activities.

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