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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Urban Housing Dynamics and the Impact of Planning Policies on Supply, Demand, and Affordability

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
  *Corresponding Author: 893754969@qq.com	Housing affordability in urban centres remains a concern in many jurisdictions around the world due to growth in urbanisation, increasing demand for the commodity, and due to social and economic differences. Within this research, the effects of urban planning policies on the housing supply, demand, and price are explored using the case studies of London, Sydney and Shanghai. These cities have different planning regimes and markets and provide useful lessons on the prospects and problems of urban housing policy. The study follows the acknowledgment that restrictive zoning in London, including green belt controls, restricts the supply of land and thereby increases housing costs even with liberal policies such as density bonuses. In Sydney, there are initial positive signs of inclusionary zoning policies but achieving its application is an issue because of high land prices and irregular application. Speculative investments and rising city status have made houses expensive within Shanghai even when house supply is high and through measures such as a ban on multiple house purchases. In all three cities, the issue of the high cost of housing continues to be a major concern because the costs of houses are far higher than the income being generated in the market. According to the study, those policies should be aimed at correcting supply-demand relations, moderating speculation and encouraging the construction of affordable housing in the long term. About sustainability and inclusion important components of the approach to urban housing are discussed. The findings of this study will help policymakers formulate relevant public policies that would help to increase access to adequate housing across the globe and help to reduce the growing problem of affordable housing in urban areas.

INTRODUCTION

The housing markets in urban areas face immense pressures from factors such as growth in urban centres, growing population and changing socio-economic factors. Less affordability of living standards is becoming one of the main issues for cities in creating an adequate balance between supply and demand in residential real estate worldwide (Wetzstein, 2017). The need for residing in urban areas has grown as cities continue to pull new businesses, education facilities, and various groups of populaces. However, the increasing interconnection between restrictive planning policies, speculative real estate practices, and limited developable land has led to a sophisticated environment of housing deficits, and rising prices.

Urban planning policies cut across various areas ranging from the allotments of land for housing, zoning of the land, and affordability measures. These policies define how much space is to accommodate development, which kinds of residences are most desirable, and how quickly new stock can be delivered (Haffner & Hulse, 2021). If adopted and followed to the letter, planning

frameworks can help avoid housing crises because equitable growth and housing access are key objectives in planning. On the other hand, overly prescriptive or uncoordinated planning systems worsen deficits, raise costs, and widen the division.

The paper discusses how these urban planning policies impact supply, demand and affordability of housing in three cities with differing planning ideologies; London, Sydney and Shanghai. These cities are also balanced in terms of the level of governance, rate of urbanization, and market (Molloy, 2020). Exploring common issues still present today in the boundaries of London, the historical and cultural city, one can get an idea of problems arising from the requirements for architectural development and protection of historic and cultural sites. Sydney is an emerging major city, where it becomes difficult to enforce the inclusionary zoning policies to achieve the set affordable housing management policies. Shanghai is one of the global cities and has the problem of coordinating the effects of investments and rapidly developing construction (Öztürk et al., 2018). The study identifies and focuses on three cities to reveal important lessons on how planning systems affect housing markets and affordability.

The current state of housing affordability in the world requires new thinking regarding urban development for economic, social and ecological benefits. Solving these issues entails an analysis of the general supply and demand factors and market forces together with considering the legal framework (MacAskill et al., 2021). This study adds to this knowledge base by identifying how planning policies influence housing results, and by outlining that sensible and realistic suggestions for generating positive change in housing systems should be centred on planning policies rather than vision and plan-making.

This paper aims to conduct a review of academic literature, analysis of case studies, and planning systems to get an overall understanding of the dynamics of urban housing. The study revealed the indispensability of policy measures in developing progressive concepts that consider housing availability and access in consonance with the distinct towns. In conclusion, this work will contribute towards enhancing the ability of scholars and practitioners to design sound planning frameworks addressing the numerous challenges of urban housing in a world that is experiencing rapid urbanisation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Urbanisation and Housing Demand and Supply

The urbanisation has been a key initiator of the housing needs. In a remark by Gurran and Bramley (2017), the rate at which the population of urban dwellers increases the demand for housing and subsequently land and space for development thereby resulting in high costs in densely populated towns. Admitted by Fingleton et al. (2019), housing production usually lags behind other forms of urban development because of restricted land space and lengthy planning procedures. These distortions compounded the situations regarding housing deficits and issues of affordability most especially in fast-growing metropolitan regions.

In addition, urban cities are associated with the employment of high-income individuals, which results in high commodity prices, including housing. Been et al. (2019) note that it is important to formulate political activities to resolve this issue by offering housing that would fit the population density. Physical planning initiatives, since they provide direction on land utilisation zoning, and density, have a large effect on the provision of housing stocks. As seen in many world cities, zoning regulation poses some constraints to the extent of land available for residential use. All these policies shield some regions from excessive development, but in effect, fuel housing scarcity and higher prices (Bramley & Watkins, 2015). Whereas, inclusionary zoning which is a more progressive policy requires the developer to set aside an amount of stock for the low-income group. Thus, the results

have suggested that inclusionary zoning also has limitations, which boil down to the essential constant practice and producer motivation.

2.2 Affordability and Market Speculation

The availability of quality and affordable housing poses another challenge in society more so in urban areas experiencing rapid economic growth. This paper used the ratio of median house prices to median household incomes to analyse affordability. Housing affordability is assessed by the Survey in terms of the City Housing Affordability Range (2019/2020) as severely unaffordable for markets with a ratio above 5.1 (Akinsulire et al., 2024). These ratios are often above that in cities such as London, Sydney, or Shanghai, pointing to the severity of the affordability deficit.

Analysing the available information points to the conclusion that market speculation contributes negatively to the issue of affordability. Gyourko and Molloy (2015) state that bubble investments are responsible for the high costs of housing as it is possible in most regions efficient for inhabitants. This is because the observation made in this paper is apparent in Shanghai where speculative activities have resulted in high price swings.

2.3 Case Studies: London, Sydney, and Shanghai

London housing market represents conflict between heritage and housing supply. Campus restrictions typically favour heritage protection ahead of novelties and consequently, the housing market in important regions is closely regulated. Ahmad (2015) elaborated that the green belt policies of the city take away the availability of land and thus force a high price degree. Previous attempts to rationalize the approval process for planning and to promote the use of previously developed areas have yielded little result because of bureaucratic approaches.

Furthermore, London has tried progressive policies such as density bonuses which enable developers to move beyond density allowance in exchange for affordable housing. However, to some extent, those policies have yielded some success, but the affordability ratios are still high (Favilukis et al., 2023). Explaining reaffirmation, Sydney has chosen inclusionary zoning as a key approach to what can be labelled housing affordability. It enables the establishment of affordable housing by insisting on developers dedicating a slice of new units to affordable housing or putting cash towards affordable housing. Murphy (2016) argues that although inclusionary zoning has helped make homes more affordable within particular districts, it has not been particularly productive due to the high costs of land and the fact that its application varies from one district to another. According to the housing plan of the city, the target is to establish sufficient housing stock to eliminate the deficits but opponents have claimed that focusing on the tall buildings kills the genuinely affordable offerings (King et al., 2017). Furthermore, problems of integrating population growth and diverse housing solutions into the spatial structure have emerged as a key issue in Sydney's urban development framework.

Figure 1: Land-use changes in Shanghai
(Source: Shanghai land-use map, 2025)

The development policies of Shanghai in urban areas have allowed the population challenge to be addressed through speedy housing construction. Figure 1 shows that from 2016-2019, more housing units were built in the city due to effective planning and adequate investment in the infrastructure (Alawadi et al., 2018). Nonetheless, speculative investments have led to reduced attainability given that property prices in the prime areas have been established to have risen by over 40% in the five years. Policies include acquisition restraint and property tax that have been affected by the Shanghai authorities to reduce speculation. Although these policies have contributed positively to fixing prices in the short run, their effectiveness in the long run is still questionable (Chow & Niu, 2015). The case of the city shows why it could be hard to deal with the process of urbanisation and the provision of affordable houses.

2.4 The Role of Governance and Policy Integration

Creating supply and demand as well as affordability requires efficient policies and the most important determinant is good governance. Coordinated development plans that link the housing sector, transportation network and economic growth initiatives have been sound in various settings. For example, a key principle of successful affordable housing seen in the Housing Development Board (HDB) of Singapore integrates cohesive planning of the project and intensive government intervention (Gallent et al., 2017). Thus, although they are not directly comparable to such cities as London, Sydney, or Shanghai, Singapore's experience demonstrates in which ways coordinated and transparent governance could be efficient.

2.5 Challenges in Implementation

Some of the challenges that emanate when implementing urban housing policies include the issues of fragmentation, inequity of enforcement and stakeholder opposition. In the general Sydney area, there is a division of responsibilities where the local government, state government and the federal government create confusion on policy implementation (Hulse et al., 2015). The political structure of London presents a problem for organisational change as there is significant political opposition to reform particularly in restrictive zoning areas, where political action is often used to prevent change. The market environment in Shanghai in particular provides unique filters for the effectiveness of such regulatory mechanisms as purchase restrictions because the enforcement of measures often does not directly counteract the systemic market behaviours (Li et al., 2016). Further, socio-economic disparities and increasing cost of land also worsen affordability constraints making a case for better institutionalisation and partnerships with planned incentives supporting sound policy enactment.

2.6 Emerging Trends and Innovations

New directions in urban housing policy concern itself with the use of innovation, technology, sustainability, and community-based solutions to the issues of affordability and supply. The application of smart city technologies in analysing GIS and real-time data facilitates the planning of land use and monitoring of the housing market (Liu et al., 2020). Sustainability projects stress cost-effective design that minimises energy use in construction, incorporating compact urban design, and transportation-oriented development. Community land trusts (CLTs) are proving to be useful in sustaining physical affordability and public-private partnerships (PPPs) are increasingly important in sustaining social affordability (Yap & Ng, 2018). Such initiatives draw special attention to the application of developing, technological, and people-centred approaches to reforming urban housing systems internationally.

2.7 Gaps in Literature

From the literature, there are still a few areas that have been left open. To date, research on steps in

formulating and implementing urban planning policies, particularly how socio-cultural and political contexts affect the process is scarce. This paper aims to establish how informal housing markets influence affordability regimes while focusing on a rapidly urbanising city Shanghai. There is a lack of quantitative longitudinal investigations that evaluate the effects of policies such as inclusionary zoning and speculative controls after long-term horizons, therefore restricting the ability to get a thorough understanding of their prospects (Galster & Lee, 2021). Further, there is limited analysis of how global dynamics including climate change and technology-driven urbanisation play out in the affordability and availability of houses.

Accessibility and availability of housing in urban centres have been noted in the literature as being influenced greatly by planning policies. London, Sydney and Shanghai communities are examples of the variation in problems and prospects facing various paradigms of planning. As adverse urban planning expands housing scarcity, inclusive zoning can go a long way to achieve affordability. However, to achieve the objectives it involves governance, stakeholder cooperation, and novelty. Further research should be dedicated to filling the gaps outlined in the study and moving further into the situation of how planning policies and market forces can interact within different socio-political conditions.

3. METHODOLOGY

Conforming to the structured research approach, this study seeks to identify and analyse the urban planning policies that affect housing supply, demand and market affordability in the major cities of London, Sydney and Shanghai. Thus, using official statistics and scholarly publications as a basis, it is designed to offer a comprehensive analysis of the housing situation in these cities based on statistical data and trends, as well as the results of critical policy analysis related to the housing situation.

3.1 Research design

The method used in this research study is mixed-methods research as a way of understanding the effect of urban planning policies on housing demand, supply, and affordability in London Sydney and Shanghai. The study includes an investigation of the housing situation in each city, using both qualitative and quantitative methods (Hulse & Yates, 2017). Qualitative research involves the analysis of policy papers, theoretical and empirical publications, and commentaries on the structural context of urban planning and housing-first affordability. The quantitative method is a collection of factual statistical data from efficient apparatus of housing and planning ministries and departments including affordability ratios, house price indices, and supply and demand ratios. The city-specific approach makes it possible to investigate the specificities of the planning systems and market dynamics and get to know the socio-economic and cultural environment in which the practices take place (Samad et al., 2017). Hence, there is a comprehensive approach of not only using patterns and trends but also the point of reference of the resultant global urbanisation policy and policy impacts at the regional locale.

3.2 Data Collection

Primary and secondary sources of information for this study are used to discuss how urban planning policies affect housing demand, supply and affordability in London, Sydney and Shanghai.

Official reports, statistical bulletins and government publications form the database of primary data collection. For London, the available report concerning housing affordability is "Housing Affordability in England and Wales 2023" which includes the ratios, the data on prices and housing, comparisons of wages, and historical tendencies. Supply-demand tables are sourced from the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC), and existing and new residential buildings of occupied and occupied plus vacant in Sydney are also presented along with the metrics

showing the affordability of houses. For Shanghai, information is obtained from a report titled "Housing Price Development in Shanghai" which provides information on price-to-income ratios, contribution by land prices, and effects of urbanization and speculated investments in affordable houses.

In addition to primary data, secondary data provides literature review, journal articles, and policy review as the broader context of the subject matter. Other important contributions are the comparative papers in housing affordability and planning which include Nicole Gurran, Glen Bramley and others focusing on zoning regulation, inclusionary mechanisms and the housing market. Furthermore, international experiences of housing affordability problems set up concrete observations made for particular locales in the context of global discourses (Li, 2015). This applied way of enriching quantitative data with qualitative information enhances the reliability of collecting data on urban housing in the chosen cities.

3.3 Analytical Methods

The research methodologies used in this study are quantitative and/or qualitative and used to assess the effect of urban planning policies on housing in London, Sydney, and Shanghai. Quantitative analysis uses figures such as affordability ratios, supply-demand ratios, trends in prices of housing, and use of land among others. The affordability ratio is worked out from the arithmetic of percentages while the affordability benchmarks are obtained from price-to-income and price-to-rent ratios. For example, the source of the supply-demand balance for Sydney is derived from the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) data concerning changes in the rate of residential construction and the market (Winke, 2021). The prices of Shanghai are compared to relevant historical price indices and government-reported land values.

Finally, qualitative data extends the quantitative results by including the analysis of policy documents, zone planning, and strategies. Country issues are discreet as restrictive zoning in London, inclusionary zoning in Sydney, and speculative investments in Shanghai. This analysis uses policy papers, research papers, and other sources of stakeholder information for grounding quantitative data within socio-political and economic theories.

3.4 Case Study Framework

The theoretical framework based on the case study in this study aims to present and compare how each planning policy of a city has affected housing in London, Sydney, and Shanghai by understanding the planning systems, market environment, and affordability constraints. In each case, there are three key dimensions such as policy, market and implementation issues of the case under consideration. In London, contentious matters of focus are restrictive zoning policies and other forms of control such as Green Belt regulations in determining the shortage in the availability of houses (Bangura & Lee, 2019). Several criteria, including affordability levels and the volume of housing stock, are applied to determine the correlation between the planning constraints and housing price levels. It also looks at such policies as density bonuses to understand how the policies enhance the provision of the needed units.

The case advances the Sydney inclusionary zoning policies where affordability is required in new constructions. They explore the problems relating to the peculiarities in its implementation, which include the high cost of land and inequality in enforcing the policy across different local governments (Cai & Lu, 2015). Supply-demand balance concerning housing has been obtained qualitatively from the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation as quantitative measures concerning housing availability and affordability. For Shanghai, the objectives are rapid urbanisation and property speculation that has contributed to improved housing costs. Purchase restrictions which are one of the government interventions are reviewed about the stability of the market (Al-Masum &

Lee, 2019). It reveals the past ratios of price revenue and land values that indicate how housing affordability has been in the past as well as its challenges.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Standard measures for ethical practice were adopted in this research to maintain the highest standards. The authors used all published data from relevant reports, articles, and government publications to exclude proprietary or confidential information. Cite and reference techniques were used to acknowledge authors and sources of some data gathered. It was conducted without bias or manipulation of the results or information provided. To ensure the results remain general and not specific to any specific individual, the study did not import any items that could be construed as private information, and all complication percentages were overall. The different measures serve to guarantee that the research incorporates academic and ethical practices to increase the reliability of the findings.

3.6 Limitations

This work has some limitations. First of all, the availability of data differs from one selected city to another, which may lead to the inconsistency of observations and qualitative differences in the analysis. Secondly, the variations in governance structures and socio-economic environments may overshadow some findings (Wyly, 2022). Thirdly, the study ignores potential cross-coupling between urban housing market processes and the rural housing markets. Also, it may involve certain inaccuracies in the secondary data used for conducting the research. Last, lack of direct interaction with the stakeholders or professional interviews limits the type of qualitative information about the problems facing policy implementation (Bangura & Lee, 2020). This methodology allows for a systematically comprehensive and qualitative analysis of the current and proposed urban planning policies and their consequences on the housing market supply, demand and housing accessibility.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section gives the results of the research with a special emphasis on the effects of policies in urban planning on the housing market especially in the three cities under consideration which are London, Sydney and Shanghai. The findings point to the specific strengths, issues and factors influencing each city concurrently bringing attention to the comparable concerns that are urban housing concerns across the globe.

4.1 London: Restrictive Zoning and Affordability Challenges

London is a housing market constrained by inadequate housing land and restrictive zoning laws, especially the green belt laws. The above policies have focussed on the conservation of heritage and the environment thus limiting the amount of land available for residential use (Beswick et al., 2016). The current "Housing Affordability in England and Wales 2023" report shows that the affordability ratio is nearly at 8.5, its standard, which means that the average house costs more than eight times the median annual income (Figure 2).
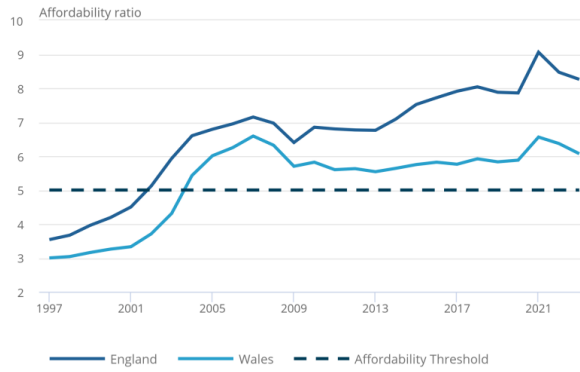
Figure 2: Housing affordability ratio of England and Wales, 1997 to 2023)
(Source: Office for National Statistics, 2024)

Despite many attempts have been made to introduce a progressive practice, including density bonuses, their application has remained rather apparent and restrained. For instance, the price of an average home in central London has risen by more than 40% within the last five years compounding problems of affordability that are already inclined to low- and middle-income families (Ferreri & Sanyal, 2018). In the past few years, there has been a question concerning housing stock to housing demand about price determination that has led to persistent price increases.

4.2 Sydney: Inclusionary Zoning and Uneven Implementation

Inclusionary zoning has been the principal approach of Sydney to urban planning which mandates the allocation of some of the new residential buildings to affordable housing. Although this approach provides some promise, its application is challenged in the areas of high land prices and variable adoption among local governments (Gurran & Ruming, 2016). From the data obtained from the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC), supply is expected to exceed demand by almost 60,000 dwellings in Sydney.
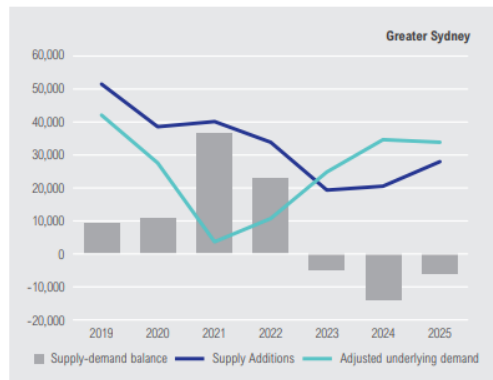

Figure 3: Annual change in demand and supply and supply-demand balance in Sydney
(Source: National Housing Supply Council, 2012)

Sydney has experienced a growth in residential construction, particularly, the supply of dwellings has been more than demand during 2021 and the corresponding period in 2022 (Figure 3). Nonetheless, much of this supply is contained in high-rise buildings that target premium or upper-middle-income earners thus leaving a wide and deep hole in the delivery of genuine affordable accommodation for low-income earners (Baker & Ruming, 2015). The NHFIC also notes a problem of a shortfall in the production of apartments about detached houses, continuing the imbalance in housing stock and its accessibility.

4.3 Shanghai: Rapid Urbanization and Speculative Investments

Shanghai has gone through massive urban developments regarding migration and an expanding economy. According to the data, between 2010 and 2020, more than 1.2 million housing units were constructed, which indicates the active planning of urban development (MacDonald, 2015). Nevertheless, speculative investments have had a prominent effect on the change in house prices and the ratio of price to income. According to the "Housing Price Development in Shanghai" report, housing prices in first-tier urban hubs have risen by 40% in five years (Figure 4).
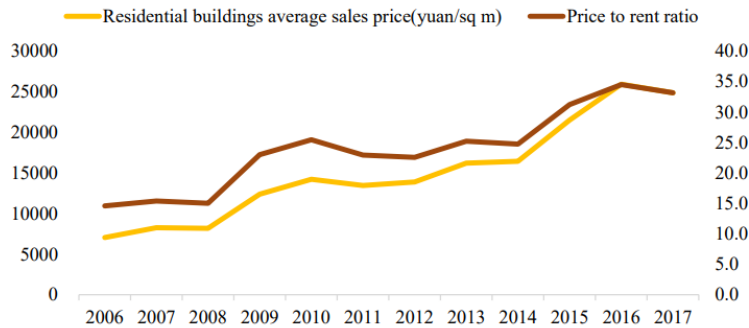

Figure 4: Annual house price and Price-to-Rent ratio in Shanghai
(Source: Tian, 2019)

The government has adopted measures that regulate buying and put special taxation on properties to discourage people from gambling through the real estate market (Bangura & Lee, 2022). Thus, while these measures have made it possible to temporarily stabilise prices in the long run their efficacy is still questionable. There is a continuation of land sales as one of the major streams of local government revenue which has to increase land values that have a similar effect to housing costs. Such a cyclical relationship shows how trying it might be to focus on affordability within the Shanghai property market.

4.4 Common Themes and Global Implications

Analysing the specific case of each city does show that the study findings expose the same issues that are universal in contemporary urban housing:

- **Supply Constraints**: Housing production is hindered by restrictive zoning and the high cost of land puts the developers off easily. These constraints are however compounded by bureaucracy and politics in both London and Sydney.

- **Speculation and Market Dynamics**: Evaluating the speculation of house prices in Shanghai shows that market trends can manipulate housing costs even in an area with sufficient houses.

- **Policy Implementation Gaps**: The irregularity of executing the policies such as inclusionary zoning equity problems that are faced in Sydney is not solved.

- **Affordability Crisis**: All of the three cities post an affordability ratio of more than 8, signifying a major problem of housing affordability, especially in urban cities across the globe.

4.5 Comparative Insights

The paper demonstrates that, even though each city has its specific situation, the experiences that

can be observed in the context of the respective city can be useful in terms of solving housing problems in other cities.

- London is a living example of how even the most historic cities can restore old buildings while striving for additional accommodation.

- Sydney notes that inclusionary zoning when done correctly and backed by other supplements can help in affordability.

- Shanghai calls for safeguards to avoid speculation and instabilities in the housing market.

This stress on the policies relating to urban planning is done to highlight the importance of understanding housing markets. Although several progressive procedures such as inclusionary zoning seem promising, their efficiency depends on the regularity of their application and correlation to the overall tendencies in the sphere of economics and social policies. Solving the affordability crisis is a more complex process that has to consider the competitive environment, legislation and long-term strategic aims.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Balancing Housing Supply and Conservation

The regulations of London are to favour the skyline restrictions regarding the zone and the housing shortage of heritage. It should also be noted that according to the regulations the ad hoc green belt, which was created to protect environmental and historical values, limited the availability of land for residential construction (Von Wirth et al., 2019). This imbalance has therefore helped to increase the cost of houses making affordability another key factor. Progressive density bonuses appear to be effective but underdeveloped because of administrative and community opposition.
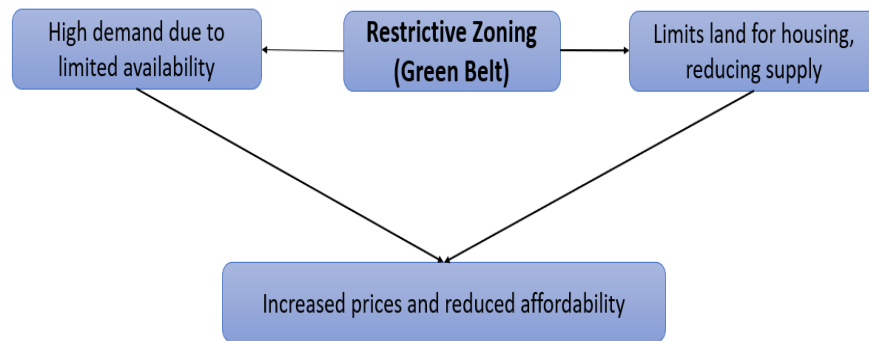

Figure 5: London's influence of zoning regulations on housing supply and affordability
(Source: Self-created)

The bigger picture that should be grasped from the above presentations is that though conservation is needed, it should be tempered with affirmative policies to meet even the demand for housing (Figure 5). Such concepts of adaptive zoning permit incremental intensification of underused sites in areas such as London, in which heritage buildings might still be maintained (Adil & Ko, 2016). Combining public-private partnerships could also help to increase the speed of delivering housing stock, thereby ensuring adequate supply while at the same time retaining the physical nature of urban settlements.

5.2 Effectiveness of Inclusionary Zoning

The experience of Sydney with inclusionary zoning suggests the potential use of the policy tool in housing affordability politics. As a matter of policy, the policy aims to ensure that a certain percentage of fresh units is provided for lower- and middle-income earners to close supply deficiencies (Sharifi & Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020). Nonetheless, regular implementation by different local governments jeopardizes its achievements and the costs of land procurement for assignment.
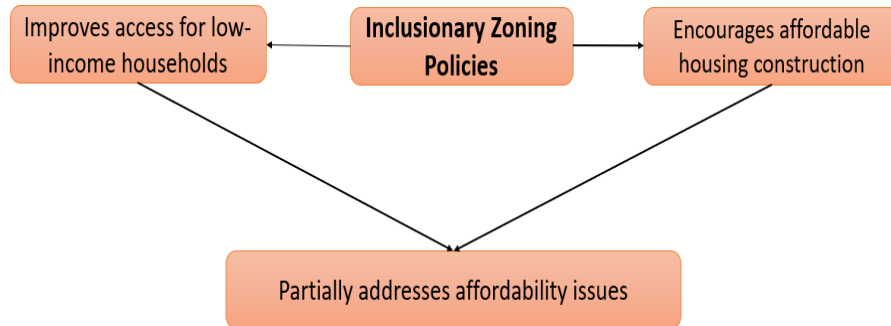
Figure 6: Sydney's influence of zoning regulations on housing supply and affordability
(Source: Self-created)

This is why coherence in governance and supportive incentives for such behaviours remain fundamental. Financial incentives, preference in permits and approval process, and tax welfare for the developers can conceivably increase the adoption of inclusionary zoning (Figure 6). Also, to encourage compliance with the goals of providing affordable housing, strong enforcement mechanisms are important. Thus, equitable distribution and enforcement of affordable living conditions (Lemonsu et al., 2015). Policymakers in Sydney and other cities should also ensure that long-term affordability covenants are incorporated to ensure that dwelling prices of units identified to be affordable do not increase in future due to speculation.

5.3 Curbing Speculative Investments

The experience of urbanisation and economic prosperity of Shanghai have made investors engage in speculation and therefore skyrocket housing prices (Figure 7). Profit specialists in land and property have made accommodation expensive despite a high production rate of new units (McGrane, 2016). This paper shows why market forces alone cannot be relied on to provide an affordable housing regime.
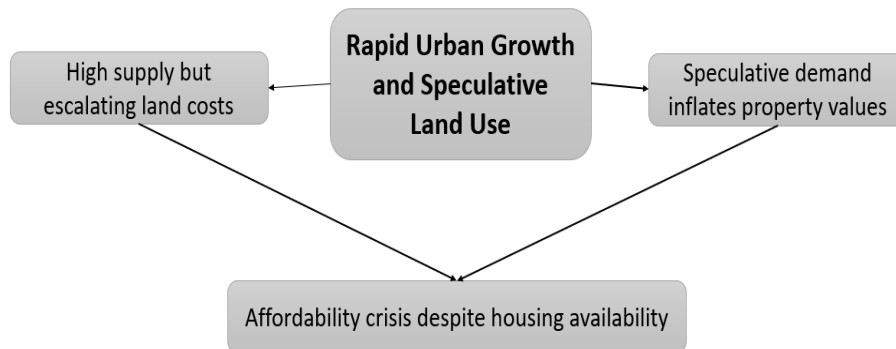
Figure 7: Shanghai's influence of zoning regulations on housing supply and affordability
(Source: Self-created)

Purchase restrictions and property taxes can be effective to some extent as traditional methods of intervention by the government on the market. Nevertheless, these measures should be implemented as a package with affordable housing percentage share, reinforced or more restrictive land zoning, and various perspectives for the revenue increase for the local authorities (Wolff & Wiechmann, 2018). From Shanghai, one learns the need to promptly deal with such behaviours to calm markets and provide equal housing opportunities.

5.4 Affordability as a Global Crisis

There is an alarming housing cost crunch identified by the affordability ratios, all above 8.0 in all three cities. This is in concord with global data observed in cities across the globe evidenced by the fact that housing costs have been rising more than income hence pushing millions of households to the nerves of high housing costs (Dear & Scott, 2018). Socio-economic elements also come into play, where the needy, the poor and the disadvantaged usually end up being 'price smart' products.

To address this crisis, it is essential to have political cooperation and knowledge exchange among policymakers globally. From another perspective, cities can study best practices with public housing platforms in Singapore for affordability, accessibility, and sustainability (Xiang et al., 2021). Thus, the strategies that have experience and success in other places can be adapted with certain modifications depending on the problem a city is facing in a bid to fit in the general solution towards the problem of housing in urban areas.

5.5 Challenges in Policy Implementation

One of the major issues identified throughout the analysis is the issue of the divergence of policy formulation and policy execution. For example, there are problems with the implementation and acceptance of London Green Belt regulation, Sydney inclusionary zoning or Shanghai speculative controls (Mansour et al., 2020). This has implications for the fact that there is a gap between policy and intended outcomes in that policy reform requires more robust institutions and the involvement of more stakeholders. Thus, the focus for policymakers should be on increasing the openness of the planning process and stressing the accountability of government policies to the public. Community, private sector and non-governmental organisations can effectively work together hence encouraging the recognition of special interests to ensure the proper implementation of housing policies.

5.6 Sustainability and Long-Term Planning

Sustainability is a factor of concern for housing policy reforms in urban areas. While affordability crises have recently emerged as a major concern in cities, environmental issues such as climate change and resource convection, also cry for attention (Bibri et al., 2020). British government policies of focusing on the density of urban areas, new methods of building energy-efficient homes and appropriate constructions can strike a balance for the common man and respond effectively to environmental challenges.

Sustainable integration of housing policies into structural frameworks of urban planning involves an overall synthesis of the housing policies with overall goals in transportation, energy, and environmental management frameworks. For example, integrating business, residential and other facilities in a city laid out, and designing movement around hubs and nodes such as railheads are some that can help cut the bills attached to travelling and provide for affordable and decent housing within the urban setting (De Roo & Miller, 2019). The results presented stress the aspect of equity and diversity in the housing policies in urban societies. Concerns should be paid to the needs of especially the vulnerable groups in the community, which include the poor, the elderly and the migrants. Gaps such as housing subsidies, rent controls or social housing initiatives can therefore be used to avoid leaving out anyone when it comes to affordable housing.

They illustrate that urban housing issues are complex and that urban planning is a key to overcoming them. The cases of each city are different, but the conclusions drawn have relevance for various countries, focusing on the essential aspects of the policies intermediate, innovative and inclusive (Han et al., 2017). Through the application of the systemic approach to the strategies of planning, regulation of the housing market, and sustainability of cities, the theory has made it possible to develop housing systems that are fair, affordable and sustainable to the dynamic challenges faced by the cities.

6. CONCLUSION

Housing markets in three cities London, Sydney, and Shanghai illustrate the nature of urban planning policies, housing supply demand and affordability. Nevertheless, analysing the current study, it is possible to point out the similarities that give generalisable conclusions and lessons to be learnt worldwide within the framework of different socio-economic and governance contexts specific to each city.

Green belt restrictions on the outskirts of London for example have greatly limited the amount of land available for housing thus making the properties expensive to acquire. Attempts to address these challenges, such as through density bonuses, have been hobbled at best because of red tape and local opposition. This has brought the conservation of heritage parallel to the need to provide housing units in the societies.

Sydney has most recently adopted inclusionary zoning policies as part of a proactive approach to the issue of affordability. However, where applied there have been complaints of inconsistent implementation and high land costs that demoralise the project. There is an evident need to improve the current governance structures, offer better incentives to developers, and ensure that a variety of long-term affordability covenants are met since such policies will determine their efficiency. It is important to have affordable housing as an element of the city design and always have a considerate and consistent approach in the policy implementation as was the case with Sydney.

Shanghai has witnessed rapid urbanisation and economic liberalisation, which have led to the ever-changing structure of the housing market including high risks for speculative investments and high housing prices. While policies, and measures such as the control of purchase and high property taxes have been effective in reducing speculation to some extent the effects and continuities of these government interventions are yet to be seen. Speculation and investor activity, the above and beyond dependence on land sale revenues by local governments, and weak institutional buildings are some of the major challenges affecting the Shanghai housing market to promote stability in the housing market, Shanghai needs to address these factors.

Thus, affordability is still a significant issue in all of the studied cities with housing prices continuing to increase faster than income and having a particularly negative impact on the low- and middle-income segments. The affordability ratios are all higher than 8.0, which is evidence of the severe crisis and closely related to the global patterns identified from the studies on the urban centres throughout the world. Thus, there is a need to try uniqueness while striving to produce a synthesis solution to unconventional urban housing conditions.

This study also discusses more general consequences for policy related to housing in large cities. Policy implementation requires the support and participation of different stakeholders, as well as openness and positive relations in the implementation process. Housing policies should integrate sustainability coefficients as one of the cornerstones in compact urban forms about energy consumption, climate changes and associated risks.

In conclusion, solving the problems of housing in cities involves a complex solution both in terms of

increasing the availability of housing stock and regulating the demand for housing, as well as preventing the formation of speculative capital, as well as incorporating the principles of affordability of housing and its sustainability into urban planning regulations. Through policy innovation, cities are therefore able to develop housing systems that are fair, adaptive and responsive to burgeoning demographic diversities in urban settings. Through analysing examples from London, Sydney, and Shanghai, this research provides valuable findings for policymakers worldwide pursuing the goal of building sustainable and affordable urban environments.

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