

Full Length Research Paper

The determinants of squatter development in Southern Aba Region of Nigeria

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Squatter developments are settlements predominantly composed of makeshift structures, often constructed on cheap or vacant land. Squatter development in Southern Aba Region of Nigeria constitutes nonconventional housing, constructed by the urban poor- predominantly the rural migrants and migrants from the main city of Aba, Port-Harcourt and Uyo. This study examined the determinants of squatter development in Southern Aba region with the view to ascertaining the policy options for the renewal of the region. The study adopted survey design. Both primary and secondary data were collected with the aid of structured questionnaire, measurement and observation; and from the Abia State Ministry of housing and urban planning handbooks respectively. The sample size of 400 respondents was determined from the study population of 125,257 using the Taro Yamane model for sample size determination. Cluster and systematic random sampling techniques were used to proportionately select the settlements and respondents used in the study. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's alpha which yielded a correlation co-efficient of 0.80. Data analysis was conducted with appropriate descriptive statistics using SPSS for Windows, Version 17. The study revealed the dynamics of certain factors that replicate squatter development in the study area, among which are: collapse of the agricultural economy of Abia state; weak institutional governance and low level of physical planning at the local government level; and ineffective land policies and the attendant difficulty in securing title to land. The study therefore recommends among other things, an urban renewal strategy based on attracting government institutions, agencies, and some projects outlined in the medium term expenditure framework of Abia state to the region; massive investment in agriculture; and the re-establishment of the local government system to ensure responsive governance and effective physical planning at the suburban areas.

Key words: Squatter development, determinants, slum.

INTRODUCTION

Squatter settlements have been defined by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe [UNECE] (2009) as settlements established by people who have illegally occupied an area of land and built their houses

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on it, usually through self-help processes. Hartshorn (1992) also described squatter development as nonconventional housing, constructed by the urban poor-predominantly, the rural migrants, without government authorization and frequently, on lands they do not own. Bello (2009) observed that squatter developments usually spring up at urban fringes as a result of land speculators buying agricultural lands, and laying them out without provision for adequate roads and other basic infrastructures. He further stated that the common features of squatter developments include: low incomes; absence of occupational skills and qualifications; poor housing which is manifested by dilapidated state of the buildings; and garbage on the streets.

The research into the physical, socio-economic, and political forces that generate and sustain the formation of squatter settlements or slums is abundant. These include the works of UNCHS Habitat (1996), Kombe and Kreibich (1997), Durand-Lasserve (1996), Kombe and Kreibich (2000), Huchzermeyer (2002), Sietchiping (2005), Berner (2007) and Ahmed et al. (2012). These authors observed that because of their inherently “non-legal” status, squatter settlements have services and infrastructures below the minimum levels. According to Kombe and Kreibich (2000), squatters are predominantly migrants, either rural-urban or urban-urban, though many are also second or third generation squatters. Berner (2007) observed that the disparities created by the global economic system have resulted in wealth and livelihood opportunities being concentrated in nodal centres or cities which in turn become attractive to people who are struggling with livelihood. Inequalities in economic conditions between urban centres and rural areas have forced excess rural labour to migrate into the cities, seeking improved standards of living. While in the city, because they are unable to find decent accommodation, they take over vacant land on which slums are created (Berner, 2007).

In most African countries, squatter developments are common occurrences at the outskirts of major cities, being developed mostly by immigrants to cities from neighbouring villages, who lack financial capacities to rent decent accommodation (Ahmed et al., 2012). In 2012, the estimated population of 47 sub-Saharan African countries was 910.4million (World Bank, 2013) and of this, 167million were Nigerians (FRN-National Population Commission, 2013). Out of the 167million people in Nigeria, 61.1% (over 102.2 million) were said to reside in slums (Pepple, 2012). In Nigeria, the failure of government to respond to the housing needs of the poor has encouraged them to find their own way of putting up houses, and this has given rise to many squatter developments in cities (Fekade, 2000). Sietchiping (2000) observed that many squatter settlements in developing countries result mainly from socio-economic factors: high rent charges and high cost of land in the cities, high

immigration rate, problems of landlessness, poverty and unemployment. Amadi (2004) has observed in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, that squatter settlements are the result of low level of education, poverty, unemployment, high dependency ratio, lack of social infrastructure, and low level of city planning by government. Squatter settlements and squalors have sprang up in and around the city of Abuja due to poor housing scheme, which made proper accommodation within the federal capital territory of Nigeria unaffordable for low income residents of the city who were mostly civil servants (Opeyemi et al., 2015). Magigi and Majani (2006) also identified institutional causes of squatter developments which include excessive bureaucracy in issuing development and building permits, and corruption of officials. Sietchiping’s (2005) framework on informal settlements attributes the growth of squatter settlements in urban areas of developing countries to four main factors which are physical, socio-economic, socio-cultural and institutional (rigidity of urban planning regulations). His study shows that squatter settlements flourish on marginal or less valuable urban lands such as river-banks, steep slopes, dumping grounds, abandoned and unexploited plots, and open spaces along transportation networks or near industrial areas and market places, and in low lying areas or wetlands.

Southern Aba region of Abia State is one of the biggest slums in Nigeria which has constantly experience rapid squatter development (Ogbonna, 2014). The rate at which squatter settlements are growing in the region has become worrisome as it has continued unabated despite several attempts, by the government of Abia State to checkmate the phenomenon. New make-shift apartments are being built on daily basis at the urban fringes of Southern Aba without title to land, and without planning approval. There appears to be a strong resilience by the residents of the squatter communities to government attempts at, stopping the proliferation of squatter developments. Over the years, such resiliencies have been exhibited through civil demonstrations, community uproar, and direct confrontations with, government agencies responsible for development control. Squatter developments have impacted negatively on the physical and socio-economic environment of Southern Aba. The region is presently being perceived to be “safe-heaven” for anti-social elements like kidnappers, armed robbers, drug peddlers, and area boys generally referred to in the area as “Agbero”. There is the general perception that crime rates in the city of Aba and Port-Harcourt have remained increasingly high because the perpetrators of such crimes come from the slums and squatter settlements in the Southern Aba region.

The preponderance of squatter development in Southern Aba region is arguably being attributed mainly to the poor socio-economic conditions of residents of the area. There appears to be a total neglect of the area by

government in terms of provision of social infrastructure like schools, hospitals, markets, and low income housing. These coupled with high rate of unemployment, illiteracy, and dilapidated physical infrastructure has reduced the region to a poverty zone with a common name "Azuobodo" in local parlance, meaning the backyard of city.

Azuobodo as it were, has become the first point of call for a prospective immigrant to the city of Aba, and maybe, this encourages squatter developments in the area. The policies of various governments in Nigeria regarding squatter developments have usually been to demolish them, with either a shabby resettlement plan for the affected evictees or total abandonment thereafter (Mallo, Samuel, Esther, Choji, and Aliyu, 2015).

However, these scholars observed that such policies have had adverse ramifications all over the country, hence the need for this study which seeks to understand the dynamics that replicate squatter developments in Southern Aba, with the view to ascertaining the policy options for the renewal of the region. The specific objectives were to review the physical and socio-economic conditions of Southern Aba region, and examine the dynamics of factors that replicate squatter development in the region.

THE STUDY AREA, SOUTHERN ABA REGION, NIGERIA

The study area is Southern Aba region of Abia State, Nigeria. The area is sandwiched between four local government territories: Aba-South, Ugwuagbor, Osisioma Ngwa and Obingwa Local government areas. Southern Aba is located approximately between latitudes 05° 01' 30" and 05° 07' 00"N of the equator and longitudes 07° 22' 00" and 07° 26' 00"E of the Greenwich meridian. The area lies within the tropical rain forest zone of West Africa. The districts that form part of Southern Aba Region are: Ngwa road, Omuma, Izuogu, Obohia, Ohanku, Ndiegoro, Urata, Ohabiam, Ihieoji, Umuosi and Owerri-Aba. Figure 1 is map of Abia State showing the study area, and the seventeen local government territories.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researchers adopted the survey research design. The population of study comprises of the residents of the eleven districts that make up Southern Aba, of which the number is 125,257. This population figure was gotten from the projection of the 2006 National Population Census (NPC) figures of 88,951 for the area, to 2016 using the Malthus Population Projection Model. The population growth rate for the area by NPC (2006) is 3.5%. The sample size of approximately 400 was estimated from the population using the model:

$$n = \left\{ \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \right\}$$

derived by Yamane (1967).

Cluster sampling technique was used to divide the region into four quadrants for purposes of fair representation, and equal numbers of questionnaires were administered in all the quadrants. Systematic random sampling method was then used to select the houses (street by street) where the survey instruments were administered to house hold heads in all the streets in each quadrant. The study was based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through field survey making use of structured questionnaire, direct measurement using measuring wheels, and observation. The secondary sources include books, journals and government publications from the Abia state ministry of lands and urban planning. Data collected was analyzed with appropriate descriptive statistics using SPSS for Windows, Version 17.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Physical and socio-economic conditions of the residents of Southern Aba region

A total of 400 copies of questionnaires were administered while 364 were retrieved, which implied 91% success rate. Table 1 shows results of surveys on physical and socio-economic conditions of residents of Southern Aba region, and these have been summarized as follows. Majority of the squatters (over 70%) are male-family people whose average age fall between 30 to 50 years. About half of the population either did not go to school or managed to acquired basic education (up to secondary school level) while the rest have some tertiary education certificate, with those that obtained degree or higher certificates comprising about 19% of the total population. The rate of poverty in the area is very high, with about 60% of the residents earning less than N200, 000 (\$1000) per annum, which translates to less than \$3 per day. Those who may qualify as medium income earners in the area, who earn between N500, 000 to N1million (\$2,500 to \$5,000) per annum constitute only about 19%. Unemployment is also very high, with over 83% of the residents either unemployed or underemployed - being involved in some daily labour, petty trading or subsistent farming for survival. Findings also show that over 78% of the respondents have migrated into the area either from the inner city of Aba or neighbouring towns like Port-Harcourt, Owerri, Umuahia and Uyo. Four types of housing are predominant in the area: make-shift apartments; rooming (face-to-face) apartments; block of 2 or 3 bedroom flats; and detached/semi-detached bungalows. However, it is significant to note that about 50% of the respondents occupy rooming apartments, while about 23% occupy block of flats. Also significant is the fact that 17% of respondents live in make-shift

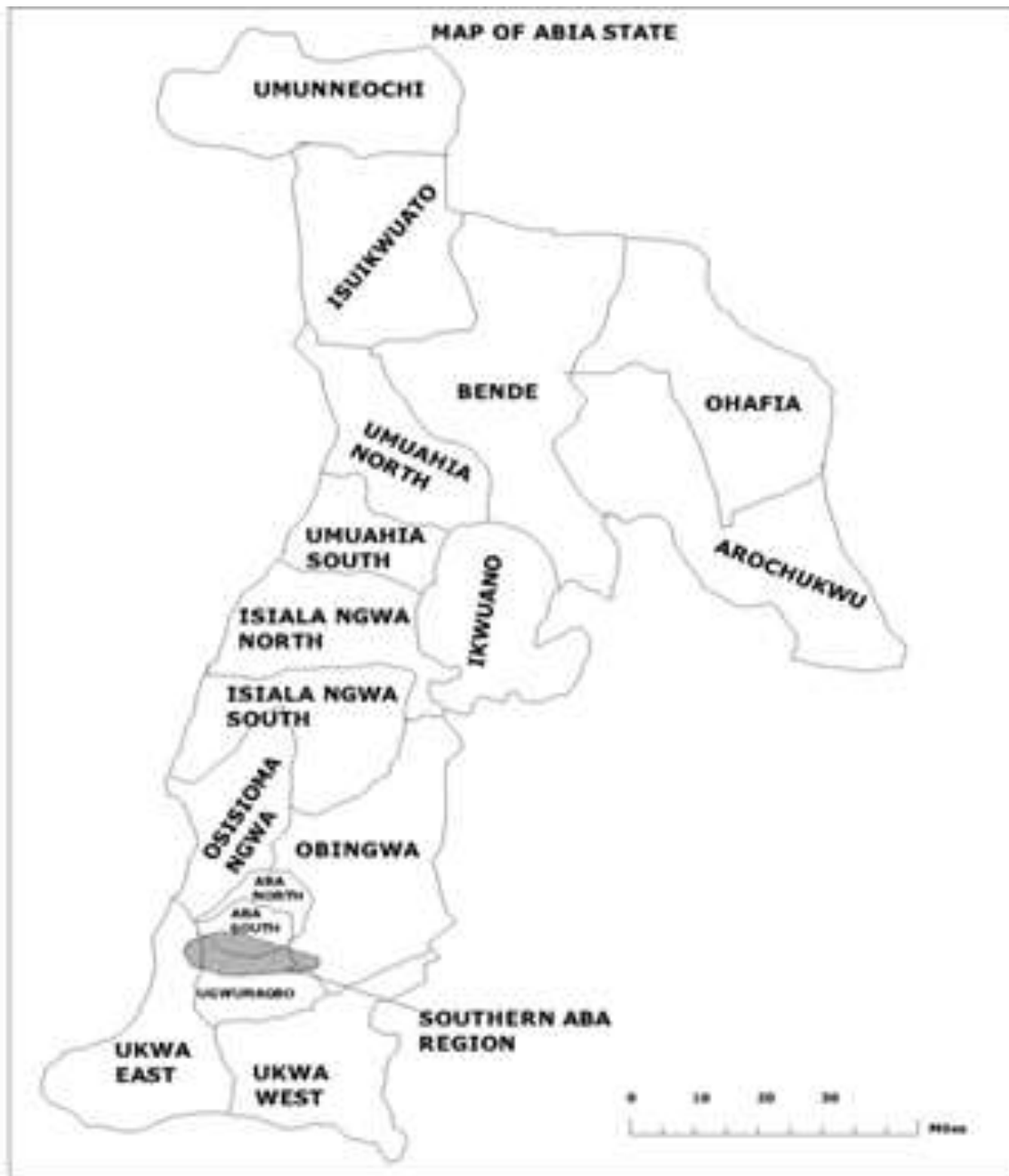


Figure 1. Map of Abia state showing southern Aba Region Source: Ministry of Lands and Urban Planning Abia State, Nigeria.

(temporary) structures. Results also show that majority of the residents are tenants, with the few that own houses (21.8%) being mostly the natives of the area. Rent regime for housing in Southern Aba is relatively low compared with Aba main city. For instance, a 3bedroom flat in the area costs between N120, 000 to N150, 000 (\$600 to \$750) per annum, whereas similar apartment in the Aba main city costs between N250, 000 to N350, 000 (\$1,250 to \$1,750). Over 74% of the residents of the area

live in houses where they pay less than N50, 000 (\$250) annually, with just less than 3% paying more than N150, 000 (\$750) as annual rent.

The dynamics of factors that replicate squatter development in southern Aba

The survey revealed that the primary factors which

Table 1. Socio-economic and physical conditions of respondents.

	Sex	Frequency*	Percentage		Status	Frequency	Percentage
A. Sex Distribution of respondents	Male	316	86.6	B. Marital status of respondents	Single	76	20.8
	Female	48	13.2		Married	270	74.0
					Divorce	7	1.9
	Total	364	100		Widowed	11	3.0
				Total	364	100	
C. Age category of respondents	Age	Frequency	Percentage	D. Academic qualification of respondents	Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
	18 - 30yr	38	10.4		SSCE or below	169	46.3
	31 -40yr	205	56.2		ND	121	33.9
	41 - 50yr	94	25.8		HND or Degree	64	17.8
	51-60yr	27	7.4		Masters or PhD	9	2.5
	Total	364	100		Total	363	100
E. Average yearly income of respondents (N)	Income Class	Frequency	Percentage	F. Occupation of respondents	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
	Less than 60,000	65	17.8		Daily labor/Craft/Farmer	205	56.2
	61,000 to 200,000	143	39.2		Trader/Business man	98	26.8
	201,000 to 500,000	69	18.9		Junior civil servant	21	5.8
	501,000 to 1000,000	70	19.2		Senior civil servant	34	9.3
	Above 1,000,000	17	4.7		Major entrepreneur	6	1.6
	Total	364	100		Total	364	100
G. Type of house occupied by respondents	Type of House	Frequency	Percentage	H. Amount of annual rent paid by respondents	Rent category	Frequency	Percentage
	Make-shift	61	16.7		Owner occupier	79	21.6
	Rooming	183	50.1		N20,000 or less	40	11.0
	Block of 2 or 3 b/d	82	22.5		N21,000 - N50,000	154	42.2
	Bungalow	35	9.6		N51,000 - N100,000	42	11.5

Table 1. Contd.

	Duplex	3	0.8	N101,000 - N150,000	39	10.7
	Total	364	100	Above N150,000	10	2.7
				Total	363	100
I. Migratory status of respondents	Migratory Status	Frequency	Percentage	Road condition	Frequency	Percentage
	Native	77	21.1	Tarred	2	3.7
	Immigrant	274	75.1	Un-tarred/gullied	34	63
	Total	351	100	Available Storm drain	0	0
				Always Flooded	18	33.3
				Total	54	100

K. Road condition in Southern Aba

Source: Researchers' survey, (2016) * Frequency.

initiate the growth of squatter development in the study area are socio-economic in nature, as presented in Table 2. Certain socio-economic deficiencies propel both developers and home seekers to go for squatter development in the Southern Aba region. Such factors include: prevalence of cheap land (mostly not serviced with access roads and other infrastructures) in the region, as against high cost of land and housing in Aba main city; influx of immigrant population with high demand for squatter apartments; high rate of unemployment among residents which translates to low income and poverty; less municipal taxes and levies such as business permit, sanitation levy, and infrastructure fees enforced in the area; and the fact that the area offer cheaper locations for starters of micro enterprises. Land is cheap and property value is very low in southern Aba because of very low level of infrastructure and

social services development. The area offer a comfort zone for new immigrants to Aba due to the prevalence of low priced make-shift apartments, and majority of these immigrants are job seekers who commute daily to the Aba main city and Port-Harcourt in search of jobs.

Endemic poverty and choice of housing

Table 3 is a cross tabulation of average yearly income, and type of housing occupied by respondents. The results demonstrate that residents with lesser annual income occupy the worst types of housing. For instance out of 65 respondents who earn less than N60,000 annually, 42 live in make-shift apartments, 22 live in rooming apartments, and one person lives in block of flats. No respondent within this income

group lives in either bungalow or duplex. All three respondents who indicated living in duplexes earn above N1million annually. The implication of this is that poverty is endemic in the region such that even if there is abundance of standard accommodation, more than 90% of the residents would also live in make-shift apartments because they cannot afford such quality of accommodation.

Gross deficiency in qualitative housing, and government housing policies

The surveyed revealed gross deficiency in qualitative housing in the region as illustrated in Figure 2. The class of housing that may be regarded as qualitative housing in the area are the bungalows and duplexes which constitute about 11% of the existing housing stock. The lack of

Table 2. Factors that initiate squatter development in Southern Aba region.

A. Factors that encourage Landlords to build new squatter apartments			B. Factors that encourage renters to go for squatter apartments		
Factors	Freq.*	%	Factors	Freq.	%
Much housing demand (1)	15	4.1	High cost of Land/House in City (1)	8	2.2
Cheaper Housing/Land in Sothern Aba (2)	6	1.6	Unemployment (2)	6	1.6
Inability of tenants to pay for good quality Housing (3)	3	0.8	Cheaper area to locate micro business (3)	9	2.5
Cheaper building materials for temporary housing (4)	1	0.3	Less tax and Bills (4)	3	.8
All of the above (5)	276	75.6	Social affinity to family (5)	6	1.6
1 & 2	22	6.0	all of the above	93	25.5
1,2 &3	37	10.1	1,2,3 &4	237	64.9
1, 2, 3 &4	2	.5	Total	362	100
Total	362	100			

qualitative housing in the region is as a result of marginalisation by the government in previous housing policies in Abia State. There has never been any direct government housing programme or intervention in the region in the past decades. On the contrary, the region has been a recipient of negative fallouts of housing policies implemented in Aba metropolis and Port-Harcourt city by way of urban sprawl and outward migration occasioned by such policies.

Unemployment and housing challenges

Table 4 displays cross tabulation of employment status and the type of housing occupied by respondents. The results indicate that the unemployed and underemployed persons patronize make-shift and rooming apartments, while respondents with good regular employment

occupy more decent accommodation. Respondents who are involved in daily labour or petty trading are essentially unemployed migrants to the region, and they have migrated from the main cities where they could not sustain their accommodations. The result implies that squatter developments increase in direct proportion with rate of unemployment in the region.

Migration and socio-economic inequalities between the region and surrounding cities

The survey revealed high rate of migration to the Southern Aba region, mostly from Aba metropolis and Port-Harcourt. Figure 3 shows that migrants constitute about 78% while natives make up just about 21% of residents in the region. This trend is also a fallout of marginalisation and social inequality created by the rapid socio-economic

development of Aba and Port-Harcourt at the total neglect of the Southern Aba region. The lopsided developments create protected zones for the middle and upper classes in those cities, whereas the poor are forced out of the cities by rising land and property values.

Title to land and land value in southern Aba region

Figure 4 shows that less than 18% of households in the region own land. Furthermore, less than half of those who own land actually have title to their lands, the rest own land by inheritance without having regularized ownership from government. This result suggests that squatter settlements are built by few landlords to make quick money which has been made possible by demand pressure from home seekers. Though land value is

Table 3. Cross tabulation of average yearly income and type of housing occupied by respondents

Variable	What type of house do you Occupy?					Total
	Make-shift	Rooming face-to-face	Block of 2 or 3 bedroom flat	Bungalow	Duplex	
less than 60,000	42	22	1	0	0	65
61,000 to 200,000	15	120	8	0	0	143
201,000 to 500,000	1	38	30	0	0	69
501,000 to 1000,000	2	3	41	24	0	70
Above N1,000,000	1	0	2	11	3	17
Total	61	183	82	35	3	364

Source: Researchers' survey, (2016).

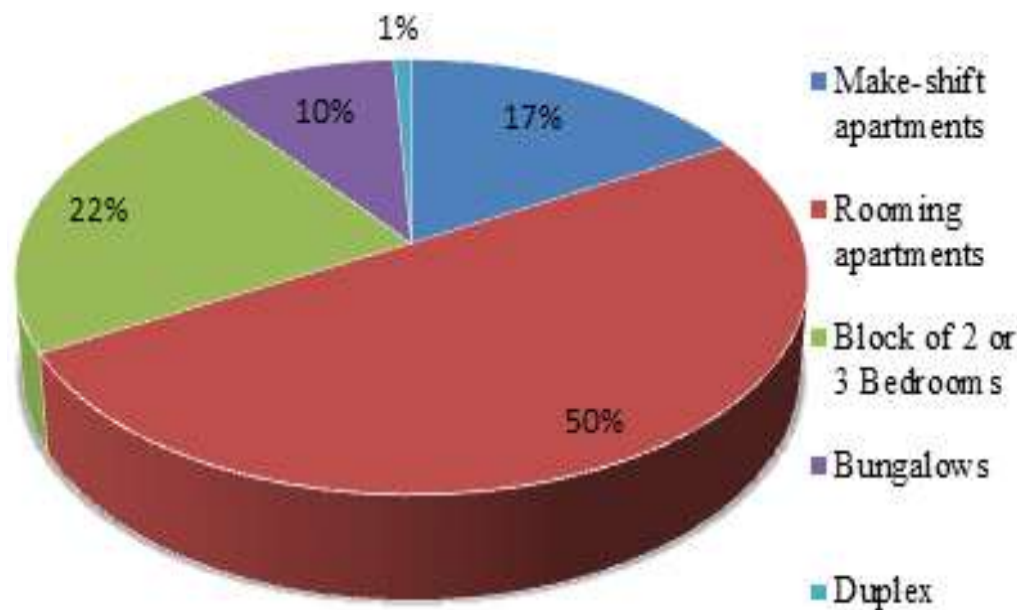


Figure 2. Existing housing stock in southern Aba.

comparatively very low, the land owners are reluctant to sell to prospective developers. Government land policies have been largely inconsistent, and entirely not implemented in Southern Aba. Nigeria, and Abia state in particular, still operates the long outdated Land Use Act of 1978, which has been a subject of much controversy, and also been seen to frustrate access to land by the poor. If it were possible and relatively cheaper for migrants to Southern Aba region to own land, most of them would build standard houses and maintain good environment even if it takes long to achieve.

Quality of infrastructure and direction of squatter development

The survey further revealed that parts of the region with better road and electricity have more standard housing and environment than those areas where the roads are bad and where there is no supply of electricity from the national grid. Table 5 shows that only Urrata and Ngwa road neighbourhoods which have comparatively fair quality of roads and electricity have above 10% of the housing stock being of standard quality, the rest have

Table 4. Cross tabulation of Employment Status and Type of housing occupied by respondents.

Variables	What type of house do you Occupy?					Total
	Make-shift	Rooming face-to-face	Block of 2 or 3 bedroom flat	Bungalow	Duplex	
Daily labor/Craft/Farmer	53	125	22	5	0	205
Trader/Business man	7	42	35	14	0	98
Junior civil servant	0	13	6	1	1	21
Senior civil servant	1	3	16	13	1	34
Major entrepreneur	0	0	3	2	1	6
Total	61	183	82	35	3	364

Source: Researchers' survey, (2016).

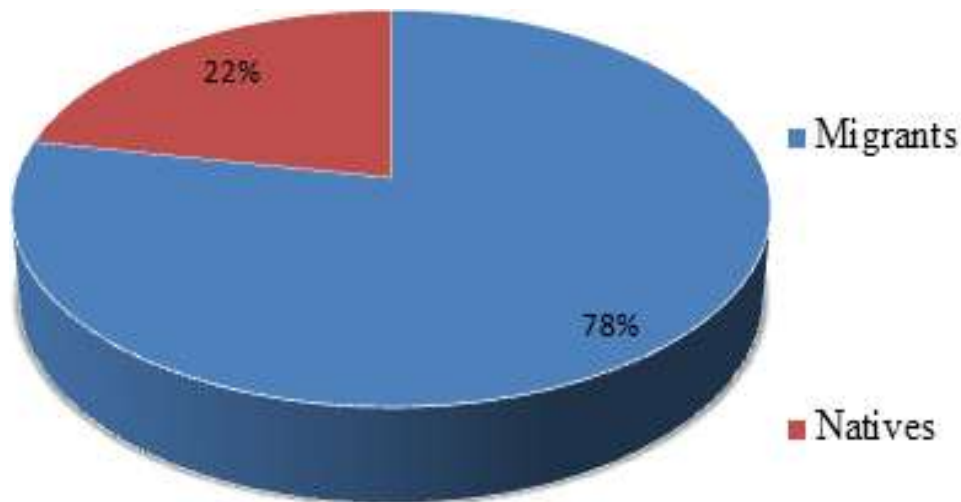


Figure 3. Rate of Migration to Southern Aba.

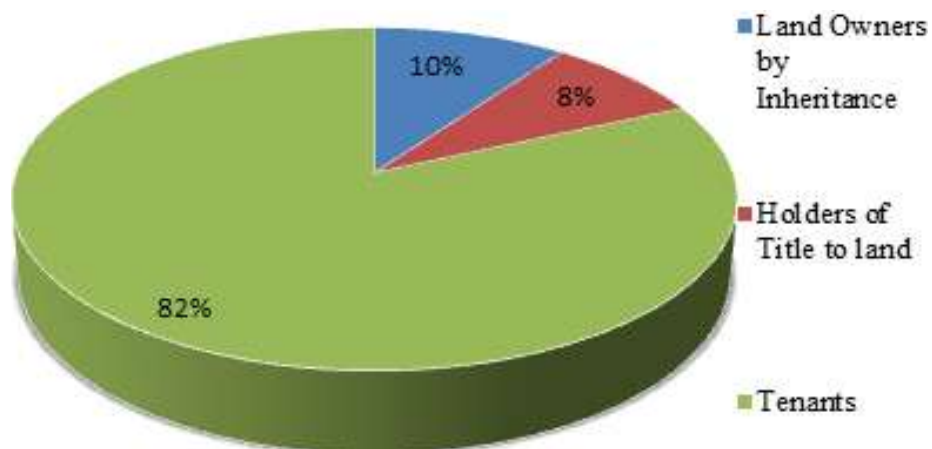
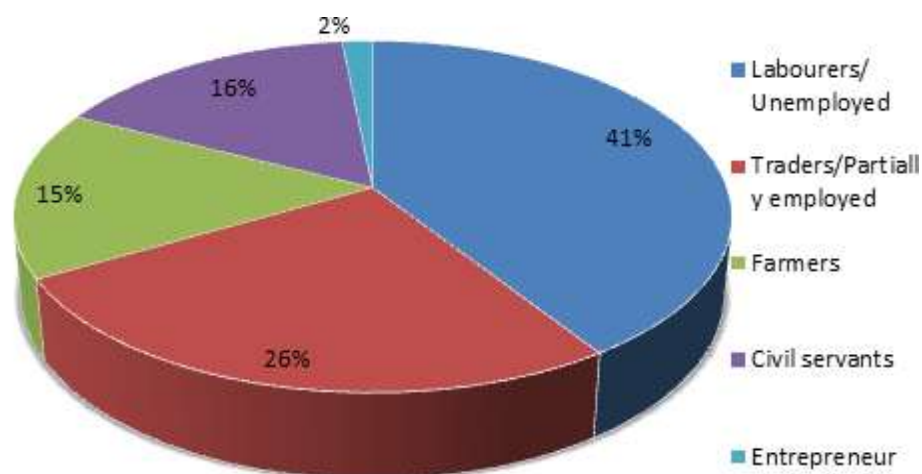


Figure 4. Title to Land in Southern Aba.

Table 5. Road /electricity quality and percentage of standard houses.

Neighbourhood	Road quality	Electricity	Percentage (%) of Standard Houses
Ngwa road	Tarred but gullied	Fair	14.3
Omuma	Tarred, gullied and flooded	Bad	8.5
Izuogu	Un-tarred, flooded	Fair	6.0
Obohia	Tarred, badly eroded, flooded	Very bad	3.4
Ohanku	Tarred, badly eroded, flooded	Very bad	2.5
Ndiegoro	Un-tarred, flooded	Very bad	0.6
Urrata	tarred	Good	18.1
Ohabiam	Un-tarred, flooded	Bad	5.0
Iheoji	Un-tarred	Very bad	4.5
Owerri-Aba	Un-tarred, flooded	Very bad	2.8

Source: Researchers' survey, (2016).

**Figure 5.** Employment Statistics in Southern Aba.

insignificant percentages of standard housing. This shows that the quality of municipal infrastructure plays out to determine the direction where squatter developments spread in the region.

Collapse of the agricultural economy and availability of cheap suburban land

National statistics shows that Southern Aba region had a population of about 18,655 by 1991 census, of which 85.6% were farmers, and 69.6% of the entire land use was agriculture. The 2006 census also showed that the region had a population of about 88,951 with 48.5% being farmers. However, this study reveals (as illustrated in Figure 5) that with present projected population of about 125,257 for the region, only about 18.5% are involved in farming, with area of land devoted to

agriculture being less than 40%. This however is a local reflection of the collapsed agricultural economy of Nigeria which was as a result of oil exploration and the attendant neglect of the sector. The implication of this result is that, as the residents abandoned agriculture, their lands became available, cheap, and vulnerable to urban encroachment, hence the rapid growth of squatter settlements in the region.

Destabilization of the local government system and weak development control

Results from the study (Table 6) show that: no government planned layout exists in the study area; 92.4% of the existing buildings do not have planning approval; more than 90% of the residents claim not having been served with enforcement order for planning

Table 6. Application of local government tools for land administration.

Local government tools for land administration	Yes responses	Percentage of total sample
Houses which have been built in approved government layouts	0	0
Houses with planning approval	27	7.4
Houses which have been served with town Planning enforcement notices	34	9.3
Houses which have been served with Environmental health demand notices	29	8.0
Houses which have been paying local government property/ sanitation fees	83	22.8

approval or demand notice for environmental health approval by either, town planning authorities or public health departments of the local governments. This is a reflection of inefficient public administration, lack of planning, and inadequate tools for land administration by the local government authorities. The failures of the local government system is however a constitutional issue since the beginning of the fourth republic in Nigeria in 1999, whereby state governments usurped the autonomy of the local government system – fallout of the application of “true federalism” as contained in the 1999 Nigerian constitution. This situation has given rise to conflicting actions regarding the informal settlement. Whereas the local government authorities which are responsible for planning and monitoring development in the area have been less concerned, the state government has continually demolished squatter houses in the region without alternative development for the demolished areas. These mechanics have played out to replicate squatter settlements in Southern Aba region.

Conclusion

This study examined the determinants of squatter development in Southern Aba Region of Abia State, Nigeria. The investigation revealed the interplay of certain factors which create the mechanics that replicate squatter development in the study area as follows:

- i). Collapse of the agricultural economy of Abia State, which gave rise to abject poverty and availability of cheap suburban land for squatter development in Southern Aba.
- ii) Weak institutional governance and low level of physical planning at the local government level occasioned by the destabilization of local government system by the state government.
- iii). Marginalisation of Southern Aba resulting in socio-economic inequalities between the region and surrounding cities, which gave impetus to urban sprawl and influx of the urban poor to the region.
- iv). Failure of state government housing policies, which gave give rise to deficiency of qualitative housing in the region.
- v). Ineffective land policies and the attendant difficulty in

securing title to land.

vi). Unemployment resulting in dismal poverty and inability to secure decent housing.

vii). Poor state of the physical and social infrastructures which influences the direction of spread of squatter development.

The study therefore recommends an urban renewal strategy for Southern Aba region, which should be based on attracting government institutions, agencies, and some projects outlined in the medium term expenditure framework of Abia state to the region, to achieve social integration and address the twin problems of unemployment and poverty. Some existing government institutions like the Abia Line Transportation Network limited; the Aba Ultra-modern Shopping Village; the College of Health Technology Aba; the Modern Ceramics Company Plc, and the proposed Abia Agro-Industrial Zone should be relocated to the region. The state government should utilize the advantage of abundant low-priced suburban land to invest massively in agriculture in the region, and use agriculture to create buffer zones that will serve to limit urban encroachment. In addition, Abia state government should locate the 2016/2017 Direct Federal Housing Project (DFHP) allocated to it in Southern Aba. This will attract massive federal presence in the region and revive the housing sector. Abia state should conduct local government elections and re-establish the local government system to ensure responsive governance and effective physical planning at the suburban areas. Finally, the government should adopt public-private partnership approach to collaborate with the squatters and slum residents, NGOs, and financial institutions to effect social integration, formulate and fund urban renewal plan for Southern Aba region.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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