

# **Impact of Private Land Developers Activities at the Periphery of the Greater Port Harcourt City**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Private land developers are creating extensive peripheral urban landscape globally due to their developmental activities (private layouts and mixed-use estate development) at the peripheries of cities around the world. This development is as a result of rapid spatial expansion of the cities of the world due to increase in urban population and concentration of humans into urban areas around the globe (Fulton, Pendel, & Harrisson, 2001; Ugbo 2021).

According to Garreau (1991) the growth of new forms of residential and mixed-use estate (including gated communities) much of it is driven by the private land developers. This form of development happens when residential settlements and other unplanned developments that were not part of the original urban plan start to spring up around the city periphery due to physical expansion and population pressures. The developments include housing estates, commercial, institutional and industrial buildings developments on the urban fringes (Ogu, 2005).

Literature reveals that private land developers play significant role in the development of peripheral cities globally. In Nigeria cities have been experiencing enlargement of existing built-up areas and the emergence of new ‘urban’ settlements. These emerging peripheral areas have fewer houses and smaller population densities than the older cities with established infrastructure and are mainly developed by the private land developers. These peripheral (new) areas of the city tend to be characterised by heterogeneous urban form or pattern (houses built with cement or wood can all coexist within the same area); the area houses newcomers or migrants into the city and, as such, they are ethnically, professionally, socially and religiously diverse. This type of development can be found throughout cities of all sizes in Nigeria such as Sharada in Kano, Kakuriin Kaduna, Wadata in Makurdi and Port Harcourt in Rivers State (Onu & Onu, 2012).

Historically, private land developers’ activities in peripheral city development in Nigeria started before the colonial period. In the North, cities developed and expanded to support trans-Saharan trade routes, which attracted migrants and traders from surrounding areas. In the Southeast, cities were organised to facilitate trade to the coast; these also attracted migrants to the urban areas. In both instances, separate houses were built by private developers to host migrants. In the South, these houses were referred to as ‘Sabo’ and hosted migrants from the North. In the North, the houses were referred to as ‘SabonGari’ (literally, new town) and hosted non-Muslims and those that were not subject to the religious and other prohibitions of the Emir (Onu & Onu, 2012).

Port Harcourt City also experienced serious development due to its seaport that was used for export of oil following independence. The development and transformation of the city’s structure came about in 1976 when Port Harcourt was declared capital of the newly created Rivers State. The city enlargement was triggered by land development mainly from the private sector, who established residential and industrial areas throughout the city (Metz, 1991).

### **2.1 The Greater Port Harcourt City**

Greater Port Harcourt City (GPHC) was established by Rivers State Law No 2 of 2009. The area incorporates the entire Port Harcourt City Local Government Area and portions of Obio/Akpor, Okirika and Ogu-Bolo. Ikwerre, Etche, Oyiogbo and Eleme Local Government areas. It was created to cater to the growing population of Port Harcourt Municipality, the increased demand for housing, modern urban amenities, medical and educational facilities, as well as services. Greater Port Harcourt City was also intended to deal with the existing dimension of sprawl and changing the dynamics of land development (The Greater Port Harcourt Project, 2012).

The new Master Plan for the development of GPHC was completed in 2008. It replaced the old one which has become obsolete in 2005. The new Master Plan consisted of two main parts, including renewal of old Port Harcourt City, and the establishment of a conurbation to help de-densify the original city (Ebiri, 2015).

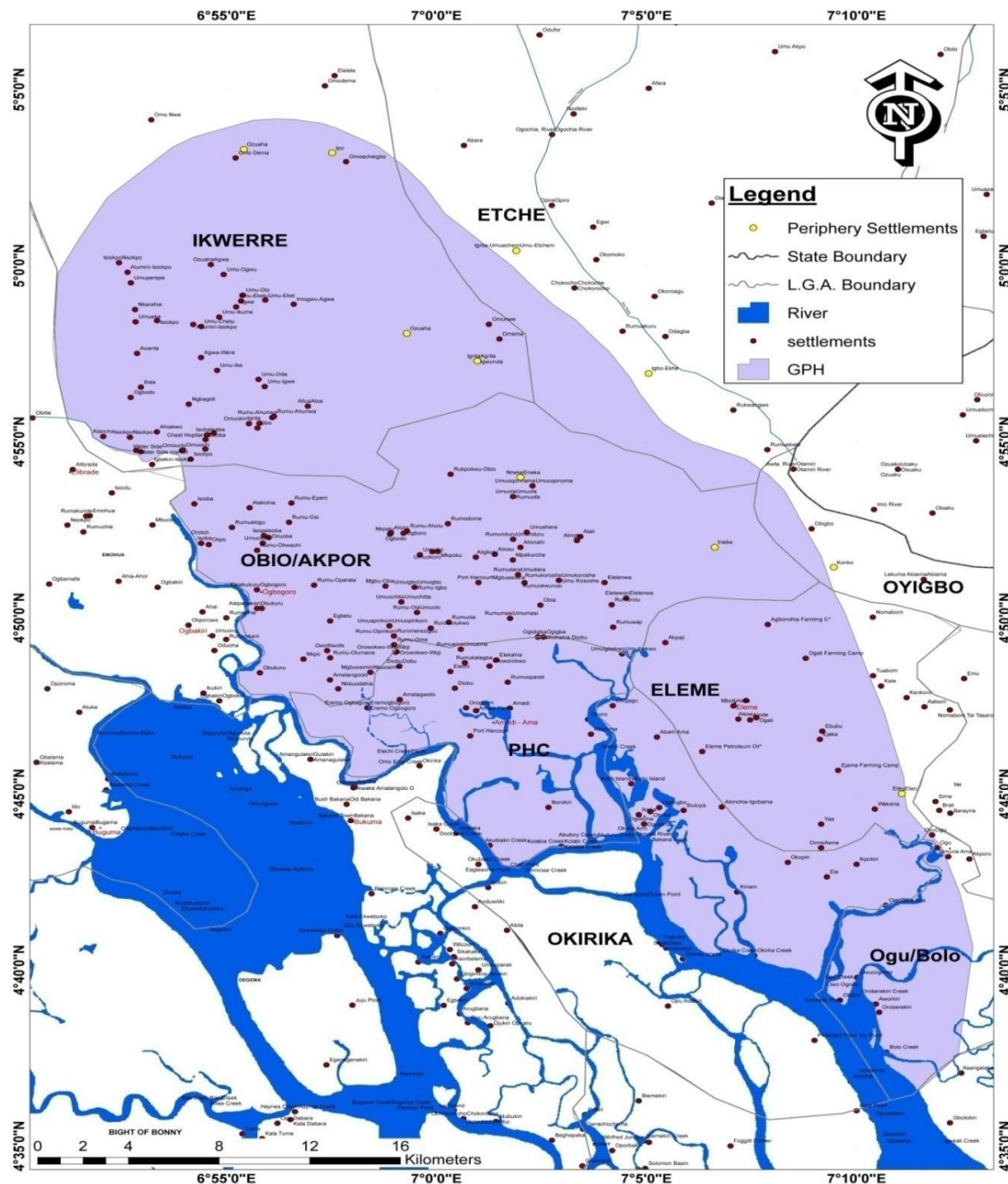


Fig. 2.1 Map of Greater Port Harcourt City Showing the Peripheral Settlements

Source: Department of Urban and Regional Planning GIS, (2023).

### 3.1 Impacts of the Private Developers' Development Activities in the Study Area

The study found that the development activities in the study area have both positive and negative impacts in the area. The positive impacts include; orderly and organized neighbourhoods, revenue generation for the local and state government (in form of taxes and levies), employment generation, provision of housing (residential, commercial and industrial), increase in land value, aesthetic environment.

#### 3.1.1 Employment Generation

Employment for both skilled and unskilled are generated, amongst the skilled are the professionals like the Town Planners, Land Surveyors Architects, Estate Valuers and those that are engaged in building constructions like masons, plumbers, electricians and those that are unskilled referred to as labours (See Fig 3.1)

### 3.1.2 Perception of Impact of Private Developer Activities on Employment

Respondents were asked their perception on impact of private layout and development on employment. The modal response was 'Good', accounting for 47.2% of the distribution. Others were 40.5% representing fair, 11.2% poor and 1.0% very poor (Fig. 3.1).

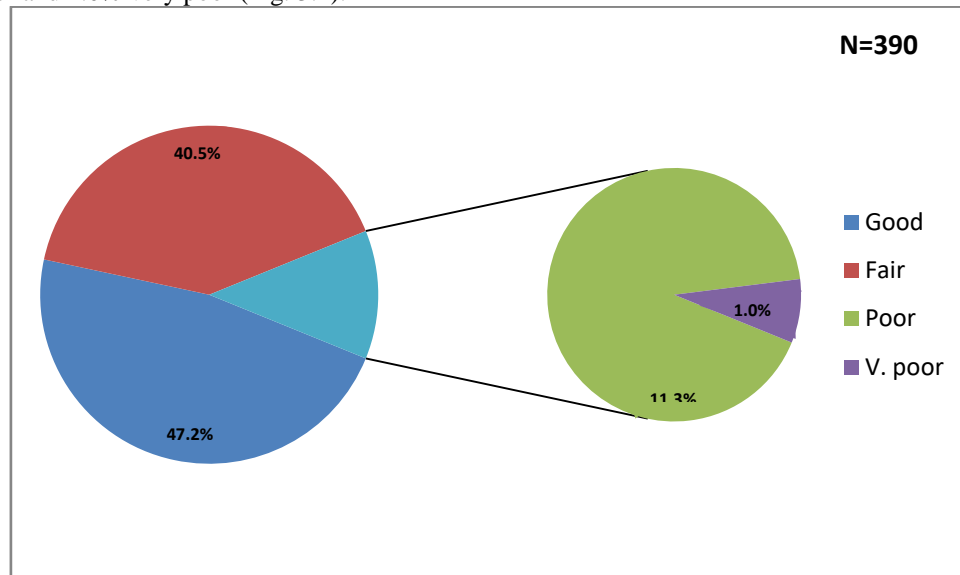


Fig 3.1: Percentage Distribution of Impact of Private Developers Activities on Employment  
(Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023)

### 3.2 Revenue Generation

#### 3.2.1 Perception of Respondents on Impact of Private Developer on Revenue.

Respondents were asked their perception on impact of private layout and development on revenue in the area. The modal response was 'Fair', accounting for 53.1% of the distribution. Others were 37.2% representing good, 8.5% poor and 1.3% very poor (Fig. 3.2).

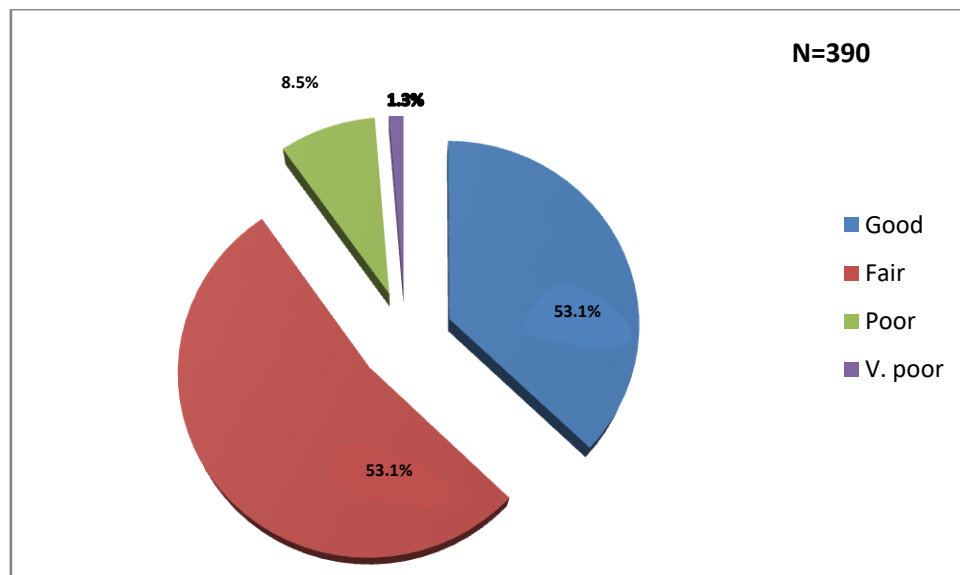


Fig 3.2: Percentage Distribution of Impact of Private Layout on Revenue Generation  
(Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023)

### 3.3 Housing

#### 3.3.1 Perception on Impact of Private Developers on Housing.

Table 3.1 shows the perception of respondents on the impact of private layout and development. The modal response was 'Good', accounting for 36.2% and fair 30.5%, 25.6% poor and 7.7% very poor respectively.

**Table 3.1: Impact of Private Layout on Housing**

S/N	Rate	No	%
1	Good	141	36.2
2	Fair	119	30.5
3	Poor	100	25.6
4	Very poor	30	7.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023)

### 3.4 Commercial and Industrial Activities

#### 3.4.1 Perception of Respondent on Impact of Private Developer on Commercial and Industrial Activities.

Respondents were asked their perception of private layout and development on commercial and industrial activities. The modal response was 'Fair', accounting for 36.9%, good 34.9%, poor 24.9% and very poor 3.3% respectively (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2: Impact of Private Developer on Commercial and Industrial Activities**

S/N	Rate	No	%
1	Good	136	34.9
2	Fair	144	36.9
3	Poor	97	24.9
4	Very poor	13	3.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023)

### 3.5 Physical Environment

#### 3.5.1 Perception of Respondent on Impact of Private Developer on the Physical Environment.

Table 3.3, shows the perception of respondents on impact of private layout and development on the physical environment. The modal response is 'Good', accounting for 42.3%, fair 31.8%, poor 22.1% and very poor 3.8% respectively.

**Table 3.3: Impact of Private Developer on the Environment**

S/N	Rate	No	%
1	Good	165	42.3
2	Fair	124	31.8
3	Poor	86	22.1
4	Very poor	15	3.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023)

### 4.1 Negative Impacts of the Private Developers Activities in the Study Area.

Data on perceived negative impacts of private developers' activities on the physical environment in the study area was collected and subjectively analysed. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of the respondents' perception. Use of agricultural land use for development accounted for 20.3%, disorganisation of zoning arrangement 18.7%, disorganisation of urban boundaries 20.5%, dis-organisation of landuse management plan 19.7% and non-conformity of land use 20.8% respectively.

**Table 4.1: Negative Impact on Physical Environment**

S/N	Negative Impact	Frequency	%
1	Dis-organisation of land use management plan	77	19.7
2	Dis-organisation of zoning arrangement	73	18.7
3	Dis-organisation of urban boundaries	80	20.5
4	Use of agricultural land for development	79	20.3
5	Non-conformity of land use	81	20.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>390</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2023)

**4.2 Assessment and Rating of the Negative Impacts of Private Developers Activities on the Environment**

Table 4.2 shows the respondents opinion on the assessment and rating of the negative impact of private layout on the physical environment in the study area. The distribution shows 42.3% says impact is very low, 31.8% low, 22.1% moderate and 3.8% high.

**Table 4.2: Rating of the Negative Impacts on the Environment**

The rating of the negative impact of private developers activities on the physical environment is very low (see Table 4.2).

S/N	Rating	Frequency	%
1	Very High	-	-
2	High	15	3.8
3	Moderate	86	22.1
4	Low	124	31.8
5	Very low	165	42.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>390</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2023)

**Conclusion**

This study has concluded that private developers' development activities exist in the study area. It is an activity practiced mainly by Private Land Developers (Estate Developers) mainly male with high education, indigenes and high income earners. The communities play an important part in this development as most of the activities are carried out in conjunction with community leaders and youths.

The Private Layouts comprises mainly residential, commercial and industrial landuses. The firms are mostly run by Professionals in the built industry and highly educated. As with private layout, the development activity is dominated by Rivers state indigenes. The estate firms operate with few staff or employee who formally acquired skills.

The development activities in the study area have both positive and negative impacts in the area. The positive impacts include; revenue generation for the local and state government (in form of taxes and levies), employment generation (for skill and unskilled), provision of housing (residential, commercial and industrial). While negative impacts included disorganisation of landuse management plan, disorganisation of urban boundaries that are zoned for agricultural landuse.

**Recommendation**

There is need to establish private development policies and regulations to guide development and to curb unauthorized and haphazard development in the study area.



The GPGCDA must ensure that private layout plans are in conformity (for compatibility and continuity of land use) with the zoning of Master Plan before approval is given.

There is need for development monitoring procedures to keep in check development at the periphery of the city.

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