Urban Crisis and Management in Africa
Urban Crisis and Management in Africa
A Festschrift for Prof. Akin Mabogunje

Edited by
Isaac Olawale Albert
and
Taibat Lawanson
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CHAPTER 18

Urban Redevelopment and the Right to the City in Lagos, Nigeria

Taibat Lawanson, Damilola Odekunle and Isaac Olawale Albert

Introduction

Lagos, Nigeria’s largest city, is growing at an unprecedented rate. Consequent to this is increasing pressure on land and available infrastructure, accompanied by social inequalities, polarised demographics, and proliferation of slums (World Bank, 2014; Focus on Land Africa, 2016; McGranahan, 2016).

Academic debate on urbanisation and land management in Nigerian cities aver that urban growth could be an agent of development (Atilola, 2010; Aluko, 2011; Furkuor, Mahama and Kyei, 2012), and can hold the key to future inclusive growth, since if well managed, they can be a source of economic growth and also a powerful tool for reducing poverty and inequality (World Bank, 2016). Conversely, other scholars opine that urban growth has resulted in challenges of effective land administration, gentrification, and spatial displacements (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997; CESC, 1998; Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, 2004; Abdulai, 2006; Burns, 2009; Oshodi, 2010; Schrader-King, 2015; Abdul-aziz, 2016; Ezema). In fact, the trajectory of urban development in Lagos is beset with various incidents of spatial displacements and forced evictions (Amnesty International, 2016) Ezema, Opoko, & Oluwatayo, 2016). The most comprehensive till date is that of July 1990 when an estimated 300,000 inhabitants, of Maroko, Victoria Island
were forcefully evicted in a nine-day slum clearance exercise. In fact, it is estimated to be one of the largest forced eviction exercises in modern history (Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, 2006).

This chapter considers the circumstances surrounding the Maroko evictions, the socio-spatial consequences of the incidents, as well as institutional responses and resulting land administration issues on the evicted spatial area. The narrative is framed around the ‘Right to the City’ concept.

Urban (re)development, Spatial Displacements and Invoking the Right to the City

The transformation of many African cities has seen to the increased commodification of urban space, and vulnerability of the urban poor (World Bank, 2015). This is because urban development often results in gentrification which is defined as the class-oriented process involving exclusionary displacement, where low-income people are denied access to places they might have lived in or worked or shopped (Shaw, 2008). Of concern are circumstances in which such displacements are induced by governments against their citizens, as these are often violent and socially, economically or racially discriminatory in nature, with many harmful consequences (Schechla, 1994). Many of these urban (re)development efforts have also resulted in conflicts over who can lay claim to the city, fundamentally denying the urban poor their ‘right to the city’. The case of Maroko is particularly poignant as 300,000 people were violently removed from a site that is now an upper-middle class neighbourhood – Oniru Royal Estate.

The ‘Right to the city’ concept was coined in the 1960s by the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre and has been interpreted severally and adopted as a campaign slogan, a guiding principle for urban policy, and an agenda for urban management (see Harvey, 2008; Fernandes, 2007; Mayer, 2009; Woessner, 2009; Earle, 2011). Most relevant to this chapter however, is the fact that the concept has provided a platform for the introduction of a rights-based approach to urban development (Fernandes, 2007; Brown, 2010).

The human-rights interpretation of the Right to the City considers it the overarching theme in efforts at directing public policy and legislation to promote social equity and justice in urban development (Omoegun, 2015). The expansion of existing international covenants and conventions in line with the Right to the City has also been advocated in the light of the rapid urbanisation rates globally and the attendant challenges. In fact, the 2016 Quito Declaration states that:

We share a vision of Cities for all . . . and note the efforts of some national and local governments to enshrine this vision, referred to as “right to the city”, in their legislation, political declarations and charters. In this regard,
the New Urban Agenda is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. It is informed by other instruments such as the Declaration on the Right to Development.

In Nigeria, the right to the city is invoked through the African Charter on Human Rights. The African Charter on Human Rights guarantees the right to life, respect for the dignity inherent in a human being and to security of the person as well as the prohibition on cruel and inhuman treatment (Articles 4, 5 and 6). The right to adequate housing (articles 14, 16 and 18) encompasses property or land ownership, right to an adequate standard of living as one of the conditions required for a dignified existence, irrespective of income or access to economic resources (SERAC, 2013). This has been successfully invoked in the case against the Nigerian government by the evicted residents of Bundu Ama, Port Harcourt in 2014 (Suit No: ECW/CCJ/APP/10/10), as well as other cases of forced eviction in Nigeria (Amnesty International, 2017).

Embedded in the right to the city narrative is the issue of land rights. Yearly, millions of people around the world are evicted from their homes and land, against their will and without consultation nor equitable compensation (CESCR, 1997, UN-Habitat, 2011). These evictions are carried out despite international law explicitly recognising the right to security of tenure and adequate housing, hence they are almost never referred to as cases of forced eviction. In fact, they are often justified in the name of the broader public good and given developmental process names such as “infrastructural development”, “urban renewal” and “inner city regeneration” (UN-Habitat, 2014) as was the case of Makoko (2012), Badia (2013), Otodo gbame (2015) and Abonema Wharf (2012) as recorded by Amnesty International (2012, 2013, 2015,2016, 2017).

The United Nations Basic Principles on Evictions No. 60-68 prescribes that:

When eviction is unavoidable, and necessary for the promotion of the general welfare, the State must provide or ensure fair and just compensation for any losses of personal, real or other property or goods, including rights or interests in property . . . Cash compensation should under no circumstances replace real compensation in the form of land and common property resources. Where land has been taken, the evicted should be compensated with land commensurate in quality, size and value, or better.

Furthermore, the UN Covenant on Economic and Social Rights prescribes that where it is impossible to return evictees to the lands they originally occupied, state authorities should provide just, equitable and adequate resettlement. According to Amnesty International (2017), resettlement housing must comply with identified adequacy standards including the following:
(i) **Legal security of tenure:** The resettlement housing provided to evictees must be one in respect of which they would have a secure tenure.

(ii) **Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure:** Resettlement housing must provide facilities necessary for healthy, secure and comfortable living, while also providing access to safe drinking water, electricity, sanitation and washing facilities, refuse disposal, site drainage and emergency services;

(iii) **Affordability:** Where evictees are justly required to pay for alternative housing, it must be affordable for them.

(iv) **Habitability:** The resettlement housing must be physically and structurally safe, while also providing inhabitants with adequate space and protecting them from sun, rain, cold, heat, wind, disease vectors and other threats to health.

(v) **Accessibility:** Adequate resettlement housing must be accessible to everyone affected by the forced evictions, and consideration should be given to disadvantaged groups such as the elderly, children, the physically disabled, and terminally ill individuals amongst others. The resettlement plan should take factor in the special housing needs of these groups.

(vi) **Location:** The resettlement housing should be in an area which allows inhabitants access to schools, hospitals, employment options, healthcare services, and other social facilities.

(vii) **Cultural adequacy:** The resettlement housing offered to evictees must take into consideration their cultural ways of life and expression.

Evictions in Lagos have often been state sponsored or state supported, and justified under developmental and renewal concerns, from the 1990 Maroko to more recent ones in Ilubinrin, Makoko and Ijora Badia respectively (Coulhart, 2006; Amnesty International, 2017). Furthermore, these evictions are often justified on the premise that the residents of such lands lack legal titles to the land and are mere squatters who criminally invaded lands they had occupied for decades (Amnesty International, 2016). After the evictions, the cyclical scenario has been government re-administering the land to higher income earners.

With the 1990 evictions of Maroko Community, being the most comprehensive till date, and no evidence of any academic inquiry beyond that of Agbola and Jinadu (1997), this study seeks to assess the socio-spatial consequences of the events, as well as institutional responses over time. Data was collected over a sixteen-month period (June 2016 – October 2017) and involved the following activities: literature study, content analysis of archival materials, field survey in Ilasan and Oniru Housing estates respectively,
key informant interviews with Maroko evictees, and representatives of Maroko evictees supporting NGO (SERAC), Oniru estates holding company (Landbridge Limited) and Lagos state Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development and Lagos State Urban Renewal Agency. The following section outlines a timeline of activities related to the evictions (before, during and after), consequences of the evictions and resettlement claims by evictees, as well as surrounding land administration issues.

Timeline Study of Maroko Community

The area called Maroko historically consisted of 38 distinct villages, called Maroko-Orile, Ilabere, Oroke, Apapa-Eleko, Igbosere, Apese, Olukotun, Iru, Araromi, Tukuru, Okokuku, Ipeun, Magbon, Igbo, Abule-Ode, Mepo, Itinrin, Inupa, Ilado, Agbadan, Ahoyaya, Famiyiwa, Aniyameta, Idiroko, Onireke, Morekete, Gedegede, Moba, Obalensoro, Ogoyo, Alagutan, Ikoyitedo (Nwanna, 2012), recognised since 1914. Prior to the 1990 eviction and demolition, Maroko was a fully settled sprawling functional community (SERAC, 2013), with residents mostly engaged as low-income traders and wage-labourers. Though largely poor, it was a fully functioning town with businesses, schools, churches, mosques, a police station, and an active and organised citizenry (Aiyeyemi, 2002; SERAC, 2013).

The community has also suffered a series of evictions to make way for the continuous expansion of the Lagos metropolis (see Table 1). The first eviction that occurred was between 1958 and 1960 when six villages were uprooted to facilitate the continued expansion of colonial quarters from Ikoyi to present Victoria Island (Bonny Camp and Walter Carrington area). Affected villages included Apese, Magbon, Itinrin, Oroke, Igbo and Ilabare, which are streets in present day Ikoyi. Between 1982 and 1983, 4,000 homes were demolished, while another 1500 were pulled by the Lagos State Government in 1985 (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997) to facilitate the construction of the Lekki Epe expressway. In these cases, victims of the demolition exercises resettled in neighbouring communities in Maroko. In July 1990, over a twelve-day period, a total slum clearance of Maroko community was done in which 15,000 buildings and 38 autonomous villages were completely demolished, leaving 10,000 households homeless (Nwanna, 2012).

At the time of the 1990 evictions, many families relocated to Ilasan and Ikota estates (See Fig 1), two government estates located outside the metropolis that were under construction at the time but were evicted after two weeks. However, after a series of legal interventions, the Lagos state government was mandated to allocate apartments in the estate to the evictees, seeing that they possessed legal titles to the lands they were removed from, and were thus entitled to compensation and/or resettlement (FGN, 2002).
Only 2000 were effectively resettled until 2005 when the Lagos State House of Assembly recommended monetary compensation for 8000 others (LSHA, 2005). Despite a verification exercise in 2010, there is no evidence that they have been paid.

After the evictions, there was no development on the cleared site until 1993, when the Oniru family contracted Westminster Dredging Company to begin sand-filling the site (i.e. the acclaimed remaining 12 percent of the initial 6,000 acres the Oniru family were left with after acquisition by the Lagos state government in the 1970s. according to the Oniru family, the redevelopment of the site was based on the guidelines of the Oniru Land Development Scheme which will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Fig. 1: Map of Lagos showing Ilasan

With the rapid urban growth of Lagos, and Lagos sprawl extending to the Lekki-Epe axis, Ilasan and Ikota estates are currently surrounded by middle and high-income communities, and vulnerable to another wave of evictions. For instance, in 2007, make-shift structures built by evictees who were allocated non-existent flats were removed. In 2008, Lagos Building Investment company issued an eviction notice to the residents stating residents must move because the ‘area is currently below sea level and unfit for human habitation’ (SERAC, 2008), while in 2014, there was another attempt to relocate the entire estate to Epe, a satellite town outside the Lagos Metropolis. One of the residents said:

The then Commissioner for Housing said that Ilasan Housing Estate had become a gold mine and no longer suitable for us, because the people staying on this area are not like us.

This attempt was vigorously resisted with the residents stating that:
We would rather die by the bulldozers than relocate from our estate again.

Table 1: Time line Assessment of Maroko Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>activity</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Maroko came into existence</td>
<td>First documented mention of Maroko community. Same year as amalgamation of northern and southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>protectorates of Nigeria. Location was close to the present day Barbeach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB)</td>
<td>LEDB purchased part of then Maroko land for 250,000 pounds, for expansion of Lagos to present day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>purchased land from Oniru family</td>
<td>Victorian Island. Displaced fishermen were paid compensation of 150,000 pounds. Many relocated</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to site at present day Oniru estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-</td>
<td>Eviction from Mekuwen to Maroko</td>
<td>10 years after the LEDB eviction in Victoria Island, people from the settlement of Mekuwen in</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td></td>
<td>present-day Ikoyi were evicted for the construction of residences for colonial authorities and</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>their Nigerian allies. Evictees relocated to Maroko</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Land sale to individuals</td>
<td>Receipts of legal land sales with accompanying deeds of lease were dated around 1970-1972, signed</td>
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<td>by the three land owning families in the areas – Oniru, Onikoyi and Elegushi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>LSG issued stamp duties to Maroko lease holders</td>
<td>Legal recognition of titles/deeds of lease of Maroko land owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>LSG acquired part of Maroko lands from</td>
<td>LSG acquired 3,100 acres of Maroko lands from Oniru chieftaincy family through eminent domain and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oniru family</td>
<td>paid N6.8m to family. Leaseholders and homeowners retained possession of their properties and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>continued paying property taxes to LSG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>LSG reassigned portions of land to Oniru family</td>
<td>LSG handed over 370 – 570 acres of land back to the Oniru family after a Supreme Court judgement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Oniru family submits layout plan to LSG</td>
<td>Oniru family submitted a development plan to the Lagos state government but it was not approved,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>for undisclosed reasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 -</td>
<td>Evictions in Maroko</td>
<td>1982-1983: 4,000 houses were demolished by LSG. 1985: 1,500 houses were demolished by LSG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td></td>
<td>Both exercises were for the construction of the present day Lekki Epe expressway</td>
</tr>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>Maroko Total Slum clearance</td>
<td>Feb 1990: President Babangida visited Maroko after a flooding incident, and promised support for</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>improvement in living conditions of the residents</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>July 7, 1990: 1 week eviction notice announced on radio</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>July 9, 1990: CLO filed restraining order</td>
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<td>July 14-26: DEMOLITION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Urban Redevelopment and the Right to the City in Lagos, Nigeria

July 16 – August: Evictees took over uncompleted government owned Ilasan and Ikota estates
August 1990: Govt announced that displaced Maroko residents could stay at Ilasan and Ikota estates: Two weeks later, those who relocated were re-evicted.
Sept 1990: Femi Falana got a restraining order, and sued govt to court which resulted in the allocation of flats to the first 2000 landlords.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Land re-development by Oniru Family</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sandfilling of eviction site by Westminster Dredging Nigeria Limited, contracted by Oniru family (Landbridge Holdings).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>LSHA recommends compensation</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lagos state House of Assembly recommends compensation for 8000 landlords who were not resettled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Demolition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make-shift structures built by evictees were destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Eviction Notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lagos Building Investment company issued an eviction notice to the residents stating residents must move because the ‘area is currently below sea level and unfit for human habitation’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Re-certification process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lagos state government carries out recertification process for all Maroko evictees in Ilasan to ascertain their legal tenure status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Threat of Eviction</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Lagos state Ministry of Housing suggests relocating residents of Ilasan Housing Estate to Epe due to proliferation of middle class housing and increased land value in the area. The notion was roundly rejected by residents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SERAC (2013).

Socio-Spatial Consequences of the Maroko Evictions

Forced eviction and relocation have been known to inflict serious adverse consequences on the people concerned (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997). This section discusses the effect of the evictions and aftermath over twenty-five years on the Maroko evictees who were relocated to Ilasan Housing Estate. This was achieved by a series of interviews with evictees, their supporting NGO (SERAC) as well as a perusal of newspapers and other documented resources from the time.

During the Evictions

The 1990 eviction exercise was conducted with a military style precision of the then Lagos state government. Several trucks and bulldozers were deployed in the middle of the night, and armed soldiers and policemen supervised the twelve-day operation, inflicting violence on many residents (SERAC, 2009; Amnesty International, 2013). The settlements were simply rolled
over and destroyed by bulldozers with no regard for residents’ wellbeing or safety (SERAC, 2008). This resulted in the death of some people while others suffered permanent injuries in their bid to escape the bulldozers and/or collapsing buildings. In the immediate aftermath of the exercise, many deaths were recorded due to the cumulative stress suffered, with many families searching for relatives some of whom were never found. According to one of the evictees:

when the military came, they came with many bulldozers, ambulances, Black Marias and armour tanks like they were going to war. I lost 3 wives due to the Maroko injustice, how many losses will I count? Some of our people are buried under that ground at Oniru.

The Maroko evictions destroyed about 15,000 buildings including shops, schools, churches and about 10,000 residential structures (SERAC, 2013). SERAC report further shows that the landlords and their families together with approximately 290,000 other persons were rendered homeless.

Furthermore, because the eviction was conducted without consultation and inadequate notice, the evictees interviewed recounted the fact that they were not given a chance to move and reorganise their belongings to alternative storage; resulting in the loss and destruction of unquantifiable amounts of business assets, trade goods, and personal property. Aside these immediate consequences, it was further revealed that during the evictions, personal possessions of evictees were stolen by looters who seized opportunity presented by the chaos and confusion of the eviction, while many women were sexually assaulted (SERAC, 2008).

After the Evictions

Over the last twenty-five years, many Maroko evictees are yet to be effectively resettled, facing untold hardships across three dimensions namely – physical, social and economic.

Physical Impact

Homelessness

The Maroko evictees who are now residents at Ilasan Estate explained the first impact was homelessness and inadequate housing. There was no government resettlement plan, and a resettlement committee was set six days after the demolition, due principally to intensive local and international pressures on the government (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997). Evictees sought refuge under bridges, in churchyards, open fields, and other informal settlements (Makoko, Iwaya, Ajegunle, Ijora-Badia, Elekon, Okeyantan, Ilado, Ajah, Ado, Bar Beach and
ikorodu), before some of them relocated to Ikota and Ilasan Housing estates respectively. One of the resident’s stated:

This place (Ilasan) was an abandoned Jakande Housing Estate in the middle of the bush.

Many of the houses at the estate were uncompleted, with no doors, windows, roofs, electrical fittings, toilets or plumbing of any kind. A large number were, and still are, in a dangerous state of disrepair (see Plate 1). The buildings are so structurally unsound that some have collapsed, killing their occupants.

**Loss of Assets**

The allocation of flats which followed the setting up of the resettlement committee was found to be highly discriminatory as only landlords with evidence of property ownership prior to 1972 were considered. Thus, of the estimated 41,776 landlords displaced from Maroko, only 2,933 were considered for relocation, of which 1,766 were allocated flats in Ilasan housing estate (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997). In fact, many evictees were allocated non-existent flats as only one block (six flats) out of the estimated 2,000 flats was completed as at 1990 when they moved in. Furthermore, irrespective of how much one owned in the old Maroko, landlords were only entitled to one flat (see Plate 2). One of the residents said:

We had three houses and more than 30 tenants in Maroko. We now have a letter of allocation for a two bedroom flat. My father never recovered.

It is also important to note that even those evictees who lucky to be given an allocation were required to pay: a list of requirements for a flat allocation distributed to evictees by the hastily established ‘resettlement committee’ required payment of #1,646 in application and processing fees merely to apply, and some evictees reported requests for payments of as much as #10,000 for an allocation.

**Lack of Basic Services**

The study discovered that basic facilities and services available at these locations were no better than at Maroko, and in many instances, they were far worse. Accounts from Aiyeyemi (2002) reveal that in Maroko, there were four huge markets, petrol stations, the popular California Hotel and film house, churches and mosques, a health centres, eleven primary schools, two secondary schools, a federal library as well as branches of People’s Bank of Nigeria, Societe Generale Bank and Co-operative Bank, in addition to paved streets, drainage channels and public taps. As at 2016 when the field survey was conducted, despite being a government estate, there is no evidence of
government infrastructure in Ilasan apart from the police station located nearby. The primary was donated through efforts of the National Youth Service members, a health centre is run by a faith based organisation, while there is a non-functional water reservoir tank donated by another faith based organisation. The community is prone to flooding (Plate 3), with poor road and drainage infrastructure.

**Plate 1**
Ilasan Housing Estate (Credit: Centre for Housing Studies, University of Lagos, 2017)

**Plate 2**
Letter of Allocation (Credit: Aishat Sanusi, 2016)

**Plate 3**
General Environmental Condition (Credit: Taibat Lawanson, 2015)

**Social Impact**
Apart from the social dislocation and loss of socio-cultural institutions occasioned by the evictions, the following are the most intense social impacts experienced by residents of Ilasan Estate.

**Family Fragmentation**
In the immediate aftermath of the demolition, many families were physically separated, and unable to reunite, in some cases for weeks or months or years. Children were distributed among relatives in other settlements. In many instances since then, family relationships have disintegrated due to the pressures of husbands traveling long distances to find work and not returning, women left to care for large families with proceeds from petty trading. In many cases, widows of landlords who died during the evictions were unable to claim their allocations and were resigned to a life of destitution and vulnerability.


Access to Educational Services

The biggest and most enduring impact of the eviction has been its effect on the children of Maroko and their access to education. The destruction of their schools in 1990 and the construction of the single primary school in Ilasan in 1993 resulted in many students missing several academic terms, and in some cases years because of distance to nearest school (exorbitant transport costs) and loss of school records. Many others dropped out of school due to homelessness and loss of parental income (whether by death, injury, or loss of employment). Direct consequences of this situation are the high rate of youth unemployment and juvenile delinquency in the estates. Even though the community pooled resources together to establish another primary school in 1995, there are still major challenges as average class size is 69-80. There is still no public senior secondary school in the community.

Access to Health Services

During the demolition, hospitals, clinics and other health care facilities were destroyed. Evictees suffered severe physical and psychological trauma and were unable to access and/or afford health care due to their precarious housing situation and loss of livelihoods. As a result of this, many families were exposed to sanitation diseases and juvenile malnourishment. This situation was particularly dire during the rainy season in spite of the humanitarian health services offered by the local St Kizito clinic run by a faith based organisation. According to a residents:

> At Ilasan, 95 per cent of the buildings are surrounded by permanent pools of water. Malaria and typhoid are common. In fact many children are reported to have fallen into the pools of water and died.

Economic Impact

Loss of Livelihoods

The demolition of Maroko destroyed a vibrant local economy, that had many traders and cottage industries. Many of these business owners lost not only their facilities, equipment and stock, but also local client base and goodwill. One of the respondents said:

> From being a landlord with ten rooms and a shop, I became someone waiting for his wife to sell plantain before I eat. It is really shameful.
The persistent disruption caused by the precarious living situation and the resettlement package/compensation limited to residential apartment made it quite difficult for entrepreneurs in Maroko to rebuild their businesses.

**Poverty**

A general overview of Ilasan Estate shows a state of endemic poverty. The Maroko Evictee Committee further stated that many Maroko evictees who lost their sources of livelihood were never able to recover. From the office workers to the farmers, Maroko residents had depended on their proximity to the commercial centre of Lagos for a living. The resettlement locations where some evictees were able to find shelter were located far from the economic and commercial nerve centres of Victoria Island and Ikoyi where they had been employed, thus making commuting either from those location or even Ilasan quite difficult. The increased distance from important service locations caused additional hardship in increased transportation costs and reduced accessibility. As such many were forced to give up their jobs or live apart from their families with the attendant loss in quality of life.

**From Maroko to Oniru: Accumulation by Dispossession?**

Oniru estate is a wealthy residential area located in the exact site of the Maroko evictions (see Fig. 2). The estate sits on 732 acres of land acquired from both the state and federal governments (Nwanna, 2012 and SERAC, 2013). The transition from Maroko to Oniru Estate begun sometime in 1993, when the Westminster Dredging company started sandfilling the site.

Development in the estate is guided by the Oniru Layout development scheme, with landmarks including British International School, The Palms shopping Mall, Oniru Private Beach, as well as a number of luxury gated communities. The minimum plot size of 60X120 ft/ 648sqm within the estate is estimated to cost about eighty million naira (N80,000,000) for a (Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, 2016). However, just like Maroko and Ilasan, Oniru Estate is prone to flooding, and suffers challenges with accessing potable water.
The study revealed that before the 1990 Maroko eviction, land was customarily owned by the Oniru, Elegushi and Onikoyi chieftaincy families respectively. Land acquired by the Maroko residents was usually in 40X60ft/ 460 sqm plot size from the three customary chieftaincy families on 13-99 year leaseholds called the ‘lease of interest’ or ‘deed of lease’. The lease of interest was issued as a form of land titling and signed by representatives of the three chieftaincy families after which legal certification was issued at the court. In 1971, the LSG issued stamp duties to Maroko residents to recognise their land rights and continued to do so even after 1972 when LSG acquired 3,100 acres of Maroko lands from the Oniru family through its eminent domain power. Some portions of land (between 370 and 570 acres) acquired by LSG was reassigned in 1976 to the Oniru family; with LSG acknowledging the lease of interest held by the Maroko residents, regarding such as ‘de facto’ property rights (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997).

However, with the 1990 evictions and subsequent events, it is apparent that the transition of Maroko to Oniru royal estate is a case of Slash and Build gentrification which is the massive process of accumulation by dispossession in the inner city, that is clearly discernible, widely evidenced and orchestrated by the state and manifests as a combination of state-led and new-build gentrification (Shin, 2016). Accumulation by Dispossession is defined by Harvey (2004) as dispossessing the public of wealth or land through neoliberal capitalist policies and the centralisation of power. Shin (2016) further describes the Slash and Build gentrification process as often a
violent one which is sometimes psychological and while the primary role is played by the state, a closely related property-hungry corporate sector forms an important accomplice.

Indeed, According to one of the Maroko evictees:

There is this high level of connivance between Oniru Family and LSG, no matter how you want to analyze it, if the land was taken for good, overriding public interest, we are talking of an international market, a stadium, let’s say a general hospital or a teaching hospital or a national library, no problem; but you cannot say that British International school is overriding public interest, or Oniru Estate, or Ligali Ayorinde.

Furthermore, Smith (1979) argued that gentrification was a movement of capital and not people, by demonstrating that the driving force behind gentrification was the growing difference between the potential value of inner urban properties and their underlying land values. An overview of land value of Maroko to Oniru (see Table 2) attests to this as a plot of land valued at around $1000 in 1990 grew to $220,000 in 2016.

**Table 2: Land value in Maroko and Oniru Estate (1969-2016)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Area (sq m)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value Maroko</th>
<th>Value (Oniru Estate) N</th>
<th>Relative value (exchangerate.guru.com) (USD - 2017)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>460</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>50 pounds</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,089.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>460</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>50 pounds</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>873.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>460</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>N5,000.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,592.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>460</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>N10,000.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,353.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>648</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58,000,000.00</td>
<td>374,193.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>648</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60,000,000.00</td>
<td>370,370.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>648</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58,364,000.00</td>
<td>293,253.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>648</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>81,357,000.00</td>
<td>272,370.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>648</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>80,000,000.00</td>
<td>220,385.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Documentary evidence on Old Maroko and Lagos real Estate investment report (2012-2016)*

1991-2011: Period of transition from Maroko town to Oniru estate)

*Official USD ($)/NGN (N) rates are used to convert Naira to dollar value for the particular year

With the new Maroko (Oniru Estate) being entirely owned by the Oniru family and administered by the holding company (Landbridge Estates), one may ask: Where is the overriding public interests for which Maroko was demolished in the first place? How did public acquisition of an ‘inhabitable’ land become a private holding? Why were the poor forcibly removed from the land, even
though the state government acknowledged their ‘de facto’ property rights? Furthermore, why is the quality of life and access to basic services worse in the resettlement site – Ilasan than it was in Maroko? For Maroko evictees, where is their right to the City?

**Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted issues germane to the complexities of urban development and rights of the urban poor in Lagos. First is the worrisome fact that socio-economic status is deemed a more important determinant of secure tenure than legal land title in Lagos. The study revealed that Maroko residents, despite having legal title to their properties prior to the 1990 evictions, were forcefully removed without adequate notice, compensation and resettlement. Unfortunately, this situation has been repeated severally in the cases of Makoko, Badia East and Otodo gbame. It is also a matter of concern that the vulnerability to eviction is entrenched as even those who were resettled in Ilasan are still vulnerable to insecurity of tenure due to the emerging elitist urban form in the Lekki-Epe axis. Paradoxically, the poor environment being used to justify cause for eviction using an urban redevelopment rhetoric is caused by the Lagos state government’s neglect of her development priorities which include provision of schools, hospitals and urban infrastructure. Lagos state has a duty to respect, fulfil and protect the right to adequate housing of all her constituents, including the poor; and must ensure that in redeveloping the city, the local populations experience a non-decreasing level of well-being in the long-term (Camagni, Campello and Nijkamp, 1998).

Secondly, in spite of the locally specific factors involved in spatial displacements, it is necessary to also highlight the underlying reasons for forced evictions: the entrenchment of neo-liberal development models, and the increasing tensions between the ‘City for People’ and ‘City for Profit’ model where urban planning and development approaches that are anchored on private sector-led (real-estate) interests, are prioritised above citizen welfare (Davis & Monk, 2007; Lawanson and Agunbiade, 2017, Lawanson, 2017). The state-sponsored support for the Maroko evictions, and the transition of Maroko to Oniru Royal Estate, a high-income community via a *Slash and Build* form of gentrification attest to this.

Furthermore, the severity of large-scale spatial displacements, human rights violations that occur especially during state sanctioned eviction exercises, and the long-term consequences as shown in the Maroko case offers a platform for consolidated and supported action in line with rights based urban development planning. Spatial justice is essential in urban planning and development and in ensuring the right to the city for all citizens, the
Lagos state government must embrace the vision of the ‘City for all’, which according to the 2016 Quito Declaration (New Urban Agenda):

We share a vision of Cities for All, referring to the equal use and enjoyment of cities and human settlements, seeking to promote inclusivity and ensure that all inhabitants, of present and future generations, without discrimination of any kind, are able to inhabit and produce just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements to foster prosperity and quality of life for all.

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Urban Redevelopment and the Right to the City in Lagos, Nigeria


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