

Forced eviction and forced relocation in Nigeria: the experience of those evicted from Maroko in 1990

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SUMMARY: *This paper examines the consequences for those evicted from the settlement of Maroko in Lagos in 1990 in terms of housing quality, overcrowding, rents, basic services and overall satisfaction with their new neighbourhood. It shows that most of those evicted were worse housed than before the eviction. By way of introduction, the paper describes the scale and nature of recent evictions in Lagos, and the underlying causes, and the concluding section discusses why evictions remain so common in urban areas of Nigeria.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

DECENT AND AFFORDABLE accommodation remains a basic need and plays a central role in human survival. Despite the various efforts of governments and agencies to address housing problems, over one billion people throughout the world lack adequate shelter or live in unacceptable housing conditions.⁽¹⁾ In the Lagos metropolis alone, a 1981 World Bank assisted urban renewal project identified 42 "blighted areas" and the state Urban Renewal Board has identified more of these in recent years. The majority of urban residents are crowded into these areas and other enclaves of low-income groups. The comment by Chatterjee in his study of Lagos in 1981 that, for most of the urban poor, housing related services are of very poor quality with the housing itself overcrowded, unsanitary, congested and polluted, remains valid today.⁽²⁾

The problems within such settlements have continued to bother planners and administrators alike and have generated different responses. For example, whilst the emphasis in most countries in the North and many in the South has long shifted away from complete redevelopment to rehabilitation, the main approach in Nigeria (as well as in other countries in the South) has been outright demolition, after forced eviction and forced population relocation.

1. Audefroy, Joel (1994), "Eviction trends worldwide – and the role of local authorities in implementing the right to housing," *Environment and Urbanization* Vol.6, No.1, April, pages 9-13.

2. Chatterjee, Lata (1983), "Migration, housing and equity in developing countries", *Regional Development Dialogue* Vol.4, pages 105-131.

3. Onibokun, A.G. (1982), *Issues in Nigerian Housing*, NISER, Ibadan.

4. Ephriam Y.Y. *et al.* (1979), "Reactions to rehousing: loss of community or frustrations", *Urban Studies* Vol.16, No.7, pages 133-138.

The early experiences of "slum" demolition in Nigeria date back to the 1920s when they were carried out in Lagos by the Lagos Executive Development Board in response to the bubonic plague that broke out at the time. This was followed by the pre-independence demolition which resulted in the celebrated Isale-Eko clearance to give the visiting Queen of England a pleasing view of the area. The pre-independence and immediate post-independence clearances in Nigeria were marked by a series of eviction cases in the 1980s and this culminated in the large-scale Maroko eviction of 1990 where some 300,000 people were forcibly ejected. It is now generally agreed that forced eviction represents a dimension of urban violence.

The demolition of Maroko in 1990 is another example of the government's unsuccessful efforts to address the housing problems of low-income groups. Not only have their past efforts been limited by ineffective programmes of action and the ineptitude of the appropriate institutions⁽³⁾ but most of the programmes undertaken have not met their target of decent and affordable accommodation for the urban poor. Meanwhile, governments who persist with the policy of wholesale clearance of what are judged to be blighted areas have made significantly worse the housing problems of the poor. For example, in most cases where evacuees were given government assistance, its scale was inadequate and often misdirected. As a result, evacuees usually moved to another area which the government also considered a slum, thus reinforcing the cycle of slum development, government inaction and eventual clearance.

At present in Nigeria, information on the multi-faceted problems of eviction is limited. Much of what exists comes from newspapers or magazines and is speculative or lacks detail. Most is based on informed observations which are "...rarely based on longitudinal research which follows a given population from urban slum into public housing projects."⁽⁴⁾ This paper seeks to address this gap in knowledge by interviewing a range of people who were evicted from Maroko – including some who obtained accommodation on public housing estates and others who live in private rental accommodation because they were not allocated public housing. The paper considers the adequacy, suitability and affordability of the alternative accommodation secured by the displaced persons and, especially, the effect of the displacement on neighbourhood cohesion and community life. This allows some consideration of the effectiveness of forced relocation and rehousing in addressing the housing and related problems of the urban poor. Prior to this, the paper provides some context for Maroko including how it developed and the factors which led to the eviction.

II. FORCED EVICTION: A TIME DIMENSIONAL SURVEY

EVICTION IS AN involuntary or forceful removal of people from their homes by whatever means. The rising number of direct and indirect removals of large populations or communities from

5. Schechla, Joseph (1994), "Forced eviction as an increment of demographic manipulation", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol.6, No.1, April, pages 85-105.

6. *Environment and Urbanization* Vol.6, No.1 (1994), Special Issue on evictions, April.

7. Scudder, T. and E. Colson (1981), "From welfare to development: a conceptual framework for the analysis of dislocated people" in Oliver-Smith, Art and A. (editors) (1981), *Involuntary Migration and Resettlement: The Problems of Dislocated People*, Westview Press, Colorado.

8. Fried, Marc (1963), "Grieving for a lost home" in Duhi, L. (editor) (1963), *The Urban Condition*, Basic Books, New York.

9. Smith, D.W. (1976), "Urban renewal in an Asian context: a case study of Hong Kong", *Urban Studies* Vol.13, No.3, pages 295-304.

their homes by force has attracted much attention in the literature in recent years. However, it is those evictions induced by sovereign governments against their citizens that have been of major interest to planners rather than those induced by natural factors or disasters (for instance fires, floods and earthquakes) or wars or colonization. This type of eviction, as distinct from voluntary movement or population transfers, is what Schechla described as an "...officially sanctioned act which has many harmful consequences for the affected persons or group"⁽⁵⁾ and it is usually violent and socially, economically or racially discriminatory in nature.

The genesis of evictions of this nature can be traced to redevelopment in urban areas of the United Kingdom in the early nineteenth century that were directed at reducing over-crowding and destroying what were judged by those in power to be "eyesores" or "centres of crime". This was supported by legislation similar to that passed in many other countries. Forced evictions remain a common means by which land occupied predominantly by low-income groups is cleared for redevelopment. In 1994, a special issue of *Environment and Urbanization* on evictions documented how millions of people are forcibly evicted from their homes each year in urban areas of Africa, Asia and Latin America.⁽⁶⁾

As noted above, there is also a long history of evictions in urban areas of Nigeria. Table 1 lists some of the evictions that have taken place since 1973. Two-thirds of the 36 cases occurred in Lagos and half or more involved the eviction of thousands of people. In many cases, the method of removal was forceful and brutal, with little notice given to the people who were evicted and, in many cases, with no compensation or alternative sites provided.

Forced eviction and relocation have been known to inflict serious adverse consequences on the people concerned. According to Scudder and Colson, "...forced resettlement is about the worst thing you can do to a people - next to killing them."⁽⁷⁾ The bitter experiences that follow a wake of evictions were described by Fried in 1963 who observed that grieving for a lost home is evidently widespread and a serious social phenomenon that often follows urban dislocation.⁽⁸⁾ Such dislocation is likely to increase social and psychological "pathology" in a limited number of instances and it is also likely to create new opportunities for some and increase social mobility for others. For most people, dislocation is likely to lead most often to intense personal suffering despite moderately successful adaptation to the total situation of relocation.

The (limited) research that has been done on evictions and relocations shows some common patterns but also, not surprisingly, diverse consequences as the context differs from city to city and eviction to eviction. Most case studies of evictions show that there were serious adverse consequences for those evicted. A study of urban renewal in Hong Kong found that although the poor households move away from the city centre they go to other urban tenements because of their inability to afford better quality accommodation.⁽⁹⁾ A report by the Asian

Table 1: Examples of Evictions in Lagos and Elsewhere in Nigeria (1973 - 1995)

No.	Location	Date	No. of persons evicted	Motive given for eviction	Eviction agent for evictees	Compensation or offer of an alternative site
1	Idioro, Agege Motor Road, Lagos	August 1973	500	Road construction	Federal govt.	N.A.
2	Metropolitan Kano	May '79	N.A.	Urban development	State govt.	N.A.
3	Laramo village	Dec. '79	N.A.	Road construction	Federal govt.	No compensation
4	Adeniji Adele Street, Lagos	Oct. '75	5,000	Urban renovation	State govt.	No compensation
5	Iponri, Lagos	Dec. '76	5,000	Urban development	LSDPC, Lagos State	No alternative site
6	Oba Akran, Ikeja, Lagos	April '76	N.A.	Road construction; illegal occupation	State govt.	No compensation
7	Calabar	1976	500	Urban renovation	State govt.	N.A.
8	Elekuro, Ibadan	Aug. '76	10,000	Encroachment on school land	State govt.	No resettlement
9	Central Lagos	Sept. '76	10,000	Urban renovation	Federal govt.	Resettled
10	Ketu, Lagos	1976	10,000	City clean up	State govt.	Not resettled
11	Apongbon, Lagos	Nov. '76	N.A.	Road construction	State govt.	Not resettled
12	Alaba Market, Lagos	Aug. '77	20,000	Illegal occupation	State govt.	No compensation
13	Isiala Ngwa LGA, Imo	Nov. '78	7,000	Illegal occupation	State govt.	N.A.
14	Aba road, Port Harcourt	Nov. '78	60,000	Road construction	State govt.	N.A.
15	Shasha village, Lagos	June '79	5,000	Illegal occupation	N.A.	N.A.
16	Onilekere, Lagos	June '79	N.A.	Land dispute	Owner/ authorities	No resettlement
17	Port Harcourt	Aug. '79	N.A.	Illegal occupation	State govt.	No compensation
18	Oworonshoki, Lagos	April '80	10,000	Urban development	State govt.	N.A.
19	Shomolu/Barga	Jan. '81	N.A.	Channelization programme	State govt.	N.A.
20	Maroko, Lagos	1982	N.A.	Road construction	State govt.	N.A.
21	Suleja, Niger State	Aug. '82	5,000	N.A.	Local govt. council	N.A.
22	Maroko, Lagos	Oct. '83	60,000	Set back for lagoon	State govt.	No compensation

23	Agboju/Amuwo Osofin, Lagos	Dec. '84	N.A.	Illegal occupation	State govt.	N.A.
24	Ebute Meta/ Lagos Island, Lagos	July '85	10,000	Illegal occupation	State govt.	No compensation
25	Along Badagry Express, Lagos	Aug. '85	N.A.	Illegal occupation; structures under NEPA high tension cables	State govt.	No resettlement
26	Iponri, Lagos	Sept. '85	5,000	Urban renewal	State govt.	Only 1,000 resettled
27	Shomolu, Lagos	March '86	10,000	Urban beautification	State govt.	N.A.
28	Igbo Erin, Lagos	Aug. '86	N.A.	Illegal occupation	State govt.	N.A.
29	Oworoshoki, Lagos	Feb. '88	3,000	Bridge construction	Federal govt.	No alternative site
30	Maroko, Lagos	July '90	300,000	Illegal occupation	State/fed. govt.	No compensation
31	Maitama village, FCT	Aug. '90	3,000	FCT Development	FCDA	Resettled; 1,000 naira compensation
32	Central Lagos	Nov. '90	N.A.	Urban sanitation	State govt.	No compensation
33	Mushin, Lagos	March '91	N.A.	Illegal occupation	State govt.	No compensation
34	Lugbe (Garki), Abuja	May '93	30,000	FCT Development	FCDA	Resettled
35	Aboru village, Lagos	May '94	N.A.	N.A.	Federal govt.	N.A.
36	Bamisoro, Island, Lagos	Feb. '95	N.A.	Illegal occupation	State govt.	No compensation

N.A. = Figure not available

SOURCE: Culled by the authors from the records of the Daily Times of Nigeria Limited, 1995.

10. Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, (1989) "Evictions in Seoul, South Korea", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol.1, No.1, April, pages 89-94.

11. See reference 4.

Coalition for Housing Rights on the millions of people evicted in Seoul between 1960 and 1990 found that most of those who were evicted could not afford houses in the redeveloped areas and were forced to pay higher prices for smaller spaces in nearby neighbourhoods.⁽¹⁰⁾ Not only are community ties broken but family life also suffers. The dislocation that accompanies eviction often means that people lose access to jobs and children's schooling also suffers disruption as confirmed by a study of 169 families who lived in a poor neighbourhood of Tel Aviv.⁽¹¹⁾

The nature and magnitude of the effects of relocation are not only dictated by the nature of the move (whether voluntary or forced) but also by the social and economic setting in which relocation occurs. This paper examines the effects of the Maroko eviction on those evicted in the Nigerian socio-cultural and economic milieu. Whilst most work has been on the conditions of evicted people who are rehoused on government estates, this paper compares the housing and general socio-economic con-

ditions of those evicted from Maroko in both the public and private housing units in the Aja, Maroko-Beach and Okokomaiko areas of Lagos State and of the effect on their community life in particular (see Maps 1, 2 and 3).

III. THE SETTING

THE RESEARCH COVERS five different locations in the Eti-Osa and Ojo local government areas of Lagos State (see Table 2 and Maps 1 to 3). Specific study locations include Aja, Ikota, Ilasan, Maroko-Beach in Eti-Osa and Okokomaiko in Ojo. The selection of these neighbourhoods was helped by a preliminary field survey which showed the presence of a fairly large concentration of people evicted from Maroko.

Table 2: Sample Frame

Locations		Number of questionnaires: distributed	retrieved	Per cent of sample
1	Ilasan	177	150	48.4
2	Ikota	92	81	26.1
3	Maroko-Beach	40	29	9.4
4	Aja	40	28	9.0
5	Okokomaiko	40	22	7.1
Total		389	310	100.0

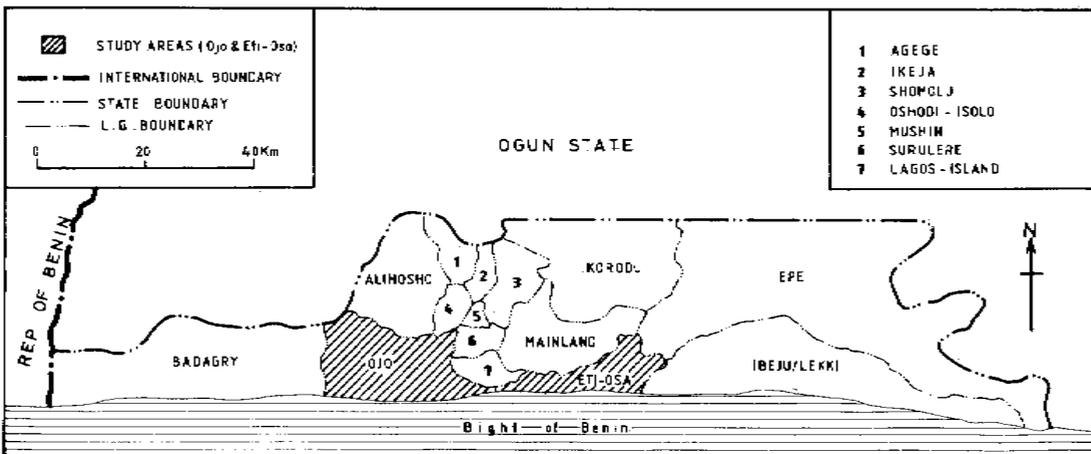
The Ilasan and Ikota housing estates are government estates located respectively, six and 11 kilometres along the Lagos-Epe expressway. They consist of one and three-bedroom flats with poor housing and neighbourhood services. Aja, Maroko-Beach and Okokomaiko are private neighbourhoods also with old and unserviced structures.

IV. METHODOLOGY

VERY LITTLE INFORMATION was available on the subject of this paper and that which did exist was scattered in different places. Initial insight was drawn from journals, student dissertations, newspapers and magazines, and pictures, maps and records of evictions were collected from the Eti-Osa local government offices and the Daily Times Publishing House.

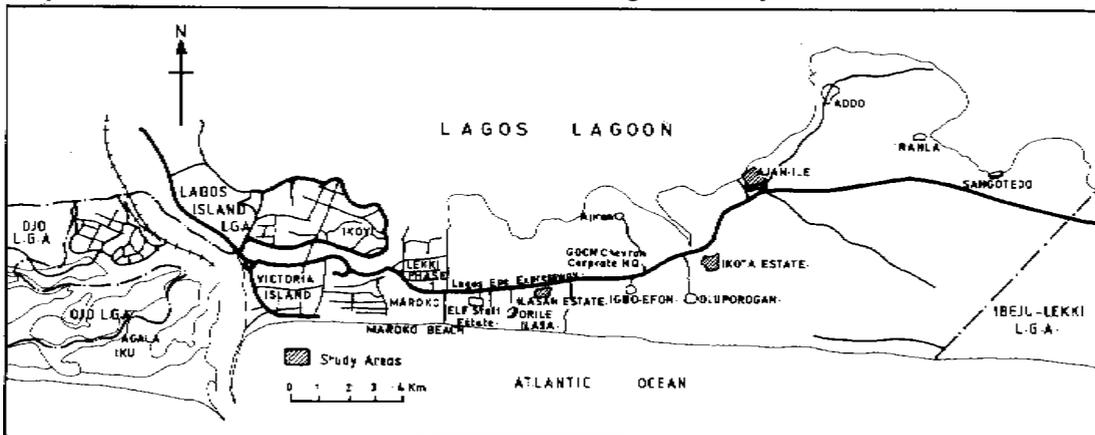
Primary data were collected by means of two sets of questionnaires, interviews and personal observation. The first set of questionnaires was directed at the Lagos State town planning officials and dealt with the growth and physical conditions of Maroko, the reasons for its clearance, social and environmental consequences, the desirability of the demolition approach and the resettlement programme. The second set of questionnaires was directed at those evicted from Maroko who had secured accommodation in the five locations listed in Table 2. The ques-

Map 2: Lagos State Local Governments, showing the Study Areas



SOURCE: Geography and Regional Planning, University of Lagos, 1995.

Map 3: Eti-Osa Local Government Area, showing the Study Areas



SOURCE: Eti-Osa Local Governments Secretariat, Lagos, 1990.

Aja, Igbo-Efon, Ajiran, Maroko-Beach, Ajangbadi, Okokomaiko, Abule-Egba, Bariga and Orile Iganmu (see Map 3) were identified as neighbourhoods with fairly large concentrations of evicted people. These areas were categorized as being either within the Eti-Osa local government area or outside it. A random selection of two neighbourhoods from each category was made with Aja and Maroko-Beach being selected from within Eti-Osa and Okokomaiko and Abule-Egba from outside.

In the two housing estates where resettled population was present, a 10 per cent sample size was chosen. One hundred and seventy seven and 92 questionnaires were distributed in Ilesan and Ikota, respectively. However, due to a serious problem of identification in the areas outside the housing estates, and in a bid to ensure that information was drawn only from people evicted from Maroko, only 40 questionnaires were distributed in each of the neighbourhoods. This brought the target

population to 389. As shown in Table 2, only 150 questionnaires were retrieved in Ilasan, 81 in Ikota, 28 in Aja, 22 in Okokomaiko and 29 in Maroko-Beach. This brought the total number of questionnaires administered to 310. The distribution of the questionnaire in each location was through a random-systematic method using an interval of three houses. The distribution started with a pure random selection of the first five houses to determine the starting point from which the research proceeded at an interval of three. Seven other questionnaires were administered to the state town planning officials to obtain their views on the demolition exercises.

V. RESEARCH RESULTS

a. The Forced Evacuation and Relocation of the ex-Maroko Dwellers

THE DEMOLITION OF Maroko on July 14th, 1990 was the culmination of several threats and minor clearing rehearsals carried out within and around the settlement during the 1980s. The reasons advanced by the government for the clearance were that the residents were squatters on land the government had acquired since 1972; that the occupied land is 1.5 metres above sea level and was, therefore, liable to flooding and complete submergence; and that Maroko's total environment was unkept and dangerous and presented a risk of disease epidemics. As far as the government was concerned, therefore, Maroko was cleared in the "over-riding public interest" and to give room for good planning so as to make life more pleasant, safe and convenient for those evicted.

Investigative research into the circumstances surrounding the clearance of the slum pointed to other implicit factors. For example, our survey reveals that Maroko was located uncomfortably close to the highly priced lands and properties of Ikoyi and Victoria Island and was regarded as an eyesore by these high-income neighbourhoods. The fear of epidemics and the high crime rate associated with Maroko did not endear its residents to its wealthy neighbours. Even worse perhaps, from their perspective, was the reduction in property values in Ikoyi and Victoria Island due to Maroko's proximity. However, even more compelling than these reasons was the need for more land as land in both Ikoyi and Victoria Island had been partitioned and repartitioned to its limit. Maroko was the next logical place for outward expansion but this was only possible once the inhabitants had been evicted.

To these explicit and implicit factors must be added the real or imaginary security report that linked the April 1990 Orkar military coup attempt with Maroko, alleging that the coup had been planned in Maroko. This security factor was exploited by other existing pressures and by a massive flood caused by 16 days of non-stop rainfall. Maroko was cleared at the expiry of a seven-day *verbal* quit notice by the military governor of Lagos State.

One of the most common reasons given for the demolition of what government defined as, or labelled, a slum was the question of the residents' illegal status and this was investigated. Our research findings revealed that most of the residents were not squatters. Some of them were resettled in Maroko by the LEDB between 1958 and 1964 and were paying annual rent to the Oniru chieftaincy family which owns Maroko land. Other residents were found to be investors who had purchased 40 x 80 foot (12 by 24 metres) or 50 x 100 foot (15 by 30 metres) plots of land from the Oniru and Elegushi families on 99-year leaseholds. Not only did most of these owners acquire their property prior to the government's land acquisition in 1972 but their properties also fell within the private portion of Maroko land which was released to the Oniru family after a Supreme Court judgement in 1976. The reason given for clearing Maroko which related to its height above sea level was also erroneous since its location and, indeed, height indicate that it can not be inundated by the sea without taking with it Victoria Island, as clearly shown by the 1995 sea surge. It would seem that the evicted population were simply victims of the greed of the Nigerian ruling élite and of an inappropriate urban development policy.

As a result of the squatter status accorded those evicted from Maroko, despite evidence to the contrary, the subsequent relocation process could only be problematic. First, with only seven days verbal notice, there was no pre-demolition resettlement scheme or plan. It is not surprising therefore that the Lt. Col. Tunde Buraimo resettlement committee was set up six days after the demolition, due principally to the intensive local and international pressures on the government. The allocation of flats which followed the commissioning of the 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.⁽¹²⁾ Of these, 1,766 were relocated on the Ilasan government housing estates, 917 on the Ikota estate⁽¹³⁾ and 250 on Epe.

At the time when these housing units were allocated, most were not ready for human habitation. For example, on the Ikota government housing estate, only four blocks out of the 2,000 one-bedroom flats were habitable.⁽¹⁴⁾ Likewise in Ilasan, only one block (six flats) out of the estimated 2,000 flats was completed. There were neither water nor electricity supplies nor facilities on the housing estates and the whole environment was waterlogged. Accounts from the residents confirmed that the two estates lacked toilets, hospitals, markets, schools, and postal and other services at the time they moved in.

Gross irregularities also marked the flat allocation process. Some people, who had not been landlords in Maroko, managed to secure two to three different allocations. They were reported to have purchased receipts of land ownership from the chieftaincy families and, with these, were able to obtain the allocations. Thus, of the 136 former landlords from Maroko interviewed for this research, only 59 (43.4 per cent) had a flat allocation, 52 (38.2 per cent) had no allocation at all and 25 (18.4

12. *Newswatch* (1990), "War over the shanties, the scramble for power", Vol.12, No.4, July 30, pages 14-20.

13. *Lagos Horizon* (1990), "2682 evacuees get approval for resettlement", Vol.3, No.7, July 7th.

14. See reference 12.

per cent) had been allocated vacant plots or non-existent top floors of incomplete blocks or dilapidated but still incomplete buildings. These initial resettlement problems highlight the limitations of the official claim that those evicted would live a better life. Based on these government assertions, and five years on, this paper now examines the housing and socio-economic lives of those evicted from Maroko.

b. The Dimensions and Ranking of Housing and Housing Related Problems for the Evicted Population

Clearly, what a government labels a “slum” is not necessarily viewed as a slum by its inhabitants. For those who live there, it can be a vibrant community of upwardly mobile individuals who may, at present, be living on the edge of society and have many problems but who are also struggling to solve these. We sought to learn about the dimensions of the many problems encountered by those evicted from Maroko both before and after the forceful relocation. Table 3 shows what were considered the major problems when in Maroko, and what they are now in their present location. Housing when in Maroko was only considered as the most serious problem by 42 per cent of respondents while half said it was less serious than access to food and clothing, health and education, and employment or access to it. In contrast, for 92 per cent of respondents, housing was now considered the most serious problem they faced.

Table 3: Housing and Related Problems by Rank

Rank	Maroko		Present location	
Topmost (housing)	130	41.9	284	91.6
2nd to food and clothing	20	6.5	9	2.9
2nd to health and education	3	1.0	1	0.3
2nd to commuting and unemployment	2	0.6	3	1.0
Last in the hierarchy	155	50.0	13	4.2
Total	310	100.0	310	100.0

Overcrowding, which is usually measured in terms of persons per room, is one of the more visible and easily measured aspects of inadequate housing. Table 4 shows how more respondents experience housing congestion in their present location compared to their former homes in Maroko. Eighty-three per cent of respondents now occupy one to two rooms with an average of eight persons per household compared to 69 per cent when living in Maroko. In the new locations, no household occupied more than four rooms whilst in Maroko, 6 per cent occupied five or more rooms.

The level of overcrowding is particularly noticeable on the Ilasan and Ikota estates. In Ikota, there are cases where two households live in one-bedroom apartments while in Ilasan, cases where between two and four households share a three-bedroom

Table 4: Number of Rooms per Household

Number of rooms	Maroko		Present location	
	No.	%	No.	%
1	120	38.7	150	48.4
2	93	30.0	106	34.2
3	39	12.6	11	3.5
4	38	12.3	43	13.9
5	8	2.8	0	0
6+	12	3.8	0	0
Total	310	100.0	310	100.0

flat predominate. In Ilasan, a case of nine persons in a room and 26 people in a flat were recorded. In Aja and Okokomaiko, occupancy rates vary from an average of four to six persons per room.

The questionnaire returns also revealed other aspects of the housing problems now faced by the former Maroko residents. These are listed in Table 5. Respondents made mention of one or a combination of poor housing attributes as the most serious problem(s) they faced in their new locations. Sixty-nine per cent now experienced inadequate facilities, poor housing conditions and poor environmental conditions compared to 37 per cent when they were in Maroko. Nineteen per cent reported not having had housing problems when in Maroko but only 1 per cent reported this for the current locations.

Most respondents now faced problems with high rents. Respondents who were paying between 10 and 40 naira per month, per room in Maroko had (in 1990) to pay between 70 and 120 naira after the eviction. The pressure on existing housing markets that the eviction helped to create has continued to push up rents. For instance, in Aja, tenants now pay as much as 350 to 500 naira per week per room with two years advance payment also required. While rents in Maroko rose slowly from between three and six naira in 1972 to between 30 and 50 naira in 1990, they have risen sharply to between 1,000 and 1,500 naira per month for a flat on the Ilasan housing estate.

c. Housing Support Services and Neighbourhood Satisfaction

A house only becomes an adequate home when all the necessary ancillary facilities are available and functioning. Those evicted from Maroko may have been forcefully ejected from what officials regarded as a slum but most now live in settlements with worse ancillary services than they had previously had in Maroko. Those evicted now live in houses which range from the Ilasan three-bedroom flats and the Ikota one-bedroom apartments on government housing estates to the roomy apartments in Aja and Okokomaiko. Those who settled in Maroko-Beach live in squatter sheds built from materials taken from the ruins of Maroko such as planks, rusty sheets, polythene, tins and

cans. A survey of toilets, baths and waste disposal facilities show that conditions have deteriorated in the new locations. For example, the number of residents who had adequate toilet and bathroom facilities fell from 60 per cent to 29 per cent while those without rose from 32 per cent in Maroko to 41 per cent in

Table 5: Housing Problems of the Evacuees

Type of housing problem for the evacuees	Maroko		Present location	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Unavailability	3	1.0	3	0.9
2. High rent	0	0	8	3.6
3. Inadequate facilities	86	27.7	38	3.6
4. Poor housing conditions	13	4.2	4	1.3
5. Poor environmental conditions	31	10.0	15	4.8
3,4 and 5 above	82	26.4	144	46.5
All of the above	3	1.0	8	2.6
2-5 above	0	0	64	20.6
3 and 5 above	33	10.7	0	0
2 and 3 above	0	0	19	6.1
None of the above	59	19.0	4	1.3
Total	310	100.0	310	100.0

the present locations (see Table 6). In Ikota, the two public toilets provided are in disuse due to poor maintenance while over 90 per cent of the houses have no toilet facility at all. Most residents use the nearby bush.

Table 6: Condition of Toilets and Bathrooms

Condition of toilets and bathrooms	Maroko		Present location	
	No.	%	No.	%
Present and adequate	187	60.3	85	27.42
Present but inadequate	98	31.3	126	40.64
Lacking	25	8.1	99	31.94
Total	310	100.00	310	100.00

In all the locations, research findings show that there is no improvement in waste disposal facilities and disposal methods and that both in Maroko and in their present locations, most people were and are not served by regular garbage collections (see Table 7). Dumping household wastes in the open or in the bush as well as dumping along the road is common in Ilasan, Ikota, Aja and Okokomaiko while residents of Maroko-Beach mainly burn or bury their refuse in the sand. Residents of Ira quarter in Okokomaiko use a more organized collection centre than their Ago Hausa counterparts.

Table 7: Waste Disposal Methods

Method of waste disposal	Maroko		Present location	
	No.	%	No.	%
Open dump	136	60.0	83	26.8
Bush	34	10.9	115	37.1
Along road sides	70	22.6	63	20.3
Into water bodies	8	2.6	19	6.1
Organized centre	12	3.9	14	4.5
Burying	-	-	16	5.2
Total	310	100.0	310	100.0

Poor drainage and poor environmental conditions were among the most serious problems in Maroko before the eviction and these were used, among others, as official reasons for demolition. A comparison of conditions in Maroko before the eviction with the present locations found that drainage and environmental conditions for over 60 per cent of the evacuees are still very poor. This is particularly true in Ilasan as well as in parts of Ikota and Okokomaiko. The small improvements recorded over the Maroko situation are peculiar to Aja, Maroko-Beach and Ira quarter in Okokomaiko where the environment is relatively well drained. The drainage conditions in the eastern part of the Ikota estate are poor with the area always being waterlogged and particularly unsanitary during and after the rains.

The situation is particularly bad on the Ilasan estate where 95 per cent of the buildings are surrounded by permanent pools of water for months on end. The drainage system on the estate is blocked as the drains are permanently filled with blackish water which does not flow due to the lack of an outlet. The perpetual pools of water have thus served not only as breeding grounds for disease agents but also as death traps for children; at least five children have been reported to have fallen into the pools of water and died. The general environment of the two estates is bushy and, according to respondents, harbours snakes and other dangerous animals. Thus, on the Ilasan estate and parts of the Ikota estate, pedestrian access to buildings is very difficult and intra-neighbourhood vehicular movement is denied. Residents on the Ilasan estate have to use rain boots or pedestrian bridges made of planks to gain access to their buildings.

Adequate provision of basic facilities such as electricity, water supply, good roads, schools and other services is required to ensure the functioning of any urban neighbourhood as well as for the stability and development of individual family life. One of the main problems with Maroko was the lack of social facilities and, at the time of demolition, the government promised to provide better facilities. But five years on, the promise has still not been met.

Maroko was not connected to the national electricity grid and did not have piped water provided by the state water corporation. However, a sizeable number of residents enjoyed electricity and water supplies from private commercial sources. Be-

15. Sunday, O.K. (1986), "Power, class and the slums: the Nigerian housing questions, Maroko-Lagos", essay submitted to the Department of Sociology, University of Lagos; also see reference 12.

tween 1986 and 1990, private electricity supplies from generators cost between six and 12 naira per point per month while a bucket of water from tankers cost 0.3 to 0.5 naira.⁽¹⁵⁾ Our research shows that 85 per cent of those relocated to Ilasan, Ikota and Maroko-Beach are served with electricity neither from the government nor private sources while only 15 per cent in Aja and Okokomaiko are connected to the national grid. Five years after resettlement, the electricity project for the Ilasan and Ikota estates has been abandoned while the squatters along the Atlantic coast have no hope of obtaining electricity from nearby Victoria Island.

With regard to water supply, none of the areas studied have piped water supplied by the state water corporation. Residents of Aja and Okokomaiko use water from wells to supplement supplies from commercial tankers. On the two housing estates, the boreholes provided have not functioned for over three years. Thus, residents of Ikota and Maroko-Beach use water mainly from hand dug wells whilst on the Ilasan estate, the polluted groundwater forces the residents to rely solely on irregular supplies from commercial tankers. In Ilasan, Ikota and Aja, a 25-litre keg of water costs between 10 and 15 naira depending on the season whilst at Maroko-Beach it costs between 8 and 10 naira.

If intra-neighbourhood roads in Maroko were judged to be of poor quality, the situation in all the relocated neighbourhoods is no better. Field observations reveal that most roads in the new locations are of poor quality and poorly maintained. In Ilasan, only a few roads are tarred and over 80 per cent of the access and distribution roads are usually waterlogged. In Ikota, no road is tarred and most roads are made of earth and are without drains. Whilst the roads in Ira quarter are adjudged poor by the residents, those in Ago Hausa area and Aja can not be called roads at all as they are simply unpaved tracks. The poor nature of the roads in these neighbourhoods hinders accessibility whilst in Maroko-Beach there are no roads, only foot and vehicle paths on sand.

Educational facilities have not improved much for the relocated population. The Ikota estate has only one nursery school. Primary and secondary school pupils attend schools in Ikota village and Ilasan or Maroko-Sandfill areas, respectively. Until August 1993, children from the Ilasan estate travelled several kilometres to school, after which primary and secondary schools were approved for the estate. The schools, which are co-managed by the government and the Community Development Association (CDA), at present make use of makeshift classrooms and the secondary school has facilities for students up to junior secondary school level.

The availability of health care in Ilasan, Ikota and Aja reflects what had existed in Maroko, with all available facilities being privately owned. Maroko-Beach residents have no health facilities at all.

Market facilities exist for lower order goods in all the studied locations except Maroko-Beach where the inhabitants make use of the nearby Sandfill market. However, residents have to travel to more established markets to buy specialized items. All the

studied areas lacked facilities such as community recreational centres.

d. Neighbourhood Satisfaction

Most of the relocated population thought that Maroko was far better than their present neighbourhoods (see Table 8). The preference for Maroko was based largely on cheap accommodation and transport, a favourable business climate, an easy life, communal understanding and a low cost of living. As described above, the new homes for most are no better than those they had in Maroko. In all areas of investigation – housing, services, facilities, neighbourhood ties and cohesion – research shows that the situation became worse rather than better, as officially promised. This gives weight to the suggestion that the real reasons for the eviction were to do with the desire of elite groups to remove a high concentration of low-income groups from a high-profile government desired location. But how was such a large-scale forcible relocation possible?

Table 8: Neighbourhood Suitability

Rating	No.	%
More suitable	32	11.0
No difference	46	15.9
Less suitable	212	73.1
Total	290	100.0

VI. DISCUSSION

THE PROBLEMS CAUSED by eviction have gained increasing international recognition not only because of their severe adverse consequences but also because of the intricate and complex nature of evictions. Thus, the United Nations has not only considered forced eviction as a gross violation of rights but has also declared all instances of forced eviction as *prima facie* incompatible with the principles of international law. In this paper, we have considered the various aspects and consequences of eviction but not what makes eviction possible in various countries, especially in Nigeria. One explanation could be the complex and conflicting nature of land acquisition and land ownership structure. Disputes over ownership or rights to land are, within our contemporary societies, the main cause of litigation and eviction. Although the 1978 Land Use Decree in Nigeria nationalized all lands, the many social, institutional and technical problems which hinder its smooth operation⁽¹⁶⁾ have made the registration of land titles and the acquisition of a certificate of occupancy difficult.

In an inflation prone economy such as Nigeria's, the acquisition of real estate is regarded as one of the safest investments. The rich and powerful seek to own properties in high quality

16. Okpala, D.C.I. (1982) "The Nigerian land use decree revisited", *Habitat International* Vol.6, Nos.5/6, pages 573-584.

17. Agbola, Tunde (1986), "Institutional constraints on housing development in urban areas of Nigeria: the case of land use decree and the building plan approval process" *Habitat International* Vol.11, No.22, pages 113-120.

18. Agbola, Tunde (1994), "The politics and administration of housing standards and the structure of Nigerian cities" in Albert, I.O., J. Adisa, T. Agbola and G. Herault (editors) (1994), *Urban Management and Urban Violence in Africa*, IFRA, Ibadan, pages 87-102.

neighbourhoods and the ranks of these hitherto small cliques continue to grow with the constant coups and changes of federal and state government. Yet, one major attribute of land in general – and of well-located land in any particular city – is that it is limited in supply. The situation in Nigerian cities is thus a combination of this constraint on increasing supply and of an élite giving high priority to land acquisition – within a system where land acquisition is difficult given the confusions caused by the Land Use Decree and the fact that the traditional land tenure system still flourishes alongside it.⁽¹⁷⁾ Attempts to circumvent the constraints on supply have led to illegal land transactions which cause land litigation and eventual expulsion.

This problem is being compounded by government having the powers to acquire land compulsorily and to revoke any right of occupancy. This power of eminent domain, as contained in the Land Use Decree and the (Federal) Compulsory Land Acquisition Law Cap 167 which preceded it, makes it possible for governments in Nigeria to acquire, for "public interest", land already occupied. Such power was invoked in the acquisition of some parts of Maroko by the government in 1972 and in the recent Aja and central Lagos cases where about 300 and 90 structures were demolished in September and October 1995, respectively. Where this type of dispossession is not compensated with adequate resettlement options, as is very common in Nigeria and as exemplified in the Maroko case, the citizens who are to be relocated always refuse to move and this often brings about forceful eviction.

But what is the public interest? What is my right as a citizen to own a piece of land and when, and under what conditions, must individual interests be subsumed to the public interest? Who determines what is the public interest? If we assume that public interest is the agglomeration of individual interests, what is the role of the law courts as the custodian of public interest and adjudicator between the conflicting interests?⁽¹⁸⁾ Is there any possibility of a voice for the individual in authoritarian régimes such as are common in Nigeria? Unless and until these issues are resolved, the problem of eviction is bound to persist.

The laxity in the enforcement of planning regulations in Nigeria and the haste with which evictions are carried out are also worth considering. Ordinarily, the statute books on planning regulations should guide the planning processes irrespective of which government is in power. However, in Nigeria, as in many other countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, it has become apparent that the tempo, intensity and effectiveness of urban planning depends on the type of government of the day. Planning officials do nothing to prevent illegal developments or provide low-income groups with legal alternatives – but they will justify an eviction. Maroko existed as a settlement for **18 years** before it was demolished just as the recently demolished Aja existed for ten years. Maroko-Beach, where some of those evicted from Maroko settled, is now growing rapidly without much official planning intervention. The question often raised is whether urban authorities should wait for a violation of the laws before the regulations are applied? And whose interests are the plan-

ners serving, those of the public or of the government of the day? Of course, planners are government employees who are expected to work according to the statute books but, in Nigeria, this happens only as long as it does not infringe upon the interests of the government of the day or its powerful operators.

What is more confusing in the Maroko case (and others) is that the government responsible for its demolition had previously issued certificates of occupancy to Maroko residents thus legitimizing their presence. For example, Governor Mobolaji Johnson, a one-time military governor of Lagos State had, in 1971, issued stamp duties to the occupants in recognition of their leasehold rights; and in the recent Aja case, the evicted occupants had certificates of land occupancy. What is more, where land litigation is resolved in the law courts, which is the last hope for the average Nigerian citizen for seeking redress against ill-articulated public interest, the government can simply disobey the court injunction for a stay of action with the use of an executive fiat (as happened in the Maroko and Aja cases). The erosion of judicial powers in contemporary Nigeria has made any respect for housing rights a difficult if not impossible task to achieve.

If one considers the amount of time allowed for the enforcement of an eviction order, the implication is that those about to be evicted are villains. Where notice of eviction is given, the length of time involved is mostly very short. In the case of Maroko, only seven days verbal notice was given whereas in the Aja case, residents claim that the bulldozers came unannounced. Why the haste for demolition when the authorities had failed to prevent encroachment in the first place? Within this context, even the 21-day quit notice allowed under Nigerian planning law was inadequate when viewed against the multiplicity of problems confronting those who were evicted. Thus, it would seem that the goal of housing rights for all citizens of all nations rests on the perception and disposition of national governments and their operatives. Government stability and the articulation and pursuit of viable, functional and practical housing policies may be the first step towards stopping demolition and eviction. Nigeria has a workable housing policy and it is presently overhauling the ambiguous, often misinterpreted and usually abused land allocation system. The town planning laws have also been revised but perhaps what is needed now is a re-education of the professionals and visible political support from the various governments. However, none of this will be effective unless there is a stable government or political system that ensures the implementation of a good and carefully articulated urban development policy.