

“The Poor Also Must Live!”

**Market Demolition, Gentrification and the
Quest for Survival in Lagos State.**

October 2016



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Publication Date: October 2016

About FIWON: FIWON is a membership based organization of self - employed workers in the informal sectors of the Nigerian economy. Whereas workers in the informal sectors constitute over 80% of non-agricultural employment, 60% of the urban employment and over 90% of new jobs in Nigeria, they are often subjected to arbitrary and excessive taxation, downright extortion, arbitrary arrests and imprisonment while their basic needs for social security is ignored. Informal workers constitute the bulk of the poor and marginalized people in Nigeria. FIWON was inaugurated June 18, 2010 in Abuja in the course of its 1st National Conference in Abuja with over 34 self - employed workers' organizations in attendance. Today, there are over 120 organizations from 15 states of the Nigerian federation.

FIWON's overall goal is to transform the working and living conditions of informal workers to an acceptable standard that guarantees their basic human rights as citizens and workers.

FIWON builds leadership capacities of informal workers for resisting rights violation and for representation in decision making public institutions. It has a Cooperative and Thrift arm that provide soft loans for members while it collaborates with public and private institutions for vocational and entrepreneurial training of members.

*This survey was conducted by the Federation of Informal Workers' Organizations of Nigeria (FIWON), which represents the interests of poor traders and other informal workers, and with the support of the Heinrich Boell Stiftung Foundation. The goal was to gain insights into the recent upsurge in demolition of informal housing, markets, and production clusters in Lagos as part of the programme of the state government to turn Lagos into a 'mega city' within the context of a larger project by the HBF: **Integration of the Informal Sector into the Economic Policy Framework of Lagos**. The focus however was on the traditional open markets, which typically accommodate mostly women dealing in foodstuff, household utensils, cosmetics, toys, clothing materials, building materials, office stationery, and light peripherals. The study also tried to look at the validity of the promise to accommodate displaced traders in new 'ultra-modern' shopping malls built in place of the destroyed traditional markets. These 'ultra-modern' markets come with better facilities complete with municipal services such as parking lots, toilets, running water, and electricity, facilities that are often lacking or are very inadequate in the open traditional markets. Finally, the study probes into the overall effects of this development on the livelihoods and general well-being of the traders involved.*

Lagos: The Making of an Urban Development Conundrum

Lagos evolved, at least from the 15th century, as a trade center and seaport with focus on the slave trade. It became a British colony in 1861 to tap into the trade in palm products and other goods with the interior. In 1906, Lagos joined with the British protectorate of Southern Nigeria. In 1914, when Southern and Northern Nigeria amalgamated, they became part of the coastal colony of Nigeria. In 1954, most of the colonies were merged with the rest of Nigeria, but Lagos was made a separate federal territory till 1991 when the capital was moved to Abuja.

The 1970s through the early 1980s marked a period of unprecedented prosperity known as the 'oil boom' era with marked physical infrastructural development of Lagos State, the then Federal Capital. New roads were constructed with bridges linking the Lagos Mainland with the Island to ease accessibility for people. Most of the nation's manufacturing industries, large construction companies, and governmental institutions, were located in Lagos, to take advantage of the ports. With over 2,000 industries, 65 per cent of the country's commercial activities are carried out in the state. Two of the nation's largest seaports — Apapa Port and Tin-Can Port — are located in Lagos State.

The historical advantages of Lagos, the failure to provide similar physical and social infrastructures, and the concomitant social and economic opportunities available in Lagos that are generally lacking in other parts of the country, have combined to pose a tremendous pull factor that bring people into Lagos daily from other parts of the country. Lagos has witnessed one of the most rapid population growth rates in the world, averaging 14 per cent per annum in the 1970s with an estimated population increase of about 275,000 persons per annum. In 1999, the [United Nations](#) predicted that the city's metropolitan area, which had only about 290,000 inhabitants in 1950, would exceed 20 million by 2010 and thus become one of the ten most populated cities in the world.¹

Markets in Lagos State

According to the data provided by the Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) on Lagos State markets, there are about 425 markets in Lagos State. Out of this number, data on the number of lock-up shops and stalls are available for only about 50 markets, adding up to roughly 28,371 lock-up shops and 15,342 stalls.² Though there are no data on the remaining 375 markets, it is safe to estimate based on available data, that there would be no less than 250,000 lock-up shops and stalls in Lagos markets. This number excludes traders operating on open grounds around these markets, in neighbourhoods, in markets within housing estates, and around residential houses. An estimate of all of these would amount to nothing less than 2 million market shops, stalls, and sheds providing employment to at least 5 million people, with women and their children constituting at least 70 per cent of that figure. The bigger, well-known markets are located on Lagos Island due to their closeness to the Apapa Wharf. The bulk of imported materials sold in these markets go to Nigeria. The markets include Obalende, Balogun, Idumota, Sangrouse, Ita Faji, Pelewura, and Oke Arin, all of which attract traders from all over Nigeria and other parts of West Africa. Other markets located in the Lagos hinterland (Mainland) are also important as they also enjoy the benefits of close proximity to the Lagos ports. These include market clusters in Oshodi, the Alaba International Market, Ketu/Mile 12 foodstuff Market cluster, Oyingbo and Mushin Markets. The Ketu/Mile 12 Market cluster is an exception in that it deals mainly in local foodstuffs, vegetables, and livestock brought from other regions, especially the northern parts of Nigeria and other countries such as Niger and Chad, unlike most of the other markets that deal in imported materials.

¹ See *Factsheet: Nigeria Population figures, Africa Check, and "State of Lagos Megacity and Other Nigerian Cities: Report"*, Lagos State Ministry of Economic Planning & Budget, 2004.

² See Lagos Waste Management Authority *Data on Markets in Lagos*, PRS Data Bank.



The popular Balogun Market; busy despite falling Rain (FIWON, September 2016).

The Story of Home and Livelihood Demolition and Traders' Eviction in Lagos

Market demolition and traders' eviction from their markets, within the context of what has come to be popularly known as 'slum clearances', 'urban renewal', 'illegal structures', demolitions, etc. in official circles, is not new. The first slum clearance was recorded in 1920 when there was a demolition by the Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB) — which is now known as the Lagos State Development and Property Corporation (LSDPC) — in response to the outbreak of bubonic plague. 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 evictions in the 1970s. Some of the documented evictions include Adeniji Adele with 5,000 people evicted from their homes and workplaces in 1975. For poor people in Lagos, 1976 was a bad year as 5,000 people were evicted in Iponri from their homes and workplaces; Central Lagos and Ketu recorded that 10,000 were evicted, respectively, in that single year. Perhaps the most celebrated eviction in Lagos so far took place in 1990 when the sprawling Maroko community was demolished with estimated 300,000 people forcibly ejected from their homes and livelihoods.³ Later, the area was transformed into a condominium known as Oniru Private Housing Estate beyond the reach of the urban poor in a classic case of gentrification and urban dispossession.⁴

Recent Market Demolitions in Lagos

Market demolition and redevelopment in Lagos have followed a clearly discernible pattern in the last one and a half decades of democratic governance. Either Government moves to demolish a market under the pretext of poor municipal facilities — roads, water, parking lots, toilets, etc. — or a ‘mysterious’ fire, as an informant put it, engulfs a market and government quickly moves in to demolish the market after which the market usually gets fenced off pending redevelopment which typically lasts several years. Lastly, with few exceptions, market redevelopments have been undertaken through private ‘developers’ who typically price the rebuilt markets out of the reach of the original occupants of those markets, raising fears of a deliberate and systematic displacement of poor traders from traditional markets in favour of private interests working in cahoots with the state government. The only exceptions to this rule are the Balogun and Ita Faaji markets in the Lagos Island, which accommodated most of the displaced traders after reconstruction by private developers. This was possible because the rebuilt stalls are of modest sizes which make them relatively affordable to most of the traders. Some of the more notorious cases of demolished markets include:

- Tejuosho market demolition after fire incidents in 2004 and 2007;
- Jankara market demolition in December 2012, after a fire incident that gutted some buildings around the market;

³ See Agboola T. and Jinadu A.M. *Forced Eviction and Forced Relocation in Nigeria, the Experience of Maroko in 1990* in *Environment and Urbanization* Vo. 9, No. 2, Oct. 1997.

⁴ See Nwanna, Chinwe, *Gentrification in Lagos State: Challenges and Prospects* in the *British Journal of Arts and Social Science*, 2012.

- Mushin Ajina market, demolished in September 2012;
- Sandgrouse Market demolition on 3 February 2015;
- Owonifari, Oshodi market demolition on 6 January 2016;
- Daleko market demolished 28 February 2016;
- Alade market, Allen Avenue, Ikeja, demolished in July 2016.

Markets under threat of demolition include Olorunshogo Ultra-Modern Market, Mosafejo, Oshodi, Pelewura, and Ebute markets on the Lagos Island.

We shall focus on a few of these cases with a view to establish common trends and draw relevant lessons.

Tejuosho Market

The first phase of the Tejuosho market was built in the early 70s as a model market while the second phase was completed by the Alhaji Lateef Jakande in the early 80s. The market was, however, gutted by mysterious fire twice in 2004 and 2007 when it was completely destroyed, causing traders to lose billions of naira's worth of goods and property. The Lagos state government subsequently embarked on a reconstruction of the market on a scale and dimension that dwarfed the relatively massive edifice that was destroyed. The new Tejuosho Market, commissioned on 26 August 2014 by the then governor of Lagos state, Governor Raji Fashola, is a sprawling five-storey building, comprising no fewer than 4,000 shops, a police post, a fire station, and a parking space that can accommodate 800 vehicles at a time. The new market also boasts of a waste disposal system, a water supply system, a mini power plant, elevators, and ramps, among others.

It is interesting that almost two years after official commissioning, the new market is only about 30 per cent occupied, with most of the present occupants being banks, health spas, pharmacies, ICT sales and service outlets, offices, and such other high-brow customers. Some of the old Tejuosho traders can only afford to do business in open spaces on the ground floor! The reason is not far-fetched. The new rents and rates are simply prohibitive!

According to the Tejuosho Property and Development Company Limited, the concessionaire, one-year rent for different sizes of shops in the market ranges from N650,625 to N1,575,000. Three-year rent ranges from N577,500 to N3,465,000, while five-year rent ranges from N500,000 to N5,000,000. The purchase price of a shop space goes for N600,000 per square meter and beyond, while restaurant space sells for N700,000 or more, depending on the size.

Displaced Tejuosho market traders lament that these new rents and rates are simply outlandish. In the words of an old Tejuosho trader, 'What do I sell? Children toys, children clothing, bed sheets, house hold utensils... The entire value of my ware cannot pay for a small shop for one year in the new market. They know what they are doing, they don't want us there! They say it costs between N5 million to N7 million to own a shop. Even for rent, we were asked to pay not less than N1.5 million. Where would one whose total goods do not amount to N1 million get money to pay for such shop? We now hawk our goods around the railway tracks where KAI (Kick Against Indiscipline) men are pursuing us here and there and confiscating our wares."

Another trader working close to the Yaba Motor Park says "All I sell you can see; cosmetics, soap, detergent, matches and other household stuff...they could provide small collapsible stalls, klamps, kiosks to accommodate people like us in the new market."



The Tejuosho Ultra-Modern Market remains largely empty (FIWON, September 2016).

Oyingbo Market

The old Oyingbo market started in the 1920s as a depot for agricultural produce. The fast growth of Ebute Metta and other communities around the market and the movement of traders from Apapa environs in the 1930s boosted the size of the market and expanded the array of available goods to include meat and livestock.

The old market was demolished in 1991 by the Lagos Island Local Government under Engineer Sulaiman Larinde, leaving the traders with no other option than to fan out into adjoining streets to ply their trade while the long wait for the reconstruction of the market

started. In 2007, Governor Babatunde Fashola awarded the construction of the market to Messrs ELCON Properties Nigeria Limited in 2007, but was later awarded to Messrs Palmyra Construction Nigeria Limited in 2009, who completed it 60 weeks later. The completed four-storey massive complex sits on a 544 square metres with a 622 open shops, 102 lockup shops, 48 open offices, 134 toilets, 6 exit gates, and 150-car capacity parking lot on the ground floor. Other features in the new market complex include an industrial borehole, water treatment plant, fire protection, air cooling system, cold room, refuse chute, sewage treatment plant, ground and overhead water tanks, 100 KVA transformers, two 1,250 KVA generators, and a 100 KVA fire alarm system/smoke detector. Like the Tejuosho market, the New Oyingbo market remains largely vacant since May 2015 when it was commissioned.



The New Oyingbo Market, largely vacant (FIWON, September 2016).

Arena Market, Oshodi

At the Bolade, Oshodi end of the ever congested Agege Motor Road lies a sprawling edifice known as the Arena Market, a beautiful architectural masterpiece completed in 2009. The edifice, owned by the Nigerian Army, was constructed under a lease arrangement between the Nigerian Army, the owner of the market site, and Woobs Resources Limited, which was granted a concession right to construct, manage, and operate the ultra-modern market for a period of 25 years on a build, operate, and transfer basis.

Located on parts of the new Arena Market was a 'mammy market' belonging to the Army. The mammy market was largely vacated after the January 2002 bomb explosions that occurred at the Ikeja Cantonment's Armoury, which led to loss of many lives and massive destruction of structures belonging to the military and civilians alike.

The Arena market boasts of 3,000 stalls made up of lock-up shops and open and warehouse structures, some of which are *en suite*. Support facilities in the market include seven restaurants; parking space for 1,016 vehicles, including a 32-truck parking bay; and covered loading and off-loading bays at the flanks of the premises to ease management of cattle and bulk goods. There are also banking halls and a facility management office, all complete with 216 public toilets and 72 bathrooms built in seven clusters within the market. The Arena also has a dedicated fire service station to complement the fire hydrants spread all over, including a police post, abattoir, incinerator, and a modern refuse disposal system as well as dedicated electricity transformers, generators, and water boreholes with adequate water storage facility.



It is sad to note, however, that only a few of the lock-up shops are occupied seven years after official commissioning of the market. Most of the shops are under lock and key while many of the warehouses remain un-occupied. But the open stalls section of the complex is about 80 per cent rented and bubbling with traders and buyers of footwear, clothes, fruits, vegetables, and other perishables.

The major reason given for the low trader occupation of the market is the relatively high rental cost. A lock-up shop at the complex costs N300,000 per annum, while a lease for five years goes for N1.25 million. Rental values for a lock-up shop *en suite* cost N326,000 per annum, while the open stalls cost N55,000 per annum. Space for warehouse goes for N421,000 per annum, while the service charges in the shopping arcade range from N4,000

to N5,000 per month. The lower rental value of the stalls obviously accounts for the higher occupation rate of those classes of shops. Though there are insinuations that the presence of uniformed military personnel manning the entrance gates into the market might also scare away traders and their customers, the question is why are the relatively cheaper open stalls still largely occupied?

Sura Shopping Mall, Simpson Street, Lagos

The story of the Sura Shopping Mall on Simpson Street, Lagos Island, is indicative of the low use value of the kind of futuristic reconstruction of traditional open markets gaining increasing social currency in Lagos right now. Built about two decades ago by the Ibile Holdings, the investment company of the Lagos State Government, the Sura Shopping Mall comprises over hundred lock-up shops of various sizes, open and lock-up warehouses with standby electricity generating set, running water, adequate parking space, as well as good security. A visit to Sura market today would reveal an almost deserted market with most stalls now being used as offices, pharmacies, and service centers by some IT companies while a lot of the stalls remain empty. Traders complain about the relatively high cost of rent plus difficult access as the reasons for the sparse volume of commercial activities in the market. Yet the Sura Market model remains popular among government and private sector developers in Lagos State.



Sparse Sura Shopping Mall, over 20 years after construction — an indication of how the New Tejuosho Market will Look in 20 years' time? (FIWON, August 2016).

Demolished, Yet-to-be Rebuilt Markets

Sandgrouse Market

The Sandgrouse Market on Lagos Island is one of the oldest markets in the Lagos Metropolitan Area. It has a chequered history and was demolished and rebuilt after fire outbreaks in 1971 and 1981. It is noteworthy however, that the 1981 reconstruction was very sensitively handled by the then Alhaji Lateef Jakande government. Older traders recall how those occupying the market before the fire outbreak were given a temporary site before the reconstruction and were promptly resettled in the market after reconstruction.

In July 2015, the market was again demolished by the Lagos State government who, in the following month, signed an agreement with DHB Construction Limited to commence redevelopment of the market. Though Mr. Hakeem Aloba-Bakare of DHB Construction promised that traders would be relocated to another site pending reconstruction of the

market, almost one year after the traders still remain in limbo with most of them operating behind the iron roofing sheets with which the demolished market was fenced off.



The demolished Sandgrouse market fenced off with roofing sheets. Note the picture of the futuristic 'Sandgrouse Mall' inside the fence. Outside the fence, traders manage to do business close to the thick vehicular traffic (FIWON, August 2016).

Owonifari Market, Oshodi

Many traders claimed they lost goods worth billions of naira to the bulldozers and debris following the 6 January 2016 demolition of the market to construct 'a world class bus terminus' around the place. While traders blamed the government for not giving sufficient notice to move their wares, the government insisted to have not only given the traders enough notice, but had actually provided another alternative site at Isopakodowo Market, Bolade, also in Oshodi.

The traders, however, maintain that whereas the Owonifari Market accommodated about 5,000 traders, the new one has slots for just 600, excluding the kee clamps. Traders also

fear that they might not be able to afford the price tags of the market stalls in the relocated site.



The demolished Owonifari Market, Oshodi, to make way for the 'Oshodi Transport Interchange' (FIWON, August 2016).

Jankara Market, Lagos Island

Jankara Market, located at the center of Adeniji Adele area of Lagos Island, was demolished in December 2012 following a fire incident which razed a few buildings around the market. The market site was subsequently fenced off and the traders, who were left to operate behind the fence and in adjoining streets, became subject to frequent harassment and extortion by government agencies, especially the Kick Against Indiscipline (KAI) Brigades. Unlike other cleared markets, there is no discernible plan to rebuild the market in the foreseeable future.



Traders outside the fence in Jankara (FIWON, August 2016).

Mushin Ajina Market

The Mushin Ajina Market, estimated to be over 100 years old, was demolished in 2012 by the Mushin Local Government Council under the chairmanship of Mr. Babatunde Adepitan. With close to 2,000 market stalls, lock-up shops, and k-clamps, it was one of the biggest markets on the Lagos Mainland. A wide variety of goods, ranging from foodstuffs, cloth, livestock, and household and general merchandise, were traded in the market. The Mushin local government has a rather fuzzy arrangement with a private sector property developer to redevelop the market, an arrangement that has not seen the light of the day almost four years after the demolition of the market.



The roofing sheet fencing of the Mushin Ajina Market. The market remains undeveloped and abandoned four years after demolition (FIWON, August 2016).

Daleko Market

Daleko Market, the popular rice, vegetable oil, and staple market in Lagos, was demolished in February 2016, two days before the ultimatum given to traders to vacate the market.

The traders and the market leaders were said to have agreed to the market redevelopment plans, as championed by the Iyaloja. However, now the traders are expressing fear that the prior arrangement, wherein those owning stalls in the demolished market would be given new shops free after reconstruction, was already being breached even before any reconstruction had started. In the words of one trader:

"...I sell rice and I have been in this market since 1983. It wasn't the government's decision. They came around 8 a.m. yesterday asking us to vacate the place. It took them about six hours to remove the roofs of the shops. It is the Iyalaja General. We are not saying she shouldn't develop the market, but why should we pay for our shops. We were told that whether we have documents or not, we would buy the shops. Is the notice fair enough?"

The Story of a to-be-demolished Market

The Olorunshogo Ultra Modern Market, Onigbongbo, Oshodi Lagos, has an interesting but chequered history that started in 1987 with a protest during Col. Raji Rasaki's stint as the military administrator of Lagos state. The immediate cause of the protest was the fact that the traders were operating in a swampy, unhealthy environment. As a result of the protest, the military administration granted the traders permission to build permanent structures in the market, but the developers, in the opinion of the traders, overpriced the new stalls at the cost of N18,000. In 1991, the traders took the developers to court to protest the high cost of the stalls, which was then reduced to N12,000 by the court. In 2006, a developer, Larry Ogunmusere & Co., undertook to upgrade the market to 'ultra-modern' market status in an arrangement involving the state government, the traders, and the developer.

A new twist developed in the story, however, when on 4 January 2016, the traders received a seven-day eviction notice from the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning on the grounds of poor infrastructure in the market. The traders subsequently embarked on massive renovation to further enhance the value of the market. Despite all efforts, however, the Lagos state government served the traders another eviction notice in April 2016. The traders succeeded in having a meeting with the Governor Ambode in July, during which the governor made it clear that the shopping complex would be demolished by September 2016 to make way for the proposed 'Oshodi Transport Interchange' to which his government was irrevocably committed. However, he promised to compensate the traders as well as provide another site for a new market in Olushosun area of Ojota. A recent intervention has helped to postpone the demolition threat pending the development of the Olushosun site.

Comparing Costs in Open Markets with Costs in the 'Ultra-Modern' Markets.

Depending on the size, location, and nature of shops, the cost of a shop or stall in an open market ranges from N30,000 per annum to N100,000 per annum. Other costs include an 'agreement fee' of N25,000 while the Local Government and LAWMA collect N2,400 each, N3,000 is paid as security fees while the Lagos state government collects N2,500 personal income tax, which has just been increased by 100 per cent to N5,000 per annum.

In the 'ultra-modern' markets, on the other hand, a prospective shop seeker pays average of N500,000 to N5 million, depending on the location and size excluding other charges, levies, taxes, and fees.

Implications of Market Demolitions and Evictions

The effects of market evictions and demolitions on the traders operating in the traditional open markets are enormous. Almost all the markets we visited and conducted interviews in had recorded several deaths during and after demolitions and evictions. Several traders reportedly succumbed to deteriorating health conditions, especially heart-related diseases. Needless to say, given the tradition of social division of labour among the Yorubas of Southwest Nigeria, and the lower access to formal education and skills, women predominate in trading and lower-end commercial activities. Expectedly therefore, women form the bulk of those operating in markets and petty trading and are more heavily affected by the demolitions and evictions that have become very frequent in recent years. According to a researcher who conducted extensive field research on implications of evictions of women traders:

"... As entrepreneurs, women's economic potential is capped due to the lack of access to safe work spaces and start-up capital. Among the evicted women traders, forced evictions ... are a major cause of insecurity. The destruction of market stalls does not mean the demolition of market stalls alone but often means that the informal enterprises/livelihoods that the women traders engage in are also destroyed. Women, children and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are most adversely

affected by such evictions which invariably increases rather than reduces, the problems that they set out to 'solve'".⁵

Some of the issues raised by women interviewed in the course of this work, include the following:

- Inability to pay for a shop, in the newly reconstructed 'ultra-modern' markets and getting a new working capital.
- Backward coping strategy, such as withdrawing children from fee-paying school for low standard non-fee paying schools.
- In some extreme cases, withdrawing children from schools to engage in street trading or hawking and sending children out to live with other members of extended family.

In conclusion, it is clear that the Lagos State Government needs to develop an inclusive urban development policy that will include the needs of the poor in urban upgrades and redevelopment initiatives. Such policies would ensure better access for the poorer residents of Lagos state to housing and trading needs. For instance, it is clear that the 'ultra-modern' markets could easily include poor traders' need for very small spaces in accessible parts of the new markets. Such spaces would attract competitive rates that would be affordable to the poorer traders, who usually deal in highly perishable wares, such as foodstuffs, vegetables, meat, fish, and fruit. The private developers should by now also realize that, as majority the of Lagosians are poor, their needs should be consciously incorporated into redevelopment plans. As one interviewee put it, "the poor also must live!"

However, since the right things are not always apparent to policymakers, development experts and social, environmental, and human rights activists should team up with the Federation of Informal Workers' Organizations of Nigeria (FIWON). Together, they can campaign vigorously for inclusive urban development policies, especially in the areas of housing and market redevelopments.

⁵ See Olabisi, Sherift Yusuff, *Gender and Urban Renewal Development; An Examination of Challenges of Evicted Market Women in Lagos state, Nigeria* in the American journal of Rural Development, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2013.



A Map Showing Markets Surveyed in this Study.