

## Gentrification in Lagos State: Challenges and Prospects

**Chinwe R. Nwanna (Ph. D.)**

*Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos Nigeria,*

*GSM: 234-8034034559; 234-7026287269*

*Email: [chironwa@yahoo.com](mailto:chironwa@yahoo.com); [cnwanna@unilag.ed.ng](mailto:cnwanna@unilag.ed.ng)*

### Abstract

*Using a qualitative method, this study attempts to explore the challenges and prospects of gentrification in Lagos state. The result observes that gentrification has occurred in former Maroko and is occurring in other parts of Lagos metropolis. Developers buy up abandoned housing and harass low and middle-income tenants into leaving their buildings that can then be converted for high profits. It observes further that low-income tenants find their rents suddenly doubled and tripled. Evictions are common, and when the current residents leave, the buildings are renovated into edifices. It also observes that gentrification has come to stay in Lagos State as many dilapidated houses are being purchased by developers and affluent members of the society. Landowners who do not want to sell their properties have warning signs such as “CAVEAT: THIS HOUSE IS NOT FOR SALE. BEWARE OF 419.” We argue that while gentrification improves the quality of life in gentrified buildings or areas and beautifies the city, it further impoverishes the urban poor pushing them into a lower quality of life. The paper therefore recommends that displaced residents should be adequately compensated to enable them to afford conventional houses.*

**Key words:** Gentrification, gentrified area, gentrifiers, Maroko, Oniru Housing Estate, Lagos State

## **1.0 Introduction and background to the study**

Africa has the highest levels of urbanization but the least urbanized when compared with other regions of the world. In 2009, almost 40% of African population lived in urban areas (UN-HABITAT, 2010). By 2050, the Africa's urban population is estimated to triple to over one billion (UN-HABITAT, 2010). In most countries, a high rate of urbanization combined with consistent economic decline over the last two decades has resulted in a rapid increase in the number of urban poor. In sub-Saharan African countries, it is estimated that more than 40% of urban residents are living in poverty (Aluko and Amidu, 2006). These factors contribute to the increasing informal developments in African cities; Nigeria inclusive.

Currently, about 43% of Nigerians live in urban centres. Modern urbanization in Nigeria has been dominated by the growth of a single primate city, the political and commercial hub of the nation, Lagos. Rural – urban migration from other parts of the country into Lagos has been the major determinant for this high rate of urban population growth resulting in proliferation of slums and squatter settlements, high rate of unemployment, etc. It is estimated that between 20 and 80 % of urban growth in developing countries is informal, usually inhabited by the low income people (Aluko and Amidu, 2006). Without secure access to land and the means of production, the paradigm of daily survival compels the poor, due to circumstances beyond their control or influence, to live within short – term horizons that degrade resources and fuel a downward spiral of poverty. These informal settlements have over time evolved informal systems of land tenure relations and management in spite of the state – sponsored land tenure law in Nigeria.

In market-driven countries like Nigeria, land allocation is inequitable. Formal urban markets, by their very operations and rules, prevent access to land by the majority of city dwellers. As a result, informal markets fill this exclusion gap and this is where the overwhelming majority of African urban land transactions take place. Low-income urban people have to solve their shelter and livelihood problems themselves. The spread of squatter settlements and slums are hardly surprising given the large numbers of poor people, increasing rural-urban migration, and lack of government concern. People move to the city from rural areas because of both 'push' factors (including poverty, land degradation, low incomes, low productivity, etc.) and 'pull' factors (the glamour of urban areas, higher incomes, services, clean water, electricity etc.). Most people migrated in search of employment opportunities which are often not available. They, therefore, engage in irregular, low-income employment making them poor that they cannot afford conventional housing. They live in sub-standard housing. Audefroy (1994) notes that, globally, over one billion people lack adequate shelter or live in unacceptable housing conditions.

Housing, one of the basic needs of man, is a major problem in urban centres. Urban land is valuable. Land and housing markets constrain access to housing for the majority of urban dwellers. Slums and squatter settlements are found on the urban fringes or in centrally located areas, mostly on public land but also, less frequently, on private land, especially when disputed. They can also be found on swampy areas, areas prone to flooding, and other waste lands. These can be the result of an organized invasion or a gradual occupation. Slums and squatter settlements are distinctive features of cities in Nigeria. They are both the products of and vehicles for modernizing activities. Most often government's response to squatter settlements, shanty towns and slums is demolition or slum clearance after evictions of the residents. Such efforts are largely undertaken to improve the city's international public image, or justified for health reasons or as maintaining standards. Slum clearance is also justified in market terms, when a settlement is located on prime development land. A prime example of slum demolition occurred in former Maroko in July 1990 which was later converted into a condominium (Oniru Private Housing Estate) beyond the reach of urban poor. This transformation is referred to as gentrification.

Gentrification is relatively a contemporary term. The concept was developed by a sociologist, Ruth Glass (1964) in London when middle class people who migrated into suburbs were moving back into the inner city. Gentrification is an ongoing, cyclical process that is widespread in the developed western world. It literally means a planned change in the population of land users in such a way that the new users are of higher socio-economic status than the last users. There is also a change in the constructed environment through an investment in the fixed capital. A gentrified area is characterized by a displacement of a lower income group by a higher income one. It occurs mostly in residential areas and involves rehabilitation of dilapidated buildings into condominiums. Gentrification is currently taking place in many countries in both developed and developing ones in different forms and directions. In Nigeria, it has been observed to be occurring in Lagos State.

Gentrification is a new phenomenon in Nigeria and has not yet been studied. Why and how is this phenomenon taking place in Lagos State? What are the implications? What are the prospects? These are questions that beg for answers in this paper. Using a qualitative method and personal observations, this paper attempts to explore the challenges and prospects of gentrification in Lagos state.

### **1.1 Objectives**

The objectives of this paper are:

- To identify and understand the demographic and social changes which have occurred variously from life in Maroko to that in gentrified Oniru Private Housing Estate.
- To explore the disadvantages and implications of gentrification in Lagos State.
- To consider the prospects of gentrification in Lagos State.

### **1.2 Conceptual discourse**

The word, gentrification, has received significant attention in a number of academic disciplines, most notably urban geography and urban sociology. It was first defined by Glass (1964) as the process by which the original, poor and working-class residents, are displaced from neighbourhoods by rising costs and other forces directly related to an influx of new, wealthier residents. She describes succinctly thus “One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle-classes - upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages - two rooms up and two down - have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences. Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed”. (Hamnett, 2000). While The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines gentrification as a transformation of neighbourhoods from low value to high value. Slater (2002) describes it as a fascinating, powerful and often frighteningly rapid process which plays an important role in fashioning the physical and social form of cities. Like the more widespread process of suburbanization, it is a process which has had a profound impact on the lives of urban residents in hundreds of cities.

For Kilmartin (2003), gentrification is the process by which higher income households displace lower income residents of a neighbourhood, changing the essential character and flavour of that neighbourhood. Under this definition, gentrification has three specific characteristics: (a) displacement of original residents, (b) physical upgrading of the neighbourhood, particularly of housing stock, and (c) change in neighbourhood character. In essence a gentrified area or building must be a residential area or building. Gentrification is not confined by time limitation and hence even though the term is relatively new, any process that fits that basic description of displacement/replacement of one group for another would constitute gentrification. Some other rules that would qualify a process as a process of gentrification include the fact that gentrification is mostly an inner city process, it takes place mostly in

residential areas and that it involves the rehabilitation of un-maintained buildings even if they are architecturally attractive. It is driven by an imbalance in housing supply and demand. AbsoluteAstronomy (2005) assessing gentrification defines it as a physical, social, economic and cultural phenomenon whereby working class and/or inner-city neighbourhoods are converted into more affluent middle class communities by remodelling building, resulting in increased property values and in the displacement of the poor.

Gentrification can be distinguished from urban regeneration urban renewal or urban redevelopment. Urban regeneration can be described as a deliberate effort to change the urban environment through planned large-scale adjustment of existing city areas to present and future requirements for urban living and working (Osuide 2004). Urban redevelopment and urban renewal are technically widely separated according to Glazer (1965). Redevelopment means total clearance of an area and refers to treatment made possible by 1949 Housing Act. Urban renewal is a process where an urban neighbourhood or area is improved and rehabilitated. It is a state-sanctioned programme designed to help communities improve and redevelop areas that are physically deteriorated, unsafe, or poorly planned. The renewal process can include demolishing old or run-down buildings, constructing new, up-to-date housing, or adding in features like a theater, parks, office buildings, and a sports arena. Urban renewal is usually undergone for the purposes of persuading wealthier individuals to come and live in that area. It is often part of the gentrification process. From their various definitions, the main distinction between urban regeneration, urban renewal and gentrification is that gentrification does not include features such as a theater, parks, office buildings, and a sports arena. It is exclusively a residential programme.

## 2.0 Theoretical underpinnings

Gentrification is a complex phenomenon with its exact causes relatively unknown due to the fact that no one theory seems to suit all cities where this process has occurred. However, through many studies, the reasons for gentrification have been shown to be diverse depending on the needs of the new inhabitants. There are three major groups of paradigms for the explanation of this phenomenon which are: urban-ecological, Neo-Marxist and hybrids integrated approaches.

The first of the theories is the urban-ecological perspective. The first and dominant proponent of this group of theories is Glass (1964). She introduced the concept of gentrification into the sociological and geographic lexicon. She asserts that gentrification is a process in the housing market that occurs when the original poor residents are displaced from neighbourhoods by rising costs and other forces directly related to an influx of new wealthier residents. The Housing market is therefore an excellent indication of the change in an area, based on the contention that poor people can no longer afford to live in such areas with rising rents and house prices. She further stresses that *“once this process of gentrification’ starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original poor occupiers are displaced and the whole character of the district is changed.”* (Glass, 1964)

The urban-ecology theories were found to be deficient by neo-Marxists such as Smith (1979). He contends that urban ecological scholars have overvalued the cultural analysis of the gentrifiers, at the expense of a theoretical understanding of the role of capital investment into the cities. He argues that gentrification is the result of the uneven development of many major Western industrial cities i.e. the overvaluing of the suburbs over the inner city. He therefore applies rent-gap theory to explain the depreciation of inner city property values due primarily to suburbanization and de-industrialization, and why gentrification occurs. He avers that capital flows where the rate of return is the highest and the movement of capital to the suburbs, along with a continual depreciation of inner city capital eventually produces the rent gap (Smith 1979). This rent gap ultimately creates the economic opportunity for

developers, landlords, private investors and other people with a vested interest in the development of land to profit from the surplus value left by the disparity between the exchange value and the use value of the property.

In their own contributions to the explanations of gentrification, Hybrid theorists like Damarius (1983) and Hamnett (1984) faulted the over-compartmentalization of the gentrification by both the urban-ecologists and neo-Marxists and therefore called for an integrated approach to gentrification studies. For instance, Hamnett (1984), after comparing various theories on gentrification, highlighting Smith's in particular, with residential location theory, posits that there are five main explanatory factors of gentrification, which are "*by no means mutually exclusive*" (emphasis mine). According to him, these five explanations, both blending the previously argued theoretical positions and introducing his own assertions, are (in order of importance): first, the impact of increasing city size coupled with changes in the trade-off between preference for size and accessibility; second, changes in the demographic and household structure of the population; third, lifestyle and preference shifts; fourth, changes in the relative house price inflation and investment; and lastly, changes in the employment base and occupational structure of certain cities (Hamnett, 1984). Hamnett insists that all sociologists and geographers should be examining the phenomenon by answering the questions "Why has gentrification occurred, when and where it has occurred?"

This study is, therefore, premised on Hamnett's integrated approach because it is interested in the changes in the demographic and household structure of the population; lifestyle and preference shifts; changes in the relative house price inflation and investment; and changes in the employment base and occupational structure of Oniru Private Housing Estate.

### 3.0 Study setting

The study covered Oniru Private Housing Estate in Lagos State. Lagos state was created on May 27, 1967 by virtue of the State Creation and Transitional Provisions of Decree No. 14 of 1967, which reconstructed Nigeria's federation into 12 states (Lagos State, 1998). The state is located on the south western part of Nigeria and lies approximately between longitudes  $2^{\circ}42^1E$  and  $3^{\circ}22^1E$  and latitudes  $6^{\circ}22^1N$  and  $6^{\circ}52^1N$ . Located on the narrow coastal flood plain of the Bight of Benin, Lagos is bounded in the north and east by Ogun state, the Atlantic Ocean in the south and in the west by the Republic of Benin. Administratively, Lagos State is divided into 20 local government areas (LGAs) and 37 development areas. In the recent 2006 census figures, Lagos has over 9.0 million inhabitants with a landmass of 3,577 square kilometres representing 0.4% of the total landmass of the federation. The Lagos State government has since declared that the figure was unacceptable because a parallel census conducted by the state produced a higher figure of 17.6 million people (Obia, 2007).

Lagos state is inhabited predominantly by the Aworis and Eguns who are Yorubas in Ikeja and Badagry divisions respectively. Generally her ethnic configuration is diverse with Yorubas constituting 65%, Hausa 15%, Igbo 15% and others 5% (Lagos State website, 2006). Until recently, Lagos served as the federal capital of the country. She also serves as the industrial and commercial hub of the country with a gross national product (GNP) that triples that of any other West African country (Lagos state government, 2006). It therefore, attracts a good number of in-migrant and immigrant settlers.

Lagos State has been experiencing high rates of urban population growth from 267,400 in 1952 to 665,246 in 1963 at a rate of over 8.6% per annum (Nwanna, 2004) to its current disputed population of 9.1 million (Federal Government Printer, (FGP) 2007). As the pace of urbanization and urban growth speeds up, Lagos State government's capacity to manage the consequences of undesirable urban trends decreases due to inadequate spending on human and institutional capacities, services delivery, adequate and affordable housing and job opportunities. The social, economic and environmental effects of these

failures fall heavily on the poor, who are excluded from the benefits of urban prosperity. Among the symptoms of over-urbanization in Lagos are slum and squatter settlements proliferation, high unemployment rates, social polarization and crime, which all result from systemic governance failure and unequal distribution of urban or national wealth.

Housing in Lagos State is inadequate both in quantity and in quality due to burgeoning urban population. A 1970 Nigerian Government Urban Survey showed that 70% of the households in Lagos lived in one-room housing units (UNECA, 1989:31). There was a deficit of 3 million houses in urban centres in 1987 (Syagga 1987:205). Construction has not kept pace with urban rapidly expanding populations leading to severe overcrowding and congestion particularly in Lagos. For instance, average number of persons per room in Lagos State is 5.4 while four persons occupy a single room in metropolitan Lagos in housing units that lacked good sanitation and uninterrupted water supply (Nwanna, 2004). Atere (2001) reported that a 1981 World Bank assisted urban renewal project identified 42 “blighted areas” in the Lagos metropolis alone. 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 (Chatterjee, 1983). The problems within such settlements have continued to bother planners and administrators alike and have generated different responses. The main approach by Lagos State government in most cases is eviction of the residents, demolition or slum clearance and relocation.

Slum clearance is not of a recent origin in Lagos. It dates back to 1920 when there was a demolition by the Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB) 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 1980s. A large-scale eviction took place in Maroko in 1990 where some 300,000 people were forcibly ejected (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997). Later, the area was transformed into a condominium known as Oniru Private Housing Estate beyond the reach of the urban poor.

#### **4.0 Methods of the study**

This was an exploratory study that was carried out in Oniru Private Housing Estate, Iru - Victoria Island. The study population were residents of the Housing Estate i.e. Families, Individuals etc. Using a qualitative method of in-depth interviews of twenty (nine males and eleven females) occupants from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2009, content analysis of secondary data and personal observations, information was obtained. Respondents were interviewed with the use of In-depth Interview Guide. The guide had two sections. The first section had the back ground data of the respondents while the second asked questions on the state of Oniru Private Housing Estate. The main aim was to compare the conditions and facilities of the former Maroko and the new gentrified Oniru Private Housing Estate. Data were collected by 300 and 400 level students of Sociology of Urban Life and Urbanization and Labour Migration. The data collected were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis.

#### **5.0 Results of the study**

##### **5.1 The Profile of Old Maroko**

Before describing the gentrified area of our study, Oniru Private Housing Estate, it is pertinent to discuss the profile of Maroko before demolition. Maroko was a densely populated slum area with a space of about 11,425 hectares adjacent to Ikoyi and Victoria Island, low-density areas of Lagos State. It

was under a traditional leader, Chief-Murtallab Folami, the Baale of Oroke. The Oniru and the Elegushi families were said to be the landowners, from whom people bought land. It had an estimated population of about 300,000 socially heterogeneous inhabitants (Amnesty International, 2006). Majority of the residents were young and middle aged mostly in age group 30 – 49 years and polygynous with large families. Their occupational status shows that they were mostly fishermen, semi-skilled self-employed men such as mechanics, technicians etc. Women were mainly traders. Maroko had a mixture of people in the formal and informal sectors. It was a service centre to the adjacent Victoria Island and Ikoyi where the majority of its residents were employed in formal bureaucratic organizations and as domestic staff to the bureaucrats inhabiting Victoria Island and Ikoyi. Maroko was a central market point for people of the Victoria Island and Ikoyi. Majority of the residents of Maroko were low income earners.

Ethnic configuration of the area showed that Yorubas predominated among whom were the Ilajes. They occupied the Ilado area of Maroko and were mostly fishermen notable for the operation of the canoes and boats that plied Ikoyi/Maroko enroute the Lagoon. Other inhabitants were the Ibadan, the Ondo, the Egba and the Igbo people in that order. Immigrants from Togo and Ghana also resided there and were said to own houses in the area. Housing stock was of spontaneous nature (makeshift plank building) and was easily flooded during the raining seasons. There were some brick buildings as well, mostly owned by some wealthy landlords, many of whom did not necessarily reside at Maroko (Kehinde, 2003). Residents of Maroko had no access to pipe borne water, electricity and proper drainage system and sewage disposal. Bucket toilets were used. An average of eight persons per household occupied one to two rooms. Waste disposal was in the form of burning or burying in the sand. 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 (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997). There were no roads, only foot and vehicle paths on sand. Also there were no public health facilities at all.

## **5.2 Transformation of Maroko into a gentrified area (Oniru Private Housing Estate)**

Maroko's location within the heart of Victoria Island, a wealthy residential and commercial area of Lagos, made it attractive for property development. It was demolished in phases, first, during Governor Jakande (1979-1985) era. The purpose of the demolition according to the state government was to transform the slums into civilized cities and towns while dual development was to be stopped, so that the ugly juxtaposition of haven in Victoria Island and a hell in Maroko would be history. Second demolition was in 1985 by Buhari/Idiagbon government. In February 1990, the then President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida, visited the community and promised to improve the living conditions of the residents. Nevertheless, five months later, the third demolition took place and the remaining part of Maroko slum was uprooted on Saturday, July 14, 1990 by Governor Rasaki (Kehinde, 2003). The major reason offered for this demolition was that Maroko was occupying an area below sea level; liable to flooding and complete submergence; and that Maroko's total environment was unkept and dangerous and presented a risk of disease epidemics and was, therefore, dangerous for human habitation. Another reason was that the residents were squatters on land the government had acquired since 1972. 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.

Displaced residents of old Maroko moved to Aja, Ikota, Ilasan, Maroko-Beach in Eti-Osa and Okokomaiko in Ojo (Agbola and Jinadu, 2006). 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. Only about 2,000 out of over 10,000 former Maroko house-owners were resettled (Amnesty International, 2006). Up till today, the remaining 8,000 house owners are neither assisted to find alternative accommodation nor offered compensation.

The issue of which family was the genuine owner of Maroko had been a tussle between the Oniru and the Elegushi Chieftancy Families of Lagos since 1965. The suit was filed and settled in court which found and declared Oniru Chieftancy Family, the lawful owner of the land. However, Lagos State Government was able to prove that Maroko land belonged to it and acquired the land. Oniru Chieftancy Family then pleaded with the government to leave some portion of the land for their family use. Government considered this request mainly to prove that the acquisition was not motivated in bad faith as alleged in court. A portion of the land was conceded, duly derequisitioned and published in the Official State Gazette in 1977. The State Government paid a total sum of N6.8 million as compensation to the Oniru Chieftancy Family for both the land and the structures thereon. What was left to the Oniru family was 732 hectares out of Maroko large expanse land of about 11,425 hectares which harbours the estate. Some parts of the land were sold while 200 plots were given to Oniru family members. The entire estate is under the Administration of His Royal Majesty, Oba (Dr.) Idowu Abiodun Oniru (Aki Ogun the Second). The Oba manages the affairs of the people in the estate, ensuring peace, and social order. In case of any disputes, they are resolved in the Oba's palace and on rare instances when the Oba could not resolve such disputes, they are then transferred to the police or the court depending on the cases.

### **5.3 Socio-demographic profile of the gentrified Oniru Private Housing Estate**

Gentrification is a highly visible expression of wider social and economic change. There have been demographic and household changes that create the potential for new patterns of housing demand. Oniru Private Housing Estate comprises of both males and females from various cultural, ethnic and occupational backgrounds. It is of low density. The exact population of Oniru Private Housing Estate is not known. According to one of the respondents who is an official in the Oba's palace said "*there is no estimate of the population of the people living here because there has been no effort yet to conduct a census of people living in the estate yet as development is still going on*". The estimate of the population may be known when the details of the 2006 Population and Housing census are released. It was also observed that majority of the residents are young and middle-aged people, although some have their elderly ones staying with them.

#### **5.3.1 Family structure**

When the respondents were asked to state the types of families that lived in the estate, it was revealed that they were mainly nuclear families, comprising only of the father, mother and a few children ranging from 2-4. This is contrary to the polygynous and large families of old Maroko.

#### **5.3.2 Educational, income and occupational status of the residents**

There is hardly any class distinction amongst them in terms of property and family settings. The respondents reported that majority of the residents were highly educated with post-graduate education (mostly masters, Ph. D. Holders) and a high disposable income and with professions in fields such as law, medicine, engineering, finance, media and the arts compared to low income group of Maroko residents. Unlike the semi-skilled, unskilled and petty traders of Maroko, the Oniru Private Housing Estate occupants are mostly business executives, senior bureaucrats and a range of well-paid workers in financial and oil services, advertising, and the media. Their workplaces are situated in neighbouring areas on the Island and its environs. They have long or irregular hours and therefore want

to live close to work and the cultural and entertainment facilities offered by these areas. Access to the city and key facilities is vital for these groups, to maintain their positions in the dynamic and insecure economic environment. Central location and apartment living reduces time lost in traditional suburban pursuits of commuting and house maintenance. Like in other gentrified cities of the world, increase in feminisation of the professional work force and the formation of dual career families were also observed. The respondents noted that there was a high proportion of women in professional and technical occupation compared to women in Maroko who were mostly traders. More women have chosen to continue their careers as well as become mothers. This may have led to the need to relocate to the area to avoid travelling long distances and consequently saving time.

### **5.3.3 The structure and types of dwellings in the estate**

Contrary to Maroko, the estate is a fully residential area and well planned. The land and buildings in the Oniru Private Housing Estate are very expensive. A plot of land of about 1,500 square meters costs about 180 million naira (approximately UD\$1,139,240.5). There are three categories of houses such as the Terrace houses, fully detached houses and semi-detached houses. House prices in the area have significantly increased. A three bedroom-flat goes for N8 – 9 million (US\$50,632.9 – US\$56,962.0) per annum excluding the service charges of N1.5million (US\$9,493.7). This is far beyond the reach of the original occupants. Within the estate, there is another mini estate where a room cost about N800,000 (US\$5,063.3) per annum compared to between N120 (US\$0.8) and N480 (US\$0.9) i.e. less than one dollar per annum. The Oba built this for members of his extended family. There are local reductions in a neighborhood's property crime rate. In fact in the words of one of the researchers *“there are no miscreants there”*.

### **5.3.4 Social amenities in the estate**

The researchers also noted a change in local amenities, services and shops. There are no economic activities observed in the estate but on the entrance is the famous Shoprite Shopping Mall that serves the population in the estate and others in its environs. Contrary to Maroko, the area is served with electricity; good roads; drainages; waste and sewage disposal systems and other social amenities within the home. Despite the regeneration of the Maroko area, one visible problem lurking the residents of Oniru Private Hosing Estate is the issue of water, there is no potable water because it occupied an area of freak topographical feature. According to one of the respondents, *“we have spent close to N10 million (US\$63,291.1) trying to find a lasting solution to the issue of water but all have failed instead”*. They have resorted to buying water which costs N7,000 (US\$44.3) per tanker every week.

There is no Association presently in the estate. It was observed that development is still going on in the estate. The other hectares of land acquired by the government have since been sold out to companies, individuals while some are still undergoing the sand filling process.

## **5.4 Gentrification in other areas**

Gentrification is not unique to Maroko. Personal observation shows that gentrification has also occurred and is occurring in other parts of Lagos metropolis e.g. Onike, Iwaya, Surulere, Isolo, Ikeja to mention but a few. In these areas, the older residents move out, and the houses remain vacant until they are purchased by real estate developers or private investors and converted into high-price rental houses. The market for gentrified housing is strong, making developers and investors buy up abandoned housing and harass low and middle-income tenants into leaving their buildings which are then converted for high profit. At times low-income tenants find their rents suddenly doubled and tripled. Typically, the landlord raises rent to a level that is too high for the existing tenant to pay, but is affordable to newer (wealthier)

residents. The existing tenant will then move to another, more affordable neighborhood, or to a smaller or lower quality residence in the same neighborhood. When the current residents leave, the buildings are torn down or completely transformed into luxury apartments and edifices. This renovated housing is well beyond the reach of the vast majority of the previous residents as has been demonstrated above.

## **6.0 Challenges of gentrification**

International and local experiences show that while gentrification can have positive impacts on an area in terms of upgrading infrastructure and bringing in capital, it can also have negative impacts such as displacement, isolation and social dislocation. Hartman (1979) and Marcus (1986) have argued and noted that gentrification has been both prevalent and socially harmful to areas. It increases homelessness for displaced residents because it is financially hard and sometimes impossible to find new housing and pay for moving. For instance, in Agbola and Jinadu's study (1997), of the estimated 41,776 landlords displaced from Maroko, only 2,933 were considered for relocation. This is validated by Amnesty International (2006). Their report revealed that out of over 10,000 former Maroko house-owners only about 2,000 were resettled.

The places they were forced to move into offered marginal facilities in terms of educational institutions, medical facilities, transport and security. Children who are displaced have to change schools, which can negatively impact on their performances in school, not to mention their emotional well being and sense of stability. Educational facilities did not improve 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 (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997). According to Agbola and Jinadu (1997) until August 1993, children from the Ilasan estate travelled several kilometres to school, after which primary and secondary schools were approved for the estate.

As regards the health facilities, there is no distinction between what existed in Maroko and those in Ilasan, Ikota and Aja. All available facilities were privately owned (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997). Maroko-Beach residents had no health facilities at all.

Another limitation is overcrowding. Families are forced to sometimes double-up e.g. after the 1990 demolition of Maroko, residents of Victoria Island and Ikoyi gave out their boys' quarters to their paid workers who at night secretly harboured their friends and relations (Kehinde, 2003). Furthermore, Agbola and Jinadu (1997) investigated the consequences of Maroko eviction and relocation in terms of housing quality, overcrowding, rents, basic services and overall satisfaction with their new neighbourhood. They found that 83% of Maroko evictees now occupied one to two rooms with an average of eight persons per household compared to 69% when they were living in Maroko. Their study also revealed that the level of overcrowding was particularly noticeable on the Ilasan and Ikota estates. In Ikota, there were cases where two households lived in one-bedroom apartments while in Ilasan, cases where between two and four households shared a three-bedroom flat predominated. Also in Ilasan, a case of nine persons in a room and 26 people in a flat were recorded.

Older long-term residents can be forced out, driven as much by the disappearance of familiar landmarks and memories as by rising rents, living costs and diminishing services. This can result in family or generational separation.

Relocating is expensive both emotionally and financially, especially because it is often into inferior housing. For instance, majority of the relocated Maroko population thought that Maroko was far better than their present neighbourhoods (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997). 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. The new homes for most of them were no better than those they had in Maroko. In all the areas investigated by Agbola and Jinadu (1997), housing, services,

facilities, neighbourhood ties and cohesion were worse rather than better, as officially promised. For example, 69% of the respondents now experienced inadequate facilities, poor housing conditions and poor environmental conditions compared to 37% when they were in Maroko. A colossal 85% of those relocated to Ilasan, Ikota and Maroko-Beach were not served with electricity by the government nor private sources while only 15% in Aja and Okokomaiko were connected to the national grid. With regard to water supply, none of the areas where Maroko evictees were relocated had piped water supplied by the state water corporation. Residents of Aja and Okokomaiko used water from wells to supplement supplies from commercial tankers. Residents of Ikota and Maroko-Beach used water mainly from hand dug wells whilst on the Ilasan estate, the polluted groundwater compelled the residents to rely solely on irregular supplies from commercial tankers. In Ilasan, Ikota and Aja, a 25-litre keg of water cost between N10 (US\$0.06) and N15 (US\$0.09) depending on the season whilst at Maroko-Beach it cost between 8 (US\$0.05) and N10 (US\$0.06). From the above, the conditions in the relocated areas were not better than Maroko. This lent credence to the allegation that the real reasons for the eviction were to do with the desire of élite groups to remove a high concentration of low-income groups from a high profile government desired location.

More time and money have to be used by the displaced people to travel to and from work. Loss of job or job change which is due to having to move. Displaced persons may also experience negative emotional effects such as stress, anxiety and depression due to the forced and unwanted changes in their lives due to gentrification. The new residences were too expensive for them to afford. For instance, most respondents experienced higher rents in their new locations than in Maroko. For example, respondents who were paying between N10 (US\$0.06) and N40 (US\$0.3) naira per month, per room in Maroko had (in 1990) to pay between N70 (US\$0.4) and N120 (US\$0.8) naira after the eviction (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997). The pressure on existing housing markets that the eviction helped to create has continued to push up rents. In Aja, tenants paid as much as N1,400 (US\$8.9) to N2,000 (US\$12.7) per month per room with two years advance payment.

Low-income people living in gentrified areas (if any) have reduced opportunities for community participation, and there are well-documented links between social isolation and ill health, irrespective of income levels.

## **7.0 Prospects**

Basically gentrification seems to be good for the developers and residents who get to stay and enjoy it. It brings benefits to communities, increasing their status, capital wealth and improvement of social problems. There is reduction in crime rate in the area. It beautifies the environment and slows suburban sprawl and environmental degradation. The neighbourhood is well organized. In view of all these merits, gentrification has come to stay in Lagos State as many dilapidated houses are being purchased by developers and affluent members of the society. It is spreading like wild fire. Landlords and landladies who do not want to sell their properties or whose properties are in dispute have warning signs such as "CAVEAT: THIS HOUSE IS NOT FOR SALE. BEWARE OF 419." The phrase is a Nigerian way of proclaiming the caveat: BUYERS, BEWARE! The number 419 originally represents a section of the Nigerian criminal code (part of Chapter 38) that prescribes the punishment for any person obtaining property by false pretense. The "419" scam is an aspect of transnational financial crime with a 'modus operandi' peculiar to the Nigerian swindler. The most recurrent type of transnational "419" scam is the "advance fee fraud" in which the target is persuaded to advance sums of money in the hope of realizing a significantly larger gain. It originated in the early 1980s when the country's oil-based economy declined. Several unemployed university students first used this scam as a means of manipulating business visitors interested in shady deals in the nation's oil sector. As the confidence trick

in the oil sector became widespread, businessmen in the west and later, the wider population became the targets. Among the variations on this type of scam, are the Nigerian Letter (also called the 419 fraud, Nigerian scam, Nigerian bank scam, or Nigerian money offer), the Spanish Prisoner, the black money scam as well as Russian / Ukrainian scam (also extremely widespread, though far less popular than the former).

Real estate has consistently been a target of investment by investors. Sanyaolu and Sanyaolu (2010) report that the emergence of private estate developers, building initially especially for the elite, in the early part of this new millennium expanded the frontiers of real estate industry and paved the way for huge funding and multinational interests in the real estate development market. This was encouraged by the instant success of primary developments like Lekki phase 1, the Victoria Garden City (VGC), and the Oniru Private Housing Estate, all in Lekki, Lagos. The emergence of the private estate developers, their successes, the banking sector consolidation exercise that started in June 2004 and the consequent boom in the Nigerian capital market; telecommunication industry successes, all raised the demand for in road real estate. However, the low supply shot up the prices of real estate. As a result, the activities of property speculators and impostors increased. Crimes in land and building transactions increased as the so called '*omo oniles*' (land owners) - sell and resell already sold properties to unsuspecting buyers. The activities of these criminals inculminated in the inscription of the phrase by land owners who want to protect their properties and wade off the prospective buyers. Furthermore, houses looking old and untidy are targets for property speculators and undeveloped plots attract more attention. This caption helps to wade off any foreseeable interest.

## **8.0 Conclusion and recommendation**

The and impacts of gentrification have been demonstrated through looking at property prices, education impacts, socio-economic consequences of relocation, social changes and the flow of capital into the area. Increased property prices and flows of capital into the gentrified areas lead to an overall improvement of the economic structure of the area. We argue therefore that while gentrification improves the quality of life in gentrified buildings or areas and beautifies the city, it further impoverishes the urban poor pushing them into a lower quality of life. The paper therefore recommends that displaced residents should be adequately compensated to enable them to afford conventional houses. Gentrification processes are now increasingly putting threat on the social cohesion and inclusiveness of such areas leading in some cases to brutal social transformations and eventually to forced evictions. They therefore require a concerted set of policies, strategies and processes that are socially inclusive and capable of ensuring that the benefits of urbanization today will not be unsustainable in the near and long future. Furthermore, in response to gentrification pressure, rent control laws can help. Rent control restricts the rent charged to tenants; this allows existing tenants to remain in place, reduces resident turnover, reduces the number of available apartments for newly arriving residents, and reduces landlords' incentive to speculate on land values. However, we know that rent control laws do not work in Nigeria. Only few rent control laws have been able to achieve their aims. The State government should establish an affordable housing fund and associated housing investment strategy. It could also commit to continued financial support for public and social housing in general

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### Author's bio-profile

Chinwe R. Nwanna (Ph.D.), a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, University of Lagos, Nigeria, is the Faculty Coordinator of Social Science Foundation Programme, Coordinator- B. Sc. Social Work and Business Manager- **UNILAG Sociological Review**. She has many publications in reputable journals and books nationally and internationally in population studies, HIV/AIDS, Urbanization/Migration, Social Work, etc. She also has numerous research studies to her credit and several awards for academic excellence. She is a member of various professional associations: IUSSP, France; UAPS, Ghana; BIARI, USA and the Financial Secretary of NASWE, Nigeria.