



STREET ENCROACHMENT BY THE INFORMAL METAL CONTAINER OPERATORS IN OSOGBO, OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The attendant consequence of the urbanization in the developing countries, Nigeria in particular, is the influx of informal activities. This paper examines the encroachment of streets by the informal metal container operators in Osogbo with the view to evolve a policy framework that will guide the activities of these illegal shop operators and to enhance effective city management. The study examined the socio-economic characteristics of the people in this informal sector, determined their tenure status and measured impacts of these container shops on the environment. Primary data was used for the study. The data was derived from fieldwork which involved direct interview and group discussion with the pedestrians and motorists in the study area and administration of questionnaire to eighty (80) operators of the container shops. Purposive sampling techniques were used in the selection of respondents in the area. Descriptive statistics was used such as tabulation and percentages in the presentation and analysis of data. The study, however, shows that most (75%) of the containers are erected on the road setbacks which has constituted nuisance to the environment. The study also shows that only 15% of the operators enjoyed hereditament while others are on lease and rentage arrangement. The sector is mostly dominated by the female (56.25%) respondents. The paper, therefore, suggested policy framework to guide the activities of this informal sector.

Keywords: Street, Encroachment, Informal, Urbanization

Introduction

It was observed that one in two people will live in cities in 2008 and that by 2030; over 60% of the world population will live in cities, majority of which will take place in the developing world (UNFPA, 2007). Nigeria, is urbanizing at an unprecedented high rate, the urban population percentages in 1970 was 20%, 29% in 1980, 35% in 1990, 42% in 2002, 49% in 2010 and by 2013 it was 51% (World Bank Group, 2014). Thus, the rate of urban population growth of between 7 – 8% far exceeds the national population growth rate of 3%. However, international forecast indicates that by the end of the century, there will be at least 250 urban centres in Nigeria with not less than 18 of them having a population of above 1 million (UNFPA, 2007).

The attendant consequence of the urbanization in the developing countries, Nigeria in particular, is the

influx of informal activities. This is largely responsible for the unmet demand in virtually all urban infrastructural facilities and particularly economic demand of the population. Associated with the rapid growth in urban population is a concomitant city space; for example, an indiscriminate encroachment of streets and open spaces by the informal metal container shop operators in the cities and at Osogbo in particular. Such encroachments are very often at the expense of road access, safety and environmental hygiene, and affect the quality of city life. They usually cause nuisance, inconvenience and hazards to pedestrians and traffic. In some cases, pedestrians are even forced to walk on the carriage way intended for vehicles due to obstruction on the walk way.

The aim of this paper is to explore the encroachment of streets and open spaces by the informal metal

container shop operators in Osogbo, Osun State, with the view to evolving policy frameworks that will guide the activities of these illegal shop operators and to enhance city development and management. The objectives set for the study are to determine socio – economic characteristics of people in this informal sector, their tenure and examine the impacts of these container shops on the environment.

Study Area

Osogbo is situated between latitude $7^{\circ} .46' \text{ N}$, longitude $4^{\circ}.34' \text{ E}$ and latitude $7^{\circ}.767' \text{ N}$, longitude $4^{\circ}.567' \text{ E}$. The city is the capital city of Osun State and also headquarters of both Osogbo and Olorunda Local Government Areas. The position of the city justifies the influx of the informal sector into the city. Based on the 2006 census (provisional result) the population of Osogbo is about 287,156 people (Adedotun, 2015). The city has been a commercial centre since the arrival of railway in 1907 which brought the colonial government to the threshold of the city. The city is now a bursting commercial city with a lot of illegal erection of metal container shops in all nooks and crannies of the city (Figures I & II).

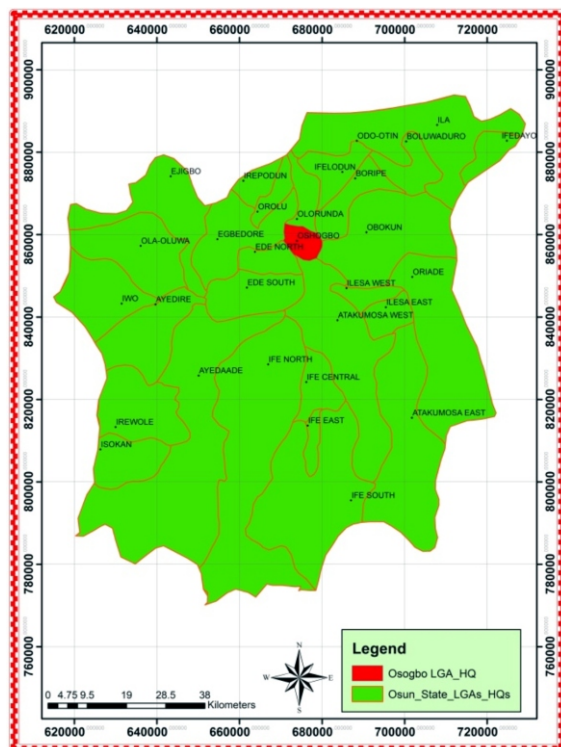


Figure1.1: Osogbo within the context of Osun State

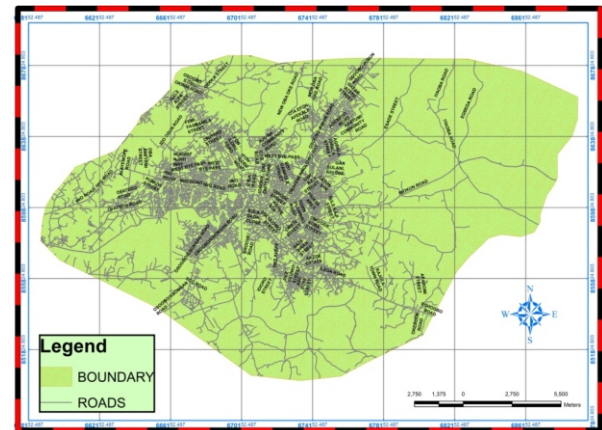


Figure1.2: Map of Osogbo

Concept of Urbanization and Informality

Urbanization has become critically important to international development, but there has been a considerable confusion over what urbanization actually is; whether it is accelerating or slowing; whether it should be encouraged or discouraged; and more generally, what the responses should be. By definition, urbanization refers to the process by which rural areas become urbanized as a result of economic development and industrialization. Demographically, the term urbanization denotes the redistribution of populations from rural to urban settlements over time. However, it is important to acknowledge that the criteria for defining what is urban vary from country to country, which cautions against a strict comparison of urbanization across nations. The fundamental difference between urban and rural is that urban population live in larger, dense, and more heterogeneous cities as opposed to small, more sparse, and less differentiated rural places. Urbanization happens because of the increase in the extent and density of urban areas. The density of population in urban areas increases because of the migration of people from less industrialized regions to more industrialized areas.

The history of urbanization can be traced back to the Renaissance times in 16th century. For instance, Turkish assaults resulted in movement of Christians from the east to western European countries. This resulted in the growth of trade and European cities along the coasts developed greatly. A further boost for urbanization was created with the advent of the “Industrial Revolution” in the 18th and 19th centuries when the population of cities in Europe and USA started to increase significantly. However,

urbanization started in Asia and Africa in the 20th century when the countries obtained independence from colonial rule (McGranahan and Satterthwaite, 2014).

Table 1: Urbanization in the world today

	1950	1990
World	30%	51%
MEDCs	53%	74%
LEDCs	17%	34%

Source: *McGranahan and Satterthwaite, 2014*

Table 1 presents the urbanization trend in the world. MEDC refers to Most Economically Developed Countries and LEDC to Least Economically Developed Countries.

Urbanization usually occurs when people move from villages to cities to settle, in hope of a higher standard of living. This usually takes place in developing countries like Nigeria. Cities in contrast, offer opportunities of high living and are known to be places where wealth and money are centralized.

Urbanization brings with it, several consequences both adverse and beneficial. It impacts on social and environmental areas. It increases competition for facilities due to the high standard of living in urban areas, which has triggered several negative effects. Many people who move to cities in search of a better life end up as casual labourers as they lack adequate education and skills for good job. This leads to one of the worst problems of urbanization – the growth of informal activities such as spontaneous growth of container shops.

To address the question of 'informality', the existing literature has come up with various definitions and concepts. De Soto (1989) observed that there is no distinct border between formality and informality in the legal sense. He noted that individuals are not informal, but their actions and activities are. However, broadly speaking, informal activities are those that are beyond the purview of the state. Informality of a production unit, or an unemployment relationship, is mostly defined through the absence of one or more forms of state mandate regulations, such as registration for taxes, enrolment into a social security system, minimum wage regulation, etc. (Kanbur and Sinha, 2012).

Lipton (1984), in his review of informality identified several strands of conceptualization including small size of enterprise, overlap between capital and labour, and "prevalence of perfect or rather near-perfect competition". This has been argued by Guha-

Khasnabis, Kanbur and Ostrom (2006) that these features of activities or a sector, are outcomes of an economic process rather than core defining aspects of informality. They were of the opinion that the core concept has to be the relation of the activity to state regulations. Hussmanns (1996), described informality as a term that designates a range of phenomena, such as absence of regulation, smallness of size, competition etc, that generally go together.

Harriss-White and Sinha (2007) characterize the informal sector broadly as consisting of units engaged in production of goods or services operating typically at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production and on a small scale. However, it has been observed that activities performed by firms in the informal sector are not necessarily performed with the deliberate intention of evading the payment of taxes or social security contributions, or infringing labour or other legislation or administrative provisions.

An empirical work of Chen (2006) and a few others show that those working in the informal sector are predominantly poor in income and in non – income dimensions. For example, in India, the NCEUS (2007, p. 24) estimated that workers in the unorganized sector had a much higher incidence of poverty (20.5%) than their counterparts in the organised sector (11.3%), almost double. This is an indicator of inadequate income levels and the extent of vulnerability of workers in the informal sector. Ju Hing and de Laglesia (2009) maintained that informal jobs are often precarious, have low productivity and of low general quality and that young people and women seem to be over represented within this category of jobs.

Kanbur (2009) made the following proposition of classification of economic activities to help structure thinking about evolution of informality. Firstly, specified the regulations relative to which formality and informality are being defined. Category A can be activity which is in the purview of the regulations and which is complying with them. This is the formal sector as normally conceived and measured in official statistics. The rest are informal. There are three categories of informality. Category B is the activity that comes under the purview of regulations but which is not complying – in other words illegality. Category C is activity which has adjusted out of the purview of the regulation. Finally, category D is activity which is outside the purview of regulations

in the first place and is so not affected by it.

In Nigeria and in the study area in particular the unprecedented growth in urbanization has resulted in all sorts of informal activities in the urban centres among which this study is interested to explore the encroachment of streets by the informal metal container shop operators.

Research Methods

Primary and secondary sources of data were used for this research work, such as administration of questionnaires to the operators of metal container shops and oral interview and small group discussion with motorists and pedestrians in the selected streets within the city. Eighty metal container shop operators were purposively selected across the major streets in the study area. The questionnaire sought information on the socio – economic characteristics of respondents, source of tenure, reasons and purpose for the use of metal container shops among others. Information was sought on the experience of motorists and pedestrians with the erection of containers on the streets in the study area. Descriptive statistics such as tabulation and percentages were used in the presentation and analysis of data. Secondary data were sought from texts, journals and internet browsing for concepts and literature review.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Metal Shop Operators:

The socio – economic characteristics of the respondents considered in this study are; gender, age, education, marital status, and monthly income. The study reveals that 56.25% of the metal shop operators in the study area are female, while the remaining 43.75% are male (Table 2). The study shows that women are more involved in an informal metal shop operation in the study area.

A significant proportion of the respondents (61.25%) in these informal metal shop operations are in the age bracket of 20 – 40 years. The study also reveals that 30% are within the age bracket of 40-60 years. The analysis reveals that most of the people in this sector are in their prime age of production (Table 3). This however calls for government attention on the need to integrate this set of people into the formal sectors of the economy.

Table 2: Gender of respondents

Gender	No	Percentages
Male	35	43.75
Female	45	56.25
Total	80	100

Source: Field work, 2018

Table 3: Age of respondents

Age	No	Percentages
Less than 20years	05	6.25
20-30 years	28	35
30-40 years	21	26.25
40-50 years	15	18.75
50-60 years	09	11.25
Above 60 years	02	2.5
Total	80	100

Source: Field work, 2018

Another socio-economic characteristic of the metal container shops operator examined is the educational status of the respondents. The result shows that 60% of the respondents have post secondary school education (Table 4), while only 5% are without formal education. It was established from the study that the involvement of people in this informal metal container shops operation is as a result of unemployment in the formal sector of the economy.

Table 4: Educational status of respondents

Educational level	No	Percentages
None	04	5
Primary School	07	8.75
Secondary School	21	26.25
Post Secondary School	30	37.5
Graduate	18	22.5
Total	80	100

Source: Field work, 2018

The analysis further reveals that most of the respondents are married (73.75%), while 22.5% are single (Table 5). Table 6 shows that 37.5% of respondents in this sector of the economy earned less than #20, 000 per month, 20% earned between #20, 000 and #30, 000 per month, while only 13.75% earned above #50, 000 per month. The analysis shows that most of the people in this sector are poor and of low-income earners. The study reveals that taking care of the family is a serious challenge for people in this sector of the economy. **Table 5:** Marital status of respondents

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Marital Status	No	Percentages
Married	59	73.75
Single	18	22.5
Widowed	03	3.75
Total	80	100

Source: Field work, 2018

Table 6: Monthly income of respondents

Income (₦)	No	Percentages
Less than 20,000	30	37.5
20,000 - 30,000	16	20
31,000 - 40,000	13	16.25
41,000 - 50,000	10	12.5
Above ₦50,000	11	13.75
Total	80	100

Source: Field work, 2018

Informal Metal Container Shop operations

Table 7 shows the length of operation of the metal container shops by the respondents. 43.75% started the operation of the metal container shop within the last five years, 35% started within the last 10 years, 17.5% within the last fifteen years, while only 3.75% started within the last twenty years. The study reveals that the activity of these informal metal container operators is a product of influx of people to the city (Osogbo) without corresponding government job for their employment.

The study also examined nature of tenure system enjoyed by the operators of these metal container shops. It shows that 35% are on lease arrangement, 32.5% on rental arrangement, 17.5% acquired the land by purchase from the land owners, while only 15% enjoy hereditament (Table 8). It was observed from the study that most of these metal container shops operator occupied their site on temporary arrangement.

Table 7: Length of stay in the shop

Length of stay	No	Percentages
Less than 5 years	35	43.75
5-10 years	28	35
11-15 years	14	17.5
16-20 years	03	3.75
Total	80	100

Source: Field work, 2018

Table 8: Land tenure system

Source of tenure	No	Percentages
Family land	12	15
Lease arrangement	28	35
Through government	-	-
Purchase	14	17.5
Rentage	26	32.5
Total	80	100

Source: Field work, 2018

The study further shows that only 26.25% of the people in this sector secure temporary approval for the erection and sitting of their container shops, while 73.75% have no approval for their activities. This shows that the operation of metal container shops in the study area is illegal, which should be discouraged. It is worthy to mention that despite the illegality of these activities, oral interview with the operators in the sector reveals that a token of one thousand and five hundred naira is being paid as tenement rate annually to Local Governments' purse. Table 9 further shows reasons for metal container shops in the study area. 43.75% of the respondents in this sector opted for the use of metal container shops because it is moveable. It can be easily relocated when the need arises. It is never a permanent structure. 26.25% however, do not have access to permanent "cement block" shops within the commercial area, while 18.75% were of the opinion that to build permanent structure for shop is very expensive, hence the option of metal containers.

Table 9: Reason for container shops

Reasons	No	Percentages
Cheap to erect	04	5
No permanent shops	21	26.25
Expensive to build shops	15	18.75
Cannot afford shop rents	05	6.25
Easily moveable	35	43.75
Total	80	100

Source: Field work, 2018

The study also considered the usage of the metal container shops as revealed in Table 10, 25% of the respondents use metal containers for sales of provisions, 16.25% use it as business centre (computer and photocopy services), and 15% as cement store, while 12.5% use it for food vending. Further study reveals that 45% of the respondents identified too much heat as the greatest challenge associated with the use of metal container shops,

28% identified spoiling of goods, while 15% identified the risk of closeness to the road.

Table 10: Uses of the containers

Uses	No	Percentages
Office	05	6.25
Sales of food stuff	10	12.5
Sales of provisions	20	25
Cement store	12	15
Work shop	07	8.75
Business center	13	16.25
Food vending	09	11.25
Others	04	5
Total	80	100

Source: Field work, 2015

Oral interview and group discussion with the motorists and pedestrians in the study area reveals that proliferation of metal container shops continues to compromise the safety and access of pedestrians, drivers and other street users. The interview reveals that owing to high shop rentals and keen business competition, many metal container shop operators are tempted to extend their business areas onto the pavements. However, people maintained that placements of these containers often obstruct pedestrian traffic and causes nuisance, inconvenience and hazards to pedestrians and traffic. Further observation also reveals that 75% of the containers surveyed were placed on the kerbs and gutters. It also affects the aesthetics and landscape of the city due to improper coordination in the size, usage and placement of the container, hence the ugly outlook of the city.

Conclusion

The study reveals that the attendant consequence of urbanization in the developing countries like Nigeria is the influx of informal activities. This resulted in the unmet demand in urban facilities especially organised shops. The study examined the encroachment of street with illegal metal container shops in Osogbo with the view to evolving policy guidelines for these informal sectors.

The study shows that women are dominant in the

operation of informal metal container shops in Osogbo, while most of the people in this sector are within the age of adulthood. Most of these people also have post secondary education and are married. The study further reveals that, most of the people in this sector of the economy are low income earners. The result also shows that most people in this sector began in the last 10 years. This is truly the products of urbanization since it all started when Osogbo became the state capital of Osun State. Most of the operators are squatters; they occupy their site on a temporary lease and rental arrangement. Furthermore, the study reveals that the operators opted for the use of metal containers because it can be easily relocated if need arises and because of lack of access to commercial shops. Most of the shops are used for provision stores, business centres and cement store. Problems identified with the metal container shops are too much heat, spoilt of goods and risk of closeness to the road.

It has been confirmed from the study that erection and placement of metal container shops on the streets causes obstruction and inconvenience to road users – drivers and pedestrians, hence the need for urgent attention to address this ugly urban sprawl scenario.

The following recommendations are therefore made: First, government should through the Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning embrace urban design that will provide for adequate and affordable shopping complex in the nook and crannies of our cities.

Government should consider enforcement of the existing law against erection and placement of containers on road sides. Thirdly, there must be legislation by the appropriate authority guiding the construction, erection, and placement of metal container shops in our cities.

Finally, media outfit should be involved in the public education and publicity on the risk involved in the street encroachment by the metal container shops, exhorting these operators not to extend their business areas and obstruct the pavements. Pamphlets or leaflets on legal consequences of street obstruction in general may be produced and distributed to shops and other businesses that operate on the streets.

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