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## CITY IN TRANSITION: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE IN THE NIGERIA CITIES.

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**Abstract:** According to the principles proclaimed in the charter of United Nations, equity, recognition of inherent dignity and inalienable right of every individual are the foundation of justice, peace and freedom in all Nations. With the aforesaid as the base, the fact that most developing countries around the world have weak social justice and economic system could not be denied. Countries in the developing world including Nigeria are plagued with social and economic injustice. The gap between the poor and the rich progressively increases on a daily basis in every area of life, especially in urban centres and cities. This condition has degenerated that there is high rate of poverty and crime and all sort of vices in the said settlements. The status-quo might be corrected and people live in harmony if common wealth is shared in fairness to everyone irrespective of social and economic status. This paper provides and summarizes an overview of the evidence on how social injustice and adverse economic system in the cities are important factors in understanding disparities in well-being of Nigerians in vital areas of life (employment, health, income, wealth, housing and neighborhood and criminal justice). Important data about the contribution and outcome of various government policies are supplied to show the impact of government strategies. It ends with recommendations based on research findings which would solve the problem if implemented by the various governments.

**Keywords:** Justice, Urbanization/Urban-Growth, Urban-Renewal, Social, Economic.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

City, according to Collins dictionary, is an incorporated settlement covering relatively large expanse of land which administers its own affairs without interference. Such an independent city was referred to as City-state by ancient Greek. In United States, it is a chartered municipal corporation with charters given by state administration as spelled out by the state's legislation. Charter is not given as the confirmation that a settlement has attained the status of City until certain number of people is confirmed living in there and the jurisdiction of authority is clearly defined by act of legislation. Charters vary according to the measure of authority and authorities/leaders are chosen democratically. Conclusion could be reached from the aforesaid that city features heterogeneity of backgrounds (population is of varied cultural beliefs, religions and social and economic statuses). Nigeria is a state in the developing world with host of cities; Lagos, Ibadan, Abuja, Kano, Ogbomosh, Kaduna, Zaria, Katsina, Bauchi, Enugu, Akure and a lot of others some of which are major economic nerves of Nigeria. The responsibilities of leadership and the subjects as well as expected relationships in every City of Nigeria are spelled out by legal document known as constitution. According to the Nigeria 1999 rigid constitution, citizenry has equal right and constitution is supreme to every citizen irrespective of status. However, as city change in size following the industrial revolution of 19th century, people are stripped of their fundamental rights stipulated by constitution leading to cry for justice from the affected citizenry, majorly the poor. The Poor are getting poorer and the rich richer, because of the monopoly and exploitation from the side of rich and political office holders. Likewise, it could be said that industrial revolution has done more harm than good considering its attendant problems in the developing world like Nigeria. Slum, urban ghettos, squatter

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settlement, inadequacy of infrastructure and poor housing are all aftermath of industrial revolution. These prompted urban renewal programmes which go on in most of the Nigerian cities, causing strife and disunity between government and the governed especially the poor because of seeming injustice and partiality associated with it. Even in allocation of common property, less-privileged seems neglected. David Mike said "Segregation in city is not a frozen status-quo, but rather a ceaseless social war in which state regularly intervenes in the name of "progress", "beautification", and even "social justice for the poor" to redraw spatial boundaries to the advantage of landowners, foreign investors, elite homeowners and middle class commuters at the disadvantage of the low income and petty populaces". Philosopher Slavoj Zizek argues that those ideas which have previously guided our efforts towards social justice have been "replaced by the collaboration of enlightened technocrats and liberal multiculturalists via the process of negotiation of interests". His claim is that our ability to discuss ideas of social justice has been eroded over recent years. For some, it has therefore become paramount that we re-assemble our debates around social justice so that the collections of growing urban social problems can be dealt with.

### **AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

This research aims at appraising Nigeria cities for social and economic justice using current issues for discussion (urban renewal programme, politics, space allocation etc).

### **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE IN NIGERIA (LITERATURE REVIEW)**

City since inception is faced with several challenges; urbanization, Migration, climate change, social tension, autocracy in administration and host of other related challenges said Mike Davidson. He said globalization that linked places separated with vast distance together have complicated the issues mentioned due to its attendant problem of complex relationships compare to when city started. Today Nigerians complain of social and economic injustice in the leaders - subjects relationship especially in Cities probably because of its complex nature which is the reason for this research. And one way to define a thing is defining what it is not in the first place. Social and economic injustice could therefore be known by understanding what social and economic justice is.

**Justice** according to Oxford Advanced Learners' dictionary is fair-play in everything. It is different from charity in that dues are received as against charity that gives according to the need.

**Social Justice** encompasses fairness to humanity and is the practice of promoting and protecting human rights and responsibilities, with a particular emphasis on the social rights of society's most vulnerable groups (Sheila Landers Macrine). Social justice is the virtue which guides us in creating those organized human interactions we call institutions. In turn, social institutions, when justly organized, provide us with access to what is good for the person, both individually and in our associations with others. Social justice also imposes on each of us a personal responsibility to work with others to design and continually perfect our institutions as tools for personal and social development (Harvey, David, 2000). The foregoing implies that social justice is being fair in dealings and relationships in Cities especially between governors and the governed when common resources is shared, renewal is done, law/regulations are given and election is conducted. It has to do with the preservation and in-alienation of fundamental rights of individuals in a city. Moreover, it encompasses economic justice.

**Economic Justice** on the other hand encompasses the moral principles which guide us in designing our economic institutions. These institutions determine how each person earns a living, enters into contracts, exchanges goods and services with others and otherwise produces an independent material foundation for his or her economic sustenance. The ultimate purpose of economic justice is to free each citizen to engage creatively in the unlimited work in the city where he is resident thereby check monopoly and preferential treatment in economy. (Harvey, David, 2000).

Kelso-Adler identified the following as the principles of economic justice;

- principle of participation,
- Principle of distribution,
- Principle of harmony.

### **Principle of Participation**

This describes equal opportunity of all to participate in economic activities either with human or material capitals. It speaks against monopoly in participation in city's economic activities. Social status should not be the determinant of areas of participation according to Kelso-Adler.

### **Principle of Distribution**

This principle explains that reward (out-take) is proportional to input either in labor or capital form. It turns to the free and open marketplace, not government, as the most objective and democratic means for determining the just price, the just wage, and the just profit.

### **Principle of Harmony**

"Economic harmonies" is defined in The Oxford English Dictionary as "Laws of social adjustment under which the self-interest of one man or group of men, if given free play, will produce results offering the maximum advantage to other men and the community as a whole." This principle offers guidelines for controlling monopolies, building checks-and-balances within social institutions, and re-synchronizing distribution (outtake) with participation (input). The first two principles of economic justice flow from the eternal human search for justice in general, which automatically requires a balance between input and outtake, i.e., "to each according to what he is due." The principle of harmony, on the other hand, reflects the human quest for other absolute values, including Truth, Love and Beauty. Kelso and Adler referred to the third principle as "the principle of limitation" as a restraint on human tendencies toward greed and monopoly that lead to exclusion and exploitation of others. (Harvey, David, 2000). It could be said from the above that social justice means being fair to all in dealings within city not minding social, political and economic statuses of individuals towards preventing alienation of fundamental rights of all as stipulated in the constitution. Economic justice though integral part of social justice has to do with the avoidance of preferential treatments in the issues pertaining to economy within a city.

**Constitution** is the fundamental system of law, written or unwritten, of a sovereign state, established or accepted as a guide for governing the state. A constitution fixes the limits and defines the relations of the legislative, judicial, and executive powers of the state, thus setting up the basis for government. It also provides guarantees of certain rights to the people. Social injustice which encompasses economic injustice is therefore striping people of their fundamental rights of enjoying public properties and participation in economic activities within the city.

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## DISCUSSION

Federal Republic of Nigeria has thirty (36) states each governed by executive governor. As earlier stated Nigeria is governed with constitution which highlighted the fundamental rights of individuals, relationships between government (leadership) and subjects and declared that law is supreme to everyone; Section 1(1) of Nigeria 1999 constitution says "This constitution is supreme and its provision shall have binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria". (Oladeji, M.O). The foregoing means, nobody is above the law. "Ideal state" is the state that dots every "I" and crosses every "T" in its regulations and such could as well be referred to as just state socially and economically because all sorts of relationships are guided by regulations. But the statement by one of the renowned authors reveals that such is not possible for the condition is worsened as year went by and technology increased; "From their very beginnings cities have been sights of social tension, exploitation and emancipatory movements. This remains the same today, with a host of contemporary processes giving rise to new questions of justice and, at the same time, resurrecting some age-old issues. Indeed, cities today face unprecedented challenges"(Mike Davidson). However, this is not an excuse to indulge in the act of injustice. Every state is expected to strive and attain certain level justice as constitution required. Conversely, it is evident in Nigeria that constitution is no more guiding, fundamental rights of citizens are trampled on by better citizens economically and socially. Poor are becoming poorer and rich richer because of monopoly of offices. An office holder hand-over to his/her child/relative rather than another qualified individual. Government would prefer to use socially/economically okay individual as contractor rather than another qualified but socially/economically disadvantaged individual. This is obtainable in every area including city planning and open space allocation. Recently, Oyo State and other Action Congress ruled cities in Southwestern Nigeria started a renewal programme as part of its transformation agenda, popularly referred to as south-west integration. This programme according to its manifesto is meant for several positive reasons-attractions of foreign investors, redrawing of spatial boundaries and beautification of the city. As good as this programme is it is being evil spoken of because of seeming biased judgment of affected underprivileged. However, the programme in question could be socially justified because of the following reasons;

### Citizen Despised Town Planning Orders

Every city has rules and regulations regarding physical developments. For instance, the following are required for residential buildings development in Oyo State, published by Oyo State Urban and Regional Planning, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development;

- Minimum of 1.5m between property boundary and wall-fence,
- For neighborhood road, minimum of 4.5m between road centre and building frontage,
- Minimum of 6m clearance between building front-line and Trunk A road centre,
- Approval must be sought before project execution,
- Buildings are not allowed close to electric poles
- Building near river is prohibited etc(Ministry of Lands and Housing)

Table 1: General Building Requirements: *Residential Buildings*.

Class of Density	Height of Dwelling	Minimum Setback				Maximum Coverage Plot percentage
		Front	Rear	Left	Right	
Low	2	7.5m	6.0m	6.0m	6.0m	35
Medium	3	6.0m	3.0m	3.0m	3.0m	40
High	4	4.5m	2.0m	2.0m	2.0m	50
Urban High	14	4.5m	2.0m	2.0m	2.0m	30

Source: \* Ministry of Lands and Housing

Table 2: General Building Requirements: *Commercial Buildings*.

Type of Development	Plot Area sqm	Setback from property lines (m)			Max. Plot Coverage %
		Front	Left	Right	
Convenience Shops	250 - 500	7.5	4.0	2.0	60
	501 -1000	9.0	4.0	2.5	50
	Over 1000	10.5	6.0	3.0	40
Departmental Shops	1000- 4000	10.5	6.0	3.0	40
	Over 1000	12.0	7.5	4.5	35
Banks, Hotels	250 - 500	9.0	4.0	2.5	50
	Over 500	10.5	6.0	3.0	40
Office Buildings	250 -1000	9.0	3.0	3.0	35
	Over 1000	10.5	6.0	3.0	30
Warehouse	1000- 4000	9.0	6.0	3.0	60
	Over 4000	10.5	6.0	4.5	55

Source: \* Ministry of Lands and Housing

Table 3: General Building Requirements: *Industrial Buildings*.

Plot Area (Hectares)	Setback from property lines (m)				Max. Plot Coverage %
	Front	Rear	Left	Right	
0.2 - 0.4	9.0	12.9	3.0	9.0	50
0.41 - 0.80	12.0	13.5	4.5	10.5	45
0.81 - 2.0	13.5	15.0	6.0	12.0	40
Over 2.0	15.0	18.0	7.5	15.5	35

Source: \* Ministry of Lands and Housing.

No contravention goes unpunished where Physical Planning regulations are sternly considered. There are penalties for contravention the capital of which is demolition. And apart from the fact that this is meant for city beautification, it protects citizens against unforeseen incidents like accident in a situation where building is too close to the road and fire in a situation where building nears the power line. Anybody who turns deaf ear to these will not blame government in case any action is taken like it is presently happening in Yoruba cities because, to be fore warned, according to an adage, is to be fore armed. Where there is law sin is imputed. For demolition of shops and buildings close to roads and under power-lines in cities government is justified for it would have warned the populace in the long-run if anybody contravenes. Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Taiwo Otegbeye, said “the shops, shanties, and structures that are being demolished in the first place do not have approval, as they were

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constructed illegally; hence the traders need not blame the government. As a matter of fact, if it were to be other advanced countries, those traders could have even been charged for their illegal acts. The commissioner continued by saying that Oyo State Government, as led by Senator Abiola Ajimobi does not believe in meting out such punishments. Instead, the government is providing alternative market for free, and even making provisions for loan facilities for the traders at zero interest rate. And for those who argued that the traders do not have any place to go, the truth remains that there are vacant shops at official market places such as Aleshinoye Market, Gbagi Market and many others. Records even show that some of the traders have shops at these official markets, but prefer to display their wares on the roads... It should be noted that Governor Ajimobi's decision to carry on with the reconstruction exercise is pragmatic, and at the same time utilitarian....." (Adapted from Nigerian Tribune, Friday, 17 May 2013).

### **Demolition was done Without Sentiment.**

Popular musician, Yinka Ayefele's plead with Oyo state government for his 200million worth of residential building marked for demolition in Nigerian Tribune reveals that social status was not considered when buildings were marked prior to demolition activity. In addition, mosque fence demolished in Iseyin, oke-ogun area of Oyo state is an evidence that there was no sentiment at all. If there were sentiment, they would not demolish it for it is a religion building. A witness of demolition activity in Ogun state also related that Palace fence was not left out. In a nutshell, it is evident that the activity in question was void of bias; political, social and otherwise statuses were not considered. Meanwhile, government could be socially unjust because of the following shortcomings;

### **Government Ought to Make Preparation for the Affected People Prior to Demolition.**

No urban renewal programme is without displacement and demolition. This knowledge should guild government in this activity. Government however put cart before horse. People were displaced before provision was made for their security and safety. This is in accordance with discussion of an activist in Nigerian Tribune of March 24, 2013 captioned "The Jaundiced Approach of The Action Congress of Nigeria". He said this about the subject being discussed; Early this week, a tag on a Facebook picture showed three indifferent looking people (a woman in a religious garb and two men) receiving a cheque from the Ogun State Government's representative. The picture in question was captioned 'Compensation being paid in Sagamu for the structures AFFECTED by the construction of the express junction to Oba Erinwole Junction'. Last week, Nigerian dailies carried similar news item where the Governor of Oyo State pledged to compensate those whose structures had been DEMOLISHED by the ongoing expansion and dualization of roads within the state. He made this promise to the indigenes of Iseyin community when they paid him a courtesy visit. It is often said that genuine urban renewal must come at a cost if development must take place. Structures will have to give way as we have been seeing everywhere around the world. The Oyo and Ogun state's examples are not any different though significantly different in the manner of execution; this is not only at an immense cost to the respective State treasuries but also to affected individuals. With Ogun State budgeting around N10 billion for compensation alone (a sum which is about 22% of the federal allocation it received in 2012 and 50% of the Internal revenue it generated for the same year), that is not only enormous but absolutely ridiculous! It is not enough to tell us how such projects will open up investment opportunities but to also go ahead and give us tangible realizable figures for the foreseeable future. A government that is serious should have asked Business analysts to compute what can be realized in tangible and intangible gains before the project commenced. I am in doubt as to whether any such financial considerations where

looked at or if alternative actions were considered if only to save cost and still arrive at a solution. Moving away quickly from the cost of these projects to the treasury, it would be interesting to know at what cost the demolishing of structures has been to the citizenry. Should demolition come before compensation as we are made to believe by various Governments or should compensation come before demolition? I will cite a few examples of similar projects around the world and how and when those displaced were compensated. As early as the 60's when cities and towns in the United States began a process known as 'urban renewal', it forced a flight to the suburbs of middle class people. Several schemes were put in place BEFORE demolition commenced, schemes such as allowing people borrow money at low interest rate to purchase their own new homes and also sitting down with soon-to-be displaced people to work out the best housing options available to them, this was when cities used the law called Eminent Domain to PURCHASE land and properties from citizens who were to be displaced. The case of Margaret Green Harris vs. HUD immediately springs to mind in that period, the long and short of this case was that the city did not offer Margaret an adequate replacement house that was affordable to her. The basis of her lawsuit was to challenge the displacement of people in the urban renewal neighborhoods, who were not offered a suitable alternative home that was affordable to them. That was the fundamental legal principle involved. The suit was negotiated to a settlement in 1972 with fairly broad language about how cities would, from that point forward, not displace people that were in the urban renewal neighbourhoods, without providing them the "suitable relocation housing". There is also recently the story of Salford Council sitting down with people whose homes were to pave way for development. A team of officers from the Council helped and supported residents, finding out individual needs and preferences and supporting them in identifying suitable new homes before their structures were demolished. Also, there was the case of demolished homes in the West Gorton Council in the United Kingdom where it was agreed that there will be no demolitions until the council had talked through everyone's re-housing options. They eventually offered everyone who wanted a suitable home in West Gorton the home of their choice. Where there were not enough homes of a certain type to match the demand, they asked people to move elsewhere in the city, with a guarantee that they will help them move back to West Gorton when a suitable home becomes available. Most recently is the ongoing consultations on the proposed High Speed Rail 2. Extensive consultations will work out ways to compensate the over 320 buildings, industrial estates and settlements that would be demolished to make way for the high speed train service from London to Birmingham, a work not expected to start until 2017 but for which the compensation of those to be affected are already being discussed.

Lastly is the story of the Chinese couple in Wenling, China, who refused to move out of their property even when their lone standing house was in the middle of an expressway (a picture that went viral on the internet and which I have attached). The couple was eventually compensated to the tune of \$40,000 which saw them eventually move, and their building brought down.

What is the difference between the approach of the Oyo & Ogun State governments and those I have listed above?

In saner climes, compensation preceded demolition, while for the Action Congress Governments in Oyo & Ogun State, demolition preceded compensation. Do we have to be a developed nation before our state governments can use their brains correctly?

The picture I was tagged on and the comment from the Oyo State Governor which necessitated this write up was clear on one thing, that those AFFECTED (an event that has already occurred) are being compensated after the deed. Same for Oyo which stated that those

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‘AFFECTED’ communities will be compensated, a case of putting the cart before the horse you would say. Why destroy and then compensate, why not otherwise? Why the rush to destroy before engaging victims and settling them? I wonder how much compensation will be paid to the affected owners of demolished buildings, is government going to use the ongoing market rate of putting up equivalent structures or are they going to pay compensation based on their own perceived costs of building, such as benchmarking compensation to be paid with the £1million foot bridge amongst other over inflated projects? Are we sure the processes of paying compensation will not actually become a means to a corrupt end? How many ghost ‘landlords’ will be paid?

Unfortunately we may not get answers to all of this and many more until this government is kicked out of office in 2015, a mission that is the collective will of right thinking people of Ogun State. I am convinced that the shambles this government is presently presiding over will be put to an end by the powerless people whose buildings and livelihood has been lost and who have been ill-compensated for the trauma and discomfort they have been made to go through. (Adekoyejo Adegbesan). Also, government promised to compensate the affected individuals especially the owners of shops demolished not having data of such. Anybody could not meet authority in charge for shop although his/her shop is not part of those demolished since there is no data as check. In these, government could be socially unjust for people had to struggle for security against indifferent weather elements when their buildings were demolished. Even now, some have no-where to rest their heads and for this reason they have had nothing done economically since the incident of building demolition. Children stopped going to school because of in-conveniences. In this, they do not contribute to the economy of their localities, families, and Nigeria at large.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the trend of social tension and related problems in cities of the developing world including Nigeria is worrisome. And it is obscured whether government is deliberately doing it or do not have good advisers in this area. Evidently, neither social justice nor economic justice is of paramount importance to our leaders in Nigeria, but self interest. Subjects should not be directed anyhow because of the opportunity of Power. Even, cattle are reared with compassion, weak ones are led differently from the strong. Every city has varieties of humanity; poor and rich, gentle and stubborn, strong and weak, and it is an act of social injustice to exploit an individual in an area where he is disadvantaged. Federal Republic of Nigeria is a democratic state, as such individual dignity, equity and fundamental human rights are to be recognized, acknowledged and allowed as constitution stipulates.

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