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Globalizing Cities

Inequality and Segregation in Developing Countries

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2   Residential Segregation in Nigerian Cities

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This paper examines the origin and pattern of residential segregation in Nigerian cities. It first clarifies the concept of residential segregation and then presents a description of Nigerian cities and urbanization as background information. The residential pattern in pre-colonial Nigeria is discussed, followed by a discussion on the origin and pattern of residential segregation in colonial and post-colonial Nigerian cities.

Kemper (1998) has conceived residential segregation as the spatial separation of population sub-groups within a given geographical area such as a large city. Such sub-groups can be formally defined in terms of age, occupation, income, place of birth, ethnic group or some other measures like race or religion (Friedrichs, 1977). Such sub-groups can also be social minorities which are distinguished from dominant groups by power differentials (Saltman, 1991).

Although the degree of segregation varies from one society to another, spatial separation or residential differentiation is normally affected by social stratification in each case (Kemper, 1998). Berry and Horton (1970) had earlier advanced reasons for residential segregation. They opined that people choose to live apart from those unlike themselves in an attempt to minimize the possible conflicts that could emanate from "class, generational, racial and religious or national differences" and that this is done

within the limits of the technology and resources at their disposal. Berry and Horton came to this conclusion after analyzing the census data on Chicago. A similar observation had earlier been made by Burgess (1967) who noted that owing to economic competition for scarce urban land, middle class residents were located in an area further removed from the centre of the city than the working class. However, they (middle class residents) were closer to the centre than the affluent who could afford new homes and transportation costs of the commuter's zone which was much farther away from the centre of the city. Thus, evidence from the literature shows that, three major factors: socio-economic status, family status and ethnic status are the causes of residential segregation (Abumere, 1994). Explanations by Burgess (1967) had earlier emphasized socio-economic status, stating that there is a positive correlation between socio-economic status and the distance from the centre of the city.

Within the capitalist ethics of survival of the fittest, classical and neo-classical explanations have placed emphasis on rent. It is argued that persons who could not afford the rent of a given area are compelled to move to such areas, which have prevailing rent that fall within their financial capability. With time, this crystallizes into a system in which different residential areas emerge consisting of persons who can afford given rent. The socio-economic status factor sometimes has two dimensions: an income dominated pattern, and one based on education or occupation (Abumere, 1994). Abumere also noted that some studies have attempted to explain residential differentiation and segregation in terms of the stages of economic development. It is argued that at the lowest level of economic development, populations in cities tend to be segregated on the basis of ethnic origin. At the next stage, they are segregated by socio-economic status and, finally, at a later stage of development, by family status. It is against this backdrop that we examine the origin and pattern of residential segregation in Nigerian cities but first, a description of Nigerian cities and urbanization as background information.

Background Information on Nigerian Cities

The region of Nigeria was predominantly rural in the pre-colonial era. This is not, however, to suggest the absence of cities in the region at that period. Indeed, such Nigerian cities as Ibadan and Kano were among the largest cities in the continent of Africa at that time. Many of the cities had long been in existence before the advent of colonialism. The city of Kano, for example, had existed for at least 900 years before the British colonized Nigeria. Similarly, Benin City has a long history. While large scale urbanization was not necessarily introduced in the colonial and post-colonial periods, the tempo of urbanization became accelerated in the later half of the 20th century. A number of factors accounted for this but, mainly, the oil boom of the 1970s brought substantial wealth to the country. With this, large-scale urban development programmes were embarked upon. This is exemplified by the construction of a new federal capital, Abuja, and the building booms experienced by Lagos, Kano and other cities. Coupled with the availability of new jobs, especially in the construction industry, with concomitant multiplier effects in the service and informal sectors, the consequence was massive rural-urban migration. This was particularly so in the face of the prevailing rural poverty. This trend has continued till date and Nigeria's urban population, which was 16 per cent and 20 per cent in 1970 and 1980 respectively, was reported to be 38 per cent in 1993 (World Bank, 1996) and 44 per cent in 2005 (PRB, 2005).

It is important, at this juncture, to briefly discuss urbanization in Nigeria. The aim is to help the reader understand and be kept abreast with the urbanization process in Nigeria. As a process in which there is an increase or growth in the proportion of the population living in urban areas, the country is experiencing rapid urbanization. Urban areas in Nigeria doubled their share of the population between 1970 and 1996. But with only 44 per cent of the population residing in urban areas in 2005, the country can be described as still predominantly rural. However, between 1980 and 1993, the annual rate of growth of urban population was 5.5 per cent (World Bank, 1996). But, rather than a sprawling outward

growth into the suburbs, urban growth is concentrated around highly populated urban cores resulting mainly from influx of rural populations into the cities. This is generally characteristic of less developed countries unlike the developed countries in which urbanization tends to sprawl outward into suburbs.

Nigeria has a long history of urban development particularly in the northern and southern parts where a substantial number of the cities existed centuries before the advent of colonial rule. Lagos, which is not only Nigeria's largest city but also Africa's largest with an estimated population of 13,427,000 in year 2000, is a main commercial centre. It grew as a colonial Nigeria's capital and leading port. It is in fact, a classic example of the history and pattern of urbanization phenomenon, not only in Nigeria, but in the developing world. At the end of the 1967-1970 civil war in Nigeria, Lagos witnessed an influx of refugees from neighbouring nations and it is still experiencing population boom thirty-five years after. Its annual growth rate was estimated at almost 14 per cent in the 1970s, when the massive extent of new construction was exceeded by the influx of migrants attracted by the booming prosperity of that period. Lagos is now one of the world's largest urban centres. Although 90 per cent of the residents have access to electricity (albeit irregular), other resources are scarce. Not withstanding the fact that the city lies on the Gulf of Guinea, and is intersected by canals and navigable waterways, there is shortage of water supply. Traffic congestion on the city's roads is one of the most severe in the world and this leads to high level of air pollution and noise. The movement of the nation's capital from Lagos to the central Nigeria city of Abuja in 1991 was an attempt by the Nigerian government to slow down the rate of growth of Lagos and to reduce its congestion. However, this move barely reduced the rate.

The second largest city in Nigeria is Ibadan. Before it was overtaken by Lagos, it was the largest pre-colonial city in sub-Saharan Africa and its large population resulted from massive rural-to-urban migration. With an estimated population of 1,731,000 in year 2000, Ibadan is the only other city in Nigeria with more than a million inhabitants. Its economy is based largely

on agriculture and trade. Another major city is Kano, the largest of the Hausa cities in northern Nigeria. Kano grew to prominence as the centre of a prosperous agricultural district and as a major terminus of the trans-Saharan trade. It remains a major commercial, transportation, industrial, and administrative centre. Other important cities include the Yoruba cities of Ogbomosho, Oyo, Ife; the Hausa cities of Zaria, Katsina, and Sokoto; and the newer, colonial-era cities of Kaduna, Jos, and Enugu.

Apart from Lagos and Ibadan, no other city has a population of up to a million in Nigeria, However, a number of other cities which have more than 225,000 inhabitants include Aba, Abeokuta, Ado-Ekiti, Ede, Enugu, Ila, Ilesha, Ilorin, Kaduna, Kano, Maiduguri, Ogbomosho, Onisha, Oshogbo, Port Harcourt, Zaria, Calabar, Benin-City and Warri. Although Nigeria does not currently have the highest proportion of urban population in sub-Saharan Africa (in several of the countries of francophone Central Africa, for example, close to 50% of the population is in the major cities), it has more large cities than any other sub-Saharan African country as well as the highest total urban population. The south-west occupied by the Yoruba ethnic group is the most urbanized part of the country while the middle belt is the least urbanized.

Although the country as a whole is experiencing rapid urbanization, individual cities have unique histories and characteristics. A brief survey of this diversity will provide a more nuanced understanding of Nigerian cities. Nigeria provides diverse examples of historical urban development. A useful distinction that could enhance our understanding is the classification of the cities into indigenous and non-indigenous. This distinction basically refers to the development or emergence of a city relative to the colonial period. By implication, indigenous cities are those which originated prior to the period of the British colonial rule while those planned and constructed during the colonial period (1900-1960) are non-indigenous. Kano is an indigenous city. It traces its origin to the era much before the arrival of the British, approximately 1000 A.D. and it is among the oldest continuously occupied cities in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. However, it was not until the 14th

century that it developed its Islamic character, after the coming of Islam. With the consolidation of Islam, Kano became a major terminus of trans-Saharan trade and this supplemented its role as a centre of Islamic teaching and education.

Like other northern savannah cities, Kano grew within city walls. The main market, the government buildings and the central mosque were located at the centre. The houses of the rich and powerful then clustered around them. Found away from this core were smaller markets and denser housing and with the little markets at the gate of the city. Groups of craft manufacturers as blacksmiths, cloth dyers, weavers, potters and the like were organized into special quarters. These crafts were often family-based and they were inherited. Thus, residential differentiation was on the basis of crafts and some degree of occupational specialization.

Another indigenous Nigerian city is Ibadan, which is located in the south-west. Although Ibadan is not as old as Kano, it predates the arrival of the British colonialists. The contemporary prominence of Ibadan in Yorubaland is largely attributable to its rise as an important city-state in the early and mid-19th century. However, Ibadan was much more directly affected by European influence than northern cities like Kano during the colonial period. For instance, the influence of Islamic urban design persists in the layout of Kano's street network. As in many Islamic cities, the street network is such that avoids long lines of sight and open vantage points. This is essentially to promote household privacy and the seclusion of women. On the other hand, Ibadan has landscape features which derived from the influence of Christianity, western education and the direct establishment of European Government Reservation Areas. The colonial influence in Ibadan is also marked by the differentiation of the new city (e.g. Bodija), associated with British development, and the old city (e.g. Beere), associated with indigenous development.

A very important attribute of indigenous urban development in Yorubaland is 'densification'. It involved filling in compounds with additional rooms, then adding a second, third, or sometimes even a fourth storey. Eventually, hundreds of people might live in

a space that had been occupied by only one extended family, two or three generations earlier. This culturally based pattern was probably reinforced during the period of intercity warfare, but it persisted in most areas through the colonial and post-colonial period.

Whereas Ibadan was an indigenous city with significant aspects of colonial influence, some other cities like Kaduna and Jos actually owe their present location to colonial influence. Kaduna and Jos were actually established by the British. Kaduna was the colonial capital of the protectorate of northern Nigeria. On the other hand, Jos, established in 1921, was on the plateau and was the centre of the tin mining industry. It was also a recreational town for expatriates and the Nigerian elite. Unlike the indigenous cities, these new cities did not have walls. However, they had centrally located administrative buildings as well as major road and rail transport routes, along which the main markets developed. These routes enhanced the growth of these cities. Although Jos became a commercial and administrative centre, the indigenes of its region were not educated to fill the administrative and commercial jobs of this new city. Consequently, the British engineered the relocation of non-indigenes to the city, especially the Hausa. Also attracted to the city were the Yoruba, Igbo and other Africans from the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone and they served as merchants, civil servants and clerks and this marked the origin of ethnic diversity in the city of Jos with a high proportion of the residents being non-indigenes.

Pre-Colonial Residential Pattern

The centre of a city was of symbolic and functional importance in pre-colonial Nigeria. With respect to traditional Yoruba cities, the Oba's palace (King's palace in Yorubaland) was located in the centre of the city with its own wall. Close to the Oba's palace was the open space in which the principal market was held. Similarly, smaller markets elsewhere in the town were situated in close proximity to the residences of lower chiefs, thus constituting a sub-nucleus (Mabogunje, 1968; Asiyanbola, 2001). The location of the residence of the highly placed individuals at the centre of the city was a form of fortification.

In pre-colonial Kano, the system of political authority and the conditions of obtaining rights and privileges in the system were based primarily on residence and occupation. With respect to residence, the structure of political authority was primarily territorial. An individual was first and foremost a citizen of the ward in which he lived, and he related to the system of authority through the ward and section head, up to the Emir (the King in northern Nigeria). The wards were, however, linguistically and culturally heterogeneous; any migrant could settle permanently and obtain land for building a house with the permission of the ward head. Citizenship was, thus, primarily determined by residence (Perchonock, 1994). Secondly, an individual related to the system of political authority through his occupational group, craftsmen, for example, were organized into a guild system through which their taxes and tributes were assessed and paid. Although all the members of a particular occupation did not settle in one area, many wards tended to become occupationally specialized. This was because individuals who settled in, for example, a ward where many people were blacksmiths, tended to marry into blacksmith families and perhaps apprentice their children to learn this craft. This way, a person's place of residence tended to have an important bearing on his occupation and that of his children (Ibid.). The essence of the system of political authority and access to citizenship was, therefore, mainly through residence. Authority was structured on a territorial principle, and migrants became assimilated both culturally and economically into the system within a relatively short time.

Residential Segregation in Colonial Nigerian Cities

The residential pattern that existed in pre-colonial Nigerian cities was altered by the advent of British colonialism. Prior to that time, there was a form of cohabitation among people of various national, social and ethnic origins. However, the British resolved to put an end to this residential pattern. Spatial, legal and psychological boundaries between social, ethnic, or racial categories were imposed to enforce a clear division between so-called races and ethnic groups to make these categories visible, in everyday life (Mabogunje, 1968; Agbola and Agbola, 1997; Egunjobi, 1999).

The urban political structure of the colonial era was completely different from that of the pre-colonial era. Be it in the indigenous cities like Kano, or in the non-indigenous or new ones like Jos, residential segregation was the norm and it was based on religion, ethnic origin and race. The *Sabon gari*[1] system in northern emirate cities was the epitome of this British-imposed policy, based on the principle of divide and rule (Perchonock, 1994). For example, the settlement known as *Sabon gari* (which means 'new town' in Hausa language) in northern Nigeria was first established in Kano around 1911. At this time, Kano was already an Islamic city and it was populated by the Kanawa[2] (the indigenous Kano people) who vehemently resisted the British colonization in 1903. The colonial authorities became keenly aware of the need to respect the sanctity of Islam in Kano. Consequently, the *Sabon gari* settlement was founded for the dominantly Christian southern Nigerian migrants who trooped into the city. As the Kanawa distanced themselves from the colonial authorities most especially on religious grounds, more southern Nigerians migrated into Kano to serve the whites. This way, the image of *Sabon gari* as a settlement of 'strangers' was consolidated. As a result, the Kanawa economy soon fell into the hands of the southern Nigerian strangers domiciled in *Sabon gari*. This development has given rise to frequent ethnic and religious violence in the city of Kano. An instance was the ethnic and religious violence, which took place in that city in 1995 (Albert, 1996). It is in cities like Lagos, Kano and Ibadan that ethnic violence often erupts. Indeed, the true ethnic nature of the violence is evident in the hierarchical diffusion of urban unrest. For example, in 1999, ethnic violence at Mile 2 in Lagos spread to the northern city of Kano, resulting in reprisals of Hausa against minority Yoruba of Kano.

It should be emphasized that the colonial pattern of residential segregation in these cities was not chosen by the Nigerians themselves. Rather, it was deliberately established and enforced by the colonial power. In Zaria, for example, during the first decades of colonialism, heterogeneous population of migrants sprang up outside the city walls, on the present site of *Sabon gari*. It was populated by people from different parts of Nigeria, who had

come to Zaria as a result of the railway and cotton ginnery. Some
of the indigenes of Zaria even came and settled there. However, by
early 1920s the British began to entertain some fears. They
envisaged that this community of diverse people might create a
situation that would not be in their (the British) interest. They felt
threatened by the existence of this heterogeneous population
domiciled in *Sabon gari*. Consequently, they issued an order
stating that Muslims must not live in *Sabon gari*. They also
enforced the regulation that non-indigenes could not live in Zaria
old city. The result was that the Muslims were removed from
Sabon gari while all non-Muslims were removed from Zaria old
city. At the same time, the British reserved for themselves the
Government Reservation Area (GRA) (Perchonock, 1994).
Eventually, the residential pattern of Zaria metropolitan area came
to be a totally segregated one, dividing the indigenes from
non-indigenes, the Christians from Muslims, and the Europeans
from Africans. This was a completely different picture from what
obtained in the pre-colonial period in which everyone, regardless
of ethnic origin had settled within the city walls.

The colonial pattern of residential segregation gave rise to a
kind of structure which made conflict between the different
separate communities that had been created inevitable. This was
essentially because the cities were characterized by a hierarchy of
citizenship rights, in which some individuals had more opportu-
nities and more access to societal resources than others. This
situation perfectly suited the needs of the colonial power that
sought to keep Nigerians internally divided so that they could not
present a united front against colonial oppression. The strategy
was very successful but it created problems which are still much
part of Nigerian life some four and a half decades after
independence and they continue to perpetuate the interests of
neo-colonialism.

Residential Segregation in Post-colonial Nigerian Cities

The residential pattern, which emerged during the colonial era,
persists till date. Many types of segregated sub-communities are
now found in Nigerian cities. The segregation in these cities is

religiously motivated, ethnically motivated, and economically motivated. The *Sabon gari* settlements are now found not only in the northern Nigerian cities but also in the southern Nigerian cities and their peculiarity derives from their unique demographic composition, social orientation and religious characteristics. The *Sabon gari* settlements in the Hausa-Fulani dominated northern Nigerian cities are inhabited by southern Nigerian migrants while those in the Yoruba dominated south-western Nigeria are domiciled by the Hausa-Fulani settlers (Albert, 1993). Its abridged version, *Sabo*[3], became popularized in south-western Nigeria and they are found in such Yoruba cities as Ibadan, Ijebu-Ode and Sagamu. In Igbo dominated eastern Nigeria, the Hausa-Fulani settle in the 'Abakpa Quarters'. These are, however, stranger settlements established by the strangers themselves through their continuous aggregation in given locations within the urban system. They are, however, patterned after the *Sabon gari* settlements, which were established during the colonial era.

In addition, however, it is important to point out that most studies of residential land use in post-colonial Nigerian cities such as those by Mabogunje (1968), Onokerhoraye (1977, 1982), Sada (1975), and Adedibu (1980) have identified three categories of residential areas which are distinct in social and physical patterns. They include the low, medium and high quality residential areas. The low quality residential areas (also known as high density residential areas) in our cities have similar socio-economic and physical characteristics. These areas are not planned and the houses have been built without reference to a street network. Most of the houses in this area, for example, Beere area of Ibadan, are overcrowded and they are occupied by persons of low socio-economic status or the low income people. In the traditional indigenous cities, majority of the population of low quality residential areas are indigenes of the urban areas. Conversely, in the more modern cities, the ethnic composition of the inhabitants is more varied and thoroughly mixed (as in Ajegunle of Lagos) but the inhabitants are low income individuals.

In the medium quality residential areas, the streets are planned and the inhabitants comprise the middle income or

middle class people. An example is the Surulere area of Lagos. These medium quality residential areas are not usually as overcrowded as the low quality residential areas. The population density per hectare is usually comparatively lower than that of the low quality residential areas. The ethnic composition of the population is quite mixed, especially in the rapidly growing traditional and modern towns. However, in the traditional cities, which are growing less rapidly, the majority of the inhabitants comprises young members of indigenous population, who because of the socio-economic and physical conditions in the pre-colonial residential districts, have been forced to move to medium grade districts in the suburban.

Finally, the high quality residential area, unlike the low quality and medium quality residential areas is, characteristically, well planned. The density of housing and population in this area is quite low and as such it is often referred to as low-density residential area. Most of the houses stand in the midst of well-kept lawns surrounded by neatly trimmed hedges. The houses in this area in our cities largely belong to the upper socio-economic group. Ikoyi in Lagos and Bodija in Ibadan are typical examples of these high quality or low-density residential areas.

The Impact of Globalization on Residential Segregation

Globalization is now a widely used concept. To Singh (1998), it is a process that involves "the growing economic interdependence among nations". The concept has also been defined as "a set of processes changing the nature of human interaction across a wide range of spheres including the economic, political, social, technological, and environmental" (WHO, 2004). Globalization is the process of integration of the world economy into a common system, either economic or social. It is "a process in which social life within societies is increasingly affected by international influences based on everything from political and trade ties to shared music, clothing style, and the mass media" (Johnson, 2000).

Though globalization became popularized in the last two decades, it has been an ongoing process. It, however, gained momentum when the Europeans came in contact with, conquered,

and colonized the new world. It reached some kind of climax in the last two decades due to the revolution in information and communication technology that has brought human beings and societies closer to one another than at any other time in history. The impact of globalization on residential segregation in Nigerian cities, therefore, should not necessarily be viewed in the context of the revolution in information and communication technology of the past two decades as this has not significantly affected the pattern of residential segregation in Nigerian cities. The ways in which globalization has had significant impact on residential segregation in these cities have essentially been through the colonization experience. It was during the colonial period, as argued earlier, that the colonial powers deliberately established and enforced a residential segregation based on religion, ethnic group and race. Christians were segregated from Muslims, indigenes from non-indigenes, and Europeans from Africans. This pattern that was established then has continued both in the indigenous and non-indigenous cities.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the origin and pattern of residential segregation in Nigerian cities. The present day pattern of residential segregation is largely attributable to the colonial influence. The pre-colonial residential pattern in Nigerian cities was altered by a deliberately established residential segregation by the British. Not only was this done in such indigenous cities like Kano but also in the non-indigenous ones like Kaduna and Jos. Christians were segregated from Muslims, indigenes from non-indigenes, Europeans from Africans. This pattern gave rise to urban-based political institutions structured around conflict between the various separate communities. The hierarchy of citizenship rights which characterized the system and differential access to societal resources created problems, which are still with us today. This must be addressed if we are to become free from the regular conflicts that we often witness in Nigerian cities.

Notes

1. *Sabon gari* means 'new town' in Hausa language and it was a settlement of strangers.
2. The Kanawa are the indigenous people of Kano.
3. *Sabo* is the abridged version of *Sabon gari*. It is this shortened version that is commonly used in south-western Nigeria domiciled by the Yoruba ethnic group especially in the Yoruba speaking cities of Ibadan, Ijebu-Ode and Shagamu.

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