



## Thomas Aquinas Notion of Justice and Its Implication for Nigerian System

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### Abstract

Nigeria is a country that is richly blessed with natural endowment of mineral resources and good climate. But, one would say that the human growth is not in correspondent with the growth of the nation due to injustice meted to some parts of the country. The growth of every nation is based on the effort of the members of that nation. This effort if properly harnessed through justice and fairness by treating everyone equal without prejudice will create a lasting cohesion and a sustainable development in the nation. This study employs a qualitative research design where data were being sourced from books, journals, encyclopedia and internet. Historical, evaluative, analytical and expository methods were employed to understand the practice of justice in Nigeria. It is interesting for us to understand that equity and fairness is the bedrock of national growth. Any country that eschews equity and fairness among the citizens will find it very hard for national development. Findings in this study reviewed that headlines of daily news are rife with cases of agitations and insecurities orchestrated by lack of justice in the society. The work therefore established that for justice to prevail there is need to distribute the dividends of democracy equally among the entire states and regions of the country without concentrating everything on one part, region or tribe. However, the research agreed with Aquinas on his notion of justice and therefore recommends that if Nigeria society will affirm equality of all members, there would not be insecurity, religious division, tribal war, sectionist agitations and revolutions.

**Key Words:** Equity, Justice, Fairness, Equality, Injustice and Insecurity.

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## Introduction

Justice is the software that promotes progress and tranquility of all nations. No nation can ever progress without justice as it is the vehicle for equality and fair play in that nation. St. Thomas Aquinas of the philosophical school advocated for equality and fair treatment among all men in the society. The benefit of this is enormous as such will uplift the interrelationship among men in the society and will in turn promote peace and coexistence among all men. Man is a social animal, he always look for a partner and relation which he would always like to commune with at all times. But, man by nature is also selfish as he tend to seek for that which would always benefit his interest all year round. So, if all men stay together seeking for that which would satisfy their individual interest, then conflict must abide as both may gain interest on a particular thing. It is a vehicle that carries equality of goods and services to the door step of everyone.

However, the best option for crisis settlement is equitable distribution of wealth. When goods are distributed equally to the extent that people gain their share without grudges, justice has prevailed but when the goods are shared and some people gain higher than the other, injustice has gained interest and this will bleed chaos, insecurity and unnecessary agitations.

Over the years, the issue of justice has been fueling all-round the air creating major concern for every dwellers in Nigeria. It's no longer a news that people are agitating against the Nigerian government over unfair treatment against some regions of the country. This no doubt has caused a lot of conflicts, insecurity, political instability and economic deterioration in the nation. In the recent, a young Nigerian lawyer from Delta State of Nigeria dressed in a native attire into the law court as a protest against the judgment infavour Hijab dressing in Nigeria Law school. The act



which raises concern from all sphere and genres of the country as an accolade to the national unfair treatment.

Notwithstanding, the Igbo section of the country has been on the neck of the government against the unfair detention of the Biafra leader and freedom fighter, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu. The detention has caused a compulsory sit at home order issued by the followers of the freedom fighter as against the wish of the people. The sit at home order has affected all facets of economy and caused unruling nature of the government. One would ask, how does this link with justice? The answer is very simple. The Biafran leader alleged that the present government sidelined the Igbos in his developmental stride including the appointment of the serving security chiefs and all other major key positions.

However, this study shall be of great benefit to our nation as it shall serve as a panacea for the problem of insecurity that is commonly ravaging our nation. It will also x-ray the methodic approaches employed in curbing insecurity challenges in the country. More so, it will expose the basis of justice and areas of injustice in our country.

### **The Concept of Justice**

The concept of justice is as old as human existence. Justice is one of the oldest human virtues in the world. It is mentioned among the 42 virtues of “Negative Confessions” called *The Book of the Dead*, by the Ancient Black Egyptians (Asa, 1987, p.12). The oldest word for Egyptians is “Maat” which means ‘truth, righteousness and justice. Justice concerns the proper ordering of things and persons within a society. A person is treated justly if treated according to what is fair, due, or owned. For instance, if equal rights are due to all the members of the society or community, then justice is prevailed when those rights are accorded. If the reverse becomes the



subject matter, justice is denied. Any denial of good service or piece of information to which one has a right to or is entitled to base on justice is an injustice. For instance, if two persons do the same amount of work, there should be paid equally if not, there is injustice. Another good example is when two persons commit the same offence and are equality guilty, there should be given equal punishment. If the other is given two years imprisonment, let the other not be given four years imprisonment. If both are not treated equally, therefore, there is injustice. However, in the Dictionary of Ethics, John Macquarrie stated that justice means moral righteousness, rectitude, perfection or excellent (John, 1967, p.189). Man must be righteous in order to dine with the spirit. There is no impure man that can ever commune with the superlative being or gods.

The sense of justice can stand as an order which is divinely meant to serve as a guide to all men. So, in this work, ‘The Teachings of Ptah-Hotep’, which stand as the oldest existing work in the world can be aptly described as the oldest document living among men. In the narrow sense or “sensu stricta”, justice means conformity with the law. Though, this is with numerous objection as the conformity to written or legal law without the spirit of justice shows the inadequacy of the narrow sense (Asa, 1987, p.12). Ptah-Hotep in his 5th instruction as;

If you are a man who leads, a man who controls the affair of many, then seek the most perfect way of performing your responsibility so that your conduct will be blameless. Great is Maat (truth, justice, righteousness). It is everlasting. Maat has been unchanging since the time of Asar. To create obstacle to the following of laws is to open away to the condition of violence. The transgressor of laws is punished; although the greedy person overlooks this. Business may obtain riches; yet crime never lands its wares on the shore. In the end, only Maat lasts. Man says; Maat is my father’s ground (Asa, 1987, p.18).



In the book, *Issues in Moral Philosophy*, Damian Anyam (2016) stated that justice is explained based on the characteristics (p.84). The three characteristics of justice according to him are;

first, justice is a social norm, that is, a directive for guiding men in their actions towards one another. Second, justice is probative in the sense that to label an action as just indicates an approval of such action. Third, justice is obligatory; it presents us with a duty to act in a certain way rather than in another. For instance, to view an action as just implies that everybody ought to act in certain way (Anyam, 2016, p.84).

This statement implies that justice is based on that which is due to everyone and everyone is expected to act on the same manner.

In the biblical exegesis, justice was regarded as a moral rectitude or righteousness. Justice in the biblical sense can be interpreted as “conformity with the legal norm” (Deut.1:16; 16:18; 25:15). The legal norm here means the judicial command and order in man to man relationship. Justice is all about fairness irrespective of the person involved. It talks about treatment or equality of all. It is equated as the way or conduct which people are expected to exhibit or behave in the society. It entails giving each person his due especially in appropriate time. Justice has also been used as a way of showcasing benevolence through the payment of wages, rectitude in a relationship of men and telling the truth (Sirach, 3:30; 2Cor. 9:9; Eccles. 5:7).

Consequently, justice has an attribute of social norm. In his book *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls (1972) proposed a social justice theory whereby he maintained that the principle of rational prudence is applied to aggregative conception of the welfare of the group (p.24). Rawls sees justice as fairness; this understanding of justice is drawn from his vision of the society as being based on a social contract. In his theory of justice as fairness, Rawls think that two principles would be chosen in original position:



First, each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with similar liberty for others. Second, social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably accepted to be everyone's advantage and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all (Rawl, 1972, p.18).

Rawls theories placed much emphasis on the goals of the individuals in the society and seek to place individual at the verge of gaining from the society other than the individuals providing for the society. This notwithstanding proves and expose Rawls critic of Utilitarianism which places the goal of the society above the individual goal.

However, the social structure according to Rawls has a way of operating, individuals are rational competitors and choosers. This shows that social contract is as a result of overlapping consensus giving the participation of choice of rational men. Rawls theory is a theory based on rational choice that is principle of justice deal with conflicting claim upon the advantages won by social cooperation; they apply to the relations among several persons or groups. He stated thus;

Among the essential features of this situation is that no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural asset and abilities, his intelligence, strength and the like. I can even assure that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principle of justice is chosen behind a veil of ignorance. This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of the principle by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstance (Rawl, 1972, p.60).

The result of choice with the affairs of ignorance is a reflective equilibrium for Rawls seeks a theory of justice that is justifies in the basis of mutual accommodation and support of many considerations. So, Rawls idea of justice as that which excludes ones knowledge by the natural maker is indirectly limiting the responsibility of man and making him guilt free amidst his wrong doings. This implies that justice is a mere conception as man ought to accept that which comes



his way. This affirmation makes Rawls theory contradictory, because he earlier postulated that justice is fairness. How can fairness come into play without man's involvement and taking responsibility of all around him? So, Rawls goofed in his analysis of justice at this point.

The concept of justice should not have any reference to the natural creation. It's understandable that some people seem to have super power above others in some areas but such is the beauty of nature. Everyone has something which must be different and superior to the next person and that is what makes him unique and also justifies the fact that man is equal but his equality is in opposite direction. So, what we advocate and what Aquinas sort was equality of dividend of democracy. It is the equitable distribution of the artificial gift used in beautifying the nature by the Supreme Being.

### **Aquinas Notion of Justice**

Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican friar and priest who was born between 1224/1225 and died on March 7, 1274. He was canonized a Saint according to the Catholic tradition as a way of awarding a righteous man on July 18, 1323. Aquinas was a philosopher and a theologian, studied at the University of Naples before joining the Dominican order of priests. He joined the Dominican priests and taught at the Dominican seminary (an institution where priests are trained) in Paris. His time coincidentally was when the Aristotelian teaching was rampant in Paris. He tried to integrate into Christian thought the liquors of Aristotelian philosophy just as the early church fathers had integrated Plato's teaching in the early Christian era (<http://www.encyclopedia.org/Aquinas/2021/profile.html>). He held that reason is capable of operating within faith; while the philosophers relied on reason, the theologians accepted faith as the onus of their Christian faith and proceed to conclusion through reason.



In his *Summa Theological*, Aquinas (1947) defined justice based on the concept of the equality of man. He said that justice is “the strong and firm will to give to each his due” (II-II, q. 57, a. 3). For Aquinas, the proper thing about the idea of justice consists on those things that belong to our intercourse with other men; hence, justice is rendering the other his due or right. That is, man to man relationship is duly required and maintained for justice to prevail.

Justice, or *justitia*, is a cardinal virtue and defined by Aquinas as "a habit whereby man renders to each one his due by a constant and perpetual will" (*Summa Theologica* II-II, q. 58, a. 1). Along with temperance, prudence, and fortitude, justice provides the complete structure of good works. Like all virtue, justice is an intrinsic principle. A principle intrinsic to good action and thereby, subjective. Justice, as a principle of good action, is then related to the will of the rational creature. The quality of justice adheres to the subject which is the will. Law, as an extrinsic principle, relates to the intrinsic principle of justice. As human law emanates from reason to direct actions of the community, justice is implicated as "it is proper to justice, as compared with the other virtues, to direct man in his relations with others: because it denotes a kind of equality, as its very name implies...for equality is in reference of one thing to some other"(II-II, q. 57, a. 1). The object of justice is the just, which places justice above other virtues. The just is the same as the right, or *jus*. Therefore, the right is the object of justice. Law is "not the same as the right, but an expression of right". Right, or just, depends on commensuration with another person. Justice is only in one-man relationship towards another.

Aquinas further delineates two forms of justice, commutative and distributive. Commutative justice is concerned with dealings between two persons while Distributive justice relates to the order of the whole community in relation to each single person (II-II, q. 61, a. 1). In distributive





justice, the common goods are to be distributed by proportion. Ultimately, the proper act of justice is nothing else than to render to each one his own. The justice that directs to the common good is legal justice, that which regulate the relation of the individual and the other. A man according to Aquinas relates to himself as he relates to others; temperance and fortitude are the virtues that direct a man as he relates to himself. The point is that justice as it operates has some moderations and these moderations regulate man's relations with others. What this implies is that justice operates individualistically. The way justice operates in the state differs from how it operates based on the individual. As individual acquires a habit of character to constantly render one another their due, the state in its legal duty is charged with the due responsibility to ensure that justice is maintained with the distribution of the common good or the individual's relation to the whole.

However, "in legal justice, there is the order of the whole towards the parts, to which corresponds the order of that which belongs to the community in relation to each single person. This order is directed by distributive justice, which distributes common good proportionately; hence there are two species of justice, distributive and commutative justice (II-i, q. 58, a. 11). An individual is always exhausted by given the other his due at all time, and by so doing he is moderate and just. Aquinas recognizes that all acts of virtue may relate to justice by benefiting the good of community. As law is the attempt of the rational creature to benefit the common good, Aquinas maintains consistency in justice and law as a specific virtue.

Acts of virtue can pertain to justice, in so far as it directs man to the common good. It is in this sense that justice is called a general virtue. And since it belongs to the law to direct to the common good, as stated above (I-II, 90, 2), it follows that the justice which is in this way styled general, is called "legal justice,"



because thereby man is in harmony with the law which directs the acts of all the virtues to the common good (II-i, q. 58, a. 11).

In keeping with Aristotle, Aquinas maintains this concept of legal justice stands foremost among all the moral virtues. As it is considered the most excellent of virtues by Aristotle and Aquinas, attainment of justice will not be common as excellence, or virtue, is not achieved by all men.

Legal justice begs an opposite which is the failure of human law to exact justice

Likewise, in the distribution of justice by the state, moderation is the panacea as everyone is expected to be a partaker without prejudice or sidelining. Aquinas contended thus;

The act of distributing of goods of the community belongs none but those who exercise authority over those goods; and yet distributive justice is also in the subject to whom those goods are distributed in so far as they are contended by a just distribution. Moreover, distribution of common goods is sometimes made to the members of a family, and such distribution can be made by authority of the selected individual. Distributive and commutative justice differ not only in respect of unity and multitude but also in respect of different kinds of due because common property is due to an individual in one way and his personal property in another way (II-i, q. 57, a. 2).

However, the act of distributing the commodity or goods is prerogatively the duty of the authorities. The authority governs a perfect community or state and such authority should ensure that everyone is justly treated and the individuals receive their share as they also participated in the sharing the burden and task pertaining the common good of the state. Every individual share partakes in conquering a battle should also benefit from the dividend of the labour. When everyone is involved in the sharing of the task, everyone should also be involved in enjoying the fruit of the land therein. It is the duty of the authorities to ensure that the individuals who partake in the task of the community are well treated. The individuals are expected to extend such magnificent attitude to everyone within their circle.



### **Basis of Justice in Nigeria**

In the discussion of justice, many issues are very important to be discussed as they portray what we can boldly say that are justified.

i. Human Nature: Man is always the focal point of everything that exist and as such, man is the subject matter of justice. He is also the ontological basis and principle of justice. This is because, the animals do not think and have no wills of their own (though this fact is still under investigation because some animals are alleged to possess some rationalistic characters). But for the moment until factual truth and other investigative or research results are been made clearer, animals do not possess rationality, hence, they cannot perform rational and moral obligations which are adjudicated as just or unjust. On the contrary, man is rational. He wills, feels and have propensities for acts that are judged just and unjust. Justice is meant and derived from the fundamental responsibility of all men. All men are equal and no man is greater than the other. Men are endowed with common human nature and destiny to attain and realize a certain goal. Through the law of nature, we all live under the same norm and morality and are been guided through the same moral law.

The natural law or law of nature in its prescriptive sense means a universal precept or command intended by nature to regulate the activities of man in the universe. It's the universal law which enjoins all men to do good and refrain from doing evil. However, in its descriptive sense natural law is a formulation of the regularities in which all things happen uniformly all over the world under certain conditions (Uduigwomen, 2010, p.7). So, all the laws, the law of planetary motion, the law of gravitation, the law of relativity, the law of equality of substance and all kinds of law



which describe the regularity and uniformity with which things happen under certain conditions in the world are laws of nature in its descriptive sense.

The natural law confers on us natural rights which are the same in every living being. No one can be deprived of his natural end, all we can do is to deprive him of the means to attain it here on earth. One's human right or fundamental right can be violated by stepping on the means of realizing life. Thus, to live in a comfortable condition, one not just to live but some other elements that help to nurture life like food, clothing, shelter, liberty, education, employment, companionship, property, recreation and so forth. When all these are not adequately provided, then justice is questionable.

ii. Social Order: In the beginning of time human nature is seen as the basis and source of justice. Justice as pointed above is said to have derived its state from the natural law, but such may sound fallacious because most justice can equally be linked with the civil and political life of man in the society. The existence of man is believed to have constituted from the social order. In the social nature, man is a bundle of civil and political character. Man by nature is just as he seeks for the betterment of other individuals in the society. Thomas Hobbes in the *Leviathan* aptly stated in the second category of the law that; "a man be willing, when others are so too...to lay down this right to all things; and be contend with so much liberty against other men as he would allow men against himself. For as long as a man holdeth this right, of doing anything he liketh; so are all men in the condition of warre" (Osagwu and Damine, 2013, p.77).

It is in the human society that he realizes himself by living with others and having social intercourse, communication and relationship with them. He realizes his been to the society by



associating with them. This is because every human being possesses a unique character that differs him the other, the uniqueness is the true sweetness of inter-human relationship. When these characters are tapped together, it will bring a colorful and sweet tasting environment that will enhance good behaviour and justice to the dwellers. In other to achieve a cohesive and justified living in the society, there was need for a civil law that will help to implement and guide the “individualness” of each person. This civil law is expression of the contents of the natural law.

iii Personal Contracts: Justice is also derived from the contracts among men in the society. There are many transactions which are too personal in scope to be determined by civil law. In matters where neither civil nor positive law can determine any agreement which the parties concerned determines in so far as they do so on their personal agreement, they shall be just and fair.

The mutual agreement which concerns the transfer of rights are contracts. In situations where two men agree for the exchange of property or goods, as far as their agreement and transactions are genuine and carried without disagreement, that contract is justice and instantly holds. But, if at the process one party declines or could not carry his own obligation of the transaction, there is therefore a breach of trust which instantly results to injustice. However, what obliges each to play his or her part is called “Commutative Justice”. Commutative justice is the justice that requires the relationship between individual citizens among themselves (Omeregbe, 2011, p.237). It requires and calls for fairness in transaction between individual citizens and exchange of things of equal value.



Iv. Religious Justice: Man is a religious being and are bound to profess any religion of his choice. In our society today, there are different religions which we are obliged to choose a membership as our birth is surrounded by a religious sect which we are advertently mandated to belong. The membership of these religious organizations propels one for a role and therefore seeks for our protection when necessary.

As a member of a religious sect, it's our duty to protect the interest of our religion whenever and however the need arises. As we protect the interest of the religion, the religious organization will in turn seek for our own right as a citizen in matters that concerns us. When each other reparatively plays his or her role affectionately, justice is bound to exist. But in a situation whereby the religious organization or the individual fails to play his or her role for the benefit of the other, such encores the bleach of injustice. More so, injustice occurs when the government prefers and protects the right and conducts of a given religion as the expense of others. For instance, if the government of Nigeria makes law to protect the interest and activities of Islamic religion at the expense of other numerous religions in the country, such is injustice as every religion has the right to exist in the country and also seek the protection of the law of the country.

### **Implications of Justice in Nigeria System**

Nigeria is a country blessed with both human, man power, good land, agricultural, economic trees, natural deposits of crude resources and a favorable climate weather. Over a time, I had always contended that Nigeria received more grace and justice from the supreme creator (being qua being in Aristotelian language) than other countries of the world. But, I have also wondered why Nigeria was colonized by the British, and resolved that it could be or maybe because



Nigeria lacked the intellectual usage of all these gifts but other countries are endowed with intellectual superiority as a complement of divine gift bestowed on Nigeria soil by the creation God.

However, the natural blessings bestowed on Nigerians for the growth and progress of the nation have been mismanaged due to injustice and failed leadership. Nigeria today would have been the most prosperous country in the world in all ramifications but injustice could not allow us to share what have been giving to us equitably for the benefit of all of us. The leaders preferred tribal sentiment than communal benefit and this has eaten deep in our political and religious institutions. There is nothing one can ever think or do today without making reference to either the tribe, religious group, political party or zonal belongings. When these have been brought into our system, that is the beginning of the dilapidated nation and as such you know that 'snake is in the basket of salt' as it can only take a philosopher king to redeem the country.

Historically, the issue of injustice made its entrance into our mind even before the creation of our country, Nigeria. It is on record that our grandfather and the grand patron of Nigeria, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the blessed memory once demanded justice from the colonial masters during the colonial dispensation. After the creation or independence of Gold Coast (Ghana) championed by Julius Nyerere in 1957, the fathers of Nigeria met with the British Commonwealth and sought while justice granted to their neighboring state cannot be extended to them, notwithstanding that Nigeria made a move for independency before Gold Coast. In their word, Azikiwe read, "we demand the right to assume responsibility for the government of our country. We demand the right to be free to make mistakes and profits from our experience" (Azikiwe, 1998, p.170). After that incidence, Nigeria gained independence within six years<sup>43</sup>. This happened after the



amalgamation. Even the amalgamation in 1914 was also a child of impunity and injustice as people were not sought for before it took place. It was just a decision and agreement of one person, Fredrick Lugard who was the governor of Northern and Southern protectorate and his then lover, Mrs Flora Shaw. It was learnt that Flora Shaw was actually the person that coined the name Nigeria to describe the area which was then the territory administered by the Royal Niger Company ([www.dailytrust.com](http://www.dailytrust.com)). So, the imprint of injustice can easily be traced through the amalgamation because I'm sure that if respective people were asked to choose before the coalition, the two protectorates would have accepted to be an independent region and that could have prevented the Nigerian war of 1967-1970 where the likes of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu declared for an independent state.

The issue of justice in Nigeria is a worrisome one. It is an ideology seeking for a balance stand as the resting support had long been removed. Most often, I would say that justice is a borrowed language in our society. To say that there is justice is to say that man live in a brutish condition. Live in the present day Nigeria is so nasty, brutish and chaotic just like Thomas Hobbes earlier postulated in his state of nature, which he used to describe the nature of man before the era of civilization. Many a times, I would say that Nigerians are still leaving in the Dark Age where there is equality without the law and anyone can easily take up something without permission rather anyone who raises head against the will of the other will be sent to the den of abyss.

However, one thing that confuses me is when we claim to exercise justice as proclaimed by Thomas Aquinas by ensuring that everyone gets his due at the right time. This ideology has kept me puffed and wondered if actually we do not understand Aquinas or that we decided to practice our own different concept of justice. The practicability of Aquinas justice in Nigeria is in





comatose; it's a limping notion without clutches. What Aquinas actually postulates is that justice consist on those things that belong to our intercourse with other men; hence, justice is rendering the other his due or right (Aquinas,II-i, q. 58, a.3). The 'kpim' of justice is fairness. This entails that no one will be cheated while all men receive their due at right time.

In Nigeria of our time, insecurity has taken an executive seat and everyone is left to his fate. There are different insurgencies found in the country today, such as Boko Haram, Militancy, wide spread kidnapping, Fulani Herdsmen, Isis (those that claimed the responsibility of Kuje prison break in Abuja on July 5, 2023) ([www.premiumtimesng.com/news](http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news)) and many more including some that are at the incubating stages. The insecurity in the nation has over powered the security personnel to the extent that security personnel's that supposed to be protecting the civilians are been kidnapped in their cantonments and stations. The major cause of these insurgencies are as a result of injustice in the state as people form themselves to get their daily bread which most often metamorphose to uncontrollable sect.

In our electioneering system, they are a lot of injustice taking place. The internal democracy has been brought into a staggering motion. In the just concluded primary election of 2022, we saw how APC and PDP used money to adduce their voters on the expenses of the poorer politicians among them, making it impossible for them to choose the most credible persons for 2023 election ([www.vanguard/news](http://www.vanguard/news)). A similar thing also happened in the 2019 election in Imo state where someone that came fourth emerged the throne of leadership. Thus, with this level of gambling in electioneering system, there can never be a time the country can move forward in developmental strategy.



However, the through pervasion of justice is championed by religious and tribal inclinations. Nigeria is a multi-religious country and every Nigerian belongs to one religious group. But the unfortunate truth is that those who assume the helm of affairs in our nation are so attached to their religion or religious belief to the detriment of the economic stability of the country. This has seriously affected our nation badly to a point that everyone is left to his fate and the economy in shambles. Religion in Nigeria is been used for selfish reasons. But my worry is that, as we all profess religious belonging, crime is always at a very high rate and the religious leaders care less about people from the other religions. This has no doubt created unnecessary discrimination between the various religions in the country.

Another major issue that has credited injustice in our nation is tribal affiliation. Nigeria is grouped into six regions and three major tribes, Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa. Within these three major ethnic groups only two have been leading the country since her independence in 1960. In their agitation for a taste in the number one seat, what we have today as sit at home order emanated leaving the South Easter part of the country in perjury. The idea that one tribe or two will always share what belong to three tribes is unfair and the worst of it all is that most often, the juice positions are reserved only for people that come from the same tribe with the leader while the rest will either be given inferior positions if at all. In this fading political dispensation, a good analyst will always affirm with me that it is beclouded with tribal sentiment to the extent that almost all the special aides to the president are from the North. All the chief of military and para-military are from the North and almost all the board chairmen are from the North.

We can state that almost all the facets of government and governance is seriously begging for justifiable assistance as there are covered with injustice. There is what one could be called



invidious discrimination or arbitrary unequal treatment in the areas of governance and legislating, administering or enforcing roles, or in distributing burdens or benefits (Omeregbe,2011, p.238). More still, there is a high increase in exploitation, taking advantage of another's trust or natural handicap to gain opportunity at his detriment. One is seriously confused on whom to trust with his hard earned resources for management because even the so called religious leaders have also perverted justice at the altar.

### **Conclusion**

The philosophy of Aristotle has a great influence on Aquinas especially in his treatment of justice in Nicomachean Ethics (1970). This ethics is revealed to be the foundational philosophy of Aquinas knowledge. Justice is regarded by Aristotle as a sovereign virtue and the purpose of the state. It means treating everyone equal and fails at all times. It can be stated to have flown from Plato's Crito where eponymous friend of Socrates tried convincing him to escape from the prison but he resisted. It went further to say that justice is required not only inflicting wrong or injury but fulfilling once agreement and abiding by once agreement (Plato, 1974, p.23).

The study has it so far that justice is the prime state of all things and it's the bedrock of peace and harmony in every nation. There is no nation that can triumph in impunity and injustice, it is only justice that drive the progress and sustenance of all nations. Nevertheless, the problem of Nigeria is as a result of injustice flowing like a river in all parts of the country. The research found that why development is at the redundant motion is because justice is not allowed to thrive in the economy of the nation. Aquinas however advocated for a fair share and equality before all



men in distribution of goods and services. It is on this stand that most social vices like insecurity shall be eradicated and economic progress will gain its way in our nation.

### **Summary**

Aquinas notion of justice was an advocacy for a fair treatment among all members of the society irrespective of race, category and level. For Aquinas, the proper thing about the idea of justice consists on those things that belong to our intercourse with other men. Anything that will bring in relationship with all men and as such commute man to man relationship. It projects equality and fair treatment by rendering the other his due or right at all times. That is, man to man relationship is duly required and maintained for justice to prevail.

The Thomistic theory of justice is a specimen to Nigerian nation which every member claims to live in one accord with each other and share things equitably to all members. But for a country like Nigeria, the yardstick for justice was verified through different basis like Human nature, social other, personal contact and religious behaviour. It was understood that justice in Nigeria is delusional and yet to receive a warm embracement.

However, the implication for justice was viewed in a negative direction. It was found that lack of justice has fueled the increase in insecurity, sectionalism, litigations, economic bewilderment, high rate of inflation and other social vices in Nigeria. Thus, the researcher implores the architects of national economy to be transparent in dispersing and sharing the national cake.



## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made;

1. That the drivers of our national economy should be fair in sharing the dividends of democracy.
2. That the government of Nigeria should take all regions as one and no part of the country should be sidelined.
3. That the religious leaders of the various religions in Nigeria should deter from anything that will bring injustice in the country and use their podium as a stand of justice other than a place of division
4. That the only solution to the crisis and insecurity challenges is fair treatment to all citizens including students and graduates as such will bleach the gap between criminal activities that leads to insecurity
5. That everyone should learn to treat each other equal as Aquinas advocated because such will grant trust among all citizens.
6. That we should try to shun tribe, race, and religion and class division and take everyone equal before the law as such will promote justice in our nation.



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