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AN INTELLE CTUAL MAN

**PROF.
AKINLAWON
LADIPO
MABOGUNJE**

NNOM, FNAEng,
Hon. Dr. Sc., CFR. CON

Oct. 18, 1931 - Aug 4, 2023

**PROF. AKINLAWON LADIPO
MABOGUNJE
NNOM, FNAEng, Hon. D.SC., CFR. CON
(October 18, 1931 - August 4, 2022)**

**ONE OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF
SOCIAL SCIENCE DISCIPLINES AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN**

**AN
INTELLECTUAL
MAN**

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PREFACE

As I approached my 70th birthday in 2021, I reflected on my life and career, and the profound impact of Professor Mabogunje came to the forefront of my mind. I wrote a public tribute, published in the Nigerian Guardian Newspapers, titled "Moulded By An Icon: Still On Mabogunje At 90." This tribute acknowledged the significant influence he had on my life, shaping me into a scholar and public policy advisor in his likeness.

Two years after his passing, I revisited his legacy, aided by his family's published book, which showcased his polymathic versatility. The Special Issue of Benin Journal of Geography, Planning and Environment in his honor further demonstrated the scholarly response to his impact.

This book focuses on one facet of his life that intersected with mine: his intellectual work. I feel fortunate to have shared in his scholarship through extended discussions, problem-solving assignments, and mentorship opportunities. His confidence in me was humbling, and our collaborations revealed the depth of his intellectual charisma.

This book is a down payment on our collective quest to further investigate and elaborate on his intellectual work and legacy. I thank my colleagues, especially Professor Bola Ayeni, for their support in compiling this book. May God bless them for their kindness and generosity.

Isaac F. Megbolugbe
Swansea, Illinois, USA
August 2024

AWARDS

East Lansing, Michigan, United States	-	1976
Hon. D. Sc. (University of Benin, Benin-City)	-	1995
Hon. D. Sc. (Ogun State University, Ago-Iwoye)	-	1996
Hon. D. Tech. (Bells University of Technology, Ota)	-	2009
Hon. D. Env, Tech. (Federal University of Technology, Akure)	-	2010

Honorary Fellowships:

Fellow of the University College London (FUCL)	-	1981
Fellow of the Nigerian Geographical Association (FNGA)	-	1984
Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (FNITP)	-	1990
Foreign Associate of the United States National Academy of Sciences	-	1999
Fellow of the Social Science Academy of Nigeria (FSSAN)	-	2002
Fellow of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors & Valuers	-	2006
Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Engineering (FNAE)	-	2006
Fellow of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors (FNIS)	-	2010

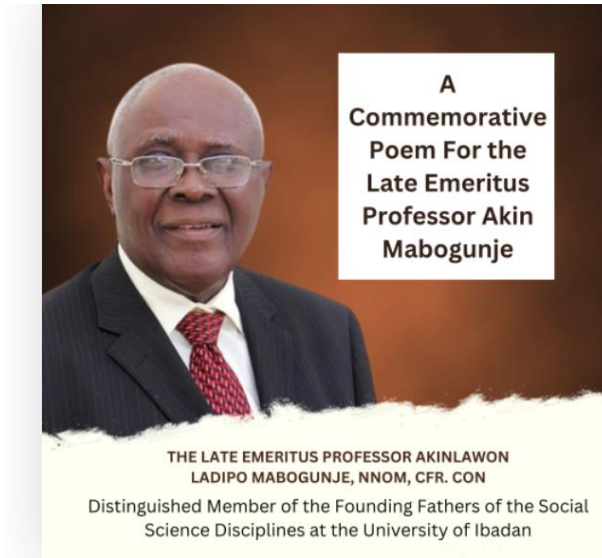
Other Honours:

Prize-Winner in Geography, University College, Ibadan, 1950/51 and 1951/52	
Winner of Parry Prize in Geography, University of London, University College,	1953/54
Award of the David Livingstone Centennial Gold Medal by the American Geographical Society for distinguished contribution to the Geography of Africa,	1972
Murchinson Award of the Royal Geographical Society, London for distinguished contribution of the Geography of West Africa,	1975
Melville Herskovits Distinguished Professor of African Studies, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, USA,	1978
Nigeria National Order of Merit Award, (NNOM), the highest national award for distinguished contribution to the academic and intellectual life of the country,	1980.

aureate d'Honneur, Société de Géographie, Paris,	1984
Anders Retzius Gold Medal of the Swedish Association for Anthropology and Geography,	1985
ocial Correspondent of La Societa Geografica Italiana for distinguished contribution to the study of urbanization in the Third World, Rome,	1986
Honorary Corresponding Member, Academie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer, ruxelles, Belgium,	1987
ife Membership, University of Ibadan Alumni Association, Ibadan,	1987
Merit Award Recipient as a distinguished citizen of Ogun State, Nigeria,	1989
Honorary Corresponding Member, Royal Geographical Society, London, U.K.	1991
Recipient of the Grande Medaille of the French Geographical Soccity, Paris,	1992
Recipient, Certificate of Merit of the Ijebu-Ode Development Association,	1993
Recipient of the Research Gold Medal of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society,	1994
Distinguished Africanist Award of the African Studies Association of the United States, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, November,	1997
UNCHS Scroll of Honour for outstanding contributions to human settlements development, Dubai, United Arab Emirates,	1998
niator and Chairman of the Ijebu Development Initiative on Poverty Reduction (IDIPR), Awujale's Palace, Ijebu-ode,	1999 – 2022.

Foreign Associate of the United States National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C.,	April, 1999
Nigerian National Honours of Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON),	2001
Special Award by the Archbishop of Ibadan Province, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Ibadan,	2003
Hallmarks of Labour Foundation Role Model Award,	2005
National Union of Geography Students Association (NUGSA) (University of Ibadan Chapter) Role Model Award,	2005
National Environment Award 2006 (Sustainable Development Man of the Year)	2006
The Zik Prize in Leadership (for outstanding performance in Public Service),	2006
Distinguished Service Award by the Cathedral of St. James The Great at the 150 th Anniversary Commemoration of its Founding	2010
Nigerian National Honours of Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic (CFR),	2011
Centenary Award, Federal Government of Nigeria, 100 Eminent Citizens,	2014
CVL Leadership without Title (LWT) Award	2016
Laureate of the Vautrin-Lud Prize” which is regarded as the Noble Prize of Geography	2017
Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences	2017
Heart of the Nation Star Award by the	

CHAPTER ONE



A Commemorative Poem for the Late Emeritus Professor
Akin Mabogunje By Professor Isaac Megbolugbe

One of His Intellectual Disciples

A sage has left us, a star has fallen
Akin Mabogunje, a legacy unbroken
A life of service, a heart of gold
A nation's development, his life's fold
With a mind sharp as a razor's edge
He cut through complexity, a true sage
His vision for Nigeria, a dream yet to be

A united, strong, and self-reliant nation, he could see

Through the lens of geography, he gazed

At the landscape of development, with a critical gaze

He diagnosed the problems, with a master's hand

And prescribed solutions, with a servant's stand

His leadership was marked by excellence and grace

A true servant leader, in every time and place

He stood before kings, with a humble heart

And served with integrity, a work of art

His knowledge process, a journey of discovery

From historical methodology to spatial science, a true mastery

He researched, he analyzed, he wrote, and he taught

Leaving a legacy of knowledge, a true gift

His practice of policy advisory, a testament to his skill

A true expert, with a heart for the thrill
Of making a difference, of leaving a mark
Akin Mabogunje, a shining star in the dark

His platform and performance, a beacon of light
A true public policy artist, a guiding sight
For generations to come, his legacy will live on
Akin Mabogunje, a life well-lived, a job well-
done

Rest in peace, dear Professor, your legacy
remains

A testament to your life, a life that still sustains
Inspiring generations, guiding and directing
Akin Mabogunje, a true Nigerian icon,
protecting.

CHAPTER TWO



Prof. Akin Mabogunje



Prof. Isaac Megbolugbe, PhD FRICS

INTRODUCTION

Reading Emeritus Professor Akin Mabogunje’s autobiography, almost two years after his passing, was a transcendent experience that embodied memories, reflections, and emotions. The intersectionality of our connection – our shared experiences, his mentorship, and our friendship – made it feel like an out-of-body experience, filled with a sense of wonder, gratitude, and blessedness. The confluence of our lives was a precious gift, and I rejoice in having known him,

learned from him, and been impacted by his life and legacy.

Nevertheless, the huge void left by his demise still reverberates, leaving a crippling sense of disorientation and disillusionment in its wake. The intellectual and leadership vacuum created by his departure continues to be acutely felt, both in the industry and on a personal level. In tribute to his enduring legacy, I revisited his autobiography, which inspired this heartfelt Tribute. His absence remains a piercing reminder of the immense impact he had on our lives and the vast chasm he left behind.

HIS VISION

With the benefit of hindsight over a career of almost 50 years that labor on a variety of assignments at the state and federal levels about different aspects of the development of Nigeria, all he could report was that the country might be positioned to see what he has envisioned all his

life, but not sure if the country would be able to realize it. Nevertheless, he was hopeful that it might eventually emerge. Only a sage of his caliber could frame his disappointment, heartbreak, and dismal picture of Nigeria as eloquently as he did in his autobiography.

The vision that remained emergent to Mabogunje is the same vision articulated more than five decades ago under the direction of his late colleague, Professor Ojetunji Abayode in the Second National Development Plan (1970-74):

- “i. A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- ii. A great and dynamic economy
- iii. A just and egalitarian society
- iv. A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens
- v. A free and democratic society.”

Mabogunje acknowledged that the inability of the Nation to realize the vision set for it has always been a feature of a Nigerian polity secured by its political patron, UK and ingrained agency that has sustained what Mr. Harold Smith, an Oxford graduate, called “Northern domination” of Nigeria (see page. 654). In a sense, what Mabogunje said amounted to this; “The deck was stacked against me, and no matter how hard I try or how brilliant my ideas and programs were, the system was rigged to ensure the Nation’s failure.” Mabogunje argued that the corruption of purposes, people, performance and prosperity in Nigeria was predesigned and successfully implemented, consistently, to prevent the emergence of a developmental state and to ensure that the British could achieve its own exploitative goals and objectives. He offered three sets of evidence as proof of his charges. First was the Biafran war. Second was the thirty years of military rule. Third was the emphasis on an

ascriptive, rather than a universalistic criterion for staffing and leadership positions in Nigeria.

Mabogunje's attempt to end his autobiography on a hopeful note, perhaps caused him to choose a dialectical approach aimed at understanding the relationships and tensions between the perspectives he shared with many but pivoted to embrace aspirational visioning of the future trajectory and therefore the current mindset about the meaning of what has transpired in the Nation's development over the past 50 years. However, his narrative turned polemical. Instead of synthesizing and integrating different viewpoints to arrive at a deeper understanding or a higher level of truth about the dilemma that the Nation's development face, he deployed rhetorical strategies to persuade or convince us of his aspirational perspective. That being said, dialectics can sometimes be used as a means of engaging in polemics, and the line between the two can become blurred. However, in principle,

dialectics is a more constructive and inclusive approach aimed at understanding and growth,

Rather than simply winning an argument. Mabogunje surrendered ultimately to humility by referencing his limited impact to “fumbling”, perhaps he wanted to take responsibility rather than pass the buck. But his humility belie his already brilliant analysis that amounted to the situation that he was, namely that “The odds arrayed against him were insurmountable, and the system’s features were intentionally crafted to hinder the Nation’s progress, regardless of his efforts, abilities or strategies.”

HIS LEADERSHIP

Mabogunje’s vision of his leadership career is aligned with his strive for excellence and mastery in his field, recognizing that skillful work will earn recognition. He aimed to make a significant impact, influencing leaders and decision-makers (symbolized by “standing before kings”). For

example, Nigeria's President Obasanjo (1999-2007) said about Mabogunje: 'I drew from his well of endowment' and described him as 'a man of uniquely analytical mind' and 'enlightened scholarship', who deserves 'a place of honor in the roll of outstanding scholars, administrators, and statesmen of our generation'.

He sought to build a reputation for excellence, rather than being obscure or unknown. He understood that his work ethic and competence would determine his level of influence and leadership. By associating his vision with Proverbs 22:29 (Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; He shall not stand before mean men), Mabogunje aspired to lead with excellence, integrity, and a strong work ethic, aiming to make a meaningful impact in his field and be recognized for his expertise.

He became an embodiment of servant leadership, a concept that is deeply rooted in the Holy Scriptures. Jesus taught that true greatness comes

from serving others, not from seeking power or status (Matthew 20:25-28, Mark 10:42-45). The Bible encourages leaders to have a servant's heart, humbly serving others and putting their needs first (Philippians 2:3-4, Galatians 5:13). It portrays leadership as an act of service, not a means of gaining power or control (1 Peter 5:2-3, Matthew 23:11). Servant leaders are called to humility and obedience, following Jesus' example (Philippians 2:5-8, John 13:12-15). The Scriptures use the metaphor of shepherding to describe leaders who care for and serve their flock (Psalm 23, John 10:11). These principles and examples from the Holy Scriptures form the foundation of servant leadership, emphasizing humility, service, and putting others first that are internalized by Mabogunje. No wonder he was so admired, respected and iconized.

HIS KNOWLEDGE PROCESS

Mabogunje began his knowledge journey of the Nation's development with the mastery of the

historical methodology in the study of Geography. He traveled across the British landscape to observe the various patterns of land use, especially in the rural areas. He noticed the regime of production in each field, which was controlled by the village community. The technology of production which was ploughing with six or 8-oxen ploughs required the kind of coordination and synchronization that necessitated the level of control he observed.

As helpful and needful as his ability to observe and describe was, he realized very quickly that to practice policy advisory work demanded expertise way beyond his historical perspective to knowledge and competency, which he had mastered during his Master's degree education. So, he began his research for PhD, so that he could master the research method.

The choice of research method depends on the research question, the field of study, and the resources available. Researchers may use a

combination of methods to achieve their research goals. In essence, the research method offers the tools and techniques used to systematically investigate a phenomenon, gather data, and derive meaningful insights from that data. Mabogunje realized once again that he needed to buck down and really master the research method with further training and seasoning with post- doctoral education in the US. This was the time when geographers became spatial scientists and therefore required rigorous training in theoretical and quantitative education that was already characteristic of the scientific method. For almost a year, Mabogunje buckled down to further master his field. Ultimately, the fruit of that work ethic and commitment to excellence was his “Urbanization in Nigeria” (1968) book, which provided a theoretical focus and incisive treatment of Nigerian urbanization and its problems. He argued that the forces of urbanization are the same worldwide, but their

intensity varies, leading to the emergence of urban systems and affecting individual urban centers' growth and development. This insight has been validated by the field of urban science, which has made significant progress in understanding cities and urban centers worthy of the highest level of theoretical reasoning and rigorous computation and modelling.

HIS PRACTICE OF POLICY ADVISORY

The practice of policy advisory for Mabogunje began when urban and regional development became his focus, much like a medical doctor's clinical practice. His mastery of the scientific method, evident in his 1968 book on urbanization, made cities and regions his clients, and their healthy development his priority. By integrating historical, research, and scientific methods, he thought comprehensively and in an interdisciplinary fashion, addressing issues holistically without boundaries. His 1980 book, "The Development Process: A Spatial

Perspective,” demonstrated exceptional spatial thinking, which he conveyed through analogies to medical concepts during our extensive conversations. Over 50 years, he refined his practice acumen and ability to communicate spatial concepts across disciplines. As his disciple, I learned to reason and communicate like him, enabling in-depth discussions. In hindsight, I wish I had accepted his invitations to serve in the federal government, honoring his legacy.

HIS PRACTICE PLATFORM AND PERFORMANCE

Professor Mabogunje’s illustrious career in public policy advisory spans over five decades, a testament to his unwavering dedication and unshakeable principles. With a platform built on integrity, work ethic, and keen insight, he earned the trust and respect of every government administration in Nigeria, regardless of party affiliation, military or civilian.

His practice platform was rooted in impartiality, unbiasedness and non-partisanship. Mabogunje worked with various governments, providing objective guidance and expertise. His profound knowledge and understanding of public policy made him an invaluable asset to policymakers. Unwavering commitment to ethical standards earned him the respect and trust of leaders across the political spectrum. Tireless dedication and perseverance characterized his approach, ensuring effective and efficient policy implementation.

His performance as a public policy artist of high regard was evident in his contributions that shaped policy decisions, leaving a lasting legacy in Nigeria's development. Respected by all, he fostered bipartisan cooperation, demonstrating the power of unity in policymaking. Effectively navigating diverse political landscapes, he consistently delivered results. Inspiring generations of policymakers and public servants,

His influence extends beyond his own accomplishments. He molded me in his likeness and artistry.

In conclusion, Professor Mabogunje's platform and performance serve as a beacon of excellence in public policy advisory, a testament to the transformative power of integrity, expertise, and dedication. His legacy continues to inspire and inform policy decisions, ensuring a brighter future for Nigeria, whenever the time of renewal comes as King Solomon declared in Ecclesiastes 3: 1.

Isaac Megbolugbe, PhD, FRICS, Senior Advisor and Principal GIVA International, was a former student, mentee, and colleague of the Late Emeritus Professor Akin Mabogunje. He is a retired professor from Johns Hopkins University and resides in Illinois, the United States of America.

CHAPTER THREE



Professor Isaac Folusho Megbolugbe

A Life of Grace: A Review of Professor Andrew G. Onokerhoraye's

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Professor Andrew G. Onokerhoraye's autobiography, "The Riches of His Grace," is a captivating and eventful life story that offers a thoughtful reflection on the author's experiences, challenges, and triumphs. The book is a testament to the riches of God's grace, which has been abundant and lavish in the author's life. The author's motivation to write his autobiography came from his friends, who recognized the value of his life story and its potential to inspire others. Despite initial hesitation, Professor Onokerhoraye

decided to write his autobiography to capture the intimate details, nuances, and landmarks in his life.

The autobiography is written through the frame of the Holy Scriptures, “the riches of his grace” referring to the abundant and infinite nature of God’s grace, demonstrated through His kindness and generosity towards us in Christ Jesus. Some of the key aspects of the riches of God’s grace include the following: the riches of God’s grace are limitless and overflowing, surpassing our understanding and needs; through Christ’s blood, we receive redemption and forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God’s grace; the riches of God’s grace reveal His generous and loving nature, demonstrating His glory and goodness; God’s grace is lavished upon us, not because we deserve it, but because of His abundant love and kindness; the riches of God’s grace include spiritual blessings, such as adoption as God’s children, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and access to God through prayer; and finally the riches of God’s grace ultimately lead to eternal life with God, a gift that surpasses our understanding and is available through faith in Christ Jesus. Reading through this autobiography, Onokerhoraye’s life experiences either directly or

implicitly through inferences match these six categories of the riches of God's grace: (1) Redemption and forgiveness. (2) God's character. (3) Lavished upon us. (4) Spiritual blessings. (5) Eternal life. (6) God's kindness and generosity.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The autobiography is divided into five sections, each focusing on a different aspect of the author's life. The first section traces his life story from his humble beginnings in a remote village to his rise as a professor and university administrator. The second section focuses on his teaching, research, and public service, while the third section highlights his contributions to university governance. The fourth section explores the application of his research training and capability to building a Think Tank, and the final section expresses gratitude to his family, friends, associates, and partners.

THEMES AND REFLECTIONS

Throughout the autobiography, Professor Onokerhoraye reflects on the riches of God's grace, which has been evident in his life. He writes about the challenges he faced, the opportunities he received, and the lessons he

learned. He also acknowledges the role of providence and good fortune in his life, demonstrating his humility and gratitude. The autobiography offers valuable lessons for the young and old, highlighting the importance of focus, discipline, and determination in pursuing education and succeeding in life. Professor Onokerhoraye's life story serves as a model for those seeking inspiration and guidance.

The author's writing style is engaging, and his use of language is rich and descriptive. He shares his experiences with vulnerability and honesty, making the book a relatable and authentic read. One of the strengths of the autobiography is its ability to convey the author's passion for education, research, and public service. His commitment to making a positive impact in the lives of others is evident throughout the book. The autobiography also highlights the importance of relationships and community in the author's life. He expresses gratitude to his family, friends, and associates who have supported him throughout his journey. Overall "The Riches of His Grace" is a captivating and inspiring autobiography that offers a glimpse into the life of Professor Andrew G. Onokerhoraye. The book is a testament to the power of God's grace and the

importance of reflecting on one's experiences, challenges, and triumphs. It is a valuable resource for anyone seeking inspiration, guidance, and encouragement.



Professor Andrew G. Onokerhoraye's

In reading the autobiography of Onokerhoraye, I found an intriguing intersectionality and confluence of differences and similarities in our educational and professional careers. Despite distinct paths, our journeys reveal remarkable parallels, underscoring the power of shared experiences and intellectual roots. We both attended a Grade II Teacher Training College and entered the University of Ibadan through the GCE

channel. We both chose geography as our undergraduate degree program, influenced by Professor Mabogunje's scholarship and achievement. Both recognized gaps in our understanding of urban systems as articulated in Mabogunje's 1968 book on Urbanization in Nigeria and addressed them in graduate school. We both embraced the development ethos in our research and writing. We both returned to the University of Ibadan after doctoral studies.

Our careers diverged in several ways. Onokerhoraye focused on geography and planning, while Megbolugbe delved deeper into economics and finance. Our career trajectories took different turns, with Onokerhoraye working at NISER and the University of Benin, and Megbolugbe joining Florida State University and later Fannie Mae, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Johns Hopkins University. Despite divergent paths, our careers converged in consulting, executive management, think tanks, and philanthropy. We were also born within the same decade, also retired within the same decade, our careers were anchored by research, teaching and lifelong learning.

This later narrative in my review highlights the significance of intersectionality and confluence in understanding the complexities of individual experiences. The parallels and divergences in the careers of Professors Onokerhoraye and Megbolugbe serve as a testament to the power of shared intellectual roots in being grounded in the study of social science by our founding fathers including Professors A.L. Mabogunje, Ojetunji Aboyade, Francis Okediji, R.K. Udo and E, Essien-Udom and the value of diverse perspectives.

Rating: 5/5 stars

Recommendation: This book is highly recommended for anyone interested in memoirs, autobiographies, and stories of inspiration and triumph.

Review by: Isaac Megbolugbe, who is a retired professor from Johns Hopkins University and a fellow student and mentee with Professor Onokerhoraye of the Late Emeritus Professor Akin Mabogunje at the University of Ibadan. Isaac resides in the United States of America.

CHAPTER FOUR

Upcoming in: Benin Journal of Geography, Planning and Environment Vol. 4. No. 1, 2024:

Honouring Professor Akin Mabogunje's Legacy in Urbanisation, Development and Geography

Bola Ayeni* and Isaac Megbolugbe**

*Retired Professor, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria;

**Retired Professor Johns Hopkins, University, Baltimore, USA

Abstract

This paper celebrates the achievements of Professor Akin Mabogunje, the first African to receive the prestigious Vautrin Lud Prize, often referred to as the "Nobel Prize of Geography." It honours his contributions to the field of geography, particularly in urbanisation and regional development. As a pioneer in African geography, Prof. Mabogunje's work has had a profound impact on research, policy and practice for decades. This paper aims to bring further into

public focus a significant omission in the series of international academic awards accorded this great scholar, and to highlight further his immense contributions to knowledge, including the specific impacts made on urban planning and development.

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, Prof. Akin Mabogunje won the prestigious Lauréat Prix International de Géographie Vautrin Lud, the highest award that can be gained in the field of geography. The Vautrin Lud Prize, is much like the Nobel Prize. It is usually celebrated by associates, colleagues and friends of the winner who are desirous of announcing the achievement to the whole world. Such celebrations usually include publications of scholarly articles in the top journals. An author in Tuesday Column, Created November 7, 2017 02:00, Trust Radio (2017) gave a beautiful write up and a homage to Prof. Akin Mabogunje for this award. He writes:

“This October must have been a special one for Akin Mabogunje, the Professor of Geography who celebrated the ripe age of eighty-six in the month and also became a recipient of one of the most prestigious prizes in his field of endeavour. He became the Laureate of the Vautrin-Lud Prize of 2017. It is the highest honour in the field of geography and is highly coveted and probably that is why it is referred to as The Nobel Prize of Geography. Since the prize was instituted in 1991, Professor Mabogunje is the first African to be named a winner”

The summarization of the writer’s achievements of Prof. Mabogunje is fantastic and may not be easily surpassed. He writes further:

“Anybody that has been acquainted with the field of geography and where it is applied, particularly in areas of regional and town planning, must have come across Mabogunje. He has been the dominated national figure in the field. He is reputed to be the first black African to earn a PhD in the subject and also the first to become a Professor of Geography, thus earning the sobriquet, the Father of African Geography”

Appreciating Prof. Akin Mabogunje’s legacy,
Basirat Oyalowo (2022) Senior Lecturer/ Researcher

in Housing, Real Estate and Sustainability, at the University of Lagos writes:

“Mabogunje’s legacy stretches far beyond his seminal book, Urbanization in Nigeria. He served as a consultant to the Nigerian government and several states in urban and regional development, helping politicians and bureaucrats to understand how research institutions could influence and shape policy.... he was instrumental to the conceptualization of Abuja, Nigeria’s capital city. He was also the foremost professional in getting it built, canvassing rigorously for the appointment of Nigerian town planners and architects to build the city. It is up to urbanization scholars, ordinary Nigerians, and politicians to do more than just offer tributes to the father of modern policy in the nation’s-built environment. We all owe him action: to bring his vision of cities that work for all to life.” (emphasis ours).

We don’t know any specific publication by Nigerian academicians especially geographers to celebrate this award. We think this is an omission that can and should be corrected. One aim of this paper is to rectify this anomaly and establish a notable precedent. We also believe

there is a need for full documentation of this achievement focusing on the specific contributions of the erudite professor to the key issues that earned him the coveted honor. This could be a challenge to budding academicians to strive to attain the same level of excellence that Prof. Akin Mabogunje attained.

In an inspiration sense, Professor Akin Mabogunje's achievement is a testament to his dedication and excellence in the field of geography. His work has spanned decades, shaping research, policy and practice in urban and regional development. He was the first black African to earn a Ph.D. in geography and subsequently to become a professor.

Mabogunje's contributions to urbanization and geography are immense. His seminal book, "Urbanization in Nigeria," is a landmark study that has influenced policy and research. He played a crucial role in the conceptualization and development of Abuja, Nigeria's capital city,

advocating for Nigerian professionals to lead the project. His work has focused on creating cities that work for all, and his legacy challenges us to continue this vision.

Professor Akin Mabogunje's achievement is a call to action for urbanization scholars, policymakers, and citizens to bring his vision to life. We must strive to create cities that are equitable, sustainable, and prosperous for all. This paper honors his legacy and challenges us to continue his work, inspiring future generations to excel in the field of geography.

The Vautrin Lud Prize in Geography

The Vautrin Lud Prize is the highest award in the field of geography, established in 1991 and named after the 16th Century French scholar Vautrin Lud. It is awarded annually at the International Geography Festival in Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, France, and decided by a five-person international jury. It is dubbed the Nobel

Prize of Geography and remains the highest honour in the discipline. As Table 1 shows the prize has been awarded to 35 renowned geographers, including Peter Haggett, Torsten Hägerstrand, Gilbert F. White, Roger Brunet, Paul Claval, Peter Gould, David Harvey, Doreen

Massey, Ron J. Johnston, Sir Peter Hall, Allen J. Scott, Brian J. L. Berry, Mike Goodchild, Terry McGee, Yi-Fu Tuan, Mike Batty, Anne Buttimer, and Edward Soja. These were all very notable scholars who made their distinctive marks in the discipline.

Table 1: Awardees of the Nobel Prize in Geography

S/N	Name	Country	Year
1.	Peter Haggett	UK	1991
2.	Torsten Hägerstrand and Gilbert F. White	Sweden and US	1992
3.	Peter Gould	US	1993
4.	Milton Santos	Brazil	1994
5.	David Harvey	UK	1995
6.	Roger Brunet and Paul Claval	France	1996

7.	Jean-Bernard Racine	Switzerland	1997
8.	Doreen Massey	UK	1998
9.	Ron J. Johnston	UK	1999
10.	Yves Lacoste	France	2000
11.	Sir Peter Hall	UK	2001
12.	Bruno Messerli	Switzerland	2002
13.	Allen J. Scott	US	2003
14.	Philippe Pinchemel	France	2004
15.	Brian J. L. Berry	US	2005
16.	Heinz Wanner	Switzerland	2006
17.	Mike Goodchild	UK	2007
18.	Horacio Capel Sáez [es]	Spain	2008
19.	Terry McGee	Canada	2009
20.	Denise Pumain	France	2010
21.	Antoine Bailly	Switzerland	2011
22.	Yi-Fu Tuan	China-US	2012
23.	Mike Batty	UK	2013
24.	Anne Buttimer	Ireland	2014
25.	Edward Soja	US	2015
26.	Maria Dolors García Ramón	Spain	2016
27.	Akin Mabogunje	Nigeria	2017
28.	Jacques Lévy	France	2018
29.	John A. Agnew	UK-US	2019
30.	Rudolf Brázdil	Czech Republic	2020
31.	Brenda Yeoh	Singapore	2021
32.	Michael Storper	France – US	2022
33.	Jamie Peck	Canada – UK	2023

Source: Wikipedia contributors, "Vautrin Lud Prize," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vautrin_Lud_Prize&oldid=1205419836 (accessed May 11, 2024).

The analysis of the nationalities of the winners shows that the United Kingdom, the United States of America, France, and Switzerland have dominated the awards, with the UK and USA having the most winners. (See Table 2). This is not surprising, given that these countries were pioneers in the development of modern geographical thought.

The Vautrin Lud Prize recognizes outstanding contributions to the field of geography, and its winners are considered giants in the discipline. The prize continues to inspire and promote excellence in geographical research and scholarship.

Table 2: Nationalities of Award Winners

Country	No of Times Won	Won by two or more nationalities
UK	6	2
US	4	5
France	5	1
Switzerland	4	

Canada	1	1
Nigeria	1	
Brazil	1	
Spain	1	
Czech Republic	1	
Ireland	1	
Sweden		1
China		1

Source: Computed by Authors from Table 1

Prof. Akin Mabogunje and Geography in Nigeria.

Professor Akin Mabogunje is a renowned geographer who has made significant contributions to the field of geography, particularly in Nigeria and Africa. He was the first African to join the Department of Geography at the University of Ibadan and later became a full professor at the age of 34. Mabogunje's work focused on urbanization, regional development,

and spatial analysis, and he was instrumental in introducing quantitative methods and computer programming to geography in Nigeria. Mabogunje's academic achievements are impressive, with over 23 books and 100 articles published between 1958 and 2002, in professional journals (as recorded in his 75th Birthday Brochure, Celebrating Mabogunje at 75 pp. 7 – 14). In a publication at the celebration of the one-year anniversary of the departure of the great man, the number of books we counted was 31 and there were 41 consultancy projects.

He was also an accomplished administrator, serving as Head of the Department of Geography, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ibadan and founding the Planning Studies Programme, the precursor to the present Department of Urban and Regional Planning. He held various international positions, including President of the International

Geographical Union (first African to be so appointed) and membership in the United Nations Secretary General's Ad-hoc Committee on Regional Development.

Mabogunje's legacy extends beyond his academic achievements. He was a mentor and inspiration to many students and colleagues, and his work has had a lasting impact on the field of geography in Nigeria and Africa. He was a man of superlatives. The Brochure commemorating his 75th Birthday used such words as a man of honour, a man of rare versatility and genius, true visionary man of excellence, a truly great achiever, the African prince of geography, the peoples' scholar, an inspiration to generations, a completely selfless man, eminent world citizen and visionary scholar, true gentleman, loving husband and father and family to the core. His commitment to excellence, integrity, and service has made him a role model for future generations.

The compliments from addresses by Prof. Isaac Megbolugbe and Prof. Toyin Falola among scores of tributes presented at his interment on September 3, 2022, highlight Mabogunje's exceptional qualities as a scholar, leader, and individual. His life and career serve as a testament to the power of dedication, hard work, and vision. As Megbolugbe noted, Prof. Akin Mabogunje's life represents a "masterclass in surfing the turbulent sea of life," and his legacy continues to inspire and motivate others to strive for excellence, (Megbolugbe, 2022; Falola, 2022).

The Road to the Vautrin Lud Prize Award to Prof. Akin Mabogunje

While Prof. Akin Mabogunje's works in the area of urban geography, have been phenomenal, two of them "Urbanization in Nigeria" (1968) and "The Development Process: A Spatial Perspective" (1980), were particularly singled out

by the assessors as having a profound impact on the field of geography and development studies. According to them, "Urbanization in Nigeria" is considered a classic in urban geography, providing a comprehensive analysis of incidence of origin, growth and patterns of urbanization in Nigeria and offering insights into the development process. The book's emphasis on the dual structure model of urban spatial structure and its use of sophisticated quantitative methods made it a groundbreaking work in studies of the morphology of cities.

"The Development Process: A Spatial Perspective", on the other hand offers an alternative perspective on development, emphasizing the importance of spatial reorganization and the mobilization of internal resources. The book was presented in four parts, which comprehensively examined the concept of development, rural and urban structures, and

national integration. Mabogunje's work challenges traditional development paradigms, and advocated a more holistic and spatially aware approach to development.

Both books have been widely acclaimed for their originality, depth, and significance. "Urbanization in Nigeria" was praised by Wheatley (1970) as a "scholarly contribution of first-rate importance" that has come to be regarded as a classic in the field. "The Development Process" has been recognized for its innovative approach to development studies, offering a fresh perspective on the complex issues surrounding development.

From Mabogunje's works, we do know the general characteristics, the nature and problems of urban centres and urban development in Nigeria. We also know that a critical issue in finding solution to the problems is that of instituting a virile management system that also

involves creating spatial orderliness in the cities. However, fifty years after these path breaking studies (Mabogunje, 1974), purposeful urban administrative setup remains a mirage. Nonetheless, Mabogunje's works have not only contributed significantly to the field of geography and development studies but have also inspired generations of scholars and practitioners. His legacy continues to be celebrated, and his ideas remain relevant in contemporary development discourse.

The Roots of Urban Geography in Nigeria

The three concepts of urbanization in the social sciences which have constituted the bedrock of analytical work in Nigerian urban geography, are the behavioral, the structural, and the demographic. Urbanization as a behavioral process is enshrined in Louis Wirth's work on urbanism as a way of life (Wirth, 1938) and is concerned with the changes in experience which

individuals go through over time, and the associated patterns of behavior. Urbanization as a structural process is related to activities of the whole population and the changes in the economic structure. It sees the movement of people out of agricultural communities into other and generally larger non-agricultural communities (Childe, 1964) as a product of increasing economic specialization and advancing technology. Urbanization as a demographic process postulate that the process of population concentration is a way of ordering a population to attain a certain a level of subsistence in a given environment and takes place in stages described by Eric Larnpard (1955) as primordial, definitive, classic and industrial.

While, the three concepts of urbanization constituted the bedrock of analytical work, the geographer's contribution has been in the emphasis on the spatial aspects of urbanization.

This emphasis has been manifested in studies of the spatial patterns of urban systems and the manifestations of the consequences over space. It has also been on the studies of the spatial structure or patterns within cities. In general, therefore, geography has focused on the importance of location and distribution in addition to factors of the site and situation of cities.

For a long time, the studies on the African urban scene remained purely descriptive and merely provided insights in terms of some intuitive notion of differing types of urbanization related to different historical origins. The approach did not encourage the generalization of factors of urbanization as measured in different parts of the world and neither did it encourage the emergence of theories nor the testing of existing ones on urbanization. Secondly, there was an over-concentration on the sociological problems of

the few rapidly growing urban centers in countries which have just begun to adjust to a new economic order. Concern was given to such issues as unemployment and overcrowding, delinquency, and the plight of the new immigrant and the decline of traditional values. Unheeded was the pressing problems posed by the emerging urban systems in the development process and those of the pre-colonial traditional urban centers which have become no longer functional in the new economic order.

As noted by Mabogunje, the descriptive nature of the earlier studies was a consequence of the limited familiarity of earlier research workers with sophisticated statistical techniques (Mabogunje,1968). Nonetheless, the lack of concentration on the issues which urbanization raised in terms of national development and the assimilation and integration of pre-colonial cities into the development process remained for so

long as relevant disciplines of geography and urban and regional planning did not enter into the research arena. Mabogunje's contribution to the understanding of urbanization in Nigeria therefore involves on the one hand, the utilization of sophisticated statistical techniques to unravel the nature of cities, and on the other, drawing the attention of researchers on urbanization to the spatial dimension which it possesses and which proves critical to the national development process. Mabogunje's *Urbanization in Nigeria* remains a classic in the area of Urban Geography in Africa. The sort of analysis in that book has not been repeated in this country ever since nor are there as thorough investigations of the urban situation in many countries of the developing world.

Some of the specific contributions of Mabogunje emphasized the spatial aspects of urbanization and the importance of location and distribution

through applications of principles from central place theory to understand the hierarchy and structure of urban systems in Nigeria. Urbanization in Nigeria provided a theoretical focus and incisive treatment of Nigerian urbanization and its problems. He argued that the forces of urbanization are the same worldwide, but their intensity varies, leading to the emergence of urban systems and affecting individual urban centers' growth and development. This insight has been validated by the field of urban science, which has made significant progress in understanding cities and urban centers.

Urban geography represents an area where the greatest number of theses was written in the department since its creation and up to 2000. The area is also one that has put Nigeria on the international academic research map judging by quality and quantity of publications in books,

local and international journals. For instance, of the nine master's theses written in the department, between 1963 and 1980, four or nearly 50% were in the area of urban geography while for the thirty-nine Ph.D. theses written between 1968 and 1996, eighteen or nearly 50% were in the area of urban geography (Ayeni, 1998). Furthermore, at least four of the second generation students whose theses were supervised by Mabogunje secured appointments at the Department and produced grand children who with them propagated Mabogunje's approach to geographical inquiry. The contributions of Prof. Mabogunje and his students' include:

1. Emphasizing the spatial aspects of urbanization and the importance of location and distribution.
2. Applying central place theory to understand the hierarchy and structure of urban systems in Nigeria.

3. Conducting city-based studies on migration, intra-urban mobility, industrial location, and housing patterns.
4. Developing models of urban spatial structure and testing hypotheses about human spatial behavior.
5. Investigating the impacts of urbanization on rural areas and the economy.

Prof. Akin Mabogunje's ideas had lasting impact on the field of urban science in the following value propositions:

1. Understanding and addressing urban challenges,
2. Informing urban planning and policy,
3. Improving urban livability and quality of life,
4. Fostering innovation and economic growth,
5. Addressing global challenges,

6. Interdisciplinary approaches,
7. Data-driven decision-making,
8. Enhancing urban governance and leadership,
9. Understanding urban dynamics and complexity,
10. Improving urban resilience and sustainability (see Ayeni, 1998).

In summary, we assert that Professor Akin Mabogunje's contributions to the understanding of urbanization in Nigeria are immense. Overall, the significant and manifold contributions to the field of urban geography in Nigeria emphasizes the need for continued research and investment in this area. His contributions have not only been profound but prescient, and it is not an exaggeration to credit him with many of the value propositions of the urban science field today.

Overall, the significant and manifold contributions of Mabogunje and his students to the field of urban geography in Nigeria and emphasizes the need for continued research and investment in this area. We are delighted that the Benin Journal of Geography, Planning and Environment, with Professor B. A. Chokor as Editor-in-Chief, blazed the trail in 2023 with a Special Issue in honour Professor Mabogunje's legacy, focused on the theme: "Urbanisation and the Environment: A Practical Roadmap to Planning and Managing Nigerian Cities Sustainably". The Issue was widely presented to a broad spectrum of stakeholders at the University of Ibadan on 18 October, 2023, as a major deliverable at his posthumous birthday celebration. The Issue identified gaps and development failures in Nigerian cities and offered hands-on-solutions to governments and regulators.

Our Tribute to Professor Akin Mabogunje

The Late Emeritus Professor Akin Mabogunje's receipt of the prestigious Vautrin Lud Prize, often referred to as the "Nobel Prize of Geography" in his eighties was a fitting crowning of his career. He was a pioneer, chronicler, and visionary thinker in the field of urban studies and city planning. He was a classic archetype and a giant in geography and more because of his immense contributions and impact.

He domesticated the vocabulary in urban geography in Nigeria for the twentieth century and his influence on many students, mentees, and colleagues showcased his leadership and mentorship qualities. He had an uncanny ability to be flawlessly intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary, demonstrating his collaborative approach and ability to bring people together across disciplines, and between town and gown. We take the opportunity of this article to convey

our sense of gratitude and pride among those who were fortunate enough to learn from him, work with him, and be mentored by him. Overall, we join many that have found Professor Mabogunje to be a remarkable individual who has left a legacy in the field of urban studies and beyond!

Note: Bola Ayeni and Isaac Megbolugbe were former students, mentees, and colleagues of Professor Akin Mabogunje.

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CHAPTER FIVE



**Prof. Akin Mabogunje: His Intellectual Work
for National Development**



Prof. Isaac Megbolugbe, PhD FRICS

INTRODUCTION

Professor Akin Mabogunje's passing has left a void in the academic and policy communities. While his practice-level accomplishments are widely celebrated, his intellectual legacy risks being overlooked. This article argues that Mabogunje's intellectual work, particularly in the fields of urbanization and development as an embodiment of the broader development ethos cultivated by the founding fathers of social science disciplines at the University of Ibadan, including Professors A.L. Mabogunje, Ojetunji Aboyade, Francis Okediji, R.K. Udo and E,

Essien-Udom, deserves equal attention and recognition. By exploring his ideas and theories, we can gain a deeper understanding of his contributions and their relevance to contemporary debates.

The Work of Knowledge Across the Scholarship Spectrum

As we journey through the scholarship spectrum, we find ourselves traversing a diverse landscape of engagement and activities. At the intellectual level, we delve into the realm of theoretical foundations and concepts, where critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation reign supreme. Here, we engage in reading, researching, discussing, and writing, laying the groundwork for a deep understanding of the subject matter.

As we progress to the philosophical level, we enter a domain of exploration, where fundamental principles and values are scrutinized and debated. Reflection, critique, and debate become our guiding principles, and we engage in reading, discussing, writing, and presenting our ideas.

Next, we arrive at the understanding level, where comprehension and interpretation take center

stage. We actively listen, question, and clarify, seeking to grasp the nuances of the subject. Our activities shift to reading, discussing, summarizing, and applying, as we strive to make sense of the information.

The functional level brings us to the realm of practical application and skills development. Problem-solving, experimentation, and feedback become our focus, and we engage in practicing, experimenting, receiving feedback, and refining our skills.

At the operational level, we find ourselves in the midst of implementation and execution. Planning, coordinating, and monitoring are our primary concerns, and we engage in planning, organizing, leading, and controlling.

Finally, we reach the practices level, where real-world application and expertise are paramount. Decision-making, troubleshooting, and innovating become our guiding principles, and we engage in performing tasks, solving problems, and continuously improving

As we move through this spectrum, we notice a shift in engagement and activities. We transition

from theoretical to practical, from critical thinking to problem-solving, from analysis to application, from reflection to action, and from comprehension to expertise. Our activities evolve from reading and discussing to practicing, experimenting, and performing. This journey through the scholarship spectrum is a transformative one, equipping us with a rich understanding and diverse skills to tackle complex challenges.

Distinguishing Between Intellectual Work and Practice

As we delve into the realm of knowledge work, we find ourselves navigating a complex landscape of interconnected levels. From intellectual to philosophical, understanding to functional, operational to practices, each level presents unique demands and requirements. However, amidst this intricate web, a clear distinction emerges between intellectual work and practice.

Intellectual work is a distant realm, where abstract concepts, theories, and ideas reign

supreme. It requires a specific talent and temperament, one that is characterized by analytical thinking, critical evaluation, synthesis, and absorptive capacity. Individuals who inhabit this realm possess a natural curiosity, a passion for exploring abstract ideas, and a comfort with ambiguity.

In contrast, practice is a different sphere altogether. It involves applying knowledge in real-world contexts, where pragmatic thinking, technical skills, experience, and expertise are paramount. Practitioners excel in solving concrete problems, relying on intuition, creativity, and experimentation to navigate the complexities of their domain.

The separation between intellectual work and practice is rooted in four key reasons. Firstly, the cognitive demands of each level differ significantly. Intellectual work requires intense analytical thinking, while practice demands pragmatic problem-solving. Secondly, the talent and temperament required for each level are unique, with individuals excelling in one area not necessarily thriving in the other. Thirdly, the learning pathways for intellectual work and

practice diverge, with formal education and theoretical training giving way to experiential learning and hands-on experience. Finally, both intellectual work and practice contribute to knowledge work in distinct ways, making it essential to appreciate their separate value.

By acknowledging and respecting these differences, we can foster a deeper understanding of knowledge work and encourage individuals to excel in their respective domains. We can create an environment where intellectual curiosity and practical expertise coexist, each enriching the other and propelling us forward in our pursuit of knowledge.

Preserving the Intellectual Legacy of Professor Mabogunje

The passing of Professor Mabogunje two years ago sparked widespread celebration of his contributions, primarily at the practice level. However, his equally profound intellectual legacy risks being overlooked. To ensure his impact is fully appreciated, a separate platform is necessary to engage with his intellectual contributions.

Professor Mabogunje was a quintessential intellectual who effortlessly navigated the

hierarchy of knowledge, from intellectual to practical levels. While his practical accomplishments are widely recognized, the intellectual infrastructure that enabled him to perform was neither perceived nor understood by many in both the academic and the policy realm.

Now that he is no longer with us, few can replicate his performance or understand how he achieved it. His academic colleagues are largely unaware of his scholarship practices, and many policy makers assume his accomplishments were due to inherited attributes or endowments rather than his knowledge process and craft.

A separate platform is needed to engage with his intellectual legacy for several reasons:

1. Intellectual rigor: His work demands a level of rigor and nuance that may be lost in practice-focused discussions.
2. Depth and complexity: His ideas require in-depth exploration, analysis, and critique.
3. Targeted audience: A dedicated platform can attract scholars, researchers, and intellectuals who can engage with his work at the appropriate level.

4. Contextualization: A separate platform can provide the necessary context for understanding his intellectual contributions and their relevance to contemporary debates.
5. Legacy preservation: By creating a distinct space for his intellectual legacy, we can ensure its preservation and continued relevance for future generations.

The value of Professor Mabogunje's intellectual contributions is weightier than his practice-level accomplishments for several reasons:

1. Timelessness: Intellectual ideas can transcend time, remaining relevant long after practical applications have been implemented.
2. Influence: His intellectual work has the potential to shape fields, inspire new research, and inform policy decisions.
3. Interdisciplinary connections: A platform focused on his intellectual legacy can reveal connections between his work and other disciplines.

By acknowledging the value of his intellectual contributions, we can cement his legacy as a quintessential intellectual and servant leader. A separate platform will provide a dedicated space

for scholars and intellectuals to engage with his ideas, ensuring their continued relevance and impact.

Examples of Fruits of His Intellectual Work

In his seminal work, "Urbanization in Nigeria" (1968), Professor Mabogunje showcased his intellectual prowess by declaring that cities and regions are spatially implicated within urban systems. This work provided a theoretical focus and incisive treatment of Nigerian urbanization, arguing that the forces of urbanization are universal, but their intensity varies, leading to the emergence of urban systems that affect individual urban centers' growth and development.

Narratively, Professor Mabogunje encouraged us to gaze upon the sprawling metropolises and vast rural landscapes, recognizing the intricate web of connections that binds them together. This interconnectedness defines urban systems – a complex network of cities and regions, each influencing the other through a delicate balance of spatial dimensions.

At its core, an urban system is a dynamic entity, comprising physical structures, governance and economic systems, and processes that shape

demographic, economic, and social dynamics. These elements interact and intersect, giving rise to a multifaceted whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Consider the flow of people, goods, and services between cities and regions, fueling economic growth, cultural diversity, and innovation, but also creating challenges like managing transportation networks and addressing disparities in resource allocation. Historical and cultural contexts, economic and demographic factors, political decisions, and environmental changes all converge to shape urban systems' development trajectories.

As national planners and policymakers, it's crucial to grasp the intricacies of urban systems. By acknowledging interdependencies between cities and regions, we can craft effective strategies to address pressing issues like inequality, sustainability, and infrastructure gaps. This requires a holistic approach, integrating national policies, sectoral programs, and local implementation.

In his Autobiography (2011), Professor Mabogunje surmised that true development

comes from transforming access to the four factors of production – land, labor, capital, and entrepreneurship – empowering individuals and enhancing a country's capacity to raise its earning capacity and gross domestic product.

In 2017, when awarded the Vautrin Lud Prize, Professor Mabogunje reiterated his statement, defining geography as "the totality of the environment." From an intellectual perspective, his statements can be interpreted as:

1. Holistic understanding: Viewing geography as an integrated field encompassing physical, human, and cultural aspects.
2. Interconnectedness: Highlighting the interconnectedness of environmental components and the need to consider them collectively.
3. Systems thinking: Approaching geography as a complex system with dynamic relationships between components.
4. Contextualization: Emphasizing the importance of context in understanding geographical phenomena.
5. Transcending disciplinary boundaries: Incorporating insights from ecology, sociology, economics, and other fields to

understand the environment and economy. Intellectually, his statement challenges reductionist approaches, encourages nuanced understanding, and suggests a comprehensive and integrated approach to geographical research and practice. Overall, Professor Mabogunje's work reflects a sophisticated and inclusive understanding of geography, emphasizing the need for a holistic, system, and contextual approach to understanding the environment, economy, and development.

When Professor Mabogunje argued that cities and regions constitute an urban system that can be studied for its organization and development, he made a profound intellectual statement that many overlooked. He reiterated this idea in his 1980 book, "The Development Process: A Spatial Perspective." His development ethos for Nigeria was conceptualized as an urban system problem that could be comprehensively addressed and solved, achieving a balance between development and environment, as well as between places, cities, and regions.

Mabogunje contended that spatial inequalities are the foundation and manifestation of development

inequalities. This issue cannot be resolved solely at the policy level; it requires an intellectual approach to balance equities and options inherent in development. His work necessitates constructing a spectrum of thought experiments to explore these complexities.

Despite his intellectual contributions, nobody engaged with his work at the same level. He was praised and awarded the Nobel Prize in Geography, but his ideas were not thoroughly investigated or critiqued, either in Nigeria or abroad. The intellectual underpinnings of his two classic books, "Urbanization in Nigeria" and "The Development Process," remain unexplored, leaving a gap in understanding the depth of his scholarship.

By neglecting to engage with Mabogunje's intellectualism, we missed an opportunity to delve deeper into his ideas and build upon his work. His contributions deserve a more nuanced examination to appreciate the complexity of his thoughts and their implications for development and urban planning.

Implications of His Intellectual Work

As we reflect on Professor Mabogunje's scholarship, several unaddressed intellectual issues come to the forefront. His conceptualization of cities and regions as interconnected urban systems, for instance, requires a comprehensive approach to understanding development and organization. Yet, this idea remains largely unexplored.

Furthermore, Mabogunje's emphasis on spatial relationships and inequalities as the foundation of development inequalities demands an intellectual approach that goes beyond policy-focused solutions. However, this aspect of his work has not received the attention it deserves.

Mabogunje's argument for achieving balance between development and environmental concerns, as well as between different places, cities, and regions, is another crucial aspect of his scholarship. Nevertheless, this idea has not been fully engaged with, leaving a gap in our understanding of how to address these complex issues.

The lack of intellectual engagement with Mabogunje's ideas is a missed opportunity for

Nigeria. By not exploring his concepts in depth, we may have overlooked solutions to development challenges. The persistence of spatial inequalities is a testament to this.

Moreover, policy efforts may be ineffective or incomplete without a deeper understanding of the intellectual underpinnings of Mabogunje's work. The absence of thought experiments and intellectual engagement with his ideas may have limited innovation in development approaches and solutions.

Ultimately, Mabogunje's intellectual legacy remains incomplete. His ideas and contributions have not been fully explored, debated, or built upon. It is crucial that we revisit his work and engage with his intellectualism to unlock the full potential of his scholarship and address the development challenges facing Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Professor Mabogunje's intellectual work offers a wealth of insights and ideas that can inform our understanding of urbanization, development, and spatial relationships. By engaging with his intellectual legacy, we can unlock new perspectives and approaches to

addressing Nigeria's development challenges. It is essential to recognize the value of his intellectual contributions, preserve his legacy, and build upon his ideas to ensure their continued relevance and impact. By doing so, we can honor his memory and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in his fields of expertise.

Isaac Megbolugbe, former practice leader at PricewaterhouseCoopers, retired professor at Carey Business School, Johns Hopkins University, and fellow at Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors was a former student, mentee, and colleague of Professor Mabogunje. He is also one of his intellectual disciples. He is resident in the United States of America.

CHAPTER SIX



**Prof. Akin Mabogunje: His Intellectual Work
for National Development**



Prof. Isaac Megbolugbe, PhD FRICS

The late Emeritus Professor Akin Mabogunje was a quintessential scholar-practitioner whose work had a profound impact on Nigeria's development. His commitment to excellence and rigorous training enabled him to produce groundbreaking work, demonstrating the importance of continuous learning and expertise in achieving impactful research and practice. This article explores Mabogunje's knowledge journey and how he embodied the scholar-practitioner model, highlighting his contributions to national

development and the lessons that can be learned from his approach.

As he embodied scholar-practitioner, he explained this attribute masterfully in his autobiography. I hope to explicate this further in the future. This practice model for public policy advisory work accounted much for his longevity, over a 50-year career in the service of his nation. Until I reviewed Professor Tunji Olaopa's recent memoir, *The Unending Quest for Reform* and read the biography of Professor Ojetunji Abayode, *A Prophet with Honor* that he wrote in 1997 that I became aware of the branding of this practice as scholar-practitioner. I am reminded of the synoptic gospels in the New Testament of the Holy Bible. The biography of Professor Abayode could be dubbed the Gospel of National Development Planning according to Saint Abayode and Olaopa's memoir the Gospel of National Development Implementation and

Management according to Saint Olaopa. Both books complement each other in presenting the full and complete story about how best to practice national development planning and implementation in Nigeria including policy making, development planning, development implementation and development management including democratic governance. Professor Mabogunje embodied this practice model perfectly, although he was never an employee of the government. He remained an advisor and refused to assume the role of decision making or served to custode or use government authority.

National development practice unfolds in phases. Phase 1 is problem framing and solution incubation. Phase 2 is solution refinements and policy making. Phase 3 is development plan preparation. Phase 4 is implementation and management. Abayode developed the framework and architecture for the first three phases. Olaopa

in his memoir discusses a reform agenda that embeds the framework and architecture for development implementation and management.

Figure 1 - Phases of National Development Planning and Implementation



The first phase of national development planning is exploration research to frame the problems that the plan seeks to address. Solution incubation consists in framing the problem and developing the rudiments of a potential solution design for the development plan. The various problems in focus can be framed in different ways with each frame indicating a unique solution. But this is nothing less than the very essence of ill-structured problems of development: they are in a sense underdetermined, that is, there are multiple ways of framing national development problems. Key to the development of genuinely novel ideas lies

in the capacity to make use and combine the insights of multiple disciplines. Solution incubating calls for developing a synthesis from multiple disciplines or, at the very least, applying the expertise and insight from one knowledge domain to another. The ability to combine insights from multiple knowledge domains is intimately related to the professional skills and backgrounds of the team tasked with the responsibility to explain the development problems of the country to the bureaucratic and political leadership of the nation.

Olaopa discussed how phenomenal Aboyade was in leading this phase of national development planning with intelligence and tact. He said about Abayode in 1997 this: “In the arena of policy formulation, he was able in a masterly way to arrange elements of a problem into a framework that facilitates resolution. He was a leading light that can transform complex permutations of

difficult choices into well thought scenarios, using quantitative analyses that mundane thinkers would toss out as “too technical.” This is what we might call development practice acumen similar in style and substance to clinical acumen in medical practice. The ability to connect different knowledge domains and see commonalities between them makes use of abduction, a form of reasoning fundamentally distinct from induction and deduction. Olaopa praised consistently masterly performances from Abayode in whatever work assignments came up in his national development practice. He detailed in the Abayode book how Abayode prepared himself intellectually, professionally and temperamentally. He also discussed the contextual factors both in Nigeria and throughout the larger world that shaped the extraordinary grounding and seasoning that Abayode accomplished through a combination of his

education, work assignments, mentorship, tremendous work ethics, discipline and impeccable standards of self-control and management. All these attributes were very much shared among the founding fathers of social science disciplines at the University of Ibadan anchored by their shared commitment to a development ethos with respect to the Nation.

In the second phase of national development planning, the rudimentary solution design is subjected to empirical testing. This is more of a trial-and-error– type iterative process. The refinement phase is a combination of design improvements, implementation, and evaluation and often makes use of the more familiar plan designs and reasoning. However, in trying to pinpoint the sources of the unintended consequences, abductive reasoning and further detective work may be required. Because development of solutions is always partly a

political process, it is important to identify potential problems arising from different parties having different interests. Phase three is more of a technocratic phase with different moving parts that have to be coordinated and perfectly harmonized in a manner that leaves the best of conductors of first rate orchestras in the dust. The Second National Development Plan (1970-1974) epitomized the embodiment of a magnificent monument to national development planning in Nigeria, nothing before it came close and nothing since then has been able to rise up to the mezzo-soprano of the plan.

Olaopa picked up where Abayode stopped. Olaopa faulted Abayode for refusing to get involved in implementation and management of national development plans. He cited Abayode's records of demonstrated competence in executive capacities to validate his executive management credentials and political skills that would have

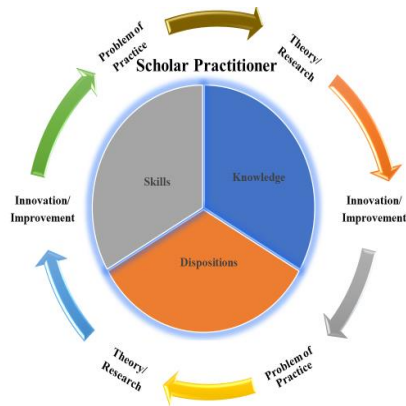
allowed us to witness and capture his framework and institutional architecture for implementation and management of development plans in Nigeria. Olaopa took the baton and continued the race. With this memoir Olaopa has informed the Nation that he has finished the race. The ball is now in the proverbial court of the Nation.

In his recent commentary about the Olaopa memoir, Professor Adeshina Afolayan, Head of Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan said something that I think is appropriate to share here. He commended Olaopa for possessing a strong sense of inner worth and significance fortified and reinforced by his upbringing and fabulous relation with his social environment. The mentoring of a network of great men have also proved to be substantively definitive. He has been disciplined by his conscious practice of becoming who he was born to be- an intellectual. Aboyade became a scholar- practitioner. He

molded himself in his image and became a scholar- practitioner too. Like Afolayan said, Olaopa has the potential to achieve transcendent transformation in connecting himself to the Nation's struggle for realization of emergence as a capable developmental state. Professor Mabogunje's intellectual work offers a wealth of insights and ideas that can inform our understanding of development. By engaging with his intellectual legacy, we can unlock new perspectives and approaches to addressing Nigeria's development challenges.

The Abayode-Olaopa national development practice model is akin to the framework of a doctoral program at Northeastern University, USA. As shown in Figure 2 below. The national development practice model captures some of the stresses scholar-practitioners might go through to complete such a doctoral program.

Figure 2 – Abayode-Olaopa Practice Model for



National Development

Source: Adapted from Northeastern College of Professional Studies

This model represent the fact that it is the person who is the scholar practitioner embedded within the process of the scholar practitioner and so when we consider the skills, knowledge and dispositions of a scholar practitioner these categories aren't really mutually exclusive because what does it mean to find knowledge as opposed to what does it mean to have knowledge and certainly scholar practitioners is somebody who's dedicated to understanding what is known

in addition to having a sense for how to go about finding out some more and in addition to that some of the dispositions aren't just about scholarship but rather some of those dispositions include things like collective work capacity for collaboration engagement with curiosity and wonder and considering practice from that Vantage of what else might he be doing as opposed to what is it simply that he is doing. The process by which a scholar practitioner exists is cyclical in nature in that it begins with the definition of a problem.

Then you can address the problem in a systematic way moving forward so looking at a problem of practice and identifying that also from the component of dispositions suggest that we're looking at it from myriad angles whose perspectives have historically been omitted from these conversations that we can draw upon so that we're collectively identifying these problems in a

very careful thoughtful way so that as we look at the problem of practice we investigate what's known different lenses that have been applied to it.

We are able to sort of investigate further within our own practice gathering rigorous rigorously gathering data conducting analyses and answering our own research questions so that we can further our own process in our own practice toward an improvement in practice only to find out that we are left with yet another problem of practice and question to answer and so the cyclical nature of those skills dispositions and knowledge or the way that those are those are activated through the process of the scholar practitioner allows us to be really systematic and deliberate about the ways that we affect change.

Professor Mabogunje's knowledge journey is instructive about how he embodied the model knowledge architecture that the scholar-

practitioner needs to practice effortless and learn profusely in understanding Nigeria's development. He began with mastering historical methodology in geography perfecting his observational expertise and absorbing the essence of the anthropology of a society and its institutions. For example, he observed land use patterns in Britain, noting the importance of community control in rural areas. Recognizing the limitations of his historical perspective, he pursued a PhD to master research methods. He realized that expertise beyond his current knowledge was necessary for policy advisory work. After further post-doctoral training in the US, he mastered spatial science, theoretical, and quantitative education. This led to his seminal work, "Urbanization in Nigeria" (1968), which provided a theoretical framework for understanding Nigerian urbanization and the linkages to development from urban, regional and

national scale. His insight, validated by urban science, highlighted the global forces of urbanization and their varying intensities, shaping urban systems and individual urban centers. Mabogunje's commitment to excellence and rigorous training enabled him to produce groundbreaking work, demonstrating the importance of continuous learning and expertise in achieving impactful research, attributes that are broadly befitting scholar-practitioner worldview.

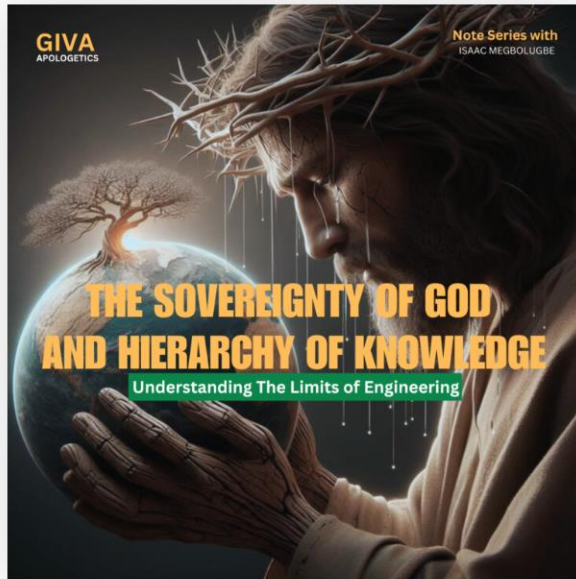
Professor Mabogunje's intellectual legacy offers a wealth of insights and ideas that can inform our understanding of development. His commitment to excellence, rigorous training, and continuous learning enabled him to produce groundbreaking work that has had a lasting impact on Nigeria's development. The Abayode-Olaopa national development practice model, which he embodied, provides a framework for understanding the complexities of development and the importance

of a scholar-practitioner approach. As we reflect on Mabogunje's contributions, we are reminded of the importance of embracing a scholar-practitioner mindset, one that combines theoretical knowledge with practical expertise, to address the complex challenges of national development. By doing so, we can unlock new perspectives and approaches to achieving impactful research and meaningful change.

Isaac Megbolugbe, former practice leader at PricewaterhouseCoopers, retired professor at Carey Business School, Johns Hopkins University, and fellow at Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors was a former student, mentee, and colleague of Professor Mabogunje. He is also one of his intellectual disciples. He is resident in the United States of America.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND THE HIERARCHY OF KNOWLEDGE: UNDERSTANDING THE LIMITS OF ENGINEERING



Isaac Megbolugbe

July 26, 2024

In the grand tapestry of human understanding, God's sovereignty weaves an intricate pattern of knowledge, with each thread meticulously placed to reveal His divine design. From the majestic

laws of physics to the intricate workings of the human heart, all knowledge originates from God's omniscient mind. However, humanity's pursuit of understanding is filtered through a hierarchy of reasoning, with engineers situated near the practical reality end of the spectrum.

Engineers, masters of precision and clarity, excel in applying the laws of nature to create innovative solutions. Their expertise is indispensable, yet their proximity to practical reality can also be a limitation. The very precision that makes them exceptional engineers can render them impervious to learning from others who engage in higher-level reasoning. This creates a challenge for development and progress, as engineers may overlook the broader implications and underlying principles that govern their work.

The hierarchy of knowledge, with God at its pinnacle, descends through levels of abstraction, from theology and philosophy to science and

engineering. Each level builds upon the previous one, with engineers operating at the practical application end. While this hierarchy is not a rigid classification, it acknowledges that different disciplines require varying degrees of abstraction and reasoning.

Engineers' reluctance to collaborate with those engaged in higher-level reasoning stems from their focus on tangible results and their expertise in precise application. However, this narrow focus can lead to a lack of consideration for the underlying principles and broader implications that govern their work. By neglecting to engage with higher-level reasoning, engineers may overlook innovative solutions, ignore potential pitfalls, and fail to integrate their work into the larger tapestry of human understanding.

To foster development and progress, engineers must recognize the value of collaboration with those who engage in higher-level reasoning. By

acknowledging the hierarchy of knowledge and their place within it, engineers can:

1. Appreciate the broader implications of their work
2. Integrate their solutions into the larger context of human understanding
3. Learn from others who operate at different levels of abstraction
4. Recognize the sovereignty of God as the ultimate source of knowledge

By embracing this collaborative approach, engineers can transcend their limitations and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of God's design. As we acknowledge the hierarchy of knowledge and the sovereignty of God, we can work together to unravel the intricate tapestry of human understanding, revealing the divine beauty that underlies all creation.



Dear Engineer Friends,

I hope this letter finds you well. As someone who has had the privilege of working with many engineers over the past three decades in the real estate and development industry, I wanted to share some observations and concerns that I believe are essential to our collaborative success.

While I have immense respect for the technical expertise and precision that engineers bring to the table, I have also experienced instances of intransigence, failure to listen, and a reluctance to learn from others. This has led to missed

opportunities for innovative solutions and, at times, hindered progress.

I understand that your education and training emphasize precision, accuracy, and problem-solving within well-defined parameters. However, this can sometimes lead to a narrow focus, causing you to overlook the broader context and neglect the value of input from those outside your field.

I want to emphasize that my intention is not to criticize or diminish the vital contributions engineers make. Rather, I hope to encourage a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in collaborative problem-solving.

I believe that engineers, like anyone, can become predictable in their responses and approaches due to their education and practice style. I urge you to recognize the value of diverse perspectives and be

open to learning from others, even when it challenges your expertise.

Let's work together to forge solutions that integrate our collective knowledge and expertise. I would love to hear your thoughts, experiences, and insights on this matter, especially in the context of an article that I wrote about this issue in GIVA Apologetics Ministry.

Best regards,

This article beautifully articulates the intricate relationship between the sovereignty of God and the hierarchy of human knowledge. The perspective that all knowledge originates from God's omniscient mind, with engineering positioned near the practical reality end, provides a profound understanding of how different disciplines contribute to the tapestry of human understanding.

The call for engineers to recognise and collaborate with those engaged in higher-level reasoning is particularly insightful. By acknowledging the broader implications of their work and integrating it into the larger context of human understanding, engineers can transcend their limitations and contribute more holistically to society.

In recognising God's sovereignty as the ultimate source of all knowledge, how can individuals from various fields of study and practice work together to ensure a more holistic understanding of our world? What role can educational institutions play in fostering this kind of interdisciplinary collaboration and appreciation for different levels of abstraction?

CHAPTER EIGHT



**Prof. Akin Mabogunje: His Intellectual Work
for National Development**



Prof. Isaac Megbolugbe, PhD FRICS



Prof. Bola Ayeni

**Professor Akin Mabogunje's
legacy: Urbanization, geography, and more**

By Bola Ayeni and Isaac Megbolugbe

On August 4, 2022, Emeritus Professor Akinlawon Ladipo Mabogunje passed into the realm of the Divine. As his students, mentees, nay, disciples, who drank from his fountain of knowledge and benefitted immeasurably from both his personal generosity on the one hand, and immense global network of academic and professional contacts on the other, we consider it fit and proper to remember him in this extolling essay. We write to honor a benefactor; but even more importantly, to keep alive the memory of a giant in his calling who was also a benefactor to his academic disciple in particular, and academia in general, his country, Africa, and the world.

‘Prof.’ was a giant in name, in his field of endeavor, and in achievements across disciplines than span Geography, Urban and Regional Development, as well as formulation and execution of public policy in these areas. It is no wonder that, at his passing two years ago - like yesterday for some of us – his life was duly and deservedly celebrated at home and abroad. Indeed, a 154-page *Book of Tributes* from around the world document his achievements, and the lives he, in different ways touched in the academia and practice, the public and private sectors, across tribes, and cultures, countries and races. For the author of that seminal work *Urbanization in Nigeria*, it could not have been otherwise.

2017 was a landmark year - one of many yet exceptional - in the already outstanding career of Prof. That October when by an interesting coincidence he marked his 86th anniversary, he

won the prestigious Vautrin Lud Prize, often referred to as the "Nobel Prize of Geography." He was the 27th awardee on the roll of honor.

The Vautrin Lud Prize is the highest award in the field of geography, established in 1991 and named after the 16th Century French scholar Vautrin Lud. It is awarded annually at the International Geography Festival in Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, France, and decided by a five-person international jury. To date, (2003) the United Kingdom, the United States of America, France, and Switzerland have dominated the awards, with the UK and USA having the most winners. This is not surprising, given that these countries were pioneers in the development of modern geographical thought. The Vautrin Lud Prize recognizes outstanding contributions to the field of geography, and its winners are considered giants in the discipline. The prize continues to

inspire and promote excellence in geographical research and scholarship.

Since Peter Hagget, Professor Emeritus in Urban and Regional Geography in University of Bristol first won it in 1991, Prof. Mabogunje is the 27th on this ladder of giants. A commentator on the November 7, 2017 edition of the ‘Tuesday Column’ on Trust Radio enthused: “This October must have been a special one for Akin Mabogunje, the Professor of Geography who celebrated the ripe age of eighty-six in the month and also became a recipient of one of the most prestigious prizes in his field of endeavour. He became the Laureate of the Vautrin-Lud Prize of 2017”. He added: “Anybody that has been acquainted with the field of geography and where it is applied, particularly in areas of regional and town planning, must have come across Mabogunje. He has been the dominant national figure in the field. He is reputed to be the first

black African to earn a PhD in the subject and also the first to become a Professor of Geography, thus earning the sobriquet, the Father of African Geography”.

As a pioneer in African geography, Mabogunje's work has had a profound impact on policy and practice.

Prof. Akin Mabogunje and Geography in Nigeria

French poet of the 17th century, Jean de La Fontaine is quoted to say that by the work one knows the workman; English novelist and critic Samuel Butler said that every man's work is always a portrait of himself. The length, breath, and depth of Mabogunje's work speak eloquently about his person. But first his work.

Professor Akin Mabogunje is a renowned geographer who has made significant

contributions to the field of geography, particularly in Nigeria and Africa. He was the first African to join the Department of Geography at the University of Ibadan and later became a full professor at the age of 34. Mabogunje's work focused on urbanization, regional development, and spatial analysis, and he was instrumental in introducing quantitative methods and computer programming to geography in Nigeria. Mabogunje's academic achievements are impressive, with over 23 books and 100 articles published in international journals. He was also an accomplished administrator, serving as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ibadan and founder of the Planning Studies Program. He held various international positions, including president of the International Geographical Union and membership in the United Nations Secretary General's Ad-hoc Committee on Regional Development.

Mabogunje's legacy extends beyond his academic achievements. He was a mentor and inspiration to many students and colleagues, and his work has had a lasting impact on the field of geography in Nigeria and Africa. His commitment to excellence, integrity, and service has made him a role model for future generations.

The tributes from Prof. Isaac Megbolugbe and Prof. Toyin Falola highlight Mabogunje's exceptional qualities as a scholar, leader, and individual. His life and career serve as a testament to the power of dedication, hard work, and vision. As Megbolugbe noted, Mabogunje's life represents a "masterclass in surfing the turbulent sea of life," and his legacy continues to inspire and motivate others to strive for excellence.

The Road to the Vautrin Lud Prize Award to Prof. Akin Mabogunje

Professor Akin Mabogunje's works, particularly "Urbanization in Nigeria" (1968) and "The Development Process: A Spatial Perspective" (1980), have had a profound impact on the field of geography and development studies. "Urbanization in Nigeria" is considered a classic in urban geography, providing a comprehensive analysis of urbanization in Nigeria and offering insights into the development process. The book's emphasis on the dual structure model of urban space and its use of sophisticated quantitative methods made it a groundbreaking work.

"The Development Process: A Spatial Perspective" offers an alternative perspective on development, emphasizing the importance of spatial reorganization and the mobilization of internal resources. The book is divided into four

parts, examining the concept of development, rural and urban structures, and national integration. Mabogunje's work challenges traditional development paradigms, advocating for a more holistic and spatially aware approach to development.

Both books have been widely acclaimed for their originality, depth, and significance. "Urbanization in Nigeria" was praised by Wheatley (1970) as a "scholarly contribution of first-rate importance" that has come to be regarded as a classic in the field. "The Development Process" has been recognized for its innovative approach to development studies, offering a fresh perspective on the complex issues surrounding development.

Mabogunje's works have not only contributed significantly to the field of geography and development studies but also inspired generations

of scholars and practitioners. His legacy continues to be celebrated, and his ideas remain relevant in contemporary development discourse.

Appreciating Prof. Akin Mabogunje's legacy, Prof. Basirat Oyalowo (2022) wrote "Mabogunje's legacy stretches far beyond his seminal book, *Urbanization of Nigeria*. He served as a consultant to the Nigerian government and several states in urban and regional development, helping politicians and bureaucrats to understand how research institutions could influence and shape policy.... he was instrumental to the conceptualization of Abuja, Nigeria's capital city. He was also the foremost professional in getting it built, canvassing rigorously for the appointment of Nigerian town planners and architects to build the city. It is up to urbanization scholars, ordinary Nigerians, and politicians to do more than just offer tributes to the father of modern policy in the nation's-built environment. We all owe him

action: to bring his vision of cities that work for all to life.”

In an inspiration sense, Prof.’s achievement is a testament to his dedication and excellence in the field of geography. The first black African to earn a Ph.D. in geography and become a professor, his work spanned decades, shaping policy and practice in urban and regional development.

Mabogunje's contributions to urbanization and geography are immense. His "Urbanization of Nigeria," (1968) is a landmark study that has influenced and continues to influence policy and research. He played a crucial role in the conceptualization and development of Abuja, Nigeria's capital city, advocating for Nigerian professionals to lead the project. Indeed, former president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo acknowledged this in his tribute. 'Akin was particularly useful as a geographer in our siting of

the new capital of Abuja', he wrote. His work has focused on creating cities that work for all, and his legacy challenges us to continue this vision.

Professor Akin Mabogunje's body of works calls to action urbanization scholars, policymakers, and citizens to bring his vision to life. We must strive to create cities that are equitable, sustainable, and prosperous for all. In honor of his legacy we are challenged to continue his work, inspiring future generations to excel in the field of geography.

The Roots of Urban Geography in Nigeria

The three concepts of urbanization in the social sciences which have constituted the bedrock of analytical work in Nigerian urban geography, are the behavioral, the structural, and the demographic. Urbanization as a behavioral process is enshrined in Louis Wirth's work on

urbanism as a way of life (Wirth, 1938) and is concerned with the changes in experience which individuals go through over time, and the associated patterns of behavior.

Urbanization as a structural process is related to activities of the whole population and the changes in the economic structure. It sees the movement of people out of agricultural communities into other and generally larger non-agricultural communities (Childe, 1955) as a product of increasing economic specialization and advancing technology. Urbanization as a demographic process postulate that the process of population concentration is a way of ordering a population to attain a certain level of subsistence in a given environment and takes place in stages described by Eric Lampard (1964) as primordial, definitive, classic, and industrial.

While these theories have constituted important notions for the study of urban geography, the geographer's contribution has been in the emphasis on the spatial aspects of urbanization. This emphasis has been manifested in studies of the spatial patterns of urban systems and the manifestations of the consequences over space. It has also been on the studies of the spatial structure or patterns within cities. In general, therefore, geography has focused on the importance of location and distribution in addition to factors of the site and situation of cities. Furthermore, for most of this time, the studies remained purely descriptive.

Mabogunje (1968) observed that the descriptive nature of the earlier studies was a consequence of the limited familiarity of earlier research workers with sophisticated statistical techniques. However, the availability of data was also an important issue, which even today remains

critical to effective analysis of the urban situation in the country. Nonetheless, the lack of concentration on the issues which urbanization raised in terms of national development and the assimilation and integration of pre- colonial cities into the development process remained for so long as relevant disciplines of geography, urban and regional planning did not enter the research arena. Mabogunje's contribution to the understanding of urbanization in Nigeria therefore involves drawing the attention of researchers on urbanization to the spatial dimension which it possesses, and which proves critical to the development process as well as the utilization of statistical techniques to unravel the nature of cities.

Professor Akin Mabogunje's *Urbanization in Nigeria* (1968), provided a theoretical focus and incisive treatment of Nigerian urbanization and its problems. He argued that the forces of

urbanization are the same worldwide, but their intensity varies, leading to the emergence of urban systems and affecting individual urban centers' growth and development. This insight has been validated by the field of urban science, which has made significant progress in understanding cities and urban centers.

His work has had a lasting impact on the field of urban science, and his ideas are reflected in at least 10 value propositions. These are: a) Understanding and addressing urban challenges b) Informing urban planning and policy c) Improving urban livability and quality of life d) Fostering innovation and economic growth e) Addressing global challenges f) Interdisciplinary approaches g) Data-driven decision-making h) Enhancing urban governance and leadership i) Understanding urban dynamics and complexity j) Improving urban resilience and sustainability.

Indeed, Prof.'s contributions have been profound and prescient, such that it is not an exaggeration to credit him with many of the value propositions of the urban science field today.

Other specific contributions of Mabogunje and his students include emphasizing the spatial aspects of urbanization and the importance of location and distribution; applying central place theory to understand the hierarchy and structure of urban systems in Nigeria; conducting city-based studies on migration, intra-urban mobility, industrial location, and housing patterns; developing models of urban spatial structure and testing hypotheses about human spatial behavior; and investigating the impacts of urbanization on rural areas and the economy.

We posit that these significant and manifold contributions to the field of Urban Geography in

Nigeria emphasize the need for continued research and investment in these areas.

The award of the prestigious Vautrin Lud Prize to late Emeritus Professor Akin Mabogunje was a fitting crown on his career. He was a pioneer, chronicler, and visionary thinker in the field of urban studies and city planning; he was a giant in field of Geography.

He domesticated the vocabulary in Urban Geography in Nigeria for the twentieth century. His influence on students, mentees, and colleagues testify to his leadership and mentorship qualities. He had an uncanny ability to be flawlessly interdisciplinary as demonstrated in his collaborative approach and ability to bring people together not only across disciplines, but also between ‘town and gown’.

We take the opportunity of this article to convey our deep sense of gratitude and pride to be among those fortunate enough to learn from him, work with him, and be mentored by him, in short, to drink from the Mabogunje ‘Pierian spring’. We are proud to be counted among the many that have found Professor Mabogunje to be a remarkable individual who has left a legacy in the fields of Geography, Urban and Regional Studies, and more.

The Holy Book says do you see a man diligent in his work? He will stand before kings. That was Mabogunje. Nigeria’s President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) said he ‘drew from his well of endowment’ and described him as ‘a man of uniquely analytical mind’ and ‘enlightened scholarship’, who deserves ‘a place of honor in the roll of outstanding scholars, administrators, and statesmen of our generation’. We cannot agree more. The general concluded: ‘I thank you

for being my friend'. We should say, above all else, that Professor Akinlawon Ladipo Mabogunje was a good man, indeed a very good man.

Bola Ayeni and Isaac Megbolugbe were former students, mentees, and colleagues of Professor Akin Mabogunje. They are retired professors from University of Ibadan and Johns Hopkins University respectively.