

Privatization in Nigeria, Social Welfare, and the Obligation of Social Justice

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ABSTRACT Privatization—the process of transferring control and ownership (partial or total) of an enterprise, business or agency, or the production of goods and services from the public sector (government) to the private sector—has been defended on different grounds, foremost of which is the view that it would lead to economic growth and efficiency. The Nigerian Government has aggressively embraced the concept, having been spurred on largely by creditor institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The privatization program in Nigeria, which came as an integral part of the country's overarching public policy of adjustment credits has been bogged down by a host of problems and controversies. At present, only 10% of the 400 public enterprises that were privatized from 1999 till date are properly functioning. In this paper I defend the view that the privatization program in Nigeria is socially unjust. I argue that by privatizing enterprises that provided a primary source of employment and income for most Nigerians, particularly in the midst of widespread bureaucrat corruption, and in the absence of social welfare programs the Nigerian Government undermines the quality of life and well-being of its citizens, and accordingly acts unjustly.