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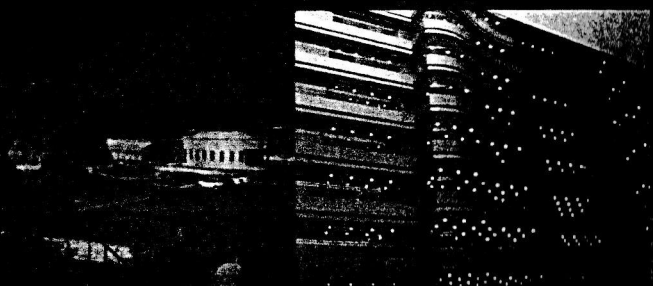


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Industrialization, Urbanization and Moral Decay in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we examine the processes of industrialization and urbanization and their roles in shaping morality in the Nigerian society. Industrialization, urbanization and moral values have been issues engaging sociologists, including philosophers of the discipline. The paper explores various perspectives of the processes (industrialization, urbanization and moral decay) with particular focus on Nigeria by examining the issues of the causes and effects of urbanization, social change and its consequences in terms of changing moral values and the specific roles of these processes in moral decadence in Nigeria. It is argued that these twin processes have greatly impacted upon the family which constitutes the bedrock and the building block of the society universally. In doing so, the processes altered social functions such as economic support, reproduction/procreation and family care usually given to the aged and physically challenged, thereby causing families with members in need of care to turn towards institutional care and facilities such as the old people's home and schools/hostels for the physically challenged. Therefore, there is need to device measures aimed at correcting the deleterious consequences of industrialization and urbanization in Nigeria as a way of sustaining social development.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid industrialization and increased urbanization with attendant interdependence of parts of Nigeria are bringing into close contact groups of diverse cultures. If Nigerians are to embrace moral decency, then they must develop a basis for common understanding and for the creation of new patterns of controlling the interaction of individuals of different cultural groups. Such common understanding, in the field of ethical systems are the only lasting foundation upon which a modern Nigeria can be built. If the

various Nigerian societies cannot afford to adhere to certain basic moral values in their dealings with each other, their strength will be spent in wars and preparations for global development and civilization as we know it, will elude the country.

Another condition which adds urgency to the quest for the understanding of Nigerian moral values is the necessity for revising many of our familiar cultural patterns to meet the new conditions imposed by industrialization and urbanization and consequent mechanical type solidarity earlier proposed by Emile Durkheim (1893). The rapid technological and scientific progress of current era bids fair to alter our daily lives and even our ways of thinking so profoundly that new Nigerian moral values will have to be based on the universal human needs and social imperatives. We will have to get down to bed rock to create new understanding of social interaction which our new situation requires. This, then calls for serious academic attention. This is because the Nigerian moral value system is infected with decay. The decay is so intense that doing otherwise will present one as a deviant. The unfolding pages will explicitly present the picture clearer.

Industrialization: its prospects and challenges

Industrialization is variously defined by many scholars. To some, it is the process through which industrial capacity is created. Even still, some view it as the introduction of the factory system, that is, specialized establishments where there is the centralization of power driven machinery and where workers gather specifically for the purpose of production. The workers work for wages and do not own the tools of production. While to others, industrialization is the establishment of an economic and social system characterized by the large industries, machine production and the concentration of workers in areas designated as urban. And to others, it is a process of social and economic change whereby a human society is transformed from a pre-industrial to an industrial state. This social and economic change is closely intertwined with technological innovation particularly the development of large scale energy and metallurgy as well as other productive capacities geared in the moulds of Durkheimian and Spencerian diversification of production.

Viewed from the above, it is a fact for one to contend that industrialization alters the mode of production from labour to machine intensive with attendant commercialization of production. Though production is commercialized, there is increased access to cheap labour. However, in a 1997 paper, Essoh argued that Industrialization poses some form of philosophical change or a different attitude in the perception of nature, dangerous machinery, impersonal work, isolation, poverty, homelessness and substance abuse. In fact, he maintained that health problems in industrial societies are so much caused by economic, social, political and cultural factors.

Essoh (1997) agreed with Egbon (1995) that industrialization in Nigeria accounts for changes in terms of values, perceptions, behaviour and historical contexts of social classes and interest groups. He asserts that the people are unnecessarily exposed to undue pressure from the industrialization process. This is typified in the pressure put on NNMC and ALSCON in Oku Iboku (Itu) and Ikot Abasi not forgetting that put on Exxon-Mobil (Eket) all in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria respectively.

In capturing the role of industrialization in the project of ethnic interest in Nigeria, Ikpeze (1991) admits that:

“Nigeria’s industrialization process tends to favour the citing of industries in major cities in the nation’s regional enclaves. The effect is the projection of ethnic values and ethos.”

Closely akin to the above, Ademisokun – Turton (1992) admits that:

“Nigeria’s industrial policies, objectives and strategies are often subject to either modifications or neglect or even total abandonment. In other words, industrial policies and practices are pursued on an ad-hoc basis and in a most uncoordinated manner. This major shortcoming partly explains the reason for the concentration of Nigeria’s few industries in major cities like Lagos, Kano, Ibadan and Port Harcourt, the centres of political power of the ruling elites. It equally explains why industrial location is not solely a function of reasoned entrepreneurial planning and decisions, since political considerations are often given undue weight.”

In tune with the above, Ekweremadu (1999) posits that industrialization is therefore a policy adopted by third world economies to emulate the fast pace of development in the first economies like America, U.K. and much of Western Europe. To him, industrialization has brought about an unprecedented growth in the citing of industries. This explains the new phenomenon in world industrialization where the really advanced and industrialized amongst humanity are referred to as the G8. In his own opinion, Ojeh (1992) argues that since Nigeria is part of the globalized economy, she must industrialize. In this view, he maintained, she can experience increased economy of scale.

Generally speaking, industrialization is being viewed by man as the capacity of governments to establish industries for the sole purpose of justification in a globalized economy. It equally directs the path of economic growth and often times leads to commercialization of manufactured goods. It meets the demand of the consumers and therefore gingers satisfaction. It is for reason adduced, that Nigeria has adopted the industrialization policy as a way of unlocking her untapped potentials. However glaring it may be, industrialization has a lot of challenges. Most importantly it has to wrestle with changes. Change in its entire gamut.

Interestingly, industrialization is capital intensive and requires large capital to undertake. Sadly, most countries in Sub-Sahara Africa lack the capital hence industrial growth in and within the countries in the sub-region is slow which calls for concern. As is well known, industrialization gingers urbanization. Industrialization and urbanization trigger up migration in all its ramification and therefore breeds moral decay which in itself is a by-product of cultural diversification or culture contacts.

Urbanization: Its Causes and Effect

Closely related to industrialization is urbanization. Urbanization is increasing in both the developed and developing countries. However, rapid urbanization, particularly the growth of large cities and the associated problems of unemployment, poverty, inadequate health, poor sanitation, urban slums and environmental degradation pose formidable challenges in many developing countries. Available statistics show that more than half of the world's 6.6 billion people live in urban areas, crowded into 3 percent of the earth's land area (Agnotti, 1993; UNFPA, 1993). The proportion of the world's population living in urban areas, which was less than 5 percent in 1800 increased to 47 percent in 2000 and is expected to reach 65 percent in 2030 (United Nations, 1990; 1991). However, more than 90 percent of future population growth will be concentrated in cities in developing countries and a large percentage of this population will be poor. In Africa and Asia, where urbanization is still considerably lower (40 percent), both are expected to be 54 percent urban by 2025 (UN 1995;2002).

So presented, urbanization, simply defined, is the shift from a rural to an urban society. It involves an increase in the number of people in urban areas during a particular year. Urbanization is the outcome of social, economic and political development that lead to urban concentration and growth of large cities, changes in land use and transformation from rural to metropolitan pattern of organization and governance. Viewed therefore from this angle, we can rightly say that some Nigerian towns like Lagos, Garki, Jos, Abuja, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Calabar, Yola, etc are urban centres with their attendant characteristics.

What Causes Urbanization?

Ofodile in Iwaremie-Jaja (1999:33) holds that natural population increase (High Birth and Death rates) and migration are significant factors in the growth of cities in the developing countries. He argues in agreement with Essoh (1999).

“...The natural increase is fueled by improved medical care, better sanitation and improved food supplies, which reduce death rates and cause population to grow.”

Edward (1974) argued that in many developing countries, it is rural poverty that drives people from the rural areas into the city in search of employment, food, shelter and education. This, he said, continues unabatedly in developing countries.

Like Edward (1974), we maintain that in Africa, most people move into the urban areas because they are “pushed” out by factors such as poverty, environmental degradation, religious strife, political persecution, food insecurity and lack of basic infrastructure and services in the rural areas or because they are “pulled” into the urban areas by the advantages and opportunities of the city including education, electricity, water, etc. We go on to aver that, even though in many African countries the urban areas offer few jobs for the youth, they are often attracted there by the amenities of urban life which are necessarily lacking in the non-urban areas.

In trying to capture the many processes that bring about urbanization, Essoh (1999) quotes Beanaw (1990:13) thus:

“A significant feature of the urbanization process in Africa is that, unlike Asia and Europe, much of the growth is taking place in the absence of significant industrial expansion. Although Africa is fast urbanizing, mega-cities defined as cities with 10 million inhabitants or more are few. Urbanization also finds expression principally in outward expansion of the built-up area and conversion of prime agricultural lands into residential and industrial uses. An alternative to the present expansion of the urban population across a wide area of the country in order to save prime land for agricultural is to construct high-rise buildings and promote commercial development in specific zones, which would depend on effective appropriate technology.”

Also, in close relation to the above we observe that:

The urbanization processes are largely driven by market forces and government policies that lead to simultaneous process of change in livelihoods, land use, health and natural resource management including water, soil and forest and often reactive changes in Local Government. Government development policies and budget allocations, which often favour urban residents over rural areas, tend to pull people into the urban areas. In cities, public investment, which often misses the urban poor, with expenditures biased towards the higher-income class migrants force them into slums and squatter settlements ... the market forces result in a series of changes in employment, urban agriculture and peri-urban production systems. Ready market leads to an increase in production of horticultural crops and perishables such as vegetables given the high demand and proximity to urban consumers. These factors therefore, act as a great centripetal force in favour of urbanization.”

From the foregoing, we have shown that the processes of urbanization is mostly artificial with human efforts playing dominant roles. Hence, many

governments the world over have been making efforts to curb its overbearing influences.

Be that as it may, urbanization has its own effects. In Africa, the dramatic effects of rapid urbanization are very clear in the cities and peri-urban areas. As the cities expand, the main zone of direct impact in the peri-urban areas and those living in the peri-urban interface face many new challenges and opportunities in meeting their needs and accommodating the by-products of the urban populations. Although, cities serve as "engines" of growth in most developed and developing countries by providing opportunities for employment, education, knowledge and technology transfer and ready markets for industrial and agricultural products, high urban population place enormous stress on natural resources and imposes ecological footprint on the peri-urban areas. For example, urbanization leads to the outward expansion of cities and results in changes in land use whereby urban residents buy up prime agricultural land for residential or commercial purposes. The conversion of farm lands and watersheds for residential purposes have negative consequences on food security, water supply as well as the health of the people, both in the cities and in the peri-urban areas. Cities impact on health in many ways. These could be seen in the area of the environment and health, problem of emission reduction, supply of clean water, sewage and rubbish disposal, food security and poverty reduction that can be regarded as the most important.

The World Bank report in (1990) holds that:

"A large proportion of the urban population is affected by poor sanitation that threatens their health. River pollution is particularly found to be worse where rivers pass through cities and the most widespread is contamination from human excreta, sewage and oxygen loss."

It is glaring even from natural observation that most developing cities like Lagos, Maiduguri and Sokoto in Nigeria do not have safe drinking water and even if they do, there is limited access to clean drinking water and these are found only in such areas as Ikoyi, Victoria island, Lekki (for Lagos) and the GRAS for the others. GRAs are acronym for Government Reserved Areas or Housing/Planned Estates for Senior Government Personnel.

The above position presents the effect of urbanization. But introspectively, both industrialization and urbanization are affected by social change with family as the focal point

Social Change: The Antidote for Changing Moral Values in Nigeria

The family as the basic unit of social organization and the 1st seed of society is central to human experience and obviously cannot escape the effect of social change, its structure and function. Viewed from this angle, Etzioni and Etzioni (1989) defined social change as an initial force that makes for the

attainment of equilibrium and those for the attainment of disequilibrium. As a force, social change as characterized by the twin action of industrialization has impacted greatly on the structure of the family as the bedrock of every society. In retrospect, the man was always playing the role of a bread winner of the family, but due to social change, it is now in most cases the woman in traditional societies which are "creeping" into modern state system. Like in the Igbo speaking area, women were always referred to as "ori aoku" (consumers of wealth) but now they prefer "odozi aku" (promoters of wealth).

We note in this article that the family functions of economic support, reproduction and child rearing are affected by social change. Today, we argue that economic support is personalized as everyone is to him or herself. The elderly are thrown into old people's homes and the disabled are abandoned by other members of the family who tend to perceive their disability as a curse and disgrace to the family.

In the area of child rearing, Obi (2000:48) and Uyoata (2006:64-79) observe:

"As regards reproduction and child rearing, the family traditionally takes major and often sole responsibility for having and raising children until they mature. However, the long period of breast-feeding, for example, has been drastically affected by social change. Males were formerly breast fed for two years and females for one year. In contrast, as a result of social change, feeding bottle has replaced breast-feeding their children in public. Moreover, child care has become the sole responsibility of the nuclear family as it is now unusual and unappreciated for neighbours to bother about or take care of a child in the absence of the child's parents. Formerly caring for and socialization of children tended to be the responsibility of the neighbourhood but today, bringing children up rest with the nuclear family and or day-care centres."

Given the above scenario, the extended family system is not spared from the influence of social change. The crucial bond of dependence upon the older generation has been weakened if not broken or at best, modified. It is difficult, if not impossible to find a group of brothers, their wives and their children living with their parents. The extended family structure has been so weakened that adults no longer share responsibilities. Nonetheless, the fact that the extended family contains more than one couple insures that children will be supported and cared for, and they in turn will support the surviving members in their old age. Thus, scholars rightly point out that the extended family provides a standard against which to examine how family has changed in modern times. Therefore, the emphasis is that our moral decay emanates from the family we all belong and the changing society occasioned by industrial and urban characters.

It could be discerned from above submission that social change affects the size and composition of the family, structure and function. Traditional

bride price has been replaced by commercialized bride wealth, old people's homes that are springing up in the cities, have not helped our moral obligations to the aged characteristic of traditional African, norm and values of being our brother's keepers.

Goldthrope (1985) notes that social change affects the demographic changes and changes in the role relations within the family.

However, as societies change, so their moral values change. Nigerian values seem to be grounded on common sense and social needs; hence the multiplicity of values among various ethnic groups in Nigeria. The contemporary Nigerian is at the crossroads; he is sitting on two moral stools." He is not comfortably seated on any of the value systems – Western and African which – he is confronted with. The contemporary Nigerian no longer appreciates his environment through the erstwhile value that Western education, culture and civilization has introduced him to. What is more, the theistic and teleological considerations that accounted for what passed as values among Nigerians have been replaced with utilitarian and materialistic considerations. It is therefore imperative that we sieve out the best from traditional Nigerian values and the Western oriented values so as to forge a value system which tends toward a hybrid so to speak that will meet the challenges of our time.

The Role of Industrialization and Urbanization and the Consequent Moral Decay in Nigeria

Admitting the decay in our country, Muyiwa (2001) quotes Njoku (2000:43) thus:

"...of course, one can admit the bug known as the Nigerian factor." This bug must be killed if anything positive is to be achieved in the country. This bug has made nonsense of probity, accountability, justice, honesty, fair play, merit and morality in the country. It has brought about the worship of corruption, injustice, falsehood, mediocrity, sycophancy, sharp deals, bribery, immorality and other such pervasive vices enumerated by the I.C.P (2000), in both private and public affairs in the country. Until this bug is killed and laid to rest, our Nation will see no peace... This bug has lowered our esteemed moral values."

The above portrays the nature of our moral values which is experiencing decay.

In our view, the Nigerian state has reached value bankruptcy. To us, our youths in a bid to catch-up with the demands of industrialization and urbanization, corrupt our value morals. This could be seen from the point of view that hitherto, chieftaincy titles and awards were reckoned and received on merit, but today due to the need to boost one's ego, chieftaincy is for sale to the highest bidder, tradition for auction, thieving children are no longer outcasts of the family, and corruption has become our national pastime. We can see that our traditional moral values are drifting towards the drain.

We argue further that we, Nigerians have become nihilist. If anyone is responsible for our nihilification, it is the Nigerian Elder? This, in our thinking may refer to the eminent Nigerian, the champion of industrialization and urbanization renewal. These are the elites who are the carriers of moral decay in Nigeria and its promotion also. To this end, Prof. Dora Akinyuli, our immediate past Honourable Minister of Information and Communication engaged in a crusade to rebrand the Nigerian since she came on the stage. How successful was she?

In support of the above, we observe like Olujimi did that:

"Once the epitome of decency, the National Elder has become the notable champion of our moral decay. Our Elder is the looting politician, the crooked statesman, the incompetent technocrat, the rogue traditional ruler, institutions have become violated by corrupt men. An Elder is towering symbol of all our depravity. He is a thieving person. Robbing tradition by demanding respect and stealing the country blind."

In a bid to capture the above picture, Chukwulozie (2004) asserts that:

"... The Elder is the reason we have become almost a failed state. He ruined most of our traditional institutions, damaged modern authority and order. A Nigerian Elder is a totally lawless character. Bribery is the tool he uses to defeat our values. Our elders brought the culture of 'chop I chop' upon us, colluding with Nigerian military to plunder our progress. In civilian rule the Elder was even worse. He created political thuggery and electoral process theft. The Elder does not value Democracy. He is a chauvinist of power. Elder by any means necessary!"

Our reaction to this is that it is a truism that most of our elders are also privileged in terms of access to the Means Of Production (MOP) in the country. They may not create industries but relish in the ruins of those created by the State through corrupt practices and ineptitude. Once ruined, they cart the spoils to foreign lands. These classes of people are spoilers because to them, they have rubbished the vision of the Nigerian nation and damage our national pride as well as cultural heritage.

Njoku (2001) in support of the above quotes Olofin (1999:12-38) thus:

"Our Elders are debtors. Huge debt was never a way of life for us. They owe the international community billions of Dollars, most of the money borrowed at a period of economic prosperity. These shameless men are now asking for debt forgiveness. Our Elders now live in fear. They forgot that they will suffer from the blights of moral decadence they brought upon us. Now the roads are bad, the Elders must drive through pot holes like everybody else. Now the hospitals are gone, the Elders died in foreign countries. What do you have? A dead Elder! Dead and flown back for burial in Nigeria. Son

of the soil came back home in a casket. Our Elders are also threatened. Most of them keep Robbery tithe at home, should in case Armed Robbers descend on their homes. Yes, they pay Armed Robbers taxes like everybody else. Our thieving elders, living in fear of burglars. We have become shameless."

Even in the area of preserving our traditional food culture have been jettisoned in favour of the fast food culture. Our current research shows that the urban families adopt a "fast food culture." To us these families seem to forget their traditional diet and while there is usually more food they do eat is potentially more unhealthful than their traditional diet. Our position is further reinforced and amplified by the fact that divorce rate has become alarmingly high as couples are incapable of maintaining steady, lasting, emotionally sound relationships. We note that children have suffered most in broken homes and large numbers of adolescents have become drug addicts and delinquent thereby taking after values that degrade our moral order or respect, virtue, honour, duty and honesty. In a bid to show the effects of industrialization and urbanization Aina (1992) quotes Adelekan (1984:93) thus:

...Already burdened with various other socio-economic problems due to industrialization and urbanization, Nigerians now have to face the additional burden of family and health problems. Interpersonal relations have become superficial and brittle, and large number of people find themselves alienated, frustrated and mentally ill, without a sense of direction and purpose. The alienated individual has no friend to turn to for solace, and as he is already estranged from religion, psychiatry has stepped in to give some measure of relief."

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it has been established that moral values in Nigeria are no more cherished as they were few decades ago. The many positions justify the contention that our lowered morals should be given urgent therapy. However, although we from time to time experience scandalous behaviour on the part of our national leaders whose honesty and integrity have become questionable, we should recommend a pathway to piety. Some are rigged-out of elections due to malpractice. So when those in highest social and political positions stood to such dishonesty, definitely, we cannot expect our moral standards to be maintained in the long-run.

The scientific man of today has tapped many of nature's secrets and has learned to control the physical forces of the universe. But he has yet to learn to master the social and psychological forces that affect his very being, and his relationship to fellowmen and the environment. Though people in the industrialized and urbanized age may be intellectual giants who have

achieved technological wonders, emotionally, some of them are mere dwarfs who have barely taken a couple of steps beyond the stone age. One writer compares modern man to a person who has one leg tied to a jet plane while the other leg is tied to a bullock cart. Thus, man's development is utterly lopsided and this psychological imbalance seems to be largely responsible for the crises of development situation we face in morality, industry and urbanization in Nigeria. What is needed is the total development of the personality as a whole, and for that to be, the cultivation of a sound moral dimension is an absolute must. This makes the age old preaching in sociological discourse of relevance: proper and adequate socialization processes from cradle to adolescent and the examples shown by the leadership of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua from May 2007 to May 2010 for which his successor Dr. Goodluck Jonathan adequately fits in thereafter are enough models for a good percentage of our population and national discourse.

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