

FAMILY SIZE, CORRUPTION AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

By

Nma Alh. Salihu Haruna

Department of General and Liberal Studies

Niger State Polytechnic

Zungeru, Niger State

liddabdul@yahoo.com

and

Isah Ndashiru A. Usman

Department of Mass Communication Technology

Federal University of Technology,

Minna, Niger State

Abstract

Family is an Integral social institution in every society, whether developed or developing. It forms the basic organising principles of social life. Thus family varies from one society to another. In all societies, however, it is the central institution that is responsible for transformation of infants into civilised adult. It introduces the child to altitudes, beliefs end behavioural expectations that prevail in the larger world in which the family is located, (Ogunbameru, *et al*, 2000). Family as an institution, therefore, evolved as modernity progressed and so do its functions. These changes have been a cause of serious concern, most especially considering the implications on the lives of individuals, groups and the entire society. As the most basic unit of social organisation, some of its latent functions are bound to be negative impacts on the behavioural expectation of individuals and groups in the society. Never-the-less, the issue of corruption and development cannot be divorced from the analysis of the functions of the family, because both pivot round attitude and behaviour of people. As such this paper using sociological perspective dwells' on the structural change of the family and its impact on corruption and development in Nigeria becomes imperative.

Introduction

In both developed and developing societies, the family is the central institution with the responsibility for supporting individuals. Primarily, family as a social institution is charged with the responsibility of transforming the pre-human infant into a civilised adult, (Ogunbameru, 2000:70). It introduces the child to the norms and values of the society so that he would grow with all the skills necessary for his living and survival.

The family institution, though universal, varies from one society to another the difference, however, follows the accepted practice of marriage. It has two aspects of a social and biological grouping. The biological involves those people that are blood and descendent members of a family. While social aspects of the family are relatives made through marriages. (Affinal kin). When closer relative other than a married couple and children live either in the same house hold or in a close and continuous relationship with others, we speak of an extended family size. This also includes the grand parents, brothers and their wives, sisters and their husbands, aunts, and nephews. While in the case of nuclear family size, we have two adults, a man, his wife, and biological children or adopted children.

The family institution has undergone fundamental changes which in the recent time has provoked many researchers to find out it impacts on both individuals and the society. Some of these researchers, as David Popenoe (1993) Otite *et al* (2006) argue that, in the recent past, there has been a serious decline in the structure and function of the family. Popenoe (1993) in Guerro (2005:77) stressed that:

Families are not meeting society's need; as they once did and have lost most of their functions, social power and authority over their members.

He attributed the weakness of family function to high divorce rates, declining family size, and the growing absence of fathers and mothers in their children lives. All these changes in the family serve to challenge the fundamental values of home, and the society.

Against this background, this paper sets the following objectives to accomplish:

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of this finding include the following:

- to identify the impact of industrial revolution on the family size; and
- to examine effect of the family size on corruption and development.

The paper is, therefore, divided into sections. Section one is the introductory part, while section two contain: theoretical frame work, the family size before the industrial revolution, the effect of industrial revolution on family size, the impact of family size on corruption and conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

Functionalist theory view society as a system; that is, as a set of inter-connected parts which together form a whole. An understanding of any of this part as argued by Haralambos (2008:20) requires an analysis of its relationship to other part and most importantly its contribution to the maintenance of the society. The theory further stressed that, just like organism, there are society basic needs (parts) that must be met if it is to continue to exist. These are social institutions such as family, religion, health, education, etc.

In analysing the function of the various social institutions, R.K. Merton (1957), in Haralambos (2008) stressed that each has manifest functions and latent functions and. The former refers to "those objective consequences for a specified unit which contribute to its adjustment or adaptation and were so intended; the latter refers to unintended and unrecognised consequences of the same order". In this vein, Ogunbameru *et al* (2007:72) added that, family like any other social institution also performs some unintended functions which could be positive or negative. For instance, family neglect can bring about delinquency in children.

Thus, it is within the functionalist theoretical framework, the family size, corruption and development would be examined in this paper.

The family Size Before the Industrial Revolution

To understand the family size before the industrial revolution is to review the traditional structure of the family *and* the functions it performed during this period. For instance, in most traditional agrarian societies, like Nigeria, the functional basic unit is the extended family. The nuclear family is part of a larger kinship network. It is the main source of security. The success of every member is built on family connections which, in turn, revolve mostly around access to and ownership of land. This made every member of the family to be close to home and related to this land on the basis of values and rules sanctioned by The Society. These values, Igun *et al* (2002: 71) emphasise.

Have both ethical and philosophical aspect. In the ethical point of view, societal values insist that no body shall be allowed to become destitute. This is achieved through an inheritance law

that guarantees for all children or sons of a man, a share of all his properties. While philosophically, family land is seen to belong to all members including the ancestors, as well as the future generation (Igun, *et al*, 2002:71)

In the traditional societies, when parents became aged and their ability to support themselves and family decline adult children take over, because firstly parents have socialised them to accept such support as their responsibility. Secondly, they are fully prepared to inherit the land which is their source of income and finally children were made to believe that children who support their parents in old age may view themselves as setting examples for their own children to follow, this structure reflects the intimate relationship that exists among members of the traditional extended family. This relationship, according to Igun *et al* as argued by (2002) makes for greater feeling of security than where members are isolated from the wider family group. The closely knit extended family structure has implications for the stability of the household. For instance, in the event of divorce or death, there would be less disruption in the performance of family functions. Beside, the primary socialisation of the child is taken to be the responsibility of every older member of the extended family. In this setting, "a child is aware that he can seek succor from any of his numerous fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters whenever he wishes" Igun *et al*.

The Effect of Industrial Revolution on Family Size

In Nigeria, the creation of slates with ministries and parastatals and subsequent establishment of companies and industries from 1960s to date led to the weakening of the traditional family kinship system, resulting from employment opportunity away from home to the cities which, by implications, transforms into urban/industrial centres. This as, argued by Gidens (2008) disrupted the selling of family system previously centered on landed production.

Thus, the forces of industrialisation are accompanied by changes in behaviours and attitudes. The structure of the family changed from extended to nuclear families in which majority of people live in the urban areas tend to behave relatively impersonally and exclude distance kinsmen. That, a part from the man, his wife and children, if any, other members are tolerated as the economic and social costs of retaining links with wider family group, Otite (2006).

The argument above suggested that the self-government achieved by Nigeria and subsequent developments that led to economic growth weaken solidarity among the extended family size. Guerrero (2005:73) stresses that structural change in the economy determines the quality of life among working class families. That the reality of long workdays and weeks take its toll on families.

However, Frankenberg and Kuhu (2004:4) argue that neither occupational nor geographic mobility need necessarily reduce the strength of extended family ties. He stressed that tiers between extended family may remain strong if migration away from rural areas is to secure multiple economic sectors and geographic locations, or if migration is undertaken as a means to temporarily high earnings by individuals who intend to return to rural areas at some future point.

This is in line with Otite's argument that, even though, some Africans, particularly Nigerians are urbanised, they still retain their feet in their rural traditional family systems. That they are very conscious about their mutual social security for the rich and the poor, the dependence of the sick and the old on the young and stronger members, and their common involvement in prestigious social occasions, such as burial, community development, chieftaincy titles, etc. This with increased cost of living in the cities, will encourage a high

dependency ratio and an increase in the functional load on the employed members of the family. It is with this background that this paper considers the impact of family size on corruption and development in Nigeria.

The impact of Family Size on Corruption

It is evident from the discussion on the effect of industrial revolution on the family size that resources flow from individuals working in urban areas to members of extended families in the rural areas. Hypothetically, therefore, those individuals whose opportunities are not sufficient enough to cater for their extended responsibilities are likely to find additional means to do so, through legal or illegal means. This suggests the reason why acts of dishonesty and illegal behaviour in developing countries especially in Nigeria are mostly common among people in the civil service.

In Nigeria, the first obligation of every individual who took up employment is to provide for his close kin and then to his lineage or ethnic groups. This obligation, therefore, make it difficult for government officer to refuse request made by his people. In most cases, these remittances to members of extended families are relatively high considering the size and the nature of livelihood of which 70% are poor farmers. This certainly will lead to corruption. The question now is what is corruption?

Corruption is defined as the act of corrupting someone by securing his consent to act in breach of duty for financial gains. According to Ighorajah (2002).

Corruption is form of transaction which violates the duty of a public office holder with the partial motive of acquiring or amassing resources illegally for personal advancement and self gratification. Ighorajah (2002:139)

The Advance Learner Dictionary (2000) looked beyond amassing wealth by defining corruption as a process of making some one to behave in a way that is morally wrong. Therefore, corruption involves behavioural acts that violate the normative values of the society.

The family problem which, according to functionalists, emerges when it struggle to adopt lo a modern society. It is in the process of adaptation to urban lives that extended family structure was disrupted and this affects the influence children are subjected to m the traditional family system, where a person's child is taken to be every body's child.

Sociologists are very much concerned about social consequences of urbanisation on the family, because when family fails as a result of these social consequences such as divorce and domestic violence functionalists take these problems seriously These problem, in the words of Guerrero (2005:65), "afflict not only the family but also lead to problems in the society, such as crime, poverty or delinquency". Yusuf, in Igun *et al* (2002:75), corroborated Guerrero's argument by stressing that in Nigeria the disruption of the extended family size still creates a number of corrupt practices in individuals, groups and the entire society. He attributed increasing incidence of juvenile delinquency, crime, prostitution and many other anti-social and immoral acts to break-down of the traditional hold of the family on the individual.

Nevertheless, the paper has noted that, the family's original functions have been taken over by other organised social institutions, like education, health, economic, government, etc., but the argument is that still the family is expected to provide its main functions of raising children and provide affection and companionship for its members. However, in Nigeria today, many affluent and some middle class workers relegated these major functions by employing the services of house maid to perform them. Such neglect can

lead to negative latent functions of the family, and its attendant consequences of delinquency in children. A common parlance that says if you want to know the future of any society, interrogate how children are raised and you will have a better view of such society.

Where, a family fails, to perform its primary function of socialisation, by structuring the personalities of the young, thereby providing them with the psychological training and support necessary for the requirements of the social system, such society cannot experience development. According to Todaro (1982:5), development is a multi-dimensional process of change in attitude, social structure, institution as well as the general acceleration of economic growth. This means that development involves more than economic growth and changes in economic structures. Therefore, if people's attitude cannot be changed from dishonesty and immoral acts, and when social institutions like the family is not performing its primary functions effectively then it will be strange to call the result development even if per capita income doubled.

The paper, however, is not criticising development inherent in the growth of industries and urbanisation, but that its impact on the family size (extended and nuclear) contributes in not little measure on the high rate of corruption in Nigeria. And the government is not much aware of this. This is why all its efforts both in the past and present to wipe out corruption in Nigerian society had been geared toward economic and political institutions. The fact is that, many families are not able to fulfill their legitimate responsibilities as father, mothers and even as responsible children. In all, it seems that "the social importance of the family relative to other significant social institutions is increasingly declining" Yusuf in Igun *et al* (2002:30).

Recommendation

The paper, therefore, is not suggesting that we should revert to the past, but believed that there is need to ensure that relevant functions associated with the family in past be held to. Also "necessary measures needed to be taken towards restoring family stability, establishing new bonds between families and communities, and on the whole restoring hope in the family so as to make living in the family a worthy effort" Yusuf (2002).

To achieve this objective above, there is the need for government to organise workshops for working class Nigerians at all levels to educate them on the importance of early child integration to socialisation.

Though, fighting corruption is often the product of ideological definition by political leaders, it can be suggested that government policy on corruption should attach importance to the family as an active social institution that can improve moral standards of the society.

There should be efficient and effective government policy against corruption, which would include poverty alleviation programmes and provision of employment opportunities for the unemployed.

Good reward system should be introduced. Workers should be paid living wages so that employed members of the family will have enough to share among members of the extended family circle. With proper rewarding system, family member need not to deviate or tempted by corrupt persons.

Conclusion

The social changes in our modern society, undermining primary functions of the family and this remain the major causes of corruption in Nigeria. This situation arrest development.

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