



Industrial Sociology: A Viable Instrument For National Development In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study of national development occupies a seemingly contradictory, but nonetheless possibly true position within industrial sociology. From classical time to the present, it has had a central place in the minds of theorists concerned with the transition toward more advanced political, social and economic development. At the same time, familiarity with the concrete historical experiences of countries in the ‘underdeveloped’ world has remained a tangential preoccupation. This is especially true with regard to the actual dilemma faced by nations attempting to break away from their past and move toward national development. Nigeria has been facing a number of developmental challenges ranging from insecurity, prolonged workers’ strike, infrastructural deficit, unemployment, political crisis, etc. which has remained as major obstacles to national development. Industrial sociology as an academic discipline is a viable instrument for national development, since it disseminates knowledge which proffers solutions to many of the industrial disputes and instances of industrial unrest, which has reduced the gap between industrial management and industrial workers, and it has stressed upon the important role of trade unions in settling industrial disputes. Despite the role played by industrial sociology to national development, its applied nature is not so much revealed. Against this background, this paper attempts to examine the implications of industrial sociology to national development.

Keywords: Industrial sociology, National development, Economic growth, Unemployment

INTRODUCTION

In order to define and then describe industrial sociology is a challenge because there is no general agreement among sociologists about the origin and definition of industrial sociology or even the content of the sub-discipline (Stover, 2006). This disagreement has produced alternative labels for the sub-discipline from “Sociology of work”. Furthermore, there is no sense of identity among social scientists conducting industrial sociology investigations. While important industrial sociological research is being conducted, it is spread among many different disciplines, including sociology economics, and business. Here, industrial sociology will be defined as the study of work and work organizations, careers and adjustments by workers, and the relations of workers and work organizations to the community and society (Stover, 2006).

Emergence of Industrial Sociology

Industrial sociology as a distinguishable is a very broad field of study and may truly be said to have been born in the late 1770, (Berg 1991). Continuous with their fore-bearers' interests have been many of the specific subjects of concern of modern investigators. Systematic studies of social organizations in industrial societies date from the long-celebrated if not always carefully read analyses by Adam Smith, who addressed philosophical issues having to do with economic activities and related "moral sentiments" early in writings and then turned to his widely known and enduring work on the social (macroscopic) and organizational (Microscopic) roles in society of capitalists and, more famously of labour.

Smith regarded labour and its effective mobilization and utilization, not the fruits of mercantilism (i.e., the quantity of gold and silver imported from colonies and the exportation of finished goods), as the real sources of what he termed the wealth of nations. Smith's studies of the superiority of specialized divisions of labour in a pin factory became a template for studies of the personal and social costs and benefits of manufacturing enterprises by scholars of all political colours.

Furthermore, Smith's analyses and urging about the benefits of free trade of constraining the role of government in economic affairs, of the critical roles of increasingly differentiated divisions of labour, and of the emergence of the "factory system" in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth Century England staked out most of the basic subjects of modern industrial sociologists research studies: economic organizations; managers' and workers' ways; the correlates of technology and divisions of labour, economic exchange and trade; questions about the roles of central governments in economics, and about innumerable regulatory measures affecting work places; and finally, the distributive effects of industrialization on national stratification systems.

Industrial sociologists can also trace their roots to Charles Dicken's very popular literary treatments of life in early nineteenth-century England and to other early and more pointedly social, economic and political reformers in Europe (Berg, 1991).

Thus, investigators now undertake studies with debts to English and French Critics, Commentators and Philosophers whose works are captured in the term "the enlightenment", to Henri St Simons urgings about the application of scientific rationality to social organization, to Karl Marx's historicist treatments, of capitalism's problematical "maturer" states, to the pros and cons in arguments about nascent trade union movements; to debaters arguing over alternative welfare, trade and other initiatives by governments; and to assessments of the philosophical legitimacy of the emerging stratification of societies, as variant forms of aristocracy gave way to variants forms of more representative governments.

Dickens's characterization of an employers' association that resisted safety guards on moving machine parts as "The Association for the mangling of operatives" and his and his audiences concerns about the improvement of working conditions presaged a great deal of the work of industrial sociologists in the twentieth century, most of whom have been critical of unfettered markets. Continuities since the nineteenth century, meantime, in all but methods of research, have been notable.

The subjects pursued include the forces that virtually compel ever more differentiated division of labour, the effects of different patterns of national income distribution and the contributions of these forces to the rise, expansion, and characters of both "blue-collar" labour forces and overlapping with them, the expansion of middle classes in urban centres; the forces that contribute to the rise of trade unions and the resulting growth of new systems of law that have changed the nature of property and property claims to include more than physical capital and reality; the forces that have contributed to the decline in small agricultural holdings, small towns, and rural areas; and withal, the forces that generally make social life more secular, political life more democratic or undemocratic and working life more bureaucratic.

Conceptions of Industrial Sociology

Industrial sociology is a field of applied sociology and has grown mainly out of interests in one issue as productivity, motivation and unionization (Etzioni, 1958).

The applied nature of industrial sociology is revealed not so much in a lack of theoretical implications of the various studies as in a lack of conceptual codification and of systematic delimitation of the field. The

accumulation of studies in this area seems now to have reached the stage at which one may attempt to offer such a systematic delimitation and to spell out the main dimensions of the field.

An important justification for this effort is that a successful conceptual delimitation of industrial sociology will make research in the field more economical (Etzioni, 1958). Thus, industrial sociologists have had a better understanding of the process of supervision and the role of the foreman since the concept of leadership taken from other areas, has been introduced. Military sociology, on the other hand, has benefited from the ideas of informal organization, first used by industrial sociologists such as "translations" of concepts are not possible unless it becomes clear that soldier and officers on the one hand, and workers and foreman on the other, are phenomena that have some element in common. This is where theory enters into applied fields.

Etzioni (1958) suggest that what is usually regarded as industrial sociology can be fruitfully conceived of as a branch of organizational sociology. Industrial sociology has an implicit delimitation which, when made explicit and somewhat rearranged fits neatly into the model of organizational sociology. The latter is concerned with roles, and with processes of interaction, communication and authority, that are specialized in serving specific social goals.

Thus it studies civil services as pursuing the goals set by the government; and industry as creating goods and services or as making profit. It has a relatively well developed theoretical model based on Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy, which has been significantly remolded and improved by supplementing the study of rational aspects with the study of non-rational and irrational aspects of organizations (Parsons, 1956).

Organizational sociology is potentially able to develop sound bases for a generic as well as a comparative study of organizations and it has greatly benefited from the interchange of concepts and hypotheses among its various sub-fields (Merton, 1951). Thus, while there are many significant differences between a church, an army, a university, a factory, and a trade union, sociologists have found it helpful to treat all these organizations as having common problems that may serve as a basis for a generalized discussion of organizations and also for differentiating the various organizational structures.

The various types of organizations seem to have common functional problems but different structural solutions, though fortunately the number of alternative solutions seems to be limited, and this makes a fruitful study of the field possible. Presumably the subject matter of industrial sociology is industry. But "industry" seems to be a concept with no direct sociological meaning, and it is difficult to specify a theoretical orientation along its lines.

The term "industry" has been taken over from common sense language, economics, and the census of occupations, without sociological scrutiny. It has been used mainly in two ways: as synonymous with factory; and as covering any large-scale employment of labour and capital.

In the first use industry is seen as the manufacturing unit. Sociologists who have used the term in this manner have called industrial sociology "Plant sociology" (Kerr and Fisher, 1957). This seems to be a too exclusive delimitation. There are many studies that fruitfully apply the ideas and concepts of industrial sociology to the study of offices, transportation, restaurants, and grocery stores and to exclude these organizations from industrial sociology seems a rather arbitrary decision (Katz, Macoby and Morse, 1950).

The second use of the term is widespread. Industry, according to Webster, is "any department or branch of art, occupation, or business; especially, one which employs much labour and capital and is a distinct branch of trade", or, in economics, "systematic labour or habitual employment". The census follows the same lines and classifies every field of full-time work as industry, including public administration, professional services, education, and private household work. All these demarcations of the field are obviously much too inclusive.

The delimitation of industrial sociology to an area of sociological study of economic organization will include the study of offices, restaurants and other economic organizations that are not factories, but will exclude the study of universities, schools, hospitals and other non-economic organizations. Economic organizations are those whose primary aim is to produce goods and services, to exchange them, or to organize and manipulate

monetary processes. The profit motive as an institutionalized primary goal may often serve as a helpful empirical indicator, but it is not reliable because, on the one hand, some schools, hospitals and social clubs are geared mainly to the maximizing of profit, while on the other hand, publicly owned or managed industries may not be profit oriented.

Study of the formal structure of economic organizations – the division of labour and the line of communication and authority is conducted mainly as part of the study of administration. Although this type of investigation is relatively well developed in regard to some kinds of organizations leaves much to be done. Often it is assumed that because the latter are close to the generic model of organization, there is little need to study the specific nature of their administrative structure.

Therefore the sociologist though interested mainly in the relationship between the formal and the informal aspects is quite often compelled to spell out the nature of the formal structure he is dealing with (Coser 1958). Industrial sociology has a direct interest in the study of society only in the following cases: first, when the problem is the relations of economic organizations to other organizations and to collectivities and the extent to which society regulates or directs these relations; and second, when there is direct interaction between economic organization and integrative structures of the society itself, as in the political organs of modern society (Lipset and Bendix, 1958).

Finally, organizational sociology studies the generic characteristics of organization as well as the differentiating features of various sub-types of organizations, classified according to their functional nature. Industrial sociology can be fruitfully conceived of as the study of economic organizations, and thus fitted into the general theoretical model of the study of the study of organization. It seems useful to codify the findings of organizational studies on four levels: the organization as a social unit, its relations to other social units; its relations to personality and to culture; and (less extensively studied so far) the ecology of organizations.

Role of Industrial Sociology to Changes in Society

The most important role played by industrial sociologists has to do with the consequences of the industrial process. What happens to a society as it industrializes? Two opposing theories have been described. The divergence theory of industrialization suggests that although the industrialization process changes the production system of a society, the culture of a society is so strong and durable that the industrialization process has minimal if any, effect on it. In contrast, the convergence theory of industrialization argues that the industrialization process is so strong it substantially transforms any society that is industrializing (Stover, 2006).

De-industrialization and the Development of a Service Economy

The concept deindustrialization means the loss of industrial capacity and implicitly, the loss of goods producing jobs. The phrase deindustrialization refers to both the loss of industrial capacity and to the economic and social consequences of that loss. The development of the service economy is the counterpart to that trend. Service-producing jobs (Stover, 2006). The change started in the 1960 when the United States lost the virtual monopoly it had maintained on many markets since World War II; in fact the United States was forced out of several Markets (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982; Harrison and Bluestone 1988).

Corporations responded in several ways. As Harrison and Bluestone (1988) state, “They abandoned core business, invested offshore, shifted capital in to overtly speculative ventures, subcontracted work to how-wage contractors here and broad, demanded wage concessions from their employees, and substituted part-time and other forms of contingent labour for full-time workers. Bluestone and Harrison (1982) suggest that somewhere between 32 and 38 million jobs were lost during the 1970s alone as the direct result of private disinvestment in American businesses. The consequences of this deindustrialization are substantial. First, the ability of a country to continue to develop economically depends on having a strong and manufacturing base. Many industries are highly dependent on goods production because they move parts to the assembly plants and then move the finished products to the distributors.

Second, the nature and character of the jobs available to workers change. The combination of the loss of a substantial number of goods-producing jobs with the creation of a huge services sector has produced a substantial shift in the nature of the jobs available in the economy. Good jobs with good pay, good fringe

benefits, job security, and guaranteed civil rights are being destroyed or moved overseas and are being replaced by bad jobs with poor pay, few fringed benefits, no job security, and little protection of civil rights.

Organizational Changes

With Frederick Taylor's success in popularizing his scientific management theory in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Frederick Taylor (1911) saw many of his ideas about how to run organizations eventually dominate management practices (Braverman, 1974; Hill 1981; Kanter 1977). As Hill (1981) notes "Taylorism established the basic philosophic of work organization which has dominated the administration of work through to the present day".

However, there have been numerous industrial sociology investigations into the consequences of his management philosophy for workers and calling into question the validity of his insistence that the best way to manage an industrial organization is to have managers conceptualize and plan work and to have workers carefully controlled and carefully instructed on exactly how to do the work. Berggen (1992) argues that the consequences of Taylorism – such as alienation, massive job dissatisfaction, worker absenteeism and turn over, deskilling and worker powerlessness were so negative there was a virtual revolt against it during the 1970s in the western industrial world.

The Quality Revolution

The quality revolution refers to the increasing emphasis by consumers for quality goods and services; it is a label for a revolution of rising expectations in terms of quality. Industrial sociologists, documented how this revolution affected the operations, success, and sometimes failure of organizations (Dobyns and Crawford mason 1991) Kanter 1989; Main 1994; Thrown 1992; Womack, Jones and Roos 1990), stated that Toyota assemble plants home practically no rework areas and perform almost no rework.

American buyers report that Toyota's vehicles have among the lowest number of defects of any in the world, comparable to the very best of German luxury car producers, who devote many hours of assembly-plant effort to rectification. Other Car Manufacturing companies were forced to change their operations, adapt to the new production standards, or out of business (Stover, 1991).

Industrial Sociology and National Development in Nigeria

The application of sociological concepts and methods in understanding the problems and challenges of industry is one of the responsibilities of industrial sociologist (Okafor, 2014). The world industry basically means organization or establishment and covers a wide range of factory and non-factory blue and white collar workers, commercial and non-commercial establishments. In other words, it covers anywhere productive or service activities take place, the kind of behavior exhibited by the workers and management and how internal and extern factor such as technology and cultural influences, the pattern of the relationship between the workers and management influence production (Miller and Willam, 1964; Otodo, 1994; Scott and Marshall 2005; Ogunbameru and Oribabor, 2008).

Thus, the scope of industrial sociology covers wide range of workers' behavior, organizational changes, and industrial conflict. It is generally accepted that the knowledge of industrial sociology will benefit organizational managers and policy makers in both private and public sector especially in the following areas for overall national development.

Forster Understating of Industrial Peace and Harmony

The knowledge of industrial sociology will enable managers and policy makers to understand the importance of negotiating in good faith so that viable and implementable collective agreement will be reached when workers and management will be reached when workers and management are in dispute (Okafor, 2004).

The knowledge will also enable both parties to know that agreement freely entered are not always cast in iron, however, sometimes there may be supervening event in the environment or from either of the party that will make the implement of part or whole of collective agreement impossible. Such event should be communicated to the other party and the agreement may be renegotiated. This is only possible where parties to industrial relations are open and honest to one another. If the negotiation and collection agreement are crafted in dishonesty and deceit and self serving as currently done in Nigeria, tension and

conflict will always arise (Okuogbo, 2004) which will continue affect industrial peace and harmony, which are an essential ingredients for national development.

Enrich Understanding of Best Standard Practices for Corporate Governance and Leadership.

The knowledge of industrial sociology among the managers of corporate organizations in the private sector and the bureaucratic in the public sector will enrich the understanding of adopting international best practice in managing the affairs of their organizations and make the organization more efficient and effective in service delivery. Various sectors of Nigerian economy need dynamics of organizations and workplace and are able to apply these in the management of men and materials in order to produce visible results that will propel national development (Okafor, 2014). The knowledge of transformation leadership can be used to reposition Nigeria for national development through various work organizations in the public and private sector.

Foster Understanding on How to Obtain the Best from the Principle of Federal Character

The knowledge of industrial sociology will make policy maker and managers of work organizations to come to term with the fact that in as much as the principle of federal character is an attempt to give every segment of Nigeria fair and equal opportunity, however, merit should be sacrificed on the alters of mediocrity and that even within the context of federal character the best can still be obtained and made to work for the overall benefit and development of Nigeria. Also, the knowledge of industrial sociology shows that efficient and effective service delivery as part of global international best practices is a hallmark of any progressive country and organization (Okafor, 2014).

Foster Better Understanding of Globalization and Use of Casual Workers

Globalization has become the major issue in the world today that has a lot of implications of work organizations (Okafor, 2014). It has led to the migration of workers across national boundaries and help lot of workers to improve themselves to the extent that in the recent times many workers have become multi-tasked workers. It has also led many foreign direct investment and many multinational corporations have generated to some areas previously thought to be difficult.

However, as much as globalization has benefited some workers, it has also hurt some developing economies and creates precarious condition of work in many countries including Nigeria (Offiong, 2001; Onyeonoru, 2004; Okafor 2005; Adepegba, 2013). With globalization, the use of casual workers by multinational companies and even local firms as cost saving device so as to maximize profit has escalated. This undermines workers performance and productivity in the workplace and is major obstacles to national development.

CONCLUSION

Industrial sociology plays a vital role in national development in Nigeria (Okafor, 2014). Therefore, it is important for the various institutions in Nigeria offering this discipline to ensure that their students are well equipped and well grounded intellectually in various area of industrial sociology, so that they will positively contribute to national development. Industrial sociologist themselves should continue to create public awareness on the relevance of the discipline of national development.

From all indications, most Nigerians are yet to appreciate the role of industrial sociology as a viable branch of sociology and academic discipline for national development. The Nigerian social scientists should be in the fore front of producing scholarly works that will re-define national discourse and shape the way things are viewed and perceived in political economy and to challenge the politicians to be transparent in their action and dealings and be accountable to the people who elected them. Generally, the knowledge of knowledge of industrial sociology will enable the policy makers to be in vantage position to formulating policies and programmes as well as putting in place adequate regulatory framework that will diversify the Nigerian economy and building strong human capital that will propel overall national development.

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