

Modernization And Kinship Dislocation Among The Ejagham People Of Etung, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study devotes attention to the understanding of the true perspectives of the relationship between the insurgent modern culture/modernization and the failed perspectives of African Traditional Kinship System in the rural communities of Etung, Nigeria. The problem statement hinged on the recognition of the glaring dis-embeddedness among the disparate categories of individuals and as well to isolate particular cases of nonconformity to the new system of Western individualism that characterised the emerging cultural incursions in the area. The method was explained based on the explanation of the area of study in physical geographical terms, economy, and milieu. The population was identified as the indigenous people of the area and the sampling technique well defined as relating to multi stage technique. The instrument to used in data collection is the structured questionnaire while surrogate data was captured by other instruments. In line with the decision rule it was evident that the F-critical is greater than the F-tabulated at alpha level of 0.05. This followed that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was upheld. This implies that there is a significant impact of modernization on kinship dislocation in the area.

I. INTRODUCTION

Modernization connotes transformation from the old to the new. It suggest a change from the non-fashionable to the fashionable. It also alludes to what is called Westernization. Westernization represents a shift from feudalism to capitalism. Westernization is rooted in the colossal change in paradigm from feudalism to capitalism. The western conception is traceable to the European culture of individualism which negates serfdom but embraces individual property ownership and a drift from land as the major factor of production. It also highlights urbanisation to the neglect of rural life oligarchy.

Modernization in all ramifications has caused the erosion of traditional life forms (Gregory, 1995). This means disintegration of communal forms and the entrenchment of individual life engagement.

In all ramifications, modernization is engendered by colonial imperialistic incursion. Modernisation embodies several paraphernalia such as monetisation, urbanisation, technological advancement, acculturation and dis-embedded of local traditional ideals. Western industrial culture has

eroded the traditional life styles of the indigenous cultures leading to disorientation of cultural norms.

Kinship spirit is one significant feature of the African social life styles. Stan (2004) espoused the tennets of African kinship spirit, in the words: "An emphasis on wholesome human relations among people, respect for elders, community fellow feeling as reflected in communal land tenure, and ownership, live-and-lets live philosophy; altruism and hospitality".

These assertions reflect the true spirit of African kinship organisation. It is the bedrock of extended family relationship where the individual lives with and for the family and the community. Inherently, these attributes have become extinct in our todays world caused by a number of interrelated forces which maybe wholesale couched in modernisation. Modernization commenced with the advent of westernisation which as now culminated in globalisation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Modernization connotes a change from traditional life styles to western cultural perspectives. In a sense, it may be

christened civilization which has culminated in the present scenario of globalization. Modernization is a form of enculturation in the sense that a fresh current of change tends to engulf the old order of traditional life forms. The erosion of indigenous cultural life form will of necessity produce a form of anomie or extinction of natural identities. Social anthropologists have embarked on vigorous investigation toward unravelling the tennets of cultural extinction in most communities of the developing world regions. Kinship identities is one formidable area of African cultural life form that is somewhat sacrosanct to the custodians of African cultural heritage. It embodies recognition of genealogy or origin of descent. In this sense, the family is supreme or uppermost in communal or social affairs. The essence of being is traceable to the roots of existence. It involves recognition of extended family ties. Currently, such values have completely been trampled in several respects.

This current research is aimed at unravelling the underpinnings of the various constraints to the formal cultural embeddedness in the direction of kinship aggregation among the Ejagham people of Etung Local Government Area in Cross River State, Nigeria.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This work is justified on grounds such as:

- ✓ General contribution to knowledge in the area of cultural anthropology.
- ✓ Unravelling the basic paraphernalia of attrition of cultural cohesion by ensuing forces of modernization.
- ✓ Calling attention to the need for overall reversal of ideals of innate cultural values.
- ✓ A clear of understanding of the looming dangers of a universal global culture.
- ✓ Reorientation of the value of sustainable cultural identity.

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study directs attention to investigating the impact of modernisation on cultural cohesion vis-à-vis kinship dislocation among the Ejagham people of Etung in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the objectives are the following:

- ✓ To assess how extended family ties have been abandoned by most families in the area.
- ✓ To investigate generational opinions in the recognition of kinship spirit among the people.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis is state as follows:

Ho: Kinship orientation has not been significantly affected by modernization in the area

Hi: Kinship orientation has been significantly affected by modernization in the area

LITERATURE REVIEW

Modernization connotes a change from old to new. It means a shift from prevailing culture to new foreign culture.

Different expressions have been rendered to lend colour to the tennet of modernization. Wallace (2015) presented a treatise on the attendant issues of modernization in Africa and attempted to provide explanations on the various facets of modernization. Accordingly, he said modernization connotes the idea of economic development which has been replete with numerous explanations. He also alluded to the notion of scientific and technological achievement as important variants of modernization.

In another sense, it was reasoned that modernization is more related to standards of life. Implicit in this last position are issues related to increased life expectancy, reduced infant mortality, increased literacy and so on. Overall modernization connotes a change in traditional cultural life forms to western life style with a great deal of implications for kinship organization. Shaefer (2002) gave a lucid explanation of the basic tennets of kinship. He affirmed that kinship is simply of a state of being related to the other. He stated further on, that kinship is culturally learned and is not totally determined by biological or marital ties.

Adoption is also cited as a mode of kinship because it is legally recognised. In further clarification, it was stated that family and the kin are not necessarily the same because it is not all kins that live together but families do. Kins group include aunts, uncles, cousins, in-laws and so on (Owens 2005) kinship relationship are identified according to the principle of descents based on their relationship as either father or mother, father, cousin and so forth. There is the principle of bilateral relation which implies that both mother and father are equally important. In this sense, Udo (1995) call it agnate kind of descent. We also have patrilineal descent, which means emphasis on the fathers side or matrilineal descent which means emphasis on the mothers' side. Kindred relationship has numerous roles in African traditional sociology in that it to alleviate unforeseen experiences such as burial occasions, wedding ceremonies, intervention in matters of grave significance, etc. before the advent of western cultural life style.

Clarke (2008) expressly alluded to this scenario of cultural conflict in the words that "many indigenous people see modernization as a threat to traditional family life structure, thus creating a disconnect from cultural tradition". This argument situates well with the general social milieu of today's African indigenous tradition. Everywhere there is disarray in the form of children/youth objectification, strife, antagonism, etc. Parents to end to lose their parental control because the binding force of ethnic mores has fallen due to the insurgent culture of modernization. This readily substantiate Achebe's literary exposition which says "things fall apart", the centre cannot hold".

This form of conflict is what cultural anthropologists refer to as acculturation (Linton, 2004). Acculturation from the point of view of cultural Anthropology refers to the loss of cultural values of minorities and its replacement by that of the majority. Acculturation leads to a condition where one culture melts into another (Siskind, 2011). Boyd and Richardson (2005) tended to rationalize on how alien cultures may engulf the native one.

Fishman et al (2007) in the natural experiment on the native Amazonian of Brazil came up with conclusions that

sustained exposure to outsiders erodes local cultural values. The study also considered variables such as age, sex and education are plausible avenues of cultural melting.

ISSUES IN KINSHIP DISHARMONY AMONG THE LOCAL FOLKS IN ETUNG LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Chinua Achebe in his trilogy of African tradition averred that “they have put knife on what held us together and things have fallen apart”. Going further, he stated “twirling and twirling in a wailing gyre the falcon cannot hear the falconer, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world”.

Such expression depicts the true picture of our traditional African rural societies. The combined forces of modernization have caused the whole sale dislocation of African traditional life norms (Eno, 2015). Every fabric of our society has been invaded by the upsurge of western cultural norms. This has led to production of a universal global culture where western life style pervades and permeates the traditional order of the natives (Ritzer, 1996). The old traditional order of gerontocracy, leadership by the elders has waned and the new order of individualism has come to play (Wonah, 2014).

Kinship tradition devolves on communal life style, which demands placing the interest of the general ahead of that of an individual. It also requires respect for elders, obedience of the law of the land, sharing, caring and so on. This is what Anih (2017) calls “community of inquiry”.

Community of inquiry is the African sociological platform where issues are handled mutually and orderly, but the current state of our society disregards this organised social order. The new trend is what Anih (1997) calls dis equilibrium and/or radical opposition. The concept of radical opposition is termed by Anih (1997) as a sort of organic dismemberment of the intrinsic value and structures of the socio-cultural ground norms. The aftermath is the resultant political disturbance or radical disequilibrium which is debilitating and sufficiently frustrating. Going further, Anih (1997) further stated that the natural structure and values have been so distorted. That they are now inconsistent. This trend depicts the current image of the kinship status of the society that this study set out to explore.

CONCLUSION

The underlying concern of this enquiring predicates on the glaring recognition of the cultural conflict that prevails in most rural communities. This trend has tended to rip the society apart in all its ramifications. It’s a matter of grave concern that demands attention and the necessary possible solution. This concern instigates the problem identification of this study.

II. METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

RESEARCH DESIGN: This research design is a descriptive field exploratory survey design aimed at data collection using the questionnaire.

AREA OF STUDY

The study area, Etung Local Government Area is a geographical entity as well as a cultural realm in that it has a common language identity which is the Ejagham speaking people of the Bantu variant of languages.

Geographically, it belongs to the tropical rainforest belt which is ecologically of the equatorial rainforest biome. Characteristically, this area registers abundant annual rainfall which supports luxuriant growth of equatorial rainforest vegetation. This rainforest is one of the 25 biological hot spots areas with teeming population of species of flora and fauna. At its pristine stage, the forest teems with a beehive of species of plants and animals but today human activities in hunting, agriculture, lumbering and other related occupations have caused near extermination and/or extinction of some of natural environmental capital.

Culturally, the people practice the African traditional life styles which embodies communalism and kinship adoption. The kinship spirit is rooted in the supremacy of the family over an individual and correspondingly the supremacy of the community over individuals. It fosters the recognition of tribal lines and the idea of extended family ties.

SUBJECTS/POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population comprises adult and youth members of every household in the core rural domains of the local government area, such as Bendeghe, Abijan, Etome, Agbokim, Nsofan, etc. From this universe the sample for the study was drawn.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The technique for sampling was handled in stages such as:

- ✓ Area of cluster sampling;
- ✓ Semi cluster/household selection and;
- ✓ Stratified sampling

INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

- ✓ Structured questionnaire was employed in interview procedure for eliciting response from the subjects.
- ✓ Maps were employed for demarcation of areas.

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Field data collection was achieved through the following stages:

- ✓ Construction of instruments (questionnaire)/procurement of research equipment.
- ✓ Preliminary field visitor/reconnaissance visit for delineation of clusters, field familiarization and field penetration strategies.
- ✓ Field pilot visit/trial run.
- ✓ Field data collection main

This involved administration of instruments through defacto interviews, surrogate information on settlement characteristics and history was captured alongside.

DATA ANALYSIS

Information generated from questionnaire was analysed using statistical techniques of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The raw data employed for statistical testing is as shown on table 1 below.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

DATA COLLECTED FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

Adherence to extended Family system	Combined Family Burial Rites	Sustenance of Family Heritage	Close Kindred marriage	Domiciliary in Ancestral domain	Properties sharing in common	Popularity of extended Family	Children as common heritage	Family Property held in common	Social Capital practice
80	45	36	65	40	46	28	41	25	26
48	49	28	70	52	48	32	43	28	29
78	85	96	80	92	93	96	99	95	88
86	93	98	74	97	97	98	96	97	96
292	272	258	289	281	284	254	279	245	239

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Adherence to extended Family system	4	292	73	289.3333
Combined Family Burial Rites	4	272	68	601.3333
Sustenance of Family Heritage	4	258	64.5	1419.667
Close Kindred marriage	4	289	72.25	40.25
Domiciliary in Ancestral domain	4	281	70.25	812.25
Properties sharing in common	4	284	71	771.3333
Popularity of extended Family	4	254	63.5	1499.667
Children as common heritage	4	279	69.75	1028.917
Family Property held in common	4	245	61.25	1612.25
Social Capital practice	4	239	59.75	1398.917

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	807.025	9	89.66944	0.094649	0.999573	2.210697
Within Groups	28421.75	30	947.3917			
Total	29228.78	39				

Table 1

DECISION RULE

Here, we can see that the F-critical is greater than F-tabulated at alpha level of (0.05). We therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that Kinship orientation has been significantly affected by modernization in the area.

III. RESULTS/FINDINGS

Following the decision rule, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted indicating that the native traditional values of the people have

been significantly affected by the Western culture of modernization.

The result corroborates existing findings by scholars in Social Anthropology and others in the field of Ethnography. Also our introduction to the literature review brought to bear existing philosophy of change earlier enunciated by Chinua Achebe the Africa Nobel prize winner in Literature in book titled, “things fall apart” “the centre cannot hold”. It is in this master piece that the true perspective of the erosion of the African Traditional Values were expostulated in clear terms. The results or findings also support the notion of Fishman et al (2007) in his natural experiment on the native Amazonians of Brazil, “that sustained exposure to outsiders erodes local cultural values. This author also further maintained that variables such as age, sex and Education are plausible avenues of cultural melting. A critical view of the above advocacy brings to bear a number of insights which practically fall in line with current happenings in the area and eastern Nigeria as a whole. Reflecting back to the first premise of the authors arguments, it is evident that most traditional societies in Nigeria today have had contact with Western culture before and during colonization of the territory.

Following years of cultural abrasion and attrition, there to be some degree of fusion or diffusion between the exogamous (English) culture and the Endogamous (Native) culture and veering back to the second premise predicating on sex, age and education, meaningful, allusions can be made. Inherently, negligible proportion of aged people may still be tenaciously stuck to their old order while the younger generations have been lavishly goaded by the new order up to the point of outright neglect of the native old order. The sex dimension of this argument remains faintly tenable in that Western Education and the Crusade for Women Education has come to level the playing ground for western socialization by the male and female categories.

The current perspective of cultural dis-embeddedness as exemplified in Kinship disorientation of the native people of Etung finds expression in the statement by Anih (1997) based on his “community of enquiry” where held categorically that “the current state of Social disharmony by youths and other culturally disoriented persons is a form of radical opposition which is a form of organic dismemberment of the intrinsic value and structures of the socio-cultural ground norms. This injunction by the advocate of “Africa thinkers Community of Inquiry” is a form of trite condemnation of the new social order character rise by wholesome distaste for ones innate spirit of place (Topoplickia). Topophika embodies love ones birth place and its spirits. This scenario led Boyd and Richard (2005) to rationalise on how alien cultures can engulf native ones.

Grossly viewed, the extent of this drift has tended towards outright loss of identity of the local people unless something significant is done towards the reversal of the trend.

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