

Religion, Social Capital and New World Order: A Reconsideration

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Abstract: The world has been experiencing a great vacuum in its socio-political and economic life since the middle of 20th century. Some who are indifferent about the social system may not have taken time to observe the social lacuna, so they assume that everything is working according to the normal law of evolution that is in operation within the cosmos. Some who have taken time to observe the void, mistaken/ugly attribute it to the socio-economic and political system operating the modern world. However, those within the mainstream discipline of social sciences note that the lacuna is caused by lack of 'Community'. Therefore, the modern system is inhabited by persons who consider themselves as 'atoms' within the community of other atoms. This state of affair produces extreme individualism or at best extreme familism within the social order. Hence competition and domination become the dictum of the modern world governed by greed and cupidity. The consequence therefore becomes social isolation and this results to social aggression, violence, terrorism and increase in crime. The basic reason for the social crisis is noted in this paper as the destruction of the moral fabrics/energies that held the world together through the relegation of religion and her institution to the private sphere of the society. It is the considered opinion of this paper that if the social system must be healed and world citizen begin to live in genuine community characterized by solidarity, trust, conviviality, reciprocity, cooperation, mutuality etc, which are technically known as "Social Capital" then religion must resume its seat in the public sphere and becomes the foundation of social activities, politics, business etc. Without doubts, the state has made some conscious attempt to creating these moral energies, "Social capital" through the creation of the civil society. However, this paper having surveyed the scenario, observes that social capital is not an artificial creation of any society rather it an invaluable and pristine donation of religion to mankind. Religion is the sole repository of social capital; hence it is the only social institution that can initiate genuine and committed relationship across hoarders of gender, ethnicity, social status, race etc. It is only religion that can bind homogenous people together in a committed relationship and also bridge the gap of relationship between heterogeneous societies. It is only in religion that true community based on empathy, trust, solidarity, altruism and mutual cooperation could be formed. This paper therefore submits that it is high time religion is brought into the public sphere to give the moral foundation of a lovely and caring society.

Key words: Religion • Social Capital • New World Order • Reconsideration

INTRODUCTION

One does not need to be expert in economics to observe that the current power- imbalance between global financial market and national politicians... We meet in the midst of a critical transition from crisis to recovery to turn page on the era of irresponsibility and to adopt a set of policies, regulations and reforms to meet the needs of the

21st Century global economy... However, after all such promising rhetoric, the disappointing results arc for everyone to see [1].

In the citation, [2] observes a serious paradigm shift in human relation. This shift was occasions by the introduction of market/capitalist economy, which violates human association and all it stood for. In consequence, the capitalistic economy model introduced and promoted

individualism or rather atomism of human being in an artificially created society. This shift consists of number of related elements [3] describes these elements in vivid terms this:

.... In the economy, services increasingly displace manufacturing... the role of information technology and 'intelligence embodied in both people and increasing smart machines, mental labour to replace physical labour, production is globalised as inexpensive information technology makes it increasingly easy to move information across national borders and rapid communications by televisions, radio, fax, e-mail erodes the boundaries of long established cultural communities (3).

The period that the crisscrossing of national boundaries, destruction of national sovereignty and the remarking of the moral imperatives-social capitals-that determines social relationship began to occur from the mid 1960's through the early 1990's. This period experienced great material and human capital development on the one hand, while on the other hand, it is characterized by serious deterioration of social conditions, resulting to high rise in crime action and general social disorder. It is therefore argued in many social and academic circles that the current social state of the new world order is occasioned by the intentional disruption of the community existence by the world community. In the place of community model of existence, which is defined by close kinship relationship and governed by moral values, the modern man created an artificial state governed by laws and rules of social contract. Hence we note that in the modern society, what exists in the place of community model of existence is "Gesellschaft" which maintains a framework of laws and other informal regulations [4], here the social relationships were formal and impersonal, individuals did not depend on one another for mutual support to really the same extent and therefore were less morally obligated. According to [5], the idea that informal norms and values as seen in community will be replaced over time by rational formal laws and rules has been a mainstream of modern sociological theory... in the modern capitalistic society, relationships are based on contract and therefore enforceable, the contract relationship is not a moral one, either party can break it at any time, provided the terms of the contract are fulfilled (9).

Therefore, the consequences of the new social arrangement based on contract are the weakening of social bonds and also the rapid technological development that the modern world has witnessed. Thus in the opinion of [6], the two events are interconnected and interlocked with each other and both blessings and woes flow from them (5). In this new arrangement, the economic sphere seems to be given a prime position in human relationship. Therefore, economy having become the organizing paradigm of human association, substituted physical work for a mental one. These propelled millions of woman into the workplace thereby undermining the traditional understanding on which the family had been based [7]. In further development, [8] opines that in the network of these events that shocks the world are:

- Innovations in the medical technology, both control pill and increasing longevity. These have increasingly reduced the rule of production and family in people's lives.
- Cultural intensive individualism. This has placed human beings in the market place and leads to innovation and growth. Spilled over into the realms of social norms, where it corroded virtually all forms of authority and weakened the bonds holding families, neighbours and relations together. These are the major pathogens that destroy the social capital and moral values of our generations (6-7).

In the face of the wreckless disruption/dislocation of the moral values that held humanity together, mankind stands at the risk of obliteration [9]. Therefore, humanity had to find solution to his predicament: and being rational he created a state and civil society in the place of social community. In the place of moral values which under guide social community life, he created laws, rules and regulations, which must guide and control human actions, these laws, regulations and rules come in the form of social contract. [10] reiterated this fact as he writes'

... But there is a bright side too: social order once disrupted tends to get remade once again and there are many indications that this is happening today. We expect this to happen for the simple reason. Human beings are by nature, social creatures, whose most basic drive and instincts lead him to create moral rules that bind themselves together into communities. They are also by nature rational and their rationality allows them to create ways of cooperating with others spontaneously (6).

In consequence [11] summarizes that man's natural state is not the war of everyone against everyone but rather a civil society made orderly by the presence of host of moral rules. Consequently, mankind created legal and political categories or ideologies to check his excessive individualism that will facilitate his imminent self-destruction. Hence mankind in creating an alternative social community also created alternative critical values or imperatives. Here he promotes the value of human freedom and equality, which he claimed was obviously absent in the traditional society. However, the extent this new laws have served its purpose of bringing harmonious and peaceful world cannot be presently and ascertained, Therefore it seems mankind is at the cross road of his destiny without knowing where to make the next step.

Against this background, this paper notes that the cause of the disharmony, conflict, violence, wars, oppression etc is the relegation of religion, which is the main source of social capital, to the metaphysical and non-practical sphere of the modern world. It is noted with great nostalgia that the disengaging religion from the public sphere of the 2nd century in preference to mere material development has occasioned moral crisis and breakdown in the 21st century. It was [12] who expressed this idea vividly thus: If you were to destroy in mankind the belief in immortality not only love but ever maintaining the life of the world would be at once dried up, moreover, nothing would be everything is permissible even cannibalism' (265). It therefore suffices that religion is an indispensable social institution that guides the moral foundations of mankind and this cannot be satisfactorily replaced by any other social institutions. Against this background assumption this paper is therefore poised to consider the relationship between religion and social capital and how they could be an aide in solving the socio-political and economic crisis that have bedevil the modern world.

Social Capital: Towards tin Understanding: There is no univocal and universally accepted definition of social capital. In a very broad sense, the term included yet not limited to those social relationships that help people to get along with each other and act more effectively than they could as isolated individuals [13]. In the ideas of [14] social capital is a sociological concept, which refers to connections within and between social networks (1395-1411). Hamifan aptly defined the concept of social capital thus;

I don't refer to real estate, or to personal property or to cold cash but rather to that life which lends to make these tangible substance count for most daily lives of people namely good will, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among group of individuals and families, who make up a social unit... if he may come in contact with his neighbours and they with other neighbours, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improve of living conditions in the whole community. The community as a whole will benefit the cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his association the advantages of the help, the sympathy and fellowship of his neighbours (130-131).

While social capital has been given a number of definitions, many of the definitions and theoretical framework simply refer lo manifestation of social capitals than to social capital itself. Following this assumption, [15], therefore defines social capital as 'instantiated informal norms that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals. The norms that constitute social capital can range from norms of reciprocity between two friends, all the way up lo complex and elaborately doctrines like Christianity or Confucianism (1-4). He maintains that the norms must be instantiated in actual human relationship: the norms of reciprocity exist in potential in my dealings with all people but it is however actualized only in my dealings with my friends. Accordingly, this definition place trust, civil society and the like, which have been associated with social capital at the epiphenomenal, arising as a result of social capital but not constituting social capital itself [16].

It is helpful to point here that social capital is not limited to sociological sphere and social categories alone. It extents to other field of discourse within the modern period. However, scholars within sociology tend to stress the following aspect of social capital thus:

Social capital is' the trust, reciprocity and mutuality that inheres the social relationship. It accumulates to the extent that members of different social groups can maintain respect differences and learn to cooperate especially beyond family and clan. Trust and mutuality in sociological sense are often identified as moral resources [17].

On the other hand, those in the economic sphere interpret the concept social capital- to reflect their special interest thus:

Social capital is best understood as institutional dimension of transactions, market and contracts. It determines the way in which reliable stable relationship and shared information among actors can enhance effectiveness and efficiency of both collective and individual interest, especially relevant to market imperfections where public goods are involved. Trust is defined expectations about the actions of others that have bearing on one own [18]

The concept of social capital has become a current scholarship debate. The World Bank [WB] stimulates four (4) basic forms of capital.

- Natural Capital: This consists of a country's endowment of natural resources.
- Constructed Capital: This is generated by human beings and includes infrastructure, capital good financial capital, trade capital etc.
- Human Capital: This is determined by the level nutrition health and education of the population
- Social Capital: is thought as a recent discovery of the development science (Bernardo 1999:83-100).

According to [19] Robert Putnam- one of the pioneers in the study of social capital maintains that social capital consists fundamentally of the degree of confidence that exists between the social actors of a 'society, the norms of civic behaviours they observe and the level of association [20]. According to him, these elements show the wealth of the resources and strength of social fabrics. Confidence for example acts as an element that reduces potential conflicts by limiting the tendency to perceive areas of discord. Positive attitude in terms of civic behavior, which range from looking after public spaces to payment of taxes, contribute to general well-being. He further maintains that the existence of high level of association in a society shows that it has the capacity to act in a cooperative manner, forming all kinds of networks, concerted arrangements and synergies [21].

Historically, it was Jane Jacobs, who first used the term-social capital-in the 1960s. Although, she did not explicitly define the concept but her usage referred to the value of networks [22]. Following Jane's category, Robert Salisbury advanced the term as a critical component of

interest group formation. In the same direction, Bourdieu used the term in 1972 in his outline of theory of practices in relation to culture and in contrast to economic and symbolic capital [23]. On the whole, it was Jane Coleman that was responsible for bringing the term- social capital- into great popularity in social sciences, economic, political and academic circles. Coleman maintains that it was a public good and therefore would be under produced by private agents interacting markets'. This according to him is wrong, since cooperation is necessary to virtually all individuals as means of achieving their selfish end it stands to reason that they will produce it as a private good [24]. Coleman therefore defines social capital functionally as, a variety of entities with two elements in common: they consist of some aspect of social structure and they facilitate certain actions of actors within the structure. This means that social capital is anything that facilitates individual and collective actions. Against this backdrop, Coleman envisioned that social capital exists at both the individual and collective levels. The first of this is connected with the individual degree of social integration and his network of social contacts. It implies reliable relation, expectations of reciprocity and form of behavior and improves effectiveness at the private level. Social capital, when considered at the collective level, is a collective good, for example, if everyone in a particular neighbourhood shares tacit standards of non-aggression and concern for others, children will be able to walk to school in perfect safety and social capital will be producing public order [25].

In his own opinion [26] considers social capital as a subject phenomenon, made up of values and attitude that effect the way people relate with each other. It includes confidence, norms, reciprocity, attitudes and values, which help people to surmount conflictive and competitiveness forms of relations and establish relations of cooperation and mutual aids (27). In the current usage, social capital is the trust, reciprocity, norms and networks of civic engagements in a society that facilitates coordinated action to achieving desired goals. Social capital is rooted in history, tradition and culture. Unlike human capital or physical capital, social capital is relational and embedded in social structure. For instance, if we live in a community with active neighbourhood watch in which neighbours patrol and trust one another, we benefit irrespective of our individual trustworthiness and participation in the neighbourhood watch patrol. Therefore, this public-good characterization,

social capital is said to be undervalued, does not attract private investment and is often a by-product of other activities is not true. Against this backdrop, [27] identified social capital as resources that accrue to individuals by value of his access to contacts, connections and linkages. A well-connected person, especially one of high status, is seen as having more social capitals, by converting these relationships to value to himself [28]. In the same direction, [29], accepts that volume of social capital possessed by a given person depends on the size of the network that could be effectively mobilized (7).

This set of social capital is based on information and as such the importance of education and communication to cut knowledge as personal resources [30]. In summary, the central idea of social capital theory is that relationship matters, the central thesis is that social networks are valuable assets, interaction which enables people to build communities to commit themselves to each other and to knit the social fabric. A sense of belonging and the concrete expressive social network (and the relationship of trust and tolerance that can be involved) can be of great benefit to the people [31].

Social Capital, Civil Society and The State: Most definitions of social capital refer mainly to voluntary associations and organizations outside the market and state [32]. These definitions relate social capital to the third sector which consists of private organizations that are formal and sustained by group of people acting voluntarily and without seeking personal profit to provide benefits to themselves and others [33]. According to this school of thought, it is through civil society or the third sector, that the individuals are able to establish and maintain relational network. Thus the voluntary association connect people with each other, build trust and reciprocity through informal, loosely structured associations and consolidate society through altruism without obligations [34].

Against this background, social capital is therefore the property of groups both formal and informal [35]. Accordingly, developing a self-governing institutional structure is a key to the formation of social capital based on commonly accepted and enforced rules or norms of intra-group behaviours. This agreement evolves through the process based on mutual learning about how to work better together [36]. This school of thought (institutional school) stresses the deliberate investments in building trust and reciprocity in group relations. [37] one of the

major proponents of this school of thought, propounded what is today known in social and political sciences as 'Crafting institution'. According to him, crafting institutions means externally induced improvements in existing organization. The work of Olson has been applied extensively by the America government and other Western countries in the practice of common pool resources (C R R), such as in irrigation systems, forestry and other watershed development [38].

Notably, institutions at any level involves more than individual efforts. They embody some kind of collective actions in which the interest, resources, ideas and ideals of persons are brought together. Institutions therefore serve as a channel for collective actions that are reinforced by diffused benefits, legitimation and shared expectation. The benefits from institutions according to [39] leads to public goods, things of value to person besides those immediately engaged in activity, which is also described among American economists as positive externalities" [40]. In another direction, the social capital initiatives in a technical paper presented to the World Bank, in April 1998, maintains that a broader understanding of the idea of social capital includes the social and political environment that shapes the social structure and enables norms to develop. This view extends the importance of social capital to most formalize institutional relationship and structures such as the government, the political regime, the rule of law, the court system and civil and political liberties. This view does not only account for the virtues and vice of social capital and the importance of forging ties within and across communities but it also recognizes that the capacity of various social groups to act in their interest depending crucially on the support they receive from the state as well as the private sector [41].

Similarly, the state depends on social stability, existence, peace and development. Notably, the political function of social capital in modern democracy has been collaborated by Alexis de Toeqeuville in his *Opus Magnus*, "Democracy in America". He used the phrase, "act of association" to describe America propensity for civil association [42]. Accordingly, Toeqeuville maintains that modern democracy tends to wipe away all forms of social class or uninhabited status that bind people together in aristocratic societies. [43] gave an avid reason for the project of wiping away all forms of inherited social capital through democracy thus:

The traditional social group are also affected with an absence of what Mark Granoveller calls, "Weak ties" that is heterodox individuals at the periphery of the society's various networks, who are able to move between groups and thereby become bearers of new ideas and information. Traditional societies are often segmented. That is, they are composed of larger number of identical, self contained social unit like villages or tribes, modern societies by contrast consist a large number of special groups that permit multiple membership and identities. Traditional societies have fewer opportunities for weak ties among the segment that make them up and therefore pass on information, innovation and human resources less easily (7-20).

The consequences thereof are that in the modern societies, men are left equally free but weak in their equality since they are born with no conventional attachment. Therefore, modern societies: created and promoted excessive individualism that is preoccupied with one's private life and family and unwilling to engage in any public affairs. This situation is sequel to the creation of artificial societies that maintain autonomous individuals in the states. Gunning, Butter, [44] maintain that the internet though created positive effect on social capital through the rapid networking site such as Facebook and My Space, however, they posit the negative influence of artificial relationship, in their own words!

... although the preponderance of evidence shows a positive association In between social capital and internet... internet replaces our strong bonds with online weak ties or with socially empty interaction with the technology itself. Internets can create a world of "narassim of similarity" where sociability is reduced to interaction between those that are similar in terms of ideology, race or gender (103-108)

In order to combat the negative consequences of this trend of excessive individualism, America for one, genre the propensity to creating voluntary associations, which led them to form groups for all aspects of their lives. Toequervilla, who carried out this study in America and Europe, maintains that the America State and group formation stood in sharp contrast to the native France, which according to him, was beset by much more

thoroughgoing individualism than that of United States. In his own words as found in the old regime and French Revolution, '... on the eve of the Revolution, there were no Frenchmen, who could come together for a common cause" (22).

This situation had negative effect in the building of virile democratic state, since it is only when people come together in civil association that the weak individuals can become strong. Thus in the forming of association, they could participate directly in the political life as in the case of political party or interest group or could serve as "schools of citizenship" where individuals could learn the habits of cooperation that would be eventually carried over into the public life. It is against this backdrop, that scholars, like Coleman and Pullman, opine that an abundant stock of social capital is what produces a dense civil society, which in turn has been seen as a necessary condition for modern liberal democracy. This as a condition to measuring liberal democracy, they maintain a protected sphere of individual liberty, where the state is constrained from interfering. If such a political system is not to degenerate into anarchy, the society that subsists in that protected sphere must be capable of organizing itself.

Therefore, civil society according to this position serves as a balance of power of the state and to protect individuals from state power [45]. However, in the absence of civil society, the state often steps up into organizing individuals, who are incapable of organizing themselves, since the aftermath of excessive individualism is not freedom but rather tyranny. In order to avoid the problem of excessive individuals, this may not augur well with an organized state. The state itself as a father, who is interest in the holistic affair of his children, therefore promoted intra-community associations in the form of NGO and other trade unions, since the modern state has destroyed community based associations. Therefore, the intra-group associations became harbingers of social capital in the modern society. It is noted among scholars of sociology, political science and economics that both intra-and. extra community associations are bedeviled with negative effects on the modern society.

On the intra community association, it is a general opinion that social capital are more generated by the community based on the grassroots association, where the relationship among people with common neighbourhood, ethnic, religious or family ties constitute important sources of security, mutual help and conviviality. In the words of [46] "Traditional rural

communities, while poor are often endowed with this type of social capital, either in the whole community or within certain Subgroups.(41). However, [47] foresaw what he calls "amoral familism" in this kind of social arrangement. Here, he maintains that amoral familism occurs, where trust simply extends only to immediate family members and blood relatives. In this situation, there is an "excessive community" built around forceful legalities and familial attachments. The situation is found mostly among African States. This situation noted to have hindered the much deserved political stability and economic development. It has also hindered members of such communities from advancing economically, moving geographically and engaging in amicable dispute resolution, with outsiders [48]. In the words of [49].

Under amoral familism no universally shared social ethic exists. Codes of conduct are governed by limited group morality, which emphasis the strength of ties for close personal relations, procedural norms, when they exists are particularistic, procedural standard are low, rewards and sanctions mechanism including litigations as well as taxation and subsidies are meted out in specific way so as to make patronage effective, wealth is currently acquired or redistributed through trafficking, racketeering, plundering, looting or favouritism. In many cases the 'small men draw their livelihood from participating at the lowest level in various "factions, cliques or groans fighting power (72-3).

Amoral familism undoubtedly is a highly negative social culture that hampers efficient social harmony Social duty, social stability and economic development.

Next in the list of negative social condition following the amoral familism is the concept of amoral individualism. Amoral individualism exists where there is neither familial nor generalized trust, where self interest invades all activities. A better illustration of such state of affairs is reported by [3] among an ethnic tribe in Uganda, East Africa, whom he described as "a people who have become monstrous beyond belief (121-28). Accordingly, the IK tribe of Uganda routinely lied and stole from every immediate family member, if it was needed to provide even the basic needs. In the same report, it is said that parents do abandon their children at any point they consider them as economic burdens. [8], who carried an empirical sociological investigation on Equatorial Guinea measure of social capital had this to report:

... I do not trust my neighbours to sell the imalanga for me, one woman explained after several of my questions, apparently surprised that I was surprised, Why? I just do not, she would not give me the correct price or would take the money, even a woman in your village, your neighbor, yes I do not trust him (72).

Notably, lack of trust can have dire consequence even in otherwise viable communities. Hence, [24] posits that even poor communities need to generate social ties which ought to extend beyond their primordial groups, if development outcomes are to be achieved. In his opinion, to each beyond the original spatial economic and cultural boundaries of the group is quite necessary. It is [28], who first suggest this paradigm shift in this theory of "cross acting associational membership. Thus economic group in poor communities need to forge extra-group linkages so that;

- The economics and non-economics of community members can be resisted when they undermine the group economic viability and expansion.
- Entry to more sophisticated factors and product market can be secured.
- Individual of superior ability and ambition within the group itself are able to leave and insert themselves into new and social network (67).

[31] stepped Putman's proposition that for entirely developmental project that it not enough to scale up micro level of social capital-the best effect result from state-society synergy, "active governing enhance each other development efforts. While Evans admits that such a complementary is to egalitarian social structure and robust coherent state bureaucracies, he argues that synergy can be created even in the most adverse circumstances typical of some developing countries. Against this backdrop, we notice that the state created or enforced societies like NGO's and other group like the Mafia or Klu Klux Klem (K.K.K), which are based on internal strong bonds, which actively promote violence and discrimination towards other members of the state. These negative aspects of social capital include conspiracy against the public (Gangs and restrictions on individual freedoms and business initiatives (Tight social network) community can bring demands for conformity and restrict human capital accumulations. Some economists like [5] have strongly criticized 'guilds', labour unions and other economic *as he* argues that such civil group stifle macro-economic growth by seeking

disproportionate share of the national resources and subsidies and also inhibit micro economic advancement obligations on members. [25] concludes by positing individual initiative (72-78). Against this backdrop, [34] has demonstrated using a range of indicators of civic engagement, voting, political participation, news paper readership and participation in local association that there have been serious decline in social capital in the modern world, despite its tendency to globalize. According to him "It appears that American's social capital was in decline, first in the realms of civic engagement and secondly, in social connectedness (45). He therefore demonstrated the veracity of such decline in the last three decades in following areas.

- Political and social engagement: Voting, political knowledge, political trust and grassroots political activism are all down. American's sign 30 percent fewer petitions and are 40 percent less likely to join consumer boycott, as compared to just a decade or two ago. The decline arc equally visible in non political community life; membership and activity in all sort of local clubs and civil and religious organizations have been falling at an accelerating pace. In the mid-1970s the average American attended some club meeting every month by 1998 that rate of attendance has been cut by nearly 60 percent.
- Informal societies: In 1975 the average American entertained friends at home 15 times a year. The equivalent figure in 1998 is now barely half. Virtually all leisure activities that involves doing something with someone else from playing volleyball to playing chamber music are declining.
- Tolerance and Trust: Although Americans are more tolerant of one another than were previous generations, they trust one another less. Survey data provided one measure of the growth of dishonesty and distrust but there are other indicators, for example, employment opportunities for police, lawyers and security personal were stagnant for most of the century. Indeed, America had fewer layers per capita in 1970 than in 1900. But in the last quarter of the century, these occupations have boomed as people have increasingly turned to courts and police (45-55).

The cause of the disappearance of social capital as evidenced in the work of [8] could be traced to the interference of the state in the private sector of the society. According to [16],

... states can have a serious negative impact on social capital when they start to undertake activities that are better left to private sector or civil society. The ability to cooperate is based on habit and practices, if the state gets into the business of organizing everything, people will become dependent on it and lose their spontaneous ability to work with one another (1-14).

Instances abound to illustrate the above assumption, one of the major examples is France of the middle age period, which had a rich civil society but had its trust horizontal between each other weakened as a result of a centralizing state that set Frenchmen at each other through a system of petting privileges and status distinctions. Another example is the former Soviet Union, Bolshevik Revolution, where the communist party consciously brought to undermine all forms of horizontal associations in favour of vertical ties between party- states and individual. This left post- Soviet society bereft of both trust and durable civic society. Conclusively, this paper posits that both the Traditional Society, the Civil Society and/ or the State (are) is incapable of creating and sustaining the social capital needed in the modern world to harmonize the potentialities of humanity, which will enable her to attaining the new world order of our dreams, founded on mutual trust, community, conviviality and respect for human dignity. Therefore, we turn our attention to the resources of religion with a view of deriving the social capital on faith and maintaining the categories of binding, bridging and linking of all humanities into one global family.

Religion, Social Capital and the New World: Whenever I go and ask people what is missing from their lives, the most common answer (if they are not impoverished or seriously ill) is "community" what happened to community and why don't we have it any more? Community is impossible in a highly monetized society like our own [23].

In former times, people depended for all of life's necessities and pleasures on people they know personally and trusted implicitly and as such, if one alienates oneself from the local blacksmith, brewer or doctor, one does not have replacement and one's quality of life will be reduced. Further if one alienates oneself from one's neighbours, the one might not have himself if one sprained one's ankle during harvest season or during traditional dancing festival or if one barn got burnt down. Therefore, community was an add-can to life, in fact it was a way of

life. However, today, with slight exaggeration, we could say we do not need anyone, we do not need the farmer grows my food, I can pay someone else to do it. I do not need mechanic who fixed my car, I do not need the brewer. In fact I do not need any of the people who produce anything I use, I feed someone to do the job but not a unique individual people. They are replaceable and so I am. The turn of event is as a result of current economic practice, which placed much premium on money more than human community and human association. The effect of placing money at the centre of all activities is first of all the loss of social solidarity, trust, reciprocity and mutuality that are by-product of community living. This has also resulted in the social chaos, disintegration, oppression, violence and terrorism. The logic behind the chaotic system that humanity is facing is that everyone considers himself an atom, an individual within other individuals. Thus, we are about to come to the end of history. However, in order to stop the impending human self destruction, man being relational, have created artificial communities, which they christened civil society, with the intentions that such will bring about social bonds, solidity, trust, harmonious co-existence. The people created systems and institutions to foster such genuine human qualities which they call *social capital*. [42] explicates on this state of affairs in modern society as he writes:

...Gesellschaft, on the other hand, was the framework of laws and other former regulations that characterized large, urban, industrial societies, social relationships were more formalized and impersonal, individuals did not depend on one another for mutual support to nearly the same extent and were therefore much less morally obligated (8-9),

Accordingly, the relationship in those social organizations is simply based on contract and this contract relationship is not a moral one. In the opinion of [46], the formal laws and strong political and economic institutions are not in themselves sufficient to guarantee a successful modern society. This is because "liberal democracy has always depended on certain shared cultural values to work properly. Against this background we turn to religion for direction (57).

Religion, on the other hand, is a global socio-spiritual phenomenon which binds human beings to their gods) and their fellow human beings. It is a system of belief and practices by which a group of people struggle with the

ultimate problems of life [3, 4]. Religion concerns itself with the enterprise of building human capacity, of fostering constructive personal, communal and institutional stability that aims at harmonious social existence [17]. Against this background, the classical definition of religion by Clifford Geertz, suits our inquest for the role of religion in the modern society. Accordingly, Geertz defines religion in the following vivid terms:

Religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in man by (3) formulating the conception of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of actuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic [11, 12].

Here, religion functions primarily as a meaning providing social institution. It provides meaning by the use of symbols. Through the vehicle of symbols, we understand our world and its operations. Religion in the mind of Geertz also functions within a social structure and provides the social psychology referred in the definition above as moods and motivations. It is therefore a generally scholarly opinion that religious values and vices play indispensable roles in the lives of the people as they deal with issues affecting their communities and socio-political existence. Thus, Religion provides a core vision that inevitably colours its adherent socio-political aspirations, engagements and behavior. In this direction, [45] underscores this basic fact as he opines that religion constitute a factor in economic development. In his own words:

...Religion continues to be a factor in economic development. One of the most important and underrated cultural revolutions going on in the world today is the conversion of Catholics to Protestantism (largely) America Evangelicals and Mormons. This process, which has now been under empirical observation for nearly two generations, has produced social effects in poor communities, where it occurred not unlike those ascribed to Puritanism by Weber. Converts to Protestantism find their incomes, education levels, hygiene and social networking expanding (1-20).

Fukuyama's assumption substantiates [6] proposition, that religious institutions have the most viable form of human association, for it embodies the most

sublime of human aspiration. It is the bulwark of morality, a source of public order. Thus, religion meets basic needs not met by other social institutions as it enforces collective consciousness (2). It is in this direction that [27] submits that houses of worship build and sustain social capital of more varied forms-than any other type of social institutions in America. Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and other houses of worship provide a vibrant institutional base for civic good works and training ground for civic entrepreneurs. He summarily assets, "roughly speaking, nearly half of American stock of social capital is religious or religiously affiliated, whether measured by association, membership, philanthropy or volunteering (185-188) Hence, [34] maintains that religion stands for peace, fraternity and magnanimity (1-4). Accordingly, [35] assert that the church is the fastest growing form of community organization today. Congregation based-organization mobilizes existing stock of social capital in church network. It relies one on one relationship building as the foundation stone for creating and developing community leaders and building trust, through mutual understanding of self interest and values (1-7).

[27] using the statistical data presented by [11] has shown that more than two-third of the world population belong to religious communities. Accordingly, 29.2% of the religious constituencies are Christians, 17.90% are Muslims, 13% are Hindi, 5.7% are Buddhists/Shintoists, while 6.7% are Confucianism/Taoism. Notably, these religious organizations have huge infrastructure with organized communication network, reaching all corners of the globe., Therefore with great population of fellowship, world religion have great responsibilities and leadership is-expected, from them to give the world a renewed vision of community life and living, based on equality, social justice and even distribution of resources of -the world according to ones need and not according to one's strength and shrewdness [4, 5]. With the large population control of the member 'of the world community, religion thereunto becomes inherently endowed with the capacity to mobilize fellowship. Religious organization can mobilize people of diverse ethnic groups and culture, sex and social status and age for a common purpose. Here, the taxonomy of Putman is made manifest-the bonding social capital and bringing social capital. While bonding social capital refers to values assigned to social networks between homogenously groups of people, bridging social capital refers to that of social networks between socially heterogeneous groups. While other civil societies just like

religion, can bring bonding type of social capital, where the social relationship among people with common neighbourhood, ethnic or family ties can constitute important sources of security, mutual help and conviviality, this type of relationship breeds both positive and negative consequences for the society. It is through religion that bonding and bridging types of social capital could be realized. This assumption is based on the fact that central to all religions or most religions is the duty and social obligations to fellowmen, irrespective of culture, race, sex or social status [16]. For example, in Christian faith, biblical terms such as social justice, grace and good stewardship provide a framework for social actions [40]. The key Christian instruction to love God and ones neighbours also serves to underscore the importance of social obligations. It implies that one is obliged to pay dues to the community; to support the weaker members of society and that one has a social responsibility towards others, without qualification and discriminations [32].

A critical review of the basic role of religion in the society, betrays the fact that as a social institution, religion is a repository of both the bonding and bridging types of social capital, through bonding capital, religion fosters reciprocity and mobilizes solidarity, while through her large quality of bridging social capital it brings about linkages to external asserts and information diffusion and generates broader social identities and reciprocity. It therefore becomes a kind of sociological superglue to diverse people of diverse social cultural background as it unites them into one global family. Against this backdrop [12] notes:

...General social science theories about the mentality of socialization appear to apply primarily to West Europe, there is little evidence that religion is losing its grips elsewhere, including in the USA. Religiously inspired cultural change remains a life option in many parts of the world, the Islamic world and Latin America have both seen the growth of new forms of religiosity in recent decades... religion has also historically been one of the most important sources of culture and is likely to remain so in future (7-20)

A systematic study carried out by [32] and his team across Africa with particular reference to the Igbo community of Eastern Nigeria, has shown that the continent has a great reservoir of stock of social capital and these are embodied in their socio-religious traditions, noting that African life is tied to her religion. Among the

Igbo people of eastern Nigeria, we come in contact with the concept of "*Ibuanyi Ndanda*" (Social solidarity). The sense of *Ibuanyi Ndanda* also known in some African communities as "*Ununna bu Ike*" "*Ubuntu*", '*Ujamaa*' is a priceless product in all Africa community. [11, 12] highlights on this moral virtue across Africa as he writes, The Kinship system is based on the respect of elders, reverence for ancestors and on the extended family culture. The sense of "*Umunna bu Ike*" is experienced at all major levels of social intercourse - domestic, village, clan and age-group" (144). In African communities, each level -of solidarity is a veritable instrument of social harmony, social security and a means of the protection of the individual right through the duty of mutual co-operation and mobilization of resources and loyalty it enjoins. [16], enunciates further on this practical spirit of relations evident in the religious customs of common sharing of work, collective maintenance of public roads and markets, collective assistance of members, who are in difficulty or who embark on construction of houses, collective discharge of burial rites of members, celebration of social occasions of happiness and local festival (144).

The basic philosophy upon which the "*Ibuanyi Ndanda*" social ideology was founded was underscored by Pantalon Iroegbu in his concept of 'Uwa'. Iroegbu, defines the concept as the enfolding ideology, which defines the thought and ontology of the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria as comprehensive, totality and wholeness of reality itself. This understanding of reality, according to him is in consonance with the central moral principle of Igbo people, which emphasis complementarily as the philosophy of social living [15]. [23] further opines that 'Uwa' ontology evokes the feeling of complimentary character of all reality and mutual inter relatedness of all existent realities and mutual interconnectedness of all existent realities within the framework of the whole (205). Azouzu equates 'Uwa' ontology with the concept of *Umunna* (Kinsmen) which he maintains is an inroad to understanding the worldview of the Igbo-people expounded around the idea of communalism (2006). This concept squares with what Rabindranath -Tagores proposed as the concept of universal consciousness of humanity. This concept laid much emphasis on the universal bond of common humanity, which cuts across religious, racial and political affiliations. The idea of cosmic consciousness as expounded by Tagore in his "Opus Magna" 'The Universal Man' hinges on his novel idea of the oneness of reality. The Universal mind', which is the sole source of all mankind [34].

The Main Emphasis of the Igbo Religious Culture of *Ibuanyi Ndanda* Is Social Belongingness: Accordingly, Iroegbu and Azouzu hold that the belongingness stems from the idea of common source or stock of mankind. Therefore, 'to be' means to belong to a community of other people and things [16]. It is therefore in solidarity of relationship that the Igbo society is sustained. The Igbo social solidarity gave birth to the Igbo sense of democracy. The democratic principle of the Igbo people is predicated on the belief that, 'what concerns all, all should be duly consulted and participated': This moral value of the society affords every member of the community an intrinsic worth, which should not be taken for granted. Therefore, the religio-cultural foundation of the Igbo community makes it a highly egalitarian, relatively classless and democratic society. It gives the bases of its decision making through the openly arrived consensus of group of persons [11, 12] sustains this assumption as he asserts, The Igbo religio-traditional leadership is organized around the eldership forum, which preoccupied itself with the maintenance and protection of civic virtues or public virtues (social capital) by which the citizens are animated with common concern for public good' (32).

The willingness of the citizens of Igbo society to participate directly in the civic affairs, identify their good with the common good and crave for and sacrifice for public weal is at the epicenter of the Igbo republican spirit. The republican virtues in the society are the moral sense in the citizens that enables them to pursue the common good of all. The republican spirit generates a sense of public affection and mobilizes solidarity and community consideration in feeling and behavior [23]. This republican spirit that defines the Igbo traditional society as a 'humanistic society' and helps to organize itself in such a way that it ensures that values are harmonized and at the same time it ensures the autonomy of the individual members of the republic. Notably, the Igbo republicanism combines personal enterprises, strive and independent mindedness with moral commitment to solidarity, trust and social cohesion and devotion to common good of all. In the Igbo society both the interpersonal and intergroup linkages are emphasized and this of course results into desirable benefits for all within the social community. The religio-cultural society of the Igbo people fits into Flora and Flora (1993) category, through which they described horizontal social capital as embodying egalitarian form of reciprocity where each member of the community is expected to give and also gain status and pleasure from doing so, with the

expectation that each receives as well. Here, each person in the community is seen as capable of providing something of value to others. In other words, exchanges, while never quite the same, are not based on the superior powers of one partner over another (72). It could therefore be a general assumption, deriving from our particular investigation that religion /faith provides moral foundation for civic regeneration. Hence faith gives meaning to community services and goodwill, forging a spiritual connection between individual impulses and great public issues [34]. This connotes that religion helps people to internalize an orientation to the public good, it therefore suffices that religion ('faith) has such powers to transform lives, faith based programme can therefore enjoy success where secular programs have failed.

Although in Western world, religious participation has been in steady decline since the 1960, however, in the late 1990, there has been a strong, steady and unprecedented rise among the world citizens, of religious sentiments. In the words of [29] using America as an example:

...Even the media are beginning to reflect the nations concern with spiritual malaise. There are an estimated 2,500 television and Radio Evangelists in the United States and they raise over \$3 billion annually. In addition, religion has made inroad on the major network whose traditional fare has tended towards soaps and sitcoms. In a move that would have been unheard of even a decade before CBS launched "Touched by an Angel"- a prime-time drama the revolves around the love of God and the redemptive power of his messengers. The programme ranks essentially high in the Nelson rating and its viewers seems to be unusually community minded... Americans who cite the breakdown of family values or decline in morality as the nation's most pressing problem in virtually every poll, more people cite spiritual ill as a top problem than cited drug abuse or health care system or broken schools or poverty (24-30).

All this suggest that, as formal religious participation declines the world seems to be searching for a way to heal spiritual rifts within themselves and within the society and of course religion is still the only answer. Therefore, as the world and their religion institutions seek to reconcile after decades of growing alienation; -the time is thus ripped to translate this increasing interest in spirituality

into complementary work for community renewal. Notably, the efforts of religious institution to achieving this task must be guided by both principle and pragmatism. As pragmatists, there should be a recognition that religion is both important and contentious.

The world populations have escaped from the religious tyranny of medieval age and being faced consistently with the malaise of the growing ethnic and religious diversity therefore the world citizens want to believe that freedom from religion should also mean freedom of religion. While there is no evidence that atheism is on the increase. Skepticism or/and hostility towards religion seems to be more manifest now than about 50years ago [45]. The historical abuse and misuse of religious faith- that is the harmful consequences of religious social capital- have made great number of the world population become seriously concerned about mixing private faith and public life. Taken to an extreme, religious impulses can be self-righteous, divisive and even violent [40]. Therefore, the principle that must guide religious involvement in civic renewal must recognize that such efforts hold both potential and peril. The challenge is to mobilize religious work grounded in love, not hate and in unity not division.

CONCLUSION

One of the greatest needs of the new world order is community, which will be able to give itself members and citizens dignity, integrity, personality and justice. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in an anticipation of such community opines "someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness the energies of love and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire. However, the expectation of Teilhard de Chardin seems to be eluding the contemporary world after we have achieved great feat in both material and natural sciences but have neglected the energies of love, which is the foundation humanity and community. Therefore, we face crisis in all areas of the socio-political and economic arrangement of the present world order. [23] describes the world scenario vividly this:

... The crisis has many labels ranging from 'subprime crisis to credit crunch' to financial tsunami" or economic Armageddon " preceded by an 'Enron crisis" possibly leading up to credit default swap crisis around the world people are coming to single diagnosis "something deeply unhealthy in our world". (12).

This is lack of community; all of us now have become isolated and individuated. Therefore, the social capital of trust, solidarity cooperation has been bartered for high individualism and this is the bane of the contemporary existence. However, we have discovered that it is only in religion and her institution that we have the potentiality to fostering a community that will fill the gap in the social system. Social capital-trust, solidary, cooperation, altruism, respect are intrinsic qualities the religious sentiment only can generate in mankind. Thus, the only way out of the contemporary social quagmire is to allow religion qua religion play its most qualified role of generating the social capital for the harmonious existence of the world population.

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