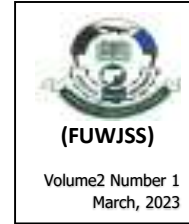


EDUCATION AND CLASS STRATIFICATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines the nexus between education and class stratification in Nigeria through the Marxian theoretical lenses. The paper argues that education is a critical component of human progress; regrettably, colonialism codified and perpetuated class divides in Nigeria in manners that underlying structures and patterns of material production and distribution in the country have deprived a great majority of persons in the country to attain education. This has also bequeathed unequal distributions of rights and powers among and between distinct groups in the Nigerian society. Data was collected through primary and secondary sources. Findings established that education in Nigeria creates and maintains classes by restricting access to certain forms of knowledge to a confined group of individuals while denying others access. Education offers different kinds of knowledge to different people thereby preparing them unequally for different roles in society. The paper concludes that education creates and maintains a class structure in Nigeria that promotes inequality. The paper recommends that Nigeria should review its educational policies to make room for wider access at all levels of education.

Keywords: Educational access, class, exploitation, capitalism, inequality

Introduction

Education is a critical component of human progress. That is not the same as schooling. Schooling is only one method of providing education, whereas education is concerned with the entire process of human learning in which knowledge is transmitted, faculties are exercised, and various abilities are cultivated (Adesemowo & Tumininu, 2022). Education ensures the survival of the human species, preserves its intellectual and cultural traditions, and aids in the development of enlightened civilisation for human well-being and economic progress, as witnessed and observed throughout history (Sumanta, 2018). Humans, unlike other organisms, are capable of learning and being educated. Modern times have seen a significant increase in the importance

of education in human life. The human child needed to study significantly less in past civilisations to live a convenient life. The amount of experience, knowledge, information, and talent that has been garnered over time has greatly risen due to the growth of human civilisation, technical advancement, and social innovation. As a result, the modern individual requires additional schooling to understand how to live an efficient adult life. Education prepares people for their environments, both natural and social, through the development of their abilities, which continues throughout their lives (Sumanta, 2018). Education was originally intended to enlighten the intellect and, in particular, to foster moral development; however, the onset of the industrial revolution altered the role of education. As a result of industrialisation, skill sets became increasingly specialised, with more complicated knowledge necessary to hold such skill sets. As a result, education determines the skills that are available in a market (Onuoha, 2018). Marxian political economy shows that certain necessities called productive forces are needed for production to take place. They include the objects of labour, means of labour and labour power which are a combination of the natural resources upon which man applies labour on, the tools that are used in production and the physical and psychological capabilities of man to produce in other words, skills (Ake, 1981). The capabilities are developed by education and their development can lead to the development of the means of labour which enhances man's ability to create more wealth by harnessing the objects of labour more efficiently. Marxian historical materialism advanced that changes in society start from changes in productive forces which correspondingly affect changes in other spheres of production (Stalin, 1938).

Beyond productive forces, another essential element of production is social relations of production. This is characterised by the relationships people enter in the process of production (Ake, 1981). Humans produce through the exchange of activities and as such must go into different forms of relationships in the processes of production (Stalin, 1938). Humans are a social species, and like ants, termites and other social animals, their activities are based on collective action through the exchange of activities by different individuals. The exchange of activities and social cohesion is necessary for survival among social species. Social species band together because their collective survival is better enhanced in social grouping than in individualistic living (Ezgi, 2019). At the core of social living is the survival of the species where individuals collaborate to provide for each other what they can hardly get as individuals (Tomasello, 2014). Beyond the importance of socialising, the human social system has suffered from obstructions of its harmony. Conflict, wars, and other forms of disharmony have been visited upon humans throughout the history of homo sapiens. This begs to question

why human socialisation is not always harmonious regardless of the benefits of social harmony. Several scholars have attempted to trace human social disharmony to several factors ranging from differences in ideology to punishment from gods and failure in positive thinking. This is one area Marxism differs from earlier social thought as it views social disharmony as a result of man's competition for wealth, especially the appropriation of surplus value (Cohen, 1978). This is so because man depends on his economy to survive, without which he cannot prevail against forces of nature like hunger, cold, predation.

According to Marx (1859), the productive capacity of society develops over time, and gets to a point where production rises above the necessity for survival or subsistence to surplus particularly at the stage of capitalism. However, these surpluses are not evenly distributed. Fight between socially organised groups ensues on how these surpluses are shared. The Manifesto of the Communist Party (1848) opened with the statement that the history of all hitherto existing societies is one of class struggle. Miliband (1969) notes that the people who get the least of what it is to get are the ones who have to work the hardest for it. Struggles continue to characterise the sharing formula of a society's wealth between those who produce and those who own the means of production. These two groups are known as classes and are a central theme in Marxian discussions. Class distinctions are present in Nigeria and Africa as a whole, Nwangwu, Onuoha, Nwosu and Ezeibe (2020) held that African societies are separated into groups with varied social, economic, and political circumstances that influence their perspectives. Colonialism codified and perpetuated class divides in Africa in the (early) post-colonial era. Thus, class analysis is required to comprehend the continent's inequities and political and economic processes. This is due to the fact that it provides a clear insight into the underlying structures and patterns of material production and distribution in Africa and other post-colonial contexts. These class interactions are supported by unequal distributions of rights and powers among and between distinct groups in relation to specific types of productive resources. As a result, there are disparities in material well-being and opportunity, which lead to disputes within the dominant class and between the dominant and subservient classes. While subordinate classes essentially aim to improve their material circumstances, several strands of the dominant class struggle to embed and spread their numerous factional class interests.

One of the ways in which the subservient class attempts to improve its welfare is by improving its labour power through education with the hopes of gaining higher placements in the ladder of production. As production continues to improve, it features an ever increasing division of labour which leads to more specialisation. Specialisation on the other hand requires more

education. The result of it is an ever increasing attempts at acquiring education. However, instead of being a tool for class liberation, education has itself become a tool for class stratification in Nigeria. How does education lead to class stratification in Nigeria? This research looks at the way education leads to class stratification in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The research is anchored on a Marxian theoretical foundation. Marxism owes its origins to the works of German Philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 19th century. They see economic struggles and private property as the root of all evil in society. They saw capitalism as the pinnacle of private property competition which features gross class struggle (Marx & Engels, 1848). They see the entirety of society as being built on an economic foundation metaphorically described as the base structure. Every other aspect of society known as the superstructure is built on an economic foundation. The superstructures are seen as being built and controlled by the upper class to reinforce or maintain their privileged position especially in a capitalist society (Study Smarter, 2023). In order to keep the lower class suffering without challenging the status quo, instruments of the state are used to perpetuate false consciousness on the working class to keep them working without challenging their subservient position. As a component of the superstructure, Marxists contend that education seeks to legitimise and reinforce class inequalities by creating a subservient class and workforce. Education also trains the children of the capitalist ruling class (the bourgeoisie) for positions of authority. The functionalist assumption that education creates equal opportunities for all and that it is a fair system, according to Marxists, is a capitalist fiction. It is sustained in order to persuade the working class (the proletariat) that their subjection is normal and natural, and that they have the same interests as the capitalist ruling class. The education system is predicated on exploitation and oppression; it teaches proletarian children that they exist to be ruled, and it teaches capitalist ruling class children that they exist to dominate. Schools subjugate students so that they would not oppose the institutions that exploit and oppress them (Study Smarter, 2023).

Schools are knowledge gatekeepers, determining what constitutes knowledge. As a result, schools do not teach students that they are oppressed and exploited, or that they must fight for their liberation. Pupils are kept in a state of false consciousness in this manner (Study Smarter, 2023). This theory applies to this research by showing that education perpetuates the false consciousness that creates and maintains the class structures in Nigeria. It shows how the content of education perpetuates false consciousness; how

access to different types of knowledge and restrictions of job opportunities stratifies Nigerians into classes.

Methodology

The survey and documentary data-gathering approaches were used in this investigation. According to Nwanolue, Onuoha, and Obikaeze (2018), survey research is the process of acquiring information from a certain population or universe. It entails extracting information regarding a population's perspective on political, social, economic, or other issues. It is practically impossible to research all people in a population while choosing a sample size that is representative of the entire community. To gain firsthand knowledge, survey researchers use data collection tools such as interviews and questionnaires. Because respondents state things about themselves, the survey method of data gathering is also known as the self-reporting approach (Aniche & Ofodum, 2018). The interview is used as a data-gathering tool in the study. It "involves eliciting information from the respondent," writes Nwargu in Aniche & Ofodum (2018, p.52). The research interviewed 20 Nigerians selected from the following demographic groups: 5 admission seekers, 5 unemployed graduates, 5 university workers and 2 managers of industries, and 3 artisans. They were asked questions that border around the way education stratifies classes in Nigeria. Their answers were analysed using simple percentages. The research interviewed 20 Nigerians selected from demographic groups that transcend the three classes identified in the country. Out of the 20 interviewees, 12, representing 60% of the total were tertiary educated Nigerians. 5 out of them fell into the lower class by earnings, 5 were in the middle class and 2 were of the upper class. They were asked questions about the role of education in their class placement. They were asked about their highest qualifications. The two managers of industries both had managerial postgraduate certificates from Lagos Business School while the rest had non-managerial degrees from conventional universities. 4 out of the 10 interviewees had degrees in applied courses while 6 out of them had degrees in basic courses. This aligns with the argument of the Marxian theory that education prepares people for different roles in the economy. Here the members of the upper class are exposed to knowledge that prepared them for managerial roles while the rest were prepared to either be workers of graduates with few skills and job opportunities.

Out of the 12 University graduates interviewed, 6 representing 50% admitted that specific individuals in high places influenced their admission into their various universities. Also, 3 representing 50% of them also noted that their courses of study were influenced by their benefactors. The other 50% were asked if they studied basic courses out of choice but only one of them

said he studied a basic course he wanted, the rest applied for professional courses but had no one to struggle for them. Out of the 5 admission seekers that were interviewed, 3 representing 60% said they were relying upon some benefactors to help them gain admissions while only 2 representing 40% said they were depending on the strength of their academic performance. The 3 artisans interviewed had qualifications below tertiary education and all of them said they did not further their education because of the price of education which they were unable to afford. This is also in agreement with the position of the Marxian theory that the upper class exposes different segments of the population to stratify and maintain the capitalist class structure. Through these interviews, the study finds that education stratifies Nigerians into classes and maintains the class structure which the Marxian theory of education argued about. The contents and access to education are restricted to specific demographic groups which in turn defines their role in the economy hence their class. This is typical of capitalism where class distinction and struggle determine resource allocation.

Class Stratification

To understand the concept of class stratification, it is important to understand the concept of class itself. Class is one of the most prevalent concepts in Marxian discussions. Class is a popularly misconceived word, but in the Marxian lexicon, class means a social group whose members share the same relationship to the means of production and distribution (Ezurike, 2013). Class is also seen as something established by nothing other than a person's objective place in the network of ownership relations (Cohen, 1978). Igwe (2007, p.65) sees class as a 'socioeconomic and political category identified by individual's relationship to the means of production, distribution and exchange, whether as the owner, controller or beneficiary or as the exploited'. On the other hand, McLean & McMillan (2009, p.82) look at class in a somewhat different way, stemming from the Oxford English Dictionary, which sees class as "a division or order of society according to status; a rank or a grade of society." They further observed that it is somewhat confusing with Marx and Weber's position on understanding class. For Marx, class is "defined by one's relationship to the means of production. One either controls a factor of production, or one does not." Weber, on the other hand, distinguished class from the status group. He sees status position as not being determined by class position alone; possession of money or entrepreneurial skills are not themselves status qualifications, although they can become such. In a plot summary of a Victorian melodrama, the Duke of Omnium and his self-employed window cleaner are in the same class (owners of a factor of production) but not in the same status group. The Duke's window cleaner and his daughter, who cleans windows

in the factory where she works, are in the same status group but different classes (McLean & McMillan, 2009).

It is observed that the English language uses the word "class" to cover both concepts, whereas, in Marx and Weber's native German language, a distinction between them is made. This research will not look at class strictly in the Marxian or Weberian sense but hybridisation of the two in Nigeria. Class is therefore seen to mean a group of people who share similar living conditions as a result of their relationship to sources of resource allocation especially state power that seems highly responsible for resource allocation and wealth distribution. This is so because the primary source of wealth in the country is the state which drives it from rent gotten through natural resources exploitation. The typical industrially run economy where Marx' ideal classes exist and previous economic classes are not very characteristic of Nigeria. This is so because Nigeria is industrially weak. The classes in Nigeria are categorised into three basic groups: the upper class, middle class, and lower class (McLean & McMillan, 2009). Stratification on the other hand means the arrangement or classification of something into groups especially vertically. Class stratification is seen in this research as the process of categorising people by class.

Education

Education like many concepts has divergent meanings depending on the multiplicity of views to give it meanings from different perspectives. However, some scholars have offered their perspectives on what education is. Education is seen as the act or process of educating or applying discipline to the mind or a process of character training (Adesemowo & Tumininu, 2022). Also, Bamisaiye in Adesemowo & Tumininu (2022, p.1), sees education as a "cumulative process of development of intellectual abilities, Skills, and attitudes, all of which form our various outlooks and dispositions to action in life generally". Education is the purest form of learning, making us permanently capable and inclined to benefit ourselves and other members of society through the application of such learning. John (2020) sees education as a method for polishing the human mind developing and training it. The name Education, like the concept of education, has an ambiguous root. Educare and Educatum are Latin terms that mean "to educate." The former implies raising, whereas the latter refers to the skill of teaching and training (John, 2020). Thus, education can be described simply as a system or activity that seeks to teach an individual a new skill or new concept. Furthermore, it sharpens minds and develops moral standards in individuals (John, 2020). T. P. Nunm in Sumanta (2018, p.11) sees education as 'the complete development of a child so that he can make an original contribution to human life according to the best of his capacity'. UNESCO in Sumanta

(2018, p.12) “Education includes all the process that develops human ability and behaviour.

Scholarly definitions above show that education trains the mind and prepares people for tasks. Education can be formal or informal. In this research, the focus is on formal education. Formal education is seen as a sort of education that is organised and structured. Learning takes place in specially constructed, purpose-built institutions such as primary and secondary schools (private and public), special schools for the handicapped, colleges, colleges of education, colleges of technology, and universities (Adesemowo & Tumininu, 2022). Syllabi, schemes of work, course outlines, lesson plans, and timetables are used to meticulously arrange and structure the instructions to be taught. The instructor is a certified and competent professional who taught under the supervision of internal and external administrative organisations. A certificate is issued at the end of each stage of formal education to recognise the trainees' achievements (Adesemowo & Tumininu, 2022). Education determines greatly, the skills and character that are present in an economy. Through education, the role an individual plays in society can be determined through the acquisition of certain knowledge, character or skills. As such it has the potential to determine individual class placement. How it plays a role in class stratification in Nigeria will be looked at in the research.

The Class Structure in Nigeria

Class analysis is required to comprehend Africa's inequities and political-economic processes. This is because it provides a clear insight into the underlying structures and patterns of material production and distribution in Africa and other post-colonial contexts. These class interactions are supported by unequal distributions of rights and powers among and between distinct groups about specific types of productive resources (Nwangwu, Onuoha, Nwosu, & Ezeibe, 2020). In a typical capitalist economy, espoused by Marx & Engels (1848), classes are constituted chiefly into the owning class, known as the bourgeoisie, and the working class, known as the proletariat. Nigerian society like its African counterparts was forcefully brought into the capitalist world economy through the different stages of involvement with the capitalist West (Wallenstein, 1976). The inculcation of Nigeria in the world capitalist system, however, did not create in the country a complete capitalist state with productive forces at the capitalist stage of development, instead, it produced a hybridisation of different pre-capitalist economic systems at different stages of development and decomposition (Ake, 1981).

Nigeria does not perfectly fit into any of the historical epochs discussed in Marxian historical materialism, it is pertinent to understand the unique

dimension social formation has taken within Nigerian society. Nwangwu, Onuoha, Nwosu, & Ezeibe (2020) observed that despite evidence that class is a major social divide in Africa, its analysis in the African studies literature is limited. The state of Nigeria is rentier, relying on earnings from the sales of crude oil and other natural resources to finance itself. This is also a result of the colonial legacy born by the Western quest for cheap raw materials. The state is now in charge of all natural resources and controls their exploitation and sale. But the state officials are driven to accumulate, so they prebendally allocate higher percentages of the resources to their private pockets. Class in Nigeria is much more defined in terms of a status group, which has to do with people living in similar conditions due to their access to sources of wealth. Unlike typical capitalist economies where there are clear classes defined by relationships to the means of production and distribution i.e. the owning class and the working class, most of the country's source of wealth is owned and controlled by the state and wealth is largely dependent on relationship to the state power. Therefore, the Nigerian class is divided into the upper class, middle class, and lower class, defined by living conditions and largely determined by access to control of state resources. The particulars of the segment of society that make up these categorisations will be discussed below.

a. Upper class: this class is composed of individuals who earn higher incomes with living conditions similar to those of the bourgeois in capitalist countries. Their income level is in higher millions and billions. United Nations estimate defines this category of people as people who earn more than \$100 daily while the African Development Bank estimates it as people earning more than \$20 daily (Ogunbiyi, 2022). This group is mainly composed of the political elite who hold political power and control resource allocation. The national assembly, for instance, consumes 25% of the annual federal budget through salaries, allowances, and alleged bribes to jerk up budgets of ministries and parastatals, as alleged by the former CBN governor Sanusi Lamido Sanusi and confirmed by Dr Haruna Yerima, a former member of the house of representatives (Musa, 2010). Also, in a book by the former minister of finance, Dr Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, a claim was made that ₦17 billion had to be paid to the 7th national assembly for them to approve the 2015 budget (The Nation Nigeria, 2018). Also, ministers, commissioners, governors, and presidents make huge allocations to their private pockets as salaries and allowances. The percentage disparity with the rest of the country is vast locking the political class in a constant battle with the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), and other trade unions in continuous battles about minimum wage. In 2015, 2016, and 2017, the government appropriated the sums of ₦3.94

Billion, ₦3.87 billion, and ₦3.2 billion, respectively, to the Aso Rock clinic for the provision of necessary drugs and equipment, whereas the following sums were appropriated to the 16 teaching hospitals in the country collectively for capital projects, 2015, ₦1.424 billion, 2016, ₦3.333 billion and 2017, ₦1.943 billion (Ogundipe & Ovuakporie, 2017). Similarly, the 2017 budget appropriated ₦850 million to Aso Rock for food, cooking gas, and kitchen utensils (Obasi, 2016) whereas the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development was allocated the sum of ₦76 billion (Adebayo, 2017). Beyond huge allocations to themselves, the Nigerian political elites are also engaged in the act of primitive allocation through the siphoning of public funds into private pockets. Some do so by inflating prices, others with bribes and kickbacks. In 2018, the Kano state governor, Dr Abdulahi Ganduje was allegedly caught on tape receiving a \$5 million kickback from contractors (Yusuf, 2018). Beyond private allocations and corrupt practices, some Nigerian political elites build businesses that use the state to patronise themselves. All these enable the political elite to form a class or be among the status living in affluence.

Besides political elites, the Nigerian upper class is also composed of entrepreneurs comprising industrialists, merchants, and bankers who earn high from their businesses. Although the country's industrial base is weak, few industries are engaged in light manufacturing. Such industries include the Dangote Group, Innoson Group, etc. They still make profits from sales and appropriation of surplus value, which gives them higher earnings. Besides industrialists, there are merchants engaged in the trade who also earn higher incomes equivalent to those of the upper class. While the industrialists are involved in the production, merchants carry out the task of distribution, which earns them both high incomes. These merchants are either involved in distributing locally produced commodities or foreign ones. Foreign manufactured goods make their way to Nigerian markets through the activities, and like the foreign bourgeois whose interest they represent, they are motivated by the quest to accumulate. They accumulate through profits they make from selling higher than they bought in a margin that earns them very high income. A more significant portion of the Nigerian entrepreneurial class comprises distributors or merchants. Besides industrialists and merchants, another group in the industrialist class in Nigeria includes bankers who deal with financial issues related to the entire economy and make huge profits from it. Another group that falls within the upper class or upper middle class are top-ranking civil servants, including permanent secretaries, directors, DGs, etc. This group enjoys high salaries and allowances, enabling them to gain earnings within the range of the upper class. Besides their huge "legitimate" income, some of them engage in corrupt practices of diverting monies meant for running institutions into

private pockets. A typical case is that of Mr Abdulrasheed Maina, the former Director, of Customs, Immigration, Prisons Pension Office and acting Chairman the Pension Reforms Task Team, who was alleged to have been engaged in a ₦2.7 billion pension fraud (Sahara Reporters, 2018). Also included are top-ranking officials of large private enterprises and multinational corporations who may not be engaged in the corrupt practices of civil servants but earn very high wages that offer them the opportunity of being in the status group of the upper class.

b. Middle-class: The middle-class is the next class after the upper class. This class comprises status groups earning less than the upper class but higher than the lower class. They make enough to live comfortable lives but not as comfortable as the upper class but do not lack like the lower class. The United Nations in Ogunbiyi (2022) categorises the middle-class as comprising people who earn between \$10 and \$100 per day while African Development Bank categorises them as people who earn between \$2 and \$20 per day. While the Western capitalist countries Marx and Engels studied have risen to the level where the majority of their citizens fall within this class, Nigeria is different. Most of Nigeria's people fall either in the upper or lower class, but the middle class still exists in the country. African Development Bank in Johnson (2022) estimates that 23% of Nigerians fall into this category and 92% of them are educated beyond secondary school. This class in terms of diversity, contains people from more works of life than the upper and lower classes. The group is composed of several groups. One of the most prominent groups of Nigeria's middle class includes middle to higher-level civil servants and workers in large private enterprises. Such groups include academics, physicians, lawyers, bankers, etc. Also included are traders who engage in medium-scale trade but do not own businesses as large as those of merchants in the upper class or small ones like those of petite traders in the lower class. This group is one of the most mobile because their business can grow to the size of merchants or shrink to that of petite traders, thereby changing their status group.

The middle-class can be categorised into the upper middle-class and lower middle-class. These are both defined by the income level of the individuals who occupy these strata. Most senior employees of both government and large enterprises fall within the upper middle class because they earn higher incomes in salaries and allowances. Some of them engage in corrupt practices that enrich them further than their already large income; some even succeed in migrating to the upper class. Also, some traders have businesses that earn them income at the upper middle class level. The lower middle class, on the other hand, is made up of middle to upper-lower-level employees of government and large private enterprises as well as traders

who earn at that level. Some farmers, artisans, etc., who typically occupy the lower class, have successfully migrated to the lower middle-class. The middle class is a bridge between the lower and upper classes where individuals can migrate upwards or downwards. The middle-class tends to be the most educated of all classes as their position is essentially a result of academic qualification.

c. Lower class: The lower class is made up of individuals who learn very low-income. The United Nations in Ogunbiyi (2022) categorises the lower-class as comprising people who earn less than \$10 per day while African Development Bank categorises them as people who earn below \$2 per day. Some find survival difficult, while others barely get by daily. This is where the bulk of Nigeria's population falls; unfortunately, Nigeria recently took over from India, which has a higher population, as the World's headquarters of poverty. National Bureau of Statistics (2022) reports that 63% of people living in Nigeria are multidimensionally poor which amounts to 133 million people. This group comprises unemployed people, highly underemployed people, and self-employed people mainly engaged in the informal economy. The group is made of peasant farmers, petite traders, lower-level employees of government and private enterprises; underpaid employees people engaged in activities that earn them lower income. This group tends to be populated by people with lower levels of education in comparison to the middle-class and upper class.

Education as a tool for class stratification in Nigeria

Education represents the process individuals acquire knowledge through a formalised process. The importance of education cannot be overstressed. The relevance of education has changed over time. According to Onuoha (2018), education was initially for the enlightenment of the mind and especially for moral development; however, the rise of the industrial revolution changed the role of education. Industrialisation led to higher specialisation of skill sets with more complex knowledge required to possess such skill sets. As a result, education determines the skills available in an economy; it is, therefore, pertinent to understand how education determines the placement of people in society as it relates to status groups. Education stratifies Nigerian society in the following ways discussed below.

a. Content of Education

Education is designed to shape the human resources of a society in a particular way; it aims at developing the capacity of that society to build a mentally conceived society. The aim may be to change a situation or maintain a status quo. Whatever the purpose is, the content of education is

determined by what the parties charged with educating a populace envisage as the type of society they want to build. The Nigerian state, as observed earlier, monopolises control over the economy, and as Ezeani (2018) observed, there is democratisation in the political space but no democratisation of the economic space in Nigeria. Leaders of Nigeria feed fat on the state in a parasitic manner and, as such, want the maintenance of the status quo where they and their children will continue to milk the country of its resources. The content of education in Nigeria is therefore designed to maintain a general consciousness that supports their position. Starting from the colonial period, Nigerians were equipped with skills to serve as clerical staff to colonialists. The colonialists destroyed the local mode of education in the areas of the economy, politics, morals, religion, culture, and so on (Salami, 2009). In that process, productive knowledge was not passed to Nigerians, so they were kept in perpetual servitude to Europeans. Skills to make them grow economically were never passed to them but were passed to Europeans, keeping them ahead of Nigerians economically. Indigenous leaders who took over from European colonialists after independence were offered privileged positions, so they adopted the European style of education by providing educational content that limited people's capacity for innovation and rising economically. Several competitiveness reports show Nigeria underperforming in innovation with particularly poor spending on education, especially research and development (World Economic Forum, 2015); (World Economic Forum, 2017).

Again, Nigeria's education content is designed to view class stratification as a natural element of society. Individuals are taught to be individualistic and competitive in school as opposed to communalism and cooperation, which was a part of African culture before colonialism. Nigerian educational system teaches individuals to view personal success as the major motivation for personal development instead of group success. Nigerians are made to have a distorted Western view of what constitutes development (Ake, 1979). Through causes like Business Administration and Entrepreneurship, individuals are taught how to manage private businesses to maximise profit regardless of the exploitation involved in the process. The major thrust of this argument is that education in Nigeria is designed to defend the primacy of private property and to also see success as something that can be achieved only through the accumulation of private property. Through this process, class stratification begins as some people are trained to be CEOs and top managers, and others are trained for servitude but all are made to first of all believe that class stratification is natural and then see the upper class as a result of ingenuity and not a result of exploitation. The exploited are not antagonistic to their exploiters; they envy and aspire to be like them. This is in total disagreement with Marx' position that the economic condition of man

determines his thinking and not his thinking determining his condition (Marx, 1859). Miliband (1969) describes this process as the bourgeoisification of the capitalist state including members of the working class. The exploited here are made to defend their exploitation instead of antagonising it.

One of the major beneficiaries of the class structure in Nigeria is upper-class members. This same class wields political power through the state's instruments, controlling the content of education. Primary education boards control primary education; secondary education boards control secondary education boards, while education in universities is controlled by the National Universities Commission (NUC), all of which are organs of the state. They inspect and review the curriculums of all educational institutions. Until they issue licenses or approval, no educational institution can operate in the country, else it is regarded as illegal. Also, the content of each subject of study in Nigerian schools is strictly sourced from their approved curriculum. No subject or even topic is taught in any Nigerian university, for instance, without the approval of NUC. Upper-class members have used such organs of state to ensure that the content of education favours existing class structures and justifies rather than antagonise their position. Politicians have made conscious efforts to suppress such radical ideas as the teaching of Marxism, even in the departments Political Science, Economics and Sociology. The course Theory and Practice of Marxism used to be a compulsory course in the Department of Political Science, but recently, it was changed to an elective, and in effect, some graduate from the department without having an adequate understanding of Marxism. In place of radical thought, such capitalist-inclined courses like entrepreneurship were introduced.

b. Political Patronage and Interference with Admission Processes

The quest for political patronage has also affected some aspects of education with its attendant consequence on class stratification. This has affected the process of admission, especially in tertiary institutions and famous secondary schools. The number of tertiary institutions in the country is insufficient for the number of people seeking tertiary institutions. In some cases, admission criteria exist, but more people qualify than the carrying capacity of such institutions. In such cases, individuals in high places seeking political patronage tend to interfere with the process to influence and determine to a large degree, the individuals who make it through the admission process. By this, they limit certain skill sets to a segment of the population that may be tied to their aprons in perpetual servitude. Also, the education beneficiary of this process acquire enables them to fit into certain job requirements, which in turn stratifies them into the class people in such

jobs occupy. Again, some courses offer higher paying jobs like medicine, pharmacy, etc., regardless of performance; in most cases, they are an exclusive reserve of the children of people in high places and their clients. It is usually difficult for children of the poor to gain admission into departments that offer such courses, thereby stratifying them into courses that provide opportunities in lower-paying jobs, thereby maintaining the dominance of wealthy families over poor ones. This is not peculiar to Nigeria but prevalent in virtually all capitalist societies.

c. Job Opportunities

Regardless of skill requirements, many jobs in Nigeria make the criteria for recruitment stringent in the phase of high unemployment. One of the most vital criteria considered is academic qualification. Nigeria has been described as a nation that cares too much about paper qualification as against individual capacity. By this very reality about the country, academic qualifications start the process of class stratification by offering better job opportunities for people with higher qualifications regardless of their skills. It can be observed that most people in the middle class and upper class tend to have higher academic qualifications compared to their counterparts in the lower class. In Nigeria, paper qualifications go beyond the level of educational attainment to classes of degree and other qualifications that limit the number of people that will have a higher ascension on the economic ladder. It is a fact that acquiring higher qualifications is a lot difficult for a whole lot of people due to difficulties in gaining admission and the price of education.

Beyond the job opportunities offered by higher qualifications, education also facilitates class stratification in offering special managerial training to people recruited to head higher places that offer very high pay. Such institutions as the Lagos Business School, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Study (NIPS) offer certain courses that allow their graduates to occupy high positions. Entry into such institutions is almost entirely blocked for people from the lower classes. Miliband (1969) made a similar observation about institutions of such nature and much higher job placements in Western countries like the US, Britain, and France.

d. Price of Education

The price of education is one thing that also facilitates class stratification in Nigeria. It has been observed earlier that higher academic qualifications offer greater opportunities for securing higher-paying jobs. The high price of education limits the ability of children from lower classes to acquire them, thereby standing a chance of class mobilisation. It was observed by Adeyi (2018) that the registration fee for the WAEC examination is ₦13,950, that

of NECO is ₦11,400 while that of UTME is ₦6,500 and Post-UTME ₦2,000 on average giving a total of ₦33,850. The country's minimum wage is ₦18,000 (now 30,000), implying that a parent or sponsor on minimum wage has to wait two months and use almost the entirety of his/her income to afford these examinations to qualify a child or ward for entry into the nation's tertiary institutions. After that, sponsors may also have to wait five to six or more months to afford tuition fees, accommodation fees, and money for feeding, clothing, and other expenses. This excludes the price of books and other necessities that facilitate learning. Again, postgraduate and additional professional training offering higher training and qualifications are even more expensive than undergraduate courses. Such institutions as the Nigerian Law School, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), etc., are particularly very expensive. Nigerian Law School, for instance, costs ₦295,000, and there is no government policy to make it cheaper or affordable for aspiring lawyers from a lower class. In the last week of October 2018, 28 students of Bayelsa state origin appealed to the state government to assist them with ₦295,000 each to enable them to pay their fees in the Nigerian Law School (Sahara Reporters, 2018). Although the state government responded by paying the schools of their indigenes in December 2018 (Bayelsa Now, 2018), it highlights the expensive price. Without a professional Law school certificate, law graduates cannot be called to the bar or practice law in the country.

In addition to public universities and tertiary institutions being expensive for poor Nigerians, private institutions that are supposed alternatives are far more costly. Some are as expensive as ₦1,000,000 and above, making it almost impossible for children from poor backgrounds to afford.

e. Deliberate Mismanagement of Public Schools

It was observed earlier that institutions of learning are regulated by various organs of government in Nigeria. Public institutions are also owned and managed by the government. Government officials have, over the years, mismanaged public institutions of learning, subjecting them to inadequacies of learning materials and sometimes teaching personnel and buildings or other critical infrastructures. It can be observed that education is only allocated 7% of the national budget (Adeyi, 2018). This result of mismanagement of public education is the production of poor quality education where some products of public institutions are described as unemployable by some employers thereby remaining in perpetual unemployment or underemployment. In other words, people from lower classes are not equipped with ideas that will enable them to gain class migration. The public officials charged with managing public institutions of learning are largely unaffected by their outcome. Most of them and their

children/wards do not attend such institutions. Instead, they afford to send the children to private and foreign schools. They get quality education and graduate on time, unlike their counterparts in public schools. By the quality of education in private and foreign schools, children from the upper class are equipped with better or more ideas to maintain hegemony in society by possessing such ideas. Senator Bukola Saraki as Senate president of Nigeria for instance was seen celebrating his son's graduation from the London School of Economics (Alabi, 2017).

f. Social Capital

Social capital has to do with that which people benefit from relationships with certain people. Because children of the rich and poor in Nigeria attend different schools, their relationships and obvious "connections" grow differently. Schools offer children of the rich opportunities to befriend children of fellow rich men who eventually collaborate to fix each other in places of higher earnings, thereby locking the poor out in perpetual poverty.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The relationship between education and class stratification in Nigeria was analysed. It was found that the capitalist system governing the country designs an educational system that is targeted at maintaining the current class structure predicated on the primacy of private property. First, the content of education justifies private property and class stratification; it also suppresses ideas that challenge capitalism and its attendant inequality for the benefit of the ruling class. Secondly, ruling class members interfere in education to limit access for all, especially in favour of their children and wards. Thirdly, different educational qualifications offer different opportunities that further stratify Nigerian children. Fourthly, the exorbitant price of education makes it difficult for children from lower classes to acquire levels of education that may enable them to escape poverty. Fifthly, the deliberate mismanagement of public schools limits the ideas children from lower backgrounds acquire. Lastly, rich children's schools' social capital makes it difficult for poor children to break into their circle and benefit from their class. The study therefore concludes that education is a tool for maintaining capitalism and the class structure it creates for the benefit of few at the expense of many. Hence it recommended that the content of education be changed to reflect more of collectivisation than individualism. Free and compulsory education be implemented across Nigeria to open a space for more people to get educated. Admission processes should be transparent without external influences.

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