


**Sociology,
Culture
And
Social
Problems**
Essays and Insights

■ REVISED EDITION ■

DAVID O. IMHONOPI
UGOCHUKWU M. URIM



**SOCIOLOGY, CULTURE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS: ESSAYS
AND INSIGHTS**

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PREFACE

The question you might ask is: there are many books on Sociology, culture and social problems, why do we need another one? Well, the answer is straightforward. We acknowledge the painstaking efforts of different erudite scholars of the North and South in providing academia, industry and society with engaging discourse on the above subjects, with their thought-provoking and distinctive slants, but we have had some difficulty in finding a book in Nigeria that has brought the subjects of sociology, culture and social problems together in one book. Thus, for us, this was an interesting lacuna that teased our interest and to which we committed our energies, research efforts and resources.

Similarly, having been privileged to teach different Sociology courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and having noticed the chasm that exists in the present literature, we have therefore combined the three subjects in the book to further educate our readers.

It is important to mention that the need to revise the first edition which was released in 2004 arose as a result of the response to the dynamic changes that have taken place in the Nigerian society. For instance, before and in 2004, terrorism in Nigeria had not taken the new dimension of suicide bombers, existence of an army of willing terrorist soldiers and recruits, use of sophisticated weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and large-scale bombings and explosions which it is now characterised by. The Boko Haram sect was not even branded in the country's consciousness as it is now. So also were issues of kidnapping, examination malpractices aided by technology tools and others which have now become social problems and a national malaise. Thus, a review was necessary to give the book contemporary relevance with useful insights and essays using modern examples and information that will be relevant to our various readerships.

This book is an interesting, down-to-earth and revealing text written in contemporary academic style and is recommended for all students in law, humanities, social sciences and others who are taking a compulsory course in Introduction to Sociology or as part of the requirements for passing their general studies exams. Sociology majors will also find this book useful especially those who are freshmen. This book will also be useful to public servants who are interested in studying social problems

and their likely solutions. Members of the civil society, public office holders and citizens who desire to understand what sociology, culture and social problems are all about will also derive some utility from this book.

We have included one hundred (100) multiple choice questions because we are aware that many universities are now beginning to adopt e-exam methods in testing students' knowledge especially at the 100 level and for those offering general studies courses. These questions will stimulate readers' interest and help them gauge their understanding of the subjects treated.

This book is divided into three sections. Section one covers issues on Introduction to Sociology such as the origin, meaning, scope, founding fathers of sociology, social methods in sociology and basic theoretical perspectives in Sociology, among others. Section two addresses issues relating to culture with focus on the meaning of culture, characteristics, functions, elements, and other important aspects of culture. The third and last section concentrates on Social Problems with respect to Nigeria and deals with the meaning of social problems, differences between social and individual problems, types of social problems, their causes and likely solutions and others.

While issues treated may not be exhaustive, we have tried to cover much ground and updated the information on such issues as concepts of culture, and identified modern social problems, their likely causes and solutions with chief focus on Nigeria.

David Imhonopi, PhD
Ugochukwu Moses Urim, MSc

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INTRODUCTION

Sociology is a discipline that belongs to what is conventionally called the social sciences and plays a leading role in the study of the human society. The term “sociology” literally means the science of society. Sociology, as an academic discipline arose in the first half of the 19th century (in 1838, to be precise) as a special science dedicated to unravelling the fundamental laws governing the societal phenomena and human social relationship with primary interest in analysing the problems and societies of the modern, western world (Doda, 2005). It has, thus, conventionally been accepted to associate sociology with the study of the modern, industrialised societies of western world. However, in this work, we tried to trace the development of the discipline in Nigeria. Non-social science students studying this discipline have a great advantage of gaining fresh insights and practical benefits in their personal lives and professional practices. Sociology, along with other kindred disciplines such as anthropology, economics, social psychology, human/cultural geography, history and political science, has now become an essential course that students within and outside the social sciences in universities and other training and research institutions are expected to sit for and pass.

This section of the book which is focused on Introduction to Sociology is prepared for students within and outside the social science family including students in other disciplines who take a course in Introduction to Sociology as part of their general studies, which is a general knowledge course designed to expose them to a broad range of general topics regarding different subjects being treated. The purpose of this section is to provide students with basic ideas and knowledge in the science of sociology. By learning the materials presented in this book, it is believed that students will be able to understand and appreciate the basic issues, principles and approaches of sociology. Students may also gain an indirect benefit of appreciating the social, cultural, and behavioural dimensions of the society. Specifically, the main learning objective of introduction to sociology is to familiarise students with the basic ideas, issues, concepts and principles of sociology. Students will be able to describe the meaning, scope, methods, history and importance of sociology, and its relations to

other disciplines. Students will also be able to appreciate the relevance of sociology in their personal and future professional practice. In addition, the knowledge of the development of sociology in Nigeria will help readers to appreciate the efforts of early Nigerian sociologists to contextualise the study of the discipline, bringing into bold relief the ethno-cultural and religious peculiarities of Nigerians.

Furthermore, in this book, readers will be exposed to the concept of culture, its characteristics, its types, functions, and elements. We also considered selected concepts of culture to widen the understanding of our readers.

The last section in this book addressed the issue of social problems in Nigeria. Social problem was defined and a distinction was made between social problems and individual problems. Four sociological perspectives were adopted to analyse social problems as a phenomenon. They included functionalist perspective, conflict perspective, interactionist and feminist perspective. A number of social problems in Nigeria were considered in Nigeria such as poverty, prostitution, violence, terrorism, HIV-AIDS, examination malpractices, unemployment, drug abuse, crime, tribalism, teenage pregnancy, corruption, divorce, religious fundamentalism, rural-urban drift and traffic congestion. It is expected that readers will understand what social problems are, their likely causes and consider the suggested solutions in the book.