



## **Relevance of Auguste Comte and Max Weber Contributions to Contemporary Nigeria Development**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the postulations of Auguste Comte (the acclaimed father of sociology) and Max Weber, with a view to assessing their contributions to socio-milieu of the society during their era and juxtaposing the relevance, contributions of their exponential thoughts with the contemporary issues of our time. To do this, available academic literatures are reviewed to bring to bear knowledge enhancement. The strongest thrust of this paper is that Auguste Comte drew grand universal laws and created a science – “Sociology”. His aim was to create a science of society by explaining both historical development and the future direction of mankind. Similarly, Max Weber’s landmark was to bring out human race from the doldrums of irrationality to rationality. Both attempted to discover the laws by which human society maintains itself and progresses. In addition, and in spite of the centuries of which both scholarly works existed the founding fathers were able to establish that, positive thinking, determination and objective evaluation of social-problems could lead one to channel rightful postulations (policies), thereby enhancing development and sustainability of the society, which is the motto of Sociology as a discipline.

**Keywords:** Thoughts, Laws, Irrationality-Rationality, Development and Society

### **INTRODUCTION**

Epistemology of all social phenomena is broadly and widely accepted to be resting on philosophy as the foundation of human learning. It is equally conceived and evidently proven, with facts, that human endeavours are multifaceted in dimension. To this, sociology as a discipline takes no exception. The paper objectively brings out scholarly contributions of Auguste Comte and Max Weber to the society amidst other founding scholars of the discipline based on available literatures. This is to establish with proofs the origin of the discipline, its relevance to human endeavours, and above all, its contributions to societal development.

Development has, assumedly, multidimensional approach in its explanation. Widely conceived to be a complex concept. It is usually viewed as socio-economic, political, science and technology inclusive. In this context, development in Nigeria as a focal point will be streamlined to socio-economic aspect. Meanwhile; Auguste Comte (acclaimed father of Sociology) and Max Weber, equally a great contributor to development of the discipline – Sociology, both are chosen for this academic exercise as attested to as great scholars in academic literatures. More importantly, considering the volumes of their works (Comte and Weber) which remain or might be inexhaustible in a single paper of this nature. Majorly, the paper is organized into two sections. Section one covers some of Auguste Comte’s works – Methods of Inquiry,

Law of three stages and positivism. Section two brings to bear Max Weber's selected work "Bureaucracy". Thereafter, the paper evaluates and married both scholars' works to justify their relevance to the contemporary social-economic development in Nigeria. A conclusion was drawn to encapsulate the whole academic exercise (paper).

### LITERATURE REVIEW

**Development: what about it?** It is no longer gainsaying about the complexity in conceptualization of the discourse "Development". Arising from the questions raised in academic literatures regarding how effective the use of Gross National Product (GNP), Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) and many more in measuring development? Development as a discourse still strongly remain a "hard-nut" to crack. Attesting to this statement "...an effective measures and evaluation of development still remain questionable" (Oyeshola, 2007). In other words, development cannot be subjected only to spectrum of diagnosis and surgical instrument of GNP, GDP and PQLI as important they may be. Rather, development should be all encompassing. Hence, Oyeshola (1989) assert that development includes the conditions of reality that allow people to take their destiny into their own hands individually and collectively. A cursory review of this expression thus:

*"Comte's aim was to create a naturalistic science of society, which both explain the past development of mankind and predict its future course. In addition to building a science capable of explaining the laws of motion that govern humanity over time, ...he attempts to formulate the conditions that account for social stability at any given historical moment"* (Coser, 1977: 3-5).

One might tend to conclude that Comte did exactly what Oyeshola asserted. In a similar vein, among Weber's landmark was to bring out human race from the doldrums of irrationality to rationality. Corroborated by Coser (1977).

Comte seems to have been an influence for Weber's postulations. .... "Weber wrote of Oligarchies having more freedom than tyrannies, and democracies (bureaucracy inclusive) having more freedom than Oligarchies". Implicitly, development can be defined in terms of the ability and capability of a people, Oyeshola (1989) concluded.

Meanwhile, Adeniyi (1995) refer *social development* as positive social change. Implicitly, social change to him, is the process through which the patterned network rules and institutions are modified in the course of time. Suffices to say, according to Yusuf (2003) it connotes a transformation of the ways of life and structures of society overtime. And once transformation or modification exist, this should lead to new behaviour which reflects improvement on the old attitude, Adeniyi (1995) asserted.

On the other hand, *Economic Development* according to Falodun, Omogiatior and Ezeaku (1997) is the attainment of ideals of modernization such as the rise in productivity, social and economic equality, improved institutions and values. In clear times, it simply implies providing basic essentials of life, eradication of extreme hunger and poverty, universal basic (both qualitative and quantitative) education, health for all citizenry, gender parity (especially empowerment for female gender) among others as entrenched in Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is buttressed by Yusuf (2003) that economic development refer to the improvement in the general standard of living of the people of the society. It is against this background that the paper x-rayed a few of Auguste Comte and Max Weber exponential thoughts to justify their relevance with contemporary social-economic development in Nigeria.

### Methodology Summary of Auguste Comte and Max Weber

Auguste Francois M. Xavier Comte (1798-1857) possibly could have been influenced in his writings considering his background, experiences about life which informed the following observation:

*"Comte's aim was to create a naturalistic science of society, which both explain the past development of mankind and predict its future course. In addition to building a science capable of explaining the*

*laws of motion that govern humanity over time, ...he attempts to formulate the conditions that account for social stability at any given historical moment” (Coser, 1977: 3-5).*

Comte established a new social science which he termed “social physics”, but later-on changed to “sociology” having discovered that one Belgian social statistician, Adolphe Quetelet had stolen the concept (“social physics”) away from him. Comte theoretical postulations are widely regarded to be beyond the social sciences, but rather (to Comte) will be of immense benefit to man and underplay significant role in the amelioration of the human condition. This segment takes-on few of his thoughts (postulations), and later-on their relevance to contemporary issues, particularly socio-economic development in Nigeria.

**Methods of Inquiry**

What then are the resources upon which sociology can draw when it sets for itself the task of explaining the laws of progress and of social order? (Coser, 1977:5) These are questions posed by Coser, (1977). And they were vehemently answered by Auguste, (1851). They are, first of all, the same that have been used so successfully in the natural sciences: *observation, experimentation, and comparison.*

According to Coser (1977) *Observation* does not mean the unguided quest for miscellaneous facts. "But for the guidance of a preparatory theory, "No social fact can have any scientific meaning till it is connected with some other social fact" by a preliminary theory. Hence, observation can come into its own only when it is subordinated to the statistical and dynamic laws of phenomena. But within these limits it remains indispensable (Auguste, 1851). Suffices to say, it is not just by merely “looking” or “noticing”. Such “notice” (thoughts) should be subjected to analytical, or and ethnographical-content analysis, for it to be seen as scientific.

Explaining Comte’s work further, the second scientific method of investigation, *experimentation*, is only partly applicable in the social sciences. Direct experimentation is not feasible in the human world. But "experimentation takes place whenever the regular course of the phenomenon is interfered with in any determinate manner. . . . Pathological cases are the true scientific equivalent of pure experimentation." Disturbances in the social body are "analogous to diseases in the individual organism," and so the study of the pathological gives, as it were, privileged access to an understanding of the normal (Coser, 1977). This implies that any socio-milieu that is disturbing to man’s socio-existence is conceived to be pathological. There is the need to diagnose (assess) such societal-problem and proffer solution. The proposed solution is the (experimentation), once it resolve the problem, it becomes a social fact.

Comte’s third schema; in the scientific method of inquiry, which is of central importance to the sociologist is *comparison*, above all, because it "performs the great service of casting out the . . . spirit [of absolutism]." Comparisons of human with animal societies will give up precious clues to "the first germs of the social relations" and to the borderlines between the human and the animal. Yet comparisons within the human species are even more central to sociology (Coser, 1977). What seems deducible here is that, Comte is of the opinion of reviewing the past, compare to the present in order to project for the future. Atacit development for human race.

Therefore, all three conventional methods of science must be used in sociology, it relies above all on a fourth one, the “*historical method*”. He (Auguste, 1851) further stated that the historical comparison of the consecutive states of humanity is not only the chief scientific device of the new political philosophy . . . it constitutes the substratum of the science, in whatever is essential to it." Historical comparisons throughout the time in which humanity has evolved are at the very core of sociological inquiry. Sociology is nothing if it is not informed by a sense of historical evolution (Coser, 1977) concluded.

**The Law of Human Progress**

Is another discourse by Auguste Comte! Coser (1977) asserted that Comte was applying what he conceived to be a method of scientific comparison through time, Comte emerged with his central conception, “*The Law of Human Progress or The Law of Three Stages*”. This is further explained by Salawu (2010) Comte believed that mankind has passed through three stages. These three stages, according to Comte are the theological or fictitious stage; the metaphysical or abstract stage and the scientific or positive stage.

In addition, that each stage as expressed in Comte's work represent a particular state of human development with its own socio-cultural characteristics and belief-system. He explained, in the theological stage, for example, the human mind seeking the essential nature of being supposes all phenomena to be produced by the immediate action of the supernatural beings. Furthermore, in the metaphysical stage, the mind supposes abstract forces, which are capable of producing all phenomena. And in the final stage, which is the positive stage, the mind is said to have given over the vain search after absolute notions, the origin and destination of the universe as the causes of phenomena. Instead, the mind applies itself to the study of their laws.

Salawu (2010) submitted that each of the three stages parallel the stages in the development of social organizations, types of social order, types of social units and the material conditions of human life. And to Coser (1977) he conceived it, that all these evolved in similar manner as the changes in progressive mental development take place.

### **Positivism**

To Giddens (1977) it is easier to understand the intervention of Comte in this context (positivism). Giddens (1977) further stated, philosophy of positivism was a product of widespread upheaval in his own country. Conflict with its neighbours and profound social changes brought by the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Giddens (1977) posits further that the introduction of machinery in the day-to-day running of society in Britain had propelled the use of science and technology to the fore front of human thinking. Theology and metaphysics had been demoted (Giddens, 1977) concluded. To Peter (1982) positivism is conceived as

*"... a unity of science thesis according to which all sciences can be integrated into a single natural system"*.

Peter (1982) points out that, to Comte, sociology was "scientific" because knowledge had practical value and growth of science was for the benefit of human kind. To him (Comte) according to Peter (1982) positivism was "empiricist" as only humans could experience it. It was "encyclopedic" because all the sciences came under a single system of natural laws. And it was "progressivist" because social stability could be restored by re-establishing a moral order, based on scientific knowledge, not on religion which made the world mysterious and prevented empirical inquiry, or metaphysical speculations which had no practical value.

### **Max Weber's Work**

Weber's work encompasses a wide scope of large interest. Most, if not all, of his writings has had a profound impact on Sociology and society at large. As such, an attempt to fully capture the length and breadth, more importantly, the significance of his scholarship exceeds the limitation of a single paper presentation, just as with the case of Auguste Comte. Notwithstanding, one can take several aspects of his work, that taken altogether, could serve as the foundation for understanding the impetus behind much of his writing.

**Maximilian Karl Emily Max Weber (1864 – 1920)** was a "German sociologist, philosopher and political economist whose ideas influenced social theory, social research and the entire discipline of sociology" (Salawu, 2010). Succinctly, there are four themes in his study of sociology: Religion and Class, Class and Inequality, Bureaucracy and Rationality. Cuzzort and King (2008) repeat Max Weber's assertion; thus "Modernity creates greater efficiency, wealth and justice, but modern people he said (Weber) are also becoming: dehumanized, becoming specialist without spirit, sensualist without heart". It is on this note; this segment takes on **Weber's Bureaucracy** as a social discourse among others. Ogunrotifa (2013) wrote; "bureaucracy is derived from the two words „bureau" (refer not only to a writing desk, but to an office where officials worked) and „kratiaorkrato" which means „power" or „rule". Bureaucracy thus basically means office power or office rule, the rule of the officialdom". The term bureaucracy came into use in the early 18th century in Western Europe as a workplace where officials worked. Bureaucracy was first popularized in academic discourse following the seminal writing of Friedrich Hegel's book *Philosophy of Right* written in 1821. Hegel argued that Bureaucracy is a form of public administration that serves as a link between the State and the civil society (Hegel, 1821). Hegel noted that: (as expressed in Ogunrotifa's work (2013):

*“There is a distinction between the monarch's decisions and their execution and application, or in general between his decisions and the continued execution or maintenance of past decisions, existing laws, regulations, organisations for the securing of common ends, and so forth. This task of ... subsuming the particular under the universal is comprised in the executive power, which also includes the powers of the judiciary and the police. The latter have a more immediate bearing on the particular concerns of civil society and they make the universal interest authoritative over its particular aims. Particular interests which are common to everyone fall within civil society and lie outside the absolutely universal interest of the state proper. The administration of these is in the hands of Corporations, commercial and professional as well as municipal, and their officials, directors, managers, and the like. It is the business of these officials to manage the private property and interests of these particular spheres and, from that point of view, their authority rests on the confidence of their commonalties and professional equals. On the other hand, however, these circles of particular interests must be subordinated to the higher interests of the state, and hence the filling of positions of responsibility in Corporations, etc., will generally be effected by a mixture of popular election by those interested with appointment and ratification by higher authority. The maintenance of the state's universal interest, and of legality, in this sphere of particular rights, and the work of bringing these rights back to the universal, require to be superintended by holders of the executive power, by (a) the executive civil servants and (b) the higher advisory officials (who are organised into committees). These converge in their supreme heads that are in direct contact with the monarch (Hegel, 1821).*

Ogunrotifa (2013) posits further that; to Weber, the objective reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization has always been its purely technical superiority over any other form of organization (Weber, 1946). In addition, Ogunrotifa (2013) further buttressed Weber's argument “that human civilization evolved from primitive and mystical to the rational and complex stages and relationships, and such societal evolutions is facilitated by three types of authority that he identifies as traditional, charismatic and legal-rational Authority”. Writing in a similar vein, Fry (1989) according to Weber, “previous forms of bureaucracy in traditional societies such as Ancient Egypt and Rome were founded on the basis of charismatic and traditional forms of authority. Thus, argued that modern bureaucracy is a particular type of administrative structure developed through rational-legal authority”.

Aside an attempt trying to justify Weber's root of „bureaucracy“ there is the need to bring out characteristics of ideal bureaucracy as noted by Weber. Consequently, Carl Friedrich while reviewing Weber's work according to Ogunrotifa (2013) incorporates Weber's bureaucratic characteristics as follows: There is a high degree of Division of Labour and Specialization. There is a well-defined Hierarchy of Authority. It follows the principle of Rationality, Objectively and Consistency. There are Formal and Impersonal relations among the member of the organisation. Interpersonal relations are based on positions and not on personalities.

There are well defined Rules and Regulations. These rules cover all the duties and rights of the employees. These rules must be strictly followed. There are well defined Methods for all types of work. Selection and Promotion is based on Technical qualifications. Only Bureaucratic or legal power is given importance (Friedrich, 1952).

However, to Ogunrotifa (2013) Weber was of the opinion that not “every formal association will possess all of the characteristics of the ideal bureaucracy”. The ideal bureaucracy is developed as a “yardstick to determine and compare whether a particular organisation is bureaucratized or not” (Hall 1963: 33).

Ogunrotifa (2013) added that Max Weber was credited for providing thorough and systematic social scientific analysis of bureaucracy as his idea became spread easily and moves into the vacuum left by the disappearance of administration based on traditional or charismatic authority, and finally became the model for the organisation of civil service, management theories and public administration that cut across all the facet of contemporary societies and private organisations. Ogunrotifa (2013) quickly noted that at a point, Weber was cynical and cautious that the advantages of bureaucracy in the management of

industrial organisations could also turn out to be its shortcomings. He averred that bureaucracy put us in an „iron cage“, which limits individual human freedom and potential instead of a „technological utopia“ that should set us free (Weber, 1946: 432). Conclusively, Ogunrotifa (2013) asserts that bureaucracy tends to generate oligarchy. Corroborated by Weber, (where few officials are the political and economic power) because those who “control these organizations control the quality of our lives as well undermine human freedom and democracy in the long run, and therefore constitute an *inescapable fate*”(Weber 1979:403).

### **Criticisms of Auguste Comte and Max Weber**

It is widely accepted that “no theory is final” (Schafersman, 1999). Even metatheorising in sociology does not and cannot claim absolutism – of understanding all socio-phenomenon in the society. As sustained by Deepak (2008) that the philosophy of positivism (most importantly) founded by Auguste Comte has come under severe criticism in the last forty (40) years. To Deepak (2008) criticism in itself of something (Comte’s work) that is over 150 years old is not surprising. To Anthony (1977) society has moved on in this (many) periods; there are new perspectives and many more minds ready to challenge the old theorists. “So the post-positivist social scientists are justified in one respect at least”, asserted Anthony (1977).

Comte was a great thinker who intuitively understudied the problems confronting France (his country) having been left behind in the area of technological advancement couple with political and internal turmoil the country experienced. “The main concerns for Comte would have been how to re-establish social order and achieve scientific progress for the benefit of society” (Anthony, 1977). Anthony asserted further that “therefore, we see the assertion by him (Comte) that sociology was the “queen of sciences” and that “all sciences came under a single system of natural law” (Anthony, 1977). Conclusively, despite attempted criticisms of Comte’s work. However, in the Nigeria context, juxtaposing Comte’s postulations to contemporary issues in the country. Nigeria is still seen to be at metaphysical realm as demonstrated by Comte’s postulations. Things are not done objectively, with true spirit of altruism. For instance, the last Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup 2014 edition, many things were wrong with the Nigeria team. “No biting spirit,” “No zeal to excel” compared to winning teams, the like of Argentina, Netherlands and of course the eventual winner, Germany, fondly call “German Machine”. Therefore, the strongest thrust of this paper at this juncture is that we (Nigerians) need accurate data, purely scientific and objective verification of “would be leaders”, shun nepotism, ethnic chauvinism and primordial sentiments which has been the grave yard of many failed policies of government. Nigeria has a lot to learn from industrialised countries of the world using positivistic assertions (science and tech-know-how) to galvanise the nation’s resources to development in all its ramifications. Not until reversal, development as coined sociologically might continue to be endangered and thereby engendering its sustainability becomes elusive. Following the review of bureaucracy, Weber’s work has received thorough criticisms from scholars especially in social sciences who have axe to grind with his ideal bureaucracy when juxtaposed with grim reality of the contemporary working of the bureaucratic organisations. Some of these criticisms will be espoused as part of this section.

Bureaucracy in practice has not always been about the ethereal, intellectual concepts propounded by academics (Ogunrotifa, 2013). He (Ogunrotifa, 2013) further stated that the fundamental weakness of Weberian bureaucracy is that it ignores democratic practice in the management of organisations. This lack of democracy stems from hierarchical domination of bureaucratic organisation that is often fraught with abuse of power by bureaucrats. Bureaucracy therefore establishes itself not only as the apparatus regulating the functioning of the State, but also as the power imposing its political will on society. Instead of being a mechanism for effective service delivery, hierarchical domination has made bureaucracy as a tool which reinforces the structures of control in society (Gale & Hummel 2003: 416). Equally as expressed in Ogunrotifa’s work (2013) other criticisms of Weberian Bureaucracy were best elaborated by Warren Bennis (1968). Equally in Ogunrotifa’s work (2013) as: bureaucracy does not adequately allow for personal growth and the development of mature personality; bureaucracy develops conformity and „group-think“; its systems of control and authority are hopelessly outdated; bureaucracy

does not possess nor prescribe adequate means of resolving differences and conflicts between ranks and most particularly between functional groups in the organization; communication and innovative ideas are frustrated or distorted due to hierarchical divisions; the full human resources of bureaucracy are not being utilised due to mistrust and fear to reprisals; and bureaucracy cannot assimilate the influx of new technologists or scientists entering the organization.

In the Nigerian context, Public Bureaucracies (Aluko and Adesopo, 2004) are fraught with numerous problems and deficiencies. As Okotoni (2001) reported, politicization and over-politicization of civil service and public institutions is one of the discontents of bureaucracy in Nigeria. The increasing pace of politicization in the appointment, recruitment and promotion of personnel on the basis of ethnic, religious, political and class consideration as Aluko and Adesopo (2004:19) reported, represent a dangerous centrifugal factor that will undermine the effective function of public institutions in Nigeria. Strong institutions cannot emerge from present day public bureaucracies where top echelons of these bureaucracies are handpicked on the basis of ethnicity, religion and class. Successive military and civilian regimes in Nigeria are notorious in politicization of several offices in the civil services such as offices of the Permanent secretaries and Head of civil services couple along with the impositions of so-called technocrats from outside to man several Parastatal and public enterprises.

Ogunrotifa (2013) further expressed that another problem with the public bureaucracy in Nigeria is the high level of corruption (Okotoni 2003: 225; Expo 1979). Corruption is a major problem limiting public bureaucracies in Nigeria. Corrupt practices occur in nearly all ministries, departments, and agencies where virtually all members of the upper and lower levels of the bureaucracy are involved. Graft and corruption include bribery, extortion, and nepotism, and are characterized by the subordination of public interests to private aims and violations of the norms of duty and welfare, accompanied by secrecy, betrayal, deception and a callous disregard for any consequences suffered by the public. The public considers graft and corruption to be widespread and persistent in Nigerian public institutions.

**Relevance and Contributions of the Duo's Work to Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria**  
Deductively, from the foregoing analyses of Comte's work. The paper made an attempt by using "Recapitalisation of Banking Industry in Nigeria to explain Methods of Inquiry. As at early 2004, banking industry in Nigeria became epileptic in rendering services to the citizenry (source). It becomes pertinent on the part of government to salvage Nigerian banks out of its then economic quagmire. Hence, the inclusion of ₦25 billion as capital base, a policy for any bank can be allowed to operate in Nigeria. (See Soludo, C.C; 2004). Intuitively, it is an (observation) or a reality of what was happening to Nigeria banks during the period in question. Equally corroborated this,"... (IL) legality of the 2004-2005 reform of the Nigerian Banking sector" (see AbdulQadir, 2010). "Experimentation" set in; banks began to raise the money (capital base) amidst criticism of its impossibilities. Yet, who could not, the era of "merger" was introduced."...this capital requirement was a result of progressive increment from #50,000.00 stipulated for commercial banks and allowed by S. 9(1) and (2) Banks and other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) (see Soludo, C.C 2004.p6). The policy stands the test of time till date. A "comparison" can be evaluated by examining the evolutionary trend of Nigeria banks in the recent past to the contemporary days.

Furthermore, in trying to illustrate the position (**Law of Human Progress/The Law of Three Stages**) and juxtapose the argument to contemporary issue among other social-issues in Nigeria. **The political stages or path way to political development** is looked into for instance. Before the advent of the colonial masters, some forms of political system were prevalent in pre-colonial societies that evolved into Nigeria. There was for instance monarchical system of government (the likes of Alaafin of Oyo in Western part of the country) and the (Emirate council in the Northern part of the country). This can be likened to theological era – succession (rulership) by dynasty – domination by the priests. The era of the colonial rule can be likened to as the "metaphysical" – corresponds to the Middle Ages and Renaissance in Nigeria context, under the control of partly Missionaries and the British imposition (governor generals) rulers.

Finally, the era of democracy emerged whereby – rulers are been elected by “simple majority votes” having (the country - Nigeria) gained independence. The use of scientific procedure (positivism), one might say evolution of “change”. To this, Comte asserted that other factors such as intellectual; evolution as the causes of human progress (development), he (Comte) specifically stressed the factor of increase in population. Because of increase in population, according to Comte quoted in Salawu (2010) that there will be division of labour, which becomes the powerful implement of social evolution or human progress. This is in consonance with Nigeria’s favourable demographics. Its population grew on average by more than twenty seven percent (27%) per annum over the past decade, reaching 168 million in 2012 (Oliver, 2014). Implicitly, increase in population and adequate manpower training would automatically bring about socio-development. This is achievable by revamping both science and technology in Nigeria (positivism). Hence, Comte’s positive philosophy, which is predicated on increase in population as a major determinant of the rate of social progress (change).

In addition, Comte’s positivist thinking can be empiricised further, using “Health care delivery system” in Nigeria among numerous contemporary social discourses (issues). In the old days, the use of “herbs”, “voodooist” as curative of ailments (theological prepositions) “magic or spiritual cleansing” to cast “demons” supposedly attack on human being (metaphysical). All these seem to be given way to experimentation/science, “diagnostic gadgets”, “surgical operations” just to mentioned a few. Hence; (positivism), and use of various contraceptives to aid better health care delivery system in the contemporary time.

This is corroborated by Harriet (1854) that it is now clear that social science (sociology inclusive) requires, more than any other, the subordination of observation to the statistical and dynamical laws of phenomena: No social fact can have any scientific meaning till it is connected with some other social fact; without which connection it remains a mere antidote, involving no rational utility, concluded Harriet.

As much as Weber’s bureaucracy as a social discourse is widely and globally, appreciated, in Nigeria, there is no exemption. Weber (1946) presents bureaucracy as both a scientific and generic model that can work in both the public and private sectors. For instance, Wasim (2011) noted Weber asserts that:

*“The bureaucratic structure goes hand with the concentration of the material means of management in the hands of masters. This concentration occurs, for instance, in a well-known and typical fashion, in development of big capitalist enterprise, which finds their essential characteristics in this process. A corresponding process occurs in public organization” (Weber, 1946).*

Bureaucracy has contributed and still contributing immensely to all facets of human endeavour. For instance, Sociology as an academic discipline with its diverse areas of specialization (Division of Labour) at the “Ivory Tower”, specialties within the discipline help in enhancing knowledge. Also, other human endeavours. Even at the foremost social institution – “the family”, there are gender assigned roles and responsibilities, though cultural relativity, beliefs system, societal influence among others dictates the tune. Yet, bureaucracy underscores social relationship at that level. Most importantly, Wasim (2011) added that some scholars, the like of (Friedrich, 1940; Finer, 1941; Simon, 1946; Sharfrit & Hyde, 1997 and Vetriss, 2000) argue that “administering the public is a field of control; control of public administrators, control of people, control of inputs, and control of outputs. All these kinds of controls seek to achieve one main goal which is to meet the people’s needs and expectation in an efficient way”. And according to Weber, bureaucracy “is from a purely technical point of view, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and is in this sense formally that most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings” (Weber, 1946). This might justify to a certain extent, why “bureaucracy” is singled out among other works of Max Weber. Importantly, considering contemporary socio-political dynamism in Nigeria. However, the caution, weber noted (Iron Cage) is equally “a force” to be reckoned with in the Nigerian context. Take for instance; the plight of widows, patriarchal dominance and socio- religious doctrines as been practiced in some regions of the country (Nigeria). This is corroborated by Weber “...because those who control these organisations (social institutions

inclusive), control the quality of our lives as well as undermine human freedom and democracy in the long run, and therefore, constitute an inescapable fate” (Weber, 1979:403).

Furthermore, x-raying Weber’s bureaucracy, Oliver (2014) asserts that Nigeria’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rebasing makes the country the largest economy in Africa – “the change of the base year from 1990 to 2010 and the increase in the number of industries measure for GDP calculation raises the size of the economy of Africa’s most populous nation by 75%. Following the rebasing, Nigeria dethrones South Africa as the largest economy in Africa, albeit with a population more than three times larger.

These factors are achieved as a result of increased macro-economic stability – prudent monetary policy succeeded in keeping the naira stable and recently in bringing inflation to single digits – as well as high prices for Nigeria’s primary export good, oil. Among other reason for the booming economic performance is Nigeria’s favourable demographics. Its population grew on average by more than 27% per annum over the past decade, reaching 168 million in 2012 (Oliver, 2014).

Even, the UN projects that this trend (population growth) is set to continue. It expects Nigeria’s population to double within the next 25 years to 350 million. As at now, Nigeria is the world’s seventh most populous nation, this means that Nigeria will be the fourth most populous nation by 2040, trailing only India, China and the United States (Oliver, 2014) further asserted – a Deutsche Bank researcher.

Suffices to say; all these comparisons, projections and what more, are possible as a result of tenacity of bureaucracy. “Weberian bureaucracy is rational because of its precision, speed, consistency, availability of records, continuity, possibility of secrecy, unity, rigorous, coordination, and minimization of interpersonal friction, personal costs, and material costs” (Fry, 1989) emphasized quintessential of Weber’s scholarly contribution to contemporary issues and development of the society at large.

Moreover, the study concludes that Nigeria and South Africa still lie far apart in terms of capital market development and other sub-strata of development nexus. In order to close these gaps in economic development, Nigeria has to improve its institutions and business environment, Oliver (2014) asserted. Especially in the “political stability and absence of violence/terrorism”, stark problems in the business environment. In the latest World Bank Ease of Doing Business Report, the country (Nigeria) ranks 147<sup>th</sup>, far behind South Africa in 41<sup>st</sup> place, (Oliver, 2014) concluded. This is a further crystal demonstration and relevancy of Weber’s Postulation “Bureaucracy” in term of “availability of records, rigorous coordination” as one among numerous social thoughts – perspectives, theorising in resolving socio-phenomenon of our contemporary times. Hence, contributing toward socio-economic development.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

At this juncture, before drawing a conclusion on this social discourse. A cursory re-evaluation of the theorists suggests there is a seemingly interconnection of thoughts between the duo (Auguste Comte and Max Weber).

Auguste Comte became famous for his grand universal laws. His aim was to create a science of society, explaining both the historical development and the future direction of humankind. He developed a philosophy he called “Positivism”, in which he described human society as having developed through three stages, the third of which he called the “Positive” stage, dominated by scientific thought.

In a similar vein, Weber argues that human civilization evolved from primitive and mystical to the rational and complex stages and relationships. Weber believes that societies move from the primitive stage to theoretical and technical ones (Wasim, 2011). According to Weber, the evolution of societies is facilitated by three types of authority, which he identifies as traditional, charismatic and legal-rational authority (Fry, 1989). To Wasim (2011) it is the legal rational type of authority that constitutes the basis of Weber’s concept of bureaucracy and the foundation of modern civilization as it is premised on “a belief in the legitimacy of the pattern of normative rules and the rights of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue command” (Stillman, 2000).

Implicitly, the duos (theorists) have been speaking from the same prepositions of thoughts in a polar dichotomy of expressions. Literatures justify this; the “metaphysic” phrase of Comte was rooted in the problems of French Society before the revolution of 1789. The metaphysical involved the justification of

universal rights as being on a higher plane than the authority of any human ruler to the countermand, according to Coser (1977). Here, Comte seems to have been an influence for Max Weber's theory of democracy in which societies progress towards freedom. Coser (1977) further stated that, Weber wrote of Oligarchies having more freedom than tyrannies, and democracies having more freedom than oligarchies. Comte's belief that universal rights were inevitable seems to be foretelling of Weber's theory, Coser (1977) concluded.

In a capsule form, there is a symbiotic influential relationship and contributions between the two theorists (Auguste Comte and Max Weber) prepositions.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the theoretical underpinnings and the postulations of Auguste Comte and Max Weber. Foremost, it is very difficult to gain a clear understanding of positivism because of the number of ways in which the term has been defined and interpreted by many of its supporters and critics. It is, however, safe to say that an important goal of positivism was objectivity. The law of three stages of Comte suggests that he used the term „positive“ to mean „scientific“ as succinctly expressed by Coser (1977).

Secondly, Max Weber's ideal bureaucracy and analyzes the negative features associated with the perspective such as inefficiency, red-tapism, waste and corruption, lack of accountability, poor productivity, and lack of control. However, in the Nigeria context, public institutions such as civil service have been enmeshed in myriads of problems: weak governance structure, red-tapism, weak accountability, low professional standards, waste, and are always viewed as a cesspool of corruption, under-performance, a bastion of bureaucracy and a graveyard of so many failed policies of government as equally depicted by Ogunrotifa (2013).

With this development, it is obvious that introducing democratic practices into the management of public organisations will help to build institutional capability that will improve institutional structures and processes, enhance the ability of Nigerian public institutions to perform specific activities so as to achieve its goals in a sustainable way, and provide strong institutions that adhere to rule of law, peoples' aspirations, and societal expectations.

Thirdly and succinctly, the prepositions of both scholars have added imperative value to Sociology, quintessentially as a discipline among other human endeavours. Comte's method of inquiry has established an indelible print in social research which is the benchmark of any quest for betterment of mankind, implicitly development. For instance, the dreadful "Ebola virus" ravaging 90% mortality among its victims where it occurred. Its advent as recorded in 1976 in two simultaneous outbreaks, one in a village near the Ebola river in Democratic Republic of Congo and the other in a remote area of Sudan (Lagos State Ministry of Health, 2014). Such discovery is an "observation" as depicted by Auguste Comte. The viral mode of contact, attendant symptoms and spread (person to person via direct contact through broken skin, mucous membrane and wounds with the secretions of an infected person; or through coming in contact with materials that have been contaminated by the infected persons. Even through sex from a recuperated person up to seven weeks of recovery. All these can be placed in Comte's "experimentation" scheme of "methods of inquiry". Finally, its prevention and likely cure as also reported by (LSMH, 2014) can equally be placed within the realm of "comparison" in Comte's work on methods of inquiry – social research, one might say, thereby contributing to societal development.

Similarly, Max Weber's encapsulated work "Bureaucracy" (high degree of division of labour and specialization, principle of rationality, objectivity, defined rules and regulations etc). This serves as emancipation of mankind from antediluvian pattern of social existence and from doldrums of irrationality to rationality. Take for instance, the "Dark Ages" in the history of mankind characterized by a general stagnation of educational, scientific and literary progress as well as poverty and ignorance. An important development that followed the period was the movement from feudalism to capitalism, and division of labour occasioned by what later became known as Industrial Revolution (Onyeonoru, 2005).

## RECOMMENDATION

From the forgoing, the strongest thrust of this paper is that all these were made possible as a result of understanding the lapses in the society and a gradual re-transformation (upliftment) of both human capability and societal apparatus to meet the quest for development in all its ramifications.

Hence, the need for Nigeria as a developing nation to take clues from these scholars' wealth of experiences and dedication toward humanity in other for the country (Nigeria) to meet the much long-awaited quest for development and its sustainability.

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