RETHINKING THE *PRINCIPLE OF SOLIDARITY* IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE 'MODERN MAN' IN THE QUEST FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL ORDER IN AFRICA

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Abstract
History and living experiences of Africans (Nigerians in particular) and societies of the Global South have provided an extra-ordinary set of pressures and events as a context for modern man, social order, nation-building and authentic development. Under such circumstances, the imposition of colonial rule, independence, inter-ethnic and inter-regional competition or even violence, military coups, civil wars, oil boom in Nigeria, for instance, had government and individuals spending recklessly and often with corrupt intentions, along with huge debt crisis, which had led to drastic recession that lowered standards of living among the citizenry. These challenges ultimately give tendencies to citizens in cleaving to what they know, have and believe; this is to state that people adhere to regional loyalties, ethnic ties, kinships, religious and political relations, among others, that protect them in an unstable and insecure society. The thrust of this paper, therefore, is to examine the principle of solidarity from the theoretical framework of social doctrines of the Catholic Church in the quest to understand the modern man and the utmost search for good governance, which will engender virile social order and development in African societies and other societies of the Global South. The intent will be to critically bring to fore that the application and implementation of solidarity within any human society will be valid and guaranteed when its members recognise one another as persons in the quest towards social order and authentic development.

Keywords: Modern man, Social order, Development, Solidarity, Global South

Contextualising the *Modern Man* and the Discourse of Social Order and Development

Our understanding of the idea of *modern man* is one that faces existential crises and problems in all facets and ramifications of life whether economic, social, political, religious and cultural, among other factors and crises. Here, we are talking of man pre-occupied with what it means to exist; a man with myriads of challenges and problems lying in his path (especially in societies of the Global South particularly Nigeria where he is not sure of what to eat, what to drink, what to put on and where to lay his head, among others). And because of these essential and existential needs, he is still given the first place in all things. Man, here, is not to be construed in terms of his essence in Plato's philosophy as a form but man is what he is according to how he makes of himself.

For Plato, an individual becomes a man by his participation in the form of man, as seen and conceptualised in his *World of Forms*. But for the existentialists like Jean-Paul Sartre, Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Buber and Martin Heidegger, among others, man is a self-creating being, that is, he exists first and makes himself what he is. This is a form of 'protest' against the way man sees himself as strictly a member of the society or as the society understands him. Even if he is to see himself that way, he would enjoy a feeling of 'irresponsibility' and his decisions determined by majority opinions. In this regard, man would be nothing other than 'a machine' in the hands of the society. For anyone that cares to know, man is an existential problem to himself and to his world, and not an

abstract speculation as he has to describe, make, form and salvage his own existence and its conflicts, the origin of the conflicts and the anticipation of over-coming them. This suggests and shows that man is a conscious being rather than a thing to be predicted or manipulated.

The question of social order in the understanding of the modern man is seen and understood from the theoretical framework of Ernest Gellner. Gellner's position for a stable social order leads to our argument in the quest for an authentic development in Africa, as he itemises two major factors by which a stable social order could be attained and in the same manner affect positively the quest for an enduring development. To him, "In our time, a social order is valid, has rightful claims on the loyalty of the members of the society, under two conditions: It is bringing about, or successfully maintaining, an industrial affluent society (that is, conducive to economic growth) and the most important one that is more related to our argument here is that, those in authority are co-cultural with the rest of the society."[1] The question we should ask ourselves in this part of the world is: how true is this analysis and conceptualisation of Gellner in state's relationship with and to the society? Do leaders especially in Nigeria command the loyalty, obedience and trust of their people, if not put under force? Or are they living in the same way those in society are living despite the fact that they continuously 'evangelise' that people need to sacrifice for the development of their society? The answers to the above questions are blowing in the wind and could be answered by all, even by children, that it is a truism leaders in Nigeria if not in all societies of the Global South are not co-cultural with fellow citizens.

In reality, Gellner's argument projects the fact that even though a stable economy is a necessity in a given society, the idea of nationalism should also not to be forgotten, which has been our argument. That is, even though industrialisation is necessary, nationalism is more needed in the over-all interests of the people of a particular society. He argues further in support of moral or non-tangible aspect of development to be more important than the tangible as a social order, which fails to satisfy either of these conditions, as mentioned above, will fail to retain the loyalty of its members where one that is able to satisfy these conditions is likely to survive not minding other defects therein that:

> Virtue, salvation, the good life, consent, the general will, and the rest – those one fashionable criteria – though they may survive in textbooks, when used in real life are merely near vacuous labels attached to quite different criteria and questions. These are – how to become industrialised, and just what to do with an industrial society when one has it. The paradigm of a founder of a state, of a Father of the nation, is no longer the ancestor, or conqueror, divine visitor, hero or lawgiver: it is the liberator-developer, the Ataturk figure. (Liberators who do not modernise or modernisers who do not liberate, are not eligible as symbols of an acceptable order). . . There is also, admittedly, the issue of how much liberty is possible at either stage. (This indeed is a concern whose roots may be quite independent. Still, its relevant current formulations are those against the background of industrialism or industrialisation.)[2]

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[1] Gellner, Ernest. *Thought and Change.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964: 33.
[2] Gellner, *Thought and Change,* 36.

The argument by Gellner is that values, norms and mores, among others, are necessary in the quest for stable order and authentic development. There is no doubt about the fact that economy or what we refer to as industrialisation is good but the non-tangible aspects cannot be under-played as they are necessary parts of the culture of the people in which Gellner points at as the basis of nationalism. In his views, he projects that, "The effective conviction of our time was summed up as the doctrine that a social order is made valid by conducing to or maintaining to an industrial society, plus the fact that its members share a common 'nationality'. An alternative way of formulating this contention is to say that the diffusion of industrialism, carried out by national units, is the dominant event of our time."[3]

By nationality, national units, nationalism, we mean culture, which is the totality of people's way and manner of existence of which strategic conditions will be examined and analysed in my argument that it will be difficult to achieve and attain virile social order and authentic development in Africa without recourse to culture as the basis and foundation. This is to bring about the link between humanity and culture, that is, to be human, one needs to be cultured and, therefore, affects positively the quest for social order and development in all ramifications of man's existence as he argues that, "And the classification of men by 'culture' is of course the classification by 'nationality'. It is for this reason that it now seems inherent in the very nature of things, that to be human means to have some nationality. In our particular social context, it is inherent in the nature of things."[4]

By culture, it is understood as everything that man perceives, knows, thinks, values and feels, is learned through participating in a cultural system, that is, the totality of people's way of life. This means that human potentials can only be realised within the structure of human culture and through growing up in close contact with other human beings in the society. Culture is understood as the complex and broad set of relationships, values, attitudes and behaviours that binds together a specific community consciously and unconsciously. This is because man is born into specific culture with prevailing values and opportunities. Culture is ordinary as every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, and its own meanings. Every human society expresses these in institutions, arts and learning. It is also expressed in social, political, religious, economic and even personal levels as the quality of human existence.

In simple terms, it will be difficult for societies of the Global South to attain social order and development until the above are achieved, which ought to begin from those in the realm of state and flowing back to the society. Based on this, the principle of solidarity for sustenance of a virile social order and authentic development is apt and germane! In discussing about the true nature of social order, Felix Olatunji argues elsewhere that it would be a futile exercise to examine and project about social order and development without recourse to the idea of freedom that, ". . . for authentic development to be a reality, which will translate to social order, an informed and disciplined freedom is a necessity of which without it, it will be a futile effort in the quest for development in Africa."[5]

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[3] Gellner, *Thought and Change,* 40.
[4] Gellner, *Thought and Change,* 157.
[5] Olatunji, Felix O. "Modernisation Theory and the Challenge of Social Order in Africa", in Zalaznik, Mira and Komel, Dean (eds.), *Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit als Herausforderung der Humanwissenschaften - Freedom and Justice as a Challenge of the Humanities.* Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, Switzerland, 2018: 169.

The *Principle of Solidarity* in the attainment of Virile Social Order and Authentic Development in Africa and the Global South

In Catholic tradition and through her emphasis on social teachings, the principle of solidarity, alongside the principles of subsidiarity and option for the poor, is one of the major social teachings that we are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cut across religious, nationality, racial, economic, class, cultural, political, language and ideological differences, which ultimately means that each of us is part of the same human race and that human race is inter-connected and inter-dependent. We must see ourselves in others and collaborate towards solutions to the problems and challenges affecting global peace, social order and development. Solidarity is a recognition that is a commitment to strengthen community and promote a just society.

In *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, John Paul II unequivocally states that, "solidarity is 'not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual because we are all really responsible for all."[6] He argues further that:

> The exercise of solidarity within each society is valid when its members recognise one another as persons. Those who are more influential. . . should feel responsible for the weaker and be ready to share with them all they possess. Those who are weaker. . . should not adopt a purely passive attitude or one that is destructive of the social fabric, but, while claiming their legitimate rights, should do what they can for the good of all. The intermediate groups, in their turn, should not selfishly insist on their particular interests, but respect the interests of others.[7]

And similar to the dictates and analyses of John Paul II above, Andreas Raspotnik, Jacob Marine and Laura Ventura, in *The Issue of Solidarity in the European Union,* clearly project that, "solidarity mechanisms are not based on pure generosity but on enlightened self-interests. Our unity *(should be)* is based on deep ties: common roots and common values. It is those values that make us a Community and a Union, not just a market."[8]

Our argument for the discourse and conceptualisation of solidarity is set on the ontological foundation upon the relationship between two entities – individuals and the society in which they reside, that is, the utmost search for development and social order in societies of the Global South will be realisable when the 'new abhorrent culture of sentimentalism', which is founded on primordial realities of individualism and geocentricism, among other conceptualisations, is uprooted and replaced with and through the social indicators of communalism, namely: the supremacy of the community, the sanctity of authority, respect for old age or the elderly, the usefulness of the individual, and religion as a way of life as examined by Joseph Faniran.[9]

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[6] John Paul II. *On Social Concern*, 1987: No. 38.
[7] John Paul II. *On Social Concern*, No. 39
[8] Raspotnik, Andreas. Marine Jacob and Ventura, Laura. *The issue of solidarity in European Union – a discussion paper*. TEPSA Pre-Presidency Conference, June 14-15, 2012: 1.
[9] Faniran, Joseph. *Foundations of African communication with examples from Yoruba culture.* Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd, 2008: 45-58.

What the above implies, according to Olatunji Oyeshile, is that, "in modern African states, the quest for development and social order is not something that can be pursued from one end, either that of the state or that of the citizens. It has to be a joint venture. And there is an ontological basis for this relationship. The community, we should note, is the basis for the actualisation of individual values, aspirations and goals. The individual who has imbibed the spirit of community voluntarily gives up certain desires in order to ensure the continued survival of the community."[10] This is to state unequivocally that individuals owe their existence, survival, sustenance and development to the community of which they reside and live, which could be built upon John Mbiti's popular *dictum*: 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am'. This is clearly separated and distinguished from Rene Descartes' popular saying: *Cogito ego sum* – I think, therefore, I am. This is because an individual in African communitarian sense must essentially exist in the midst of the people before his/her essence could be materialised. The relationship is symbiotic in nature, which cannot be separated and broken. This is to state from the Yoruba parlance that, *agbajo owo la fi n'soya, ajeje owo kan o gberu d'ori* (The communal chest is beaten with collective palms; one hand cannot lift the load to the head) and *a kii r'eni lodo s'agbara* (One does not go through unnecessary exertion at the riverside where there is a waiting helper), which has been argued for in other essay by the duo of Felix Olatunji and Ade' Adejumo[11].

The above is the reason individualism, as an ideology and a principle of life, is abhorrent and not encouraged in Africa, although it is not destroyed. Even though an individual is a separate being, and can take decisions on his/her own, with full authority of whatever s/he does, Kwame Gyekye argues in a distinct and precise manner thus:

> . . . the capacity for self-assertion that the individual can exercise presuposses, and in fact derives from, the autonomous nature of the person. By autonomy, I do not mean self-completeness but the having of a will, a rational will of one's own, that enables one to determine at least some of one's own goals and to pursue them, and to control one's destiny.[12]

Our argument above shows that an individual enjoys his/her existence, self-assertion and even authority to take decisions from the shared values, ideals, thoughts of the shared system in which s/he lives. The point being made here is that societies of the Global South must definitely re-align themselves with this inclusive (endogenous) instead of exclusive (exogenous) system of life, which is already lost for social order to be attained and entrenched. This is clearly different from the unnecessary accumulation of wealth today to the detriment of the worse-offs in the society as it is the new life that many Africans are wont to leave and depart from, so that no one is alien to the community in which s/he belongs. We must be conscious, understand and acknowledge the fact that

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[10] Oyeshile, Olatunji. "The Individual-Community Relationship as an Issue in Social and Political Philosophy", in Olusegun Oladipo (ed.), *Core Issues in African Philosophy.* Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2006: 116-117.

[11] Olatunji, Felix O. & Adejumo, Ade. "Thoughts on Corruption in Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* and the Challenge of Social Order in Africa", *Journal of Philosophy and Life,* 2018, 3/4(2): 33 – 45, Uzbekistan Philosophical Society, Uzbekistan. Also in Olatunji, Felix O. & Adejumo, Ade. "Reflections on Corruption in Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* and the Challenge of Social Order in Africa", *Satya Nilayam: Chennai Journal of Intercultural Philosophy,* March, 2019, 35: 80 – 98, India.

[12] Gyekye, Kwame. *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997: 54.

three fundamental essentials are *sine qua non* to the achievement and attainment of virile social order in any society of the Global South, which are cultural knowledge, education and a functional rule of law. A virile and sound educational and an implemented functional rule of law are standards upon which social order for humanisation, emancipation and authentic development could be laid and established.

Our understanding of cultural knowledge is different from the Western notion and idea about epistemic claims, which negates in totality realities about the mystical and supra-sensible realm. In this manner, our analysis here will not follow the rules as set in Western epistemology but rather a deviation from the *statusquo*. Here, Amaechi Udefi states that epistemology, which is the science of knowledge, cannot exist in vacuum without culture of the people. He argues that, "The point being made so far is that philosophy (epistemology) is the product of a culture because it is inconceivable to say that a culture can exist without those elements of thought that are shared in common. Hence, we can say that all individualised philosophies stem from the general experience and problem confronting a particular people in a given cultural environment."[13] With this understanding, Chris Anyanwu's view as quoted by Naseem Zubairi is apt here, "We are therefore entering into a cultural world whose philosophy of integration, whose principles of understanding and of aesthetic continuum differ completely from the Western ideas of what constitutes the trust-worthy knowledge and reality."[14] Here, we are moving technically away from the Western dimension.

Within the framework and ambience of the concerns of peoples and persons in societies of the Global South, we argue that cultural knowledge is critical towards the achievement of social order and authentic development in all societies. This means that it is imperative that cultural understanding is highly and essential integral to enhancing strategies in the quest towards analysis of social order and development to the realities of societies, quality of life and well-being of peoples in Africa, which must be founded on man as both the subject and object. Our understanding of cultural knowledge is based on the belief systems of the people, which are seen as the foundation and clearly different from the sources of knowledge, in the traditional Western form of epistemology. This means that the systemic nature in belief systems is the interrelation among several beliefs that people identify and uphold for their commitment and survival. Every human being has a belief system that s/he utilises, and it is through this mechanism(s) that human beings individually and communally make sense of the world around us.

The argument is, therefore, centred on man as the subject of development with its processes and outcomes revolving around people. While the processes of and about development centre on the expansion of people's choices; its outcomes are based on the improved quality of human life, which ultimately means that attention should be shifted to people and not necessarily to structures that are built on economic/scientific foundations alone. Such attention, according to our understanding, should be based and founded on cultural knowledge of the people, in order to solve their problems by themselves. This means that inclusion and participation of people, from their cultural knowledge, are essential for the attainment and achievement of social order and development in African (Global South) societies.

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[13] Udefi, Amaechi. "Dimensions of Epistemology and the case for Africa's Indigenous Ways of Knowing", *Tattva Journal of Philosophy,* 2015, 7(1): 6.
[14] Naseem, Zubairi. "African Heritage and Contemporary Life: An Experience of Epistemological Change", *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change.* 1992, II(2): 24.

From another dimension in the quest for social order and development in any society, it must be acknowledged that education is pivotal and germane. It is a truism that our modern education and educational policies often turn 'educated' minds to robots and individualists so many times. Our societies (especially African) today are filled with 'educated illiterates' and it should not be forgotten that education is not the same as certification but a round education, which will produce individuals to conform to rules, mores, norms and regulations of their societies. In this claim, we should be reminded that, any academic pursuit with degrees and certificates devoid of character is pointless.

It must also be noted and acknowledged that the importance of education can never be under-played and under-valued in any society as it is the most potent weapon, which is left for man to transform, change and liberate himself and his society from enslavement, ignorance, backwardness and under-development. That is, education would not just mean the totality of ideas in the world but a combination of methods to mould individuals as good persons to themselves and to the society in which they live because morality is not only taught, it is also lived. This is because education is and will always be a process of renewal of the meanings of experiences through a process of transmission partly incidental to the ordinary companionship and/or intercourse of adults and youths; and partly deliberately instituted to engender social continuity and regeneration. This process is seen to involve control, growth, transformation, development and humanisation of both the immature individuals and the group/society in which they live.

The end-objective of this type of education is multi-lateral in nature because it is out to produce persons who will be responsible and responsive towards the maintenance of peace and order in any society they find themselves. In *Gravissimum educationis,* the fathers of the Second Vatican Council aver that:

> All men of whatever race, condition or age, in virtue of their dignity as human persons, have an inalienable right to education. This education should be suitable to the particular destiny of the individuals, adapted to their ability, sex and national cultural traditions, and should be conducive to fraternal relations with other nations in order to promote true unity and peace in the world. True education is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of that society to which he belongs and in the duties of which he will, an adult, have a share.[15]

The implication of this is that education is a process of developing knowledge ability in individuals in such a way that they use this form of knowledge to improve themselves and their society. The process of this education is that of cultural interaction because each person is educated in and for the society in which he/she lives. This social attitude of the community in which one lives and shares its values helps to improve personality and it is the hallmark of the quality of being educated. This form of education is aimed at producing *omoluabi* – an individual of good character - in Yoruba educational ideology in its entirety, that is, in life situations and for the sake of posterity. This type of education makes individuals good assets to the society. And it is not meant only for the recipients because as it contributes to the growth and development of the recipients; so

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[15] Vatican Council II. *Gravissimum Educationis - Declaration on Christian Education,* 1965: No. 1.

also, it contributes and benefits the society that produces such educated fellows for the emancipation, socialisation and the humanisation of such society.

In order to further this argument on education towards social order, development and humanisation, it must be noted that education is a process of acculturation through which individuals are helped to attain the development of their potentialities and their maximum attention when necessary according to the right reason and to achieve thereby their perfect self-fulfillment in accordance with and to the societal dictates. Georg Hegel is of the view that the individual derives his/her understanding and practice of virtue from the virtuous state of which s/he is a part while Immanuel Kant's ideal community consists of individuals who treat one another as ends rather than means. His famous categorical imperative states that man should always act as though his individual actions were to become a universal maxim binding on all men in all human circumstances, situations and conditions. Therefore, the responsibility of this *stratum* cannot be over-emphasised and waved aside in the education of individuals for the community. This is germane as functional education makes individuals members of their community, using the words of Obafemi Awolowo as stated by Francis Ogunmodede that, "education is the most potent weapon left to man to transform, change and liberate himself and society from the slavery of ignorance, diseases, poverty and backwardness, and attain rapid socio-economic and political progress, prosperity, peace and happiness.[16] Here, the attention should be shifted to the integration of the right quantity and quality of the so-called formal and cultural systems of education for the actualisation of social order and not only the accumulation of certificates and degrees.

We also state, apart from the above, that the rule of law is *sine qua non* in the attainment of social order and development. By the rule of law, we understand the efficient carrying out of the rules by members of the society, which has two dimensions, namely: the law should rule the people and the people should obey the law; and that the law must be capable of being obeyed, that is, to guide and guard people's behaviour. These two aspects of the rule of law are indispensable for the good working of any society (state). The first prevents the danger of legalism, that is, citizens becoming slaves of the law, forgetting the spirit behind the law. Legalism forgets the human aspect of the law whereas the second avoids the danger of presumption that one breaks the law all the time and gets away with it, as it is the case in this part (African societies especially Nigeria) of the world. Here, if those who transgress the law are not punished, the entire system will collapse because those that are following the first aspect will have reason to think that those who are not obeying the law are profiting from the system and contributing commensurably to the destruction of the community.

The importance of the rule of law lies partly in the power it denies to people and governments, and in the discipline to which it subjects all forms of authority. The denial and discipline are conditions of the exercise of power, which in a democratic society, comes from the people. This is because the underlying principle behind what is called and referred to as good governance as one of the fundamentals of social order and development is the focus on the people as the ultimate objective. Then, the emphasis on the rule of law stems from the widespread acceptance that the rule of law is a pre-condition for human survival, that is, a functional rule of law is considered an important characteristic and a pre-requisite for development and social order. This is because the

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[16] Ogunmodede Francis. *Obafemi Awolowo's Socio-Political Philosophy*. A Ph.D Thesis Submitted to Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, Faculty of Philosophy, Rome, Italy, 1986: 218

benefits of functional rule of law are numerous as it proposes that government should have restraints and not possessing discretionary powers, as Philip Ujomu and Felix Olatunji reiterate that, ". . . in interpreting the concrete repercussions of seeking the rule of law, we are concerned about the way by which a person or group with power can be made to act justly or see the need for doing so. If this is so, then we are interested in how power can be negotiated or made to serve the interest of higher and positive values or goals."[17] This ultimately means that there should be legal controls over government activities and no one, including those at the helms of affairs, should be above the law. These principles, if successfully implemented will result in virile social order and development, of which national stability, security and good governance would be guaranteed.

Hayek wrote in his work, *The Road to Serfdom*[18] that the rule of law implies limits to the scope of legislation: it restricts it to the kind of general rules known as formal law, and excludes legislation either directly aimed at particular people, or at enabling anybody to use the coercive power of the state for the purpose of such discrimination. This means that not everything is regulated by law; but on the contrary, that the coercive power of the state can be used only in cases defined in advance by law and in such a way that it can be seen how it is being used. In a democratic society, the rule of law must be inculcated in all the members through education, good example and consistent application. It is a necessary aspect for a good functioning of the political community in the realisation of the values of communality and individuality.

Conclusion

Our conscious effort towards the understanding of the principle of solidarity is to make modern man a 'veritable tool' in the attainment of social order and authentic development, which could be likened to the prayer for peace of St. Francis of Assisi: *Lord, make me an instrument of peace* in the world. We must note that without peace as a fundamental and significant condition, it will be difficult to have social order and development in societies of Africa and the Global South. It is a truism that peace could only thrive when there is adequate security of lives and property, as it is in an environment that is secured that peace and tranquility could thrive, which will evolve social order and authentic development. This is to say that security is ensuring a better today and a brighter future for the citizenry, which in itself, guarantee an atmosphere of peace, serenity and tranquility in any human society. This form of security could only be guaranteed when there is good governance, which is a solid foundation upon which social order and development could thrive. We have argued also in this paper that the essence of one's education is to make individual conforms to the dictates and norms of his society; anything outside this is pointless and aimless. This clearly means that proper and sound education will form the fulcrum upon which the principle of solidarity could be laid.

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[18] F. Hayek. *The Road to Serfdom.* London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, United Kingdom, 1976: 62-63.

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