

Rober Dibie, **Public Management and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Military-Bureaucratic Relationship by Robert Dibie**. 400 pages. \$89.00. Publisher: Ashgate Publishing Limited, England, 2003.

Public Management and Sustainable Development in Nigeria is the first seminal research completed book on Nigerian Public Administrators. It analyzes Nigeria's administrative values and attitudes using survey research methodology. With wit and ingenuity the author traces the development of Nigeria's public administration and the shifting perceptions that have accompanied them throughout the nation's history. The author breaks new ground in explaining how efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability, improved leadership and gender perception, elimination of quota system, effective implementation of the rule of law, and improved ethics orientation could transform the Nigeria's civil service into an instrument for attaining broad-based sustainable development in the twenty-first century.

In pursuing the theme of public management and sustainable development in Nigeria, this text explores the relationship between the military administration and federal bureaucracy in the nation. The ongoing tension between the army and the bureaucracy in this relationship is revealed through the use of interesting case studies. For example, two key instances characterizing this tension included the so-called (1) Nigeria's Structural Adjustment policy, and (2) the difficulties encountered when the federal ministries responded adversely to directives for implementing policies promulgated by the military administration. As a backdrop to the multitude of issues underpinning the text's discussion of public management and sustainable development, military-bureaucratic relationship, the author provides a thorough treatment of Nigeria's problems with political development. The text also examined the roles played by the succeeding military rulers, including higher civil administrators ranging back to when Nigeria gained its independence from Great Britain (p. 337)

As is evident in the analysis provided in this text, the process of development in Nigeria during 1996-1999 was marked by centralized economic decision-making, coupled with an unorthodox set of policies by the military juntas. For example, the protracted military intervention, along with the dictatorial approach to policy making during the period examined as part of this study, appear to be fundamentally in conflict with any known systematic process of economic or political development. To be sure, economic progress is said to be promoted when economic freedom, expressed through the market place, is nourished and enhanced. Or, as Michael Todaro rightly noted, several qualities of development would encompass "a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions as well as the

acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty” (see also, Todaro, 1979: 62).

The text highlights those factors that appear to have been responsible for retarding the process of economic development in Nigeria. The factors discussed include the irrelevance of centralized economic decision-making; near-complete military domination and intervention in Nigeria's economic affairs; the pervasiveness of “bad government” exhibited by the military administrators; and the unprecedented violation of the rule of law during the military regimes in Nigeria, just to mention some.

As the author rightly observed by drawing on Bienen (1970), the military lacked the wisdom, skills, training, mindset and resolve for social and economic development. For instance, their mode of ruler-ship has been described as arbitrary, even compared to that of the British colonial administration. Under the military regime, “the problems of corruption, the ever increasing incidence of robbery and brigandage, the frequent industrial strikes, the miserable performance of the economy, the high rate of inflation, the uneven development of the country, the low level of modernization, and sustained inter-ethnic rivalry have led to the paralysis of the military government.” (p. 340)

As part of the data collection process, the author conducted extensive interviews between 1997 and 2000. He interviewed key military officers, senior and junior federal public servants, including development program coordinators. The text further argued that the nation's resources and opportunities were not only inequitably distributed; they were overwhelmingly dependent on the will of the Supreme Military Council (SMC) or the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) and selected senior civil servants. The ruling military council also depended on selected senior bureaucrats for advice and counsel when it came to implementing public policies in the nation. In the process of making public policy, however, the juntas depended less on the more experienced senior civil servants. Clearly, the relationship between the military and the civil servants was contentious to the point that it severely detracted from an effort to pursue sustainable development. In the author's view, effective decision-making is only possible in conditions that promote cooperation between the military and higher bureaucracy in Nigeria, but such cooperation has diminished markedly. The Nigerian situation indicates a breakdown in civil-military decision-making, and hence, repeated failures in achieving stated national goals. Part of this problem can be explained by the fact that in Nigeria, public administrators are underpaid; lack motivation and most of all do not seem to have a clear sense of purpose and direction.

As the author makes clear, the core element of the Structural Adjustment (SAP)/Make-or-Buy policy rested on its implementation. While it was essential that those who were to be involved in policy implementation should be included as part of policy deliberations----formulation, unfortunately, in the Nigerian situation, this was not the case. Other examples of the poor meshing between policy making and its implementation abound. The most notable of these remains the Oakland, California, Economic Development Administration (EDA) study by Pressman and Wildavsky (1984). Under the Nigerian military regime, the tendency for administrators to participate in the process of policy deliberations was very remote. As a result, policy implementation in the Nigerian context may rightly have been seen as an imposition, and hence, resisted by those charged with its execution.

The text outlines and discusses some of the factors that would enhance Nigeria's potential for development and the attainment of sustainable development in the 21st century. These factors include (1) accelerating trade liberalization to enhance the competitiveness of domestic procedures and speeding up Nigeria's integration into the global economy; (2) fostering private sector development as the principal engine of growth, but focus on the primary sector and the use of raw materials; (3) promoting all aspects of ethical practice, fairness, justice and good governance; (4) fostering human resources and social development; (5) building administrative and managerial capacity as an essential step in carrying out the needed reforms effectively; (6) opening the banking sector to healthy competition, particularly through privatization schemes; (7) strengthening the legal framework for banking activities; (8) enforcing the rule of law; and (9) enforcing transparency and accountability in the public sector (p. 357).

The relationship between the military establishment and the federal bureaucracy in Nigeria is explored in the text. Among many other factors, Nigeria's Structural Adjustment policy, including the difficulties encountered whenever the federal ministries responded differently, often adversely, to the implementation of their policies, was used to highlight the nature of tenuous relationship between the military and public administrators. For instance, the author points out that in the context of evolving a broad-based sustainable development, military intervention and the patrimonialization of Nigeria's apparatus were seen to be fundamentally in conflict with the process of economic development. As a result, it is suggested that "policy reform" should represent the initial steps in the long journey toward sustainable development and progress in Nigeria. Policy reform, as used in this text, refers to those policies that effectively promote development through market-oriented principles and reduced government intervention. In suggesting that sustainable development is a multifaceted concept, the author argues that the

behavior of government officials in particular, plays an important role in stimulating or impeding, economic progress, as does, for example, the behavior of entrepreneurs.

This book will be useful to a wide range of audiences: students and active researchers in development administration; policy makers, managers, administrators, and individuals who seek to understand the challenges and complexities of organizing and managing sustainable change and the need to work toward meaningful change. For classroom usage, universities and colleges in western and developing countries should find the book particularly relevant for courses in areas such as development administration, comparative, and sustainable development. Overall, the text will serve as an invaluable resource in fostering a deep understanding of the complexities involved in public management and sustainable development in Nigeria.

References:

- Bienen, Henry. 1971. *The Military and Modernization*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Pressman, J. and Aaron Wildavsky. 1999. *Implementation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Todaro, Michael. 1979. *Economic Development in the Third World*. London: Longmans.

Ogwo Jombo Umeh, Ph.D.
Department of Public Affairs and Administration,
California State University, Hayward