

Adedeji, Adebayo, Onigu Otite, 'Kunle Amuwo, Samuel Egwu, Inya Eteng, Sina Kawonise, Nnamdi Ofondu, Aja Okorie and Nuhu Yaqub. 1997. Nigeria: Renewal from the Roots? The Struggle for Democratic Development. Zed Books. London and New Jersey. XV + 226 pages + index.

The basis for the book is set by President Julius Nyerere's comment on the African Center for Development and Strategic Studies (ACDESS) in which the former President of Tanzania made the following remarks:

"There is no poverty of ideas about what Africa's problems are, nor how to deal with them—either within or outside the continent. But it was thought that there was a lack of opportunity to express, debate and test African leadership which is dedicated to thinking about and for Africa's future" (p.vii)

This book is ACDESS' first attempt to do what it was established to do which is "to provide a center where many ideas flow together, fertilize each other and challenge each other, while the policy relevance of research remains pre-eminent. And no one will be responsible for its work and output except itself—so that all African peoples, institutions, and governments will be able to use it, and consider its ideas and arguments, while the approval of no government or institution will shape the outcome of the research" (p.vii). The book focuses on Nigeria. It is divided into three parts: 1) Theoretical Perspectives 2) Seven Nigerian Case Studies and 3) Evolving a Way Forward. Part 1 contains three chapters; part 2 contains seven chapters and part 3 contains one chapter. Eight of the nine authors are affiliated with Nigerian universities. They are very knowledgeable of the Nigerian condition and are scholars of the Nigerian political system.

Although when this book was written, Nigeria just began to work hard toward democratization after decades of dictatorship of military rulers. This book is certainly relevant for it provides a historical perspective of governance in Nigeria. The struggles of this African country in finding a permanent solution to its political instability and unsustainable development trends since independence are well documented and debated in the book.

The first three chapters of the volume provide a solid theoretical basis for popular participation in government. The meaning of democracy is examined. The relevance of democracy to Nigeria, the different models of participations in organization are discussed. How does a country such as Nigeria with over 370 ethnic groups grapple with democracy? Democracy requires a voice in government. The different ethnic groups must be represented in government and how to do so has been Nigeria's biggest problem.

Estein's ladder of citizen participation clearly informs everyone of the significance of real representation in organization. Placation and tokenism are problematic in seeking representation. In order to include the vision of the people of Nigeria in how they want to be governed, their voices must be heard and their input in the government must be actively sought after, nurtured and encouraged. In a society that is very complex, its history must be taken into account and its indigenous perspectives as well as its Euro-American social and cultural elements must be included in the formula for governance. It is generally argued in the book that a "bottom-up" approach of participation is best for Nigeria. This argument is supported by the seven case studies from four regions of the country. This is an excellent book for students of development in Third World countries, especially Africa. Its scholarship is superb and its contributors are well informed. Their essays (empirical for the most part) inform its readers. Highly recommended for libraries and as supplemental text for African Studies.

Valentine James
Southern University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana