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Improving The Compliance Level of The Hard-To-Tax-Group in Nigeria: <i>Ibiang, Okoi O.</i> ...	1
The Evolution of Value Added Tax (VAT) in Nigeria: <i>E.E. Attah</i> ...	10
Periscoping Value Added Tax in The Nigerian Economy: Some Contending Issues: <i>Patrick L. Akpan</i>	18
Capital Sourcing Methods By Gender Among Nigerian Cocoa Marketers: <i>Akinola, Grace Olujemisi</i>	30
The Effect of Motivational Incentives on The Performance of Voluntary Workers of Disease Control Programme in Cross River State: <i>Bassey B. Esu</i> ...	40
Productivity Improvement Techniques in Small Scale Enterprises: <i>B.J. Inyang</i> ...	51
Credit Policy And Profitability of The Firm: <i>S.A. Effiong</i> ...	63
The Privatization Option in Restructuring The Education Sector in Nigeria.: <i>Akpan, Emmanuel Isaiah</i>	84
Developing Effective Policy on Consumer Welfare in Nigeria.: <i>Nsobiari F. Awara</i> ...	92
Poor Revenue Base of Local Government: Causes and Cures: <i>E.J.C. Duru</i> ...	103
Career Development and Optimization of Human Resources Uses in The Emerging Technologies: The Conflicts and Possible Resolutions: <i>Adeoye Abayomi Olarewaju</i> ...	112
Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Economy in Governance in The 21 <sup>st</sup> Century: Budget Analysis as a Tool: <i>Ariyo Adesopo</i> ...	126
The Cameroon Woman's Status and Political Economy: <i>Ngum Martha</i> ...	140
The Electronic Media And The Democratization Process in Nigeria As a Developing Country: <i>Solomon U. Ezenibe</i> ...	157
Early Personality Development: A Foundation For a Healthy Adult Life: <i>Robert B. Etor</i> ...	162
Library Reading as An Instrument For Survival and National Development: The University of Calabar Experience. <i>Mfon E. Etuk</i> ...	170
Effect Of Credit Use On Gross Margins In Food Crop Enterprises Of Small Scale Farmers In Cross River State, Nigeria: <i>D.I. Agom and I.C. Idiong</i> ...	179
Basic Social Indicators For The promotion of Primary Health Care.: <i>Emmanuel C. Ihejiamaizu.</i> ...	190
The Macro-Economics of Nigerian Agriculture: The New Realities and Alternative Development Path: <i>Okon E. Akpan</i> ...	202
The Politics of Deregulation of the Down-Stream Sector of the Oil Industry: <i>Boypa O. Egbe &amp; J.O. Ewah.</i>	219
Book Review: The Sociology of Traditional and Modern Political Administrative Systems and Some Contentious Issues in Contemporary Nigeria by E.C. Ihejiamaizu and B.O. Egbe. Reviewer: <i>Patrick A. Assibong</i> ...	235

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## CONTENTS

Improving The Compliance Level of The Hard-To-Tax-Group in Nigeria: <i>Ibiang, Okoi O</i>	1
The Evolution of Value Added Tax (VAT) in Nigeria: <i>E.E Attah</i>	10
Periscoping Value Added Tax in The Nigerian Economy: Some Contending Issues: <i>Patrick L. Akpan</i>	18
Capital Sourcing Methods By Gender Among Nigerian Cocoa Marketers: <i>Akinola, Grace, Olujemisi</i>	30
The Effect of Motivational Incentives on The Performance of Voluntary Workers of Disease Control Programme in Cross River State: <i>Baseey B. Esu</i>	40
Productivity Improvement Techniques in Small Scale Enterprises: <i>B.J Inyang</i>	51
Credit Policy And Profitability of The Firm: <i>S.A Effiong</i>	63
The Privatization Option in Restructuring The Education Sector in Nigeria: <i>Akpan, Emmanuel Isaiah</i>	84
Developing Effective Policy in Consumer Welfare in Nigeria: <i>Nsobiari F. Awara</i>	92
Poor Revenue Base of Local Government Causes and Cures: <i>E.J.C Duru</i>	103
Career Development and Optimization of Human Resources Uses in The Emerging Technologies: The Conflicts and Possible Resolutions:	112
Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Economy in Governance in The 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Budget Analysis as A Tool: <i>Ariyo Adesopo</i>	126
The Cameroon Woman's Status and Political Economy: <i>Ngum Martha</i>	140
The Electronic Media And The Democratization process in Nigeria As a Developing Country: <i>Solomon U. Ezeribe</i>	157
Early Personality Development: A Foundation For a Healthy Adult Life: <i>Robert B. Etor</i>	162
Library Reading as An Instrument For Survival and National Development: The University of Calabar Experience. <i>Mfon E. Etuk</i>	170
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Book Review: The Sociology of Traditional and Modern Political Administrative System and Some Contentions Issues in Contemporary Nigeria by E. C. Ihejiamaizu and B. O. Egbe. Reviwer: <i>Patrick A. Assibong</i>	235

BOOK TITLE: THE SOCIOLOGY OF TRADITIONAL AND MODERN POLITICAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS AND SOME CONTENTIOUS ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA.

AUTHORS: DR. EMMANUEL C. IHEJAMAIZU AND MR. BOYPA O. EGBE

YEAR OF PUBLICATION: 2001

REVIEWER: DR. PATRICK A. ASSIBONG

PUBLISHERS: AFRICAN SCHOLARS PUBLISHING COMPANY, OWERRI

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The publication of the fourteen chapters book, *The Sociology of Traditional and Modern Political Administrative Systems and some Contentious Issues in Contemporary Nigeria* by the above prolific writers Dr. Ihejamaizu and Mr. Egbe at this period when Nigerian is still struggling to find her bearing in a traumatised ecological setting, could not have been more timely. With the 2003 elections around the corner, politicians, academics, undergraduates, laymen and even potential political thugs would gain much from the text book under review especially as the two authors tried and succeeded in charting a new path for all stakeholders in government to follow: namely – that for the Nigerian political system to be truly democratic, the elites must borrow wisdom from the Nigeria indigenous multifarious traditional political systems which can be “panel beaten” and used to help in the survival and development of the much sought for democracy in the year 2003 and beyond.

In driving the above prognoses for action home, the authors used the centralised political systems of the Yoruba, Hausa and Jukun and the non-centralised political systems of the Igbo, Yakurr and Ibibio as a point of departure. Traditional rationality in the selection of leaders in the above ethnic groups was brought to the fore by stressing the fact that the process of selection was sanctioned by spiritual element which guaranteed respect for the rules of the political game since the gods of the land were consulted to intervene by helping the king makers select the right leader.

Secondly, the treatment of the above six indigenous traditional political systems by Dr. Ihejamaizu and Mr. Egbe, revealed that all the traditional systems adhered strictly to the tenets of constitutionalism which Euro-centric scholars have often given one sided credit to western democracies.

*Book Review*

The above prescriptions (rationality and constitutionality) which are graphically and vividly presented in their book between chapters three and four are missing ingredients in the body politic of Nigeria before and after independence and this ghost has been haunting the country to this day-end product? Coups, counter coups, fabricated coups, corrupt and inept leadership.

In addressing the above issues, the authors revisited the almost forgotten indirect rule system, tradition and democracy, tradition and social change in Nigeria which helped in situating their analysis of modern administrative system, ethnicity and national integration; marginalisation and the political future of Nigeria; corruption and Nigeria's underdevelopment; the vexed and contentious issue of resource control; deregulation of the down-stream sector of the oil industry and the place of the national orientation in guaranteeing the stability of Nigeria in its proper perspective.

Throughout the book, the authors succeeded in showing that rationality, constitutionality, credibility, accountability, transparency, service to humanity, trust, truth, and diplomatic practice was also in the character of traditional politico-socio-economic systems in Nigeria before the institutionalisation of indirect rule cum colonialism and that for Nigeria to be truly democratic and for her to enjoy any modicum of political stability in this millennium, Nigerian political elites must learn from the successes recorded in traditional administrative systems in Nigeria ante colonialism. To comment the above exposition, the authors had this to say:

The major strength in these... is the prevalence of merit in all political affairs. Also we learn from these societies that democratic principles, communalism, selfless service, accountability and co-operation characterised governance and thus ensured stability, social cohesion and economic progress. Therefore, modern Nigeria can learn from them (Ihejiamaizu & Egbe, 2001:94).

To show that the two seasoned writers are not arm chair theoreticians who are preoccupied with the exuberance of their own verbosity by only criticising Nigeria's modern Political Administrative System, they presented what they christened their "Agenda for political stability in Nigeria" in the last chapter (XIV) of their book which explained the need for the new Nigeria to re-conceptualise the notion of Nation-State, develop positive attitudinal disposition; prepare to embrace reforms; the need to revive traditional African values; re-enact a truly democratic constitution devoid of the Zamfara Muslim syndrome; acceptance of dialogue and consensus; the government providing the basic needs of her citizens and foreigners alike; creation of the enabling environment for equal opportunities; tolerance:

*Book Review*

wide and popular political participation; genuine concern for each others welfare and a call for a sovereign national conference where the grey areas of Nigeria's 43 years of pretentious existence as a nation would be adequately and finally addressed.

In the history of writers in Nigeria, I do not know of any other pair which has written so extensively and pedagogically on extant and current issues about Nigeria as Emmanuel and Boypa but since every coin has two sides, we have no option than to state some deficiencies of the book which may help them update their book in subsequent editions.

In terms of geographical spread, the Ejagham speaking people are the largest ethnic group in the Cross River State. They are found in Akim Qua Town, Big Qua Town, Ikot Ansa, Ikot Omin (eight miles), Odukpani, Akamkpa, Etung and parts of Ogoja and Ikom yet the authors chose to adopt Yakurr as case study. This almost conspiratorial neglect started when Akwa Ibom was not created and Efik was chosen as the State language, followed by Bekwarra while Ejagham came a poor third and last. The news translations in vernacular were/are presented in the above order even when the Akim Chiefs and people donated the area of land housing the Radio and Television Stations.

Had the two authors consulted Professor Erim O. Erim who was lavishly acknowledge on page vi of the book under review; had they consulted Dr. Sandy Ojang Onor's book, *The Ejagham Nation published* in 1994 by Kraft Books Limited, Ibadan, had they visited the Ndidem Usang Iso of Akim Qua Town, had they... they would have collected enough material which would have helped them situate their Yakurr experience within the larger Ejagham family. For the reprint of subsequent editions, the two authors could revisit Dr. Onor's book particularly chapter four, page 86 – 117. Nigeria has a lot to learn from the Ejagham traditional political system which is actually the cradle of all Bantu Traditional Political Organizations in Nigeria and beyond.

The second fundamental limitation of the book is the total absence of visual aids like photographs, maps, diagrams, graphs, tables etc. which are supposed to be included in text books at the university level neither did the authors remember to include study/examination questions which would have helped the students to prepare for their examinations.

The chapter summaries are rather sketchy and the sub-heading would have been printed in colour to amplify the contrast and add colour and glamour to the book.

Lastly, one would have expected the authors to include a comprehensive bibliography at the end of the book which includes all the books used from chapter one to chapter fourteen. For a project of this magnitude, the two prolific writers have no excuse.

As stated earlier, the two authors have given a good account of their academic credentials in that within 302 pages, they have succeeded in presenting very credible and convincing information about *The Sociology of Traditional and Modern Political Administrative Systems and Some Contentious Issues in Contemporary Nigeria.*

## INTERNATIONAL REPORT

## The Global Science Panel on Population in Sustainable Development

The forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa (26 August – 4 September 2002) has been called by the United Nations to consider strategies toward sustainable development in all its dimensions. Hence, its mandate is broader than that of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio Conference). Population issues have previously been discussed in a separate series of World Population Conferences (Bucharest 1974, Mexico City 1984, Cairo 1994). With no new World Population Conference scheduled for 2004 and Johannesburg having a mandate that explicitly includes social and economic aspects, population as a key component of sustainable development should figure prominently in the deliberations. Yet, after the third of four preparatory meetings for WSSD (which ended in New York on 5 April), population considerations are absent from the planned agenda.

A plausible explanation for this absence is bureaucratic: in most countries inputs to Johannesburg are being prepared mainly by environment ministries that have little experience in dealing with population questions. There may also be political reasons for not wanting to discuss population issues in Johannesburg. But, arguably, sustainable development strategies that do not take into account the diversity and the dynamics of human populations will fail. This is one of the conclusions of the Global Science Panel on Population and Environment. The Panel is an independent body of international experts from the fields of population and environment that was organized by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), and the United Nations University (UNU). (Members of the Panel acted in their individual capacity, rather than representing their institutions). After a ten-month preparatory process, in April 2002 the Panel finalized a statement that summarizes its understanding of the role of population in sustainable development and outlines key policy priorities. The full text of this statement, titled *Population in sustainable development*, is reproduced below.

If we do not put the human population at the core of the sustainable development agenda, our efforts to improve human well-being and preserve the quality of the environment will fail. The Johannesburg Summit must heed the first principle of the 1992 Rio Declaration – that “human beings are at the center of concern for sustainable development” – by taking full account of how population and society interact with the natural environment.

Sustainable development aims at improving human well-being, particularly through alleviating poverty, increasing gender equity, and improving health, human resources, and stewardship of the natural environment. Because demographic factors are closely linked to these goals, strategies that include consideration of population have a better chance of success.

*International Report*

The International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 recognized that population policy should be oriented toward improving social conditions and expanding choices for individuals. The key recognition was that focusing on people – their rights, capabilities, and opportunities – would have multiple benefits for individuals, for society, and for their sustainable relationship with the environment.

Hence in Johannesburg, consideration of sustainable development policies must include population growth and distribution, mobility, differential vulnerability, and the empowerment of people, especially women.

**A demographically diverse world**

We live in a world of unprecedented demographic change. Global population increased by 2 billion during the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reaching 6 billion in 2000. Despite declining fertility rates, population is expected to increase by another 2 billion during the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nearly all of this growth will occur in developing countries and will be concentrated among the poorest communities and in urban areas.

We also live in a world of unprecedented demographic diversity. Traditional demographic groupings of countries are breaking down. Over the next 25 years increases in population in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East are expected to be larger than in the past quarter century, and growth in North America will be substantial as well. In contrast, in most European countries and in East Asia, population growth has slowed or stopped and rapid population aging has become a serious concern. Mortality also varies widely across regions, with the burden of infectious disease, including HIV/AIDS, being particularly heavy in Africa. In addition, levels of mobility, urbanization, and education differ substantially among and within regions, affecting economic and health outlooks.

This diversity presents different challenges requiring differentiated responses. The most urgent of these occur where rapid population growth, high levels of poverty, and environmental degradation coincide.

**Population matters to development and environment**

Research has shown that changes in population growth, age structure, and spatial distribution interact closely with the environment and with development. Rapid population growth has exacerbated freshwater depletion, climate change, biodiversity loss, depletion of fisheries and other coastal resources, and degradation of agricultural lands. Fertility decline in high-fertility countries, by slowing population growth, can make many environmental problems easier to solve. It can also have important economic benefits by reducing the number of children relative to the working-age population, creating a unique opportunity to increase investments in health, education, infrastructure, and environmental protection.



In high-income countries, the environmental impact of population growth and distribution must be considered jointly with high consumption rates. Even in countries where little growth is envisioned, unsustainable patterns of consumption have global implications for the environment and human well-being, and must be addressed with appropriate policies.

Before the end of this decade, a majority of the world's population will live in urban areas. Urbanization can improve people's access to education, health, and other services. It also creates environmental health hazards, such as water and air pollution, and by increasing consumption levels, can have environmental impacts in distant rural areas as well.

The mobility and spatial distribution of populations, especially at local and regional scales, is a significant determinant of sustainability. Where the population lives and works relative to the location of natural resources affects environmental quality. The expansion of the agricultural frontier and other human activity is encroaching on fragile ecosystems in many parts of the world.

#### **Policy must account for differential vulnerability within populations**

Deteriorating environmental conditions and extreme events do not affect all countries, populations, or households in the same way. Even within a household, the effects may differ by age and gender. Consideration of vulnerability must therefore focus not only on countries but also on the most vulnerable segments of the population within countries.

Many factors contribute to vulnerability, including poverty, poor health, low levels of education, gender inequality, lack of access to resources and services, and unfavourable geographic location. Populations that are socially disadvantaged or lack political voice are also at greater risk. Particularly vulnerable populations include the poorest, least empowered segments of the population, especially women and children. Vulnerable populations have limited capacity to protect themselves from current and future environmental hazards, such as polluted air and water, catastrophes, and the adverse consequences of large-scale environmental change, such as land degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

Vulnerability can be reduced by promoting empowerment, investing in human resources, and fostering participation in public affairs and decision-making.

#### **Empowerment through education and reproductive health has multiple benefits for people and the environment**

Two policies have multiple benefits for individual welfare, for social and economic development, and for the environment. One is investment in voluntary family planning and

reproductive health programs. Since a substantial proportion of women in high-fertility countries have more children than they actually want, these programs reduce unwanted childbearing. The resulting fertility decline in turn reduces population growth, allowing more time for coping with the adverse effects of that growth and easing stress on the environment.

The other top policy priority is education. Education enhances individual choice, fosters women's empowerment, and improves gender equity. More educated people are in better health and often contribute to greater environmental awareness. The increased economic productivity and technological advance that education induces can lead to less pollution-intensive production. It may also reduce vulnerability to environmental changes by facilitating access to information and the means to protect oneself. Furthermore, in countries with rapid population growth, the fertility-depressing effect of education contributes to reducing the scale of human impact on the environment.

These two policies – education and reproductive health programs – are in high demand by individuals almost universally because their multiple benefits are clear. They also empower individuals to make informed choices. Efforts to achieve sustainable development should give them the highest priority.

#### **Strengthening interdisciplinary training and research**

To facilitate the joint consideration of population, development, and environment, more interdisciplinary research and education addressing these topics is necessary at all levels. The different disciplines should also conduct their studies in ways that make the results mutually accessible. Training about the nature of these interactions is a priority issue for the policy community, media, and scientists.

Source: Population and Development Review 28(2) (June 2002)