

FEDERALISM AND PLANNING IN NIGERIA

Adam Adem Anyebe¹

¹Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The viewpoint often heard among students of development administration is that federalism is in conflict with national development planning; yet little is available by a way of empirical studies to demonstrate the influence of one on the other. This study was therefore undertaken to examine Nigeria's planning experience against the background of its federal system of government. The study employed documentary sources and personal interviews for data collection. It was revealed among others, that Nigeria has not achieved a fully integrated national development planning because of its federal arrangement. It was therefore recommended that the intergovernmental planning institutions should be strengthened while the National Bureau of Statistics should be equipped with modern techniques for data collection, processing, storage and retrieval.

Keywords: Federalism, Planning, Development, Conflicts, Planning machinery, Institution.

Contribution/ Originality

This study contributes in the existing literature by adding the study of effect of federalism on National Development Planning in Nigeria. This study uses new estimation methodology of organizing interviews with planning officers. This study originates new formula of content analysis. This study is one of very few studies which have investigated planning in a federal set-up. The paper contributes the logical analysis of relationship between federalism and planning in Nigeria. The paper's primary contribution is the finding that coordination of planning in a federal set-up is difficult. This study documents that the National Economic Council should be headed by the President of the country.

1. INTRODUCTION

The problems which federalism presents to planning have been at issue for many years. In fact, the viewpoint often heard is that federalism is in conflict with planning. This viewpoint is partly, due to the fact that a comprehensive centralised planning was first attempted in the then Soviet Union after the socialist revolution in 1917 as it proceeded to implement the development of a socialized economy (Anyebe, 2001). It has become clear in the course of more recent experience that planning may be undertaken in centrally-controlled economies like those of Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union, but it may also take place in democratic states. Such

democratic states (developed or developing) are instituting planning procedures in which the objectives of such a plan are periodically reviewed by the elected representatives of the people.

The need for planning arises largely from the fact that productive resources are scarce relative to the demand for them. Had the resources been unlimited, there would have been no need for planning. Planning is particularly popular in developing countries because it is regarded as the best approach for transforming their economies and for narrowing the gap between them and the advanced industrial countries. In view of the relative backwardness of these nations, it is generally believed that it is not expedient to leave their development to market forces (demand and supply) due to the imperfection and price distortions inherent in the system. It is therefore felt that government is the only institution in these countries capable of mobilizing resources for national development and also in a position to create an effective administrative machinery to manage the development. It is also argued that developing countries engage in planning to meet the conditions of foreign aid donors- an aid recipient should have a national plan before it can receive an aid from the donor. Therefore, planning is accorded a high priority by governments of these countries.

It is possible to describe and thereby define such planning as an attempt to promote and coordinate through central planning institutions the social and economic activities of central and regional governments with a view to achieving an accelerated national development. It is obvious that such planning presents problems in a federal set-up whose principle includes the division of powers among the levels of governments; the existence of a written constitution showing the division, and the coordinate supremacy of the levels of the governments with regard to their respective functions (Anyebe, 2012).

However, planning implies high level of regimentation and control. It also involves the acceptance of a clearly defined set of social and economic objectives in terms of which overall policies are framed. The planning process cuts across constitutionally delimited powers and functions of the central and regional governments and these two planning levels must be brought into harmony with each other. It would obviously be destructive of the purpose of planning if the component units go ahead with developing plans that conflict with each other and with the central government's plan as well. For example, as Clark (1963) aptly observed:

Regional planning groups (in Nigeria) went about the planning exercise independently: each drew up its own programme and employed its own method of review and evaluation only under strong pressure was a uniform sectoral format employed for the presentation of Regional plans in the national document... rivalry among the governments often hindered... the regional inter-change of ideas, information or personnel.

Also, in spite of the extensive consultations between the officials of the then National planning Office on the one hand and those of other federal ministries and agencies, and the state ministries of economic planning on the other, in the process of formulating the 1981-85 Plan there were cases of indiscriminate or uncontrolled changes in the programmes approved for the various governments and new projects were introduced without the necessary approval from the

National Economic Council (NEC) (Anyebe, 1995). In fact, Ayo, a former director of planning in the Federal Ministry of National Planning, observed that the 1981-85 Plan lacked internal consistency and central direction (Ayo, 1988)

It suffices at this stage to ask one pertinent question. Can federalism as viewed in terms of coordinate relationship, co-exist with development planning? The objective of this study, therefore, is to assess development planning in Nigerian federation.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Some basic historical documents were relied upon for purposes of data collection for this study – Federal Government of Nigeria: The 1962-68, the 1970-74, the 1975-80 and 1981-85 national development planning documents. Personal interviews were held with some planning officers in the National Planning Commission to extract from them their reflections on the system with which they were actively involved.

Each interview lasted between 30-40minutes and it took the form of discussions organized around four sets of issues in planning process: Plan integration, plan discipline, conflict in plan objectives and plan coordination in Nigeria. All interviews were preceded by formal written request and the four sets of issues were raised in the letters. In some cases text messages were used. Replies were received indicating willingness to grant the interview and the scheduled time. Notes were taken down and relevant jottings were read to the hearing of the interviewees for their consent.

The analysis of the data for this study was done with the information collected from secondary sources and expert comments of the planning officers were used to compliment the secondary data.

3. NIGERIA'S PLANNING EXPERIENCE

Nigeria's experience in development planning began with the Ten year Plan for Welfare in the country which was introduced in 1946 by the Colonial Government under the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. Hitherto, economic activities in the country had almost entirely been commercialized as the role then envisaged for the colonies was that of producers of raw materials and consumers of finished products.

The Ten-Year Plan could hardly be called a development plan in any serious sense as it was more of a list of disjointed sets of projects grouped under developmental headings which reflected the administrative structure of the colonial government rather than any coordinated sectorial division of the economy. The plan which was to cover 1946-56 was revised in 1951 as a result of the move towards a federal system of government in the country. However, the revised plan which was to cover a period of five years (1951-56), did not deviate from the earlier plan in any appreciable sense especially in terms of inter-relationship of plan's projects and national objectives.

With the introduction of a federal system of government in 1954, the revised plan came to a premature end in 1955. Since the new constitution (Lyttelton's Constitution) made each of the

three regions autonomous, each of the regional governments and the federal government launched its own Five-Year development for the period of 1955-60. The autonomy enjoyed by these regions led to the situation where there was a considerable overlapping in the plans of the various regional Governments and the need to coordinate them at national level. This factor was responsible for the gradual creation of an appropriate body to handle plan coordination at the national level, with important implications for the machinery for planning.

Since Nigeria became independent in 1960, it has formulated and implemented at least four development plans (1962-68; 1970-74, 1975-80; and 1981-85). These plans were more comprehensive than the pre-independence plans in terms of their project composition. However, many of the plans lacked internal consistency (Ayo, 1988).

The federal character of Nigerian government conflicts with the attempt to formulate and implement a national plan, and in particular with the attempt to implement the objectives and priorities set forth under the inspiration of the planners at the federal level. This is because the Nigerian Federal Constitution allows a great deal of freedom of regional expression while development planning involves some level of regimentation and control. An effective planned development may be difficult to achieve in this kind of setting unless there is the right type of central machinery to coordinate the plans (Anyebe, 2001).

The purpose of planning is, essentially, to set development targets and objectives to be achieved and mobilize the resources of a nation in a deliberate attempt to attain an accelerated economic development. This gives rise to the need for a machinery to formulate the plans and implement them. The need for the planning machinery is even more necessary in a federally governed country because of the autonomy enjoyed by regional governments which make planning cumbersome.

Nigeria's planning machinery has to a large extent been created in response to the political structure of the country. Following the Lyttleton's Constitution, Nigeria became a federation of three regions (North, West and East) plus the Southern Cameroon and the Federal Territory of Lagos in 1954. With this development, the regional governments had coordinate status with the Federal Government. Also, while the Federal Government was given some specific functions to perform either exclusively in its own right or concurrently with the regional governments, the latter retained residual powers. This decentralized political structure of the country with its carefully defined areas of responsibilities made national planning more complicated given the high degree of autonomy possessed by the new regional governments.

For example, shortly after Nigeria became a federation, it was agreed by all the governments of the Union that a new plan be prepared for the country. Accordingly, each government prepared its own plan and Nigeria had four development programmes of varying degrees of sophistication and comprehensiveness. Some degrees of coherent and well-thought out plans were prepared by both the Federal and Western Regional Governments, the Northern Region's plan contained merely, a statement of policy on the development finance while the Eastern Regional Government published only an outline of a development plan (Adedeji, 1971). No attempt was made to relate the various development plans to one another or to any quantitative or qualitative overall

national objectives. Each government struck off in an independent direction and prepared a set of programmes.

NEC which was chaired, initially by the Governor-General and later by the Prime Minister while the regional Premiers and some federal and regional ministers were members, was intended to achieve the coordination that the decentralization of planning had made necessary. It was therefore, stipulated that:

The council will be a consultative body in which the governments of the federation and the regions may meet to discuss the many economic problems common to each notwithstanding their separate constitutional functions and of consequences reaching beyond their respective constitutional spheres. The council will provide a permanent basis for such consultations without, however, encroaching upon the authority entrusted by the constitution to the respective governments. It is designed to give the maximum encouragement to the development of a national economic policy and to close cooperation towards that end between the governments in the federation (Anyebe, 1995).

One defect of NEC was that its deliberation was infrequent, meeting only seventeen times in the ten years of its existence to August 1965, an average of about 1.5 meetings a year and there were years, too, in which it did not meet. The mode of discourse at NEC's meetings was said to be one of generalized debates over national policy preferences and accommodation rather than detailed examination of policies (Oyovbaire, 1976).

Conscious of its relative weaknesses NEC established the Joint Planning Committee (JPC) in 1958 as its intellectual and technical arm which was charged with the advisory task of formulating planning objectives and of coordinating the planning proposals of the federal and regional governments. This Committee, chaired by the Economic Adviser to the Prime minister had officials (Permanent Secretaries of planning ministries) of the governments of the federation as members. Its specific duties among others were:

a) To examine and report upon any matters remitted to it by the National Economic Council or individual governments.

b) To advise the National Economic council, in particular by:

I. Preparing a statement of fundamental objectives for the guidance of the planning committees of the several governments in the federation of their development plans for each succeeding period.

II. Examining the plans formulated by the governments and advising what modifications should be made to them in the light of the fundamental objectives agreed for this purpose, in order that the plans together may form a coherent whole.

C) To direct its secretariat in:

I. The preparation of studies, reports and surveys;

II. The collection, coordination, and dissemination of information (Clark, 1963).

Although JPC was supposed to be a committee of experts drawn from the federal and regional governments, most of those who took part in its deliberations were not economists, but generalist administrators. Other weaknesses of the committee, according to Oyovbaire, include

The fact its members were not only impermanent, its members were generally attended only by junior regional and federal officials (representatives of the relevant permanent secretaries) (Oyovbaire, 1976). The high rate of mobility of civil servants between ministries and between ranks caused a rapid turnover in the committee's membership, few participants in its activities were said to be there under the same schedule for more than two years running (Clark, 1963). By and large, the politics of the regional governments, their rivalries and political alignments seeped through to the JPC. Although the officials were expected to attend and to discuss the issues before them dispassionately and in the interest of the country as a whole, the divergent views of the members of the JPC, according to Okigbo, often reflected the position taken by the governments whose delegates they in fact were; the rivalry between the regions became a regular feature of the meetings of the JPC and this rivalry was often transferred to the meetings of NEC (Okigbo, 1989). The fact that the Committee was subservient to NEC, and the need to reflect in its own deliberations the political bargaining of the council, made the JPC succumb to political pressures (Oyovbaire, 1976).

Indeed, the weaknesses of the machinery for planning were reflected in the 1955-60 Plan. The various plans were not related to one another or to any quantitative or qualitative overall national objectives. Each government struck off in independent directions. The only common frame of reference was the report of the World Bank Mission, entitled "The Economic Development in Nigeria" and which was even left entirely to the discretion of each government.

What is more, by 1959 the federal plan and plans for the three regions which were to cover the period, 1955-60 were at variance with one another; the Western Region felt it had completed its 1955-60 plan and was about to begin a 1960-65 programme, the Eastern Region abandoned its own 1955-60 plan and was engaged in a 1958-62 plan and the North wanted its 1955-60 plan extended for further two years (Adedeji, 1971). Unfortunately, the National Economic Council (NEC) which was created to coordinate the plans could not effectively perform its coordination functions as its decisions were not binding on the various governments. Moreso, the Federal Government was so anxious not to impinge on the autonomy of the regional governments that they were left to do what they liked.

The major political obstacle to the maintenance of national plan priorities in Nigeria according to Ayida, was and remains what might be called the inordinate ambition of the major tribal groups seemingly coterminous with the former regional groups (Ayida, 1987). As long as the tripod theory of power in Nigeria subsisted, the unhealthy rivalry among the three major groups made rational plan administration difficult.

There was the classic example of the location problem of the iron and steel complex. The former federal government and the three regional governments included an iron and steel complex in their respective development programmes reproduced in the National Development Plan document (1962-1968) as approved by the National Economic Council. The inclusion of the mill in the respective regional programmes was to ensure that the interests of the regions concerned were taken into full account before the location was determined. When the National Economic Council eventually came to grips with detailed planning and investment decisions on

the project, the politicians were naturally divided on regional lines. Some of the administrators ceased to be faceless technocrats and their regions of origin either influenced their views or seemed to determine their expertise. NEC debated this project from 1959 until the fall of the civilian government, yet no firm decision was taken mainly because of the desire of each region to have the mill. At one point, it appeared that the North and the East would each have separate integrated mills, while NEC promised that consideration would be given to the establishment of a third in the West, although on financial and economic grounds, the Nigerian market was barely large enough to sustain one modest mill (Aboyade, 1968).

Regional rivalries and the difficulty of influencing the regions to implement the plan's policies and priorities influenced the formulation of the plan itself. Each region attempted to secure the largest possible expenditure target for its own plan, and by implication, the largest federal financial support for its plan. Further, as Clark (1963) observed:

The regional planning groups went about the planning exercise independently: each drew up its own programme and employed its own method of review and evaluation. Only under strong pressure was a uniform sectoral format employed for the presentation of regional plans in the national document...rivalry among the governments often hindered ...the regional inter-change of ideas, information or personnel.

Regional plans embodied an attempt to diversify exports on a regional basis. Some examples are the plan of the East to foster cocoa production which was a speciality of the West and the West plan to encourage (the growth of) rubber and cotton, which were specialties of the mid-West (created in 1963) and North respectively (Dean, 1972). Relating regional nationalism to planning, Aboyade (1968) declared that there was not so much a government as a collection of regions at the centre.... This struggle for regional economic advantage provides the key to understanding the planning strategy and plan implementation in Nigeria.

In spite of the macroeconomic framework of the 1962-68 plan, a nationally coordinated planned development effort still remained partial and halfhearted (Federal Ministry of Economic Development). According to Aboyade (1968), the planning process remained heavily skewed towards the regions, weakening both local involvement as well as central direction. What has been described as a national plan was no more than four separate plans, formulated, decided and presented by each of the four governments with no doubt some recognition of common objectives and economic targets. The plan lacked internal consistency; projects in different regions often overlapped each other.

In summary, one would like to say that the political and constitutional changes which took place in 1954 made national development planning more complicated, given the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by the regional governments. Programmes were formulated mainly on the basis of regional rivalry without due recognition of the law of comparative advantage. This regional rivalry hindered consultations, exchange of ideas and effective plan coordination.

The planning machinery was unable to coordinate the federal and regional plans because its decisions were not binding on the various governments. As stated earlier, the Federal

Government was so anxious not to impinge on the autonomy of the regions that the regional governments felt free to do whatever they liked.

It was not unusual for the regional governments to proceed and prepare their plans independently; each drew up its own programme and employed its own method of review and evaluation. This situation made the preparation of a nationally integrated plan a difficult, if not an impossible task.

3.1. Nigerian 1981-85 Plans

In a study on the 1981-85 plans by Anyebe (2014), it was reported that:

Many of the state ministries and their agencies were unable to evaluate the guidelines issued by the National Planning Commission (NPC) to know the implications of their states. Consequently, most of the projects submitted to the NPC by many of these ministries and their agencies for inclusion in the plan reached there most of the time as mere ideas lacking the necessary preliminary appraisals to establish not only their feasibility but also their scope and estimated costs. Any attempt to exclude these "Projects" from the plan was often stoutly resisted.

To take one illustration, the researcher was informed that even though the National Planning Commission had given its disapproval for inclusion of a university in a state's 1981-85 plan (on the ground of lack of proper feasibility study), even before the draft plan was processed the state government concerned had already contracted the proposed project. In its state of helplessness, the National Planning Office developed a low profile and the project was allowed.

From this analysis, one discovers that each government's plan was developed relatively independently, the only unifying factor being the general consensus amongst the governments concerning the general and overall objectives of the plan. The preparatory work, according to an official, that should lead to an effective integrated plan was often lacking because of shortage of executive capacity and regional autonomy. The procedure for formulating plan targets was in most cases, no more than educated guesswork. Plan integration was also viewed by analyzing the planned and the actual expenditures during the first four national plans (Anyebe, 2014).

Also, an illustration on the difference between the proposed and actual capital expenditures is relevant here. Under the first National Plan (1962-68) 79.4% of the projected expenditure was actually spent. This went down to 66.79% under the second National Plan (1970-74). The actual expenditure rose slightly to 67.95% in the Third National Plan (1975-80). The Fourth National Plan (1981-85) was the most disastrous of all with only 41.0% of the projected expenditure being spent. What these figures illustrate is how unrelated the sizes of the plans have been to the capacity to implement them. This must have partly, accounted for the general under-expenditure on the plans (Anyebe, 2014).

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that the 1981-85 plan was not nationally integrated. Commenting on the 1981-85 plans, an informant said that there was more evidence of conflicts in the plan objectives that should ordinarily be the case. Illustrating this manifestation, the informant went further to say that:

Projects which bore no relations with the policy objectives underlying the plan and which did not reflect the established priorities in the plan document featured in the plans of most states during the first three years of the plan period. Projects like color television, laundry, lottery and amusement park which were never brought to the attention of the National Economic Council for clearance were executed by some state governments (Anyebe, 2014).

This comment was supported by an interviewee (a director in a state ministry) who, when asked about the relationship between his state and the Federal Government with particular reference to the formulation and implementation of the 1981-85 plan answered sharply, "it was our plan. We prepared it. We knew what was good for us and we did not need to refer to anybody!" (Anyebe, 2014). This goes to show that the state's plan was developed relatively independently without much reference to the Federal Government. This situation might have arisen because the state concerned felt that it had a constitutional position as a district level of government with specific responsibilities either concurrently or residually and it therefore saw no need referring to the National Economic Council for clearance before embarking on any desired project.

In the light of the information distilled from the informants, it is clear that there were cases of conflicts in objectives and priorities of the 1981-85 plans (Anyebe, 2014). They were reports on the 1981-85 plans which indicated cases of plan indiscipline. For instance, an informant who was a director of planning in the National Planning Commission, said:

In the process of implementing the Fourth National Plan, a number of projects which were never brought to the attention of the National planning Commission or which were rejected because they failed the usual viability tests were excluded by some state governments (such projects included universities and mechanised farms). This was usually done by voting funds for the implementation of such projects under "other charges" in Recurrent Estimates (Anyebe, 2014).

The author was reliably told that the National Planning Commission had "unofficial" knowledge of a number of such unapproved projects being implemented by some state governments which were outside the national plan document and submitted official reports complaining about this manifestation of plan distortion but the reports were lost amidst the bureaucratic web of indecision.

It is ironically true that some projects (such as oil industry and industrial estates) approved for some states were either abandoned or neglected. No explanation was offered about why these projects were abandoned midstream.

An informant said that the National Economic Council had no power of decision. Being chaired by the Vice- President (instead of the President himself) gave an impression that it was

merely an advisory body lacking in authority to enforce its decisions. The mode of discourse at NEC's meeting was said to be one of generalized debates over national policy preferences and accommodation rather than of detailed (planning) policies. The informant said that the Council showed that it had no teeth and served merely as a forum for exchange of views or for states to ventilate their grouses against the Federal Government between 1980 and 1983 (Anyebe, 2014).

Next to the National Economic Council was the Joint Planning Board. The Board was supposed to be a technical and an intellectual body charged with the advisory task of formulating plan objectives and of coordinating the planning proposals of the federal and state governments but failed to perform these roles objectively as many state representatives on the Board tended to merely advocate those points of view favoured by their respective governments. During the interview, the author was told that the National Planning Office was lacking in executive power to enforce its decisions during the 1981-85 plan and in any case, it was not intended for inter-governmental control. Though at the risk of some repetition, this point can be complemented by the results of an earlier interview to place it in a clearer perspective. It was said that when the National Planning Office had unofficial knowledge of plan distortions by some state governments and submitted official reports complaining about the manifestations, the reports were lost in the midst of bureaucratic web of indecision (Anyebe, 2014).

There were other inter-ministerial committees of the National Economic Council which were moribund, they only existed on paper. Having examined comments of some experts and informants on the activities of the main inter-governmental coordinating bodies with reference to the 1981-85 plan, it is clear that an effective coordination of plans was not achieved.

The shortage of executive capacity especially in the area of project formulation and preparation in some federal ministries and corporations and even more so at the state level can affect the integration of national plans. Ayo (1988) asserts that except the National Planning Office which has a cadre of specially trained planning officers, very few ministries and agencies at both the federal and state levels have such an institution to undertake planning functions on a permanent basis. Planning duties, therefore, have to be undertaken by administrative officers who are given ad-hoc training prior to the commencement of plan preparation. What usually emerged from this arrangement was the production of planners who were amateurs in planning activities. In fact, many of the state ministries and their agencies were unable to evaluate the guidelines issued by the National Planning Office to know the implications for their states, and so the question of drawing up comprehensive documents encompassing details of local needs did not arise. Consequently, most of the projects submitted to the National planning Office by many of these state ministries and their agencies for inclusion in the plan reached there most of the time as mere ideas lacking the necessary preliminary appraisals to establish not only their feasibility but also their scope and estimated costs. Thus, a considerable number of ideas admitted into the plan as "projects" were not properly studied, designed and costed and as a result, their full implications were unknown at the time of their admission.

A major finding therefore, emerges from Nigeria's planning experience: the country has failed to achieve a fully integrated planning process.

3.2. Discussion

The known empirical studies on the relationship between federalism and development planning seem to show conflicting results. The study of the first six years of the implementation of the 1962-68 National Development Plan in Nigeria by Dean revealed that the federal structure is consistent with effective development planning and not irrelevant to plan implementation (Dean, 1972). This study was criticized because it relied completely on documentary research for its data instead of combining this method with another method especially survey method. A personal interview could have helped to distill from the administrators of the system their reflections on the processes with which they were intimately involved, and from others who were serious observers of the system. This would have increased the reliability of the results.

In a similar study conducted by Oyovbaire on planning in federal set-up, using the last two years of the 1962-68 plan and the 1970-74 plans in Nigeria; employing documentary research and survey method for data collection, rejected the hypothesis set out concerning the incompatibility of development planning with federalism and concluded that planning is not impeded by federal structure (Oyovbaire, 1976). One of the criticisms leveled against this study is the fact that it was undertaken during a military administration and military rule is generally regarded as a unitary government which cannot adequately exemplify the effect of federalism on development planning. This limits the generalizability of the study's findings.

A study of patronage system and plan discipline during the 1962-68 plan by Ayida revealed that the "patronage" system which has become part of Nigeria's political system has disastrous consequences for rational plan administration and the maintenance of priorities as in that system:

Planning decision (tended) to be set aside at every turn of the road, the priorities laid down in the national plan were usually subjected to substantial distortions since project selection and implementation and the timing of investment decisions depended on their rate of pay-off for a few; new projects were introduced overnight without adequate appraisal and plan discipline was lacking (Ayida, 1987).

On the contrary, after an excellent study on the process of planning using the India's five-year plans (1950-54) as the focus, Hanson concluded that one factor that has facilitated centralized planning in that country is the nation-wide support enjoyed by the Congress Party which has since independence formed the government in almost all the states as well as in the centre (Anyebe, 1995).

A study on compatibility between federalism and planning made Loswentein conclude that ... Economic planning is the DDT of federalism (Anyebe, 1995). Adedeji, in a study on federalism and plan Administration, found that attempt made by the Federal Government of Nigeria to coordinate the implementation of the various programmes of the 1962-68 plans through the setting up of the various inter-governmental institutions proved ineffective because of acrimonious rivalries among the regions (Adedeji, 1971).

Relying heavily on official documents, Okigbo reported in a study on claim of the 1962 plan to national character that the difficulty encountered by planners since 1962 is that Nigeria has

had not only a divided assembly but also, and simultaneously, a divided nation. It is this factor that has denied planning any true national character in the allocation of resources functionally by activity and spatially by region or state (Okigbo, 1989).

Analysing the 1962-68 plan in terms of coordination, Aboyade scholarly declared that the planning process remained heavily skewed towards the regions, weakening both local involvement as well as central direction (Anyebe, 1995). In a study on formal institutions for decision making, Okigbo reported that the Economic Planning Unit (the power house for planning for the Federation) which was supposed to issue the guidelines, the format, and the overall macro-economic parameters for planning at the centre and in the regions, reconcile the central and the regional plans and evaluate each region's plan to ensure that the projects were as fully articulated as possible and that there was some measure of coherence among the various plans could not perform these functions effectively because it was an inexperienced body and had little or no control over the federal and regional ministries (Okigbo, 1989).

However, Ayo reported in a study on plan integration during the 1970-74 plan that the plan was diversified in its project composition and it was in fact the first truly national and fully integrated plan which viewed the economy as an organic unit with the twelve states being fully integrated in the plan (Ayo, 1988).

The findings of a study on Nigeria's planning experience in relation to data base by Stolper revealed that inadequacy of the relevant information coupled with that of inadequate executive capacity has made it difficult to work out feasible and viable projects that could fully absorb sectoral fund allocations (Stolper, 1966). The technology of data collection and processing which gained momentum during the final years of colonial rule became seriously infected with conflict emanating from the political forces at play in Nigeria. The conflicts in objectives and goals which dominated the political scene were transferred into arena of data collection and this point in the direction of a weakening of the data base of planning in Nigeria.

The 1979 Constitution placed agriculture on the concurrent legislative list, thereby making the development of this leading sector of the economy and which was also a priority programme of the 1981-85 plan the responsibility of the federal and state governments. Consequently, the federal and state governments jointly initiated various food production programmes under the Green Revolution Programme. For instance, the federal and state governments in conjunction with the World Bank initiated rice production programmes in the former Imo and Anambra states and similar joint ventures between federal and state governments were embarked upon in Cross River state while the eleven River Basin Development Authorities were created to serve as the vehicle for realizing the objectives of the Green Revolution. While these joint programmes were being executed, some state governments independently launched their own agricultural programmes which were apparently tailored to no national objectives, except perhaps, objectionable ones. For example, the former Anambra state government launched "Operation Food for the People Programme" which instead of going into direct food production resorted to importation of foods. According to Nwankwo, the former Anambra state government, using the

operation food for people programme spent ₦1.7 million to import rice and cassava stems in 1982 (Nwankwo, 1987)

One question that readily arises is why is it that the National Development Council of India (NDC) has been able to achieve a measure of effective coordination of India's National Plan while its Nigerian counterpart, the National Economic Council (NEC) has failed, in spite of the fact that both bodies have been consultative in nature. In India, even though the NDC is a consultative body, its conclusions on any planning matter are as good as government decisions because it has the prime minister as chairman and all the chief ministers as members. Therefore, the Council derives its authority and pre-eminence from its membership rather than from the formal powers assigned to it. The inclusion of the chief ministers and their approval of the schemes of the council gives a kind of sanctions of the states to schemes included in the plan (and remember that same party has been in power at the centre as well as in almost all the States). However, in Nigeria the situation is different. The National Economic Council is chaired by the Vice-President (the number two man). This gives an impression that the Council is merely an advisory body lacking in authority to enforce its decisions. In fact, this point is complemented by Okigbo (1989) who says:

Its (the Council's) role was advisory as its resolutions were not binding on the President though they might have strong moral force. Its inherent weakness (was) that although the President and Vice-President constitute a team, the moral force of the resolution of the Council would have been stronger if the Council were presided over by the President himself.

The Council has so far shown that it has no teeth, and serves merely as a forum for exchange of views or the states to ventilate their grouses against its policies.

Also, the Indian Constitution assigns the power of planning to the central government and establishes institutions enabling cooperative participation (of the states) in the planning process, the Nigerian Constitution on the other hand, places the states in a much stronger position in matters relating to development planning by having assigned to them both concurrent and residual functions. This arrangement makes the actual role of the central government that of leadership and the coordination of national plans. However, NEC, being strictly, an orthodox federal institution which lacks any constitutional status, cannot impose its decisions on the various cabinets - state as well as federal.

Apart from the National Economic Council, there are quite a number of inter-governmental institutions at both ministerial and official levels with specific responsibilities for coordination of policies. Examples of such institutions include: the National Planning Commission, the Joint Planning Board, Conference of Ministers/Commissioners for Economic Planning and federal and state executing ministries. Most of these agencies are not really equipped to handle planning matters adequately. For example, the Joint Planning Board which is supposed to be a technical advisory body and should examine issues on their merits and advise objectively has failed to perform this role. Many of the state representatives tend to merely advocate those points of view favoured by their respective governments.

The screening of state's projects (which is supposed to be based on viability and on how the projects relate to national objectives and priorities) often turns the board into a quarreling arena. The 'quarrel' is usually between the state officials interested in pushing through their programmes unimpeded and their counterparts (federal and other states officials) interested in relating individual state's planning proposals to national objectives and priorities. As the Board does not have the final word in the matter of admitting a project into the plan when a state government is committed to his proposal, the state concerned could appeal against the ruling of the Board and still get the rejected project approved at the higher planning institutional level. The situation described here is even considerably better, according to [Ayo \(1988\)](#), than it was in the Joint Planning Committee (the fore-runner of JPB) during the First Republic when the representatives of the regional governments on that body usually viewed each other with intense suspicion and were often unwilling to compromise. However, there is still much to be done to ensure a national outlook in that forum.

Another deficiency of the Joint Planning Board is that very little initiative tends to be forthcoming from the state officials who constitute a majority of its membership. This is because the state officials on the Board are permanent secretaries. Generalist administrators as most of them are, they are not often as able to handle certain technical planning questions as are their federal counterparts on the Board. Thus the technical planning issues examined by the Board are virtually only those proposed by the secretariat and modifications to proposals originated by the secretariat are usually insignificant.

This deficiency of the Board must have caused the 1974 Udoji Public Service Review Commission to recommend that it would be profitable if the (Board) was restructured in such a way that professional planners are in majority. In this way all technical planning problems could be discussed and solved by it. The Federal Military Government merely noted this recommendation.

Shortage of high-level manpower was experienced practically by all the institutions, for example the Joint Planning Board, and this has been a major impediment to the formulation and implementation of a coherent national plan. When the issue of shortage of manpower is being discussed, one is not thinking of lack of academic qualifications alone but also of a wrong orientation.

Many of the top Nigerian civil servants were not equipped for the new role of advising the political leadership on how to run a modern government particularly in the context of national development planning. Many of them, brought up in the tradition of the colonial civil service, were more interested in routine administration. They did not have the vision required for imaginative task of development planning and there was therefore, an administrative vacuum at various levels for purposes of plan administration. The requirement that each ministry shall establish a department of planning, research and statistics is meant to enhance innovative capabilities of the civil service. This is meant to improve the professional skills of the civil servants so as to enhance their efficiency in plan formulation and implementation.

One other weakness of the Nigerian civil service was the high rate of mobility of civil servants between ministries and between ranks. It was difficult to find many of the staff who participated in formulating a plan in a particular ministry to remain in the same ministry and under the same schedule for more than two years running. It should be stressed here that no matter how comprehensive plan documentation is, many crucial assumptions are left over for resolution at the implementation stage. It will therefore, be difficult to properly time investment decisions in a plan without reference to the principal authors of the plan. This element is very important in a decentralized system. The degree of decentralization of planning decisions in Nigeria can be appreciated when one looks at the analysis of the planning institutions and the activities involved in planning process in chapter three.

This problem of constant mobility of civil servants was identified by the 1988 Reforms and was addressed in unambiguous terms by professionalizing the service as every official will make his career entirely in a ministry of his choice where he is expected to acquire the necessary expertise through relevant specialized training and experience. Whether the officials are really acquiring the necessary expertise through relevant specialized training and experience or not remains to be seen. The 1994 Ayida Panel whose recommendations the government began to implement incrementally in 1997 reversed most of the changes introduced by 1988 Reforms.

The inadequacies of administrative leadership to cope effectively with development planning and plan administration can also be seen in a federally governed county in which each level of government has its own civil service. India, for example, has administrative services whose members serve at both federal and state levels. This tends to facilitate national approaches to planning at the state level. In federations where such institutions are lacking unless there are in-built safety valves to ensure that national interests are always taken into consideration at the state level, there may be a tendency towards differentiation and autonomy and this may make the coordination of national plans difficult. In Nigeria, where each government has its own civil service, planned development can only be enhanced if the federal civil service is in position to provide leadership, policy guidance and counselling, and sometimes technical assistance to states' civil services. The federal civil service can only do this if it is superior in terms of professional competence but it is doubtful if the Nigerian federal civil service has this superiority. A superior federal civil service can promote national integration which will in turn enhance plan coordination.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What has emerged from the discussion so far is that the adoption of development planning in a federation introduces another dimension to the problems of federalism because of some level of regimentation, direction and control which the planning entails while federalism stresses regional autonomy and expression. This makes plan coordination difficult to achieve. For example, with reference to Nigeria's Fourth National Development Plans (1981-85 Plans), an effective coordination of the plan and plan targets were not attained.

Indeed, this study seems to have provided answers to the questions which prompted it. It is difficult to achieve a nationally integrated planned development in a federally governed country unless the forces which

make for national integration and unity are stronger than those making for differentiation and autonomy. In spite of its elaborate process and machinery for development planning, Nigeria has not been able to achieve a fully coordinated national development planning because of the many difficulties which the planning machinery has got to contend with. These difficulties include plan indiscipline, conflict areas in planning and mere advisory roles of inter-governmental planning institutions.

It is thus, recommended that:

- There is need to strengthen the National Bureau of Statistics to adopt modern techniques of data collection, processing, storage and retrieval;
- There should be closer collaboration between the levels of government in drawing up plans to minimize conflicts;
- The National Economic Council should be headed by the President; and
- The private sector should be fully involved in planning activities.

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