

*The State in Contemporary Nigeria: Issues, Perspectives and Challenges—Essays in Honour of Professor Ben O. Nwabueze*, edited by J. Shola Omotola and Ikenna Mike Alumona

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The state, with its essential features such as sovereignty and independence, remains the most important actor in the world of organisations. Despite its relatively declining position vis-à-vis non-state actors in the era of the globalisation of the liberal economic order, it is acknowledged that weak or failed states and statelessness are globally undesirable. African states have continued to receive academic attention because of their poor capacity to deliver public goods required for human security and development. Against this background, J. Shola Omotola and Ikenna Mike Alumona compiled the volume, *The State in Contemporary Nigeria: Issues, Perspectives and Challenges—Essays in Honour of Professor Ben O. Nwabueze* (hereafter *The State in Contemporary Nigeria*), which examines the capacity and efficacy of the state in Nigeria, the most populous African country.

*The State in Contemporary Nigeria* is an edited volume comprising 580 pages and 27 chapters spread over five sections (excluding the introduction), and there are 31 contributors. The foreword by Adigun Agbaje, a renowned professor of Political Science in Africa, records the life and academic achievements of Professor Ben O. Nwabueze, in whose honour this volume was compiled. Nwabueze is a renowned constitutional lawyer and academic figure in the field of political sciences in Africa. Therefore, it is a surprise that the title of this publication and the texts included in it are not very legal in perspective. Moreover, among the contributors only one is an academic lawyer; of the 30 other contributors, 22 are involved in the field of political sciences whereas

the rest are in the fields of economics, peace and conflict studies, education, business management, and international relations (*The State in Contemporary Nigeria*, xi).

Despite the foregoing concerns, the book succinctly addresses the subject of the state in Nigeria but it makes few references to Nwabueze's thoughts. The two chapters that form Section I provide a theoretical basis for the volume, focusing on the concept of state and its applications, most especially in democratic theory, from a comparative perspective. Section II of the volume covers the efficacy of the Nigerian state in the formulation and implementation of public policy. The seven chapters in this section focus on the implementation of policy relating to youth and universal basic education, on the enforcement of policy relating to zero gas-flaring and local content in the oil industry, and on the challenges of combating corruption and the impacts of judicial corruption on the administration of justice in Nigeria.

The eight chapters making up Section III of the volume focus largely on national questions as they revolve around identity crisis and its management in Nigeria. One of the contributions provides insights into the 2014 national conference and its place in the management of the national question in Nigeria. Some of the other contributions in the section explore the subject of identity politics in the fourth republic, the interaction between religion and the state, ethno-religious conflicts in national security calculation and the phenomenon of ethnic militias in post-military rule in Nigeria. One chapter in this section focuses on post-civil war reconciliation and the challenges of national unity, whereas another chapter examines the Igbo's struggle for political space and emancipation in Nigeria, with some references being made to the contributions of Nwabueze.

In the eight chapters that make up Section IV of the volume, the focus is on the challenges of national security. Some of the contributions address issues such as state fragility and human insecurity, food security and the management of social security in Nigeria. One of the contributions looks into internal security at a sub-national level, with special attention being given to the Anambra State. Major national security threats, such as trans-border crime, are also dealt with, with special attention being paid to smuggling and human trafficking. As can be expected, the volume also devotes a chapter to the issue of the Boko Haram crisis, although the analysis falls short of expectation. The author of this particular contribution unnecessarily wastes seven pages on the timeline of the Boko Haram attacks based on Wikipedia's chronology. Two other contributions in this section focus on the relevance of prison service and on the armed forces in national security management in Nigeria respectively.

The last section of the volume concerns Nigeria and the rest of the world. The section has two brief contributions, one on Nigeria and the challenges of African politics, and the other one on the country in relation to global politics.

Considering the topics covered in this edited volume, the publication makes a useful contribution to the body of knowledge on public policy, democracy, the national question, national security and international relations in Nigeria and Africa. However, with a few exceptions (representing less than a quarter of the contributions) that provide some useful quantitative data—exclusively presented in tabular form—the analyses in the volume are largely qualitative in nature. Nevertheless, the volume is highly recommended as an introductory text for students, researchers and everyone who is curious about government policies, politics, state-building, societal developments, security situations and their management, and foreign affairs in Nigeria and Africa and in developing societies in general.