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NIGERIAN MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND PROBLEMS  
OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

THESIS

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This thesis attempts to analyze the military government's role in solving the country's agricultural problems. This analysis is essential because it was during the military's stay in power that Nigeria's potential as a self-sufficient and food exporting nation declined.

Materials collected to analyze the above problems reveal that the military government's lack of adequate personnel to supervise and implement decisions taken on agriculture, unplanned schemes, and unresearched projects were partly responsible for the government's inability to solve Nigeria's agricultural problems.

While it may be necessary to blame the military government for not being able to completely solve the country's numerous agricultural problems, the presence of global political and economic decisions seriously hampered measures taken by the military government.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

For mankind to survive hunger and the problems associated with it, emphasis must be placed on improved agricultural production. And where poverty and the lack of modern technology and education are widespread, adequate food production for a large population remains bleak. Developing countries and African nations in particular presently face the serious danger of not being able to feed their increasing populations as a result of the above reasons. This situation is further compounded by political instability resulting from the military's intrusion into politics. In Nigeria, for example, the constant change of military administrations<sup>1</sup> which began in 1966 may have complicated the issue of food production and the success of agricultural progress in many parts of the country. Although the actual role of the military government in the country in relation to agriculture is yet to be analyzed and completely determined, it might be suggested that the problems of Nigeria's agriculture have existed even before

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<sup>1</sup>From January 1966 to December 1979 (i.e. the period under review) four military coups took place.

the advent of the military in Nigeria's political arena.<sup>2</sup> This view suggests that not only are past administrations involved in the complicated agricultural problems faced by Nigeria, but also many other variables and factors may have to be examined before reaching a partial conclusion that may enable any researcher to offer necessary suggestions.

This study, while emphasizing the role played by the military administration, will also survey the past history of Nigeria's agricultural trends in order to fully determine the successes and/or failures of the Nigerian military regime. Evidence suggests that some of the basic causes preventing the production and development of an adequate food supply for Nigeria's rising population may have started many years ago.<sup>3</sup>

Nigeria's agricultural difficulties may, therefore, be traceable to the era of primitive man. As in many parts of the world, the early settlers in Nigeria were greatly handicapped in their agricultural production because of crude farming methods. These methods, though adequate for ancient man, may not be productive if adopted by the present Nigerian farmer due mainly to the explosive rate of growth of the population dependent on food production. Some of the farming tools and methods still in vogue in certain areas of

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<sup>2</sup>Nnamdi Azikiwe, Zik: Selected Speeches of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (Cambridge, 1961), p. 155.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Nigeria might be a necessary, but not sufficient cause for the country's farmers' inability to produce enough food to satisfy the country's population.

However, things may have started getting better for the Nigerian farmer when the British colonized Nigeria. Their introduction of some exotic cash crops and the construction of roads and railways<sup>4</sup> may have alleviated some of the difficulties confronting Nigerian farmers. While well-constructed roads and railway lines facilitated the movement of crops from one section of the country to the other, the new cash crops provided another means of revenue for farmers. These changes may not have alleviated the farmers' problems because not all of them could afford the services or opportunities provided by the British colonial masters.

Some Nigerians may have expressed the notion that the country's independence from Britain would usher in an agrarian (economic) revolution since the British colonialists were reluctant to invest in Nigeria's economic development.<sup>5</sup> Theoretically, indigenous politicians would be more patriotic and better equipped with basic solutions to remedy their agricultural problems than foreign politicians. This assumption proved correct when, during the first Nigerian Republic, the country was not only self-

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<sup>4</sup>Olufemi R. Ekundare, An Economic History of Nigeria 1860-1960 (New York, 1973), p. 98.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

sufficient in food production but also exported surplus food to other African nations and overseas. For example, Nigeria ranked first in world groundnuts and palm kernel production. It was also the world's second largest exporter of cocoa.<sup>6</sup> However, these advantages existed for only a short spell in the annals of agricultural development in Nigeria. Thus, in the late 1970s the value of Nigeria's food imports increased tremendously as compared to the situation in the early 1960s.<sup>7</sup>

However, when the military came to power in 1966, there was renewed hope of remedying the agricultural problems in Nigeria because one of the military government's aims was to make the country self-sufficient in food production.<sup>8</sup> Ironically, the problems which existed for years were compounded during the military's era; this discrepancy seems to have compounded the already worsening situation. The military did introduce drastic measures which might have been envisaged to remedy the situation.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is to analyze the various attempts and policies of the Nigerian military government to

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<sup>6</sup>V. P. Diejomaoh, Economic Development in Nigeria, Its Problems, Challenges and Prospects (Princeton, 1965), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup>O. Awoyemi, "Character of Nigerian Agriculture," Bullion, 6, No. 4 (October/December, 1981), 6.

<sup>8</sup>James O. Ojiako, 13 Years of Military Rule 1966-79 (Lagos, Nigeria, 1979), p. 23.



improve the deteriorating agricultural situation in the country and to determine their success and failure in relation to the overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

#### Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are

1. To discuss the causes of Nigeria's agricultural problems which led to food shortages and subsequently resulted in massive food importation,
2. To examine and analyze the various measures adopted by the military government to solve Nigeria's agricultural problems,
3. To measure the degree of success and failure of the military's policies in terms of agriculture's contribution to the country's GDP, and
4. To identify the specific inherent problems facing Nigerian farmers and evaluate the extent to which the military attempted to rectify them.

#### Significant Questions

The following significant questions will be addressed in order to examine the efforts of the Nigerian military government in its attempts to solve the country's deteriorating agricultural productivity:

1. Did the military government's policies, initiatives, and changes in regard to Nigeria's agriculture

increase or decrease agriculture's contribution to the Gross Domestic Production?

2. What major changes did the military government introduce in its attempt to solve the agricultural problems in the country, and to what extent did these changes succeed or fail in solving the problems that they were intended to rectify?

### Review of Literature

Africa's agricultural problems are so severe that the attention of agrarian scholars all over the world ought to be directed to the problem of food shortages in the continent. Although African scholars have made some attempts to solve their own problems, their efforts have not proved very effective. Only few non-African scholars have written specifically on Nigerian agriculture before or during the military regime. Research in this area is also negligible. Books that discuss Nigerian agriculture are those written on worldwide agricultural systems, which, as a result, discuss Nigeria's agriculture only in its general relationship to international systems. The role of the military has been excluded in most such discussions.

In his 1970 thesis, "Agricultural Development in Nigeria," Fagbamiye argues that the Nigerian agriculture is plagued by poor education and unscientific methods of farming. In his conclusion, he submits that for Nigerian agriculture to succeed a coordinated agricultural project

involving various federal and state governments is necessary. He contends that modern technology would improve Nigeria's agricultural production.<sup>9</sup>

Although this thesis covers the period during which the Nigerian military government was in power, it fails to mention anything about the military's efforts to solve the country's agricultural problems or the effects of the Nigerian civil war on agriculture. It is, therefore, not possible to deduce from Fagbamiye's work if the military made any contributions towards solving Nigeria's agricultural difficulties.

Contributing an article to The Structure of the Nigerian Economy, 1979, Tomori points out that the Nigerian agricultural system could be divided into three broad areas: the subsistence type, the mixed type, which produces food for both the domestic and export markets; and the plantation type, products of which are mainly commercial.<sup>10</sup> Tomori argues that during the period in review the then federal government (that is, the military government) provided some infrastructural and credit facilities to enable farmers to overcome some of their difficulties.

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<sup>9</sup>Theophilus A. Fagbamiye, "Agricultural Development in Nigeria," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Economics, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1970, pp. 69-70.

<sup>10</sup>Siyanbola Tomori, "Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing," Structure of the Nigerian Economy, edited by F. A. Olaloku (New York, 1979), p. 18.

Although Tomori did not deal with the main causes of the military administration's failure to provide a blueprint for the success of Nigerian agriculture, he concludes that agricultural development planners will always encounter problems that may seem impossible to solve.<sup>11</sup> Tomori, echoing Fagbamiye's view, suggests the need for more innovative farming techniques, the success of which will depend on the knowledge, willingness, and ability of farmers to adopt them.<sup>12</sup>

Writing in West Africa, John Madeley reports on Oshuntogun's study on the impact of credit to farmers in Nigeria. Oshuntogun explains that only 39 percent of cooperative loans obtained was used for farm purposes, while the rest was invested in the education of the farmers' children and other unrelated ventures.<sup>13</sup> However, Oshuntogun concludes that in order for farmers to use farming loans prudently, and for farm purposes, the Nigerian governments should provide rural welfare services and other basic needs.

#### Limitations

This study will discuss and analyze the Nigerian military government's attempts to solve the problems of Nigeria's agriculture from 1966-1979. The few books and

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 31.      <sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>13</sup>John Madeley, "Finance for Agriculture," West Africa (February 16, 1981), p. 305.

scarce research materials in this study area have greatly limited the sources of information available. Another handicap is the author's inability to travel to Nigeria to secure detailed and necessary materials for this study. Thus, most of the required information was obtained through correspondence with the author's brother, a staff member at the National Steel Council, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

#### Significance of the Study

One of the basic roles of agriculture is the provision of food for man, without which formation of human capital and progress in diverse areas are impossible. Zuvekas recognizes that the food man consumes improves the quality of labor. He also emphasizes that poor diet and malnutrition can cause mental and physical retardation, both of which can reduce the productive capacity of the individual and lead to health failure.<sup>14</sup>

The shortage of food resulting from agricultural backwardness in Africa has been of continuous world concern for many years, especially in the 1980s. The role of research and empirical studies will, no doubt, attempt to search for ways and means of alleviating Africa's agricultural problems. In this light, the importance of this study will become manifest in its attempt to find a means of recommending ways of resolving Africa's

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<sup>14</sup>Clarence Zuvekas, Jr., Economic Development: An Introduction (New York, 1979), p. 205.

agricultural problems in general and Nigeria's in particular. Efforts are being made in the field of economic research to contribute necessary ideas for the progress of mankind. This study, therefore, will attempt further to make necessary contributions to this body of knowledge.

One essential aim of this study is to analyze the role of the military in solving Nigeria's food shortage. With the frequency of change of governments from popular democracy to military dictatorship and the consequent deterioration of food production in many African countries, the question constantly asked is whether the intervention of the military in Africa is synonymous with the decrease of food and agricultural progress which were present before the military came to power.<sup>15</sup> This is one basic question that this study will discuss and attempt to answer.

One of the problems that developing countries experience is the need to feed their large populations. In the past decades, Nigeria's population has grown to about 80 million,<sup>16</sup> and the fear is that, like other poor nations with massive populations, Nigeria may not be able to feed itself in the near future if the present trend of poor food production continues. This research shall, therefore,

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<sup>15</sup>Ghana, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and many other African countries experience food shortages following a military take over of power.

<sup>16</sup>"Nigerian Supplement: Nigeria, the Maturity of A Nation," Africa Now (October, 1981), p. 165.

suggest ways and means for Nigeria to find workable avenues to solve its agricultural problems in order to ensure that its population will be adequately fed in the future.

Not much research has been done in the area of the military government and agricultural problems in relation to Nigeria. This study, therefore, shall serve as a kind of pioneer effort in this area of research upon which future researchers and scholars of agronomy will improve.

#### Organization of the Study

This thesis discusses the problem of Nigeria's agricultural development during the military regime from 1966-1979. This discussion based on an examination of the historical background of Nigeria's agriculture before and after the military seized power.

Chapter I will discuss the general background of the problem and the areas to be covered in this thesis. The historical perspective of Nigeria's agriculture from the British colonial administration through the civilian regime will constitute the basis for the discussion in Chapter II.

In Chapter III, the role of the military in Nigeria's agricultural development and its efforts at assuring a prosperous yield for the economy will be analyzed. Chapter IV will summarize, conclude, suggest, and make recommendation for further studies to other researchers who might want to analyze some other questions raised by this thesis.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY OF NIGERIAN AGRICULTURE

When the British colonial administrators came to Nigeria, the country's level of agriculture they found had developed to the people's standard of social and economic developments. The British administrators did introduce some exotic cash crops and some infrastructural and communication facilities. Although the British may have attempted to improve Nigeria's agriculture, some basic problems were left unsolved.

At independence, Nigerians had high hopes for an agrarian revolution because it was assumed that indigenous politicians would be more patriotic than the British at finding workable solutions to the country's agricultural problems. However, the first Nigerian civilian government may have encountered numerous difficulties in their attempt to improve the country's agriculture. What agricultural problems the civilian administrators experienced, how they came about, and what efforts the administrators made at alleviating them will be discussed in this chapter.

#### Pre-Independence Agriculture in Nigeria

When the British came in 1860 to the present area designated as Nigeria, farming, although practiced, still



could be regarded as a highly unorganized social activity. Ekundare posits that the inhabitants in this area mostly collected wild fruits, hunted, and fished as their means of livelihood. He further argues that, although this was the case, these people were self-sufficient in food production.<sup>1</sup> He shows that these early inhabitants of Nigeria<sup>2</sup> had advanced in a system of agricultural production conducive to their time in history. As in many other African countries before the arrival of the white man, the farmer was content with his subsistence type of farming which usually provided his family with enough food. Whatever was left could have been bartered for other food items that he did not cultivate.<sup>3</sup>

The farmer, at this time, was mainly concerned with domestic agricultural production, and there was no need to export the excess food. Coleman notes that "Such societies were self-sufficient in food, and as there was no agricultural surplus, little or no exchange of produce occurred."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Olufemi R. Ekundare, An Economic History of Nigeria 1860-1960 (New York, 1973), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Nigeria was amalgamated by the British in 1914. Before this date, there were two areas, the Southern and Northern protectorates, which, after the amalgamation, became known as Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup>Ekundare, op. cit., p. 280.

<sup>4</sup>James S. Coleman, "The Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa," The Politics of the Developing Areas, edited by G. A. Almond and J. S. Coleman (Princeton, 1960), p. 253.

As a result of the farmers' limited economy, the amount of food produced may have been commensurate with his population. Consequently, there may not have been acute famine. Whenever such occurred, the result could be imputed to natural disasters. Dalton, supporting this assumption, attributes the fluctuation in productivity to the high "degree of ecological dependence"<sup>5</sup> due to the absence of applied science.

Another major agricultural problem in pre-independence Nigeria farming was the shifting cultivation or land rotation system of land cultivation, a method whereby a piece of already cultivated or depleted land is abandoned for some period while more fertile land is planted.<sup>6</sup> Anderson describes this system as rotation of crops and land.<sup>7</sup> The implication of this practice is that the abandoned piece of land which could have been used for productive purposes would be left unused for several planting seasons in anticipation of its replenishment.

The implements used may have hampered farming in pre-independence Nigeria. These tools included cutlasses,

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<sup>5</sup>George Dalton, "Traditional Economic Systems," Vol. I essays of The African Experience, edited by John N. Paden and Edward W. Soja, 3 Vols. (Evanston, 1970), p. 66.

<sup>6</sup>Victor P. Diejomaoh, Economic Development in Nigeria, Its Problems, Challenges and Prospects (Princeton, 1965), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup>C. M. Anderson, Contributions of Agriculture to Nigerian Economic Development (1950-1964) (Michigan, 1969), p. 34.

spades, and hoes, which, according to Ekundare, were used to make farm ridges for planting root crops, while the clearing of bushes and digging out of root crops involved the knives and cutlasses.<sup>8</sup> However, Coleman considers these tools as adequate farming equipment for that time in history since enough food was produced for domestic consumption.<sup>9</sup>

By the time the British took control of Nigeria in 1900, they met an agricultural system which, though quite satisfactory to the indigenes, may not have measured up to their standard. This explains why the British administrators introduced some cash crops and established a research institute at Vom.<sup>10</sup> Also due to their efforts, Nigerian agricultural and forestry products were exhibited at Toronto and Antwerp.<sup>11</sup> This exhibition may have exposed Nigerian agricultural products to a worldwide market.

As a result of the social, political, and economic activities of the British in Nigeria, some exotic farming implements that could have revolutionized Nigeria's primitive agricultural system, may have been introduced. This assumption, however, does not seem to be corroborated by the literature examined in this study. There is a tendency to believe that the British administration did

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<sup>8</sup>Ekundare, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>9</sup>Coleman, op. cit., p. 253.

<sup>10</sup>Ekundare, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

little or nothing in this direction. Azikiwe states that "The agricultural programme is often ante-diluvian as no energetic effort is made to introduce and popularize labour-saving machinery and modern farming techniques."<sup>12</sup> Dalton notes that traditional agricultural technology remained unchanged.<sup>13</sup> The absence of machine technology, Dalton asserts, meant low productivity and uncontrollable fluctuations in output.<sup>14</sup>

Ekundare also notes that the Nigerian agricultural "system and techniques of production remained largely primitive."<sup>15</sup> The introduction of cash crops into the Nigerian economy and agriculture by the British, according to Crowder, was beneficial to the farmers only because of the high prices of cocoa and coffee crops.<sup>16</sup>

These attempts to improve Nigeria's agriculture should, however, not becloud the assumption that the British colonial government nurtured the country's agricultural system to suit their economy. Awolowo observes that "the British came to Nigeria in order wholly and solely to

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<sup>12</sup>Nnamdi Azikiwe, Zik: Selected Speeches of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (Cambridge, 1961), p. 155.

<sup>13</sup>George Dalton, op. cit., p. 77

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>15</sup>Ekundare, op. cit., p. 157.

<sup>16</sup>Micheal Crowder, "The Impact of Colonialism," Vol. I essays of the African Experience, edited by John N. Paden and Edward W. Soja, 3 Vols. (Evanston, 1970), p. 242.

promote their private and national economic interest and to enlarge their colonial spheres of influence."<sup>17</sup> While Ekundare asserts that the reason for the railway construction in Nigeria was primarily economic,<sup>18</sup> Crowder contends that the farmer bore most of the burden of the road, railway, and port constructions.<sup>19</sup> There is sufficient evidence to support the notion that the amount of money the federal government devoted to agriculture was minimal.<sup>20</sup>

Although the new cash crops introduced by the British administration may have benefited the Nigerian farmers, whatever benefit or gain they received was spent on different forms of taxation. Thus, farmers paid so much tax that what could have accrued to them as benefits were spent on various forms of taxation to support government infrastructural projects. Although transport facilities were provided by the British, only a few farmers benefited from such luxury. The roads, for instance, were linked only to export-producing areas and not all farmers or areas in the country were export crops producers. Also, the cost of transport services may have been beyond the farmers' means.

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<sup>17</sup>Obafemi Awolowo, The People's Republic (Ibadan, 1968), p. 60.

<sup>18</sup>Ekundare, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>19</sup>Crowder, op. cit., p. 241.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 243.

However, the migration of the rural population to urban centers in search of jobs and other modern luxuries created additional problems.<sup>21</sup> These migrants, who constituted a great part of the rural farming population, abandoned their farms to the old and weak, probably reducing food production. The presence of these immigrants in the cities also created population problems for the British government.<sup>22</sup> Helleiner suggests that while there was a slight decrease in agricultural yields in certain areas of the country, there was also population growth.<sup>23</sup>

Although the British may have revolutionized the country's agricultural system, Awolowo notes that "the fact remains that Nigerians have benefitted in no small measure from the so-called selfish activities of the British."<sup>24</sup> And when the British left in 1960, after Nigeria became independent, they had left a trail of changes in Nigeria's agricultural system.

#### Nigerian Agriculture After Independence: Problems and Prospects

Although there was some optimism about Nigeria's agriculture after independence, numerous existing problems

<sup>21</sup>Dalton, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>22</sup>Crowder, op. cit., p. 246.

<sup>23</sup>Gerald K. Helleiner, Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth In Nigeria (Homewood, 1966), p. 23.

<sup>24</sup>Awolowo, op. cit., p. 60

seemed to have plagued whatever successes were expected from the first group of Nigerian leaders after independence. Farmers, for instance, were still cultivating the land with the same tools that they used many years ago.

The problem of land tenure still confronted the new Nigerian administration. Generally, land was being controlled and monopolized by clans, families, and villagers.<sup>25</sup> The generally accepted practice among Nigerians was that people, through their families, relatives, and clan connections, inherited land as property. This they could sell, rent, and/or lend to non-landowners for an exorbitant fee. Johnson notes that the existing land tenure system prevented foreign investors from acquiring land needed to assist in the production of rubber, palm oil, cocoa, and livestock.<sup>26</sup>

Another researcher comments that although a land market imperfection exists in many West African countries, exports expanded at an annual growth rate of 5 to 10 percent.<sup>27</sup>

While Eicher suggests a government land reform policy that

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<sup>25</sup>Federal Ministry of Information, Second National Development Plan 1970-74 (Lagos, 1970), p. 110.

<sup>26</sup>Glenn L. Johnson, "Factor Markets and Economic Development," Economic Development of Tropical Agriculture, edited by W. W. McPherson (Gainesville, 1968), p. 97.

<sup>27</sup>Carl K. Eicher, Research on Agricultural Development in Five English-Speaking Countries in West Africa (New York, 1970), p. 16.

will foster economic growth, Johnson advocates a land market reform that will involve both reclamation and development.

The generally inadequate living standards of farmers was another problem area the new Nigerian leaders had to solve. The Nigerian farmer, because of his lack of education, was unable to accept or utilize some of the scientific concept made available by education. It, therefore became a problem for the Nigerian government to succeed in their efforts at mechanizing farming.<sup>28</sup>

Finance also proved to be another major problem for the Nigerian farmers and one with which the government had to deal. Tomori explains that the problems of the farmers were worsened because they could not benefit from the services of banks and financial institutions due to the farmers' lack of adequate collateral securities.<sup>29</sup> Diejomaoh suggests an organization of farmers into cooperatives and credit group in order to poll their collateral to secure group loans from banks.<sup>30</sup> Diejomaoh also argues that there was a shortage of investment funds, a dilemma caused by high consumption

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<sup>28</sup>Obafemi Awolowo, The People's Republic (Ibadan, 1968), p. 303.

<sup>29</sup>Siyanbola Tomori, "Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing," Structure of the Nigerian Economy, edited by F. A. Olaloku (New York, 1979), p. 24.

<sup>30</sup>Victor P. Diejomaoh, Economic Development in Nigeria: Its Problems, Challenges, and Prospects (Princeton, 1965), p. 76.



levels, waste, and the corrupt practices of government officials.<sup>31</sup>

Another notable problem of Nigeria's new administration was the adverse effect of regionalism and tribalism. While Johnson notes that these have led to a lack of national agricultural policies, Diejomaoh observes that the results have been that of misallocation of scarce resources, duplication of development projects, and stagnated flow of regional labor.<sup>32</sup>

The problem of government urban wage adjustment which drafted labor away from the rural agricultural sector to urban areas<sup>33</sup> was also a major problem. Due to the downward fluctuations in export prices, followed by the excessive taxation policies of the government-owned Marketing Boards, agriculture was left in the hands of the old and weak farmers in rural areas.

Apart from the Marketing Boards, which were established by the British colonial administration for the purposes of marketing export products, there was no agency to stabilize the prices of domestic food crops. The lack of an agency and the seasonal nature of crops, therefore, caused the fluctuations in prices of domestic crops.

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>32</sup>Diejomaoh, op. cit., p. 133; Johnson, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>33</sup>Eicher, op. cit., p. 23.

There was yet the problem of low income for farmers. This problem prevented the farmers from expanding domestic food crops markets. Johnson also notes that the indirect involvement of government in pegging prices of export commodities also was a major barrier. As a result of these drawbacks, the agricultural sector was unattractive to qualified personnel.<sup>34</sup> However, the problems did not prevent the first Nigerian indigenous government from improving the agricultural system inherited from the British colonial government.

Johnson and Diejomaoh explain that the regional governments set up agricultural schools to train extension personnel. In addition, they also note that there were farm settlements to which Nigerian farmers graduated after two to six years of training. For instance, the Western region government had 13 such farm settlements.<sup>35</sup>

Although regional governments established plantations and farm settlements, Eicher observes that research studies favor government assistance to smallhold farmers and not the establishment of government-sponsored plantations and farm settlements. This suggestion, he says, is because the internal rates of return on investments are low.<sup>36</sup> However,

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<sup>34</sup>Johnson, op. cit., pp. 104, 106.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 104; Diejomaoh, op. cit., pp. 3-8.

<sup>36</sup>Carl K. Eicher, Research on Agricultural Development in Five English-Speaking Countries in West Africa (New York, 1970), p. 21.

both regional and federal governments did operate research and experimental centers where better methods of producing crops, extermination of pests, and improvement of soil fertility were researched.

Johnson posits that although the government, in its attempt to upgrade agricultural standards in the country, imported hydraulic hand stork mills for processing palm fruits, only 40 of the 1,000 were installed. The government also established factories to improve planting materials for cocoa, rubber, and palm seeds.<sup>37</sup> All regional governments adopted various policies to make it easier for farmers to obtain loans. They also made adequate plans for the distribution and collection of the money from farmers. Thus, the attempts of Nigeria's first indigenous government to improve the agricultural standards of the country can be measured against the value of the country's major export crop earnings between 1960 and 1966. These values are shown in Table I.

In 1960 export earnings from cocoa was ₦73.54 million. Although this amount fluctuated, it increased to a high level of ₦85.4 million in 1965. In 1966 the value of groundnut export almost doubled its level of ₦45.8 million in 1960. Palm kernel also recorded its highest value in 1965.

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<sup>37</sup>Glenn L. Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-105.

TABLE I  
 VALUE OF MAJOR EXPORT CROPS  
 1960-1966 (N MILLION)\*

Export Crops	Years and Values of Export Earnings (N Million)						
	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
Cocoa	73.54	67.48	66.7	64.73	80.2	85.4	56.52
Groundnuts	45.8	64.4	64.8	73.8	68.6	75.6	81.6
Palm Oil	28	26.4	17.8	18.8	21.6	27.6	22
Palm Kernel	52.2	39.8	33.8	41.6	42	53	44
Rubber	28.5	22.1	22.7	23.7	24.4	22	23
Cotton	12.4	22.2	22.2	19	12.1	6.6	7.1

\*Source: S. O. Olayide, Economic Survey of Nigeria (1960-1975) (Ibadan, 1976), pp. 30-36.

Diejomaoh says that Nigeria was ranked the largest groundnuts and palm kernel exporter and second largest cocoa exporter in the world.<sup>38</sup> Eicher notes that the annual growth rate of exports in the 1960s was estimated at 4 to 5 percent.<sup>39</sup> Helleiner argues that, by 1961, the three regional Marketing Boards had accumulated a total of

<sup>38</sup>Diejomaoh, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>39</sup>Eicher, op. cit., p. 27.

£118,369.4 thousand in trade surplus.<sup>40</sup> Many indigenous entrepreneurs made fortunes from farming investments. For example, Sanusi Dantata, a renowned Nigerian millionaire, traded in peanuts. Similarly, Timothy Adeola Odutola used the profits from his farming business to set up a bicycle tire factory.<sup>41</sup>

Since Nigeria's export earnings were closely tied to the prevailing world market prices, these huge export earnings started dwindling due to the downward fluctuation in world export prices. The emergence of synthetic substitutes for Nigeria's agricultural export crops also affected earnings and domestic production.<sup>42</sup>

Anderson contends that Nigeria was almost self-sufficient in food production, with food import only about 8 to 12 percent of the value of total imports.<sup>43</sup> Table II shows the value of Nigeria's food imports between 1962 and 1966.

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<sup>40</sup>Gerald K. Helleiner, "The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61," Taxation for African Economic Development, edited by Milton C. Taylor (New York, 1969), p. 423.

<sup>41</sup>"Africa: The Nigerian Millionaires," Times, 86 (September 17, 1965), 122.

<sup>42</sup>Diejomaoh, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

<sup>43</sup>Anderson, op. cit., p. 44.

TABLE II  
 VALUE OF FOOD IMPORTATION  
 (N MILLION) 1962-1966\*

Years	Value of Food Imports (N Million)
1962 . . . . .	46.986
1963 . . . . .	43.804
1964 . . . . .	41.24
1965 . . . . .	46.076
1966 . . . . .	51.568

\*Source: O. Awoyemi, "Character of Nigerian Agriculture," Bullion, 6, No. 4 (Oct./Dec., 1981), 6.

Although the value of food imports in the above table seemed to be increasing, the increase, however, still represented a negligible proportion of the country's total import value.

### CHAPTER III

#### NIGERIAN AGRICULTURE DURING THE MILITARY REGIME, 1966-79

By January 15, 1966, the efforts of the first civilian administration to upgrade and improve the agricultural standard in Nigeria were abruptly disrupted when the army seized control of the government. The military administration was critical of the way in which the general system in the country was being managed by those who were in authority.<sup>1</sup> This, therefore, also means that the army was not satisfied with the agricultural trends in the country.<sup>2</sup> The change of government introduced many problems which may or may not have complicated the problems the civilian administration tried to correct in Nigeria's agriculture.

While it may be argued that the military regime attempted to correct the existing agricultural problems during the first civilian administration, it could also be suggested that the means and methods by which the military sought to rectify the problems may have been inadequate, unplanned, and unworkable.

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<sup>1</sup>James O. Ojiako, 13 Years of Military Rule 1966-1979 (Lagos, 1979), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

In order to analyze the successes and failures of the Nigerian military government, it is necessary to examine the methods by which it sought to correct the problems it inherited from the civilian government. It will also be necessary to determine why the innovations introduced by the military to rectify the country's past agricultural problems further complicated the whole situation.

In order to understand the efforts of the Nigerian military regime to solve the country's agricultural problems, it is necessary to clarify one issue. It should be noted that the period examined by this thesis, 1966-1979, was one in which different military administrations were involved. In other words, there were various military coups that brought in different army regimes.<sup>3</sup> Although the Nigerian military is one entity, these different military regimes were different from one another. Each administration did not necessarily follow the problem-solving methods of other preceding administrations. However, this thesis will consider the various military administrations as one single regime.

#### Attempts by the Military to Solve Nigeria's Agricultural Problems

When the military came to power in 1966, the structures of the regional and federal governments were disorganized

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<sup>3</sup>Between 1966 and 1979, there were four military coups in Nigeria: January, 1966; July, 1966; July, 1975; and February, 1976.



due to the traumatic shock the changeover caused in the entire country. At this stage, the major emphasis of the military government was not on agriculture per se, but on how best to manage the destabilized and fragmented political and economic systems inherited from the civilian administration. While the states' military administrators may have attempted to solve some of their agricultural problems, the main concern was basically that of increased food production.<sup>4</sup>

The Nigerian Civil War, 1967-70, further caused the relegation of Nigeria's agricultural problems to the background. All attention and efforts were focused on the war. Programs in the 1962-1968 development plan were abruptly ended.<sup>5</sup> This, however, did not prevent the military from trying to remedy the agricultural problems in the country. The federal government tried to sustain the important infrastructure that existed during the civilian administration. The Central Bank, for instance, was appointed to monitor the financial dealings of the Marketing Boards.<sup>6</sup>

While efforts were being made to sustain agricultural activities in the entire country during the Civil War, it

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<sup>4</sup>Ojiako, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>5</sup>M. O. Ijere, "Planning Experience in Nigerian Agricultures," Journal of Administration Overseas, 16 (January, 1977), 19.

<sup>6</sup>Ojiako, op. cit., p. 68.

was not so in the Eastern States because most of the war was fought in these areas. Although records are scanty about the agricultural situation in the three Eastern States during the civil war, the constant battles disrupted agricultural practices throughout the period of the war. Not only were existing farms abandoned, but also no major new agricultural activities were going on, except maybe limited farming for domestic consumption.<sup>7</sup> The effects of the war, according to Gusau, were, consequently, catastrophic to the progress of the country's agriculture.<sup>8</sup> The problem of the Nigerian farmer continued without any major government actions during the Civil War. Farmers still cultivated the land with the same tools they used many years ago. While they still could not obtain government loans, the government itself did not focus attention on helping any individual or group of farmers. The states' governments, just like the federal government, concentrated every focus on the war activities. Thus, money meant for agricultural development was diverted towards the success of the Civil War.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, many farmers and farm laborers were attracted into the Nigerian army because it offered a better and more

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>8</sup>Ibrahim Gusau, "Nigeria's Green Revolution," Africa Report, 26 (July/August, 1981), 19.

<sup>9</sup>Alan Rake and J. D. Farrell, "Nigeria's Economy No Longer a Model: Reassembling the Fragments Will Be High on the List When the Shooting Stops," Africa Reports (October, 1967), p. 22.

promising wage system than farming. This eventually led to a lesser production of the domestic food supply than previously. Another consequence was the shortage of farming labor that were diverted to other economic sectors. The effect of this was that only few farmers were engaged in cash crop farming. This therefore reduced Nigeria's share of export trade in the world market. Farmers engaged in cultivating Nigeria's export crops abandoned their farms in pursuit of more wages either in the army or the government sector. There was a further reduction in Nigeria's exports when the Sapele plywood factory, the largest of its kind in the world, was shut down because of war.<sup>10</sup>

On January 12, 1970, the Nigerian Civil War ended. While the states' and the federal government's major efforts were directed primarily at reconstruction and reconciliation, they also focused attention on rehabilitating Nigeria's agriculture and economy in general. On the state level, the government attempted to redirect attention to assisting its farms and individual large-scale farmers. Farming equipment, fertilizers, and other farming necessities were made available to farmers. Dams were constructed for irrigation purposes. The federal government also stepped up its extension services.<sup>11</sup> Loans were made

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>11</sup>Ojiako, op. cit., p. 70.

available to farmers but were, however, not easy for the average farmers to obtain.<sup>12</sup> As before, attaining loans for farming remained a basic problem.

At the federal level, the government was primarily responsible for rehabilitating farmers in the eastern part of the country where the effects of the war were disastrous. Government farms and farm settlements in East Central, and South-Eastern states that were abandoned during the war were reopened and farmers were offered employment in them.<sup>13</sup> Farming became attractive once again because other jobs were not easily attainable.

Like the state governments, the federal government also made farming equipment and supplies available to farmers at subsidized costs.<sup>14</sup> Efforts were intensified to import farming equipment. However, research results reveal that the life span of imported equipment was considerably shorter than those equipment in Europe<sup>15</sup> because of poor maintenance and shortage of spare parts.

New agricultural schools were established, and admissions requirements were liberalized in order to encourage

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<sup>12</sup>G. O. Nwankwo, "Agricultural Finance, Policy and Strategy in 1980s," The Bullion, 6, No. 4 (October/December, 1981), 11.

<sup>13</sup>Ojiako, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>14</sup>"Nigeria Survey, Expo Africa '79: Agriculture's Billion Dollar Drain," African Business (May, 1979), p. 62.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

more students to take up farming and agriculture as a career.<sup>16</sup> Demobilized soldiers and those who sustained injuries that made them incapable of continuing in the army were encouraged by the governments to take up farming.

The federal government, in its effort to rehabilitate farms, made available high yield production seeds, pesticides, and fertilizers to farmers through the National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP).<sup>17</sup> The crops under this project included rice, maize, guinea corn, millet, wheat, and cassava. The main aim of the project was to increase food production among small-scale farmers.

The federal government, in its attempt to make the attainment of loans easy for farmers, established the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank (NACB) in 1973.<sup>18</sup> The NACB, with its head office at Kaduna, was the first institution of its kind in the history of agricultural development in Nigeria. The Central Bank of Nigeria owned 40 percent of the bank's shares, while 60 percent was held by the federal government. The primary aim of the NACB was to give both medium- and long-term loans to farmers for all

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<sup>16</sup>Central Planning Office, Second Progress Report on the Third National Development Plan 1975-80 (Lagos, undated), p. 39.

<sup>17</sup>"World Food Day," West Africa (November 9, 1981), p. 2639.

<sup>18</sup>Godwin E. Okurume, "Nigerian Agricultural Bank: Its Functions and Prospects," The Bullion, 2, Nos. 3 and 4 (July-September/October-December, 1977), 26.

agricultural products. Another aim of the NACB was to provide storage facilities and oversee the marketing of such primary products.<sup>19</sup> Table III depicts the pattern of loans and advances the NACB extended from its inception until December, 1982.

Table III shows that a total of ₦255.1 million was disbursed in loans and advances to a total of 531 borrowers in various categories from the inception of the NACB in 1973 up until 1982. Individuals constituted the largest number of borrowers, about 25.8 percent, even though their percentage of loan proportion is less than that of companies. The largest percentage proportion of loans, 53.6 percent, was acquired for crop production.

The NACB disbursed many loans and advances since its inception for various projects, but the default rate of borrowers was high. It was estimated that by 1980, 142 borrowers had defaulted to the tune of ₦27.4 million.<sup>20</sup> The absence of this huge sum of money from the coffers of the bank consequently made it difficult for the bank to provide credit assistance to prospective loan applicants.

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<sup>19</sup>J. O. Osakwe and M. O. Ojo, "The Nature and Extent of Government Assistance in Agricultural Financing in Nigeria," unpublished paper presented at a seminar on "The Role of the Banking System in Financing the Agricultural Sector and Rural Development," African Centre for Monetary Studies, Harare, Zimbabwe, November 25 to December 2, 1984, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

TABLE III  
 LOANS AND ADVANCES OF THE NIGERIAN AGRICULTURAL AND  
 CO-OPERATIVE BANK AS AT DECEMBER, 1982\*

By Categories of Borrowers	No. of Borrowers	No. of Borrowers As Proportion of Total (percent)	Amount of Loans (NMillions)	Loans As Proportion of Total (percent)
Individuals	137	25.8	55	21.6
Cooperatives	90	16.9	55.6	21.8
Companies	116	21.8	59.1	23.2
Statutory Corporations	54	10.2	38.6	15.1
State Governments	75	14.7	32.2	12.6
Others	56	10.6	14.6	5.7
Total	531	100	255.1	100
By Sector				
Crops	213	40.1	136.7	53.6
Livestock	242	45.6	21.1	8.3
Fishery	7	1.3	14.4	5.6
Others	69	13	82.9	32.5
Total	531	100	255.1	100

\*Source: J. O. Osakwe and M. O. Ojo, "The Nature and Extent of Government Assistance in Agricultural Financing in Nigeria," unpublished paper presented at a seminar on "The Role of the Banking System in Financing the Agricultural Sector and Rural Development," African Centre for Monetary Studies, Harare, Zimbabwe, November 25 to December 2, 1984, p. 38.

The federal government also established a National Grains Production Company (NGPC) in 1975. The aim was the operation of large-scale mechanized grain farms. Such grains include rice, maize, sorghum, millet, legumes, and wheat. The NGPC was also responsible for storing, processing, and marketing facilities for these grains.<sup>21</sup>

The Marketing Boards Reform of 1976 created many changes in the existing Marketing Boards. One such change was the introduction of seven commodity Boards operating across state boundaries.<sup>22</sup> Each of these commodity Boards was charged with producing and marketing major primary crops both for local consumption and processing. Unlike the practice of the previous marketing boards, major food crops were covered under the new system. Export duties and produce sales taxes were abolished, a reform which required the Head of State to fix producer prices so as to ensure an increase in farmers' income.<sup>23</sup> This process also guaranteed the incomes of farmers, and produce prices were stabilized.

The federal government, in 1976, in its attempts to encourage farming, introduced "Operation Feed the Nation" (OFN). This was a national "green revolution" which

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<sup>21</sup>E. O. Obayan, "The Role of the Parastatals in the Development of Agriculture in Nigeria," The Bullion, 2, Nos. 3 and 4 (July-September/October-December, 1977), 20.

<sup>22</sup>Ojiako, op. cit., p. 169-170.

<sup>23</sup>G. O. Obatoyinbo, "Role of Government in Agriculture: A look at the Commodity Boards," The Bullion, 2, Nos. 3 and 4 (July-September/October-December, 1977), 23.



involved all cadre of Nigerians.<sup>24</sup> The outstanding success of the OFN was that it generated an awareness in every Nigerian of the necessity of agriculture and farming as the mainstay of the country. Schools were encouraged to emphasize agricultural science and to produce their own food.<sup>25</sup> The federal and state governments seized this opportunity to redirect attention to agriculture.

The OFN, it can be argued, could be regarded as a partial success because of the sudden awareness it created among Nigerians. However, the scheme could as well be viewed as an unnecessary effort and a complete waste of federal funds. For instance, the amount of money paid to students as vacation job stipends for their farming activities could have been made available to individual farmers and government farm settlements. Furthermore, creating a green revolution awareness is different from creating an agrarian revolution. The extent to which a green revolution achieves its aims depends on how well a nation's farmers are incorporated into the program. It might be argued that any green revolution that neglects or does not focus major attention on farmers will not accomplish its goals. Although the OFN represented the good intentions of the federal government, the scheme was later abandoned. Kasfir

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<sup>24</sup>Ojiako, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 160.

argues that the program was not likely to effect any major positive impact on the food situation in Nigeria.<sup>26</sup>

In an attempt to aid farmers in the Northern part of the country suffering from arid weather, the federal government established numerous dam projects for irrigation purposes. Two prominent dams were the Bakolori Irrigation Project, which had the potential capacity of "irrigating 23,200 hectares of land" and the Kano River Project, which include "20,000 hectares of land for irrigation."<sup>27</sup>

To supplement the role of the banks in helping the farmers acquire loans, the federal government established the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS) Fund in 1977.<sup>28</sup> This scheme was set up to increase credit flow to the agricultural sector, especially in areas where the commercial banks were reluctant to offer finances to farmers. The ACGS was managed by the Central Bank of Nigeria on behalf of the federal government. The scheme guaranteed 75 percent of any loan, while the other 25 percent was the on-lending commercial or merchant bank's liability.<sup>29</sup> The scheme did not guarantee 100 percent so that the on-lending

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<sup>26</sup>Nelson Kasfir, Soldiers As Policymakers in Nigeria, Africa Series, XVII, No. 3, American University Fieldstaff Report (October, 1977), 20.

<sup>27</sup>"World Food Day," West Africa (November 9, 1981), p. 2645.

<sup>28</sup>A. O. G. Oti, "Scope and Prospects of the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme, The Bullion, 2, Nos. 3 and 4 (July-September/October-December, 1977), 14.

commercial/merchant bank could exercise some prudence when giving out the loans. The maximum amount an individual could acquire was ₦50,000, and 1 million was the limit for a cooperative society or cooperate body.<sup>30</sup> From the establishment of the ACGS until 1983, a total of ₦179.6 million in loans was disbursed to 6,095 borrowers.<sup>31</sup> The details of the loans in terms of categories is shown in Table IV.

From Table IV, it can be deduced that a large proportion of the loans, 66.1 percent, went to livestock projects, while 26 percent was granted to the food crops sub-sector. The cash crops sub-sector had a share of 7.9 percent.

To ensure the success of the ACGS scheme, the Central Bank of Nigeria directed the commercial and merchant banks to open up more rural branches.<sup>32</sup> Although a great number of loans were granted to farmers under the ACGS, many farmers could not meet the collateral standard set by the banks.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, most of the rural farmers did not have

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>30</sup>Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund: Guidelines for the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (Lagos, undated), p. 2.

<sup>31</sup>Osakwe and Ojo, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>32</sup>A. O. Otitì, "Scope and Prospects of the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme," The Bullion, 2, Nos. 3 and 4 (July-September/October-December, 1977), 15.

<sup>33</sup>G. O. Nwankwo, "Agricultural Finance: Policy and Strategy in 1980s," The Bullion, 6, No. 4 (October/December, 1981), 11.

TABLE IV  
ANALYSIS OF LOANS GUARANTEED BY THE AGRICULTURAL  
CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME FUND\*

Purpose	Cumulative No. of Loans 1978-1983	Percent of Total No. of Loans 1978-1983	Cumulative Value of Loans 1978-1983 (Nmillion)	Percentage of total Value of Loans 1978-1983
Livestock	1698	27.8	118.9	66.1
Poultry	1397	22.9	106.4	59.2
Cattle	233	3.8	5.6	3.1
Fisheries	12	0.2	2.4	1.3
Others	56	0.9	4.5	2.5
Food Crops	3204	52.5	46.6	26
Grains	2304	37.8	29.6	16.5
Roots/Tubers	771	12.6	7.3	4.1
Mixed Farming	129	2.1	9.7	5.4
Cash Crops	1193	19.7	14.1	7.9
Oil Palm	27	0.5	0.8	0.4
Rubber	2	0	0.1	0.1
Cocoa	22	0.5	0.3	0.2
Cotton	154	2.5	1.3	0.7
Groundnuts	194	3.2	1.2	0.7
Others	794	13	10.4	5.8
Total	6095	100	179.6	100

\*Source: J. O. Osakwe and M. O. Ojo, "The Nature and Extent of Government Assistance in Agricultural Financing in Nigeria," unpublished paper presented at a seminar on "The Role of the Banking System in Financing the Agricultural Sector and Rural Development," African Centre for Monetary Studies, Harare, Zimbabwe, November 25 to December 2, 1984, p. 40.

access to banking services. Another problem which hindered the scheme was that most banks lacked the manpower to appraise projects of farmers or applicants. Where such qualified personnel were available, they were located far from the farms and were required to travel long distances before they could come in contact with farmers. On the part of the farmers, their problem was that of illiteracy which prevented them from utilizing funds from the scheme.<sup>34</sup>

The rate at which farmers defaulted in paying back loans they got from this fund also became a major problem for the government. Many farmers were not able to repay their loans, which made it difficult for the government to honor applications from other prospective farmers. By 1983, a total of seven million naira remained unrepaid.<sup>35</sup> Part of the reason for this high default rate was the farmers' misconception of the scheme. Most farmers believed loans acquired under this fund were a kind of free gift from the government which did not require repayment.<sup>36</sup> Also, the government's requirements caused some problems in regard to loans.

The federal government, through the Central Bank of Nigeria, for instance, issued to commercial banks credit

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<sup>34</sup>"An Interview with the Director of Agricultural Finance Department, C.B.N.," The Bullion, Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>35</sup>Osakwe and Ojo, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>36</sup>"An Interview with the Director of Agricultural Finance Department, C.B.N.," The Bullion, op. cit., p. 37.

guidelines which required a bank in any one month to give 6 percent of its total loans and advances to the agricultural sector. Any shortfall of this amount was not to be given to any other sector but to be deposited with the Central Bank of Nigeria as long as the shortfall continue.<sup>37</sup>

A major effort by the federal government to solve some of the country's agricultural problems was the introduction in 1978 of the land use decree. This was the first attempt at initiating a national land policy. The major purpose of the land use decree, *inter alia*, was to enable every citizen who wished to use land for productive purposes to have access to it. The decree, supposedly, would break the monopoly of the landlords, chiefs, and very powerful individuals who controlled the ownership of land. It therefore became possible for anyone to own land, not from individuals, but from the state and local government authorities.<sup>38</sup> Another importance of the land use decree was that those regarded as strangers in a particular area of the country could own and cultivate a piece of land through the government.

A major obstacle that prevented the success of this decree was that certificates of occupancy, serving as

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<sup>37</sup>Otiti, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>38</sup>"Nigeria: 'Land for Development Available for all,'" *West Africa* (April 4, 1978), p. 722.

evidence of ownership, were rarely issued by the government.<sup>39</sup> Also, except in urban areas, the land use decree was hardly operative.<sup>40</sup> This partial implementation of the decree allowed landowners to flout its provisions with impunity. Many people continued to invest huge sums of money to purchase land from landowners.

The 1978/79 budget provisions of the federal government made efforts to alleviate the farmers' problems. The budget emphasized a five-year tax free holiday for all agricultural processing and production industries.<sup>41</sup> The budget also stipulated that the Nigerian ownership of all agricultural investments be reduced from 60 percent to 40 percent. Also, import duties on all agricultural equipment were abolished. Further incentives included a 75 percent subsidy on fertilizers and tractors hired. Another provision of the budget was that investors could carry forward their losses until they were finally written off.<sup>42</sup>

Another area in which the federal government assisted domestic food production was food importation. The government increased the importation of food, including cereal,

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<sup>39</sup>Nwankwo, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>40</sup>O. Awoyemi, "Character of Nigerian Agriculture," The Bullion, 6, No. 4 (October/December, 1981), 7.

<sup>41</sup>Asong Ndifor, "Nigeria Survey, Expo Africa '79: Austerity's Wind Chills Local Manufacturers," African Business (May, 1979), p. 99.

<sup>42</sup>"Nigeria's Budget Calls for Sacrifices for All," West Africa (April 10, 1978), p. 693.

meat, fish, and dairy products. Although the country needed more food production, this policy of food importation did not give domestic farmers the opportunity to meet the challenges of feeding the nation and increasing their productivity. Ironically, the same government that encouraged domestic farmers indirectly discouraged them by importing food items that they should have been urged to produce in large quantities. Table V shows the extent of Nigeria's food importation between 1967 and 1979.

TABLE V  
VALUE OF FOOD IMPORTATION IN NIGERIA  
BETWEEN 1967 AND 1979  
IN (N)MILLION\*

1967	. . . . .	42.56
1968	. . . . .	28.392
1969	. . . . .	41.732
1970	. . . . .	57.694
1971	. . . . .	87.910
1972	. . . . .	95.104
1973	. . . . .	126.26
1974	. . . . .	155.708
1975	. . . . .	277.863
1976	. . . . .	438.927
1977	. . . . .	702.013
1978	. . . . .	1,108.662
1979	. . . . .	1,105.901

\*Source: O. Awoyemi, "Character of Nigerian Agriculture," Bullion, 6, No. 4 (October/December, 1981), 6.

By 1979, the amount spent on food importation had increased 21 times, more than what it was before the military came to office in 1966. The value during the civilian administration was N51.568 million. A major increase in food



importation occurred between 1976 and 1979, from ₦438.927 million to ₦1,105.901 million. This was also the period when most of the policy initiatives to improve agricultural development in the country were being implemented by the federal government.

A major disadvantage of the food importation measure was that it drained the country's foreign exchange reserves. It also caused consumers' preferences to shift from domestic to imported food. Although it may be argued that importation of food created a competitive atmosphere for Nigerian farmers, it also discouraged the domestic farmer whose products were neglected in favor of cheap and easily-purchased imported food items.

#### Constraints Against Military Attempts

There were certain drawbacks that prevented the complete success of the Nigerian military government in its attempts to improve Nigeria's agriculture. While some of these problems were caused by unplanned government projects,<sup>43</sup> others were constraints the federal military government could do little or nothing about.

Some major problems that plagued the military's agricultural initiatives were the mismanagement of funds and programs and the lack of adequate personnel and manpower. While the OFN, for instance, may have had sufficient

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<sup>43</sup>Awoyemi, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

materials to achieve its aims, the program lacked carefully organized manpower for counseling and extension services. Also, the money budgeted for this scheme was not properly channeled to the areas that needed financing.

The Udoji Award is another major area that indicated the government's lack of planning. This increase in public workers' salaries did not take into consideration the adverse effect it would have on agriculture. The result was that it drafted labor away from farming in search of government jobs. Also, while prices of essential commodities went up, there was no corresponding increase for farm products and farmers' income. Farmers became the losers and may not have benefited considerably from the Udoji award.

Also the government seemed to have neglected farmers in decisions that affected their occupation. Decisions were made by government decision makers, and farmers were expected to comply with such decisions.

One other problem the federal government may have brought on itself was the total neglect of agriculture in the 1970s during the "oil boom"--when petroleum oil generated unexpected revenue into the federal government coffers.<sup>44</sup> Not only did the states and federal governments fail to seize the opportunity provided by this money to build a solid foundation for Nigeria's agriculture, but they also

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<sup>44</sup>J. K. Onoh, The Nigerian Oil Economy (New York, 1983), p. 67.

failed to focus the attention of Nigerians on agricultural production. This failure caused many farmers to disregard agriculture, abandon their farms, and migrate into urban centers. Farming and agriculture became unattractive to both farmers and would-be farmers.

Another constraint on the government was the poor supervision of imported agricultural equipment. Most of these machines, which cost the government large amounts of money, were not used or maintained. The few that were put to use were discarded for lack of parts or for lack of proper care.<sup>45</sup>

While it might be argued that the constraint that prevented the progress of Nigeria's agriculture during the military regime resulted from the mismanagement of finances and the lack of qualified personnel at both federal and state levels, there were other problems which were beyond the control of the military government. These were problems that were either exogenously generated or caused by certain aspects of global economic situations.

Although the federal government may have caused a domestic inflation resulting from the Udoji salary award, a greater recession and inflation caused by the international economic situation further disrupted Nigeria's agricultural development. A typical example was the sharp fall in oil

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<sup>45</sup>Awoyemi, op. cit., p. 3.

revenue due to a fall in petroleum production in 1976-77 from 2.7 million to 2 million barrels a day.<sup>46</sup>

Another major problem outside the control of the military government was the fall in Nigeria's primary exports products. In 1961, primary exports were valued at 62.2 percent of total exports value, but by 1971, this figure had fallen below 30 percent.<sup>47</sup> After the introduction of synthetic production and the stiff competition from other producing countries, Nigeria's export crops could not withstand the external competition. The effect of this greater competition was disastrous to Nigerian farmers who were thrown out of their jobs due to lack of markets for their products.

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<sup>46</sup>Ojiako, op. cit., p. 168.

<sup>47</sup>S. O. Olayide, Economic Survey of Nigeria, (1960-1975) (Ibadan, 1976), p. 5.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

#### Summary

The core of Nigeria's agricultural problems cannot be understood without first attempting to determine the genesis of the problems. The foundation of these troubles may date from the earliest times when the people who presently occupy Nigeria farmed with very simple tools. These implements were quite adequate for their time in history; which was less complex, less populous, and more limited in terms of external relations. However, as the society grew, so did the demand for more food, which meant that the Nigerian farmer needed better farming equipment in order to feed the growing population.

When the British colonialized Nigeria in 1900, they met a system of agriculture too unsophisticated to measure up to their standard. In response they introduced some cash crops into the Nigerian agricultural farming system. Exotic farming tools adequate to cultivate these British-introduced cash crops were also injected into the Nigerian agricultural system. The advent of the British government may, therefore, be regarded as a revolution that transformed Nigeria's agriculture. The Nigerian farmer, for the first

time, was introduced to the external world through his exports of cocoa, groundnuts, rubber, and palm products. The demand for these cash crops in the industrialized world forced many Nigerians into farming and agro-allied business.

However, the advent of the British in Nigeria had some drawbacks. Because the British introduced schools, a new political system, and the civil service, a new cadre of Nigerians to man these positions was urgently needed. Many farmers and would-be farmers were attracted into the cities. As farms became less attractive, population drift became a problem for many cities.

Although the British administration attempted to upgrade Nigeria's agricultural system, certain basic problems still remained unsolved by the time the British left in 1960. Nigerian farmers, for instance, were still cultivating the soil with the same farming equipment they used before the British arrived.

In 1960, Nigeria became independent from Britain. Many optimistically believed that since Nigerians were now in control of the government, Nigeria's agriculture would experience a more meaningful progress. The first Nigerian indigenous government attempted to solve the problems inherent in Nigeria's agriculture. Both regional and federal governments established farming institutions and farm settlements, encouraged the education of more Nigerians

in agronomy, and attempted to mechanize Nigeria's agriculture. However, they also failed to solve the basic problems that plagued Nigeria's agriculture. Farmers were not able to obtain loans to improve their farming, and government-owned marketing Boards overtaxed export producing farmers. Land tenure and the antiquated tools still used by farmers remained problems the government could not solve.

In 1966, when the military government seized power, it inherited the accumulated agricultural problems not only from the civilian government, but also those that were carried over from the British administration. Although the Nigerian Civil War prevented the military from tackling Nigerian agricultural problems, once the war ended in 1970, both the state and federal governments embarked on a full-scale war against the problems that plagued Nigeria's agricultural system. For the first time in the history of Nigeria, the issue of land tenure experienced a momentary change: farmers could obtain loans from existing banks, and agro-banks and credit schemes were set up by the federal government.

Although the military, it may be argued, could have succeeded in demolishing Nigeria's agricultural problems, its attempts at this measure were characterized by mismanagement, poorly planned, and inadequate personnel that could have supervised the structures they introduced. And, just as in the past, the basic problems in Nigeria's agricultural development remained largely unsolved.

## Conclusion

This research has attempted to critically analyze the efforts of Nigeria's military government to solve the problems that stagnated the country's agricultural progress. In the first place, it might be difficult to blame the military government without first knowing the problems confronting it in relation to Nigerian agricultural problems and its attempts at solving them. The Nigerian military government, it has been realized, inherited a series of problems from past administrations. It might have been possible for the military government to solve some of these problems directly, but others were beyond its capability.

The Nigerian Civil War, it might be argued, prevented the military government from attempting to solve Nigeria's agricultural problems immediately after they took over power from the civilian administration. While the Civil War cannot serve as an apology or excuse for the military government's abandonment of agriculture, it certainly diverted major attention from the agricultural sector to the Civil War. However, this study has revealed that immediately after the end of the Civil War, both state and federal governments intensified their efforts at rectifying Nigeria's agricultural problems. The efforts of the military government were well-intentioned, but the approach, organization, and decision-making processes of the military



government aborted whatever successes it could have achieved in rebuilding Nigeria's agricultural system.

The basic question generated at this juncture is why the military, with all the necessary manpower at its disposal, finances, and other infrastructural capabilities, was unable to solve those problems that were carried over for many years. Part of the answer could be that the military government failed to identify those major root causes that plagued Nigeria's agriculture. Instead of starting from the grassroots of Nigeria's agricultural problems, the military government began solving them from the top. For instance, the military could have directed an initial research of the Nigerian rural farmer and his major difficulties in order to identify his problems. But the military failed to do this. To achieve part of this goal, the farmers could have been incorporated and involved in decisions about agriculture and farming. However, because the Nigerian farmer was not involved in decisions that affected his life and occupation, it should be noted that this neglect resulted in the military government's inability and failure to identify what these problems were.

It is also necessary to assess the role of the government in its own schemes and projects. The federal government, for instance, introduced loan schemes and an agricultural bank for farmers, but failed to notice that numerous bureaucratic obstacles prevented farmers from

obtaining these loans. Also, the OFN scheme introduced by the military could have attained some of its objectives but for lack of proper planning. This scheme failed mainly because the military did not research thoroughly all the ramifications that usually accompany an agrarian revolution. A green revolution, the sought of which the military government wanted to embark upon, could have been successful not by asking all cadre of Nigerians to start farming, but by working closely with farmers in rural areas of the country.

Furthermore, the introduction of unresearched and unplanned schemes by the military further complicated the military government's fiscal policies. The Udoji award, for example, did not recognized the impact such measures could have on the Nigerian farmer. This award was a one-direction policy which sought only to alleviate the problem of the Nigerian civil servant. If initial thorough research had been done, the impact on the farmer of such an inflationary policy as salary increase could have been prevented. The abandonment of agriculture and farmers when the 1970s oil boom earned Nigeria unexpected income also contributed to the military government's failure to achieve its agricultural objectives. The country, between 1970 and 1975, earned an income of ₦38,649.7 million and was recorded as

reserve of ₦8,438.4 million.<sup>1</sup> Why, then, did the military government forsake agriculture and farmers when the money was at its disposal to transform and create an agrarian revolution in the country? This neglect shows the misdirected approach which largely characterized the military government's effort at restructuring Nigeria's agriculture. And because the money and encouragement were not in the agricultural sector, farmers and potential farmers migrated to the cities for government jobs in which money was more easily earned.

These domestic, self-inflicted constraints apart, there were global economic situations that, when combined with the internal difficulties, caused a downward progress in the nation's agriculture. The prices of crude petroleum oil had dropped in the world market, and this drop meant Nigeria's major revenue earner was cut short. The country's oil no longer attracted the sort of income it did in the 1970s. The effect of this situation on agriculture was more distressing because people became reluctant to take up farming.

The question may be asked as to why the federal and state military governments did not use the money generated from oil revenue to build a solid foundation for the country's agriculture. If the military failed to utilize

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<sup>1</sup>J. K. Onoh, The Nigerian Oil Economy (New York, 1983), pp. 70-79.

oil revenues, there is no reason to impute the country's problems on the global recession as a major cause that prevented the government from attaining its agricultural goals. Had the military laid a solid foundation for the nation's agriculture, the shock caused by the global economic problems could have been absorbed with minimal effects. But because this was not the case, Nigeria became a country that resorted to importing crops it had produced and even exported a few years earlier.<sup>2</sup> Part of this study's conclusion is that the domestic mismanagement, lack of effective prior research of projects, inappropriate constant supervision of schemes, and gross misuse of money, all of which characterized the activities of the military administration, were the major causes that prevented the progress of Nigeria's agriculture. Although the international economic difficulties may have worsened some of these problems, they were far less than the domestic constraints the military indirectly brought on itself.

At the beginning of this research, some questions were posed in order to arrive at some independent conclusions. These questions will assist in determining the major changes and the effects of the military government's efforts to improve the agricultural standards of the country.

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<sup>2</sup>G. O. Obatoyinbo, "Role of Government in Agriculture: A Look at the Commodity Boards," The Bullion, 2, Nos. 3 and 4 (July-September/October-December, 1977), 23.

QUESTION 1: Did the military government's policies, initiative, and changes in regards to Nigeria's agriculture increase or decrease agriculture's contribution to the Gross Domestic Production

ANSWER: The role of the military government in laying a solid foundation for Nigeria's agriculture was not a complete success. The plans of the government for agriculture were well-intentioned, but the handling process was a major problem. Schemes like the "Operation Feed the Nation," Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme, Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank, government farms and farm settlements, and even the importation of machinery, were all designed to rebuild the nation's agriculture. This thesis has shown that the military government's management capability and decision-making process were major reasons for the complete failure of the military's agricultural intentions. Schemes like the "Operation Feed the Nation" were abandoned halfway mainly because of mismanagement and misplaced priorities.

Indirectly, however, certain economic measures taken by the federal military government drastically affected the future of agriculture and farmers. The Udoji award, for instance, was a fiscal policy which did not take into account the future of farmers, the problems of agriculture, and its own impact on the farmers. While civil servants were content with salary wages, many farmers who wanted to

earn more money abandoned their farms in search of civil service jobs in the cities. It is against this background that one should measure the effects of the military policies on the percentage share of agriculture to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). By 1966, agriculture's contribution to the GDP was 55.6 percent; however, this figure by 1975 had fallen totally to 23.4 percent.<sup>3</sup> While the military government's domestic policies are largely to blame, global economic influences also affected Nigeria's agricultural development.

The main point, therefore, might be that had the military government focused more attention on agriculture by injecting sufficient money and capable, efficient, and constant manpower to the proper areas to direct agricultural schemes and programs, farmers might not have abandoned farming. The government's projects and plans may have indirectly caused the decline in the nation's domestic production of cash crops and thereby reduced the share of agriculture to the country's GDP.

QUESTION 2: What major changes did the military government introduce in its attempt to solve the agricultural problems in the country, and to what extent did these changes succeed or fail in solving the problems they were intended to rectify?

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<sup>3</sup>S. O. Olayide, Economic Survey of Nigeria, (1960-1975) (Ibadan, 1976), p. 13.

ANSWER: One basic change the military introduced was the land use decree which was supposedly to put a stop to the monopoly of land by a few Nigerians. It was a failure because there was insufficient personnel to supervise and police its implementation. Landowners flouted the decree with impunity. Also, schemes such as the "Operation Feed the Nation" might not have failed if the government had a program that was well-researched before being introduced to the public.

The federal government also introduced an agricultural bank and credit scheme to solve the problem of loans to farmers. The bureaucratic difficulties that farmers had to comply with before getting these loans made the scheme a failure. How and why the federal government did not thoroughly research a program before introducing it to the public is a question beyond the scope of this research. As a result, however, the government's seemingly incoherent policies, schemes, and initiative prevented its success in solving the major problems that it hoped to solve.

#### Recommendation for Further Studies

The major focus of this thesis was to critically analyze the impact of the Nigerian military government in its attempts to solve the basic problems inherent in Nigeria's agriculture. Because its major focus was limited, this thesis dealt with certain questions and problems only briefly. It is therefore necessary for other researchers to

endeavor to find answers and workable solutions to these questions.

A major area of focus that is being recommended by this study is the decision-making machinery which was responsible for agriculture during the military regime. Those responsible for particular decisions, the planning process, and final implementation should all be discussed as well.

Another potential area of study could answer the question of why major projects, fiscal measures, and agricultural policies were abandoned midway before they realized their goals. The question of lack of finance and personnel should be considered in this area as well in order to determine the real causes of this shortcoming.

Another recommended area of study is the relationship between farmers, the government, and important decision makers. Were farmers involved in the decisions that affected their occupation? If so, to what extent were they involved? And if not, why were they neglected? It might also be necessary to determine how the neglect of farmers by the military government affected the success or failure of its major policies.



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