

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND POLICY : THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

By

*Dr. A. O. SANDA **

I. – INTRODUCTION

Any attempt which is directed at understanding the impact of the social sciences on policy in Nigeria must probe into the history of the interaction between the social scientists and the policy-makers in Nigerian society. Such a history will bring into focus the relevance or otherwise of the situation during the colonial period, the nature of the peculiar development of the social sciences in Nigeria, the relative contribution of the different disciplines within the social sciences and some of the attributes of government or policy-makers which influence the extent of the impact of the social sciences on policy in Nigerian society.

In order to accomplish the above, a three-day workshop was organized by the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) from 4 to 6 June 1979. The workshop brought together 71 participants including 5 policy-makers, 24 representatives of NISER and 42 other social scientists ranging from a Vice-Chancellor to Professors, lecturers and research assistants from 8 of Nigeria's 13 universities. All these people discussed several positions which were presented at NISER's three-day meeting from 4 to 6 June 1979. What follows, is a synopsis of the results of this collective effort at ascertaining the impact of the social sciences on policy in Nigeria.

Social science as it is currently understood in Nigeria is dominated by the «Western perspectives», in as far as it is a product of Western civilization (1). Indeed most of the contemporary Nigerian social scientists have been trained in either Western Europe or in the United States of America. Barongo puts this situation very clearly:

«Western domination of our curricula and research orientations can be seen to arise from two sources, namely the continued reliance on Western literature... and the fact that a substantial percentage of the present university teachers of social sciences are themselves products of Western Universities... Consequently the orientation of our teaching and research programmes have tended to continue to be drawn within the... tradition of Western Scholarship» (2).

Consequently the current practice of the social sciences in Nigeria derives its inspiration, theories, paradigms and methodologies from Western societies. In spite of the assumed universality of science, the effect of the western origin of the social sciences on the impact that these disciplines have on society appears much more important than the cultural-contact theorists could have anticipated. This historical fact is however very important for the understanding of the current predicament and limitations of social sciences in Nigerian society.

* *Senior Research Fellow & Head Social Development Division, Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Ibadan.*

According to Lerch «perhaps nowhere in independent Black Africa has social science become more prominent and received more attention than in Nigeria». (3) This is evidenced by the number of Universities which currently teach the social sciences, the number of research institutes utilizing the resources of social scientists and the number of Nigerians specializing in the social sciences. However, «prominence» is not the same thing as «impact»; indeed, after three decades of development planning in Nigeria, a society which, to a large extent, still remains underdeveloped, one may like to probe seriously into the history of the development of the social sciences to get insights into the various determinants of the contemporary form and content of the Nigerian social sciences.

The social and political history of government – social scientists relationships in Nigeria dates back to the colonial era, when anthropology, economics and political science aided both the exploitation and subjugation of the Nigerian economy and the masses to the wishes of the colonizer. In particular, anthropology was used by the professionals to aid the colonial administrators in the ethnic and linguistic classification and manipulation of the people.

From about 1908, several anthropologists were recruited into the colonial service. Additionally, the colonial anthropologists amassed considerable data about the so-called «primitive peoples» and in the «tribes», for the use of the colonial power. (4) As indicated by G.I. Jones, even though the manifest function of the collection of data by colonial anthropologists was «to present the facts, its latent function was usually to cover up». The manipulative role of applied anthropology during the colonial times has also been noted by several authors including Otite. (5) Onoge, (6) Ekpo. (7) The great suspicion and distrust with which anthropology was subsequently viewed by some of the nationalists were not unconnected with its initial role in the Society.

Also, the establishment of the social sciences in the Nigerian universities began with Ibadan where economics was for a long time the only social science discipline in which degrees were awarded. For those first generation of Nigerian social scientists who were not trained at Ibadan, Britain (especially the London school of Economics) and America offered the training in the social sciences. And for those trained at Ibadan, their teachers were predominantly foreign and hence dependent on foreign literature, research traditions and orientations in the social sciences. This first generation of social scientists (as well as their successors) therefore became dependent upon and fostered the Western tradition of scholarship, with the latter's presumed «objective social science» becoming dominant.

Just as anthropologists were dominant among the social scientists who influenced the colonial policy (especially with respect to indirect rule) the economists were dominant among the social scientists who functioned as advisers to the government in the late 1950s and after 1960. However, none of the previous Nigerian governments utilized the services of social scientists as much as the current military administrators (i.e. during 1975–79). In any case, the nature and extent of government dependence on social scientists are not the same as the use of research findings of social scientists, and general responsiveness of social science researchers to policy demands in Nigeria.

Indeed, much of the written contributions of social scientists at this initial stage were government publications and classified documents which are kept away for as long as policy-makers consider it necessary.

II. — THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IMPACT ON POLICY

There are three main avenues through which social scientists can, in the course of their professional activities, interact with other members of the Nigerian society. Social scientists may teach and enlighten both students in the universities and adults in the wider society. Secondly, they may influence other societal members through their research and publications. And thirdly, social scientists may interact with policy-makers by acting as consultants, advisers, planners, commissioners and direct government officials in the civil service. With respect to contemporary Nigerian society, social scientists have been most influential in the third area of interaction with policy-makers. It is probably necessary to elaborate on each of these aspects of the paper.

Nigerian social scientists conduct researches into different aspects of social and economic processes in Nigeria and they publish such findings in both local and international journals. The foremost among the local journals utilized as medium of communication with policy-makers and the rest of the society is the *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, which has existed for 19 years. Other local journals are not as regular, even though some of them, like the *Quarterly Journal of Administration*, *Nigerian Behavioural Sciences Journal*, *Ife Journal of the Social Sciences*, *Savanna*, *Odu*, *Journal of the African studies*, and the *Journal of Business and Social Studies* at the University of Lagos, also carry occasionally social science findings.

Additionally, social scientists, for reasons of academic career requirements, publish a great deal of their research findings in foreign journals of high academic repute. (8) But comparatively few social scientists ever endeavour to write in the wider circulation media (e.g. the newspapers) in Nigeria. This is because of the great emphasis placed on publication in scholarly journals by the relevant appointment and promotions committees of the various Universities and Research Institutes. The result is that much of the research communication by social scientists are with other social scientists. Olofin noted this constraint when he said that «... there is also the problem of absence in most cases of any effective mechanism for making research results accessible to the policy-maker...» (9) The consequences of this situation for policy will be considered below.

As far as teaching is concerned, Nigerian social scientists relate mostly to captive audiences in the universities and research institutes. The kind of community involvement that could allow for teaching outside the classrooms are precluded either by National Universities' Commissions' directives on university teachers' non-involvement in partisan politics, or by the social scientists' fear of the ultimate negative repercussion on the security of their jobs. Nevertheless, radio and television discussions offer avenues for informal teaching by Nigerian social scientists. In any case, the teaching offered by the social scientists draw in the main from the literature produced by social scientists in Western societies.

In relation to direct participation in policy formulation and execution, the most influential social scientists are those in full employment in the Central Planning Office (C.P.O.) of the Federal Ministry of Economic Development. There are about 164 social scientists (mostly economists) in the Central Planning Office which in the final analysis is responsible for drawing up the national development plans and progress reports. In addition however, social scientists employed in para-statal research institutes like the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, the National Policy Development Centre, the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, all have had different degrees of input into policy at different points in the nation's planning and development process.

However, the measure of the impact of the social sciences on policy in Nigeria must include not just the participation of social scientists in policy-making, but also, both the results of policy as well as the extent to which policy is informed by social science research findings. These latter measures leave one in doubt as to the degree of real impact of social sciences on policy.

According to Okedara for instance, in 1955 the Western Region of Nigeria launched the free primary education scheme. About 170,000 pupils were expected per annum, but 391,895 pupils actually enrolled in the first year, even though between 1955 and 1960, 66.4 % withdrew from the schools for a variety of reasons. The attendant problems of administration and provision of adequate facilities tend to suggest the absence of a pre-policy implementation or pre-investment survey. (10) Indeed, many vital decisions, including the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps, the launching of Universal Primary Education, the launching of the Operation Feed the Nation and others are not preceded by adequate social science research. Even where some specific researches have been commissioned by government, (as in the setting up of commissions of enquiry or the use of private consultants) several constraints have operated to limit the potential impact which the social sciences could have on policy in Nigeria. Such constraints need to be examined in greater details in the next section of this paper.

And with respect to the private sector, the contribution by Alhaji Salami is revealing: according to him

«The researches and studies which led to the formulation of social sciences concepts applied in the personnel function were all conducted in foreign cultures where the works of Maslow, Argyris, Mccgregor, Herzberg, Corenz and Skinner have contributed immensely to management thought. Most of our first generation of personnel experts received their training either overseas or from foreigners in Nigerian institutions. *There has been very little attempt to adapt these foreign-acquired ideals to the circumstances of Nigeria. This is the main reason why the impact of the Social Sciences can be described as minimal as far as solving personnel problems here is concerned*». (11) (emphasis added)

III. — SOME LIMITATIONS ON THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES ON POLICY

There are numerous factors which militate against the social sciences having the degree of impact that these disciplines could have had on policy in Nigeria. Some of these factors are concerned with the practitioners of the disciplines, as well as their tools of research and analysis. Other factors inhere in the nature of Nigerian Society with its characteristically endless power struggle in a basically anti-intellectualist environment. In this presentation, our first consideration will be given to the constraints which are internal to the social sciences and their practitioners.

Firstly, there is the limitation imposed by basically western and received theories in all the social sciences. With regard to economics in particular, Professor Phillips has put the problem rather briefly but accurately:

«To date, much of social science research in Nigeria revolves around received theories. Specifically, the emphasis has been on testing the applicability to the country of theories developed in and received from the more economically advanced countries... the institutional cultural and historical climate often reduce the applicability of many theories to such a low level that the next logical step is develop what in essence amounts to new theories, test these and then base policy prescriptions on them; to date, social scientists demonstrate through empirical tests the inapplicability of several received theories but then stop short of the substitution process mentioned above. The upshot of course is that the researcher has nothing to offer to the policy-makers». (12)

This same problem of received theories has been identified by Olofin who tried to depict the extent to which the «reality» gap continues to widen especially with respect to macro-economic policy. And as put by that author,

«... the more a model has to rely on unrealistic set of assumptions, the more meaningless and unfruitful such models would be as a basis for directly influencing policy». (13)

Secondly, even in situations where empirical researches have been embarked upon, the professional requirements of social scientists and their considerations of requirements for mobility frequently lead to the utilization of vague, specialized and sophisticated methodologies and language of communication, all of which act as barriers to effective communication with would-be users of findings of social scientists. The use of academic jargon and the adoption of complex models and methodologies by social scientists though repulsive and alienating to policy-makers, represent such a mark of professionalism and academic excellence to the older social scientists that these phenomena may continue to widen the gap between the producers and users of social science knowledge for a long time.

Similarly, the over-dependence on the academic journals with restrictive circulation, and to which most policy-makers do not subscribe further limit the access of policy-makers to the research findings of social scientists. Again, in view of the great premium placed on academic journals

by social scientists, the latter have in the main been talking to themselves, to the exclusion of most of the policy-makers. Fourthly and perhaps most importantly, social scientist in this society do not engage in long-term policy-oriented researches partly as a result of their obsession with publishing results of short-term researches in an academic environment dominated by the «publish or perish» syndrome, and partly for other reasons which include inadequate funding and lack of adequate societal (both government and private) support for social research. Similar considerations of the requirements of the academia frequently induce a preoccupation with trivial research subjects which are reported in complex mathematical languages. Of course, the availability of research funds especially from foreign sources sometimes dictate the research problems which Nigerian social scientists try to investigate.

All these constraints which are internal to the social science disciplines and practitioners partly reflect the absence of an in-depth knowledge of the socio-structural environment with which social scientists are functioning. This situation is also not unrelated to the obsession with practising a supposedly value-free social science and the consequent distance between the societal members and the social scientists. Whereas, as noted by Phillips,

«It is by deeply appreciating the environment within which he carries on his profession that the social scientist can best maximize his usefulness as a producer of ideas for the upliftment of the society of man». (14)

Apart from the internal constraints, there are also limitations which inhere in the nature of Nigerian Society. First and foremost in this category is the paucity and unreliability of statistical data in Nigeria. Arowolo observed the incompleteness of different types of available information on which social scientists tend to base their socio-demographic analysis. This and other problems of statistical data in Nigeria have also been observed by Idele who has also noted the proliferation of organizations responsible for the collection of Industrial Statistics; similarly the collection of agricultural statistics suffers from the same ailments. Consequently, Idele suggests that both types of statistics need to be reorganized. In the meantime however, the inadequately organized and unco-ordinated production of statistical data acts as a major constraint to their use by policy-makers. Additionally, Idele observed that:

«Lack of statistically trained personnel... and the general public apathy towards statistical studies, scarcity of up-to-date and reliable data... the unco-operative attitude of industrial organizations and government organs having to do with those materials, lack of data processing facilities... the sheer size of the country... all these constitute some of the well-known problems facing statistics in Nigeria today». (15)

This society has in fact conducted two abortive census exercises in 1963 and 1973 respectively; and in spite of its shortcoming, the census count of 1963 is still in use for purposes of planning and social scientific

predictions. This further reduces the probable utility of social science prescriptions which derive from the use of this data base.

Secondly, there is the impatient and frequently indifferent attitude of policy-makers in the public sector as far as research is concerned. Part of this attitude has been explained as resulting from the power struggle between public sector policy-makers and the researchers. Phillips noted this problem rather vividly:

«The nature of governmental power... is such that it inevitably comes into conflict with the powers exercised by the purveyors of knowledge. The conflicts get expressed in fears and cynicism directed toward academics and researchers — fear that these professionals will expose the illogicality and irrationality of government decisions...» (16)

Part of the policy-makers' attitude may also be explained by their belief in calling upon researchers only when the latter are considered necessary. This may again be related to the power in relation to the power over facts or knowledge possessed by the social researchers.

Additionally, there is the colonial mentality which induces policy-makers in both the private and public sectors to prefer what Usoro calls «borrowing» from abroad. The importation of finished ideas and equipment is preferred by many policy-makers who are rather unwilling to go through what they consider to be long period of waiting for local researches to come out with relevant findings. In the private sector in particular, the subsidiaries of the various multinationals are totally dependent on foreign consultants and researchers, as well as on reports forwarded by their parent companies for influencing the activities of the local subsidiaries.

Finally, there is a total lack of co-ordination (17) of research activities in the social sciences and a complete absence of inter-disciplinary orientation either by policy-makers in their selection of relevant advice or utilization of research results or by social scientists themselves in most of their studies. The result of this situation may be seen in the perception of only one or a partial aspect of the problem at any one time. Even in influencing policy with regard to either education or agriculture or any development issue or problem in Nigerian society, this relative absence of inter-disciplinary orientation both among the researchers and among the users of research findings is a major obstacle to the effectiveness of social science in responding to policy demands in Nigerian society.

IV. — CONSEQUENCES FOR POLICY & SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

For most of the participants at the workshop on the Impact of the Social Sciences on Policy in Nigeria, such an impact has been minimal, as a result of the constraints enumerated in the preceding section. This situation has resulted in the adoption of the «wrong» policy prescriptions with respect to the overall development planning and also with respect to specific sectoral options like the farm settlement schemes in the agricultural sector or the take-over of schools and universities by the government with respect to edu-

cation. At the same time, this situation accounts for the existence of unused and scattered but informative findings with respect to many spheres of government and private sectors' activities. Okpala, for instance, depicted how social science research findings which preceded the promulgation of the Nigerian land use decree ran counter to the eventual policy decision of government. (18) Similarly, research findings on industrial location, housing and price controls are not given adequate consideration in the taking of government decisions housing schemes, or to control rents or prices. Part of the explanation for the situation lies in the lack of information by policy-makers. A more salient explanation is however concerned with the extent to which policy-makers rely on subjective, rather than objective, considerations in arriving at their policy decisions.

Consequently, in order that social science may positively exert some impact on policy in Nigeria, certain policy decisions would have to be taken especially at the national level, but also by the producers of social science knowledge in the society.

Firstly, there is an urgent need for the creation of a Social Science Research Council in Nigeria. Such a body will, among other things, be responsible for the co-ordination of Social Science Research at the national level in order to prevent duplication of efforts and promote interdisciplinary collaboration among social scientists. Furthermore, the proposed Social Science Research Council will also be engaged in the proper dissemination of research findings by social scientists, especially through such vehicles of communication which are comprehensible and accessible to both researchers and policy-makers.

Secondly, there is the need for social scientists to be much more relevant in their selection of themes and subjects for social research. The current practice which entails the concentration on subjects which tend to be esoteric and irrelevant in the context of pressing national problems and which thereby prejudices policy-makers with respect to social science research must be revised in favour of research problems which are relevant to current and future policy considerations in the society.

Thirdly, social scientists have to subject the nature, form and content of their discipline to a rigorous review in order that those paradigms, models, theories and concepts that are not relevant to the local circumstances may be modified or substituted with new ones. Social scientists such as Professor Ake would recommend the total rejection of «Western Social Science» which is believed to dominate the contemporary African scene. The rationale for such an overthrow is believed to lie in the worship of order and the values of capitalism by Western social science. It is possible, however, to adopt those aspects, theories and models of the social sciences which are verified as universal and reject those features and aspects which are proved to be culturally specific or true to other societies.

Fourthly, the training and production of social scientists need to be revised in order to make the content of education of social scientists much more relevant. This policy prescription is probably not unconnected with the need for special government efforts to finance social science research into publications for local materials which may subsequently be utilized for the training of future social scientists.

A fifth recommendation relates to the dire need for manpower exchange between the universities and research centres on the one hand, and the public and private sectors on the other. The current situation which virtually restricts social scientists to either of the two sectors prevents functional interaction between researchers and policy-makers and perpetuates narrow-minded suspicion and mistrust of the other party. The recommended cross-fertilization between social researchers and policy-makers may improve the communication gap between the two groups and encourage worthwhile co-operation between them.

V. – CONCLUSIONS

From all the preceding discussions, one may infer that social science has been having some impact on policy in Nigeria, especially in situations where social scientists have been commissioned by the policy-makers to conduct researches into specified problems. However, the content of information made available by social scientists even on such occasions have suffered from several limitations which militate against maximum effectiveness of policy prescriptions which are based on such information input.

On the other hand, the social sciences have not been having the degree of impact which these disciplines could otherwise be having partly because of some features of the universities and research institutes which harbour the social scientists, and partly because of some features of public service bureaucracy and the bureaucrats. Any worthwhile attempt which is directed at ensuring greater utility of the social sciences by public and private sectors' policy-makers will have to involve a process of change which will affect both the social scientists, the universities and the policy-makers in the Nigerian society.

FOOTNOTES

1. This position was the main thesis of the paper by Claude Ake, «Social Science, Dependence and Underdevelopment», presented at the National Workshop on Social Science and Policy in Nigeria. NISER, Ibadan, 4 June 1979. Also C.O. Learch «Social Science and Society in Contemporary Nigeria», paper presented at the Workshop.
2. J. R. Barongo, «The Study of Development and Political Change in Nigerian Society». Paper presented at the 6th Annual Conference of the Political Science Association, March 6, 1979.
3. See C. O. Learch, 1979, op. cit. for further details.
4. See for example P. A. Talbot, «The People of Southern Nigeria» (in four volumes). Oxford University Press, 1926; C. K. Meek, «The Northern Tribes of Nigeria» (two volumes). Oxford University Press, 1926; G. T. Basden, «Among the Ibos of Nigeria», London, Seeley and Service, 1921; S. F. Nadel, «A Black Byzantium», «The Nupe Kingdom in Nigeria». Oxford University Press, 1942.
5. O. Otite, «Anthropological Responsibility in Nigeria», P. F. Wilmot (ed.), *Sociology in Africa: A Book of Readings* Vol. I, Zaria, Gaskiya Corporation, 1973.

6. O. Onoger, «The Counter-Revolutionary Tradition in African Studies: The Case of Applied Anthropology.» *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, 15 March 1973.
7. M. Ekpo, «The Function of Functionalism; The Application of British Anthropology to British Colonialism». *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 2 January 1975, 17 – 35.
8. The main thesis of the paper which Sanda contributed to the workshop was that «... the relevance and social utility of professional outputs of social scientists are directly related to the social and institutional definition of requirements for upward or downward mobility among social scientists». See A. O. Sanda, «Mobility Prospects of Social Scientists as Constraints on Relevant Professional Outputs». Paper presented at the National Workshop on the Impact of Social Science Research on Public and Private Sectors' Policy in Nigeria, Ibadan, 4 – 6 June 1979.
9. S. Olofin, «Received Theory Constraints on Macro-economic Policy Research and Application in Nigeria». Paper presented at the Workshop on the Impact of Social Science Research on Policy, Ibadan, 4 – 6 June 1979.
10. J. T. Okedara, «The Role of the Social Science in Tackling Educational Problems: The Case of Universal Primary Education in Nigeria». Paper presented to the Workshop on the Impact of Social Sciences on Policy, Ibadan, June 1979.
11. Alhaji Isa Ozi Salami, «The Impact of the Social Sciences on the Personnel Function in Nigeria». Paper presented at the National Workshop on the Impact of the Social Sciences on Policy, Ibadan, June 1979.
12. A. O. Phillips, «Factors Inhibiting the Effective Utilization of Social Science Research Findings in Governmental Decision-Making». Paper presented at the National Workshop on the Impact of the Social Sciences on Policy in Nigeria, Ibadan, 4 – 6 June 1979.
13. S. Olofin, op. cit.
14. A. O. Phillips, op. cit.
15. S. I. Idele, «The Responsiveness of Statistical Research to National Development Policy in Nigeria.» Paper presented to the Workshop on the Impact of the Social Sciences on Policy, Ibadan, June 1979.
16. A. O. Phillips, op. cit.
17. See for instance C. Okongo-Adigwe et al. «Need for a National Comprehensive Socio-economic Information Organization». Paper presented at the Workshop on the Impact of the Social Sciences on Policy, Ibadan, 4 – 6 June 1979.
18. D. C. I. Okpala, «Assessing Public Policy-Makers' Responsiveness to Social Science Research in Nigeria.» Paper presented at the Workshop on the Impact of the Social Sciences on Policy, Ibadan, June 1979.
19. C. Ake, «Social Science, Dependence and Underdevelopment». Paper presented to the Workshop on the Impact of the Social Sciences on Policy, Ibadan, June 1979.

RESUME

Dans son introduction l'auteur fait d'abord remarquer que pour comprendre l'impact des sciences sociales sur la politique au Nigéria, il convient de se retremper dans l'histoire de l'interaction entre les spécialistes en sciences sociales et les responsables politiques nigériens. Un tel bain montrerait que les sciences sociales telles qu'elles sont comprises au Nigéria sont dominées par la perspective de l'occident. La plupart des spécialistes en sciences sociales du Nigéria ont été formés en Europe occidentale et aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique. Ainsi les théories, les paradigmes et les méthodologies sont d'inspiration occidentale. Cependant ce qui fait du Nigéria un cas particulier est «peut être le fait que les sciences sociales y sont devenues très importantes et y ont acquis plus de considération que nulle part ailleurs en Afrique Noire».

Comment les spécialistes en sciences sociales ont-ils pu influencer la politique au Nigéria ? Pour l'auteur, c'est d'abord en travaillant comme conseillers, consultants, et planificateurs qu'ils ont eu un accès direct aux conceptions mêmes de la politique nigérienne. C'est notamment le cas des spécialistes en sciences sociales qui travaillent au Bureau Central de la Planification du Nigéria. C'est aussi le cas des nombreux spécialistes qui travaillent dans les organismes parapublics comme, l'Institut Nigérien pour la Recherche Economique et Sociale, l'Institut Nigérien pour les Affaires Internationales etc... D'autre part l'impact des sciences sociales sur la politique ne doit pas seulement se mesurer par la participation des spécialistes en sciences sociales aux prises de décisions politiques mais également à la fois par le résultat de la politique ainsi que par l'importance avec laquelle cette politique est affectée par les recherches en sciences sociales. Néanmoins, un certain nombre de facteurs empêchent les sciences sociales d'avoir l'impact qu'elles auraient dû avoir sur la politique. Ces facteurs sont les suivants :

1. Les sciences sociales en usage au Nigéria sont basées sur des théories reçues de l'Occident.

2. Victimes de leur formation, les spécialistes nigériens en sciences sociales utilisent des méthodologies et un langage sophistiqués incompréhensibles des intéressés.

3. Le fait aussi que leur promotion dépend de leurs publications dans des journaux à distribution réduite constitue une barrière entre les intéressés et les spécialistes en sciences sociales.

4. Les spécialistes nigériens en sciences sociales préfèrent ne pas se lancer dans des projets de recherche à longs termes. Il y a aussi des facteurs inhérents à la nature même de la société nigérienne. Ce sont :

1. La pauvreté et l'inexactitude du corpus en statistique.

2. L'attitude d'impatience et d'indifférence des politiciens à l'égard de la recherche en sciences sociales.

3. La mentalité des politiciens qui préfèrent toujours emprunter plutôt que créer.

4. Le manque de coordination des activités de recherche en sciences sociales et l'absence totale d'une orientation inter-disciplinaire.

Dans sa conclusion, l'auteur fait certaines recommandations pour une participation plus effective des spécialistes nigériens en sciences sociales à la prise des décisions politiques.