

Under Siege: The Dark Territory of Technical-Technological Divide in the Development of Polytechnic Education in Nigeria

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Introduction

On 18th September 2005, the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Prof. Godswill Obioma informed the nation that the Federal Government will scrap the existing structure of education and replace it with a modified one in 2006. The announcement of another shift in the structure of Nigerian education does not come as a surprise to those who have been watching the history of education in Nigeria since the turn of the last century. In at least 46 years since independence from Britain, and despite the massive cultural, political and economic transformations of the country, structural reforms have been the least concern of Nigerian educational policy makers.

Yet changing economic, social and political situations in both developed and developing countries have combined to create needs for constant innovations and reforms in education. As Durkheim (1938:167) argued,

Educational transformations are always the result and the symptom of social transformations in terms of which they are to be explained. In order for people to feel at any particular moment in time the need to change its educational system, it is necessary that new ideas and needs have emerged in which the former system is no longer adequate.

This is more so in developing countries where from the late 1950s to mid 1970s independence from colonial administrators, and in some cases new found wealth based on natural resources have contributed to a redefinition of social priorities and objectives. As Fagerlind and Saha (1982) contended, although it is difficult to pinpoint when strong links between education and social and economic development began, nevertheless,

“...it is certain that by late 1950s and early 1960s there was general agreement among politicians, educational and social planners, and schools that education was a key change agent for moving societies along the development continuum.” (Fagerlind and Saha, 1982:39)

And within this context, expanded and improved educational provision became a focus of development efforts, especially in developing countries as a means of acquiring new skills and increasing productivity. A further strong rationale behind massive investment in education is argued by Adams (1977:299) who also contended

educational systems were said to produce the skilled manpower and the new knowledge requisite for technological advancement and economic growth.

The rationale behind this argument is reflected, for instance, in a review of several documents issued in the 1950s and 1960s in several African, Asian and Latin American countries. These documents, in the form of National Plans, expressed a desire to use educational provision for economic development (Lewin, 1984). A common theme has been that education is not seen to be pursuing relevant goals, and its various outcomes subsequently unsatisfactory (Hurst 1983). This search for relevance had a long history in Nigerian education.

Restless Natives and High Aspirations

In 1905 the British colonial government in Nigeria established the Education Code, a Board of Education that included Nigerians, and an Advisory Committee on Education in Tropical Africa. In response to the growing pressure for government involvement in a more literary form of education, the government requested the Board to present a scheme for a model school to be established by the government in Lagos. In 1906 the Board came up with a detailed scheme for such school which was envisaged to have a broad curriculum “catering for a sound literary foundation, but equally providing opportunities for those with scientific and vocational orientation” (Ogunlade 1974:332). Students to the model school, to be called King’s College, were to be admitted after passing the Standard VI examination to be conducted by the proposed college. The students would also be taught up to the level of the London University Intermediate Examinations which were the preliminary and first year examinations. The reference in the scheme to the

London Matriculation and the Intermediate Examinations, the size of its academic staff, the marked distinction between categories of staff, the size of the student population, and the range of subjects in the curriculum of the proposed institution — all are comprehensible within the University system of contemporary Britain (Ogunlade 1974: 333).

The proposed curriculum of the school was certainly the standard British fare in the education of a gentleman, comprising of: English composition, Literature, History, Geography, Mathematics and Latin which were all compulsory. Students would have electives chosen from French, German or Arabic, Chemistry, Physics, Botany; and there were plans to include, at a later stage, Electricity, Geometrical Drawing and Survey, Pure and Applied Mathematics.

The Colonial Office in London balked at the university pretensions of the proposed college as well as its literary slant when the proposals were presented for approval in 1907. A long dialogue ensued between the Colonial Office and officers of the Lagos Board, with each presenting and defending contrasting views. The Lagos Board naturally insisted on the literary predisposition of the college, while the Colonial office wanted a less pretentious institutions which bias towards agriculture and vocational education. In the end some sort of compromise was reached and in 1908 the picture of the approved college that emerged was that it would consist of “a model primary department, a well-equipped secondary department and a post-secondary department” (Ogunlade 1974:342). With this approval, the King’s College Lagos was opened on September 20, 1909.

Racism and the Colonial Curriculum

The years after the establishment of the King's College were followed with significant issue of adapting curricula to the needs of the country. But by 1916 it was getting clear to the colonial administration that the products of the King's College, and similar institutions maintained through government, were not going to be the docile clerics it had hoped. T R Batten, a colonial teacher, noted in his unpublished *Lectures on Education in Colonial Society* that 'the present picture is one of ferment and conflict in which the individual much more than in the past, sees himself and his private interests more clearly, an society and his duties to it as something outside himself, demanding and frustrating...The ranks of criminals, delinquents and other social misfits appear to be most largely recruited, not from illiterate persons, or from the best educated, but from products of the schools.' (in Omolewa 1976:94). Lord Lugard, the first governor of Nigeria was more trenchant in his observations when he noted that the products of these early schools in Nigeria were

unreliable, lacking in integrity, self-control, and discipline and without respect for authority of any kind...Education has brought to such men only discontent, suspicion of others and bitterness, which masquerades as racial patriotism...As citizens they are unfitted to hold posts of trust and responsibility where integrity and loyalty are essential. (Lugard 1923: 428).

The 1916 education ordinance also spelt out the three types of education required in Nigeria. The first was the literary or western academic style of education. It was geared towards preparing boys to hit the market economy as teachers, clerks, accountants, government and commercial agents. It also trained young men for potential positions of responsibility in the management and administrative sector.

The second type of education was job-oriented technical training. Indeed, F.D. Lugard spelt out the direct beneficiaries of technical education in the following words:

The second-class to which I have referred, includes those who seek a technical or manual training. Most of the openings for such boys are in the railway, marine, public works or printing departments where the machinery driven by steam or electricity is used... Boys who have passed the fourth or fifth standard in a provincial (or non-government) schools will be accepted as apprentices, and trained in batches, their pay rising with each complete year of service, if passed as efficient (F.D. Lugard 1920:63-64)

It is instructive to note that Lugard categorized technical education in the same class with "manual training" and considered it "second-class" – meaning it is considered an inferior form of education to one considered "first class"; i.e. literary academic style of education. *It is right from here that the contempt for technical education started.*

The third named category of education was elementary schooling. This type of education was aimed at the peasants who sought neither literary education nor the job driven technical training. The objective of this model of instruction was to: "train character and promote habits of discipline, industry and truthfulness (whether Christian or Moslem), and to fit the pupils for life in their own villages, and the improvement of the standard of that life" (Lugard 1920:64).

The preference of the Colonial Office for a more manually-focused curriculum had its antecedent roots in the racist theology of what constitutes the best education of the

Black people. This was because the calls for adaptation of the schooling program in the colonies — from both colonial and Nigerian officers — came from far afield. In 1919 the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society channeled a request through the Committee of Reference and Consul of the Foreign Mission Conference of North America for an African education survey, and suggested that the Phelps-Stokes Fund of the United States sponsor a study of the educational needs and resources of Africa shortly after World War I (Berman 1971). The Fund was believed best suited for this due to its concerns and interests in the education of African Americans in early parts of the century (Dillard 1932). This led to a first visit to Nigeria, among other nations, by a team of six led by Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones of the Fund between August 1920 to March 1921. The report of the Commission, *Education in Africa: A study of West, South and Equatorial Africa, by the African Education Commission* was published in 1922. As Berman (1971:135) noted,

The report was written exclusively by Jones, the chairman of the Commission, and reads like the report on Negro education with a different locale. His general recommendations deal with the adaptations of education to meet local conditions, the incorporation of his four “essentials” [sic] of education (health, appreciation and use of the environment, effective development of the home, and recreation) into the curricula at all levels....the overriding importance of agricultural and simple industrial training.

The views in the report echoed not only the conviction of the Commission about the education of the African, but also reflected the then current philosophy behind the education of African Americans in the United States. After the American civil war, one of the pressing issues was the re-settlement of African Americans and their integration into the mainstream American social affairs. One of the most common educational strategies advocated for achieving this was the industrial education approach. Further, according to Berman (1971:134),

This committee believes that everywhere the best experience warrants the assertion that for the Negro race all education ought to have an industrial basis...it is noteworthy that all the most successful experiments in Negro education, e.g., in South Africa and in the Southern States of America...have been based upon the gospel work and its application, as part of the school curriculum, in agriculture and handicrafts...Industrial education seems to have special application to the education of the Child Race, whose “mental digestion” is weak, and who are more successful in getting knowledge than in using it....

Thus with regards to the recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, Spivey (1986:5), for instance argued that

Jones believed that industrial schooling could strengthen America’s foreign alliances by helping the colonial powers stabilize the African situation (see also Spivey 1978).

Jones himself made it clear that colonization was the best thing that could have happened to African nations. As he stated,

Civilization is the result of contacts and as the people of Africa have contact with other peoples of the world so will they share in the benefits of civilization. We left West Africa with a very sincere gratitude for the great accomplishments of the British Empire in Africa. (Jones 1924 in Spivey 1978:4-5).

The Fund’s report, being the most comprehensive and specific document on African

education at that time, and echoing the convictions of the British colonial administration of the directions of the education for Africans — simple agricultural and artisan or ‘industrial’ training — acted as a catalyst for the policies of the Advisory Committee on Native Education set up in 1923 by the British colonial administration. The Fund’s Report also prompted the government to request for another, second, commission to be undertaken, this time incorporating the members of its own Advisory Committee, to survey educational developments in East and Central Africa. The report of this second mission, *Education in East Africa: A study of East, Central and Southern Africa by the Second African Education Commission* was published in 1925. Its findings echoed the first report, and as Berman (1971:141) quoted,

The most essential requisite of all is a genuine belief in agriculture, a recognition of its vital contribution to the life of the community, a realization of its value in the physical, mental, and even the moral welfare of the Native people.

These views had a further catalytic influence on British colonial education policy and culminated in the government’s publication of *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa* in 1925, whose central theme was that,

Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples covering as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life; adapting where necessary to changed circumstances and progressive ideas, as an agent of natural growth and evolution. Its aim should be to render the individual more efficient in his or her conditions of life, whatever it may be, and to promote the advancement of the community as a whole through the improvement of agriculture, the development of native industries, the improvement of health, the training of people in the management of their own affairs, and the inculcation of the ideals of citizenship and service (*in* Scanlon 1964:94).

The ideas outlined in all these documents about the education of the African turned out to be more anthropological than educational, professing as they did, welfare of the natives, but lacking in real strategies of how such goals can be attained. The ideas and strategies for emphasizing agricultural/artisan education also would seem to echo a belief that the African was incapable of acquiring education beyond a basic sustenance level knowledge. It was also interesting that agricultural education was being promoted as the best form of education for a people who had been subsistence agriculturists for the whole of their evolutionary history.

Perhaps not surprisingly, attempts at adapting education to local needs, already ambiguous as they stood at that time, were not entirely seen as favorable development by Nigerian officials. This could be because of the artisan-agriculture tones of the adaptation movement. As Brown (1964:373) pointed out,

In West Africa under British rule what most articulate Africans wanted was a European-type secondary education designed to equip them for white-collar jobs. Although attempts were made to promote agricultural education...they were not very successful for the simple reason that West Africans did not appreciate them.

Racism and Higher Education – The Yaba Higher College

With the King's College in place, it became clear that a higher institution was needed to absorb the products of the College. The colonial administration, fueled by the various reports of Christian mission fact-finding tours, were understandably eager to explore a form of education thought to favor the mentality of the African – simple industrial education and agriculture. This was underscored in the racist motives behind the establishment of the Yaba Higher College in 1930 when the colonial Director of Education, Hussey outlining his views on general government involvement in education in Nigeria provided a blueprint for its establishment. This blueprint was published in *Memorandum on Educational Policy in Nigeria*. The document proposed comprehensive government involvement in education by establishing a series of elementary and middle schools whose products would feed an envisaged Higher College to be established at Yaba, Lagos, a site close to the seat of government. Another Higher College was also proposed in Zaria, Northern Nigeria. The motive behind the founding of the Higher College was manpower development, for according to Hussey in the *Memorandum*,

I have dwelt upon the vital necessity of providing an institution in Nigeria which can train men in the country to play an honourable part in its development...A comparable study of staff lists for Nigeria and such countries as the Sudan, where higher training of the type contemplated at Yaba and Zaria has been in operation for many years, will show that a considerable reduction in European personnel is possible by this means, with a consequent savings of large sums of money on European salaries (*in Okafor 1971:70*)

Despite these expectations, it was interesting to note that the Higher College was not intended to be a *degree* awarding situation – i.e. *academic* – in the same way the Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone awarded University of Durham degrees. The Higher College was expected to provide vocational courses, teacher, medical and agricultural training at an intermediate stage. In effect, the Yaba Higher College was to provide the vehicle for the realization of the Phelps-Stokes agenda on Black education in Nigeria.

These proposals were accepted by the colonial government on May 29, 1930 and provided the first official basis for higher education planning in Nigeria. It was agreed by the government that the products of the college could provide well trained assistants for various department of government and companies, and the standard of the college would gradually rise, although it was not expected to attain a British university status for sometime. The College would award its own certification and was not to be affiliated to any British university (Okafor 1971).

The Yaba Higher College was officially opened in January 1934. The main emphasis of the college was on its medical program which was to last for five years, leading to the appointment of a graduate of the program in government service as an Assistant Medical Officer for five years, after which he would be eligible to return to Yaba for another year to get a College diploma and could upon successful graduation, become a medical practitioner. The teacher training course was to last three years, while agricultural training would last for a total of four years. The medical program was started at King's College on a temporary basis in 1930, followed by the other courses in 1932.

There were protests from Nigerians at the college at the manner of its establishment, but mainly at its programs. According to Okafor (1971:72) “the heat generated by public discussion [about the College] was momentous that it prompted events which have profoundly affected not only the educational but also the Nigerian political situation for a long time.”

There were three main reasons for the protests against the Yaba Higher College. First was the apparent non-involvement of Nigerian opinion in its design. By the time it was created Nigerians emboldened with liberal conceptions of democracy had started agitation for participation in all affairs of their lives. Second was the lack of affiliation of the college to any *standard guard* which will ensure that the programs offered would be acceptable as a basis for further education, especially in England. Third, its vocational orientation would seem to be a rehash of the industrial-agricultural educational strategy suggested by the Phelps Stokes Fund Commission and favored by the colonial government. Nigerians were chafed at the suggestion that industrial form of education would be best for them because it was considered appropriate for African Americans in Southern United States at the turn of the century.

These protests reached to head on Saturday March 17, 1934 when a group “representing the intelligentsia of Lagos” held a meeting and issued a press release which stated, in part,

While it may be expedient and desirable that opportunity should be provided locally whereby a certain number of youths may be trained to acquire some measure of skill in the different professions to meet the immediate needs of certain services, it is considered inimical to the highest interest of Nigeria to flood the country with a class of mass-produced men whose standard of qualifications must necessarily be deficient owing to the limited facilities available locally both as regards material and staff (*Daily Times*, March 18, 1934).

The protest meeting was organized by what later became the Nigerian Youth Movement, one of the pioneer nationalist political parties in Nigeria. Significantly, according to the *Lagos Daily News* of April 21, 1934, most of those who attended the meeting and became incorporated in the Movement were products of the King’s College, Lagos. Thus in this way education and politics became entwined.

These protests did little to change the government’s stand regarding the Yaba Higher College, and it was left to function as originally intended, mainly as a training ground for middle level manpower for government service, until December 1947 when, overtaken by more pressing events, the College was closed down.

Thus the early schools in Nigeria which set the pattern for the rest of the country therefore established precedents of being *training* institutions, rather than *learning* institutions. The absence of university or other tertiary training in the colonies forced the small but growing number of Nigerians who aspired to such education to seek it in England and the United States. For this reason, qualifications acceptable to British institutions were required. And because of the prestige attached to such form of achievement in the British examinations, many Nigerians scorned indigenous, i.e. artisan-agricultural type of education and vigorously embraced the English

universities' examinations. Nigerian youths began to consider the successful acquisition of the certificate of such examinations as the ultimate process of their education, especially since

the dictates of the colonial situation in Nigeria demanded a thorough grounding in English education and internationally recognized certificates to enable the holders proceed to further studies. It seems very doubtful if an adapted education, suitable as it could perhaps be to local conditions, could have provided adequate international recognition in the period, and lead to the making of new elite who became advocates of the country's independence and piloted the ship of the country's destiny during the early phases of the country's independence (Omolewa 1976:116).

New Directions, Same Map – Search for National Policy on Education

The emphasis of the Nigerian education on purely academic lines of educational pursuit was a source of concern for Nigerian educational planners. For instance, in a sponsored survey of the system in 1967, it was observed that

Criticism, other than that of a purely political or social nature, of Nigeria's educational and training system, may be placed under two major headings. *First*, the system is not geared effectively enough to the realities and needs of the labor market; it is not adequately *employment-oriented*. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the system's educational and training institutions have operational inadequacies impairing equitable access to opportunities and the quality of instruction. *Second*, there is insufficient application of the system's facilities and manpower toward solution of the country's most pressing development problems: it is not adequately *service-oriented* (USAID, 1967:49, including *emphasis*).

The mid-1960s therefore saw the beginnings of low-level reforms and experiments in education in Nigeria aimed at making the system more accountable to a rapidly changing society where there were very limited opportunities for the white collar job market. These were intensified when it was realized that an appreciable proportion of the school population terminate their education progressively at primary and secondary schools, with very few actually making the transition to the university. For instance, of the 56,155 secondary school leavers in Nigeria in 1965, only 5,199 actually passed the School Certificate Examinations at the *minimum* level (i.e. Division I and II of the School Certificate Examination) that would enable them to proceed to the university. The sixth form — first introduced in the King's College Lagos in 1951 — the main bridge between the secondary schools and the universities, did not fare too well either. Only 56.6% of the 1,874 HSC students in 1965 achieved examination passes in two or more subjects necessary for university admission (WAEC, 1966). Thus as the USAID report further noted in 1967,

At the present time the Nigerian educational system continues to suffer from the evils of too heavy an academic orientation, when the need is for a greater employment orientation. The person who terminates his education prior to graduation from the university often views himself as a failure who has been forced to settle for something that is second best, even though he is among the majority of the students (USAID 1967:53).

The first move away from this educational stalemate was attempted in the Western Region of Nigeria by the recommendations of an obscure, yet most potential educational committee established by the Western Nigerian Regional Government. Although the proposals of the Committee were not fully implemented (partly due to

the radical departure from the accepted norms suggested in the report, as well as the funding implications of the suggestions), the findings of this committee were to resurface later and form the central engine of the future Nigerian educational structure. The Committee was chaired by Archdeacon S. A. Banjo, with Chief J. O. Ojo, Reverend I. Edeki, Femi Oyewole, S. O. Leshi, Mrs. F. A. Ogunsheve and Professor C. H. Dobinson as members.

The Banjo Commission (as it was known) stressed the importance of *technical* and commercial courses in secondary schools. However, the Commission did not merely recommend that new courses or new programs be introduced in the schools. Rather, it presented a proposal for a new system of secondary education which was to be developed from the existing one and in which the programs of study represented a departure from traditional patterns. This itself was a brave gesture from a regional stronghold with fierce alliance to British values in every respect. The plan proposed by the Banjo Commission called

for the conversion of the existing dual structure into a single-track, but two-level, system of secondary education. The first level was to be the junior secondary school which would offer a three-year course of study and be open to all children who passed the primary school leaving examinations [the second was to be senior secondary school of four years duration]...While a wide range of prevocational courses was to be provided in the junior secondary schools, it was proposed that these kinds of studies should vary from school to school be related to the employment opportunities in the vicinity...After completion of the junior secondary school course, it was anticipated that approximately 30 percent of the graduates would proceed to *Senior Secondary Schools* while the remainder of the youth would enter trade centers, teacher training colleges, technical colleges, or take jobs (Muckenhirn 1968:216).

The Senior Secondary School was to be a four year course of study with extreme academic bias providing, in the final stages, preparation for sixth form work, although the curriculum was sprinkled with the notions of enabling the learner to acquire some vocational skills. These proposals, especially the attempted vocationalization of the grammar oriented Senior Secondary School was rejected by many educators in the Western region, for as Muckenhirn further observed,

While not expressed explicitly, it was this writer's impression from conversations with grammar school teachers that there was a feeling that the introduction of vocational and technical education into the curriculum of senior secondary schools would not only weaken the academic standards but also would create an institution which could not be accorded the prestige of traditional grammar school (Muckenhirn, 1968:222).

Thus the recommendations of the Banjo Commission report were not really fully accepted and implemented in the Western Region at the time. However, the central philosophy of the report itself (published in 1961) — echoing the puritanical belief of its members on utilitarianism in education — was taken up by the recommendations contained in the Ashby Commission Report which suggested that

the content of secondary school education is of particular interest to the government. *Obligatory manual subjects must be introduced. Vocational training must be increased. Agricultural education must be expanded in all secondary schools* (Nigeria 1960: 3, emphasis added).

Thus again we see here the resurfacing of the thinking of Rev. Jesse Jones of the Phelps Stokes on the nature of education of the Nigerian – from *official* Nigerian sources. And while this idea was not wholly implemented immediately at the national level, early experiments with comprehensive schooling in the Western Region of Nigeria led to the establishment of *junior* secondary schools with a common academic core curriculum, and a set of introductory pre-technical, pre-vocational courses for all students. Upon completion of the junior secondary school, and on the basis of a thorough selection and guidance procedure, students would either terminate their education or complete their secondary education in the grammar school wing or another specialized wing of the institution (for further details, see *The Development of Technical Education and its Relation to the Educational System in Western Nigeria, 1962-1970*. Ibadan: Government Printer). But

the stubborn adherence to the traditional grammar school type of education made it difficult for the junior high school to spread and eventually accounted for its eclipse (Adesina 1984:13).

Indeed, the first explicit attempt at the comprehensive school planning in Nigeria was with the establishment of Aiyetoro school in Abeokuta, near Ibadan, initiated as part of the Ashby Report recommendations, as well as the recommendations of the Banjo Committee. The Aiyetoro school opened in February 1963, with a gathering of teachers from Nigeria, U.S., Britain, and Scandinavian countries. Harvard University Graduate School of Education provided the overall guidance to the school's philosophy (Hinkle 1969 p. 81). The political overtones of this American aid gesture is not lost on some observers. For instance, Karl Bigelow (1965:47) observed that

The United States government can support a Harvard-sponsored comprehensive secondary school in Western Nigeria; it could not invest American public funds in a school modeled on Eton — to say nothing of whatever the Russian equivalent may be!

The Aiyetoro school was considered innovatory in many ways.^{1 1} First it departed from the then British tradition of the eleven plus terminal elementary school examination as prerequisite for admission. Students were admitted directly from primary schools in the catchment area of the school. Secondly, the school offered a core curriculum in all subjects which students must take within their first two years — thus simulating an American educational philosophy of providing broad general education in the junior years. Success at the end of these two years determined the subsequent tracking of the student. The first track was for the academically more able but who took electives in technical courses. The second track was for the less able and was vocationally oriented (Skapski and Somode 1962). And yet despite these strategies at providing liberal education in a less confining manner,

...the drop out and survival rates at Aiyetoro in its early years were unparalleled in the history of government sponsored secondary level education in Nigeria. On a cumulative level, only 33

¹ Two schools sharing the same American inspired general education philosophy were actually initiated. The first was at Aiyetoro in Ibadan in Western Nigeria. The other was located at Port Harcourt in Eastern Nigeria. Like the Aiyetoro school, the comprehensive school in Port Harcourt was also set up with funding from USAID. The Port Harcourt school, however, was affected by the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) and was not apparently continued after the war. See Newbry and Ejiogu (1964).

of the original 143 who entered in 1963 survived up to Form V, representing a cumulative drop out rate of 76.6%. For the second cohort the cumulative drop out rate was 43.40% while the annual drop out rate ranged from 8% between Form I and Form II and 23.97% between Form III and Form IV (Adesina 1984: 8).

Adesina attributed this failure to a possibility that the Aiyetoro school was attempting to operate an American system of education in a British-oriented examination system, for

whereas the education at Aiyetoro was essentially American in its form, content and methods, the examinations that finally judged the students requirements were essentially Britain [sic] in form, content and requirements while the background of those executing the project was diverse...The picture might have been different if Aiyetoro based its final assessment of its students on its own aims and practices. To have spent five years in a system that appears revolutionary in its aims and practices, and be subsequently exposed to an examination system that does not reflect that revolution was one of the several misfortunes of Aiyetoro students (Adesina 1984:9).

Still in search for a more effective solution to the issue of relevance of the Nigerian education in a post-independence era, in 1964 Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa (New York University, Graduate Class of 1955) who was later to become a central icon in Nigerian educational planning and subsequently a Federal Minister of Education (1990) conducted a survey in

an attempt to “sound out” the opinions of 2000 parents randomly sampled over a wide geographical and representative area of the country on the primary and secondary education systems...Ninety-eight percent of all the parents were dissatisfied with the “present system of primary education”, while opinion was equally divided on the same question relating to secondary education (Fafunwa 1989:43).

It is quite interesting that “...eighty percent of the parents sampled were from East, West and Lagos, while twenty percent were from the North.” (ibid). With a clear lack of uniformity in what constitutes education values in the “North”, it was clear right from the beginning of the creating a new Nigerian policy on Education that the “North” is already marginalized. Thus out of the 2,000 respondents who informed the direction of Nigerian educational policy, about only 300 were from the region with the largest number of people. This was perhaps informed by the view, then current, and possibly still now in 2009, that the “north” is an “educationally backward region” and consequently had nothing to offer about the future direction of Nigerian education.

As a result of this survey, in that a same year a proposal was made during one of the meetings of the national advisory committee on education, the Joint Consultative Committee for a *National Curriculum Conference* principally to look at the issue of relevance and future directions of Nigerian education. It took a whole year (to 1965) for the proposal to be accepted. The Nigerian civil crisis which began in 1966 halted any further planning for the conference, and it was not until September 1969 that the conference was finally held in Lagos. The Conference lasted from 8-12 September and was sponsored by a government agency, the Nigerian Education Research Council (NERC), now Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERD), with additional funding from The Ford Foundation. The main aim of the

conference was to “review the old and identify new *national* goals for education in Nigeria at all levels and provide guidelines on what the system should be doing.” (Balogun 1970:5).

These views were also echoed by the then Federal Commissioner of Education during his opening address at the 1969 National Curriculum Conference at which he underscored government’s views about education in Nigeria which was:

No doubt that the educational system we inherited was a good one. Good, that is, for the country and society for which it was planned; good for England and English society. But it was not good for us, because it neglected to take into consideration our cultural and social background; because it has tended to produce an educated class of pen-pushers and because *it failed to lay the foundations of economic freedom by providing the manual skills and expertise necessary for successful industrial and agricultural development* (in Adaralegbe 1969 *Opening Address*, emphasis added).

It is of course, a paradox that these recommendations were made — and accepted — to the Nigerian government in 1960s at the height of independence, when, earlier on in the 1920s, the Phelps-Stokes Fund commission had recommended *precisely the same strategies* (emphasis on agricultural and manual type of education for immediate absorption into the labor market); which were found unacceptable by Nigerian nationalists. Similarly, the Banjo Commission Report to the Western Nigerian Government in 1961 had the same anthem, and ended up with the same time-tested opposition.

What emerged out of the conference was a new framework for Nigerian education. And although its direct inspiration was not made clear, nevertheless there was a lot of similarity between the new structure suggested and the recommendations of the earlier Banjo Commission Report on the re-organization of the education in the schools of Western Nigeria.

The new framework recommended that Nigerian education should be composed of six years for primary schools, followed by three years of junior secondary schools, and three years of senior secondary schools. The university education was recommended at four years for a standard university degree. This educational pattern came to be known as 6-3-3-4 system of education.

This was a radical departure from the then existing structure, and the third in the development of education in Nigeria. Before the Nigerian political independence in 1960, the educational pattern was 8-6-2-3, in which a student spent eight years in the primary school, followed by a six year secondary schooling, a two year “A” level education, terminated by a standard three year university education. In 1955 this pattern was changed to 6-5-2-3, a structure which Nigeria retained until the National Curriculum Conference in 1969 which recommended a 6-3-3-4 formation, breaking the monolithic structure secondary education for the first time at a national level.

At the same time, the idea of multilateral, or comprehensive schools was also finally recommended to be an official educational policy for the nation. The comprehensive schools would not only have a greater number of students, but also greater number of courses than the hitherto standard curricula fare which prepared students only for

examinations. The examination itself was not abolished entirely, however, but a series of continuous assessment procedures were recommended, particularly for the junior school which would cumulatively be used as a basis for transition to the senior secondary school. The School Certificate examination, used as a basis for terminal evaluation of secondary schooling, would be replaced by Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), which would also be conducted by WAEC.

Based on these recommendations of the national conference on curriculum, the Federal Ministry of Education created a draft National Policy on Education (NPE) and the nation was introduced to it by the then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon during a speech at Barewa College on April 26, 1972.

Extremely ambitious in its scope, the NPE was seen as a blue-print for national development. Its expansiveness was justified on the basis of petrodollars that Nigeria earned unexpectedly as a result of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur war after which the Arab oil producers instituted a boycott of oil supplies to the West, driving up the price of the product from then \$2.50 to subsequent \$15.00 per barrel. By January 1974 the benefits had started accruing to the Nigerian government – enabling it to embark on extremely ambitious programs of national development. The then military leader of the country Gen (rtd) Yakubu Gowon was credited to having said that Nigeria had so much money that spending it was the problem, which drew a lot of critical flak, especially from Economists. Years later he was asked if he actually made that statement. His response was:

All right, I said so. But come along; it was merely in a manner of speaking! People had been saying to me that there was all this money, and therefore the government should spend it. And I will tell you who said so – the Governor of the Central Bank. He rang me one day on the hot line to say that he wanted to see me. I cancelled all engagements thinking something serious had happened. That was my fear. I was worried about paying salaries, paying off our debt, and still being able to embark on the plans we had earmarked. If there was a problem with our finances, there was a big problem. However, the governor of the Central Bank only came to tell me that he had so much money he did not know what to do with it!

I became very angry with him! What do you mean -- you have so much money, and you do not know what to do with it, I said to him...What we should be talking about, I told him, is not that we have so much money; rather, it is what to do with the money! And that was the context in which I made that statement! (General Yakubu Gowon In Conversation With Pini Jason Part One, Sunday 16th October 2005, *The Chinua Achebe Foundation Interviews #15: General Yakubu Gowon*; available online at <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/chinua-achebe-foundation/the-chinua-achebe-foundation-interviews-15-general-yakubu-2.html>.)

By 1980s that money had dwelled considerably after the collapse of oil prices, forcing the Nigerian government to institute a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) – a set of economic reform measures designed to achieve recovery and growth – in June 1986 which was initially meant for two years, but ended up lasting for almost 18 years. Based on the shifting realities of Nigerian economic system, as well as desire to standardize Nigerian education in global flows and patterns, the NPE was revised in 1981, 1993, 2004, and 2007.

However, back in 1981, and based on the various recommendations of the education committees established and amendments made to their reports, a revised *National Policy on Education* was published by the government, and stands as the definitive framework for Nigerian education. As the National Policy on Education document stated in summarizing the new educational structure:

The school system will be on the 6-3-3-4 plan. The system will be flexible enough to accommodate both formal and non-formal education and will allow leaving and re-entry at certain points in the system...The first six years will be for general basic education followed by three years of general education with pre-vocational subjects like woodwork, metal work, shorthand and typewriting, book-keeping and technical drawing so that the students who wish to leave the system at this stage will be employable. The next three years will be for general education leading to some marketable skills apart from training in the science and humanities so that the students graduating at this stage will be employable. Every student will be made to learn a skill (Nigeria 1981:47).

Prior to this, the implementation of the primary school stage had already been started nation wide on September 6, 1976 in the first nation-wide educational reform in Nigeria through the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme (Bray 1981). The three year Junior Secondary School (or Junior *High* School as it was referred in the National Policy on Education) portion of the national policy started in September 1982, while the students of this same system entered their three year Senior Secondary Schools in October 1985. In September 1988 the first products of the system entered Nigerian universities.

The National Policy on Education in Action

I will not attempt to recount the multifarious problems that afflicted the National Policy on Education since its take-off with the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program in 1976. This has been well-documented in other sources. I will, instead focus on the racist theology about the superiority of vocational-technical education for Africans, in this case, Nigerians and show that it did not work. As noted earlier, the main logic given for the a National Policy was to promote the industrial education philosophy so advocated by the colonial administration and the Nigerian government after independence – despite the disdain shown towards this form of education by the Nigerian elite class. Nevertheless, the junior secondary school portion of the National Policy was to have been the main gateway of ensuring the independence of the Nigerian child – a ticket to freedom from the shackles of white-collar yearning characteristic of secondary education. However, this has not been achieved since the implementation of the policy. According to Oni (2006), the picture was less than perfect, as indicated in Table 1 (from Oni 2006) which shows the trends in the enrolment of pupils in secondary and technical institutions from 1991 to 2001.

Table 1: Enrolment in Nigerian secondary and vocational-technical institutions 1991 - 2001

Year	Secondary		Technical	
	No	Enrolment	No	Enrolment
1991	3,854	1,653,891	208	46,083
1992	5,840	1,814,000	202	40,878
1993	5,948	1,865,189	190	72,136
1994	6,092	2,794,498	300	72,136
1995	5,991	2,934,349	240	76,434
1996	5,859	2,941,781	252	89,536
1997	6,001	2,923,791	261	1,179
1998	5,860	2,901,993	261	1,426
1999	6,008	3,123,277	261	1,425
2000	6,009	3,600,204	261	1,835
2001	5,959	4,032,083	261	1,835

Source: Compiled from Social Statistics in Nigeria 1995; Annual Abstracts of Statistics 2001; Federal Office of Statistics; Nigeria (Oni 2006).

The dramatic decrease in the number of student enrolment in the vocational colleges, as contrasted with the equally dramatic increase in the number of secondary school's enrolments in the same period clearly attests to the failure of the vocational-technical education philosophy, at least in the civil society.

Further problems of the National Policy on Education identified in the literature include:

- emphasis on formal education at the expense of technical, pre-vocational and vocational skills at all levels;
- emphasis on formal education at the expense of the non-formal targeting of children and adults in difficult circumstances;
- tendency for society to relegate technical education to the background in preference to university education;
- neglect of early child-care education, which is left to private initiatives;
- narrow goals of primary and secondary education (with the exclusion of life-skills such as health/HIV/AIDS education, population and family life, etc.);
- attendant social problems of unemployment resulting from graduates with excessive ambitions but no skills looking for white-collar jobs;
- under-utilization and non-committal attitude of communities/societies to ownership of primary education.

It is a further irony that years after Phelps Stokes report, the artisan vocational education is still being advocated in Nigeria, despite the fact that successive Nigerian governments had placed a high priority on the vocational education section of the National Policy on Education. And despite the failure of such approach. Further, the facilities were not available, as studies of the implementation of both the junior (Nwakoby 1987), and the senior (Osokoya 1986) secondary schooling shows. Moreover, it is interesting that Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, one of the main

architects of the Nigerian National Policy on Education in 1964, and who was to become a Federal Minister of Education in 1990 was quoted to have stated that

The policy had not met expected objectives because of poor implementation. Although some progress had been made, the 6-3-3-4 education policy is not working as planned. (“Progress To Nowhere”, *Newswatch Magazine* (Nigeria), May 13, 1991 p. 48).

Further, it would be instructive to ask, were these problems caused by faulty implementation of the policy, or by structural weaknesses in the policy? It is important to ask this question because it seems the policy perspective is a perfect game of running around in circles. If we can recall, the Missionaries wanted artisan vocational education – as did the colonial administration. The Nigerian nationalists do not want that form of education. Eventually, however, it found its way into the junior secondary school curriculum of the National Policy, and almost 30 years later, is described as having failed. So where exactly do we stand – a reinforcement of another vocational artisan education matrix and another report sheet of failure in another 30 years? The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council does not think so. This was because on 20th September, 2005, the *Daily Trust* (Nigeria) reports that the NERDC, through its Executive Secretary, Prof. Godswill Obioma announced that:

there is the urgent need to restructure both the primary and JSS curriculum into one harmonious nine-year and the re-alignment of the SSS for a strategic broad based vocalisation. “The present curriculum has a system error because we have placed too much emphasis on certificates instead of skills. In other parts of the world the reverse is the case; skills before certificates.

“The existing primary and secondary school curricula are structurally defective, There is a disconnect. There is a gap. The connection between primary and JSS curricula is weak. Primary pupils had weak support base to learn JSS contents”.

Furthermore, he stated that JSS curriculum could not achieve functional and acquisition of productive skills for those who could not access senior secondary school, just as “majority of JSS graduands lack strategic skills, as well as functional literacy and numeracy.”

No windows of opportunities, he added exists for JSS graduands who could not access SSS for continuing with acquisition of life-long skills and that the present primary and JSS curricula are over-loaded, therefore” the existing JSS curriculum cannot guarantee the support for reducing poverty, creating jobs and wealth for JSS graduates who are not bound for the SSS. Further,

“The SSS curriculum tends to favour the few that are university bound. The vocalisation of the SSS curriculum can hardly be achieved in the present context. There is no emphasis on productive work skills at the JSS and SSS. “The curriculum in its present structure lays undue emphasis on paper and pencil test for certification. The six-year primary and three year JSS curricula in their present structure truncate the continuous nine-year education curricula and the selection examination into the JSS is no longer necessary”.

This heralded the introduction of another structural change in Nigerian educational system and sees the introduction of 9-3-2-3 system, which sees a nine year primary-cum-junior secondary school, followed by a three year secondary school, a two year

higher school, and a three year university. The new system was to start in September 2006 – about 30 years after the previous one started in 1976. However, for various logistic reasons – including total absence of the curricula – it did not take off until September 2008.

With its emphasis on vocational education for the nine year primary school system, and after 46 years of self-independence, it truly heralded a progress to nowhere. This is because the original purpose of education for a developing nation is yet to be defined, since the new policy is still ghost of the brainchild of Rev. Thomas Jesse Jones of Phelps Stokes Fund. This is captured in Fig. 1 which summarizes how the circle started, and how it is still spinning.

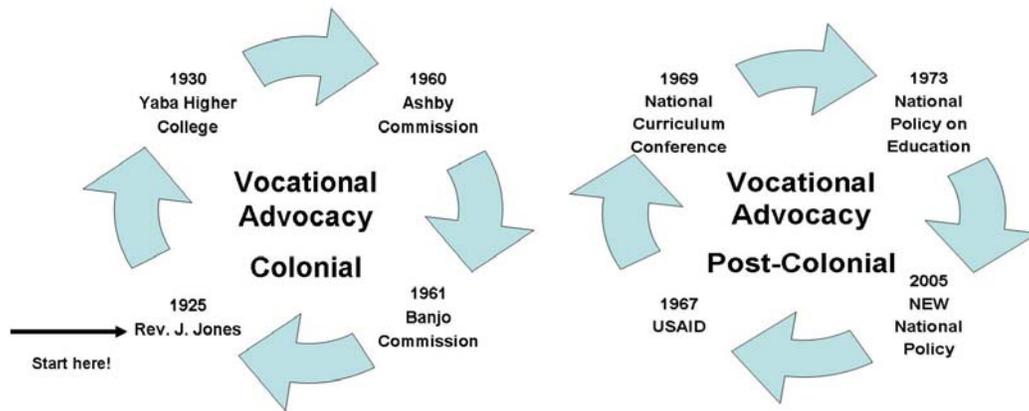


Fig. 1. Nowhere – Now Here: Anatomy of a Circle

Under Siege: Technical Technological Divide

Thus it is pretty much clear that both the Government and the civil society has a predilection towards emphasis on technological, rather than technical education. This is reflected in the development Universities of Technology from 1980. In 1980, one of the policy thrusts in education of the then civilian government headed by Alhaji Aliyu Shehu Shagari was the creation of new universities of technology. The purpose, as announced by government, was in line with the national policy on education, with respect to technical and scientific training; namely, to develop, at every stage of the educational system, a scientific and technological attitude in preparation for the nation's technological take-off. Thus, the old States of the Federation: Bauchi, Benue, Gongola, Imo, Niger, Ogun and Ondo that had no federal universities became the immediate beneficiaries of this new initiative. In the same year three such institutions were named for Bauchi, Benue and Imo, while the other four commenced in 1981.

The question is, why would the Federal Government believe that its technological vision can only be realized through *universities of technology*, rather than polytechnics? If the emphasis of the National Policy on Education was on mass production of technically competent manpower, then the policy thrust would have been on further development of polytechnic education. The fact that this path was not followed indicated the divided that exists with regards to emphasis in either technical or technological education: the shift is clearly on *technological*; and from the government perspective, this can only be achieved in *universities*.

This therefore reflected an ambivalent policy attitude towards technical education that sees a clear favoring of technological education. Technical education, to be pursued in polytechnics is seen still as second class type of education for the less-abled, while technological education, to be pursued in universities of technology as well as comprehensive universities, is seen as a higher class of training that will be the main gateway to national scientific and technological development.

This dark territory is further illustrated in the way the products of polytechnics are treated compared to the products of the universities of technology (or engineering graduates from universities). For instance, the HND is often routinely considered as a basis for admission into *Level One* of degree programs in many universities – thus equating the HND at less than even the NCE. And in almost all universities, direct admission into academic Masters’ degrees is almost impossible for HND holders – they have to do a “converter” course that apparently equates the HND to an undergraduate degree level.

Nigerian Education Sector Reforms and Tertiary Consolidation

Right in the middle of these challenges facing education the Nigerian Government introduced a whole range of Education Sector Reforms from 2007 aimed at achieving a significant gain in the implementation of World Bank’s policies on Nigerian education. The legal instrument for the institutionalization of these reforms is Education Reform Act, 2007. The reforms cut across the swathe of education from pre-primary, encompassing Universal Basic Education and all the way to the university. The details of each of these sectoral reforms are:

ORASS (Operation Reach All Secondary Schools)

ORASS was the first condition survey conducted by the ministry of education since its inception. 11,000 inspectors visited and inspected 14,543 secondary schools.

Adopt-A-Public-School

The Adopt A Public School initiative aims to leverage stakeholders in education, particularly corporate organizations, to come together as partners, for the purpose of rescuing our public schools; and consequently restore them to institutions capable of delivering sound learning and aptitudinal education.

CATI

The Community Accountability & Transparency Initiative (CATI) seeks to get various institutions, civil society groups, town unions, etc involved in holding UBEC, SUBEBs, Contractors and the various Ministries of Education accountable for Government disbursements at all tiers.

IEI (Innovation Enterprise Institutions)

To advance Nigerian’s economic growth through the maximization of human potential through excellence in vocational and technological training so as to develop the workforce and enhance Nigeria’s global competitiveness.

Unity School PPP

The PPP initiative will ensure the effectiveness of the Federal Governments Unity Schools by bringing together various stakeholders in the Education system to deliver innovative solutions to the problems of poor school management, academic under-achievement and poor utilization of public financial resources.

ORAPS (Operation Reach all Primary Schools)

ORAPS is a follow up to ORASS (Operation Reach all secondary Schools), successfully carried out over the last quarter of 2006. ORAPS is an exercise geared towards doing both qualitative and quantitative inspection of all primary schools in Nigeria.

Ed.Tap

The ed.Tap initiative Tracks the “products” of Nigeria’s educational system to determine who they are, their backgrounds, capabilities and needs to inform a long-term strategic planning process for the education sector.

Tertiary Consolidation

The consolidation initiative will deliver the conversion all Federal Polytechnics and Colleges of Education into campuses of neighboring Federal Universities, thus improving the carrying capacity of the Universities, and satisfying the quest for University Education and degree certification.

The Consolidation of Tertiary Education

Let me focus my attention to the last sector – Tertiary Consolidation, which further illustrates the “dark territory” of polytechnic education, and confirms government agenda in technical education – an agenda established since 19th century.

With the introduction of these sectoral reforms, the scope has to be expanded to include Federal Colleges of Education and Polytechnics. The main rationale given for the consolidation of the Federal tertiary sector is mainly that

The consolidation initiative will deliver the conversion all Federal Polytechnics and Colleges of Education into campuses of neighboring Federal Universities, thus improving the carrying capacity of the Universities, and satisfying the quest for University Education and degree certification. http://www.fme.gov.ng/initiatives/tertiary_Consolidation.asp

The Education Sector Reform also prescribes the establishment of Tertiary Education Regulatory Commission which replaces the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). According to the Act,

24. From the commencement of this Act, the 21 Federal Polytechnics (except the Yaba College of Technology and Kaduna Polytechnic which shall become ‘City Universities’) and the 20 Federal Colleges of Education shall be converted into campuses of neighboring universities as may be directed by an order issued by the Minister and published in the *gazette*.

Purpose clause

25. The purposes of this Part of this Act are to –
- a. to merge the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) into one body to be known as Tertiary Education Commission which shall be charged with the responsibility of regulating all Federal Government owned tertiary institutions in Nigeria;
 - b. to strengthen the Tertiary Education Commission to enable the body promote research and development in support of the industry in Nigeria;
 - c. improve on the carrying capacity of the universities, particularly given their inability to accommodate a vast number of applicants;
 - d. to eliminate the desperate desire for University education as against other tertiary institutions;

- e. to eliminate the perception that certain tertiary institutions are superior to others;
- f. to reduce huge overhead cost by consolidating the supervisory agencies (National Universities Commission, National Board for Technical Education and National Commission for Colleges of Education); the Boards of the three Parastatals and 37 Governing Councils, Chief Executives, Registrars and other principal officers;
- g. to improve funding to universities in area of infrastructural and instructional facilities, research, scholarly publications and staff training and development through the consolidation of Education Tax Fund intervention; and
- h. to facilitate the creative use of underutilized physical assets by converting underpopulated tertiary institutions into campuses of Innovative Enterprise Institutes;

The Federal Ministry of Education also lists a series of precedents to the consolidation, pointing out that it is nothing new. For instance,

- The idea builds on a familiar historical tradition in Nigeria. Some universities started as campuses of other universities: UI (London), Jos and Ilorin (UI), BUK, ATBU (ABU), FUTY (Unimaid), Calabar (UNN) etc.
- Some universities presently operate multiple campuses located in:
 1. same city i.e. the ABU campuses at Congo and Samaru; or
 2. Other cities within a reasonable distance such as the two UNN campuses at Enugu and Nsukka
- As Advanced Teachers’ Colleges (ATCs), some of the COEs started as campuses of neighbouring universities e.g. ATC/ABU Kano and ATC/ABU Zaria. Today COE Zaria and the Congo Campus of ABU are only separated by a street. So too is COE Kano which is directly opposite the main gate of the city campus of BUK.
- A number of Polytechnics and COEs are presently awarding degrees by affiliation. Until recently, some COEs (both Federal and State) were in fact awarding their NCEs by affiliation.
http://www.fme.gov.ng/initiatives/tertiary_Consolidation.asp

The appendix attached to this paper give the concept map of the consolidation of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria according to the Education Sector Reform Act. However, since we are the Hussaini Adamu Federal Polytechnic, let us look at how the consolidation will affect the College, by looking at the affected section below:

Bayero University, Kano	Kabuga Campus (former Federal COE) Bichi Campus (former Federal COE Technical) Kazaure Campus (former Hussaini Adamu Federal Polytechnic)
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Under the proposed scheme, the Federal College of Education Kano, the Federal College of Education (Technical) Bichi and the Hussaini Adamu Federal Polytechnic will all become campuses of Bayero University Kano. This creates a “super BUK” and has consequences for the individual constituting units. For one thing, the staff development process in the individual units has not been as aggressive as in the university. Whereas the trajectory of a lecturer rising to become a professor is clear enough; it is less so in the individual constituent units. This means staff in the units – to be called “schools” will now have the disadvantage of being equated on the same level as their university colleagues. One would have thought that the individual units first needed to be equated to university status (using NUC resource verification as a benchmark) before the consolidation.

Critique

Thus it is very clear from the documents of the FME on the Tertiary Consolidation plan that there are issues to be resolved if the consolidation is to be successful. In the first instance, there were no wider consultations from academic Boards or senate of the institutions to be affected by the consolidation. This reinforces the view that democratization of education is merely a lip-service and is not followed by engagement and consultation.

Secondly, a reverse logic seems to be at play here. The creation of the University of Jos, for instance, gives the new university considerable latitude in serving its immediate environment, rather than being attached to the University of Ibadan. On its own, University of Jos can create a series of programs that otherwise would not have been possible under the tutelage of the University of Ibadan. By merging institutions such as FCOEs and Polytechnics to nearby universities, the gains made by the individual FCOEs and Polytechnics in providing vital community education would be lost in the new era of rationalization. This is because if the combined programs of the three categories of institutions were merged, then clearly some will have to be closed down – leading to staff loss on the charges of duplication.

An extension of this reverse logic is the inherent contradiction in the rationale given for the consolidation. For instance, the Reform Act says that the advantages of the consolidation include (amongst others):

- a. to eliminate the desperate desire for University education as against other tertiary institutions;
- b. to eliminate the perception that certain tertiary institutions are superior to others;

Yet if the FCOEs and Polytechnics are merged to universities, then there would not be any “other tertiary institution” – thus indeed *reinforcing* the view that the university is superior, because it is *only* the university that the Federal government recognizes – having eliminated other tertiary institutions. Nowhere in the Reform Act are facilities provided for the recognition of the FCOEs and Polytechnics – since even the regulatory bodies for these institutions have been “consolidated” into a new Tertiary Education Commission. Even the name of the new commission contradicts its provision. The use of the term “tertiary” in any educational discourse refers to a whole spectrum of provisions of education not restricted to universities. Yet under the new dispensation, only universities exist; so why call the commission Tertiary, instead of University Education Commission?

Further, it is not clear how the consolidation is expected to “eliminate the desperate desire for university education” since according to the FME statistics, more and more students apply to *universities* than other sectors of tertiary education. Creating “super universities” merely places more emphasis on university education – for the State COEs and Polytechnics are likely to be deserted.

Also basing the logic of consolidation on antecedent merger of previously independent units is faulty because the rationale for creating the independence units in the first place was to serve their localities in a distributed way.

It is clear that Nigerian technical education structures face a lot of challenges in a developing economy. It is under siege from so many dark fronts – from students who continually see it as a second option; from Government that historically consider it “second class”; from educational technocracy that sees it as useful as human appendix – best to be cut off to create a better person, in this case, a better university, rather than polytechnic.

These challenges – demographic, financial, academic and administrative – will determine the quality – and the future – of Nigerian polytechnic graduates in the future. The journey has barely begun.

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Appendix

Teritary Consolidation at a Glance

S/N	University	New Campus (es)	Remarks
1.	University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	Ilaro Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Osiele Campus (former Federal COE)	May have to convert the University from special (Agriculture) to conventional so that it can have an Institute/Faculty of Education to take over the FCOE and a regular Faculty of Engineering to absorb the Federal Polytechnic.
2.	University of Abuja	Nasarawa Campus (former Federal Polytechnic)	
3.	University of Technology, Akure	Ado-Ekiti Campus (former Federal Polytechnic)	
4.	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka	Oko Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Umunze Campus (former Federal COE)	
5.	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi	Gwallameji Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Gombe Campus (former Federal COE Technical)	
6.	University of Benin	Auchi Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Asaba Campus (former Federal COE Technical)	
7.	University of Calabar	Obudu Campus (former Federal COE)	
8.	University of Ibadan	Campus (former Federal COE Special)	
9.	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	Ede Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Ondo Campus (former Adeyemi Federal COE)	
10.	University of Ilorin	Offa Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Idah Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Okene Campus (former Federal COE)	
11.	University of Jos	Pankshin Campus (former Federal COE)	

S/N	University	New Campus (es)	Remarks
12.	Bayero University, Kano	Kabuga Campus (former Federal COE) Bichi Campus (former Federal COE Technical) Kazaure Campus (former Hussaini Adamu Federal Polytechnic)	
13.	University of Lagos	Yaba Campus (former Yaba College of Technology) Akoka Campus (former Federal COE Technical)	
14.	University of Maiduguri	Damaturu Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Potiskum Campus (former Federal COE Technical)	
15.	Federal University of Technology, Minna	Bida Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Kontagora Campus (former Federal COE)	The FUT Minna has no programme in Education. The options for FCE Kontagora are to: a. consolidate it with a conventional university e.g. University of Abuja or UDU Sokoto. However, the problem of distance may make coordination difficult; b. consolidate it with either the University of Abuja or UDU Sokoto as an interim measure until the current students graduate and thereafter convert it into a campus for Education (Technical)
16.	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Afikpo Campus (former Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic) Eha Amufu Campus (former Federal COE)	
17.	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	Nekede Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Omoku Campus (former Federal COE) Federal Polytechnic, Ekowa	
18.	Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto	Kauran Namoda Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Gusau Campus (former Federal COE Technical) Birnin Kebbi Campus (former Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic)	
19.	Federal University of Technology, Yola	Mubi Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Jimeta Campus (former Federal COE)	Same observation as in serial 15 . The FUT Y Yola has no programme in Education. The

S/N	University	New Campus (es)	Remarks
		Jalingo Campus (former State Polytechnic, Bali)	options for FCE Yola are: a. consolidate it with a conventional University e.g. the University of Maiduguri. However, the problem of distance may make coordination difficult; b. consolidate it with the University of Maiduguri as an interim measure until the current students graduate and thereafter convert it into a campus for Education (Technical).
20.	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	Kaduna Campus (former Federal Polytechnic) Tudun Wada Campus (former Federal COE) Katsina Campus (former Federal COE)	Although Katsina is closer to Kano but BUK will have three additional campuses, two of them outside Kano city. It is therefore better to convert FCOE Katsina into a campus of ABU Zaria which already has a campus in Katsina State (the SRS Funtua) and a Teaching Hospital at Malumfashi.