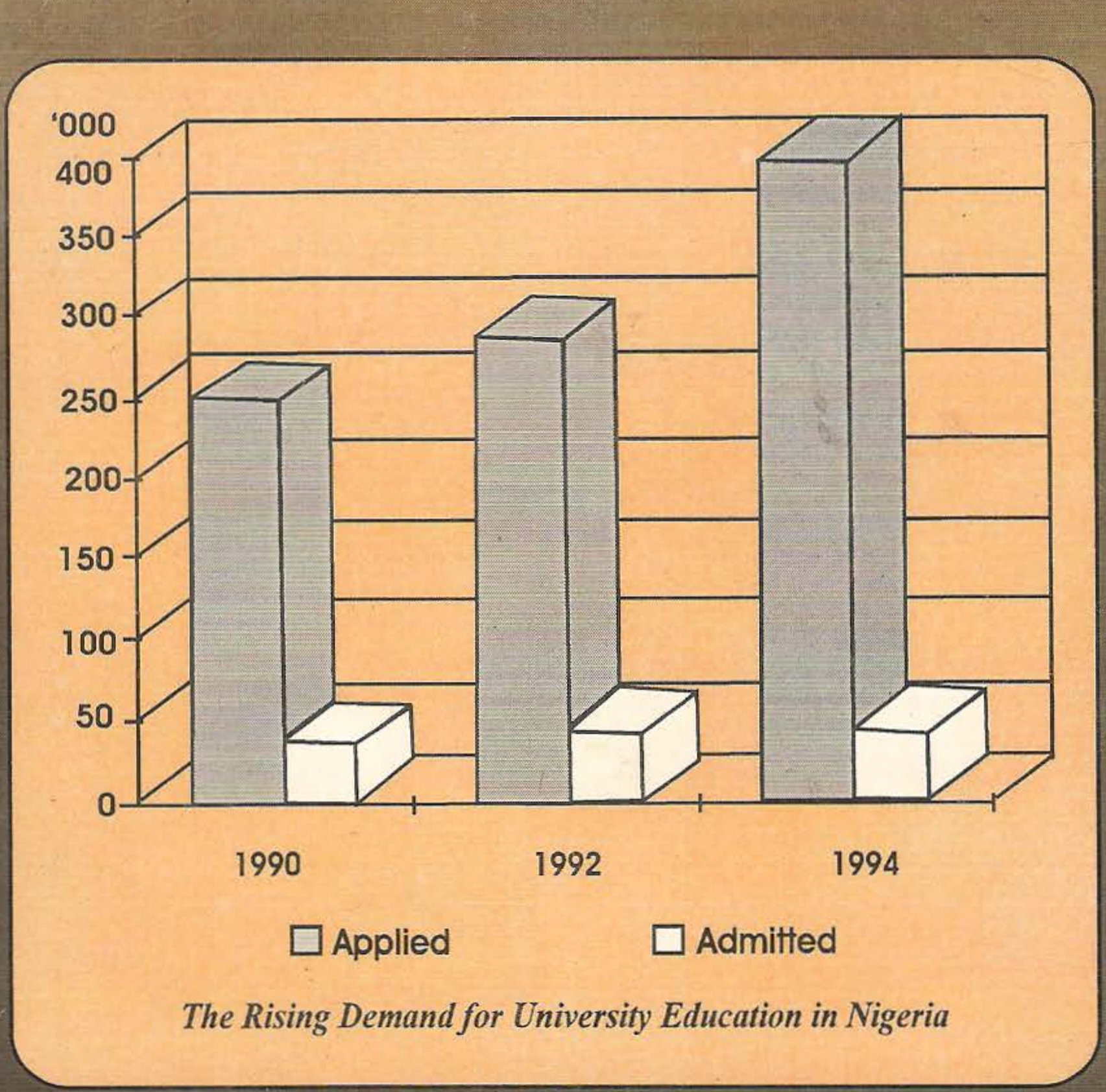
Perspectives and Reflections on Nigerian Higher Education

Festschrift in Honour of Ayo Banjo



The Rising Demand for University Education in Nigeria

Edited by

Munzali Jibril

PERSPECTIVES AND REFLECTIONS ON NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Genesis to Revelation: Reform and Adaptation in Nigerian University Curricular Structure, 1960-1988[1]

Abdalla Uba Adamu

Introduction

The greatest challenge faced by the Nigerian university in the years after independence from Britain was whether to retain its British legacy – the 'gold standard' of Lord Ashby of Brandon (Ashby 1965 p. 82) – or open itself to other influences – as is the case with universities all over the world – and gradually evolve a distinct character of its own.

The desire to retain the British framework predominated quite simply because the Nigerian labour market – civil service, private sector and the industries – has not developed a system of assessing prospective employees except through their education and examination outcomes. And since the entire employment superstructure is based on British patterns, retaining the British educational framework had the comfortable currency of predictability. An almost paternally condescending relationship between Nigeria and Britain also helped to retain Nigeria within the British ambit for a considerable period after independence.

The First Wave: Aid Agencies and the Nigerian University System

Gradually, however, a crack began to appear in the relationship between Nigeria and Britain in the 1970s over geopolitical issues and this had the effect of orienting Nigeria gradually away from

British influences, for as Gambari (1989) argues:

> Nigeria shares with Britain the use of English as the official mode of communication, but the two countries rarely speak the same language on political issues. In spite of close historical, economic, trade, cultural, institutional, and other ties between independent Nigeria and the former colonial power, serious political discord has seldom been far from the surface (Gambari 1989 p. 139).

This serious political discord (between Nigeria and Britain) appeared almost immediately after independence when, in 1962, Nigeria abrogated a defence agreement with Britain which was part of the independence package. But despite this move, Nigeria remained dependent on Britain for military supplies until 1967 when the Nigerian Civil War broke out (Ate 1987). The British policy towards the war – neutrality – deeply disappointed Nigerian leaders "and had a chilling effect on Nigeria-British relations" (Eke 1990 p. 133). This chill continued until 1973 when attempts were made by the two governments to normalise relationships on somewhat warmer levels. But the change in government in 1974 in Britain set in another chill when, in that year, the British government reduced its general aid package to Nigeria based partly on Nigeria's unexpected windfall in oil revenue following the rise of oil prices after the Yom Kippur War of October 1973 (see *The changing emphasis in British aid policies: More help for the poorest*. London: HMSO, 1975; and Hewitt and Sutton, 1980). This, of course, affected any British aid to Nigerian universities. Coupled with subsequent frosty relationships as a result of increasingly differing political standpoints regarding global issues such as South Africa, Angola, Palestine Liberation Organization, independence in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Namibia, competition between the British North Sea oil and Nigeria's oil, (see Galloway 1987 for a detailed analysis of this development), the impact of British academic system on Nigerian universities went steadily into decline.

It would seem that subsequent changes in government – in both Nigeria and Britain – had the effect of further widening the gulf between the two countries because by 1984 diplomatic relations were at a point of rupture, and Nigeria almost withdrew its membership of the Commonwealth. Things stabilised, but whatever intellectual influence Britain might have had on the Nigerian educational development had already withered away as early as the 1960s, when, in 1969 the National Curriculum Conference in Nigeria organised by the Nigerian federal government advocated a restructuring of the Nigerian education system more along American lines. Even politically, the image of Britain as a source of inspiration waned when, after the failure in 1966, of the Westminster style of government adopted by Nigeria in 1960, the Nigerian government adopted an American presidential style of administration for its civilian government in 1979. And although a military intervention curtailed that system of administration, a subsequent military government (established in 1985) adopted a loosely American defence structure complete with a President, and Joint Chiefs of Staff.

On the other hand, relationships between Nigeria and the United States, since the 1970s have been considerably warmer than with Britain (see, for instance, Montgomery 1961, United States 1980). The relationship between Nigeria and America was contextualised by Professor Jibril Aminu, a one time Minister of Education in Nigeria and a one-time Ambassador to the United States, who noted that:

> Nigeria, in spite of its clear policy of non-alignment, has demonstrated in the last few years, its genuine desire for strong links with the United States, especially after 1977 when the U.S. policy in Southern Africa showed a somewhat favourable shift. There will also be need to show genuine appreciation, not only for the uninterrupted supply of oil, but for the more profound political development of Nigeria largely and freely adopting, in its first post-military era, a constitution modelled largely on the U.S. constitution. (Aminu 1986 p. 270).

However, the influence of American ideas in the development of education in Nigeria has as long a history as American involvement in African education. In the 1920s the Phelps-Stokes Fund undertook a mission on African education and came up with a series of perceptions that did not go down well with Nigerian nationalists who rejected the patronising proposals of the Fund on the sort of education an African should receive. Since then American aid agencies had been rather cautious in prescribing any specific educational development pattern, preferring, instead to provide funding through which Africans can develop their ideas using the aid agencies, through American universities, for consultative purposes. As Eberly (1962) points out:

> The American-West African relationship until the late 1950s may be described as a slender two-way bridge with the traffic directed by the Americans. More recent events indicate the evolution of a partnership with American resources being geared to West African educational needs, as outlined by the Africans themselves (Eberly 1962 p. 49).

In this way, the International Development Placement Association, United States Agency for International Development, the African-American Institute, Operation Crossroads Africa, the American Council on Education along with about twenty or more other American organizations have all contributed to the provision of fund and expertise to Nigerian education. In addition, U.S. colleges and universities aided in the process by sponsoring many African academics, including many Nigerians, to study in American institutions. For instance on September 25, 1960, *The New York Times* reported that:

> A large scale scholarship program for students from tropical Africa, sponsored by twenty-four American colleges and universities will be expanded to include an additional seventy-five to one hundred institutions...When the participating African

> nations have made known the kinds of training most needed for their development, the sponsoring colleges will enlist the cooperation of American institutions which offer established courses of recognized quality in these fields [E11].

The biggest contribution to the educational aid process, of course, was by the big three American aid agencies: Carnegie Corporation, Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. For instance, the Carnegie Corporation made possible a massive training of African scholars through the funding of the Afro-Anglo-American Program in Teacher Education at the Columbia Teachers' College, and

> by 1975 personnel from institutes of education at most universities in most formerly British colonies had been exposed to (if not influenced by) American pedagogical concepts as practised at the influential Teachers' College, Columbia University. Movement of personnel between African institutes and Teachers' College for advanced degree work was an integral part of the program. In this way, large numbers of influential African educators were exposed at first hand to American pedagogical concepts and practices (Berman 1977 p. 80).

And when the American National Science Foundation sponsored the review of science curriculum in the early 1960s, some of these curricula formed the basis for the Nigerian Secondary Science Project (NSSSP) materials, developed by the Comparative Education and Study Adaptation Centre of the University of Lagos. The Centre itself was set up with partial funding from the Ford Foundation. In 1985, the NSSSP materials were introduced in all the senior secondary schools in Nigeria as part of a compulsory National Policy on Education.

The Ford Foundation also played a key role in the establishment of the African Primary Science Program in 1965 in Nigeria, which in 1970 became the Science Education Program for Africa, aimed at using the U.S. sponsored National Science Foundation approaches

to teaching science in African primary schools.

The Aiyetoro Comprehensive School established in Ibadan was an even more explicit statement of the early transfer of American educational ideas in Nigeria: not only was it designed as an American high school in 1963, it also introduced the *general education philosophy* of the American high schools in its curriculum.

But despite the barrage of American influence on Nigerian university structure and curricula organisation in the 1970s, especially through training offered to Nigerian academics and defrayed by the American aid agencies, Britain nevertheless maintained a working interest in Nigerian universities, at least up till the mid-1970s. British involvement, however, had more to do with staffing the universities with British lecturers than making provisions for structural reforms, or even small-scale innovations; in any event it was not likely that the British would suppor. any radical departure from the inherited British educational format in Nigerian universities. The relationship between Nigerian universities and British institutions before and a decade after independence in 1960 was articulated through the Inter-Universities Council, formed on the recommendations of the Asquith Commission in 1946. The purpose of the Council was to

> promote the foundation and expansion of universities in the British colonial territories as comprehensive institutions offering both liberal education and professional training (Kolinsky 1983 p. 37).

The essential tasks of the IUC were to provide a supply of British university teachers to the new developing universities in the colonies, as well as to help in training promising local graduates to supply locally needed academics (Kolinsky 1987). And owing to the importance of the tasks of the IUC, it was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in October 1970. Its operational expenses were borne by the British Ministry of Overseas

Development.

In Nigeria, the IUC was most closely associated with the University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University and the University of Ife (Obafemi Awolowo University), with nodding acknowledgments to University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and the University of Lagos (particularly the College of Medicine which benefited from a stream of short-term British visitors brought to the College by the IUC) and the new universities established (not entirely to the IUC's pleasure) in the 1970s. Further, albeit limited aid to the Nigerian universities was also provided by the British Council, the Technical Education and Training Organisation for Overseas Countries, the Centre for Educational Development Overseas, the British Volunteer Programme, and most importantly for training young university academics in Nigeria, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (Griffiths 1980 p. 699; Hawes and Coombe 1986).

The Second Wave: Reform and Innovation

However, the biggest outcome of the strained relationship between Nigeria and Britain was reflected in the total reorientation of the Nigerian educational system, from the elementary school all through to the university away from its British *gold standard* and movement towards a more diversified and cosmopolitan model. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka led the way to the reform right from its inception. Not only was it the first *indigenous* university in Nigeria (i.e. set up as a result of African, rather than British colonial initiatives), but it was also the first to be based entirely on an American model of university course structure and evaluation, complete with semesters, schools, and credit system in its courses.

Nsukka was established following an initiative by the then Eastern Nigeria Government in 1955 in collaboration with the Michigan State University. And,

> although the stated intention of Nsukka's fo[illegible]

> the best from British as well as American experience and create something uniquely suited to Nigeria's needs, the approach is considerably more American than British (Conklin 1961 p. 9).

This American approach caused quite a bit of stir, laced with regional sentiments – even leading to the establishment of another university in the Western Region (the University of Ife). Further,

> this break with tradition has opened the university [Nsukka] to a great deal of criticism, for British attitudes toward American education are still strong in Nigeria. Holders of American degrees have long had to face prejudice in finding jobs in both government and business (Conklin 1961 p. 9).

Official British participation in the establishment of the university was initially "not forthcoming" (Umeh and Nwachukwu 1986 p. 76), although gradually the British were made part of the process, since after all, Nigeria was still a British colony then. British attitudes to the new university, according to Umeh and Nwachukwu (1986) were further affected by whether or not the competition for students and staff would not adversely affect Ibadan (then a showpiece of educational institutional transfer from Britain to Nigeria), whether the magnitude of the proposed project would not impose too large a financial burden even if the university adopted a less expensive style than Ibadan; and whether the emergence of the university would not encourage an uncoordinated proliferation of universities.

Further, the Nigerian prejudice against American education was in a way amplified by the Ibadan axis, some of whose members believed that in America:

> there is a vast proliferation of so-called universities which have no academic standards and precious few of any other sort...It cannot be said too strongly that a first degree at an American university is worth no more than an English Higher School Certificate: even the best universities, Yale and Harvard, are

> compelled to spend much time imparting instruction which should have been given at school (Olubummo and Ferguson 1960 p. 14).

These views, coming from a lecturer in the Department of Mathematics (Olubummo) and Head of Classics (Ferguson) both at University of Ibadan further served as a commentary on British/ Nigerian attitude to American education being tried at Nsukka in 1960. What made Nsukka a maverick was its unashamedly American orientation in virtually every way (although retaining the British concept of external examiner). For example, at Nsukka,

> instead of reading in a single subject throughout their stay at the university, as is customary in the British-style African university, Nsukka students are required to spend their first two years in a school of general studies. There, American fashion, they are introduced to the concept of related disciplines as they take basic courses in English, a modern language, general science, and the social sciences. Only after a through exposure to this broad base do the students choose their area of specialisation (Conklin 1961 p. 9).

And although Nsukka incorporated suggestions of university structure predominantly from America (or, to be precise, Michigan State University), nevertheless it used a sprinkling of British consultants during its initial days; a situation which was without its source of tension as, for example,

> The British were concerned that the proposed general studies curriculum not take away time from the students' area of concentrated study. They wanted external examiners to read the students' papers and assure that proper standards were being upheld. To the British, nothing was more fearful than the notion that one might become involved with mediocrity, and to the Americans, nothing seemed more frightening than the possibility that this should be just another traditional university

> which ignored the special needs of the Nigerian community (Zerby and Zerby 1971 p. 108).

The unease regarding general studies from the British consultants (and some of the students) was surprising, considering the care with which Michigan State University consultants ensured that the programme would be as Nigerian as possible, since

> from the start it was recognised that the general studies work in Nigeria should be uniquely Nigerian. Thus it was not possible to import syllabi from other universities: teachers were forced to be creative (Zerby 1965 p. 10).

Unobtrusively, one of the texts used by Michigan State faculty to teach the general studies programme in Nsukka was *Toward Liberal Education* – a text that would no doubt ensure more converts to the general education philosophy!

Eventually Nsukka stabilised and provided a virtual model of the first American university transplant in Africa.[2] Michigan State was chosen as model for Nsukka not just because they were willing to help, but also because of the land grant philosophy behind its establishment, which the founders of Nsukka were convinced should provide the most acceptable framework around which Nigerian university education should be based. As one of the Michigan State consultants argued:

> High level instructional staff capable of tapping and developing the human resources in the primary and secondary schools is going to need to be developed. Production of such individuals in the technical, commercial and scientific fields for the secondary school level of instruction is especially urgent. The land grant philosophy, with its emphasis upon tailoring the curricula to meet whatever needs arise, whether traditionally acceptable or not, is ideally suited to countries facing such new needs (Hanson 1962 p. 53).

However, although elements of the American structure of

undergraduate curriculum were gradually spread across other universities in Nigeria (and not necessarily through Nsukka's example), the land grant philosophy, despite Nigeria's oil wealth in the 1970s, did not provide a basis for mass higher education in Nigeria. Indeed, if anything, the *special relationship* that existed between Michigan State and Nsukka was curtailed in 1975 (Osuntokun 1985 p. 136) and all issues of external aid to Nigerian universities reviewed. Professor Jibril Aminu attributed this to the

> militant uppity nouveau riche foreign policy of the Government, whereby the country felt that it could pick and choose from where to receive external aid. Blood money was unacceptable even for the universities. There was also the general feeling that aid could be used to subvert the nation in some way. These prevailing official attitudes led to the Federal Government centralising the channels of external aid (Aminu 1986 p. 92).

There was certainly a drastic decline in the activities of the aid agencies, particularly the American after this period (1975-1979). Britain had earlier removed Nigeria from its list of poorest countries deserving aid and had also substantially cut back its aid to the country (see, for instance, Hodkingson 1976). Subsequently, the Nigerian government opened up new types of *agricultural* and *technological universities* in Nigeria in the 1980s which, while not exactly based on the land grant framework, nevertheless shared a similar philosophy and were geared towards using agriculture and technology as a means of rapid social transformation.

Before long, the Nsukka experiment started showing its appeal – at least in the structure of its curricula, if not in its philosophy – and when Nsukka's archrival, the University of Ife was being planned in 1960, a commentator noted that:

> it was evident that the committee [to set up academic programmes of the university] would recommend that the new university borrow ideas from the American model. It observed

> that the adoption of the European model had hampered the successful operation of many African universities and that any new institution which adopted the European model was not likely to meet the demands of its society (Adediran and Omosini 1989 p. 14).

And although the University of Ife started off with conventional British university structure, by 1968 there were mounting criticisms from faculty at Ife at the inadequacies of the current educational structure. As Akintoye (1973 p. 33) noted:

> There had, for some time, been growing criticism of the existing curriculum and structure. It was widely felt that the existing system whereby every student had after his Part One (first year), to register for either a single Honours degree in one subject or a combined Honours degree in two subjects was too restricting and did not allow for as wide a general education as was desirable.

This led to the university Senate establishing a university Committee on Curriculum Reform and gave it the task of creating frameworks for the reform of the curricula at Ife. The committee recommended, among others:

> the introduction of 'units' and 'credits' for weighting courses, a method most widely used in the American university system. It recommended modifications of the examination system, especially the provision of examinations at the end of courses rather than at the end of the session (Akintoye 1973 p. 34).

In 1972 the university also introduced a general studies programme "to enrich, broaden or meet whatever deficiencies exist in the academic or general educational background of students" (Akinrinade 1989 p. 37). The general studies programmes

> were almost immediately accepted and incorporated into the structures of the various degree programmes. All students were expected to register for two compulsory general studies courses,

> the Use of English and African History and Culture, as well as a third general studies course (Akinrinade 1989 p.37).

By 1976 a complete change had occurred at Ife because that was when the course unit system was introduced "to enrich the intellectual diet of students" (Adediran 1989 p. 49), coupled with the introduction of a semester system, splitting the year into "Harmattan Semester" (September to February), and "Rain Semester" (February to July).

The University of Lagos, also established in 1962 like the University of Ife, started off on a *gold standard* footing reflecting British university structure. However, by 1966 it had undergone some changes and adopted a *school* and *collegiate* system for its teaching units. By 1975:

> the university had experimented with the schools system for a decade, and students have successfully been trained under it. That notwithstanding the system suffered some measure of criticism. There was undoubtedly a greater degree of familiarity with the faculty system operating in other universities. Besides, it was a bit confusing to have too many systems in operation. For, whilst Law and Engineering had the faculty system, the other seven 'faculties' operated under the schools system. Medicine and Education which have been brought more closely into the University fold ran the "Collegiate" system. This triple system of organising the teaching aspect of the university soon became fatiguing. The question would appear not to be about the retention of this diverse system, but about the modalities of how and when it can be changed and streamlined (Gbadamosi 1987 p. 38).

And while some streamlining undoubtedly took place in the ensuing years creating a more uniform administrative structure at the University of Lagos, its most radical innovation was in the adoption of what it called Unit Course System in 1972. As the university's historians recorded, by 1987

> the unit course system that had been introduced in the Faculty of Science since 1972 has now been adopted in all the teaching units of the university. The system has been designed to allow for flexibility in course offerings across disciplines and faculties initially at the undergraduate level. In this way, students can broaden their knowledge at least in the first two years of their degree programmes while they specialise in their major disciplines in their last two years. This interdisciplinary approach is exemplified in the Faculty of Engineering where students take courses in the Faculties of Social Sciences, Arts, Law, Science and Environmental Sciences (Agiri 1987 p. 62).

The first generation University of Ibadan, that bastion of *special relationship* with the University of London staunchly resisted any new-fangled reforms in its curricular structure for the first two decades of its existence. For instance, according to Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, another one-time Federal Minister of Education in Nigeria:

> Conservatism, scholasticism, romanticism and a colonial outlook joined forces to frustrate curriculum reform in higher education from the time Ibadan opened its doors in 1948 until the early 1960's when the four new universities entered the scene. There was considerable optimism among a number of Nigerian educators, some sections of the press and the public that these institutions would blaze a new trail in higher education (Fafunwa, 1971 p. 274).

Even the Nigerian government found Ibadan conservatism rather too much, especially on account of the influence it could have on emerging universities. For as the then Head of State of the Nigerian Military Government, Lt.-General Olusegun Obasanjo stated in an address to Vice-Chancellors and Principals of Nigerian Universities and University Colleges on Saturday September 18, 1976:

> by an act of commission or omission the premier university of this country unfortunately emphasised the concept of ivorytowerism from its inception. Both physically and otherwise it maintained an aristocratic seclusion and remoteness from the society it was meant to serve. Nobody seemed to appreciate the danger involved in this but today we realise that it was a bad precedent. That fact has been a big constraint in the expansion programme of all our universities because all other universities tended to follow the example of the university of Ibadan (Bayero University Kano Academic Development Committee Archives, Volume II p. 249).

This scholastic conservatism, according to an observer, actually reflected a power, or more appropriately *influence* struggle among the faculty at *Ilosho* a.k.a. Ibadan, for as van den Berghe (1973 p. 137) noted:

> in matters of curriculum reform, for example, the alignment is largely in terms of British versus American trained. The latter group are in minority and tend to favour a more American model. The British trained majority (both expatriates and Nigerian) naturally lean towards the *status quo*, and being in majority, often manage to prevent change, or at least slow it down. A good example of this inertia was the "course system" reorganisation of undergraduate courses, providing among other things, for more flexibility for teachers and students. The implementation of the proposal was delayed several years despite the absence of strong arguments against it.

Similar observations were noted by an Ibadan insider concerning the introduction of the course unit system and its perception at Ibadan who wrote that

> In the University of Ibadan...it took almost two years of impassioned debate to get some faculty members who have been schooled in the British and other European traditions to accept the introduction of the American-type "course system", because

> they saw in this move a plan to "cheapen degrees"! (Unoh 1970 p. 95)

The resistance went beyond course reorganisation and extended to training. Not only were faculty at Ibadan reluctant to embrace American ideas, but it would seem they were also reluctant to accept even *free* American training, for as noted by Ajayi (1988),

> In African universities and government circles, offers of American aid continued to be treated with suspicion though a few politicians and other alumni of American universities were also advocating the virtues of American system of education. Three times between 1954 and 1980 Ibadan University College authorities failed to take up offers of postgraduate studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology for nominated graduates of Ibadan (p. 11).[3]

And while other first generation universities were imbued with intellectual nationalism, as reflected in a focus on African culture in their compulsory general studies programmes, Ibadan University curricular structure remained true to its classical heritage, for as Ferguson (1965 p. 400) defended, regarding the non-introduction of General Education programmes at Ibadan:

> there is a major problem about any compulsory subject. If it is not examined, it is not taken seriously. If it is examined, you are confronted with a prospect of failing, say, a first-class chemist because he cannot write critical essays on African studies...The Nigerian members of the Board felt that the whole thing was too self-conscious; an English undergraduate does not have compulsory European studies; our culture surrounds us as the air we breathe.

The classical heritage of Ibadan was reinforced by the faculty's recommendation of the performance of heart-stopping theatre thrillers such as Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Handel's *Messiah*,

Gheon's *The Way of The Cross*, Sophocle's *Antigone*, and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer' Night's Dream*; works which Olubummo and Ferguson (1969 p. 75) were convinced would help Ibadan maintain good standards – although it was not clear in what. From Olubummo and Ferguson's account of Ibadan as an *Emergent University*, the only missing ingredient to a decent African university is a river flowing through the Ibadan campus; for that would have provided a good starting point for the boat race team – along Oxbridge models!

But despite the disdain for American influences in Nigerian universities in the early days of Ibadan, links were still made with an American university. For instance when in 1967 Ibadan set up an IBM 620 mainframe computer, the Rockefeller Foundation made it possible for Professor R. L. Wilson, head of computing at Ohio Western University, to be seconded to Ibadan for two years (*in* a graduation speech given by the Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor John Harris on June 30, 1967, and reproduced in *Minerva*, Autumn 1967).

Yet perhaps more significantly, the course unit system *was* introduced at Ibadan as early as 1969 – after a nine-year delay; possibly in response to the introduction of similar reforms in other universities, particularly Ife, Lagos and Nsukka; a very healthy competitive development. The process, however, started as early as November 1960 when the Faculty Board of Science at Ibadan discussed a memorandum from D.H. Irvine of the Chemistry Department proposing a consideration of the degree structure of the University College, especially as it would soon become an independent university. This subsequently led to a new degree structure at Ibadan, approved in May 1962 (Ekong, 1973). In altering the existing structure of degree programmes at Ibadan, a mechanism was suggested to deal with large student failures due to excessive specialisation. This mechanism was first suggested by the Ibadan Faculty of Science in 1966. However, instead of considering a

school structure as urged by the then Vice-Chancellor Dr. Dike, the faculty proposed a *course unit system* should be introduced which would provide a more flexible framework for dealing with students of varying ability and backgrounds. This system was approved by the Faculty of Science in 1968, but came into effect in the faculty only in October 1969.

With the Ibadan Faculty of Science breaking the ice of conservatism by introducing the course unit system in 1969, the Ibadan Senate recognised the inevitability of the system for the future of Nigerian university education by creating the Course System Committee in 1971 which worked out the modalities for the introduction of the system in the University (Awe 1981). It was practical considerations that led to the system-wide decision to adopt the course unit system at Ibadan in 1972. Obviously the Faculty of Science could not operate the system in isolation since many departments in the faculty offer courses to students from other faculties (Ayandele and Taylor 1973). In any event, it was just a matter of time before the other faculties joined in the new system.

Thus academic programme reform and structure in the oldest four southern Nigerian universities (Nsukka, Ife, Lagos and Ibadan) from 1960-1975 was unique to each individual university, and was accompanied by an underlying tone of competition on two perspectives. First was regional competition to ensure that each university sets a high standard for itself consistent with the aspirations of those who set it up. Secondly, the four universities became theatres where the drama of British versus American educational traditions was played out. If anything, however, the intensity with which there were attempts to ensure that each university had the most American undergraduate degree structure and pattern reflected the total decline of British educational tradition in Nigeria in the mid-1970s.

Northern Universities and the Reform Process

While curricular structure reform and organisation in southern Nigerian universities, and their affiliates and neighbours was embarked upon with enthusiasm, the reform in northern Nigerian universities was rather slower, and more cautious. The newer universities (Jos, Ilorin, Maiduguri and Sokoto), established in the mid-1970's followed the pattern set in by their southern counterparts and challenged, in one form or another, their curricula structural dogma, and slowly, but gradually re-oriented their degree programmes along the now more fashionable course unit system. The University of Jos, which started as a college of the University of Ibadan, embraced the course unit cause right from its independence in 1975. At the University of Sokoto some departments such as Nigerian Languages, started on the course unit system while other departments retained their traditional honours degree structures. Similarly, the University of Maiduguri started with honours degree programmes in 1975, but almost soon after adopted the course unit system in most of its units. These developments were random, rather than structured, and there was nothing much to indicate any degree of correlation between a departmental discipline and the speed and ease with which the department reformed its academic programmes.

Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), the oldest university in the North (established on the same Ashby bandwagon as Ife, Ibadan and Lagos) was as a central cultural icon to Northern Nigeria as the University of Ibadan was to Western Nigeria, and University of Nigeria, Nsukka to Eastern Nigeria. As Professor Jibril Aminu noted:

> If, as one Head of State once remarked in 1973, it is difficult to imagine what Nigeria would have been like without the University of Ibadan, it can be added here that it is becoming increasingly true that it is difficult to imagine what Nigeria, certainly northern Nigeria, would have been like without the Ahmadu Bello University (Aminu 1983 p. 24)

Indeed ABU was seen primarily as a northern establishment, starting as it did as an unashamedly *northern* university intended to portray northern Islamic values – a development which the powerfully influential Christian community in the north would probably have reacted against subsequently. As Sir Ahmadu Bello, the then Northern Region Premier and after whom the university was named himself stated:

> if our staff and students are drawn from all parts of the world then the mixture of international minds working together under an atmosphere of academic freedom can produce a university true to its ideals and meaning. But we are, as well, the University of Northern Nigeria, and our character must reflect the needs, the traditions, the social and intellectual heritage of the land in which we live (*Speech by the Chancellor, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, Premier of Northern Nigeria, his installation as the first Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University,* Saturday November 23, 1963).

ABU also served as the breeding ground for northern intellectuals. And although it is superfluous to talk of *northern* and *southern* universities in a federal (and extremely regionally sensitive) system such as Nigeria, the divisions are brought out to illustrate the combined effect of British colonial policies and socio- cultural norms to reform and innovation in Nigerian higher educational programmes.

Thus, despite the strong northern identity of ABU and its British roots, thanks to Indirect Rule, yet surprisingly, when the University was being planned in 1961, the university of the North, as it was initially intended to be called, was expected to

> develop its campus system along the lines of some of the Welsh and big American State Universities – that is to say different faculties and colleges of the University will be situated in different towns (Kirk-Greene 1961 p. 35).

Another alternative strategy for the establishment of ABU which was strongly favoured by the Premier of the Northern Region, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the *Sardauna of Sokoto* was to model the university after the famous Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt (Chafe, 1987). *England* was neatly edged out of the possible models. In the end, the University of California system with its nine campuses dotted throughout the State of California provided an inspiration for Ahmadu Bello University planners (Kirk-Greene 1961).

This was more so since the Nigerian College of Arts and Science in Zaria which formed the nucleus of the university had associated institutions linked to it at Samaru, Vom and Kano, each a fair distance from Zaria (with the exception of Samaru which was localted in the same area as the University). While the Ahmadu Bello University retained its British faculty and subject structure, nevertheless by 1978 it had also introduced general studies (more as a result of federal directive enshrined in the National Policy on Education, than a deliberate attempt at systematic reform).

And yet although there was no rapid embracing of American curricular structural ideas at Ahmadu Bello University, there was nevertheless a particular disenchantment with the *contents* of the inherited British curricula. Predictably, this manifested itself in the individual faculties – as in the case of Ibadan – rather than in the university as a whole. Generally, the period 1974-1987 signified the greatest period of change in ABU's curricular structures. In 1975, the university directed all faculties to re-examine the teaching/ research programmes of their departments and make recommendations on how such programmes could be made more relevant to Nigerian developmental circumstances. In January 1976, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, FASS, created a Faculty Development Committee to review the faculty's curricula which were considered predominantly Eurocentric. For instance, it was noted that the degree structure of the Department of Geography:

> reflects the academic backgrounds of the expatriate teachers, largely in British, but also in Indian Universities. Thus there is virtually nothing in it to suggest that it was designed for a University in Nigeria or even Africa. *Only in the final year is Africa given specific recognition in terms of a (comparative) Regional Geography course* (Ojuwu *et al* 1987 p. 97; including emphasis).

As a result of these observations, the curricula in virtually all departments of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at ABU were Africanised and the committee proposed the introduction of "Logic of the Scientific Method" and "Nigeria and World System" as foundation courses to be common to all first year students of the faculty. This proposal – providing the first glimmerings of a liberal general education – was not, however, accepted by the faculty despite the fundamental review of the curricula just accepted.

This slow beginning at the radically-oriented Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at ABU remained the only attempt at a wider scale curricular review. But there were clearly no attempts to use the American model. However, Professor Hamman Tukur Sa'ad's historical account of the development of the Faculty of Environmental Design provides an indication of the reasons for any slow pace of curricular structural reforms at ABU along American lines as already undertaken in southern universities; for as he observed with regards to his faculty,

> our experience is that a minor course restructuring takes anything from one to two years while obtaining approval for the initiation of a new programme consumes anything from two to four years with a bit of luck. The case of the four-year degree and course credit system that has taken more than nine years to formulate is an example. Even when finally accepted and approved, we should expect bottlenecks in the implementation of the programme as a result of inertia from Academic staff (Sa'ad 1987 p. 154).

By 1986 the Ahmadu Bello University had come to terms with the reality of curricular reform in Nigerian universities — and that is to adopt the American course unit system. This was more so when the University's Academic Development Committee issued a circular requesting all faculties to reorganise their curricula and course structure in order to begin the four-year degree programme with effect from October 1988. Professor Sa'ad noted that:

> The changes proposed represented a real quantitative improvement in curriculum structure if not in content. However, the ultimate issue was how well the academic staff would adapt to the proposed structure and how willing they would be to operationalise the system. Staff that had been educated under the existing course structure and operated it all their academic life might be unlikely to find this new structure palatable (Sa'ad, 1987 p. 157).

Thus Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, the central beacon of university education in the North, delayed implementing its course unit system until the very last minute, 1988 – a year in which the National Policy on Education made it mandatory for *all* Nigerian universities to restructure their curricula along the course unit system.

Bayero University Kano (BUK), a former affiliate of the Ahmadu Bello University before being made a full university in 1977, also remained faithful to the tenets of its parent university in its cultural and academic structural orientation. According to a submission of the University to the NUC concerning the academic programmes of the newly created University in 1977, its founding philosophy was that

> ...overall, the basic guideline for the university is that whatever curriculum is developed must be inspired by the three constants of its environment: an Islamic culture, a time-tested commercial civilisation and complex political community. Thus, whether

> in medicine or basic sciences, economics or geography, sociology or public administration, the starting point for our students needs to be the actual experience of this culture zone (BUK Academic Development Committee archives, Volume III, 1978 p. 397).

And while this may have little bearing with regards to the reform of academic structures in the university, subsequent debates of the University Senate and the Academic Development Committee made it clear that there was a polarisation with regards to abandoning the British degree patterns adopted, and accepting an alternative. Indeed, between 1976 and 1983, there were three attempts to introduce the course unit system in the university – and at each stage, these attempts at reform were thwarted by the university Senate. However, when it became an official Nigerian government policy for the universities to change their academic programmes, Bayero University, like all the others, had to respond to the new directives, although taking its time to do so. During the 1988 graduation ceremony of the Bayero University Kano (held in 1989), the Vice-Chancellor of the university announced what was the first clearly enunciated policy concerning the Course Unit System in Bayero University Kano:

> I am happy to announce the successful take-off of the Course Unit and Semester Systems this academic year [1988/89]. The Course Unit System has several advantages especially for students. It...reduces the rate at which students fall casualty to that dreaded monster, examination. Under the system, students repeat course, not years of study. From the point of view of standards, the system ensures uniformity of the criteria by which courses within the University and between universities may be assessed. The Semester System, which goes hand in hand with the Course Unit System, ensures that students do not accumulate all their examinations to the end of the year. By splitting the academic year into two equal halves, it gives students the opportunity to study many more courses than was possible

under the old dispensation (Graduation Day Speech of the Bayero University Kano. Vice-Chancellor, February 11, 1989).

It is significant that while southern universities were reforming not only the contents of their curricula to make them more sensitive to African needs, they were also experimenting with structural frameworks; yet in ABU and BUK the latter course was not willingly followed, although the former courses were also zealously embarked on. A closer look at some of the reasons for the regional differences in accepting innovations in the academic structure of the programmes might provide more insight into the mechanism of acceptance of the change process in higher education in a Nigerian setting.

There were three possible reasons for the slow reforms in northern universities.[4] Firstly, northern Nigerian universities, reflective of their social and cultural environments, tended to be conservative, and resistant to changes. It took between 1962 to 1975 before ABU could challenge the Eurocentric orientations of some of its programmess. Indeed, on the whole, northern political structures tended to be less antagonistic towards the British, and subsequently British institutions, than those of southern Nigeria (Mackintosh (1966 p. 32) and consequently the region retained its British educational legacy quite faithfully – any educational reforms were based on a federal initiative, rather than state governments in the region or even the individual institutions. The lack of antagonism to British institutions in the North might be attributed to the effects of *indirect rule*, a mechanism through which the British colonial administration ruled the Northern Region through the traditional rulers. These rulers, highly respected in the northern enclaves exerted powerful influences in all aspects of life in the north, making challenges to the British dogma difficult.

The British themselves capitalised on this and at every opportunity were quick to accord full, albeit condescending respects to the northern traditional institutions, a process which further enamoured the latter to the former. For instance, a retinue of northern

Emirs was given an extremely warm welcome in London during a visit in 1934, with speeches given by the Lord Mayor of London in which he proclaimed that:

> We feel that the Fulani and the English races have much in common. Both have had a long experience and special aptitude for administering their own and other people's affairs. Ancestors of both races share that enterprise of outlook which in the old days sent them over the face of the earth to strange countries, among foreign peoples... (*West Africa* Volume XVIII, No 909 June 30, 1934 p. 709).

Such romantic views and justification of British colonialism in Nigeria and the earlier conquest by the Fulani of northern Nigeria contributed in ensuring support of existing British academic ideals among the traditional rulers in northern Nigeria and created a conservative cabal among the powerful ruling traditional hierarchies in northern Nigeria with nominal resistance to British traditions.[5] Introducing any structural reforms of academic programmes along lines that differed from these British traditions would not have been welcomed by this northern traditional cabal.

Secondly, northern universities had more expatriate academic members of staff than those of the south. Such expatriate faculty rarely allowed themselves to get deeply involved in matters as politically sensitive as major academic reforms with geopolitical implications, thus contributing little to the impetus for change. As Ward (1971 p. 35) noted,

> On various occasions...expatriate academics have either been praised or damned for intervention in local politics or in questions of academic freedom or human rights. The political and social pressures upon expatriate academics can lead them to perform their requisite duties in the most perfunctory manner, fearing controversy, participating in the university community only as observers, being overly sensitive to local prejudices.

A sampling of expatriate distribution among selected Nigerian universities during the periods of intense curricular reform, illustrates their number, as indicated in Table 14.1.

Table 14.1: *Percentage of Expatriate Academic Staff in Selected Nigerian Universities, 1980-85*

University	Nigerian	Expatriate	% Expatriate
Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto	141	99	70.2
University of Maiduguri	265	180	68.0
University of Jos	231	134	58.0
Bayero University, Kano	216	114	53.0
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	840	351	42.0
University of Calabar	260	109	42.0
University of Nigeria, Nsukka	681	158	23.2
University of Port Harcourt	268	53	20.0
University of Ilorin	265	41	15.4
University of Benin	500	76	15.2
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife	855	98	11.4
University of Lagos	897	67	7.4
University of Ibadan	1001	71	7.0

Source: National Universities Commission, *Digest of Statistics, 1980/81-1985/86*

Thus, the southern universities of Ibadan, Lagos, Ife, Benin, and Ilorin had a combined expatriate percentage population of 56.4% in the period surveyed, which was less than the percentage expatriate population of Bayero University Kano alone. Nsukka and Port Harcourt seemed to occupy middle positions. Northern universities such as Usmanu Danfodio, Maiduguri, Jos and Ahmadu Bello indicated their preference for expatriate staff overwhelmingly, with each, with the exception of the more cosmopolitan Ahmadu Bello University[6], having more than 50% expatriate population in the period. It is argued that the lesser expatriate population in southern universities which meant a larger population of highly sensitised Nigerian faculty would have created a more effective forum for reform than in northern universities.

Third and finally, curricular structural reform in northern universities was comparatively slower than in the south possibly because of the relatively high turn over of the Nigerian academic staff in northern universities. Because manpower was still a developmental problem, especially in the 1970s, northern states tended to rely on northern *returnees* or those with high qualifications from Nigerian universities to man strategic posts in the civil service and the labour market. There was thus a constant movement of academic staff from the universities to the civil service – a fact which helps to partly explain why these universities have higher proportion of expatriate staff to begin with. At one stage, for instance:

> shortage of teaching staff in some of the universities has reached a level where they now depend on other universities for the training of some categories of students. The University of Jos, UNIJOS, which has attracted some of the best lecturers from other universities in the past four years, not only allows its lecturers to teach in other universities hit by mass exodus of lecturers but had had to complete the training of medical students from at least two universities in the northern part of the country ("Universities Under Lock" *Newswatch* Magazine (Nigeria), April 13, 1992 p. 21).

Situations such as these which had been recurrent in northern universities since the early 1970's do not promote experimentation in academic programmes, and consequently little progress would be made in any reform of such programmes.

By late 1970s low level institutional innovations in the structure and organisation of the university curriculum had started in Nigeria, spiraling from the extremely influential first generation universities of Lagos, Ife, and Nsukka. Since the innovations started slowly and on an individualistic basis, it was not precisely clear *why* they took place; and certainly reflect a combined effect of political forces, geopolitical influences with a desire to experiment with new modes of organisation, as well as the possible influence of a large number of returning American-trained Nigerian university lecturers as well as the efforts of American aid agencies in the transformation of the Nigerian university. These *outcomes* certainly reflected one of the main propositions of American aid agency efforts which believed that educational development required changes and not merely expansion of the status quo; a proposition which has been

> an article of faith of the United States aid programme all along. Its oversea's advisers and officials have given strong encouragement to the introduction of new types of institutions, programmes, methods and content into educational systems which they regarded as obsolete, inappropriate or incomplete. This has encouraged a wholesome questioning of existing educational patterns and has given legitimacy to the idea of change (Coombs 1965 p. 22).

Coombs did not make it clear to whom the programmes to be replaced were considered obsolete – the benefactors of the programmes or the recipients. That some of the aid agency officials or agents found much to be desired in the British system of education in Nigeria was fairly noted. For instance, according to Masland (1967):

> Most U.S. advisors and developers eager to aid African education see the sixth form as an alien importation which fails to fulfil African needs. So far, however, U.S. alternatives have been equally culture-bound...What is needed is a detached approach, growing out of African experience (p. 32).

It may also be possible that these innovations were stimulated by the affiliation of the various units of these universities to overseas, predominantly American universities. For instance, the Faculty of Business and Social Studies at Lagos was affiliated to the City University of New York; University of Ife had the University of Wisconsin as its mentor, and the historic link between the University of Nigeria of Nigeria, Nsukka and the Michigan State University marked the first foray of American university transplant as an African university. Similarly, links existed between Ahmadu Bello University and University of Pittsburgh. Bayero University Kano also formed an academic linkage with the University of West Virginia in 1987 fostered by visiting Fulbright scholars from that university. All these linkages created facilities for staff exchange between Nigerian and American faculty and tremendously facilitated the transfer of ideas, especially from American universities to Nigerian institutions.[7] Similar linkages were not well-formed or extensive with British universities.

Into this mix came the ideas brought by returnees from American universities concerning university academic structure and reform. The statistics show clearly that there are more Nigerian faculty trained in the United States than in Britain, and this might have contributed to the rapid adoption of American curricular model of university organisation. The figures are indicated in Table 14.2.

Table 14.2: *Training of Nigerian University Academics*

	Highest Degrees Obtained From			
University	**U.S.A.**	**U. K.**	**Both**	**Total**
Obafemi Awolowo	239	195	02	436
Nsukka	234	196	08	438
Ibadan	204	226	10	440
Lagos	176	198	12	386
Ahmadu Bello	172	126	11	309
Port Harcourt	105	89	05	199
Ilorin	94	78	09	181
Maiduguri	84	90	06	180
Bayero	47	63	06	116
Usman Dan Fodio	17	43	02	62

(*Source: Commonwealth Universities Year Book*, 1990)

Although the figures that made up the table were taken at a time when the Nigerian university system was faced with a problem of massive brain drain, nevertheless it did show an interesting trend. The northern universities of Maiduguri (50%), Bayero (54%) and Usman Danfodio (69%) would seem to prefer British to American training since more than 50% of each of their highest qualified teachers were trained in Britain. Only Ahmadu Bello University staff indicated American preferences. Interestingly, a closer examination of the *names* of the faculty at Ahmadu Bello seemed to indicate they were more cosmopolitan reflecting greater diversity of ethnic origins, especially from southern Nigeria. A similar cosmopolitan trend is not revealed in the staff listing of other northern universities.

On the other hand, the southern universities of Ife, Nsukka, Port Harcourt and Ilorin indicated preference for American training. The only exceptions being, predictably enough despite massive American foundation aid, the University of Ibadan which, next to Usman Danfodio has the highest number of trained teachers from

the U.K. at 51% The University of Lagos also, interestingly enough, has more U.K. trained academic staff – the same percentage as Ibadan – than would have been expected, considering the university's readiness for reform towards American university structures early enough in its establishment (although it was the only university, together with Ibadan, that started out with federal backing; the other universities at Nsukka and Ife were regional universities).

On the whole, slightly more than 50% of Nigerian academics in selected first and second generation universities received their highest training in the United States, with less than 48% receiving similar training in the United Kingdom; while about 3% received their training in both the two countries.

Thus as the table shows, there was some preference for American universities among Nigerian academics[8]. In this way, returning academics from the United States, more numerous than those from the United Kingdom, might have also returned with greater enthusiasm for implementing American style curricular structures and organisation in their universities. Thus as Coleman (1958) argued, Nigerians trained in the U.S. during the Second World War have been leading figures in postwar nationalism. And upon their return to Nigeria, they

> became crusaders for American practical ("horizontal") education, as contrasted to the British literary ("vertical") tradition. Their agitation in behalf of American education...was one of the principal reasons for the post-war migration of hundreds of Nigerians to America. Their propagation of the American educational ideal and their positive nationalism contributed to the antipathy of both British and British educated Nigerians toward American education and American-educated Nigerians (Coleman 1958 p.243).

This provides the background to understanding the continuous experimentation with various configurations of programmes in Nigerian universities, but most especially towards an American pattern

Conclusions

It is clear that Nigerian university structures, wittingly or unwittingly, follow the American university structure. However, what set of lessons can we draw from this investigation of the introduction of the course unit system in the Nigerian university system? Obviously not all the aspects of the reform have been considered in this study – for instance, faculty and students' views of the reform, detailed analysis of subvention to the universities before and after the introduction of the reforms – but it is hoped that enough has been presented to provide a fair idea of the nature of the reform and its possible direction for the future. What remains now is the generalisability of this system of academic development strategy for other systems.

Perhaps the first lesson deals with the needs analysis for the reform. The main reasons given for initiating the reform – making the curricula more responsive to labour market needs – do not provide a comprehensive rationale for such a massive system-wide transformation requiring specialised personnel and enormous resources in a dwindling economy. In almost all the cases of the curricular reforms, no reference was made to a system analysis of the labour market – to considerations of whether the labour market would indeed prefer graduates with greater "breadth" than "depth" in their education.

Significantly, the failings, as they were, of the old structure of university education have not been adequately identified, analysed and noted. Until the factors that led to the inability of the former system to make education more responsive to the labour market are removed from the picture, they will keep recurring under the new reforms. In the end, it would not be clear whether failure, or success, of the reform was due to the implementation machinery or recurrence of the factors that led to inadequacies of the previous system.

Secondly, in searching for a new system to borrow, it was not clear what informed the decision of the policy-makers to adopt a

course unit system fashioned along American university academic programme structure. This is more so as the connecting interfaces of the lender and the borrower are totally different. The course unit system which evolved under radically differing social, political and economic climates in the United States, is subjected to *individual* interpretation by the various universities, and devoid of *centralised* control. Its method of implementation is supported by an evolving technology to which the system adapts as it goes along. This situation is certainly not so in Nigeria where attempts are made to unify a diverse philosophy and bring it under central control and give it uniformity.

Thirdly, the course unit system in the United States has all the supportive public utility services necessary to make it function at minimal efficiency level. Management information systems, extensive communication networks are all facilities that enhance and sustain a very complex system. This does not mean that even in the U.S., information technology is an enthroned operational icon in all colleges. For instance, Bogard (1972) discovered that:

> institutions of higher education in general have not put substantial effort into institutional research (IR), computerised management information systems (MIS), and planning-programming-budgeting systems (PPBS). This phenomenon in itself is not an indictment of institutional effectiveness, for the technological dimensions of management exemplified by these techniques is but one of three closely interrelated dimensions of effective management. Nevertheless the state of the socio-psychological and structural dimensions is determined in large part by the state of the technological dimensions; hence, one must question the capacity of institutional administrators to manage effectively in the face of mounting social and economic pressures for accountability.

In the Nigerian case this is more since both the need to manage a new innovation and the absence of supportive structures to manage it, both from technological as well as socio-psychological

perspectives, arrived at the same time. Effective management was therefore likely to be inadequate.

Finally, lack of political stability is a variable that must also be taken into consideration in reforms of such magnitude. In Nigerian political settings, policies change as rapidly as their makers. Every new policy maker sets himself the first agenda of discarding any inherited policies and implanting his own. Between 1985 and 1994 at least five different Federal Ministers of Education were appointed – Professor Jibril Aminu, Professor Aliyu Babatunde Fafunwa, Professor Ben Nwabueze, Professor Abraham Imogie, and Dr. Iyorchia Ayu – and each set about the task of either discarding or undoing what his predecessor had done. Thus with each change of guards therefore come new, and often contradicting policies. Reactions to this change of guards from the beneficiaries of the system – faculty and students – often lead to work-stoppages and sustained strikes. This interrupts the implementation process and puts a question mark on the quality of knowledge generated under such circumstances. A further contribution of the political instability to the system is lack of linked integrity between the various arms of the education service, and lack of synchronisation in getting students to move from one stage of the education chain to the other. This ultimately affects the efficiency of the management of any reform at the terminal point of the educational system.

Thus the flexibility of the course unit system of curricular organisation under any setting comes at a price, mainly in terms of the sophisticated information systems required to record assessment results and credits, produce academic transcripts, assist in the enrolment, registration and time-tabling processes. Part of the price also includes social and political stability, a sharing of purpose between users (employers and students) and policy-makers and a commitment to a positive result-oriented outcome by faculty, administrators, students and policy-makers. It is up to the policy-makers to determine whether it is worth paying the price – or coming

up with a more indigenous and reality-based solution to development through effective university programming than copying mismatching systems on top of each other.

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Notes

1 For a more detailed study, see Adamu, A.U. (1994), *Reform and Adaptation in Nigerian University Curricula, 1960-1992: Living on a Credit Line*. Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press. 1994. African Studies Series Volume 33.

2. The Nsukka experiment seemed to have generated a flurry of interests in such institutional transfer and is thus well documented; see also Hanson 1968; Johnson 1963, 1966; Obiechina et al 1986; Ojiaku 1968; Ukariwe 1984, and Zerby 1965, 1971.

3. May be it is just the MIT that the Ibadan faculty did not like, for despite this reluctance to accept American *training*, nevertheless Ibadan University authorities were not averse to *accepting* American aid in general. For instance, according to Berman (1979), of the 117 Nigerian fellows supported for training in U.S. by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1975, "73 were then on the Ibadan staff. The Foundation also provided 107 man-years of teaching for the University by carefully selected non-Nigerian expatriates." (p. 162). Similarly, the Ford Foundation also allocated $5 million for university development to the University of Ibadan (Berman p. 159).

4. The Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) was the only northern university for quite a while and all other "modern" universities started out as either its affiliates or had some of their programmes supervised by ABU. Slow reforms at ABU therefore reflected themselves in other universities in the north, although the newer ones adopted a more enthusiastic approach to curriculum review (e.g. Usmanu Danfodiyo University). In my analysis I use ABU as the northern central icon that sets examples.

5. Despite this, however, some northern leaders have given what is often a devastating attack on the western educational system

as practised in Nigeria. For instance, in a very fiery speech at the 1971 convocation of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, the ***Wazirin Sokoto*** [Grand Vizier for the Sultan of Sokoto] Alhaji Junaidu questioned the relevance of modern educational structures to contemporary life in northern Nigeria by telling the audience that

> ...your university, like all others in Nigeria, is a cultural transplant whose roots lie in another tradition...our universities appear to belong to us only in their location and in their names...our universities should arrest the process of endorsing our personality out of our lives, education and up-bringing (*in* Brown and Hiskett, 1975 p. 469).

6. A limitation of the figures was that the *nationalities* of the expatriates were not indicated.
7. These are not the only linkages between Nigerian universities and overseas institutions; but are highlighted here in relation to the theme of this chapter – the American influence on the transformation of the Nigerian university undergraduate curricula. Links between Nigerian universities and other institutions included: Ibadan, Nsukka, Akure, ABU and Center for Tropical Veterinary Medicine, Scotland and Institute of Veterinary Medicine Berlin, Katholiek University, Leuven, University of Surrey, RVB, Netherlands respectively.
8. And this may very well be an incomplete picture. The figures were computed from the listed names of all Nigerian university teaching staff as contained in the Commonwealth Universities Year Book 1990. Only those teaching staff whose source of highest qualifications, a masters or doctorate degree, obtained from universities in the United States and the United Kingdom were listed in the table. The total number for each university, of course, is far more than the figures listed in the table.

However, this was because although the full qualifications of all the teaching staff were listed against each individual, not all have their *sources* of highest degrees indicated. Nevertheless this table is used to buttress the argument of the greater preponderance of American trained academics, than UK-trained ones in Nigerian universities. If this trend is to continue, it is quite likely that many of those whose sources of highest qualifications were not indicated against their names in the Year Book may also have obtained their highest degrees from the United States.