

## ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT AND THE CHALLENGES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Prosper Godonoo

### Introduction

Higher education in Nigeria has become a complex undertaking. This complexity stems from the magnitude and diversity of problems needing to be tackled, and the often contradictory and fuzzy policy guidelines pursued by various actors. The Nigerian higher education system is facing the double crises of theory and practice, occurring in the midst of social, economic and political disruptions and discontinuities.

The inability of Nigeria to provide meaningful and relevant education to the populace has been a source of disappointment within Nigeria. This is due, in part, to declining public resources allocated for education, as well as to the current high level of unemployed graduates. Many scholars are disillusioned by the performance of the current educational system and have lost confidence in the Nigerian state and its custodians; particularly those charged with responsibilities for managing higher education. In addition, the impact of structural adjustment on higher education is characterized by increased enrollments, erosion of university autonomy, deterioration of libraries and teaching facilities, and the overall decay of intellectual and professional life.

This paper provides an analysis of the untidy situation in the Nigerian university system in terms of policies and practices that emerged due to the implementation of macro-economic reform measures by the Nigerian military custodians. In this vein, issues related to the social, cultural, economic and political dimensions are addressed. As a backdrop, we will begin our analysis by examining the role and influence of international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) within the field of education in Africa.

### Field of Education and The World Bank

The educational crisis of the 1980s brought into sharp focus the role and influence of international institutions such as the World

Bank and the IMF, and indeed the whole of the donor community in the field of education. As a result of the decline of African universities and research institutions, donor and international organizations have become critical players in both the production of research knowledge and the dissemination of policy related research findings intended to impact policy formation and implementation.<sup>1</sup> In this regard, it is no accident that donor agencies have become key actors in funding and consuming educational research, thus rendering African universities more marginalized in the production of independent, nationally relevant research and also in the provision of policy analysis capability.

The World Bank's leadership in this case has brought visibility to educational issues in Africa. On the whole, the donor community emphasizes the critical role Africans can play in undertaking educational research, policy analysis, participating in policy dialogue and the sharing of information intended to shape the process of change and innovation. However, the dominance of funding agencies, in the articulation of priority issues, the funding of required research, and in the formulation of policies consequent to reform initiatives tend to marginalize African researchers and policy makers (Collier, 1991, p. 112), thus taking the wind out of enthusiastic scholars in Africa.

The World Bank has continued its technical work in the educational arena, particularly seeking ways of over-coming African higher education's "crisis of quality, relevance, and finance." In 1992, the World Bank came out with its study entitled, *Universities in Africa: Strategies for Stabilization and Revitalization*. This study reviews the African higher education environment and quantifies the crisis in part, as follows:

- that in Sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa, university enrollment rose by 61% in the 1980s to a total of 542,700 students, while per student

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<sup>1</sup> Donors have taken a number of initiatives highlighting not only critical issues in African education, but also indicating possible solutions and strategies for their implementation. Examples include: *Education in SSA: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization and Expansion* (1988), and the Task Force of Donors to African Education (DAE), that brings together about forty donor agencies operating in SSA to cooperate and share information on educational support.

spending fell by 70%, as measured in inflation adjusted US dollars;

- that the number of library books available per student dropped by an average of 85% in the 1980s, according to a survey of 31 of the region's 95 universities;
- that real faculty wages fell by 30% from 1980 to 1986 and have declined further since then, thus pushing faculty salaries as low as US \$19 a month in Uganda and forcing professors in many nations to take second or third jobs;
- that a continent wide brain drain has cost some countries among them Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda and Zambia - more than half of their skilled professionals. While many moved to Europe or the US, many African teachers and academics have also taken jobs in South Africa; and
- that drastic cuts have reduced Africa's always meager research spending to less than one percent of the budget at some universities and below three percent at many others (Saint; 1992).

This World Bank report recommended that universities in Africa, among other things, undertake the following initiatives:

- limit enrollment growth so that the universities do not outpace budget growth;
- adopt merit-pay systems, which will reward the most talented faculty members; and also
- shift the mix of academic programs toward science, mathematics and engineering, which currently have been judged to account for fewer than 15% of the university students' interests in most countries (Saint; 1992).

Research activities in African universities have also taken a beating during this era of structural adjustment. Research institutions

are battered by a host of financial and political problems and thus, are incapable of providing a hospitable environment for such scholarly activities. Donald Ekong, the Secretary General of the Association of African Universities summarized the poor state of research when he stated that:

like many other aspects of African university life today, the decline of academic research can be attributed primarily to the economic crisis that has affected virtually all African countries. And our experience is that it is impossible to have first class universities within economies that are collapsing (Ekong; 1991, A. 28).

The sad state of African universities' affairs has led to the emergence of a series of criticisms leveled against the IMF and the World Bank by African leaders, scholars, and the antagonists of adjustment policies.<sup>2</sup> Scholars in this camp argue that World Bank supported structural adjustment programs have caused many of the problems of African universities and continue to exacerbate them. In this vein, these scholars argue that most of the teachers running to South Africa are from countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, which were subject to structural adjustment reforms. These reforms, inspired by the World Bank, include salary freezes, and the imposition of new student fees; thus fuelling demonstrations and causing universities to close in all parts of the continent (Federici; 1993, A 33).

At this juncture, we shall examine how public policies are formulated in collapsing economies such as Nigeria's.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the *World Bank Report on Financing Education in Developing Countries* (1986) suggested, among other items, the prioritization of primary over higher education. This recommendation, however, was criticized by African leaders, educational planners and scholars alike, who pointed out the negative effects of such a policy on the education system.

### Public Policy Framework in Nigeria

In general, public policy making in present day Nigeria conforms to a familiar pattern found in other countries, but with some visible variations. Public policy in Nigeria is the end product of a series of activities and decisions carried out at different stages and levels of government.

The three organs of government responsible for policy making under the federal military government are: the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), the Council of States and the Federal Executive Council (FEC). The most important and highest is the AFRC, comprised of members drawn from key sections of the Armed Forces, and headed by the President of Nigeria and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The inspector general of police is also a member. The AFRC combines the role of the Legislative, the Executive and the Judiciary branches of government (in dispensing the prerogative of mercy).

The second organ is the National Council of State, comprised of all the state military governors, the service chiefs, and the president, who chairs the council meetings. The council addresses national issues such as the national budget, national development plans, and other matters having state implications.

The third organ is the Federal Executive Council (FEC), or Council of Ministers, and is comprised of both civilian and military members. FEC meetings are presided over by the president. The FEC is the executive arm of the military government. In most cases, it initiates policy matters and also ensures their faithful implementation.

At the state level, the State Executive Council is the only policy making body. It is made up of the state governor, the military commander in the state capital, representatives from the Navy, and Air Force, and the state commissioner of police. Commissioners at the state level, the equivalent of ministers at the federal level, are also members. The council meetings are chaired by the governor.

At the local level, the local government council is the highest policy making body. It makes decisions on matters affecting all communities within the local government area. Although the existence of local government is recognized in the constitution, its autonomy is limited by frequent interventions from the state government. These

interventions are usually in the areas of budgetary control, jurisdictional control and personnel matters.

In examining the policy making framework in Nigeria, we found that the policy making process has yet to evolve regularized procedures or institutional structures for mobilizing involvement or generating widespread consultation in policy development. Hence the existence of structural weaknesses in the policy making process. Two particular areas of weakness include: an inadequate base for policy knowledge and an imbalance of power or authority.

A major weakness in the policy making process is the lack of quality data, (without which we may add) policy making is forced to rely unduly on guesswork or on the personal preferences of the policy makers. In this regard, planning without facts has become the bane of policy making in Nigeria. The "uncoordinated nature of the work of various data gathering and research institutions in the country has been further complicated by political corruption, all of which has distorted information gathering and policy analysis activities" (Yahaya, 1994, p. 45).

Another area of weakness in the policy making process is the imbalance of power that exists between political executives and their senior bureaucrats. In this regard, it is claimed that the recent economic crisis that Nigeria is experiencing can be traceable, at least in part, to the power imbalance between the political and professional executives (Yahaya; 1994, p. 46). The World Bank - Federal Nigerian Universities sectoral enhancement loan policy initiatives could go to exemplify such an unequal power or authority base.

Ideally, the policy process involves key institutional, group and individual participants; and the outcome of this process is expected to be influenced by the three tiers of government in the country. The ephemeral nature, however, of the policy making machinery in the Nigerian political system has contributed to public policy failure. Although each succeeding government in Nigeria has tended to modify inherited structures and processes or create new ones in order to address new realities, the policy making framework in Nigeria "continues to be characterized by 'cronyism' and 'prebendalism'; a situation in which patron-client relationships and personalistic loyalties influence the policy making process" (Joseph, 1987, p.156).

### Effects of Economic Adjustment on University Education

Higher education in Nigeria is caught in the midst of many tensions and changes as the country struggles to move into the next century. The challenges of global competition, falling commodity prices, foreign indebtedness, political instability and rising unemployment are part of the tensions impinging on academic and professional life in Nigeria.

### Fiscal Scenario

Prior to the introduction of the structural adjustment program (SAP), earnings from the petroleum sector accounted for about 69 percent of aggregate government revenue. Between 1987 and 1991, however, the share of oil in the total revenue increased to an average of 78.5 percent while the contribution of non-oil revenue was generally on the decline. (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN); 1993, p. 7). These trends were largely due to a relatively short improvement in the international oil market.

An area of major concern has been the magnitude of public expenditure relative to revenue which has resulted in considerable fiscal deficit. The federal government's overall deficit as a percentage of GDP, which was only 3.9 percent in 1985 prior to the structural adjustment program, increased to 10.4 percent during 1986 and was fairly stable at about 8 percent during 1988-1990. The level of deficit, as a percentage of GDP rose to an all-time peak of 11 percent in 1991. (FRN; 1993, p. 7) This rising trend of public expenditure was due mainly to the depreciating value of the naira (local currency), the persistent problems of inflation, and measures crafted to alleviate the pains of adjustment through a 1992 relief package. (FRN; 1993, p.7).

Another major cause of extra-budgetary expenditure has been the rising trend of external debt service which increased from 40.8 percent of total federal retained revenue in 1985 to 54.9 percent in 1986, 51.2 percent during 1989 and 64.4 percent and 68.9 percent during 1990 and 1991 respectively. These fiscal deficits were mainly funded through domestic bank financing, draw-downs on the Stabilization Account and disbursements on the existing pipeline of external loans (FRN; 1993, p.8). The balance of payments position of Nigeria was a problem.

### Balance of Payments

With an average annual export and import of about US \$12.7 billion and US \$12 billion respectively, the trade and resource balances for Nigeria are estimated at US \$2.4 billion and US \$0.7 billion, per annum, respectively. The net non-factor services account is estimated to remain in deficit to the tune of about US \$1.73 billion per annum, largely as a result of the expected deficits in shipment trade. (FRN; 1993, p.18)

The objective of Nigeria's policy plan is to ensure that the debt service ratio is kept at about 20 percent, in order to 'free' resources for the importation of productive materials necessary to boost economic growth. Given this scenario, the current account of the country is projected in deficit, to the tune of US \$1.16 billion per annum; with the multilateral amortization obligations of Nigeria, estimated at US \$2.6 billion per annum. (FRN; 1993, p.18).

### The Nigerian National Rolling Plan.

It is relevant to introduce the 1993-1995 Rolling Plan to the discussion at this point. The Rolling Plan is the first to be prepared since the establishment of the National Planning Commission with Decree #12 of 1992. It has the responsibility for the preparation of the medium term strategic rolling plan to include the annual capital budget for the country. Above all, the 1993 - 1995 Rolling Plan takes into account background information on the performance of the Nigerian economy after about six years of the Structural Adjustment Program.

By 1980, oil production and sale accounted for 81 percent of the Nigerian government's revenues and 96 percent of Nigerian export earnings. As revenues and foreign exchange rapidly increased, so did ambitious public investment programs that were put into effect across all sectors. In education, for example, the universal primary education program was launched; thus resulting in more than doubling the number of enrollments. The number of universities was also increased.

Nigeria has the largest and most diversified system of higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 24 federal, one military and twelve state universities. There have been four major periods of university development in Nigeria: the first in the 1960s and early

1970s when six universities were established, the second in the mid-1970s when seven more were created, the third in the early 1980s when seven Federal Universities of Technology and eight state universities were established, and the fourth in the early 1990s when three federal and four state universities were created. "Enrollment growth has been phenomenal in the past, with total enrollments doubling every four or five years and reaching over 160,000 in 1988/89" (World Bank; 1990, p. 4).

The reasons for doubling or tripling the number of universities have been variously stated as: satisfying the high-level manpower needs of the country arising from a sudden growth in the economy; providing the opportunity to enter institutions of higher learning to as many qualified candidates as possible; and spacing out educational facilities throughout the country on a geographical basis (Yahaya; 1987, p. 3). The extent to which these reasons seriously justified the establishment of new universities at a particular time is open to debate. It is clear that the increase in the number of universities has necessitated (absolute) increases in annual grants allocated by the federal government to the National Universities Commission (NUC), which exists to co-ordinate higher education. It has also created financial problems for both the old and new universities. This situation has forced universities to prune their estimated budgets yearly in order to stay within their means (grants). This pruning has implications of varying dimensions, as it affects: program delivery, research activities, staff/student morale, tax payers and hence the developmental agenda of the country.

The rapid growth of oil revenues during the 1973-80 period made it possible for Nigeria to finance the second and third waves of university expansion. It also enabled Nigeria to undertake massive investment programs in health, education, manufacturing and basic infrastructure. With the sharp decline in oil revenues in the early 1980s, these programs were trimmed, and many projects have been abandoned in varying stages of completion.

During the 1980s, Nigeria devoted between 46 and 62 percent of federal education expenditures to the universities. These expenditures were equal to approximately 18 percent of total educational expenditures. In current prices, allocations increased until 1984, when they started to decrease. From 1980 to 1983, grants to

the universities averaged N221 million a year. This average fell to an average of N 41 million for 1984 and 1985 (FRN; 1985, p. 188). Capital expenditure grants to the universities also collapsed, particularly in 1984.

The impact of the austerity and structural adjustment policies on the universities were felt in several areas. For instance the older universities faced curtailment of their activities. A testimony of this situation is vividly captured by an observer, who holds that:

everything in the university points to an agonizing decline. Students swarm from their hostels where there are six in a room designed for two, into a dingy lecture room where a lecturer shouts his notes across a hall of five hundred listeners... there are generally no course seminars or tutorials... For several months now we have been expected to run a physics lab without electricity, perform zoology and biology experiments without water and get accurate readings from microscopes blinded with usage and age. Chemicals are unimaginably short (*West Africa*, Sept. 1983).

Austerity measures and stabilization programs, emerging as a result of the economic crisis, have affected Nigerian universities in two domains. The first domain is finance, and the second is governance and management. This effect will be euphemistically called 'adjustment/reform,' and will be summarized as follows.

#### Adjustment/Reform in Finance

Our findings suggest that universities in Nigeria are being forced to diversify their sources of finance. In this regard, fees have been initiated in some areas and students are being offered opportunities to borrow the necessary finance for their education. Furthermore, universities are aggressively seeking endowment funds from private industries, as well as initiating contacts with private business for the purpose of seeking research contracts. These characteristics seem to typify those of universities in the United States and Canada. They also serve to support our contention that the

intellectual agendas of universities in developing countries, such as Nigeria, are being set by international financial institutions and their agents, namely the World Bank and the IMF, through the network of funding policies.

#### Adjustment/Reform in Governance and Management

Our findings suggest that the old traditions of university management have been compelled to undergo changes; just as reforms in the area of university finance. Structural adjustment policy initiatives have necessitated Vice Chancellors of universities in Nigeria to assume leadership of their institutions on the basis of their skills in business management. As a result, the federal government, the donor community and particularly the NUC, tend to consider Vice Chancellors as Chief Executive Officers of publicly-owned corporations, who are judged on their ability to reduce student and faculty costs, balance the budget and attract new resources.

Furthermore, academic departments are being asked or required to justify their existence economically. In this vein, departmental budgeting, class sizes, and student/faculty ratios are being used to determine whether parts of the university structure should survive or not. In general, our finding suggests that the adoption of austerity measures and stabilization programs which were adopted by the Nigerian state, coupled with the expansion of enrollments in the universities, have resulted in unintended consequences for the higher educational system.

This is because the various measures have resulted in significant unit cost reduction in expenditures for the universities; and also have exacerbated a shift within the recurrent expenditure budget from non-salary to salary categories for these institutions. Thus, one can find lecture rooms at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria so crowded that there are often struggles among students to gain entry. Moreover, in some lecture facilities, what students hear, once they gain entry inside is a distant voice, that is poorly amplified (if at all) and without the benefit of visual aids, laboratory equipment and library resources.

We will next delve into how the current socio-economic crises of Nigeria are inter-twined with the "intellectual malnutrition" syndrome of the universities. Thus enabling us to contend that the political and economic path/crises that Nigeria has pursued in the

recent past, has been felt dramatically within the higher education system, through SAPs. These have led to drastic cuts on education expenditures and other social services. The politics and consequences of structural adjustment are too complex to attempt a comprehensive analysis. However, the repercussions of these policy initiatives on universities and the roles that the custodians of the Nigerian state have played will be briefly examined.

#### Nigerian Universities and State Custodians

The foundations of the university system in Nigeria have been destroyed by the military. The various military regimes were aided by scores of 'intellectual rationalizers,' who work with the military as advisers, ministers, commissioners, hangers-on, consultants, and agents of the World Bank. Academics who joined the governments at various stages, also fully collaborated in various capacities to erode strands of academic procedure, freedom and respect.

Institutions are no longer known for teaching and research but for politics, manipulations, ethnic and religious jingoism, petty squabbles, mediocrity, political posturing, opportunism, and the recycling of outdated, irrelevant and useless theories, methodologies and ideas (Ihonvbere; 1994, p.82 ). It is safe to contend that most of this sad state of affairs was brought to bear on the Nigerian university system due to economic dislocation and decay that accompanied the imposition of an IMF/World Bank inspired stabilization and structural adjustment program.

It is a truism that several of the past leaders have paid lip service to the cause of education and the universities. Others have made concessions to the school system at various levels. But these have generally been part of a political program or have been made in the context of ideological declarations that would be incomplete without such programs. In any case, such concessions have never been sustained. The point, however is that Nigerian leaders in the past and more so under the present military regime, have never seen education as a weapon for national development, liberation, and reconstruction. Thus, the neocolonial content and context of the educational system, its repressive and exploitative character, and its gross irrelevance to the objective needs and aspirations of the Nigerian

populace have been reproduced over the years since political independence in 1960.

Many of the military officers simply have no idea how important a library or laboratory is to the overall development of ideas and policies in society. The university is nothing more than a place to grab a certificate and come out to become a "big man" or "big madam" in the Nigerian context. This unfortunate perception of universities by the military arise, in our view, as a result of the conservative military training that Nigerian officers receive abroad as part of their service to the nation. This attitude has resulted in total disrespect for university autonomy, a belief that students' unions are of little or no use in the running of the universities, a belief that students cannot and in fact have no business debating national issues, disrespect for research and the place of universities in the development process, and the identification of the academy and academics as obstacles to the strengthening of relations with international finance capital (Ihonvbere; 1994, p.83).

Consequently, the history of current and past military regimes has been: the unprecedented massacre of students, the unparalleled detention of students and academics, the frequent imposition of vice chancellors and unrepentant support for corrupt, inefficient and unpopular vice chancellors, massive cuts in university funding, the abolition of research grants, scholarships and bursaries to faculty and students, frequent and confused changes to the school calendar. It has also led to the attempt to monitor teaching and research to put it in line with policies of the IMF and the World Bank; the deterioration of libraries, infrastructures, research facilities and laboratories; and the incorporation of academics into a programmed system of subservience to imperialism, corruption, manipulation and waste (Ihonvbere; 1994, p.84).

Furthermore, the military regime has through its economic and political policies done everything possible to convince the Nigerian populace that going to school is indeed a waste of time because you can become a millionaire faster by joining the army, making friends with some generals, engaging in corrupt and illegal activities, or running some backwater organization and just waiting to get the government to donate millions of naira to it. By devaluing education, illustrated by the thousands of graduates who are roaming the streets

and by the inability of academics to meet the most minimal expectations of their children, the Nigerian government has created the impression that the future does not lie in education.

It would be unfair to lay all of the burden on the regime by exonerating the academy and the academics. Nigerian academics have also contributed to the reproduction of the neocolonial educational system by colluding with powerful foreign interests to undermine the national economy and by advising regime after regime in the legitimization, rationalization and reproduction of Nigeria's crisis-ridden dependent capitalist economy.

#### The Challenges of Nigerian Universities Amidst Discontinuities

The state of the universities in Nigeria today is pitiable. This is the most visible measure of the twin crises of policy and practice in the universities; and a clear demonstration of the impact of structural adjustment.

The implementation of the SAP has only worsened an already bad situation, as illustrated by the following:

While figures are damning, the reality on the campuses themselves are quite scandalous. Physical evidence of decay abound showing overcrowding in hostels and classrooms. A room designed to accommodate two or four students sometimes takes between eight and twelve. Consequently, septic tanks overflow and are not collected, shortage of water has become a permanent feature on campuses, classrooms are clogged, small essentials such as chalks and dusters are not available, teachers are few, underpaid and frustrated and students are malnourished, angry and touchy. Few researches are undertaken, books and journals are hopelessly outdated, more students fail, much more take solace in prostitution, drug abuse and occultism and violent secret societies re-enacting medieval antics and strange bestialities which swathe the campus in frightful dark ages togas (*Nigerian Economist* 4, #15 April 29; 1991; p.12).

In 1992, at a convocation address, the pro-chancellor and chairman of the governing council of one of the second generation universities reflected that:

since 1990 when I first came to this university, the question that has repeatedly bugged me and my council has been why has this Federal University remained so physically underdeveloped? Of the seven second generation universities, Uniport still wears the like of some village primary school. After 17 years of establishment, Uniport's physical features, facilities and infrastructures (with no water, no NEPA, electricity from the national grid and no phones) are still far less than you find in any average secondary school . . . what has happened to the N20 million special grant to the University of Port Harcourt by Mr. President in 1990 (Fola-Alade; 1992, pp.3-4).

Parents are withdrawing their wards from school because the "pieces of paper" i.e. certificates, they bring home from school after huge expenditures currently translates into economically, an unviable asset in Nigeria. The unemployment rate is so high that those who graduated six years ago are still roaming the streets in search of employment. Those who dropped out of school and took to pimping for top military officers and bureaucrats, drug pushing, and currency trafficking are already "living the good life."

#### Inferences on Policy Making

As we stated earlier, SAPs provide guidelines, which are usually mandatory, for developing countries such as Nigeria to use in reforming their economic and financial agendas. Since education is usually considered one of the social services that needs to be provided for the population, it is invariably affected by any policy changes. Thus, we need to draw inferences on how education policy is initiated in the era of structural adjustment in Nigeria.

It is often assumed that education policy and planning are largely, if not entirely, a matter of centralized decision making and bureaucratic management. This perspective, usually emphasizes

rationality and systematic progress through sequential steps towards stated objectives. Yet in most cases, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria, the setting and implementation of education policy, is a process of bargaining and negotiation among inherently unequal actors. Although conventional wisdom dictates that external forces may influence national macro-economic policy, it is also commonly assumed that education policies are essentially domestic matters which are devoid of external influences. Our current research indicates that this above assumption is incorrect.

It is our informed view that the current economic crisis in developing countries has given or permitted an increased foreign influence in national or domestic affairs - in all spheres of national activities. As the education sector constitutes a substantial segment of the national expenditure of developing countries, such as Nigeria, and since this sector also appears to be the major employer of civil servants, it then becomes a sector of interest for foreign actors such as the Bretton Woods' organizations. This is because the education sector has become an experimental arena in which the World Bank and IMF seem to unleash or test their new "fiscal economic drug" of free market with its attendant retrenchment, under the guise of enhancing efficiency and reducing redundancy in the performance of tasks.

On a general plane, we will argue that the extent and nature of influence exerted by external agencies (their roles, the form and contents of their activities) in domestic or national policy initiation for developing countries, such as Nigeria, is determined in part by the need for foreign assistance and the depth of the economic crisis that the developing country finds itself. In this vein, we will proceed to discuss policy imperatives: who sets and initiates policies.

#### Policy Imperatives: Who Sets and Initiates Policies

Our research findings inform us that educational policy making is a political process in which those in leadership positions to exercise their influence unquestionably are given greatest leverage. This revelation rejects the more conventional orientation, which treats policy and decision making in arenas such as education, as the result of a highly rational and apolitical process.

The findings also suggest that in Nigeria, policy decisions are shaped by alliances, coalitions and interests of actors in the policy arena. It also suggests that policy actors do not follow concrete procedures or pedagogical strategies on their journey towards a policy decision. For instance, the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces exercises direct influence both in guiding and deciding the fate of the country in all spheres, including education. Besides, our findings reveal that the Vice Chancellors of Nigerian universities, use administrative action strategies frequently, to make policy decisions in the universities so as to reflect the directives of the president and commander in chief of the armed forces.

Procedurally, federal education ministry officials, the NUC, representatives from the government, the ministry of planning and finance etc. are the expected participants in the decision making process, as it affects or relates the universities in Nigeria. Although the finance ministry is responsible for the overall federal government's expenditures, and for policies in many spheres of governmental activities, its officials are not expected to initiate and adopt detailed policies and programs for other ministries. In practice, however, personnel from the finance ministry plays an active and direct role in promoting particular policy orientation in all ministries, including education. Educational policy making and planning in our view, is now a domain where the academic subject matter, economics, is the dominating discipline and numbers are the essential measures and required rationale for particular courses of action to be taken. This new trend or strategy can be inferred from the current internationalization of approaches to education's role in development; which is being measured and promoted by a diffusion of a particular orientation being championed by the values and thinking of the countries of the North Atlantic.

The finance ministry represents the governments of countries (such as Nigeria) in their negotiations with the IMF, the World Bank, and other external agencies for foreign funding. It is this mandate and responsibility that gives the finance ministry in Nigeria the authority to become more directly involved in carving detailed education policy initiatives. This role seems to fit well with the concerns and orientations of the external agencies interested in reducing domestic spending. With this arrangement, the external agencies thus find

personnel from the finance ministry as convenient allies, who can be counted upon to help structure the national education policy to suit their interests.

This symbiotic relationship or alliance between the Bretton Woods sisters and the Nigerian national planning commission and finance ministry suggest that the process of setting national education policy agenda has been restructured from a policy premised on national planning, to a reformed one, predicated on international marketing. This statement is being made because developing countries such as Nigeria have become more dependent on external funding to support various projects and even to support their recurrent expenditures as the preceding discussions have indicated.

In this regard, we can infer that national educational planning is assuming an increasingly external influence or slant; thereby forcing educational planners in developing countries to seek foreign assistance for their various national policies and program initiatives. For the Bretton Woods sisters, this new trend with its requests to provide education assistance has turned into a business venture, or assumed a new sphere of influence. This business nature of providing foreign funding to education by the World Bank can be inferred or gleaned from the activities of the international financial institutions, who insist that recipient governments should undertake specific policy reforms, before being considered eligible to draw on lines of credit that would be agreed upon by the lending institutions. Nigeria's experience as one of the applicants for this kind of educational assistance (i.e. education sectoral adjustment loan from the World Bank) will suffice to exemplify the point. In our view, funding is the mechanism through which the international financial institutions and their agents function to set intellectual agendas for developing countries. In the concluding section, we will offer suggestions as to how educational policies should be initiated in this era of structural adjustment.

### Conclusion

Considering the various debates and analyses on the issue of macro-economic adjustment of debtor countries, it is our contention that "adjustment" is really "re-adjustment." This is because Africa and the rest of the Third World, as the periphery of world capitalism, have

been adjusting continuously to the reproductive requirements of the metropolitan center of world capitalism. This adjustment has become tough and traumatic for Africa, and Nigeria in particular during the down-turn phase of world capitalist expansion (i.e. during periods of crisis, depression or recession). In boom periods, however, this adjustment becomes easier, as export prices become high, capital becomes available, employment expands, and the like (Onimode; 1992, p. 69).

Adjustment thus becomes a question of grafting internal balances and growth (not development as such) on to the concessions and possibilities granted by the world capitalist system. Adjustment to world capitalism in this vein, thus maintains and reproduces unequal and polarized development as our research suggests; although it does not imply absolute negation of growth:

And growth through adjustment is in fact an ideological justification of a growth realized in favor of a minority that imposes its development, to make its class domination permanent. This growth through adjustment is perverse in the precise sense of unequal growth, reproducing and deepening the heterogeneity and sectoral and societal disparities while rendering the external positions even more evident. Through growth and adjustment, the shaping of the societies of the periphery by external constraints is reproduced in new forms (Mahjoub; 1990, p. 167).

The periphery of world capitalism has thus always been engaged in a never-ending adjustment to the demands and constraints of the dominant capital. In this regard, the centers are 'restructured,' while the peripheries are 'adjusted' to this restructuring.

In conclusion, we will argue that the adjustment issue or discourse has a double but interrelated implication. One is that the adjustment issue has served a theoretical and practical purpose. There is little doubt that the adjustment issue has clarified some aspects of the controversy that continues to rage, namely in the areas of: conceptualization, sponsorship, conditionalities, policies, economic impact and socio-political effects on debtor countries. The adjustment

conceptualization, sponsorship, conditionalities, policies, economic impact and socio-political effects on debtor countries. The adjustment discourse has, in this regard, sharpened our understanding of these issues through the vast literature it has generated.

The second implication of the adjustment discourse is in connection with its termination. It is our contention that this issue will be quite protracted. This is because, while the adjustment process is continuing, so will its discussion, debate, and research. Even after the current adjustment process has ended (though adjustment itself is a continuous process in all economies), students of history, posterity and education will have the final word in researching, debating, examining, and analyzing this economic paradigm.

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