



A POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GLOBALISATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA, WEST AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This critique of the foreign-induced globalization effort in secondary education in Nigeria concludes that the attempt would further widen the gap between the rich and the poor, derail a genuine effort at fostering unity and nation-building. The paper canvasses an abandonment of the 2006 Unity Schools Reform (Charter) project, particularly as it is a poor imitation of the American Charter school concept. The paper is essentially on imperialism and the commoditization of education.

Keywords: globalization, education, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

This study begins with an examination of the (dis) contents of globalization, and presents the charter school movement in the United States of America (USA), discusses the disguised sale of secondary education in Nigeria between 2005 and 2010 as an imitation of the American Charter School movement and ends with the consequences of a chartered secondary education system in Nigeria. The theoretical force is that the latent aspects of the globalization of finance and production are the globalization of liberal democracy, education, culture and religion and that the expert outcomes of these are Western democracy, elitist education and secularity. The study explores the extent to which the study can be said to be people friendly.

DISCONTENTS OF GLOBALIZATION

It is obvious that there are disagreements among scholars about the meaning, scope, extent and consequence of globalization. The concept is often presented as an all-pervading one, as having a hold that reaches as far as the wind can go, or as touching all lands where the sun rises and sets. Whereas the question what is globalization is often asked, one rarely hears the question what is globalizable? An emergent question is can a global culture emerge and replace all pre-existing cultures so comprehensively and totally that all men would act and live the same. Further still, can a system of education (global) emerge to the complete elimination and replacement of all pre-existing ones, noting that education reflects the history and culture of a people? What is today called modern or global would pass away leaving its prints and residues behind: it won't be there forever.

While some thinkers [like Ohmer 1994] contend that globalization is a new and completed project others like Lairson and Skidmore (1997) write that 'the globalization of the world economy is a continuation and extension of trends present since the 1950s but at levels that require new concepts and understanding'. Five major changes provoked observers of world economy to develop new technology and concepts for thinking about these changes. '[1] Extremely rapid growth in international financial transactions, [2] rapid growth in trade, especially among transnational firms, [3] very rapid growth in foreign direct investment [FDI] especially by multinational corporations, [4] a decline in market segmentation, the emergence of global markets and the convergence of many prices on a global scale, and [5] the global diffusion of technology and ideas via a global transportation and communication system. [Lairson and Skidmore 1994: 96].

Held and McGrew (2002) in Globalization/Anti-Globalization identified two types of theorists of globalization (viz Globalists and skeptics, and advanced a transformationalist stance. The globalists



believe globalization has taken place, while the skeptics argue it has not come. Ohmae, Sklair and Giddens are all examples of globalists, whereas Hirst and Thompson are examples of sceptics'. Among others, the differences between the globalists and skeptics is represented thus:

Sceptics stress the continuing primacy of the national interest and the cultural traditions of national communities, while globalists point to the growing significance of transnational political problems – such as worldwide pollution, global warming and financial crises – which create a growing sense of the common fate of humanity [Held and McGrew. 2002:15]

Ohmae (1994) has it that political borders have become increasingly insignificant, trade between people in different nation-states is now very easy due to rapid improvement in communications through cable and satellite TV, cheaper, easier and more frequent international travels and the rapid development of the Internet. It is becoming very difficult for government to protect their domestic industries from foreign competition. Sklair (2003) advanced, the idea of transnational practices which originate with non-state actors and cross state borders [not international relations which involve the relations between nation-states], the idea of the transnational capitalist class as a concept and as the drivers of the global systems and the culture – ideology of consumerism which stresses the benefits of consumerism – so important because of the near-universal spread of the mass media, as proof that globalization as taken place. In his words,

‘Cheap televisions, cassettes, and radio’ now totally penetrate the urban second and third worlds and are beginning to penetrate deeply into the country side in every country’ (Sklair 1995).

Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson (1996) also subscribed to the idea of weakened nation-states because ‘nation states have become almost irrelevant to patterns of economic activity and because the existence of national boundaries makes little or no difference to patterns of trade. However they but do not subscribe to the idea that states have been completely eliminated. The reason is that though with the dismantling of exchange control and changing of economic condition, states had to adopt increasingly similar policies to succeed in the contemporary world’, experience reduced capacity to act autonomously in their societies, and lost some military and ideological powers, they have not been eliminated because they remain facilitators and orchestrators of private economic actors.

Giddens (1999) who claimed and proved that globalization is taking place, said that the powers of nation-states are restricted not lost, that states have to compete in order to attract inward investment from major transnational corporations, have to keep institutional investors happy and so, cannot afford to levy taxes in order to pay for expensive welfare programmes. Giddens is of the opinion that the state is less able to provide effective central control of economic life, not that it is no longer able or is not in a position to provide it. ‘Nations retain and will for the foreseeable future, considerable governmental, economic and cultural power, over their citizens and in the external arena’. They must however collaborate with other states, transnational actors, regions and localities to exercise such powers. (Haralamboos and Holborn (2004: 577).

In the transformationalist stance, Held and McGrew provide what in a Nigerian parlance is called a-little-to-the- left and –a little –to –the-right. This stance accepts a modified version of the globalization argument emphasizing that while contemporary patterns of global, political, economic and communications flow are historically unprecedented, the direction of these remains uncertain, since globalization is a contingent process replete with conflicts and tensions’. Perhaps anti-globalization forces would be victorious, and the direction of the process changed or even is reversed’.



The transformationalist structure has the following characteristics: states must act in tandem with one another, they operate at the intersection of regionalizing and globalizing networks, (e.g UN, EU, NATO], states influence the investment decisions of transnational corporations through domestic economic policy, New social movement, (Greenpeace, Amnesty International, and Oxfam] influence behaviour across nations – the individual consumers, intergovernmental organizations, and multinational organizations such as the EU. The transformationalist structure is of multi-layered governance in ‘which a variety of institutions work to deal with problems at the local, national, regional or global levels. It must be said that this [transformationalist structure] is not different from what obtains now, which deepens the underdevelopment of 3rd world nations, and renders them ineffective and unable to participate as sovereign nations in matters concerning them. The United Nations system, WTO, GATT etc prescribe unworkable programmes on education and politics for African countries. These programmes fail, because they do not recognize African culture and the African personality. For example whereas voting is individualistic in the west, it is communal in Africa, whereas it is voting that matters in the west, it is neither the voting nor the counting that matters in Nigeria, it is the results announced that matters. In Africa, education is a communal and collective thing whereas it is individualistic and private in Western cultures. Consequently when the world bank and IMF ask African countries to cut down on spending on education as a social welfare project, ‘right-size’ the teaching force, charge high school fees push taxes up and invariably create hunger and unemployment such governments, no matter the volume of external military and economic support, soon run into problems,: their collapse are thus caused by unadapted global prescriptions. Africans, particularly Nigerians, are not deceived by the pretensions and ephemeral nature of imperialist global ‘merchants’ because it is clear that international capital simply fashions the weapon for the castration of local labour and no substantial capital will move in here. A peculiar feature of global liberalism here in Nigeria is that global capitalism is using Nigerian peoples’ money to dominate the Nigerian people’ (Fasina 2003:31).

TYPES OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

From 1882 when the colonial government promulgated an education ordinance for British west Africa setting up a criterion grants for teachers’ salaries, to 1903 when the government set up an education department in Southern Nigeria and built a few government primary schools with 11, 732 pupils, fifty-nine government primary schools with 24,000 pupils” to 1922 the year of the Phelps-Stokes Commission Report, and the subsequent ordinance, to the Solaru Report on indigenization in 1958, through the Harbison (1959) and the Ashby Report (1976) and to the UBE Programme of 1999, two factors become very clear:

1. That Nigerians recognize the importance of secondary education as the final annulment of illiteracy and ignorance, and
2. That Secondary education is a key element in nation building. It was the first factor that significantly accounts for the proliferation of private and community owned secondary schools in southern Nigeria particularly after independence in 1960.

The second factor, added to the experiences of the civil war and the ethnic-basis of Nigerian party politics between 1946 and 1966 informed the birth of Federal Government Colleges otherwise known as Unity schools. There are one hundred and two [102] of such schools in Nigeria, at an average of two schools to each of the thirty-six states and the federal capital territory Abuja. However, states like Bauchi, Lagos, Oyo and Kano have about three each of these colleges. The federal ministry of education administers them while admission is through a central entrance examination and the principle of quota, which ensures that children from different ethnic backgrounds and states of origin are admitted annually, is applied. Through the system of alumni associations, old boys and old girls associations, the federal government colleges have established a much envied *esprit de corps* or fellowship among their old students while the annual federal government colleges sports and ‘literary and debating’ competitions



have come of age. Many through old-boy contacts get contracts and appointments into positions in government.

In Nigeria today, the following types of secondary schools are observable: Nationality school – established by embassies and high commissions e.g Indian school, German school and the Lebanese school all in Lagos, Unity schools – established by the federal government to foster national integration, cohesion and peaceful coexistence, State – owned public secondary schools – some taken over from missions and some established by the various state governments to provide access to good education for all residents, Private schools- owned by individual trust councils and quasi-missions established with the approval of either the state or federal government, Staff schools – owned by tertiary institutions, government parastatals and allied establishments, to enhance the exploitation of staff labour (disguised as welfare packages), to generate additional income for the institution and massage the elitist ego of ‘all concerned’, and Self-help or Harambee schools usually unknown to the laws, operated by bands of unemployed itinerant university graduates and preparing candidates for the senior secondary school examination or the GCE, (These candidates are usually infused illegally unto the examination lists of conventional or approved schools, or some of these candidates hold dual studentship and Military or forces schools – operated by the armed and police forces e.g. Cantonment, Air, Navy, and Police secondary schools dotted all over the country.

The nationality schools, private schools and staff schools are not opened to all comers: they are somewhat exclusive class-oriented and income –based. They are not available to the children of the poor. State owned schools are divisible into three categories: a. Model colleges b. good or possible colleges c. ugly or ghetto colleges. State owned schools of (ugly) genre are available to all-comers: they are free politically but lack basic amenities water, light, books, and at times seats. The children in the A and B categories of state schools have parents who earn well and who are interested in the Parents Teacher Association and what goes on in school and such parents (particularly of the A type) would quickly send their children to private schools ‘as soon as their conditions improved’. i.e when they are economically better. Harambee Schools charge more money than type C public schools because of the claim that they are examination - focused. Unity schools derive their clientele from across the nation; they have very intelligent students who cut across most social-economic strata.

The Marketization of Education

In 1994 Bill Clinton, at his inauguration stated succinctly that ‘for America, the 21st century will be the century of education but since then both the U.S and the global community, have witnessed increased capitalism for example the Washington Consensus, [which emerged earlier and believes that U.S styled capitalism had to spread across the world, supported if necessary by the use of military power) was strengthened, and the Third Way between capitalism and socialism which Clinton (U.S.A) and Blair U.K is an acceptance of economic globalization, free markets and a belief that nothing can be done about inequality’ (Haralamboos and Holborn 2004: 595). This seeming lack of an alternative to capitalism caused Fukuyama to declare the end of history. The era became the apogee of New Right or Neo-Fordism – blaming excessive welfare spending and social democratic policies toward education for economic decline, and contending that too much emphasis on equality of opportunity has led to a decline in educational standards and that high government spending in education has heightened tax rates, thereby discouraging foreign companies from investing. It was in this spirit that the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at its 1999 Seattle meeting tried to gain agreement between different countries to open up competitions across the globe in the provision of educational goods and services. It is to the glory of the 4000 anti-capitalism demonstrators that no agreement was reached, and international education was salvaged, because ‘this prevented the opening up of education to global capitalist competition, one of the main objectives of the meeting. However, this could be regarded as temporary set back for American



educational imperialism because several of these countries involved were already neck-deep in debt with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which are agencies controlled by the USA as their highest subscriber. This was the situation in which Nigeria found herself in 1999, whence forth privatization has been disguised as a reform agenda.

Consequently, though the 1999 constitution – essentially a liberal democratic document, not a libertarian one - ‘states that the commanding heights of the economy shall not be in the hands of a few, the federal government’s policy is to the contrary; all public property is for sale – Telecommunications, Ports, Railway, Banks, Refineries, oil fields etc’

Whereas the contribution warrants a commitment to social welfare, the Federal government is reducing its commitments to provision of education, health, and job to its citizens. The new social policy is “All power to privatization of public property” [Fasina; 2003:30]

The decline in federal government’s allocation to education, (12% of total budget in 1995, 8.36% in 2,000 and 2001.8% in 2003 according to Fasina 2003:40) attests to the severity and depth of its commitment to privatization and thus the chartered school concept which took the vogue about 1996 in the USA became one of the coping strategies of the government’s educational globalization effort and the solution to the perceived problems of the Unity Schools in Nigeria.

A charter school is a public institution that is conceptualized, organized and operated by any public or private person or organization (Beirlein 1997: 38) ‘Some are managed by private entrepreneurs, others by teachers, parents, or nonprofit organizations that have demonstrated a capacity to operate an educational institution’ (Ravitch and Viteritt 1997: 6). In the USA the charter school concept was so popular about the turn of the century that in 1996 it became one of the few education – related issues both the Clinton administration and the Republican congress supported. Though Democrats are split (unionism and students equity issues Vs empowerment), nearly all Republicans, at the state level favour the concept because of its free-market and choice components.

When a state enacts a charter school law, a school organizer (teachers, parents, outfit) approaches a sponsor (Local school board, state board or a University) to operate a school. Such schools may be formed ‘using an existing school’s personnel and facilities, a portion of such a school (called a school – within – a school), or a completely new entity with its own facilities and staff’. They are independent legal entities with the ability to hire and fire, sue and be sued, award contracts for outside services and control finances. More importantly:

Such schools are public schools: they received state funding, are nonsectarian, and are prohibited from selective student admission or charging tuition. They are also schools of choice of teachers, students and parents; if a charter school fails to attract these individuals or violates any terms of its charter, it goes out of business (Bierlein 1997: 38).

By 2000 AID more than 50% of states in the USA including the District of Columbia have passed charter school laws. The laws generally provide that: charter schools can seek sponsorship from a public entity other than the local school board, can appeal a school board decision, any individual or group can develop and submit a charter school proposal, charter school are above state laws except those on health, safety, civil rights and fiscal and pupil accountability, they must have fiscal and legal autonomy, as many as possible can be established in a state and that they must be permitted to employ non-certified teachers.



The overall objective of charter school laws is to improve teaching, learning and performance in public schools.

Charter should not be confused with contracting. John Golles' Educational Alternatives, Inc. (EAI), Chris Whittle's Edison Project and the Sylvan Learning Systems are examples in contracting. Contracting law arrangements originate at local district level rather than at the state, the service providers are usually private entrepreneurs, they have always been there providing transportation, delivering meals, etc, what they have recently added is the provision of instruction and the management of schools. In 1995 the Edison Project opened its first four partnership schools in Sherman, Texas Wichita, Kansas; Mount Clemens, Michigan, and Boston, and John E Chubb its senior vice president wrote, 'The schools would share key features with public schools, they would accept all students, regardless of academic ability or record, and to further ensure representative enrollments, they would offer scholarship to students in need. The schools would operate for the same amount of money per pupils as public schools. By staying within public school budgets, Edison schools could serve as models of educational innovation for public school (Chubb 1997: 87) Edison started with four objectives: create schools that would give first rate education; improve opportunities available to disadvantaged children; stay within public school budget; and be profitable. Note that they provide the capital to give partner schools state-of –the art technology, put computers in every student's" home; retrofit schools with instructional materials and offer their teachers extensive profession and development.

Sylvan Learning Systems [SLS] are a smaller firm running specific instructional programmes for public schools but leaving the overall administration of the school to the district. For example, according to Mark Walsh (1995), as reported in Ravitch and Viteritti [1997:7], SLS was contracted to provide remedial programmes in three Newark New Jersey, high schools, and it has similar projects in other cities including Baltimore, Chicago and St. Paul. The charter school movement (law) and Chris Whittle's Edison Project have some things in common: long periods of extensive incubation, characterized by criticism, suggestions, research, investment, law making, head-hunting, consultation and multi-layered programming. For example the chartered school concept started in 1985 by the California alternative education association but it was not until 1991 in Minnesota, that the first charter law was enacted and the concept did not climb the vogue until president Clinton's first term. Also though the Edison project gained public attention only in May 1991, its first schools were opened in 1995/96 because Christ Whittle had to sit back to pick his team, constantly source for support, search for partner schools and consult clients and partners on school design, culture and investment plans. Also the two were championed by associations and persons with long established interests in education: Christ Whittle, earlier pioneered Channel One a daily news broadcast for secondary schools paid for with commercial advertisement.

Another genre of school management style worthy of attention is the Bush –not- for profit model. Bush (Snr) had Lamar Alexandar as his secretary of education. Together they were advocates of market-oriented reforms. Their flagship was the New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC), which was 'funded by private contributions but promoted by the white House' (Chubb 1997: 87).

NASDC wrote major research and development projects hoping to create 'break –the –mold' schools that would serve as models to help public education reinvent itself as an institution that offers a range of excellence choices. The NASDC is a federally sponsored non-profit organization. This is an example of a positive people-oriented presidential intervention: not the sale of collective properties to a set of ever-ready well-wishers, cohorts, and scavengers.

In 2006, (February) the federal government under its reform agenda woke up to inform Nigerians that it had discovered a significant difference between the performance of children in Unity schools and those in



other schools i.e that children in other schools perform better than those in Unity schools. The factor responsible for this, the government canvassed is the management of the schools and this should be changed. Advertorials were taken in newspapers explaining the new arrangement to the less informed and inviting groups, service providers, old and new to show interest in the new venture.

The opposition was spontaneous because the teachers went on strike causing other stakeholders to show interest support for the striking teachers came from parents, newspapers, social activist and trade union like the academic staff union of universities. For about three months, neither the federal government nor the striking teachers blinked an eyelid.

In subsequent development and reaction the federal ministry of education maintained that ‘PPP initiative will ensure the effectiveness of unity schools by bringing together various stakeholders in the Education system to deliver innovative solution to the problems of poor school management, academic under-achievement and poor utilization of public financial resources’. The government on this site formally denied allegations of an intention to sell the unity schools, but the teachers and many parents were not taken in by denial, not with the spate of privatization in the country, the opening of several private universities and the anti-poor postures posture of the ruling class. The government’s statement went thus:

The PPP initiative is not a sale /of unity schools. Rather, it will foster strong governance, based on partnership between the Federal Government as the main financier of these schools and non-government organizations.

The union, activists and sympathizers refused to trust the government. The non-government partners are seen as traders and business men, not not-for-profit outfits and no one can guarantee that their charges would not outstrip or be more than their rates. The non-government partners and manager of schools; ‘mobilizers of non-government finding to augment resources provided by Federal Government; and are ‘responsible for achievement of standards and goals’ on the part of the government, ‘Governments’ role will change from the management of education, to that of: enabler and facilitator of the system, standard-setter through our, regulations standards, etc, primary funding provider; regulator and inspector to ensure maintenance of minimum standards, and asset owner of land and physical infrastructure’.

Parent Teacher Association, school alumni groups, educational NGOs and charities, and local community groups are expected to act as school management organizations. In Nigeria, these groups are not like the Red Cross or the Red Crescent; they could be characterized by intrigues, ‘runs’ and deals. There is no free meal, any longer in Nigeria, except from the government as in this case. The number of Nigerian ready, willing and able to mobilize non-government funding to augment resources provided by the federal government for the running of federal government –owned schools without protecting self – interest, profit and commission would not be as large as are needed to run the schools. The Unity Schools Public Private Partnership (USPPP) is, as advertised, a game shrouded in mystery and doubt and is full of expectations which are not reflective of simple familiarity with the Nigerian and his situation.

Further to the governments’ advertorials, outfits of different shapes and colours descended on the Corporate Affairs Commission to register as education service providers. One of such, Accelerated Educational Services Nigeria Limited Foundation, in the Guardian newspaper of Tuesday Feb. 13 2007 informed the public of its intentions to:

- a. Provide high quality educational facilities for children of pre-primary, primary, and post – primary school ages,
- b. To contract marriage, educational institutions for public and private proprietor, who have efficient and result-oriented management from the foundation, and
- c. To inculcate high academic, moral and ethical standards at all times to all enrolled pupils/students in educational institutions managed by the foundation. The closing statement of the advertorial has it that ‘any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar – General, Corporate Affairs Commission Area II Garki within (28) days of this publication’.



The trustees of the foundation are:

Major General Edet Adam Akpan (Rtd) MNI
Mrs. Virgy Akuaro Anohu
Chief (Mrs) Grace Inok Archibong OON
Mrs Urong Eyo Inameti
Chief Fidelis Eno Etim OFR
Chief (Mrs) Folashade Fadepemi Gab-Umoden
Major General Christ Anulu Garuba (Rtd) Mni, CON
Major General Hafiz Brahim Momoh (Rtd) mni
Hajia Zainab Ahmed Ribadu Tukur
High Chief Gabriel Emmanuel Umoden.

It is observable that 30% are ex-military officers and rulers while 50% are recipients of government awards and honours. It is good that they are bringing the accumulations in their previous endeavours to this ventures, but the targets they want to capture as betrayed in aims and objectives two are collective properties, which foster national unity and give intelligent children from poor homes a sense of national belonging and the hope that they will have (a federally supported) secondary education. Much as this does not conclusively suggest that the military is coming to dominate a chartered federal government school system, it is good to remind one another that the succession of military dictatorships in the country that dismantled the welfarist intentions of the Nigerian state by withdrawing subsidies from education and health and imposing education levies which force many children out of school.

Potentials of a Chartered Federal Government College,

Apart from the moral shortcomings inherent in the sale or transfer of federal government colleges to entrepreneurs, the aftermath would be a system that favours, further entrenches and advertises the ability to pay at the expense of the ability to learn. In addition the arrangement constitutes a colossal material waste to the teeming masses of the working class or the proletariat and the Nigerian state because the infrastructures already on those sites (enough to house conventional modest city universities) were built from a combination of proceeds from natural resources and taxation in the 1970's and 80's and not from public stocks/shareoffers. A more serious and immediate waste is the intellectual layoffs that would arise from 'rightsizing'. Those responsible for planning Nigeria's education should realize that for any being of the 20th century the junior secondary school is no longer the terminal stage of formal education because of the relative ease with which graduates of that stage revert into illiteracy. This suggests that to charter any aspect of the SSS structure is to surrender the future of the youth of Nigeria to the whim and caprices of global investors (both local and foreign), and to charter the federal government colleges amounts to shattering a significant microcosm of the country's national life/existence.

The charter concept and application constitute a naked embourgeoisement and transfer (mental and managerial, at least) of collective possessions to an unproductive home-based but global capitalist class. A preferred alternative is the Bush-not-for-profit model which has a greater potential of achieving glocalization, not globalization. Investors in this charter project are likely to predicate their moves on the assumption that it is a low-risk and high-yield project (i.e needing no go – go fund/push) and that the Republican will remain in power long enough to actualize it. A drive for appropriate (global) pricing in the mould of the British International School or the Corona school systems coupled with huge capital investment for takeoff could scare away the clients. Reforms are not ideology – based in Nigeria; they are government – specific; reforms of yesterday are quickly jettisoned today. The cloud seems to be gathering for a rain of change to follow, particularly given the forthcoming elections in the country. A successor government might opt to address the utilization of the inter-phase between secondary education as it is and



the apprenticeship system, a synchronization which hold a great potential for accelerated technological development. The government has challenges which are greater than the privatization of unity schools. Reforms without constant supply of electricity, good roads and health services would only leave the country in the Stone Age. It must be succinctly clarified that the Edison project, SLS, and others etc involved in charter, contracting or choice business (even the parochial catholic systems) , are profit – oriented (‘our customers are knowledgeable buyers – wrote Chubb, 1997; 111) but the attraction is that they operate ‘for the same amount of money per pupils as public schools’. This is the challenge before the government in Nigeria: would a chartered unity school or other public schools accept all students irrespective of socio-economic background (See Chubb, 1997: 118). The government in Nigeria may not be able to ensure this and so it is advised to drop its ‘unity schools PPP’ initiative and consider a package that includes the following s: a thorough and complete cleaning of the present leaderships of the schools, the elimination of unproductive teachers; operating a curriculum which is above the prescribed basic minimum academic standard (BMAS); revitalization/re-organization of the inspectorate division of the Secondary Education unit of the ministry of education (MOE); mandating university faculties of education to carry out critical bi-annual inspection of the schools; mandating the ministry of finance or any other government agency outside the MOE to monitor or somewhat run the accounts (funds) of the schools, maintain its present level of funding; strengthen access for children of ‘the poorest of the poor’ to attend unity schools, and retain the teachers because on the average several Nigerian teachers have not been prepared to the standards which the nation wants her children to meet in future. Concerning the administration of the schools, three specific actions need to be taken: organization of annual business intelligence (literacy and wisdom) training for principals and vice-principals; the ministry of finance and the National Institute for policy and strategic studies to run quarterly or bi-annual checks on the schools (tests of managerial efficiency) i.e run inspections on the translation of business intelligence into action (Monday morning details, for example) and ensuring that levels 15+ officers are not made principals, this allows for directives from 15+ officers in the inspectorate MOE, MOF NIPSS and the academia to be effective and ensures that levels 15+ officers are not promoted into an oblivion as they come back to supervise and support the system.

CONCLUSIONS

When the political economy approach is applied to the current reforms in secondary education management in Nigeria, inequality stares the analyst in the face as the less privileged child is on his way out of the federal government college, as nation-building is sacrificed on the altar of chartering and privatization, and the government continues to ignore the significance of direct community management of schools. Class analysis remains a potent instrument in education because of the continuing crisis in the distribution of wealth in the nation. Finally, what the unity schools currently need are improved supervision and renewed leadership, not chartering out to ‘latter-day make-belief outfits’.

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