

EDUCATION

Institutional Degeneration and Evolution of Violent Secret Cults in Nigerian Universities.

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Abstract

In this paper, we argue that though a plethora of other factors outside the University system have been advanced to explain the upsurge of violent cults on Nigerian campuses, endogenous forces including policy failure, administrative naivety, and deterioration of structures, equipment and facilities, that is, institutional degeneration is the key explanatory variable. We conclude that institutional expansion and restoration of existing structures to better health rather than combative measures will produce results that are more effective against cults. Combative measures merely drive cultism underground while institutional regeneration addresses the root causes of the problem.

Introduction.

Secret Cults had existed for constructive purposes in Nigerian society and to some extent in a few Nigerian Universities since the early 1960s. There are male only, female only as well as unisex cults. Nationally, the most-talked about cults are the Pyrates, Eiye, the Buccaneers, the Black Axe, Seadogs and three all female cults including the Amazons, Jezebel, and the Brassieres. But since the 1980s, campus cultism has become ubiquitous, violent, fatalistic, socially threatening, problematic and uncontrollable. The changing character of secret cults on campuses from its earlier functional mode particularly its proliferation and violent disposition has been explained by a number of factors notably: defects in the national education policy; untrammelled dynamics of the education industry generally and of tertiary institutions in particular; evolution of structural deformities in the other key institutions of society that have vital links to the education sector, notably, the state, the family and kinship, the economy, religion and behaviour control institutions. Others are the value crisis and anomic disorder which afflict most transitional societies and, most of all, institutional decay within the Universities themselves.

These factors operate together to offer explanation to the course of change in the objectives, size, structure, as well as, membership, proliferation,

purpose and modus operandi of secret cults. However, without prejudice to the explanatory relevance of the other factors, this chapter focuses restrictively on the role played by internal institutional degeneration in universities in the emergence of violent secret cults and cult activities on the campuses across the country.

Our concern in this paper, therefore, is to examine the effects of the following, that is: shortage of facilities and equipment, uncertainties in official regulations and actions, and frequent changes in internal procedures. We shall also look at loss of administrative traditions, inadequate funding, and admission irregularities. To complete the analytical variables, we shall beam our searchlight on loss of autonomy and academic freedom, and de-motivation of academic and other support staff. Finally, we would analyze the effect of these factors on the course of emergence of violent cultism on our campuses. It is our belief that violence among campus cults arises from similar origins as violent student protests, frequent employee strikes, widespread examination malpractices, immorality on campus, certificate forgery, admission racketeering and non-cult related violence of various descriptions on the campuses. Their origin is institutional degeneration.

These forces are slowly changing the medieval concept of the University as a monastic, knowledge-producing machine for breeding people of impeccable character, learning and public service. Our Universities are today comparable instead with an anomic community where members are drug abusers, gun runners, pimps, robbers, rapists, arsonists, cheats and prostitutes, a betrayal of the ideal tradition of the Ivory Tower and a corruption of the proverbial synergy between the Town and the Gown.

The rest of this chapter will address the conceptual tools for this analysis, the main thesis being canvassed, the theoretical framework of the analysis, and finally, a discussion of what is to be done.

The Research Proposition and Conceptual Framework.

The proposition that forms the pivot of this analysis is that violent cult behaviour on Nigerian campuses is a means by which some maladjusted students (and in a few cases, staff) are coping with the pressures exerted upon them by the institutional inadequacies of the rapidly changing University system which manifests in the form of contradictory, inverse and diametrically opposing forces within these institutions especially since the early 1980s. Three sets of concepts emerge from this thesis and the internal links between them form our conceptual frame of analysis. These are: internal institutional inadequacies (III), the maladjusted student / staff (MSS) and violent campus cult behaviour (VCB).

One, this notion portrays a cyclical relationship between the three variables starting with III. Two, they are related to each other in the following way: - the dependent variable-VCB is influenced by the independent variable – III with an intervening variable- MSS. The collapse of formal organization,

facilities and administrative structures in universities produces maladjusted responses from students and staff which in turn encourages formation and joining of cults and preference of violent behaviours ostensibly as a legitimate means to society's valued ends.

Institutional Degeneration / Inadequacies and Violent Cultism.

The idea of institutional degeneration is used in two related senses. One is substantive degeneration, that is, the decline in quality and student/facility ratio in such areas as physical facilities, equipment, classrooms, laboratories, halls of residence and overstretching of social amenities and infrastructure from conditions that obtained in the Nigerian Universities before the 1980s. Two, is procedural degeneration that is, the gradual erosion of the traditions, philosophy, values, rules, procedures and norms that characterized the Universities both at its origin in the medieval ages and particularly before 1980 in Nigeria. Universities have degenerated in terms of non-sustainability of the ethics and traditions which people hold about universities, as well as, in physical structures, infrastructural facilities and funding, regrettably against a backdrop of quantum increases in number of students admitted over the years.

Substantive Degeneration.

The rapid growth and expansion of Nigerian Universities can be measured from the number of universities, size of students, the number of departments and programmes which have not grown at comparable speed with infrastructural facilities, funds or number of lecturers. For example, by June 2001 the number of Universities in the country had risen to 44 up from only one at independence in 1960. In that year, there were 26 Federal, 15 State and 3 Private Universities (Ekong 2002). By 2005, that total had increased to 55 with the addition of 3 state-owned and 8 privately owned universities. Seven private universities received license to operate in January 2005. This however is not the total picture because there are non-university degrees awarding institutions in the country. In forty years, 53 additional Universities have been established since 1962 and that is an average establishment rate of slightly above one and half universities per year. This exponential growth rate is at variance with the growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita or with the economic fortunes of the country as a whole. While this number grew, the declining average annual budgetary allocation to Universities translates into stagnation of growth of physical facilities and the number of teachers but which did not stop the rise in number of student intake. According to the Federal Office of Statistics in the Annual Abstract of Statistics (1999), in 1990/91 session the number of academic staff in Universities was 11,936. This fell to 9,772 in the 1992/ 93 session. Available statistics on federal universities show a marginal rise from 11,484 in 1993/94

to 14,208 in 1998/1999. Within the same period first-degree awards, that is, universities output doubled in five years from 19,204 in the 1991/1992 session to 42,967 in the 1996/97 session. In the same period total student enrolment in federal universities jumped from 227,999 in 1992/93 academic year to 253,121 two years later in 1995/96 but peaked at 302,569 in the 1997/98 session. The result of these discordant growths is manifested in the declining quality of University education. The state of the rot in the institutions may be gleaned from the Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) evaluation report from across Nigerian Universities conducted by the NUC and covering 1999 and 2000 and published in 2002 (Guardian, April 10, 2002 p. 4). In brief, only 2 out of 23 Universities listed under Accounting were fully accredited; for Banking and Finance, none of the 13 Universities examined was suitable for full accreditation; for Economics, of 26 Universities 8 were denied accreditation while 18 had interim recognition; for Pharmacy, 6 Universities were denied accreditation while 9 got interim recognition; for Law, out of 25 institutions only 1 merited full accreditation. Universities were denied accreditation on account of failing to meet minimum standards on some of these grounds: physical facilities, staffing, library space, floor space for lectures and laboratory space. Most Universities were disqualified mainly by two deficiencies, that is, physical facilities and staffing. The summary of the outlook of the Report on our universities is one of total neglect, severe decay and institutional deterioration over the years.

This situation has put avoidable strain and stress on available infrastructure. Government has hearkened to the demand for more spaces in Universities by creating more Universities often by political fiat rather than by rational consideration of their feasibility and sustainability. Subsequent governments at the federal level have played politics with free university education, by not allowing the charging of sustainable service fees. By so doing, it denies other stakeholders and partners in the tertiary education sub-sector the opportunity of assuming any substantial share of the cost of University education. Ironically, inadequate annual budgetary allocation to the sector, official corruption and revenue instability of the state account for the apparent need for overhaul of that policy which government is naive to do. The disproportional growth of student intake to available facilities emanates from a number of factors. Prominent among these are the general educational awareness among the populace. Another factor is the generally lower age of entry into the University by students in recent times. The third is over centralization of admission process which denies each University any opportunity of screening its candidates before final selection. There are also sharp practices such as manipulation of qualifying test scores, cheating in examinations, certificate forgery, bloated admission by individual universities and failure to adhere to National Universities Commission (NUC) and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) guidelines without any stringent sanctions. These factors produce the effect that there are many candidates who

are offered admission but who have no business being in any tertiary institution. These classes of students are a willing reserve force for recruitment into secret cults.

The failure to match student intake with available resources has caused overcrowding in halls of residence, classrooms, laboratories and libraries. On inadequacy of residence spaces, most universities adopt the on- and off-campus accommodation of students based on year of study, health or other factors. The short supply in bed spaces in the halls leads to touting in bed spaces, that is, buying and selling of bed spaces at commercial rates by students. It also creates opportunity in other instances for sharp practices among the administrative staff who sometimes also sell spaces to the highest bidders. A room meant for four students sometimes harbours as many as twelve. In each room there are categories of occupants humorously classified as landlords, squatters, floaters or occasionals. Apart from pressure on facilities, the numbers make effective student monitoring and supervision in the halls virtually impossible. In such crowded rooms the good student has a high probability of being “polluted” by the bad ones. In some universities privately owned off-campus satellite villages have been encouraged to spring up. Since these facilities are not within the control of the authorities, they have been identified as grounds for festering crimes such as rape, prostitution, robbery, and cultism and drug abuse. In the same way, shortage of classrooms and other academic area facilities make learning unconducive, tedious and burdensome especially for weak and average students. The competitive nature of the struggle for access in these arenas has tended to encourage the search for additional sources of power and influence in order to acquire a competitive edge. Some students have resorted to cults as source of raw power, confidence, finance or social connection and influence to help them deal with this situation.

Several vital services on campuses have been commercialized. Not only has students’ access to these services been curtailed by higher prices, the situation has adversely affected the quality of student living on the campus. Regrettably, the quality of these services has also declined. For instance since 1978, when meal subsidy was removed and the institutional cafeteria system abolished, students have had to pay more for poorer quality food prepared under unhygienic conditions. Laundry, transportation and health services have all suffered the same fate. As these services are more or less “privatized” in many campuses, cost of living among students has tended to increase rather on annual basis in response to market forces. These forces might have rendered financially marginal and indigent students vulnerable to cults and violent cult activities where a promise of financial or other material assistance is packaged into the bait.

Poor academic facilities and inadequate environment for studying and preparing for examinations lead to adoption of desperate measures toward passing examinations. When a student discerns the cost of repeating a

semester or session to be prohibitive, he elects to pass at his first sitting at all costs. The situation on campuses as a whole as we described above tends to be conducive for examination malpractices. Poor academic staff remuneration and low teacher-student ratio both lead to lowering of commitment and poor student supervision and teaching. Indeed finding a way out of examination-related problems is a factor cited often by cult members as a motive for joining and taking part in violent rival operations, especially those directed at lecturers or the university authorities.

Procedural Degeneration.

One organizational problem that has plagued the country since 1966 when the military first took over the reigns of government is the over-centralization of power and authority in the unitary form of government introduced in that year. This system has led to top-to-bottom only flow of command and obedience in government organs and parastatals. Consequently, in the Universities, the promise by government to grant academic freedom and operational autonomy to universities and the resultant clamour for these rights by University operators has remained basically a fleeting illusion. A peep into the draft Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Repeal Act, 2003 alias University Autonomy Bill, submitted to the National Assembly by the Government reveals clearly the falsity about the feigned enthusiasm of government to grant autonomy to Universities. The draft Bill creates a demagogue of the vice chancellor, an appointee of the government. Organs of federal government control which have also become tools of centralization of authority to make decisions in the universities notably the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) have severely encroached on the revered tradition of autonomy from external control and academic freedom. These bodies, for instance, have to approve conditions for admission, stipulate admission quota and approve physical developments in universities among others. Funds are shared among the universities by and through the NUC. The various academic disciplines need to be accredited by the NUC and the Federal Ministry of Education. Currently, all academic departments in every discipline in federal Universities run a common curriculum across the country. Perhaps the greatest source of erosion of University autonomy is dependence on the government for over 80 percent of funds needed for survival by each institution. Deciding on the criteria for arriving at how much each university will share and manipulating the process of disbursement entail enormous powers of external control over universities. This explains the fact that most trade disputes declared by the university sector unions are against the government rather than against the immediate authority in respective universities. This is because it is at that level that terms and conditions are usually determined or tampered with. As if these sources of powerlessness are not enough, the politicization of appointment of vice-chancellors, which leaves government with the ultimate choice, is a major

source of erosion of organizational power of self-control. In the 1996-2000 Council of the University of Lagos, a majority of 12 out of the 20 members were either appointed by government directly or indirectly or representing government parastatals. Whenever a decision will be reached through voting those twelve will ensure that the interest of government rather than the university is upheld. The bottom line of procedural degeneration is that decision-making powers are concentrated outside as opposed to within Universities. The lack of power to discipline erring staff and students, lack of authority to handle criminals on campus, frequent changes in public service rules and directives, all contribute to making official bureaucratic processes in Universities ineffective in tackling problems and providing lasting solutions in campuses. The inability to handle the problem of proliferation of cults and violent cult actions is one area that the powerlessness of individual universities to deal with their day-to-day problems has manifested.

Generally, there has also been a decline in the seriousness with which official rules and regulations are enforced within university establishments. Extra-bureaucratic influences such as bribery, immorality, and fear of victimization, ethnicity, politics and corruption have tended to weaken the internal organs of university administration. In some cases the sheer volume of infractions of official regulations is overwhelming to the authorities because of the rapid expansion in the number of students. There is perhaps no better part of university administration that highlights the weakness of internal administrative devices than in the internal security organization. The commercialization of services on campuses attracts several service providers who commute into the campuses daily. The mounting of part-time programmes, most of which are in the evenings, also keeps the human traffic in the campuses high throughout the day. The Security Units are starved of adequate number of personnel. Many of them could do with specialized training in minimum security situation enforcement, routine patrols, loss prevention, crime anticipation, crime detection and education of the members of the community on security consciousness. Those who are employed are severally lower than undergraduates in their academic qualification and they therefore lack the confidence and temerity to deal with miscreants among students.

The Maladjusted Student and Violent Cultist Behaviour.

Three categories of students join cults and perpetrate violent behaviour. The first is described as the *adventurous*. This student is the exuberant type, full of energy, inquisitive, ambitious and adventurous, with an insatiable desire for recognition, power, relevance and success. He might be intelligent, comfortable and extroverted. Such a student falls into the cult group once membership promises to confer fame, money, connection and the feeling of belonging with the "Joneses". For this student though the motive is legitimate the means is socially frowned at and it is this persuasion to perceive violence

and clandestine cultism as legitimate means to a valued goal that qualifies him as a maladjusted person.

The second category of potential cultists is *socially marginal and academically weak*. This category join cults as a means to augment their deficiency which may be due to poverty, introversion, lack of self confidence or some form of deep feeling that he might not succeed in the competition of life unless he acquires extra power through group support and members' solidarity. Where this student comes to depend so heavily on the cult, the superiority of his group above all others becomes inseparable from the achievement of his life goals in the school. He develops a dependency syndrome to cultism such that where violence is perceived as a means to group and therefore his personal goals, he participates zealously and without restraint.

The third category of students found in violent cults is the *naïve* character. These ones are usually young and inexperienced. They are often lured as they are just stepping into the university. A stale student who is also identified by the peers as unstable and uncommitted to anything in particular-religion, ideology, life calling etc, might also fall into this category. Cult members in recruitment drive take advantage of their naivety to enlist them and line them up in the battle with rival cults and other adversaries.

As is the case with the first category of potential members on a voyage of discovery, the marginal and naïve cultists soon internalize group norms and membership values. This may include protection of their kind, drug abuse, and disdain for constituted authority, devaluation of human life, especially the life of non-members and wanton disrespect for university norms. Due to the illusory circumstances in which they join the cults, they develop a false valuation of reality and appearances and come to regret the results of violence only after it has taken its toll.

Though some of the sources of these forms of maladjustments may be peculiar to an individual's personality system, situational factors such as one's family background, life experiences and school's earlier attended before coming into the University may also play an active role in determining the specific type of maladjustment in each case. It is however the breakdown of the old order in the University which provides a fertile ground for these predisposing factors to materialize in the form of cult membership and institutional violence. This trend of thought tends to lend credence to the belief that for any deviant act to occur three situations must be present. One is the actor's *will* to take the action. Another is the *opportunity*, which is created by the actor or others in the situation. The third is *escape*, which consists in the actor's estimation of probability of being caught and the punishment that may follow. Thus for a deviant act such as belonging to a cult and taking part in violent outings to materialize, the person must have the inclination, the situation (e.g. anomic internal structure and processes in the University) must create the opportunity and the actor must in his estimation see chance of

avoiding detection or an avenue to avoid the pains of punishment. These three conditions are not only necessary but also sufficient for the act to occur.

The crisis of uneven internal changes and violent cultism.

Another significant dimension of internal social disorganization in Universities is the unevenness of changes that are taking place. The growth of structural imbalances has produced disorderly change and contradictory results. We would use two illustrations to demonstrate the effect of this problem.

In the first place, we have noticed over the years, an inverse relationship between the growth rate of available facilities and growth in number of students. While there is contraction of spaces, facilities and equipment, that is, capacity contraction, on one hand, on the other, the number of students qualifying for admission, as well as, those actually taken has been expanding. Similarly, there has been a wide imbalance between the number of students who apply for spaces in the University and those actually taken. This situation has tended to heat up qualifying examinations and admission processes. While a few who are admitted at first instance bask in the euphoria of success, many applicants are frustrated by several failed attempts and so become desperate before and during subsequent trials and upon coming into the campus ultimately. When they do come in, they face another hurdle of frustration, that is, the shortage of facilities, which precipitates cut-throat competitions and desperation.

Secondly, a related but analytically separate dimension of disorderly unevenness of growth is that between budgetary allocations to the sector vis-à-vis the explosion of demand for opportunities for University education. Generally, due to the national and global economic recession of the 1980s (the SAP era and after) the ability of government to adequately cater to the needs of the University financially has severely dwindled. As is held in economics, a situation in which large demand chases few goods is inflationary. The schism in the demand and supply of spaces in the Universities has caused an inflationary spiral in cost of admission, cost of living in schools and cost of delayed entry due perhaps to illness, failure in examinations or disciplinary action. The strict regulation of the ability of Universities to charge fees creates further frustration for the Universities themselves. Even other facilities that may ensure the comfort and convenience of staff, students and other members of the community are adversely affected. A situation such as this where the students, staff and institutions' authorities are frustrated and desperate is a fertile ground for the growth of violence and the prosperity of any contra-culture that promises an escape from the "tyranny" of the dominant order.

Theory of Anomie and Violent Campus Cultism.

Durkheim (1964) was the first to propound the theory of anomie. The theory seeks to establish a relationship between social disintegration and formlessness. A society is said to be in a state of anomie when those things that ensure cohesiveness and social integration are weakened. Society is said to be held together by “the collective conscience” or the group norm. When these norms are no longer seen as the basis of behavioural orientation a state of anomie or formlessness may occur.

Similarly, Merton (1968) employs this idea to explain the disproportionate involvement of Blacks in criminal activities in America. He derived five adaptive alternatives in a situation in which a variance exists between cultural goals and approved or normative means. These include *Innovation* where a person accepts the cultural goals but rejects the institutional means and replaces those with alternative devices; *Conformism* is the acceptance of both the approved goals and the means specified; *Rebellion* is the rejection of goals and means and their replacement with deviant alternatives. The *Ritualist* rejects the goals but accepts the socially approved means at those goals. Finally, the *Retreatist* rejects both goals and means but unlike the rebel does not replace them with deviant alternatives but withdraws from active social participation in the pursuit of both social goals and the deployment of approved means. In the American case, Merton is of the view that Blacks resort to criminal alternatives because relative to Whites, the legitimate means are not equally facilitative of their success in a racially structured social system. Blacks just like Whites are oriented towards the achievement of American goals, the American dream, while Blacks resort to crime as an innovative alternative to blocked access.

The mode of adaptation that has explanatory relevance for the proliferation of secret cults on campuses and their violent attitude is *innovation*. The cultist accepts the goals of society such as wealth, academic success, fame, power, recognition etc., but rejects the legitimate, painstaking avenue to achieving these laurels. He replaces the socially recognized means e.g. hard work, open competition, honesty, perseverance by dependence on cult power and cult assistance which he erroneously believes will give him social advantage, psychological confidence and competitive edge etc. The anomic background for development of this form of maladjustment is the collapse of the old institutional order of the Universities. The rapidity of uneven changes, the imbalance in the growth of facilities and the demand for them, and the erosion of the internal powers of control of the University by Government, are responsible for this situation. By inference, the cultist is a social precipitate, a victim of disorderly social change, a pawn in the chessboard of uncontrolled transition.

The Limitation of Institutional Approach.

In addition to the institutional approach to social analysis, the sociological tradition also recognizes system and interactionist approaches. The defect of each approach is often easily analyzed from the view of their being the strength of the other methods of analysis. Every method prides itself of some advantages which it parades over the others, those others in turn priding themselves of their own strength over the alternatives. While the systems perspective draws on the interaction between an event, action or institution on its wider environment with which it is seen to be in an on-going exchange of influences, the interactional perspective views the situation as constituting rationally motivated individual actors and interest groups whose actions are shaped by their goals their capacity and the allowance or obstacles in their action situation among others. System analysis feeds fat on analytical principles of secondary cybernetics while the interactionists consider as significant the understanding of the socio-psychological disposition of the actors.

The institutional approach such as we choose to rely on in this study is chosen because of its robust allowance to us to examine in reasonable detail internal organizational features and the University system as a whole. This approach sees the problem of Universities from within, that is, their organizational structure, management techniques, competing interest groups, motivation and discipline of staff, adequacy of facilities, equipment and infrastructure, student administration, etc. However, those gains are diminished by not laying equal emphasis on the input of the vital organs which though external to the University are in a role-web together with the Universities. These are the family, primary and secondary schools, the state and its organs, employing organizations, professional associations, individuals, philanthropists and non-governmental organizations. These bodies play an equally significant role in the determination of behaviour of authorities, staff and students on campuses. The significance of the interactionist approach, on the other hand may be felt in seeking an answer to the quintessential sociological-question, why is it that some do and others don't? In this case, why is that institutional degeneracy leads some students into embracing cultism but does not produce same effect on others? In order to answer this question one will need to go beyond the general outlook of systems and institutional approaches into individual differences in personal history, individual disposition and variations in personality profiles and experiences among social actors. This observation explains why institutional degeneracy as an explanatory factor was described on the first page of this chapter as 'restrictive' which is an acknowledgement of the non-exhaustiveness of the approach.

Conclusion

In concluding this analysis, the relevant question is about what is to be done to check the proliferation of campus cults and re-engineering and restoring them to the pre-1980 non-violent and non-obtrusive character on campuses. In posing this question it is in order here to assert that some mistakes have been made in official handling of cults and cult violence. Cult groups have been described as gangs of robbers, murderers and criminal gangs. Individual cultists are often described as social miscreants, misguided elements, robbers, rapists and dangerous human beings. They have been described as “culprits” rather than as “victims”. As ‘criminals’, government and University authorities see them as offenders that must be punished rather than as social precipitates that need to be reoriented and rehabilitated. This view has informed the combative and curative approach which places the Police and the criminal justice system at the centre of official cult-containment policy. It has mistakenly removed the shine from any preventive or reorientation measures which are described as patronizing and romanticizing cultism. The general idea appears to be that a serious problem must be given a tough solution, the fire-for-fire kind of approach. Thus it is usual to hear the authorities talk of “stamping out cultism”, “denunciation of membership”, “expulsion, rustication of culprits”, “fishing out the criminals”, etc. It is our opinion that the official approach to cultism has principally been treating the symptom and not the cause. Proliferation and violence are the symptoms of institutional degeneracy and structural deformities. These latter elements, that is, institutional incapacity (excess of demand for spaces over the supply) shortage of facilities and equipment, dwindling resources, decline of administrative traditions, disrespect for bureaucratic norms, denial of university autonomy and academic freedom (unhindered internal self control) in the face of sharply rising number of students and programmes, are the causes. These are the factors that need to be addressed by the immediate authorities and the government. It is predicted that for as long as these lapses are not allowed to creep into privately-owned universities, so long will they be shielded from the menace of violent cultism. If personal factors are the main predisposing factors the privately owned institutions must soon have their share of the maladjusted miscreants from homes where parents are also cult members.

From analysis of the categories of students who join cults they are characters that should draw our sympathy and understanding due to the crushing pressure and influence of the “criminalizing” university environment in contemporary Nigeria, pressures that the set up does not assist them to cope with. We favour the preventive strategy, which not only requires the University to re-position itself for example, by avoiding the long idle period between resumption and commencement of lectures, a period in which cult recruitment occurs, but also demands that it fills the orientation period with anti-cult and citizenship and leadership orientation lectures, films, demonstrations and exercises. The Guidance and Counselling Units be

strengthened and relocated to academic faculties in order to be closer to students. Given the early average age of entry into Universities nowadays an overhaul of hostel rules and administrative norms is required to allow for closer supervision. There is evidence that the majority of new intakes are unable to manage adequately the freedom that is suddenly thrust upon them upon entry and will therefore need assistance and support and monitoring. The Government must begin to think of widening the scope of involvement and contribution of parents to the provision of facilities and the management of especially students' hostels. The management of these hostels can be semi-privatized to allow for participation of estate and accommodation outfits that will upgrade facilities, do strict maintenance of infrastructure and carry out independent administration of those halls after the Universities may have completed placement in bed spaces. Each University must control its admission process and limit intakes to what available facilities can reasonably accommodate. While these reforms are going on the facilities and infrastructural base should be gradually increased and improved. Given the seriousness of this problem at present we favour an administrative system closer to the school management system adopted in a typical mission secondary school for Universities.

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