

**PRINCE ABUBAKAR AUDU UNIVERSITY,  
ANYIGBA, NIGERIA**



**16<sup>th</sup>**

**INAUGURAL LECTURE**

**DOES HISTORY REALLY MATTER?**

**KNOWLEDGE AND THE HISTORIAN IN A  
SOCIETY IN TRANSITION**

**By**

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*25<sup>th</sup> November, 2025*



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## **NATIONAL ANTHEM**

**Stanza I**      Nigeria, we hail thee  
                    Our own dear native land  
                    Though tribe and tongue may differ  
                    In brotherhood we stand  
                    Nigerians all, are proud to serve  
                    Our sovereign Motherland

**Stanza II**      Our flag shall be a symbol  
                    That truth and justice reign  
                    In peace or battle honoured  
                    And this we count as gain  
                    To hand on to our children  
                    A banner without stain

**Stanza III**     O God of all creation  
                    Grant this our one request  
                    Help us to build a nation  
                    Where no man is oppressed  
                    And so with peace and plenty  
                    Nigeria may be blessed

**PRINCE ABUBAKAR AUDU UNIVERSITY ANYIGBA, ANTHEM**  
Prince Abubakar Audu University, you stand in strength and pride,  
Showing the way for all who yearn  
Standing firm in wisdom and truth  
In unity we grow  
Committed to imparting knowledge, skills and learning  
To all who long for excellence  
Prince Abubakar Audu University, the pride of the world  
We honour your virtues

**Table 1: Preceding Inaugural Lectures of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba**

S/N	Inaugural Lecturers	Title	Date
1.	Professor Sunday S. Arogba	Phenolics: A Class of Nature's Chemical Weapons of Self-Preservation	26 <sup>th</sup> August, 2008
2.	Professor Zacchaeus O. Apata	Unburdening the Colonial Burden: Lessons from History	17 <sup>th</sup> August, 2010
3.	Professor Steve Metiboba, Jp	Matrimony between two Healthcare Systems: An Unholy Wedlock?	27 <sup>th</sup> June, 2014
4.	Professor Stephen I. Ocheni	Accounting for Public Funds: The Leviathan of Government Bureaucracy	25 <sup>th</sup> June, 2018
5.	Professor Eniolorunda A. Tai Oluwagbemi	Scientific Elegance and Political Naivety of Food and Wood Sufficiency In Nigeria: The Take of An Agroforester	28 <sup>th</sup> June, 2018
6.	Professor Charles I. Oyewole	Coroner's Inquest: An autopsy of the Man with the Hoe	15 <sup>th</sup> August, 2019
7.	Professor Odin Eboh Monday	Insanity and Life Pain Two Ancestral Curses: The Role of Village Herbalist	24 <sup>th</sup> August, 2019
8.	Professor Jimoh Habibat Isah	The Geography of Erosion in Nigeria: An Explanation	30 <sup>th</sup> August, 2019
9.	Professor Marietu Ohunene Tenuche	Neoliberalism: Forecasting Nigeria's Ungodly Romance with the East	29 <sup>th</sup> September, 2020

10.	Professor James Omale	Remedy or Poison? Double –Edge Sword PARADOX of Alternative Medicine: The concern of Toxicologist.	11 <sup>th</sup> March, 2021
11.	Professor Stephen Jimoh Ibitoye	If Agricultural Revolution is the Answer, What is the Question?	20 <sup>th</sup> September, 2022
12.	Professor Enejo Simon Attah	Intercropping: That there may be Enough Food	19 <sup>th</sup> February, 2025
13.	Professor Cornelius Ojo Orishagbemi	Food Research Innovations as Panacea for Post-Harvest Losses, Food Security and Safety: Renown Contributions of a Certified Scientist	7 <sup>th</sup> August, 2025
14.	Professor Daniel Friday Atidoga	The Annihilator’s Sexual Intent: The Crime of Crimes and Demise of Tomorrow	13 <sup>th</sup> September, 2025
15.	Faith Aladi Sale	Agroforestry: The Magic Bullet for Agricultural Land Degradation and Food Insecurity	18 <sup>th</sup> November, 2025

## **DEDICATION**

To my father, Late Capt. I. A Ukase and my mother, Late Mrs. Victoria I. Ukase

## PROTOCOL

- The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Marietu Ohunene Tenuche, *FHPSA, Fspssp, GFACASSS*
- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Administration, Professor J. J. Orugun
- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academics, Professor Oja Paul Egwemi
- Former Vice-Chancellors here present
- The Registrar, Dr. Yahaya Aliu Segun
- The Bursar, Dr. Amina Ibrahim Anuhi
- The Librarian, Dr. Oladimeji Yemi-Peters
- Deans and Directors
- Professors and Members of Senate
- The President, Council and Members of the Historical Society of Nigeria
- The Chairman and Members of the Inaugural Lecture Committee
- Members of Congregation
- My Lords, Spiritual and Temporal
- Members of My Nuclear and Extended Family
- Invited Friends and Colleagues
- Staff and Students of this Great Institution
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press

# 1. Introduction

It is with profound joy, deep humility, and utmost gratitude to Almighty God that I stand before this distinguished audience to deliver the 16th Inaugural Lecture of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba. This event marks the second inaugural lecture to be delivered by a historian in our university and the second from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (FAH)—the last being that of Professor Z. O. Apata delivered in 2010.<sup>1</sup> With this lecture, the FAH has broken a fifteen year old jinx.<sup>2</sup> I remain sincerely grateful to our indefatigable Vice-Chancellor, Professor Marietu Tenuche, for granting me this significant platform, which inaugurates me as the second Professor of History in this esteemed institution to attain this honour. I warmly welcome you all to this memorable occasion and deeply appreciate each of you for honouring me with your presence.

As I deliver this lecture, I am deeply mindful of the esteemed intellectual tradition within our ivory tower—one that grants newly appointed or promoted professors the privilege of showcasing their scholarly journey across time and space. This tradition provides a

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<sup>1</sup>. Professor Z.O. Apata of the Department of History and International Studies, Kogi State University (now Prince Abubakar Audu University), Anyigba, was the department's first Chair in History, and also the first in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (FAH) to deliver an inaugural lecture at Kogi State University (now Prince Abubakar Audu University (PAAU)). He delivered the university's 2nd Inaugural Lecture on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2010 titled: *Unburdening the Colonial Burden: Lessons from History*.

<sup>2</sup>. Professor Z.O. Apata of the Department of History and International Studies, Kogi State University (now Prince Abubakar Audu University), Anyigba, was the department's first Chair in History, and also the first in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (FAH) to deliver an inaugural lecture at Kogi State University (now Prince Abubakar Audu University (PAAU)). He delivered the university's 2nd Inaugural Lecture on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2010 titled: *Unburdening the Colonial Burden: Lessons from History*.

platform for professors to present a comprehensive account of their teaching, research, and community service, highlighting the contributions that have earned them the distinguished rank of professor in their respective disciplines. It also serves as an opportunity to engage the university community and the public, demonstrating how our academic endeavors have been applied to advance knowledge and serve humanity. Moreover, it offers a moment to reflect on the trajectory of our research and outline future directions.<sup>3</sup> While inaugural lectures are typically delivered by newly promoted professors, I must clarify that I am not one. I was elevated to this esteemed rank by the Governing Council of this university on the 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 but effective on October 1, 2019—nearly six years ago.<sup>4</sup>

Madam Vice-Chancellor, the title of my inaugural lecture is: *Does History Really Matter? Knowledge and the Historian in a Society in Transition*. Through this lecture, I aim to demonstrate how I have, throughout my academic journey, extensively utilized the knowledge of my discipline—History—and my area of specialization—Political History and Development Studies—to make a significant impact on society. These include research, teaching, administration and community service.

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<sup>3</sup>. For more details on these perspectives see C.B.N. Ogbogbo, *In Defence of Tradition*, University of Ibadan Inaugural Lecture Series (Ibadan: University Press), September, 2018; O. O. Okpeh, *The Historian as a Catalyst: History, Ideology and the Social Process*, Federal University of Lafia Inaugural Lecture Series (Lafia: FuLafia Press), 2023; S. A. Ajayi, *Who is Not Afraid of History?* University of Ibadan Inaugural Lecture Series (Ibadan: University Press), 2023; A. C. Odoemene, *Settled, Unsettled and Resettled: Dialectics of History and (Dis)Order in the Nigerian Society* (Federal University, Otuoke Inaugural Lecture Series, July 2023.

<sup>4</sup>. Though my professorial chair took effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019, it was announced by the Governing Council of the Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2021. The formal presentation took place in January 2022. For more details see Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba: *Minutes of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Regular Meeting of Senate*, held on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2022, 5

## 2. Forging my Early Career Path

Madam Vice Chancellor, my venture into History was a natural progression. I earned my General Certificate of Education (GCE) in 1989 with a distinction (A1) in History, confirming the same distinction I had received in the Mock Examination. This achievement named me the best graduating student in History for that year. My success was largely due to Mr. Austine Adejo,<sup>5</sup> our Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria-trained history teacher at Government College Makurdi (GCM), who made the subject not only appealing but also very easy to relate with. However, like many Nigerian parents who favour certain “prestigious fields,” my late father insisted that I apply to study Law at ABU in my Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination (JAMB) application, despite my preference for History or Economics. Obediently, I followed his instructions and applied for Law, with History as my second choice. Fate intervened, and instead of being admitted to study Law, I received two separate offers: one for B.A. History and another for BSc Economics in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS).<sup>6</sup> The challenge then shifted to choosing between the two. While my father preferred Economics, I was determined to pursue History. His insistence that I study Economics driven by the widespread misconceptions about the relevance of History as a discipline, partly inspired the title of this inaugural lecture. It was only after our next-door neighbor and family friend, Mr. Cletus Omale Inedu (May his soul rest in peace),<sup>7</sup> intervened

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<sup>5</sup>. Mr. Austin Adejo worked in the Benue State Teaching Service Board (TSB) for a number of years during which he taught at Government College Makurdi and other schools. He later transferred his services to the Benue State Civil Service, where he retired a few years ago.

<sup>6</sup>. This admission was facilitated by the then Vice-Chancellor of ABU, Zaria, Prof. Daniel Saror, who included me on his list when I couldn't secure admission when the initial admission lists were released.

<sup>7</sup>. Mr Omale Inedu was an ABU trained Economist, a renowned teacher and public servant. He was the one who personally convinced my father to allow me follow my heart and interest.

that my father agreed to my choice, with the condition that I would switch to Law in my second year. Today, I stand before you, proudly as a Professor of History because I followed my heart and passion. Regrettably, my parents never lived to see me rise to the pinnacle of my career because God called them to be with Him very early in my journey.<sup>8</sup>

I began my undergraduate studies at ABU in the 1992-1993 academic session with excitement and confidence, assured that I had chosen a path well-suited to my strengths, given my strong background in History from secondary school. My first semester at the university reaffirmed my decision, solidifying my commitment to the field of History. The Department of History established on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1962 developed to be known as the *ABU School of History*,<sup>9</sup> which made it distinct from the study of history in other universities in Nigeria.<sup>10</sup> Developed under the leadership of Prof. Abdullahi Smith, it embarked in the teaching of areas hitherto tabooed by colonial historiography through the promotion of Afrocentric scholarship. Within a short time, the department had established itself as a distinguished institution, recognized not only within the university community but also globally. Propelled by the Department of History, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) at ABU Zaria—before it was later reorganized—became

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<sup>8</sup>. My father died on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 1998, when I was in my final Year at ABU, Zaria, while my mother died 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2001, a year after my NYSC.

<sup>9</sup>. The ABU School of History promoted research and the teaching of African History, led initially by Professor Abdullahi Smith and later supported by his adherents and scholars like Dr. Y. B. Usman, Prof. George Kwanashie, and Prof. A. Mahdi, etc. This school adopted a historical methodological approach that challenged Eurocentric assertions. They debunked claims that pre-colonial African changes were solely driven by racial and tribal conflicts, and that state formation in Africa resulted from the actions of legendary hero immigrants from the Middle East. This scholars promoted Afrocentric methodological approaches in historical reconstruction and studies.

<sup>10</sup>. See A. Abba, “History of the Department of History,” text of a Valedictory Lecture delivered at the Assembly Hall of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2023

an intellectual hub, attracting some of the finest academicians from around the globe.<sup>11</sup>

This was the department I had the privilege of being admitted to. During my formative years as a history undergraduate student, I was fortunate to be taught by some of the country's most distinguished scholars. Leading figures in the Department of History included late Dr. Y. B. Usman, late Professor Abdullahi Mahdi, Prof. Ahmed Modibbo Mohammed, the late Dr. George Kwanashie, Prof. Enoch Oyedele, Prof. Alkassum Abba, Prof. Mahmud Hamman, Prof. M. M. Gwandabe, Prof. Kabir Chafe, Prof. Shaba Jimada, Dr. Mamman Musa, Dr. Abdulkadir Adamu, Dr. Sule Bello, Dr. Usman Ladan, Mallam Safiyanu Aminu, and the late Prof. Mailafiya Filaba.

These lecturers and others in the FASS made ABU Zaria a premier environment for scholarly pursuits. The academic atmosphere in Zaria profoundly influenced my ideological thought pattern and worldview. By the time I completed my second year, the idea of switching to the Faculty of Law, as initially planned, had vanished. Even my father, who had initially desired the change, likely forgot to mention it. Attending lectures under the guidance of these esteemed academics was transformative; their diverse conceptual, theoretical, and methodological perspectives in the humanities significantly shaped my future career path. Due to the prolonged labour strikes by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), I completed my four-year studies in 1998 instead of 1996 and proceeded for my National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme in Cross Rivers State in 1999, which I eventually completed in 2000.

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<sup>11</sup>. FASS was a major hub of intellectual activities in Zaria. Several seminars, public lectures and conferences were held at frequent intervals in the faculty, some of which pulled the finest academicians within and outside the country. Some of these public lectures locked down the university while they lasted.

In 2002, I commenced my Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in History at Benue State University (BSU), Makurdi.<sup>12</sup> Although the institution was relatively young—having been established just a decade earlier—it was already distinguishing itself as the first state-owned university in Northern Nigeria, attracting high-quality scholars from a broad spectrum of both first- and second-generation universities in the country. The Department of History at BSU, one of the pioneer departments established in 1992, was spearheaded by its first Head of Department, Prof. Yakubu Ochefu. The department drew its academic strength from first and second-generation universities across the country. Distinguished scholars such as the late Dr. Joseph Iyo, late Prof. Armstrong Adejo, late Dr. Atoato Igirgi, Prof. Mike Odey, Prof. Okpesh O. Okpesh, Prof. Toryina Varvar, and Dr. E. C Ayangaor formed the core of the department. Prof. John Agaba and the late Prof. C.C. Jacobs later joined this coterie of lecturers from the University of Jos to strengthen the department. These lecturers, in collaboration with other like-minded younger academics, laid the foundation for what was later known as the *BSU School of History*.<sup>13</sup> My time at BSU,

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<sup>12.</sup> The name of the University was recently changed to Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi by the Benue State Government.

<sup>13.</sup> The BSU School of History developed a unique identity by integrating diverse ideological perspectives and methodological approaches from lecturers hailing from first and second-generation universities. Through hard work and a formidable team spirit, the department crafted a rich curriculum and strong academic traditions, elevating the quality of its undergraduate and postgraduate programs to exceptional levels. The department emphasized micro-historical studies, with particular focus on minority nationalities and the interrogation of issues around Central Nigeria also called the Middle Belt, foregrounding its academic content with a focus on these nuanced historical narratives. For more details on this, read O. O. Okpesh, *The Historian as a Catalyst...*, 4 and P. I. Ukase and B. Audu, “The Contributions and Influence of Okpesh Ochayi Okpesh to the Study of African History, 1996-2018”, in P.I. Ukase, S.I. Ugbegili, B.J. Audu & T. Ikpanor (eds), *History, Globalization and Relations in Africa History, Globalization and Relations in Africa* (Ibadan: Integrity Press), 2018, xv-xxvi.

which marked my second academic journey, completely transformed my future academic trajectory for the better.

I completed my MA programme in record time in 2004, still without the faintest idea that I would become a full-fledged academic. My further studies were driven purely by my passion for the discipline and my interest in knowledge generation and production. Upon completing my MA, I visited my supervisor, Prof. Okpoh, who, after much persuasion and despite my initial resistance, convinced me to commence my PhD. Reluctantly, I agreed, even though I was already engaged in the Benue State Civil Service (BSCS). This decision marked a turning point in my life and my future career path. Prof. Okpoh, who later became my PhD supervisor, played a pivotal role in my journey. I completed my thesis in a record time of two years and eight months, specializing in Political History with a focus on Parliamentary/Legislative History. The training I received as a professional historian at ABU and BSU laid the foundation for my early and future career paths in numerous ways. It did not only enhance my work ethics but also developed in me a thorough, deep, resilient, and critical mindset, which has been invaluable in addressing societal needs and challenges.

My first job, a few months after completing my NYSC, was with a newspaper called *The Insight*.<sup>14</sup> I was offered this position based on a piece I had written for my neighbour's wife, who was studying Mass Communication and had sought my assistance. Impressed by the write-up, her husband, a renowned journalist, Mr. Fred Gusha (of blessed memory), offered me a job as a reporter in March 2000,

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<sup>14</sup>. *The Insight* was a privately-owned, fledgling newspaper established in Makurdi, the Benue State capital. Published weekly, it quickly became sought after by the reading public. The Editor, Mr. Fred Gusha, upheld high ethical standards and set a high bar for quality journalism. Alongside myself, the late Terna Doki, Chris Atsaka, the late Doris Eru, and David Yuwa were the foundation staff of this outfit. Due to my outstanding performance, I was posted to Government House, Makurdi, as its Bureau Chief in January, 2021.

barely a month after my NYSC. As a young graduate, writing during the early transition from military to civilian governance, I applied my historical knowledge to my journalism career in several ways. For instance, my training as a historian enabled me to conduct thorough and meticulous research, applying critical thinking skills essential for uncovering facts and verifying information in journalism. This training also equipped me with the skills of accessing sources, identifying biases, and evaluating and interpreting complex information, ensuring balanced and objective reporting.<sup>15</sup>

Historians are typically very critical of their sources, often cross-checking and cross-breeding in order to establish their credibility, authenticity and reliability as important sources. To achieve this, they adopt the principle of scrutinizing and verifying sources for accuracy,<sup>16</sup> similar to the core values of handling sources responsibly and ethically in journalism.<sup>17</sup> This training helped me to treat and protect my sources with the utmost care they deserved. Additionally, writing clearly and effectively is fundamental in both history and journalism. My background as a historian honed my ability to communicate complex ideas in an accessible manner.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15.</sup> Objectivity is a cornerstone of historical studies and reconstruction, heavily emphasized in the training of young historians. Without objectivity, there can be no true history. Therefore, a thoroughly trained historian learns to detach themselves from the subject of study. They are taught to ensure that their environment, ethnicity, religion, and other personal biases do not influence their analysis and conclusions. Importantly, is the sacred way and manner historians use and handle sources. For more details, see C.B.N. Ogbogbo, “Use of Primary and Secondary Sources in Historical Writing” in S. O Aghalino, O.O. Okpeh, Jr and D. L. Imbua (eds), *Historical Research Method* (Abuja: Published by Herodotus Publishers for the Historical Society of Nigeria), 2023, 39-50

<sup>16.</sup> P. I. Ukase, “Writing Journal Articles and Book Chapter” in S. O Aghalino, O.O. Okpeh, Jr and D. L. Imbua (eds), *Historical Research Method...*, 128

<sup>17.</sup> Like journalists, historians are trained to handle sources discreetly. In fact, there can be no history without sources, just as there can be no news without them. Both professions, therefore, share similarities in how they handle and treat their sources.

<sup>18.</sup> See K. Azaigba, “The Discipline of History and Employment Opportunities in

These skills and attributes from my historical training provided a strong foundation for effective and responsible journalism. With these skills, I wrote some of the best editorials, commentaries, and news reports for *The Insight* during the two years I worked there. In my short spell in the journalism profession, I was able to demonstrate that History matters in all disciplines and professions.

### **3. History and the Historian in the Transition Process: A Conceptual Discourse**

Madam Vice-Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this lecture explores the concepts of *History*, *the Historian*, and *Transition*, situating them within the broader theme of the intersections between agency and transformations in society. A clear understanding of these concepts and their relevance will enhance our appreciation of the lecture's focus. At its core, my inaugural lecture aims to highlight the significance of history as a discipline and its relevance to my research. I will demonstrate how, throughout my academic journey, I have applied its methodological and theoretical tools to address critical societal challenges. Specifically, I will examine four key areas: (i) research on the legislature, (ii) institutional contributions to PAAU, (iii) contributions to the legislature in collaboration with related institutions such as NGOs, and (iv) service to the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN), my professional body, and other relevant organizations during this transitional period.

Let me start by emphatically asserting that history is one discipline that is fundamental and key to all human societies. Regrettably, it is also one of the most misunderstood, underrated, ignored, and abandoned disciplines, especially in developing nations such as ours. While every leader leverages history to ascend to power, its

role in the development trajectory of these nations is often neglected by the same leaders who use it to gain authority. Our everyday life is propelled and defined by our history. From the family, community, state, and country, our cultural heritage, language, socio-economic structures, legal and political systems, education, social norms and values, technology and innovation, economic practices, and collective memory and identity are significantly shaped by our history. Yet, the discipline of history remains one of the most misunderstood and underrated in Nigeria.

Madam Vice Chancellor, history, as a discipline, has no universally accepted definition, making it subject to various interpretations. Arthur Marwick conceptualizes history on three levels: first, as “the entire human past as it actually happened”; second, as “man’s attempt to describe and interpret the past”; and third, as “the systematic study of the past.”<sup>19</sup> Others define history as “the study of past events, especially the political, social, and economic development of a country or nation.”<sup>20</sup> Additionally, history has been categorized at two levels—as a process and as a study. As a process, history examines the relationship between humanity and its environment, as well as the mutual impact between both. As a study, it encapsulates the totality of changes that humanity has undergone,<sup>21</sup> positioning history as a discipline that spans the full spectrum of human activity.

Despite the variations in definitions, the underlying nexus is that history is the study of the human past, as it influences the present, with the goal of shaping the future to achieve societal progress. People with no knowledge of the past will continue to grope in darkness. To live without history is to live without memory. The historian values the past because of its enduring connection with

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<sup>19</sup>. A. Marwick, *The Nature of History* (London), 1970, 15

<sup>20</sup>. See P. I. Ukase, “History and Other Related Disciplines,” *Benue Valley Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 6, No. 2, December, 2005. 53

<sup>21</sup>. P. I. Ukase, “History and Other Related Disciplines,”..., 53

the present. Contrary to the claim that history is irrelevant because it studies past empires, kingdoms, and cultures, the past remains alive to the extent that it shapes contemporary events.<sup>22</sup> Historians engage with the past, not as a dead subject, but as a tool for understanding the present and anticipating the future—a principle known as the doctrine of continuity. As E.H. Carr aptly stated, “History is the continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the past and the present.”<sup>23</sup>

History, as a collective memory, enables individuals and nations to understand their origins, their present realities, and their future direction. A nation with a strong grasp of its history is better equipped to navigate challenges, as historical knowledge provides a foundation for informed decision-making. J.F. Ade-Ajayi warns that “a nation without history lacks depth, values, and stability,” while Wole Soyinka cautions that forgetting the past endangers the future.<sup>24</sup> To reject history is to lose the ability to analyze societal processes and explore possibilities for change. Historical awareness compels critical questioning and fosters insight into national transformation, allowing societies to forge pathways toward a better future.

That said, what is transition? Transition refers to the process of change or movement from one state, condition, or system to another. It can occur in various contexts—political, social, economic, or personal. In a political context, transition often signifies a shift in governance, such as Nigeria’s transition from

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<sup>22</sup> . G. A Kwanashie, “The Crisis of Relevance and the Teaching of History in Nigerian Universities” in A. I. Yandaki and Y. Abubakar (eds.), *The Consequences of Being a Historian: Thoughts and Reflections of Practitioners and Students of History* (Sokoto: Usman Danfodio University Press), 2018

<sup>23</sup> . E. H. Carr, *What is History* (London: Penguin Books), 1961

<sup>24</sup> . J. F. Ade Ajayi and Wole Soyinka’s submissions are cited in O. O. Okpeh, *The Historian as a Catalyst...*, 12

military rule to democracy in 1999.<sup>25</sup> However, beyond democratic transition, which marks the initial shift to civilian rule, there is a second phase of civilian transition, which refers to the peaceful transfer of power between elected administrations through democratic processes. Since 1999, Nigeria has undergone multiple electoral cycles, demonstrating a commitment to democracy. Yet, persistent challenges still exist indicating that the nation's democratization remains an ongoing process.<sup>26</sup> More importantly, and central to this lecture, is the concept of civilian transition, which not only ensures the continuity of democratic governance but also strengthens democratic processes, particularly institutions, to foster long-term stability and development.

Historians (as agents of change) play a crucial role in civilian transition by analyzing past governance structures, political transitions, and institutional weaknesses. As custodians of national memory, they document and assess the successes and failures of institutions—democratic and non-democratic institutions—offering valuable insights to policymakers. By studying democratic institutions, constitutional reforms, and institutional independence, historians advocate accountability, rule of law, and stronger governance. Beyond government institutions, strengthening NGOs through collaborations is essential for fostering independent research, civic engagement, and policy advocacy. Historians foster

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<sup>25</sup>. This term describes the shift from non-democratic regimes, such as military rule, to a democratic government. For Nigeria, a significant democratic transition occurred in 1999 when the country moved from prolonged military rule to civilian governance. This transition was marked by the establishment of the Fourth Republic and the adoption of a new constitution. The process involved the dissolution of military juntas, the formation of political parties, and the conduct of general elections that led to the inauguration of President Olusegun Obasanjo on May 29, 1999.

<sup>26</sup>. See P. I. Ukase, "Democracy, Democratization and Good Governance in Nigeria: What Role Can the Catholic Church Play?" in F. E. Enegho, J. I. Ebeh and P. A. Idachaba (eds), *Essays in the Humanities and Arts: A Genenkschrift in Honour of Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Egbunu* (Jos: Eiwa Press Nigeria Limited), 2020

political consciousness by advancing civic education, promoting democratic norms, and strengthening institutional integrity, thereby empowering citizens to advocate for transparency and good governance. By drawing lessons from history, historians help anticipate challenges and recommend strategies to fortify democratic, academic, and civic institutions, ensuring a more stable, accountable, and progressive governance system.

Madam Vice Chancellor, despite its relevance, policymakers in Nigeria have continued to devalue the discipline of history. In 1982, as a matter of government policy, the study of history was removed from the primary and junior secondary school curricula. For nearly four decades, Nigerian youths were, either by omission or commission, deprived of the knowledge of history.<sup>27</sup> It took the spirited efforts and struggles of at least four successive leaderships of the Historical Society of Nigeria (2005-2022) to have the subject reintroduced by the federal government into the first nine years of the nation's basic primary and secondary school system.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>. The movement for the return of History to schools commenced under the leadership of Prof. Yakubu Ochefu and was sustained by successive leaderships of the Society (Professors Olayemi Akinwunmi, C.B.N. Ogbogbo, Okpeh O. Okpeh while its eventual flag-off took place under watch of Professor S.O. Aghalino). For more details on the struggle for the reintroduction of History in Nigerian Schools, read C.B.N. Ogbogbo, *In Defence of Tradition...*, 21-32; O. O. Okpeh, *The Historian as a Catalyst...*, 4; S. A. Ajayi, *Who is Not Afraid of History,?* 70-76; A. C. Odoemene, *Settled, Unsettled and Resettled...*, 62; and P.I. Ukase & I. I. Baba, "The Return of History: Interrogating the Challenges of Teaching the Discipline in Nigerian Schools and the Way Forward" in Afaha, P. (ed), *Advocacy for History: A Festschrift in Honour of Professor CBN Ogbogbo* (Abuja: Command Publishers, 2018). Also see text of a speech delivered by Prof. Samuel Aghalino, President of the Historical Society of Nigeria, at the official Flag-Off Ceremony of the return of the teaching of History in schools and the commencement of the training of History teachers at Basic Education levels, which was held at the International conference Centre, Abuja on Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2022.

<sup>28</sup>. The reintroduction of History into the first nine years the country's basic education system was effectuated in 2018 but the official flag off was performed by the immediate past Minister of Education, Alhaji Adamu Adamu. The colourful event which marked the official flag off of the return of the teaching

Regrettably, those children born almost four decades ago are now in their forties and occupying various leadership positions in the public and private sectors. However, they lack the knowledge and understanding of the history of their immediate environment and the history of those they claim to lead. To the government and many parents in Nigeria, history does not matter. The truth is that the present policy inconsistencies and contradictions that the nation is experiencing can largely be attributed to this lack of historical knowledge. J. F. Ade Ajayi was spot-on on this issue:

Perhaps, one reason why there is so much violence, aggression and instability in our day to day life is that we have so little consciousness of time perspective. We act and react as if there is only today, no yesterday, no tomorrow. We seem to care so little about the past... We lack statesmen with any sense of history... The nation suffers which has no sense of history. Its values remain superficial and ephemeral unless imbued with a deep sense of continuity and a perception of success and achievements that transcends acquisition of temporary power or transient wealth. Such a nation cannot achieve a sense of purpose or direction or stability, and without them the future is bleak.<sup>29</sup>

C.B.N Ogbogbo was equally forthcoming in his submission:

I contend that various aspects of our national life are in disarray because we have recklessly abandoned our traditions. Our lives in all ramifications, education, economy, politics, and values—have

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of History in schools and the Commencement of the Training of History Teachers at Basic Education levels was held at the International conference Centre Abuja on Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2022.

J. F. Ade-Ajayi, "History and Society" in C.B.N Ogbogbo and O. O. Okpeh (eds), *Interrogating Contemporary Africa: Dike Memorial Lectures, 1999-2007* (Ibadan: Historical Society of Nigeria), 2008, 64-65

been terribly infected by the virus of disorder. Our glorious past has been jettisoned and recklessly abandoned. The country and its citizens are hurting because we have neglected a most critical tool for nation building. This is in spite the ceaseless call ...about the dire consequences of a society abandoning her past...I contend that the present situation in the country is because we have discarded our sense of the past. As a nation we are like a rudderless ship tossed around by strong waves.<sup>30</sup>

Simon Ajayi reinforces the implications of sidelining the discipline, which was once regarded as the mother of all disciplines:

This has had great implications for the later developments in the country. For instance, the aberration created a generation of Nigerians with little or no knowledge of the country's peoples, history and their inter-group relations...It is this category of Nigerians that have taken up arms against the post-colonial Nigerian state as terrorists, insurgents, bandits and kidnappers, among others while denigrating the country's national values with impunity. The ghost of the past that was not well treated has refused to rest and seems to be hunting the country today.<sup>31</sup>

In my third year at university, specifically in 1996, I was taking a walk around our neighborhood in Makurdi when I met my father conversing with one of his friends, Mr. Philip Daniels (both of whom are now late). My father introduced me to his friend and mentioned that I was studying History at ABU. The man looked at

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<sup>30</sup>. C.B.N. Ogbogbo, *In Defence of Tradition...*22-23

<sup>31</sup> S. A. Ajayi, *Who is Not Afraid of History?*, p.71

me, saluted me albeit dismissively, and questioned why I had traveled hundreds of kilometers from home to study history in faraway Zaria. This interaction reflects the unfortunate ignorance displayed by many educated individuals who you would expect should know better. His ignorance of the discipline and its utility value is in harmony with Anthony Asiwaju's submission that, "despite a well-established tradition of historical scholarship..., the abysmal ignorance still displayed about Nigerian history even by some highly placed Nigerians must necessarily give serious concern to Nigerian historians."<sup>32</sup>

At a thanksgiving mass organized by my family shortly after I earned my PhD, my uncle, Dr. Felix Atume, a professional engineer by training, underscored the utility of history at that occasion. He shared that he only came to fully appreciate the discipline's value when he studied at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) in Kuru, Jos, Plateau State. At NIPSS, every course is anchored in history under the framework of *History for Decision Making*,<sup>33</sup> emphasizing that no sound policy decision can be made without a solid historical foundation. His remarks highlight a common paradox: while people frequently reference historical events in everyday conversations, they are often quick to dismiss the discipline's relevance when it matters most.

In most of the advanced countries, history holds a place of pride and is consistently leveraged for unity and nation-building purposes. In the United States, for instance, politicians regularly use historical references to mobilize, inspire, connect with voters, and frame policy discussions. Political parties and their candidates

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<sup>32</sup>. A. I. Asiwaju, "History and National Awareness in Nigeria" in E. O. Erim and O. E. Uya (eds), *Perspectives and Methods of Studying African History* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers), 1984, 77

<sup>33</sup>. Engr. F. Atume drew my attention to this information after the Thanksgiving Mass which took place at the Catholic Youth Centre Parish along George Akume Way, on Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2008.

frequently reference historical events, figures, and movements to draw parallels with contemporary issues and strengthen their narratives. President Barack Obama often invoked the speeches of past leaders such as John F. Kennedy and Abraham Lincoln, emphasizing hope, unity, equality, justice and the American dream. He framed his candidacy as a continuation of America’s journey toward its ideals of equality and justice, presenting his victory as the realization of this ongoing historical mission.<sup>34</sup> During the 2008 financial crisis, Obama referenced previous economic challenges, such as the Great Depression, to justify his economic recovery plans. Similarly, many other presidents in the U.S. and leaders in other advanced countries have leveraged historical precedents to legitimize their approaches to resolving various social, economic, and political challenges.<sup>35</sup> This effective use of history underscores its importance and demonstrates that, indeed, history does matter.

In Nigeria, the trend, especially among policy makers is often to underscore the relevance of courses in the humanities. The humanities are often dismissed as outdated or impractical and will not lead to “real job.”<sup>36</sup> But this mindset is not just short-sighted, it is dangerous. To this group of policymakers and, sadly, some parents, a developing nation must necessarily shift its focus from disciplines like history to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). In fact, to some, courses like history do not even matter; what matters are the STEM courses. In 2021, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) announced that it would no longer sponsor foreign postgraduate studies and

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<sup>34</sup>. See “Transcripts of President Barack Obama’s Victory Speech” cited in <https://www.npr.org/2008/11/05/96624326/transcript-of-barack-obamas-victory-speech>, accessed on 6/7/2024

<sup>35</sup>. President Barack Obama’s Speech on the Economy” cited in <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/08/us/politics/08text-obama.html>, accessed on 6/7/2024

<sup>36</sup>. See M. Neely, “Why We Must Study the Humanities” cited in <http://www.thepacifican.com/opinion/why-we-must-study-the-humanities>, accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2025.

research in the humanities, emphasizing that it was more inclined to promoting science and technology research for national development.<sup>37</sup> But like Maddie Nelly puts it:

Without the humanities, we risk losing the ability to think critically, empathize deeply, and challenge the system that shape our world. Studying the humanities is not a luxury, it is a necessity that we must prioritize. At the core, the humanities teach us how to understand and interpret the human experience... whether you are studying engineering or geology, the humanities offer invaluable perspectives. By taking a humanities general education course, you are gaining skills that are irreplaceable no matter how advanced technology becomes...ultimately, to dismiss the humanities is to dismiss what makes us human. A society that neglects philosophy forgets how to question, a world without literature loses its ability to imagine. Without history, we repeat our mistakes.<sup>38</sup>

These policymakers fail to realize that in elevating STEM courses and undervaluing disciplines in the humanities such as history, a major development gap would be created. While advancing the need for STEM, policymakers ought to realize that knowledge and knowledge production is, in itself, a system. Systems Theory, for instance, views all complex entities and systems as interconnected and interdependent components working together to achieve common goals. The theory emphasizes the relationships and interactions between the parts of a system rather than focusing on the individual components in isolation.<sup>39</sup> What this implies is that promoting STEM alone cannot propel the development that we

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<sup>37</sup>. *The Historian as a Catalyst...*, 17

<sup>38</sup>. M. Neely, "Why We Must Study the Humanities"...

<sup>39</sup>. For more details read, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, *General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications* (New York: George Braziller), 1968

yearn for as a nation. Rather, nations must emphasize that every component of a system is connected to, and interacts with other components. Changes in one part of the system can affect other parts and the system as a whole negatively. Thus, advancing the course of STEM to the detriment of other courses in the humanities and social sciences will distort or negatively affect the latter, with multiplier implications for development such as we have experienced in Nigeria.

#### **4. Researching the Legislature in a Period of Transition**

Madam Vice Chancellor, although the military had disengaged from politics in 1999, the political transition is still ongoing. After nearly two decades of uninterrupted military rule, it would have been naïve to assume that the transition from military to civilian administration would be a one-time event. As the new civilian administration gradually settled into its constitutional duties and worked to strengthen democratic structures, it also made concerted efforts to subordinate the military which had become seriously yoked with and politicized to civilian leadership.<sup>40</sup> In support of the strengthening of Nigeria's nascent democratic system, several international development agencies (IDAs) entered the country. One such agency was the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which aimed to bolster Nigeria's fledgling legislative institution during this period of transition. The choice to focus on the legislature was due to its status as the weakest link in the policymaking process, having suffered

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<sup>40</sup>. Subordinating the military to civilian administrations, especially in countries where the former has held sway for a long time, has always been problematic. Other nations, prior to Nigeria, that experienced military rule faced similar dilemmas during transitions from military to civilian governance and even from one civilian administration to another. Beyond merely subordinating the military to civilian control, the new administration also faced the challenge of demilitarizing the civilian population, which had become accustomed to the military's command-and-control approach to governance. For more details on some of this concerns, see P. I. Ukase, "Subordinating the Military to Civilian/Legislative Control in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward," *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (SCSR-JSSH)*, Vol 1, No.1, March 2014, 09-24.

institutional underdevelopment and degradation during the long years of military rule.<sup>41</sup>

To aid in strengthening the Nigerian legislature in this transitional period, USAID, along with its partners, including the Mississippi Consortium for International Development (MCID), Development Consultant Network (DCN), and the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER) in Ibadan, piloted a Legislative Strengthening Programme for Nigeria (LSPN) in eight states: Benue, Rivers, Adamawa, Edo, Enugu, Katsina, Lagos and Niger. The programme aimed to recruit vibrant young graduates in the humanities and social sciences, enhance their capacities in legislative practices and procedures, and place them in their respective State Legislative Houses to assist legislators in improving the processes of lawmaking, oversight, and representation.

In Benue State, I was among the six candidates selected and appointed as Legislative Interns/Attaché. The selection process for this internship program was one of the most rigorous and transparent I have ever experienced.<sup>42</sup> The USAID-LSPN exposed us to numerous workshops and conferences both within and outside the country. During our two-year internship at the Benue State House of Assembly,

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<sup>41</sup>. For more details on the institutional weaknesses of the Nigerian Legislature, read P. I. Ukase, "Presidentialism and Executive Recklessness in Post-Military Nigerian Politics: Implications for Inter-Branch Relationship" in W. Bokelmann, O. Akinwumi, U.M. Nwankwo and A.O. Agwule, *African Leadership Challenges and other Issues* (Berlin-Germany: Mediateam IT Educational Publishers), 2012, 50-60 and P.I. Ukase, *Performance Evaluation of the Benue State Legislature, 1999-2007* (Ibadan: Aboki Publishers), 2010; P. I. Ukase, "Performance Evaluation of the Benue State Legislature, 1999-2007 (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers), 2010.

<sup>42</sup>. This interview was conducted and the results were announced on that same day at the venue of the exercise. Some of the representatives of these International Development Agencies (IDAs) included Dr. Yakubu Ochefu (BSU Makurdi), Prof E. C. Ndekwe of the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), Ibadan) and Mr. J. Mayange (Benue State Government), just to mention but a few. Those appointed as Interns at that interview included Patrick I. Ukase, Jerome Andohol, Adole Francis, Doo Jirbo, Alfred Odeh and Bem Mela Faasema.

we were immersed in parliamentary practices, processes, procedures, and administrative duties, and we also served as professional advisers to legislators. During this transitional period, the legislature, as a research institution, required constant research, knowledge generation, and production to enhance legislative work. My background as a young and budding historian provided the impetus for me to excel in these tasks. The training, exposure, and hands-on field experiences I received through the LSPN redefined my career path and set a trajectory for my future academic pursuits. Upon completing the internship in 2002, all the attachés were employed by the Benue State Government (BNSG) and posted to the Benue State House of Assembly to continue impacting the institution based on the knowledge we had acquired during the LSPN.

During my training as an attaché, and as part of my interest in knowledge generation and production, I became deeply interested in exploring the theoretical basis for the frequent conflicts between the executive and the legislature, which had become a recurring issue since the return of democracy in 1999. In 2002, I pursued an M.A. degree in History at Benue State University (BSU). To satisfy my curiosity, I focused my dissertation on Political History, specializing in Legislative History. In attempting to address a fundamental gap in an aspect of Nigeria's political historiography, I interrogated the basis for the persistent conflicts between the executive and legislative branches of government in Benue State in that study.

In 2004, shortly after completing my M.A., I registered for my Ph.D programme. While my M.A. dissertation focused on Benue State,<sup>43</sup> I expanded my focus to the federal legislature for my Ph.D. thesis.<sup>44</sup> The unconventional nature of my Ph.D thesis title initially met with

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<sup>43</sup>. That Dissertation which is titled: "Issues, Dimensions and Perspectives on Executive-Legislative Conflicts in Nigeria: The Benue State Experience, 1992-2003", M.A Thesis, Department of History, Benue State University, Makurdi, 2004.

<sup>44</sup>. For more on this thesis, see P. I. Ukase, "Executive-Legislative Relations, 1914-2007: A Study in An Aspect of Nigerian Political History", PhD Thesis, Department of History, Benue State University, Makurdi, 2007

skepticism from some conservative historians and non-historians alike.<sup>45</sup> This experience highlights the beauty of historical scholarship, which allows us the exceptional opportunity to explore and study everything under the sun, provided it is historicized, using historical methodologies. That beauty lies in its amenability to all branches of knowledge, confirming the saying that, “All knowledge is historical.”

In my thesis and subsequent studies, I employed a historical and multi-disciplinary approach to expose the inherent contradictions in Nigeria’s democratic transition, particularly between the executive and the legislature. I argued that the conflicts between these branches in Nigeria’s Second and Fourth Republics stem from their colonial origins, which deliberately strengthened the executive over the legislature, and were further entrenched by the military’s centralized command structure during its nearly three decades rule. I further argued that the military’s preference for a presidential system, which centralizes power in a single leader, further cemented this imbalance, contrasting with the parliamentary system’s dual leadership and potential for weaker executive authority.<sup>46</sup>

Madam Vice Chancellor, arising from the centrality of this issue in the governance challenge we continue to confront as a people and a nation in recent years, permit me to espouse my thesis and subsequent studies in this area a little bit further. Nigeria’s transition from military to civilian rule on May 29, 1999, marked another significant attempt at establishing democracy in the country after nearly two decades of military dominance. A key aspect of this transition was the adoption of the American-style presidential system, which introduced the

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<sup>45</sup>. My Internal Reader, Dr. (now Prof.) Eugene Aliегда of the Department of Political Science at BSU, Makurdi, shared similar concerns until he completed reading the thesis before he realized the extent of historicization in the research.

<sup>46</sup>. See P. I. Ukase, *A History of Executive-Legislative Relations in Nigeria, 1914-2007* (Ibadan: University Press), 2014; P. I. Ukase, “Presidentialism and Executive Recklessness in Post-Military Nigerian Politics...; and P. Ukase, “A Cat and Mouse Relationship: Interrogating 20 Years of Executive-Legislative Conflicts in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic” in R. Olaniyi and I. Hassan (eds), *Democracy in Two Decades, 1999-2019: Reflections on Nation-Building and Development in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Swift Books), 2022.

principles of separation of powers and checks and balances. It is noteworthy that since the Supreme Military Council (SMC) replaced the parliamentary system with the presidential system in 1979, subsequent military regimes have adhered to this structure.<sup>47</sup> Several factors influenced the military's preference for the presidential model over the parliamentary system, primarily due to the conflicts between the Prime-Minister and the ceremonial Head of State. Additionally, the presidential system's clear lines of authority mirrored the military's command structure and authoritarian logic.<sup>48</sup>

The reintroduction of the presidential system in 1999 sparked discussions on the vital relationship between the legislative and the executive branches, the two elected arms of the three governmental branches in a presidential system. These branches are expected to collaborate in making and executing laws while maintaining checks and balances on each other. However, this interconnectedness and interdependence, especially between the executive and legislature, broke down at the commencement of the Fourth Republic in 1999, almost derailing the democratic process. The presidential system adopted by Nigeria in 1999 which was predicated on the theory of *Separation of Powers*, aims to prevent the over-concentration of state power in the hands of a few individuals. This theory calls for the distribution and sharing of functions among the three branches of government.<sup>49</sup> Despite this, the Fourth Republic has experienced

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<sup>47.</sup> The Constituent Assembly, Constitution Drafting Committee, and the Supreme Military Council (SMC) during Ibrahim Babangida's administration (1985-1993) all adopted the presidential system of government, which the country had operated during the Second Republic. Similarly, General Abacha's transition program in 1997-1998 sought to reintroduce a modified presidential system, proposing the creation of a president's position alongside five vice presidents, each representing one of the six newly established geopolitical zones of the country.

<sup>48.</sup> S. Adejumobi, "The Relevance of the Presidential System of Government to Nigeria's Quest for Democracy" in *The Constitution: A Journal of Constitutional Development*, Vol.3, No.2, December, 2002. Also see P.I. Ukase, "The Role of the Military in Nigeria's Democratization Process in the Fourth Republic," *Benue Valley Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 7, No. 2.

<sup>49.</sup> For more elaborate details on the theory of separation of powers, read P. I. Ukase, *A History of Executive-Legislative Relations in Nigeria, 1914-2007...*,

continuous struggle for power between the legislative and executive branches at the federal, state, and local government levels, threatening the stability of Nigeria’s democratic institutions and governance. I have argued elsewhere:

...democratic stability is predicated on the establishment and existence of strong institutions—the executive, legislature and judiciary, police, press, anti-graft institutions and so forth—to drive the process. The strength or otherwise of any democratic institution system is, therefore, a function of the extent to which actors are able to internalize democratic etiquettes and also foster political institutionalization. In this connection, political institutionalization can only become efficient and guaranteed when democratic regimes are sustained.<sup>50</sup>

In my research, I have consistently pontificated that, Africa and Nigeria in particular, continue to face challenges in strengthening democratic structures and institutions. One of the major challenges in this regard is that, the legislature, a critical arm of government restored in 1999, has continued to struggle with institutionalization, primarily due to interference from the executive branch. This has led to incessant conflicts between the executive and legislative branches at various levels of government. My research illustrates these conflicts,

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16-17; F.O.N. Roberts, “The Presidential System, Separation of Powers and the Stability of the Fourth Republic” in M. Jibo and A. Simbine (eds), *Contemporary Issues in Nigeria Politics* (Ibadan: Jodad Publishers), 2003, 124; and G. Kusamotu, *Nigerian Federalism and separation of Powers* (Ibadan: Sulek-Temik Publishing Company), 2001, P. 8.

<sup>50</sup>. See P.I. Ukase, “The Contest for Governance Space in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic: Perspectives on Executive-Legislative Relations, 1999-2019” in M. Omilisi and O. Olugbemi-Gabriel (eds), *Two Decades of Democratic Experiment: Perspectives on Institutions of Democracy in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Prime Publishers and Educational Services), 2021, 381

highlighting the executive's usurpation of legislative powers during colonial and military rule.

In a constitutional democracy, government institutions must freely exercise their statutory constitutional powers. Nigeria's presidential system, adopted in the Second and Fourth Republics, delineates powers among branches to ensure effective governance and institutional strength. However, the Nigerian legislature has historically been weakened by colonial and military subjugation.<sup>51</sup> From 1966 to 1999, military rulers centralized power and ignored the rule of law, promulgating 291 decrees with ouster clauses.<sup>52</sup> This legacy of centralized authority influenced subsequent civilian administrations, leading to power struggles and executive overreach. This is another challenge. The power contest in the Fourth Republic largely stems from colonial efforts to prevent a viable legislature and the authoritarian nature of military rule, creating an executive eager to dominate and a legislature striving for independence.

One hallmark of any democracy is the extent to which government institutions can freely exercise their statutory constitutional powers. Under Nigeria's presidential system adopted in the Second and Fourth Republics, each branch of government has separate, clearly defined powers, ensuring effective functioning and strengthening institutions. However, the legislature has historically been emasculated, facing numerous challenges. Nigeria's legislative history is marked by colonial subjugation, where legislative councils from 1862 to 1960 served primarily to further British interests and had limited powers.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>.See P. I. Ukase, "The Nigerian Legislature in Historical Perspective, 1960-2010: Challenges and Prospects" in O. Akinwumi, M. M. Adamu and P.I. Ukase (eds), *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation-Building* (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press; Published for the Historical Society of Nigeria), 2012; W. Wight, *British Colonial Administrations* (London: Oxford University Press), 1952, 17-18 and R. Uwechue, (ed) *Africa Today* (London), 1999, 1457

<sup>52</sup>. P. I. Ukase, "The Nigerian Legislature in Historical Perspective, 1960-2010..."

<sup>53</sup>.G. O. Olusanya, "Constitutional Developments in Nigeria, 1861-1960" in O. Ikimi (ed), *Groundwork of Nigerian History* (Ibadan: Heinemann), 1988, 15; P. I. Ukase, "The Nigerian Legislature in Historical Perspective, 1960-2010: Challenges and Prospects" in O. Akinwumi, M. M. Adamu and P. I. Ukase (eds), *Nigeria*

This subordination continued during military rule, where the Supreme Military Council (SMC) usurped legislative powers, ruling by decree and weakening the legislative institution.<sup>54</sup>

This military's legacy of centralized authority and impunity influenced subsequent civilian administrations, causing power struggles between the executive and the legislative branches. Successive civilian presidents have often overstepped constitutional boundaries, exhibiting what Abdullahi Mahdi calls "executive recklessness."<sup>55</sup> The Fourth Republic's contest for power stems from two historical factors: the colonial administration's prevention of a viable legislature and the military's authoritarianism. This excessive concentration of power has created a structural superior-inferior relationship between the executive and the legislature. Consequently, the executive is eager to dominate the other branches, while the legislature often reactively asserts its independence in the new democratic era. The conflict between the executive and the legislature—at the state and federal levels—in the fourth Republic has manifested in at least five ways:

*i. Inter and Intra Party Conflicts and Contradictions*

I have argued that the political parties that emerged in the First and Second Republics, and during Nigeria's return to democracy consisted of individuals with differing ideological persuasions, leading to a lack of internal cohesion.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, these parties became platforms

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at 50: *The Challenges of Nation-Building* (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press; Published for the Historical Society of Nigeria), 2012; P. I. Ukase and P. Toryue, "Public Perception of the Benue State Legislature, 1999-2015: What Role Can Public Relations Play" in *Public Relations Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 1&2, 2020, 21-23; and "W. Wight, *British Colonial Administrations* (London: Oxford University Press), 1952, 17-18

<sup>54.</sup> R. Uwechue, (ed) *Africa Today* (London), 1999, 1457

<sup>55.</sup> A. Mahdi, "We Can Actualize Our Dreams as a Nation," 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Public Lecture of the Ahmadu Bello University Alumni Association, Rivers State Branch, held on the 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2004, 21

<sup>56.</sup> P. Ukase, "A Cat and Mouse Relationship ...," 183-185 and P. I. Ukase, "Political Parties and the Sustenance of Democracy in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic," *Journal of Contemporary Research and Issues*, 1, 2, 2006, 184-196.

for power and personal gain rather than representing collective interests. This issue was evident in the early Fourth Republic parties: All Peoples Party (APP), People's Democratic Party (PDP), and Alliance for Democracy (AD). These parties faced foundational weaknesses due to the convergence of politicians with conflicting ideologies, which hampered the effective operationalization of Nigeria's presidential system. For instance, the PDP was plagued by internal crises due to its lack of unified vision.<sup>57</sup> The struggle for supremacy between the executive and the legislative branches began even before the Fourth Republic's inauguration, destabilizing the National Assembly from 1999 to 2015. Similarly, the All Progressive Congress (APC) was formed in 2013 by merging several opposition parties and some dissident defectors from the PDP. While the APC succeeded in unseating the PDP in 2015, it faced significant intra-party conflicts over leadership positions, affecting its stability and the executive-legislature relationship, especially from 2015 to 2019.<sup>58</sup> Between 2015 to 2023, the three major political parties —PDP, APC and Labour Party (LP) and the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)— have all been enmeshed in endemic squabbles that have continued to threaten their unity and survival.

ii. *Election of Leaderships of the Legislature*

Despite dominating the National Assembly (NASS) in 1999, the PDP failed to foster a strong relationship between the executive and the legislative branches. The executive branch sought to leverage control over the legislature by manipulating internal politics and imposing pliant leadership, as seen with Senator Evans Enwerem's election over Senator Chuba Okadigbo, despite the latter being the preferred choice

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<sup>57.</sup> P. I. Ukase, "Executive-Legislative- Relations in Nigeria, 1999-2003," 180-189

<sup>58.</sup> See P. I. Ukase, "Executive-Legislative- Relations in Nigeria, 1999-2003" in P. I. Ukase, P. Afaha, T. A. Larab, *Studies on the Nigerian Legislature, 1999-2011* (Ibadan: Vast Publishers), 2013 and P. I. Ukase, "The Contest for Governance Space in Nigeria's Fourth Republic..." 389-391

of many PDP senators.<sup>59</sup> These actions created deep-seated frictions, with multiple Senate Presidents from 1999 to 2007 and significant conflicts in the House of Representatives, highlighting the executive's influence and the resultant instability.<sup>60</sup>

From 2007 to 2015, the Senate saw more stability under President David Mark, attributed to President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's leadership style, which respected the separation of powers.<sup>61</sup> However, efforts by the executive to control the House of Representatives faced resistance, exemplified by Aminu Tambuwal's emergence as Speaker in 2011 against the executive's preferred candidate. The 2015 elections for NASS leadership further strained executive-legislative relations when Senator Bukola Saraki and Yakubu Dogara secured leadership positions in the Senate and House of Representatives respectively with opposition support, defying their party's directives.<sup>62</sup> These events underscored leadership question in the country,<sup>63</sup> particularly the executive's attempts to dominate the legislature, revealing internal party contradictions and the extent to which it impacted governance in Nigeria over the past two decades.

The situation is even more troubling at the state level, where governors—often regarded as the de facto leaders—have run not only the state but also the legislature as their personal fiefdoms. Speakers

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<sup>59</sup>. P. I. Ukase, "The Role of the Media in the Management of Conflicts Between the Executive and the Legislature in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic," *African Journal of Economy and Society*, Vol. 7., No. 1, 2006, 231-232S; S. Adejumobi, "The Relevance of the Presidential System....," 50 and J. I. Elaigwu, "Democratic Governance and Political Stability in Nigeria," Benue State University Convocation Lecture, 2004

<sup>60</sup>. S. M. Dansadau, "Why Executive-Legislative Relations is Frosty," *National Concord*, Thursday, June 22, 2000, 11

<sup>61</sup>. P. I. Ukase, "The Contest for Governance Space in Nigeria's Fourth Republic....," 393

<sup>62</sup>. See *Vanguard*, July 9, 2015

<sup>63</sup>. Okpoh O. Okpoh, Jr. and Patrick I. Ukase, "The Leadership and Followership Conundrum in the Political History of Nigeria Since 1960", in Julius O. Adekunle and Appolus O. Nwauwa (eds.), *Governance and Leadership in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges* (Glassboro, NJ: Goldline and Jacobs Publishing, 2016

and other leaders of state legislatures are frequently “selected or appointed” at the discretion of governors and are expected to conform entirely to the dictates of the executive. Those who have dared to assert independence have often been impeached on trumped-up charges.<sup>64</sup> It has become increasingly difficult to keep track of the number of speakers removed in the past 25 years of Nigeria’s democratic experience, as few—if any—state legislatures have escaped executive interference. Consequently, federal and state legislatures have failed to serve as the essential pillars of good governance and sustainable development, remaining largely at the beck and call of the executive branch.

iii. *The Management of Public Finance*

In the past two decades of Nigeria's democracy, one of the fiercest battlegrounds between the executive and legislative branches has been over public finance management, particularly the budget process. Presidents, from Obasanjo to Yar'Adua, Jonathan to Buhari, have struggled to define their respective roles in budget making, leading to recurrent conflicts and delays in budget passage and implementation. Despite these issues, neither branch has sought Supreme Court interpretation to definitively settle these disputes.<sup>65</sup> The disagreements had profound implications, affecting budget implementation and the overall economy. The National Assembly (NASS) and state legislatures have consistently contested the executive's exclusive powers in budget determination, asserting its right to modify budget proposals. This has led to prolonged standoffs and accusations of budget padding, as seen in various administrations, including notable clashes during the tenures of Obasanjo, Yar'Adua, Jonathan, and

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<sup>64.</sup> For more details, read P. I. Ukase, “Performance Appraisal of Margaret Icheen’s Leadership of the Benue State Legislature, 1999-2002”, *VUNA Journal of Gender Studies*, 1, 1, 2013.

<sup>65.</sup> A. O. Ogunyemi, “Historicizing and Interrogating the Powers of the National Assembly Over Nigeria’s Budgetary Processes, 1999-2011” in P. I. Ukase, P. Afaha, and A. L. Tangshak (eds), *Studies on the Nigerian Legislature, 1999-2011* (Ibadan: Vast Publishers), 2013, 241

Buhari.<sup>66</sup> These conflicts underscore broader challenges in governance and the need for clearer delineation of powers as outlined in Section 4 and 81 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution as amended.

iv. *Lawmaking and Public Policy*

In the last two decades of Nigeria's democracy, a significant area of conflict has been the question of who holds the initiative in law-making and policy-making within the presidential system. This issue created persistent frictions between the executive and legislative arms of government at the outset of the new democracy in 1999. Both branches have sought to assert their authority, leading to numerous clashes with grave consequences for the governance process. Notably, from 1999 to 2007, these conflicts included the delay in the passage of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Bill, which frustrated President Obasanjo and led to mutual accusations of indolence and undue pressure.<sup>67</sup> Another major conflict was the manipulation of the Electoral Act in 2001, where the NASS accused the president of amending the Act without their consent, aiming to disadvantage new political parties in the 2003 elections.<sup>68</sup> This alleged manipulation was partly associated with the politics of re-election. This Act was later nullified by the Supreme Court. Additionally, clashes over constitutional amendments have persisted, with Presidents Jonathan and Buhari withholding assent to bills that they

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<sup>66.</sup> A. O. Ogunyemi, "Historicizing and Interrogating the Powers of the National Assembly..." 241-242; Y. Akinseye-George, "Separation of Powers: Federal/State Relations" in K. Akinkugbe, et'al (eds), Olusegun Obasanjo, *The Presidential Legacy, 1999-2007* (Ibadan: Bookcraft), 2013 and P. I. Ukase, "The budget Cycle, Processes and Procedures: The Constitutional Role of the Legislature Revisited" in Y. A. Ochefu, P. I. Ukase, P. T. Vande and N. Doki (eds), *Odysseys of an Academic, Administrator and Politician: Essays in Honour of Professor D. I. Ker @ 70* (Makurdi: GreatNex Publishers), 2021

<sup>67.</sup> See P. I. Ukase, *A History of Executive-Legislative Relations in Nigeria, 1914-2007...*, 197-205

<sup>68.</sup> Adejumobi, "The Relevance of the Presidential System..." 51

felt usurped executive powers or targeted their administrations, leading to further legislative tensions.<sup>69</sup>

Equally concerning is the state legislatures' inability to initiate and drive development-oriented policies. Research shows that most bills passed at the state level originate from the executive, reflecting what many critics referred to as lackluster and docile legislatures, reduced to merely endorsing executive proposals. In Benue State for instance, the 4th Legislature passed only five Private Member Bills (PMBs) out of 28 total bills, while the 6th Legislature passed 26 bills—all executive-sponsored.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, in Kogi State, only 4 of 62 bills (7%) passed between 1999 and 2015 were PMBs.<sup>71</sup> This trend is consistent across most states, highlighting the legislature's weak capacity and executive dominance. Despite considerable allocations for research and legislative drafting, most laws passed are limited to constitutionally required functions such as budget approval and establishing MDAs, often increasing recurrent expenditure. The lack of institutional support, technical expertise, and research capacity continues to hinder the development of robust, independent legislative agendas critical for sustainable development at the state level.

iv. *The Politics of Impeachment threats on the Executive by the Legislature*

The greatest challenge faced by the legislature in Nigeria's Fourth Republic has been its survival amidst executive interference, as it attempts to assert its independence. This conflict has led to serious confrontations, deadlocks, and governance failures, particularly evident during the tenures of Senate President Chuba Okadigbo and Speaker Na'abba, who opposed President Obasanjo's perceived

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<sup>69.</sup> *The Punch*, September 4, 2018 cited in <https://punchng.com/again-buhari-refuses-to-sign-electoral-bill> accessed on October 9, 2018

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<sup>71.</sup> A. Murana, A. Ambali, and A. R. Bakare, "Legislative Turnover and Lawmaking Effectiveness in Kogi State, 1999-2015" *IJBSS*, Vol 19, No. 1, 2017

authoritarianism.<sup>72</sup> The most notable clashes included the failed impeachment attempt against President Obasanjo in 2000, accusations of economic mismanagement, and non-implementation of the Appropriation Act by the House of Representatives in 2002.<sup>73</sup> In 2005, President Obasanjo's national broadcast accused Senate President Adolphus Wabara and other legislators of a N55 million bribery scandal, which led to significant backlash and threats of impeachment against President Obasanjo.<sup>74</sup> Subsequent presidents, including Jonathan and Buhari, also faced impeachment threats over issues like non-assent to bills and perceived interference in legislative affairs, underscoring the persistent tension between Nigeria's executive and legislative branches.<sup>75</sup>

While there have been a few impeachment attempts at the federal level, efforts to remove governors at the state level were often instigated by the federal government, particularly during President Obasanjo's administration. Between 1999 and 2007, the presidency allegedly influenced several state legislatures to impeach their governors. Popular examples of governors who faced such threats include Joshua Dariye (Plateau), Diepreye Alamieyeseigha (Bayelsa), Peter Obi (Anambra), Ayodele Fayose (Ekiti), and Rashidi Ladoja (Oyo). At the state level, deputy governors have been especially vulnerable, frequently removed at the behest of governors over minor disagreements. These impeachments were often marked by intimidation and coercion, violating the due process outlined in Section 188 of the 1999 Constitution. Although some ousted governors later reclaimed their mandates through the courts, such unconstitutional practices as has been rightly noted, "had the propensity

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<sup>72</sup>. For more details on the threats of impeachment, see P.I. Ukase, "The Contest for Governance Space in Nigeria's Fourth Republic..." 404-409

<sup>73</sup>. P. Ukase, "A Cat and Mouse Relationship ...," 179-197 and G. Mbah, "Enemies of Democracy," *Insider Weekly*, September 2, 2002, 17

<sup>74</sup>. P. I. Ukase, "Presidentialism and Executive Recklessness in Post-Military Nigerian Politics...," 58-59; P. I. Ukase, *A History of Executive-Legislative Relations in Nigeria, 1914-2007...*, 255 and S. Igboanugo, "Wabara's Nude Dance of Courage, in *Daily Independent*, Wednesday, March 28, 2005, 16

<sup>75</sup>. A. A. Akinsanya, P. Rosenje and S. Osunkoya, "Executive-Legislative Relations May 2012-May 2013" in J. A. A. Ayoade, A. A. Akinsanya, and O.J.B. Ojo (eds), *The Jonathan Presidency: The Sophomore Year* (Ibadan: John Archers), 2014.

of weakening the fabric of executive institution, the hallmark of constitutional democracy.”<sup>76</sup>

Madam Vice chancellor, I submitted in my thesis and subsequent studies that, the struggle for power has often resulted in executive lawlessness and a reactive legislature, lacking robust engagement, the substance of which are collaboration, persuasion, lobbying, and consultation. To foster a more harmonious relationship, it is imperative to institutionalize regular and structured consultations and thorough interfacing between both arms of government to enhance the establishment of a legislative framework for clearly delineating the powers and responsibilities of executive and legislative arms of government. I have also consistently stressed the need to encourage a culture of mutual respect and constitutional adherence to mitigate confrontations and ensure a more stable and effective governance system.<sup>77</sup>

Madam Vice Chancellor, my thesis affirms that history truly matters by generating critical knowledge to inform and guide the nation’s ongoing democratic transition. As Onwuka Njoku aptly observed, “a historian is a prophet looking backwards.”<sup>78</sup> By looking backwards, I have been able to shed light on our current democratic challenges and offer insights for the future. I am also pleased to report that the depth and relevance of my thesis earned it the distinction of being adjudged the best in the Humanities within the Nigerian University System for 2008 by the National Universities Commission (NUC).<sup>79</sup> The award followed the review of over 100 doctoral theses for that year by the NUC. This

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76. K. Awotokun, “Nigeria’s Democracy and the Crisis of Leadership: Legislative Vs Executive” in Bokelmann, W, Akinwumi, O, Nwankwo, U. M and Agwuele, A.O (eds), *African Leadership Challenges and Other Issues* (Berlin-Germany: Mediateam IT Educational Publications), 2012

77. P. I. Ukase, “The Legislature, Good Governance and Democratic Sustenance in Benue State” in *African Journal of Economy and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 1&2, 2010, 96-96

78. O. N. Njoku, “Towards Building Nigeria into a Nation: Retrospection on a Broken Covenant,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria (JHSN)*, Vol. 28, 2019, 9

79. See National Universities Commission (NUC): The Nigerian Doctoral Theses Award Scheme (NUDTAS), 2006 and 2007 Awards announced in *The Nation*, Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2010, B 5

recognition was conferred at an elaborate ceremony held at Ladoke Akintola University, Ogbomosho, in 2010. The thesis has since been published by University Press Ibadan through a collaborative effort between the NUC and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). I have published over fifty papers on that subject and other aspects of the legislature, and over the past two decades, I have also delivered several thought-provoking lectures on the same theme.

## **5. My Foray into the Knowledge Industry**

Madam Vice-Chancellor, as I mentioned earlier, I earned my MA and PhD in 2004 and 2008, respectively. Before transitioning into the academia, I worked in the Benue State Legislature—first as an intern from 2000 to 2002 and later as a civil servant from 2002 to 2010. However, the monotony of civil service soon became evident to me. Each successive legislature—the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th Assemblies—engaged in the same repetitive processes while expecting different results, yet the state remained underdeveloped.

The Benue State Legislature, which ought to have been a catalyst for development through robust democratic engagements, instead became an appendage of the executive—much like most state legislatures across the country. Rather than strengthening democracy and fostering sustainable development, the legislature was mired in corruption during oversight functions, superficial displays of loyalty, and servile deference to successive governors. These practices became the *raison d'être* of its existence, undermining its core function as a check on executive excesses. The erudite historian, Yakubu Ochefu encapsulates the extent of Benue State's underdevelopment in his analysis:

If an economic audit of the Benue political leaders from Aper Aku to Moses Adasu, George Akume, Gabriel Suswam, and Samuel Ortom, and the elite that drove their development agenda is performed, it is easy to see where our losses have come from... Between June 1999 and 2019, over 1.5 trillion naira had 'visited' and 'passed' through Benue. That is an average of 75 billion naira every year. Does that state look like a place that

over 1.5 trillion naira has passed through? Absolutely not.<sup>80</sup>

He concludes:

If you attempt to do a panoramic balance sheet analysis of what came in and where it went to, go to Judges' Quarters in Makurdi, GRA's in Otukpo, Gboko, and Katsina-Ala, and take stock of the quantum of private infrastructural development between 1999 and 2019. Compare it to the outlying communities, and a clear picture of... a macro parasitic and opportunistic elite will emerge. That is why it is difficult to understand how a hardworking people like those of Benue can be so miserable.<sup>81</sup>

Ochefu's assessment vividly captures the state of governance in Benue, ostensibly under the oversight of the legislature. Unfortunately, most legislators became part of the very parasitic elite he describes, complicit in the systemic failures that deepened the misery of the people. As I have argued elsewhere, the legislature's failure to serve as a watchdog and hold the executive accountable amounted to an abdication of its fundamental responsibilities. Having worked in that legislature, I recognize that it cannot be absolved of blame for the emasculation and underdevelopment of Benue State.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>. Y. A. Ochefu, *A Homo-Economicus and a Homo-Digitalis: A Curmudgeon Cliometrician's Cogitations on Economic History, Genetics, Development and Institutional Legacies*, Benue State University, Makurdi Inaugural Lecture, 2019, 29

<sup>81</sup>. *A Homo-Economicus and a Homo-Digitalis...* 30

<sup>82</sup>. P. I. Ukase, *Performance Evaluation of the Benue State Legislature, 1999-2007* (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers), 2010, 75; P. I. Ukase and P. Toryue, "Public Perception of the Benue State Legislature, 1999-2015: What Role Can Public Relations Play?" *Public Relations Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 1 & 2, 2020 and P. I. Ukase, "The Legislature, Good governance and Democratic Sustenance in Benue State, 1999-2007," *African Journal of Economy and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 1 & 2, 2010, 92

Disillusioned by the lack of progress in my workplace—a cycle of motion without movement—I began to seek a more fulfilling path. After thoughtful consultation with my better half, I made the decision to leave the Civil Service and transition into the university system, where I believed I could make a more meaningful impact. This decision was not taken lightly. As a PhD holder, I recognized that the Civil Service provided limited opportunities for intellectual growth and professional advancement. More importantly, I was drawn to the university system because it promised an environment where I would not merely be *seen*—as was often the case in the bureaucratic structures of the Civil Service—but *heard*.<sup>83</sup> The university, I believed, would give me the platform to articulate ideas, engage in critical debates, and contribute meaningfully to knowledge production. Prior to taking this decision, and while serving as a staff of the legislature, I had already begun lecturing and supervising undergraduate and postgraduate students on a part-time basis. My academic training had instilled in me the responsibility to pontificate and propagate ideas rather than suppress them. A career in academia aligned with my intellectual curiosity and my desire to contribute through constant research, rigorous inquiry, and community development. The university, as a hub of intellectual engagement and innovation, seemed to offer the ideal environment for me to thrive—one where I could fulfill my potential as a scholar, mentor, and contributor to national discourse. I therefore exited the civil service and joined the Veritas University of Nigeria (VUNA) in 2010/2011 academic session, marking the commencement of a new career after having served the public service for more than nine years.

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<sup>83</sup>. The late Professor David Kerr, Professor Olayemi Akinwumi, and Professor Okpeh O. Okpeh consistently shared this perspective, emphasizing the need for me to leave the Civil Service and transition into academia—a field they believed offered greater promise, opportunities for personal growth, and a more meaningful platform for contributing to nation-building.

## **6. Institutional Contributions to VUNA and PAAU**

In this section, I have chosen to highlight three key areas where I believe I have made significant contributions as a scholar for nearly two decades. These include my activities and engagements within the university community, my key contributions to legislative and collaborative institutions, and my service to my professional association, my discipline, and other related institutions since I joined the university system.

### *i. Institutional Contributions at the PAAU*

Madam Vice-Chancellor, since joining the university system, I have had the privilege of working under at least five Vice-Chancellors: Professors David Ker and Mike Kwanashie at Veritas University of Nigeria, Abuja (VUNA), and Professors Hassan Isah, M. S. Abdulkadir, and Marietu Tenuche at Kogi State University (KSU), now Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba (PAAU). Under these distinguished scholars and several other university administrators, I have been actively involved in the development of my faculty, department, and the university as a whole.

My first major administrative appointment was in 2011 when I was assigned to serve as the Examination Officer in the Department of History and International Relations at VUNA. In this role, I spearheaded a comprehensive overhaul of the department's results management system, leveraging ICT to streamline processes and enhance service delivery. That same year, I was elected to represent the College of Management, Social Sciences, Arts, and Theology (CMSSAT) at the university's Senate. In 2012, I was elected Deputy Dean of CMSSAT, working closely with the Dean, Professor John Anyam, and the university management to uphold the highest academic standards. Our collective efforts culminated in a 100% accreditation score for all courses in the college during the NUC

accreditation exercise that year.<sup>84</sup> In recognition of my contributions, I was appointed Director of the General Studies Programme by Vice-Chancellor Professor Kwanashie, where I worked diligently to realign the university's General Studies courses with NUC requirements. Additionally, I served as the College Representative to the newly established School of Postgraduate Studies, where I played a pivotal role in laying the groundwork for the commencement of postgraduate programmes in the institution.

Beyond these key positions, I also served in several other strategic capacities at VUNA. As Chairman of the College Business Committee (CBC), I played a crucial role in advancing the academic and administrative priorities of the college. I was also the College Representative on the University Website Committee, where I contributed to enhancing the institution's digital presence. Additionally, I served as a Member and Secretary of the Curriculum Review Committee for CMSSAT, helping to refine and improve the academic programmes within the college. One of my most notable contributions was initiating and pioneering the first departmental journal, *VUNA Journal of History and International Relations*, in 2012, serving as its founding Editor-in-Chief. I am gratified that this legacy has been sustained, with several volumes published since my departure. Through these roles, I actively contributed to institutional growth, academic excellence, and the strengthening of administrative structures that continue to shape the university's trajectory.

I assumed work at PAAU in 2013 under the headship of Prof. O. N. Njoku and was appointed to coordinate undergraduate projects in the department. Under my watch, we overhauled our project topics and supervision template, making the process more transparent and thematically structured. In 2017, I was appointed as the Departmental Postgraduate (PG) Coordinator shortly after the Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU) imbroglio at PAAU. The backlog of students who had yet to complete their programmes was massive, to

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<sup>84</sup>. This was VUNA's first accreditation after its establishment by the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria (CBN) in 2007/2008 Academic session

say the least. Under the headship of Dr. (now Professor) Abiye Ichaba, we developed a solid roadmap to ensure that these students, particularly those who were active in the programme, completed their internal processes and were ready for their *viva voce*. Despite the significant challenges facing the department at the time, we successfully cleared the backlog of postgraduate students while sustaining the programme.

In 2019, the then Dean of the Faculty, Prof. William Onogu, appointed me as Member/Secretary for the 2nd Faculty of Arts National Conference. I later assumed the role of Chairperson of the conference following the election of Prof. Felix Enegho—who was initially the Chairperson—as Dean of the Faculty. Notably, close to twenty years after the faculty’s establishment, this conference had only been held once, a clear indication that the faculty had yet to entrench a solid academic culture. The absence of departmental and faculty-level conferences during this period had far-reaching implications for a fledgling university. Institutional visibility and ranking, which universities actively seek, are collective functions of faculties and departments driven by the quality and frequency of academic engagements.<sup>85</sup> The absence of both individual and, more importantly, institutional visibility—exemplified by the lack of conferences—was a major shortcoming for the faculty. Under my leadership, we successfully organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> Faculty of Arts and Humanities Conference (FAH) in 2019, drawing scholars from various parts of the country. The conference was themed: *20 Years of Democracy in Nigeria: Perspectives from the Humanities*. In 2022, I was reappointed as Chairman of the FAH Conference. The conference, themed: *The Humanities, Diversity, and Nation Building in Nigeria*, was held in April 2023. Notably, the conference proceedings were published prior to the event, marking a significant milestone in our conference's planning and execution. This proactive approach not only enhanced

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<sup>85</sup>. For more details on this subject, see P. I. Ukase, “Enhancing Global Visibility and Fundraising Strategies for Nigerian Universities, Paper delivered at a workshop organised by the Committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (CVCNU), held at CVCNU Headquarters, Abuja, on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2025

the dissemination of research findings but also contributed to the conference's resounding success.<sup>86</sup> Through these initiatives, I contributed to advancing the aspirations of our university, aligning with the primary goals and objectives set by its founders.

In 2020, I was appointed Head of Department by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Marietu Tenuche. This was a particularly challenging period, as the department was due for accreditation within a few months. Without hesitation, we hit the ground running. We developed a two-year (2020–2022) strategic work plan and convened a departmental board meeting, with the Dean, Prof. Felix Enegho, in attendance. Members of the Board made their inputs, after which the document was formally adopted as the department's official work plan. The plan was then submitted to the Vice-Chancellor for approval, and she commended the initiative, granting us permission to proceed with implementation. To be specific, she stated *inter alia*: “The strategic plan is well thought out. The department should think through ways and means to achieving targets. Concerted efforts should be made to generate funds internally”<sup>87</sup> The work plan retrospectively outlined the department's situation at the time, highlighting key challenges such as poor staff work ethics, weak supervision of undergraduate projects, inadequate documentation and record-keeping, delays in result compilation, and the absence of a departmental journal, among others.<sup>88</sup> The plan not only identified these gaps but also provided a roadmap with specific timelines for bridging them. We outlined 14 core objectives and three additional sundry goals. Following my reappointment as Head of Department in April 2022, the plan was reviewed. By the end of my tenure in March 2024, a benchmarking assessment showed that we had achieved 80% implementation. The philosophy underpinning this plan was guided by my training as a

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<sup>86</sup> . The Faculty of Arts and Humanities Conference did not hold in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely impacted global activities.

<sup>87</sup> . See the minutes conveying the Vice Chancellor's approval dated 29<sup>st</sup> May, 2020

<sup>88</sup> . For more details, see P. I. Ukase, *Kogi State University, Anyigba: Department of History and International Studies Strategic Work Plan (2020–2022)*, presented on April 20, 2020.

historian and the wisdom imparted by the *Old Rabbits*<sup>89</sup> in the profession who have often strongly asserted that “You can only know where you are going to when you understand where you are coming from.”<sup>90</sup>

One of our most notable accomplishments was securing full accreditation for the department, achieving a total performance score of 93.6%, broken down as follows: 96.9% in academic matters, 88.6% in staffing, 100% in physical facilities, 100% in library resources, 66.7% in funding (our lowest score), 83.3% in research and collaboration, and 75% in tracer and employers’ rating.<sup>91</sup> I am deeply grateful for the opportunity provided by the Vice-Chancellor at this critical juncture to offer both academic and administrative leadership—two essential components for securing full accreditation. To achieve these results, and in line with our strategic work plan, we implemented the following key reforms. First, we improved the administration and processing of results, positioning the department among the top three in the university in terms of prompt result submission to the University Senate. This achievement earned us commendation during the Senate meeting in October 2021. The Vice-Chancellor, in recognition of our efforts, gifted the department a new laptop during the November 2021 Senate meeting.<sup>92</sup> Second, to

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<sup>89</sup>. The *Old Rabbits* are senior colleagues in the Profession who have had long years in teaching, researching community service and mentorship, and who have served the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) in various capacities.

<sup>90</sup>. Upon receiving the news of my appointment as Head of Department, Prof. Yakubu Ochefu called to congratulate me and advised me to develop a work plan to guide my tenure. He also provided valuable input when I shared my draft with him. In a recent study, Prof. Ochefu reinforced his arguments on the need to develop a strategic document to guide one’s policy as the head of a research institution. For more details, read Y. A. Ochefu, *Catalysing Academic Centres for Community Engagement, and Sustainable Development* (Graffiti Communications), 2025

<sup>91</sup>. See *National Universities Commission: Summary Report on the Accreditation of Undergraduate Academic Programs in Nigerian Universities – Kogi State University, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Department of History and International Studies*, 2021.

<sup>92</sup>. See Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba: *Minutes of the 120<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of Senate Held on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2021*, 13, and *Minutes of*

promote research and scholarship, we secured approval to launch the *Anyigba Journal of History and International Studies (AJOHIS)*, which I sustained throughout my tenure as the Editor-in-Chief. The journal has gained high subscription rates and upholds the highest standards of peer review and academic production. Third, recognizing the need to foster a strong reading culture among students, we established a departmental library. To stock the library, we solicited resource materials from colleagues and scholars across the country, many of whom responded generously. We received nearly 200 volumes of books, supplemented by over 250 online resource materials donated by various benefactors.<sup>93</sup> This efforts surely explain why the NUC accreditation team awarded us a 100% score in library resources.

In 2023, under my leadership as Head of Department, we actively contributed to the development and implementation of the new NUC Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS), which replaced the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS). This reform marked a strategic shift toward aligning university education with the realities of the 21st-century digital and knowledge-driven society. The CCMAS framework allocates 70 percent to nationally prescribed content and 30 percent to institution-specific content, allowing universities to tailor part of the curriculum to address local challenges and the peculiarities of their immediate environments.<sup>94</sup> In line with this vision, we introduced innovative courses and teaching approaches in History and International Studies that emphasize the use of technology in teaching and learning, ensuring our graduates are not only academically grounded but also

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*the 121<sup>st</sup> Regular Meeting of Senate Held on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2021*

<sup>93.</sup> Some of the historians that donated books to the department include late Prof. C.C. Osakwe, Prof. Y. Ochefu, Prof. Okpeh Okpeh, Prof. David Imbua, Prof. Terhemba Wuam, Prof. Isaac Ediba, Prof. John Agaba and Dr. Jimam Lar. One organization—The Catholic Diocese of Makurdi Foundation for Justice, Development, and Peace (FJDP), also donated several books to the library.

<sup>94.</sup> See the new NUC-CCMASS, National Universities Commission, 2023. Also see the revised Department of History and international Studies, PAAU Handbook, 2004

technologically competent and responsive to both global trends and local needs.

One of the areas where my leadership significantly enhanced institutional visibility was in promoting a vibrant university culture through conferences and other forms of academic discourse. In 2018, under Prof. Abiye Ichaba's headship, the department, through the prompting of Prof. Ochefu, initiated the *Democracy Day Lecture Series*, hitherto held annually on May 29th.<sup>95</sup> Understanding the importance of continuity, I not only sustained this tradition but also elevated its impact. We invited top-tier scholars to deliver thought-provoking lectures and used the platform to showcase the department's activities. The 2020 lecture, held virtually due to COVID-19, was delivered by Prof. Samuel Aghalino,<sup>96</sup> the current President of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN). The 2021 lecture was delivered physically by a renowned political scientist Prof. Shola Omotola.<sup>97</sup> The 2022 lecture was delivered by Prof. C. B. N. Ogbogbo,<sup>98</sup> the then HSN President. During the event, the department presented copies of the published report, funded through a university

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<sup>95</sup>. This event was initially held on May 29 but was moved to June 12 in 2022 following a law passed by the National Assembly and assented to by President Muhammadu Buhari, officially recognizing June 12 as *Democracy Day*. The date commemorates the annulled June 12, 1993, presidential election, widely believed to have been won by Chief Moshood Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). The election was annulled by Nigeria's military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, on allegations of irregularities.

<sup>96</sup>. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Democracy Day Lecture was delivered by Prof. Samuel Aghalino, a renowned historian from the University of Ilorin, titled: *Counting the Cost of Governance in Nigeria*. Previous lectures include the 1st lecture (2018) by Prof. Sam Egwu, *19 Years of Democracy in Nigeria: The Journey So Far*; and the 2<sup>nd</sup> lecture (2019) by Prof. M. S. Audu of the Federal University, Lokoja, titled: *Security Challenges in North-Central Nigeria and the Threat to Democracy*.

<sup>97</sup>. Prof. Shola Omotola, of the Department of Political Science, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, delivered the 4<sup>th</sup> Democracy Day Lecture, titled: *Nigeria: Has This House Truly Fallen?*

<sup>98</sup>. Prof. C. B. N. Ogbogbo, a distinguished historian from the University of Ibadan and the current Director of Research at the Nigerian Army Resource Centre (NARC), delivered the 5<sup>th</sup> Democracy Day Lecture on *Political Parties, the New Electoral Act, and the Conduct of the 2023 General Elections: The Prognosis of a Historian*.

management grant, to the Vice-Chancellor.<sup>99</sup> The 2024 lecture was delivered by Prof. Zacharys Gundu,<sup>100</sup> Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mkar, Gboko, Benue State. This lecture series has become a highly anticipated event, fostering an atmosphere for scholarly dialogue and networking among academics and students, in line with university traditions. I am particularly pleased to report that the 6th Democracy Day Lecture, held on June 12, 2024, was upgraded to a full-fledged conference following approval from the department and university management.

Beyond the shores of PAAU, the department under my leadership initiated and collaborated with the Department of History, Bayero University, Kano to organise a commemorative conference in honour of the immediate past Vice-Chancellor of PAAU, Prof. M. S. Abdulkadir, who is also a renowned Economic Historian. The well attended event witnessed the presentation of scholarly and a thought provoking paper by the guest speaker, Prof. Sati Fwatshak of the Department of History and International Studies, University of Jos, and soap box conversations featuring lecturers of the collaborating universities.<sup>101</sup> These initiatives, among others, have significantly contributed to advancing the department and the university at large,

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<sup>99</sup>. The university management awarded a research grant to the department in 2021. The findings were published in *Gender Oppression and Marginalization in Nigeria: Unlocking the Unheard Voices of Rural Women in Benue and Kogi States* (Abuja: Integrity Publishers, 2022), authored by P. I. Ukase, A. Ezeogueri-Oyewole, D. Abah, K. Olubiyo, and J. Ineke.

<sup>100</sup>. The 2023 edition of the lecture did not hold due to logistical challenges. However, in 2024, Prof. Zacharys Gundu delivered the 6<sup>th</sup> lecture titled: "*Assessing Nigeria's Democratic Progress: 25 Years After.*"

<sup>101</sup>. At that epoch event, Prof. Sati Fwatshak delivered a paper titled: "Scratching at the Surface: A Survey of Twentieth Century Economic History Northern Nigeria." A paper presented at a symposium in honour of Prof. M.S. Abdulkadir, held on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2023, to commemorate his retirement from Bayero University, Kano. Prof. Abdulkadir served as the 4<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor of the Kogi State University, Anyigba.

ensuring that we continue to uphold the ideals of academic excellence, research, and institutional visibility.<sup>102</sup>

Madam Vice-Chancellor, under my headship, the quality of our graduates improved tremendously. Notably, in the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 sessions, Mary Aliyu and Mishael Opeyemi broke a 20-year jinx by becoming the first and second students in the department to earn first-class degrees in History from PAAU, respectively.<sup>103</sup> These two young women have once again demonstrated that when provided the requisite conducive learning environment and appropriate opportunity women can serve as veritable instruments of national development. While Mary Aliyu has begun her career in a private institution, Mishael Opeyemi was retained at the prestigious Nigerian Army Resource Center (NARC) after her NYSC, and is currently pursuing her M.A. at the University of Ibadan, thanks to Prof. Ogbogbo, who facilitated both her NYSC placement and her appointment in 2022.<sup>104</sup> Daniel Asipita would later join the ranks of first-class graduates in the 2022/2023 academic session.<sup>105</sup> Anyone who has encountered these students cannot help but admire their intellectual depth and, brilliance; but also, their resourcefulness,

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<sup>102</sup>. I emphasized this point repeatedly during my Democracy Day speeches in 2020, 2021, and 2022. For more details, see Speech Delivered by Prof. Patrick I. Ukase, Head, Department of History and International Studies, on the Occasion of the 5th Democracy Day Lecture, held at the Ado Ibrahim Auditorium, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, on Monday, June 13, 2022. The event was rescheduled to Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2022, as 12<sup>th</sup> June fell on a Sunday that year.

<sup>103</sup>. See speech delivered by Prof. Patrick I. Ukase, Head, Department of History and International Studies, on the Occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Democracy Day Lecture.

<sup>104</sup>. While serving as the Guest Speaker at our 5<sup>th</sup> Democracy Day Lecture, Prof. C. B. N. Ogbogbo expressed great excitement upon learning that Mishael Opeyemi had graduated with a first-class degree in History. Impressed by her exceptional brilliance, he offered her a place of primary assignment at the Nigerian Army Resource Centre (NARC) for her NYSC.

<sup>105</sup>. In 2022, Daniel Asipita was among the fifteen students selected from various Nigerian universities as interns for the Royal African Leadership Forum (RAYLF); an initiative of His Imperial Majesty, the Ooni of Ife. This was after a highly competitive selection process. He is currently pursuing his MA at the University of Ibadan.

diligence, humility and discipline. Today, these graduates have become great ambassadors of PAAU in whom we are truly pleased.

Beyond enhancing the visibility of the Department of History and International Studies and our university, I have successfully mentored, supervised, and graduated over twenty-nine postgraduate students across PAAU and BSU and the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA), where I served as a visiting lecturer for more than six years. Of this number, ten earned Ph.D. degrees,<sup>106</sup> while nineteen hold M.A. degrees.<sup>107</sup> While some of them are making their mark in the academia, carving out successful careers in their own right, others are actively contributing to national development through public service. It is with profound excitement and humility that I share the accomplishments of some of my former students. Dr. T. Ayemga of Kaduna State University and Dr. S. Koko of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, have risen to the rank of Associate Professors, while Prof. Shishi Zhema currently serves as the Vice-Chancellor of Kwararafa University, Wukari, Taraba State.

Madam Vice Chancellor, I was appointed Director of the Centre for Pre-Degree and Diploma Studies (CPDS) on August 23, 2023,<sup>108</sup> and I am pleased to report that together with my Deputy Director, Prof. Enojo Kennie Enojo, we have made significant progress in line with our two-year Strategic Plan.<sup>109</sup> Using historical insight, we assessed

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<sup>106</sup>. Other supervisees under my watch included Dr. Sale O. Oyakata, Dr. Steven C. Anisere, Dr. Danladi Abah, Dr. Simon Kerga, Dr. Ben Ikwue, Dr. Joseph Wanshe, and Dr. M. Eban.

<sup>107</sup>. Among those who earned M.A. degrees under my supervision are Mr. (now Dr.) I. Baba, S. Yakubu, Mr. (now Dr.) S. Odikpa, Stephen Oluyole, S. Alih, Patricia Abah, and Paul Amedu, to mention a few.

<sup>108</sup>. The Centre for Pre-Degree and Diploma Studies (CPDS) was established by the university to run Diploma and Pre-Degree programmes. Students of the Pre-Degree programme could gain admission into the degree programme if they are successful in the internal exams and need not write post-UTME exams, while those who earn upper credit at Diploma level are offered direct entry admission into the institution.

<sup>109</sup>. I presented this plan and it was adopted by the Centre's Unit Coordinators, the Board of the Centre and the University Management Committee (UMC) before it took effect.

the Centre's current state, envisioned desired improvements, and developed fifteen targeted action steps with specific timelines.<sup>110</sup> In the last twenty four months, we have reorganized the examination process, introduced Computer-Based Testing (CBT) for pre-degree students, enhanced the quality of teaching by improving the caliber of resource persons, strengthened the diploma curriculum to align with the new CCMAS introduced by the NUC, and secured an enhanced honorarium for resource persons, effective from the 2024/2025 session. Despite some challenges, we have achieved approximately 70% of our strategic objectives, demonstrating significant progress of our work plan.<sup>111</sup>

Madam Vice Chancellor, I have demonstrated the significance of history by effectively applying my expertise—both as a discipline and a method of inquiry—to enhance the Faculty, Department, and the Centre for Pre-Degree and Diploma Studies (CPDS), particularly during a period of transition. My approach embodies the historian's ability to critically analyze the past, interpret the present, and strategically shape the future. Through a historically informed strategic vision, I assessed institutional challenges, identified gaps, and implemented structured reforms that have led to improved academic and administrative outcomes. By leveraging institutional memory, I built on past successes while also addressing inefficiencies, ensuring continuity of best practices while adapting to evolving needs.

## ii. *Key Contributions to Legislative and Collaborative Institutions*

Madam Vice Chancellor, over the past 21 years, my expertise in Political and Legislative History, as well as Development Studies, has enabled me to build capacity within the legislature and other collaborative institutions. Through my knowledge and experience, I

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<sup>110.</sup> The Work-Plan has fifteen (15) targeted objectives to be achieved within two years. For more details, see P. I. Ukase, *Centre for Pre-Degree and Diploma Studies (CPDS) Work-Plan (2023-2025)*, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2023

<sup>111.</sup> P. I. Ukase, *CPDS Work-Plan...*

have contributed to institutional strengthening, policy development, and governance reforms, fostering a more effective and informed legislative process. In 2018, I was appointed as a Research Consultant for the Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth, and Advancement (YIAGA) Africa under its Center for Legislative Engagement (YIAGA-CLE) Scholars Programme.<sup>112</sup> Through this role, I provided consultancy services to the National Assembly (NASS) and various State Houses of Assembly (SHA). Notably, in February 2019, I served as a resource person during the training of over 400 young aspirants contesting for seats in the SHA and NASS organised by YIAGA Africa. In May 2019, I also served as a resource person at a training programme for newly elected members of the NASS organised by YIAGA Africa.<sup>113</sup> Additionally, YIAGA Africa engaged me to develop a *Toolkit on Engaging the Legislature in Nigeria*,<sup>114</sup> which has become a key resource for constituents on how to engage their legislators.

Since 2010, I have been actively involved in capacity-building programs for various State Houses of Assembly (SHA), notably in Benue State, where I have trained legislators on budget and budget-

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<sup>112.</sup> YIAGA Africa is a non-profit civic hub of change makers committed to the promotion of democratic governance, human rights and civic engagements. Launched in 2007, it has since established itself as a leading civil society organization in Africa. Since its inception, the organization has carved a niche for itself as one of Africa's frontline non-profit organization promoting participatory democracy, human rights and civic participation. Its headquarters is located in Abuja-Nigeria

<sup>113.</sup> The first training program, *The Convergence 1.0*, was designed for over 400 political aspirants for SHA and NASS across various political parties, while the second, *The Convergence 2.0: Leadership, Power, and Politics*, focused on young elected representatives in the SHA and NASS ahead of their inauguration in June 2019. Both events were held at the Congress Hall, Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, on December 12–13, 2018, and May 7–8, 2019, respectively. For more details, see P. I. Ukase, "Campaigns for State Assembly Elections: The Ten (10) Critical Things a Candidate Would Need to Do" and "Understanding the Constitutional Powers of State Legislatures in Nigeria," presented at *The Convergence 1.0* and *The Convergence 2.0*, respectively.

<sup>114.</sup> For more details, see YIAGA AFRICA: *Toolkit on Engaging the Legislature in Nigeria* (Abuja: YIAGA AFRICA), 2018. I developed this manual with Dr. Ernest Ereke of the Department of Political Science, University of Abuja.

related issues.<sup>115</sup> Similarly, since 2023, I have served as a resource person for the Legislative Mentorship Initiative (LMI) in Abuja, contributing to the training of interns on legislative and leadership matters.<sup>116</sup> As part of my institutional collaborations, I secured a grant in 2020, commissioned by the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi's Foundation for Justice, Development, and Peace (FJDP) in partnership with the Centre for Peace and Development Studies, Benue State University, Makurdi, to conduct an empirical study on the plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Benue State.<sup>117</sup> This study has since become a key reference material on IDP issues in the state.

Given that our democracy remains in transition, history serves as an indispensable tool for understanding the past, navigating the present, and shaping the future. Recognizing this, I have consistently applied my expertise in history to strengthen democratic institutions and processes. By analyzing historical patterns of governance, institutional development, and policy evolution, I have provided critical insights that inform legislative capacity-building efforts. Through collaborations with major Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), I have contributed to initiatives that enhance legislative efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness. My work in training legislators, mentoring young political leaders, and developing strategic

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<sup>115</sup>. In 2024, I delivered a thought-provoking paper at this event. For more details, see P. I. Ukase, "Benue State 2025 Budget of Human Capital Development, Food Security and Digital Economy: The Legislature's Role in Ensuring Success," held at Ta'al, Lafia, Nasarawa State, on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2024.

<sup>116</sup>. This program, an initiative of Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, the immediate past Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abuja, is designed to build the capacity of young interns in Nigeria on various aspects of the legislature and leadership. I have delivered several papers during this internship. For instance, see P. I. Ukase, "*A Nation in Transition: From Country to Nationhood*," a paper delivered at the 3rd Legislative Mentorship Initiative (LMI) Programme, held at the National Institute of Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) on Monday, August 19, 2024.

<sup>117</sup>. I led this study in collaboration with Dr. Paul Jato of the University of Agriculture, Makurdi (now Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi - JOSTUM). For full details, see P. I. Ukase and P. J. Jato, *From Home to Homelessness: The Dilemma of Internally Displaced Persons in Benue State* (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers), 2020

engagement tools has helped reinforce democratic norms and fostered a culture of informed governance. In doing so, I have not only supported the institutionalization of democratic principles but also underscored the vital role of history in shaping a resilient and sustainable democracy.

*iii. Service to History and other Related Institutions*

Madam Vice Chancellor, my involvement with the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) dates back to its 52nd Congress/Conference in Calabar, Cross River State, in 2007. However, my engagement with historical scholarship and advocacy began much earlier during my undergraduate years at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, where I served actively in the Students' Historical Society of Nigeria (SHSN) for four years, ultimately rising to the position of Secretary of the chapter.<sup>118</sup> Naturally, transitioning to the parent body was a seamless and logical progression for me. In 2018, I was elected Member of Council of the Society Representing North Central, serving two consecutive terms from 2018 to 2022. During this period, the leadership of the Society, like those before it, remained steadfast in the struggle for the re-introduction of History into Nigeria's basic education curriculum—a campaign that had been ongoing for years.<sup>119</sup> I had earlier on briefly touched on this effort, and given that it is already well-documented, I will not dwell on the details here.<sup>120</sup> However, what deserve emphasis are the critical roles I played during this transitional period when History was reintroduced into our schools. These contributions were not only instrumental in shaping the direction of the discipline but also reinforced my commitment to

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<sup>118</sup>. I was elected the Secretary of the Students Historical Society of Nigeria (SHSN) ABU chapter in 1997 and served in that capacity for one academic session.

. The basic educational system refers to primary 1 to Junior Secondary School (JSS) 3.

<sup>120</sup>. For more details on the struggle for the return of History in Nigeria's Basic educational System, see C.B.N. Ogbogbo, *In Defence of Tradition...*; O. O. Okpoh, *The Historian as a Catalyst: History, Ideology and the Social Process...* and P.I. Ukase & I. I. Baba, "The Return of History: Interrogating the Challenges of Teaching the Discipline..."

advancing historical scholarship in Nigeria.

Following the reintroduction of History into Nigerian schools, the leadership of the HSN appointed me, along with seven others, as a member of its Coordinating Committee for the development of basic history textbooks—the HSN History Series—in March 2017. This assignment was carried out diligently and with utmost dispatch. Notably, these textbooks were developed in alignment with the new curriculum approved by the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC).<sup>121</sup> As professional historians, we ensured that the books adhered to a three-tiered framework, covering local, state, and national histories, with emphases on themes that unite us as a people rather than those that divide us. This approach, which can be described as “history for development” or “history for nation-building,” was deliberately chosen to counter the divisive narratives that have historically hindered national unity and development.<sup>122</sup>

Madam Vice Chancellor, one of the most challenging yet critical assignments I undertook during this period was my invitation by UBEC in 2021 to serve as a member of the Committee to Develop a Training Manual for the training and retraining of History teachers across Nigeria.<sup>123</sup> This task was pivotal, as the manual would later serve as a national guide for the training of teachers who would

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<sup>121.</sup> For more details, read the *Basic Education Curriculum History for Primary 1-3, 3-6 and JSS 1-3* (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), 2016).

<sup>122.</sup> See Goodwill Message delivered by the President of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN), Prof. Samuel Aghalino, at the Flag-Off Ceremony of the Re-Introduction of the Teaching of History and the Commencement of the Training of History Teachers at Basic Education Level, which held at the International Conference Centre, Abuja, on Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2022. Also see P.I. Ukase & I. I. Baba, “The Return of History: Interrogating the Challenges of Teaching the Discipline in Nigerian Schools and the Way Forward” in Afaha, P. (ed), *Advocacy for History: A Festschrift in Honour of Professor CBN Ogbogbo* (Abuja: Command Publishers), 2018

<sup>123.</sup> This Committee met in Kaduna from 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2021, where it produced a draft manual for UBEC for the training of history teachers across schools in the country.

commence the teaching of the subject in schools.<sup>124</sup> Recognizing the shortage of professional History teachers, we designed the manual to provide clear guidance, especially for non-specialist teachers who would inevitably be drafted to teach the subject. Later that year, I was again invited by UBEC to critique the draft manual at a workshop in Kaduna, ensuring that the final document met the highest academic and pedagogical standards.<sup>125</sup> This workshop culminated in the official production of the training manual, a milestone achievement in which I played an active role.

In 2022, UBEC further appointed me as a Master Trainer for the Train-the-Trainers Workshop for History Teachers, which took place in Kano.<sup>126</sup> As the lead trainer for the North-East Zone, my responsibility was to guide participants through the fundamentals of History instruction, using both the new curriculum and the training guide we had developed. This assignment was particularly fulfilling, as it provided me with the opportunity to practically implement the manual we had worked so hard to produce. Moreover, as one of its architects, I was able to emphasize and instill the new philosophy of History—“History for Nation-Building”—directly into the training process. The workshop was a resounding success, not only in my zone but across

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<sup>124</sup>. The *Training the Trainer Workshop* has its roots in the Society’s engagement with the Honourable Minister of Education, who was then represented by the Permanent Secretary, Arc. Sunday Echono. During that meeting, the Society made a compelling case for a Training the Trainers Workshop as part of the implementation of the presidential directive to reintroduce the teaching of History in all primary schools across Nigeria. In its proposal, the Society outlined a clear strategy, highlighting the need for a comprehensive training manual, the modalities for conducting the training, and the key agencies of the Ministry that would play direct roles. Specifically, UBEC and NERDC were identified as facilitating partners to collaborate with the leadership of the HSN in providing the necessary technical and intellectual resources. This engagement took place in late 2020.

<sup>125</sup>. I was appointed member of the Committee to Critique the Training Manual on Training and Retraining of History Teachers in the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme by Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), held at Lafia, Nasarawa State from 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2021.

<sup>126</sup>. This training was to be cascaded across the various states by the trainers across their states in the six geopolitical zones of the country.

all the six geopolitical zones of the country, effectively heralding the full-scale return of History to Nigerian schools.<sup>127</sup> In May 2025, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), in collaboration with the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN), appointed me as Team Lead to oversee the monitoring of the re-introduction of History in basic schools across the country. The study, which was successfully conducted and produced far-reaching recommendations, is currently under review by UBEC with the aim of strengthening and improving the teaching of the subject nationwide.<sup>128</sup> In recognition of my outstanding contributions to the discipline, the Council of HSN appointed me Chairperson for the 66th Congress/Conference held in Enugu in 2021,<sup>129</sup> an assignment I delivered with alacrity. Since 2020, I have served as a key member of all subsequent HSN Conference/Congress Organizing Committees, playing an instrumental role in the planning and execution of these high-profile academic gatherings.

Madam Vice Chancellor, in 2022, I was elected Secretary General of HSN during its 67th Conference/Congress in Abuja for a two-year term. In 2024, at the 69th Conference/Congress in Yenagoa, I was re-elected for another term. As Chief Scribe of the Society, I have spearheaded major administrative reforms in the Secretariat, streamlining operations to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. While time and space may not allow me do a detailed exposition of these reforms, suffice it to say that they have significantly strengthened the institutional structure of HSN. As a professional

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<sup>127</sup> . Prior to this training, the UBEC had organised an elaborate Flag-Off Ceremony for “The Re-Introduction of the Teaching of History and the Commencement of the Training of History Teachers at Basic Education Level,” which held at the International Conference Centre, Abuja, on Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2022. The Flag-off organised by UBEC and was performed by the Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu.

<sup>128</sup> . For more details, See Historical Society of Nigeria: Report on the Monitoring of the Re-Introduction of History in Basic Schools in Nigeria submitted to the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2025

<sup>129</sup> . Before this appointment, I had served as the Secretary for the 65<sup>th</sup> Conference/Congress which would have been held in 2020 but was shifted to 2021 because of the COVID 19 Pandemic.

historian, I firmly recognize the indispensability of documentation. There can be no history without sources, and documents remain the lifeblood of historical scholarship. It is in this spirit that I have, as Secretary-General, continued to ensure the rigorous preservation and dissemination of historical knowledge for the present and future generations.

I have been deeply committed to knowledge generation and scholarly production, both within the HSN and in collaboration with other institutions. In 2010, I was on the editorial team with Prof. Akinwumi and Prof. Mamman Adamu that produced the proceedings of the 55th Conference of the HSN, held at ABU, Zaria.<sup>130</sup> In 2023, I was honoured to be appointed as a member of a distinguished team of top-tier historians, carefully selected from universities across Nigeria, to document the history of the Nigerian Army's involvement in Liberia and Sierra Leone under the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). This prestigious assignment, commissioned by the former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Faruk Yahaya (Rtd), has since been successfully completed, culminating in the publication of a major book thereby closing a major knowledge gap in this aspect of Nigeria's military and diplomatic history.<sup>131</sup> At the same professional level, I was also part of the select HSN team that contributed to the production of a comprehensive compendium,<sup>132</sup> and two other edited

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<sup>130.</sup> This conference also commemorated Nigeria's 50<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary. For more details on this volume, see A. Akinwumi, M. M. Adamu and P. I. Ukase, *Nigeria at 50: The Challenges of Nation Building* (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press), 2012

<sup>131.</sup> For more details on my publication in this volume, see P. I. Ukase, "Nigeria-Led ECOMOG Intervention in Sierra Leone: A Study of Some Specific Military Operations" in C.B.N. Ogbogbo (ed), *Nigerian Army Participation in ECOMOG Operations and Lessons Learned* (Abuja: Horrendotus Publishers Ltd), 2023

<sup>132.</sup> For elaborate details on my publication in this compendium, see P. I. Ukase, "NYSC and the Policy of Posting and Primary Assignments" in O. O. Okpeh and C.B.N. Ogbogbo (eds), *The National Youth Service Corp Scheme, 1973-2020: Emergence, Developments and Achievements* (Lagos: LANUV Enterprises), 2021

volumes on the activities of the NYSC.<sup>133</sup> These works serve as authoritative references on the historical evolution, impact, and contributions of the NYSC to national development. In the same vein, I have served as a resource person to several HSN organised methodology workshops for junior and mid-tier academics, and also contributed a chapter to the Society's major publication on this subject.<sup>134</sup> This volume which is very much sought after, was produced to harmonize historical methodologies across Nigerian universities.

I am also delighted to share that from reading one of Nigeria's most authoritative historical works, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, edited by Prof. Obaro Ikime in 1980 and published by the HSN, as an undergraduate and later as a postgraduate student, I have now become a co-contributor to Chapter 8 of Volume 2 of this same monumental work, edited by Prof. Yakubu Ochefu and recently unveiled during the HSN's 70th Anniversary celebration in Abuja.<sup>135</sup> For me, nothing could be more gratifying or fulfilling in my career as a historian than this moment. Those familiar with *Groundwork of Nigerian History* would readily attest to its intellectual richness, scholarly depth, and immense contributions to the understanding of Nigerian history across diverse thematic areas.

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<sup>133</sup>. For more details on these books, see S. Ibrahim, P. I. Ukase, B. J. Audu, M. Hamza & O. P. Otumela (eds), *The National Youth Service Corps and Elections in Nigeria* (Kaduna: Pyla-Mark Press and Publishers Limited), 2021 and S. Ibrahim, P. I. Ukase, B. J. Audu, M. Hamza and R. Aliyu (eds), *The National Youth Service Corps and the Nigerian Health Sector* (Kaduna: Pyla-Mark Press and Publishers Limited), 2021

<sup>134</sup>. For more on this chapter, see P. I. Ukase, "Writing Journal Articles/Book Chapters" in S. O Aghalino, O.O. Okpeh, Jr and D. L. Imbua (eds), *Historical Research Method* (Abuja: Published by Heredotus Publishers for the Historical Society of Nigeria), 2023

<sup>135</sup>. See P. I. Ukase and D. Imbua, "Constitutional Developments in Nigeria Since 1960" in Y. A. Ochefu (ed), *Groundwork of Nigerian History* (Makurdi: Published for the Historical Society of Nigeria by Aboki Publishers), 2025, 165-200.

One of the most consequential and exciting aspects of my contributions is the immortalization of titans in our discipline through scholarly activities. Recognizing that I have come this far by standing on the shoulders of giants, I have made it a priority to celebrate and preserve the legacies of my mentors through high-quality festschrifts and scholarly articles. For instance, in 2017, I led a team of editors to produce a festschrift in honour one of our most distinguished lecturer and mentor at ABU, Prof. Enoch Oyedele, upon his retirement after over thirty years of dedicated service to the institution.<sup>136</sup> In 2018, I replicated this feat for another renowned historian, mentor, and former president of the HSN, Prof. Olayemi Akinwumi.<sup>137</sup> That same year, I led another editorial team to produce a publication celebrating the golden jubilee anniversary of Prof. Okpeh, O. Okpeh, also a former president of the HSN.<sup>138</sup> In 2021, I collaborated with two other colleagues and a former HSN President, Prof. Yakubu Ochefu, to produce a volume in honour of the distinguished academic and administrator, Prof. David I. Ker, at 70.<sup>139</sup> I have extended these efforts to mentors at Prince Abubakar Audu University (PAAU). I served on the editorial team that produced a Gedenkschrift in honour of Prof. Musa Abikan<sup>140</sup> and led another team to publish a Festschrift

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<sup>136.</sup> Professor Enoch Oyedele was former Head, Department of History, ABU. Zaria. For more details on this book, see P. I. Ukase, E. O. Akubor, & A. I. Onoja, *Urbanization, Security and Development Issues in Nigeria, 1914-2014: Essays in Honour of Professor Enoch Oyedele* (ABU Zaria Press), 2016

<sup>137.</sup> Professor A. Akinwumi is the current Vice Chancellor, Federal University, Lokoja. For more details on this volume, see A. Adoyi, M. Mejida & P. I. Ukase (eds), *In Search of Security in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Professor Olayewmi Durotimi Akinwumi* (Jos: Eiwa Press Nig. Ltd), 2018

<sup>138.</sup> Professor Okpeh O. Okpeh supervised my M.A dissertation and PhD thesis at the Benue State University. For more details see, P. I. Ukase, S. I. Ugbeigili, B. J. Audu, & E. T. Ikpanor (eds), *History, Globalization and Relations in Africa: Festschrift in Honour of Okpeh O. Okpeh, Jnr* (Lagos: Integrity Publishers), 2018.

<sup>139.</sup> Professor David Ker was former Vice chancellor, Benue State University and Veritas University, Abuja. For more details on the book, see Y.A. Ochefu, P. I. Ukase, P. Vande and N. O. Doki (eds), *Odysseys of An Academic, Administrator and Politician: Essays in Honour of Professor David I. Ker @ 70* (Makurdi: GreatNex Publishers), 2021

<sup>140.</sup> Professor Musa Abikan was a lecturer in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. He died in active service in 2021. For more details on this book, see F.

celebrating the retirement of the first chair in history at PAAU, Prof. Z. O. Apata.<sup>141</sup>

Madam Vice-Chancellor, through these scholarly initiatives, I have not only contributed to shaping the trajectory of historical scholarship in Nigeria but also played a pivotal role in mentoring younger colleagues. I have guided them not just in the art of writing rigorous academic essays but also in recognizing the importance of honoring mentors who have provided exemplary academic and administrative leadership. More significantly, through these engagements, I have—with all humility and modesty—elevated the visibility of my university within the academic community, firmly placing it on the global map of historical scholarship. As a relatively young university still in transition, I have, through historical hindsight, recognized the importance of establishing a strong academic tradition and culture. This realization has guided my actions throughout my service to this institution.

## **7. Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction with Nigeria's Ivory Tower**

As I previously disclosed, I exited the civil service due to my dissatisfaction with its dysfunctional structure and its inability to serve as an effective instrument for implementing government policies. My transition to the university system was driven by the belief that universities are true centers of excellence. In comparative terms, I must honestly say that the academic environment has provided me with far greater satisfaction. Drawing from my experiences in both the civil service and academia, I have no regrets about my decision to exit the civil service. As a lecturer, I have had the privilege of shaping and

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Enegho, P. I. Ukase, S. N. Saleh, A. M. Salisu and A. Musa (eds), *Language, Religion and the Humanities: A Gedenkschrift in Honour of Professor Musa A.M. Abikan* (A Publication of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Kogi State University, Anyigba), 2021

<sup>141</sup>. Professor Z. O. Apata was former Deputy Vice Chancellor at the Kogi State University, Anyigba. He retired from the university in 2024. For more on this book, see P. I. Ukase, L. E. Odeh, K.G. Olubiyo and P. I. Akanmidu (eds), *Democracy, Politics and Nation Building in Nigeria: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Z. O. Apata* (Abuja: Integrity Press), 2025

mentoring the next generation of leaders and academics. I have contributed to knowledge production, and bridging the gap between the “gown” and the “town.” Furthermore, I have participated in national conversations, influencing policies and shaping the discourse on development—opportunities that were largely unavailable in my previous career. In this sense, I can affirm with confidence that I am fulfilled in my role as an academic but more especially as an academic. I even more fulfilled because my first daughter, Thelma Ukase, not out of any compulsion but due to personal interest, bagged a degree at VUNA with a second class upper division.

Suffice to place on record that Nigerian universities have undoubtedly produced remarkable scholars, groundbreaking research, and innovative contributions to various fields. However, despite these achievements, the reality remains that several systemic shortcomings continue to undermine their status as true “Centres of Excellence.” As Nigerian universities strive to transition into globally recognized institutions, it is my duty as a historian to highlight the persistent challenges impeding this progress. These include:

- i. Poor remuneration and inadequate welfare for academic and non-academic staff.
- ii. Chronic underfunding, insufficient research infrastructure and other infrastructural, hampering innovation and global competitiveness.
- iii. Bureaucratic inefficiencies that stifle academic freedom and institutional growth.
- iv. Unethical practices by both teaching and non-teaching staff, eroding academic integrity.
- v. Declining academic standards, affecting the quality of graduates and research output.
- vi. Massive brain drain, as top scholars leave for better opportunities abroad.
- vii. Ethnicity and clannishness in staff recruitment, fostering mediocrity over merit.

- viii. An unstable academic calendar, plagued by incessant strikes and industrial unrest.
- ix. Promotion requirements based on *Eurocentric* templates rather than *Afrocentric* intellectual parameters.<sup>142</sup>

These and other structural deficiencies have significantly slowed down the transformation of Nigerian universities into globally respected institutions. This should be of great concern to us, the torchbearers of the academic system. Intellectual activism, once the heartbeat of our universities, is waning. Our campuses are becoming mere shadows of their former selves, and some of our finest academics are leaving in droves, further weakening an already fragile system. Let there be no misunderstanding—no nation can attain true greatness without fixing and prioritizing its educational system. A strong and well-functioning university system is the foundation for national development. Our politics, economy, and societal values will remain stagnant if we fail to strengthen our educational institutions, and restore the dignity and excellence of Nigerian academia.<sup>143</sup>

## **8. Conclusion: Mainstreaming Historical Knowledge in Times of Transition**

As a historian, it is my duty to tell my story, and that is precisely what I have done in this inaugural lecture. History is shaped by our individual and collective experiences—my story, her story, his story—all coming together to form the larger historical narrative. While traditional and conservative historians have long resisted the notion that history can serve as a tool for predicting the future, liberal and

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<sup>142</sup>. Some of the challenges listed here are some of the issues that have been on the front burner of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) for close to four decades. For more details see I. E. Unya, A. U. Chukwu and A. H. Abighe, “The Role of the Academic Staff Union Of Universities (ASUU) In the Sustainance of University Education in Nigeria” cited in <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359735958>, accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2025

<sup>143</sup>. P.I. Ukase, “A Re-Examination of the Challenges of Sustainable Tertiary Educational Development in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Nigerian Experience”, *Journal of Intra-African Studies (JIAS)*, Vol. 5, 2011

contemporary historians strongly disagree. The latter argue that historians, by virtue of their knowledge, are inherently two-faced—one looking to the past and the other to the future—offering insights that serve as a guidepost for what lies ahead. In this lecture, I align with this perspective but propose a slight modification: historians are inherently three-faced—one looking to the past, another to the present, and the third to the future, either by discussing or prognosticating what is to come. With the benefit of historical hindsight, I have sought to answer a fundamental question in this lecture: *Does History Really Matter in a State of Transition?* In addressing this, I have drawn from two key areas that have shaped my research over the past two decades—the legislative-executive relationship and contributions to institutional and capacity building. These contributions span three critical domains: institutional development at VUNA and PAAU, engagement with legislative and collaborative institutions, and service to the discipline of History and related fields.

The Nigerian state is undergoing transition at multiple levels—its politics, institutions, and governance structures. More than twenty-five years into the Fourth Republic, the nation continues to grapple with the challenge of strengthening its institutions. A truly resilient democracy is built on strong institutions, not on strong personalities. While individuals may influence governance temporarily, it is institutions that endure and safeguard democratic principles over time. Nigeria operates a constitutional democracy founded on the principles of separation of powers and checks and balances. However, the country's transition has been persistently hampered by the ongoing struggle for power between two key institutions in this framework—the executive and the legislature. Drawing on historical hindsight, I have analyzed the roots of these conflicts and their implications for a nation in transition. Additionally, I have examined the transitional challenges confronting other institutions and demonstrated how my knowledge of history has enabled me to intervene effectively within the legislature, my university, and other collaborative institutions.

As we move forward in this transition, we must recognize the indispensable role of history in charting a path toward sustainable progress. And so, to the question; *Does History Really Matter in a State*

*of Transition?* I dare say, yes, absolutely it does. No nation can achieve meaningful development without critically examining its past to inform its present and shape its future. Historians do more than just document past events—they shape national identity, promote civic consciousness, guide policy decisions, and facilitate societal transformation. Their insights are crucial in navigating transitional periods, offering informed perspectives that strengthen governance, foster unity, and uphold accountability. In the context of our legislative, educational, and institutional frameworks, history serves as a vital tool for preserving knowledge, cultivating critical thinking, and reinforcing institutional memory. It is, therefore, a cornerstone of national development, ensuring that transitions are informed by lessons from the past and directed toward a more stable and prosperous future.

As we envision the future trajectory of the discipline, a fundamental question arises: In light of contemporary realities, which direction is the study of history truly heading? While conventional areas of specialization continue to hold their place, it is imperative to interrogate the positioning and prospects of emerging and unconventional subfields in the discipline. Where do we currently stand with specialties such as *Historiography and New Directions in History Teaching*; *Decolonization of History and Heritage Curricula*; *Historical Studies in the Age of Artificial Intelligence and Social Media*; *Environmental History and Historical Ecology*; *Food, Drink, and Fashion History*; *Hauntology and the Ghosts of the Past*; *Public History and Historical Performance*; *Comedy in History*; and *Sports History*, to mention but a few? Although the axiom that “history matters” remains true, the real challenge lies in how historians can meaningfully adapt and apply innovative methods and interdisciplinary approaches to address the multifaceted challenges of contemporary society. How can the discipline evolve without losing its core, and how can historians become more responsive to the demands of public engagement, technological disruption, and global shifts in knowledge production? These are the pressing questions that must shape our reflections and strategies going forward.

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