



**FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY,  
MINNA.**

**CONSTRUCTION  
AND  
NATIONAL INTEGRATION:**

**BY**

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# NEW GRIDDED RAIL/ROAD NETWORK

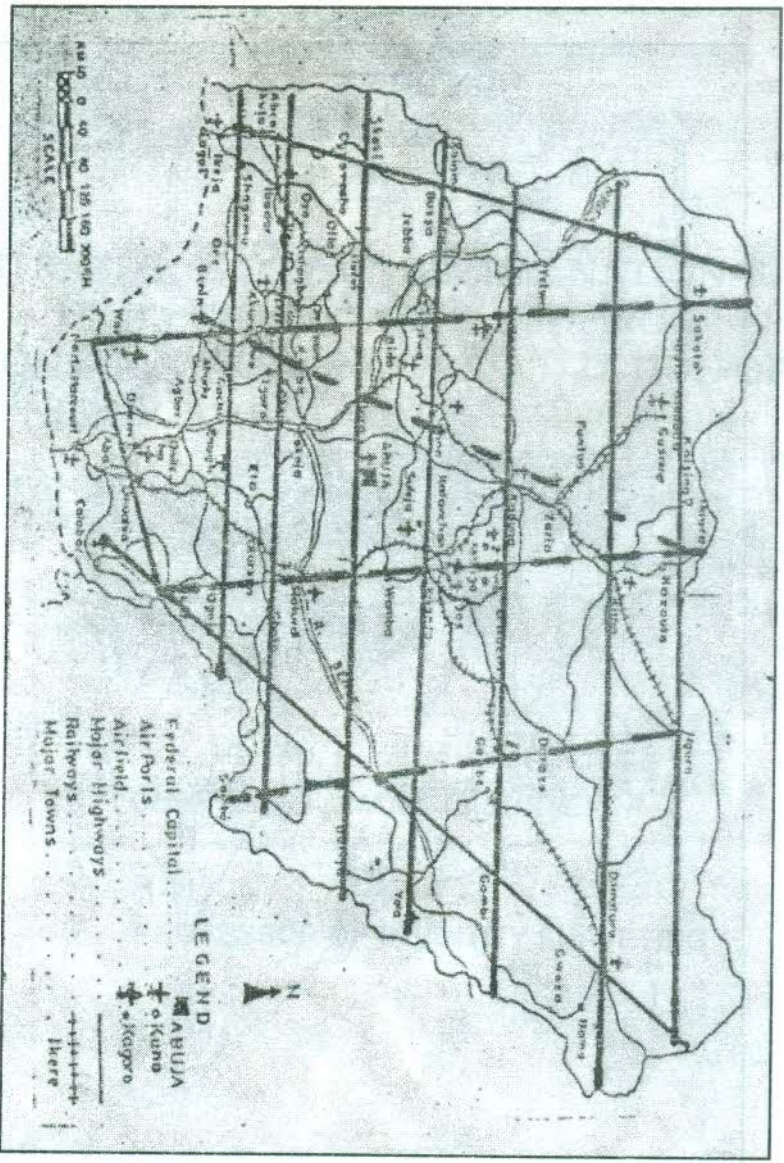


FIG. 3 - RAIL AND RAIL NETWORK



**CONSTRUCTION  
AND  
NATIONAL INTEGRATION:  
STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING NATIONAL  
UNITY THROUGH THE REDESIGN,  
CONSTRUCTION AND PRIVATIZATION OF  
NEW ROAD AND RAIL NETWORKS IN  
NIGERIA.**

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## 1.00 ABSTRACT

*This paper defined construction and aligned that definition to its use as a veritable tool for national integration. National integration was reviewed from historical perspectives linking poor and inadequate communication to the divisive tendencies which impacted negatively on national cohesion. Two principal means of communication, namely: the road and the rail systems were spotlighted as subjects that deserve urgent national attention for the achievement of unity through infrastructural provisions. It was argued that the failure of the public road and rail systems to satisfy the expectations of the Nigerian public was an outcome of the administrative inefficiencies prevalent in the colonial-oriented Nigerian Public Service system and also due to the non-availability of adequate public finance. Therefore, a call was made for a radical and a revolutionary re-design, construction and privatization of new integrated road and the rail systems. The concepts of privatization were discussed which pointed out that there is a need for Nigerian to realign with the new world capitalist and open market mechanisms where Nigerians and foreigners could participate to provide viable private road and rail systems. A suggested plan was presented for new national grided and integrated road and rail systems that could enhance the speedy achievement of national unity.*

**KEYWORDS:** road, rail, finance, debt, competition, inefficiency, economy, land.

## 2.00 INTRODUCTION

The Chairman, Mr. Vice Chancellor, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, we have assembled here today to discuss some ways and means of moving Nigeria forward as an indivisible nation. We have lived together as a country for almost one hundred years and we hope to continue living together in order to be a light and a sign of hope to black people all over the world. The unity of Nigeria is of political, economic and social significance to the African continent. Actually, it may be claimed that the success story recorded in Nigeria (in its *unity-in-diversity* framework) gave birth to the formation of the erstwhile Organisation For African Unity, OAU, ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States and the African Union, AU.

In order to solidify the unity existing in Nigeria, the academic community is bound to beam a searchlight through its own theory-based approaches in order that the entire Nigerian nation may establish some sound basis for evolving some practical solutions to Nigeria's problems. Universities, sometimes, called the "*Ivory Tower*", should tower above all ambiguous assumptions, unfounded beliefs, falsehood, miracles, and, suspicion, in order to resurrect and launch the society to a path of continuous progress.

This Federal University of Technology, Minna located in the North Central Geo-political zone of Nigeria, and which was set up over 20 years ago, has been a centre of academic excellence and a place where all Nigerians meet, unite, learn and research together. Today we shall focus on how to use an applied construction technology philosophy to achieve effective national integration. It is well to note that Niger State is best positioned for holding serious discussions on the national integration of Nigeria. Going back to history, it should be noted that Bishop Adjai Crowther anchored his ship at Baro, Niger State by 1840 to preach Christianity and to introduce modern education. Bishop Adjai's exploit of about 160 years ago taught us that one might not be an indigene of an area before serving that area. Niger State was the place where the famous Scottish Explorer, Mungo Park, paid the supreme sacrifice in the quest for locating River Niger a river that gloriously, naturally and longitudinally integrated a large part of is now known as the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Thus, his missionary and educational services were integrative in nature. It was in Niger State that Lord Lugard sojourned to solidify the formation of the erstwhile "Protectorate of Northern Nigeria" with its capital at Zungeru. After administratively and militarily integrating the former Northern Nigeria, he stayed back at Zungeru

to resurrect the concept of the Amalgamation of the Protectorate of Northern and Southern Nigeria. After perfecting that concept at Zungeru, he then moved down to Lokoja. Zungeru later turned to be the birthplace of Nnamdi Azikiwe who though born of igbo parents, became an apostle of Nigerian independence and unity. Zungeru was also the birthplace of Odumegwu Ojukwu who later on, primarily questioned through armed conflict, the existence of the Nigerian Federation. Niger State also gave birth to General Abdulsalami Abubakar who magnanimously and successfully ended military governance in Nigeria and gloriously enthroned democracy to Nigeria. By assembling here today, we are celebrating democracy for it is only in democratic societies that open debates can be conducted on matters pertaining to national development.

As a quantity surveyor, I wish to discuss how to use construction for achieving national integration in our contemporary times, given the limited financial resources at our disposal. There are some on-going debates in Nigeria on the privatization of infrastructural works in Nigeria. The Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) in its 12<sup>th</sup> Engineering Assembly held in Abuja, July 2003, discussed at length on that topic area. However, it focused strictly on the privatization of engineering infrastructure in Nigeria:- "The role of the engineering family". On the other hand, this paper focuses on how to use revolutionary construction concepts and the privatization of infrastructural works to achieve national unity. It is a welcome development that privatization is now being discussed not purely from the eyes of the Bureau of Public Enterprises which hitherto had concentrated on the sale of public property but from the eyes of engineers, construction economists, architects and other construction scientists, the University community, and the general public.

The discussions to be held will briefly focus on:- (1) construction, (2) national integration, (3) land transportation and national integration, (4) politics, communication and national integration, (5) the Nigerian Public Service sector, (6) the motor road network system, (7) the Nigerian rail system, (8) privatization, (9) participation in business and construction, and, (10) some tactics and strategies for privatizing constructional works in order to achieve national integration.

### 3.00 CONSTRUCTION

As *construction* is being used to control the economies of nations, it is always strongly related to politics, economics, sociology and the legal



framework. Political participation in construction planning is obligatory in the modern world democracies. Construction cannot progress in a weak and docile economy. Construction cannot feature where there is social distress and social instability, (Allison, 1973; Mogbo, 1998).

The importance of construction in any national economy stems from three characteristics: firstly, its size, secondly, that it provides predominantly investment goods and thirdly, that government is the client for a large part of its work. The government, in managing the economy, attempts to achieve four main objectives: (i) solvency, that is the ability to pay its way abroad by balancing the payments made for goods and services, (ii) to maintain an acceptable level of the employment of resources, particularly manpower, (iii) the stimulation of growth i.e. the increase in the amount of goods and services which a country produces and which it is able to consume in absolute terms, and, (iv) to effectively control inflation, (Hillebrandt, 1974).

Generally, the term "*Construction*" refers to the provision of infrastructural facilities like roads and railways, harbours and ports, airfields, dams and power stations, fresh water supply, drainage and buildings. Infrastructural works directly and indirectly impact on human lives at local, national and international levels. Construction works and construction costs take into consideration, the physical resources needed for construction: money, market, materials, men machines and management. The consideration of those six factors cannot be divorced from a good knowledge of politics, economics, and sociology, (Mogbo, 1976; Holmes, 1983; Mogbo, 1998.)

#### 4.0 NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Although construction is a very important factor for the progress of any nation, to us in Nigeria, what is of primary importance is the survival of Nigeria as a viable nation state. A popular Igbo word, "*Igwebuike*" means when translated to English, "*unity is strength*". Once we are united, we shall be capable to strengthen our social, economic, and political aspects of life. On the other hand once we are divided, we cannot achieve much. The post civil war Nigeria has given birth to a strong united black African nation. It was through our unity that we were able to influence some significant political trends that left the emancipation of our African brothers in Southern Africa. It was from our internal unity that we were able to work along with other neighboring states to establish the ECOWAS, which is being transformed into a strong West African political entity. The unity we have in Nigeria

