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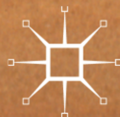
NIGERIA'S UNIVERSITY AGE

REFRAMING DECOLONISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

TIM LIVSEY



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Nigeria's University Age

Reframing Decolonisation and Development

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Cover illustration: University College Ibadan, probably in the late 1950s. On the left is Mellanby Hall, a hall of residence named after the university's founding principal. In the background is the Roman Catholic chapel, one of three places of worship at the university. Both buildings were designed by Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew.
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Preface and Acknowledgements

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This book is a substantially revised and expanded version of my doctoral thesis. I am indebted to my supervisors, Hilary Sapire and Frank Trentmann, for their encouragement and generosity. I am grateful to the Department of History, Classics, and Archaeology at Birkbeck College, University of London, for supporting the project, and to the Arts and Humanities Research Council, which funded my doctoral research studentship (AH/I015787/1). John Darwin and the late J.D.Y. Peel examined the thesis and offered guidance and encouragement with the project. It is a particular sadness not be able to repay Professor Peel's enthusiasm for the research with a copy of the finished book.

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Finally, a few words about my position. This book has been made possible by the people acknowledged here, but responsibility for the text is ultimately mine. This book is the work of a British writer. I have endeavoured to engage with a range of sources and perspectives on the events the book documents. Nevertheless, I grew up mostly in Britain, much of the research for this book has been carried out in London, and my education was made possible through the opportunities afforded me by the British state. These opportunities are scarcer for most Nigerian colleagues. This book is, therefore, the product of the enduring inequalities between global regions that it describes, and readers should approach it mindful of the histories involved in its production. I would like to dedicate it to the staff and students of Nigerian universities: past, present, and future.

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Abbreviations

ACEC	Advisory Committee for Education in the Colonies
AG	Action Group
AID	Agency for International Development
CCNY	Carnegie Corporation of New York
CDW	Colonial Development and Welfare
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CURBML	Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library
DULSC	Durham University Library Special Collections
FF	Ford Foundation
GL	Research and Bibliographic Department (Ghandi Library), University of Lagos Library
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICA	International Cooperation Administration
JICH	*Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*
JLI	Jadeas Library, Ibadan
KDL	Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Africana Collection
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
MSU	Michigan State University
MSUAHC	Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections
NACP	National Archives at College Park, Maryland
NAI	Nigerian National Archive, Ibadan
NCAST	Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology
NCNC	National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons, later National Council for Nigerian Citizens
NNDP	Nigerian National Democratic Party
NPC	Northern People's Congress
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire

RAC	Rockefeller Archives Center
RF	Rockefeller Foundation
RHL	Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House, Oxford
SHLSC	Senate House Library Special Collections, University of London
SND	*Southern Nigeria Defender*
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
TNA	The National Archive, London
UARSP	University Archive and Record Services Project, University of Ibadan
UCI	University College Ibadan
UDP	University Development Program
UH	*University Herald*
UI	University of Ibadan
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WAP	*West African Pilot*
WASU	West African Students' Union

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Nigeria's University Age

In January 1948 a new era was inaugurated in Nigeria, the largest, most populous colony of the British empire. Its first university opened in the city of Ibadan, near Lagos in the southwest of the country. 'We see the University College as a centre where different young men and women from North, East and West will meet, live together as brethren and learn to understand and tolerate one another', declared an editorial in the student-run *University Herald*. 'The University College is bound to be the centre from which the threads of unity in Nigeria will be woven'.[1]

Despite this high-minded confidence, the university in some ways had an inauspicious beginning. It was housed in the dilapidated huts of an old military hospital, and the opening ceremony took place in an assembly hall hastily converted from a former ward building. Only a mid-ranking colonial official, the chief commissioner of the Western Region, attended the festivities.[2] 'Rising amidst cheers Mr Abrahall expressed his pleasure for attending the official opening of the University in one of the largest African cities', reported the *Southern Nigeria Defender*.[3] There were, however, complaints that local dignitaries had not been invited. 'Where then do our chiefs stand in the eyes and estimation of officialdom', asked one editorial.[4] 'We are co-operative with the new venture', announced the nationalist daily the *West African Pilot*, but it cautioned that 'we are duty bound to warn our youth aspiring after higher education to embark on nothing that would eventually turn out to be a Yaba Higher College',

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a reference to the university's unpopular predecessor institution.[5] Nevertheless, over time journalists came to believe that an important milestone had been passed. A year after the opening, a *Southern Nigeria Defender* editorial observed that 'Nigeria has reached the University age'.[6] University College Ibadan was widely discussed, and loomed large in the minds of students, nationalist politicians, colonial officials, and journalists.

Universities were crucial institutions in decolonising nations. Nationalist leaders and colonial authorities saw expensive new universities as a wise investment. They would educate new elites that would lead economic, social, and political progress. Ibadan, and later Nigerian universities, were sites of development and decolonisation: two interrelated, multilateral negotiations that reshaped the mid-twentieth-century world with effects that ranged from the sphere of high politics to the minutiae of everyday life. Unlike the many admirable institutional histories of Nigerian universities, this book takes universities as sites to explore these wider, transnational histories of development and decolonisation.[7] It considers universities' administration, but also addresses the debates around their foundation, cross-border connections, and built environments. The book assesses student culture, universities' role in the Cold War, and in post-colonial politics, to analyse the place of these disparate phenomena in broader histories of development and decolonisation. Universities are important sites for this enquiry because of the striking transnational consensus, from the 1940s to the early 1960s, that they were pivotal institutions. This introduction considers, first, the deeper histories of education in the region, and then outlines the book's contribution to historiographies of development and decolonisation, its sources, and its structure. University College Ibadan was an intervention in a much longer history of West African engagements with education.

University Contexts

Africa was home to diverse forms of knowledge and education long before European colonisation. Orally transmitted systems of knowledge have long flourished without formal educational institutions; while Muslim centres of learning at Cairo, Fez, Timbuktu, and Djenné have, like the universities of medieval Europe, histories that span many centuries.[8] This study focuses on the history of African interactions with forms of education that have roots in the western world.[9] Africans have accessed these educational institutions and forms of knowledge through

a wide variety of encounters associated with exploration, the slave trade and its abolition, missionary activity, colonial rule, diasporic networks, and international development.[10] They played crucial mediating roles in the spread of western education. African repatriates, for example, formerly enslaved peoples who returned to the coast of what would become Nigeria from Latin America and Sierra Leone, were vital intermediaries. Sierra Leone was a particularly important bridgehead for western education in West Africa. Founded in 1787 as a territory for formerly enslaved people, Sierra Leone came under British jurisdiction from 1808.[11] Repatriates travelling from Sierra Leone brought western education and Christianity to much of the West African coast, often in advance of European missionaries and direct colonial rule. Many influential repatriates had studied at Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, founded in 1827 as West Africa's first western-style institution of higher education.[12] The British annexation of Lagos in 1861, and the spread of British jurisdiction along the coast in the 1880s and inland in the 1890s and 1900s, further increased the importance of western education to local people who sought the social status associated with lucrative clerkships in the employ of European governments, missions, or companies.[13]

The West African educated elite campaigned for improved educational opportunities in southern Nigeria during the later nineteenth century. It formed a small but prominent minority, which was often characterised by Christianity as well as styles of education and culture that looked to the west. They were vital protagonists in this story. African pioneers such as the West Indian-born Liberian Edward Blyden called for the foundation of a West African university, for example, and secured the award of British university degrees at Fourah Bay College in 1876.[14] Even when British attitudes towards race hardened from around 1880, missionaries and colonial governments continued to educate a small number of African intermediaries who were essential to their activities in the region, and a tiny but steady flow of West Africans travelled abroad to study at European universities.[15] This contrasted with the predominantly Muslim, inland region of northern Nigeria. Only conquered by the British after 1900, western influence there was short-lived compared with the coastal south. In northern Nigeria, British officials governed in alliance with local emirs and sultans, and placed tight restrictions on Christian missionary activities, including schooling.[16]

In southern Nigeria, educated elites continued to agitate for improved provision of western education, which was seen as central to personal and social development. These campaigns were lent focus by the 1934

foundation of the widely reviled Yaba Higher College in Lagos, which was criticised for offering qualifications tenable only in Nigeria. Nigerian protests won some reforms at Yaba, and contributed to a broader British re-evaluation of the place of higher education in colonial territories. The British government's 'Elliot' Commission on Higher Education in West Africa toured the region in 1944, and encountered strong demand for a Nigerian university. The Elliot report of 1945 failed to reach a clear conclusion, but there was general agreement that higher education would be important to West African development, and, as a result, the new Nigerian university was opened at Ibadan in 1948.[17]

University College Ibadan was not unique, but part of a wider network of new colonial universities founded by the British government. As well as Ibadan, universities were opened in the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Uganda, the West Indies, and Malaya (now Malaysia) in 1948 and 1949. These new institutions awarded University of London degrees, were mostly staffed by British lecturers, and their buildings were designed by British architects. The new universities belonged to a distinctive post-war phase of British colonialism distinguished by 'development', in which the empire was reframed as a force for political, economic, and social progress that would prepare colonies for eventual self-government. Universities were seen as an important part of this new mission, bringing to colonies modern knowledge and skills, which would drive their development and equip them for transfers of power. These doctrines of technocratic, state-led development were not confined to empires. The post-war years saw the growing prominence of development ideas, and the foundation of new universities, across the world. The university age noted by the *Southern Nigeria Defender* was thus a global phenomenon that extended beyond Nigeria and the declining British empire. In the mid-twentieth century, universities were widely understood as central developmental institutions in the west, as well as in the socialist and decolonising worlds.[18]

University College Ibadan's founding principal was the British entomologist Kenneth Mellanby. His boundless energy and sometimes unconventional methods could infuriate colleagues, but got the new institution underway. In 1953, the university administrator J.T. Saunders, brought from Cambridge with a brief to steady the ship, succeeded Mellanby. J.H. Parry followed Saunders in 1957. Parry was a British historian who increased student numbers and prepared Ibadan for the imminent transfer of power. In the independence year of 1960, Kenneth Dike, an eminent historian and University College Ibadan's first Nigerian principal, took charge, and oversaw Ibadan's transition to becoming a full, degree-awarding university.

As the transfer of power neared and new constitutions were introduced in 1951 and 1954, Nigerian politicians took up senior posts within the colonial government. They too saw universities as important to development. In the Eastern Region, the leader of the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), Nnamdi Azikiwe, opened the University of Nigeria, Nsukka to coincide with the transfer of power in 1960, having secured substantial American assistance. In 1962 three more universities were founded in the newly independent nation. The leader of the Action Group (AG), Obafemi Awolowo, founded the University of Ife in the Western Region; Sir Ahmadu Bello, leader of the Northern People's Congress (NPC), inaugurated Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) in the Northern Region; and in the capital, the federal government established the University of Lagos (see Fig. 1.1). Nigeria had a significance in the Cold War that has been little appreciated, but which helped prompt a flood of American development advisors into new Nigerian universities. As the 1960s wore on, universities became embroiled in mounting ethno-political rivalries, and their capacity to generate meaningful development was increasingly questioned as Nigeria slid towards civil war.[19] The university age started to draw to a close.

Today, Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, and is on course to become one of the most populous in the world by 2100. Despite continuing challenges of governance and insurgency, Nigeria is home to an expanding middle class that fascinates journalists and economists.[20] In recent years there has once again been cautious re-evaluation of African universities' potential contribution to development.[21] This is an apposite moment to reconsider Nigeria's university age.

Development

When the *Southern Nigeria Defender* reported the arrival of the university age in 1949, it suggested that Nigeria had progressed to a new stage of development. Development has been a crucial mobilising idea in modern history, although its exact meaning has remained elusive both to those engaged in bringing about development, and to scholars seeking to analyse their activities. Visions of development, and the state of modernity to which they aspired, have varied across time and space.

In this book, the history of Nigerian universities is explored using the concept of 'frames for development'. Modernity and development have often been seen as concepts of universal relevance, but the debates around

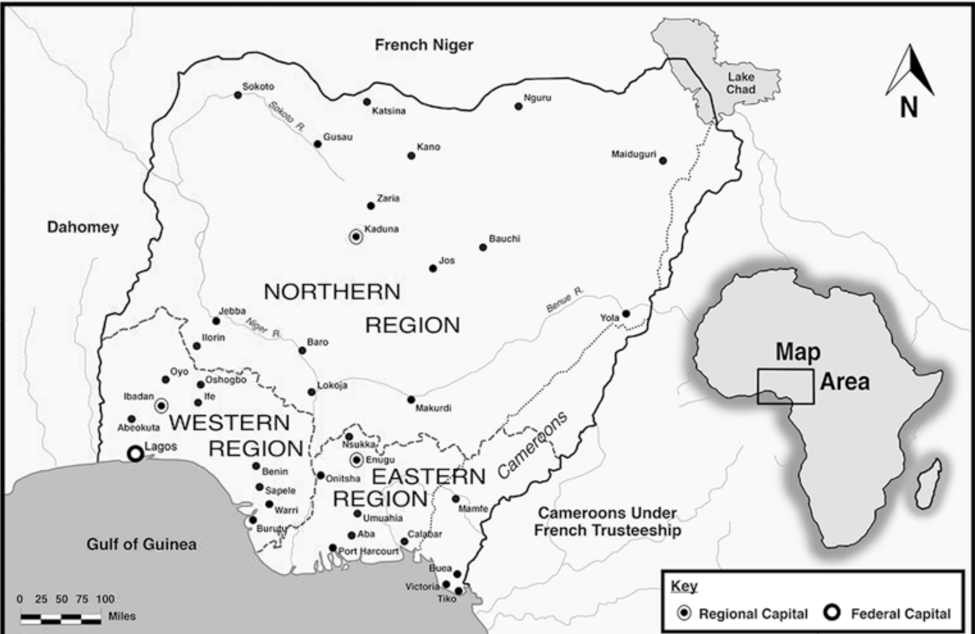

Fig. 1.1 Map of Nigeria in the mid-1950s. Nigeria was formed by the amalgamation of the British-controlled territories of Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria in 1914. The Northern Provinces and the Southern Provinces were the two main administrative units within the new state until 1939, when the Southern Provinces were divided to form the Western Region and the Eastern Region. The North, West, and East formed a three-region system that remained in place until 1963. Note the university city of Ibadan. In the early 1960s universities were also founded in Lagos, Ife, Zaria, and Nsukka. Map by Ashley Crowson.

Nigerian universities suggest that many of those involved thought about development in terms of spaces smaller than the globe: imagined, bounded areas described here as frames for development. These frames implied both the geographical units in which development was envisaged, and the ideas and standards that would be involved. For example, in the 1930s and 1940s some Nigerians campaigned for a university that would award British qualifications recognised throughout the empire, using an imperial frame to imagine development. Others wanted a university that would strongly emphasise indigenous skills and cultures, deploying national or pan-African frames. Some sought a university that would combine British models and qualifications with local culture, using two or more overlapping frames to imagine development. Frames for development ranged from sub-national spaces defined by administrative regions or the presence of an ethnic group, to national frames, and transnational frames such as empires, oceans, continents, and the Cold War-era capitalist and communist worlds. The conceptualisation of development was an imaginative process that often involved the combination of several frames.

People imagined development using frames that seemed to address their local needs, but their thinking was also informed by the movement of ideas, people, and objects through networks of communication and transport. Envisaging development meant making comparisons between places considered more developed and those held to be less developed, but the variety of frames involved meant that conceptions of development were often complex, ambiguous, and contradictory. People with broadly similar worldviews, such as American and British development experts in the 1950s and 1960s, could struggle to agree about development; and even in the era of decolonisation, the nation was not seen as an unambiguous, natural unit of development.[22] Ideas about development were more a messy patchwork than a seamless whole.

In addition to identifying the frames involved in the conception of development, the book studies development as a *practice* in which people set about creating the futures they had envisioned. Development was not only theory. Negotiations about putting development ideas into practice usually involved a range of parties with their own visions of the appropriate aims and methods. These were informed by both local concerns, and impressions of other places considered to be more or less developed. Given the multiplicity of actors and frames involved in negotiations of development, and their ever-changing contexts, no single frame for development could be accepted as definitive. A focus on development practice,

rather than theories, emphasises the importance of these negotiations, and their uncertain outcomes, to experiences of development.

The significance of these points can be better appreciated in relation to the history and historiography of development. The roots of development ideas have often been located in an optimistic conception of humans' ability to bring about progress through the application of reason that emerged in the western world during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[23] By the 1930s, the economic and political crises unleashed by the Depression seemed to many to demand a new kind of developmental response. There were calls across the globe for state-directed development that would mobilise scientific and technical expertise to modernise societies. Nations as diverse as the United States, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union became fascinated with the potential of an alliance between state planning and expertise. In Britain during the 1930s and the years of the Second World War, modernist planners and architects who claimed the expertise to institute development moved from being a small band of insurgents to influential positions within the establishment.[24] British colonial administrators too contemplated developmental responses to the disorders of the later 1930s, which included strikes and riots in the West Indies and West Africa, while educated, elite Nigerians called for the colonial state to take action to improve education and modernise cities.[25] Frederick Cooper and others have seen the 1930s as giving birth to a 'development era' distinguished by transnational optimism about technocratic, state-led development.[26] Across the world, in colonised and non-colonised territories alike, state-led development was seen as the route to socio-economic progress.

These ideas reached their zenith during the era of decolonisation in the 1950s and early 1960s. Concepts of development were sufficiently authoritative and ill-defined for advocates to overlook their inconsistencies. New universities were founded around the world to train experts who would sustain the onward march of development, while the superpowers saw development as a powerful concept that could win Cold War allies amongst decolonising nations. By the mid-1960s, though, the jubilant consensus around technocratic development began to be overshadowed by doubts. It buckled under the weight of its accumulated contradictions, as development plans failed to deliver the progress they had promised and created unanticipated new problems. Development planners faced a furious backlash.

Since this time, development and modernity have been seen as deeply problematic terms. During the 1960s and 1970s, technocratic

development ideas were criticised for in fact delivering underdevelopment and dependency.[27] Development has come to be seen as authoritarian and riddled with racialised western assumptions that were presented as having universal relevance. By the 1990s, scholars including James Scott and James Ferguson argued that development legitimised the global activities of a tiny, unaccountable cadre of mostly western planners.[28] Ferguson and Frederick Cooper contended that the concept of modernity, often the implied goal of development practices, had never been an objective condition but was, and is, merely a 'claim-making concept' or a 'myth'.[29] Technocratic development now looks more like the socio-cultural artefact of a particular historical period rather than a rational, or even scientific, method of transforming societies. The concept of frames for development contributes to this scholarship by exploring how development and modernity were the products of imaginative work that involved a spatial dimension.

The historiography of colonial development since the 1970s, in similar ways to research on development in general, has often concluded that development was inseparable from colonial power and largely directed by European officials. In 1976, D.A. Low and John Lonsdale posited a post-war 'second colonial occupation' of Africa that was distinguished by European technical experts arriving in colonies in unprecedented numbers, intervening more deeply than ever in colonised societies, and provoking new forms of resistance.[30] A few years later, J.M. Lee and Martin Petter interpreted British colonial development as a 'metropolitan initiative' that was planned in London and exported to the colonies.[31] More recently, David Anderson has agreed. 'Nowhere in colonial Africa were Africans participants in the colonial decision-making process that defined development goals', he has argued of rural development projects.[32] American development programmes during the Cold War have frequently been interpreted in a similar way, as privileging foreign agendas at the expense of indigenous aspirations for development.[33]

Colonial universities have rarely been analysed as development projects, but accounts of their history also emphasise Europeans' agency. For the British figures that founded colonial universities, the story was essentially one of how the British Colonial Office embarked upon a new, developmental colonial policy in the years around the Second World War that produced the new institutions.[34] Many historians have agreed, seeing the universities as British-led projects that may

have opened some possibilities for their students, but also perpetuated colonial-era asymmetries of power.[35] Apollos Nwauwa, for example, has acknowledged African demand for universities, but argued that they reflected a British colonial politics that was about 'seizing control for the centre to make and execute policy'.[36]

For a long time, though, there have been scholars who have seen development ideas and practices as emerging from more collaborative, but still unequal, processes. In the 1960s, J.F. Ade Ajayi argued that the development of education in Nigeria was moulded more by Nigerians' demand for certain forms of schooling than by the decisions of colonial officials; and in the 1970s J.D.Y. Peel contended that conceptions of development amongst the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria were formed from a mix of local and imported ideas.[37] By the 1990s, more scholars were rethinking modernity as a concept produced through interactions between global regions, rather than as a western phenomenon exported to the rest of the world. Dipesh Chakrabarty argued that western concepts that claimed universal relevance invariably encountered pre-existing local ideas, creating mixed conceptions of modernity; while S.N. Eisenstadt envisioned 'multiple modernities', with modernity a hybrid produced by diverse groups' appropriation of the concept on their own terms.[38]

This pioneering work, together with wider scholarship on postcolonialism, globalisation, and networks, has made possible a reappraisal of colonial development which sees it as a process characterised by asymmetries of power, but which was nevertheless interactive and multi-directional.[39] Monica van Beusekom advocated a paradigm of 'negotiated development', which makes room for the involvement of colonised peoples as well as colonial officials in the formation of development practice.[40] Joseph Hodge and Julia Tischler too have argued that, even in colonial contexts, developmental expertise and practice was shaped by criss-crossing flows of people and ideas.[41] This interest in the co-creation of colonial development has drawn on recognition of African intermediaries' crucial role in relations between Africa and other parts of the world before, during, and after colonial rule.[42] The history of development has thus come to look more like an episode in a longer history of encounters between global regions which, as Sebastian Conrad has argued, is probably better conceptualised as a multilateral tangle of transnational engagements rather than in terms of bilateral relationships, as in the older historiography of colonial development.[43]

A focus on the uncertain world of putting development plans into practice, rather than on development theories, offers a route towards a fuller exploration of the role of contingency in negotiations of development, and further recognition that these negotiations involved not only planners and politicians, but also other protagonists who negotiated development through their experience of everyday life. A wide range of people and forms of knowledge were involved in negotiations of development at Nigerian universities. Development practice involved Nigerians, Americans, British, and others who conceived of development using a variety of frames. Their visions were combined through negotiation to create new ideas and experiences of development. If development was intended as an instrument of control, in practice its effects were uncertain. At times, development negotiations produced moments of consensus, when it seemed as if many actors visualised development using similar frames. At other times negotiations were marked by disagreement. They failed to create a harmonious modern world, producing instead only new iterations of development negotiations. The importance of practice to experiences of development suggests the value of detailed historical studies of particular development projects at a local level, which remain relatively scarce.[44]

Universities are apt sites for such enquiries because they were locations where development was imagined, practised, and contested. The announcement in the *Southern Nigeria Defender* that the university age had arrived suggested that there were universal stages of development that all nations would eventually pass through. A focus on frames for development and the ways in which it was negotiated in practice emphasises that development was invariably more complex and contentious than a linear, stage-by-stage progress towards modernity. Decolonisation, too, is a freighted word that demands further discussion.

Decolonisation

This book uses evidence from universities to reassess histories of decolonisation. It was no coincidence that decolonisation coincided with the age of technocratic development. New visions of colonies' social and economic prospects implied a re-evaluation of their political future. Scholars have used the term 'decolonisation' in a variety of senses, two of which are particularly relevant here.[45] Decolonisation suggests change at the level of high politics: a process in which nationalist leaders and British officials

negotiated transfers of power, distinguished by constitution-writing and state-building. The high politics of British decolonisation lasted many years, defining a late colonial era that got underway slowly in the 1940s and peaked with transfers of power in the 1960s. Decolonisation can also be seen as a more socio-cultural process of addressing and ameliorating legacies of colonial rule. Decolonisation in this sense involved more people. Instead of being confined to meeting rooms in colonial and imperial capitals, it encompassed patterns of everyday life, and outlasted the period associated with the high politics of decolonisation. Indeed, this socio-cultural negotiation of decolonisation continues today. The high politics and cultural processes of decolonisation were at once related, and distinguished by the people and periods involved.

The colonial state formed a vital arena for the political and cultural dynamics of decolonisation. Considering this state arena offers historians a route towards responding to calls for further study of the cultural dimensions of empire and decolonisation, and examining the interaction between 'top down' and 'bottom up' dynamics in decolonisation.[46] In the 1930s, before decolonisation and Nigeria's university age, British colonial states in Africa tended to be small, with limited revenues and few employees.[47] Rather than intervening extensively in African societies, colonial states restricted their goals to the maintenance of order and the 'gatekeeper' function of regulating and taxing the movement of people and goods across colonies' borders.[48] The prevailing colonial ideology of indirect rule suggested that the government of colonised people should be left as much as possible to 'native authorities' led by local chiefs. From the 1940s to the 1960s, colonial administrators adopted a different approach. They sought to build modern states that would one day become self-governing. These new-style colonial states were larger, with improved capacity to plan and oversee political, social, and economic development. State revenues were increased, including through the allocation of new funds from metropolitan Britain, and the ranks of state employees grew.[49] An influx of foreign development experts in the employ of the state after 1945 formed the foot soldiers of the second colonial occupation identified by Low and Lonsdale.[50] This transformation of colonial states was immensely significant, and has often not been sufficiently emphasised in analyses of colonial legacies.[51] Decolonisation was partly a process of enlarging the state, and universities were at the heart of these changes.

Universities have often been seen as non-state institutions; but in Nigeria, and many other territories, universities were so densely

interconnected with the state for them to be virtually indistinguishable.[52] Nigerian universities were founded and funded by the state, and were deeply enmeshed with colonial and postcolonial states. Like other state and semi-state institutions founded during decolonisation, including legislatures and state corporations, universities formed part of the arena in which decolonisation was negotiated.

Although they have rarely been considered as such, universities were quintessential institutions of decolonisation that exemplify decolonising states' increasing heterogeneity.[53] British colonial states underwent 'Africanisation', a policy of appointing Africans to senior civil service posts from which they had generally been excluded. Students at University College Ibadan were expected to take up senior state posts opened up by Africanisation, and one day to lead the self-governing nation. Nigerian lecturers at University College Ibadan were also beneficiaries of Africanisation, and nationalist politicians were put in a position to found new universities because they held state posts opened by decolonisation's constitutional changes. At universities, and elsewhere in the state, Nigerians gained more influence during decolonisation.

Nigerian universities also exemplified decolonising states' increased openness to new influences from overseas, seen in their recruitment of multi-national bodies of lecturers, growing American involvement in the context of the Cold War, and the engagement of international organisations such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (better known as the World Bank).[54] The new universities formed part of the decolonisation-era growth of the state, which saw its interventionist capacity expand even as its personnel became more heterogeneous. Instead of being run by a tiny nucleus of British colonial officers, states became sites where the meaning of decolonisation was contested.[55] These larger, more plural colonial states were bequeathed to independent African nations.

High politics was evidently important to colonial states' transformation, but it had enormous socio-cultural implications as well. Universities were places where people lived, sites of everyday life, and arenas in which the cultural and quotidian dimensions of decolonisation were made manifest. This makes them good locations to study the interaction of the high politics of decolonisation with its cultural dimensions. Africanisation created a new elite of Nigerians who held senior posts in state and semi-state organisations, including civil servants and university lecturers, and those who expected to, like university students. Their novel place in a

decolonising society implied new forms of everyday life. These elite Africans lived in distinct built environments provided by the state that had previously been restricted to Europeans. They were relatively well paid, and worked in institutions that were deeply shaped by British and imperial frames of reference. At University College Ibadan, students were often considered suspiciously Anglophile, and the university's buildings have been viewed with misgiving as embodying British norms that were left implanted in African soil even after the colonisers departed.[56]

The foundation of new institutions and the emergence of new cultures of everyday life during decolonisation involved a political economy of 'standards' that were often presented as universal but which were informed by distinctively British and imperial frames for development. The importance invested in these standards influenced virtually every aspect of decolonisation, from high politics to everyday life, and proved strikingly resilient, far outlasting political transfers of power.[57] The ongoing salience of standards associated with Britain continued well after independence to associate Nigerian universities with what Tamson Pietsch has called a 'British academic world'.[58] Colonial universities offer a new perspective on decolonisation that highlights the importance of state institutions as sites where its political and cultural dimensions interacted. Universities have the additional advantage to historians of being documented by a wealth of historical sources, many of them little used.

Sources

The book draws on a variety of sources, representing a range of perspectives, to illuminate histories of development and decolonisation. All of the sources used naturally offer partial evidence that requires critical reading and comparison with other sources. Nigerian university archives have been little used by historians, especially historians of development and decolonisation. This research drew on the archives of the University of Ibadan and the University of Lagos, and on records from Yaba Higher College, the highest educational institution in Nigeria from 1934 until Ibadan was established 1948.[59] These collections hold important sources on these institutions' foundation, operation, overseas connections, and everyday life. In Britain, the archives of the University of London and Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies have been consulted, and in the United States the archive of Michigan State

University, for evidence of their programmes of assistance to Nigerian universities.[60] They too form significant and under-used resources for histories of development.

Extensive use has been made of sources that illuminate the socio-cultural dimensions of development and decolonisation. This includes evidence about the planning, construction, and use of university buildings, including architects' papers and buildings themselves.[61] The study of the University College Ibadan buildings, in conjunction with archives about their tortured conception, reveals the assumptions involved in their planning. The buildings and spaces designed around 1950 can be contrasted with later extensions for evidence of changing expectations of student life during decolonisation, for example, while walking university campuses contributes to an appreciation of expectations about their use, including by affording a sense how they were intended to relate to the neighbouring city.

Student magazines, essays, and short stories offer abundant evidence of young Nigerians' perspectives on everyday life at universities, as do novels written by former students.[62] Student magazines often included photographs, which offer evidence of built environments and dress.[63] The personal papers of staff and visitors can offer useful impressions of university life, as do student and staff memoirs, although they can betray signs of nostalgia.[64] Interviews with former students, staff, and their families have been used, and some conducted especially for this book.[65] Like all historical sources, interviews must be treated critically, but they form an important source on university social and cultural life. Nigerian universities were also objects of study during decolonisation, particularly by American social scientists interested in modernisation, whose work includes useful detail about university life.[66]

Historians are fortunate that Nigeria was home to an exceptionally vibrant, Nigerian-owned press during decolonisation.[67] It was a vital part of the Nigerian public sphere, and a forum for vigorous debate about higher education, development, and decolonisation. Official and semi-official reports, and especially the personal papers of those involved in writing them, offer important evidence on university planning; and government archives offer voluminous documentation on universities and the high politics of decolonisation.[68] The Nigerian National Archive, Ibadan holds the records of the central colonial government of Nigeria, and the National Archive in London the records of the British government, including the Colonial Office.[69] The colonial

archive forms a distinctive corpus, shaped by the preoccupations and processes of colonial government in ways that offer historians opportunities for insight into the mentalities that underpinned colonial rule, but demand careful and critical use.[70] The United States National Archive in College Park, Maryland holds records of the American government's activities in Nigeria, including the files of the Agency for International Development (AID), its predecessors, and records produced by American diplomats stationed in Nigeria.[71] Sources produced by representatives of the United States government share some of the qualities of colonial archives, including the potential for racialised views of Nigerian development. The archives of the major American philanthropic foundations that assisted Nigerian universities have similar qualities.[72] This wide-ranging body of evidence has been consulted to permit a reassessment of development and decolonisation that reaches from the local to the transnational, and from high politics to everyday life.

Chapters

The book falls into three sections. Chapter 2 considers the period before Nigeria's first university was founded, addressing debates that led to the dawn of the university age in 1948. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 concentrate on the period associated with decolonisation, from the late 1940s to around 1960, when University College Ibadan was Nigeria's only university. Finally, Chapters 6 and 7 focus on the era of the transfer of power itself in the later 1950s and 1960s, which saw the foundation of new universities and increasing American involvement in Nigerian affairs.

Chapter 2 explores the pre-history of Nigeria's university age by considering the debates that led to the foundation of University College Ibadan in 1948. It addresses the importance of Nigerian demands for improved higher education, with a particular focus on opposition to Ibadan's predecessor institution Yaba Higher College and the British government's formation of the Elliot Commission, whose 1945 report recommended establishing a university at Ibadan. The chapter argues that Ibadan was not purely a colonial development project, but was shaped by deeply rooted West African visions of progress. The university was the outcome of a lengthy negotiation informed by Nigeria's position within the British empire.

Chapter 3 concerns the politics of university development from 1948 to 1960. It argues that University College Ibadan should be seen as part of

the second colonial occupation of Africa, and as part of the decolonisation-era growth of the state. The university brought foreign experts to Nigeria and in some ways exemplified the continuing authority of British norms and practices. It also weakened British control over the Nigerian state, by opening Nigeria to new influences, creating new links with foreign institutions, and offering a prominent site where the terms of development and decolonisation could be debated. Nigerians held the university to account in newspaper columns and legislatures, showing how in practice colonial development was contingent and contested.

The spaces of the university are considered in Chapter 4. The chapter argues that built environments formed another arena in which development and decolonisation were experienced. Rather than simply representing an expression of colonial power, the meanings around the Ibadan university buildings were ambiguous and subject to debate. A surprising range of actors was involved in planning the buildings. Differing expectations of university space, including disagreements between and amongst Nigerian elites, colonial officials, and university administrators, meant that complete agreement about suitable university buildings remained elusive. Even when the buildings were complete, their meanings continued to shift in relation to changing negotiations of development and decolonisation in which buildings were one form of intervention amongst many.

Student culture is the focus of Chapter 5. The chapter considers Ibadan students and their daily life to examine relationships between culture and decolonisation. It argues that students cultivated cultural competences associated with the British that helped them to take advantage of the new opportunities created by decolonisation-era state-building. Nevertheless, the students also engaged in a range of other activities associated with pan-African, national, ethnic, and other frames of reference. Student culture was never entirely defined by university authorities, but formed a field for students to explore and express their place in a decolonising society. The chapter analyses a 1957 outbreak of student disorder to consider the tensions around youth, gender, and generation at University College Ibadan, before considering changes in student culture in the later 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter 6 explains the growing involvement of the American government and foundations in Nigerian higher education during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Americans considered Nigeria to have a greater Cold War significance than historians have generally recognised, and embarked on development programmes intended to further American aims in relation