

Higher Education Expansion Policies and Demographic Change: A Comparative Study of the University of Ibadan and University of Ghana, Legon (1948–1962)

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Abstract

This study analyses the demographic evolution of West Africa's pioneer higher education institutions—the University of Ibadan (UCI), Nigeria, and the University of Ghana, Legon (UG) -between 1948 and 1962. Framed around the political economy of education (PEE) and historical institutionalism (HI), this paper contextualizes the operational adaptability of UCI and UG to rising student enrollment from late colonial rule to early national independence. Historically, the literature on early West African higher education has focused extensively on political nationalism, leaving a significant gap in data-driven demographic histories and the socioeconomic shifts in the student body. This article addresses this gap through a comparative method, analyzing how state expansion policies democratized access while transforming student demography during the period of study. It also investigates the infrastructural strain caused by the state-mandated expansion policies and argues that rather than institutional inertia, the era was marked by administrative resilience and tactical adaptation. Both universities managed the demographic shift by altering rigid on-campus accommodation policies, introducing applied academic disciplines, providing new lecture halls, and diversifying funding sources through collaboration with state marketing boards and international foundations. The study employs a comparative historical methodology that juxtaposes primary archival documents, institutional enrollment registries, and official policy papers with relevant secondary sources. The study's primary contribution is to offer vital historical insights for modern educational planners, showing that sustainable higher education policy requires adaptive, fluid organizational structures capable of responding to shifting contexts.

Keywords: University College Ibadan, University of Cape Coast, Legon, Expansion Policy, Demography, Historical Institutionalism

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Introduction

The establishment of the University College, Ibadan, Nigeria, and the University College of the Gold Coast (now the University of Ghana, Legon) in 1948 marked a watershed moment in the history of West African higher education. Founded on the recommendations of the Asquith and Elliot Commissions, these premier institutions were designed to midwife a highly educated bureaucratic and intellectual elite capable of steering their respective nations toward self-governance. However, the period spanning 1948 to 1962 was characterized by profound political, economic, and social transitions, as both Nigeria and Ghana moved from late-colonial rule to sovereign statehood (Adewoye, 2000). Amidst this whirlwind of decolonisation, the demographic landscape of these universities underwent a radical transformation that fundamentally challenged their foundational mandates.

Scholarly publications on early West African higher education obsess over themes of political nationalism, colonial intellectual imperialism, and the struggles for curricular autonomy while overlooking the shifts in student demographics and the factors driving them. (Mojuetan, 2000). The initial cohorts of students were structurally shaped by geographical proximity to coastal urban centres, the restrictive secondary school funnel and high density of children associated with Christian missionary activity. The massive injection of state funding, the expansion of regional scholarship schemes, and the diversification of course offerings democratized access, allowing individuals from a cross-section of socioeconomic backgrounds to gain admission.

Second, this rapid democratization of access triggered an immediate structural crisis. Driven by the urgent nationalist demand for a high-level workforce, expansion policies focused disproportionately on inflating student enrollment numbers. However, institutional planning and policies were adjusted to match this demographic surge with a corresponding expansion of physical infrastructure. Consequently, lecture theatres and laboratories were expanded, new courses were offered, and residential accommodation was provided. By utilizing a comparative historical lens, this article examines how both universities navigated the delicate balance between expanding social access and maintaining infrastructural integrity between 1948 and 1962 (Omorege, 2000).

This study adopts a comparative historical methodology to analyze the demographic and institutional trajectories of both universities. The comparative approach is premised on their shared commonalities: both institutions share a parallel lineage and are the result of the same colonial policy framework (the Asquith Colleges scheme). Both were established in the same year and were initially affiliated with the University of London. By holding these structural origins constant, the study isolates how differing funding mechanisms, regional pressures and campus infrastructure directly shaped changing student demographics (Ejike, 2024).

The empirical evidence for this study is drawn from a rigorous triangulation of primary archival sources and secondary academic literature: The core demographic data, enrollment statistics, and social background records are extracted from official institutional archives.

These include the *Annual Reports of the Principal*, *University Calendar registers*, student enrollment ledgers, and minutes from the University Senate and Council meetings at both Ibadan and Legon (Ejike, 2024). To contextualize the archival data, this study engages with existing institutional histories, biographical accounts of early alumni, and broader historical literatures on West African decolonisation and educational planning.

The mismatch between increased student enrollment and the fulfillment of political mandates was not matched by adequate infrastructural and socioeconomic resources, necessitating fundamental changes by both governments and private institutions. Crucially, institutional and governmental efforts to address these resource deficits took distinct paths, shaping student demographics differently in both territories. By historicizing this crisis at the University of Ibadan and the University of Ghana, this study problematizes the structural origins of massification, offering critical insights into the identical funding, infrastructural, and capacity deficits that plague the West African university system today.

Theoretical Framework

To analyze the relationship between student demographic growth, socioeconomic access, and institutional capacity at the University of Ibadan and the University of Ghana, Legon, between 1948 and 1962, this study synthesizes two complementary academic lenses. The first is the political economy of education (PEE) perspective, attributed to scholars like Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, and Martin Carnoy, who drew inspiration from Karl Marx. Essentially, this school of thought views educational systems like the UCI and UG as tools that serve the state and the economic interests of the ruling class; as such, institutions are fundamentally shaped by the distribution of wealth and state policies. Accordingly, both universities emerged as a calculated mechanism by the British colonial government during the late colonial period to cultivate a specific managerial class to protect the interests of the state. (Carnoy, 2024). However, proponents of PEE often ignore institutional autonomy and the fact that institutions are shaped by several factors, such as students, faculty, and other historical complexities, that are independent of state control. Besides, it is rather reductionist to assume that colonized populations are passive victims of imperial financial engineering and that graduates of both universities functioned to preserve British interests alone. Contrary to this view, the early cohorts of both UCI and UG became the intellectual architects of radical African nationalism, decolonization and cultural reclamation.

This study employs historical institutionalism (HI) to show how institutional designs, policies, and early decisions create long-term structural paths that are difficult to change (a concept known as "path dependency"). This perspective is mainly by Theda Skocpol, Peter Hall and Paul Pierson (Lynch & Rhodes, 2016). Many related positions, they argue that institutions are often rigid, and their internal planning mechanisms frequently lag behind fast-moving external demographic pressures. This framework helps explain why expansion policies fail to align with campus realities. University administrators and governments prioritized the immediate, politically popular goal of increasing

enrollment numbers to meet the workforce needs of newly independent nations. However, because infrastructural planning operates on a slower, rigid bureaucratic path, the physical expansion of lecture halls, laboratories, and hostels lagged severely behind. While HI explains institutional inertia, the case of UCI and UG instead demonstrates institutional flexibility and resilience. Besides, proponents of HI tend to centre on government actors and the top cadre of the administration, treating institutions as ‘iron cages’ where change happens only from the top down rather than bottom up, and, as such, ignoring the agency of students and non-state actors. To justify its flaws, the demographic shifts witnessed in UCI and UG were not simply passive results of political mandates alone. However, they were also shaped by students’ protests and subaltern adaptations to changing campus spaces.

A Brief Administrative History of the University College, Ibadan

To accelerate the smooth take-off of the pioneer University Colleges in West Africa colonies, the Secretary of State for the Colonies officially announced the key actors who would use their expertise to manage the institution's academic activities. Thus, in May 1947, Dr. Kenneth Mellanby was appointed principal-designate of the new University College in Ibadan. He arrived in Nigeria from the United Kingdom in July 1947 (Mellanby, 1958). At the time of his arrival, there was no college, no building, no student body, no staff, no governing body. His first step was to transfer students from the old Yaba Higher College to Ibadan. They formed the nucleus of the new university college. (Fafunwa, 1971). In the meantime, the Nigerian government made arrangements to house the college on a temporary site at Ibadan – in old army barracks which was also used as an army hospital during World War II.

After securing a temporary campus and a student population, the first entrance examination for admission to the University College was held in Ibadan in November 1947 (Fafunwa, 1971). On January 18, 1948, the college commenced activities with about 104 students and thirteen instructors comprising the nucleus of the new college (National Archives, 1945).

The University had begun its second year in October 1948 with 210 students, including new students admitted as a result of the entrance examination taken in November of the previous year. Of the total students’ intake, 176 were undergraduates, and twenty-five were ‘attending special courses leading to diplomas’. From its humble beginning, the University College grew to become one of the most revered higher institutions of learning in Nigeria, Africa, and the Commonwealth of Nations (National Archive, 1945).

A Brief Administrative History of the University College, Gold Coast (Ghana)

The University College of the Gold Coast, Ghana, was established by the Ordinance on August 11th, 1948, to provide for and promote university education, learning, and research (Agbodeka, 1978). Its first Principal was Mr. David Mowbray Balme, and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and

Professor of Classics at the University of London (University of Ghana Calendar, 1978). With his appointment as Principal-Designate of the University College, Balme visited the Gold Coast in September, Legon Hill, where the permanent site would be, and Achimota College was designed for the temporary take-off. His visit to Ghana in preparation for the new task helped him familiarize himself with the people and the environment before he resumed his official assignment, and he ultimately kept his promise to lay a solid foundation for the establishment of the University College in the Gold Coast (Agbodeka, 1978).

Mr. Balm was farsighted, courageous and dedicated to an ideal of scholarship. Despite the limited resources at his disposal, his vision, industry, and single-minded purpose enabled him to build a college and lay the foundations of a sound University education system, which is now a source of pride to the people of Ghana, the African continent, and the world at large. In his ten years of leadership as the principal, he created an institution whose keynote was orderly living with dignity in a community of scholars. Like UCI, the Gold Coast University College started on the Achimota College grounds, with about 90 students transferred from Achimota Higher College to form the institution's pioneer students in 1948. The University later moved to its permanent site to Legon campus in 1952.

Students Demographics at Inception of UCI and UG

The UCI and UG commenced operations in 1948 as a highly controlled micro-demographic experiment in West Africa's higher education (Agbodeka, 1978). Rather than serving as engines for mass regional literacy, British colonial policymakers designed both institutions as highly insulated, low-density academic enclaves. UCI opened its gates to a foundational cohort of just 104 students composed of existing students transferred from the Higher College Yaba and distributed across the Faculty of Arts, Sciences and Medicine (Ade Ajayi & Tamuno, 1973). Its initial enrollment at Achimota (before relocation to Legon) was similarly minuscule, drawing a baseline cohort of 90 undergraduates (Agbodeka, 1978). This quantitative baseline in students' demographics at both universities reveals the underlying philosophy of the colonial higher education project: practical utility over mass literacy and, in practice, training a small, loyal elite to assist in lower-level administration and economic exploitation. This explains why numerical restriction was used as a deliberate mechanism of social selection and cultural insulation.

Students Demography and Gender Ratio

The initial demographic profile of both universities was marked by absolute homogeneity. First, it was an overwhelming male monoculture. Women were almost completely absent at the opening of UCI, accounting for less than 5% of the initial population. This gender imbalance in students' demography is traceable to the colonial secondary school pipeline, which systematically prioritized boys for academic tracks where they had to pass the Cambridge School Certificate or the London Matriculation examinations, while funneling girls into domestic science, nursing, or primary school teaching (Fafunwa, 1974). To be sure, the earliest boys' secondary schools in the Gold Coast that prepared male students for university matriculation were the Mfantshipim School, Cape

Coast founded in 1876 by the Methodists Mission, The Ghana Secondary Technical School (GSTS), Takoradi, founded by the government in 1909, Adisadel College, Cape Coast founded by the Anglican Mission in 1910 and Achimota School also founded by the government in 1924. Although Wesley Girls High School was founded in 1894 early as 1936 it started off as a primary school before it transformed to a secondary school. The Aburi Girls' Secondary School was founded in 1946 and also began as a primary school in 1852 (Graham, 1971). It was the Holy Child School, also founded in 1946, that was explicitly designed to prepare girls for higher professional and tertiary education. British colonial policies for higher education were inherently biased in favour of men. This explains the disparity in gender ratio at the UG from inception. At this time, the gender ratio was 88 male students to 2 female students, representing 98% male to 2% female. While the first set of male students graduated from UG in 1951, the first female student, Elizabeth Baaaaba Sey, graduated in 1953, earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree (Graham, 1971).

Similarly, among the boys' secondary schools that served as a pipeline to funnel male students into the University of Ibadan were CMS Grammar School, Lagos founded in 1859, Methodist Boys High School, Lagos in 1878, Kings College, in 1909 and Ibadan Grammar School, Ibadan in 1913 (Fafunwa, 1974). As in the Gold Coast, girls' secondary schools were few in Nigeria, and even so, their curriculum in the early decades was heavily dominated by training in domestic economy. The earliest girls' secondary school in Nigeria was Methodist Girls High School, Lagos, founded by the Methodist Mission in 1879. It was followed by Queen's College, Lagos, founded by the Government in 1927, while St Theresa's College was founded by the Catholic Missions in 1933. (Fafunwa, 1974). In all, the curriculum was guided by a paternalistic and gender-segregated educational policy. The girls' secondary schools were therefore designed to prepare women to be good homemakers, prioritizing practical training in sewing, cookery, and needlework. At the same time, boys were taught mathematics, Latin, or pure sciences required to clear the London Matriculation Examinations. This explains why, out of the first cohort of 104 students in Ibadan in 1948, only four were women, with Felicia Adetowun Omolara Ogunseye as the first woman admitted to UCI. It is also important to stress that these first four women all attended Queen's College, Lagos, which was specifically established to provide elite, rigorous education to young women. The school continued to serve as the primary feeder line for female university candidates in Nigeria during this period of study.

Another feature of the students' demographics in both institutions at inception was their bifurcated age cohorts. As the first universities in the West Africa region, the two universities attracted students across generational divides. The foundation cohort was highly structured by age and included young secondary school graduates who completed and obtained their secondary school certificates at elite feeder schools. Among them were older, mature students who had spent years working as primary school teachers, Catechists, or low-level colonial clerks, as well as individuals studying independently through correspondence courses while waiting for the universities to commence activities (Tamuno, 1973).

The residential policy also shaped students' demographics in both universities. The institution's policy mandated that all students live on campus to enable them to absorb an elite academic lifestyle (Oyebade, 2024). Under the Asquith doctrine, residential life was treated as an invisible part of the curriculum. At Ibadan, architects Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew designed the early permanent structures—such as Mellanby and Tedder Halls—with high-quality, single-study bedrooms, formal dining halls, and manicured courtyards. Similarly, at Legon, the architecture of Commonwealth and Akuafo Halls mirrored the elite, collegiate traditions of Oxford and Cambridge, featuring mandatory academic gowns for dinners and high-table hierarchies. This policy created an incredibly exclusive student demographic in both universities. It meant that the physical number of single-occupancy bed spaces served as a rigid administrative cap on the student population. The initial student body took on a campus identity as a highly insulated elite (Agbodeka, 1998).

Beyond the institutional mandates by the Asquith commissions, geographical proximity to Western-style educational infrastructure was another structural factor that shaped student demographics in both institutions at inception. Admission to UCI and UG was entirely dependent on passing the grueling Cambridge School Certificate or London Matriculation examinations (Oyebade, 2024). However, the opportunity to prepare for these exams was not evenly distributed across either colony. Rather, it was gatekept by a high concentration of secondary schools in the Southern Protectorate (Oyebade, 2024). Consequently, the students' data revealed a stark spatial disparity marked by students clusters in southern coastal regions and a complete absence in the northern regions. In Nigeria, elite feeder schools included King's College Lagos, Government College Umuahia, and CMS Grammar School, Lagos, among others, and they were located in the East and Western Coastal regions of Nigeria. This created a severe geographic asymmetry at Ibadan, where students from the West and East overwhelmingly dominated the student demographic. The massive Northern region, where Islamic educational traditions prevailed and colonial policy restricted Western missionary schools, was starkly underrepresented (Oyebade, 2024). However, the under-representation of northern students at UCI resulted from a combination of interrelated factors. British policy itself was shaped by the northern Muslim oligarchy's intense desire to preserve the Islamic faith and its structures of socio-political control rather than being an independent colonial agenda. As a trade-off, Christian missionary activity was limited in order to preserve the Islamic religion and its structures from Western cultural and religious influence in the region. The shortage of northern students was not a deliberate design by the British but also reflected the northern education system itself. It was intentionally tailored to the oligarchies' isolationist desires. At the same time, the colonial government established schools around the same period as those in the west and eastern regions of Nigeria, such as St John's Bida founded by the CMS in 1909, Alhuda-Huda College, Zaria founded by the premier government, Government College, Bida in 1912 and in particular Barewa College, Zaria, founded

by Governor Hugh Clifford in 1921. These schools were mostly designed for local employment. Barewa College was the most famous historic college, as it was designed to train the sons of the northern Muslim oligarchy for local civil service. With guaranteed jobs for the northern secondary school graduates in northern civil service and teaching ranks, the incentive for higher education was further reduced.

The student demographic reflected a comparative pattern in the Gold Coast; just like Nigeria, the Northern Territories of Ghana were virtually invisible in the early university students' profile (Ejike, 2024). The institutional pipeline favored the coastal and southern areas, where schools like Achimota, Mfantsipim, and Adisadel College were clustered (Ejike, 2024). In reality therefore, while the "merit-based admission policy of 1948 favoured anyone who made it into the examination room, the geography of colonial infrastructure ensured that only a very specific regional demographic ever stepped through that door (Nyaku, 2024). The policy meant that schools' admission policy had to undergo deliberate adjustment mechanisms to democratize access and to meet societal demands. At inception, therefore, the composition of students in both universities was shaped by the constraints of colonial higher education philosophy and the existing layout of colonial education infrastructure, which was deeply conflated with regional and religious cleavages.

State-mandated Expansion Policies and Student Demographic Mutations from the 1950's

The early 1950s were marked by student demographic shifts triggered largely by political leaders whose legislative and financial interventions reshaped the size, age, socio-economic background, gender ratio, and ethno-religious composition of the student population in both universities.

The implementation of the 1951/1952 Macpherson Constitution regionalized politics in Nigeria, granting fiscal autonomy to the Western, Eastern, and Northern regions (Ejiogu, 1985). This triggered an immediate "scholarship war" as regional premiers rushed to train local civil servants, causing an initial surge in enrollment at University College Ibadan (UCI), which jumped from 210 students in 1950 to over 400 by 1953 (Ade Ajayi, 1973).

The Gold Coast Accelerated Development Plan for Education (January 1952) had the potential to increase student enrollment into the UG. Launched by Kwame Nkrumah's early colonial cabinet, this policy radically expanded primary and secondary school infrastructure across the Gold Coast (Avotri, 2003). By vastly broadening the bottom of the educational pyramid, it acted as a delayed funnel that forced the University College of the Gold Coast to expand its capacity, driving student numbers past the 500 milestone by 1955 as a younger generation emerged (Avotri, 2003).

The expansion policy was also implemented through the Introduction of the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level (1951–1953): The transition from the old London Matriculation exams to the Cambridge/West African Examinations Council (WAEC) GCE A-Level system streamlined university preparation. This created a standardized "Sixth Form" pipeline (Nwadinigwe, 2024). This structural policy change inverted the age cohort, transforming the campus demographic from a

bifurcated mix of older, self-taught teachers to a younger population of 18-to-22-year-olds entering university straight from secondary school.

Similar steps were taken in Nigeria, particularly in the Western Region, to boost the University student population. The Western Region Free Universal Primary Education (UPE) (January 1955), initiated by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, was one such step. This initiative sparked a psychological demand for mass higher education in the Western Region. While it targeted primary schools, the accompanying expansion of secondary and teacher-training schools forced UCI to structurally accommodate larger student volumes, contributing to a steep enrollment climb that reached 1,200 students by 1959 (Ajayi, 1973).

The Opening of the University College Hospital, Ibadan (November 1957) was another major step that drove student enrollment figures upwards. Before this date, medical students had to be shipped to the UK for clinical training because local facilities were inadequate, capping medical intake. The opening of this 500-bed facility broke the physical bottleneck, allowing the medical student demographic to fully internalize and expand on local soil (Ade Ajayi, 1973).

The Creation of the Special Scholarship Scheme for the Northern Territories (1957) was another policy that promoted students' enrolment into Legon. Immediately following Ghana's independence on 6 March 1957, Nkrumah's government launched this targeted scheme to counter the coastal, Christian school monopoly (Agbodeka). This targeted policy directly injected northern and Muslim students into the University College of the Gold Coast (Legon), fundamentally altering the ethnic and religious demographic profile of the campus to foster national unity (Agbodeka, 1978).

Despite the rise in student enrolment, women still represented only about 5.5% of the student population at UCI in 1957. Out of about 563 students, women comprised only 31. The 1957 Visitation Report to the University College, Ibadan states that of the 31 female students, 21 were from the western region, 7 from the eastern region, 2 from Southern Cameroun and 1 from Sierra Leone.

The Ashby Commission Report (September 1960), titled *Investment in Education*, submitted on the eve of Nigeria's independence, marked a major leap forward for higher education in Nigeria (Omolewa, 2010). First, it was the first official legal mechanism in which Nigerian educationists worked closely with American and British educationists to determine the country's higher education framework. It also pioneered a fundamental paradigm shift away from traditional colonial education policies, positioning education as a vital economic investment, indispensable for national development (Omolewa, 2010). This document provided the structural justification that accelerated UCI's final push to over 1,500 students by 1962, signaling the formal demise of the low-density colonial enclave (Ade Ajayi, 1973).

Another factor that promoted higher education expansion was funding from philanthropic organisations, especially after the regional and national governments took over the marketing boards in the mid-1950s. To bridge the widening gap between state allocations and rising student numbers, universities aggressively courted international foundations such

as the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Nuffield Foundation. Funding from these organizations targeted breaking specific demographic bottlenecks. They bypassed government bureaucracy by directly funding advanced research fellowships, medical research equipment, and the foreign training of promising African faculty members. With this support, both universities were able to maintain international academic standards and expand their research profiles without straining local state budgets. The donor investment and targeted scholarships helped to attract more-low-income and under-represented including women and international students with the female to male ratio creeping to 7-10 % mark in Ibadan (Saliu, 2026).

The Shift to Sovereign State Subventions (1961–1962)

By the dawn of independence, the funding model underwent a permanent, structural rupture. As both colleges severed ties with the University of London (Ghana in 1961, Ibadan in 1962), the newly independent governments took full financial ownership. With the massification policy, the funding dynamic flipped from a diverse mix of colonial grants, philanthropic capital, and board endowments into a model almost entirely dependent on direct government subventions. This shift laid the groundwork for severe financial strain later in the 20th century, as state revenues eventually failed to keep pace with the geometric expansion of the student populations. (Saliu, 2026).

Comparative Analysis of UCI and UG Strategies to Higher Education Expansion Policy

Both universities exhibited administrative resilience and institutional elasticity by accommodating the crisis that accompanied the state-mandated expansion policies, following comparable structural paths with variations stemming from their unique local political environments. To address the accommodation crisis, UCI expanded existing halls and altered the one-person, one-room policy, allowing more students to be accommodated in single rooms. In contrast, the UG administration's response to the students' accommodation crisis took a different route. With funds from CMB, the university constructed sprawling residential complexes and was able to preserve the one-person, one-room policy.

Furthermore, each university responded to the tension caused by the growing student population in slightly different ways. One approach that set each apart was the choice of academic programmes each sought to prioritize. UCI expanded its medical and science faculties, especially with the opening of the 500-bed University College Hospital (Ayeni, 2003). It also positioned itself as the regional hub for postgraduate studies. UG, by contrast, prioritised the Institutes of Education and the Institute of African Studies, and focused more on Administration, Sociology, and local history to mass-produce civil servants to staff its government.

There were also variations between the two universities in responding to the funding crisis that accompanied the growing student population. While the UCI funding was tied to intense regional political rivalries and competitive scholarship, the UG relied on a centralised funding system. Above all, both institutions demonstrated flexibility in adapting to the increase and the steady rise in students' population during the period of study.

Conclusion and Recommendation

A comparative summary of the changing demography of the University of Ibadan and the University of Ghana highlights contrasting patterns even though both institutions transitioned from elite, low-capacity colonial colleges into mass-higher-education flagships. Initially, the student body was largely characterized by socio-economic and gender privilege, drawing mainly from male students of educated and Christian missionary schools concentrated in the coastal regions near Ibadan and Legon. While the diversification of funding models began to shift the gender ratio in both universities, this shift was modest and female students remained largely under-represented. Nevertheless, the introduction of scholarship programmes by regional governments and private institutions democratised access, precipitating a surge in enrollment that transformed the student body into a more representative ethnic microcosm of both nations. Crucially, rather than maintaining rigid institutional designs, these universities were forced to adapt to shifting circumstances and intense pressure from the political elite. The evolution of student demographics shows that systemic change was not merely an internal, top-down initiative but a collaborative effort involving central authorities, non-state actors, and local communities.

Traditional recommendations to expand physical infrastructure to meet rising student enrollment at both universities are largely outdated. Given the current higher education landscape in West Africa, contemporary solutions must focus on developing hybrid modular campuses and virtual learning environments that allow student demographics to expand dynamically without triggering physical overcrowding or accommodation crises.

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