BRITAIN'S SUBJECTS, IRELAND'S GUESTS; WEST AFRICAN STUDENTS AT TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN AND IN IRELAND 1930-1970

BY

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DECLARATION OF THE AUTHOR

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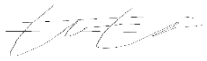

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Date: 4th April 2026

DEDICATION

For Fred Opare

A steady light in my path

For Rosemary Amponsah †

Always in my heart

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I owe the completion of this dissertation to many people.

Firstly, I honour the colonial students of the last century whose lives and legacies I have spent the past five years studying. In line with West African cultural traditions, I acknowledge them as ancestors. Despite traversing great cultural and structural barriers, many colonial students played important roles in the formation of the very nation I now call home. Their histories reflect a fighting spirit that speaks to the condition of the African in the colonial and postcolonial eras.

I express gratitude to the generations of archivists and recordkeepers at the National Archives of Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, the Dublin City Archives, and at various informal collections. Their tireless work has preserved critical voices from oblivion. I have so clearly stood on their shoulders to complete my doctorate.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation extends the study of colonial students beyond Britain to Ireland, examining Nigerians and other West Africans at Trinity College Dublin between 1930 and 1970. It reconstructs their educational trajectories, associational and intellectual lives, as well as encounters with race, in a context shaped by both imperial authority and Ireland's own colonial past.

Five original papers form the structure. Paper 1 explores how medical school, family, postwar/colonial, gender, and missionary archives can be used to navigate around archival silences when reconstructing the histories of overlooked colonial students. Paper 2 analyses the Association for Students of African Descent as a site where colonial migrants in Dublin forged pan-African solidarities and articulated decolonial politics, while Paper 3 examines their participation in the University Philosophical Society, focusing on Egbert Udo Udoma's 1942 presidential address, to show how Irish debating forums became arenas for anti-imperial discourse and the cultivation of a West African intelligentsia. Paper 4 turns to the 1964 Fadipe affair, in which the assault of a Nigerian medical student prompted public controversy. It situates the episode within longer histories of racialisation, belonging and postcolonial negotiation in Ireland.

Together, the dissertation demonstrates that Ireland was not peripheral but central to the history of colonial students, providing training, support networks and careers while also exposing the racial hierarchies and political conflicts of the mid-twentieth century. It shows that West African students in Ireland were not passive recipients of colonial education, but rather agents who negotiated identity, leadership, and decolonisation within an institution and a society marked by the legacies of Empire.

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1. INTRODUCTION.[1]

Granddaughter of Queen Victoria, Princess Marie Louise of Schleswig-Holstein, noted the following during her tour of the Gold Coast in 1925:

> 'The young African desirous and keen for higher education has had to seek his training overseas, in surroundings alien to those amongst which he must ultimately live and work; thus exposing himself to the danger of growing out of touch with his own race during the most important period of his intellectual development.'[2]

The critique of colonial education as a process that separated African students from their native communities is most evident when studying African, Caribbean and Asian students in European universities during the first half of the twentieth century. These students were commonly referred to as *colonial students* in Britain and Ireland.[3]

Among colonial students in Europe, West Africans (and especially Nigerians) are acknowledged as among the most political.[4] This dissertation brings together four research papers on their presence in Ireland and at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland's oldest university. The question guiding the study is: How did West African colonial students navigate ambition, race, identity and belonging within Irish society between 1930 and 1970? This question must be situated within Ireland's paradoxical status as both former colony and

[1] Parts of this chapter was included in the paper *Negotiating identities: Reflexivity and reflections on colonial student research* [accepted for publication by *African Identities* on 4th July 2025].

[2] Marie Louise, *Letters from the Gold Coast* (London: Methuen & Co., 1926).

[3] Sara Legrandjacques, 'Colonial Students in Europe', in *Encyclopédie d'histoire Numérique de l'europe*, Migrations in Europe (Sorbonne Université).

[4] Anna Craven, *West Africans in London* (London, UK: Institute of Race Relations, 1968); Richard D. Heyman, 'Nigerian Students Abroad', *African Studies Review* 15, no. 3 (1972): 538–39; K. Leney, 'African Students in Europe', *Journal of African History* 40 (1999): 321–22.

participant in imperial business. The dissertation repositions colonial student research by focusing on overlooked contexts.

Paper 1 examines the role of medical school, family, postwar/colonial, gender, and missionary archives in circumventing archival silences when constructing colonial student histories. Paper 2 investigates how West African students in the Association for Students of African Descent organised around pan-African identities and decolonial leadership. Paper 3 offers a complementary narrative on activism in institutional spaces, analysing how West African student members of the University Philosophical Society used elite debating forums to challenge imperial ideologies. Paper 4 expands focus into the postcolonial period, examining the Fadipe Affair, a public assault case that strained race relations in 1964 Dublin.

As these four papers will demonstrate, Ireland, a former British colony, offers an under-researched context for interrogating the experiences of colonial students, a context marked not only by its own colonial subjection but also by its entanglement in the reproduction of imperial hierarchies.

There are important conceptual tensions to address however. Scholarship has shown a great reluctance to treat colonial students as a sui generis historical category. This hesitancy points to an expected discomfort with using colonial nomenclature in socio-historical analysis. While it is true that colonial terminology risks reinscribing colonial mentalities, tendencies, and marginalities, opting instead for politically neutral descriptors (e.g. African, Caribbean, or Asian students) simply does not capture the historical significance of these cohorts and their unique experiences within colonial educational frameworks.

The term colonial student conveys the idea that these individuals were produced within, constrained by, and sometimes propelled by imperial structures. Their educational trajectories were shaped by colonial governance, racial hierarchies, and imperial expectations, factors that cannot be adequately captured with neutral descriptors. Recognising colonial students as a sui generis category allows historians to engage more directly with the social, political, and institutional dynamics of colonial education, rather than erasing or generalising their experiences. If, despite this understanding, scholars continue to obscure the shared structural conditions shaping these students' experiences

across empire, are they not, in effect, yielding to the very colonial anxieties they seek to evade?

Colonial students constituted a coherent historical grouping, representing a substantial population within European universities, technical colleges, and vocational institutions, particularly in the postwar period when scholarship schemes expanded imperial educational channels. Using neutral descriptors frames this education as natural, uneventful and unworthy of further critical scholarly interest. This is clearly misleading. Education was a conscious instrument through which colonial governments, missionary groups, and civil society organisations sought to shape postcolonial futures through the production of both colonial and anti-colonial intermediaries. Colonial students were therefore very active participants in the colonial power matrix, and an academic term to identify them ought to reflect that.

Names influence how histories are interpreted. To abandon the term *colonial student* in favour of 'safer labels' is to sever student identities, mobilities and experiences from the politics that conditioned them. A proper account of colonial student experience must begin with our capacities as scholars to make academic sense of difficult terminology. Granted, the term may feel politically awkward, but that discomfort is the result of the realities of colonial history rather than a flaw in the concept itself. Avoidance does not make this uncomfortable history more inclusive or politically correct. It only creates a name that is stripped of its historical meaning, resulting in significant demographic and conceptual losses.

Additionally, recognising colonial students as a distinct demographic category does not require strictly imposing a revolutionary, radical or nationalist intent on them. Some colonial students scarcely had overt political ambitions, and not all of them participated meaningfully in anti-imperial activism. Nevertheless, their experiences were shaped by the structures and conditions of colonial rule, regardless of personal ideology or later prominence in postcolonial society. Treating the term 'colonial students' as a demographic category by way of social and institutional structure rather than personal intentions allows scholars to acknowledge internal diversity while undertaking historical analysis.

Stressing the internal diversity of colonial students is crucial because independence did not unfold simultaneously across African, Caribbean and Asian colonies. Moreover,

independence did not immediately dismantle the legacies of imperial educational systems. Many of the students continued to live through power relations that outlasted colonial rule and persisted well into the post-independence period. This makes confining the colonial student to a rigid chronological endpoint also challenging. Accounting for regional variation and temporal overlap is therefore essential in socio-historical analysis. This basic understanding of the students will allow academics to address difficult questions concerning race, class, and belonging in an expansive social and chronological frame without being hampered by conceptual limitations.

1.1 Methodology and archival politics

Ramón Grosfoguel argues that 'decolonisation of knowledge would require to take seriously the epistemic perspective/cosmologies/insights of critical thinkers from the Global South, thinking from and with subalternised racial/ethnic/sexual spaces and bodies.'[5] I engage with several of these 'subalternised racial/ethnic/sexual spaces and bodies' from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean regions to conceptualise the colonial student era, one that saw (to borrow the words of Homi Bhabha) 'the scattering of the people that in other times and other places, in the nations of others, becomes a time of gathering.'[6]

The dissertation engages with different theoretical frameworks to make sense of the complex intersections of race, diaspora, resistance, identity and postcoloniality in African-Irish histories. For instance, theories on social movements and relative deprivation are useful for contextualising colonial student activism in Ireland. It allows readers to understand the rise of colonial student societies as a response to perceived social, political, and educational inequalities. These inequalities fostered a collective sense of grievance and consequently, the political consciousness required for mobilisation. It puts colonial student societies in Ireland within broader diasporic resistances against colonisation and racial injustice.

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[5] Ramón Grosfoguel, 'Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality', *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1.

[6] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 2nd edition (Hoboken: Routledge, 2004), 139.

Equally important are theories of intelligentsia, which thinkers such as Marx, Benda, and Gramsci have identified as foundational to the development of social movements. The dissertation uses the lens of intelligentsia to centre the roles that colonial student thinkers and social organizers played in shaping cultural and intellectual movements of their day. It also highlights political agency in the emergence of social class.

Furthermore, postcolonial theory examines structures of exclusion and the production of colonial knowledge as an inheritance of imperialism. It puts into perspective Ireland's complex position as both a former colony and a site for the reproduction of colonial ideals.

The dissertation adopts thematic analyses of qualitative archival data. Archives consulted included colonial office publications (e.g. gazettes, reports, circulars), personal and biographical documents (e.g. personal notes, letters, autobiographies, memoirs, genealogical reports, obituaries, funeral tributes, national biographical dictionaries, and *Who's Who* directories), government records (e.g. inter-governmental communiqués, foreign affairs memoranda, police despatches, and parliamentary transcripts), college archives (e.g. board minutes, committee reports, matriculation, attendance and graduation reports, club and society newsletters) other media (e.g. newspapers, radio broadcasts, photographs).

Despite predominantly telling the stories of dominant sides, traditional archival practices are still mistakenly thought of as passive exercises. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot has illustrated, sources of history are as often a site of conflict as consensus.[7] I acknowledge that the science of archiving possesses the capacity to affect social memory. I found colonial-era archives to be tied to themes such as dispossession, silence, and exclusion, to uphold imperial priorities. My research therefore showed the presence of a pervasive colonial framework that could not be so easily dismissed or undone.

Archivists establish connections between archives and power, and researchers bring these dynamics to light. Rather than recoiling from colonial aftershock, my objective was to conceptualise ways that I could converse with subjects I bring into frame, those whose presences and absences so uniquely define the colonial archives I was working in.

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[7] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 1995).

This aligns with the counternarrative culture that has become widespread over the past decade. Histories, symbolically fashioned upon Eurocentric traditions, are being questioned, critiqued, and condemned. Given that 'reclaiming history is a critical and essential aspect of decolonisation,' there is now, more than ever, a growing emphasis that the lives of persons of colour whose contributions and legacies have been obscured for so long see the light of day.[8] Although given impetus by contemporary events such as the Rhodes Must Fall campaigns, it had already been underlined by many colonial students even in the 19th century. Such discourses, present and historical, were a great motivation for my research into colonial students.

1.2 The culture of mimicry in colonial student contexts

At the first All-African Students' Conference in Central Hall, Westminster, in 1960, the cultural adviser to the Ghanaian government exclaimed the following in reference to a widespread culture of mimicry that seemed endemic to the colonial and postcolonial periods;

> 'we must be ourselves; we cannot forever approximate ourselves to the European model and be genuine... we must wear our own hair, I don't care if they call it wool, take pride in our flat noses and thick lips and then they will become a source of self-confidence and inspiration for ourselves, and for our children's children.'[9]

Mamdani claims 'comparison is older than colonialism, but it matures to its fullest in the colonial period.'[10] This is meant to show that while social comparisons pre-dated colonialism, the colonial context certainly intensified them. For colonial students, a facet

[8] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd edition (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012), 30.

[9] 'UN Attacked by African Students London Conference', *London Times*, 13 October 1960, National Archives of Ireland, DFA/6/401/13/54.

[10] Mahmood Mamdani, 'Decolonising Universities', in *Decolonisation in Universities: The Politics of Knowledge*, ed. Jonathan Jansen (Wits University Press, 2019), 16.

of nationalism they embraced was, interestingly, about challenging the subordination of the native middle class to which they belonged or were well on their way to belonging. This resistance, as Partha Chatterjee describes, involved confronting the 'rule of colonial difference.'[11] Demonstrating sameness with colonisers was an attempt to escape false imaginations of Africanness imposed by Western intellectual traditions. In 1955, and in the presence of leading figures like Peter Mbiyu Koinange (of Kenya African Union) or Denis Larkin (Lord Mayor of Dublin), the president of the Association for Students of African Descent (ASAD)[12] in Dublin contextualised these imaginations with merciless accuracy: 'dark continent,' 'people without a past,' 'fetish' and 'primitive.'[13] In their search for public donations, missionaries (including the Irish who had strong spiritual empires in Africa) played up these imaginations. For instance, the popularity of Black baby donation boxes in Irish schools and shops contributed to a problematic mental construction of Africans as a race in a ceaseless state of dependency.[14]

Fascinatingly, in arguing their superior status (because of their Western educational credentials), many colonial students inadvertently imposed Eurocentric frameworks on Africans at a time when pride in native cultures had fuelled the anti-colonial, decolonial and liberation movements in the first place. Many are the colonial students who can quite justifiably be accused of transplanting Eurocentric ideals into Africa, exposing the fragility of 'independence' movements. Bhabha writes that 'if colonialism takes power in the name

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[11] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1993), 10.

[12] The ASAD was a colonial student society in Dublin, founded circa 1935 and counted among its members prominent figures such as Nigerian Minister of Health Moses Majekodunmi, Nigerian Olympian John Oladipo Oladitan, and Ondo High Chief Ebun Olawoye.

[13] 'Ireland's Part in Building Commonwealth', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 31 October 1955.

[14] Philomena Mullen, 'Black Baby Box[Ed]', *Irish University Review* 50, no. 2 (2020): 252–55.

of history, it repeatedly exercises its authority through the figures of farce.'[15] The simultaneous critiquing of Eurocentric traditions while wilfully adopting and prioritising its cultural elements (like languages, political systems, and dressing) positioned some postcolonial societies as a mimicry, unoriginal and hypocritical. Former Gold Coast colonial student Kobina Sekyi satirises this issue as early as 1915 in his influential play *The Blinkards*.

When put in conversation with new encounters, strong Western influences have made diverse cultures into articles of constant re-articulation. Colonial students living in the so-called *in-between space* encountered cultures that were not static but disruptive, disintegrative, and displacing. For instance, TCD alum and former Nigerian Minister of Health, Moses Majekodunmi was disappointed by his inability to speak as much Latin as the professors he had encountered in Europe.[16] In the same vein, when his cousin David Adekunle Majekodunmi was questioned in 1937 about his presence in the anatomy dissection hall at Trinity College Dublin, he declared, 'I am the father of a doctor and of a lawyer too' to show off the social status a Western education had afforded him.[17]

A survey conducted in London in the 1950s shows that law and medicine were the most popular programs of study among African colonial students in Britain.[18] Western legal and medical programs were considered status-conferring, placing colonial students at a level above the colonised. In fact, medical education is a major pull factor that explains the presence of Africans in 20th-century Ireland, given the nation's reputation for medicine.[19]

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[15] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 85.

[16] Moses Adekoyejo Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning: Autobiography of Moses Adekoyejo Majekodunmi* (Lagos: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers, 1998), 30.

[17] Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning*, 28.

[18] A. T. Carey, *A Study of the Social Adaptation of Colonial Students in London* (Secker & Warburg, 1956).

[19] Pierce A. Grace, 'On the Origins of Medicine in Ireland', *Peritia* 33 (2022): 91 — 109; Laura Kelly, *Irish Medical Education and Student Culture, c.1850-1950* (Liverpool University Press, 2017); T. Percy C. Kirkpatrick, *History of the Medical Teaching in Trinity College, Dublin and of the School of Physic in Ireland* (Leopold Classic Library, 2016);

Critical connections can be traced between some colonial students and the *évolués* of France or the *assimilados* of Portugal. It was typical for these persons, as Albert Memmi puts it, to 'push a colonial mentality to excess, display proud disdain for the colonised and continually show off their borrowed rank.'[20] The affinity for Western memberships, initiations, certifications, etc., is deeply embedded in the colonisation project, perpetuated to subordinate Indigenous knowledge exchange systems.

1.3 Fragmented transnational solidarities

As Fanon intimated, 'history teaches us clearly that the battle against colonialism does not run straight away along the lines of nationalism.'[21] Some colonial students aspired to European social statuses, but when they failed on the 'weary road to Whiteness,' it engendered a 'hasty retreat into nationalism.'[22] It is understood from the literature that colonial students produced national solidarities through a process in which they invested their efforts in light of the interpretation of what their colonies/race/people demanded at specific times and within specific anti-imperialist contexts.[23] Therefore, research on the students must recognise the diversity within their community, given that their experiences and perspectives on the road to decolonisation varied significantly. Colonial student research is thus unthinkable without agency and should not minimise particularities in

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Hemal Thakore, 'Medical Education in Ireland', *Medical Teacher* 31, no. 8 (2009): 696–700; George Blumer, 'The Irish School of Medicine', *The Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* 4, no. 6 (1932): 765–78; William Doolin, 'Dublin's Contribution to Medicine', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 2, no. 3 (1947): 321–36.

[20] Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (London: Earthscan, 1974), 60.

[21] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1st edition, trans. Constance Farrington (London New York: Penguin Classics, 1963), 148.

[22] Elliot Bastien, 'The Weary Road to Whiteness and the Hasty Retreat into Nationalism', in *Disappointed Guests: Essays by African, Asian, and West Indian Students*, ed. Henri Dawson and John L. Tajfel (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

[23] Hakim Adi, *African and Caribbean People in Britain: A History* (London: Allen Lane, 2022); Olivette Otele, *African Europeans: An Untold History* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd, 2020).

identities, inclinations, or interpretations of the position of formerly colonised people in the world.

Whereas persons from colonies generally agreed on the inevitability of liberation, they possessed varying answers to vital questions across a range of areas like Afro-radicalism, the teleology of nationhood and post-independence geostrategic alliances. Colonial students' distinct transnational and metacultural aims reflected the political and social conditions in imperial metropoles, conditions that were shaped, among other things, by the African presence itself.[24] For instance, West African colonial students developed and maintained their own distinctive political consciousness, aims, and ideologies while at the same time contributing to and being influenced by those of the diaspora. The fragmented nature of West African identities is evident across national lines (e.g. Sierra Leone or Nigeria), cross-national lines (e.g. Ghana–Guinea–Mali Union) or tribal national lines (e.g. Ewe independence movements) throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods. It typifies Arjun Appadurai's claims that 'culturalist movements…tend to be counternational and metacultural.'[25]

1.4 Literature on African-Irish histories

The rationale for this research and the ways in which it engages with existing scholarly debates are very important. Race was as central to the experiences of colonial students as it was to the Irish who hosted them. In fact, Irish and African peoples were often depicted as racially indistinct in the colonial project. Empire ascribed primitive status to both groups, as per its artificial constructions of race, and then reinforced this through racially charged tropes and caricatures to undermine efforts for political freedom. This parallel is explored in several key works.[26]

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[24] Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain: 1900-1960 Nationalism, Pan Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998).

[25] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 15.

[26] Fintan O'Toole, *Going Native: The Irish as Blacks and Indians*, 1994; L. Perry Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Newton Abbot: David and

Other studies, examining African imaginaries within Irish consciousness, show that early narratives about Irish knowledge of Africa were oversimplified and therefore dismantle Irish exceptionalism in how Africa and Africans have historically been conceptualised.[27] For instance, there is a debate on the status of 17th and 18th-century Irish in the Caribbean region.[28] At the heart of it is the effort of contemporary scholars to stress the distinction between Irish indentured service and African slavery in order to contest myths that placed both groups on equal footing in plantation societies.[29]

The lack of studies on colonial students in Ireland is peculiar, among other things, because Ireland, as the first British colony, was effectively the laboratory where colonising

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Charles, 1971); David Lloyd, 'Black Irish, Irish Whiteness and Atlantic State Formation', in *The Black and Green Atlantic: Cross-Currents of the African and Irish Diasporas*, ed. Peter O'Neill and David Lloyd (2009), 3 — 19; Bruce Nelson, 'Celts, Hottentots, and "White Chimpanzees": The Racialization of the Irish in the Nineteenth Century', in *Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 30–54.

[27] Denis Linehan, 'Irish Empire: Assembling the Geographical Imagination of Irish Missionaries in Africa', *Cultural Geographies* 21, no. 3 (2014): 429–47; Denis Linehan et al., 'Becoming Tropical: Africa in the Irish Geographical Imagination', in *At the Anvil: Essays in Honour of William J. Smyth* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2012); Rachel Naylor, 'The Orange Order in Africa', *History Ireland* 14, no. 4 (2006): 7 — 9.

[28] Jenny Shaw, *Everyday Life in the Early English Caribbean: Irish, Africans, and the Construction of Difference* (University of Georgia Press, 2013); Jill Sheppard, *The 'Redlegs' of Barbados, Their Origins and History* (KTO Press, 1977).

[29] Liam McKee, 'Slaves to a Myth: Irish Indentured Servitude, African Slavery, and the Politics of White Nationalism' (University of California San Diego, 2021); Sean O'Callaghan, *To Hell or Barbados: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ireland* (The O'Brien Press, 2013); Finola O'Kane and Ciaran O'Neill, *Ireland, Slavery and the Caribbean: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2023); Nini Rodgers, 'Irish and the Atlantic Slave Trade', *History Ireland*, 2007.

techniques were perfected and exported to other places like Africa. There are excellent publications that link the Irish colonising model to overseas territories.[30]

Meanwhile, the thesis on the history of Black people in Ireland is still evolving and engaging. Besides the well-known tour of Olaudah Equiano to Ireland, the work of William Hart has identified Black communities on the island during the 18th century. Hart estimated over a fifty-year period that there were likely more than a thousand, possibly two to three thousand Black people in Ireland. While this figure is small compared to Ireland's overall population, it is comparable to Black communities in larger countries, such as France, which had a population four times that of Ireland at the time. The same study concluded that within Europe, only England, Portugal and Spain likely had larger Black communities.[31]

Besides, given the reach of Irish missionaries in Africa, religion is considered an important theme in African-Irish histories. A rich body of literature, for instance, explores the personal narratives and collective biographies of Irish missionaries in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, like those on Bishops Kelly or Shanahan, or the Venerable Edel Quinn.[32] A considerable

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[30] Enda Duffy, '"As White As Ours": Africa, Ireland, Imperial Panic, and the Effects of British Race Discourse', in *Empire and After* (Berghahn Books, 2007), 23–56; Aziz Rahman et al., 'The Art of Breaking People Down: The British Colonial Model in Ireland and Canada', *Peace Research* 49, no. 2 (2017): 15–38; Dianne Hall and Elizabeth Malcolm, '"English Institutions and the Irish Race": Race and Politics in Late Nineteenth-Century Australia', *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 62, no. 1 (2016): 1–15; Jane Ohlmeyer, 'A Laboratory for Empire?: Early Modern Ireland and English Imperialism', in *Ireland and the British Empire*, ed. Kevin Kenny (Oxford University Press, 2005).

[31] W. A. Hart, 'Africans in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies* 33, no. 129 (2002): 19–32.

[32] John P. Jordan, *Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria* (Dublin: Clonmore & Reynolds, 1949); Léon Joseph Suenens, *A Heroine of the Apostolate, 1907-1944: Edel Quinn: Envoy of the Legion of Mary to Africa* (Dublin: C.J. Fallon, 1956); Michael O'Shea, *Bishop Kelly of Western Nigeria* (Cork: Society of African Missions, 2006); Raymond Hickey et al.,

body of research has also examined location, strategies, and impact of missionary activity across education, medicine, administration, military, wartime politics and complicity in the colonising mission.[33]

'The Irish Augustinians in Nigeria, 1939-1992', in *The Irish Augustinians in Rome, 1656-1994 and Irish Augustinian Missions throughout the World* (Augustinian House of Studies; Rome: St Patrick's College, 1994), 155 — 185; Colman M. Cooke, *Bishop Moynagh of Calabar* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin: Columba Press, 2014); Colman M. Cooke, 'Irish Diocesan Priests in Southern Nigeria, 1920-42' (MA, Royal Irish Academy, 1971); Andrew Nugent, 'Irish Benedictines in Africa', in *The Irish Benedictines: A History* (Blackrock: Columba, 2005), 202 — 210.

[33] Fiona Bateman, 'Ireland's Spiritual Empire: Territory and Landscape in Irish Catholic Missionary Discourse', in *Empires of Religion*, ed. Hilary M. Carey, Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008), 267–87; Cooke, *Bishop Moynagh of Calabar*; Irene Christina Lynch and Sister Joan Cosgrove, *Beyond Faith and Adventure: Irish Missionaries in Nigeria Tell Their Extraordinary Story* (ICDL, 2006); Edward O'Connor, *SMA Missionaries of Northern Nigeria, 1907-1934* (Abuja, Cork: Society of African Missions, 2007); Austine S. O. Okwu, 'The Beginning of the Maynooth Movement in Southern Nigeria and the Rise of the St. Patrick's Missionary Society, 1920-1930', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 10, no. 1 (1979): 22–45; Ciaran Needham, 'Irish Missions to Africa', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 95 (1961): 167 — 175; Nigel Browne-Davies, 'Lieutenant Macormack Charles Farrell Easmon: A Sierra Leonean Medical Officer in the First World War', *Journal of Sierra Leone Studies* vol 3, no. ed 2 (n.d.); Graham Dominy, '"Not a Position for a Gentleman": Sir Matthew Nathan as Colonial Administrator: From Cape Coast Castle to Dublin Castle via Natal', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 46, no. 1 (2018): 93–120; Bob Reece, 'The Colonial Career of Richard Robert Madden: The West Indies, West Africa, and Western Australia. [Paper in: Remembered Nations, Imagined Republics: Proceedings of the Twelfth Irish-Australian Conference, Galway, June 2002. De Paor, Louis; O'Connor, Maureen and Reece, Bob (Eds).]', *Australian Journal of Irish Studies* 4 (2004): 18–28; Raymond Moloney, 'Charles Stokes (1852-1895): An Irishman in 19th Century Africa', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 87, no. 346 (1998): 128–34; Suenens, *A Heroine of the Apostolate, 1907-1944*; *Nigerian Diplomats: Jaja Wachuku* (General Books, 2010); Daniel

The politics surrounding Ireland's cultural, racial, and social identity remain highly contested.[34] Ireland has long grappled with a racial identity crisis since Empire imposed artificial constructions of inferiority and ineptness on its people.[35] Although Ireland was itself colonised by Britain, many Irish individuals held prominent roles within the British imperial administration. Similarly, while some Irish were transported to the Caribbean

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Vangroenweghe, 'Casement's Congo Diary, One of the so-Called "Black Diaries", Was Not a Forgery', *Belgisch Tijdschrift Voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis / Revue Belge d'histoire Contemporaine* 32, nos 3–4 (2002): 321 — 350; DD Daly, 'Brigadier-General Sir Charles MacCarthy, Kt. 1764-1824', *Irish History Online* 21 (1939): 67 — 74; Christopher Flynn, 'Challenging Englishness from the Racial Margins: William Macready's Irishman in London or The Happy African', *Irish Studies Review* 16, no. 2 (2008): 159–72; Felix K. Ekechi, 'The Holy Ghost Fathers in Eastern Nigeria, 1885-1920: Observations on Missionary Strategy', *African Studies Review* 15, no. 2 (1972): 217–39; Felix K. Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland, 1857-1914* (Psychology Press, 1972); John Manton, 'The Roman Catholic Mission and Leprosy Control in Colonial Ogoja Province, Nigeria, 1936-1960' (University of Oxford, 2005); Hildegard Binder Johnson, 'The Location of Christian Missions in Africa', *Geographical Review* 57, no. 2 (1967): 168–202; Edmund M. Hogan, *Catholic Missionaries and Liberia: A Study of Christian Enterprise in West Africa, 1842-1950* (Cork University Press, 1981); Elizabeth Allo Isichei, *The Ibo People and the Europeans: The Genesis of a Relationship to 1906* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973); Nini Rodgers, 'Green Presbyterians, Black Irish and Some Literary Consequences', in *The Black and Green Atlantic: Cross-Currents of the African and Irish Diasporas*, ed. Peter O'Neill and David Lloyd (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

[34] Silvia Brandi, review of *After Optimism? Ireland, Racism, and Globalization*, by R. Lentin and R. McVeigh, *Community Development Journal* 43, no. 1 (2008): 103–6; John Corbally, 'The Othered Irish: Shades of Difference in Post-War Britain, 1948-71', *Contemporary European History* 24, no. 1 (2015): 105–25; Bryan Fanning, 'The Political Currency of Irish Racism: 1997-2002', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 91, no. 364 (2002): 319–27; Una Crowley et al., 'Race and Immigration in Contemporary Ireland', in *New Geographies of Race and Racism* (2008), 141–56.

[35] Rebecca King O'Riain, 'How the Irish Became More Than White: Mixed-Race Irishness in Historical and Contemporary Contexts', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 2019.

region to serve as indentured servants, others became settler-planters.[36] The literature reveals how Ireland's colonial identity has been unsettled by mutually inclusive histories. Scholars such as Hiram Morgan, Stephen Howe and Jane Ohlmeyer have interrogated this dual position, questioning Ireland's role as colony and coloniser.[37] The most widely known work in this area, Noel Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White,* explores the shifting nature of Irish identity within evolving racial hierarchies.[38] A more recent addition includes Patrick R. O'Malley's *The Irish and the Imagination of Race: White Supremacy Across the Atlantic in the Nineteenth Century.*[39]

Since the Celtic Tiger economic boom, West African migration to Ireland has gained scholarly attention to accompany the consequent shifts in Ireland's demographic landscape.[40] Contemporary comparative studies examine migrant discrimination in employment, housing, and access to healthcare across African and non-African migrant

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[36] Shelagh O'Byrne Spencer, 'Green Are the Hills of Natal: Early Irish Settlers in Natal, 1824-1862', in *The Irish in Southern Africa, 1795-1910*, vol. 2, ed. Donal P. McCracken, Southern African-Irish Studies (Durban: UP of Durban-Westville, 1992); O'Kane and O'Neill, *Ireland, Slavery and the Caribbean*.

[37] Hiram Morgan, 'An Unwelcome Heritage: Ireland's Role in British Empire-Building', *History of European Ideas* 19, nos 4–6 (1994): 619–25; Stephen Howe, *Colonized and Colonizers* (Oxford University Press, 2013); Stephen Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2000); Jane Ohlmeyer, *Making Empire: Ireland, Imperialism, and the Early Modern World* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2023).

[38] Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, Routledge Classics (New York: Routledge, 1995).

[39] Patrick R. O'Malley, *The Irish and the Imagination of Race: White Supremacy Across the Atlantic in the Nineteenth Century* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2023).

[40] Bryan Fanning, 'Immigration, the Celtic Tiger and the Economic Crisis', *Irish Studies Review* 24, no. 1 (2016): 9–20; Sean ORiain, *The Rise and Fall of Ireland's Celtic Tiger: Liberalism, Boom and Bust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Julius Komolafe, 'Nigerian Migration to Ireland: Movements, Motivations and Experiences', *Irish Geography* 41, no. 2 (2008): 225–41.

communities in Ireland.[41] Following from this, more social science researchers are turning their attention to the experiences of asylum seekers in direct provision centres.[42] Shannon and Rolston's well-known study from the turn of the century explores colonial legacies and the role of immigration in shaping how racism emerged in Ireland.[43] Attention has also been given to the representation of race in Irish literature, like Blackface minstrelsy, or the myth of the African King Gormund.[44] Despite ongoing efforts to advance race research in Ireland, gaps remain. Scholars like Chamion Caballero and Dianna J. Shandy, along with organisations like the Association of Mixed-Race Irish, have emphasised that the experiences of biracial Irish remain markedly underexplored.[45] Some biracial Irish people

[41] Inga Sabanova and Vanessa Stout, 'On Being the Other. The Experiences of Baltic and Nigerian Migrants in Ireland', *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 44, no. 6 (2023): 967–82; Egle Gusciute et al., 'Discrimination in the Rental Housing Market: A Field Experiment in Ireland', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 48, no. 3 (2022): 613–34; Dianna J. Shandy and David V. Power, 'The Birth of the African-Irish Diaspora: Pregnancy and Post-Natal Experiences of African Immigrant Women in Ireland', *International Migration* 46, no. 5 (2008): 119–42.

[42] Patricia Brazil, 'Direct Provision in a Time of Pandemic', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 110, no. 440 (2021): 407–14; Felicity Daly and Jacqui O'Riordan, 'Assessing Care Deficits in Ireland's International Protection Accommodation System: Lessons Learned in COVID-19 and Beyond', *Journal of Migration and Health* 10 (January 2024); James Laurence et al., *Attitudes towards Immigration and Refugees in Ireland: Understanding Recent Trends and Drivers* (Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute, 2024).

[43] Michael Shannon and Bill Rolston, *Encounters: How Racism Came to Ireland* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications, 2002).

[44] John Brannigan, 'Blackface Minstrelsy, Irish Modernism, and the Histories of Irish Whiteness', in *Race in Irish Literature and Culture*, ed. Sen Malcolm and McCormick Julie Weng (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 103–20; Douglas C. Riach, 'Blacks and Blackface on the Irish Stage, 1830-60', *Journal of American Studies* 7, no. 3 (1973): 231–41; Malcolm Sen and Julie McCormick Weng, eds, *Race in Irish Literature and Culture* (Cambridge University Press, n.d.).

[45] Conrad Koza Bryan and Chamion Caballero, *Irish People of Colour: A Social History of Mixed Race Irish in Britain and Ireland between 1700-2000*, with William Hart et al.

can trace their descent to interracial relationships cultivated during the time of colonial students in Ireland.

19th-century Irish society had interacted with prominent Black figures, such as activist Frederick Douglass and entertainer Rachel Baptiste. From here and extending into the early-to-mid 20th century, Irish Americans became notorious for their anti-Black racism and opposition to equal rights, especially after viewing Black people as labour competition.[46] Subsequently, hostilities resurfaced in postwar Britain, where Irish and African labour migrants competed for employment, housing, and social status. As Ireland entered the 20th century, its engagement with Black people was shaped by a complex mix of social, cultural, and economic dynamics. Jack Crangle dedicates considerable attention to the mid-20th-century cultural landscape. Through the lens of Ireland's national identity, he explores how migrants and colonial students faced institutional and everyday discrimination while living far from their home countries.[47]

Ireland navigated its postcolonial landscape while engaging with ongoing global liberation and justice movements.[48] The geopolitical dynamic of the period was shaped by a long and

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(London: The Association of Mixed Race Irish, 2024); Shandy and Power, 'The Birth of the African-Irish Diaspora'; Dianna J. Shandy, 'Irish Babies, African Mothers: Rites of Passage and Rights in Citizenship in Post-Millennial Ireland', *Anthropological Quarterly* 81, no. 4 (2008): 803–31; Leon Diop and Briana Fitzsimons, *Black and Irish: Legends, Trailblazers and Everyday Heroes: Legends, Trailblazers & Everyday Heroes*, with Jessica Louis (La Vergne: Little Island Books, 2023).

[46] Jay P. Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010).

[47] Jack Crangle, '"No Race Hate Here"? Irish National Identity and Racism in the Mid Twentieth Century', *Irish Historical Studies* 48, no. 174 (2024): 338–60.

[48] Michael Holmes et al., *The Poor Relation: Irish Foreign Policy and the Third World* (Trócaire, Gill and MacMillan, 1993); Christine Kinealy, *Black Abolitionists in Ireland*, Routledge Studies in Modern European History (London, New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2020); Christopher Kissane, 'Black Abolitionists in Ireland: Important and Well-Researched', The Irish Times, 22 July 2020; Donal Lowry, 'Ireland Shows the Way: Irish-South African Relations and the British Empire/Commonwealth, c.1902-1961', in

meaningful history of Irish missionary engagement in West Africa. These ties came sharply into focus during the Biafran War, where Irish Catholics, considered allies of the secessionist Ibo, were caught in the escalations.[49] Enda Staunton interrogated the responses of the Irish government, the Catholic Church, and political actors to the conflict, revealing how humanitarian concern and national interests were entangled.[50] The war, along with the Irish Anti-Apartheid movement and Irish involvement in Congo peacekeeping missions, served as the foundation for African-Irish humanitarian connections in the 1960s.[51]

A selection of Kevin O'Sullivan's publications builds on this body of work, portraying African-Irish ties through the lens of Ireland's Africa-friendly foreign policy, often styled as a third-world kinship, which was evident during the height of West African independence

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Ireland and South Africa in Modern Times, ed. Donal P. McCracken (Royal Irish Academy, 1996); Kevin O'Sullivan, 'Irish Foreign Policy and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1955-1975' (Royal Irish Academy, 2008); Kevin O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the End of Empire: Small State Identity in the Cold War 1955-75*, Reprint edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); Bernadette Whelan et al., 'Ireland and the Third World: A Historical Perspective', *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 5 (1994): 107–19.

[49] Tony Byrne, *Airlift to Biafra: Breaching the Blockade* (Dublin: Columba, 1997); Dom Colbert, *No Tears Left: Biafra to Bosnia - Further Memories of an Irish Doctor Abroad* (Dublin, Ireland: Orpen Press, 2018); Nick Maxwell, 'Escape from Biafra- an Irish Diplomat's Account of an Evacuation, 1967', *History Ireland*, 2022; Alexander A. Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War*, Revised (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co., 2000).

[50] Enda Staunton, 'The Case of Biafra: Ireland and the Nigerian Civil War', *Irish Historical Studies* 31, no. 124 (1999): 513–34; Enda Staunton, 'The Forgotten War: The Catholic Church and Biafra', *History Ireland*, 2000.

[51] Michael Kennedy and Art Magennis, *Ireland, the United Nations and the Congo: A Military and Diplomatic History, 1960-1* (Dublin Portland (OR): Four Courts Press, 2014); Norman MacQueen, 'National Politics and the Peacekeeping Role: Ireland and the United Nations Operations in the Congo', *War & Society*, 1 May 1988; Tom McCaughren, *The Peacemakers of Niemba* (Co. Cork, Ireland: Somerville Press, 2013); Fionn Rogan, 'Niemba – The Birth of an Army', *University Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 10 January 2014.

movements.[52] The intellectual tradition on the study of Irish racism, focusing on both historical and contemporary connections, has since grown.[53] For instance, Bryan Fanning, focusing on African, Jewish and Traveller communities, has demonstrated how Ireland was never exempt from perpetuating racism, despite its own history of being racialised in the British imperial system.[54]

1.5 Literature on colonial students in Britain

Researcher Michael Banton and his colleagues initiated some of the most influential postwar research on race relations in Britain, marking the heyday of this field of study.[55] The Edinburgh School (as they came to be known) exposed racial tensions between Britons and colonial migrants, demonstrating how race had become a defining feature of social life to reinforce the boundaries of Whiteness. Since then, the focus on the postcolonial period has often overshadowed earlier colonial migrant histories.

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[52] O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the End of Empire*; Kevin O'Sullivan, 'Back to Biafra. On the 50th Anniversary of a War That Was Headline News in Ireland', *History Ireland* 25, no. 3 (2017): 16 — 17.

[53] Gerard W. Boucher, *The Irish Are Friendly, but: A Report on Racism and International Students in Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Council for International Students, 1998); Steve Garner, *Racism in the Irish Experience*, Illustrated edition (London: Pluto Press, 2003); Steve Garner, 'Ireland: From Racism without "Race" to Racism without Racists', *Radical History Review* 2009, no. 104 (2009): 41–56; Frances McGinnity et al., *Migrants' Experience of Racism and Discrimination In Ireland. Results of a Survey Conducted by The Economic and Social Research Institute for The European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia*, Policy Paper (2006).

[54] Bryan Fanning and Lucy Michael, 'Racism and Anti-Racism in the Two Irelands', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41, no. 15 (2018): 2656–72; Bryan Fanning, *Immigrants As Outsiders in the Two Irelands*, with Lucy Michael (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019); Bryan Fanning, *New Guests of the Irish Nation* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press Ltd, 2009).

[55] Michael Banton, *White and Coloured: The Behavior of British People Towards Coloured Immigrants* (Rutgers University Press, 1960).

Historical case studies on colonial migrants span a variety of contexts. John D. Hargreaves, for instance, explored the experiences of African students at the University of Aberdeen.[56] Within Michael Banton's earlier disciplinary tradition, however, Ndem Eyo Bassey examined the lives of 'Negro Immigrants in Manchester,'[57] while Sheila Webster conducted a study on Black and Caribbean students at Oxford and Cambridge.[58] The seminal edited volume, *Under the Imperial Carpet: Essays in Black History, 1780-1950* offers a general complement on the realities of living Black in a hegemonically White Britain across music, education, military and labour contexts in the late 18th to mid-20th centuries.[59]

An important strand of existing research on colonial students' associational lives is focused on psychiatric aspects, adaptation, identity, and culture shock.[60] These studies portray the mental health of colonial students as fragile, especially in Britain, where they faced isolation and higher psychological pressures, resulting in hospitalisations and premature repatriations.[61] In complement to this work, scholarship on the role of institutional and state

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[56] John D. Hargreaves, 'African Students in Britain: The Case of Aberdeen University', *Immigrants & Minorities* 12, no. 3 (1993): 129–44.

[57] Eyo Bassey Ndem, 'Negro Immigrants in Manchester', 1953.

[58] Sheila Webster, 'Negroes in Bluebrick: An Analysis of the Assimilation of African and West Indian Students', Department of Social Anthropology, University of Edinburgh, n.d.

[59] Rainer E. Lotz and Ian Pegg, *Under the Imperial Carpet: Essays in Black History, 1780-1950* (Rabbit Press, 1986).

[60] G. K. Animashawun, 'African Students in Britain', *Race* 5, no. 1 (1963): 38–47; Amechi Anumonye, 'Psychological Stresses among African Students in Britain', *Scottish Medical Journal* 12, no. 9 (1967): 314–19; John Copeland, 'Aspects of Mental Illness in West African Students', *Social Psychiatry* 3, no. 1 (1968): 7–13; W. I. B. Onuigbo, 'An African's Mental Outlook in Britain', *British Medical Journal* 2 (1958): 1085–86; Murray B. Pandwe, 'An African Student Overseas', *Practical Anthropology* os-10, no. 5 (1963): 230–32; Matthew M. Heaton, *Black Skin, White Coats: Nigerian Psychiatrists, Decolonization, and the Globalization of Psychiatry* (Ohio University Press, 2013).

[61] Raymond Prince, 'The "Brain Fag" Syndrome in Nigerian Students', *Journal of Mental Science* 106, no. 443 (1960): 559–70; Carey, *Colonial Students*; Dayo Olugboji, *The Problem of Nigerian Students Overseas* (C.M.S. (Nigeria) Press, 1959).

actors confirms how mental morbidity became an urgent concern for stakeholders invested in the welfare of the students abroad.[62]

The literature shows that, confronted with these precarities, colonial migrants in 20th-century Europe formed social clubs for mutual support, and in some cases, to discreetly pursue decolonial political agendas.[63] As Immanuel Wallerstein observed, some of these societies functioned as crucial forums where colonial subjects gathered to exchange ideas, express dissent, and envision alternative futures for their home colonies, playing an important role in sustaining political consciousness.[64] Among these social clubs (or colonial student societies) for West Africans were the Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France (FEANF) and the West African Students' Union (WASU), both well-known networks for transnational political awakening in France and Britain respectively.[65]

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[62] J. M. Lee, 'Overseas Students in Britain: How Their Presence Was Politicised in 1966-1967', *Minerva* 36, no. 4 (1998): 305–21; J. M. Lee, 'Commonwealth Students in the United Kingdom, 1940-1960: Student Welfare and World Status', *Minerva* 44, no. 1 (2006): 1–24; 'Colonial Students in the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 21, no. 3 (1951): 237.

[63] Constantin Katsakioris, 'Students from Portuguese Africa in the Soviet Union, 1960–74: Anti-Colonialism, Education, and the Socialist Alliance', *Journal of Contemporary History* 56, no. 1 (2021): 142–65; Emily Marker, 'African Youth on the Move in Postwar Greater France: Experiential Knowledge and Decolonial Politics at the End of the Empire', *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 3, no. 2 (2019): 283–303.

[64] Immanuel Wallerstein, 'Elites in French-Speaking West Africa: The Social Basis of Ideas', *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 3, no. 1 (1965): 1–33; Joana Passos, 'The House for the Students of the Empire (CEI), African Women Poets from the 1950s, and Sarah Maldoror's Films', *Diacrítica* 34 (July 2020): 148–66.

[65] Brittony Chartier, 'Reversing the Gaze: WASU, The Keys and The Black Man on Europe and Western Civilization in the Interwar Years, 1933-1937' (Master, Carleton University, 2012); David Clover, 'Dispersed or Destroyed: Archives, the West Indian Students' Union, and Public Memory', *Society for Caribbean Studies Annual Conference Papers* 6 (2005); Marc Matera, 'Afro-Metropolis: Black Political and Cultural Associations in Interwar London', in *Black London* (University of California Press, 2019), 22–61.

The life writings of colonial students have shaped the discussion of their experiences, but such sources are rare, and the scarcity indicates the need for further historical research. Notably, Lloyd Braithwaite produced an important cultural analysis of Caribbean colonial students in Britain, addressing themes such as origin stories, academics, gender dynamics, political activism, social life and domesticity.[66] Equally impactful is the 1965 collection *Disappointed Guests: Essays by African, Asian, and West Indian Students*, which provides firsthand reflections, adding to our knowledge of the disillusioned realities of colonial students in imperial metropoles.[67] Biographies and memoirs of postcolonial elites and intellectuals further enrich the conversation on colonial student movements and collectives.[68] For example, Amady Aly Dieng, former FEANF president, provided valuable insights into the aspirations and challenges of colonial students.[69] His work also highlights the importance of writing and literature in shaping intellectual discourse within student social movements.[70]

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[66] Lloyd Braithwaite, *Colonial West Indian Students in Britain* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2001).

[67] Henri Dawson and John L. Tajfel, *Disappointed Guests: Essays by African, Asian, and West Indian Students* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

[68] Trevor Clark, *A Right Honourable Gentleman: The Life and Times of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa* (Zaria: Hudahuda Publishing, 1991); Egbert Udo Udoma, *The Eagle in Its Flight: Being the Memoir of The Hon. Sir Udo Udoma* (USA: Grace & Son, 2008); Susan Williams, *Colour Bar: The Triumph of Seretse Khama and His Nation* (London: Penguin, 2022); Raymond M. Cooke, 'The Historian as Underdog: Eric Williams and the British Empire', *The Historian* 33, no. 4 (1971): 596–610; C. L. R. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (Duke University Press, 2022); *Nigerian Diplomats*.

[69] Amady Aly Dieng, *Mémoires d'un Étudiant Africain*, Série de Livres Du CODESRIA (Dakar: [Oxford, U.K.]: CODESRIA; Distribué ailleurs par African Books Collective, 2011).

[70] Amady Aly Dieng, *Les Étudiants Africains et La Littérature Négro-Africaine d'expression Française* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Langaa Research & Publishing, Michigan State University Press, 2009).

Existing research has already demonstrated how collective identities and solidarities emerged among colonial migrants, especially visible in education and labour, where shared experiences and common aspirations fostered strong communal bonds.[71] Colonial student movements strategically devised a West African identity as a collective front against racism and imperialism. It is reflected in the emergence of organisations in which they played primary roles, including the National Commission for British West Africa (1917) or the West Africa National Secretariat (1945). Given that West Africans were renowned for their activism abroad, it was widely believed that the political concessions negotiated in colonial West Africa and among its students overseas would have a great impact on the rest of the continent's trajectory towards independence.[72]

Similarities existed between the challenges faced by colonial students in Ireland and Britain. The 'threat' of immigrants was a pretext for the reassertion of racialised, national, White, European social boundaries in the postwar period.[73] For example, as White European landladies restricted opportunities to rent, accommodation became a source of dispute between students and hosts. That tensioned social landscape has inspired many

[71] Philip Garigue, 'The West African Students' Union. A Study in Culture Contact', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 23, no. 1 (1953): 55–69; Oscar Gish, 'Color and Skill: British Immigration, 1955-1968', *International Migration Review* 3, no. 1 (1968): 19; Adi, *West Africans in Britain*.

[72] Hakim Adi, 'West African Students in Britain, 1900–60: The Politics of Exile', *Immigrants & Minorities* 12, no. 3 (1993): 107–28; Adi, *West Africans in Britain*; Hakim Adi, 'Pan-Africanism and West African Nationalism in Britain', *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (2000): 69; G. O. Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonisation, 1925-1958* (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1982); Phoebe Flanigan, 'Reappropriating Empire: A Study of the West African Students' Union (1925-1960)' (University of Colorado, 2012); Ahmad A. Yusuf, 'The West African Students Union and Its Contribution to the Anti-Colonial Struggle', *Africa Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1998): 101–24.

[73] J. A. G. Griffith, *Coloured Immigrants in Britain*, with Judith Henderson et al. (Oxford University Press, 1960); Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 2010); David Killingray, *Africans in Britain.* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012); Nigel File and Chris Power, *Black Settlers in Britain 1555-1958* (London: Heinemann Educational Books - Secondary Division, 1981).

literary works, notably Trinidadian Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* and Barbadian George Lamming's *The Emigrants*.[74]

In response, major colonial student societies, such as the West African Students' Union, sought to address the issue by establishing dedicated hostels for their members, notably Africa House in Britain, which opened in London in March 1933.[75] In parallel, colonial students in Ireland availed themselves of overseas students' hostels, including Koinonia House in Dublin (established by the Dublin United Missionary Council in 1954) and St. Xavier's University Hall in Cork (established by the Society of African Missions in 1949). Yet, despite the politics underpinning them, the history of colonial student hostels remains under-researched. The contributions of British activist Mary Trevelyan are especially important in this context, since her work demonstrates wider efforts to create safe spaces for colonial students in 20th-century Britain.[76]

Colonial student elites and intellectuals were shaped by their personal experiences both at home and abroad, through print cultures, elitist discourse, and influential public forums.[77] West Africans not only shaped each other's intellectual development but also engaged with and were influenced by a range of external ideologies within their social movements.[78] Pan-

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[74] Samuel Selvon and Susheila Nasta, *The Lonely Londoners*, Penguin Modern Classics (London: Penguin Books, 2006); George Lamming, *The Emigrants*, Repr., Ann Arbor Paperbacks (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

[75] William Whitworth, 'The Battle for an African Space in London: WASU Hostel and Aggrey House', in *Cultures of London. Legacies of Migration*, ed. Charlotte Grant and Alistair Robinson (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024), 263–68.

[76] Mary Trevelyan, 'The Welfare of Overseas Commonwealth Students in the United Kingdom', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 110, no. 5069 (1962): 333–44.

[77] Apollos Okwuchi Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans 1860-1960* (Routledge, 2013); Nozomi Sawada, 'The Educated Elite and Associational Life in Early Lagos Newspapers: In Search of Unity for the Progress of Society' (University of Birmingham, 2012).

[78] George Cartland, *The Political Significance of African Students in Great Britain*, CO 537/2572, July 1947 (n.d.); Daniel Whittall, 'Creating Black Places in Imperial London:

Africanism and Négritude were integral to the period, but so was Ethiopianism. Colonial students were inspired by the biblical significance of the historic Ethiopian region, as well as Ethiopia's successful defence against Italian invasion in the late 1800s. These factors closely aligned Ethiopianism with anti-imperialist movements of the last century.

Colonial students aligned themselves with cross-continental political movements that eventually culminated in the dismantling of Empire's hold on colonies, subverting the original intentions for training them abroad in the first place. By yielding to transatlantic political currents, many of them gained the status of postcolonial intellectuals and elites.[79] However, despite helping to cultivate generations of prominent colonial student leaders, the leftist influence (e.g. Marxism, Leninism, Maoism, and Castroism) in these public networks is under-researched.[80] Brant Moscovitch, for instance, has conducted influential research in this area, particularly on socialist Harold Laski's engagement with the

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The League of Coloured Peoples and Aggrey House, 1931–1943', *The London Journal* 36, no. 3 (2011): 225–46.

[79] Adu Boahen, ed., *The Role of African Student Movements in the Political and Social Evolution of Africa from 1900 to 1975* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1994); Jost Dülffer and Marc Frey, eds, *Elites and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011); Philip S. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*, Illustrated edition (Charlottesville, Va: University of Virginia Press, 2000).

[80] Hakim Adi, 'Forgotten Comrade? Desmond Buckle: An African Communist in Britain', *Science & Society* 70, no. 1 (2006): 22–45; Walter Crosby Eells, 'How Colored Communist Leaders Are Made in England', *The Journal of Higher Education* 26, no. 4 (1955): 187–230; Patrice Yengo et al., 'How "Red" elites contributed to shaping postcolonial states', Political Science, *Cahiers d'études africaines* 226, no. 2 (2017): 231–58; Austin Jersild, 'The Soviet State as Imperial Scavenger: "Catch Up and Surpass" in the Transnational Socialist Bloc, 1950—1960', *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 1 (2011): 109–32; David G. Scanlon, 'Education and Communism in Africa South of the Sahara', *Comparative Education Review* 2, no. 3 (1959): 4–8.

intellectual circles of Indian colonial students.[81] Among the more cited authors on this subject are Woodford McClellan, Constantin Katsakioris and Maxim Matusevich, whose work discusses ideological and educational exchanges between African elites and socialist states. They confirm how the USSR's political rhetoric framed Soviet friendship as both an alternative to Western hegemony and an ideological ally to anti-colonial movements.[82] Sara Pugach has also done work on African Students in East Germany.[83]

1.6 Signposting the four papers

Paper 1 explores how medical school, family, postwar/colonial, gender, and missionary archives can be used to navigate around archival silences when reconstructing the histories of overlooked colonial students.

Many 20th-century colonial students who emerged as social and cultural figures gained legitimacy and recognition through their European medical credentials.[84] Scholarship has

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[81] Brant Moscovitch, 'A "Seedbed" for Post-Colonial Leaders' (University of Oxford, 2017); Brant Moscovitch, 'A Liberal Ghost? The Left, Liberal Democracy and the Legacy of Harold Laski's Teaching', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 46, no. 5 (2018): 935–57; Brant Moscovitch, 'Harold Laski's Indian Students and the Power of Education, 1920–1950', *Contemporary South Asia* 20, no. 1 (2012): 33–44.

[82] Katsakioris, 'Students from Portuguese Africa in the Soviet Union, 1960–74'; Constantin Katsakioris, 'Creating a Socialist Intelligentsia', *Cahiers d'études Africaines*, no. 226 (July 2017): 259–88; Woodford McClellan, 'Africans and Black Americans in the Comintern Schools, 1925-1934', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26, no. 2 (1993): 371–90; Maxim Matusevich, 'Black in the U.S.S.R.', *Transition*, no. 100 (2008): 56–75; Maxim Matusevich, 'Probing the Limits of Internationalism: African Students Confront Soviet Ritual', *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 27, no. 2 (2009): 19–39.

[83] Sara Pugach, *African Students in East Germany, 1949-1975* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2022).

[84] Magnus Bassey, 'Higher Education and the Rise of Early Political Elites in Africa', *Review of Higher Education in Africa* 1, no. 1 (2009): 1; Apollos Okwuchi Nwauwa, 'Western Education and the Rise of a New African Elite in West Africa', in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

already sketched the development of Europe as a historic destination for medical education.[85] This paper builds upon these intellectual foundations by exploring new archival insights into colonial medical students' origins. It asks what understandings of colonial student histories might be gained by revisiting underutilised colonial era archives, as well as by interrogating the principles, practices and politics surrounding the presence (or absence), organisation (or disorganisation) of colonial-era archival collections. How can the archives reveal what schools, religions, clans and families the students come from?

It therefore interrogates medical school, family, postcolonial, and gender archives, asking questions of race, education, mobility, and Empire in the construction of the histories of the students. It demonstrates how the archives of West African students are embedded in political, cultural, and institutional strictures, not unlike colonial students themselves. By appraising different archival sources and the politics embedded within them, the paper

[85] Pratik Chakrabarti, *Medicine and Empire: 1600-1960* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire New York, NY: Red Globe Press, 2013); Anna Crozier, *Practising Colonial Medicine: The Colonial Medical Service in British East Africa* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007); Anna Greenwood, *Beyond the State: The Colonial Medical Service in British Africa: 134* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); Ryan Johnson, 'The West African Medical Staff and the Administration of Imperial Tropical Medicine, 1902–14', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 38, no. 3 (2010): 419–39; Terence Johnson, 'Imperialism and the Professions: Notes on the Development of Professional Occupations in Britain's Colonies and the New States', *The Sociological Review* 20, no. 1_suppl (1972): 281–309; Ryan Johnson, '"An All-White Institution": Defending Private Practice and the Formation of the West African Medical Staff', *Medical History* 54, no. 2 (2010): 237; Ampadu Kwame Samuel and Boushirah Abdul-Hamid, 'A Historical Overview of Western Medicine and Health in Ghana in the Twentieth Century', *History and Philosophy of Medicine* 4, no. 3 (2022): 20; J. Njoh, 'Early Nigerian Doctors, Their Edinburgh Connection and Their Contribution to Medicine in West Africa', *Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* 30, no. 2 (2000): 164–71; Charles Tettey, 'Medical Practitioners of African Descent in Colonial Ghana', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18, no. 1 (1985): 139–44; Charles Tettey, 'Medicine in Africa: A Bibliographical Essay', *A Current Bibliography on African Affairs* 3, no. 1 (1970): 5–18.

positions colonial students as agents of diverse origins, vulnerable to racial hierarchies imposed by the imperial system. It further demonstrates that in spite of structural accessibility issues, archival histories have an important role to play in showing how colonial education produced complex and sometimes even contradictory subjects who were central to the making of emergent postcolonial nations.

PAPER 2 assesses civic engagement among colonial students in the Association for Students of African Descent (ASAD), a colonial student society in 20th-century Dublin. Despite the ASAD's significance, it has largely eluded scholarly attention. Drawing on a range of archival sources, the paper reconstructs the role of ASAD as one of the main areas for the growth of pan-African collective identities among colonial students in Ireland.

This paper poses the question: How is ASAD's first known political petition a historical artefact for understanding the political engagement of 20th-century West African colonial students? Thus, beginning with ASAD's first known political petition, this paper uses a thematic analysis to weigh matters that concerned ASAD against the membership of its West African contingent. It examines the themes of decoloniality and leadership to demonstrate the lasting political and intellectual influence of colonial student societies on social movements of their time

Archival evidence demonstrates that while ASAD maintained ideological ties to other diasporic movements, it warrants recognition in its own right. Indeed, as evidenced by its earliest known political petition, ASAD was a centre for political consciousness and collective action. By contextualising ASAD alongside more prominent student movements such as WASU and FEANF, this paper shows Ireland's overlooked place within pan-African and anti-imperial activist networks.

The themes extracted from the archives underscore how West African colonial students in Ireland mobilised around shared experiences of imperial exclusion, transforming associations like ASAD into spaces for safe resistance. Significantly, this research reaffirms the importance of colonial student societies as catalysts for collective identity formation and decolonial activism.

PAPER 3 is an extension of research into the associational lives of colonial students in Ireland. The University Philosophical Society (The Phil) is a historic student debating society in Ireland. Nigerian nationalist Egbert Udo Udoma was elected president of the Phil in 1942, while he was a Law student at Trinity College Dublin. This paper asks, how does Udoma's inaugural presidential speech underscore the Phil's role in shaping emerging West African student intelligentsia from 1942-1962?

The Phil is presented not just as a debating society, but as a space of transnational intellectual exchange that enabled colonial students to engage critically with the ideas of their time within elite networks of influence. Udoma's inaugural presidential speech is placed in dialogue with original archival data to unpack the socio-political and intellectual landscape from which West African student intellectuals were cultivated in the Phil. Thematic analysis unearthed influences in three key areas, namely decolonisation rhetoric, access to vital social/material capital and patriarchal leadership.

Through these themes, Paper 3 contributes new insights into the interconnected histories of Europe and Africa, revealing political influences that shaped the students' thinking, as well as documenting anti-imperialist discourse within a club with ties to Irish political elite, and within a university with imperial origins. The paper reinforces a core argument in colonial student studies: that colonial students were not passive recipients of imperial education, but active agents who continuously assessed, challenged, and negotiated prevailing structures of power as they encountered them.

PAPER 4 offers a contextual analysis of a letter published by Nigerian Judge Louis Fadipe in the Irish Independent newspaper in 1964, following the assault on his son, a medical student, by two Irish youths in Dublin. The central research question of the paper is: How did racial tensions manifest between West African students and their Irish hosts in the 20th century?

The analysis is underpinned by original archival data. Through these archives, the paper examines racial complexities faced by African students in the postcolonial period as an inheritance from the colonial student era. Thus, it places the Fadipe affair within a larger

context and explains how racial issues in Ireland could be traced to a longer historical trajectory. The archives are used as a gateway to reveal how the assault and subsequent public response expose critical gaps in our knowledge of key flashpoints in African-Irish historical relations.

The study will form part of the growing intellectual tradition on the study of Irish racism, interrogating Ireland's problematic engagement with racial issues, or more accurately, its persistent reluctance to confront them as a society negotiating its own postcolonial contradictions.

1.7 Reflections

As educationists Meek, Macmillan, and Hussey famously put it in 1940, 'all sorts of minds are needed to apply themselves to the riddles of Africa.'[86] The complex relationship between African students, European universities, and colonial legacies requires constant critical reflection. My research in Ireland highlights the evolving significance of African students' intellectual and political identities in European social and cultural spaces. As it is for international students today, colonial students' narrative is neither passive nor unidimensional, but is characterised by resistance, adaptation, and transformation in response to systematic and enduring global inequities.

By examining the historical presence of colonial students in Europe through an interdisciplinary lens, we uncover the intricate relationship between migration, education, and identity. This comes alive in colonial archives that are notorious for collecting, disordering, and disrupting the histories of African people. The dual mandate of recovering suppressed stories and challenging long-established archival silences is one that researchers should take seriously.

The way we portray the past shapes our understanding and perspective of the present. Colonial student research demands bestowing new values on alternative Black archival

[86] Charles Kingsley Meek et al., *Europe and West Africa: Some Problems and Adjustments* (Oxford University Press, 1940), 114.

spaces. It also requires reparations, redress and reclamation of extraordinary events as much as everyday experiences within those archives. Africanists should therefore approach archiving with an emancipatory lens, visualising it as a practice for historical justice and liberation where Black African communities can create new intellectual discussions that resist historic erasures.

The histories of colonial students reveal insights into the intersecting fields of race, identity, knowledge production and preservation, contributing new understandings to the transcontinental legacies of Empire. Yet the archival record discloses far more evidence of African students' impact on emergent national formations than of any reciprocal transformation in Irish institutions.

2.0 PAPER 1: CRITICAL ARCHIVES IN THE STUDY OF NIGERIAN MEDICAL STUDENTS AT TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN 1940-1970 [UNDER REVIEW WITH *IRISH EDUCATION STUDIES*]

2.1 Abstract

This paper engages with archival material to interrogate the origins of Nigerian medical students at Ireland's oldest university between 1940 and 1970. The research examines how archives both reveal and obscure the histories of colonial students. It is supported by a database containing aggregated biographical details of over 700 African students who studied at Trinity College Dublin between 1900 and 1980. Data was sourced from college, city, and national archives, and supplemented with non-institutional materials. The paper demonstrates how diverse social and geographical backgrounds, catalysts, and motivations shaped the presence of Nigerian medical students at the College. By appraising missionary, gender, medical school, postcolonial and family records, it adds new perspectives on how archives can enable and constrain historical knowledge about colonial students.

2.2 Keywords

Colonial students, Trinity College, critical archives, Nigerian students, educational migration, medical education, postwar.

2.3 Introduction

As early as the 19th century, Oguntola Sapara, one of only eight Western-trained physicians practising in Nigeria, had amassed sufficient wealth to sponsor the education of several

Nigerian women in nursing and midwifery courses in Great Britain.[87] In the 20th century, for instance, Afodu Abimbola Aina, founder of A.D.R.A.O. International School, and granddaughter of the esteemed Nigerian businessman Candido João Da Rocha attended Trinity College Dublin in the late 1940s. Similarly, Akinsete Frances Mopelola, daughter of Agnes Akinsete and High Chief Mamukuyomi Akinsete, Chief Sasere of Ondo land, was head girl at Queen's College Lagos. She went on to study at Trinity College Dublin and later served as a director of the Kaduna Refinery and Petrochemical Company. [88]

In Britain and Ireland, such students from colonies were often referred to as *colonial students*, and significant numbers of them studied medicine in European imperial universities. Nigerian colonial students who did not come from families of means received scholarships from missionary groups, colonial bureaus, civil associations and private individuals.

Much of the literature on the students is centred on Britain. However, Irish contributions to Nigerian medicine are by no means insignificant. As early as the late 19th century, one could speak of the timeliness of the governor of Lagos Colony, Alfred Moloney, in appointing the first two African doctors, Obadiah Johnson and John Randle, into the colonial medical service as an important harbinger of things to come.

In this paper, I examine the sociological and historical context for the training of Nigerian medical students at Trinity College Dublin (1940-1970), spanning the entirety of the postwar, independence and post-independence periods. What can archival dynamics and archival data tell us about the presence of Nigerian medical students at a European college with strong ties to the British Empire? By appraising missionary, gender, medical school, postcolonial and family records, the paper connects critical archives to the subject of colonial students, contributing novel perspectives on how they can both enable and constrain historical knowledge about this under-researched group.

Archives have long fascinated social theorists, critics, historians, and philosophers. They are however, 'social constructs. Their origins lie in the information needs and social values

[87] Adelola Adeloye, 'Some Early Nigerian Doctors and Their Contribution to Modern Medicine in West Africa', *Medical History* 18, no. 3 (1974): 275–93.

[88] Tobi Awodipe, 'QCOGA Holds Inaugural Lecture for Mopelola Oladitan', *Guardian Nigeria*, 28 July 2018.

of the rulers, governments, businesses, associations, and individuals who establish and maintain them.'[89] In the context of African research, they have proven themselves to be of diverse nature, form and provenance, with shifting perceptions about ways of preserving them.[90] Academics have already advocated the preservation of endangered African archives, alongside the ethical and moral duty of situating agency within their reinterpretations.[91] The underdeveloped state of many African archives, however, has led to the search for data in imperial metropolitan regions where complex power dynamics inevitably shape access and presentation.[92]

In contrast, discussions surrounding European archives have focused on bureaucratic reforms and the politics of transparency within national archival institutions, especially in Great Britain and France, where many colonial archives have been redacted, embargoed, and relocated.[93] Less attention, however, has been directed toward archives that are not

[89] Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, 'Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory', *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 3.

[90] Isabel Schellnack-Kelly, 'Accessing Collective Memory: The Role of Oral History in Building an Inclusive Archives Reflecting a People's Archives', *Collection and Curation* 43 (October 2023); Isabel Schellnack-Kelly and Mashilo T. Modiba, 'Developing Smart Archives in Society 5.0: Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Managing Audiovisual Archives in Africa', *UnisaRxiv*, 12 March 2024; Asimi Alarape et al., *African Tradition Is Essentially Oral. In View of This, Is There Any Place for Oral Archives in This Digital Age?*, 1 March 2017, 122–29.

[91] Edwina D. Ashie-Nikoi, 'Out of the Ashes: Rethinking Loss in the African Archive', *Social Dynamics* 50 (March 2024); Stacey Kennedy, 'Unsettling the Archive', *Third Text*, 3 March 2024; Monique Scott, 'Excavating Whiteness in the African Archive: The Story of Amandus Johnson's 1920s Expedition to Angola for the Penn Museum', *Museum Anthropology* 47 (March 2024).

[92] Philip Curtin, 'The Archives of Tropical Africa: A Reconnaissance', *Journal of African History* 1, no. 2 (1960): 129–47.

[93] Mandy Banton, 'A "Legacy of Suspicion": The UK National Archives, the "Migrated Archives" and the Insecticide Debacle of 2022', *Africa Bibliography, Research and*

based in imperial metropoles, like those in Ireland. Furthermore, whereas social upheavals like the *Rhodes Must Fall* student movement acknowledged colonial foundations in academia, Africanist discussions have not sufficiently addressed European university archives as repositories of data on Africa. How can engagement with the politics of such archives reveal histories about Nigerian medics trained at Trinity College Dublin, 1940-1970?

2.4 Methodology

Studies on Africa have seen methodological shifts. Since fieldwork and oral histories provided an initial preoccupation with studying pre-colonial African history, 'archival documentation, in particular the colonial archive, began to be employed more thoroughly.'[94] Ireland and its oldest university, Trinity College Dublin (TCD), contain substantial colonial-era archives. For instance, Trinity College had been awarding exhibition scholarships in medicine to South African students in the early 20th century.[95] By the mid-20th century, the College had appointed a dedicated officer to oversee the welfare of African and Asian colonial students. The role was only discontinued in favour of a colonial office appointee tasked with looking after the welfare of Nigerian students, the most populous subgroup of West African students in Ireland.[96] Moreover, following the closure of that office in the late 60s, special provisions were made (with Irish governmental funding) for an Overseas Club for Afro-Asian students in Dublin to assume its

Documentation 2 (November 2023); Fabienne Chamelot, 'The Politics of French Colonial Archives: Mainland France, French West Africa and the Indochinese Union, 1894-1960' (University of Portsmouth, 2022).

[94] David M. Gordon, 'Reading the Archives as Sources', in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (2018), 1.

[95] Trinity College Dublin, *Dublin University Calendars 1911-12* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1911), 22.

[96] Trinity College Dublin, *TCD MUN/V/5/27- 12 January 1949 - 7 December 1955*, Muniment/Volumes (Trinity College Dublin, n.d.), Trinity College Dublin Manuscripts Room.

responsibilities.[97] The archives at the college, city and national levels provide a fitting context therefore for a study on Nigerian medical students.

Data for this research were obtained from archives at Trinity College Dublin, the National Archives of Ireland and the National Library of Ireland. Some of the collections consulted included materials on justice, religious missions, education, and foreign affairs at the National Archives and Library, as well as senior proctors' registers, club and society records, calendars, and alumni databases in the archives of Trinity College Dublin. These were expected to offer new insights into the presence of African students, situated within the broader themes of colonial deconstruction and republican aspirations that defined their time abroad.

However, I encountered gaps in institutional archives. So, I supplemented my research with non-institutional archival sources, including newspapers, colonial gazettes, personal notes, autobiographies, genealogy reports, media broadcasts, obituaries and funeral tributes, national biographical dictionaries, and *Who's Who* directories.

My research was part of a special-purpose project to reconstruct the histories of African students at TCD, led by the College's first assistant professor of Black Studies, Philomena Mary Mullen. The project is intended to reposition colonial students as legitimate agents whose choices, interests, and actions constituted them into the broader socio-political world they inhabited, not just the European institutions in which they were trained. It was underpinned by a database I collated over three years, containing the parentage, academic, extracurricular, tutelage, professional, and other aggregated biographical details of over 700 African students who studied at the College between 1900 and 1980.

Using this database as a starting point, the research demonstrates how diverse social and geographical backgrounds, catalysts and motivations shaped the presence of Nigerian medical students at the College. It connects critical archives to the subject of colonial students, during key historical periods that reflect the peak of West Africa's colonial and post-colonial transformations. My research question is: What can archival dynamics and

[97] Irish Department of Education, 'Letter from the Irish Department of Education Numbered C.O.988/365/22', 27 January 1969, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

archival data tell us about the presence of Nigerian medical students at a European college with strong ties to the British Empire?

Nigerian colonial students are of particular interest in this context because they came from the largest British West African colony. Their presence in Europe was marked by academic distinction, but also increased political consciousness and tensions surrounding decolonisation. Among the various groups of colonial students in Europe, Nigerians were often seen as particularly influential. For instance, John Lucien Keith, director of colonial students, reported in 1949 that 'there were about 200 [colonial students] in Ireland, of whom one half were Catholics sent by the Catholic Missions, mostly from Nigeria.'[98]

During these times, West African students sought an education in Europe to prepare themselves to 'take an active part in the life of the various colonies.'[99] Western medicine was looked on as an elite profession. Even faced with rigid patriarchal and racial barriers in the colonial medical service,[100] many Nigerians availed themselves of degree-awarding medical institutions in Ireland, particularly those in Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University College Dublin (UCD), and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI).

Historical research on students is gaining momentum, as they are being recognised as historical actors situated at the intersection of education and the proliferation of national consciousness. The years 1940–1970 selected for this research represent the postwar, independence and post-independence epochs, central to understanding the social dynamics that propelled African students to Europe. It was a period that witnessed major cultural revivals (e.g., Négritude), economic transformations (e.g., the rise of neoliberalism), and political upheavals (e.g., civil rights and liberation movements).

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[98] *The Words of JL Keith Quoted in Memorandum* (1949), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[99] William George Arthur Ormsby-Gore, *Report by The Hon. W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore, M.P. (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies), on His Visit to West Africa during the Year 1926* (London: H.M.S.O, 1926), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), TSCH/3/S5179, p. 88.

[100] Greenwood, *Beyond the State*.

So, this addition to the corpus on colonial student histories is an appraisal of available missionary, gender, medical school, postcolonial and family archival material to illustrate how archival dynamics can both enable and constrain historical knowledge of 20th-century Nigerian medical students at Ireland's oldest imperial university.

2.5 Missionary records

These are records of socio-historical relevance to colonial student research documenting missionary activities, religious conversion, and other related social dynamics.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot famously observed that 'human beings participate in history both as actors and as narrators.'[101] In the context of West African colonial histories, one often-overlooked group that participated in, and sometimes literally wrote history, was the missionary community. Far from simple observers, missionaries were active agents who shaped the sociohistorical landscape of colonial Africa. Their role continued unabated into the postcolonial period, as they continued to hold power over critical archives and therefore, history itself.

Trinity College Dublin, established by English royal charter, functioned as an imperial university to uphold an Anglican Christian ethos. This religious orientation made it a natural destination for colonial students from Nigeria's predominantly Christian south. For instance, the Majekodunmi family adhered to the Anglican faith. Similar patterns are observable in the lives of other Nigerian medical students, such as Ogun Isaiah Babafemi Olufemi and Edmund Nathaniel Oyekanmi Sodeinde, whose student records list their religion as Church of England. Benaiah Chinaka Mbata is another interesting case. He was born into an Anglican family, received his secondary education at St. Augustine's Grammar School in Nkwerre, an Anglican institution, and later taught at the Anglican Grammar School in Onicha Uboma. In the late 1970s, he pursued a postgraduate diploma in child health at Trinity College Dublin.[102]

[101] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 2.

[102] Total Care Ministries, *General and Personal Data of Dr B.C Mbata* (2018).

Irish Department of Foreign Affairs records acknowledge 'the general will of the Irish people…in the sending of missionaries to many countries, and that, particularly in West Africa… there are large numbers...' [103] Data from religious records can be obtained from church membership logs, conversion accounts, inter-colony correspondence, and some vernacular language material, given missionaries' contributions to translation and local language literacy. 20th-century Ireland, for instance, maintained strong connections with Irish missionary activity in Nigeria through networks of friends, family, neighbours, school/church donations, and widely circulated magazines such as *Africa*, *African Missionary*, and *Catholic Missions.* However, the inaccessibility of many of their archives blocks a crucial avenue for studying the experiences of colonial students. During my requests for access, religious bodies routinely reported no relevant holdings, even when a look into the archives could have revealed otherwise.

Religious archives, undeniably shaped by racialised and Euro-paternalistic biases, conceal the complex and often problematic relationships that underpinned Irish presence within colonial contexts. Consider this excerpt about the Irish missionary practice of *Black baby boxes*:

> 'Irish children were encouraged to spend half-a-crown on the "purchase" of a little Black baby and "snatch them from the claws of the devil." Buying Black Babies was a widespread and popular occupation. Cards were distributed by magazines and in schools. Variations on the same theme resulted in the purchase, and power to name a "Black Baby." Each child (or indeed adult) had a card with printed spots to be punched, and in the middle of the card was a picture of an African child. For each penny collected, one of the spots would be punched, and when thirty pennies were collected, a baby could be adopted. This was a widespread and, in retrospect, highly disturbing element of missionary fundraising.'[104]

[103] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Note Addressed to Dr. O'Brien*, 16 February 1960 (n.d.), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[104] Fiona Bateman, 'Africa and "Blackness" in the Irish Imagination', *Moore Institute, University of Galway*, 26 June 2020.

Thus, the 'imperative in archive…to protect and project the voices being silenced,'[105] often stands at odds with missionary groups' commitment towards protecting church secrets. That deliberate guardedness requires researchers to seek alternative sources and distorts historical narratives, including minimising missionaries' own positive contributions to colonial education. Religious groups awarded substantial overseas scholarships to colonial students in order to raise a local workforce capable of sustaining the health and literacy projects they were undertaking in colonies. In 1955, a letter from the British Embassy in Dublin to the Irish Ministry of External Affairs stated that 'many of these [African] students have been educated in colleges staffed by Catholic Missions from Ireland, and it is only natural that they should be attracted to the institutions of higher learning in the home country of their teachers.'[106]

From the 1920s to the 1960s, Bishops Joseph Shanahan and his successor Charles Heerey embodied the Holy Ghost Fathers' contributions to Nigeria. Igbos, largely stereotyped as Roman Catholic, possess a rich history of early formal education in Nigeria and an affinity with Irish Catholics. Chinua Achebe recalls that among 'the soccer champions of our day were Christ the King College, Onitsha, where Irish Fathers were rumoured to flog their students after every unsuccessful match.'[107] Hope Waddell Institute in Calabar, named for Irish missionary Hope Masterton Waddell, produced students who pursued medical education at Trinity College Dublin. Among them were famed anatomist Thomas Adesanya Ige Grillo.[108]

Thus, Arlette Farge writes that 'through the archive we can glimpse what became of these people who were constantly in movement, and whose agency was composed of a continual

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[105] Verne Harris, *Ghosts of Archive: Deconstructive Intersectionality and Praxis* (London: Routledge, 2020), 2.

[106] British Embassy Dublin, 'A Letter from the British Embassy Dublin to the Irish Ministry of External Affairs', August 1955, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[107] Chinua Achebe, 'Umuahia and Soccer', in *The Umuahian* (Umuahia: Government College Umuahia Old Boys Association, 1979), 79.

[108] Trinity College Dublin, *Dublin University Calendars 1973-74* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1973), 640.

combination and recombination of action and reaction, change and conflict.'[109] Missionaries were among such figures on the move between colonial and metropolitan areas. Irish Taoiseach Seán Lemass reiterated this during Nigeria's independence celebrations, stating that 'Irish missionary efforts in Nigeria … play a very important role in the educational and medical, [as well as religious life] of the people of Nigeria.'[110]

Irish missionary connections to Nigeria continued well into the postcolonial period. Irishman James Moynagh (formerly Vicar Apostolic and Bishop of Calabar, and then later Bishop of Ogoja) and Thomas McGettrick (his successor in Ogoja, and later Bishop of Abakaliki) served until the 1970s and 80s, respectively. Meanwhile, Moynagh played a supportive role in the establishment of the famous Medical Missionaries of Mary in Nigeria, who pursued healthcare and missionary projects in the country well into the 21st century.[111] In fact, at the start of the Biafran War, there were about 1,500 Irish citizens in Nigeria, primarily missionaries and their families.[112] The Irish ambassador in Nigeria, Kevin Rush, even warned that Irish Catholics' close affiliation with Igbos might make them a target for sectarian violence.[113]

The Biafran War is an example of how intertwined missionary work is with politics, grounded in a longstanding history of suspicion regarding the legitimising role of religious clergy in the rule of imperialist, monarchical and postcolonial dictatorial governments.

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[109] Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 112.

[110] Department of External Affairs, 'Ireland Welcomes Nigerian Independence', *Weekly Bulletin of the Department of External Affairs*, 1960, Number 497 Edition, 5, National Archives of Ireland, PRES/1/P5616.

[111] 'Letter by Ambassador Kevin Rush to Eamon O Tuathail Titled Visit to (Former) Eastern Region of Nigeria of First Secretary, May 1967', 30 June 1967, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/319/25/37.

[112] Department of Foreign Affairs, 'Reply given to GIB (Mr Finlay)', 28 April 1967, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/319/25/37.

[113] Ó Tuathail, 'Crisis in Lagos University', 7 April 1965, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA Lagos Embassy A3/8.

Moreover, the limitations of missionaries' archives extend beyond accessibility to epistemic validity. How much did missionaries really know, and how accurate was the knowledge they wrote down? Some scholars for instance, have challenged the notion of Irish exceptionalism, revealing that Irish cultural knowledge about Africa and Blackness was often shaped by simplified and reductive representations, some of which circulated through missionary channels.[114] It shows that missionary archives are not objective repositories of truth either, but are products of epistemic constraints imposed by colonial and religious frameworks.

2.6 Gender records

These are any records of socio-historical relevance to colonial student research documenting gender inequalities, gendered roles and other related social dynamics. There is a great deal of evidence that points to the growth of colonial student populations in Ireland. Unfortunately, many archives don't concern themselves with the gender gap.

As early as 1943, and even before the establishment of University College Ibadan, a British colonial official from London, while in Dublin, had reportedly been 'impressed by the tendency of Africans to make Dublin a popular centre for conducting professional studies.'[115] Four years later, Dublin's Evening Mail newspaper reported a rumour originating from the West African Pilot newspaper in Lagos, which read that, due to the increasing number of African students in Ireland, the establishment of a hostel for them was imminent, 'provided through the instrumentality of the welfare centre of the British Colonial Office.'[116] Similarly, in 1950, a Colonial Office note on students from British territories studying in Dublin reaffirms the growing presence of Nigerian students,

[114] Linehan, 'Irish Empire'; Linehan et al., 'Becoming Tropical: Africa in the Irish Geographical Imagination'; Philomena Mullen, 'The Insistence of Blackness and the Persistence of Antiblackness in Ireland', *Australian Journal of Social Issues* early view (March 2025).

[115] 'Dublin Hostel for Africans', *Evening News* (Dublin: Ireland), 16 February 1943, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/4/238/273.

[116] *Evening News*, 'Dublin Hostel for Africans'.

particularly at Trinity College Dublin. It notes that 'the great majority of the 201 [students from British colonial territories studying in Dublin in 1950] are from Nigeria. Trinity [College Dublin] has a long tradition of accepting Nigerians and other West African students.'[117] What this note fails to mention however, is that the great majority of the colonial students are also male.

Albert Wirz and Jan-Georg Deutsch observed that neither writers nor historians of history can side-step the question of when, how, why, by whom and for whom a certain kind of historical knowledge is produced.[118] Since West African students in 20th-century Ireland were predominantly male, archival histories of colonial students often read as though they are primarily documenting the experiences of men. Intersectional insights on their female counterparts from African, Asian and Caribbean colonies are historically lacking.

Gloria Emily Otiwaa Danquah, daughter of Margaret Edith Danquah, a teacher, and Kwabena Twum Ampofo Danquah, a magistrate, was awarded a government scholarship to attend the prestigious Wesley Girls High School (WGHS) for secondary education and then again to study medicine at Trinity College Dublin in 1960.[119] Nevertheless, in the early to mid-20th-century periods, West African female colonial students were an anomaly. When Elizabeth Abimbola Awoliyi (née Akerele) graduated from Trinity College Dublin in 1938 with first-class honours and a medal in medicine, she had become only the second Nigerian woman to qualify as a Western-trained physician and, later, the first woman to practise in Nigeria.[120] 'At Massey Street [hospital], she served first as Junior Medical

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[117] Colonial Office, *Note on Students from British Colonial Territories in Dublin* (15 Victoria Street, London, 1950), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[118] Albert Wirz and Jan-Georg Deutsch, 'Geschichte in Afrika: Einleitung Und Problemaufriß', in *Geschichte in Afrika: Einführung in Probleme Und Debatten*, ed. Albert Wirz and Jan-Georg Deutsch (Berlin: Verlag Das Arabische Buch, 1997).

[119] Transitions Funeral Home, 'Biography of the Late Dr. Gloria Emily Otiwaa Danquah', Order of service, Accra: Ghana: Enterprise Group, 1 May 2020.

[120] Trinity College Dublin, *Dublin University Calendar 1938-39* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1938); Judith A. Byfield et al., eds, *Gendering the African Diaspora: Women, Culture, and Historical Change in the Caribbean and Nigerian Hinterland*, Blacks in the Diaspora (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

Officer before being promoted to Chief Consultant Gynaecologist and finally to Medical Director in 1960, a position she held until her retirement in 1969.'[121] Massey Street Hospital opened in 1914 as the oldest children's Hospital in West Africa and was where other TCD graduates like Moses Majekodunmi practised.

'Students of the colonial have come to see appropriations of colonial history as infused with political agendas, making some stories eligible for historical rehearsal and others not.'[122] Gender politics marred colonial education policy. West African women, confined to strict gender roles, were not given comparable opportunities for overseas education as their male counterparts, making their history under-rehearsed. In fact, Elizabeth Abimbola Awoliyi's older brothers Flavius and John also pursued medicine at University College Dublin, graduating circa 1935.[123] It raises intriguing questions about what role their presence in Ireland may have played in Elizabeth's own educational trajectory.

The urgency to find an archival solution to this gender deficiency is not simply about reversing the place of Black women as incidental to history. Gender is also an important frame for assessing group dynamics and anti-social behaviours in the colonial student era. Interracial relations were viewed with suspicion, partly because of highly publicised instances of procuring illegal abortions, seducing women and murder.[124] For instance, the

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[121] RCSI Heritage Collections, *RCSI around the World: Celebrating Dr. Abimbola Awoliyi - First West African Woman to Receive a Licentiate from RCSI*, 2022.

[122] Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance', *Archival Science* 2, no. 1 (2002): 91.

[123] 'UCD Results. Medical Examinations', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 19 December 1934, Irish Newspaper Archives; 'UCD Examinations Results in Faculty of Medicine', *Irish Press* (Dublin: Ireland), 5 April 1933, Irish Newspaper Archives; 'UCD Autumn Examinations. Faculty of Medicine', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 28 October 1932, Irish Newspaper Archives.

[124] 'Four Men Sent to Prison', *Evening Herald* (Dublin: Ireland), 16 June 1944, Irish Newspaper Archives; 'Big Award £2,500 against Coloured Student in Dublin', *Irish Examiner* (Dublin: Ireland), 19 February 1941.

notorious 1963 case of Shan Mohangi, a South African medical student who killed his Irish girlfriend, did little to offset these suspicions.

Again, gender intersects with social integration and intimacy in sensitive and complex ways. In Britain, social policy sometimes adapted to accommodate the needs of colonial students' spouses and romantic partners, especially in the areas of migration, reproduction and fostering (e.g. the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts or the Citizen of the UK and Colonies status). In Ireland however, significant silences exist around this subject. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that colonial students in the country experienced varying levels of integration and intimacy. Moses Majekodunmi married an Irish woman, Nora, with whom he shared interests in poetry, literature, classical music and theatre.[125] The marriage was witnessed by his Nigerian colleague Dr. Emmanuel Domingo, who had also taken an Irish wife.[126]

2.7 Medical school records

These are any records of socio-historical relevance to colonial student research documenting medical training, curricula, students, or faculty etc.

Paul Gilroy emphasised the urgent need to 'approach Britain's colonial history by more satisfactory methodological routes,' noting that 'its racial subjects need a more complex genealogy than those debates allow.'[127] Medical school archives offer one such avenue to explore the intricate genealogies of colonial racial subjects. The allure of medicine in the colonial period cannot be overstated. Medicine (along with engineering and law) was considered a 'sort of student aristocracy'[128] which exercised a kind of 'moral leadership on

[125] Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning*, 39.

[126] Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning*, 40.

[127] Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2013), xvii.

[128] T. E. Gumpert, *Recollected in Tranquillity: Reminiscences of a Sheffield Physician* (Dronfield, Sheffield: Walker & Carson, 1978), 49.

affairs of race.'[129] Becoming a doctor, therefore, was a common aspiration among West Africans because medicine held professional and cultural status. Trinity College-trained Edmund Nathaniel Oyekanmi Sodeinde embodies this aspiration. He 'worked as a clerk in the Nigerian secretariat for several years and had attained the post of chief clerk before he retired, about the age of forty years, to study medicine' in Ireland.[130]

The colonial student model was built on higher education exclusivity in critical pre-independence geo-political climates. Therefore, the reorientation of universities from elite to mass education began to dilute the status of the colonial student. Plans for University College Ibadan (as a college of the University of London), for instance, came to fruition in 1948. It became Nigeria's first major university to graduate clinical students. While the tradition of educating doctors locally continued to grow, Trinity College Dublin played important roles in shaping the tertiary education experiences of Nigerian students during this period. Take former Nigerian Minister of Health Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, who was among the early set of students to graduate from the University of Ibadan. He trained at Trinity College Dublin between 1948 and 1954.[131]

The decision to choose Trinity College Dublin for medical education occurred at the intersection of social, political, economic, religious, as well as geographic and historical considerations. Firstly, Ireland's reputation for medical education is well established, exemplified by countless leading figures. George Blumer writes of some of these figures as follows.

> 'There flourished in the city of Dublin, the remarkable group of medical practitioners… Abraham Colles (1773-1843) and John Cheyne (1777-1836)… Robert Adams (1791-1875), Robert James Graves (1796-1853), Dominick John Corrigan (1802-1880), and William Stokes (1804-1878)… Henry Marsh, the

[129] Mervyn Morris, 'Feeling, Affection, Respect', in *Disappointed Guests: Essays by African, Asian, and West Indian Students*, ed. Henri Dawson and John L. Tajfel (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

[130] Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning*, 24.

[131] Abiodun Raufu, 'Olikoye Ransome-Kuti', *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 326, no. 7403 (2003): 1400.

> eminent teacher and general practitioner; Crampton, Carmichael and Cusack, the surgeons; William Wallace, who popularised the use of iodide of potash; Francis Rynd, the originator of subcutaneous medication; Francis R. Cruise, an early endoscopist; and the obstetricians Collins, Johnston, Montgomery, Churchill, Beatty and Kennedy.'[132]

Secondly, being one of the ancient universities of Britain and Ireland, as well as the oldest university in Ireland, Trinity College Dublin's medical program is historically associated with status and prestige. 20th-century Nigerian medical students used academic laurels to move from the margins of this predominantly White institution and to dispel racialised thoughts on the intellectual might of the African. Moses Majekodunmi writes that 'at Trinity College, there were three of us who usually vied for the first position in each subject… if I was not placed in the first three, I would consider I had let myself down.'[133]

Little, however, is spoken of the academic honours many colonial students received in their day. For instance, the Sir James Craig Memorial Prize was awarded to Black student leader Olufemi Williams in 1961.[134] In the same year, Babatunde Owolabi Onadeko received the Henry Hutchinson Stewart premedical year prize.[135] For instance, Emmanuel Adeyemo Elebute was awarded the Henry Hutchinson Stewart Medical Prize and Daniel John Cunningham Memorial Medal in 1953.[136] Between 1968 and 1970, he served as President of the Nigerian Medical Association. In 2022, a memorial lecture and prize on patient safety and quality was established in his honour by the Society for Quality in Healthcare in Nigeria (SQHCN). Thus, archives can help restore continuity to fragmented medical histories by opening up the lives of overlooked colonial students whose diverse contributions shaped the medical landscapes of emerging nations.

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[132] Blumer, 'The Irish School of Medicine'.

[133] Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning*, 34.

[134] 'Exam Results', *Irish Press* (Dublin: Ireland), 28 July 1961.

[135] *Irish Press*, 'Exam Results'.

[136] 'T.C.D. School of Physic Awards', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 26 March 1953.

Given that medicine was historically a crucial field for racism, medical archives are a fitting place to undertake liberatory research. Despite the prestige of European education in West Africa, colonial students continued to encounter discrimination within institutions like the Colonial Medical Service, where higher salaries and senior ranks were frequently closed off to persons of non-European parentage.[137] For instance, until 1942, applicants for British Colonial Administrative Service positions were expected to be of 'pure European descent.'[138] Despite holding the necessary qualifications, Moses Majekodunmi was compelled to lobby the West African Committee of the British Parliament (supported by ex-colonial student Ladipo Solanke) to have his *junior doctor* designation upgraded to *medical officer*.[139]

Even when colonial students were afforded 'racial consideration,' it only reinforced racist logic. In an exceptional case, and on his first visit to apartheid South Africa, Olufemi Williams was reportedly classified as *Caucasian* in his entry visa, supposedly as a nod to his industrious contributions to Medicine.[140] Thus, medical archives can reveal how race, science, and medicine intersected, often in problematic ways.

Medical school records are also essential because they reveal details about the role of faculty in the lives of future West African leaders. For instance, Dr. T. B. H. McMurry from the College's Department of Physics was part of a group which dispensed a special welfare fund to assist Nigerian students at the College whose scholarships had been cut off during the Biafran war.[141] Just before the war, he had been among those left in 'a very exposed' position as a member of the provisional council of the University of Lagos when a replacement for the (incumbent and perceived Catholic) Igbo vice-chancellor was

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[137] Adell Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism, and Diaspora in West Africa* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996).

[138] Kenneth Robinson, *The Dilemmas of Trusteeship: Aspects of British Colonial Policy Between the Wars* (Oxford University Press, 1965), 43.

[139] Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning*, 43.

[140] JK Randle Bashorun, 'Professor Olufemi Williams (October 3, 1935 to July 16, 2017)', *The Guardian* (Nigeria), 2 February 2019, Pressreader.

[141] Brian McMurry, *The Biafran Students in Ireland* (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, 2012).

announced.[142] That year (1966), there were 2,334 total overseas students studying mostly in Dublin. This included 825 students of colour, of whom Nigerians formed 127.[143]

Medical education at Trinity College Dublin offered colonial students opportunities to interact with prominent medical figures in Ireland. Pathologist Olufemi Williams worked with famed nephrologist Graham McGregor Bull during his student days at Meath Hospital.[144] Psychiatrist Asuni Tolani fell under the influence of Rupert Strong after his clinical training at Baggot Street Hospital. He also joined the Monkstown Group, a lay psychoanalytical group led by Jonathan (Jonty) Hanaghan.[145] Moses Majekodunmi, on the other hand, was tutored by renowned brain surgeon Adams Andrew McConnell and paediatrician Robert Collis, under whose influence he received a clerkship and training in preventive medicine. He writes, 'in later years, it formed the pivot of my contribution to the health services of Nigeria when, as federal Minister of Health, I introduced the concept of health centres where both curative and preventive medicine could be integrated and practised under one roof.'[146] In 1961, Moses Majekodunmi helped establish the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, and in 1962, returned to TCD (where there were a reported 800 Africans) to be conferred an LLD.[147]

In the pre-independence period, there were perceived economic reasons for the presence of Nigerian medical students in Ireland, given a widespread impression among African parents that a medical education could be more cheaply acquired in Ireland than in England even though 'the cost of living in Dublin is about the same as London, and scholarship

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[142] Ó Tuathail, 'Crisis in Lagos University'.

[143] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Total Overseas Students* (Dublin, n.d.), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[144] Anthony King, 'A Man for All Seasons', *Trinity Today*, October 2014.

[145] Femi Oyebode, 'Tolani Asuni', *The Psychiatrist* 35 (November 2011): 478–478.

[146] Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning*, 32–36.

[147] 'Nigerian Praise for TCD', *Irish Press* (Dublin: Ireland), 11 September 1962; An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha, *An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha D.C Circular No. 1/62*, 20 September 1962, National Archives of Ireland, TSCH/3/S16878 B/62.

allowances [for maintenance is] the same as in London.'[148] The allure of Europe has existed in many colonial cultures, while students often dreaded returning home without wealth or professional or academic qualifications.[149] In fact, by 1964, an official Irish government memorandum reported that a 'large proportion of the problem cases would consist of bona fide [African] students who had been admitted to one or other of the colleges but subsequently failed their exams, gave up study but hung on in Dublin on the fringes of the genuine student body.'[150]

Medical archives can reveal patterns in public health disparities and responses to epidemics. Oladele Kale Olusiji was extensively involved in two successful Nigerian national Guinea-worm and Poliomyelitis eradication programmes in the 80s and 90s. He was conferred a B.A.O., BCh., M.B. by Trinity College Dublin in 1963.[151] Olufemi Williams holds a similar pioneering position in HIV/Aids research in Africa, having enrolled on the College's medical program in 1955 and graduating with distinction in 1961.[152]

Of course, by the 1960s, a realignment of social and intellectual consciousness within the Nigerian educational system was already underway, given legitimacy by the recommendations of the Ashby Commission. The commission's work represented 'the first time in the history of education in Nigeria that the Nigerians themselves decided to examine the higher educational structure in terms of the needs of the country, not only for that

[148] Colonial Office, *Note on Students from British Colonial Territories in Dublin*.

[149] Braithwaite, *Colonial West Indian Students in Britain*.

[150] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Memorandum* (1964), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[151] 'Conferring of Degrees in TCD', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 9 December 1963; 'Examination Results', *Irish Press* (Dublin: Ireland), 5 October 1961; Hallmarks of Labour Foundation, 'Professor Oladele Kale', *Hallmarks of Labour Foundation*, n.d.; 'Results in TCD Exams', *Irish Press*, 9 July 1958, 5.

[152] King, 'A Man for All Seasons'; Bashorun, 'Professor Olufemi Williams (October 3, 1935 to July 16, 2017)'.

material time but for a period of twenty years…'[153] By the 1970s, the results of nascent Nigerian government investments in local medical schools began to emerge. For example, Nigerian medical schools graduated 95 doctors by 1968, 269 by 1975, and 675 by 1978.[154] By 1980, the number of medical schools across Sub-Saharan Africa had reached 51.[155]

2.8 Postwar/ colonial Records

These are archival collections documenting the official activities, policies, and administrative decisions of government bodies, colonial offices, ministries, and associated agencies. Postwar and colonial archives contain evidence of the political, economic, and social transformations of emergent nations, making them essential sources for writing colonial student histories. Yet, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot asks, 'What makes some narratives rather than others powerful enough to pass as accepted history if not historicity itself?'[156] His words underscore the epistemic violence embedded in colonial archives, persisting even in the postcolonial era, where selective and exclusionary methods of knowledge production continue to privilege certain voices while marginalising others. Despite these limitations, the post-colonial period remains a suitable context to lay bare the historical and sociological significance of colonial students in Europe. Stocktaking of the period will reveal broad efforts to reform colonial education, especially through the

[153] Babatunde Fafunwa, *The Growth and Development of Nigerian Universities*, OLC Paper No. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Overseas Liaison Committee of the American Council on Education, 1974), 8.

[154] Kayode O. Adeniyi et al., 'An Overview of Medical Education in Nigeria', *Journal of the Pennsylvania Academy of Science* 71, no. 3 (1998): 138.

[155] G. L. Monekosso, 'A Brief History of Medical Education in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Academic Medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges* 89, no. 8 Suppl (2014): S11-15.

[156] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 6.

expansion of scholarships for Western education, giving rise to emergent nationalist and elite social classes.[157]

When David Akinwunmi Akintonde, 'the first widely known Nigerian leprologist,' sailed to Ireland to obtain medical degrees from Trinity College Dublin in 1944,[158] his education, like that of his peers, coincided with the rise of a new, Western-educated middle class in Nigeria. Following independence, postcolonial ideals of nativity and indigeneity provided Trinity College Dublin's Nigerian graduates with opportunities to become pioneers in the country's budding medical education system. Thomas Adesanya Ige Grillo, one of Nigeria's first professors of anatomy, is an example.[159] Trained at the College, he lectured at a host of local Nigerian universities, including the University of Ibadan, the University of Ife and Obafemi Awolowo University. Meanwhile, Abayomi Ayodele Marinho, among the first half a dozen Nigerian doctors to be trained as psychiatrists, contributed to the Yaba Asylum in Nigeria by becoming its first indigenous medical director.[160]

Colonial students at Trinity College would have been acutely aware of the tense nature of Anglo-Irish relations, as reflected in public reactions to events such as the Festival of Britain in 1951 and the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. A particularly notable postwar incident involved Irish nationalist students rioting in protest against the hoisting of Allied victory flags on campus, culminating in the burning of the Union Jack.[161] Discourses surrounding anti-settler violence, nationalism, citizenship, and indigeneity are therefore

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[157] Ngozi Edeagu, 'Educating a Transnational Postcolonial Elite', *Diasporas: Circulations, Migrations, Histoire*, no. 37 (February 2021): 37; Nwauwa, 'Western Education and the Rise of a New African Elite in West Africa'; Julius Agbor et al., 'How Colonial Educational Practices Helped Shape the Pattern of Decolonization in West Africa', *International Journal of Development and Conflict* 4 (2014): 1–23.

[158] T. O. Majoroh, 'Obituary David Akinwunmi Akintonde MA, MB, CHB, BAO, DPH, JP 1923-1991', *Leprosy Review* 63, no. 78 (1992).

[159] Trinity College Dublin, *Dublin University Calendars 1973-74*, 640.

[160] A. Boroffka, 'Abayomi Ayodele Marinho', *Psychiatric Bulletin* 20, no. 11 (1996): 703.

[161] Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London: UK: Profile Books, 2005).

best explored through postcolonial archives. Ironically, these archives are also notorious for embargoes, cover-ups, and transfers of critical data as part of efforts to erase histories of White European complicity in acts of racial oppression, the 'ultimate open secret after decades of rule by White British colonial administrations.'[162] Many archives in Ireland originated in contexts shaped by British administration and colonial structures.

Colonial students had genuine grievances regarding racial issues in Ireland. For instance, in a letter from one J.F.A Modebe to the Irish Taoiseach Éamon de Valera, he writes, 'I thank you also for your kind promise to do anything that lies in your power to help to alleviate the difficulties of the young members of my unfortunate race who are domiciled here.'[163] In his letter, he cites his own experiences as a Black man in Dublin, where he has been taunted in the streets by 'unthinking youths' who pelted him with stones.[164] The letter was forwarded to a sympathetic Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, who remarked that the words underscore the cognition of a writer who 'evidently feels that he is a member of a despised people.'[165]

Despite the cultural clashes, European colleges continued to serve as transitional institutions for colonial students well into the 1970s, when local Nigerian universities became well-equipped to accommodate higher intakes. Trinity College Dublin hosted some of the intellectual inheritances from this early developmental period, like Ogunseinde Davis

[162] Tim Livsey, 'Open Secrets: The British "Migrated Archives", Colonial History, and Postcolonial History', *History Workshop Journal* 93, no. 1 (2022): 107.

[163] JFA Modebe, 'Letter from JFA Modebe to Eamon de Valera', 13 January 1944, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), 97/9/453.

[164] Modebe, 'Letter from JFA Modebe to Eamon de Valera'.

[165] J. C. McQuaid, 'Letter from John G McQuaid to the Taoiseach', 3 February 1944, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), 97/9/453.

Olatunji, one of the first students enrolled at Government College Ibadan, who later took a B.A.O., BCh., M.B. at Trinity College Dublin in 1966.[166]

In Ireland, certain figures sought to counter anti-African sentiment to engender a positive impression on colonial students who had demonstrated remarkable intellect and were poised to become future leaders of their countries. In 1961, Colonel William Percy Delamer, addressing a group of colonial students at Dublin Airport, remarked on how 'fitting' it was that Ireland should make an impression on students who were to 'provide the intellectual and commercial leadership of their own countries.'[167]

Postcolonial archives can reveal that racial tensions were a major problem facing Nigerian colonial students in Ireland. They will also reveal that any contention of a racial issue in 20th-century Ireland often came with pushback. Irish public sympathy towards Biafra, for instance, fed into a longstanding thought about its anti-racist leaning and third-world kinship, although the generosity of this has been disputed.[168] The Irish Taoiseach's statement to the International Social Study Congress in Dublin on 26th June 1960 reiterated how 'Irish people have a natural sympathy with countries now coming to independent status.'[169] This stance is underscored by the setting up of an unofficial fund to aid 'Biafran'

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[166] Trinity College Dublin, *Senior Proctor's Registers of Medical Degrees*, 18/1-4, TCD MUN V (n.d.); Trinity College Dublin, *Dublin University Calendars 1966-67* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1966), 517; Government College Ibadan Museum, 'Ogunseinde Olatunji Davis', Ibadan: GCI Museum, n.d.

[167] Aer Lingus Press Office, *Afro-Asian Students at Dublin Airport*, Press release (Dublin: Aer Lingus- Irish International Airlines, 1961), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[168] Crangle, '"No Race Hate Here"? Irish National Identity and Racism in the Mid Twentieth Century'.

[169] An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha, 'Extract from the Taoiseach's Statement to the International Social Study Congress at Dublin on 26th June 1960', *An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha D.C Circular No. 1/62*, 20 September 1962, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), TSCH/3/S16878 B/62.

students at Trinity College Dublin, whose scholarships had been cut off by the federal Nigerian government during the war.[170] The war had an impact on the timely admission of students into Trinity College Dublin. Take, for instance, Uche Charles Aghadiuno, whose education at the College was initially interrupted by it. He would later take his B.A.O., BCh., M.B. at the College in 1980.[171]

Postcolonial archives must be interrogated for 'the social imaginaries of colonial rule… attending not only to colonialism's archival content, but to the principles and practices of governance lodged in particular archival forms.'[172] In practice, however, working with these archives presents several challenges including encountering bureaucratic red tape, official doublespeak, but also redactions and classifications due to national security concerns. They obscure the place of West African colonial students as transnational agents at the forefront of colonial history, shaping it by their historic presence. For example, Olumide Olusanya Omololu, Nigeria's post-independence Solicitor-General, who attempted to recruit John Hearne (architect of Ireland's 1937 constitution) as Nigeria's legal draughtsman, was a graduate of Trinity College Dublin.[173] Similarly, in 1965, when Nigerian professor of agriculture, A.N.A Modebe, attempted to recruit an Irish professor for the University of Ibadan, he wrote, 'I should mention that I had my training at the University College Dublin and therefore naturally have a strong attachment to Ireland.'[174]

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[170] McMurry, *The Biafran Students in Ireland*; Fiona Bateman, 'Ireland and the Nigeria-Biafra War: Local Connections to a Distant Conflict', *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 16, no. 1 (2012): 48–67; Kevin O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarian Encounters: Biafra, NGOs and Imaginings of the Third World in Britain and Ireland, 1967–70', *Journal of Genocide Research* 16, nos 2–3 (2014): 299–315.

[171] Trinity College Dublin, *Senior Proctor's Registers of Medical Degrees*, 18/1-4.

[172] Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton University Press, 2010), 20.

[173] Trinity College Dublin, *Dublin University Calendars 1949-50* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1949).

[174] ANA Modebe, 'Letter from ANA Modebe, Professor of Agriculture, and Head of Department of Agriculture, University of Ibadan to His Excellency the Irish Ambassador

2.9 Family records

'Historical production occurs in many sites, but the relative weight of these sites varies with context...' [175] One of these sites, albeit widely overlooked, is the family archive. While archives are typically imagined as institutional rather than familial, family archives are important to the production of micro-historical data. These are any archives documenting family life, kinship, and household relationships and intergenerational experiences.

Large Nigerian towns and cities typically possessed both the economic resources and the rare preparatory educational opportunities that appealed to colonial student families. Cities like Lagos and Ibadan, colonial centres of politics, literacy, and commerce, therefore played important roles in producing the Nigerian students who enrolled in Irish educational institutions in the 20th century. Abeokuta is one of the most important cities in Nigeria's traditional, monarchical, and colonial histories. Several prominent families from the city have had members educated at Trinity College Dublin. Among them, the Majekodunmi family of Ikereku have produced several generations of Trinity College Dublin graduates. The most publicly renowned is Moses Adekoyejo Makejodunmi, who served as Nigeria's Minister of Health from 1960 to 1966. His father not only financed his medical education at Trinity College Dublin but also provided the equipment and premises necessary to establish a private practice upon his return.[176] Thus, families used invaluable medical education to skilfully navigate the social topography of their home nation, even as a bourgeoning middle class was emerging. The legacy of the Majekodunmi clan, for instance, is notable through the presence of Sylvia Sade Majekodunmi and Koye Terence Morakinyo Majekodunmi on the College's rosters in the late 60s. Family archives can reveal histories on genealogies, chain migration, associational lives, kinship networks, and other group dynamics, especially useful where institutional archives are inaccessible.

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to Nigeria, Embassy of Ireland', 1 June 1965, National Archives of Ireland, DFA/2002/19/256.

[175] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 22.

[176] Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning*, 41.

The limited number of secondary schools in the colonies served as structural, habitual, and informational resources for prospective families preparing their members for study in Ireland. In Lagos, these schools include the likes of CMS Grammar School (founded in 1859), Abeokuta Grammar School (founded in 1908), and King's and Queen's Colleges (founded in 1909 and 1927, respectively). Take also St. Gregory's College (founded in 1928), which prepared students like Abayomi Ayodele Marinho, director of the Yaba Mental Hospital, the second psychiatric institution established in colonial Nigeria.[177] These schools provided access to renowned teachers and role models, along with opportunities to sit for external exams such as the Senior Cambridge Examinations and the London Matriculation examinations.[178] For example, Yoruba monarch Adedapo Adewale Tejuoso, who trained at Trinity College Dublin, attended Abeokuta Grammar School from 1951 to 1956, where he studied under trade unionist and feminist Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti.[179] Welfare parties, gift exchanges and religious ceremonies were held to garner local community support and invoke the protection of a Supreme Being ahead of colonial students' journeys to Europe. Nigeria's local Ibibio Union, which awarded overseas scholarships, provides evidence of this practice.[180] These social and cultural interactions are often preserved in family archives.

In 1950, only 15 [of the 201 students from British Colonial territories in Ireland] held scholarships from British colonial bureaus. Others were supported by grants from non-

[177] Boroffka, 'Abayomi Ayodele Marinho'.

[178] Michael Omolewa, 'The Cambridge University Local Examinations Syndicate and the Development of Secondary Education in Nigeria, 1910–1926', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 8, no. 4 (1977): 111–30; Michael Omolewa, 'The Promotion of London University Examinations in Nigeria, 1887-1951', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13, no. 4 (1980): 651–71.

[179] Osa Amadi and Chukwuma Ajakah, 'Oba Dr. Adedapo Adewale Tejuoso: Man of God on the Throne', *Vanguard News*, 30 August 2020.

[180] Sir Egbert Udo Udoma, *The Story of the Ibibio Union* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1987).

governmental institutions and private funds.[181] Wealthy, aristocratic families with socio-political connections used foreign colleges to reinforce their social status**.** It is therefore not surprising that individuals like Olikoye Ransome-Kuti were trained at the College. He came from a family renowned for its exceptional achievements in religion, politics, and the arts. This included his cousin, Nobel Prize laureate Wole Soyinka; his brothers, Beko, a medical doctor, and Fela, the renowned Afropop cultural icon. The Ransome-Kuti family were also famed for their aristocratic unions, like those with the titled Jibolu-Taiwo family of Egbaland, who also had at least two members receive medical training at the College, viz Jibolu Taiwo Olubanke[182] and Coker Okikiolu Oluwaji.[183] These prominent families joined a host of others, like the Wachukus of Ngwa-land and the Khamas of Bamangwato, to have graced the four walls of the College, studying a variety of courses. For instance, Law student Jaja Wachuku, the son of colonial warrant chief Ndubuisi Wachuku, was a silver medal winner in Oratory at the College Historical Society, one of the oldest debating societies at the College.[184] Records of Khama Leapeetswe Tshekedi remain in college archives as well.[185]

Typical colonial student families were often able to sustain the privilege of a foreign education across multiple generations or among several members within a single generation. This social Lamarckism shows the evolution of status occupations on the West African coast, from farmers, trading agents, middlemen, and clergy to foreign-educated professionals (e.g. doctors and lawyers) nearing the independence epoch.

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[181] Colonial Office, *Note on Students from British Colonial Territories in Dublin*.

[182] Trinity College Dublin, *Senior Proctor's Registers of Medical Degrees*, 18/1-4.

[183] The Jibolu Taiwo Family, *Family History of Chief Isaac Olufusibi Coker (Alias "Aderupoko")* (n.d.); Trinity College Dublin, *Register of the Alumni of Trinity College Dublin*, 10th edn (University of Dublin, 1983), 40.

[184] Trinity College Dublin, *Dublin University Calendar 1944-45* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1944), 48.

[185] Trinity College Dublin, *Dublin University Calendar 1959-60* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1959), 532.

However, 'survival of evidence is not evidence of unadulterated survival.'[186] Family records face threats of displacement, destruction, and selective remembrance. Moreover, archival materials such as funeral tributes, obituaries, and biographies may present idealised histories as a form of respect for the deceased. Prominent families may further exaggerate their members' status and achievements to preserve a favourable public image for them. Some privately held records are inaccessible or incomplete, further complicating efforts to reconstruct accurate histories from family archives.

2.10 Conclusion

Controversial colonial education policies in British West Africa provided only limited opportunities for higher education in Nigeria at the turn of the 20th century. As a result, medical education for Nigerians had to be pursued abroad. Ireland's history as a British colony, its extensive missionary presence in Nigeria, and the imperial ties of its oldest university, Trinity College Dublin, had positioned it as a peculiar host for some Nigerian colonial students. To study abroad, colonial students transitioned between colony and metropole, negotiating complex cultural, ethnic, political, and religious tensions within unique historical conditions. The medical profession consequently emerged as a site to produce class, racial, and gender struggles. So why are archival histories of colonial students so underexplored?

I appraise family, gender, postcolonial, missionary and medical school archives to highlight how imperial legacies, national identities, international exchanges, and social aspirations shaped the training of the students. Data for the study were obtained from archives at Trinity College Dublin, the National Archives of Ireland, and the National Library of Ireland. While these collections offered key insights, gaps and silences necessitated supplementing them with non-institutional sources, including newspapers, colonial gazettes, personal

[186] Amalia S. Levi, 'Along, Against, Beyond Silences in Colonial Archives', in *Archivos Abiertos: El patrimonio documental cubano y la transformación digital*, ed. Tobias Kraft et al. (De Gruyter, 2024), 216.

notes, autobiographies, genealogy reports, media broadcasts, obituaries and funeral tributes, national biographical dictionaries, and *Who's Who* directories.

I raised the question: What can archival dynamics and archival data tell us about the presence of Nigerian medical students at a European college with strong ties to the British Empire? This research engages empirical archival data with theoretical debates surrounding colonial students in Ireland to reconceptualise the lives of the students as active agents within a broader socio-political world, not just the colleges they attended.

Ultimately, the paper demonstrates that the presence of 20th-century Nigerian medical students at Trinity College Dublin was shaped by various social and geographical origins, catalysts, and motivations. By connecting critical archives to the subject of colonial students during key colonial and postcolonial transformations, I am contributing novel perspectives on how archives can simultaneously support and constrain historical knowledge about this under-researched group.

2.11 Declaration of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

3.0 PAPER 2: DECOLONISATION, LEADERSHIP AND WEST AFRICAN COLONIAL STUDENTS IN THE ASSOCIATION FOR STUDENTS OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN IRELAND [ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION BY *THE JOURNAL OF IMPERIAL AND COMMONWEALTH HISTORY*]

3.1 Abstract

The Association for Students of African Descent (ASAD) was a colonial student society in 20th-century Dublin that has eluded academic attention to date. In this paper, data was contextualised from a variety of archival sources to build a portrait of the association. A thematic analysis weighed matters that concerned ASAD against the membership of its West African contingent. Using ASAD's first known political petition as a starting point, the paper engages with the themes of Decoloniality and Leadership to reaffirm the lasting influence exerted by 20th-century colonial student societies on social movements of their time. It offers a new perspective on the complexities surrounding the experiences of Black people in Europe during a time of global power transformation.

3.2 Keywords

Decolonisation, colonial students, Association for Students of African Descent, ASAD, postcolonial.

3.3 Introduction

Even by the mid-20th century, higher educational institutions in West Africa were relatively scarce and underfunded. After the Second World War, a substantial number of native students from West African colonies pursued studies at European universities, where they

developed ideas advocating for racial, cultural and political liberation.[187] In the British and Irish Isles, these students were commonly referred to as *colonial students*. The scholarship on colonial students in the British metropole has often taken centre stage, with less attention given to those trained at Irish universities. Regardless of where they were trained, a study of colonial students' associational lives reveals their impact as an emerging bourgeoisie class, making them indispensable to readers of West African cultural and political history.

Founded in the mid-1920s, the West African Students' Union of Great Britain and Ireland (WASU) has been among the most notable colonial student societies, often cited as a seedbed for 20th-century West African leaders in London.[188] Current research has yet to establish substantial connections between the WASU and Ireland. Meanwhile, another colonial student society that has eluded academic interest is the Association for Students of African Descent (ASAD), which was founded in Dublin in the 1930s. ASAD lacks a centralised archive, making its history intriguing and challenging for researchers. Even less is known about the role of West Africans (a very active cohort of colonial students) within the association.

In this paper, data mined from archival sources are contextualised into a comprehensive document that foregrounds the interests, activities, and legacies of the West African contingent within ASAD. Using ASAD's first known political petition as a starting point, the paper engages with the themes of Decoloniality and Leadership to reaffirm the lasting influence exerted by 20th-century colonial student societies on social movements of their time.

I aim to contribute a new perspective on the complexities surrounding the experiences of Black people in Europe during a time of global power transformation.

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[187] John L. Keith, 'African Students in Great Britain', *African Affairs* 45, no. 179 (1946): 65–72; Animashawun, 'African Students in Britain'; Adi, 'West African Students in Britain, 1900–60'.

[188] Garigue, 'The West African Students' Union. A Study in Culture Contact'; Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonisation, 1925-1958*.

3.4 Setting the context

The current study of colonial students in Europe can be distilled from the early research interests of Kenneth Little, who, along with fellow researchers, took an interest in the place of colonial migrants in post-war Britain.[189] Since then, research has consistently shown how colonial migrants reformulated the pragmatism of racial solidarity into the establishment of key societies, functioning manifestly as mutual aid groups or latently as political organisations.[190] These societies were effectively intellectual salons where colonial people gathered to envision the future of their home colonies. The most noteworthy of them, such as Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France (FEANF) and WASU, made great contributions to the development of collective consciousness and produced leading Indigenous figures in African nationalism.

The conceptual complexities of African nationalism have been temporally framed across distinct phases: cultural (from the 1860s), plaintive (from the 1900s), and radical (from World War II).[191] During these phases, critical events in African and Black diasporic histories became formative experiences for activists. For instance, research earmarks Ethiopianism as inalienable to pan-Africanist discourse.[192] It became closely connected

[189] Carey, *Colonial Students*; Garigue, 'The West African Students' Union. A Study in Culture Contact'; Junod Violaine, 'Report on a Study of the Coloured "Social Elite" in London', 1952; Webster, 'Negroes in Bluebrick: An Analysis of the Assimilation of African and West Indian Students'.

[190] Garigue, 'The West African Students' Union. A Study in Culture Contact'; Tatiana Gavristova and Natalia Krylova, 'Africans in London: Chronicle of the Union of West African Students', *Uchenie Zapiski Instituta Afriki RAN* 65 (December 2023); Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonisation, 1925-1958*.

[191] Gideon-Cyrus Makau Mutiso and S. W. Rohio, *Readings in African Political Thought* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1975).

[192] Getachew Metaferia, 'The Ethiopian Connection to the Pan-African Movement', *Journal of Third World Studies* 12, no. 2 (1995): 300–325; Danny Thompson, *Ethiopianism - The Forgotten Movement* (Independently published, 2022); Ras Wayne A. Rose, *W. E. B.*

with the intellectual labours of colonial-era liberationists who were buoyed first by the spiritual significance of Ethiopia, and second by its successful resistance against Italian invasion.[193]

Another noteworthy aspect of the scholarship concerns collectivistic solidarities during times when the decolonisation movement was considered too challenging to tackle through individualistic efforts.[194] It is evident in the rise of the National Commission for British West Africa (NCBWA, 1917), WASU (1925), and the West Africa National Secretariat (WANS, 1945).[195] The impact of a West African national identity was profound. Many believed the future of the continent could be impacted by how socio-political events unfolded in colonial West Africa and among West African colonials in Europe.[196]

Lastly, it is essential to note the Irish missionary footprint in West Africa during the 20th century. Especially during the height of the independence movements, African-Irish connections were often framed as a form of 'Third World kinship.'[197] It stems from racial

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Du Bois, Ethiopianism, and Black Internationalism: A New Interpretation of the Global Color Line (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2023).

[193] Hakim Adi, 'Bandele Omoniyi- A Neglected Nigerian Nationalist', *African Affairs* 90, no. 361 (1991): 581–605; Bandele Omoniyi, *A Defence of the Ethiopian Movement* (Edinburgh: J. & J. Gray, 1908).

[194] Adi, 'Pan-Africanism and West African Nationalism in Britain'; Adewuni Salawu, 'West African Nationalism Rediscovered', Journal of Pan-African Wisdom, 6 May 2006.

[195] Allen Marvin Howard, *The National Congress of British West Africa: An Economic and Political Study of Gold Coast Society* (University of Wisconsin- Madison, 1963); Marika Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah and the Dawn of the Cold War: The West African National Secretariat, 1945-48* (London: Pluto Press, 2019).

[196] Ayodele Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900–1945.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

[197] Whelan et al., 'Ireland and the Third World'; Holmes et al., *The Poor Relation*; O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the End of Empire*; O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarian Encounters'; Edward Leen, 'Nigeria Calling: For Irish Doctors with Comments Rev. P. J. Costelloe, Prof. Henry Moore, Rev. James Bastible, Dr. Alex Spain, Prof. Michael Tierney,

connections established within the imperial system. As an early British colony, Ireland served as a laboratory where colonising techniques were tested and later exported to other colonies.[198] Consequently, the literature illustrates how Ireland's colonial identity is discombobulated by mutually inclusive histories. For instance, Ireland was colonised by Britain, but some Irish held essential roles in Britain's colonial administration. Similarly, some Irish were notorious settler-planters, while others served as indentured servants in the Caribbean. These instances form a body of work that questions Ireland's dual role as colony and coloniser.[199]

3.5 Social movements as a conceptual lens

There is no single, overarching theory that explains student activism.[200] However, social movement theory contextualises the varied factors that drive mobilisation and shape its outcomes.[201] Student collectives have been among those heavily influenced by the pull of schismatic ideas.[202] Social movement theory examines how these collectives operate with some degree of continuity to either engender or resist social change.[203] Colonial student

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Rev. J. C. O'Flaherty, Dr. Joseph Barnes.', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 32, no. 125 (1943): 1–24.

[198] Rahman et al., 'The Art of Breaking People Down'; Rashid Khalidi, 'Settler Colonialism in Ireland and Palestine', Lecture, 24 September 2022.

[199] Howe, *Colonized and Colonizers*; Howe, *Ireland and Empire*; Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*; Shannon and Rolston, *Encounters*; Robbie McVeigh and Bill Rolston, *Ireland, Colonialism, and the Unfinished Revolution* (Haymarket Books, 2023); Kevin Kenny, ed., *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Bateman, 'Ireland's Spiritual Empire'.

[200] Philip G. Altbach, 'Perspectives on Student Political Activism', *Comparative Education* 25, no. 1 (1989): 97–110.

[201] Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, Third edition (Chichester Hoboken, N. J: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020).

[202] Philip G. Altbach, 'Student Movements in Historical Perspective: The Asian Case', *Youth & Society* 1, no. 3 (1970): 334.

[203] Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian, *Collective Behavior*, Prentice-Hall Sociology Series (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1957), 308.

societies were social movements in their own right, communities of intricate social relations, albeit sometimes with 'indefinite and shifting membership.'[204] Their histories also demonstrate the contributions of persons who, while not official members, operated in auxiliary or supportive capacities.[205]

Ghanaian scholar Albert Adu Boahen identified three phases in the evolution of African student movements, both at home and abroad: 1900-1935, 1935-1960, and 1960-1975.[206] Social movements within the first phase were fewer in number, less influential, less radical, and had smaller memberships. They were principally composed of French West African colonial students whose primary objectives included educational and socio-spatial reform. The steady rise in the number of African students in higher education provided a growing pool of potential members for student movements in the second and third phases. They disseminated activist literature and employed direct forms of activism, such as strikes, sit-in protests, and street demonstrations. In the final phase of African student movements, students redirected their activism toward African nationalist leaders, aiming to sever residual ties to colonialism.[207]

The core of this paper examines ASAD during the second phase, when movements gathered momentum, and national liberation took precedence over other endeavours on activists' agendas. It depicts the colonial student movement in Dublin (1935-1957) as constituting a network of people with shared interests who, upon identifying their relative deprivation, mobilised to enforce their positions on conflictual issues.

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[204] Turner and Killian, *Collective Behavior*, 246.

[205] Dieter Rucht and Neidhardt Friedhelm, 'The State of the Art and Some Perspectives for Further Research', in *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA*, ed. Dieter Rucht (Colorado: Campus Verlag, Westview Press, 1991), 451.

[206] Boahen, *The Role of African Student Movements in the Political and Social Evolution of Africa from 1900 to 1975*.

[207] Dan Hodgkinson and Luke Melchiorre, 'Introduction: Student Activism in an Era of Decolonization', *Africa* 89, no. S1 (2019): S1–14.

Relative deprivation theory posits that people are motivated to join a social movement because they perceive a sense of inequality. It is the consequence of an inability to achieve a level commensurate with a reference group for something considered fair or equal.[208] It has a long track record of being applied to racial matters, such as the rise of decolonial, political organisations, or civil rights movements.[209] The concept of relative deprivation underpins ASAD as a social movement, conducted in dialogue with more privileged reference groups, like some Europeans, who had comparatively stable governments, national autonomy and democracy.

Using the association's first known political petition as a starting point, I situate ASAD as a social satellite orbiting key figures and vital occurrences, portraying it as a significant (albeit under-recognised) component of the 20th-century African student social movement.

3.6 Methods and archival silences

I encountered notable gaps in the archives. ASAD's activities were partially recorded, its general impact undocumented, and its membership underrepresented. The challenge of archival colour lines and archival silences reflects the unequal levels of value accorded to European and African historical materials.[210] This research made clear that colonial archival practices have detracted a great deal from the scholarship on colonial student societies.

Nevertheless, this paper sourced primary data from a variety of archival sources, including newspapers, colonial office publications, college archives, inter-governmental communiqués, radio broadcasts, foreign affairs memoranda, religious records, memoirs, parliamentary transcripts, letters, police despatches, and unpublished notes. It uses ASAD's first known political petition as a starting point. Through thematic analysis of available

[208] Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

[209] Joan Neff Gurney and Kathleen J. Tierney, 'Relative Deprivation and Social Movements: A Critical Look at Twenty Years of Theory and Research', *The Sociological Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (1982): 33–47.

[210] Riley Linebaugh and James Lowry, 'The Archival Colour Line: Race, Records and Post-Colonial Custody', *Archives and Records* 42, no. 3 (2021): 284–303.

data, it weighs matters that concerned ASAD against the membership of its West African contingent. The research question is, how is ASAD's first known political petition a historical artefact for understanding the political engagement of 20th-century West African colonial students?

The focus on West Africans was a pragmatic one. West Africans were active in the leadership of ethnic, welfare, literary, alumni, voluntary, and youth associations, in which substantial support for nationalist activity was stockpiled in the last century. They are credited with engineering some of the most important diplomatic pushes towards decolonisation.[211]

We can, therefore, gain a better understanding of ASAD by recalibrating the activities and discourses of its West African members. Given the extensive influence of West Africans, research into their rhetoric, strategies, successes, and failures has yielded insights that explain ASAD's own origins and operations.

3.7 West African colonial students

A 1950 report from the British colonial office admits to a tendency 'among colonial students in Dublin as elsewhere, particularly among African students, to find their extramural social life in their own company and to organise African or colonial social clubs and associations.'[212] These societies were cardinal points where decolonial ideas converged, preparing members for pioneering roles in the social and cultural leadership of their colonies. West Africans had been noted for their educational migration to Britain, where groups such as the Union of African Descent (UAD, 1917) and the Gold Coast

[211] Dülffer and Frey, *Elites and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century*; Messay Kebede, 'Colonization Without Colonizers: The Phenomenon of African Elitism', in *Africa's Quest for a Philosophy of Decolonization*, vol. 153, Value Inquiry Book Series (Brill, 2004); Kenneth Little, 'The Role of Voluntary Associations in West African Urbanization', in *Man in Adaptation* (Routledge, 1974).

[212] Colonial Office, *Note on Students from British Colonial Territories in Dublin*.

Students' Union (GCSU, 1924) existed before the 1930s with varying levels of influence and longevity.[213]

The November 1953/54 ASAD inaugural meeting is documented as the society's 17th annual meeting.[214] This suggests that ASAD's first meeting may have taken place in 1937-38. However, there is evidence that the association was already in existence two years prior, during the Second Italo-Ethiopian War. These circumstances most likely set the stage for the association's rise in the Irish capital.

While there is no recognisable predecessor to ASAD in Ireland, it is well established that after the Second World War, West African students consolidated themselves as one of the most noteworthy cohorts of overseas students in Europe.

Dublin, unlike London and Paris, is not typically viewed as a central imperial metropole. Therefore, discourses on West Africans in Ireland are relatively muted. Nevertheless, the themes of Decolonisation and Leadership explored in this paper demonstrate how far-reaching the legacy of colonial student societies was.

3.8 Decolonisation

The first theme unearthed from the thematic analysis of available archives on ASAD is Decolonisation. In the last century, many West African colonial students possessed a pan-Africanist conscience which 'sometimes manifested itself as Ethiopianism.'[215] This concept presented a range of new frameworks in which Ireland (considered too near not to be part of the coloniser but far enough to be distinct from it) was memorialised as the base of ASAD decolonisation campaigns.

Ethiopianism gained roots from the 1930s to the 1950s, a period when Ireland was yielding to transatlantic currents. Here, racial thinking took insidious forms but simultaneously

[213] Nwauwa, 'Western Education and the Rise of a New African Elite in West Africa'.

[214] 'African's View on Kenya Problem', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 1 November 1954.

[215] Adi, 'Pan-Africanism and West African Nationalism in Britain', 71.

gained international sympathies, making decolonisation rhetoric assume transnational authority. Furthermore, a certain level of diasporic kinship shaped how ASAD identified with Ethiopianism. Colonial students were inspired by fraternal admiration for diasporic figures who had been bruised by intercultural tensions in the strongholds of Empire, especially London and Paris.[216]

In 1935, an ASAD delegation presented a petition to Éamon de Valera, then President of the Executive Council and Minister for External Affairs of the Irish Free State.[217] The petition urged the Irish to honour their commitment to the League of Nations Covenant and support Ethiopia's independence against Italian aggression. The Gold Coast's Daniel Beyioku George (association secretary) and Sierra Leonean Henry Coker were key West African figures in the deputation. Meanwhile, Caribbean members included Trinidadians Horace Beckford and Errol Thompson (association president), as well as Jamaicans Gerard Peltier and Ferdinand Levy (association treasurer). The petition remains a historic landmark in the understanding of the manifestations of Ethiopianism among colonial students in Ireland.

It is essential to note that although WASU was established to serve West African students in both Great Britain and Ireland, its primary focus was on Great Britain.[218] ASAD effectively filled the gap in Ireland. Since the formation of ASAD, Ireland underwent significant social changes, including the decline of clericalism, the establishment of political neutrality, literary censorship, and large-scale emigration, among others.[219] This socio-cultural landscape conspired to give rise to archetypal ASAD activists, many of whom carried cultural status, reflecting the original intent of training colonial students in Europe. Trinidadian member Errol Thompson achieved a doctorate and gave anti-

[216] Copeland, 'Aspects of Mental Illness in West African Students'.

[217] 'African Students See Mr. de Valera', *Kerry Champion* (Kerry: Ireland), 7 September 1935.

[218] Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonisation, 1925-1958*, 6–9.

[219] Tim Pat Coogan, *Ireland in the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004); Dermot Keogh, *Twentieth-Century Ireland: Revolution and State Building*, Revised edition (Dublin: Gill Books, 2005).

imperialist speeches in Dublin.[220] Jamaican Ferdinand Levy was a rare example of a colonial student in Dublin who published during the Second World War. His Harlem Renaissance-inspired collection of poetry was printed by leading Irish littérateur and revolutionary Colm Ó Lochlainn.[221] Nigerian Edmund Nathaniel Sodeinde served as a senior medical officer in Nigeria and was conferred an honorary MA by Trinity College Dublin in 1954.[222] Jamaican Noel Holmes was also a trusted medic in the Caribbean islands. The Noel Holmes Hospital in Lucea was named in his memory.

ASAD's African members would have been acutely affected by the racial selectiveness of post-war Europe. Using Anglo-Saxon attributes as a normative standard, Indians, for instance, 'appeared higher in the stratification… considered more acceptable than those of Africa, as they were said to have none of the supposed indolence of the Blacks.'[223] Furthermore, Caribbean students, accustomed to drinking tea or playing cricket, often viewed themselves as more privileged within the British imperial system.[224] Africans were disproportionately disadvantaged, first by their hosts and second by fellow colonial students.

In fact, the reason some colonial student societies pursued housing opportunities for their members was because of the incessant discrimination meted out by European landlords.

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[220] 'Racial Justice', *Irish Press* (Dublin: Ireland), 22 March 1937; 'Black Man's Burden. West Indian Student on White Africa.', *Leitrim Observer* (Carrick-on-Shannon), 3 April 1937.

[221] Ferdinand Levy, *Flashes from the Dark* (Dublin: Sign of The Three Candles, 1941); *A Jamaican Poet in Dublin*, directed by Claire Cunningham, aired 17 March 2024, on BBC Radio 4, 27 minutes and 45 seconds; Bill Hart, 'African and Caribbean Medical Students in Ireland 1879-1950', unpublished notes, n.d.; Karl O'Hanlon, 'Ferdinand Levy: A Harlem Renaissance Dubliner and De-Colonial Cosmopolitanism', *Journal of Modern Literature* 47, no. 3 (2024): 124–44.

[222] 'Nigerian Medical Service', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 16 October 1954.

[223] Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India*, ed. Inderpal Grewal et al. (Duke University Press, 2009), 110.

[224] Braithwaite, *Colonial West Indian Students in Britain*.

Granted, a few organisations were concerned with the welfare of the students. In Ireland, they included the Overseas Club at Harcourt Terrace, as well as overseas students' hostels such as Koinonia House in Dublin (established by the Dublin United Missionary Council in 1954) and St. Xavier's University Hall in Cork (established by the Society of African Missions in 1949). Regardless, African colonial students resided in generally unsuitable accommodations in Dublin, raising questions among stakeholders about the appropriateness of admitting them in large numbers for studies abroad.[225]

ASAD member Moses Majekodunmi once described his professor of surgery at the Adelaide Hospital as having 'no love for Jews nor negroes.'[226] Pan-African manifestations of Ethiopianism emerged as a form of resistance against such perceived prejudices, which caused an alarming surge in mental breakdowns among students whose realities of Europe fell far short of expectations. The following was written by officials of St. Xavier University Hall in Cork:

> 'Since 1947, sixty West African students have been in the Hall. Of these, three have had a severe mental or nervous breakdown. This high proportion of neurotics has caused us serious concern, and we have asked the bishops who are responsible for the sending of these students to make careful inquiries into the mental background of future students here. Despite the high incidence here, I am told that the figure is considerably below that of the general figure in Great Britain.'[227]

The spiritual implications of Ethiopianism resonated with colonial students who engaged with the question of race through the lens of religion. It is relevant in the context of Ireland's extensive missionary work in West Africa, a point made evident in ASAD President J.C. Anene's 1952 paper, *Africa in Transition*, and in other ASAD meetings.[228]

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[225] Colonial Office, *Note on Students from British Colonial Territories in Dublin*.

[226] Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning*, 33.

[227] *Memorandum* (n.d.), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), TAOIS/97/9/1471, p. 3.

[228] 'Aided African People', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 3 November 1952; 'Missionaries Work in Africa Praised', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 2 November 1953.

It is widely considered that, except for WASU, student movements did not play a direct role in winning independence.[229] At the height of its influence, WASU (and FEANF in the French West Africa context) was one of the most influential political organisations to represent the interests of colonial people. ASAD may not have wielded comparable influence to headline the decolonisation movement like WASU, but kept personal ties to it. Joseph Akanni Doherty was a founding member of WASU.[230] Either of his family relations, medical students Julius Adetunji or Jonathan Alade had been referenced in a pictured meeting of ASAD in April 1940.[231] Similarly, Hezekiah Oladipo Davies, another WASU member, had maternal connections with the Agbaje family, one of whose members, Abdul Mojeed Folarin Mobolanle Agbaje, was an ASAD member.[232] Besides Doherty and Agbaje, the Coker clan further illustrates West African familial connections between WASU and ASAD. Omoliyi Coker was a founding member of WASU, while Henry Christian Coker was a member of ASAD.[233] Such names illustrate the intertwined histories of slave resettlement, missionary work and colonial heritage across West Africa, Ireland and Britain.

The Second Italo-Ethiopian War may have provoked decolonisation anxieties among colonial student activists, but ASAD's anti-colonial campaigns seem to have occupied a relatively peaceful place in Irish society. A 1952 police dispatch revealed that approximately 100-120 ASAD members gathered annually at the Gresham Hotel in Dublin. Their meetings welcomed distinguished guests from Ireland's intellectual circles, featuring speeches, afternoon tea, and film screenings, all of which 'were well conducted and of good

[229] Boahen, *The Role of African Student Movements in the Political and Social Evolution of Africa from 1900 to 1975*, 16.

[230] Adu Boahen, ed., 'The History of the WASU', in *The Role of African Student Movements in the Political and Social Evolution of Africa from 1900 to 1975* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1994).

[231] 'A Picturesque Party', *Weekly Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 20 April 1940.

[232] *Weekly Irish Times*, 'A Picturesque Party'.

[233] Tofe Ayeni, 'Nigeria: Alakija, Adele, Coker… The Who's Who of Lagos Families', The Africa Report, 29 April 2022.

order.'[234] The popular perception that the 'Irish record is… free from any taint of imperialism or colonialism' would have played a role in tempering the zeal of West Africans in ASAD.[235]

Foundations for decolonisation activism in Ireland were laid for West African colonial students before the Second Italo-Ethiopian War, firstly by Ireland's own history of British subjecthood and secondly by its competency in educating international students. As early as 1911, Trinity College Dublin offered exhibition scholarships[236] to students from Africa.[237] Decolonial connections between Africa and Ireland were evident up to the 1960s, when fewer spaces were allocated to Africans because of the growth of tertiary institutions in the colonies.[238]

ASAD's political discourse was centred around the recognition of colonial people as inherently anti-colonial, especially during the peak of its activism in the pre-independence 1950s. This subject matter was well-articulated at the association's 1954 inaugural meeting at the Gresham Hotel, when President E.C. Emekekwue delivered his paper, *Principles of Leadership*, wearing a traditional toga gown.[239] A well-known orator on campus, Emekekwue also served as recording secretary of the College Historical Society, one of the oldest collegiate debating societies in Ireland.[240] Although anti-colonial activism was

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[234] Garda Siochana, *A Copy of a Despatch with Number 3C/510/1052 from Crime Branch Section 13 of the Garda Siochana.* (1952), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[235] An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha, 'Extract from the Taoiseach's Statement to the International Social Study Congress at Dublin on 26th June 1960'.

[236] An exhibition is a merit-based scholarship for new college entrants that recognises academic excellence at the start of their degree. The practice is common in the United Kingdom, Ireland and some Commonwealth countries.

[237] Trinity College Dublin, *Dublin University Calendars 1911-12*, 22.

[238] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Note* (1968), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[239] 'A.S.A.D', *Trinity News* (Dublin: Ireland), 1 November 1956, Vol 4 No. 1 Edition.

[240] 'College Historical Society', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 29 June 1956.

sometimes viewed through a criminogenic lens, ASAD, being non-revolutionary, provided activists with a safe and secure space to practice resistance.

In the years leading up to West African independence, the Mau Mau emergency rapidly became the marquee event around which ASAD built its advocacy enterprise. The brutality of the repression of the uprising led to significant press coverage, and it was understood that an international response would have symbolic value for the balance of power in Africa.[241] In 1955, ASAD president N.O Azinghe published a strongly worded letter to the Irish Press newspaper in which he condemned the showing of a film on the Mau Mau in Dublin. This may have been in reference to the British film *Simba*, directed by Brian Desmond Hurst and starring Dirk Bogarde, shown widely across Ireland, or the American film titled *Mau Mau*, narrated by Chet Huntley released the same year.[242] It is currently unclear to which film he refers. He however writes that ASAD 'considers the film a venomous perversion, unchristian propaganda, and a calculated misrepresentation of facts… one must not fail to support the genuine aspirations of a subjected people.'[243]

ASAD leaders viewed the Mau Mau revolt as part of an emerging African consciousness. The uprising had been juxtaposed with a distinguishing brand of West African nationalism reminiscent of the 1948 riots instigated by Nkrumah in the Gold Coast.[244] Nkrumah himself was a colonial student in London, as was Jomo Kenyatta, who was tried as an instigator for the riot. Nkrumah and Kenyatta are among a broader class of people who used colonial student societies to amplify their voices and emerge as cultural leaders advocating for African interests.

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[241] Rose Miyonga, '"We Kept Them to Remember": Tin Trunk Archives and the Emotional History of the Mau Mau War', *History Workshop Journal* 96 (October 2023): 96–114.

[242] *Simba*, war drama, directed by Brian Desmond Hurst (General Film Distributors (UK), 1955), 1h 40m; *Mau Mau*, directed by Elwood Price, 1955.

[243] 'Letters to the Editor, Mau Mau Film', *Irish Press* (Dublin: Ireland), 15 September 1955; 'Africans Meet for the First Time', *Sunday Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 20 October 1955.

[244] Dane Kennedy, 'Constructing the Colonial Myth of Mau Mau', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 25, no. 2 (1992): 241–60.

3.9 Leadership

The severity of the liberation question reached its culmination at the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in October 1945. ASAD's delegate to the conference was Thompson Adewale Christian, a future Nigerian jurist and, at the time, a law student at Trinity College Dublin.[245] The association's participation in the congress underscores the second theme under discussion: Leadership.

For sufficient periodisation, it is essential to point out that 'even in the eighteenth century, West African rulers and merchants and their business partners [in Europe] found it mutually advantageous to educate African children.'[246] This practice created influential colonial student families who held leadership roles in both colonies and newly independent West African nations. The West African pedigree of ASAD is demonstrated by members whose family histories evidenced crucial West African-British-Irish connections, notably the Agbaje family of Ibadan and the Doherty family of Lagos.

It appears that ASAD was never able to marshal social interest in nationalism into a campaign for political concessions. As such, what can be considered legitimate political demands were few and far between in ASAD's repertoire. Coupled with this, no recognised constitution or periodical of ASAD has survived or been identified, further obscuring the association's governance or guiding values. Nonetheless, West African colonial students in Ireland were not merely followers of their counterparts in Britain; they were deeply engaged in the matters of their academic communities and the political issues of their home countries.

[245] Trinity College Dublin, *Dublin University Calendar 1947-48* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1947), 454.

[246] Folarin Olawale Shyllon, *Black People in Britain, 1555-1833* (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

At an ASAD meeting in 1954, Fabian Colonial Bureau secretary Majorie Nicholson noted that 'West Africa was on the threshold of freedom in the sense of national independence,'[247] an observation reiterated a year later by ASAD president N.O Azinghe, with regard to the region's 'great African revival.'[248] 'The student movements encouraged militants and leaders to show that 'they were neither alone, nor anonymous, nor powerless against the repression they were subjected to.'[249] Particularly, West African students in Europe had sometimes pursued an uncompromising approach to the question of liberation. They, therefore, wielded a louder collective voice and enjoyed greater leadership influence than other cohorts of colonial students.[250] For instance, in 1953, ASAD president A.N. Modebe prepared a paper, *The Problem of Africa*, opining that 'West Africa was giving the lead, showing that African people could look after themselves.'[251] Anticipation of his paper aroused considerable trepidation, given the ongoing portrayal of West Africans as political agitators at the time. An official Irish governmental communiqué warned of the speech's potential to cause 'embarrassment,' advising Minister of External Affairs Frank Aiken to condition his attendance at an ASAD meeting on the prior review of the paper.[252]

In the absence of available data suggesting that ASAD was established earlier than 1935, the association's petition to the Irish government during the Abyssinian crisis remains its

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[247] 'Students in Dublin Told of African Revolution', *Sunday Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 31 October 1954.

[248] 'Irish People Can Learn from Africa', *Sunday Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 30 October 1955.

[249] A. I. Sow, 'African Student Movements and the Question of the African Revolution', in *The Role of African Student Movements in the Political and Social Evolution of Africa from 1900 to 1975*, ed. Adu Boahen (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1994), 29.

[250] Adi, *West Africans in Britain*.

[251] 'What Africans Owe to Ireland', *Sunday Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 1 November 1953.

[252] Brendan Dillon, 'Letter from Brendan Dillon, Private Secretary to Frank Aiken to the Honourable Secretary of the ASAD.', 17 October 1950, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22; Department of Foreign Affairs, *Note with Salutation Mr. Horan* (1953), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

magnum opus. Seeing how badly the anti-imperialist cause had been shaken by the war raises questions about whether the war was what prompted the coming together of colonial students in Dublin to form ASAD in the first place.

During the Abyssinian crisis, views on African territorial integrity became signifiers of Black pride and shaped ASAD's understandings of who was considered a collaborator or detractor. Take the case of ASAD's public protestations against the African American singer Clarence Johnstone in 1936. He halted his performance at the Theatre Royal as a 'consequence of a hostile demonstration by about a score of negroes.'[253] ASAD explained its activist actions as a response to Johnstone's comments that 'conquest by Italy will mean civilisation and greater happiness for the people of Abyssinia.'[254] See the following anecdote in the Irish Independent newspaper:

> 'Seats in the front row of the Royal Circle were occupied by coloured students, who refused to desist when appealed to by the attendants. Shouts of "we don't want Johnstone" could be heard. Johnstone and [Jules] Bledsoe had a hurried conversation on the stage, and Mr. Johnstone left. Almost at once, the noise ceased.'[255]

Available archives reveal the increasing representation of ASAD's West African leadership, along with the association's steadily growing political awareness, from the mid-20th century. Meanwhile, the Gresham Hotel, an iconic Dublin landmark, served as the association's historic meeting grounds. From here, West Africans advanced their claim as a significant cultural grouping and de facto representatives of all students of African descent in Dublin.

ASAD would have found the pressing matters of its day to involve protesting for education in colonies, for national independence and against racism in Europe, acknowledging how (as a Fabian Colonial Bureau member in Dublin had put it) 'the evils in Africa resultant

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[253] 'Negroes Demonstrate in Dublin', *Belfast Newsletter* (Belfast), 25 March 1936.

[254] 'Theatre Incident. Students' Protest', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 25 March 1936.

[255] *Irish Independent*, 'Theatre Incident. Students' Protest'.

upon the various colonising invasions were stinking in the nostrils of the world.'[256] Larger colonial student societies such as WASU and FEANF had grander aspirations, not least of which were founding hostels, relaying scholarship opportunities, organising holiday camps, and brokering employment for members. There is no available information indicating ASAD's involvement in any of these activities.

Still, given the complex intermixing of race and politics, even the least radical colonial student societies had to lend some 'political' dimension to their advocacy campaigns. West Africans' openly abrasive reputation illustrates how race, initially used to justify subjugation, was later repurposed into collective solidarity. For instance, 'ASAD was greatly displeased with the subservient buffoon-type roles Paul Robeson acted in cinema' and undertook a heckling campaign against him during his visit to Ireland in 1935.[257] Later, however, in the rooms of association president Ferdinand Levy, Robeson revealed to about twenty colonial students his honorary membership status in WASU and his deep empathy for the liberation agenda. He sang songs to illustrate that African origins can be discerned from American folk songs and spirituals.[258]

The question of West African impact vis-à-vis Caribbean members is a compelling one. Founded for students of African descent (and not just Africans), the association's name points to the influence of Caribbean colonial students in its origins, or at least its expected membership.

As early as 1900, when Trinidadian barrister Sylvester Williams organised the first Pan-African conference in London, few prominent West Africans were present (e.g. A. F. Ribeiro, a Gold Coast attorney and G. W. Dove, a Freetown Councillor).[259] Generally, however, given the teleology of independence in Africa and the Caribbean islands, West Africans' post-war activism overshadowed the involvement of Caribbeans in the decolonisation cause. The rise of early formal associations such as the Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (ARPS) or the National Congress of British West

[256] 'White Rule in Africa', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 24 February 1942.

[257] Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning*, 31.

[258] 'Paul Robeson Entertained', *Irish Press* (Dublin: Ireland), 20 February 1935.

[259] J. R. Hooker, 'The Pan-African Conference 1900', *Transition*, no. 46 (1974): 20–24.

Africa (NCBWA) contributed to this. So did the West African affiliation of prominent American diasporic activists, such as Marcus and Amy Garvey, or W.E.B. Du Bois.

Caribbean colonial students accounted for five out of the eight recorded members (and two out of the three officeholders) in the deputation that presented the association's petition to Éamon de Valera in 1935.[260] Of course, the leadership of Caribbean students in the early days of ASAD does not invalidate the contributions of West Africans. West African agitation for independence reached its peak in the postwar period. It correlated with the dramatic increase in the number of West Africans in Europe and a surge in colonial student activity. In 1949, for instance, of the 200 students from British Overseas Territories in Ireland, only 50 came from the Caribbean islands, while 110 came from West Africa.[261] Unsurprisingly, it was West African, not Caribbean leaders of ASAD who overwhelmingly appear in currently available archives on the association.

Former Nigerian Minister of Health, Moses Majekodunmi, began his medical studies at Trinity College Dublin in 1934[262] and alludes to the origins of ASAD. He writes:

> 'At [Trinity] College itself, there were many students of African origin from different parts of Africa and Caribbean Islands and aside from freely socialising amongst ourselves, we also bound ourselves together and established what we called the Association for Students of African Descent (ASAD), through which we made representations to the authorities at Trinity College.'[263]

[260] 'Abyssinian Situation. Continued from Page One. Dublin Students' Move', *Irish Press* (Dublin: Ireland), 31 August 1935.

[261] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Students from British Colonial Territories* (1949), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[262] Trinity College Dublin, *Senior Proctor's Registers of Medical Degrees*, 18/1-4.

[263] Majekodunmi, *My Lord What a Morning*, 31.

Colonial student societies were notoriously patriarchal 'small clubs for men.'[264] As a result, the quintessential colonial student is often imagined as a man. WASU's magazine, launched eight months after its inauguration, was directed towards "Brother Africans."[265] Meanwhile, the presence, contributions, and leadership of female members have often been overlooked by historians of African student movements. A rare example of a female leader of a colonial student society is psychoanalyst Solange Faladé, who served as the first president of FEANF. She was soon displaced to make way for more radical male leadership.[266] The available archives do not reveal any prominent female figures in ASAD.

In the absence of a surviving membership book, a photograph taken at an ASAD dinner on Dublin's St. Stephen's Green in 1940 provides rare evidence of the organisation's membership.[267] The photograph suggests that the ASAD was composed predominantly of male West African students, many of whom were studying medicine or law in Dublin. Several individuals appearing in the photograph can tentatively be identified through university records. Members pictured included S. Egwuatu, possibly Samuel Obiesi Egwuatu, a medical student at University College Dublin;[268] E. Forster, possibly Edward Francis Bani Forster, a medical student at Trinity College Dublin;[269] O. Unibuwe, possibly Owolabi Unibuwe, a medical student at Trinity College Dublin;[270] O. Adefolu, possibly

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[264] Seth I. Nyagava, 'The Influence of WASU in East Africa', in *The Role of African Student Movements in the Political and Social Evolution of Africa from 1900 to 1975*, ed. Adu Boahen (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1994), 69.

[265] Cobina Kessie, 'Editorial', *WASU*, June 1933; Chartier, 'Reversing the Gaze: WASU, The Keys and The Black Man on Europe and Western Civilization in the Interwar Years, 1933-1937'.

[266] Sinan Richards, 'A Lesson for the World: Solange Faladé's Anti-Colonial Multiracialism', *Modern & Contemporary France* 31, no. 4 (2023): 435–50.

[267] *Weekly Irish Times*, 'A Picturesque Party'.

[268] 'UCD Faculty of Medicine Examination Results.', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 15 July 1942.

[269] 'University of Dublin, School of Physic, Trinity College', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 15 July 1938.

[270] Trinity College Dublin, *Dublin University Calendar 1938-39*, 472.

Olusegun Omoniyi Adefolu, a medical student at Trinity College Dublin and Royal College of Surgeons;[271] A.O. Sasegbon, possibly Ayodele Oladipo Sasegbon, a medical student at Trinity College Dublin;[272] A. Wachuku; possibly Jaja Anucha Wachuku, a Law student at Trinity College Dublin;[273] A. Thomas, possibly Alexander Horatio Ekundayo Thomas, a medical student at Trinity College Dublin[274] and H.C Coker, possibly Henry Christian Coker, a medical student at Royal Colleges of Surgeons.[275] Other West African members listed included A. Makanjuola (of Yoruba origin), O. Sodipo (also of Yoruba origin), and J. Annan (of Akan origin).[276]

The register includes at least seven medical students, primarily from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland's oldest imperial university, with a longstanding tradition of educating colonial students. It accentuates the role medicine played in colonial student societies. The imperial system imposed strict racial barriers on Black African medics regardless of their credentials. Nevertheless, colonial students found fascination in the social status associated with the profession.[277] Generally, students of medicine (and law) were considered a 'sort of student aristocracy'[278] possessing a 'moral leadership on affairs of race.'[279] Dr. Ayodele Oladipo Sasegbon gave addresses on college campus, decrying the 'segregation' of African and Indian colonial students from social life.[280] Future Nigerian lawyer and diplomat Jaja

[271] 'Charge against African Student. Judge Davitt's Warning', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 20 March 1941.

[272] 'TCD Medical Successes', *Irish Press* (Dublin: Ireland), 12 July 1939.

[273] 'New Barristers', *Irish Press* (Dublin: Ireland), 2 November 1944.

[274] 'The University of Dublin School of Physic Trinity College', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 27 March 1940.

[275] 'Royal Colleges in Ireland. Physicians and Surgeons This Summer', *Weekly Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 3 August 1935.

[276] *Weekly Irish Times*, 'A Picturesque Party'.

[277] Braithwaite, *Colonial West Indian Students in Britain*.

[278] Gumpert, *Recollected in Tranquillity*, 49.

[279] Morris, 'Feeling, Affection, Respect'.

[280] 'Trinity College Notes. The End of a Term. African Students and the University', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 10 December 1938.

Anucha Wachuku was a prominent anti-colonial leader in both the Overseas Club and the Nigeria Students' Union in Dublin. 'His example, presumably, indicates the future career open to the elite of the new countries who seek education abroad.'[281]

The fragilities of ASAD became evident in the 1960s with the global transition from elite to mass higher education.[282] During this period, ASAD appeared too broad to perfectly define the interests of any particular cohort of colonial students grappling with the initial wave of post-independence disillusionment, political repression, corruption, and military coups. The *Trinity News* newspaper reports on ASAD following Ghana's independence in 1957:

> 'The Association for Students of African Descent, which has for the past 21 years played a leading role in getting the African students together, seems to be near the edge of being dissolved. At the last meeting, nobody was inclined to stand for election as the president.'[283]

The founding of new student societies along tribal and national lines threatened to erode the collective identities of West Africans or people of African descent. These identities would have been relatively safer within colonial student federations. The FEANF is perhaps the most apparent example of this, incorporating origin associations (e.g., Dahomey or Guinea student associations, etc.), host community associations (e.g., Bordeaux or Toulouse colonial student associations, etc.) and even religious associations (e.g., the Union of Catholic African Students-UECA).[284] With the entire francophone student movement affiliated with the FEANF, it resisted dissolution well into the post-independence epoch

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[281] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Note Addressed to Dr. O'Brien*.

[282] Martin Trow, 'Reflections on the Transition from Mass to Universal Higher Education', *Daedalus* 99, no. 1 (1970): 1–42.

[283] 'President-Less A.S.A.D', *Trinity News* (Dublin: Ireland), 28 February 1957, Vol IV No. 11 Edition, Trinity News Archives.

[284] Elizabeth Foster, 'Entirely Christian and Entirely African: Catholic African Students in France in the Era of Independence', *The Journal of African History* 56, no. 2 (2015): 239–59.

despite having 'lost the alpha and omega' of the independence struggle.[285] On the other hand, WASU, without federal affiliations, declined by 1958 (following the passing of its founder) and spurred splinter groups organised along national lines. There is no evidence of federal affiliation in ASAD.

National student associations were an essential landmark in the histories of colonial student societies. They marked the beginning of a new stage in West African student movements, characterised by a re-appraisal of domestic governance structures, often put in place by former colonial students who were transitioning into post-independence leadership positions.

In 1957, the Gold Coast Students' Association was formed as a separate entity from ASAD. Its inaugural meeting was held at the Gresham Hotel, the original meeting place of ASAD. Other national student associations active in Ireland during this period of decline would have included the Sierra Leone Students' Union and the Nigeria Students' Union.[286]

3.10 Conclusion

By the mid-20th century, West African students had established themselves as a significant subgroup within migrant communities across Europe, holding essential positions in college clubs and societies. Their colonial student societies served as barometers of political sentiment at home and in the diaspora. From the suspiciousness of WASU in London to the

[285] Françoise Blum, 'De La FEANF et Du Mouvement Étudiant En Diaspora. Paper Delivered at the International Conference on Student Movements in French-Speaking Africa', Université Panthéon Sorbonne and Centre Mahler, 3 July 2014.

[286] 'Photograph of Figures at the Annual Dance of the Nigeria Students' Union of Britain and Ireland (Dublin Branch) in the Shelbourne Hotel', *Evening Herald* (Dublin: Ireland), 30 April 1965.

militantism of the FEANF in Paris, colonial student societies represented a range of hawks and doves in their campaign methodologies against the imperial system.

Academic focus has gravitated chiefly toward major European metropolises, where prestigious universities hosted influential colonial student organisations. This tendency has shaped the trajectory of scholarship in this field, resulting in the occlusion of the unique contributions and experiences of West African students in Dublin and other non-imperial host cities. By redirecting our attention to these lesser-explored spaces, we not only enhance our understanding of the decolonisation movement but also highlight the essential role West African students played in shaping the discourse on social movements in Black history.

So, this study reveals the legacy of the Association for Students of African Descent (ASAD) and its members, who navigated the complexities of colonial education and activism in Europe. Their leadership and advocacy not only influenced their immediate academic environments but also laid the groundwork for future generations of African leaders and intellectuals. The history is marked by resilience and agency, and in many cases, engagement with the ideals of decolonisation. So, by examining their embrace of leadership roles and participation in the decolonial discourse, the paper offers a new perspective on understanding the dynamics surrounding the experiences of West African students during pivotal periods of historical transformation.

3.11 Declaration of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

4.0 PAPER 3: DEBATING EMPIRE: WEST AFRICAN STUDENT INTELLECTUALS AND THE UNIVERSITY PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN IRELAND 1942-1962 [UNDER REVIEW WITH *AFRICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*]

4.1 Abstract

Nigerian nationalist, Egbert Udo Udoma, was elected president of Trinity College Dublin's storied University Philosophical Society (The Phil) in 1942. How does Udoma's inauguration speech underscore the Phil's role in shaping emerging West African student intelligentsia (1942–1962)? The paper places his speech in dialogue with original archival data and unpacks the socio-political and intellectual landscape from which West African student intellectuals were bred in the Phil. Thematic analysis unearthed influences in three key areas, namely decolonisation rhetoric, access to vital social/material capital and patriarchal leadership. The research contributes new insights into the imbricated histories of Europe and Africa, especially within a transformative 20th-century epoch defined by colonial welfare advocacy and struggles for self-governance.

4.2 Keywords

University Philosophical Society, Colonial students, intelligentsia, Ireland, Trinity College Dublin

4.3 Introduction

In 1946, William Arthur Lewis stated at a Fabian conference that 'the only people who can transform the colonies into anything worthwhile are the educated Natives, the intelligentsia… as soon as a Native can read and write, he automatically becomes an

opponent of the British Government.'[287] The Saint Lucian academic was part of a predominantly male colonial intelligentsia who studied at European universities. They were called *colonial students* in the British and Irish Isles.

West African colonial students were trained in Europe because their local educational institutions were few and underfunded. Emboldened by their proximity to imperial seats of power, West Africans began questioning their subordinate relationship with the imperial state. Meanwhile, the pursuit of coveted educational and professional qualifications allowed many to join the ranks of student intellectuals. They are vital to the understanding of decolonisation advocacy and the emergence of West African nations.

Due to its varying contextual implications, defining the term *intelligentsia* can present challenges.[288] In political history, intelligentsia arise when vital cultural and intellectual movements are underway. While the term has been commonly associated with 19th-century Russia, there are comparable social formations elsewhere. In the context of West Africa, the rise of male intelligentsia typified the changing 20th-century cultural milieu when decolonisation currents were eroding traditional gentry and creating a new middle class whose legitimacy was rooted in the prestige attached to Western education. While in Europe, these student intellectuals participated in critical debates of their time and were subject to influences within various clubs and societies.

In this paper, I interrogate the presence of West African colonial students in the University Philosophical Society (commonly called the Phil). Dating back to 1683, the Phil is a prestigious student debating society at Ireland's oldest imperial university, Trinity College Dublin (TCD). With a considerable number of colonial student members, it was the centre for cultural diffusion in the last century.

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[287] W. Arthur Lewis, *Labour in the West Indies; the Birth of a Worker's Movement*, Fabian Research Series (London: Fabian Society, 1939), 13; W. Arthur Lewis, *Domination of Co-Operation?* (London: Fabian Publications & Victor Gollancz, 1946), 5.

[288] Allen McConnell, 'The Origin of the Russian Intelligentsia', *The Slavic and East European Journal* 8, no. 1 (1964): 1–16.

20th-century Africans in the Phil were predominantly male, and from Nigeria and the Gold Coast (now Ghana). As one 20th-century speaker at the Phil aptly put it, 'whatever happens in Ghana and in Nigeria will profoundly affect the rest of Africa.'[289] Nigeria was the largest British West African colony, while Nigerians constituted one of the largest cohorts of colonial students in Europe. There were so many Nigerian colonial students, in fact, that this group sometimes merited exclusive supervision. For instance, on 21st June 1950, the British Colonial Office appointed an officer to look after the welfare of Nigerian students in Ireland.[290]

Drawing on the work of Antonio Gramsci, the paper ultimately argues that the University Philosophical Society at Trinity College Dublin functioned as an important albeit underappreciated site of political and intellectual formation for West African colonial students and emergent intelligentsia.

4.4 Theoretical framework

Theorists have fragmented views on intelligentsia. Karl Marx depicts intellectuals as generals without armies, eager to enforce their beliefs on others.[291] Julien Benda posits that intelligentsia pursue universal and indivisible truths, are actors standing above society, untainted by the lure of political self-interest.[292] Karl Mannheim also views intelligentsia as being ideally 'socially unattached,' working between social classes by synthesising and

[289] R. H. Johnston, *The Role of the European in Africa: A Paper Read before the University Philosophical Society on Thursday 21st May 1959*, MUN/SOC/PHIL/8/33 (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, 1959), Trinity College Dublin Manuscripts and Early Printed Works (MUN/SOC/PHIL/8/33).

[290] Trinity College Dublin, *Minutes of the Board of Trinity College Dublin*, Minutes of meeting TCD MUN V/5/27, Register of Board Minutes (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, n.d.), 72.

[291] Shlomo Avineri, 'Marx and the Intellectuals', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28, no. 2 (1967): 269–78.

[292] Julien Benda, *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2006).

mediating polar power positions.[293] Antonio Gramsci ascribed class interest to intelligentsia, regarding it as inseparable from their political nature. The shared view, however, is that intelligentsia embody enforced ideas, morality, principles and perspectives that threaten enduring social structures considered irreconcilable with equity, justice or fairness.[294]

Intelligentsia are subordinated either to the class in power (the bourgeoisie) or the class that struggles for a new order (the workers). Gramsci saw politics as a core aspect of social behaviour and refused to reduce it to a mere instrument for self-gain. He presents the methodology of intellectuals as a continuous re-creation of persuasion through the gradual erosion of the old bourgeois system's legitimacy. He views revolution not as a single, spontaneous act but as a more protracted process for intelligentsia to popularise their will and construct a new cultural order.[295]

My use of Gramscian ideas is to illustrate how crucial colonial students were to the mediation of power in British West Africa. They actively sought to displace the old cultural hegemony, not necessarily through violent revolutions, but by constructing an elaborate civil society coalition that pursues moral and intellectual reforms.

The original conceptualisation of intelligentsia involved a small class of educated people appointed as professionals and officials among the masses.[296] Gramsci's thoughts are also relevant in the context of the educational foundations of intelligentsia in conditions of rapid social transformations. He highlights teaching and journalism as common endeavours for intelligentsia, reiterating their rational consciousness in defending and extending political

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[293] Emil Oestereicher, 'Politics, Class and the Socially Unattached Intellectual: A Re-Examination of Mannheim's Thesis', *State, Culture, and Society* 1, no. 3 (1985): 209–24.

[294] James Joll, *Gramsci* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1977).

[295] Thomas R. Bates, 'Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 2 (1975): 351–66.

[296] Isaiah Berlin, 'The Role of the Intelligentsia', in *The Power of Ideas* (Princeton University Press, 2013), 125–33.

and cultural change.[297] Although in the colonial student era, medicine and law were popular as well. In fact, in the year after WW2, half of African university students in Britain and Ireland were training to be legal or medical professionals.[298]

As Britain suffered the loss of control over its overseas territories with greater frequency in the postwar period, colonial student intelligentsia intensified their decolonisation campaigns through what Gramsci referred to as their 'organs of public opinion:' protests, conferences, public debates, periodicals, etc.[299] The students lived inside the social struggles of their time, aligning their political interests with them. This corresponds to Gramsci's view that intelligentsia can be organically related to the subordinated class, and it is from that uncontained opposition that they emerge to alter the dominant convictions of society.[300]

Gramsci's ideas therefore, point to a certain dislocation of colonial students from the 'coloniser class,' as well as how the quest for universal truths obliges the students to contribute to the decay of the imperial system that partly propelled them into European universities in the first place.

4.5 Methodology

The Cambridge Dictionary defines intelligentsia as 'the class of intellectuals regarded as possessing culture and political initiative.'[301] Nigerian nationalist, Egbert Udo Udoma, was

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[297] András Bozóki, 'Chapter I: The Role of Intellectuals: Theories and Interpretive Frameworks', in *Rolling Transition and the Role of Intellectuals: The Case of Hungary* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2022).

[298] Matera, 'Afro-Metropolis: Black Political and Cultural Associations in Interwar London'.

[299] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (International Publishers, 1971).

[300] Denzil Saldanha, 'Consciousness and Structure in the Gramscian Perspective Part 2: Implications for Education', *Contemporary Education Dialogue* 6, no. 1 (2008): 44–70.

[301] *Oxford American Dictionary of Current English* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

one of these. He was elected president of the University Philosophical Society in 1942. The Phil functioned in campus culture as a kind of 20th-century salon where male college students stimulated critical thinking and debated pressing social issues. My research question is: How does Udoma's inauguration speech underscore the Phil's role in shaping emerging West African student intelligentsia (1942–1962)?

The paper places Udoma's speech in dialogue with original archival data and unpacks the socio-political and intellectual landscape from which West African student intellectuals were bred in the Phil. Primary data was sourced from the National Archives of Ireland and the archives at Trinity College Dublin. Sources consulted included the Phil's general public and private minute books, committee books, registrar's attendance sheets, membership books, accounts of the society's exhibitions and library accounts.

I acknowledge the political tensions inherent in the practice of archiving, which can present a fragmented lens for readers of history, stripping subjects of their agency. There may be a clear relevance of Irish-trained African intelligentsia like Egbert Udo Udoma (jurist), Elizabeth Abimbola Awoliyi (physician) or Thomas Adesanya Ige Grillo (academic) in recorded histories. However, I acknowledge that the stories of many other students from this time have been lost because physical, digital, emotional and memory archivists did not consider them worthy of preservation. Accordingly, I encountered archival silences in my research on colonial students. Nevertheless, thematic analysis of available archival data still unearthed influences in three key areas, namely decolonisation rhetoric, access to vital social/material capital and patriarchal leadership. The research contributes new insights into the imbricated histories of Europe and Africa, especially within a transformative 20th-century epoch defined by colonial welfare advocacy.

4.6 Preliminary considerations

Research shows that not all colonial students were idle, disengaged, or sidelined from collegiate activities. Future Nigerian nationalist Egbert Udo Udoma received a scholarship from the Ibibio Union to study Law at Trinity College Dublin.[302] In 1942, he was elected president of the Phil. His inaugural address, titled *The Lion and the Oil Palm*, was delivered

[302] Udoma, *The Story of the Ibibio Union*.

at the opening meeting of the society. With the lion representing the British Empire and the oil palm, West African colonies, Udoma intended for his speech to be a reassessment of colonial ineptitude.

As the first and only documented West African president of the Phil during the Second World War, Udoma is part of a rare and esteemed group of male student intellectuals who both influenced and were profoundly influenced by the decolonisation movement. How could the University Philosophical Society have contributed to it? The Phil possesses more than a three-century-long track record of socialising future political and cultural icons at Ireland's oldest imperial university. Despite being arguably, the most prestigious collegiate paper-reading society in the country, its archives remain underutilised. The research addresses this issue.

4.7 Decolonisation rhetoric

One way the University Philosophical Society contributed to shaping West African student intelligentsia is through decolonisation rhetoric.

Udoma opines that it is 'easier to control, repress, oppress, and rule over an uneducated mob than it is to cooperate with and guide intelligent, educated people.'[303] As such, early colonial education stakeholders, who intended to raise a minority of British loyalists, offered the masses limited access to schooling.

Colonial students were not just artefacts of colonial history though, but also of decolonial history, pursuing incisive actions against the social structures that propelled their rise in the first place. According to a letter received by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs in 1943, a representative of the Dublin Overseas Club had confirmed that 'the majority of [African colonial students] were quite anti-British in the views they aired.'[304] West African student intellectuals in the Phil occupied a landscape that was not opposed to decolonisation

[303] Egbert Udo Udoma, *The Lion and the Oil-Palm* (Ponsonby & Gibbs, 1943), National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

[304] Department of Foreign Affairs, 'Letter Addressed to Secretary', 5 March 1943, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/4/238/273.

rhetoric either. The Phil's discourses reflect deep-seated scepticism about Anglo-European political legitimacy overseas.

West Africans may have leavened Allied efforts during the Second World War by serving in various capacities: soldiers, porters, cooks, labourers, mechanics, etc. By the war's end, however, ruptures in the imperial design revealed themselves, as leading West African intellectuals began decentring Britain from their imaginations of the future of West African colonies. This carried on well into the independence epoch. At the beginning of 1959, about 11,000 predominantly male colonial students from British dependencies were studying across various educational institutions, universities and polytechnics in Great Britain and the Irish Republic. 4,000 of these came from British West Africa.[305] Egbert Udo Udoma explained the right West Africans reserved 'to battle down all that is evil,' and to refuse to be viewed 'merely as children, always to be pitied and spoon-fed, and who, in consequence, can have no voice in the shaping of their destiny.'[306] Decolonisation, understandably, became an urgent matter of public debate and consequently, for the Phil, a critical part of its foci of intellectual exchanges.

Ireland had a contentious spiritual empire in West Africa, which, insofar as it is concerned, 'has not been a tool of colonialism.'[307] On this score, Irish self-congratulatory rhetoric is quite abundant despite academic pushback. Still, Africans drew inspiration from Irish decolonisation histories. In a 1957 letter from Kenneth David Kaunda to the Irish Taoiseach Eamon de Valera, he writes:

> 'Allow me here to state that the history of Ireland, in which of course, you have and continue to play an important part, is an inspiration to us. From it, we learn that it is possible to break the shackles of colonialism, no matter how difficult the way may be.'[308]

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[305] Griffith, *Coloured Immigrants in Britain*.

[306] Udoma, *The Lion and the Oil-Palm*, sect. Introduction.

[307] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Note Addressed to Dr. O'Brien*.

[308] K. D. Kaunda, 'Letter from KD Kaunda, Secretary General of the African National Congress in Rhodesia to the Taoiseach Eamonn de Valera', 10 July 1957, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), TAOIS/97/9/1471.

Decolonisation rhetoric within the walls of an imperial university is an act of resistance, as was the search for alternatives to the imperial-capitalist order. It drove some to embrace leftist influences at a time when communist movements sought to shape the geopolitical landscape by influencing Africa's emerging leaders. After a paper titled *The Challenge of Communism* was read at a meeting of the Phil on 2nd June 1955, the vote of thanks was seconded by Ghanaian member Kwasi Awere-Kyere. The paper asserted:

> 'The victory of democracy over world communism is possible if the Western world can win the trust of millions of underprivileged persons now living in Asia, Africa and several other parts of South America, and also to meet with wisdom and understanding, subjugated people's demand for national freedom and independence.'[309]

Many paradoxes consume Irish history, making the island a peculiar ground for any study on allegiance to the Commonwealth. Irish people played critical roles in upholding the British Empire. However, as the test site of British colonialism, the Irish were also de-historicised and de-culturalised, recast as foul, corrupt, deceptive, cunning, idle, reckless, impulsive and unfit to self-govern.[310] It was this same colonial brutality, carried across the Atlantic, that ignited African nationalist movements later on.

Charles Stewart Parnell, who was at the forefront of Irish Home Rule in the late 19th century, opined, 'the cause of nationality is sacred, in Asia and Africa as in Ireland.'[311] Similarly, Daniel O'Connell, de facto leader of Catholic Ireland, juxtaposed Black and Irish civil rights struggles by proclaiming the following:

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[309] Mo Williams, *The Challenge of Communism: A Paper Read before the University Philosophical Society on the 2nd of June 1955*, MUN/SOC/PHIL/1/13 (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, n.d.), Trinity College Dublin Manuscripts and Early Printed Works.

[310] Kenny, *Ireland and the British Empire*; David Beers Quinn, *The Elizabethans and the Irish* (Cornell University Press, 1966).

[311] Francis Stewart Leland Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (Fontana, 1973), 594.

> ‘God knows I speak for the saddest people the sun sees; but may my right hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if to save Ireland, even Ireland, I forget the negro one single hour!’[312]

In the 20th century, Ireland remained affected by the politics of empathy, evidenced by the words of its Prime Minister, Seán Lemass, in a 1960 letter to Dennis Phombeah, previously Secretary General of the West African Students Union (WASU) and the Committee of African Organisations (CAO) in London. Lemass writes:

> ‘You may be assured that the government of Ireland view with admiration and sympathy the progress of the newly-emerging African states towards independence... We wish them all a prosperous future and every success in their efforts to consolidate their territorial integrity... We in Ireland will do everything in our power to assist them in their development plans by receiving African students…for training here...’[313]

The archives of the Phil show that the presence of male West African student intellectuals in 20th-century Ireland could not be divorced from the Irish proto-student movement. These comprised ‘grand debating societies’ which had historically been the ‘main political outlets for students…used by nationalist politicians to espouse concepts of democracy repugnant to the Crown.’[314]

Nigerian nationalist Jaja Wachuku was a contemporary of Udoma and a fellow member of the Phil. On 21st May 1959, a paper titled *The Role of the Europeans in Africa* acknowledged Africa as standing at a crossroads of her own history and decried Empire’s

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[312] Wendell Phillips, *Speeches, Lectures, and Letters.*, Second Series (Boston; New York: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 407.

[313] Seán Lemass, ‘Letter from the Taoiseach of Ireland to Dennis Phombeh, Secretary-General, Committee of African Organisations’, 8 October 1960, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/6/401/13/54.

[314] Jodi Burkett, ed., ‘Rebels and Rustici: Students and the Formation of the Irish State’, in *Students in Twentieth-Century Britain and Ireland*, with Steven Conlon (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

educational efforts intended '… to fit [Africans] for a place which is subservient to, and determined by their European overlords.'[315] Wachuku duly seconded a proposal for a vote of thanks to the speaker.[316]

Colonial students arose as a direct challenge to racism in a period when West Africans had been dispossessed of land, people, and histories. Several members of Black or African student associations, therefore, frequented the meetings of the Phil and participated in discussions about Africa's place in a changing world, contestations of racial hierarchies and freedom as a natural instinct. The Phil therefore shared members with organisations such as the Nigeria Students' Union and the Association for Students of African Descent in Dublin. On 21st May 1953, future Nigerian educationist Younis Olatunji Basorun read a paper to the Phil titled *New Colonial Policy* in the presence of other West Africans like Teniwito Ogunkanmi and Michael Omisade, the society's honorary treasurer in the subsequent year.[317]

Udoma calls the exploitation of colonial peoples 'a serious indictment, a flagrant breach of trust and confidence' that will only induce rebellion.[318] Education and decolonisation had become so interwoven that West African colonial students directly spearheaded rebellions against the colonial establishment. Take Emmanuel Arun Erimona and Abdul Ganiyu Folorunsho Razaq, who were members of the 1948/49 and 1951/52 Phil sessions respectively.[319] The two led about a 70-member Nigerian contingent during a 1949 street

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[315] Johnston, *The Role of the European in Africa: A Paper Read before the University Philosophical Society on Thursday 21st May 1959*.

[316] University Philosophical Society, *General Public and Private Business Minute Book of the University Philosophical Society* (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, n.d.), Trinity College Dublin Manuscripts and Early Printed Works.

[317] University Philosophical Society, 'Photographs of the Committee Members and Other Photographs of the Society Members', n.d., Trinity College Dublin Manuscripts Room, MUN/SOC/PHIL/18/13-89, MUN/SOC/PHIL/19.

[318] Udoma, *The Lion and the Oil-Palm*.

[319] University Philosophical Society, 'Photographs of the Committee Members and Other Photographs of the Society Members'.

protest in Dublin, organised in response to British authorities shooting 80 people during a coal miners' strike in Nigeria. The protesters submitted a memorandum to Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, then British representative in Dublin, calling for a democratic constitution for Nigeria and a transfer of power within a year of the constitution's completion.[320]

While rhetorical contestation informed political consciousness, access to institutional networks and resources also conditioned how West African students navigated and repurposed elite university spaces.

4.8 Access to vital material and social capital

The Phil from which 20th-century West African men derived their associational lives was exclusive, reserved for 'the intellectual cream of College,' opinion leaders, and influencers.[321] For instance, Phil member and future Nigerian Olympian John Oladipo Oladitan[322] was 'noted for his immaculate and colourful dress, from bow-tie and London-tailored sports jacket to his brown suede shoes. He appreciates classical music, but is particularly fond of jazz and calypso, as is evident by the gramophone pick-up and records in his rooms.'[323] Meanwhile, Irish cultural leaders like the republican Jonathan Swift, unionist James Henry Molyneaux, philosopher George Berkeley, and litterateurs Oscar Wilde, Samuel Becket, and Bram Stoker have all been exclusive members of the Phil.

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[320] 'African Students Hold Parade', *Evening Mail* (Dublin: Ireland), 12 August 1949, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), JUS/8/980.

[321] J. P. Cinnamond and A. R. M. Seaman, eds, '1853-1914', in *Centenary Review: 1853-1953*, with McDowell RB (Dublin: Centenary Year Committee, University Philosophical Society, T.C.D, 1954).

[322] John Oladipo Oladitan was a Nigerian athlete who competed in the men's long jump at the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome, Italy.

[323] 'Profile: J. O. Oladitan, Captain of Athletics', *Trinity News* (Dublin: Ireland), 13 February 1958, Vol V No. 8 Edition.

During his inaugural speech, Udoma acknowledged the presence of a valuable network of social relations which included among others the College registrar, Kenneth Claude Bailey; the Assistant Registrar, Captain James Shaw; regius professor of Greek, William Bedell Stanford; as well as representatives from the Irish Times and the Irish Press to whom it was his 'honour to plead the cause of West Africa.'[324]

Founded in 1683 (but adopting its current name in 1860), the Phil has sometimes claimed to be the world's oldest collegiate paper-reading society. It was Anglo-Irish philosopher William Molyneux who convened the first sessions. Since then, recruitment has remained an expression of the Phil's social configuration. Its colloquia have featured a broad spectrum of cultural influencers, some with notable ties to Africa. Professor G.W.P Dawson, who founded the genetics department at Trinity College Dublin, had a longstanding presence in the Phil, which culminated in his election to honorary membership on 16th June 1960 at the society's 106th session.[325] Professor Dawson took the chair for several colonial student meetings in Ireland and was involved in an attempt to establish a Commonwealth university to help alleviate overcrowding at British universities.[326] Moreover, advisor to colonial students in Ireland, H.E. McClenaghan was interviewed by the director of colonial students in Britain, John Lucien Keith, who concluded that he had 'all the necessary tact and understanding for the job.'[327] McClenaghan, besides never being 'absent from any function in which colonial students were concerned,' also chaired meetings at the Phil.[328] Another Irish figure who frequented meetings of the Phil was Conor Cruise O'Brien, vice chancellor of the University of Ghana (1962–1965). He had been

[324] Udoma, *The Lion and the Oil-Palm*, sect. Introduction.

[325] University Philosophical Society, *General Public and Private Business Minute Book of the University Philosophical Society*.

[326] 'Commonwealth University', *Trinity News* (Dublin: Ireland), 15 April 1965, Vol XII No. 13 Edition, Trinity News Archives.

[327] 'Letter to FH Boland by GW Tory, from the Office of the UK Rep to the Republic of Ireland', 13 May 1950, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[328] 'H. E. St. G. McClenaghan', *Trinity News* (Dublin: Ireland), 12 May 1955, Vol 2 No. 13 Edition.

critical of Irish law enforcement's handling of racial matters and proposed that a special bureau in the police service be set up to protect African colonial students. O'Brien remained an advocate for Africa, reiterating how the universality of racism did not allow the Irish to award themselves anti-racism accolades.[329]

The Phil's meeting place since 1902 had been the Graduates Memorial Building (GMB), a signature piece of city and college architecture. Within it, West African inductees had privileges inaccessible to the uninitiated, including a debating chamber, billiard room, study room, as well as exhibition, committee, and conversation rooms.[330] The male membership of West Africans in the Phil was therefore accompanied by a considerable claim to capital, foreshadowing their status as exemplars of postcolonial leadership. In fact, in the seven years between 1953 and 1960, at least twenty-one West Africans had been nominated for membership in the society. These have included Isaac Emmanuel Amoh, Odumosu Franklin Olatunbosun, Maurice Chukwuemeka Akamnonu, Fidelis Ndarake Ikpong, James Osenwoye Osakwe, C.J Asusji and Babatunde Owolabi Onadeko. Others included Samuel O. Olagbaju, Nnanna Nwa Wachuku, Cornelius Huni Dadzie, Nigerian army captain George Amangala, and educationist Younis Basorun.[331]

The Phil was a venue suited to anticolonial rhetoric. At a June 3rd 1954 session, Younis Basorun read his paper, *The Future of Africa,* for which he won a silver medal in composition.[332] Joseph Richard Gregory, former mayor of Nairobi delivered the vote of

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[329] John Brannigan, *Race in Modern Irish Literature and Culture* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

[330] University Philosophical Society, *Officers Book June 1932-1953 of the University Philosophical Society* (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, n.d.), Trinity College Dublin Manuscripts and Early Printed Works.

[331] University Philosophical Society, *General Public and Private Business Minute Book of the University Philosophical Society*.

[332] Younis Olatunji Basorun, *The Future of Africa: A Paper Read before the University Philosophical Society on 21st May 1953*, MUN/SOC/PHIL/1/13 (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, n.d.), Trinity College Dublin Manuscripts and Early Printed Works.

thanks to him.[333] Meanwhile, Udoma's presidential speech was responded to by prominent personalities such as British scientist and internationalist Julian Sorell Huxley; South African academic and critic William Miller Macmillan; Irish writer and editor Sean O'Faolain, and Irish senator John Keane, while Trinity College Dublin provost Ernest Henry Alton presided.

The Phil would have mediated experiences of imperial disillusionment, allowing for the coordination of a collective agenda regarding the welfare of emerging African nations. Arthur Creech Jones[334] provided the foreword to Udoma's inaugural speech and reiterated how colonies cannot 'grow and share in the common life of the Free Nations' unless the intelligentsia, 'distinguished and educated British subjects in the Colonial Empire,' are viewed as collaborators.[335] The cultural backdrop to this was fitting. Udoma's election as Phil president took place nearly a year after the signing of the Atlantic Charter by Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, leading to the creation of the UN Trusteeship Council and with it, expectations of decolonisation.

Beyond decolonisation rhetoric and social/material capital however, another way the University Philosophical Society contributed to shaping West African student intelligentsia is through patriarchal leadership.

4.9 Patriarchal leadership

It is noteworthy that all the guests who responded to Udoma's inaugural presidential address were male, as were all the persons he dedicated his address to.[336] Although the Phil was well placed to instil leadership roles in rising male intelligentsia, it had historically

[333] University Philosophical Society, *General Public and Private Business Minute Book of the University Philosophical Society*.

[334] Arthur Creech Jones was a prominent British trade unionist, colonial reform advocate and Secretary of State for the Colonies (1946–1950).

[335] Arthur Creech Jones, 'Foreword', in *The Lion and the Oil-Palm* (Ponsonby & Gibbs, 1943), National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

[336] Udoma, *The Lion and the Oil-Palm*, sect. Introduction.

failed to do the same at comparable rates for women whose presence in the society was non-existent, or in later years, rare.

Male West African leaders of the Phil included the previously mentioned Younis Basorun, who was nominated to the society's council on 28th May, 1953.[337] He also served on the society's centenary year committee in the 1953/1954 academic year.[338] Basorun contributed to the legacy of West Africans in the Phil by nominating others for leadership roles. On 27th May 1954, he nominated Teniwito Agboola Ogunkanmi for librarian, seconded the nomination of Michael Adedapo Omisade for registrar and nominated the same for a place on the society's council.[339] Similarly, Olu Adesanya, future Oba of the Ijebu Igbo, was nominated for the position of honorary treasurer, librarian, and registrar, and as part of the Phil's council on 17th May, 1956.[340]

The depoliticisation of women is a problem well rooted in the colonial student epoch and further entrenched by Phil conventions. Before the 1940s, female West African students' education was premised on traditional values of homemaking and childrearing, and it was uncommon for them to advance beyond basic education.[341] Female colonial students in Europe were rare as well, and their education was further circumscribed by the intersection of a highly gendered and racialised landscape.

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[337] University Philosophical Society, *General Public and Private Business Minute Book of the University Philosophical Society*.

[338] University Philosophical Society, *1952/53-53/54 Centenary Committee Minute Book of the University Philosophical Society* (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, n.d.), Trinity College Dublin Manuscripts and Early Printed Works.

[339] University Philosophical Society, *General Public and Private Business Minute Book of the University Philosophical Society*.

[340] University Philosophical Society, *General Public and Private Business Minute Book of the University Philosophical Society*.

[341] Advisory Committee on Education in the colonies, *Mass Education in African Society* (Great Britain: H.M. Stationery Office, 1944).

Missionaries were considered pioneers in early girl-child education in colonies, but even they struggled to perceive female education as leading anywhere beyond care occupations, in line with normative ideas of womanhood. When the Legion of Mary opened the Dublin Overseas Club at Harcourt Terrace in 1962, it provided an embroidery room targeted at female students who undertook domestic courses in Irish colleges.[342] Female students were encouraged to go into teaching and secretarial work as well. In contrast, few exceptional ones were permitted into the medical and legal fields, which were often considered the preserve of males. As W.G.A Ormsby-Gore noted on his visit to West Africa in 1926:

> 'a point which is very noticeable throughout West Africa is the comparatively small provision which has been made for the education of girls as compared with the provision made for boys…if the general standard of the country is to be raised, increasing provision must be made for female education, as no society can really advance if there is a great disparity between the number of educated men and women.'[343]

On 3rd March 1955, after a paper was read on *The Place of Africa in World Politics,* the following Africans spoke; Joseph Kofi Owusu, Teniwito Ogunkanmi and Adewememo Daodu Solarin, all male.[344] Similarly, in 1961, a Phil member, Wachuku, was interviewed by the Irish police concerning his involvement in a rowdy African student protest in Dublin city centre. During the interview, he emphasises the role of 'the boys' in the protest, stating, for instance, 'the boys knew that the march was to stop at Pearce Street' or that 'the boys were rowdy and would not agree to disperse.'[345] Women being excluded from power discourse is pervasive in student histories, where they are considered too numerically weak

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[342] 'Anonymous Donor Gave 6000 Pounds', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 13 February 1962, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[343] Ormsby-Gore, *Report by The Hon. W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore, M.P. (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies), on His Visit to West Africa during the Year 1926*, 91.

[344] University Philosophical Society, *General Public and Private Business Minute Book of the University Philosophical Society*.

[345] Garda Superintendent's Office, *Notes of Interview with Mr Wachuku at Trinity College Dublin at 12:30pm, 22/2/61* (Dublin: Garda Superintendent's Office, B District, College Station, n.d.), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), JUS/8/980.

to garner major attention.[346] In much of the colonial student scholarship, the idea of the African colonial student is premised on the social imaginations of male revolutionaries (founding fathers, not mothers), like in the West African Students Union of Great Britain and Ireland (WASU) or the Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France (FEANF).

There is, therefore, a cultural debt owed to women in the history of European universities. 'At the beginning of the twentieth century, those attending institutions of further and higher education [in Britain and Ireland] were almost exclusively male.'[347] Founded in 1592, Trinity College Dublin did not register female students until 1904 and thereafter placed spatial and moral restrictions on their presence on campus. Notably, however, between 1904 and 1907, the college awarded *ad eundem* degrees to women, often referred to as steamboat ladies, whose institutions at Oxford and Cambridge had denied them formal degrees.[348]

The University Philosophical Society meetings, on the other hand, did not admit females until after its centenary year celebrations in the 1953/54 academic year.[349] It also closed off women's membership and speaking privileges until the 1967/1968 academic year. Female African membership in the Elizabethan Society, the oldest women's society on the college campus is uncertain, but in 1981, it was absorbed by the Phil. With males stringently policing the boundaries of prestigious debating societies, the networks of knowledge colonial students were exposed to were networks of men indulging in patriarchal tastes in an insular and hermetically sealed world.

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[346] Carol Dyhouse, *Students: A Gendered History* (London: Routledge, 2005); Carol Dyhouse, *No Distinction Of Sex?: Women In British Universities, 1870-1939* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[347] Jodi Burkett, ed., 'Introduction: Universities and Students in Twentieth-Century Britain and Ireland', in *Students in Twentieth-Century Britain and Ireland*, 1st ed. 2018 edition (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[348] Molly Furey, 'In 1904, the "Steamboat Ladies" Kicked Off a Trinity Equality Battle. It's Still Going', University Times, 8 April 2020.

[349] University Philosophical Society, *General Public and Private Business Minute Book of the University Philosophical Society*.

Patriarchal leadership is also enshrined in Ireland's longstanding relationship with the Catholic Church. Clericalism had expressed male hierarchies as the functional indexes of power, while conservative gender norms displaced women to matters of domesticity and political subordination. This is despite women playing prominent roles in Ireland's struggle for independence. Meanwhile, the Catholic Church's influence in the development of education and social policy for African colonial communities reinforced patriarchal ideals, integrating them as seemingly benign parts of everyday behaviour.

Efforts to determine the involvement of female African colonial students in mid-20th-century Phil therefore remain challenging because of the scarcity of currently obtainable data held on them. The male-focused narrative sadly enforces gender silences, undermines the input of women, and casts men as the primary representatives of Africans' intellectual labours in Europe during the colonial student era.

4.10 Conclusion

In the last century, students from African, Asian and Caribbean colonies, often called colonial students, pursued higher education at European universities. Among these, West Africans were very political. The students were trained abroad because colonial policies had failed to develop educational institutions in their home colonies. Many postcolonial intelligentsia were simultaneously organic and neo-colonial intellectuals born out of the colonial student era, where liberatory ideas strengthened abroad were transferred back home to add momentum to social movements.

University faculty, along with college clubs and societies, played a role in shaping the perspectives and worldviews of colonial students. In this paper, I conducted a thematic analysis of the archives of one of the world's oldest collegiate paper-reading societies, the University Philosophical Society (commonly called the Phil), of Trinity College Dublin. My objective was to uncover the social, political, and intellectual landscape in which West African colonial students were bred in the decolonisation epoch. My analysis showed influences in three areas, namely decolonisation rhetoric, access to vital social/material capital and patriarchal leadership.

The Phil, conventionally recognised as prestigious and exclusive, placed its West African members in the realm of intellectuals and influencers, legitimising their discourses on decolonisation. However, its intellectual exchanges were grafted onto patriarchal circuits that reinforced problematic paradigms about which gender could best speak for colonies. The perpetuation of this legacy long into the independence era underscores the need for continued awareness of the socialising force of European social structures on colonial intelligentsia.

Nevertheless, the research illustrates that the Phil was grounds for socio-political intervention, and that its intellectual exchanges sometimes run counter to the archetypal 20th-century Eurocentric cultural model. Through its forum, it conjoined ideas of social indulgence and political reformism that allowed colonial students to co-opt a European establishment for African gains.

This research is important because it contributes to the corpus by extending the contours of African-Irish historical connections beyond overworked narratives like Ireland's missionary work in West Africa. European institutions like the Phil are often characterised as media for transmitting Western cultural hegemonies. However, my engagement with the uncovered themes underscores the Phil's positioning on the intellectual mapping of the anti-colonial effort as well.

4.11 Declaration of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

4.12 Declaration of funding

No funding was received.

5.0 PAPER 4: BLACKNESS AND BELONGING IN A POSTCOLONIAL STATE: CONTEXTUALISING THE 1964 FADIPE AFFAIR IN IRELAND [ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION BY *RACE, ETHNICITY AND EDUCATION*]

5.1 Abstract

This paper offers a contextual analysis of a letter published by Nigerian Judge Louis Fadipe in the Irish Independent newspaper in 1964, following the assault on his son by two Irish youths in Dublin. The analysis is supported by original archival data. It highlights the pervasive and persistent tension surrounding the acknowledgement of racial dynamics within 20th-century Irish society. It situates the assault within a broader historical context, demonstrating that racial issues concerning African students in Ireland were not isolated events but rather part of a larger historical trajectory.

5.2 Keywords

Racism, postcolonial Ireland, colonial students, Fadipe affair, Charles Fadipe

5.3 Introduction to the Fadipe Affair

Aimé Césaire writes on colonial education as a 'parody…, the hasty manufacture of a few thousand subordinate functionaries, "boys," artisans, office clerks, and interpreters necessary for the smooth operation of [imperial] business.'[350] This parody was shattered by the rise of Western-educated native intellectuals, of which Césaire was a part. In his work, *The Education of a British-Protected Child*, Chinua Achebe remembers how he idolised

[350] Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 42.

such Western-educated native intellectuals as Nnamdi Azikiwe or Kwegyir Aggrey.[351] In the previous century, colonies' few and underfunded educational institutions proved insufficient to cultivate a well-educated populace. It was typical, therefore, for students from British West African colonies to pursue academic programmes abroad. They were sometimes referred to as *colonial students* in British and Irish colleges.[352]

In Britain, the general welfare status of West African colonial students was worrying, engendered by economic challenges, cultural shocks, social anxiety and racism.[353] However, their experiences have been overlooked in Ireland. This paper examines an incident in 1964 Ireland, contextualised within the broader experiences of West African colonial students.

The 1964 assault on Charles Fadipe, a Nigerian student in Dublin, reveals the racial tensions that simmered beneath the surface of Irish society. The affair that ensued offers a critical case study through which historians can examine the colonial legacies of race in Ireland, especially after the 'end of the Second World War inaugurated the postcolonial dispensation.'[354]

Charles Fadipe became a Nigerian business executive and politician.[355] However, in 1964, while only a medical student at the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin, he was physically attacked by two Irish youths, sustaining 'head and face injuries.'[356] Charles' father, Louis, a former colonial student in England and a high-ranking judge in Ibadan, visited his son in a Dublin hospital and thereafter reportedly lodged a complaint with the Irish government

[351] Chinua Achebe, *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (London: Allen Lane, 2010).

[352] Adi, *West Africans in Britain*; Keith, 'African Students in Great Britain'.

[353] Carey, *Colonial Students*.

[354] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Righting Wrongs', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103, nos 2–3 (2004): 524.

[355] 'Family, Friends Bid Farewell To Charles Babatunde Fadipe', *Metrofile*, aired 29 December 2018, on Lagos: Channels Television.

[356] 'Injured Student Is Comfortable', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 26 June 1964.

via the Nigerian High Commission in London, supported by a dossier of 25 recent racist attacks on students of colour in Ireland.[357]

In the judge's open letter published in the Irish Independent newspaper, he alerts the Irish public about the presence of a racial problem in Dublin, one in which his son had become the 'latest victim,' suffering 'a severe and irreparable eye injury.'[358]

As Edward Said argues that 'one cannot look at African writing except as embedded in its political circumstances, of which the history of imperialism and resistance to it is surely one of the most important.'[359] Fadipe's 1964 letter to the Irish Independent illustrates this, responding directly to the racial and political circumstances of its time. This paper draws insights from a contextual analysis of the external situational influences that weighed on the affair, catapulting Irish race relations into the spotlight, involving press and diplomats across Britain, Ireland, and a new Nigerian Republic.

The historical connection between colonialism and racism is well recognised. It is society that imposes minority status and corresponding stereotypes. However, the complex history of Ireland as a victim of Anglo-centric racism has often been invoked to invalidate discussions of its role as a perpetrator of racism. Postcolonial theorists decry such hasty dismissals and instead call for the acknowledgement and deconstruction of colonialism's enduring legacies.

The Irish Independent is a major national daily newspaper published in Dublin and considered moderate conservative in editorial bias**.** A thorough contextual analysis of the judge's letter must first begin with an understanding of its positioning within the Irish Independent newspaper. The letter was symbolically placed above a report on a Mississippi race riot in which one Black man had been shot by two White people.[360] The juxtaposition

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[357] 'Nigerian Protest over Attacks on Students', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 21 July 1964.

[358] Louis Fadipe, 'Nigerian Students', *Irish Independent*, 17 August 1964.

[359] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), 239.

[360] 'Racial Violence in Mississippi', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 17 August 1964.

of the two articles is an invitation to engage with their textual material discerningly, not as a monolithic construction but as a site for complex context.

Furthermore, the assailants were described as 'lacking fixed home addresses.' The stigma of homelessness discredits persons from full social acceptance, associating them with negative perceptions like hooliganism, drunkenness, and joblessness. In fact, Judge Fadipe himself qualifies such assaults as 'hostilities' carried out by 'hooliganism,' glossing over the historical elements that conditioned such racial tensions in Ireland in the first place.

Paulo Freire argues that 'a fact which is not denied but whose truths are rationalised loses its objective base.'[361] Defences published in the Irish Examiner and Southern Star newspapers question how the Fadipe case can be considered an accurate gauge of Ireland's racial tolerance:

> 'African and Asian students of both sexes walk freely about the city streets at all hours of the day and night, attend social functions of all sorts… cases of molestation which have been reported to the police fall far short of what would normally justify the descriptions being given to them... .'[362] As a result, '…one cannot regard this as constituting a "wave of racial prejudice."'[363]

Besides, a shortcoming identifiable within the discourse on the Fadipe affair is the lack of consensus, firstly, around the number of recorded assault cases that allegedly victimised African students in the city. Whereas the number of cases in the judge's dossier had been considered exaggerated by some quarters, an independent investigation by the Irish Union of Students, for instance, revealed otherwise.[364] Another source of confusion is whether a protest had, in fact, been lodged with the Irish government. For instance, some reports held

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[361] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd., 1970), 52.

[362] 'Seeking the Truth', *Irish Examiner* (Dublin: Ireland), 22 August 1964.

[363] 'Racial Trouble', *Southern Star* (Skibbereen), 19 September 1964.

[364] 'Dublin Attacks on Students', *Evening Herald* (Dublin: Ireland), 29 August 1964, Irish Newspaper Archives.

that ‘a note,’ not necessarily ‘a protest,’ had been lodged.[365] The choice of words invariably influences the interpretation of the affair’s severity.

When the Nigerian High Commissioner, Alhaji Abdul-Aliki was queried on 21st August 1964, he downplayed the urgency of the affair, stating that while he was aware of the Fadipe case, that was not the reason for his visit to Dublin.[366] ‘He was satisfied that the Irish authorities were doing their utmost to curb the attacks’ and that the cases ‘affecting Nigerians could not be regarded as evidence for a general charge of racialism against the Irish people.’[367] He explains, “I am also High Commissioner in London, and it is the practice of ambassadors to visit the country to which they are accredited. This is just a routine visit.”[368]

Similarly, when interrogated about the Fadipe case at a student conference where alleged attacks on colonial students were discussed at length, Julius Adeluyi, vice president of the Nigerian National Union of Students, mentioned he was simply at the conference as an observer and that his visit to Ireland ‘had nothing to do with any investigation.’[369] Whereas these responses could have been diplomatic manoeuvres intended to contain the fallout from the affair, they would have had reverberations throughout the country. A general lack of consensus on the affair could have strengthened perceptions that it was an ordinary, isolated street crime rather than a reflection of Afrophobic sentiment in Dublin.

Despite the general suspicion regarding the welfare status of Africans in Dublin, months after the original incident, the prosecution was unable to submit any evidence to support the claim that the assault on Charles Fadipe was racially motivated. On November 17, 1964,

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[365] ‘No Protest by Nigeria Received in Dublin’, *Irish Examiner* (Dublin: Ireland), 22 July 1964.

[366] ‘Inquiry into Attacks on Students Not Purpose of Visit’, *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 21 August 1964.

[367] ‘Government Is Concerned at Accusations- Mr Aiken’, *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 22 August 1964.

[368] *Irish Independent*, ‘Inquiry into Attacks on Students Not Purpose of Visit’.

[369] *Evening Herald*, ‘Dublin Attacks on Students’.

the Fadipe case was struck out after being remanded on several occasions. The 'attorney-general, having had the matter investigated, was satisfied that there was not sufficient evidence to go ahead with the case.'[370] Still, within the rich stream of textual matter contained in the judge's letter, there is a wealth of invaluable context that shapes our understanding of 20th-century African-Irish connections.

5.4 Methodological notes

The research aims to recover Judge Fadipe's personal perspective on the incident because he was the leading player around whom the affair developed. A preliminary literature review showed that his perspective was absent. Therefore, a deeper mining of the archives was undertaken to reach a critical understanding of the cultural and historical significance of the affair.

Archival research has a longstanding reputation for challenging biased narratives and highlighting overlooked histories. This contextual analysis was grounded in data extracted from college archives, colonial office publications, religious records, obituaries and funeral tributes, inter-governmental communiqués, foreign affairs memoranda, and multimedia broadcasts. It revealed the complex nature of racial tensions involving West African students in 1960s Ireland, showing that the Fadipe affair did not occur in isolation but was influenced by external racial controversies even predating post-war Dublin.

Newspaper archives are perceived as an inescapable source of material. Vital in the methodology of context-driven research, they provided access to periodicity and chronological data. The research acknowledges that newspapers are prone to silences and biases of writers and editorial boards. However, seldom do these extend to the hard facts that are matters of 20th-century Irish public record. In the pre-internet era, newspapers were a popular (sometimes singular) medium for the dissemination of reliable public information. Moreover, newspapers offer researchers an inherent self-correction function, with different titles allowing for cross-referencing of comparative and competing versions

[370] 'Charges of Assault Struck Out', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 17 November 1964.

of dates, names, events, etc. Simply put, newspapers are rarely challenged as inauthentic or forged, making them a reliable source of contextual data.[371] The Irish Independent newspaper (August 17, 1964) is the only available title to have published primary data from Judge Louis Fadipe concerning the affair. It remains one of the largest newspapers in circulation in Dublin and would have engaged with its readership on a large scale.

The central research question is, 'How did racial tensions manifest between West African students and their Irish hosts in the 20th century?' Meanwhile, the contextual analysis engages with the works of postcolonial theorists. The rationale is that although the affair occurred in 1964, well into the independence era, it must be understood in relation to deeper colonial legacies that continued to shape African students' experiences. The paper challenges the perception that Ireland's racial history with colonial students is uneventful (as opposed to Britain). It demonstrates that Irish public debates on matters of race and racism were intrinsically connected with the presence of West African students. Furthermore, that imperial structures, figures and relationships bore directly on the students' realities.

5.5 Author's positionality

In this study, I often identified parallels between my experiences and those of the students I researched. As an African scholar studying at a historically imperial Irish university, I have encountered many of the cultural and racial paradoxes that impacted the lives of 20th-century Africans in Europe.

I was constrained by the methodological demands of competing interdisciplinary fields. However, through engagement with postcolonial scholarship, I was able to move beyond these limitations and situate my work within a broader global intellectual framework. The history of the contributions of European educational institutions to African minds is a well-glorified area of research. Through a postcolonial critique, my commitment to the decolonial praxis allows me to resist any more of these paradigms that subordinate the Black African experience. My experience of hybridity is evident in my shifting statuses

[371] José Barranco and Dominique Wisler, 'Validity and Systematicity of Newspaper Data in Event Analysis', *European Sociological Review* 15, no. 3 (1999): 301–22.

across continents, middle class in Africa, but working class in Europe. I employed archival research to uncover similarly underexplored experiences in history.

In this work, I reconcile archival accounts with how racialised people were policed and how they resisted policing. I interrogate the language of the reportage surrounding the affair as well as how deflection and denial were framed. Lastly, I examine public understanding of the affair, bringing into view the treatment of colonial students as subalternised people

5.6 Opening remarks

THE LETTER: Nigerian Students, Irish Independent, Monday, August 17, 1964; Page: 8

> Sir—I have read your leading article of July 29 concerning the recent attacks on. coloured students in Dublin. While no one would wish to suggest that the Irish people generally are anything but friendly towards people of other countries and races, the facts about attacks on coloured students in Dublin show unmistakably that in the past 12 months there has been a growing hostility by hooligans in the city towards coloured students.
>
> I have submitted to the authorities a list of 25 incidents against Africans, West Indian or Indian students, some of which have resulted in serious injury. Unhappily, there is also evidence to suggest that the police have not been as alert to the situation or as ready to take action as they might have been expected to do.
>
> Although my own son has been the latest victim of this kind of attack and has suffered a severe and irreparable eye injury, my chief concern is that steps should be taken to prevent any similar attacks. These incidents are bad for the reputation of the city and for the well-being of the university and its students. It is to be hoped that everyone concerned will recognise the seriousness of what is happening and will take all appropriate measures to prevent any repetition.
>
> L. OLUBODUN FADIPE
> Chief Judge, Grade A, Customary Court of Appeal, Mapo, Ibadan Nigeria,
> At present at: 42 Offley Road, Oval, London S.W.9.

In the opening address of Judge Louis Fadipe's letter, he expressed his opposition to a 'leading article' by the Irish Independent. That article is quite possibly *Nigerian Students*, published in the Irish Independent on July 29, 1964, apparently as a rebuttal to a Lagos Morning Post editorial titled *Irish Atrocities*![372] To Judge Fadipe, this article symbolised an entry into the record, the Irish stance on the race matter. It is important to establish early on that this reflects a much larger historical culture of contestation and denial, which has often overshadowed critical assessments of racial experiences in Ireland.[373] For instance, a 1960 note from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs reads that Ireland is a better training ground for colonial students than 'any of the more developed western countries because of our anti-colonial tradition and also because of our lack of colour bias.'[374] While Ireland was touted as a comparatively better choice for the education of colonial students than other European countries, historical sources explicitly evidence the existence of different forms of exclusion and inequality within early to mid-20th-century society that blighted the students' experiences.

An official 1949 governmental communiqué on students from British colonial territories in Ireland states that '…young coloured men and women have inevitably a number of special problems and difficulties which have from time to time caused anxiety…'[375] The subject of anxiety brings up another important consideration, the Mohangi trial, a focal node of the Fadipe affair. The trial was held for South African student Shan Mohangi for the murder of his Irish girlfriend in 1963 and illustrates how the language of race adapts to the cultural

[372] 'Nigerian Students', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 29 July 1964.

[373] Garner, *Racism in the Irish Experience*.

[374] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Note Addressed to Dr. O'Brien*.

[375] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Students from British Colonial Territories*.

rhythms of the public. For instance, several Irish newspapers identified the accused as Indian,[376] despite his stating on record that he was South African.[377]

The identifier Indian was used by Irish newspapers in the Mohangi trial because there was a stereotypical construction of the South African prototype within the Irish public psyche, and Mohangi did not fit it. In other words, he *looked* Indian, and so he *was* one. Granted, this could potentially be chalked up to writing heuristics. More likely, however, it reflects how the language of race affects the manner of content the public is likely to understand or recognise. I acknowledge that similar rushed stereotypes are ingrained into the cognition of people, Irish or otherwise, as a way to organise their social world. However, such pseudo-scientific ideological categorisations of people provide great impetus for racism.[378]

Besides, both Judge Fadipe's letter and the Irish Independent's reportage on the affair make references to being 'coloured' in a manner that suggests that this was an essential form of identification, perhaps even superior to age, gender, or other socio-cultural markers. It is in accordance with what Chinua Achebe observed; 'oppression renames its victims, brands them… with a common signature.'[379] Thus, another important preliminary consideration is that within the history of the British and Irish Isles, while the foreign status of colonial students was well entrenched, not just by hosts, but also by the students themselves. For colonial students, racialised terms could be repurposed as a collective term of solidarity; for their European hosts, however, it remained a term of otherness.

It is in this light that, despite the attack having been carried out on a Nigerian, Judge Fadipe took the initiative of compiling a dossier of other alleged attacks against as many 'Africans,

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[376] 'Indian Again Remanded', *Evening Echo* (Dublin: Ireland), 3 September 1963; 'Indian Student in Court: Another Remand in Dublin Murder Charge', *Evening Echo* (Dublin: Ireland), 10 September 1963; 'Indian Charged with Murder of Dublin Girl', *Evening Echo* (Dublin: Ireland), 10 February 1964.

[377] 'Girl Murder Case Opens in Dublin', *Evening Herald* (Dublin: Ireland), 14 October 1963.

[378] Robert Miles, *Racism* (London: Routledge, 1989).

[379] Achebe, *The Education of a British-Protected Child*.

West Indian or Indian students' as he could find.[380] He uses the term 'coloured' to collectively designate a certain family of people he considered Nigerians a part of. He was echoing a popular Pan-Africanist conceptualisation of race that tenaciously held on to the belief that the status of the 'oppressed' was a category sui generis, invoked to encourage commonality against what Aimé Césaire referred to as 'their temporary "masters."'[381]

Racial categorisations are a social imagination (with important class considerations) and do not hold biological validity. Still, the perceived status of the 'oppressed' had permeated many aspects of 20th-century social life and spurred tropes. Non-Europeans (mainly persons from colonies) were often presented as a collective without the need for a distinction in their places of origin, tribe and other identities. For instance, in arguing for the establishment of a hostel for colonial students in Ireland, a representative of the Legion of Mary's Overseas Club[382] argued that a hostel would help curb 'the moral laxity of most of these coloured students.'[383] Mentions of Canadian, Australian, or New Zealander colonial students are rare in the archives. The term was mainly reserved for students from various African, Asian, and Caribbean regions. It underscores a perceived categorisation based on outsider status, a differentiation deemed pivotal in the context of both Irish and African socio-linguistic patterns surrounding the affair.

Whether motivated by political self-interest or religious obligation, Irish hosts acknowledged the importance of cultivating a healthy relationship with colonial students, given their special tendency to become leaders in emerging countries. Fittingly, an official Irish Department of Foreign Affairs communiqué states, 'Ireland… is a country that is both militarily and economically weak and hence all the friends it can make abroad must be of advantage...consequently, any effort we can take to expand our influence in these areas [West Africa and hither Asia] is of importance.'[384] Similarly, Archbishop of Dublin, Charles

[380] Fadipe, 'Nigerian Students'.

[381] Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 32.

[382] Overseas Club was founded by the Legion of Mary in 1940 to provide socialisation opportunities for overseas students in Ireland.

[383] Department of Foreign Affairs, 'Letter Addressed to Secretary'.

[384] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Note Addressed to Dr. O'Brien*.

McQuaid, on the opening of the Legion of Mary's Dublin Overseas Club at Harcourt Terrace in 1940, remarked to colonial students present the following; 'I hope that when you return to your own countries, you will carry a grateful memory of the charity of Christ that welcomed you here… and that, in turn, you will show… in your land the just and gently consideration that it is our privilege to show to you in Ireland.'[385]

5.7 Negotiating diplomacy, race, and national image: the African-Irish nexus

Judge Fadipe explains that '…no one would wish to suggest that the Irish people generally are anything but friendly towards people of other countries and races…'[386] This preamble softens the blow of the charge and enhances the likelihood of a productive dialogue. However, the diplomatic niceties blur the historic settings within which African-Irish relations had evolved.

It is interesting to consider how both Africans and Irish were severely racialised within the British imperial system, serving side by side as indentured servants and enslaved people in the Caribbean islands in the 17th and 18th centuries. Meanwhile, in the 18th and 19th centuries, Ireland possessed a more significant Black community than other European countries of comparably larger sizes.[387] In the 19th century, the seeds of racial tensions could be identified among Irish-Americans who were notorious for their ill-treatment of African Americans during their internal struggles for racial identity.[388] They would have transferred suspicions back home to Ireland through both linguistic (e.g. letter writing) and physical contact (e.g. holiday visits). In America, the Irish were frequently referred to as 'niggers turned inside out,' and Black people as 'smoked Irish,' with the modern Irish turn away

[385] *Irish Independent*, 'Anonymous Donor Gave 6000 Pounds'.

[386] Fadipe, 'Nigerian Students'.

[387] Hart, 'Africans in Eighteenth-Century Ireland'.

[388] Jennifer Nugent Duffy, *Who's Your Paddy?: Racial Expectations and the Struggle for Irish American Identity* (New York: NYU Press, 2013).

from ‘Blackness’ (racial deficit) to ‘Whiteness’ (racial privilege), argued as having socio-economic interests, to facilitate upward social mobility into dominant classes.[389]

Aimé Césaire decries ‘a society in which the privileged, comfortably seated, refuse to move closer together so as to make room for the new arrival.’[390] There is a 20th-century tradition of Irish immigration to the UK that makes for an intriguing thesis. This occurred in the postwar period, which left gaps in the social structure of Ireland. Meanwhile, it coincided with the growth of African and Caribbean migrants into the UK, as exemplified by the docking of the iconic HMT Empire Windrush in 1948. Here, too, the presence of Black people as labour competition would have further affected the Irish conceptualisation of race. Therefore, immigration, intersecting Irish, British, American, and African histories, contributed to laying the cultural foundations for the context.[391]

Realistically, the judge may have felt the need to cushion his allegation for any number of reasons. The early 60s witnessed the most profound transformation of West African colonies into emergent nations. Scholarship demonstrates the dynamics of Ireland’s ‘third-world kinship’ in foreign policy, especially from the 1950s when the independence movements of West African territories were at their peak.[392] The judge may have wanted to tread cautiously so as not to plunge Nigeria into an international incident that would belittle its status as a year-old republic. Moreover, a case for negligence is hard to make when several Irish bodies had historically been mandated to look after the welfare of colonial students. Some of these included the Overseas Club at Harcourt Terrace,[393] Koinonia House, as well as St. Xavier’s University Hall, a hostel in Cork, reportedly operated at a loss for several years.[394]

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[389] Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 41.

[390] Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 67.

[391] O’Toole, *Going Native*.

[392] O’Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the End of Empire*.

[393] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Note*.

[394] *Summary of Memorandum by Very Rev Canon Bastible, Catholic Dean of Residence, UCC in Consultation with President of College and with Members of Society of African Missionaries Concerning- an Article in June 1957, Issue of “the West African Student”*

The Overseas Club at Harcourt Terrace was founded by the Legion of Mary in 1940 for colonial students' recreational use. The club's first meeting was held on Saturday, 13th July 1940, at the Catholic University School on Leeson Street with ten students representing Nigeria, India, Burma, China and Thailand. In October of that year, the Knights of Columbanus dedicated a room to colonial students at 7 Ely Place, which contained a library, table tennis and billiard table, and cards and chess sets.[395] 'The Club opened several nights a week, with the formal meeting continuing on a monthly basis… Some years later, the question of providing accommodation for overseas students arose as some of the students had experienced discrimination and were not always welcomed by traditional landladies.'[396]

In fact, British civil servant John Lucien Keith, who served as director in charge of colonial students, writes as early as 1946 that 'Trinity College, Dublin[397] takes a special pride in the care and attention it gives to its African undergraduates.[398] Again, the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement (IAAM) was founded a year prior to the Fadipe affair with the help of Irish persons to serve as an essential display of allyship for African people. It may have seemed incongruous, therefore, to radicalise a charge of prejudice against the Irish. The Irish Independent summed it up as follows: 'the Irish record of assistance to developing countries overseas and to their students and trainees here in Ireland should have made these charges against Irish people as a whole unthinkable.'[399]

(Published Monthly by the Editorial Board of West Africa Students Union) Entitled 'Penny for the Black Baby' by LA Tuakli (n.d.), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), TAOIS/97/9/1471.

[395] Knights of Columbanus is an Irish Catholic fraternal organisation.

[396] Finola Kennedy, *Frank Duff: A Life Story* (Burns & Oates, 2011), 165–66.

[397] University of Dublin, Trinity College Dublin is Ireland's oldest imperial university.

[398] Keith, 'African Students in Great Britain'.

[399] *Irish Independent*, 'Government Is Concerned at Accusations- Mr Aiken'.

Frantz Fanon contends that 'a given society is racist or it is ...not.'[400] It was often claimed that Ireland's history as a former colony gave Africans in Dublin an advantage. Ireland's decolonisation struggles had often been expressed in dialogue with Africa, with a shared antipathy towards Empire being frequently invoked. For instance, a quote in the Evening Herald states in no uncertain terms that 'it is not uncommon to see in Britain a notice which reads "No Irishmen, No coloureds"' to drive home the point about the ideological relatedness of the Irish and Africans.[401] As one account in the Southern Star puts it, 'Ireland has also contributed a tremendous amount by way of money and manpower to educational progress in Nigeria itself which these people should not be so ready to forget.'[402]

Whatever the proper motivation, Judge Fadipe expressed a deep appreciation for the current and historical context in his attempt to make an unpopular piece of news seem less antagonistic. He engages with this skill throughout the text of his letter. For example, he opts for a civil tone that suggests that there is still room for improvement in the Irish police's response to the plight of colonial students.[403] He writes that 'the police have not been as alert to the situation or as ready to take action as they might have been expected to do.'[404] The Nigerian embassy's letters to Frank Aiken, Ireland's Minister for External Affairs, took on a similar civil tone concerning the frequency of racist reports and 'several other manifestations of racial prejudice on the part of the police,' imploring if 'this sort of thing could be nipped in the bud before it assumes unmanageable proportions.'[405]

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[400] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1952), 85.

[401] Jack Butterly, 'Colour Bar? There Is No Real Problem in Dublin', *Evening Herald* (Dublin: Ireland), 11 September 1964.

[402] *Southern Star*, 'Racial Trouble'.

[403] Press cuttings of the Morning Post, dated July 2, 1964, and the Nigerian Outlook, dated July 4 1964, were included in the appendix of an aide-mémoire sent from the minister for external affairs, Frank Aiken, to the Taoiseach, Sean Lemass, on August 20 1964. The editorials criticise the role of the Irish police (Aiken, 1964; Brannigan, 2009, p. 217).

[404] Fadipe, 'Nigerian Students'.

[405] Nigerian Embassy, 'Letter to Minister Aiken from Nigerian Embassy', 22 April 1963, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), Dept of Taoiseach files; Brannigan, *Race in Modern Irish Literature and Culture*, 217.

On the other hand, Irish journalist Prionsias MacAonghusa criticised Prime Minister Seán Lemass for not condemning racial attacks in Ireland as 'unchristian and unworthy of this country.'[406] Thus, the history of Ireland's religious footprint in Nigeria underscores a race-making role within the scope of education, health and welfare. In fact, Fanon insists that 'the colonialist bourgeoisie is helped in its work of calming down the natives by the inevitable religion. All those saints who have turned the other cheek, who have forgiven trespasses against them, and who have been spat on and insulted without shrinking are studied and held up as examples.'[407]

Ireland's religious empathy towards Black people was ingrained by the socialisation of the Irish and of Black people as equally lowly within the British imperial hierarchy. The colonial system criminalised the status of being Black, projecting victims as inherently menial, inept and therefore dependent, a perspective primed for religious intervention. Irish religious influence in West Africa is typified by the likes of the Medical Missionaries of Mary, the Holy Ghost Fathers, the Society of African Missions or the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary whose religious enterprises in Nigeria have been 'characterised by triumphalism, racism, pecksniffianism, defensive spirituality, anti-colonial struggle, social power, and intellectual insecurity.'[408] The proliferation of Irish religious empires in places like Nigeria reflects, in part, an effort to ameliorate the damaging effects of racism by people who have previously been subjected to racism themselves.[409]

Judge Fadipe emphasises the urgency of finding lasting solutions to any Afrophobic problem in Dublin to salvage the Irish public image. As accounts in the Evening Echo and Kerryman newspapers put it, the African students are 'children of professional men who have been as a rule educated by our own priests and nuns who in turn instilled the feeling

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[406] Prionsias MacAonghusa, 'Straight from the Shoulder', *Free Press*, 28 August 1964, National Archives of Ireland, Dept of Taoiseach files.

[407] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 67.

[408] James Onochie Akpu, 'Irish Missionary Enterprise in Nigeria, 1885-1975' (Dublin City University, 2022).

[409] Akpu, 'Irish Missionary Enterprise in Nigeria, 1885-1975'.

of affection towards this country.'[410] However, '…the affair has now blown too big for common sense of that order. Our "national image" is at stake in the coffee houses of Algiers, Cairo, Lagos, Accra and Dar-es-salaam.'[411] On the opening of the Overseas Club at Harcourt Terrace, Frank Aiken opines that 'the Club would provide a chance for the people to co-operate in enabling overseas students to bring back home with them happy memories of their stay in Ireland.'[412] These reveal a deep nostalgic feeling of the sacrifice of Irish persons to the African cause, which had allowed Ireland to establish an ethical image for herself, an image that had come under threat. Thus, while the letter depicts Judge Fadipe as fearful of the safety of African students in Ireland, a more profound read of the affair shows how the Irish also feared for the safety of their image in Africa.[413]

The judge's allegations provoked reactions at home and backlash abroad. The Daily Telegraph in Lagos reportedly issued cautions to local students intending to study in Ireland.[414] Frank Aiken 'admonished the [Nigerian] ambassador and the Nigerian government for not quelling Nigerian media reports of racism in Ireland.'[415] At the time, Aiken's commitment to the African cause had been demonstrated professionally by his support of emerging nations through the United Nations and personally by two of his children involved in developmental work in Africa. His son spent 'a year in Nigeria supervising the building of a cathedral for the Irish Holy Ghost Fathers, and his daughter [was] teaching in Northern Rhodesia.'[416] When pressed on the affair, other Irish authorities were petulant as well, calling for Lagos to be 'careful about what they print.'[417] Justice

[410] Dixon, 'A Really Enjoyable Showband Session', *Evening Echo*, 1 August 1964.

[411] 'A Lot of Nonsense about the "Problem" of Coloured Students in Dublin', *Kerryman* (Kerry: Ireland), 5 September 1964.

[412] *Irish Independent*, 'Anonymous Donor Gave 6000 Pounds'.

[413] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Note Addressed to Dr. O'Brien*.

[414] 'Nigerian Reports Annoy Government: Concern at Charges of Racialism', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 22 August 1964.

[415] Brannigan, *Race in Modern Irish Literature and Culture*.

[416] 'Minister to See Nigerian Ambassador', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 21 August 1964.

[417] *Irish Independent*, 'Nigerian Students'.

Minister 'Charles Haughey also dismissed the allegations,' while the Irish Ambassador in Lagos, Kevin Rush 'blamed the African students themselves.'[418]

5.8 Contextualising African-Irish racial tensions and the legacy of Empire's intersecting histories

The gendered and racialised postwar landscape presented acute social difficulties for colonial students who were arriving in Europe in larger numbers.[419] For instance, the lived experiences of West African colonial students have fittingly been presented as the politics of race illustrated by the clash of cultures, under which lay a complex negotiation for the disposal and retention of identity, status and pride.[420] Chief Judge Fadipe makes reference to how anti-African sentiment had increased, particularly in '…the past twelve months' in Dublin.[421] Context here, too, is crucial because racial tensions are a deeply ingrained social problem that persists over time, and understanding them as an ongoing phenomenon is essential for addressing their pervasive impact.

The complex place of Black people within Irish society has implications reaching back to Anglo-Irish colonial relationships. The Irish's own racial identity has been made increasingly ambiguous by its status as a British colony (yet some Irish held roles in Britain's colonial administration) or its settler-planters (yet some Irish served as indentured servants in the Caribbean). These, coupled with the existence of anti-Black sentiment among 19th-century Irish in America, or an Irish spiritual empire in 20th-century West Africa, have led to confusion on Ireland's dual role as colony and coloniser, and its shifting statuses as victim and perpetrator of racism.[422]

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[418] Brannigan, *Race in Modern Irish Literature and Culture*.

[419] Amechi Anumonye, *African Students in Alien Cultures* (Black Academy Press, 1970).

[420] Olusanya, *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonisation, 1925-1958*.

[421] Fadipe, 'Nigerian Students'.

[422] Howe, *Colonized and Colonizers*.

Social commentary on the Fadipe affair was linked with two other significant racial controversies. Firstly, African students in Dublin reportedly faced discrimination while seeking suitable accommodation. Second is the previously mentioned, highly publicised Mohangi case, in which a South African student was tried for the murder of his teenage Irish girlfriend in 1964. Olatunji Gomez[423] alleged that 'some Irish retaliated against Afro-Asians because they considered the punishment too light' in the Mohangi sentencing,[424] perpetuating the stereotype of colonial students as a 'student body that by definition is rootless and friendless in this country.'[425] In fact, during the Fadipe affair, it was revealed that the Nigerian Chargé d'affaires in Dublin had previously requested the Irish Department of External Affairs to closely monitor the welfare of African, Caribbean and Asian students.[426] It shows that the assault on Charles Fadipe was not an isolated incident.

It is worth mentioning that a vice president of the Union for International Affairs had remarked that in a majority of cases investigated, women were not involved.[427] Still, the Mohangi case would have given new life to the suspicion that alleged moral looseness and association with women were the reasons colonial students had historically been abused in the streets of Dublin. After all, there had been other incidents where the students had been prosecuted for crimes involving women, including 'seducing' Irish girls, procuring abortions, and murder.[428] When it was suggested to Most Rev. Dr Joseph Whelan, Irish Bishop of Owerri, that the 'root cause of Dublin's prejudice against students was that parents would not relish them as sons-in-law,' his response was that 'information on Nigerian students could easily be obtained from a Catholic secretariat in Lagos.'[429]

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[423] Olatunji Gomez was an Irish-educated Lagos attorney related to 19th-century pioneer lawyer and head of the Lagos bar, Christopher Sapara-Williams.

[424] 'Irish Ambassador Denies Victimisation, Gives Advice', *Evening Echo* (Dublin: Ireland), 20 August 1964.

[425] 'Human Relations', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 22 August 1964.

[426] 'Government Gets Protest from Nigeria', *Irish Examiner* (Dublin: Ireland), 21 July 1964.

[427] *Evening Herald*, 'Dublin Attacks on Students'.

[428] *Irish Examiner*, 'Big Award £2,500 against Coloured Student in Dublin'; *Evening Herald*, 'Four Men Sent to Prison'; 'Nigerian Student's Trial Continues: Murder Charge Evidence', *Irish Times* (Dublin: Ireland), 27 October 1965.

[429] 'Bishop Praises the African Students', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 31 July 1964.

Significant historical events had, therefore, conspired to make race a critical subject in Irish society. Intriguingly, the office of the director of colonial scholars had historically been a purely advisory role and did not carry any mandate to take practical measures to protect colonial students.[430] A year prior to the Fadipe affair, an official communiqué had also reiterated how strained the British Council office in Dublin had been in taking care of Commonwealth students, especially after several emerging nations pulled their donations towards the upkeep of the office. By 1963, the British Council office in Dublin had been reduced to one adviser and one assistant.[431] With the Commonwealth student administration's resources strained, it gave way to contending wills, operating on the basis of racial membership like in the area of finding lodging.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o observes that during his school days, 'English was the official vehicle and the magic formula to colonial elitedom.'[432] For colonial students, Englishness represented the key to socio-cultural acceptance. However, as Africans were positioned farthest from the English on arbitrary racial hierarchies (compared to their Asian or Caribbean counterparts), their experiences were often more dire.

> 'It is when coloured people are trying to find places to live that prejudice affects them most closely. So often when they answer an advertisement for accommodation, they find that unaccountably it is not free anymore. Sometimes, the landlady will say that her other tenants will not tolerate coloured lodgers. It has been known for White people to be asked to leave because they entertained Africans.'[433]

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[430] Colonial Office, *Note on Students from British Colonial Territories in Dublin*.

[431] British Council Office in Dublin, *Overseas Students* (Dublin: British Council Office in Dublin, 1968), National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DFA/5/365/22.

[432] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Oxford: James Currey, 1986), 11.

[433] 'Black and White', *Trinity News* (Dublin: Ireland), 21 November 1963, Vol XI No. 5 Edition, Trinity News Archives.

In an official 1950 note on students from British Colonial territories in Dublin, it was stated that, with the exception of Africans, many colonial students were well cared for and had little difficulty in accommodation and social welfare.[434] In the year of the affair, an Irish girl wrote to the Evening Herald with these words:

> 'My boyfriend happens to be a Nigerian student, and I know from experience the way they are insulted in the street. God knows they are paying their way and paying highly at that. Why can't they be left alone? They do not interfere with anyone.'[435]

An op-ed in the Limerick Leader records in the year of the affair that a student group intended to hand its own dossier of alleged instances of discrimination to the Minister for Justice, Charles Haughey. 'Coloured students have been interviewed at length…and some of them appear to have grounds for their complaints.'[436] Representatives of Le Cheile[437] and the Overseas Club confirmed that 'there was definite colour prejudice among landladies and those letting accommodation.'[438] Racism could have been exaggerated, or Irish hospitality overestimated.[439] What is not in dispute is the existence of racial tensions involving African students.

Some Irish commentators had been quick to point out the predictability of the attack on Charles Fadipe at a period that had seen the educational migration of many West Africans into Ireland. Denial had then been framed within the context of the effects of population growth, 'inevitable results of a foreign element in …numbers coming into a stable and settled community' and therefore could not be considered Irish racism.[440] By the year of

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[434] Colonial Office, *Note on Students from British Colonial Territories in Dublin*.

[435] 'Nigerians in Dublin', *Evening Herald* (Dublin: Ireland), 24 July 1964.

[436] Limerick Leader, 'Is This Dossier on Colour Really Necessary?', *Limerick Leader* (Limerick), 15 August 1964.

[437] The Gaelic phrase *le cheile* signifies togetherness, although the specific organisation bearing this name remains unclear.

[438] *Irish Independent*, 'Bishop Praises the African Students'.

[439] Sean Mitchell, 'Colour Problem Has Become Mountain out of a Molehill', *Kerryman* (Kerry: Ireland), 5 September 1964, Irish Newspaper Archives.

[440] Butterly, 'Colour Bar? There Is No Real Problem in Dublin'.

the affair, a notable quandary for authorities in Ireland had been what to do with the rising cases of Commonwealth students who, after having been admitted to Irish colleges, failed their exams, discontinued their studies, but remained in Dublin on the fringes of the genuine student body.[441] In fact, several Asian, Caribbean and African High Commissioners (including that of Nigeria) had '…complained that, whereas they knew who was in the United Kingdom, they never knew what students were in Dublin.'[442] Accounts such as these occurred in a continuum and are a major but neglected facet of the migratory relationship between Africa and Ireland.

An Irish student-led investigation into the Fadipe affair found that 'the number of cases quoted by Nigerian Judge Fadipe was substantially correct and included several quite serious attacks,' and that 'there had been many more attacks than had been reported,' although, in some of the cases, African students were the cause of the trouble.[443] For instance, in 1958, a case at the Dublin Children's Court involved four Irish youths who were fined £1 each for throwing bottles at a house where a colonial student was living. When questioned by the judge, the youths denied that their actions were racially motivated, instead claiming they were retaliating for being jostled off a footpath by the colonial students.[444] The controversy of the Fadipe affair indicates that Irish discourse around race and racism was not passive but instead marked by anxiety in a highly contested socio-cultural landscape.

'Before World War II, there were usually between fifty and sixty Asia[n] and African students attending universities and other third-level educational institutions in Dublin.'[445] Despite colonial students being fewer in pre-war Ireland, there is still evidence of perceived racism that shows the Fadipe affair to be part of a continuum. In 1932, the Irish Independent reported that 'Dublin, regarded by many as the most courteous city in Europe, stands

[441] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Memorandum*.

[442] Department of Foreign Affairs, *Memorandum*.

[443] *Evening Herald*, 'Dublin Attacks on Students'.

[444] 'Threw Bottles at House: Fined', *Irish Press* (Dublin: Ireland), 6 November 1958, Irish Newspaper Archives.

[445] Kennedy, *Frank Duff: A Life Story*, 165–66.

indicted on the charge of discourtesy to strangers within her gates.'[446] This charge had been levelled by a West African colonial student, Al-Hajj Massaquoi, a prince of the Vai people and son of the famed Chief and first Black African diplomat to Germany, Harvard-educated King Momolu Massaquoi. Al-Hajj reported his experience of having the door shut in his face by an Irish landlady, leaving him stranded in the rain with his furniture and motorcar despite having been assured earlier that the room was available to rent.[447]

In Britain, it is well established that even the possession of wealth did not preclude West African and Caribbean migrants from the racialisation of space, especially in situations where such wealth is considered an affront to locals.[448] The regal expectations of a prince may be considered an abstraction from everyday life, but the lodgings issue continued from Massaquoi's student days well into the West African independence epoch. In 1966, only 10 of the 600 landladies on Trinity College Dublin's residences list were willing to take in students of colour. Of this, even less would take in an African.[449] In 1969, only 2% of the landladies circularised by the treasurer of the residences committee at the same college at the start of the term registered their willingness to accommodate students of colour. Unsurprisingly again, Africans in particular were said to have found difficulties.[450]

The configuration of power reproduced through racial determinism in the search for lodgings is one that is uniquely prevalent in the colonial student epoch and is anchored in Britain too, where Judge Louis Fadipe received his legal education. 'A survey of 300

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[446] 'Dublin Charged with Discourtesy. Royal Visitor's Views. Is There a Colour Bar', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 22 March 1932.

[447] *Irish Independent*, 'Dublin Charged with Discourtesy. Royal Visitor's Views. Is There a Colour Bar'.

[448] Rob Waters, 'Precarious Lives', in *Colonized by Humanity: Caribbean London and the Politics of Integration at the End of Empire*, ed. Rob Waters (Oxford University Press, 2023).

[449] '98% of Landladies Say "No Coloureds Need Apply"', *Trinity News* (Dublin: Ireland), 27 October 1966, Vol XIV No. 1 Edition, Trinity News Archives.

[450] David Giles, 'Accommodation Problems', *Trinity News* (Dublin), 30 October 1969, Trinity News Archives.

London landladies in the early 1950s found that only 26 per cent would accept 'lightly-coloured non-European' students, while a mere 10 per cent took Black people; some charged a sliding 'colour tax' on foreigners.'[451] In another study, among about 'three hundred landladies registered with a well-known organisation for finding rooms for university students in London ... only ten per cent [were] prepared to accept African or other Negro students.'[452]

Judge Fadipe makes it clear that he is only interested in getting the Irish public to recognise the '…seriousness of what is happening.'[453] Thus, his choice of tense suggests that the issue of Dublin's Afrophobic reactions was still ongoing. Newspapers in Lagos had reportedly cited the Fadipe affair as part of Europe's attempts to keep Africans down.[454] Meanwhile, some Irish commentators chalked the attack off as the work of deviants who had become a regular part of Irish street life. In the words of one author in the Connacht Sentinel, '… many Irish people have found themselves attacked by thugs for the same reason as the African.'[455] Thus, Irish persons could just as easily have fallen victim, and so it does not signal a campaign against African students.

5.9 Re-historicising the colonial student: pride, penalty, privilege

The judge reflects on the personal nature of the assault, an 'irreparable' tragedy that had befallen his 'own son.'[456] A contextual analysis will be incomplete without interrogating what Ramón Grosfoguel calls the 'locus of enunciation, that is, the geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks.'[457]

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[451] Carey, *Colonial Students*, 57.

[452] Carey, *Colonial Students*, 163.

[453] Fadipe, 'Nigerian Students'.

[454] Brannigan, *Race in Modern Irish Literature and Culture*.

[455] 'The Irishman and the Black Races', *Connacht Sentinel* (Galway: Ireland), 1 September 1964.

[456] Fadipe, 'Nigerian Students'.

[457] Grosfoguel, 'Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy'.

Jean-Paul Sartre asserts that 'the European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of Western culture; they stuffed their mouths full of high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay in the mother country, they were sent home, whitewashed.'[458] In the last century, a foreign education in law and medicine provided extensive cultural capital and placed ex-West African colonial students in top hierarchies of nationalist associations to lead and sustain the subregion's liberation agenda. Ireland is renowned for its excellence in medical training.[459] A look at Trinity College Dublin's proctors' registers, for instance, indicates that law and medicine were highly favoured as degrees of choice for West African students in the college's history. Furthermore, medical and law students predominantly constituted the membership of the Association for Students of African Descent, a crucial colonial student society that operated between 1935 and 1957 in Dublin.

However, since 'colonialism was essentially a denial of human worth and dignity, its education programme would not be a model of perfection.'[460] Negative perceptions had marred Britain's track record of accommodating colonial students. Racism was considered a major contributory factor to high rates of mental illness among the students.[461] In the words of Albert Memmi, 'it is not easy to escape mentally from a concrete situation, to refuse its ideology while continuing to live with its actual relationships.'[462] Having studied in Britain himself, Judge Fadipe's frame of reference may have shaped his suspicions about the attack on his son. Meanwhile, said son, Charles, at the time only a medical student at the Royal College of Surgeons, would later become a presidential aspirant on the ticket of Nigeria's now-defunct National Republican Convention party after holding other essential roles in politics and commerce.[463]

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[458] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, sect. Preface by Jean-Paul Sartre.

[459] Blumer, 'The Irish School of Medicine'.

[460] Achebe, *The Education of a British-Protected Child*.

[461] Copeland, 'Aspects of Mental Illness in West African Students'.

[462] Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, 65.

[463] 'Family, Friends Bid Farewell To Charles Babatunde Fadipe'.

Judge Fadipe and his son represented two dimensions of the characteristic class and privilege that were the expected product of the colonial student epoch. They formed part of a distinct cultural class that was well aware of its entitlements and collective influence. Given their standing within the post-colonial social pyramid therefore, they may have expected better treatment. Interestingly, the judge writes that he bypassed the Nigerian Chargé d'affaires office in Dublin and flew instead to the higher office of the Nigerian High Commissioner in London to lodge his protest directly. This strategic move served two purposes: firstly, it underscored the seriousness of the assault. Secondly, it portrayed to the Irish public the extent of the Judge's influence and connections within Nigerian socio-politics. In other words, it was not the son of an ordinary father who had been assaulted in Dublin, and so the matter warranted the attention of Nigeria's highest diplomatic office in the British and Irish Isles.

On July 23, 1964, an Irish police inspector reported that while Charles Fadipe was still in hospital, he was not going to lose his eye.[464] The Fadipe affair represents a critical aspect of the power relations and forces of influence that existed for some colonial students. During periods when colonies lacked an educated citizenry, colonial student education represented the formation of the cream of colonial societies. This is how Judge Fadipe was able to engage the attention of stakeholders across Nigeria, Britain and Ireland, especially when similar fates that befell his son had previously failed to raise any eyebrows.

Take the case of the comparable assault on another Nigerian student at the University College Dublin, Patrick Udenzi, who reportedly lost an eye in 1963. By 1965, he still possessed connections to the Black community in Ireland, serving as honorary secretary of the Dublin branch of the Nigeria Students' Union of Britain and Ireland.[465] However, by all indications, his victimhood became a footnote in the history of African-Irish connections. An article in the Trinity News newspaper details the following:

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[464] 'Two Charged with Assault on Nigerian', *Irish Independent* (Dublin: Ireland), 23 July 1964.

[465] *Evening Herald*, 'Photograph of Figures at the Annual Dance of the Nigeria Students' Union of Britain and Ireland (Dublin Branch) in the Shelbourne Hotel'.

> ‘Many people have been horrified to hear that Patrick Udenzi, a student at [University College Dublin], who was wantonly attacked in Dublin recently, has lost an eye as a result of the injuries he received. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. In the past six months, there have been about fifteen such attacks on coloured people, and all of the African students in Trinity [College Dublin] to whom I spoke have learnt to laugh off unpleasant incidents, too trivial to interest the police.’[466]

The contextual realities, therefore, reveal that given what Judge Fadipe could have perceived as an indictment of his and his son’s social status, he was undoubtedly motivated to assert the presence of an alleged problem of Afrophobia in Dublin, while his and his son’s status were essential factors that accentuated the contours of the affair.

Lastly, the Fadipe affair cannot be contextualised without reference to the Niemba ambush that created a strain on African-Irish relations in the early 60s. In November 1960, Baluba militiamen ambushed Irish UN peacekeepers in Congo, killing nine of the eleven-man section of the Irish Army’s 33rd Battalion. Narratives of African brutality flooded the Irish press, ‘morbidly fantastical enough to capture the public imagination’ while ‘the term ‘Baluba’ entered the wider Irish lexicon, used to describe someone who is untrustworthy and barbaric.’[467]

At the time of the Fadipe affair, the Niemba ambush had already proven itself a sore spot in African-Irish history. It was embedded in the conceptualisation of Black indebtedness or even ingratitude to Irish empathy. Its implications were grim: that the Irish, wedded to the ideas of altruism, sought to aid Congo, and that the unruly African had repaid this with bloodshed. In reality, the Baluba tribespeople had attacked the Irish due to mistaken identity, thinking they were Katanga-allied European mercenaries. Yet it is an episode whose bleak retelling in Irish society immortalised the peacekeepers in Irish heroism and, by correlation, the African tribespeople in villainy.[468] In conclusion, the salience of the

[466] *Trinity News*, ‘Black and White’.

[467] Rogan, ‘Niemba – The Birth of an Army’.

[468] McCaughren, *The Peacemakers of Niemba*.

Niemba ambush within Irish race relations is reflected in the recollections of a Trinity College Dublin student in those years:

> 'One very distinguished Nigerian student, a chief no less, always immaculately dressed in a three-piece Saville Row suit, with an Oxford drawl reminiscent of the 'Nags,' would not have enjoyed being chased through the streets of Dublin by an angry mob protesting at the massacre of an Irish UN patrol by Baluba tribesmen during the UN intervention in the Congo. I met him dishevelled and exhausted just inside Front Gate, having been rescued in the nick of time by the gardaí. "They called me a bloody Baluba! I tried to explain that I was not a bloody Baluba but a ******* Ibo. But they didn't want to know. And they call us savages!"'[469]

5.10 Conclusion

This paper contextualises a letter Judge Louis Fadipe published in the Irish Independent newspaper in 1964 concerning racism in Dublin. The analysis is supported by original archival data. By drawing on postcolonial scholarship, readers are able to look beyond the obvious and be critical of the situational opportunities and constraints to which an understanding of interracial relations is beholden. The paper situates the assault within a broader historical context, demonstrating that racial issues concerning African students were not isolated events but rather part of a larger historical trajectory that challenges the perception of Ireland as racially indifferent.

The postwar period was characterised by the rise of West Africans seeking higher education in Europe, and Nigerians were among the largest groups of colonial students who studied in Ireland. This educational migration is an inheritance from a time when colonial education policies had failed to make advances in the establishment and maintenance of colleges and universities for people in the colonies. This paper highlights the complex relationship between local perceptions and international incidents by revealing apprehensions about the welfare of these students in 1964 Ireland. It acknowledges a resultant collective anxiety

[469] Peter Hinchcliffe, 'In the Steps of the Ginger Man', in *Trinity Tales: Trinity College Dublin in the Sixties*, ed. Sebastian Balfour et al. (The Lilliput Press, 2011).

among the Irish regarding a potential harm to their national image, particularly in West African nations like Nigeria, where the Irish have deep historical connections.

Following the Fadipe affair, the number of Commonwealth students studying in Ireland experienced a dip, although there is little available primary data to establish a sufficient correlation.[470] Still, the research confronts the prevailing notion that Ireland's own history as a victim of colonisation and its reputation for religious missions protect it from charges of racism. The assault emphasises a pervasive and persistent tension surrounding the acknowledgement of racial dynamics within 20th-century Irish society. The letter underscores the gravity of a situation as seen through the eyes of an aggrieved parent and respected legal authority, while the ensuing affair put into perspective a broader narrative, highlighting how racial issues related to colonial students were not isolated incidents but rather reflective of a longer historical pattern.

5.11 Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

[470] British Council Office in Dublin, *Overseas Students*.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of findings

In the first half of the 20th century, native families and colonial administrators began to prioritise higher education. However, due to the inadequacies of the local colonial education systems, some African, Caribbean and Asian students were sent to imperial capitals to pursue college education and were commonly referred to as *colonial students*. Many arrived on grants provided by colonial administrations, missionaries and civil society associations, while others, often from wealthy royal or merchant families, were self-funded. There is extensive literature on colonial students in Britain, the so-called *mother country*. However, the history of colonial students in Ireland has received much less attention.

Among colonial students in Europe, West Africans (and especially Nigerians) are recognised as among the most politically active. The dissertation's title *Britain's Subjects, Ireland's Guests* is meant to convey how the West African presence in Ireland carried the weight of Empire. It underscores the idea that, regardless of Ireland's self-perception of its colonial past, Irish education served as a key bridge linking Africans to the broader structures of the British Empire.

The dissertation brings together four research papers examining the West African presence in Ireland and at Ireland's oldest university, Trinity College Dublin. It asks: How did West African colonial students navigate ambition, race, identity and belonging within Irish society between 1930 and 1970?

Paper 1 explores how medical school, family, postwar/colonial, gender, and missionary archives can be used to navigate archival silences when reconstructing the histories of colonial students. Medicine was a popular subject for colonial students, so this work centres on Nigerian medical students trained at Trinity College Dublin (1940-1970). We learn from the paper that while colonial students can be categorised as a historically significant demographic, their experiences are anything but uniform. Cohorts of Nigerian medical students were socially, regionally, and religiously heterogeneous. Factors influencing their choice of Trinity College Dublin's medical program are steeped in imperial bureaucracy, missionary imperatives, kinship networks, and professional ambitions.

The archives for studying colonial students, however, are often highly fragmented, especially in relation to gender. The majority of the colonial students on the college's roster from 1940 to 1970 were male. Gendered barriers faced by the outnumbered females are less visible in the archives. Non-institutional sources, which can help fill in the gaps, are also less systematically preserved. Remaining conscious of the opportunities and constraints that multiple data types and sources present is important for researchers to mitigate archival biases in their efforts to recover hidden histories of colonial students.

Paper 2 examines how West African student members of the Association for Students of African Descent engaged with decolonisation and leadership. ASAD, previously overlooked in scholarship, was a platform for political engagement and collective identity formation away from home colonies. It provided socialisation opportunities and was an intellectual preoccupation for many of the students. ASAD's first known political petition demonstrates a high level of political consciousness. Furthermore, West African leadership within the organisation was exercised in close proximity to other cohorts of colonial students, such as Caribbean students, shaping the organisation's direction, focus, political interests and strategies. Inasmuch as ASAD functioned as a space of empowerment, its existence also reflected the social challenges faced by its members. The paper suggests that it operated simultaneously as both a response to, and a product of, social exclusion.

Paper 3 also examines how West African students leveraged elite debating platforms to challenge imperial ideologies. It focuses on their membership in the University Philosophical Society, a longstanding paper-reading society at Trinity College Dublin. Using Egbert Udo Udoma's 1942 presidential inauguration speech as a starting point, the study demonstrates that the Phil was a centre for decolonisation discourse, as evidenced in its speeches, debates, and broader social activities.

Membership in the Phil provided colonial students with various forms of capital, including access to elite social networks, oratorical influence, and institutional prestige. Students mobilised these resources both within Ireland and in their post-university careers. However, patriarchal structures have historically persisted within the Phil, constraining women's participation in twentieth-century political discourse.

Shifting into the postcolonial era, Paper 4 investigates the Fadipe Affair, a public assault case in 1964 Dublin that is absent from existing literature. The assault was carried out on a Nigerian medical student by two Irish youths. It foregrounds a letter published by the

victim's father, himself a former colonial student, in which he alleged the existence of a racial problem in Dublin. The analysis reveals patterns of minimisation, deflection, and a general reluctance within Irish society to acknowledge racial tensions as a legitimate cause for concern. This national discomfort with confronting race is, however, shown to be unjustified. The paper demonstrates that the Fadipe Affair did not occur in isolation but was preceded by systemic instances of exclusion and hostility against students of colour.

Together, these four papers push the boundaries of existing scholarship on colonial students by moving beyond the traditional focus on British metropolitan centres to show how Ireland, a nation with a complicated colonial past, is an underrated context for the study of colonial students.

6.2 Assessment of findings & contributions

6.2.1 Race & ambition

There was an intentionality underlying the historical encounters between West African colonial students and the European higher education landscape. In Ireland, commonly perceived as politically and racially marginal to the central structures of Empire, education became a means of raising future leaders to challenge Empire. Student activism is therefore a central theme in the dissertation, situating colonial students' intellectual and political contributions in Ireland within a wider genealogy of anti-colonial thought and social movements across Europe.

The notion of Irish racial neutrality, often invoked to explain the neglect of colonial student histories, does not hold up to critical scrutiny. Archival evidence demonstrates that Ireland and Irish schools functioned as sites where colonial relationships were simultaneously reproduced and contested. Racial tensions manifested in multiple spheres, across housing, social relationships, and everyday interactions. The socio-spatial segregation experienced by many colonial students reflected broader social attitudes that constructed Blackness as a threat within predominantly White European contexts. While Irish society itself grappled with racial difference in other historic contexts, the dissertation's analysis shows that much remains unknown about Ireland's historic relationship with the Black race.

Throughout the dissertation, the agency of African students is put forward as a defining characteristic of their time in Ireland, recognising how theory and praxis of activism varied across generations, institutions and national affiliations. Colonial student activism took diverse forms, including cultural events, public debates and political lobbying. Their strategic use of educational opportunities, participation in social movements, and contributions to public discourses on postcolonial futures all demonstrate their refusal to accept the colonial and racial status quo and a determined readiness to reclaim intellectual spaces.

The research also traces the continuity of West African students into the postcolonial period. It found that colonial students made purposeful efforts at political mobilisation to influence the decolonisation processes taking place in their home countries, while the postcolonial period also extended colonial mentalities that continued to shape race, ambition, and social hierarchies.

In the postcolonial period, and especially as the world began shifting from elite to mass higher education, European universities retained their symbolic and material status as centres for the formation of postcolonial leaders. Many elite postcolonial families continued to send their children to the same European institutions attended by previous generations. This pattern was reinforced by an ingrained practice of prioritising foreign credentials, licenses, and certifications, often regarded as superior to local alternatives.

The dissertation shows how Blackness was racialised through social, political and institutional frameworks inherited from earlier periods into the postcolony. The African response to these structures reflects a kind of postcolonial insecurity, challenging the assumption that decolonisation ushered in new, equitable and more palatable social realities for the Black race. Instead, the dissertation reveals the postcolony as a fragile construct where suspicions, imperial logics and hierarchies continued to shape everyday life. So, while colonial students worked diligently to redefine the boundaries of Blackness through their institutional advocacy and personal and professional accomplishments, they soon realised that Blackness still remained a marker of difference that affected their access to resources and shaped social interactions in the postcolonial world.

6.2.2 Identity & belonging

The colonial student era was marked by the movement of people, ideas, and identities across national and continental borders. This is how West African colonial students in Ireland became embedded in international anti-imperial networks that challenged enduring European hegemonic structures over colonised societies. The dissertation engages with key intellectual movements around which colonial students constructed their identities and collective consciousness, like Pan-Africanism and Ethiopianism. It also examines their sense of belonging within the forums that sustained their activism in Ireland, such as the Association for Students of African Descent and the University Philosophical Society. These groups served as platforms for reassessing the place of African societies in the global political economy.

The experiences of West African students in Ireland illustrate how transnational ideas shaped activism, intellectual debates, and cultural exchange, enabling colonial students to exert their identities in both West African and Irish contexts. At a time when decolonial resistance was too vast and complex to be approached through isolated national efforts, transnational intellectualism facilitated the reconfiguration of identities across borders. Nigerians found themselves in conversation with other West Africans, Caribbean activists, and others who shared similar experiences of colonial oppression. The hybrid identities that emerged challenge national-level analyses on colonial students and emphasise cross-border perspectives on how decolonial campaigns were socially engineered.

A particularly persistent silence concerns gender identity, a gap that has long challenged scholars of colonial education. Although colonial student communities were predominantly male, cultural and institutional constraints relating to gender, chastity, and morality severely restricted women's participation and visibility. Even when women played supporting roles, their impact is muted in the archives. These omissions reflect colonial social priorities in which only select individuals and roles were deemed worthy of preservation.

The dissertation challenges portrayals of colonial students outside of imperial metropoles as politically disengaged, showing instead that they were acutely aware of the ways in which their collective identities and activism could shape history. African students built strong support networks to foster belongingness, and to cope in a cultural landscape in which race operated as a structural determinant, shaping social relationships, public interactions and collective identities.

6.2.3 Archival politics

Archival dynamics constitute a critical theme in this dissertation. Colonial institutions have made significant efforts to identify, collect, transport, and preserve information in order to position themselves as custodians and gatekeepers of knowledge. Still, typical colonial-era archives often sideline alternative histories and instead reflect the priorities of dominant powers.

The processes from which data were obtained for this research were fraught with epistemic politics, especially in how archives are collected, preserved and interpreted (or more often, left uninterpreted). The archival material related to Trinity College Dublin's African colonial students had not been systematically collated, analysed, or incorporated into official institutional histories. Data only existed in fragmented forms, revealing silences and gaps that speak to official university, municipal and national priorities. Student voices are generally markedly underrepresented. When they exist, they tend to prioritise male students, students from elite backgrounds or those who achieved notable public successes, while offering restricted insight into the everyday experiences of the broader student population. Recovering colonial student histories therefore required political intervention and a critical approach to the archive, recognising it as both a site of colonisation and decolonisation.

6.3 Limitations & future directions

The study of African colonial students could be extended to other Irish cities and institutions throughout the 20th century, or even earlier, into the 19th century, when some West Africans were already receiving training in British institutions like the African Institute in Colwyn Bay. Moreover, incorporating the experiences of Asian and Caribbean colonial students would allow for comparative analyses, moving beyond the popular fixation on West Africans, who have often been highlighted primarily for their political engagement. Comparative studies can show how different cohorts of colonial students interacted with one another, as well as the different ways they engaged with their European hosts.

Integrating oral histories will further capture the personal narratives of African students as a way to address archival gaps and silences. Emotive experiences are best shown through memory archives of surviving colonial students and their families. For instance, firsthand testimonies can reveal more about racism and resistance in ways that traditional archives often fail to convey. This approach can also centre agency and humanise the colonial student experience.

Gender remains such an underrated aspect of colonial student research. Future research would benefit from a gendered analysis that centres the experiences of female colonial students. It should address pertinent questions like how they navigated educational spaces and racialised boundaries differently from their male counterparts, and how race, gender, and class intersected with issues such as childcare, access to scholarships and welfare, curriculum representation, and career opportunities.

Future research could extend the temporal scope to examine the legacies of colonial student families, exploring how colonial education shaped successive generations and how forms of capital and privilege were transmitted over time. It should consider how education and activism intersect with social mobility and identity formation, as well as how privilege was inherited within postcolonial racial hierarchies. Shifting the focus from individual students to wider familial and generational networks would extend our understanding of how identity and belongingness evolve.

The Black Studies discipline in Ireland is still a growing tradition. This dissertation highlights the potential to integrate colonial student histories into its developing curriculum. Doing so would enable students in Irish colleges to engage critically with race and colonial legacies as transnational issues. Through interdisciplinary research, archival recovery projects, and public commemoration initiatives about colonial students (all key components of the Black Studies tradition), stakeholders can support curricular adaptation and address historical omissions.

This dissertation is grounded in the study of subalternised Black African histories, an approach central to Black and African Studies. However, it also makes a contribution to Irish Studies by assigning African colonial students vital roles in Ireland's own racial and postcolonial histories. It goes to show that the erasure of colonial students from Irish social and institutional histories renders those histories incomplete.

Future research can add to the growing field of Critical Archival Studies by moving beyond traditional forms of knowledge production about colonial students and instead centring archival theory and methodology as subjects of inquiry in their own right. Rather than treating the archive solely as a source for historical reconstruction, this approach positions it as a site of critical interrogation, shifting attention from history itself to the processes through which it is produced. In this framing, archives are understood as spaces of colonial and anti-colonial power shaped by the ways materials are acquired, classified, stored, and accessed. This would contribute significantly to scholarship on archival theory and practice, while also expanding the methodological tools available for the study of race and postcoloniality in Ireland.

In the same vein, university archival projects should move beyond recovery alone, centring theory and reflexive methodological analysis as well. Engaging not only with historical events but also with the instruments through which history is constructed offers a means of overcoming the superficiality of contemporary higher education decolonisation initiatives. This approach has the potential to make significant contributions to the study of race relations, coloniality, and postcoloniality in understudied higher education contexts.

Overall, this thesis argues that West African colonial students navigated ambition, race, identity, and belonging through a process of strategic adaptation. They made use of colonial education to pursue social and political goals while negotiating hybridised identities amid persistent racial marginalisation. Through participation in civil society clubs and associations, the research shows how students engaged with intellectual traditions surrounding race and liberation. This engagement connected them to transatlantic struggles for Black liberation, including the civil rights movement in the United States. At the same time, their own struggles for racial justice unfolded within the context of Ireland's anti-imperial legacies. This diasporic framing underscores the need for an expanded geographical approach for the study of colonial students, which this research addresses by recognising Ireland as a site of intellectual activism, political engagement, and transnational solidarity.

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