Managing higher education for national development in the twenty-first century: a case study of the university system in Nigeria

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The thesis examines the interconnectedness of higher education and national development. The author subsumes major aspects of processes of state- and nation-building under the concept of national development and focuses on the roles that higher education institutions can have in these processes with regard to developing countries. His starting point is the Humboldtian vision that higher education institutions contribute to the formation of legitimate state institutions and the molding of national identities. He assumes that the Humboldtian vision still basically applies to post-colonial processes of state- and nation-building in developing countries, even though the political context of these processes in developing countries differs in structural terms from those dominating in Humboldt’s era. In the main, Wilhelm von Humboldt had assigned to universities the role of the education of already existing nations for statehood in states that were to be established in the future. By contrast, in post-colonial developing countries, most notably in Sub-Saharan Africa, many state institutions have existed that have hardly been able to draw on established unitary national identities. The author has chosen Nigeria as his case, because it is the most populous African state, featuring manifold problems of approximately 200 ethnicity-based collective identities, has a federal constitution that recognizes “ethnic” diversity and boasts of the most highly diversified university system in Africa outside the Republic of South Africa.

The Introduction contextualizes the management of higher education within the discourse of the emergence of knowledge-based society in Nigeria. The author explicates his hypothesis that the potential of higher education institutions to boost the formation of knowledge-based society has been impeded in the case of Nigeria through the prevalence of clientelistic practices that have penetrated into institutions of higher education. The thesis scrutinizes the university system in an effort to map out the consequences of clientelism for university management.

Following the Introduction, Chapter 1 surveys key policy texts relevant to higher education in Nigeria, such as NEEDS, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy of 2004. The chapter also provides core...
definitions, specifically that of the university system, which the author categorizes as the legal and political framework for all universities that are controlled by agencies dependent on the Federal Government of Nigeria. Moreover, it outlines the methodology. The thesis is based on empirical fieldwork that the author conducted using questionnaires that were distributed in three select Nigerian universities as well as through interviews with high-ranking university administrators. It also uses archival material to trace the evolution of the university system both during the colonial and the post-colonial periods.

Chapter 2 explicates the theoretical framework with its main focus on political clientelism. The author applies the concept of "linked clientelism" proposed by Eisenstadt and Roniger. The concept is conducive to the analysis of patron-client relationships that operate between a center and peripheries, allowing the embedding of patrons located in the center to become connected with networks of local patrons and their clients in the peripheries and supporting efforts of local patrons and clients to obtain access to resources in the center. As the Nigerian university system mirrors the federal structure of the Nigerian state — ethnicity-based collective identities together with political and economic center-periphery connections overlap with local patron-client relationships within universities, shaping appointments to teaching and administrative positions as well as admission procedures. The patron-client relationships connecting peripheries with the center are vital to the understanding of university funding, as most of the funds for public universities originate from the budget of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The chapter traces the emergence of patron-client relationships to the period of British colonial rule over Nigeria.

Chapter 3 contains the literature review. It surveys the research literature on the nexus between higher education and development in general as well as on the specific roles of universities in national development. It demonstrates the originality of the thesis as an investigation into the structural limitations of the impact that Nigerian universities have actually had on national development in Nigeria.

Chapter 4 seeks to determine the legacy of the colonial past, as some higher education institutions, such as the University of Ibadan and Yaba College, were established under British colonial rule. British colonial rule has also left its imprint on the institutional structure of universities, specifically the structure of university governance through Vice-Chancellours. Given the insufficient size of a locally trained intellectual elite at the time when Nigeria obtained independence, the organizers of Nigerian education on the eve of independence used the networks that they had established among themselves, while they were being trained overseas, thereby laying the foundation for the penetration of clientelism into the Nigerian university system. The main point that this chapter elucidates is that clientelism in Nigerian universities resulted indirectly from British colonial rule.

Chapter 5 moves the focus to current aspects of the Nigerian university system. It describes the system in its institutional setup and analyzes major problems. It points to defects of appointment practice, shaped by clientelism rather than being merit-based, with the implication that universities produce graduates some of whom have difficulties of being absorbed in the labor market. Hence, the output of the Nigerian university system is not optimal in terms of serving the goal of promoting national development.

Chapter 6 shifts to the scrutiny of aspects of university governance, which the author sees as crucial in the promotion of clientelism within the university system. He emphasizes the disadvantageous consequences of strike actions that have plagued the Nigerian university system for about two decades and are categorized as outcomes of inadequate funding, in turn a result of the operation of clienteles.

Chapter 7 examines student expectations and presents a faculty opinion profile. It reveals the gross inadequacy of the technical infrastructure as well as shortcomings of the organization of curricula, which — in combination with the negative impacts of faculty strikes — contribute to the lack of student satisfaction. In response to the poor quality of
teaching, students turn towards cult organizations, some of which use violent practices, terrorizing students and faculty. Rampant clientelism results in the lack of Academic Freedom, thereby reducing the quality of teaching and research.

The conclusion sums up the findings. The major finding of the thesis is that the Nigerian university system is not capable of fulfilling the nation-building expectations, operationalized as efforts to establish a knowledge-based society within the state, even though major actors within Nigeria have addressed to the university system nation-building tasks since the state obtained independence in 1960. The thesis provides the causes for the failure of the Nigerian university system to fulfill the stated nation-building tasks and identifies the prevalence of “linked clientelism” as the root cause.

The thesis concludes with an extensive bibliography and an appendix with statistical data.

審査の結果の要旨

The thesis is a well-researched original survey of problems that the Nigerian university system has been facing. The author demonstrates that, despite persistent increases in government funding, the system has remained underfunded, mainly as a consequence of clientelistic practices. The author establishes clientelism as the root cause of the lack of contributions that Nigerian universities have been able to make towards national development, as the author defines it. The thesis is highly original in assembling and analyzing first-hand data about governance-related issues in the Nigerian university system. The author succeeds in demonstrating the relevance of higher education institutions for the political dimension of development with an emphasis on Nigeria. However, the results of the research laid down in this thesis carry weight not merely for the case of Nigeria but for Sub-Saharan African states at large.

平成 23 年 11 月 08 日、人文社会科学研究科学位論文審査委員会において、審査委員全員出席のもと、本論文について著者に説明を求めた後、関連事項について質疑応答を行った。なお、学力の確認は、著者が「人文社会科学研究科論文審査等実施細則」第 10 条（1）に該当することから免除し、審議の結果、審査委員全員一致で合格と判定された。

よって著者は、博士（国際政治経済学）の学位を受けるに十分な資格を有するものと認める。