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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE COLONIAL ROOTS OF THE NIGERIAN CRISIS: A STUDY OF BRITISH POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

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BY

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1971

THE COLONIAL ROOTS OF THE NIGERIAN CRISIS:

A STUDY OF BRITISH POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATION

IN NIGERIA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Scope of the Research

This study is an attempt to search for correlations between British colonial policies and administrative practices in Nigeria and the political and social conflicts that brought about the fall of the First Republic of Nigeria. The circumstances that prevailed at the time of Independence were such that taking into consideration the prerequisites for a functioning democracy, no one could doubt that Nigeria would have to surmount several obstacles on her road to establishing a workable federal system. This study is essentially an attempt to analyze British colonial policies and their effects on Nigeria's development, and to supply the rationale for her developmental problems by applying some relevant contemporary political and social theories.

In the past, research studies conducted on Nigeria have tended to be historical and/or descriptive rather than analytical, emphasizing the substance of Nigerian problems but usually offering little of a constructive nature in the formulation of general principles that have broad application to political theory. This study takes note of this situation and puts some weight on finding justifiable relationships between

available material facts and data on Nigeria and contemporary and sociological theories.

Emphasizing the importance of theory in the study of social phenomena, Eugene J. Meehan says that "Facts alone have no meaning--a point too often overlooked by those enamored with the accumulation of facts or absorbed in the 'pack-rat' conception of research. A fact must be part of some relational structure before it has any meaning. . . ."[1]

Earlier, David Easton had asserted that "a major source of the shortcomings in political science lies in the failure to clarify the true relationship between facts and political theory and the vital role of theory in such relationship."[2] It should be emphasized that: "in and of themselves, facts do not enable us to explain or understand an event. Facts must be ordered in some way that we can see their connections."[3]

In Nigeria in the year of Independence, 1960, the following conditions existed:

1. A lopsided four-unit federal structure (three "Regions" and the federal capital) with one unit larger in size and population than all the rest put together.

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[1]Eugene J. Meehan, The Theory and Method of Political Analysis (Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1965), p. 44.

[2]David Easton, A Framework for Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955), p. 4.

[3]Ibid., p. 4.

2. A close correlation between political party affiliation or the support given to different political parties and the basic social groupings in the federation.

3. Each of the major political parties was the dominant party and the Government of a Region which it used as its base unit.

4. In each of the three Regions, there was a built-in majority of a dominant ethnic group whose population exceeds those of all other ethnic groups in the Region put together.

5. A large and overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of each region was indigenous to the region and characterized by a near-homogeneity in religion, ethnicity, language, and culture--the rates of integration and cultural diffusion between the different tribes, languages, and cultures were minimal.

6. The federal instrument (the Independence Constitution of 1960) establishing the federation provided for a Parliamentary system of government with its characteristic penchant for cabinet domination of both legislative and executive functions of the government.

7. The Federal Constitution's Civil Rights provisions were so circumscribed and hedged that the Courts were in effect hampered in their primary role as protector of political rights and liberties against the Federal and Regional legislatures.

Following Seymour Lipset's theory of political cleavage in contemporary society, this study advances a general thesis that a federal system with the above conditions in existence

cannot continue for long on a democratic basis, for it reflects a state of conflict so intense and clear-cut as to rule out compromise.[4]

An analytical study of colonial policies and their differing impacts on the life and political behavior of the colonial people is a vital field of study because no proper analysis of post-independence or contemporary problems of these peoples can ignore their colonial origins.

The necessity for re-examining the nature and content of British colonial policies comes from the general belief that since British colonial Administration created the Nigerian polity and guided the development of the pre-Independence political infra-structure, the policies which acted as the fundamental basis of political practices should contain some of the seeds that bore fruit to the success or failure of the system.

The causes of the collapse of the First Nigerian Republic are complex. Like any other federal system made up of a multiplicity of ethnic groups, diverse languages, and cultures, differences in religion and political culture, and a short period of socio-political cooperation under colonial tutelage, Nigeria had to go through an uneasy transitional stage before its erstwhile colonial structure could be transformed into a smoothly functioning independent system.

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[4]Seymour Lipset, Political Man: The Social Basis of Politics (New York: Doubleday, 1963), p. 31.

Any one of the diversities or a combination of them could have created such a heavy stress[5] that the system could have found it unbearable to withstand. The British did not create the diversities; but they exacerbated them by their policies and administrative practices. Nevertheless, the British are credited with creating the conditions that kept these unintegrated groups of people together until hostilities broke up this facade of unity six years after Independence. It is not surprising that the country suffered a setback; it would have been more surprising if it did not, given to the enormity of its problems.

Each of these diversities and other attenuating circumstances that led to crises could form a separate study and some have been researched. The emphasis on this study is to find out the part that policies and methods of colonial administration alone played in the final demise of the structure.

The policies are described and analyzed and then a rationalization is made on how they could have been instrumental to certain political actions.

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[5]For detailed information on the nature of 'stress' on a political system, see David Easton, Ibid., pp. 77-101. Easton describes 'stress' as "those conditions that challenge the capacity of a system to persist." (p. 90) Stress "occurs when disturbances, internal or external in origin, threaten to displace the essential variables of a political system beyond their normal range and toward some critical limit...(and)...prevents...it from operating in its characteristic way." (p. 94) The essential variables referred to above are behaviors related to the system's capacity to "allocate values for the society and assure their acceptance." (p. 96)

This study makes use of some historical landmarks in the Nigerian history for obvious reasons. J. R. Seeley epitomizes the close relationship between history and Political Science when he asserted that

> History without Political Science has no fruits;
> Political Science without History has no roots.[6]

One cannot properly explain policies and practices that took many years to evolve without necessarily giving a brief history of their evolution; neither can a future prediction be made without delving into the past. It is a truism, but nevertheless important to point out that the problems which beset post-colonial Nigeria dated back to January 1, 1914--the day of amalgamation of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, or to an earlier date.

A historic statement made by Sir Ahmado Bello, the late Sarduana of Sokoto and Premier of Northern Nigeria, while attending the House of Representatives Session during the 1953 constitutional crisis[7] supports the thesis that Nigeria's

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[6]J. R. Seeley, Introduction to Political Science (London: Macmillan Co., Ltd., 1919), p. 4.

[7]MacPherson Constitution broke down at the Federal level over Chief Anthony Enahoro, an Action Group party member's motion in the House of Representatives that "this House accepts as a political objective the attainment of self-government for Nigeria in 1956." Nigerian House of Representatives Debate, 2nd sess., March 19-April 1, 1952, pp. 985-993.

problems date to the amalgamation. He asserted that "The mistake of 1914 has come to light."[8]

An objective of the problems brought about by British colonial policies and administration must take into consideration the fact that a wide variety of factors were at work, none of which alone could account for the eventual crisis. It is the relationship among these various factors and their close correlation with some aspects of policies and administrative practices that this research is primarily oriented. However, a researcher concerned with describing and explaining causes of any social phenomenon runs into problems of subjectivity. Social scientists find nothing more fundamental and yet more difficult to explain than how one phenomenon or event or series of events have caused another.

The great political thinker, David Hume, doubts very strongly the belief that any one event or events can be validly ascertained to be a direct cause of another. He says that when people say that "A causes B," they mean only that A and B are constantly conjoined in fact, not that there is some necessary connection between them. "We have no other notion of cause and effect, but that of certain objects which have been always

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[8]Sir Ahmadu Bello (Oxford: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1962), p. 133. Bello also alleged that "Lord Lugard and his Amalgamation were far from popular among us at that time (and)--looked tempting," op. cit., p. 135. However, the North resisted the temptation to secede because their only access to the sea was the Southern ports which also collected the bulk of Nigerian revenue at that time.

conjoined together . . . we cannot penetrate into the reason of the conjunction."[9] Hume believed that through association, if "A" and "B" have been constantly conjoined in past experience, the impression of "A" produces that lively idea of "B" which constitutes belief in "B." This explains why one might believe "A" and "B" to be connected; the percept of "A" is connected with the idea of "B," and so one comes to think that there is a necessary connection between the two, though this opinion is groundless. What appears to the mind according to Hume as a necessary connection among objects of sociological phenomena is only a connection among the ideas of those objects or phenomena--the mind being determined by custom.

David Hume's logic should be taken with a grain of salt. Consistent with this line of reasoning, nothing causes another. Contemporary social scientists find this assertion unacceptable.[10]

If Hume expected that his challenge of the universally-accepted notion of social causation would influence his readers to do some rethinking and maybe alter their stand on the issue, then he is guilty of self-contradiction. All significant social or political actions, decisions, or policies have their effect on the life of the people, directly or indirectly.

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[9]Lewis Amherst Selby-Bigge, Hume's Treatise of Human Nature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), I, 96.
For a good analysis of Hume on causation, see David F. Pears, David Hume: A Symposium (New York: St. Martins Press, 1963), ch. 1, "Hume on Causation," pp. 55-56.

[10]R. M. MacIver, Social Causation (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

Commenting on Hume's rejection of causality, Professor MacIver points out that "we cannot conceive change except as caused change."[11] Social changes cannot occur in a vacuum. They are caused. What is difficult in social research is not to link an "effect" with a cause, although an "effect" may be a result of many causes. What is most difficult is to predict in the social sciences that any one phenomenon, policies, or decisions, or a combination of them has or will have a certain definite effect or result. Professor MacIver explains that "the methodological investigation of the causes of social phenomena is beset by peculiar difficulties. Any social change we seek to explain is meshed in a tangled web of its inclusive history. It is dependent on conditions arising within every order of reality--physical, biological, psychological, and social."[12]

Hume's thesis, therefore, is correct up to the point that every socio-political event is multi-causational. The decision of a government to act in a certain way or failure to act can produce results, in which case an effect can be directly traced to a cause direct, indirect, or contributory. This thesis is predicated on the belief that the cause of Nigerian crisis is multi-dimensional, but the effect of colonial policies and administrative practices are held as the paramount cause, and therefore an essential subject for research.

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[11]MacIver, Social Causation, p. 5.

[12]Ibid., p. 72.

CHAPTER II

COLONIAL OBJECTIVES

In order to comprehend more fully the British colonial policies, one needs to inquire into their fundamental basis--the colonial objectives. This is important because it is the colonial objectives that give rise to policies which are the specific courses of action designed to achieve the objectives. Objectives are the ends, while policies are the means to achieve the ends. It is a lot easier to determine objectives than means because different means can achieve the same end. Also, objectives tend to be universal and more general.

In spite of the fact that a nation's foreign objectives as expressed in her foreign policies should be complementary to be consistent, those of the British in Nigeria are apparently contradictory. The difficulty of accurately assessing British colonial objectives in general or their true motive in a particular country like Nigeria, is underscored by the almost proverbial saying that the British stumbled into the overseas colonies in a fit of absent-mindedness. Based on deductions from official statements, official exchanges and communications, contracts and trade agreements, Parliamentary debates and decrees, the behavior of the British official class, and the resistance and reactions of Nigerians, the British objectives

in Nigeria can be classified as commercial, philanthropic, and imperialistic.

The nature of the piecemeal and unsystematic acquisition of Nigeria as a colonial territory and the fact that true motives are hard to pin down, especially when the actions of differing personalities and governments are concerned, make it necessary that only those objectives that can be or have been documented need be emphasized. It will be a matter of value judgement to determine which one of these motives was uppermost in the minds of the British.

Whatever cue one uses in making this decision, one will most likely come up with the conclusion that there was a mixed objective: a desire on the part of the British to help the natives and thereby profit from their actions. This was what Lord Lugard referred to as the "Dual Mandate."

There were no coherently preconceived plans for organizing and administering the native people. Lady Lugard (the lady who coined the name "Nigeria") comments that "as in India so as in Nigeria we meant to trade but conquest was forced on us. Having conquered, we are now obliged to administer and the hope that lies before us is to develop from the small beginnings which have been made in Nigeria such another or great or prosperous dominion as our ancestors have created for us in India."[1]

The Role of Philanthropy

An official decision to end slavery and slave trading by any one nation or colonial power is no doubt humanitarian and

[1] Lady Lugard (Flora Shaw), "Nigeria," Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, LII (1904), p. 370.

philanthropic. On the part of the British, the Slavery Abolition Bill of 1807 showed a genuinely altruistic objective to eliminate "man's inhumanity to man." However, British businessmen had played such a major role in creating the conditions which the bill aimed at eliminating that British humanitarianism became clouded by their complicity in the evil that they finally eliminated. The meaning of their action is robbed because of its compensatory nature.

By the Asiento Agreement embodied in the Treaty of Utrecht, 1712, Great Britain secured the right to supply slaves to the Spanish colonies in America. This treaty, which gave the British a thirty-year-old monopoly in slave trading, enhanced British economy, prosperity, and prestige over the west coast of Africa. British slave dealers supplied several times more than the 4,800 slaves a year which the agreement provided. "Around 1798, slaves exported annually by Britain from the West Coast were 38,000; by the French 20,000; by the Dutch 4,000; and by the Portuguese 10,000, totalling 72,000." [2] It is stating the case simply to say that British traders were among the greatest profiteers of the slave trade which the British government finally paid in man power and resources to abolish.[3]

The story of British intervention and acquisition of the diverse tribes that later came to be Nigeria started with the

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[2] B. Edwards, History of British West Indies (5th ed.; London: 1819), p. 65.

[3] British Information Service, African Challenge: The Story of the British in Tropical Africa (New York: 1945). See Chapter 2, "The Abolition of Slavery".

enforcement of the abolition of slavery and slave trade bills of 1807 and 1833.[4] The short-term objective involved no coherent plans for a long-term political domination. Judged in this perspective only, there was no possible selfish motive in colonial expansion in Africa.

The British Navy patrolled the high seas to enforce the new act of Parliament by scaring all British slave ships out of the seas. Any British subject found in violation of the law was tried for every slave so purchased, sold, or transported, and any British ship which took part in the trade was forfeited.[5] It is significant that the British renounced the slave trade on moral grounds despite its profits to the country.

The British humanitarians who led the fight to pass the bill abolishing slave trade were bitterly opposed by vested interests: Liverpool merchants whose great wealth and prosperity depended on slave trade, and the West Indian colonies who regarded slave labor as an indispensable foundation of their colony.[6]

The struggle against the abolition of slavery and the slave trade was waged strongly on both sides. The opponents

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[4] The Slave Trade Abolition Bill (1807) abolished, prohibited, and declared to be unlawful all manner of dealing and trading in slaves; while the Slavery Abolition Bill (1833) abolished slavery in the British Empire.

[5] British Information Service, African Challenge, p. 22.

[6] "Petition from the West Indian Planters against the Slave-trade Abolition Bill," Parliamentary Debates, 1807, Vol. 9, pp. 85-101.

of the bill fiercely resisted what they thought was their natural right to do what they liked with their property and contended that all "men have a natural right to enjoy property legally acquired," and that "slavery has always existed as a condition of mankind in Africa." [7] They never yielded to any pressure from the humanitarians to improve the lot of their slaves. There is a contention that if the condition of the slaves was not so inhuman as to bother the conscience of all civilized people, slavery, like all other unjust social institutions would have died a slow and natural death. Even by 1823, the radical anti-slavery movements in Britain had taken a compromised position with the government "to effect the gradual emancipation of slaves."[8]

Under the leadership of William Wilberforce and T. Fowell Buxton in the House of Commons, and of William Clarkson, who campaigned all over Britain to collect evidence about the horrible condition on board the slave ships, public pressure was brought to bear upon members of Parliament and the Abolition of Slavery Bill was passed on August 29, 1833. An allocation of the sum of 20 million pounds was made as a free gift to compensate the slave owners for their loss.[9]

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[7] Christine Bolt, The Anti-slavery Movement and Reconstruction (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969), p. 55.

[8] Frank J. Klingberg, The Anti-Slavery Movement in England (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1926), p. 182.

[9] British Information Service, African Challenge, p. 23. See also, Parliamentary Papers, Contract for the loan to be raised for Compensation to Owners of Slaves, 1835, Vol. LI.

Britain had to secure the active support of other slave-dealing countries to bring slave trade to an end. The United States had, as of January 1, 1808, outlawed the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and signed a treaty with Britain "for the suppression of the African Slave Trade."[10] France, Spain, and Portugal continued to profit from the trade. Since action by both the United States and Britain alone could not stop this abject international traffic of human beings, Britain began a series of diplomatic moves which resulted in the appeasement of France and the payment of a large sum of money to Spain and Portugal to sign treaties establishing a right to search merchant ships for slaves and equipment.[11]

The British found it difficult to obtain the right to search American vessels. Since the interference with United States shipping by the British Navy was the chief immediate cause of the Anglo-American War of 1812, any agreement on the part of the United States government to enforce slavery laws was a danger to splitting the Union, as this would meet with hostility by Southern states.

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[10] Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Treaty for Suppression of African Slave Trade, Washington, 7th April 1862; 1862, LXI, 373; also Convention between Her Majesty and the United States of America, additional to Treaty signed at Washington, 7th April 1862, for suppression of African slave trade, Washington, 3rd June 1870; 1870, LXIX, 431.

[11] Report on Treaties and Engagements between Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal, respecting slave trade, &c.; with Proceedings, Evidence, Appendix, and Index; 1852-53, XXXIX, 1.

The British, therefore, depended on the power of the British Navy to blockade West African coasts and on the moral support given her by the United States federal government and the Northern and Western States where slavery had been outlawed, to enforce international treaties banning the slave trade. A major problem posed by the British inability to search American ships was the scandal of flying under American flags by non-American ships that feared capture by the British Navy.

Since both the international treaties banning slave trade and the activities of the British Navy in enforcing the ban had become ineffectual, the British decided to carry the campaign to stop the trade right to its source--the "slave coast" of West Africa.

In 1860, the British Counsul at Lagos, G. Brand, advised the British government that the occupation of Lagos either as a "possession" or a Protectorate was the most effective way to suppress the slave trade in the interior of Nigeria. "The occupation of Lagos with a proper force on the lagoon will do more to suppress the slave trade than all the ships we could muster along the coast."[12]

At first, the British government was reluctant to follow the advice of Counsul Brand to colonize Lagos. However, the continued increase of slave trade along the swampy inland shore of the Lagos Lagoon initiated events which led towards not only the occupation of Lagos, but the colonization of Nigeria. First,

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[12] Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers relative to the occupation of Lagos, House of Commons, Vol. LXI, 1862.

a usurper King, Kosoko, who refused to sign a treaty banning slave trade, was deposed. Then the King, Akitoye, was made to sign the treaty and was reinstated King of Lagos. Due to the fact that Akitoye was a weak ruler and could not effectively deal with the slave raiders, the British government decided to take over the administration of the colony and declared Lagos a crown colony in 1861, with H. S. Freeman appointed as its first Governor.

The Role of Commerce

The middle of the 19th century was the height of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. While the British government was engaged in a campaign to erradicate slavery and the slave trade, British economy was undergoing a structural change. With the rapid change at this time from a mercantile to an industrial economy, British colonial objectives were greatly affected. It became important to find new markets for the disposal of surplus manufactured goods. The yet-unexplored regions of Africa, especially the fabulous rich hinterlands, the mysterious banks of the Niger, and its tributaries attracted colonial speculators.[13]

Critics of European Imperialism are skeptical and cynical about the said role played by philanthropy in the evolution of British Imperialism in Africa.[14] These critics question the

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[13]W. L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism (New York: Macmillan, 1956).

[14]Bernard Porter, Critics of Empire (New York: Macmillan, 1968).

sincerity of the humanitarians, and point out that the reforms for which they were given credit--the abolition of slave trade and slavery, are not properly ascribed to them. They believe that the slave trade was outlawed because it suited the economic interest of the majority of the governing class in Britain, not because of any genuine disinterested humanitarian feeling.[15] Halford L. Hoskins put it differently: "It was not philanthropy which took the white man to Africa, and he has not remained primarily for philanthropic reasons." [16]

No one can deny that there were people who supported the abolition of the slave trade from purely selfish motives; the East India interest, for example, saw a chance of beating their rivals, West Indian producers of sugar. Up until the last part of the 19th century, most Englishmen were more aware of the great contribution the slave trade was making to the economic prosperity of Britain than the inhumanity involved. One of the leading opponents to the bill, James Boswell, attacked the activities of advocates of the bill as "wild and dangerous attempts to procure an act to abolish so very important and necessary a branch of commercial interest."[17] For all those who were well aware of the facts, the mode of feeling was different.

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[15]George R. Miller, British Imperial Trusteeship, 1783-1850 (London: 1951), pp. 7-8.

[16]H. L. Hoskins, European Imperialism in Africa (New York: Russel and Russel, 1967), p. 100.

[17]K. O. Dike, Trade and Politics on the Niger Delta, 1830-1885 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 12.

George R. Miller emphasizes that "no one who is familiar with the literature of the subject, with the Parliamentary debates, the evidence given before commissions of inquiry, not to mention the newspapers, can really make a mistake in the matter. The dominant motives were not selfish."[18]

The humanitarian motive for penetrating into Nigeria and for attacking slave trade from its major source was mixed with an equally compelling motivation--economic imperialism. These two apparently conflicting motives operating to suppress slaving were intimately connected, in that an increase in one tended to lead to a decrease in the other. Therefore, while the humanitarians emphasized the encouragement of legitimate trade to suppress slave trade, others encouraged legitimate trade as the best means of suppressing slaving.

As early as 1788, an African Association had been formed in Britain for a systematic geographical exploration of the "Dark Continent." The declared objective of the association was scientific research, but subsequent events showed that the predominant objective was commercial.

With the very significant discovery and mapping of the course of the River Niger, an important era of trade relations developed between Britain and the regions along the lower Niger, later called the Oil Rivers.[19]

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[18] Miller, British Imperial Trusteeship, pp. 7-8.

[19] Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, Nigeria's Constitutional Development, 1861-1960, pp. 12-13.

By the middle of the 19th century, British commercial interest along the Niger Delta was on a collision course with those of other rivaling European powers and therefore needed regulation. In 1849, a British Consul, John Beecroft, was appointed to regulate trade between the European merchant traders and the natives of the Bights of Benin and Biafra, "and to assist in the suppression of the slave trade which, despite all efforts, continued to flourish.[20]

In an effort to outrival the French and German competitors, the British traders combined to form the Niger Company.

At the approach of the Berlin Conference of 1885, George Goldie, as head of the Niger Company, and John Beecroft waged very vigorous and highly successful campaigns to sign "protection treaties" with chiefs and local leaders. These treaties, accepted as valid by the Berlin Conference of 1885, won Britain recognition of a "sphere of influence" over the Niger Basin. By the terms of the agreement at this peak of the "scramble for Africa," Britain secured an international license to rule an undemarcated chunk of land that later came to be known as Nigeria.[21]

Britain was ambivalent about her new role. From the very beginning of British connection with West Africa, members of the

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[20] Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, Nigeria's Constitutional Development, p. 7.

[21] A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, "Who Coined the Name 'Nigeria'?" West Africa [London, December 22, 1967, p. 1035; C. K. Meek, "The Niger and the Classics: The History of a Name," Journal of African History, I, 1960, pp. 1-17.

House of Commons were skeptical about any benefit of British rule in this part of the continent. The Report of a Select Committee of the House in 1865 recommended that although it was not possible for Britain to withdraw wholly or immediately from any settlements or engagements on the West African Coast, Britain should prepare for eventual withdrawal from all West African possessions except Sierra Leone, and put an end to further expansion.[22]

Undecided about the best method of eliminating slavery and ensuring free trade short of annexation, the British Parliament resorted to a tried and successful approach of the chartered company. In 1886, it gave a charter to the Niger Company to "administer, make treaties, levy customs and trade in all areas in the basin of the Niger and its affluents. [23] The Company then became the Royal Niger Company, with George Goldie as President.

The use of the Royal Niger Company in the earliest administration of Nigeria was an ingenious device. The company was both successful as an imperial agent and as a trading company. However, around the turn of the century the dual role involved the company in a conflict of interests. It was criticized for using its influence as the Administration in setting up a trading monopoly on the Niger in violation of one of the

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[22] Great Britain, House of Commons, Sessional Papers, 1865, V, "Report from the Select Committee, on Africa (Western Coast) together with Proceedings of the Committee, Minute of Evidence, and Appendix."

[23] Margery Perham, Administration in Nigeria (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1937), p. 3.

principal clauses of the charter, which says that "Nothing in this our charter shall be deemed to authorize the Company to set up or grant a monopoly of trade."[24]

According to A. P. Thornton, critics of the imperial system "object to this entire principle of chartering companies of men who often confused the desire to make money with the desire to govern men, and whose officials indulged in gasconading in the name of the English people."[25]

In the company's dual role of trade and administration the latter suffered. Moreover, the company found itself incapable of matching up with French rivalry in this yet-uncharted sphere of influence.

The Role of Imperialism

In 1897, the British government sent Brigadier (later Lord) Lugard to form the West African Frontier Force from the existing Royal Niger Company's Niger Coast constabulary.

At the Anglo-French Convention of June 14, 1898, the Western and Northern boundaries of Nigeria were set, and the agreement of the Berlin West African Conference of 1885 that "a claim of sovereignty in Africa can only be maintained by real occupation of the territory claimed," was reiterated and agreed upon.[26] Following the convention, the British Parliament

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[24] The principal clauses of this charter are reproduced in Alan Burns, Sir, History of Nigeria (London: Allen and Urwin Ltd., 1929), pp. 152-3.

[25] A. P. Thornton, The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies (New York: Macmillan, 1959), p. 158.

[26] Lugard, The Dual Mandate, p. 13.

revoked the charter of the Royal Niger Company as of January, 1900.[27] For compensation, the company was paid 450,000 pounds for administrative expenses, 115,000 pounds for its property taken over by the new Administration, and it passed down a public debt of 250,000 pounds which was incurred during the period the charter was in force. Also, the British government promised to pay the company for a period of 99 years half of the royalties collected on minerals extracted within its former territory. However, the Nigerian government paid the United Africa Company, Limited--successor of the Royal Niger Company--a sum of two and one-half million pounds in 1949 "as full compensation for the surrender by it of its right to a moiety of royalties for the unexpired period of fifty years."[28]

In announcing the revocation of the charter, the colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, said that the terms of the "Anglo-French Convention . . . make it incumbent on Her Majesty's government to maintain an immediate control over the frontier and fiscal policy of British Nigeria, such as cannot be exercised . . . by a company."[29]

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[27] Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Royal Niger Act, 1899, VI, 697.

[28] Chief Obafemi Awolowo, The People's Republic (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 15.

[29] An Announcement by the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain; cited in W. Ademoyega, The Federation of Nigeria (London: George Harrap Co., 1962), p. 102.

The history of British involvement in Nigeria clearly indicates that their motives were neither categorically defined nor consistent. There was a mixture of objectives which are hard to extricate. The question of what the overriding objective was can never be objectively answered in view of numerous evidences to support many contrasting views. However, the official position of members of the British Parliament was unmistakable. They were initially reluctant to annex Nigeria but later decided to do so because they realized the advantage to both countries.

It is only fair to conclude that even with the best of intentions, the British did not initially plan to build a strong and unified Nigerian nation and this tradition of "no planning" continued until World War II when the rapid trend of events created the urgency for development planning.

CHAPTER III

COLONIAL POLICIES

The central purpose of this analytical study of British colonial policies and their implementation in Nigeria is to bring into focus the causal relationship between colonialism and post-colonial developments. It needs to be pointed out from the beginning that it is difficult to assess the real merit of any policy out of context to the environment in which it was applied. This is so because a number of inconsistencies run through the gamut of implementing colonial policies; mainly because the British government relied heavily on the "men on the spot" for interpreting these policies.

The British colonial policies relevant to this research will merely be described or explained in this chapter, together with a short history of their evolution and the nature of their application. In subsequent chapters analysis will be made to find out to what extent these policies put into operation were consciously devised for a definite objective and what their effects were on the functioning of the post-colonial system.

A nation's foreign policies reflect what the nation's foreign decision makers assume to be in their national interest.[1]

[1] The unpopularity of a nation's foreign policy at any historic time does not contradict the fact that the foreign policy makers presume to be acting in their national interest, part of which [action] is based on classified information not available to the public.

They do not necessarily reflect the popular opinion or a consensus of the peoples' opinion, especially where the issues involved do not affect the people directly, or do not become election issues. This study therefore takes for granted that British colonial policies were based on Britain's national interest and might not have been to the best interest of Nigeria. Nevertheless, there is no assumption that Britain did not have the best interest of Nigeria at heart, or that what is to her best interest could not be to the best interest of another country.

It can rarely be said that any one of these policies began in a certain year, but for the purpose of analyzing them and tracing the effects back to their origin, it is convenient to start from the years in which they found shape and expression in official documents. Most of what passed as the British policies in Africa "began as improvisation."[2] Although mostly improvised at the initial state, most of the British policies made applicable to Nigeria date to the period of Lord Lugard's administration in Nigeria, 1900-1907 and 1914-1919, and have been well documented.[3] Supporting the view that British policies originated from precedents, Thomas L. Hodgkin asserts

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[2] Vincent Harlow, British Commonwealth and Empire: Origins and Purpose (London, 1944), p. 104.

[3] The records of Lugard himself are the most informative of these documents. See Lugard, The Dual Mandate (London: Faber and Faber, 1965); Political Memoranda; Annual Reports; Report on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria (London: H.M.S.O., 1920).

that they are "normally developed piecemeal, in relation to specific situations or even as a means of solving specific problems."[4]

Another colonial expert says that:

> British practice doubtless pivots on precedents rather than on principle--but both precedents and principles lead their addicts to much the same destination in the long run, and, as often as not in the short run. Precedents end up in systems. They are only principles in reverse.[5]

The Dual Mandate and Indirect Rule

Perhaps the most outstanding aspect of British colonial administration in Nigeria is their system of Indirect Rule. This system grew out of what Lord Lugard envisioned as the "dual mandate"[6] --a natural right of the civilized European nations to exploit the social and economic resources of Africa with a consequent obligation of helping the African people to advance their level of civilization. Lugard feared that one aspect of the "dual mandate" would prove a stronger force than the feeling of obligation to rebuild and modernize the African society which would be destroyed in the process of exploitation. Therefore, he advanced the Indirect Rule doctrine which in his opinion could accomplish the dual role of European penetration

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[4] Thomas L. Hodgkin, Nationalism in Colonial Africa (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 40-1.

[5] E. W. Evans, "Principles and Methods of Administration in the British Colonial Empire," (Colston Papers), cited in Thomas Hodgkin, Nationalism in Colonial Africa, p. 40.

[6] Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa (London: Faber and Faber, 1965).

into Africa. In his own words:

> Let it be admitted at the outset that European brains, capital, and energy have not been, and never will be expended in developing the resources of Africa from motives of pure philanthropy; Europe is in Africa for the mutual benefit of her industrial classes, and of the natives in their progress to a higher plane; and the benefit can be made reciprocal and it is the aim of civilized administration to fulfill this dual mandate.[7]

It is important to generalize that whether Indirect Rule grew out of an improvisation or whether it is part of a consciously devised general administrative policy, its application in Nigeria was unique. This view is strongly supported by many authorities on this subject, including a perceptive British anthropologist, Professor Lucy Mair, who, after surveying colonial policies in Africa, concluded that "For an understanding of the Indirect Rule policy in all its implications, no area is more instructive than Nigeria, its original home."[8]

Indirect Rule in Nigeria differed significantly from the indirect administrative systems operative in India and in the older British and French colonies. As a matter of fact, in the theoretical rationale advanced by Lugard to support this improvisation, Indirect Rule assumed a distinct status as a British administrative policy.

In spite of the distinctive nature of its application in Nigeria, some respected Imperial officials have doubted

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[7]Lugard, The Dual Mandate, p. 617.

[8]Lucy Mair, Native Policies in Africa (London, 1936), p. 118.

whether the British could be credited with originality in initiating Indirect Rule as a policy. Captain Robert Sutterland Rattray (late provincial Commissioner, Colonial Civil Service, Gold Coast) has argued that:

> What we have come to regard as essentially British innovation had actually been put successively into practice by the French in Annam as far back as 1894. The concept of Indirect Rule is of course older than Nigeria. . . .[9]

Sir Richard Palmer, Lieutenant Governor of Northern Nigeria from 1925 to 1930, contended that Indirect Rule was nothing new in history, but an application of an old theory. He alluded that "it was the normal system of the Byzantine Emperors in North Africa," but he conceded that "it was not of one universal pattern."[10] A former British Governor of Uganda, Sir Philip Mitchell, pointed out that "every group of people must possess some form of natural authority, normally, of course, symbolized in the person of some individual or individuals."[11] He then adds that it is up to any colonial power that wants to utilize indigenous traditional authority to ascertain who the persons or the traditions are which the people concede natural authority.

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[9] R. S. Rattray, "Recent Tendencies of African Colonial Government," African Society Journal, XXXIII (1934), 25.

[10] Sir Richard Palmer, "Some Tendencies of African Colonial Government," African Society Journal, XXXIII (1934), 38.

[11] Sir Philip Mitchell, "Indirect Rule," Uganda Journal, IV, No. I (July, 1936); cited in Irving Markovitz, African Politics and Society (New York: The Free Press, 1970), p. 27.

In view of the above, and other similar influencial opinions, a concession must be made about the novelty of Indirect Rule as a colonial policy. It must be admitted that the British did not originate a completely new idea. Instead, they gave added emphasis to a long accepted principle of ruling subject people--the employment of previous rulers, traditions, and customs as a bridge to introduce a new system; and which were only used insofar as they served the interests of the new leaders.

The new system as concisely expressed by Lord Lugard envisages the native chiefs as constituting

> an integral part of the machinery of the administration. There are not two sets of rulers--British and the native--working either separately or in cooperation, but a single government in which the native chiefs have well defined duties and an acknowledged status equally with British officials /in theory only/. Their duties should never conflict, and should overlap as little as possible. They should be complementary to each other, and the chief himself must understand that he has no right to place and power unless he renders his proper services to the state.[12]

Though the "chief"[13] is the unquestioned ruler of his people, Lugard made it clear that sovereignty lay unquestionably with the British government. Both the Northern Emirs who lost their power by defeat and those who acceded to British authority by consent and not as a result of conquest, as well as Southern chiefs who signed protection treaties, were delegated authority

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[12] Lugard, The Dual Mandate, p. 203. See also Lugard, Political Memoranda, No. 9, Paras. 6 and 7.

[13] All through the paper, the term "chief" represents the title of a traditional ruler. The Native Authority Ordinance, 1933, promulgated by the Governor, Sir Donald Cameron, defined a chief as "any person recognized as a chief by the Governor." See para. 2.

and powers not by right but by grace of the Imperial government. In connection with this complete British overlordship and with particular reference to Northern Nigeria, Lugard emphasized that, "This suzereignty involves the ultimate title to all land, the right to appoint Emirs, and all officers of state, the right of legislation and of taxation."[14]

It is important to differentiate Lord Lugard's Indirect Rule theory and the theory of Indirect Rule practiced by previous British Administrations and other colonial powers. The British applied Indirect Rule as an official policy in India in a very limited way. Except in the "native states," the great bulk of India was under direct British administration, aided by a British-patterned system of local government.[15] According to C. A. G. Wallis, "this of course meant continued direct control by /British/ district officials right up to 1908."[16]

In spite of the vastness of India, the British had little difficulty in Indian colonial administration, chiefly because the vast majority of the people took little interest

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[14] Lugard, Annual Reports (Lagos, 1902), p. 25.

[15] For a good comparison between Indirect Rule in Africa and in India, see Lord Hailey, "Local Government Institutions in India and Africa," Journal of African Administration, Vol. IV, No. I, January, 1952, pp. 2-6; G. P. Lloyd, "Local Government in India," J.A.A., Vol. IV, No. 2, April, 1952; C. A. G. Wallis, "The Foundation of Local Government in India and Africa," J. A. A., Vol. VII, No. 1 (January, 1955), pp. 2-11; Lord Hailey, "Native Administration in the British Territories in Africa," Reviewed by Sir Philip Mitchell, Governor of Kenya, J. A. A., Vol. III, No. 2, April, 1951, pp. 55-65.

[16] Wallis, p. 4.

in public affairs and were remarkably tolerant of colonial administration [until the rise of nationalism in the 1900's], and, secondly, because there was ample supply of volunteers recruited through competitive examinations for service in India, in contrast to Africa where volunteers were too scant to make competitive examinations necessary. In the "native states" of India, the maharajas were permitted a more or less despotic rule while under British protection. It is in part the British experience in these states, together with her experiments in local government in the rest of India that influenced British conception of Indirect Rule in Nigeria.

The Bases of Indirect Rule in Nigeria

As in India, the British made use of traditional rulers where they existed, provided that they commanded a large following. Where the traditional system had recognized the rule of elders or a council of men, the British either experimented with local government or created "Warrant Chiefs,"[17] or made use of both in carrying out local administration.

In application and practice, Indirect Rule was less successful in Western Nigeria than it was in Northern Nigeria,

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17 "Warrant Chiefs" were local people who became chiefs by warrant from the Provincial Commissioner because they were considered influencial or representative of their local communities in the absence of recognized traditional rulers.

but it was a failure in Eastern Nigeria[18], where the conditions for its existence were deficient. For Indirect Rule to succeed on a grand scale, there must be strong bases for administrative and judicial systems and a hierarchy of traditional rulers.

In Northern Nigeria, the Emirate system had all the markings of an organized administrative system. There were Moslem courts of laws and judges and a system of direct taxation. Each Emir was in direct control of an Emirate which later became not only a religious unit but a political entity as a result of British support of the pre-existing system.

In Western Nigeria there existed Yoruba kingdoms with powerful hereditary rulers--Obas--who ruled in conjunction with native councils. Of the Yoruba political system, J. D. Lloyd says that:

> There has always been a delicate balance of power between the chiefs who make . . . policy, and the Oba whose sacred status commands such authority and will ensure obedience. If the Oba misused his powers, he might be deposed by his chiefs who would 'ask him to die.'[19]

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[18] For details on the comparative lack of success of Indirect Rule in Eastern Nigeria, see Ndukwe N. Egbuonu, Indirect Rule and Its Application in Southeastern Nigeria: A Study in the Technique of British Colonial Administration (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Microfilm), 1964. The success or failure of Indirect Rule in Eastern Nigeria is not as important for this study as its huge success in the Northern Region, from where the principles pertinent to this study were derived.

[19] P. C. Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 46.

In Eastern Nigeria there existed tribal groups who lived in comparably primitive isolated societies, and were ruled by what sociologists call "high achievers"--successful farmers, businessmen, fishermen, warriors, and noted public speakers. Political powers among these Eastern tribesmen showed a pattern of dispersed tribal authority. The political structure required popular participation in the community political decision making. There were village chiefs who summoned village councils and often presided at the meetings of the village groups, but their powers were limited. A man's status in these societies was based on his achievements. The titles he earned in his life were buried with him and never inherited by his heirs. In religion they were animists and non-believers.

In view of these cultural differences before the British established a Protectorate over Nigeria, it is self-evident that expediency demanded the use of different administrative skills for each cultural grouping. As early as 1900 Indirect Rule had become policy in the administrative system of the North. By 1914 when the Northern and the Southern Provinces were amalgamated, Indirect Rule was applied in the western half of the Southern Provinces. By 1928 it had been extended to the Eastern half of the South in such a modified form that some writers of Nigerian constitutional history prefer to describe the system as local government[20],

[20] For details on the early history of Indirect Rule in the Southern-Eastern Provinces, see article entitled "Local Government Reorganization in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria and Kenya," Journal of African Administration, Vol. I, No. I, January, 1949.

and limit the terms, "Indirect Rule" or "Native Administration" to the more or less personal rule of powerful natural rulers like Obas and Emirs.

The British Concept of Indirect Rule

The major difference between British use of traditional rulers in local administration in Nigeria and her use of the same elsewhere lies in the philosophical rationale advanced to support their use and the manner in which these authorities were used--the relationship between the native ruler and alien political officer. In the Lugardian conception,[21] the authority of the chief is paramount. He is not a substitute for a colonial master. He is the unquestioned boss of his own people, not a mere agent of a colonial power. He is only appointed by the Imperial power after he has been duly selected and qualified, and therefore is not removable by it except where the chief failed to carry out his oath of allegiance or misused his traditional powers; in which case natural justice demanded that he be relieved of his position. He did not owe loyalties to the British officer but to the people whom he represented and who selected him according to customary procedures. The chief, as head of an administrative unit, collected his own taxes which were paid into the local treasury.

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[21] Lugard's version is of the greatest importance to this study, since his was the dominant influence in two important periods of administration in Nigeria (the conquest of Northern Nigeria (1900-6) and the amalgamation of Nigeria (1912-18).

Unlike the French system of Indirect Rule which is the most akin to the British system, the British sought to preserve the indigenous political institutions of authority. In a monumental speech at Sokoto in 1902, Lugard recounts that:

> The Fulani in old times under Dan Fodio conquered this country. They took the right to rule over it, to levy taxes, to depose kings, and to create kings. They in turn have by defeat lost their rule which has come into the hands of the British. . . . All these things which I have said the Fulani by conquest took the right to do now pass to the British. . . . The Emirs and the Chiefs who are appointed will rule over the people as of old time . . . but they will obey the laws of the Governor and will act in accordance with the advice of the Resident.[22]

The role of the British officer was theoretically advisory only. The Imperial agent arrogates to himself the sovereign right to rule but then delegates the same right back to the conquered ruler as a trust.

In the French system, the role of the "chief" was subordinate to the role of the political officer. The former

> did not head a local government unit, nor did the area which he administered on behalf of the government necessarily correspond to a pre-colonial unit. . . . Most of all, chiefs were not necessarily those who would have been selected according to customary procedures; more often than not they were those who had shown loyalty to the French or had obtained some education. While the British were scrupulous in their respect for traditional methods of selection of chiefs, the French, conceiving of them as agents of the administration, were more concerned with their potential efficiency than their legitimacy.[23]

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[22] Lugard, "The Speech at Sokoto," ed. by A. H. M'Kirk-Greene, in The Principles of Native Administration: Selected Documents (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 43.

[23] Michael Crowder, "Indirect Rule - French and British Style," in African Politics by Irving Markovitz (New York: The Free Press, 1970), p. 29.

Unlike the British and like all other colonial powers, modern and ancient, the French used indigenous native rulers in situations that advanced their cause, not because the institution was part of a general public policy.

The fundamental objective of the Indirect Rule system as stated by Lugard is

> to make each Emir or paramount chief, assisted by his judicial Council, an effectual ruler over his own people. He presides over a 'Native Authority' throughout as a unit of local government. The area over which he exercises jurisdiction is divided into districts under the control of 'Headmen' who collect taxes in the name of the ruler.[24]

The authority which an Emir exercises over his own people is "personal and absolute and the profession of an alien creed does not absolve a native from the obligation to obey his orders.[25]

The British officer,[26] the "Resident" or his "District Officers" act as advisors and counsellors to the native chief. On matters of general policy, the latter strictly followed the advice of the former but issued his orders and instructions to his own people in such a way as if they originated from him. The Resident maintains a delicate balance by

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[24] Lugard, The Dual Mandate, p. 200.

[25] Ibid., p. 202.

[26] According to the colonial administrative grid, the Governor was at the apex of national administration, assisted by two Lieutenant Governors /later three, excluding Lagos/, one for the Southern and the other for the Northern Provinces. Each Province was under a British officer called "Resident" who is assisted by District officers.

issuing orders indirectly and "being careful not to interfere in the way they are carried out for fear he might "lower his prestige, or cause him to lose interest in his work."[27]

In many important respects, the system was modified and modernized by Lugard's successors. Sir Donald Cameron (Governor of Nigeria, 1931-1935) issued a memorandum explaining the new and more modernized conception of the Lugardian principle. He preferred the term "Native Administration" which he defined as

> based on several principles . . . to adapt for the purposes of local government the tribal institutions which the peoples have evolved for themselves, so that the latter may develop in a constitutional manner from their own past, guided and restrained by the traditions and sanctions which they have inherited, moulded, or modified as they may be on the advice of the British officers, and by the general control of those officers. It is an essential feature of the system, that, within the limitations and in the manner that will be discussed here, the British government rules through these native institutions which are regarded as an integral part of the machinery of government . . . with well defined powers and functions recognized by government and law, and not dependent on the caprice of an executive officer.[28]

Lord Cameron had a more progressive view of Colonial Administration. He saw the Indirect Rule system as a prelude to local government, whereas Lugard saw the authorities "essentially as agents for the maintenance of law and order," and dispensation of justice to the natives in accordance with local tradition.[29] Sir Donald Cameron's Administration aimed

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[27] Lugard, The Dual Mandate, p. 201.

[28] Sir Donald Cameron, The Principles of Native Administration and Their Application (Lagos: Government Printer, 1934), p. 7.

[29] R. E. Robinson, Journal of Public Administration, Vol. II, No. 1, (January, 1950), p. 140.

at relaxing the rigidity of Indirect Rule:

> In some measure we have departed from the intentions and principles of Lord Lugard . . . in drifting into the habit of mind that a 'feudal monarchy' of this /Northern Nigerian/ kind . . . is the be-all of Indirect Administration. . . . It is the avowed intention of the Government that the natives should not stay put. [30]

It should be stressed that the system was not of one universal application. Its intensity differed from one Native Authority[31] to another, and by 1950, political awareness had caught up with the people, thereby creating a condition which made way for modernization and reform. It no longer meant "preserving and stereotyping indigenous institutions in their traditional form" but rather looked to "their evolution towards representative organs of democratic local government." [32]

Indirect Rule as an administrative system is a neutral device. Its central principle is the recognition and preservation of indigenous institutions and administrative machinery and the use of the same by an alien power in governing the inhabitants. This system of administration is described as "indirect" because the real power behind the administration

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[30] Sir Donald Cameron, quoted in Perham, Ibid., p. 331.

[31] The /Nigerian/ Native Authority Ordinance, 1933, defines Native Authority /NA/ as "any Chief or other native of Nigeria or other person, or any native council or group of such natives or other persons appointed to be a native authority under this Ordinance for the area concerned." See para. 2.

[32] R. E. Robinson, "Why 'Indirect Rule' has been replaced by 'Local Government' in the Nomenclature of British Native Administration," Journal of African Administration, Vol. II, No. 3 (July, 1950), p. 14.

is not indigenous but alien. For the system to be effective, there must be a high degree of cooperation between the alien power and the traditional authority. Indirect Rule as a system of administration is an ancient imperial expediency. In Nigeria it was systematically applied and elevated from an expediency to an imperial policy. Much credit for this goes to Sir Frederick Lugard who introduced it to Northern Nigeria when he became her first High Commissioner (1900-1906) and tried its extension to the rest of the country when he became the first Governor General of Nigeria, 1914-1918. Although there were differences in the method of application of Indirect Rule, Nigeria was ruled indirectly by the British.

In its practical implication, Indirect Rule can be progressive if the leaders are taught the techniques of modern administration and the bases of their authority are democratised. On the other hand, it can be an impediment to progress if the leaders, backed by British support of their legitimate rule, resort to autocracy. Where this is the case, as actually it turned out to be in Northern Nigeria, Indirect Rule becomes a "divide and rule" policy. Indirect Rule was viewed by western educated Nigerians, as an alliance made between the colonial power and the traditional rulers to restrain nationalistic pressure for popular participation in local government, and was relentlessly attacked as such. [33]

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[33] See a summary of the contributions of Africans to a discussion on Indirect Rule at the Royal Society of Arts, March 27, 1934, in Institute of the Royal Society of Arts, May 18, 1934, Vol. LXXXII, pp. 702-10.

Although the system was based on legitimacy according to tradition, some political cultures based on feudal aristocracy will tend to resist change and modernization, especially when backed and reinforced by an alien and superior political power. Therefore, tolerance of such a social system, partly because it was in existence before a foreign occupation and partly because it has the capacity of maintaining law and order by brute force, amounts to endorsing responsible autocracy contrary to the more universalized imperial doctrine of trusteeship.

Irrespective of all the modifications made in the application of the theory, administration continued to be the key word, to the neglect of politics. When politics began to assert its primeval role in the affairs of Nigerial polity, the clash between traditionalism and modernism produced a mode of restlessness and tension.

Education and Evangelization

The British educational policies in Nigeria reflect British general policy in that country, which at best can be described as tailored to the immediate needs of colonial administration. Like the general policy from which they cannot be divorced, the educational policies initially aimed at training the indigenous people to fill up those positions in colonial administration reserved for Africans in order to carry out the mechanics of imperial administration.[34]

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[34] H. S. Scott, "The Development of Education of the African in Relation to Western Contact," Yearbook of Education, 1938, p. 737.

As several commissions have reported and academic studies indicated, the improvised educational policies on which the British officials in Nigeria acted were short-term oriented but had long-term effects--they neglected the fundamental basis of long-term man-power planning for future scientific and technological development. Sir Eric Ashby alludes that even in later years when the consciousness of Nigerian Independence influenced the implementation of policy, the British failed to adapt education to local environment, primarily because school results and diplomas on which employment and future progress depended, were based on British-sponsored external examinations. [35]

The responsibility for the formulation of a general education policy in the Colonial Empire lies with the Secretary of State for the colonies. Until the 1920's this responsibility was left primarily to the Christian Missionary Societies or Christian Missions--the only agent of imperialism primarily concerned with education, which was considered a prerequisite for understanding and appreciating Christian religion. There was no attempt to formulate a general policy or at least make it public until World War I shook the world's conscience and the Mandates of the League of Nations roused the British to their moral responsibility to the dependent territories.

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[35] Sir Eric Ashby, African Universities and the Western Tradition. (Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964), p. 56.

As a result not only of the tide of rising public opinion criticizing educational inadequacy in the overseas territories,[77] but also of the increased revenue at the disposal of the Colonial Office, the Secretary of State for the Colonies on November 24, 1923, appointed an Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British African Dependencies with the terms of reference:

> To advise the Secretary of State on any matters of Native Education in the British Colonies and Protectorates in Tropical Africa which he may from time to time refer to them, and to assist him in advancing the progress of education in those Colonies and Protectorates.[78]

The Committee submitted its final recommendations in the form of Memoranda which were deposited with the Colonial Office and when approved by that office they became the Official Education Policy and then were forwarded to all governments concerned. Not until the Committee made its first recommendation in a memorandum entitled "Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa,"[79] published in 1925, was there any official document on educational policy applicable to British colonies and protectorates in Tropical Africa.

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[77]The most effective stimulus to formulate an education policy was a memorial submitted by the Conference of Missionary Societies of Great Britain and Ireland which was discussed at a conference in the Colonial Office on June 6, 1923. See African Pamphlet No. 47 Colonial Office.

[78]Memorandum of the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa (1925) (London: H.M.S.O., No. 62901).

[79]Command Paper, No. 2374, H. M. Stationery Office, 1925.

The memorandum contained general broad principles, which the committee believed should form the basis of sound policy. It proclaimed the need for partnership between government and evangelical missions in education and encouraged the former to give more aid to the latter, who then should come under general government supervision and work alongside government-sponsored schools. It recommended the establishment of Advisory Boards with the "missions" represented and emphasized the central position of religious and moral instruction in the educational system. The relevancy of education to the current need of the African was recommended: "Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations, and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life."[39]

Lord Lugard, then a retired Governor of Nigeria and Secretary to the Advisory Committee, commented on the merits of the memorandum:

> A future generation may look back with amazement at the comparative apathy of the British people today . . . and may regard the little noticed White Paper . . . as one of the principal landmarks of imperial policy in the twentieth century.[40]

The memorandum of 1925 was followed by other significant memoranda published in pamphlet form in 1933 and 1935. That of 1933 stated the grounds for justifying the system of grants-in-

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[39] Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa, Cmnd. 2374, p. 4.

[40] Sir Frederick Lugard, "Education in Tropical Africa" (1930) African Pamphlet No. 1135, cited by M. Perham, Lugard: The Years of Authority (London, 1960), p. 661.

aid to schools, while that of 1935 underlined the importance of education of African communities.[41]

As in every other aspect of British administration, educational development in Nigeria took a very slow pace. It was affected partly by economic scarcity and partly by the nineteenth century political thinking in Britain. The colonial government was neither able nor willing to finance all education from its meagre finances. The dominant political thought in the 18th and 19th century England was laissez faire which put too much emphasis on the virtues of private enterprise. Just as the British government had shifted administrative responsibility by granting a Royal Charter to the Niger Company, similarly it shifted educational responsibility to the Christian Missions. However, it was felt that education was a necessary aspect of fulfilling the "DUAL MANDATE," and therefore could not be left solely to non-governmental agencies. Influenced partly by the stated objectives of British colonial administration to prepare the colonials to eventually take over the management of their own affairs, and partly by the trend of socialist thinking in Britain and elsewhere in the 20th century, the Advisory Committee on Native Education recommended government support of the missionary endeavors. However, the British did not traditionally believe in mass education for all people as a prerequisite

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[41]See Memorandum on the Education of African Communities (H.M.S.O.: Colonial No. 84 (1933); and Colonial No. 103 (1935).

for political, social, and/or economic development. Hence, the schools which they built or supported financially aimed at educating the elite of their various communities.

Educational Policies in Southern Nigeria

In the Southern Provinces of Nigeria, the colonial government thought it expedient to leave the bulk of both primary and secondary education to missionary bodies, while keeping a minimal control of all schools through a system of grants-in-aid. The determination of which schools should get government grants was based solely upon the report of government inspectors. All assisted schools must conform with an Education code[42] which prescribes the subjects to be taught by such schools, and the standards of efficiency they must maintain. For guidance in computing the standard of efficiency, government inspectors considered the "tone, discipline, organization, adequacy, and efficiency of the staff, sanitation, and the quality of the class work as well as the result of periodic examinations."[43]

In spite of the fact that only a few schools received financial support from the government, the number of schools and school enrolment continued to increase. Since the government cannot effectively control all schools, there was a wide range in the quality of primary schools operating in the

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[42] Laws, Vol. I, ch. 65.

[43] Otonti Nduka, Western Education and the Nigerian Cultural Background (Ibadan: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), p. 33.

TABLE 1

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA 1926-1947

Government & Native Administration			Voluntary[a/] Agency (assisted)		Voluntary Agency (unassisted)	
Year	No.	Average Attendance	No.	Average Attendance	No.	Average Attendance
1926	59	3,984	91	11,732	*	20,000
1937	108	12,183	339	69,464	3,086	136,963
1947	183**	26,040**	473	153,759**	4,328	358,592**

Source: Nduka, Western Education, Table II, p. 73.
* Figures not known.
**Average attendance figures not available. Figures shown are for enrolment.
a/All schools not run directly by the government or Native Authority are classified as Voluntary Agency.

country. Most of the unassisted schools were located in the rural areas while most of the "assisted" ones were located in the suburban or "townships." Since the "township" schools were more likely to be assisted and had better facilities and better qualified teachers, graduates from these schools were prepared to go to secondary schools which were also located in the urban and suburban towns. Secondary schools, Technical and Vocational schools run by Voluntary Agencies also fell under the two categories of "assisted" and "unassisted." Since the same criteria were used for determining which schools got government support and those that did not, it followed that schools located in urban and suburban areas were favored in distributing government amenities.

The close correlation between the efficiency of schools and their location in the community had also another unfortunate correlation with places of employment as white-collar workers. In the villages and rural areas, agriculture was the most predominant occupation. Until recently the few industries or businesses and social services were located in the large urban towns. Because they were areas of higher income their systems were better financed and more efficient; and since grants-in-aid were awareded primarily on the basis of efficiency, the urban area drew a larger proportion of the grants at the expense of the agricultural communities.

Educational Policies in Northern Nigeria

Education in the Northern Provinces of Nigeria was, except for pagan areas, primarily in government hands because the colonial government wanted to control the disruptive impact of Western culture, especially its religious and educational aspects on a predominantly Moslem society. Unlike government administrators, Christian Missions did not seek to preserve traditional society, but rather to transform it.

When Lugard conquered the Moslem Emirates of Northern Nigeria, he promised the Emirs that British administration would not interfere with their religion. In fulfillment of this pledge, he granted authority for missionary societies to open stations and schools in Muslim Emirates if invited by the Emirs.

> The Government will offer no objection if the ruling chief concurs. . . . For the reason I have given, it is necessary that the prior concurrence of Government should be sought before a Mission is established in either a Moslem or Pagan district. There can be no fear that a British administrator would withhold consent unless for some very cogent reason. If his reasons appeared insufficient, there is probably no class which commands a wider means of influencing public opinion through the press and Parliament . . . than the Missionaries and their supporters.[44]

Judging from Lugard's own writings alone, there was no legal commitment that Christian missionaries and European traders whose presence might undermine the influence of the Emirs or cause some political instability were to be excluded from Northern Nigeria. However, due to the strong influence and authority of Lugard, his pledge became a cornerstone upon which future interpretations of educational policy hinged. There was a loose and a strict interpretation of Lugard's pledge depending primarily on the attitudes of the colonial administrators, most of whom favored a very gradual introduction of Western culture--rather than a quick transition fro.. traditionalism to modernity.

In order to establish, the Christian Missions found it less difficult to get the approval of the Emirs than to acquire a landed property. During a diocesan synod held in Lagos in 1924, the Anglican Bishop of Lagos said:

> Had the chiefs been left altogether to themselves, with the assurance that the British administration would not object to their receiving Missionaries, tactful Missionaries would have won their way and gained permission to enter these Emirates, even as they did in the days when Sir Frederick Lugard was High Commissioner. Now that the anti-missionary policy of the Government has been so firmly fixed in

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[44] Lugard, The Dual Mandate, pp. 594-96.

> the minds of the native rulers of these Moslem states, I fear I must agree with His Excellency that permission is not likely to be granted by any Emir to a Christian mission to establish itself in his territory. In my experience, the attitude of a chief in such a matter is almost wholly dependent on the view which he believes the British administration takes with regard to it, and in the past, the latter has made its policy in the matter very plainly felt, that no Emir would dare to allow a missionary to settle in his territory.[45]

On this issue Lugard had said that:

> An alien mission is, of course, 'non-native,' and as such would be bound to obtain the Governor's sanction for the acquisition of land. . . . Like any other application, it would be investigated by the District Officer, and, in particular, he would ascertain whether the people were desirous of the establishment of a mission among them or hostile to it.[46]

The differences in educational development between the North and the South seem correlated with the intensity of missionary activities in both halves of the country; and has been the subject of many comments and criticism on British educational policy in Nigeria. Commenting on the several opinions concerning this policy, Margery Perham said that:

> The Phelps-Stokes Commission referred to the 'indifference and even the hostility of the Government' to missionary enterprise, and recommended that the Government should grant religious freedom in Nigeria.
>
> An open attack was made in 1929 by Victor Murray, who interviewed the authorities at Kano upon the subject. His experience led him to a critical analysis of the whole system of indirect rule of which this policy of exclusion seemed a part.[47]

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45 The Right Rev. F. Melville Jones, Report of the Second Synod of the Diocese of Lagos, 1924, p. 30.

46 Lugard, The Dual Mandate, pp. 342.

47 Perham, Native Administration in Nigeria, p. 288.

In support of Victor Murray and Margery Perham, the denial of Christianity from freely operating in the North contradicted British policy of freedom of worship and religion even though it helped stabilize their system of indirect Rule by ensuring the undisputed authority of the Islamic tradition.

The Effects of the Dual Education Policy in Nigeria

In the Southern Provinces where government had little control of missionary activities, educational institutions increased by leaps and bounds. The policy of grants-in-aid to schools had much effect on the quality of education imparted but very little on the numerical growth of schools. The missionaries managed to keep their schools open in spite of meagre financial support because the local communities cooperated with the Missions by doing communal work for the schools. Moreover, many unassisted mission schools operated at very low cost, employing an "unqualified" staff and paying them minimal salaries. Based on the three R's (Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic) which were conducted primarily in English (after the first three years) and did not require expensive equipment to teach, and which satisfied the Churches' objectives, the foundations for the sciences and technical education were lacking.

The Northern schools operated by the government or the Native Authorities, like their counterparts in the South, maintained a very high quality of education. Unlike the Southern schools, they were few and far between and had a high concentration of expatriate staff. From the elementary schools to the teacher training schools, emphasis was placed on training the leaders and perpetuating Islamism. This view is strongly supported by a historic speech made by Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor of Nigeria, at the opening of Katsina College (the first and most popular teacher training college in Northern Nigeria) in 1922. He stated that:

> This College is designed to serve all the Muhammadan Emirates in Nigeria, and, as you are aware, the young men who will receive in it their training are drawn from every part of the Muhammadan States. It was necessary, however, to select some place at which to establish this College; and it was for two reasons that I selected Katsina as the most appropriate place for the purpose.
>
> The first of these reasons is that Katsina in ancient days was held in high repute throughout the Muhammadan Emirates as a seat of learning and of piety; and it is good, I think, that this tradition should be perpetuated. My second reason was that Katsina, though it is an important town and the administrative capital of an important Emirate, is not as yet so close to the railway and to the commercial centres of Nigeria as to make it unsuitable. . . .
>
> It is very necessary that the youths who will receive their training in this College, and who will thereafter carry the torch of learning and knowledge to all parts of the Muhammadan Emirates in order thereby to enlighten the ignorance of their countrymen, should concentrate all their energies and all their attention upon the task that is set them during their period of training. . . . While living in this College the ordinary lives of young Muhammadan men of birth and standing, they should be subjected to no influences which might tend to make them careless about the observances of their religious duties, forgetful of the customs and traditions of their fellow countrymen or lacking in the respect and courtesy which

> they owe to their parents, to all who occupy positions of authority, and to all old people. . . .[48]

Commenting on the Governor's plan to exclude non-Moslems from attending the only government teacher training college available in the North in 1922, the late Governor of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello, said that

> This was perhaps a fault; it might have been better to have had more varieties of men in the College. Anyhow, a similar college should have been established for non-Muslims but that was not part of Sir Hugh Clifford's plan. He had in mind the special colleges for princes, I think, which they had in India.[49]

In spite of the very favorable attitude which colonial administration had towards the Muslims and British concerted efforts to train Muslim leadership in modern ways, there was a tendency to resent this attitude and react against it. Whereas Southerners aped British manners, and customs and everything attributable to Western culture, the Northerners despised the Western culture with all its refined institutions. Commenting on this contrast in orientation, Perham noted that

> When we turn to the North, it is a widely different situation. . . . They wanted none of our instruction. They were alert to protect their culture from infidel communications and were well satisfied with their 25,000 Koranic schools where in courtyards or under trees little boys in shrill repetition learned a few Arabic texts. Those who wished to go further with their studies would attach themselves to a wandering scholar or an alkali of one of the courts and pick up a smattering of Arabic.[50]

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[48] Extract from speech by Sir Hugh Clifford, G.C.M.G., on the Opening of the Training College for Muhammadan Teachers at Katsina on Sunday, the 5th March, 1922; cited in Sir Ahmadu Bello, My Life, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1962, p. 28-9.

[49] Bello, My Life, p. 31.

[50] Perham, Native Administration, p. 285.

TABLE 2

SCHOOL ENROLMENT IN NIGERIA, 1875 - 1957:
AN INDICATOR OF DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT OF
EVANGELICAL MISSIONS

	Southern Nigeria (Eastern and Western regions)				Northern Nigeria			
	Schools		Pupils in Attendance		Schools		Pupils in Attendance	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
1906	126	1	11,872	20	1	0	a	0
1912	150	10	35,716	67	34	0	954	0
1926	3,828	18	138,249	518	125	0	5,210	0
1937	3,533	26	218,610	4,285	539	1	20,269	65
1947	4,984	43	538,391	9,657	1,110	3	70,962	251
1957	13,473	176	2,343,317	28,208	2,080	18	185,484[c]	3,643

Source: James S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (California: University of Calif. Press, 1958), p. 134.

[a] Number unknown.
[c] Figures for 1956.

TABLE 3

VARIATION OF LITERACY RATES IN NIGERIA, 1952/53

Region	Total Population 7 yrs. of age & over	Standard of Education and Literacy		Population 7 yrs. of age & over		
		4 yrs. of formal school (Roman Script)	All others including literates in Arabic Script	Total	4 yrs. of formal school (Ro.Scr.)	All others incl. lit. in Ar.Scr.
	Number in '000			Percentages		
Nigeria	22,500	1,300	1,400	100.0	6.0	6.0
East	5,139	546	288	100.0	10.6	6.5
West	4,256	404	261	100.0	9.5	6.1
North	12,164	114	793	100.0	0.9	5.6
Lagos	213	72	33	100.0	33.7	15.4
Cameroons	564	37	20	100.0	6.5	3.6

Source: Nigeria Dept. of Stat. Population Census of Nigeria, 1952-3, Lagos, Survey Dept., 1953, p. 8.

TABLE 4

SCHOOL AGE POPULATION IN NIGERIA & ENROLMENT IN PRIMARY, SECONDARY, & TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

Territory	School Age Population*[a]	Year	Primary School Enrolment	Secondary Enrolment	Technical & Voca. Enrolment
Lagos	67,400	1957	56,688	4,591[b]	1,578[b]
Northern Region	3,608,600	1957	205,769	3,651	872
Western Region	1,347,200	1957	982,755	46,810	220
Eastern Region	1,585,400	1957	1,209,167	12,242	3,100

[a]Estimated at 20% of the total population.
[b]Figures for 1958.

Source: UNESCO, Education in Africa, 2 Paris, 15 January 1960.

What this chapter and the included data have tried to illustrate is that there is a close relationship or correlation between British colonial policies in education and evangelization, and educational developments in the two major divisions of Nigeria; and this has immense consequences on regional developments and jealous rivalries that culminated in a crisis. The close correlation between enrolment in, and number of educational institutions in the country and the disparity of literacy rates of the North and the South indicate how colonial education policies were geared consciously or unconsciously, to keep Nigeria divided.

Various Commission Reports and academic studies have indicated the enormity in the disparity of educational developments in the various regions of Nigeria to warrant a further

examination of the issue as a possible contributor to the problems that led to crisis.[51] One of the most influencial of these Nigerian Commissions on education, the Ashby Commission, stated unequivocally that "The chief deficiencies of the /Nigerian/ educational system are lack of balance, both in structure and geographical location . . ." and warned that this "very uneven distribution throughout the country" should be corrected.[52] The lack of balance in structure is a result of lack of proper foundation for science and technological advancement, whereas the lack of balance in geographical location is a result of British protectionism of the Islamic culture. However, further research needs to be conducted into the continued disparity between the Northern Nigeria expenditure on education and those of the Southern Regions. In 1962-63, both the Eastern and Western Regions of Nigeria spent over 40 per cent of their annual budgets on primary education and teacher training, while the North spent barely 20 per cent.

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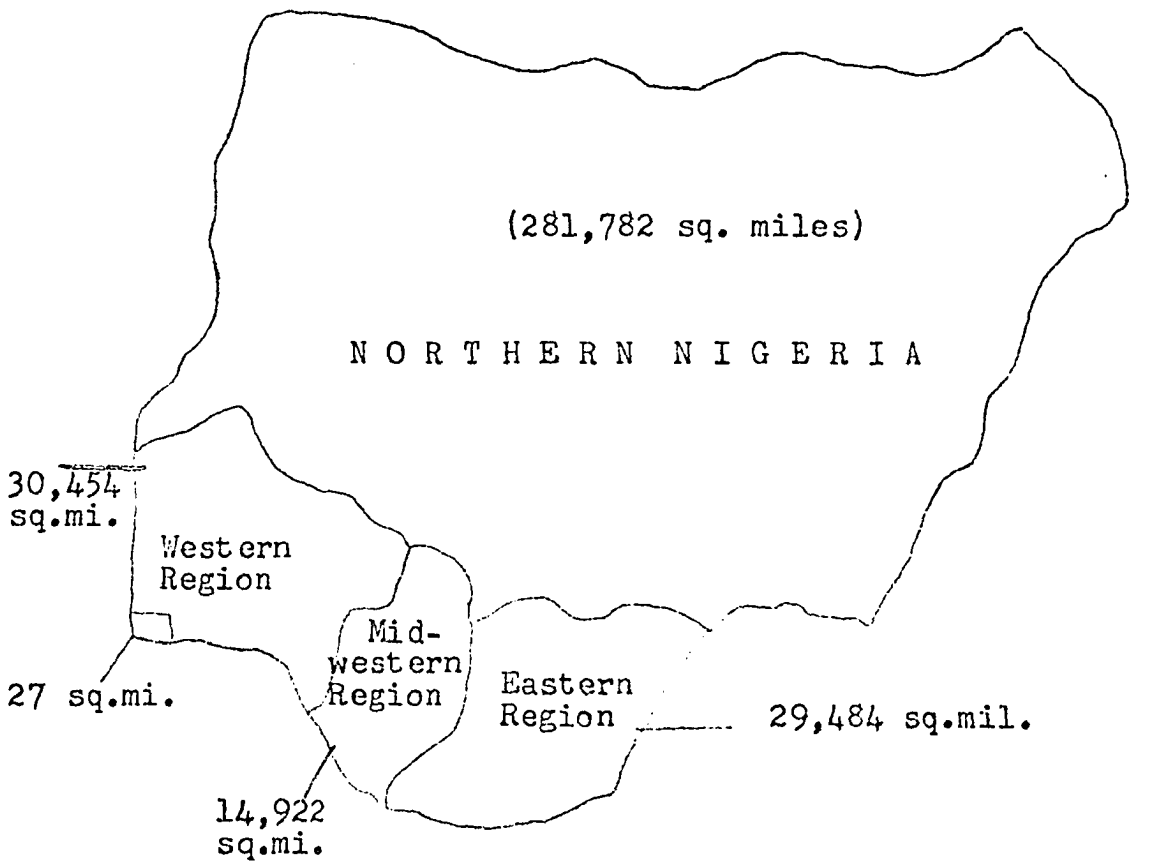
[51] See Chapter Four for further discussion on the impact of policies to the political system.

[52] Eric Ashby, et. al., Investment in Education, Report of the Commission on Post Primary School Certificate and Higher Education, Federal Ministry of Education, Lagos, 1960.

Regionalism

"Regionalism" as applied in this study refers to the division of the Nigerian people into three sub-systems called Regions for administrative convenience.[53]



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[53] At the time of Independence, Nigeria had three semi-autonomous regions and the administrative capital of Lagos. A fourth region was created in 1963. The British Cameroons, formerly administered as an integral part of Nigeria (1919-1960) was purposefully left out of the discussions since the southern part of this mandated territory voted in a U.N. supervised plebiscite to join the Republic of the Cameroon to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon, while the Northern part voted to join Northern Nigeria on October 1, 1961.

The British were the architects of the Nigerian Federation. Before their arrival, there was no Nigerian nation, much less the political infrastructure known as "regions." Nigeria comprises about 250 ethnic groupings. Before the British arrived and improved the means of transportation and communication, there was little or no contact with the different tribal groups.

During the 19th century European "Scramble for Africa" the British succeeded in cutting out for themselves the big chunk of territory containing these diverse tribal groups that later became Nigeria. Lord Hailey, one of the most enlightened British colonial experts, had remarked that, in creating Nigeria, Britain had created "perhaps the most artificial of the many administrative units created in the course of European occupation of Africa."[54]

Faced from the beginning with almost irreconcilable diversity, the British at first decided to unify the people by amalgamating the colony and the protectorates into one administrative unit.[55] This was in 1914 when Lugard became the first Governor General (this title was personal to him) of Nigeria. Before the amalgamation, the Northern Provinces

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[54] Lord Hailey, The African Survey (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 307.

[55] F. D. Lugard, Report on the Amalgamation of Southern and Northern Nigeria and Administration, 1912-1919 (London: H.M.S.O., 1920).

and the Southern Provinces[56] were administered as two separate entities with border guards between the two.

With the amalgamation, the Imperial government fused the administrative and judicial systems of the two Protectorates under one central authority. In principle, the new nation that came into being in 1914 was organized as a unitary system of government with a headquarters in Lagos.

For forty years, 1914 to 1954, Nigeria had theoretically a unitary system of government. However, a number of built-in circumstances had operated at the same time to alter the system and create a federation of Nigeria greatly influenced by the pre-existing condition in 1914. It was economic reasons firstly and administrative convenience secondly that forced the merger of the North and the South. Long before the merger of the two territories, their long isolation and separate administration had developed and consolidated different political cultures. In spite of the centralized administration and a universalization of indirect rule, the peoples of the two halves were not brought up to believe and work for common symbols and a unified Nigeria.

An emergency administrative system devised in response to the shortage of personnel resulting from the onset of World War II created a big impact on the Nigerian

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[56]Officially, the Colonial Office designated the two halves as: "Protectorate of Northern Nigeria"--(1900-1914) and "Protectorate of Southern Nigeria"--(1900-1906) and later "Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria"--(1906-1914).

political system. Four administrative units--the colony, the Northern Provinces, the Western Provinces, and the Eastern Provinces--were created within Nigeria and a substantial devolution of administrative power was given to the three regional headquarters. By the end of the war, the degree of administrative devolution had been of such magnitude as to endow the three regions with an individuality.

In 1946, Sir Arthur Richards introduced a new constitution which in effect set the future pattern for the political history of Nigeria. For the first time in Nigeria, three Regional Houses of Assembly were established--the first step towards establishing a federal system. The Richards' constitution brought about not only further administrative devolution but strengthened and formalized the division by adding budgetary regionalization as well.

After severe criticisms by Nigerian nationalists, especially the newly emerging educated elite, the constitution was revised in 1951 and 1954. The new constitution of 1954 (the Macpherson's) gave semi-autonomous powers to the regions, creating a federation of three regions and the capital city of Lagos.

There are strong arguments for and against a federation of three units (later, four in 1963) as the most feasible that the British could devise, taken for granted that the federal system was the best solution to the country's ills. There may be doubt that Sir Arthur Richards acted in

good faith by providing a system of government in which regional interests would be better taken care of on a regional basis; but there is no question that all the major political issues in Nigeria since Independence have reflected a conflict connected with the tripartite division.[57]

TABLE 5

AREA AND POPULATION OF NIGERIA BY REGIONS 1952-53; 1963

Regions	Area (sq.mi)	1952-53 Population (thousands)	Density (Persons per sq.mi)	1963 Population (thousands)	Density (Persons per sq.mi)
North	281,782	16,835	60	29,809	106
East	29,484	7,215	245	12,394	420
West	30,454	4,595	151	10,266	337
Mid-West	14,922	1,492	100	2,536	170
Lagos Township	27	267	59,889	665	24,630
TOTAL Federation[a]	356,669	30,404	85	55,670	156

[a]Total does not include the 1952-53 figure in respect of ex-Province of Southern Cameroons.

Source: Annual Abstract of Statistics, Nigeria, 1964.

[57]The three major political parties were formed and have operated in response to the three regional power bases; the Census controversy conserved the relative numerical strength of these regions; the election boycott and its attendant consequences portrayed the fear of regional domination; the mass killings in 1966, the two military coups and the civil war have regional annotations. Experience shows that the fewer the units in a federal system, the deeper the polarization among the units.

In a speech delivered at Calabar on July 13, 1946, the former President of Nigeria, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, at that time an active politician, forecast that:

> The Richards' Constitution divides the country into three zones which are bound to departmentalize the political thinking of this country by means of the block vote. Whether Richards intends it or not, it is obvious that Regions will now tend towards Parkistanization than ever before, and our future generations will inherit this legacy that is born out of official sophistry.[58]

One of the major objections to the Richards Constitution was that it was introduced without consulting the people.[59] However, this constitution which laid the framework for Nigerian regionalism was a prompt response to popular demands for constitutional improvement after the war. In his proposals for the revision of the constitution[60] submitted to the Colonial Office in December, 1944, Sir Arthur admitted the fact that he consulted only the three Chief Commissioners in Nigeria.

The proposals hurriedly and unanimously passed the Nigerian Legislative Council in March, 1945 and was ratified by the British Parliament in 1946.[61]

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[58] Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Zik; Selected Speeches, Cambridge University Press, p. 100.

[59] By 1946, when there was no representative assembly of the Nigerian people, the educated elite regarded themselves as the mouthpiece of the people and Richards "seemed to have a special knack for antagonizing (these) educated elements." Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, p. 275.

[60] Proposals for the Revision of the Constitution of Nigeria, Cmnd. 6599, H.M.S.O., 1945 (London).

[61] Nigeria (Legislative Council) Order in Council, 1946.

Although the Constitution set a pattern for a future federal system, it was not meant to introduce a radical change in the British policy of a peaceful evolution towards independence. The Governor saw the problem as how best

> to create a political system which is itself a present advance and contains the possibility of further orderly advance--a system within which diverse elements may progress at varying speeds, amicably and smoothly towards a more closely integrated economic, social, and political unity, without sacrificing the principles and ideals inherent in their divergent ways of life.[62]

In Sir Arthur's conception, regionalism was an essential first step to unity. Its aim was "to promote the unity of Nigeria; to provide adequately within that unity for the diverse elements which make up the country; and to secure greater participation by Africans in the discussion of their own affairs."[63]

Granted that the Governor had the unity of the country at heart and that the diversity of the country made both administrative and political unity difficult, it would seem a contradiction "that proposals framed with this object (the achievement of unity) should have had as their main feature a measure of legislative, financial, and administrative devolution." One of the central arguments in support of federalism is the advantage of decentralization of government powers and functions. However, where powers are decentralized to an insufficient number of units, their exercise will be polarized and the result will be anything but the desired unity.[64]

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[62] Nigeria (Legislative Council), p. 5. [63] Ibid., p. 6.

[64] Kalu Ezera, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria, Cambridge University Press, 1960, p. 74. (For details on the appropriate number of units, see Chapter Four).

A constitutional revision took place in 1950-51 after a long and extensive consultation with the people.[65] The official document that resulted from this cooperative endeavor was a Federal Constitution for Nigeria. It confirmed and consolidated

> what has since become the official view in favor of regionalism, namely, that the best way to strengthen in the long-run the unity of the country was 'to encourage the regions to develop each along its characteristic lines' and 'by that very process the unity of Nigeria will be strengthened.' [66]

At the time that Sir John Macpherson's constitutional proposals were being considered, the Regions were not represented by political parties. With the introduction of the Constitution, the political party system arrived, together with elective representation.

The drawing of a Federal Constitution from a unitary constitution was not as easy as the change from a unitary system to a federal system. The committee that drafted the Federal Constitution complained that

> the problem which confronts us is not an easy one. The federal governments of the United States, Canada, and Australia, for instance, have been built on the basis of separate states surrendering to a federal government some of their powers for the benefit of all. The reverse process on which we are engaged--that of the creation of

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[65] Obafemi Awolowo, Thoughts on the Nigerian Constitution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 11-22.

[66] Colonial No. 464A of July 15, 1950, Dispatch of the Colonial Secretary to the Governor of Nigeria. Quoted from Ezera, Ibid., p. 74.

> federal government by devolution, is a political experiment for which there is no precedent to guide us and we are very conscious of the dangers inherent in such an experiment.[67]

The Colonial Policy of separate regional development leading ultimately to national unity cannot be fully explained without admitting the fact that the Colonial Administration followed the line of the least resistance. Nigeria could have been directed towards the evolution of any number of political units that the British wanted, but they chose the three-unit regional system as the most convenient.

The focus of this chapter and the major emphasis on this study is that the division of Nigeria into two Protectorates and later into three Regions primarily for economic reasons and for colonial administrative convenience was the worst disservice colonialism did to Nigeria. It is upon these major divisions that separatist tendencies have veered. The proportional representation of the Regions at the Federal Legislature which has remained the dominant issue in Nigerian politics is a result of the imbalance in the size and population of the Regions. At the 1953 Constitutional Conference in Lagos, the delegates from Northern Nigeria threatened "that unless the Northern Region was allotted 50 per cent of the seats in the Central Legislature, it would ask for separation from the rest of Nigeria on the arrangements existing before 1914." [68]

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[67] Report of the Drafting Committee on the Constitution, Lagos, p. 3. Quoted from Ezera, Ibid., p. 151.

[68] Proceedings of the Conference on Review of the Constitution, January, 1950 (Lagos, 1950), p. 218.

At the 1959 [Independence] Constitutional Conference in London, delegates from the two Southern Regions made the creation of more Regions out of the original three, their number one priority. In agreement with the Northern Peoples' Congress which represented the North, the Colonial Secretary refused to alter the arrangement before Independence. The unusual compromise to accept Independence in spite of the existing Regional system is accounted for by the helplessness of the Southern Regions who could not do anything about changing Regional boundaries [without the consent of the NPC] short of violence. The 1963 census which some thought was the best hope of legally altering Regional representation showed more people in the North than in the South. With hope of peacefully changing the Regional balance of power by reapportionment dissipated, the Regional arrangement cast a dark shadow on Nigerian politics.

The two Military governments have each drastically grappled with the colonial Regional arrangement, each offering a diametrically opposed solution. Yet a lasting compromise has to be reached.[69]

Parliamentarism

Parliamentarism as a principle of British colonial administration went on side by side with the better publicized principle of Indirect Rule and finally replaced it. A Parliamentary system of government does not become fully entrenched

[69] See Chapter Six for further discussions.

until a responsible government [a government responsible to the people or their representatives] is formed. In Nigeria, the Parliamentary system of government is also called the "Westminster Export-Model."[70] As a model, its actual application reflected local conditions, and accommodated conflicting interests and loyalties and was flexible enough to make room for adaptation.

A Westminster system comprises the main features of the British Constitution. S. A. de Smith defines it as

> a constitutional system in which the head of state is not the effective head of government; in which the effective branch of government is a Prime Minister presiding over a Cabinet composed of Ministers, over whose appointment and removal he has at least a substantial measure of control; in which the effective branch of government is parliamentary inasmuch as Ministers must be members of the legislature and in which Ministers are collectively and individually responsible to a freely elected and representative legislature. [71]

The above definition fits the Nigerian political system at Independence, and with the exception of the name and a few minor changes, the Republican Constitution of 1963 remained the same.[72] Without further clarification, one gets the impression that since the Nigerians when they had a chance to amend an

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[70] S. A. de Smith, "Westminster Export Models: The Legal Framework of Responsible Government," Journal of Commonwealth Studies, Vol. I, No. 1, November, 1961; also S. D. Tansey and D. G. Kermode, "The Westminster Model in Nigeria," Parliamentary Affairs, Winter, 1967-8; Henry Bretton, "The Westminster-Export Model," Power and Stability in Nigeria, ch. 2 (New York: Praeger, 1962); Sir Alan Burns, ed., Parliament as an Export (London: Allen and Urwin, 1966).

[71] Ibid., p. 3.

[72] By declaring a Republic, Nigeria ceases to recognize the British Sovereign as the "head of state."

inherited political system, decided to continue with it, that logically, the inherited system was the best of several alternatives that might have been considered.

The primary reason for adopting a Parliamentary system of government in the first place and continuing with it after Independence is because it was the system most familiar to both British colonial officials and Nigerian politicians. Although several indigenous forms of governments had existed in Nigeria, none seemed to have been acceptable to all parts of Nigeria, let alone function more effectively under a British-guided "infra-structure." In spite of the fact that unlike Britain, Nigeria was a federation and that the United States Presidential system could have been considered a better alternative (judging from the fact that it has lasted longer than any other constitution in history), Nigerian politicians seemed more concerned with the best way of improving the existing system than in changing it. John P. Makintosh notes that:

> While there was much reluctance and even scoffing at the possibility of the various tribes in Nigeria settling down to work a parliamentary system with all its compromises and conventions, there is no evidence that any one of these critics or doubters set down to work out an alternative development. 73

Probably it would not have mattered what form of government Nigeria adopted at Independence; the end result would have been the same. The fault did not lie with the constitution

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[73]John P. Makintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics (London: Allen and Urwin, 1966), p. 20.

alone, but with her (Nigeria's) colonial experience and with contradictory colonial policies.

The Cabinet System

One of the cardinal principles of parliamentarism--the "Cabinet System"--ensures that while Parliament is supreme in lawmaking, it is the Cabinet which directs and controls Parliament, and makes the final determination of policy to be submitted to Parliament.

The Cabinet (or the Council of Ministers) combines both the executive and the legislative powers of the state. The Opposition can have its say, but the government must almost always have its will. In a political system, where the "Outs" feel that they have a chance of becoming the "Ins," and vice versa, "rules of the game" are observed and both Government and Opposition respect each other's rights. This principle of reciprocity is not just established by a constitution, it is learned over a period of years.

All through the colonial period, the "Indirect Rule" System was so greatly encouraged because of the ease with which it could be administered, that there was a natural tendency to delay its ultimate conversion into local government--a stage which embodied the principle of participatory democracy and itself a prerequisite to parliamentarism.

While the Imperial government stressed the importance of local government in all overseas colonies, her agents in Africa saw no sense of haste. Lugard attributed this tendency

to the fact that the authorities in Africa were "unanimous that the era of complete independence is not as yet visible on the horizon of time."[74]

Lord Hailey thought that there was a fundamental conflict between the conception of Indirect Rule and local government which made the development of parliamentary institutions difficult.[75]

Lugard felt that local government, with its attendant Parliamentary Rules and procedures were appropriate only to the towns where there were educated Africans who could profit from Parliamentary institutions, but that it should be kept separate and isolated from the rural areas and all areas where Indirect Rule was already in progress.[76] However, British policy, after Lugard, veered towards extending local government to rural areas and democratizing Native Authorities as a basis to self-government in the distant future.

At the central government level Parliamentary democracy did not exist until developments after World War II made it imperative. With the growth of nationalism ushered in by the new spirit of freedom, all colonial people including Nigeria started to agitate for self-government.

Since the Labour Party, which was in sympathy with Colonial people and stood the 1945 election on the platform

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[74] Lugard, The Dual Mandate, p. 198.

[75] Lord Hailey, An African Survey (1st ed., 1938), pp. 134-5.

[76] Lugard, The Dual Mandate, pp. 570-574.

of decolonization came to power after the war, a change in policy followed. A clear and concise statement of the new policy stated that:

> The central purpose of British colonial policy is simple. It is to guide the colonial territories to responsible self-government within the Commonwealth in conditions that ensure to the people both a fair standard of living and freedom from aggression from any quarter.[77]

In view of the rapid change in policy, it is evident that Parliamentary democracy would not have to wait for the perfection of Indirect Rule. However, before full Parliamentary procedures were finally entrenched in the Nigerian system, the country had experimented with tutelary parliamentarism. The British had placed great emphasis on change towards responsible government or Parliamentary democracy. Side by side with Indirect Rule, they had established the Legislative Council[78] as a Parliament in embryo for the administrative officials of the country, the educated intelligentsia, and the elite.

The first Nigerian Council was instituted by Lugard with the amalgamation of the two parts of Nigeria, in 1914. It consisted of thirty-six members--twenty officials and thirteen unofficials. The officials include the Governor's Executive Council, the First-class Residents,[79] the political

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[77]The Colonial Empire 1947-48 (London: Colonial Office, 1948 (Command 7433).

[78]Irving L. Markovitz, African Politics and Society. New York: The Free Press, 1970, p. 16.

[79]The Colonial officer in charge of a Province was called a "Resident."

Secretaries, and the Secretaries of the Northern and Southern Provinces. The unofficial members were seven Europeans representing the Chambers of Commerce, Shipping, Banking, and Mining, and six Nigerians comprising two Emirs from the North--the Sarkin Musulmi and Sultan of Sokoto, and the Emir of Kano; one Oba from the West--the Alafin of Oyo--and one chief each representing Warri-Benin areas (Mid-West) and Calabar (East).[80] In effect, this Council was the First Nigerian Parliament, but unlike a parliament, it had no legislative powers and contained a token of indigenous Nigerian representation. Its power was deliberative and advisory only.[81] Its main function was the discussion of the Governor's annual address and a few members' motions. The unrepresentative nature of this assembly was confirmed by Lugard himself, when he asserted that

> Before many years are past, I hope and believe that this condition will have changed, and I, or my successors, will see at the meetings of the Council a number of intelligent native chiefs representing the vast masses of the population and able to voice their thoughts. Until that time arrives, they can only be represented by the Governor, by officials who are in daily touch with them . . . and by a few representative chiefs.[82]

Although most of the native chiefs that qualified for appointment to the Nigerian Council could not profitably participate in the deliberations of the Council because of

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80 Federal Ministry of Information, Nigeria's Constitutional Development, 1861-60 (Lagos, 1960), p. 8; Takena Tamuno, Nigeria and Elective Representation, 1923-47 (London: Heinemann, 1966), p. 16.

81 Nigerian Council Order in Council, para. XVIII, 1913; and Statutory Rules and Orders, 1913, p. 241.

82 Proceedings, First Meeting of the Nigerian Council, December 31, 1914.

their educational incapacitation, the educated elite were not appointed in their place. Lugard wrote in defense of this policy that:

> It is the cardinal principle of British Colonial policy that the interests of a large native population shall not be subject to the will either of a small European class or a small minority of educated and Europeanized natives who have nothing in common with them, and whose interests are often opposed to theirs. . . . A Council in such circumstances, as Sir C. Dilke observed in Parliament, 'is not a liberal institution, but a veiled oligarchy of the worst description,' and responsible autocracy is preferable . . .[83]

Sir Hugh Clifford, who succeeded Frederick Lugard in 1919, was equally opposed to a popularly elected representative assembly for all Nigeria. Instead, he abolished the "Nigerian Council" and created a Legislative Assembly for the colony and Southern provinces[84] and assumed the right to legislate for the Northern provinces by proclamation.

Between 1922 and 1946, there was no constitutional advance preparatory for the day of full independence. Joan Wheare describes this period as a time of "unchanging stability which some might call stolidity."[85]

With the return of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe from the United States, in 1937, and his establishment of a chain of newspapers in Nigeria, nationalist activism moved into a high gear. The West African Pilot, which became the champion

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[83] Lugard, Report on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria and Administration, 1912-1919, Cmd. 468, p. 19.

[84] Nigeria (Legislative Council) Order in Council, November, 1922; and Statutory Rules and Orders (Lagos, 1922), p. 291.

[85] Joan Wheare, The Nigerian Legislative Council (London: Faber and Faber, 1950), p. 206.

of nationalist expression editorialized the inadequacy of the Legislative Council of Nigeria. It stated:

> The existence of the Legislative Council of Nigeria is not only anachronistic but also it does not hold out to the peoples of Nigeria any hope for a better status under the aegis of the British Empire.
>
> If the pronouncements of British statesmen in respect to the welfare of the native races both before and during the Second World War should not be taken cum grano salis by enlightened African opinion, then it is our submission that the time is overdue for these high ideals to be translated into practical reality. There is no need to soothe us with the promise of Caanan, when we are yet in the stage of our Exodus from Egypt and are wandering blindly in the wilderness of Kadesh-Barnea, not even able to cross the River Jordan, to witness the fall of Jericho, before reaching the promised land. That is how the African feels about these pronouncements which are germane to the policy of trusteeship in British tropical Africa.[86]

All through the duration of World War II criticism against the Legislative Council continued. The reluctance of the British in introducing a governmental system which would provide Nigerians more participation in the politics and administration of their country was denounced. "The Ex-Service Men's Union" was formed at the end of the war to support the nationalists' demand for self-government. This movement became a political force to be reckoned with.

Before Governor Bernard Bourdillon left the country in the middle of the war (1943) he had promised the people a new constitution at the end of the war and that they would all be consulted before any new constitution took effect. When Artuur Richards came to office as Governor in 1943, he saw the need for a new constitution, but he failed to consult

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[86] West African Pilot, March 2, 1940.

the people before issuing one. Criticizing this extremely paternalistic action, Bourdillon said:

> I should like to suggest that there are three things essential in any constitutional organization be it the Government of a large country or that of a small town. It must not be a mere piece of machinery of purely alien manufacture; it will break down unless those who have to work it can feel familiar with it and think of it as something belonging to them. Nor, to go to the opposite extreme, must it be a fossil, excavated from some museum and polished up for the occasion. What it must be is a living organism, capable of growth and adaption to new circumstances and suggest it can only be that if the people whom it concerns have had a considerable say in its formation, and if it is suited to the soil in which it is intended to grow.[87]

The Richards' Constitution, in addition to establishing three Regional Houses of Assembly, reintroduced a central legislature which represented all the Regions. However, he failed to see the need for direct election and popular representation. Although for the first time in Nigerian history the number of unofficials was greater than the officials[88] only four of the twenty-eight unofficials were elected.[89] The rest were appointed from the list of the respective regional councils, members of which were nominees of Native Authorities.

The British consistently ignored the elective principle which is fundamental to a democratic system. Nigerian

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[87] Sir Bernard Bourdillon, "Nigeria's New Constitution," United Empire, Vol. XXXVII, 1946, pp. 76-80.

[88] Takena N. Tamuno, Nigeria and Elective Representation, 1923-1947 (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1966).

[89] Ibid., pp. 116-117.

nationalists insisted that the nominated members of a legislature did not represent the interests or opinions of the people. Chief Awolowo commented that:

> The retention of the system of nomination cuts the people to the quick. It is wrong in principle. It is believed that it is a subtle device aimed at reducing the unofficial majority of one to a minority by the number of persons nominated. This belief is reinforced by the fact that in the past the Government has consistently shown itself incapable of impartial judgement and wise discernment in the nomination of members.[90]

The Richards' Constitution which set up regional advisory councils aimed at providing "greater participation" in the discussion of the nation's local affairs but without attendant responsibility failed to satisfy nationalist ambition.

The Richards' Constitution was brought to an abrupt end in 1951 and replaced with the Macpherson's Constitution which entrenched the federal principle into the Nigerian political system. The new constitution provided for a central legislature--the House of Representatives and three regional legislatures and governments all with a majority of elected representatives. The balance of power between the center and the regions was heavily weighted in favor of the former. However, in contradiction to what the nationalists had earlier called the "divide and rule" policy of previous British administrations, "the regions proved less anxious to foster the development of Nigeria as a self-governing nation than to advance their separate interests, with the result that the

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90 O. Awolowo, Path to Nigerian Freedom (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1946), p. 129.

constitution had to be recast."[91] The federal constitution of 1954 redressed the balance of power in favor of the regions making them semi-autonomous entities and free to advance constitutionally at their own rate within the federated system.[92]

Parliamentarianism was gradually entrenched into the Nigerian governmental system. It was not altogether a new idea when it was provided by the independence constitution. However, it would be inappropriate to talk of the colonial legislatures as fully parliamentary since their officials were not responsible to the legislatures and since the outnumbered unofficials could only debate but not overturn the government's policy.

A close analogy can be made between colonial legislatures and the legislatures of those new nations where Parliamentary institutions exist only in principle only to be abrogated at the whim of the ruling party.

With the introduction of elective representation in 1951, the emergence of political parties and party governmental system, and the consequent possibility of defeating the Government on policy matters by a negative or no-confidence vote, parliamentarianism became fully entrenched in Nigeria.

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[91] George H. Kimble, Tropical Africa, Vol. II (New York: The 20th Century Fund, 1960), p. 243.

[92] Both the East and the West in 1957, and the North in 1959 achieved internal self-government and independence was granted Nigeria in 1960.

The Parliamentary system of government is a neutral and flexible device of responsible administration. Like any other system of government, one or some of its essential variables can be overstressed or suppressed to the disadvantage or advantage of others and therefore cause a malfunctioning of the system. This chapter does not, therefore, pretend that it was the Parliamentary system that was at fault in Nigeria, but it does point out some factors which due to their developmental history became a source of conflict, and therefore, lent weight to the demise of the system.

In this chapter we have examined the historical development of Colonial policies in Nigeria and factors that conditioned their implementation. In succeeding chapters, these will be analyzed and we shall try to find out how they fit into, contradict, or conflict with existing theories of the political system.

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPACT OF COLONIAL POLICIES ON POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION

The political and administrative issues of post-independence Nigeria, the crises and compromises, the collapse of the civilian government and its replacement by a military government have their roots in the British colonial policies and administrative practices and are therefore a legacy of colonial tutelage. There seems to be no break with continuity in the political system and political institutions inherited from the British on the day of Independence, October 1, 1960 until the first Nigerian Republic met its doom at the hands of the military on January 15, 1966. However, it seems a paradox that in spite of the continuity in the political tradition, practical politics was moving downhill towards a cataclysm. The reasons are not hard to find. As often repeated by most commentators on Nigerian politics, Nigeria is an artificial creation of the British.[1] The major factor that bound the diverse groups together and which was severed

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[1] Lord Hailey described Nigeria as "perhaps the most artificial of many administrative units created in the course of European occupation of Africa." See Lord Hailey, African Survey (rev. ed.; London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 307.

after Independence was their common British overlordship. It is a fact of life that as soon as the binding tie cut loose, there would follow a re-shuffle in the balance of power leading possibly to a constitutional crisis or to the abrogation of the inherited system and its consequent replacement or at worst to the total dismemberment of the country.

Party Politics and Consensus

Party politics was one of the most fundamental traditions Nigeria inherited from the British system of government. Its introduction in Nigeria was disruptive to traditional African cultures. In spite of the fact that the diverse cultures that existed in Nigeria before the British had very little in common, they all conformed with the "consensus" theory in African politics, which holds that Africans of all cultures arrive at decisions by a compromise or consensus and not by a single majority decision; and that "the idea of a permanent and critical opposition . . . /is/ alien."[2]

According to Gray Cowan, the concept of consensus is derived from the traditional African political system of "village" meetings which "provided for limited popular decision making."[3]

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[2] Carl Rosberg, Jr., Democracy and New African States, in St. Anthony's Papers, No. XV (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), p. 30.

[3] L. Gray Cowan, The Dilemmas of African Independence (New York: Walker & Co., 1968), p. 8.

Traditional [4] African societies, the indigenous African societies before European pacification of the continent, were communal societies made up of small tribal groups, who, except in very few cases were never effectively organized into large towns, cities, or states. The tribe was a cohesive social grouping because of the community of language and culture which it provided, but it was never a political or administrative unit.

These traditional societies held political meetings and reached decisions by consensus in a "democratic" and non-partisan manner. According to Cowan, "Few if any traditional rulers in Africa governed as autocrats; usually they were surrounded by councils of some type without whose consent no important decisions could be taken." [5] Politics in a traditional African society was akin to what Pendleton Herring referred to as "the politics of the committee room and council chambers" where discussants "ponder and seek agreement rather than to think that counting noses necessarily dispose of political differences." [6]

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[4] Professors Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., noted authors in the field of Comparative Politics, have for a "developmental" classification purpose defined "traditional" differently. They designate as "traditional system" only those societies or systems with "differentiated governmental-political structures" yet lacking "differentiated political infrastructures" and those without these they dub as "primitive systems." See Almond & Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1966), pp. 213-54.

[5] Cowan, The Dilemmas of African Independence, p. 8.

[6] Pendleton Herring, "The Future of Democracy in Nigeria," in R. Tillman and T. Cole (eds.), The Nigerian Political Scene (Durham: Duke University Press, 1962), p. 256.

Cowan indicates that:

> Provisions /made for reaching decisions in these traditional systems/ did not normally involve expressions of majority and minority opinion tabulated as votes. . . . The decision-making process in these meetings is based upon discussion, which because of its length and fullness gives everyone concerned a chance to express his opinion. The consensus finally reached is shared by all those present, thus obviating the necessity of a vote which would leave the community sharply split; it should also be added that under these circumstances, everyone also shares in the consequences of a decision, good and bad. [7]

Professor Melville Herskovits has testified before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, that:

> In the aboriginal /African/ system, groups were, of course, smaller than today, but when a group could not arrive at unanimity, the minority would simply walk away out of the meeting, and that would mean there would be more talk informally until a unanimous decision was reached. Now this is something that is quite difficult for us to understand; yet it works, and it is democratic.[8]

Commenting on the African belief in the merit of unanimity, Rosberg asserts that:

> The terms of this theory of democracy do not provide for a continuing and critical opposition, as such opposition is conceived as motivated by particularistic motives. This high value given to unanimous affirmation of public interest means, in effect, the state must either convert opposition to its cause or repress it as inimical to the general welfare. [9]

It is important to point out that by the 1860's when the British took over the administration of some parts of Nigeria, the different political systems they encountered were at different levels of political development.

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[7] Cowan, The Dilemmas of African Independence, p. 8.

[8] See Statement by Melville F. Herskovits in U. S. Congress Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings, United States Foreign Policy - Africa, 86th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1960, p. 117.

[9] Rosberg, Democracy and New African States, p. 33.

At this time many coastal chiefs had grown rich and autocratic as a result of the slave trade. The southward spread of Islam which the British presence halted had also fostered centralized and feudalistic communities in the North and parts of Western Nigeria. Therefore, the ideal type communalistic societies with their characteristic consensus decisions were already on the wane when the British took over the administration of Nigeria. Nevertheless, the idea of party politics or the existence of a government and an opposition were absent. They came with the introduction of Parliamentary government into the indigenous systems.

However, we need not speculate what would have happened if the party system was not introduced into African political systems. The party system comes naturally with political development. The "Founding Fathers" of the United States of America wished the union was not divided by "the spirit of party"--which George Washington attacked as having baneful effects, in his Farewell Address. James Madison is noted for his famous attack on "faction" in "Federalist" No. 10. He used the term "faction" interchangeably with party, interest, sect, division, and group. [10] In spite of what may be the

[10] Professor Dahl cites Madison's article entitled "A Candid State of Parties" published in the Philadelphia National Gazette in 1792 where Madison said that "those who espouse the cause of independence and those who adhered to the British claims, formed the parties of the first period." Concerning "divisions" Madison wrote: "The Federal Constitution . . . gave birth to the second and most interesting division of the people . . . those who embraced the constitution. . . . those who opposed the constitution. . . . This state of parties was terminated . . . in 1788." See Robert A. Dahl, Pluralist Democracy in the United States: Conflict and Consent (Chicago: Rand and McNally, 1967), p. 207ff.

baneful effects of the party system of politics, it has come to stay as a vehicle of modern government. Whatever benefit attaches to small societies as units of government, the modern state system will of necessity be made up of large communities. However, the idea inherent in reaching decisions by consensus has been transferred to the one-party state theory in African politics. The most representative exponent of this theory, Julius Nyerere, asserts that:

> "Where there is one party, and that party is identified with the nation, the foundations of democracy are firmer than they can ever be where you have two or more parties, each representing only a section of the community.[11]

President Nyerere and other apologists for the one-party system emphasize that African governments need unity and undivided loyalty in order to withstand the centrifugal forces engendered by the amalgamation of several tribal groups into pluralistic states. In support of the one-party system as democratic (as opposed to popular views held by political scientists of the Western tradition) Professor Emerson says that:

> While it is evidently not necessarily the case that two or more parties should prejudice or disrupt the insipient national unity, it is reasonable to expect that they will not promote unity to the same extent as a single party, dedicated to that purpose, and national unity is regarded as a more real and desirable good than a pluralistic political freedom.[12]

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[11] Julius K. Nyerere, Democracy and the Party System (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Standard, Ltd.) Published without date.

[12] Rupert Emerson, "Political Modernization: The Single Party System," in Political Parties, ed. by Roy C. Macridis (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 261.

Although Professor Emerson supports the "African view" of the necessity of the one-party system, he regrets its tendency towards authoritarianism which he characterizes as "deriving from the lack of national unity rather than the expression of it."[13]

The central issue for the one-party state system is the achievement of national unity through the assurance of consensus,[14] which is easier to reach where all people politically aware, belong to the same party instead of two or several. A keen student of the political system, Claude Ake[15] sees the unity and stability of the political system as dependent on political integration which is facilitated more by a consensus of the elite decision makers than consensus by the mass public. In support of Professor Ake, Christian Patholm asserts that "if the elite of a variety of societies and regions support the system as a whole, a wide spectrum of territorial or value malintegration may be tolerated."[16]

Much as consensus is important for the survival of a political system in the absence of strong integrative forces, it is equally as difficult to achieve as political integration

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13 Emerson, "Political Modernization," p. 262.

14 'Consensus" in this study is defined as an agreement approaching unanimity. Political scientists do not yet agree at what point a majority becomes a consensus. See James W. Prothro and Charles M. Griff, "Fundamental Principles of Democracy: Bases of Agreement and Disagreement," Journal of Politics, Vol. 22 (1960), pp. 276-94.

15 Claude Ake, Theory of Political Integration (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1967).

16 Christian Potholm, Four African Systems (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 12.

in a plural society where the legitimacy of a newly inherited system has yet to be tested and proved by the passage of time.

Party Politics in a Federal Parliamentary System

British colonial policies and the colonial administrative system have direct effect on the origin and functioning of the Nigeria party system. The nature, origin, and growth of the three major political parties that existed in Nigeria exhibited an unmistakable response to the creation of a three-unit self-governing or semi-autonomous subsystems within a federal Nigerian system. The Regional System engendered a psychological and philosophical need for each political party to secure a region as its home base, which in turn makes the formation of, or the existence of national political parties very difficult.

Professor Carl Friederich points to the fact that in a federal system of government "parties tend towards paralleling the governmental setup,"[17] that is, the number of parties tend to correlate with the number of units in the federation. This is quite natural since political parties are formed for organizing and winning elections and controlling a government. Professor Friederich emphasizes that "if the government is federally structured, parties must adapt themselves to such a structure."[18]

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[17] Carl J. Friederich, Trends of Federalism in Theory and Practice (New York: Praeger, Inc., 1968), p. 47.

[18] Ibid., p. 47.

Consistent with Professor Friederich's theory about party adaptation to the federal structure, one can logically argue that the number of federal units, their size, relative wealth, and population have a direct influence on party politics and political participation. For example, if a federation is made up of say four federal units (or four Regions to use the Nigerian designation) instead of twenty or thirty, and assuming that major interests fall on the grooves of regional boundaries, then decisions of the central government will approximate those of the biggest units. This becomes clearly evident when one of the units is known to account for more than half of the federation, both in size and in population. Given these circumstances, parties will tend to be regionally based in order to protect regional interests.

Federal states have more problems of party unity than unitary states because the nature of a federation demands the decentralization of power and of influence; therefore, whenever there are conflict situations between the policy makers at the national level and those at the regional level, there is a conflict of party loyalty which threatens a split in the party. Party discipline is most in danger when the party is the government at the Regional level, but an Opposition or a junior partner in a coalition[19] at the federal level.

Two of the largest federations in the world--the United States and the Soviet Union--also the two major world powers, have learned to cope with their federal problems. Each has

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19 The crises in the Action Group in 1962 and in the NCNC in 1964 clearly illustrate the point.

built-in devices that counteract federal centrifugal forces. In the Soviet Union the Communist Party supersedes and transcends the formal federation of the governmental structure. In the United States the large number of federal units (states) counteracts the centrifugal effects of "local parties"[20] and makes a national party a "must" for the purpose of winning Presidential elections. Other successful federations--West Germany, and Australia -- have strong cohesion in their national party organizations because they have to their advantage such fundamental unifying factors as language and common culture, which are lacking in many plural societies.

The parliamentary form of government inherited from colonial administration prescribes that a political party or a coalition of parties that wins a single majority forms the government and others take the place of the opposition. Because of its policy of concentrating both the legislative and executive power on the government and therefore on the ruling party, the parliamentary system almost always malfunctions in a largely underdeveloped federal system. In a non-parliamentary system, for instance, the Presidential system, the concomitant principle of separation of powers protects national interests from being subsumed by regional interests.

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[20] The two major political parties in the United States are in effect a federation of "state parties." The low degree of party discipline is cited as an effect of this decentralization of the party machine.

TABLE 6

DISTRIBUTION OF NON-AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

Employer	No. of Employees	% of Total
Federal government	47,500	9.9
Regional governments	71,100	15.1
Local governments and others	87,000	18.1
Public corporations	95,600	20.1
Total public employees	302,200	63.2
Private, commercial, and other	176,100	36.9
Total	478,300	100.0

Source: Federal Office for Statistics; Report on Employment and Earning Enquiry, Lagos, 1958; Taylor Cole, "The Independence Constitution," ed. by Tilman and Cole, The Nigerial Political Scene (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1962), p. 90.

Since the government is the greatest employer[21] in an underdeveloped state, in spite of all the provisions in the constitution to ensure equal opportunity for all citizens, politicians in power will give their supporters an economic advantage over non-supporters of the party in order to bolster their support and ensure re-election. This situation is not necessarily peculiar to parliamentary governments. Given the same conditions, it would be true of all governments. Yet

[21] See Table 6 above.

this is not the same as saying that all kinds of governments are equally susceptible to corruption. What we are trying to establish is that looking at government from the view of its legislative and executive roles, one sees these two roles in the same hands in the parliamentary system. On the other hand, the two roles are in different hands (even though the chief executive may be elected from a majority party) if the system is Presidential. All things being equal, a party with an entrenched support of a Region, which is larger than the other Regions combined, will necessarily increase its domination of the affairs of the federation more than it would if the system was Presidential rather than parliamentary. However, a Presidential system might not have solved Nigeria's problems as former President, Dr. Azikiwe (who had advocated a strong Presidential system) and the late Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar, had come to realize.[22]

A strong Presidential system might also leave both Executive and Legislative powers in the hands of the same party that dominates the parliamentary system. From whichever side one views the Nigerian situation, one will, no doubt, see the anomally of British policy in helping to build an inherent domination of a federation by a constituent faction. By the normal process of expending political patronage, awarding contracts, and even performing necessary duties, the government in power lulls the most

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[22] Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Essentials for Nigerian Survival," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 43 (April, 1965), pp. 447-461.

influencial members of the public to its side. In the case of an undeveloped country where the means of communication are poor or inadequate, the party in power uses state apparatus and instrumentalities in propagating its views and winning adherents, and controlling and/or suppressing the opposition. In general, a ruling party in any system of government stands a better chance of winning re-election, than a party out of power unless there is a break in party unity or a break in the party-coalition.[23]

In a country where each of the major political parties is rooted in a federal unit or Region and each Regional legislature is dominated by members of one party, a psychological situation is created where parties will become identified with the Regions they govern and consequently efforts to build strong trans-Regional party loyalty will meet with failure. If party inter-Regional loyalty is lost, then national integration will be difficult to achieve.

The one-party trend which has become the most striking feature of the political structure of most African states focusses attention on the problems of political integration and nation building. This trend has affected Nigeria only at the Regional level. The Regional system of Nigerian federalism would make a one-party Nigeria state almost an impossibility. For the same reasons that a one-party Nigerian state would be undreamed of, a strong national party with overall national

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23 The Action Group suffered a defeat in the Western Region in 1962 because of an internal crisis. In spite of the crisis, the minority faction of the party--then called the U.P.P.--allegedly rigged the election to retain control of the government.

interest and identity would be hard to build, except by extra-legal means.

The Origin of the Major Political Parties[24]

The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons[25] started in 1944 as a national party. Before the party came into being, there had existed in the country nationalistic associations--the Nigerian Union of Students, the Nigerian Youth Movement, the Nigerian Trade Union Movement, and some professional groups, as well as some tribal unions.[26]

As the end of World War II was in sight, most of these national groups, as well as some tribal groups, pulled their sources together to form the NCNC in order to press on the British government to revise the existing constitution, which they denounced as unrepresentative and unresponsive to nationalist aspirations.

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[24] See Richard Sklar, Nigerian Political Parties (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963); Nnamdi Azikiwe, The Development of Political Parties in Nigeria (London: 1957); James Coleman and Carl Rosberg, Jr., Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

The historical aspect of political parties in Nigeria has been well covered. Emphasis here is on the connections between tribal and regional rivalries, the origin and development of parties, and how these were affected by colonial policies or other influences that might be a source of future conflict.

[25] The NCNC became The National Council of Nigerian Citizens in 1960 when Southern Cameroons broke off from Nigeria to join the Cameroon Republic.

[26] See African Affairs, Vol. 44, No. 17 (October, 1945), p. 165. This publication gives a comprehensive list of 105 member unions, including some 60 tribal unions representing the major tribes of Southern Nigeria--the Ibo, Yorubo, Edo, and Efik. Only the Tiv Progressive Union came from the North.

Herbert Macaulay was elected President and Nnamdi Azikiwe the Vice-President of the NCNC.[27] The almost immediate introduction (1945) of the Richards' constitution provided a rallying force to the militancy of the party. The new constitution, far from satisfying the new champions of nationalism, created an atmosphere for open revolt. A general strike went into effect two months after the constitution was approved to protest the ever-increasing cost of living. The strike was very effective--the first of its kind in Nigeria--lasting 37 days and involving 30,000 public employees and resulting in the banning of Dr. Azikiwe's two Lagos Dailies--the West African Pilot, and the Comet--and press censorship during the interlude. A commission of inquiry was set at the end.[28] The NCNC party leaders exploited the situation and launched nation-wide meetings of protest and fund raising. At the death of Macaulay, Azikiwe succeeded to the presidency of the NCNC, and headed the party's delegation to London to present their grievances to the Colonial Office. But the Colonial Secretary refused to alter the constitution and to receive the delegation. Dr. Azikiwe recalled that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Arthur Creech-Jones, "treated our National Delegates and the national cause we sent them to represent in a most summary, unpleasant, unfavorable,

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[27] Nnamdi Azikiwe, The Development of Political Parties in Nigeria (London, 1957), p. 10.

[28] "Enquiry into the Cost of Living and the Control of the Cost of Living in the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria," Col. No. 204 (London: 1946).

and disappointing manner which we regard as a great insult to our entire Nation."[29]

The Macpherson Constitution of 1951 placed Lagos under the jurisdiction of the Western Region and provided for indirect election to the three Regional Houses, which in turn elected the members of the central legislature. Elections were conducted on a three-stage electoral college system in the East and in the West, and on a four-stage system in the North. That is, elections were first held to choose representatives at the local level. These in turn met and elected representatives on the provincial level, who in turn elected the Regional representatives, who finally chose members of the federal House of Representatives. Therefore, Regional representation was at large or on a multi-member constituency basis. Surprisingly this system of indirect election created an atmosphere for expressing tribal differences and tribal hatred. The strong party support by some tribal unions, chiefly the Ibo National Union and the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (a Yoruba Cultural Organization) embittered relations between supporters of the NCNC who were Ibo and those who were Yoruba and caused the NCNC to be regarded as an Ibo tribal party. As a result of this, the popularly known Ibo and leader of the NCNC, Dr. Azikiwe, who had represented Lagos at the Legislative Council, failed to be elected from Western Nigeria to the House of Representatives at Lagos.

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[29]Quoted in West African Pilot, April 7, 1948.

The Action Group party emerged from a Yoruba cultural organization--The Egbe Omo Oduduwa ("Society for the Descendents of Oduduwa"--the mythical progenitor and cultural hero of the Yoruba people) which was organized by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in 1948. It claimed the support of traditional Yoruba leaders and called on all Yoruba people to support a party dedicated to their welfare. Because of the late start of the Action Group and the fact that it was dedicated to protect Yoruba cultural heritage, the party came out in strong support of the Regional system and the indirect electoral system which the NCNC had opposed. At the conclusion of the West Regional election in 1951, no party had a clear majority, but some members of the NCNC successful candidates, together with some "independent" candidates, declared for the Action Group to concede that party the majority and government of the Region.

The Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) was formed in 1948 by Dr. A. R. B. Dikko, the first medical officer of Northern origin, and Malam D. A. Rafih, a senior employee of the Nigerian Railways. The Congress did not become a political party until 1951. It started as a social and cultural organization with a declared intention of warring against ignorance, idleness, and oppression in the North.[30] Coleman and Rosberg considered that the NPC declaration of intention emphasizing progressive political reforms was a guise which "was considered

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30 Richard Sklar and C. S. Whitaker, "Nigeria," in Coleman and Rosberg (eds.) Political Parties and National Integration (Berkeley: California University Press, 1966), p. 606.

prudent to adopt because nearly all its members were government or native authority employees for whom political activity was proscribed or discouraged.[31] At this time, all the high Native Authority posts in Northern Nigeria were occupied by hereditary rulers and high status people in their communities, and therefore any political organization formed by such people would tend to be conservative and any changes advocated would be understandably sympathetic with the existing social and political order of the day.

Unlike the NCNC and the Action Group, and the minority political parties in each of the three Regions who organized in protest to some aspect of British colonial administration or with a view to forming the government of their Region, the NPC was formed by moderate progressives who wanted conservative reforms from the traditional feudalistic system to the parliamentary system, yet not abandoning the traditional authority system with its status symbols. The party, while restricting its membership to people of Northern origin, had as one of its primary objects, "to prevent Southern domination."[32] Two of the most distinguished members of the party, the late Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarduana of Sokoto, and the late Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa entered the party in 1951 and were elected president and vice-president of the party, respectively, which posts they retained until their assassinations in 1966.

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[31] Sklar and Whitaker, "Nigeria," p. 606.

[32] Ibid.

Two rival parties to the NPC, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) were formed to oppose the Native Authority System and the status quo; and therefore earned the hostility of the traditional Fulani aristocracy. Being in the minority in a parliamentary system, both allied with the two Southern-based parties--NEPU with the NCNC, and UMBC with the Action Group. In both the East and the West, several local parties of minority groups were formed, each aligned with the majority party in the other Region. None was in alliance with the NPC until much later.

The election to the Northern House of Assembly in 1951 was not contested on party tickets and the government was not organized on party basis, nor were ministers so appointed. However, the predominance of the Native Authority officials in the newly elected House created a merger between hereditary authority and delegated power; which in turn deepened the distinction between supporters of the existing Native Authority system and its opponents. The former retained control of the House until the government officially acknowledged in 1953 that the NPC was in control.

Because of the close connection between the traditional Native Authority system and the elective parliamentary system and the fact that Sir Ahmadu Bello, who was the religious leader of the predominantly Moslem North, was chosen as the Northern Premier, the government of the NPC became rooted on a solid foundation. The Party continued to maintain solidarity

with the traditional rulers, both in government and out of it. Richard Sklar and C. S. Whitaker, Jr. describe the party's close relationship with the administrative apparatus of the Region as symbiotic: "The party acts in defence of traditional authority, and traditional authority sustains the party." [33]

In all the constitutional conferences that preceded Independence, the NPC insisted that the North should remain an unbroken governmental unit within a federal Nigeria and that residual powers should be left with the Regions. It might look contradictory that a party which expected to dominate the federal government had consistently favored a weak center and strong Regional powers, and had threatened to pull out of the federation if this arrangement was not accepted. The simple logic of the NPC is that given time to organize and minimum interference from outside the Region, the party would consolidate the North under its administration, after which it would be fully entrenched to dominate the politics of the federation.

Rival Nationalism: National vs. Regional Loyalty

Nationalism as a political theory, creed, or doctrine is capable of many different interpretations. This is more so in a plural society where the term "nation" can be applied to the sovereign state or its constituent parts. If "nationalism" is hard to define, it is even more difficult to define a "nation." "Most writers," according to Frederick Hertz,

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[33] Sklar and Whitaker, "Nigeria," p. 625.

"who have attempted to define the concept of a nation have pointed out objective factors as the decisive criteria, i.e., factors independent of the will of individuals." [34] The most frequent and obvious criterion according to Hertz is language. Other writers have stressed the importance of race, religion, culture, and geography. However, any one definition based exclusively on one or several of these factors is inadequate, because "none of them fits all cases of recognized nations and none explains the typical aspirations called national." [35]

Many other theorists see nationalism not as a fixed concept, but a varying combination of beliefs and conditions. Boyd Shafer says that "nationalism is in part founded on myth but myths, like other errors, have a way of perpetuating themselves and of becoming not true but real." [36] He believes that myth, actuality, truth, and error are inextricably intermixed in modern nationalism. "The only way then that one can get at the true nature of nationalism would be to determine what beliefs--however true or false--and what conditions--however misinterpreted--are commonly present." [37]

Historically, several things are known to determine how nationalism is expressed or practiced. Among these are the nation's social structure, physical environment, geographical

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[34] Frederick Hertz, Nationality in History and Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 11.

[35] Ibid., p. 12.

[36] Boyd Shafer, Nationalism: Myth and Reality (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1955), p. 7.

[37] Ibid.

location, and political culture. A contemporary theoretician on nationalism, Hans Kohn,[38] traces the history of the fundamental belief of nationalism to the old Biblical concepts of "the chosen race" and "the promised land," (i.e., the concepts of a distinct people, specially marked out for a distinct end or role). The principles and practices derived from these concepts (which may be conscious or unconscious) create an attitude or feeling of oneness among the people. How the common feeling or attitude is channelled depends upon the issues of the moment, the political, military, and intellectual leadership of the time, and common historical experience--especially the most recent. However, in spite of the different variations of expression, there is always that element of national consciousness which demands loyalty and devotion to the nation and an exaltation of the nation above all others. There is an emphasis on the culture and common interests of the nation as opposed to subordinate areas and supranational groups.

In Nigerian politics, nationalism is expressed on three levels--the tribal, the regional, and the national level. The expression "one state, many nationalisms" fits the Nigeria situation. Rupert Emerson's definition of a nation as being "the largest community which when the chips are down effectively commands men's loyalty, overriding the clans both of the lesser communities within it . . . "[39] gives credence to

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[38] Hans Kohn, Nationalism: Its Meaning and History (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955).

[39] Rupert Emerson, From Empire to Nation: The Rise of Self-Assertion of Asia and African Peoples (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), pp. 95-6.

the view that tribal loyalty plays a greater part in Nigerian politics than loyalty to the Region or the state. However, the major national issues (excluding intraregional problems) that constantly faced the politicians and finally brought them to their knees were expressed regionally or nationally. Since the federal units are regions and not tribes, national issues revolved on more or less concessions to the Regions, more or less power to the Regions, fair or unfair allocation of resources to the federal units. Expressions indicate tribal overtones simply because of language [40] and because the three major tribes had become so predominant in each Region that the "Region" is equated with the "tribe." In spite of the multiplicity of languages, there is strikingly no correlation between linguistic and cultural differences. Instead, a high degree of cultural homogeneity existed in each Region, especially in the North and in the West and less so in the East. Akin Mabogunje explains that:

> Part of the reason for this has been in some areas conquest, in others the imposition of a new religion and a new way of life, and still in others to political control and organization. Nonetheless, there are areas where cultural homogeneity has been achieved through more peaceful means of interaction, trade and religious proselytization. [41]

Relationship between the Regions were marked by rivalry, distrust, and lack of cooperation. Remarks made by most of

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[40] About two-thirds of the people speak one of the three major languages--Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba--between them.

[41] Akin Mabogunje, "Land, People, and Tradition in Nigeria," in Franklin Blitz, (ed.) Politics and Administration of Nigerian Government (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1965), p. 18.

the leaders of thought in Nigeria on the question of Nigerian unity support this view. The strained relationship is more clearly marked between the Southern Regions and the Northern Region. Sylvester Whitaker clearly illustrates the reasons for the North's hostilities towards the South:

> Past animosity toward Southern Nigerians was a product of the latter's special position in the North in combination with the enormous cultural gulf existing between the two peoples, in language, religion, social situations, and customs, and perhaps most fatefully of all in traditional orientation towards political authority. There had been just enough commercial activity in the North to attract colonies of Southerners who operated either as private entrepreneurs or as agents of expatriate firms which naturally preferred them to Northerners because of educational qualification and experience. It had similarly been the habit of the colonial administration in the North to recruit southerners to secondary clerical posts and the like. The Southerner's superior knowledge, together with the legal authority and powers he sometimes enjoyed, by virtue of his official duties, inevitably exposed him to temptations of abuse and arrogance towards the illiterate Northern peasant.[42]

The rivalry and hostility between Westerners and Easterners on the other hand are imbedded in their history and early development. Because of the dominant role which the Ibos and the Yorubas play in the Eastern and the Western Regions, respectively, Regional nationalism entailed tribal hostility between the Ibos and the Yorubas.

The Ibos, by dint of necessity, have learned to be hard-working and success-oriented. They were in contact with Western education and influence much later than the Yorubas,

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[42]C. Sylvester Whitaker, Jr., The Politics of Tradition: Continuity and Change in Northern Nigeria, 1946-1966 (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 63.

and therefore trod the latter in the number of educational institutions and their concomitant benefits until the 1960's when they caught up with the Westerners, thereby redressing the balance between the East and the West and tilting the balance between the North and the South. [43]

TABLE 7
REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN POTENTIAL AND SKILLED MANPOWER, 1963

	Potential Manpower (School Enrolment)		Skilled Manpower (excluding teaching & research)		
			Intermediate		Senior
Region	Primary	Secondary	Category		Category
North	410,706	9,881	North	11,549	2,220
East	1,278,706	39,938	East	6,341	2,640
West	1,099,418	60,630	West	8,713	3,132
Lagos	107,552	11,372	Lagos	17,560	5,738

Source: Federal Office of Statistics, Economic Indicators (Lagos, 1966).

The figures above indicate a wide gap between the North and the South in the amount of available and potential manpower. While not in themselves an indication of rivalry or competition, the unevenness of development above suggests a source of future conflict which could arise when the least developed Region, acquiring political power, might use it ruthlessly--as it actually turned out to be--to offset the imbalance.

As a result of high density of population in the Eastern Region, and greater economic and educational opportunities in the urban areas, the Ibos migrated in great numbers and spread

[43] See data on potential and skilled manpower above.

all over the urban areas of the country. The greatest emigration of the Ibos to the other Regions of Nigeria was between 1940 and 1950, when there was the greatest opportunity for business enterpreneurship and the greatest demands for technical competence and white collar jobs, both in government and business.

Effects of the Regional System on Constitutional Development

The development of Nigeria's constitutional structure was based on cultural and Regional nationalism rather than on Nigerian nationalism. The separate development of the Regions had the effect of sectionalizing both the people and the institutions they adopted, and as years passed each Region tended to maximize its own security. Thus, there appeared a three-dimensional struggle for power among the three constituent parts of the country, championed by the three major political parties.

Around 1950, when the North realized its economic position vis-à-vis the South, it started to push for a federal system of government with a weak centre and threatened secession if this wish was not granted.[44] A very strong factor which had conditioned national politics from the formation of the Northern and Southern Provinces had been the Northern fear of Southern domination in a unitary system of government, where employment opportunities could be based on academic qualifications, which /situation/ would reserve an inferior status for

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[44] See Tekena N. Tamuno, "Separatist Agitations in Nigeria since 1914," The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 8, No. 4 (1970), pp. 563-584.

Northerners. In order to counteract this socio-economic advantage of the South over the North, the latter capitalized her numerical strength which was translated into political power. The Macpherson's Constitution conceded the North half of the 134 seats in the central legislature in order to appease her and prevent secession. Thus political power was balanced initially between the North and the South.

Both the decisions to use the Native Authorities as the basis of representation under the 1946 constitution and the use of an electoral college (made up of successive tiers of indirect election) to elect members of the House of Representatives in 1951 strengthened the basis of Indirect Rule and the forces of traditionalism as opposed to Nigerian nationalism. Richard Sklar argues that:

> The entire course of Nigeria's post-war constitutional development--the movement from the essentially unitary structure of 1946 to 'strong' federation in 1951 to 'weak' federation in 1954--was determined largely by the attempt to perfect a parliamentary system at the center while keeping ajar the door to survival of traditional forms in the emirates.[45]

The system of indirect election was a compromise to the principle of elective representation. Earlier in 1948, during a debate on local government at an African Conference held in London, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa had observed that:

> The system of election is a democratic instrument. The system of indirect election to the central legislature is recognized as an immediate compromise in view of the high proportion of illiteracy now prevailing in the African colonial territories. It is not acceptable, . . . as a final method of choice and we hope that the

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[45] Whitaker, The Politics of Tradition, p. 53.

> ultimate policy must aim at the polls and the ballot box as the final method of choice for selection of members of the central legislature.[46]

With equal representation of both South and North and their interests polarized, confrontation was unexpected. In 1953, the House reached an impasse over a motion by a representative from Western Nigeria, Chief Akintola to demand self-government in 1956. All delegates from the Southern Regions were in favor of the motion and all Northern delegates opposed it; the impasse created a constitutional crisis which led to convening a constitutional conference in London.

The 1953 constitutional conferences culminated in the adoption of a federal constitution for Nigeria. Based on the 1953 census, the reconstituted House of Representatives in 1954 contained 184 elected members--92 from the North, 42 from the West, 42 from the East, six from Southern Cameroons, and two from Lagos. [47] The balance between the North and the South was still retained.

All through this chapter, the central focus has been on representation as the basis for power. It is important to emphasize this polarization between the North and the South because it was artificially created by the British policy of long separation between the two Protectorates. The rivalry between the East and the West came only after the federal constitution of 1954 gave residual powers to the Regions and

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[46] The Nigerian Gazette Extraordinary, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 35, July 6, 1951, cited by Tamuno, Nigeria and Elective Representation, p. 117.

[47] See Federal Ministry of Information, Nigeria's Constitutional Development, p. 20.

diverted the attention of politicians from the federal to the Regional Legislatures. The leading politicians, including the leaders of the three major political parties, decided to stand elections at the Regional level to head their Regional governments.

Rivalry between the NCNC and the A.G. started with the introduction of party politics in the West Regional election in 1951 as discussed earlier. The Action Group emerged to challenge the leadership of the NCNC which had already established in the West. With dynamic leadership and good organizational structure, appeals to Yoruba cultural homogeneity, and adoption of a platform advocating the Federalization of Nigeria to insure that a Yoruba-born leader was the head of at least one constituent part of Nigeria, the Action Group won in the West. In his autobiography, Chief Awolowo devotes two chapters on the development of Federalism in Nigeria. He claims that:

> Until 1951, when the Action Group proclaimed its slogan of Unity through Federation, the question as to what type of constitution Nigeria should have was not at all an issue in the country's politics. [48]

When the Action Group established roots in Western Nigeria, rivalry between the party and the NCNC turned into rivalry between Ibos and other non-Yorubas in the West on one hand, and Yorubas on the other. On becoming the Opposition in the Western House, the NCNC championed the cause of the

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48 Obafemi Awolowo, Awo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp. 160 plus.

minorities and capitalizing on their support forced the creation of the Midwest Region out of the Action Group controlled Western Region. The party was not able to do this until it went into coalition with the NPC at the national government level.

It is contended by many critics that although the federal government acted within the letter of the law when it declared that a state of emergency existed in the Western Region in 1962, the NPC-NCNC federal coalition was influenced by a motive to crush a "disliked" opposition. James O'Connell contends that "no objective circumstances existed that would have justified the declaration of a state of emergency."[49] The institution of a state of emergency and the subsequent appointments of a civilian administrator and a commission of inquiry into the affairs of the statutory services of the West Regional government are series of events that helped crush the political power of the Action Group. Professor O'Connell regards these series of actions taken by the Federal government not as a breach of the law or of the constitution, but a breach of the "rules of the game"--

> those willed restraints on competition that prevent politicians from destroying one another, . . . there is implicit in the action of those concerned an appeal to manipulation of law and control of situations through superior force.[50]

It is a matter beyond the scope of this research to say what the government should or should not have done under

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49 James O'Connell, "The Fragility of Stability: The Fall of the Nigerian Federal Government," in Robert I. Rosberg and Ali Mazrui (eds.), Protest and Power in Black Africa (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 1018.

50 Ibid., p. 1019.

the given circumstances, but evidences show that both the NPC and the NCNC increased their political power while that of the Action Group was literally obliterated as a result of government emergency measures.

Events and the trend of politics leading from the 1963-4 census to the 1965 federal election brought the NPC and the NCNC in confrontation with each other and the old North-South rivalry re-emerged.

Suffice it to say in summary that a two-front and a three-front struggle for power was endemic in Nigerian politics because of the historical development of the two Protectorates which later became three Regions. If the locus for power, that is, the number of constituent units in the Nigerian Federation had been several instead of two, polarization for power would have been on several fronts instead of two or three as more politicians would have been content to exercise power at the several Regional levels, rather than to take the place of perpetual opposition.

Minority Fears and Problems-- The Case for More States

The problem of the minorities is not a new invention in the political dictionary of Nigeria. It has behind it what could now be regarded as history.[51] The national minority problem, while endemic in Nigeria, is not peculiar to Nigeria alone. It is the characteristic of every multi-national state.

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[51] Problems of Nigerian Minorities (Pacific Printing and Publishing Works, 1958), p. 1.

A contemporary scholar on national minorities, Carlyle Macartney, asserts that "wherever more nations than one are joined in a single state, a national problem of minorities will exist, and wherever a nation is divided between more states than one, there is at least a potential international problem.[52] Both situations were present in Nigeria during the period that this study covers. The many tribal groups could very well be regarded as distinct nationalities or nations.[53] The tri-partite division of Nigeria, so

TABLE 8

MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS CONSTITUTING MINORITY AREAS IN 1958

North		East		West	
Ethnic Group	Population	Ethnic Group	Population	Ethnic Group	Population
Hausa-Fulani	8,500,000	Ibo	5,000,000	Yoruba	4,300,000
Kanuri	1,175,000	Ijaw	250,000	Edo	446,000
Nupe	347,000	Efik	71,000	Urhobo	243,000
Yoruba	536,000	Ibibio	747,000	Ibo	250,000
Tiv	772,000			Ijaw	65,000
Others	5,000,000			Itsekiri	21,000

Sources: Nigeria. Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the fears of Minorities and the means of allaying them. Cmnd. 505 (London: H.M.S.O., 1958; Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, p. 15; Henry L. Bretton, Power and Stability in Nigeria (New York: Praeger, Inc., 1962), p. 128.

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[52] Carlyle Macartney, National States and National Minorities (New York: Russel and Russel, 1958), p. 480.

[53] Obafemi Awolowo, Thoughts on the Nigerian Constitution (Ibadan: O.U.P., 1966), pp. 91-92; Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Essentials for Nigerian Unity," Foreign Affairs, 1965, p. 457.

illogically done, split some of these nations thereby creating a potential inter-regional problem.

> It is an administrative blunder to have part of the Ijaws in the Western Region, while the other part is in the East. It is equally unthinkable why there should be Yorubas in the North when the West is its proper place. The same applies to the Ibos in the West when the Ibos actually belong to the East.[54]

Such administrative bungling as indicated above was defended in the name of creating viable and stable institutions which Nigeria needed at the earliest age of its developmental history and which was good for its short-term effects, but its long-term effects were supportive of the increased restlessness of minority elements that plagued the post-Independence federal system.

It was one of the most difficult tasks of the British colonial administration to devise a political structure which would keep the more than two-hundred ethnic groups in Nigeria as a political unit and yet assure to each group protection from domination by the more powerful ones. A new state comprising many ethnic and cultural groups and also divided by religion confronts problems more acute and quite different from those of another state where virtually everyone speaks the same language or belongs to the same religion.

Nigeria's minority problems became more complicated by the introduction of administrative systems which tended to perpetuate the differences rather than eradicate them. The British were caught in the middle between conflicting interests and loyalties: whether to allow each recognizable ethnic or

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[54] Problems of Nigerian Minorities, Ibid., p. 1.

cultural group to constitute a distinct unit of the state or whether to form larger units (regions) out of the multiplicity of ethnic-linguistic groups.

Another variation of the administrative dilemma was whether to organize Nigeria on a unitary or federal governmental system. On the first dilemma, the British decided on the regional system. On the second question, both the British and an overwhelming majority of the Nigerian elite decided on adopting a federal over a unitary system. It is remarkable that although most African nationalists, especially Nigerians, condemned colonial political boundaries yet they very strictly stuck to these political boundaries after Independence. With regards to Nigeria, the reasons are not hard to find. The new regional system created "a hierarchy of new loyalties each supreme in its own sphere and perfectly 'natural' because all are traditional." [55] It is hard to judge whether the British promotion of regionalism in Nigeria was a deliberate attempt to prevent an overall Nigerian national consciousness or as Burke put it [this was the British popular conception], "a necessary preliminary to the love of an extensive country or nationality." [56]

Strong fears of political incapacitation and domination were expressed for the first time in each of the three Regions in 1951. Since then the minority problem has become a permanent political issue in Nigerian politics.

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[55] Carlton Hayes, The Historic Evolution of Nationalism, p. 98.

[56] Cited by Hayes. Ibid., p. 98.

In each of the three regions, one of the three dominant tribes was in control of the government, and in course of time the party in power became associated with the majority tribe, and later with the government. Naturally, the minority ethnic groups regarded themselves as the potential opposition of the government. Because . . the "rules of the game" had not yet been fully developed, both the Government and the Opposition saw each other as natural enemies.[57]

In the late forties and early fifties, many tribal unions were formed in different urban areas where acculturation and detribalization were taking place. The mood of the time was to maximize political power by organizing to support or oppose the Regional government.

The few years of separate administrative experience had created some sense of identity among the people of each Region. Suggestions for changes after the Regional legislatures were given political power in 1951 were resisted by the dominant ethnic group who stood to lose if further devolution of power occurred. On the other hand, the minorities of each Region were in doubt of their role in the fast-changing society where an entrenched majority could perpetuate its power and make any democratic change of government impossible. They feared most that they would be discriminated against in employment and the

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[57] David E. Apter, "Some Reflections on the Role of a Political Opposition in New Nations," Comparative Studies in Sociology and History, Vol. 4, No. 2 (January, 1962), pp. 144-160.

distribution of other amenities. Some nationality groups who were split by the 1946 tripartite division demanded changes in the regional boundaries which would re-unite them. All minorities demanded the creation of more states as the only remedy to allay minority fears and problems.

As early as 1950 a number of movements had begun to pressure the colonial administration to carve out more states from the original three or to make each tribal or ethnic group a separate governmental unit. The two major political parties, the NCNC and the AG with entrenched majorities in the East and the West, respectively, came out in support of minority agitation in each other's area of entrenched support, and in the North as well. Both were ambivalent and inconsistent in their demands for new states. Cross alliances were made between each of the two major parties and minority movements for the purpose of winning the votes of dissident minorities. The NPC was about the most consistent of the major political parties with regards to the creation of more states. It persistently opposed the creation of any new states because it benefitted most from the existing system. The three major parties were consistent in only one respect: each opposed the creation of more states from the Region where it is the government.

Whenever and wherever the problems of Nigeria's minorities are discussed, the alternative solutions to allay the minority fears expressed veer from creating more states to making more majorities out of the minorities, to retaining the existing system and including constitutional provisions to ensure safety and protection of minority rights.

The major item on the agenda for the constitutional conference held in London from May to June 1957 was how to solve the minority problems in Nigeria. All political parties and interested minority movements sent delegates and position papers.

The discussions [58] proved beyond doubt that there existed deep-seated fears whether well or ill-founded among minority elements that their future in an independent Nigeria was at stake. However, it was realized that the creation of new states would not solve all the structural problems of the country since each time a new state is created, a new group of minorities will also come into existence and minorities will continue to exist as long as more than one ethnic group were joined in a state. It was therefore decided to appoint a commission of inquiry to ascertain the fears of these minorities and make recommendations to a resumed conference to be held in 1958.

The British have found the use of Royal Commissions very beneficial and inevitable where problems cannot be solved by an imperial command or majoritarian vote. Commission members are generally disinterested experts in their field of inquiry and command much respect among British subjects because of their objectivity, but in the case under consideration they were heavily influenced in the report of their findings by the official British attitude towards the transfer of power.

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[58] The Minutes of the discussions were published as Cmnd 207, 1957.

The terms of reference given to the commission enjoined them from recommending the creation of more than one new state in each of the three existing Regions if the creation of a new state was unavoidable; and to make detailed recommendations specifying the area to be included and the governmental and administrative structure most appropriate. This proviso illustrates the fears of the British government that if the new states were not viable both from the economic and administrative points of view, the British would be involved in further policy and administrative problems.

On November 23, 1957 members of the Minorities Commission --Sir Henry Willink, Sir Gordon Hadow, Mr. Philip Mason, and Mr. J. B. Shearer arrived in Lagos. The first policy problem of the Commission was the decision on who or what group to recognize as speaking for what minority group. This was not an easy decision since there were contradictory testimonies and not all who wanted to appear before the Commission could possibly do so. Many were afraid of being victimized if they testified against the government since the British government failed to provide judicial protection or legal immunity to the witnesses or their counsels, and the relationship between the different groups that presented their cases before the Commission became more strained than ever before. The government of each Region could easily cover its deficiencies by producing counter-witnesses against those of minority movements.

The Minorities Commission Report [59] was submitted to the reconvened Constitutional Conference which was held in London

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[59] Cmmd. 505.

in 1958. The Commission recommended that

> while there remained a body of genuine fears, the creation of separate states would not provide a remedy for the fears expressed--(it) placed in the forefront of its recommendations to meet this situation comprehensive provision in the constitution concerning human rights and the maintenance of a single Police Force for the country, with arrangements to enable the Regional governments to participate in the management of Force. [60]

The Commission tried to justify its recommendation by asserting that their members "were deeply impressed by the fact that it is seldom possible to draw a clean boundary which does not create a fresh minority." [61]

The Report made it sound abundantly clear that the case for the creation of more states had not been made out. [62] It cited minority charges of exploitation and discrimination in the distribution of amenities as statistically inaccurate, and that a closer analysis indicated that many minority districts were favored out of proportion to their general contribution to the revenue of the regional governments. [63]

Fears Expressed by Regional Minorities

In each of the three Regions (in 1958) the fears expressed by the minorities before the Commission were different.

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[60] Report by the Resumed Nigeria Constitutional Conference, H.M.S.O., London, 1958, p. 21.

[61] Cmmd. 505, p. 87.

[62] The conditions necessary for the creation of a new state included among other things "self-determination, ethnic or linguistic affinity, geographical proximity and economic viability." Quoted in Problems of Nigerian Minorities, p. 19.

[63] Cmmd. 505, p. 49.

Whereas in the East and the West the fears bordered on ethnic discrimination, in the North the fears were firstly religious and secondly ethnic.

In the Eastern Region where the Ibos are predominant, minority group fears were ethnic in character. Since Iboland had a high density of population (See Table 5) the Ibos acquired a natural tendency to mobility both within the Region and outside the Region, but they were resisted. The ethnic minorities in the Region saw Ibo emigration as an expansionist tendency to engulf the Region. The government of the Region, the NCNC, was accused of packing public posts and services with Ibos, manipulating the legal system in favor of Ibos; administrative discrimination; by-passing and reducing in rank and importance the chiefs and local governments not in support of the ruling party [64] and discrimination in the award of scholarships and distribution of amenities generally.

According to a study made by a perceptive Nigerian scholar, Professor Omolade Adejuyigbe, the basic problem is the claim of every ethnic nation to be the equal of others.[65] According to this reasoning, minority groups claim that government services and amenities should be distributed on ethnic group basis and not on population basis. Professor Adejuyigbe found out that of the 2,048 scholarship awards for secondary

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[64] See Bretton, Power and Stability, p. 129.

[65] Omolade Adejuyigbe, "The Problems of Unity and the Creation of States in Nigeria," Nigerian Geographic Journal, Vol. II, No. I, 1968, p. 49.

education and 491 awards for post-secondary education between 1958 and 1962 Ibo recipients numbered 1,344 in the first category and 352 in the second. On percentage basis this amounts to 66 per cent and 71 per cent of total Regional awards. At the time that this study covered, the Ibos formed more than 68 per cent of the population. Following the basic argument of the minorities that "the Ibos form only one of four or five ethnic nations and should not therefore take a larger share of awards,"[66] one finds minority claims of injustice and discrimination illogical and unfair to the majority ethnic group. "Other allegations of discrimination," Professor Adejuyigbe claimed, "can be explained on lines similar to that of scholarship awards."[67]

Before the Minorities Commission in 1958, the Ibibios, who constitute the next largest group in the Eastern Region submitted a petition demanding a separate Region to be called Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers state /C.O.R. state/. However, this proposed new state would include the Ijaws who then would have exchanged Ibo domination for Ibibio domination. The government of the Eastern Regional government testified against any subdivision of the Region. In view of all the evidences, the Minorities Commission decided not to recommend the creation of a new state out of the Eastern Region.

Ethnic Minorities in the Northern Region where the majority is Hausa-Fulani, expressed fears of preferential

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[66]Adejuyigbe, p. 49.

[67]Ibid., p. 49.

treatment accorded to Islam and the Hansa language, neglect of minority areas for public services and development, abandonment of democracy for autocracy and of tolerance of non-Moslems, the imposition of Moslem rules concerning women or/and other groups, and the use of the police and the judicial system to oppress the minorities.[68]

The predominance of Islam in Northern Nigeria and the fact that leadership in the Islamic religion is almost coterminous with leadership in the Northern Peoples' party (and incidentally with governmental authority), singles religion out as a major basis of minority fears of discrimination. While some of the fears of the Northern minorities are genuine and the size of the North may justify the creation of more states from the North, the Minorities Commission failed to recommend the splitting of the Region. It held that some of the alleged discrimations may be justified on the grounds of expediency and efficiency. For instance, the elevation of the Hausa language as the official language of the Region to the neglect of more than thirty others was prompted by the fact that a large majority of Northerners speak the language and it can be developed to be the national lingua franca, whereas some others do not even have alphabets. The major argument against the creation of more states in the North was supplied by the Northern Regional government which argued that the Northern Region was linked by history and could be better developed if it continued to be one unit. Therefore, the appeal of the

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68 See Bretton, pp. 128-9; Adejuyigbe, p. 49.

Middle Belt movement for a Middle Belt Region on the ground that it was non-Moslem and religiously discriminated, was lost.

In the Western Region the basis of minority fears was ethnic. The dominant party of the Region was Yoruba in its origin and predominantly Yoruba in its composition. Members of minority groups feared Yoruba political domination, economic discrimination, fraudulent election procedures, use of Regional apparatus against minorities, administrative oppression, under-representation in parliamentary bodies, and discrimination in local government.[69] As in the other two Regions, the Minority Commission, despite all evidences, did not see enough justification to recommend the creation of a Mid-West state which was strongly demanded by the non-Yoruba speakers of Edo, Ibo, and Ijaw.

Actually, the Commissioners who were well aware of charges against the British of "divide and rule" and "balkanization," were moved more by a desire to preserve the status quo and ensure an orderly transfer of power at the earliest possible time than the protection of liberty and rights of self-determination. As a matter of fact, a member of the Commission voiced fear of disruption that could accompany the dismemberment of any Region alleging that:

> Enough has to happen in Nigeria between now (1958) and 1960 without adding the turmoil that would arise from splitting the civil services--already strained to breaking-point, choosing new capitals, setting up new cabinets of inexperienced ministers--.[70]

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69 Bretton, p. 128.

70 Phillip Mason, "Conference and Minorities Commission," West Africa, November 22, 1958, p. 1115.

Political Effect of the Minorities Report

Based on this Report, the Secretary of State, Alan Lennox-Boyd, advised the Nigerian delegates not to disregard the unequivocal conclusions of the Minorities Commission. He warned that:

> If the United Kingdom government were asked after the election next year (1959) by majority opinion in Nigeria to provide for the creation of new states forthwith, he could not regard it as consonant with his responsibilities to transfer power in 1960 while new governments, lacking experience, trained staff, and a proper framework of administration were as yet unestablished.[71]

He gave the delegates two choices:

> On the one hand to abandon the request for independence in 1960 and instead to put the question of new states to the test at the next election, or a series of plebiscites next year (1959) followed by a fresh Conference thereafter to consider whether new states should be created, and if so, what provision was needed; on the other hand to accept that if there was to be early independence, no new states could be created either now (1958) as a result of next year's (1959) election, so that the present structure of the federation would continue in existence at least until the strains of independence had been taken.[72]

The desire by members of the resumed Constitutional Conference that Independence should not be compromised with was as unmistakable as the position of the British government against the creation of new states. It was therefore decided that the political structure of Nigeria should be left to the Nigerians themselves to solve after Independence, although provisions were written into the proposed Independence Constitution for a procedure for changing Regional boundaries and creating new Regions after Independence.

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[71] Report of the Resumed Nigeria Constitutional Conference, p. 22.

[72] Ibid., pp. 22-3.

By 1958 the British were willing to hand over power to the Nigerian politicians under any pretext, provided the atmosphere was congenial to peaceful transfer, so that they can bow out gracefully. An opinion by a former Governor of Nigeria bears out this assertion: Lord Milverton (formerly Governor Richards) explaining the plight of the British in responding to the World War II activated wave of nationalism in British Africa said:

> Whether Africans are ready or not for self-government, whether independence is reasonable or not has become irrelevant. Africa is in a hurry and is in no mood to wait. . . . The nascent nations of Africa do not accept Western time-tables of the proper or prudent timing of independence and when we talk of premature self-government, the adjective presupposes a point of view which is not admitted by Africans.[73]

Nigerian politicians were greatly committed to seeking an immediate and peaceful transfer of power, hence the pre-independence election of 1959, although hotly contested, was non-violent.

The effects of the British decision to rule Nigeria as two separate political units and later as three, and the failure to create more Regions out of these original three when pressured to do so are reflected in the two coups that have changed the face of Nigeria. It is hard to see how both the British and the Nigerian politicians failed to read the lines on the wall. If minority elements failed to be carved out of the artificial three Regional units during the time the British could have used their influence to remedy the situation,

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[73] Speech by Lord Milverton. Cited in H. Cooper, "Political Preparedness for Self-government," Annals of the American Academy of Politics and Social Science, Vol. CCCVIII (July, 1956), p. 71.

it is most unlikely that the dominant political powers would alter their position after Independence. However, the Mid-West Region, the creation of which the Commission did not recommend, came into being in 1963 because the Western Regional government had permitted its creation in 1957 when the Action Group, desirous to show its concern for the plight of the minority all over the country, supported its creation. However, when the Mid-West Bill came up for discussion at the House of Representatives in 1961, the Action Group tried to recant its position, making the creation of the new state contingent upon a prior agreement that the creation of other new states would follow. The NPC-NCNC Coalition government gave the Bill a quick passage because it served their purpose--to dwindle the power of the Action Group Opposition at the Regional level, the New Region having an NCNC majority.

The resumed Constitutional Conference adopted a resolution accepting the recommendations of the Minority Commission and called on the Secretary of State to provide draft clauses of a Bill of Rights to be included in Independence Constitution.[74]

The provision of a Bill of Rights [75] did not solve the minorities' problems as practical experience has proved. That the Minorities Commission's recommendations were based on false

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[74] Report of the Resumed Constitutional Conference, Ibid., p. 21.

[75] This provision is discussed more fully in Chapter Six of this paper.

premises was borne out by the fact that the Mid-West Region, the creation of which the Commission failed to support, proved to be viable both politically and economically. Also, the abolition of the federal system by the First Military Government and its subsequent resurrection and expansion of the existing number of federal units by the Second Military Government indicates that the federal system under the civilian government left much to be desired.

Administrative Transfer

British administrative policies were more short-term, stability-oriented, and integrative of colonial administration than they were of long-term political integration and of participation. This attitude is reflected in the strong bias of Lugard and his successors who were as much in favor of the traditional authority system, as they were against the early introduction of local government.

The British are noted for the neglect of politics in all their overseas territories. They believed that in building political communities, the legal and administrative order preceded political order. Professor Lucian Pye mildly shared this point of view when he stated that: "No state can presume to be 'developed' if it lacks completely the capacity to manage public affairs effectively, and whenever new states do have competent administrative institutions, many problems are made manageable." [76] However, Professor Pye admitted that improved

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[76] Lucian Pye, Aspects of Political Development (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), p. 38.

administration alone is not enough for political development. The British concept of orderly progress towards independence put emphasis on efficient administration carried out on the national level by expatriate officers, and (on the local level) a development of the traditional political system into a modernized system of government;[77] but, it overlooked considerably the endemic problems of Nigeria's political integration, building effective symbols, of training in national consciousness and political participation, all of which are clearly aspects of political growth.

For the period preceding the middle of this century, our study has tended to look at the local rather than the central government for the roots of the Nigerian crisis; the reason for this being that until the rapid succession of constitutional changes that followed the end of World War II and culminated in the grant of Independence in 1960, government in Nigeria consisted essentially on implementing policies worked out by the Governor and his Executive Council with the advice of the Nigerian Council (later, the Legislative Council, 1923-51) and administering of essential public services. From 1946, when

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[77] The eminent British scholar, Margery Perham, whose opinions had considerable influence on the official thought in Whitehall wrote [in 1936] that "there is one branch into which I believe Africans should not enter and that is the administrative service. This should aim at being increasingly advisory in its functions. It should be regarded as the temporary scaffolding round the growing structure of native self-government. African energies should be incorporated into the structure: to build them into the scaffolding would be to create a vested interest which would make its demolition at the appropriate time very difficult." Margery Perham, Native Administration in Nigeria, p. 361.

the Regional Houses were established and Northern representatives were for the first time admitted into the /Nigerian/ Legislative Council, there is a shift in emphasis from local or native administration to national administration.

To make for centralized administration, Nigeria was divided into Regions, Provinces, Divisions, and Districts. Following this governmental structure, there was an administrative grid with a division of responsibility and hierarchy of command centralizing in the Governor, who was supreme over both the political and administrative branches of government. In spite of the almost perfect integration in the administrative services, there was no carry-over of administration into politics. In sizing the work of colonial administration and the failure of the architects of Nigeria to lay the proper foundation for political unity, the former Attorney General of Nigeria and Minister of Justice, Dr. T. O. Elias, regretted that:

> Lugard missed a great opportunity of carrying his epoch-making task to its logical conclusion. He centralized the administration; he universalized the principles of Indirect Rule; he unified the judiciary; he even created a new country as one political unit; but he hesitated to build a Nigerian nation. Had North and South been brought into a common forum by this 1913 experiment, and encouraged with the authority and prestige of this man of destiny to look upon themselves as fellow-countrymen, they probably would have started earlier to learn to cooperate in a common political endeavour; they would not have had to wait till as late as 1947 for their first experience of legislative coordination, with all the inequality of opportunities and divergence of views that the years of separation had created between the two halves of Nigeria. [78]

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[78] Dr. T. O. Elias, "Makers of Nigerian Laws," West Africa, January, 1956, p. 23.

In spite of the said administrative integration by a centralized authority system, colonial officials who worked in either half of the country were made to feel that they worked under a separate system by the fact that they rarely met each other except at the annual budget sessions and the Legislative Council meetings; and transfers were restricted within the Region of service. Officials in each Region became acclimatized and learned local customs and languages. And, many, especially those in the North opposed the political integration of the two halves.

Nigerianization of the Public Service

Until the end of World War II, the Nigerian higher public service was an almost exclusive preserve of expatriates. According to I. F. Nicolson, "by the middle of 1948, there were in the 'Senior Service' or higher public service of Nigeria 3,786 posts. . . . Only 245 /of these/ posts were occupied by Africans."[79] It is remarkable that of the "non-expatriates" (some of whom are non-Nigerians from Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast), not one was a Northern Nigerian--a fact which makes it easy to correlate the effects of colonial policies on education and Regionalization with sources of tension during and after the transfer of power to Nigerians.

As soon as World War II was over, the British realized the necessity of providing the people greater avenues for managing their own affairs. In 1948, a public commission was

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[79] I. F. Nicolson, Administration of Nigeria, 1900-1960 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 260.

appointed [the Hugh Foot Commission, 1948]:

> To make recommendations as to steps to be taken for execution of declared policy of the Government of Nigeria to appoint Nigerians to posts in the Government Senior Service as fast as suitable candidates with the necessary qualifications come forward, with special reference to scholarship and training schemes.[80]

Appointed in June, 1948, the Commission reported in August the same year, recommending "385 scholarship and training awards to be made to deserving Nigerians for the ensuing years"[81] and emphasized that "special consideration should be given to applicants for scholarships and training courses from the Northern Provinces."[82]

In 1952, another public commission, the Phillipson-Adebo Commission, was appointed to study the Problems of Nigerianization[83] of the Senior Public Service. Reporting in 1953, at the time of the constitutional crisis over the timing of Independence for Nigeria, the Phillipson-Adebo Commission recommended the retention of one single Public Service

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[80] Quoted in Smart Ekpo, The Administrative System of Nigeria (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation) (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Microfilm, 1963), p. 137.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Report of the Commission Appointed by His Excellency the Governor to Make Recommendations about the Recruitment and Training of Nigerians for Senior Posts in the Government Service of Nigeria (Lagos, 1948) cited in Nicolson, Administration of Nigeria, p. 256.

[83] Nigerianization means "providing the people of Nigeria with efficient Civil Service manned by the best available Nigerians." See Federal Nigeria, "Report on Nigerianization of Public Service," Vol. II, No. 9, September, 1959.

for Nigeria but advised that preferential treatment be given to Nigerians, especially Northerners, in the hiring and promotion to the senior posts. It stated that:

> Normally, a political unit joining with others to make a federal state brings with it and retains its own public services and though with federation, federal officials will be appointed for federal purposes within the confines of that unit, these federal officials will be working jointly with the State public service, which will remain under State control for the staffing of State services. The difference of the present Nigerian picture from this is clear, for in Nigeria, in theory at any rate, even the humblest Civil Servant is a federal officer. This would be an odd position even in the most centripetal of federal States, but we do not for that reason advocate at this state the formal establishment of Regional Civil Services.[84]

At the time the report was submitted, the Council of Ministers could not give full examination to the recommendations for political reasons and so it was decided to defer giving any consideration to the report until after subsequent constitutional conferences in London and Nigeria. By the time it was considered in 1954, "political developments" had "overtaken" the recommendations. The constitutional conferences had resulted in Nigeria becoming officially a federation.

With federation came Regionalization of the public service, and from 1954 Nigerianization became interpreted in the Regions as "Northernization," "Easternization," and "Westernization."

The "Northernization Policy" of the Northern Regional Public Service

Although Northern Nigeria accounted for more than fifty per cent of Nigerian population, the Region was the least

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[84]Sydney Phillipson and S. O. Adebo, The Nigerianization of the Civil Service: A Review of Policy and Machinery (Lagos: Government Printer, 1954), p. 42.

developed educationally. Until 1954, when the Nigerian Public Service was regionalized, non-expatriate staff in the Northern Public Service were predominantly Southerners. With the entrenchment of federalism in the Nigerian system of government and its concomitant of separate Public Services for the Regions, the governing party in the North started to press for "Northernization" /the staffing of the Northern Public Service with people of Northern origin/, which became an official policy in 1954. Commenting on the Northernization policy and the importance of being "a genuine Northerner" to qualify for a permanent employment in the Northern Nigerian Public Service, the late Sir Ahmadu Bello, Premier of Northern Nigeria, and Minister of Local Government, said:

> I should like to assure Members of this House /Northern House of Representatives/ that it is the intention of this Government to hasten as quickly as possible Northernization and that is why we . . . pressed for a separate Civil Service Commission for the Region, so that we can preserve the North to the Northerners. . . . "[85]

The Northern Nigerian Public Service Commission reported in 1957 that:

> It is the policy of the Regional Government to Northernize the Public Service: if a qualified Northerner is available, he is given priority in recruitment; if no Northerner is available, an Expatriate may be recruited, or a non-Northerner on contract terms.[86]

A very important fact can be deduced from the Commission's report: in the absence of a suitable Northerner to fill a position, expatriates were given a priority over Southerners.

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[85] Bello, My Life, p. 165.

[86] Northern Region of Nigeria, Report on the Public Service Commission for the Period 1st Nov., 1954 to 31st Dec., 1957 (Kaduna: Government Printer, 1958), p. 7.

The Commission made concerted efforts to attract Northerners to the Region's Public Service, including the lowering of standards of entry into the different job classifications.[87] On the other hand, the Federal Public Commission gave a priority to Northerners in the filling of available federal jobs. The Federal Government's comment on this matter is quite revealing:

> The Parliamentary Committee's [on Nigerianization] recommendation that everything possible should be done to increase the proportion of Nigerians of Northern origin in the Federal Public Service is in accordance with existing policy. . . . The main difficulty in the matter lies in the fact that an equal need and an equal opportunity for young Northern entrants exists at the present stage in the Northern Region Public Service. 88

The problem inherent in Regional priorities in employment to the Nigeria Public Service in the years after Independence was best expressed by Professor Bretton:

> Insistence by Northerners that the ratio of approximately fifty-fifty be applied throughout the federal service with regard to North-South representation in all Super-Scale posts brings to a vital halt operation in certain departments where officers of seniority but of Southern origin are compelled to remain frozen in their posts while the country awaits the emergence of suitably trained Northern Hausa candidates. Many of the candidates advanced by the North are, in fact, semi-literate and extremely inexperienced. 89

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[87] Northern Region of Nigeria, Report of the Public Service Commission for 1958 (Kaduna: Government Printer, 1959), p. 4. See also, Staffing and Development of the Public Service of Northern Nigeria (Dr. J. D. Kingsley and Sir A. N. Rucker Report) (Kaduna, January, 1961).

[88] Federation of Nigeria, Matters Arising from the Final Report of the Parliamentary Committee on the Nigerianization of the Federal Public Service: Statement of Policy by the Government of the Federation, Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1960 (Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1960), p. 5.

[89] Henry L. Bretton, Power and Stability, p. 150.

Northern Nigeria, it should be pointed out, was put in a serious predicament as a result of the rapid pace of Nigerianization which the altered pace of decolonization demanded. The Phillipson-Adebo report had pointed out that the Northern Public Commission gave a higher priority to the replacement of Southerners in all posts than the replacement of expatriates in the higher posts, because unlike the expatriates, Southern Nigerians in the North brought in their families and relatives who competed with the poor Northern peasants in the scarce economies of the North, and were therefore regarded with fear and suspicion as a threat to people of Northern origin.[90]

TABLE 9

STAFF POSITION IN THE HIGHER PUBLIC SERVICE OF NORTHERN NIGERIA, 1960

	Administration	Education	Agriculture	Total
1. Establishment	293	437	86	3,318
2. Northerners	83	33	4	543
3. Expatriates	145	297	56	*
4. Southerners	1	2	0	*
5. Vacancies	64	105	26	911

*The Northernization gap in 1960 was estimated at 2,784. Figures were based on the Kingsley-Rucker Report, 1961.

Source: I. F. Nicolson, Administration of Nigeria, p. 295.

[90] The Nigerianization of the Civil Service, p. 64.

TABLE 10

RELATIVE STRENGTH OF VARIOUS NATIONALITIES APPOINTED TO NORTHERN PUBLIC SERVICE

Nationality	Number (1960)[a]	Percentage (1960)[a]	Percentage (1961)[b]
British	124	75.1	67.2
Pakistani	22	13.0	13.2
India	3	1.81	3.8
West Indian	2	1.21	----
Dutch	2	1.21	0.7
Danish	2	1.21	1.5
Norwegian	2	1.21	0.4
Polish	2	1.21	----
American	1	0.6	----
German	1	0.6	----
Irish	1	0.6	1.0
French	1	0.6	0.4
Nigerian	1	0.6	1.5
Sierra Leonian	1	0.6	----
Arabs	---	----	4.6
Ceylonese	---	----	0.7
Portuguese	---	----	0.4
Cameroonian	---	----	0.4
Broken Contracts	---	----	4.2
Totals	165	99.56	100.0

Sources: a) S. Ekpo, The Administrative System of Nigeria, p. 160.
b) L. Franklin Blitz, The Politics and Administration of Nigerian Government (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1965), p. 232.

TABLE 11

STAFF POSITION IN THE HIGHER PUBLIC SERVICE OF NORTHERN NIGERIA, 1964 (EXCLUDING VACANCIES)

	Northerners	Non-Northerners	Expatriates
Ministry of Finance	37	36	27
" of Education	140	19	464
" of Land & Survey	15	21	23
" of Works	74	47	359
" of Health	121	69	174
" of Local Gov't	7	1	3
" of Animal & Forest Resources	59	5	62
Total	453	198	1,112

TABLE 12

STAFF POSITION IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE, 1963
(TEN MAJOR MINISTRIES)

Ministry	Expatriates (a)	Expatriates (b)	Nigerians (a)	Nigerians (b)	Vacancies (a)	Vacancies (b)	Percentage* (a)	Percentage* (b)
Administration	5	2	60	106	15	42	92	98
Audit	4	2	4	54	0	2	50	96
Foreign Affairs	0	1	47	196	23	73	100	99
Commerce & Industry	9	6	6	96	4	51	40	94
Economic Development	11	30	7	208	10	61	39	87
Education	13	51	17	132	4	87	57	72
Health	10	20	32	386	6	60	76	95
Justice	5	0	16	37	5	11	76	100
Transportation & Aviation	14	32	6	76	10	174	30	70
Works & Survey	26	165	17	421	13	122	40	72
Totals	(406)		(1,920)		(773)		83	

Key * Percentage of posts held by Nigerians, based on posts actually filled.
(a) Superscale posts.
(b) Other Senior posts.

Source: Compiled from the Federal Public Service Commission Report, 1963; Franklin Blitz, The Politics and Administration of Nigeria, p. 226.

"Easternization" and "Westernization" Policies

Unlike "northernization," "easternization" and "westernization" did not replace "Nigerianization" as the official policies of either the Eastern Nigerian Regional Government and the Eastern Nigerian Public Service Commission, or of the Western Nigerian Regional Government and the Western Nigerian Public Service Commission. There is no doubt as a matter of fact,

that in practice Regional discrimination in the hiring of new personnel to man the Regional Public Services exists in Nigeria, but theoretically the Eastern and the Western Regions accepted the principle of "Nigerianization" as "the reduction and ultimately the ending of expatriate predominance in the highest levels of the Civil Service." [91]

In the Eastern Region, before a non-Nigerian was appointed, the Director of recruitment was required to state whether to the best of his knowledge no qualified Nigerian is available to fill the post, and what arrangement has been made for training a Nigerian to fill the post. [92]

The Commission made it a policy that:

> No consideration should be given to the recruitment of an overseas officer unless and until the Commission is satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that no qualified and suitable Nigerian is available. [93]

In 1960, a report on the Nigerianization of the Eastern Nigerian Public Service, written by Dr. J. D. Kingsley of the Ford Foundation noted that:

> There is much in the manpower situation in Eastern Nigeria to occasion a feeling of satisfaction. Progress in Nigerianization has been notable; and if there has been some sacrifice of quality and inefficiency in the process, this is undoubtedly the price that must be paid

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[91] Federation of Nigeria. Final Report of the Parliamentary Committee on the Nigerianization of the Federal Public Service, Session Paper No. 6 of 1959 (Lagos: Federal Printer, 1960), p. 64.

[92] Eastern Region, Report on the Working of the Public Service Commission, Eastern Region, Nigeria, 1954-57 (Enugu: Government Printer, 1958), p. 18.

[93] Ibid., p. 14.

for speed in so profound a transformation.[94]

In the Western Region, Nigerianization took the most rapid pace, comparatively. The Premier of the Region, Chief S. I. Akintola, comments that:

> Even the most prejudiced of our critics will admit that we have done solid preparatory work for this development. First among the Governments of Nigeria, the Western Nigeria Government, under the able leadership of my predecessor, Chief Awolowo, created as far back as 1957, special posts in which selected Nigerians could receive accelerated training in responsibility. In the same year, we appointed a Nigerian Head of the Service, whose special responsibilities included the promotion and prosecution of measures for the most speedy Nigerianization of top posts in the Service. We have spent a lot of money of our own to enable promising Nigerian Officers to gain overseas experience, and in addition taken the fullest advantage of similar facilities offered by our friends abroad. I am, therefore able to give a personal assurance to the public that this administrative take-over will involve no lowering of efficiency. [95]

In support of Chief Akintola's first statement, there were many critics (including Dr. Kingsley's Report for the West, which was not published) for Western Nigeria's rapid pace in Nigerianization. Contrasting the West with the East, Professor Nicolson states that:

> The Eastern Region did not follow the West's example by precipitately displacing overseas Permanent Secretaries and professional heads, or by dismantling the provincial administration, the load-carrying 'scaffolding,' but used the time the presence of expatriates gave to intensify the training of Nigerian staff. [96]

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[94] Eastern Nigeria, Staff Development in the Public Service of Eastern Region of Nigeria (Don Kingsley Report) (Enugu: Government Printer, 1961), pp. 4-5.

[95] Treasury, Western Nigeria, Nigerianization of the Public Service of Western Nigeria (Ibadan: Government Printer, 1960), p. 10.

[96] Nicolson, Administration of Nigeria, p. 289.

It is important to bring into focus here that both the East and the West had the advantage of old and experienced indigenous civil servants as well as a new breed of university graduates, unlike Northern Nigeria, which had fewer indigenous /Northern/ civil servants to begin with and also had a smaller turn-out of university graduates.

TABLE 13

STAFF POSITIONS IN THE HIGHER PUBLIC SERVICE OF EASTERN AND WESTERN NIGERIA, 1964

Positions	Nigerians		Expatriates and Other Africans		Vacancies	
	East	West	East	West	East	West
Sub-Clerical & Minor Technical	6,940	4,786	0	3	342	577
Clerical & Technical	4,589	2,772	1	6	574	909
Ex. & Higher Techn.	1,333	972	54	56	365	499
Administrative & Professional	584	381	152	85	156	248
Superscale	200	127	60	40	44	75
Other Posts	2,050	1,500	2	9	65	397
Totals	15,696	10,538	269	199	1,546	2,705

Source: Compiled from the (1964) Annual Report of the Public Service Commission.

Problems of Nigerianization

As a crash program to replace expatriate officers with indigenous Nigerians in the Public Service of Nigeria, Nigerianization resulted in loss of career to many expatriates who were

paid off to make place for Nigerians. This was accomplished by the Lump Sum Compensation Scheme established by the Federal Government in 1958.[97] Not that the loss of career to expatriates was any problem to Nigerians, but the rapid exodus of expatriates from the Nigerian Public Service, especially from the Public Services of the Eastern and Western Regions, (which was precipated by Nigerianization) did unestimable damage to the prestige, efficiency, and continuity of the public service. The Nigerianization Report blamed the mass exodus on the anticipation of real or fancied troubles, resulting from the transfer of power to African Ministers and possibly to the attraction of Lump Sum Compensation.[98]

The Federal Government was aware of the effect of Nigerianization on the performance of the Public Service but conceded that:

> In a period of transition, a temporary deterioration must be expected and must also be tolerated if the new status of the Civil Service is to be successively achieved.
>
> Some loss of output and efficiency, while the new generation of Nigerian officers are gaining experience and confidence, is a loss gladly suffered with a view to future gain.[99]

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[97] "A Lump Sum Compensation Scheme provides compensation for those in office who feel they must leave because of the altered constitutional circumstances; it is meant for those who wish to go, not as a ground for dismissing those who are prepared to continue in the service. The declaration, on the other hand, promises continued fair treatment for all (deserving) expatriate officers." The Nigerianization Report, 1959, p. 65.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1960, p. 4.

Detailed studies of the various statistics on the progress of Nigerianization indicate that many vacancies exist in the Nigerian Public Services because the Nigerian educational system was not geared towards turning out graduates in the sciences and technology. Almost all the vacancies that exist in the Nigerian Public Services need technical know-how to fill them. The sudden withdrawal of colonial administrators left a vacuum in the post-independence administrative machinery and exposed the inadequacy of the colonial educational system. A Nigerian economist, C. C. Onyemelukwe, points to the two main factors which have tended to hamper the development of technical education in Nigeria:

> First, the emphasis which the colonial administration laid on literary education; second, the delay in accepting the need for nationally planned technical education directed at the provision of skilled manpower. Even though development planning started in Nigeria in 1945, very little attention was given to manpower planning until the 1960's.[100]

It is also important to add that in support of the educational system, social standards in Nigeria have not given due dignity to manual work. The Nigerian social status has been inordinately weighted towards those in politics, law, and the top level civil servants who did not owe their positions to technical competence by any means.

The Ashby Report noted that: "Literary tradition and the university degree have become indelible symbols of prestige in Nigeria; by contrast technology, agriculture, and other practical

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[100] C. C. Onyemelukwe, Problems of Industrial Planning and Management in Nigeria (London: Longman's, 1966), p. 287.

subjects, particularly at the sub-professional level, have not won esteem."[101] Taking note of this lack of respect for manual skills and technological achievement in Nigeria, the Ashby Report offered the following solution:

> We strongly believe that the most effective way of correcting this would be to introduce a manual subject as an obligatory ingredient of all primary and secondary schooling; not as a vocational training, but because such subjects have educational value which entitles them to a place in general education. We would like, moreover, to see technical streams in some secondary schools leading to a School Art Examination which includes technical subjects.[102]

In summary, we would like to state that emphasis on this chapter was not put on explaining how the Nigerian political system functioned before the collapse of the First Republic of Nigeria. Instead, the chapter selected and emphasized certain conditions whose existence at the transition period of transfer of power and responsibility worked against future unity and stability. Each problem which presents itself shows how colonial policies and their implementation working in conjunction with the Nigerian environment have helped to create certain conditions whose solution led to discontent and violence.

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[101] Investment in Education (Ashby Commission Report), p. 5.

[102] Ibid., p. 18.

CHAPTER V

NIGERIANIZATION AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION[1]

A contemporary theorist, Clifford Geertz, very well defines "national integration" as

> the aggregation of independently defined, specifically outlined traditional primordial groups into larger, more diffuse units, whose implicit frame of reference is not the local scene but the "nation"--in the sense of the whole society encompassed by the new civil state.[2]

While the above definition suffices for our subject matter, Myron Weiner points out that the term is now becoming "widely used to cover an extraordinary range of political phenomena."[3] He lists five current usages:

> (1) the process of bringing together culturally and socially discrete groups into a single territorial unit and the establishment of a national identity

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[1]The two concepts are used interchangeably in this chapter. Their central goal is the creation of a higher loyalty /for Nigeria/ that supersedes parochial loyalties to the tribe and other subnational communities.

[2]Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States" in Geertz (ed.) Old Societies and New States (New York: 1963), p. 163.

[3]Myron Weiner, "Political Integration and Political Development," in The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 358, p. 53.

in the context of some sort of plural society or the prior existence of distinct independent political units; in this sense, 'integration' refers to subjective feelings;

(2) the establishment of national central authority over subordinate political units or regions; 'integration' here refers to objective control by a central authority;

(3) the problem of linking government with the governed, with special stress on the 'elite-mass gap';

(4) the growth of minimal value consensus assumed to be required for the maintenance of a system; and

(5) the capacity of people in a society to organize for some common purpose.[4]

These five usages do not exhaust all the slightly varied usages of the concept of "national integration" as Professor Weiner concedes: "Since there are many ways in which systems may fall apart, there are as many ways of defining 'integration.'"[5]

A different classification by Professors Coleman and Rosberg sees "national integration" as made up of two parts--"political integration" and "territorial integration". The former refers to bridging the gap between the elite and the masses and providing for a participant political community; the latter refers to "the progressive reduction of cultural

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[4]Ibid., p. 53.

[5]Ibid., p. 54.

and regional tensions and discontinuities of the horizontal plane in the progress of creating a homogenous territorial community."[6]

Taking all the different definitions, including the three above, together, one can construct two models of national integration--a "pluralistic model" according to Aristide Zolberg "involves the creation of cross-cutting affiliations by superimposing non-coincidental cleavages over primordial ones, culminating in hyphenated identities."[7] This model fits Clifford Geertz's definition, and number one of Myron Weiner's "five current usages," and "territorial integration," according to Coleman and Roseberg's classification. This model was the one Nigeria needed most at independence; the lack of which tilted her in a series of crises that finally resulted in a civil war, and the almost total dismemberment of the federal system. The "assimilationist model" assumes that primordial and civil ties are mutually exclusive and that integration takes the form of a sort of zero-sum game culminating in the emergence of a homogeneous nation.[8]

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[6]James Coleman and Carl Rosberg, Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa (New Jersey: Princeton University Press), p. 9.

[7]Aristide Zolberg, "Patterns of National Integration," Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. V, No. 4 (December 1967), p. 449.

[8]Ibid., p. 449.

This second model is harder to achieve than the first and can hardly be possible in a federal system which has a built-in resistance to a "zero-sum" assimilation.

The problem of national integration is a permanent feature of every federally organized political system. It tends to be submerged during the transfer of power by the fact that the nascent political parties compromise their differences /this is merely a tactic to win sovereign power/ in order to present a unified front against the colonial power. As soon as sovereign power is transferred the problem of social and cultural differences emerges, and at this time it becomes more explosive than ever before primarily because the colonial power is no longer there to moderate the struggle for power. The degree of harmony, cohesion or of conflict that the political system experiences after independence therefore depends upon the degree of or level of its integration during the colonial era.

Problems of National Integration

Most of the new nations of Africa as they exist today were created by fiat of the colonizing power and do not have a history of unity beyond the time of their occupation by the colonial power. As a result of the merger of many societies that previously existed independently in order to make the new nation-states, colonial powers in Africa

created the first problems of national integration. While the French attempted cultural assimilation marked by a complete integration of the political and administrative systems of the colonial territories--"overseas France" with metropolitan France, the British sought to maintain the uniqueness of the traditional society, hence the policy of "indirect Rule". The underlying difference in the policies of these two major colonial powers is the fact that the British had accepted self-government as a basic premise of her association with the colonial territories but maintained that a long period of external control under her trusteeship was necessary before the surrender of power to the indigenous people; whereas the French took for granted a permanent association with her colonies. Quite in keeping with her policy of preserving--as far as possible--native institutions and cultural heritage, the British tried to force the federal system of government /of which she had no national experience/ on her colonies before surrendering sovereign power to the people. This policy has met with less success than failure for reasons considered elsewhere in this study.[9]

In spite of the existence of socio-cultural diversities in Africa, which in the abstract would make federalism

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[9]See Chapter VII for more details.

attractive, all but three independent African countries scorned the essential equality of two levels of government embedded in federalism and put their stake on the unitary system.[10] In addition to the predominance of unitary systems of government, African states after independence inclined towards single party control, which further reinforces the trend towards centralization. In those African states where regional assemblies do exist[11] the implementation of major governmental decisions are carried out by officials appointed by the central administration.[12]

Coleman and Rosberg warn that "the staggering problem of nation building and modernization requires a central and unitary organization of power within the state."[13]

However, no matter what one might think about the wisdom of British policies in Nigeria, a unitary constitution for Nigeria in 1960 could not have been the answer to national unity or national integration, for the Nigerian

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[10]Besides Nigeria only Cameroun and Tanzania are explicitly federal. See Claude E. Welch, Jr., "Federalism and Political Attitudes in West Africa" in Kirkwood, African Affairs, No. 3 (Oxford: 1969), pp. 35-50.

[11]Uganda was (before the military coup of 1970) the best example of a unitary government with decentralized administration before the Kingdom of Kabaka got into conflict with the central government and the federal semblance was destroyed.

[12]See Claude E. Welch, op. cit., p. 36.

[13]Coleman and Rosberg, op. cit., p. 668.

federal form of government was created in recognition of profound cultural disparities which have existed unimpeded until the present time.

The basic factors that have militated against national integration in Nigeria are germane to the nature of the Nigerian society. The differences in culture, religion, and historical development of the two halves of Nigeria are natural obstacles to integration. However, they could have been turned into assets for "unity in diversity". Many Africanists including Dr. Azikiwe have contended that while differences such as those listed above have given rise to tribalism, that tribalism in itself is not an impediment to national unity.[14] A keen student of African social problems, Professor Wallerstein, says that tribalism plays an important functional role providing some essential services for the people:

> The role of the ethnic group /tribe/ in providing food and shelter to the unemployed, marriage and burial expenses, assistance in locating a job has been widely noted. West African governments are not yet in a position to offer a really effective network of such services, because of lack of resources and personnel. Yet if these services would not be provided, widespread social unrest could be expected.[15]

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[14]That tribalism is not an impediment to unity was the subject of a lecture titled: "Tribalism: A Pragmatic Instrument for Unity," delivered by Dr. Azikiwe at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka on May 15, 1964.

[15]Immanuel Wallerstein, "Ethnicity and National Integration in West Africa" in Marion Doro and Newell Stutz (eds.) Governing in Black Africa (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 10.

According to Professor Alan Peshkin, "Nigeria was shaped in a mold cast by colonial conquest rather than by indigenous historical and traditional factors."[16] When the British took over the administration of Nigeria, there were in existence in the country many tribal groups who had had a long relationship of rivalry and hostility. During the process of colonization, the different groups were grouped into two and later into three constituent units primarily for convenience in administration. The colonial power could have created more than three constituent units of the Nigerian political system if it had so desired. Regardless of the overall administrative form used, there were separate government structures for the Northern and Southern Provinces from 1900 to 1939 and for the Northern, Eastern and Western Regions from 1939 until independence. Moreover the effect of Indirect Rule by which governmental services were administered proved to be a dead weight to an overall national consciousness.

The continued preservation of the identity of each region by administrative separation, coupled with the fact that colonial land policy made it difficult for natives of one region to acquire permanent residence and landed property in

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[16]Alan Peshkin, "Education and National Integration in Nigeria," Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. V (1967), p. 321.

another region of the country, have the direct effect of keeping the people and cultures of each region homogenous. Whereas in Northern Nigeria all land is nationalized,[17] in southern Nigeria all land, with the exception of government lands used for public purposes, belongs to the tribal peoples. This is due to the fact that the British conquered the northern Emirs and made them cede the land rights held by the Fulani dynasty to the British Crown whereas she secured the Southern Provinces (except Benin) by peaceful treaties and could not therefore claim their residual land rights.

The economic, social and political problems of Nigerian development have direct relevance to the overall British colonial policy. Viewed as a system, the Nigerian polity succumbed under internal pressures with which it was not prepared to cope. Not only did the British not encourage any territorial integration or diffusion of the diverse cultures, religions and peoples, they officially supported what amounts to a separatist and discriminatory policy with regards to land acquisition and use in Nigeria. Theoretically, the British Government had complete powers over all land in

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[17]The acquisition of land in Northern Nigeria is governed by the Land and Native Rights Ordinance 1910 and 1916, which provides that "the whole of the lands of the Northern Provinces, whether occupied or unoccupied are 'Native Lands' and all rights over them are placed under the control and subject to the disposition of the Governor." See Laws of Nigeria, 1910, Chapter LXV; cited in R.L.Buell, The Native Problem in Africa (Connecticut: The Shoe String Press, Inc., 1965), Vol. II, p. 752.

The disposition of land in the South is governed by Laws of Nigeria: Public Lands Acquisition Act (1917), Chapter 88.

the north, but practically she surrendered all her control to the Native Authority which has prohibited non-Nigerians as well as Nigerians from acquiring "freehold" titles to land, whereas in the south individuals are free to hold and dispose their land without government opposition. James Coleman observes that: "This policy of differentiation in the administration of its trusteeship over land has not only strengthened the separateness of the north, but created grievances among many southerners having economic interests or aspirations in the north."[18] The point of emphasis is that whereas a northerner in the south could acquire a freehold or long-term lease, a southerner in the north could acquire only a "certificate of occupancy".[19]

Inter-Regional Migration

Although limited in extent, human mobility was not restricted in Nigeria. Migration tended to be more northward oriented and to the urban areas in all the regions and the federal capital where opportunities for employment at the highest status levels were the greatest. Migration to the North was greatest between the late 1940's and the early

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[18]James Coleman, Nigeria, p. 60.

[19]See T.O. Elias, Nigerian Land Law and Custom (London: 2nd edition, 1953), p. 298-299.

1950's, when the British awareness that independence would come earlier than expected necessitated their employing better educated people in government, and the expansion of private foreign business created technical and specialized jobs, needing trained manpower from the South. However, the influx of Southerners into the North did not lead to either territorial or political integration. Southerners were regarded as foreign in the North, and were excluded from the walled cities. Primarily for their own protection, and because of the discriminatory land use policy of the North Regional Government, the migrant Southerners lived in "sabon garis" or "strangers quarters" in the urban areas of the North. This situation aggravated the existing tensions between the two Nigerias and encouraged the existence of tribal unions in areas where detribalization and diffusion should have worked to create a common culture.

The hostility of the Northerners towards the influx of the Southerners to the North could be summarized by the expression of Mallam /Later, Sir/ Abubakar Tafawa Balewa at the Budget session of the Nigerian Legislative Council in March, 1948. He asserted that:

> Many /Nigerians/ deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one, . . .particularly some of the press people. . . . This is wrong. I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is an artificial one and it ends outside this Chamber. . . . The Southern tribes who are now

> pouring into the North in ever increasing numbers, and are more or less domiciled here, do not mix with the Northern people. . .and we in the North look upon them as invaders.[20]

Balance in Regional Development

In Chapter III we discussed how earlier western contact with the southern part of Nigeria coupled with the differential impact of colonial policies on education, Indirect Rule and Regionalism resulted in an imbalance in the overall development of Nigeria. In view of their lateness in development compared with the South, Northerners on the approach of Independence embarked on protective measures aimed at limiting the influence of Southerners on the affairs of the North--hence, the Northernization policy. According to I. F. Nicolson, "All the major decisions of policy which shaped the new northern public service were influenced by fears of southern domination and hopes of northern domination."[21] In support of the Northernization Policy, northern politicians correctly

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[20]Speech by Mallam Abubaka Tafawa Balewa [later Prime Minister] at the Nigerian Legislative Council, 1948. Nigeria: Legislative Council Debates (Lagos: Government Printer, 1948), p. 227.

[21]F. Nicolson, Administration of Nigeria, 1900-1960. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

argued that if the southerners entered the "senior service" in great numbers quickly, before Northerners were trained, the former would be senior and dominant and would therefore exercise greater influence on the affairs of Nigeria. Therefore, the Northern insistence on national origin as a major criterion for employment has as its basis a need for balance and equality in regional development. It stands to reason that if employment in the North was based on merit and common Nigerian citizenship, all the higher echelons in the public services of the Federation would be staffed mostly by Southerners.

The popular spokesman for Northern Nigeria, the late PrimeMinister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa asserted in 1958 that:

> By an accident of history. . .the areas we now call the Northern, Eastern and Western regions of Nigeria came under the British administration at different times. By virtue of their being geographically situated near the sea coast, the Western and Eastern Regions came under the British influence much earlier than the Northern Region. For this reason, . . .the rate of progress and development in the Western European civilization has been uneven with the vast Northern Region dragging behind. . . Take the question of staff in our Public Services. The South with its many schools and colleges is producing hundreds of academically qualified people for the Public Services. The common cry is Nigerianization of the Public Services. It is most important in a Federation that the Public Service shall be representative of all the units which make up the federation. Now, what do we find in Nigeria? There are 6,000 men and women in the

> Federal Public Service. I have not been able to obtain the figures of Northerners in the Service, but I very much doubt if they even amount to one per cent.[22]

If the Prime Minister's estimation of the percentage of Northerners in the Federal Public Service is correct /and the Annual of the Public Service Commission, 1957, confirms it[23]/, one will no doubt see that an explosive situation existed in the country; and that as soon as independence was achieved and the direction of sovereign power given the Northern Peoples Party, that drastic changes would be made and resisted. This was a natural situation brought about by British inconsistency in employing an "open door policy" to Christian missionaries and Western influence in the South while maintaining a "closed door policy" to the same in Northern Nigeria. The result is that while the South embraced Christianity which was Western culture oriented and emphasized education as a necessary requisite to material and spiritual welfare, the North perpetuated Islamism which put no emphasis on education /at least initially/ as a necessary developmental factor.

The vast North was sheltered from the disrupting

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[22]Speech by Sir Abubakah Tafawa Balewa: "Nigerian Independence Debate," cited in Ruppert Emerson and Martin Kilson (eds.), The Political Awakening of Africa /New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1967/, pp. 70-71.

[23]The Nigerianization Officer indicated that in 1957 Nigerians of Northern origin accounted for only one per cent of the staff of the Federal Public Service and that the percentage in the Senior Posts was even less. See, Federation of Nigeria, Annual Reports of the Nigerianization Officer, 1957 (Lagos: Government Printer, 1958), p. 7.

influence which a sudden impact of an alien culture would have on a traditional state system. Therefore, it was forced to retain a closed-door policy and to insist on continued separate development in order to ensure that the Southerners who were better prepared to take over the mechanics of modern administration from the retreating colonial power did not overshadow the more numerous but less educated Northerners. T[illegible] situation created by disparity in Regional educational [illegible]opment was the most compelling factor that influenced [illegible] Northern Region to delay self-government and to only ask for it after the Eastern and Western Regions had attained it for two years.

Revenue Allocation. The British have made use of Royal Commissions to study and make recommendations to Parliament on such important issues that a mere parliamentary decision would not satisfy even the most ardent advocates of "majority rule" who happen to be on the side of the minority. In most cases, especially those associated with Nigeria, the recommendations are accepted by all the parties concerned. This was true with the Report of the 1958 Fiscal Commission.[24] At the resumed Nigerian Constitutional Conference held in London in September and October, 1958, the delegates accepted

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[24]Nigeria: Report of the Fiscal Commission. Cmnd. 481, July 1958.

the formula worked out by the Commission on reallocating the revenues that accrue to the Federal Government. The Commission had recommended that the federal government should retain the taxation of exports and imports. Proceeds from exports were to be returned to the Regions on the basis of derivation, while other revenues accruing to the Federal Government were to be shared according to the already existing principles of "Derivation", "Needs" and "National Interests".[25]

It is very significant to note that the Reports of the two Fiscal Commissions advocate a system of revenue allocations which would strike a happy medium between the principles suitable for the tightest of the tight federations, and the loosest of the loose federations, respectively.[26] An initial disagreement over a formula for revenue allocation would have led to the early disintegration of the country as a single political unit. Although the Commissions very well defined the three principles of "derivation," "needs," and "National interest," they are flexible enough to allow any political party with a comfortable majority in Parliament to take whatever fiscal action

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[25]Hicks-Phillipson: Report of the Commission on Nigeria Revenue Allocation, 1951 (Lagos: 1951).

[26]Kalu Ezera, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria (London: Oxford Press, 1964), p. 148. f.n.

it deems necessary and yet justify it on the same principles.

The authoritative allocation of resources was bound to pose some problems after independence when the question of "needs" and "National interest" would be defined by the party or parties in power. The colonial administration was more likely to be more objective and fairer in the allocation of resources for national development than a regionally entrenched political party. However true this might be, it cannot be a justification for the extension of colonialism.

A correct analysis of the development needs of the country would give priority to the North in order to bring the standard of living and the degree of civilization throughout the country to a relatively equal level. This would be to the best interest of the country. But one of the great problems that Nigeria faced after independence was how to share federal power so that no political party regionally based will make all the political and economic decisions which the parliamentary form of government leaves to the majority party.

It was feared that as a party with an overwhelming majority in the North, the NPC was assured a dominant role in the federation since the Northern Region was numerically larger than all the other regions. The party was quite aware of this situation from the beginning, hence it had insisted on a federal structure of government with strong regional

powers and a weak center. It might appear contradictory that a party that had the best chance of dominating a federal government would advocate giving the government weak powers. The best explanation of this view of the allocation of powers was the fact that without interference in the regional politics of the North by the federal government, the NPC would consolidate its leadership in the North and therefore emerge as the leading power in the federation by electing a majority of the members of parliament from the North.

Federal-State Relationships

In a federally organized state there is a reciprocal relationship between the two levels of government. While federal powers increase, regional /state_7 powers tend to decrease. This is primarily due to the increased role of modern governments in international affairs /this role is exclusive to the national government_7 and to the law of "ever increasing state expenditure,"[27] formulated by a German economist, Adolph Wagner, in 1833. According to this law, the pressures for social progress inevitably lead to increasing expenditure which necessitates growth in the scope

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[27]Cited in Alan Peacock and Jack Wiseman, The Growth of Public Expenditure in the U.K. (London: 1961). In trying to assess the validity of the law of ever increasing state expenditure, Peacock and Wiseman came up with a different conclusion that expenditures increase because revenues increase and that government revenues grow as the economy grows.

of governmental activities. In the case of the federal system, the powers of the central government expand at the expense of the regions or states irrespective of the constitutional balance of powers between the central and the regional governments. This tendency brought about by conditions of modern economy is referred to as "The Law of Federal Dominance" in federal systems of governments. This is true of the United States, the Soviet Union, Canada, India, Australia and other federal states and was even more true of Nigeria a few years after independence.[28] It stands to reason that the more the regions (or states) depend on the federal government for their major source of revenue the more dependent on the federal government they will be in carrying out their essential functions, and the more powerful the federal governments will be vis-a-vis the regions.

Reaction to an Apparent Hegemony

Contrary to the fears of Southern politicians that the Northern Peoples Congress could elect a majority of the members of the House of Representatives from the Northern Region

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[28]For more details on how federal powers tend to absorb those of its units, see A. B. Birch, Federalism, Finance and Social Legislation (London: Oxford University Press). 1969.

alone and then form a federal Government based on votes received from one Region, the pre-independence results did not give any party a clear majority. This fortunate situation gave the out-going colonial administration the last chance to strike a balance between socio-economic development and political power. The South with its early lead in social and economic development because of its earlier exposure to Western influence could be checked by entrusting political power to the North in the event that over the years, the NPC which had become entrenched in the North would convert its numerical strength into political power with which it could redress the balance in Regional development.

Without waiting for the final results of the election and giving politicians and political parties time to bargain and regroup for the purpose of forming the central government, the Governor General reappointed Sir Abubakar the Prime Minister of the Federation. His first appointment as Prime Minister in 1957 was due to the fact that in the absence of the leaders of the three major political parties [who chose to be in the Regions as Regional Premiers[29]) Sir Abubakar

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[29]The three party leaders chose to stay at the Regions as Regional Premiers because the 1964 federal constitution did not provide for the post of Prime Minister. The post was created after the 1957 Constitutional Conference in response to the demand of the Nigerian delegates. Even after the appointment of a Prime Minister, the Governor General continued to preside over the meeting of the Council of Ministers until independence.

was the most popular of the members of the House of Representatives and appeared to the Governor General to command the support of a majority of the members. Since the NPC did not have a majority in 1954,[30] it went into a coalition with the NCNC to form the Federal Government, with the Action Group as the opposition. But, when appointed Prime Minister in 1957, Sir Abubakar decided to form a broad-based "National Government" with all the major parties represented.

Table 14

Election Results and Party Strength in the House of Representatives, 1954.

Party	Seats Won					
	North	East	Lagos	West	S.Cameroons	Total
N.P.C.	79	-	-	-	-	79
NCNC	2	35	1	23	-	61
Action Group	1	-	1	18	-	20
Unip (A.G.Alliance)	-	7	-	-	-	
Kameroun's Nat'l Congress	-	-	-	-	6	6
Others	10	-	-	-	-	10
	92	42	2	42	6	184

Source: Nigeria Liaison Office, Washington, D.C., Nigeria Liaison Letter No. 10.

[30]See Table 14 above.

It is strongly believed in Nigeria that the Governor General acted in haste to reappoint Sir Abubakar Prime Minister because it was implicit in British colonial policy in Nigeria that executive power should be handed over to a moderately conservative leader friendly with the British,[31] which qualification Sir Abubakar possessed. Any delay in the gubernatorial action could have changed the entire situation. A prior coalition between the NPC and the NCNC-NEPU before the appointment would have possibly conceded the Prime Ministership to Dr. Azikiwe, the NCNC leader and a popular symbol of Nigerian nationalism, Sir Abubakar being only a deputy leader of the NPC. In reply to dissatisfactions expressed by critics who felt Azikiwe should have been appointed Prime Minister instead of Abubakar, Dr. Azikiwe said:

> In view of certain observers, here and abroad, my decision to accept and assume the office of Governor-General has been surprising. They thought that since I was leader of a political party which contested the last federal elections, I should continue to fight in order to displace the present Head of our Government, instead of supporting the conclusions of a political truce. Whilst I appreciate the good intentions of these

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[31]The Council of Ministers, 1954-57 consisted of nine ministers /three appointed from each region/ six of which were NCNC members from the Eastern Region and the Western Regions; but, when the Governor was asked to appoint a Prime Minister in 1957, he chose one of the three NPC members of the Council. The NCNC did not raise an objection presumably because it was satisfied with the choice and moreover, the NPC had the largest number of seats in the legislature.

> critics, I should make it clear that one important reason why human society is unstable is because of the tendency to intensify rivalry beyond its normal course. . .[32]

Had the Governor General not acted quickly there was the possibility of the NPC conceding the Prime Ministership to the NCNC. In addition, the Action Group had expressed a wish to form the Government with the NCNC and to nominate Dr. Azikiwe as the Prime Minister.[33] It is an idle dream to speculate what could have happened had the post of Prime Minister gone to a leader from another party, but no one doubts that the trend of events in Nigeria after independence would have been radically different.

That the NPC, the NCNC and NEPU were able to come to agreement to form a coalition government clearly indicates among other things that Nigerian politics was not ideological. The NPC and the NCNC were ideologically and organizationally different. The NEPU and the NPC were poles apart and political enemies. The triple coalition was a "marriage of convenience". It was not long before disagreement became open and weakened the legitimacy of the entire system.

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[32] Nnamdi Azikiwe, Respect for Human Dignity. Inaugural Address at his installation in 1960. (Enugu: Government Printer, 1960), pp. 11-12.

[33] Chief Awolowo testified to this effect in his treason trial.

Within five years after independence, political opposition in each of the three regions had gradually narrowed. The NPC-NCNC-NEPU coalition had forced the creation of the Mid-West state thus narrowing the power of the Action Group, both at the Federal and Regional levels. The Action Group also suffered from an internal crisis which left the party badly mangled.

A faction of the party, loyal to the Parliamentary leader and Premier of the Western Regional Government finding itself in the minority, decided to remain in power by using extra-legal means including a rigged election; and later, formed a political alliance with the NPC.

By 1963, it had become abundantly clear that all future national governments would be NPC controlled. With this realization, the politics of alienation increased in both Eastern and Western Nigeria. Earlier in 1962, an attempted coup d'tat against the federal government was foiled, and Chief Awolowo, the Action Group leader and also Leader of the Opposition at the Federal House, was jailed on treasonable felony conviction.

The Census Controversy. Two of the major events that took place after independence--the Census (1962-63) and the federal election (1964) brought the country close to the brink of collapse. Both events were tied together by the fact that their results would decide who would wield political

power in the nation. Since the allocation of seats in the Federal House of Representatives was based primarily on the census, each political party tried to influence its results.

The controversy over the handling of the census brought an open conflict between the coalition partners--the NPC and the NCNC. The issue was resolved in a cabinet meeting held on February 19, 1963 after which the Prime Minister announced that "in view of the loss of confidence in the figures for the various regions, the Federal Government has decided to nullify the results of the Census."[34] Following the announcement of the Prime Minister, a new census was conducted with more elaborate checks but with equally disappointing results and doubtful validity.

Table 15

Nigerian Population Census 1952-3 and 1963-4

No. in 1,000's

Census Year	Northern Region	Eastern Region	Western Region	Mid West Region	Lagos	Total
1952-3	16,835	7,215	6,085	--	267	31,500
1963-4	29,778	12,389	10,378	2,535	675	55,653

Source: Adapted from the census figures. See Nigeria Department of Statistics. Population Census of Nigeria 1952-3. Lagos Survey Department, 1953. Ibid., 1964.

[34]Daily Express. Lagos: February 20, 1963.

With the tabulated result of 55,653,821 the Nigerian population increased by 77 per cent over an eleven year period. The NCNC, which was the Government of both the Eastern and Mid-Western Regions, rejected both censuses of 1962-3. Rejecting the second, the leader of the party, Dr. Michael Okpara stated that "the inflations disclosed are of such astronomical proportions that the figures obtained, taken as a whole, are worse than useless.[35] For fear that the new delimitation of federal constituencies would be based on the figures which in effect had assured an NPC return to power with a clear majority in the case of the next election, the NCNC Government of East Nigeria filed a suit with the Federal Supreme Court seeking an order to restrain the Federal Government from accepting or acting on the 1963 census figures on the ground that "the manner in which the census in question was conducted was unconstitutional, ultra vires and illegal, and was therefore null and void."[36]

The federal government filed a counter suit objecting to the case being heard. The court disclaimed jurisdiction stating that the acceptance of the census figures by the Federal Government did not infringe on the legal rights of the

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[35]Census Controversy: One North or One Nigeria? (Enugu: Government Printer, 1964), p. 3.

[36]Daily Express, May 14, 1964.

Government of the Eastern Region.[37]

It is inconceivable to an outsider who is not familiar with the political realities of Nigeria that politics should be injected into a census, an otherwise technical matter, so as to cause a deep seated political controversy. Yet, that was the situation in Nigeria. Census figures determine the number of electoral constituencies in each region. Therefore, the larger the constituencies of each region the more chances the political party controlling the government of the region has, in winning the national election. Moreover, the NCNC and the Action Group, who were most disappointed by the Census Report, had based their main hope on the figures for altering the federal power structure. Also, federal allocation of revenue to each region and federal economic development are influenced by the populations of each region.

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[37]The Attorney General, E. Nigeria vs. The Attorney General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, F.S.C., 29/6/64.

CHAPTER VI

INHERENT DEFECTS AND CONTRADICTIONS IN THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Federal Constitution upon which the British based their transfer of power to Nigeria was too brief in length and coverage to provide an answer to all the intricacies of a heterogenous society and it included many compromises that were arrived at simply to win independence. Great Britain has acquired a reputation of being expert in constitution-making, but the reputation is highly qualified when applied to the British role in framing the Nigerian Constitution.[1] The British exhibited their political expertise in finessing Nigerian problems instead of solving them, and keeping the politically unintegrated people calm enough for her to effect a dignified exit. In Britain's wake have followed a resurgence of the problems which lay covered under her protective shadow.

The issues that plagued the existence of Nigeria as a single nation were not adequately resolved before the hurriedly-reached compromises were embodied in the constitutional

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[1]The Nigeria /Constitution/ Order in Council, 1960, No. 1652 of 1960 in Supplement to the Official Gazette Extraordinary, No. 62, Vol. 47, September 30, 1960, 1960-Part B.

document. Nigerian politicians and delegates to the various constitutional conferences felt obligated to accept compromise solutions in order to achieve independence at the earliest possible time.[2]

The general consensus was that the issues under controversy[3] could be resolved after independence. But, they were not. The mechanisms for resolving them were doubtful and found inoperative when power was finally transferred.

Inadequate Safeguards

Nigeria became independent with inadequate safeguards to maintain a true federal system. The politicians seemed so blinded by the promises of independence that they paid lip-service to ensuring the conditions that make for continued existence of a federal state.

A federal constitution which necessarily is a compromise between centrifugal forces which seek territorial or regional identity and centripetal forces which press for unity in spite of obvious diversity lasts for as long as both the positive political or ideological commitment to federation

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[2]Nigerian delegates to the constitutional conference refused to accept any alternatives which could compromise a postponement of independence. For the British official position, see Report by the Resumed Nigerian Constitutional Conference, 1958. Comnd. 569, H.M.S.O., 1958.

[3]The unresolved issues concerned the creation of more states, law enforcement, and the franchise.

as an end in itself exists, and the cement that "binds" the two opposing forces together is safely guarded.[4] By 1960, if a poll were taken to find out which system of division of powers the average Nigerian wanted, a federal system based on the existing regional system would have been preferred over the unitary system because most Nigerians entered nationhood with a greater consciousness of their regional and ethnic than of their national identities. But the Parliamentary system which the country inherited from colonial administration did not provide adequate safeguards to ensure meaningful participation by all the units of the federal system.

In a federal system the importance of the Judiciary is heightened by the fact that it decides when one level of government encroaches upon the responsibilities of the other. However, the major issues that caused unrest and dissatisfaction among Nigerians were not connected with a violation of the letter of the Constitution but a violation of the spirit of the Constitution.

The Nigerian Judiciary as the final arbiter in a constitutional matter was adequate and competent and constitutionally protected to play this role,[5] but some of the provisions

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[4]Thomas M. Franck (ed.), Why Federations Fail, (New York: New York University Press, 1968), pp. 167-199.

[5]Up until 1963 when the Republican Constitution took effect, the appointment of justices of Nigerian Supreme Court were made by the Governor-General on the Justice of each region and two other members. See the Constitution of the Federation of Nigeria, Section 120. Removal from Judicial positions involved a two-step judicial process, starting with a special judicial tribunal in Nigeria and ending with a review.

of the constitution, particularly the Civil Rights provisions,[6] were so circumscribed and hedged that the courts were in effect hampered in their primary role as protector of political rights and liberties against the Federal and Regional legislatures. Commenting on these provisions Frederick A. O. Schwarz says that:

> Though the rights guaranteed are many, the exceptions to the guaranties, concise and prolix, specific and vague, could well render them symbolic rather than real protections and at the same time deprive them of much of their effect as symbols. What is given with one breath is taken away with the next as broad right is followed with broad exception.[7]

Commenting further on the dullness of the Civil Rights provisions and their inutility as an educational tool, Professor Schwarz asserts that:

> Spelling out the exceptions in copious fashion makes the constitutional guarantees much less useful as an educational tool with which to imbue the people with the spirit of liberty. Laws can change attitudes, and none more than constitutions. But to do so they should be simply expressed. The school child who is taught that free speech is guaranteed with no ifs, ands or buts is bound to develop a different instinctive reaction towards restrictions of free speech than the school child

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[6]Sections 17 to 32 of the Constitution of the Federation of Nigeria provides for ten fundamental human rights, namely: freedom from inhuman treatment; freedom from slavery and forced labour; personal liberty; freedom of private and family life; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of expression and opinion; freedom of peaceful assembly and association; freedom of movements; freedom from discrimination; and freedom to possess property.

[7]Frederick Schwarz, Nigeria: The Tribes, The Nation or the Race - The Politics of Independence (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1965), p. 180.

> who is told that free speech is guaranteed except in several enumerated situations. Perhaps the greatest drawback to the way in which Nigeria's Bill of Rights is written is that it is dull. With all its carefully elaborated exclusions and the prolix and complicated exceptions, it becomes just another law. Lacking majesty, it is written for lawyers, not for the people.[8]

In spite of the fact that the Civil Rights provisions are spelled out in detail with many broad exceptions, their usefulness is limited by a vague conclusion that nothing in these provisions shall invalidate any law that is "reasonably justified in a democratic society,"[9] in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health. Whereas the above proviso gives the Courts a broad right to interpret what actions are reasonable, or not, and therefore a great opportunity of exercising considerable control over the legislature and the executive if they wish., the Courts in Nigeria have tended to take a conservative view that if a legislature is democratically elected, a decision by a majority of its members are justifiable in a democratic society.[10] Denys C. Holland cites the dim views of a leading Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, Sir Lionel Brett,

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[8]Schwarz, Ibid., p. 182.

[9]The Constitution of the Federation of Nigeria, Section 32.

[10]Dr Chike Obi vs. The Director of Public Prosecution, F.S.C., 56 of 1961.

"who whilst acknowledging the responsibility of the court to review legislative acts in the light of the Constitution stressed the role of the legislature as the guardians of a democratic society."[11]

The need for providing a Bill of Rights to protect personal liberties in the new nations, and at the same time ensure that the Governments of these nations are not unduly prevented from carrying out their essential functions has been a subject of much controversy among British lawyers, writers and theoreticians. It is remarkable that Britain does not have a Bill of Rights, but finds it unavoidable in the Constitutions of the Commonwealth countries. Sir Ivor Jennings remarks that "in Britain we have no Bill of Rights; we merely have liberty according to law; and we think--truly, I believe--that we do the better job than any country which has a Bill of Rights or a Declaration of the Rights of Man."[12]

In concluding, it is important to point out that the attachment of a Bill of Rights to the Nigerian Constitution met a felt need in the country but its many exceptions give the entrenched majority in Parliament and in the Regional

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[11]Denys C. Holland, "Human Rights in Nigeria," Current Legal Problems, 1962, p. 145.

[12]Sir Ivor Jennings, The Approach to Self-Government (Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 20.

Legislatures a broad right to support any action they take as being constitutional. If the Courts equate majority opinion with what is reasonably justified in a democratic society, then many of the provisions of the Bill will become valueless and the tyranny of the majority will be the result. The primary reason for Bills of Rights has been to protect individuals from the government and minorities from majorities--the majorities being in better positions to enact laws to protect their interests.

Another aspect of the difficulty of ensuring civil liberties against their violation by the Government is the fact that the major issues are not legal but political, and therefore outside the purview of the Court's influence. Even when political issues turn into legal issues the influence of the Courts is further hampered by the fact that the ruling political parties utilize their influence as the Government to suppress evidence in Court. Charges of rigging elections, intimidation, oppression of political opponents, falsifying census figures and discrimination in employment for political reasons can be impartially settled by the Courts if people are willing to work within the law and the Constitution.

The employment of extra-legal and sometimes illegal means to achieve political settlement stem from the fact that the existing rules of procedure are inadequate, for they favor

the majority and disadvantage the minority. This is one of the strong criticisms of parliamentary democracy when applied in the federal state system. Since a federation according to Professor Friedrich's definition is a union of groups, united by one or more common objectives, but retaining their distinctive group character for other purposes,[13] the "majority group" in a parliamentary system or the dominant region as in the case of Nigeria will not only make its will the law of the land but will resist any change in the status quo which will lessen its influence. Where this situation exists as it obviously did in Nigeria; that is the faction forming a majority in a federation correlates with a structural unit of the federation, the spirit of the constitution which assures all people both as individuals and members of distinctive groups equal participation in shaping public policy, is violated. This can not be remedied by any Court, especially where the Republican Constitution (1963) further assures the supremacy of Parliament over the Judiciary by giving the former power to appoint members of the latter and to remove them by two-third majority vote of its members meeting in separate sessions.[14]

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[13]Carl J. Friedrich, Trends of Federalism in Theory and Practice (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 183.

[14]Under the Constitution appointments to Federal Judgeships are made by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister; and subject to a minimum of five justices, Parliament can prescribe any number of justices it wanted. See the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Sections 111-113.

Structural Imbalance

Both the federal system and the governmental system in Nigeria are structurally unbalanced. The federal system was made up of three regions in 1960 /four in 1964_7 and a federal territory; but one region was larger both in size and population than all the rest put together. In the governmental system, the Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister in virtual command dominated the legislature and had great influence /after 1963_7 in the employment and removal of members of the Judiciary.

A parliamentary system by its very nature is based on majority rule; and although federal power is shared between the Senate and House of Representatives, the composition of the latter is decisive in shaping the socio-economic and political influence in the country. Membership in the Senate is based on equal representation of the regions.[15] Senators were appointed on a five-year term /during the life of Parliament_7 by the President on the advice of the Government of each constituent unit of the federation. Not being elected by the people, both the parties in power in each region and the people they nominated regarded the prerogative of nominating Senators

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[15]The North, the East, the West /and the Mid-West after 1964_7 were each represented by 12 Senators; Lagos had 4 Senators and 4 Senators were appointed at large by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.

as political patronage. Primarily as a result of this peculiarity, the framers of the Constitution limited the powers of the Senate to reviewing bills and delaying for six months those bills on which they do not reach agreement with the house and denying Senators the privilege of initiating revenue bills. In effect the Senate lacked constitutional powers to play a leading role in stabilizing Nigerian politics. In spite of the limited but nevertheless important role of the Senate to delay hasty and improper legislation passed by the House, the former tended to agree most often with the latter because the NCNC-NPC coalition (1959-1964) was an inducement for their delegates to the Senate to agree on fundamentals and consequently compromise on incidentals.

A very noticable disagreement between the House majority and the Senate majority was over a Government Bill in 1961 to allow a Constitutional Amendment to the North Regional House which would permit the Grand Kadi[16] to sit on the Northern High Court. The Bill was tabled for discussion but later withdrawn temporarily until the NCNC, and the NPC reached an unofficial agreement for the former to instruct its Senators

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[16]The Grand Kadi is an expert in Koranic Law who presides over the Sharia Court of Appeal. It was intended that he should be eligible to sit on the High Court of Northern Nigeria to give his advice in the case of appeals involving Muslims. The Constitution however had failed to exempt him from the normal qualifications required of high court Judges, namely either being a Judge of a Court having unlimited civil and criminal jurisdiction or having been qualified for ten years as an Advocate. See John Mackintosh. Nigerian Government and Politics: London: Allen and Urwin, 1966), f. n., p. 56,

to approve the bill while the latter agreed to support legislation both in the Federal Parliament and in the North Regional Legislature for the creation of a Mid-western state. Both bills passed.

The politics of compromise between the NPC and the NCNC worked to offset the debilitating influence of the federal structural imbalance. The grand coalition was maintained chiefly because it afforded both parties an opportunity to consolidate their base at the expense of the Action Group Opposition which did not have a stake or control over the federal government. By the end of 1962 the NPC was in control of over fifty per cent of the House membership and with such an absolute majority it could pass legislation [other than a constitutional revision] without the support of any other party. However a bill that gave an unfair advantage to the North [except a revenue bill] and therefore unfavorable to the rest of the country would not pass the Senate [at least for six months] without the approval of the NCNC or any other party in power in the south. This was a major reason why the NPC needed the coalition of a southern-based political party.

The lack of proportion exhibited in delimitation of regional units that made up the Nigerian Federation could be examined from the viewpoint of what could be called "Mill's Law of Instability" in federal systems of government: "That there should not be any one state so much more powerful than

the rest as to be capable of vying in strength with many of them combined. If there be such a one, it will insist on being master of the joint deliberations: if there be two, they will be irresistible when they agree, and when they differ everything will be decided by a struggle for ascendancy between the rivals."[17] In the first place, the structure of the Nigerian federal system did not meet with Mill's specification for a successful federation. Secondly, until the 1963-1964 census showed conclusively that the North was numerically greater than all the other regions put together, the case did not arise of one region insisting or being the master of joint deliberations. Instead, the struggle between the North and the South for electoral strength, as exhibited in the census controversy, could be compared to a struggle for ascendancy between two rivals as Mill predicted. The formation of an NPC-NCNC coalition government at the federal level was "irresistible." The Action Group Opposition which was the first target of the coalition was not only destroyed as a leading political power but the Government of the Western Region which it controlled was dissolved under federal emergency powers and ruled by a federal administrator; and later a section of the region was carved out to create the Mid-Western State.

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[17]John Stuart Mill, Considerations on Representative Government, (London: Savill and Edwards, 1861), p. 300.

It should also be noted that when the NCNC realized that developments taking place under the coalition government were more advantageous to the NPC, the former began to express differences of view which tipped the balance of what might still be compared to Mill's "struggle for ascendancy" which brought the whole federal system to a discredit and contempt, and finally to its replacement by the military.

John Stuart Mill had also suggested that no constituent part of a federation should be strong enough to rely on its own unaided strength for defence. This condition of a federal system remained obscure in Nigeria until the Eastern Region seceded to form the short-lived state of Biafra. All secessions are based on the assumption by the seceding state that it can successfully defend itself and have an autonomous existence. This condition for secession made sense in Nigeria where all the four regions of the country were semi-autonomous and each considered itself large enough to be a separate independent nation. Leaders of the Northern Region had on several occasions threatened secession but were not able to take any action, partly because the North would be without a seaport if it was cut off from the South and partly because the North realized later how much it stood to gain from being part of the federation. Leaders of the Western Region had insisted that Lagos be made part of Western Nigeria and that a secession clause be inserted in the federal

Constitution, but they were not allowed to have their way. The Eastern Region finally decided to be a test case because the Region had the highest population density in the country[18] and yet her inhabitants were discouraged from emigrating to other Regions because of tribal and regional discrimination--the two massacres of Easterners living in the North being the most recent expression of this. Also, the recent discovery of oil in the East gave the Easterners the encouragement that they could endure a protracted war with the rest of the federation.

In conclusion, we must admit that the success of a federal system largely depends upon the determination of the leaders of the constituent units to preserve the union. Secondly, the federal units must be so structured that no one unit dominates others. Like J. S. Mill, a contemporary authority on federalism, Professor K. C. Wheare, observing that the capacity to work a federal system is greatly influenced by their size, suggests that: "It must be the task of those who frame and work a federal government to see that no unit shall be too large, and, equally important, none too small."[19]

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[18] See Table V.

[19] K. C. Wheare, Federal Government (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 50-1.

The Transfer of Power

One method of testing the degree to which a system has been accepted is to watch the power turnover. According to Professors M. Weiner and J. La Palombara, if the transfer of power is done without difficulty, the system can be said to be legitimized.[20] Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell have also indicated that a high level of political trust and interpersonal relationship are important for the sharing and transfer of political power:

> An ultimate test of a responsive and democratic system is its ability to transfer the power of government from one set of leaders to another. This may occur either between parties or within a single party. But if the level of personal trust is low, if the political process is viewed as a life-and-death conflict, and if little political courtesy mitigates the raw conflict, it will be difficult for the incumbent elites to relinquish their roles in the political process and step aside for a new group of political actors. The stakes will seem too high; the opposition will seem too dangerous.[21]

Professors Almond and Verba in The Civic Culture had noted that the United States and Great Britain achieved a high standard of stable, effective and responsible government

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[20]Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner (eds.), Political Parties and Political Development (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 412.

[21]Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), p. 56.

because their people trust each other, work well together and keep partisan political attitudes within bounds. The secret of their success did not lie in their institutions per se, but in the interpersonal relations of their people, and the feelings of mutual respect which politicians had for one another.

West Germany, Italy and Mexico (in that order) were found less stable because their peoples were less trustful of themselves and the effectiveness of their political system. The lesson is that the more people learn to trust and accept one another, the more they will learn to accept their political system and that the degree of interpersonal trust reflects the degree of probable stability of the political system.

In Nigeria after independence, the transfer of power--whether from one party to another or from one individual to another within the same party was bound to be a source of conflict, because the element of trust both between parties and among competing politicians was lacking.

In the first place, the mood of the leaders tended "towards the preservation of the authority handed over to them by the Imperial British," and they feared "that power might slip off their hands only to fall into the hands of their opponents."[22] While President of Nigeria, Dr. Azikiwe

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[22]Speech by Mr. O. C. Ememe, M.P., cited by Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Essential For Nigeria Survival," p. 450.

regretted the tendency for Nigerian political parties to perpetuate themselves in office by every means. He cited the case of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (N.N.D.P.), the political party in control of Western Nigeria, which had 94 members in its House of Assembly in 1965: "It is significant that of this number [94] 54 are members of the N.N.D.P., of whom 49 are Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, and four are the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Chief Whip and Party Whip, respectively."[23] The only member of the party, according to the President, who was not given an office resigned so that every member on the Government Bench held an office. Since the holding of government office meant increased income and status, politics became a very attractive profession, and once a Government is formed, the party in power retains its power through political patronage.

Nigerian politics was remarkable for the fact that political parties could be identified as representatives of a particular region or ethnic group. In such a case, political issues decided between opposing parties by a parliamentary vote leaves a section of the country or the region unsatisfied.

The usual procedure of parliamentary voting makes it inevitable that in most cases the minority social groups or

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[23] Ibid.

tribes will remain in unsatisfied opposition to important decisions affecting the whole society. This implication of parliamentary vote makes the transition of power a life-and-death struggle.

Any alternative to the parliamentary system (which is evidently not in accord with African political ideas) may suit Nigeria better. A broad-based "National Government" with which Nigeria experimented in 1957-9 and 1965-6,[24] although a weak form of democratic government, was capable of maintaining political stability and slow socio-economic growth while search for a proper balance of power went on and legitimacy of the federal system was nurtured. In such a government each political party shares in the distribution of political offices or functions according to its proportional representation in parliament and no party regards itself as the official opposition to an elected government.

The effect of the above arrangement on policy decisions are very significant. Psychologically each national unit, tribal or ethnic group, feels represented and a part of the national government, whereas a strictly parliamentary

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[24]Only the Action Group was left out of the 1965-66 all-party "National Government". Nominees of all the other parties became Ministers at the discretion of the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar.

system marks out some groups as permanent opposition and losers in view of the fact that pre-independence arrangements had conceded political leadership to Northern Nigeria and followership to the rest of the country. From the amalgamation till independence, Northern Nigeria had insisted on a high degree of regional autonomy and a distribution of Federal power on a population basis. When self-government was finally granted, each Region acquired a semi-autonomous status within the Federation. Since the independence constitution ensured federal representation based on population, the North certainly became the most powerful unit in the country.

Collective Responsibility

As early as 1963 relations between the NCNC and the NPC had deteriorated to the extent that an All-Party Constitutional Conference meeting in Lagos for two days (July 25th and 26th) agreed to abandon the collective responsibility of Ministers - an essential characteristic of the Cabinet System of government, and substituted an independent Ministerial responsibility which opened the possibility for cabinet ministers to disagree with cabinet decisions and even criticize the cabinet and still be in office unless they lost the confidence of Parliament on a non-confidence vote on the floor of the House of Representatives.[25] Ironically, the

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[25]Proposals for the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: Sessional Paper 69, No. 3 of 1963. (Lagos: Government Printer, 1963). See also, Parliamentary Debates, August 7-9, 1963 (Lagos: 1963).

NCNC co-sponsored the innovation so that the party could continue to be part of the federal coalition as well as criticize its policies when they conflicted with those of the NCNC. The importance of emphasizing this discrepancy from the classical parliamentary system is that the divergence made it easy to perpetuate the NPC Oligarchy. With this system of operation and the inducements of patronage attached to it, no government once it takes office can ever be turned out as a result of corruption or inefficiency of some members of the cabinet. This becomes more meaningful when it is realized that the NPC with an entrenched position could trade one political party or minister with another and yet not be turned out of office whether as a result of parliamentary vote or on election ballot.

In spite of open disagreements over policy to be submitted to Parliament, the NCNC-NPC coalition was not voted out of office, possibly because members of parliament knew that that meant a dissolution of the House and fresh elections; and because by 1962 about twenty-four independents and other party members in parliament had crossed over to the NPC to give the party a working majority of twelve.

In conclusion, it is important to point out that evidences of corrupt politics and inordinate ambitions for power were so much a cause of the collapse of the Nigerian Federal System in 1966, as were the institutional patterns and colonial policies against which the politicians operated.

It is remarkable that while in economic development--the twin concept of political development--causes and effects can be measured by such single and relatively simple factors as per capita income or the amount of goods and services. While these factors are themselves visible and measurable and reducible to a common denominator--money, there is no yardstick for measuring political development. The political system, according to J. Roland Pennock, "exists to produce such items as security, justice, and liberty which are invisible, largely unmeasurable, and not reducible to any common denominator."[26] Since no one can measure the degree of influence which the Nigerian political system, together with colonial policies, had on the political behavior of Nigerians, this study has relied heavily on relevant contemporary theories to indicate that there were enough inherent defects and contradictions in the Nigerian political system to predict an eventual crisis.

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[26]J. Roland Pennock (ed.), Self Government in Modernizing Nations (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 2.

CHAPTER VII

THE CRISIS:
THE COLLAPSE OF THE FIRST NIGERIAN REPUBLIC

The change from a civilian government to a military government in Nigeria is the most cataclysmic change that ever took place in Nigeria, hence we shall refer to it in this study as "the crisis". The country had experienced a series of systemic conflicts, political rifts and compromises before the military took over the control of the Government. Between Independence, October 1, 1960, and the crisis that

Table 16

Gross National Product and Per Capita Income

1958-66

Year	GNP (in millions)	Per Capita Income
1958	$ 2,770	$ 55.00
1963	4,163	75.00
1966	4,603	77.00

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1969), p. 832.

ended the civilian rule on January 15, 1966, the country had had a moderately rapid economic growth.[1] During the same period population was growing at a much faster rate than the economy could absorb.[2]

Political Participation

Mass communication and education, which were speeded up as a result of independence, helped produce with a short period of time a population more aware of political and economic issues than were the people of the colonial period. The result was a sudden emergence from a parochial to a participant culture.[3] The fact that manpower resources then available had outstripped available jobs,[4] aggravated the thorny problem of rising expectations. There was dispair as people began to discover the disparity between the workers and the senior office-holders in incomes and spending habits. The hope of independence ushering in a new era began to be doubted. All these, coupled with the anxiety for change led

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[1] See Table 16.

[2] See Table 15 .

[3] Almond and Verba distinguished three types of political cultures: "Parochial," "Subject" and "Participant". a. Parochial: distant from and unaware of political phenomenon; b. "Subject": an orientation towards output, the roles and services which affect people's lives; c. "Participant": an active orientation towards politics and the possibilities of influencing government. See G. Almond and S. Verba, The Civic Culture, reviewed by Robert E. Lane, Am.Jour.of Soc., 70 (Sep 64), p.245.

[4] There were many vacant posts at both the Federal and Regional Public Services, but the mass of the people who needed jobs did not have the specialized skills needed to fill vacancies.

to frustration and political activism.[5]

Political activism may be viewed in different ways, depending upon whether one is concerned with cleavage or consensus. In a country with a high degree of cleavage rather than consensus, political activism may tear the political system apart. Therefore a very high level of participation is not always good for democracy. W. H. Morris Jones takes a strong position that political apathy may reflect the health of a democracy rather than a lack of it.[6]

Almond and Verba's study indicates that while modernization tends to stimulate a climate for political participation, a high degree of active participation would not necessarily indicate a high degree of political development.[7] Mexico illustrated the case where a high degree of political participation did not correlate with a high degree of political development. For Mexico, participation was said to be based upon a vague understanding of the revolutionary tradition rather than upon a firm knowledge of national political issues

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[5]Part of the tendency to blame politicians for most of the ills of the post-independence period comes from the fact that the politicians "oversold" independence to obtain mass support against the colonial power. When the people failed to realize many of the things they expected from independence, they were disappointed, not necessarily because their conditions were worse than before.

[6]W. H. Morris Jones, "In Defence of Political Apathy," Political Studies (1954), pp. 25-37. Professor Jones' views is a direct opposite of the traditional belief that a high level of political participation is essential to democracy.

[7]Almond and Verba, The Civic Culture, p. 177.

or upon a high satisfaction of the working of their political system.[8]

In Nigeria, the high degree of activism and radicalism that accompanied post-independence political participation indicated a high degree of dissatisfaction with the system. This situation, in spite of the fact that Nigeria had acquired her independent nationhood and was ruled by her own people, undermined the legitimacy of the political system.

Conditions For A Crisis

Many political theories related to the breakdown of a political system can be illustrated with the Nigerian experience. According to Karl Deutsch's[9] criteria, social mobilization, participation and communication in Nigeria were more supportive of regionalistic and particularistic political groupings than they were of the federation. David Easton's[10] "Imput Overload" leading to "Output Failure" supports the thesis that where needs and demands become conflicting, contradictory and exclusive, as they were in Nigeria in 1966, no Government would be able to satisfy the people.

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[8] Ibid., p. 414.

[9] Karl W. Deutsh, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," American Political Science Review (September, 1961), pp.168-175.

[10] David Easton, A Systems Analysis of Political Life (New York: Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965).

The result would be a crisis in legitimacy.

La Palombara and Weiner suggest that a lack of popular support was not unusual with a newly independent nation:

> The first party government in a nation, typically replacing an aristocratic oligarchy, royal authority, a colonial bureaucracy, or a military rule must find some basis for legitimizing its new authority in order to win popular support not only for the new government but also for the new system of government.[11]

In spite of the strong NPC-NCNC coalition Government at the Federal level, the Nigerian party system did not succeed in winning the people's allegiance to the new political system. While the British colonial administration justified its authority on the basis of efficiency and order, the Nigerian post-independence regime could not justify its authority either on the basis of efficiency and order or on the support of the masses.

During 1964 and 1965 a series of signals was transmitted to the Nigerian political authorities about the malfunctioning of the system. These included increases in political violence, general lawlessness, and racial and ethnic propaganda; a number of allegedly rigged elections and the inability of the authorities to control the situation. The Federal Government apparently ignored these danger signals.

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[11]Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner, Political Parties and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 407.

The use of the military to support the regular Police Force was delayed until it was too late and the restlessness in the civilian society spread to the Army itself.

It was strongly believed in Nigeria that the Federal Government refused to use force to restore law and order in Western Nigeria after the West Regional election or institute a public inquiry into the conduct of the elections, because the NPC was an ally of the NNDP which was in power in Western Nigeria. The failure of the Federal Government to intervene to ensure a democratic government led to a period of unprecedented disrespect for law and order in the West, tension all over the country and "political decay," to use Samuel Huntington's phrase.[12] While Huntington would refer to Nigeria's period of internal problems preceding the military coup as a period of political decay, David Easton's reference to such situation would be a period of "stress"--one of his major criteria for judging political development. The ability of a political system to overcome a major stress without a major crisis or capitulation is a mark of political development.[13]

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[12]Samuel Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," World Politics, Vol. XVII, No. 3 (April 1965), pp. 386-430.

According to Professor Huntington's fine distinction between purely economic growth or physical modernization and economic growth, Nigeria had ample evidence of the former but lacked the latter.

[13]David Easton, A Systems Analysis of Political Life, p. 224.

Chalmers Johnson agrees with David Easton that when a political system is in a period of stress, especially when the base of authority had been discredited, as it was in Nigeria in the period under consideration, revolutions do not come automatically. "Since it /the political system/ is composed of reflective human beings, it is capable of evaluating what is happening and of taking evasive actions."[14] According to Johnson, "Actors will resort to violence only when other means have been blocked."[15] The events that trigger revolution in such a disequilitrated society, which he called "accelerators," "are not sets of conditions but single events--events that rupture a system's pseudo-integration based on deterrence."[16] While Huntington does not contradict either Easton or Johnson, he makes a strong point that a political system must either keep growing or decay, and from all indications the Nigerian political system in 1965-66 showed signs not of growth but of decay.

In Nigeria there were a few "accelerators" that could have erupted into a revolutionary violence but they all failed

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[14]Ibid., p. 225.

[15]Chalmers Johnson, Revolutionary Change (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), p. 96.

[16]Ibid., p. 99.

because none had the support of the military leadership. Any real civilian revolution that threatened the survival of the state would have been quickly put down by the Government through the use of the military, which, although small in number compared to the size and population of Nigeria, was well-equipped and adequate for a country where a negligible percentage of the people either possess firearms or can make them in a commercial quantity. In a preindustrial society, revolution does not succeed unless it has the backing of the military or at least its moral support. Since the military monopolizes the use of force and violence in such a state, a revolution must of necessity cooperate with the military or be crushed by it. There were approximately 9,000 soldiers in the Nigerian military in 1966 compared with 200,000 in 1971.

Military Intervention

A study of the military intervention in Nigerian politics cannot be undertaken without a clear concept of the Nigerian political situation in 1966, when "the tensions of the body politic reflected themselves in the military to such an extent that the army turned upon itself in wholesale slaughter."[17]

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[17]Martin J. Dent, "The Military and Politics: A Study of the Relations Between the Army and the Political Process in Nigeria," in Kenneth Kirkwood (ed.), African Affairs, No. 3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 113.

Traditionally the military is the most conservative and nationalistic of all political establishments. Its hierarchical structure and rigorous discipline inculcate the spirit of unity, obedience to law and order and allegiance to the preservation of national interests as opposed to sectional interests.

Unlike the civilian sector of society, the military is not democratic and does not brook any opposition. Its corporate sense is so strong that it is saved from sectional loyalties from which politicians get their basic support. Although the corporate sense of the military is a stabilizing factor in the state, the chances for a military coup d'tat are greatest where tensions in society become so clear-cut and sectional as to be reflected in the military. W. F. Gutteridge asserts that "the point at which the Army ceases to be the willing instrument of the Government of a newly independent state and takes over its powers may come when it feels threatened as an institution or when it is required to carry out policies which are unacceptable on behalf of politicians whose personal or public conduct is distasteful."[18] Gutteridge's many case studies on the role of the military in the politics of the new nations of Africa indicate that the

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[18]W. F. Gutteridge, The Military in African Politics (London: Methuen, 1966), pp. 151-152.

lack of proper distribution of power within these societies including the proper status of the military within the power structure account for the ease with which the civilian governments are replaced. Where power is not well distributed or widely dispersed, in which case the government has a low level of legitimacy, its overthrow by the military can be done without much blood-shed if the Army itself is not divided by the same conditions that kept the civilian society divided.

Politicians in the new nations of Africa are constantly besieged by conflicts which they fight out by legitimate persuasion through political action, elections, speeches, manifestoes and all kinds of political maneuvers within the constitutional set-up; but once conflict occurs within the military or between the military and the civilian establishment, violence results.

The violence that caused the fall of the First Republic of Nigeria in January, 1966, is not unrelated to the regional conflicts that had corroded the legitimacy of the federal government and made its fall inevitable. The Nigerian Army, brought up in the traditional British attitude of aloofness from the political process and loyalty to civilian authority, was forced to act unprofessionally as a last resort to restore what the coup leaders thought was a democratic society.

The facts that the plotters of the coup were predominantly young officers of Eastern origin, and that most of their victims were Northerners--including the Regional Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello and the Federal Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, also a Northern leader, and a few military officers of Northern origin--have many implications for the coup's major cause being a regional power struggle, and a redressing of Regional balance of power which bogged down at the political level. It is important to recall that the coup as initially planned called for the elimination of all the major political leaders, but when the plan was executed, some leaders, mostly Ibo NCNC leaders, were merely taken under protective custody but not harmed.

When the coup failed in its major objective to seize the Government, the surviving members of the cabinet turned over power to the faction of the Army loyal to the Civilian Government. Since the Major General of the Armed Forces, J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi, was an Ibo, the military oligarchy that he formed was Ibo-dominated and therefore unacceptable to the vast majority in the North who felt threatened by the new shift in power. As a temporary measure, each Region was assigned a military Governor native to the Region.

The composition of the First Military Government was a direct reflection of British colonial policies in Nigeria which created a fertile climate for a military coup.

The hierarchical strata portrayed the anomaly in the Regional imbalance in education and professional training. Of the four layers in the military strata, Southerners especially Eastern Southerners most of whom are Ibos out-numbered Northerners seven to one in the rank of major or above.[19] This is due to the fact that the composition of the Officer Corps was the result of open competition and entry by academic qualifications introduced by the British in the mid-fifties and continuing until 1961, the year after independence. According to Martin Dent, only six out of forty-four officers listed in the 1960 British Army list were Northerners and as many as twenty-three were Easterners and the rest Westerners and Mid-westerners. "Of the thirty lieutenants and second lieutenants, eighteen came from the East. Of the forty-four officers twenty-four were of Ibo origin."[20] It is not clear why there were more Ibos in the higher echelon of the Nigerian military than there were members of other ethnic groups percentage-wise. Most probably the educated Ibos who joined the military were quite aware of the strategic importance of the military in the future balance of power in Nigeria. Also, the limited number of opportunities for civilian jobs may have forced the surplus educated Ibos

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[19] Ibid., p. 118.

[20] Ibid.

to take to the military. Being culturally achievement oriented, it was inevitable that a policy of recruitment to officer training based on merit would attract Ibos out of proportion to their numerical ratio in the country. Moreover the Yorubas who would have competed with the Ibos have traditionally tended to favor business, commerce and other professions more than military life. Another important factor affecting the recruitment to the Officer Corps concerns the comparatively low prestige that Africans, especially Nigerians, attached to a military career, at least until quite recently.[21] Since Northern Nigeria was the most educationally backward, it was no surprise that this situation was reflected in the military hierarchy. Also, there were more positions available for educated Northerners in the higher echelons of the civil bureaucracy, than there were for Southerners.

At the bottom of the military hierarchy Northerners, mostly from the traditionally non-Moslem areas predominated. Psychologically people from minority areas or minority groups in a heteregenous society have a higher record of enlistment in the military compared with the dominant group or the more privileged areas.[22] The greater percentage of Northerners

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[21] James S. Coleman and Belmont Bruce, Jr. The Military in the Sub Saharan Africa in J.J. Johnson. The role of the military in underdeveloped countries.(Princeton, 1962), p. 400.

[22] In the U.S. Congress the bill to create an all volunteer Army was defeated because many Congressmen argued that such an Army would be predominantly black--the most significant minority group in the country.

among the riflemen is also accounted for by the fact that a quota system was used in regulating recruitment at the lowest level; its justification being to balance military powers with the political realities in the country. James S. Coleman and Belmont Price suggest that since Northerners were traditionally more politically quiescent and less nationalistic, it was very likely that the British colonial administration preferred them to predominate the lowest ranks of the military since the North would be the region least likely to be involved in internal uprisings and disturbances, which the military would be called upon to suppress.[23]

The second layer of the Nigerian military, comprising the line of General Duty and Non-Commissioned Officers, was more diversified and more difficult to classify, for the fact that the army does not publish tribal statistics and where data are available, they are unreliable. However, the Supreme Military Commander, Major General Gowan admitted that "most people from the South go in for the technical side and most people from the North go into the General Duty side."[24] It is easy to understand why Northerners would prefer to move

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[23]James Coleman and Belmont Bruce, The Military in Sub-Sahara Africa, p. 371.

[24]Col. Gowan, Aburi Report• Nigeria : 1967 (meeting of Thursday, January 5).

in the line of General Duty which would require less specialized training or lower educational background, while Southerners would prefer the technical line which calls for a higher educational background to begin with.

Although promotion to the status of Non-Commissioned Officer was theoretically based on merit, the policy of balancing military sectors of society influenced the promotion of more Northerners than Southerners. Martin Dent records that as high as 75 per cent of Non-Commissioned Officers in 1967 were Northerners.[25]

The third layer comprised junior officers. Since the hierarchical ladder was pyramidically structured, this rank had fewer members than the first two. Its membership was controlled by a quota of 50 per cent Northern and 50 per cent Southern as of 1961, the year after independence.

The importance of analyzing the composition of the Nigerian military before the coup is primarily to indicate the existence of inadequate integration in the Nigerian military which is a direct result of unbalanced regional development and inadequate integration of the civilian society which itself is a result of faulty colonial policies. An army so disintegrated in rank is an effective breeding ground

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[25]Martin Dent, Ibid., p. 117.

for a coup d'etat;because discrimination between ranks and/or status differentials is greater in the military than in the civilian establishment, and where different strata are dominated by different cultural groups or regions, the encouragement of, and the chances for planning a coup d'etat without detection are greatest. However, the Nigerian coup, plotted at the junior officer level had a sprinkling of supporters from the West and the North. It was not a wholly one-region plot. The rank and file were reluctant to follow the orders of the junior officers primarily because most of the latter were Southerners whereas most of the former were Northerners and the motive for the coup was suspect to all Northerners, to say the least.

The Two Coups

While the first coup had some support from all regions in the Federation /although the original motive was betrayed by the selective killing of Northern leaders/ the second coup or counter-coup was wholly regionally planned and executed. The preponderance of Northerners in the rank and file outweighed the qualitative superiority of Easterners who when the chips were down, found themselves as leaders without followers, and therefore ineffective.

The First Military Government, headed by General Ironsi, on seizing power immediately decreed that the federal

constitution had been suspended, all political parties abolished and all political appointments cancelled.[26] Then the regime moved on to centralize the Civil Service. This adoption of a national rather than regional merit system threatened job security for Northern bureaucrats. This security was further threatened by the outpouring of Southern University graduates which the economy could not absorb. In addition, an Easterner was in power. By abolishing the federal system the new regime had touched on the very issue that paralyzed the civilian government and reactions were fast and disruptive. As pointed out earlier, most political jobs were held by Northerners by the mere fact that numerically the North accounted for more than half of Nigeria, and politically the Northern Peoples' Party had controlled Northern Nigeria and the Federal Government since the inception of the parliamentary system in 1957. Therefore, Northerners were the most affected by the new military decrees. Politicians relieved of their means of livelihood probably incited mob riots aimed at Ibos in the North thereby causing the death of hundreds of them. There was no attempt at disrupting the military government because that would bring immediate and disproportionate retaliation. The General refused advice to

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[26]Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Information, Press Release No. F 348 (Lagos: May 24, 1966); See also, Federal Nigeria, Washington, D.C.: Embassy of Nigeria, Vol. IX, No. 1-4, 1966.

to use the military against rioters in the North fearing that he would alienate his few Northern supporters, and make matters worse. By his failure to act, he had psychologically betrayed the weakness of his regime in enforcing acceptance of their military rule and thereby boosted the morale of his opponents into a situation that would make the planning of a counter-coup more likely.

In his attempt to give his regime the semblance of legitimacy, General Ironsi was not only ambivalent but unclear in the policies that he followed and imprecise in the actions that he took. In the tradition of Machievellism, he would have succeeded more with a strict and brutal enforcement of the decisions of his military oligarchy than by trying to rally regional support or to embark on procedures to legitimize his government, which actions were futile. According to Edward Luttwak a successful coup, in order to ensure a long term political survival, must first establish effective control over the bureaucracy and the armed forces before embarking on any large-scale management of the problem of economic development.[27]

The counter-coup took place while the General was away from Lagos--his base of power--and touring the country to

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[27]Edward Lattwak, Coup D'Etat (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1969), pp. 183.

plead for national unity.

The First Military Government suffered from the fact that the federal government did not have a strong "political center". According to S. E. Finer, if a target state for a coup has many important regional centers, "the stroke of state will strike the wind" and therefore foil the coup or make its success the beginning of more conflicts or countercoups.[28]

Recurring Problems

It is significant to point out that a recurring problem of every administration in Nigeria had been the number of subunits in the federation. The civilian government was not able to resolve the issue politically and the report of the impartial minority commission that inquired into the best ways of alleviating fears resulting from the inadequate structure of the federal system failed to find any solution. The colonial government, by its short-term policy of pacifying the country by leaving the administrative system of the monolithic North untouched, had created a long-term problem of how best to integrate the economically backward North and the progressive South, without giving one section an advantage over the other.

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[28] S. E. Finer, Forward to Edward Luttwak, Coup D'Etat, p. xiii.

The First Military Government abolished the federal system but timidly kept the substance of the four regions pending the report of an investigating commission.[29] The Second Military Government, building on the assumption that the four-unit federation had been given a mortal blow and yet aware of the fact that the spirit of federalism was not dead, recreated a federal system consisting of twelve units. The Eastern Region seceded in May, 1967 firstly because the grounds for secession had already been established and secondly because the unilateral decree was obviously aimed at curtailing the influence of Ibos whose intelligentsia were opposed to the Second Military Government. It seems obvious that whatever regime takes over the administration of Nigeria will have to face the problem of representation of ethnic or cultural groups in its administration.

The problem of the number and size of federal units is not peculiar to Nigeria. It is a characteristic problem of every federation and does not have a quick formula for solution. However, there is ample evidence to support the assertion that the more the number of units, the more stable the federation, but the closer it leads towards a unitary system. Admittedly, a unitary system is a lot easier to operate than

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[29]A two-man commission was appointed to study the integration of Regional Civil Services into a centralized system.

a federal system, but there is no conclusive proof that a unitary system is more workable for a multinational state like Nigeria than a federal system.[30]

With six years of military rule and at least four more years to go, Nigeria will not be the same again. After ten years of military ban of political participation, a new era will dawn when politics will no longer be as lucrative as it used to be because a new crop of politicians tempered by the experience of the civil war will emerge.[31] Also, if the new federal structure survives for five years after which new elections are held to provide civilian legislatures, there is a high probability that all former attachments to the old Regional system will be dissolved and the North-South hostility due to their development problems will pass into history. The memory of the Civil War will linger on for long but it will dissipate faster if rehabilitation of war victims and war-torn areas is accelerated.

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[30]The Military Government has set 1976 as the date for the next election to the National and Local Legislative Houses.

[31]Of the 41 independent African countries only three-Nigeria, Cameroun, and the Congo are truly federal. Judging from the wave of violence and coup d'tat that swept through Africa in the 1960's there is no evidence that either the federal or the unitary system is the answer to political stability.

Causes of the Massacre of the Ibos

The causes of military intervention in politics, of coup d'etats and counter coups, and of internal and external wars have been well covered by social scientists, but not much has been written about the causes of the kind of unprovoked mass killings that preceded the Nigeria civil war. Colin Legum suggests two essential factors that release the capacity for such mass killings: "The first is that the host community should feel itself to be threatened by alien domination either economically, politically, or culturally. The second is that the host society should be in a state of great tension, malaise, or confusion."[32] In other words, Mr. Legum assumes that in order for mass killings to take place in the absence of a declared war two groups of culturally distinct peoples must be living together in the same geographical environment and yet not be physically integrated. This situation existed in Nigeria by 1966 when about 2 million Ibos who had lived and worked in the North for more than two decades were still regarded as foreigners and, in spite of their common citizenship, and in marked contrast

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[32]Colin Legum, "Tragedy in Nigeria," in Irving L. Markovitz (ed.), African Politics (New York: The Free Press, 1970), pp. 248-251. Reprinted from The Observer (London), October 16, 1966.

to the Ibos in the East, had no political ambitions.

The social and economic progress that the Ibos in the North were making, posed as a threat to Northerners who despite excluding them from the Northern civil service used them as experts and technicians in their private sectors, and as skilled workers in the federal service. The failure of full integration remained a major source of tension until the military coup and the subsequent removal of the Northern oligarchy unleashed the Northern grievance on the Ibos in an expression totally devoid of human decency. There is no doubt that the cause of the massacre of about 30 thousand Ibos in the North had roots deeper than the murder of about half a dozen Northern leaders in a military coup in which a few Ibos played a leading role.

In spite of the hostility between Southerners and Northerners in the North, both had lived in relative peace until the military coup thought that the best way to express their frustration was by violence. The one unmistakable lesson a military coup teaches is that violence is legitimized if it is successfully carried out; otherwise it is treasonous.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was focused on how British policies and administrative practice have influenced Nigerian post-independence politics. It was assumed from Chapter One that no proper analysis of post-independence or contemporary problems of formerly dependent people could overlook their colonial origins. It was also assumed that since the British "created" the Nigerian polity out of a multiplicity of tribal or ethnic groups that existed in the country before 1861 (when the British officially declared Lagos a British colony) and guided the country's development until independence in 1960, there was a high probability that the success or failure of the system had some relationship with her colonial heritage.

The study demonstrates that the political system that Britain bequeathed to Nigeria at her independence in 1960 was full of too many conflicts and contraditions to be able to stand the rigors and demands of post-colonial centrifugal pressures.

Like any other federal system made up of diverse peoples, languages, cultures and histories, the Nigerian federation was expected to go through many trials and pitfalls before stabilizing. The period of dependency ended

before there was a sound basis of representative government for the federal system. This was primarily due to the Nigerian nationalists' belief that they could develop a democratic political system better suited to their needs, rather than have a British imposed settlement. The British would have preferred to stay until mutually acceptable settlements were reached had the nationalists' impatience and obsession about independence not posed a dilemma. Finally, the British conceded to their impatience and granted Nigeria independence without further delay.

In spite of the smoothness with which power was transferred, political experts predicted that when the major force (British overlordship) that bound the diverse groups together was severed, there would follow a reshuffling in the power structure in order to adapt the colonial heritage to the political realities in the country, and that the reshuffling at worst might lead to the disintegration of the system. The worst that was feared did not happen[1] but later events followed as predicted--an adaptation of the inherited power structure to a new power equilibrium.

It was difficult to determine events that would have happened inevitably regardless of the policies the British adopted. Professor Karl Deutsch assumes that there exists

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[1]There is a Nigerian saying that nothing good turns out as good as man's hope and that nothing bad turns out as ill as man's fear.

some recurrent patterns of political and social integration (and disintegration) in the growth of nations.[2] However, a detailed examination of these patterns as found in British colonial policy and administrative behavior is beyond the scope of this study. The point of emphasis was that there is a definite and direct relationship between the political, social and economic system which Nigeria inherited from the British and the nature of Nigeria's post-independence problems. There is no contradition in claiming that post-independence Nigerian socio-political infrastructure was largely a British product, since there would be no Nigeria as a political unit, without British conquest and annexation.

The question can now be asked: To what extent was the malfunctioning of the post-colonial system a result of the colonial system? Or, to put it differently, to what extent is the collapse of the inherited system a result of the nature of the Nigerian society? These two questions can not be answered with any kind of mathematical exactitude because many factors were involved in working towards the demise of the system and their interrelationships are almost impossible to measure. It can rightly be claimed

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[2]Karl W. Deutsch, "The Growth of Nations: Some Recurrent Patterns of Political and Social Integration," World Politics, Vol. V, (January 1953).

as a result of evidences given in this study that although the British provided the initial political framework upon which Nigerian politicians operated, the malfunctioning and fall of the First Republic of Nigeria was as much a result of the decisions made by Nigerians themselves after independence as it was of the policies laid down by the British in the colonial period. The apportionment of any degree of blame is uncalled for because of the very fact that that cannot be statistically accurate.

The British came into Nigeria, as Lady Lugard (the wife of the architect of the Nigerian polity) testified, without a national plan for the country. They saw themselves as free traders, and later as humanitarians concerned with the plight of the bartered slaves. In the course of time they claimed a trusteeship over the large chunk of land and the people who lived in it. The justification for the acquisition of Nigeria could be explained by what Lugard called a "Dual Mandate" /a twentieth-century variation of what Rudyard Kipling in the nineteenth century had romanticised as "the white man's burden"/. Lugard said that it was a sacred duty on the part of the civilized nations of Western Europe to see that the government of subject peoples and the development of the natural resources of their territories, were directed to the best interest of those peoples; and to see that in the process those natural resources were not denied to the world. This conception

which became a basis for justification of colonialism has been criticized as hypocritical, or at best an attempt to reconcile incompatibles.[3]

From the beginning the British were beset with many administrative problems. First, there were not enough British administrators for the vast area they had acquired. Next, there were cultural, religious, geographical and historical diversities of the people. Since the cost of direct administration by British officials was thought prohibitive, Lugard as the first Governor General of Nigeria devised a means whereby the people would be ruled by their traditional rulers under the supervision of British officials. The inception of Indirect Rule in Nigeria became a boon as well as a bane to the country. Its short-term effect was the comparative ease with which Britain ruled the colonial people, but its long-term effect was the fragmentation of nationalism.

The many years of administrative separation between Northern and Southern Nigeria created a sense of regional, rather than national unity among their inhabitants. Southern Nigeria was further subdivided in 1939 as a result of the war and by 1945 there were three Regions in Nigeria

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[3]Mowat, C.L. (ed.), The New Cambridge Modern History, Vol. XII (1895-1945), p. 396.

and the colony and protectorate of Lagos. Although the doctrine of trusteeship, to which the British paid lip service, implied that the people should be prepared to take over the administration of their country, there was little if any adequate provision made for this eventuality until the world-wide upsurge of nationalism resulting from the end of World War II forced Britain to quicken the process of preparing the people for independence. First, Sir Arthur Richard's constitution introduced for the first time a representation of the peoples of the three Regions who met annually for "the discussions of the affairs of their country." This constitution met with ill-favor of Nigerian politicians who wanted a share in decision making (and not discussion alone) in matters affecting their country. Three other constitutions followed in 1951, 1954 and 1960; each gave progressively more powers to Nigerians.

Over the years colonial policy on education and evangelization prevented a balanced social and economic development of the country. While the South was exposed to western influence and culture, the North was protected from the same in keeping with the promise Lugard made to the Fulani aristocracy not to interfere with their feudal system. With the South more developed than the North, the latter was forced to adopt a "Northernization" policy

which in effect created a cultural unity in the North (that did not exist before the British came) and set a dangerous rivalry between the North and the South. There was also rivalry between the East and the West primarily because each contained a built-in majority grouping which naturally wanted the leadership of the majority party in its own region.

There was no truly national party in the country due to the fact that Regionalization and Parliamentarism created a psychological factor in Nigerian politics giving the majority tribal group in each Region the necessary basis for forming a political party to govern the region. The Action Group successfully challenged the authority of the NCNC in the Western Region and successfully established itself as the majority party in that Region until dissension between its leader Chief Awolowo (who no longer occupied a position of influence when he became leader of Opposition in Parliament) and its parliamentary leader at the Western Regional Government brought a conflict in loyalty among its members and led finally to its destruction.

Although there were as many as two hundred and fifty tribal or ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Ibos in the East, the Yorubas in the West and the Hausa-Fulanis in the North dominated the politics of the respective regions, primarily because Parliamentary democracy makes it mandatory for

the majority in a legislature to determine policy and its execution with the (usually ineffective) criticism of the minority. As independence drew close, members of minority groups become restless about alleged discriminations by the majority groups and demanded the creation of more states.

A commission of inquiry was set to investigate the grievances of the minorities and make recommendations for allaying their fears. The commission reported that while there were some evidences of discriminations, the creation of more states would not be the solution since the more states were created the more minorities would also be created, for each new state must necessarily include a number of ethnic groups. The fallacy in the reasoning of the Commission was that as more states were created more minority groups would also be created. But in fact, by creating more states, more majorities would be made out of minorities, thereby decreasing the number of minorities in the country as a whole.

Since Nigeria was a three-regional federation and since political parties were established on the regional basis, it was natural that the Northern Region which was larger in size and population than the other two put together would develop into an entrenched majority and dominate them. The country was saved from breaking into

pieces because the NPC which dominated the North and the NCNC which dominated the East agreed to hold the country together by forming a coalition Government. The NPC agreed to the coalition because it did not have the sufficient number to form the government. After independence the NPC developed into the monolithic party it was feared to be and was ready to play a dominant role in Nigerian politics. When the contradictions in the inherited system revealed themselves, this made compromises more difficult.

The major criticism of British colonial policy has been the creation of a three-unit federal system with one unit larger than the other two put together. This contradicts all known theories about the structure of the federal system. Moreover, the size and population of Nigeria makes each of the three Regions (four in 1964-66) larger than most (in population only) of the countries of Africa, and gives each a feeling of self-sufficiency which could be (and actually was) channelled into a desire for secession.

The number of regions or states in the federal union has been the most challenging problem of each administration in Nigeria. The colonial administration developed the three Regions apparently without a preconceived plan, and simply because it was administratively feasible at that time. The problem came when it was realized that the

country could no longer continue to have a strongly centralized administration along with a dual policy producing two culturally different peoples. Therefore, a federal trend was introduced into the system in 1946. The Hicks Report on the 1951 Nigeria Allocation very well put it that: "Though the Richard's Constitution was far from being federal, it was an adumbration of a federal constitution and a natural first stage to that end."[4] The Government of the First Nigerian Republic managed to extract the Mid-West Region out of Western Nigeria because the Action Group Government of Western Nigeria was not in power at the federal level. The First Military Government decreed that the four regions were abolished, but when faced with "strong opposition in the North, it suspended temporarily any practical application of the policy, pending the report of a two-man investigating commission. The Second Military Government, faced with opposition from the Eastern Region, decreed that the four Regions had been enlarged to twelve. As conditions for secession in the East had already been established, its implementation was immediate and civil war began.

There were some inherent defects in the Nigerian political system which acted as sources of conflict and seeds of discontent, but, given time and the willingness of Nigerians to maintain the federation, these

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[4]Hicks-Phillipson Report on /Nigerian/ Revenue Allocation (Lagos: Federal Government Printers, 1951, p. 13.

would have been corrected. A former British administrator in Nigeria, and also a constitutional expert, Mr. I. F. Nicolson, remarked in 1960 that: "When the gap between constitutional theory and practice widens at times of crises, therefore, and shortcomings of several branches of the Federal Government are considered, it is salutory to remember that one is witnessing, not the comparative failure of self-government by one people, but the comparative success of an almost international experiment in cooperation between peoples economically linked although politically and culturally divided."[5] The above statement represents a British point of view that if the planned economic links in Nigeria had been allowed to grow in number and in strength, the political and cultural cleavages in the country would have become less of a threat to the survival of the Federal Republic. While we may agree that the inconsistencies and contradictions embedded in the political system would have gradually dissipated if Nigerian leaders were strongly committed to the federal system, there is a need to emphasize a point that the nature of the struggle for power made it inevitable that a major crisis would take place before power relationships were finally settled.

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[5]I. F. Nicolson, "The Structure of Government at the Federal Level," in Franklin Blitz (ed.), The Politics of Administration of Nigerian Government, pp. 77-78.

Several factors have operated to intensify the struggle for power in Nigeria and therefore obstructed national unity. One of these was the fact that the British did not institute any effective symbols for Nigerian nationality. Until independence, there were no national ceremonies or holidays depicting Nigerian nationhood upon which national loyalties and sentiments could be focused. All symbols were in honor of British national achievements or glory. Another major obstacle to national unity and integration was the official recognition and support of indigenous community land ownership. While this policy prevented the problem of white-settler communities in Nigeria, it also prevented Nigerians from acquiring permanent residence outside their ancestral homes and therefore impeded migration and national integration.

Professor Deutsch has charged that, "Almost every historian, writing the history of a single country is likely to report that it was natural for things to come out the way they did."[8] This study, however, does not pretend to find any evidence to conclude that a military Government was bound to succeed the Government of the First Republic of Nigeria. What was unmistakable was that a certain set

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[8]Karl W. Deutsch, Nationalism and Its Alternatives, (New York: Knopf, 1969, p. 41.

of conditions[9] had to exist before a stable democracy would be established. Since these did not exist at the time of independence, the transfer of power from the regime that took over from the British to any other regime would not take place democratically.

The circumstances under which the military takes over from a civilian government cannot be accurately determined. The rapid spread of coups d'etats in Africa and the large support the military regimes get from the civilian population suggest that not all the civilian governments overrun by the military may have suffered from a low level of legitimacy but that military intervention in African politics has become contagious.[10] The exchange of information among the African military and their common colonial

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[9]S. M. Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," American Political Science Review, 53 (March 1959), pp. 69-105; Lipset, Political Man, p. 31; D. F. Aberle, A. K. Cohen, M. J. Levy, Jr., F. X. Sutton, "The Functional Requisites of Society," Ethics, Vol. 60, January 1950; Deane E. Neaubauer, "Some Conditions of Democracy," American Political Science Review, 61 (Dec. 1967), pp. 1003-9; G. Almond and S. Verba, The Civic Culture. A consensus of opinion of these authors would list adequate group representation in political decision making, a high level of political trust and sufficient socialization into the "rules of the game," as most important.

[10]James N. Rosenau, "Towards the Study of National-International Linkages," in Rosenau, ed., Linkage Politics (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1969), pp. 45-46.

Rosenau suggests that the power of example which he calls an "emulative process" contributes to the spread of violence like a virus throughout Africa. The "linkage" is indirect rather than direct.

backgrounds and training make it tempting for the soldiers to believe that if their counterparts in other countries could succeed in wresting power from the civilian government, they too could do the same thing in their own country, given to the understanding that they alone possessed the only effective means of coersion in their country and that outside intervention was most unlikely.

The Nigerian case is not a strong example to illustrate the "contagion" theory, for the Army was as divided as the civilian regime it toppled, hence the counter-coup and the secession of Biafra. However, the handful of junior officers who planned the coup were indeed convinced that they would be joined by other officers, hence they took the initiative.

The writer strongly shares Lord Hailey's view that Nigeria was "perhaps the most artificial of the many administrative units created in the course of the European occupation of Africa."[11] Perhaps the British should be complimented for their creativity but the fact of the matter is that there were not enough integrative links forged to insure the country's continuity with the result that when the defective links were broken, a civil war nearly

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[11]Lord Hailey, An African Survey (revised edition) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 307.

brought black Africa's most progressive nation to ruins.

In conclusion, caution must be exercised in the prediction of Nigeria's future. The short-lived but tragic civil war has apparently forged a spirit of unity that had not existed in the country before; and judging from the context of history, there will be a greater degree of tolerance and compromise in the future. However, for the side that suffered defeat, the memory of the war will linger on for years before eventually passing into history.

While the breakdown of Nigeria's First Republic, once thought by many to be Africa's showcase of democracy, is absorbing in many ways, to the student of politics it provides a lesson that the essential problems of nation building are ancient, general and persistent. No federal union escapes disintegration, military take over, or civil war unless the component units of the federation are psychologically committed to maintaining the union and the basis of sharing federal power are arranged satisfactorily.

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