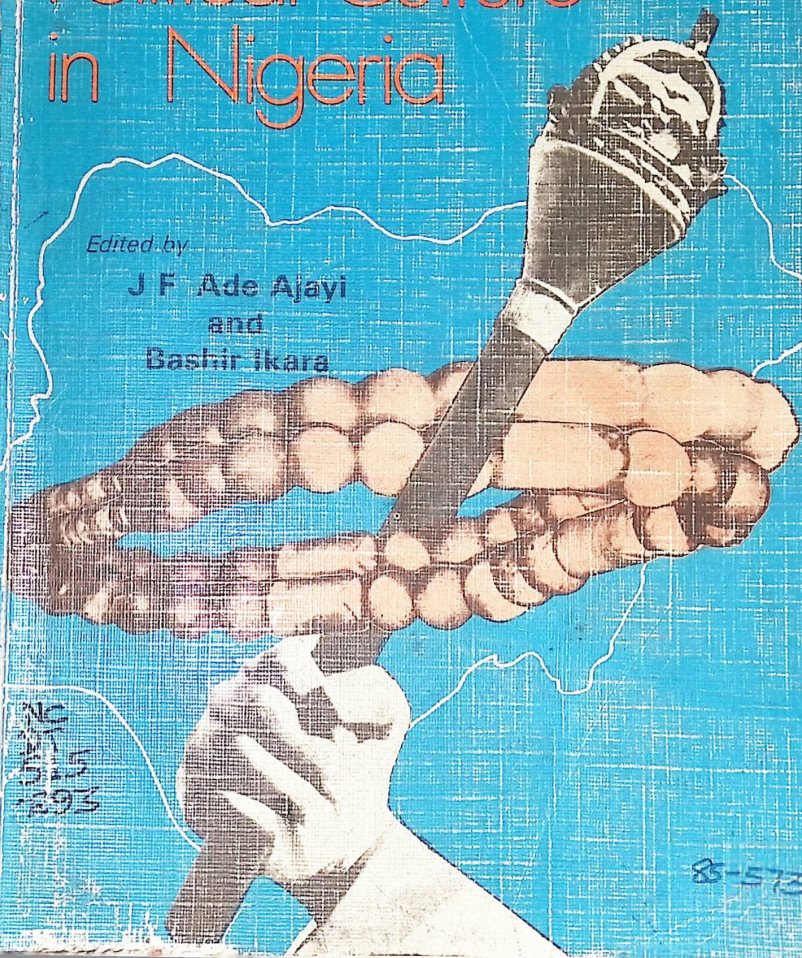


Evolution of Political Culture in Nigeria

Edited by

**J F Ade Ajayi
and
Bashir Ikara**



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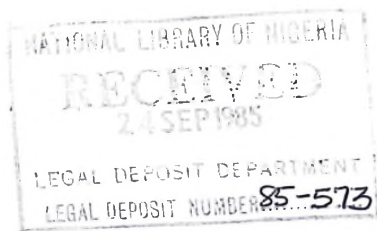
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Evolution of Political Culture in Nigeria

*Proceedings of a National Seminar Organized
by the Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture*

edited by
J F Ade Ajayi
and
Bashir Ikara



University Press Limited
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Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture
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ISBN 978 154735 9 (Nigeria)

0 19 575865 X (Outside Nigeria)

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Printed by Emaconprint Limited, Lagos
Published by University Press Limited
Three Crowns Building, Jericho, P.M.B. 5095, Ibadan, Nigeria

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Notes on Contributors	v
Members of the Editorial Board	vii
Opening Remarks by the Director of the Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture — <i>Bashir Ahmed Ikara</i>	ix
I. Introduction: Nigeria's Evolutionary Political Culture: Issues and Processes	1
II. Keynote Address: Factors in the Evolution of Political Culture in Nigeria — <i>J.F. Ade. Ajayi</i>	10
III. Kanem and Borno under three Dynasties: Some aspects of change and development c.700-1900 A.D. — <i>John E. Lavers</i>	18
IV. The Structure of Government in Kanem-Borno under the Saifawa — <i>M. Nur Alkali</i>	33
V. Political Centralization in the South of Borno: The case of Sukur in the 18th and 19th centuries — <i>Bawuro Barkindo</i>	50
VI. Political Evolution or Revolution?: The case of Kin Nupe before the advent of colonial rule — <i>Sa'ad Abubakar</i>	67
+VII. Nineteenth century Political Culture in the Eastern States of Nigeria — <i>E.J. Alagoa</i>	77
VIII. Collision and Coalition in the Politics and Society of Western Nigeria in the 19th century.— <i>J.A. Atanda</i>	85
IX. The Political System of Ibadan in the 19th century — <i>Toyin Falola</i>	104
X. The Jihad and its Role in Strengthening the <i>Sarauta</i> (kingship) system in Hausaland in the 19th century: The case of Kano — <i>Abdullahi Mahadi</i>	118
XI. Continuity and Change in the Political Administration of the Nigerian Emirates: The Kano Example (1900-1960) — <i>C.N. Ubah</i>	129
XII. The 1976 Local Government Reforms as an aspect of Nigeria's Political Culture — <i>Bashir Ahmed Ikara</i>	147
XIII. The Military and Political Engineering in Nigeria (1966-79): An Overview — <i>J.I. Elaigwu</i>	173

	<i>Page</i>
XIV. The New Political Infrastructure: Prospects for the future —	
<i>P.C.A. Daudu</i>	192
Appendix I: Members of the Organizing Committee	210
Appendix II: Members of the Technical Working Committee	211
Appendix III: List of Participants: National Seminar on Nigeria's	
Political Culture	212
Appendix IV: Resolutions	214
Index	217

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M. Isa Alkali	—	<i>Member</i>

Opening remarks by the Director, of the Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture, at the Opening ceremony of the National Seminar on Nigeria's Political Culture, Monday 2nd November, 1981.

Bashir Ahmed Ikara

The purpose of this National Seminar on Nigeria's Political Culture organized by the Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture is to examine Nigeria's various political cultures from 1000 A.D. to this day with the central focus on our political institutions, notably the indigenous rulership institutions. The principal aim, however, is to see how those various political rulership institutions have survived and functioned over the centuries, what major political changes have been incorporated so far, and what aspects of such institutions could be preserved, modified or simply shelved in the light of our present political realities as a nation and in order to evolve an acceptable, stable, Nigerian political culture.

Indeed, many successive governments in Nigeria have made pronouncements emphasizing that traditional rulers are the 'custodians of our culture and traditions' and as such have a vital role to play in Nigeria's political process. On the other hand such traditional rulers have persistently complained that their powers and authorities are daily being eroded and that, in consequence, they are no longer in a position to effectively play their role as the custodians of culture and traditions. At the same time many people refer to our modern political institutions as a continuation and a mere carry-over from our recent colonial past. However, the validity of such claims has not been positively challenged, nor has a sound solution been found to the problems of conflict of 'tradition' and 'modernity' in our contemporary political system. Attempts to find such a solution have failed either because they have often been half-hearted or because there has been a considerable degree of ignorance of 'democracy' and 'the rule of law' on the part of traditional rulers, on the one hand, and an equal amount of ignorance of the purposes and functions of the traditional political system and its methods and techniques of operation over time on the part of the Western educated elite in our society. Even when and where governments repeatedly state that traditional rulers are the custodians of our culture and tradition, they do so without any express reference to which 'culture' and whose

'tradition' in time perspective. The constitutional provisions for such political organs and institutions on the other hand are by no means clear-cut. The net effect of these uncertainties has been chaos and confusion.

This Seminar was conceived in 1980 when after a year of the operation of the Presidential system of government, the need to properly examine our traditional and modern political institutions and their roles in promoting peace, security and national development was quite evident. Since the time we sent out invitations to distinguished scholars to conduct research and present papers a lot of water has passed under the bridge in various states: troubles have erupted arising out of lack of clear understanding of the role and functions of traditional rulers vis-a-vis their respective state governments. This has further emphasized the need for this Seminar. I am particularly delighted, therefore, that amongst us here today are a number of eminent university academics and researchers, as well as experienced administrators who have accepted our invitations to present papers and to enlighten our various governments and the general public as to what is and what should be.

I should, therefore, sincerely thank all the members and staff of the Council who have served on the Organizing Committee and in particular the outside members of the Technical Committee under my Chairmanship: Professor P.C. Daudu, Department of Administrative and Business Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Dr Abdullahi Mahadi of the Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Dr Bawuro Barkindo of the Department of History, Bayero University, Kano; Dr Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya of the Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages, Bayero University, Kano; and M. Isa Alkali of the Department of History, also of Bayero University, Kano.

These members have not only helped to clarify my thinking on this vast question but have also busied themselves all the year round attending meetings to plan the Seminar in detail at short notice. That we have received many letters of appreciation from various participants showing how intrigued they have been with the thoughts behind the Seminar clearly shows that the time and energy spent have been worthwhile.

As far back as 1610, William Shakespeare, that most distinguished English playwright and dramatist, foresaw the dangers of colonialism in enslaving the colonised and depriving him of his possessions as we see in one of his plays, *The Tempest*, and as we hear from Black Caliban accusing his white master Prospero, thus:

"---This Island is mine, by Sycorax my mother, which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first, Thou strok'st me, and made much of me, wouldst give me Water with berries in't and teach me how To name the bigger light, and how the less That burn by day and night, and then I lov'd thee, And showed thee all the qualities o' th' isle The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and fertile: Curs'd be I did so! All the charms of Sycorax, toads, Bats, light on you! For I am all the subjects that you Have, which first was mine own king: and here you sty me, In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me The rest o' th' Island."

It is interesting to observe that although Shakespeare was writing at the time when the British were trying to discover and settle in the tiny little Islands on the Northern Coast of South America, now known as the Carribean Islands, it was in January 1824, exactly 214 years later that the Sheikh of Borno Muhammad al-Kanemi wrote a letter introducing Denham and Clapperton to the Emir of Kano in almost the same words though in Arabic thus:

From the Sheikh of Bornou to the Sultan of Kanou,

---Hence the bearer who is going to you is our friend Muhammed El-Wardy, in whose company he has some Englishmen, who came to the land of Soodan for the purpose of seeing and delighting themselves with the wonders it contains, and to examine and see the lakes and rivers and forests and deserts therein. They have been sent by their King for that purpose---

Thus if God permit them to reach you in safety be attentive to them and send guards to conduct them to the country of Kashna (Katsina) safe and unhurt---

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, this irony of history and the close parallel between Shakespeare's fictional world and the real world of our own traumatic colonial experience is too clear to warrant any further elaboration! But then why was it that after Independence in 1960 Nigeria failed to revert to its traditional political institutions of power and authority to mark her Independence from Colonial rule? Or why did our delegation to the 1957 Conference in London happily accept to transfer 'parliamentary democracy' all the way from England in the first place? Or why on the other hand, do educated and dynamic Nigerians renounce their professional jobs to be turbanned Emirs and Chiefs or Obas and Obis etc. Or why do Nigerian intellectuals and politicians compete for a traditional title? Why is it that even political party leaders prefer to be identified with traditional titles? Or why was it that even a Military Regime with all the guns and ammunitions at its disposal had had to appeal to traditional rulers to intervene in times of crisis to ensure national peace and security? Or why should traditional rulers be insulated from partisan politics as fathers of the land in some states and be appointed Commissioners in others? Above all why should they be paid higher salaries if they have no functions to perform?

These glaring contradictions and many more are some of the issues on which this Seminar must resolve with historical hindsight in the interest of Nigeria's contemporary political culture.

Thank you very much.

Introduction

Nigeria's Evolutionary Political Culture: Issues and Processes

Any attempt to examine the political culture of Nigeria over a period of a thousand years or so is fraught with problems of scanty and uneven distribution of records and a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural setting. Nevertheless, such an attempt needs to be made. This book is a modest beginning in that direction. It is an attempt to explore different trends in the political history of the landscape now known as Nigeria from the point of view of an evolving political culture within the dimensions of time and space on the one hand, and of change and continuity on the other. It contains the proceedings of the National Seminar on 'Nigeria's Evolutionary Political Culture since 1000 A.D.' organized by the Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture, and held in Kaduna from the 2nd to the 5th of November, 1981. This was the second in a series of three Seminars organized by the Council to illustrate that our culture goes beyond dancing and singing and remains relevant to our most crucial and fundamental issues of today. The first in the series, 'Culture and Technology in Nigeria' was held in 1980, and the third, 'Culture and Personality in Nigeria' was held in 1982.

The scope of this volume, as of the Seminar, in relation to time and space is very ambitious. It is therefore not surprising that there are wide gaps in information contained here about the political culture of different parts of the country. For various reasons, some of the scholars invited to present papers could not attend the Seminar and not all papers presented could be published, partly for reason of space, partly so as not to prolong the delays necessary for individual authors to revise their papers.

However, the ideas contained in the selection of papers presented here sufficiently cover the most salient features of Nigeria's evolutionary political culture. They illustrate the various factors constantly at work in that historical and evolutionary

process: the evolving character of the traditional rulership institutions; some of the beliefs, sentiments, attitudes and values that have sustained the institutions over the centuries; the concept of power and the processes of political legitimization, including the familial and religious bases of traditional authority; the general socio-political organization and authority structures as affected by a variety of modes of production and occupations; some of the economic and technological conditions, income distribution and patterns of social and labour relations; the revolutionary effects of externally induced religious factors of Islam and Christianity, and the competitive spirit induced by colonialism in commerce, political power and education; the emergence of party political power and education; the emergence of party political rivalries as a means to political power and authority; the progressive decline of the influence of traditional values; the intervention of the armed forces; and the Executive President as an attempted personification of the traditional father-figure in the historical process. Each chapter that follows provides in depth and detail an analysis of one or more of these salient features of the evolutionary political culture.

Equally significant were the ideas generated by the papers in discussion at the Seminar, but here we can only give a brief impression of the variety of issues raised. Participants tried to grapple with problems and processes in our political culture which have never been so systemically examined and with assumptions and beliefs never so seriously challenged. Attention was drawn to the relevance of history and historical research for the understanding of our political culture, and the historians too were forced to broaden their view of the past beyond the questions of who ruled where to examine the basis and assumptions of political power. More questions were raised than answered but the general consensus was that the Seminar had opened up several new lines for further inquiry. It is hoped that this book will convey this to a wider audience.

Clearly, one of the major problems faced in the discussion was the difficulty of probing into the earlier periods of Nigeria's political culture, for most parts hardly at all and for others hardly in any detail before 1800. It is almost impossible to pursue abstract notions such as 'values', 'attitudes', 'sentiments' and 'beliefs' in historical terms with any precision through archaeological evidence. And yet considering the dynamic nature of any given culture—and no culture is static—it is the conditions of the earlier periods which must have provided the formative influences in which our basic prejudices and attitudes were formed, setting the stage for continuity and change during the revolutionary movements of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Our historians need to develop the necessary techniques and methodologies for coping with the history of those earlier epochs, through analysis of religious and institutional change, linguistics and oral literatures.

Attention was also drawn to the heterogeneity of the traditional culture in Nigeria. Because of the wide variety of geographical conditions, economic and historical factors, religious practices and world-views across the country, there was

not one single model of political culture. One of the values of exploring the evolution of political culture in Nigeria within its multi-ethnic and multi-cultural setting is to shed light on the extent to which some of the contradictions in Nigerian politics is due to clash of different norms which if better studied and understood, could each contribute something positive to the evolution of a truly Nigerian culture.

The participants did not ignore the question of definition or take it lightly. In particular, they emphasized that political culture is not about politics alone or simply about the ruling classes or groups. They agreed with the keynote address that it includes 'the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and the operating norms of a polity.' The problem, however, was whether or not we could see political culture purely in social terms or political power and administration independent of the economic base of society. To what extent has the economic base of society fostered a kind of power-sharing in the interests of certain groups at the expense of others within the traditional system? And what is a *traditional* society! Can a traditional system incorporated into a new or foreign system be traditional any more? And are the traditional institutions compatible with democracy which allows the control of the political and economic process by the masses rather than the individual chief or ruler or ruling group? What aspects of the traditional system remain relevant to the evolving political culture of Nigeria and ought to be grafted on to the political system we now operate? These and other related questions underscore the conflict of tradition and modernity in our evolving political culture.

Then there is the problem of the concept of state and stateless societies as found in the early colonial anthropological classifications of African societies. The Igbo, for example, have often been cited as an example of a stateless society in Nigeria. It was argued that because of their republican spirit and outlook they did not have genuine traditional rulers apart from the warrant chiefs created by the British to carry out the orders of the colonial government. But the participants argued that whether in theory or in practice, it is hard to conceive of a stateless society. To do so would imply that there are societies without classes or without surplus. Differences there may well be in degrees of socio-political organization between states, but no stateless societies could exist as independent entities. The general consensus was that there are hardly any peoples in Nigeria without a concept of state and pattern of authority extending beyond the family unit. Even the Igbo had their own traditional chiefs, who, however, did not wield such autocratic powers as the Emirs in the northern part of the country. It was this that made it necessary for the British to create their own chiefs and endow them with such powers by warrant as would keep the colonial system going. They of course, encountered resentment and revolt. In the final analysis, however, the relevant issue was not whether societies were stateless or not, but what the state meant to the people, or what the concepts of power were, including the processes of political legitimization and attitudes towards authority.

Central to the discussion of Nigeria's political culture in its different perspectives were the dynamics of change and continuity in the political process. Since culture is dynamic, Nigeria's evolutionary political culture was responsive to the forces of change. But what were the factors making for change? How was change accommodated in the traditional system? What did the people expect from the government? What aims and purposes were the governments supposed to serve in the pre-19th Century period? Do we know what changes were taking place? In more recent times what were the dynamic and often antagonistic forces propelling the modern Nigerian society besides the personalities involved, e.g. labour versus capital, and the class and intra-class conflicts masking under some ideology such as 'ethnicity', 'religion', 'regionalism', north versus south, military versus civilian, bullet versus ballot, etc? Were changes in the system always linked with the development of the productive capacity of society? Do changes occur because certain systems were no longer able to sustain themselves or satisfy the needs of the common man? Were the changes gradual or sudden? No doubt, change does not occur in a vacuum, but some changes are subtle and cannot be pinned down to a particular date. A specific example is the emergence of the state. The various myths of origin, properly understood, emphasize not so much the sudden creation or emergence of the state at particular periods as the process of change through interdependence which allows the participation not only of 'founders' and 'kings' but also the common man in the making of the state.

Perhaps the most notable revolutionary changes in the Nigerian landscape can be said to have taken place in the 19th century and were induced by Islam, Christianity, and colonialism. The attempts of Shehu Usman dan Fodio to establish an Islamic theocratic state in the northern part of the country had far reaching consequences on the political culture of the area. Hausa traditional rulers in the provinces were overthrown and replaced by Fulani flag bearers under an emirate and Caliphal system with emirs paying allegiance to the Sultan of Sokoto at the head of the Caliphate. No doubt, the Jihad led by the Shehu was a religious movement but it involved a socio-economic and political revolution with Islam providing the ideology. Through the process of selection of leadership, usually the most learned and acceptable Muslim scholars, most of those who became flag bearers and provincial rulers were Fulani clan leaders, which has led some writers to the conclusion that the Jihad was a Fulani ethnic movement. Yet, it was argued, a notable irony of the Jihad was its strengthening the traditional rulership (sarauta) institution.

The impact of the christian missionary in the southern landscape and in the non-muslim areas of the north presents another significant perspective on the changing socio-political scene. It soon paved the way for the conquest and amalgamation of the different parts of the landscape under the name of 'Nigeria' by British colonialists. Yet the participants observed that the missionary impact was often not as sudden or as revolutionary as might appear. Conversion often did not mean the complete obliteration of traditional beliefs and attitudes either in the individual or

the community. Western education and attendant socio-economic changes were usually slow and gradual.

Colonialism brought in its wake its own ideas about government and society, super-imposed on the indigenous political structures which were not allowed to crumble and disintegrate. The exact relationship between the traditional and the Western institutions of power and authority during the colonial period was a matter for debate and disagreement amongst the participants. The system popularly known as 'Indirect Rule' often meant 'Direct Rule': the Governor, the Resident and the District Officer controlled and exercised power on the spot on behalf of the colonial government. The people themselves also knew too clearly that the emirs and other traditional rulers only exercised power with the permission of the representative of the colonial government at different levels of the political system.

Another problem confronted was the discrepancy between the ideal and the reality. Ideally, the Proclamations and the Ordinances of the colonial government were meant to guide and direct colonial officers as givers of advice in whispers behind the throne. In reality, however, they were the throne itself. No doubt, our understanding of how the colonial system functioned will be greatly improved through clarification of the role of the emir in relation both to the colonial system and to the traditional system that preceded it. For, it was both argued on the one hand that the colonial system weakened the position of the emir and on the other that it made him a greater autocrat than he had ever been.

The participants also tried to grapple with developments in the political culture in the period since independence, analyzing the essence of change and continuities in the system. The six years of the first Republic (1960-66) certainly ushered in new and far reaching changes such as the ballot box as a means of access to power, increased commercial, industrial and educational activities, as well as instability within the political system. How much of the political culture derived from the Westminster model of the Constitution, how much in practice was based on notions of pre-colonial systems of government? The Army take-over of power introduced organized violence as a means to power. But here again there were pre-colonial models of military rule, for example in 19th century Yorubaland, though with no repudiation of the supremacy of the civilian ethic and a gradual return to civil rule.

Military intervention in Nigeria's modern political process - often described as an aberration - also raises quite a number of other issues. For example, was the military not merely attracted by the glamour of power and wanted to partake of it? Just who was a civilian under the military regime: was it the common man in the street, the teacher, the worker or the rising bourgeoisie created by the military and anxious to share power with it or take from it? Which groups exercised the greatest influence over the making and implementation of government policies? If one took major reforms of the military such as the Land Use Decree or the New National Educational Policy, whose class interests were they serving? It may well turn out that their single most significant measure was the 1976 Local Government Reforms. But

analysis showed that it owed more to earlier trends in the system and the work of contemporary scholars and civil servants than the intervention of the military. Was the military a sub-culture by itself in the political system with its own internal logic? Was there or was there not a direct conflict or contradiction between the military and the civilian politicians, the resolution of which alone would ensure the survival of the nation? How does one resolve the inter-class conflict between the military and the civilian bourgeoisie in the interest of stability in the political culture? How does one ensure the consolidation of the Nigerian state and the political education of the Army in such a way that they can quietly retire into the barracks, firmly believing that the politicians would take care of their interests? Or, should the politicisation of the Army take the form it has taken in the USSR or in the Peoples Republic of China or in the newly developing one-party states where the Army is integrated into one political party as a 'people's Army', defending the interests of the people and the class from which it is recruited?

Perhaps the most notable feature of the political culture to which participants constantly drew attention is continuity in spite of change throughout the period. Changes there were as we have seen, but change often resulted from some 'collision and coalition', with the new order not succeeding in wiping out the old nor in creating a completely new system. It seems that no matter what changes took place, in the final analysis one simply tumbled and always ended up on one's feet as an affirmation, perhaps, that in history people have always gone backward in spite of change. It was observed that whenever there was change there was the tendency to adhere to those aspects of change that were easier to achieve and a corresponding tendency to revert to those aspects of the previous era that promoted the legitimizing ideology of the new rulers, be it military might or religious conviction. This may explain why, even today, although politicians and government functionaries may denigrate traditional rulers, they crave for traditional titles from them in order to legitimize their claims to power and authority in a democratic and republican system of government.

The family remains as the basic unit of traditional authority out of which have arisen simple as well as elaborate structures of administration and socio-political hierarchies in terms of clans, villages, towns, provinces, states, and ancient empires and kingdoms. In many areas religion is, in the main, the basis of traditional authority of the rulership institutions long after the institution has lost its sacredness. But what did it involve at different epochs of our evolving political culture to be a traditional ruler? Political power was held as a sacred trust. The forces of production including land and technology in the agrarian civilization that was dominant were vested, not in any one person, but in the community with rare exceptions, which did not constitute the ideal. Whoever was holding political power controlled the forces of production in trust for the people. Our ancestors did not like oppression and absolutism. They had religious, ancestral and normative checks and balances and when a traditional ruler transgressed his bounds he was rejected by the

gods, by the earth and by his people. In such cases he had to commit suicide or be killed, not just 'impeached' or 'deposed' as in modern times, since he could no longer move freely. But he was never rejected on frivolous grounds, since those responsible for his rejection also owed responsibility to the ancestors, the gods and the earth, who would punish the shedding of innocent blood.

Clearly, the most controversial issue today in the evolution of our political culture is whether the traditional rulership institution should be suppressed or be revamped and given specific and definite functions to perform at the local government, state and/or national levels. On the one hand, there were those who argued that the institution based on the privilege of some individuals or families had outlived its usefulness; that it formed part of a whole system and it was futile seeking to pick parts of that whole to graft on to a new democratic way of life; and that it has now become a source of contradiction and division in our political culture.

On the other hand there were those who stressed the continued relevance of the institution provided it was adaptable to change. Attention was drawn to the continued respect the institution enjoys among the masses, symbolizing their heritage and sense of identity; and thus endowing the traditional ruler with a lot of influence which could be utilized as an effective rallying point for purposes of development and political stability; the continued popularity of the chieftaincy institution as a legitimizing status symbol for the rising bourgeoisie; and the wide preference of the masses for the traditional judicial processes emphasizing equity and reconciliation over the antagonisms of the right and wrong and 'winner takes all' approach of our imported legal system. It was argued that the institution was far from extinct and it was better to understand it and integrate its positive aspects into the evolving political culture.

Along with the question of the rulership institutions, the participants also discussed the issue of traditional values of which the traditional rulers were, at least in theory, said to be guardians. It was observed that while traditional values, derived from the historical, cultural and religious experience of the people, have remained widespread and potent, they have not been harnessed to the day-to-day operation of our political life. Often there was no correlation between the norms of traditional values in relation to the concept of authority, exercise of power, basis of interpersonal relations, sense of justice, etc. and the assumptions underlying our Constitution and the operation of our political institutions. The question then arose as to how best the traditional values can be integrated into the political culture to combat the negative political behaviour that allows those in power to behave without due regard to propriety and the overall interest of the nation.

In particular, attention was drawn to the extent to which, under the Presidential system of Government in Nigeria, state governments in many parts of the country have been in constant clash with traditional rulers, sometimes with grave consequences. Perhaps the lesson to be drawn from this study is that politicians should learn to practice the politics of accommodation and compromise. In the final

analysis they ought to realise that no change can be totally effective unless it is allowed to grow within the society. On the other hand, traditional rulers must also realise that changes take place in society and they must be ready to accommodate these changes or time would move on without them.

As can be seen from this brief survey, the Seminar generated a lively discussion on the future trends in our political culture and what can be done to influence developments for the greater good of the nation. It is to be hoped that this work will convey some valuable impressions of this and prove a useful introduction to the political culture of Nigeria, bringing fresh insights alike to students of our history, politics and political behaviour. More than that, it is also hoped that it will be of practical value to policy makers whether administrators or politicians.

It remains for us to thank all those who contributed to the success of the Seminar and the publication of these proceedings. These include the Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture, the Planning Committee of the Seminar, and members of the Editorial Board.

J.F. Ade Ajayi
Bashir Ahmed Ikara
(July 1982)

Postscript

There was widespread demand during the seminar that these articles be published immediately because of their obvious national significance. We felt certain that they would be published before the 1983 August elections. However, because of the vagaries of the book trade in Nigeria today, publication has been delayed until now. Only slight revisions have been possible just to accommodate Nigeria's changed political circumstances since December 31, 1983. We believe that this book has a permanent value and is of continuing relevance and significance for Nigeria's political culture.

The opinions expressed herein are entirely those of the authors; not the publishers.

(June 1984)

II

Factors in the evolution of political culture in Nigeria

being Keynote Address to the Seminar on *Perspectives on Nigerian
Political Culture since A.D. 1000.*

J.F. Ade. Ajayi

Introduction

I must begin by congratulating the Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture and its indefatigable Director, Dr Bashir Ikara for organizing this Seminar on Perspectives on Nigerian Political Culture since 1000 AD. We are being challenged to detach ourselves from the usual preoccupation with day to day politics and take a critical look at the Nigerian society as a whole. We are to analyze the Nigerian society and examine how it has evolved, is evolving and likely to evolve. It is not a purely academic excursion into history for its own sake, but a practical one aimed at understanding the nature of political culture in Nigeria with a view to helping to shape its evolution in the future.

I congratulate the organizers for adopting the historical perspective because history is often ignored in analyses of this kind and yet it provides the most vital approach necessary for understanding our institutions and even attitudes, values and behaviour in the political process. Historical study enables us to see how what is has come to be what it is. While this does not amount to a prediction of what it will turn into, the knowledge of how it has evolved is most important for anyone trying to forecast or trying to help shape the lines of change. This is true of most societies. It is particularly true of ours where traditional institutions and attitudes remain so strong. Some societies think of the past as something they have already put behind them. For us, the time of the ancestors lies ahead of us, and future generations are those coming behind us. We cannot ignore the past. We accommodate change and

acquire new knowledge, but such knowledge becomes relevant to our total development only when adapted and related to our traditions.

Political culture which is the central concept in our discussion requires some elaboration as it is more than just a combination of politics and culture. Political culture is defined in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* as 'the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumption and rules that govern behaviour in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and the operating norms of a polity.' That is to say, we are concerned in this discussion with the evolution of the political ideals and norms of the Nigerian Society, the attitudes, beliefs and sentiments which govern behaviour within our political system. We are concerned with their evolution within different cultural groups in the country, and the evolving common political culture at the pan-Nigerian level. We should consider such issues as concepts of power and attitudes towards authority; the criteria for legitimization of the political elite and for resolving conflicts within the political system. This of course involves a historical survey of the different cultural groups and an overview of the whole evolution of the Nigerian society. All I can do here is to highlight for more detailed discussion in the Seminar some of the most important factors in that historical evolution.

The family and concepts of authority

The most basic unit of the Nigerian society is of course the family, and it is through the family that we all first experience authority. The concept of authority transmitted through family life is fundamental to any political culture as it tends to be embedded within the deepest levels of our psyche. Our changing concepts of authority tends to be a reflection of changes within the family structure.

We presume that in the remote past, the nomadic hunting and gathering family was a sovereign unit, responsible not only for internal order but also for negotiations with similar neighbouring units. It was an extended family, which tended to remain relatively small in size as discontented or enterprising members hived off. The nearest structurally that we have to these early family units are the pastoral groups which have survived to this day in a few places. For the rest, the structure of the family has been modified over the last 1000 years in most parts of Nigeria, according to the needs of the different ecologies, occupations, and evolving cultures. Some Communities reared goats and cattle, while some took to fishing, some to planting root crops in the forest areas, others to cultivating cereals in the more open savannahs. Most inherited property through the male line, a few through the female line. These different factors affected the size of the extended family, and the pattern of authority. In some authority was concentrated, in others it was more dispersed.

Within the varieties and patterns of the family in different Nigerian cultures and the changes over time, there have survived a number of common features which still influence our concept of authority within the political culture, even today. Within

the family the eldest male is generally the head of the family, entitled to the obedience and respect of every member of the family. Authority is conceived usually paternal and is personalized. It is related to age as the elders were considered the nearest to the ancestors and the wisest and most objective members of society. Generally, the basis of the authority of the head of the family was that he was representative of the ancestors. He retained the authority as long as he fulfilled his own obligations to the ancestors, and treated all members of the family with justice. Religious sanctions provided the most essential backing for his authority. He therefore lost the basis of this authority if he failed in his duties to the ancestors or if he became corrupt, partisan or consistently unjust in his dealings with members of the family.

For understanding our political culture, we need to examine not only the pattern of authority of the Head of the family, the basis of that authority and the conditions for retaining that authority; we also need to survey the duties and responsibilities of the members of the family, the processes by which they are socialized within the family, their participation in decision making and implementing decisions of the group. We also need to analyze the various social, economic, religious and other historical factors which have been affecting those relationships over the last one thousand years.

Traditional concepts of the State

Rarely did the family unit remain separate and sovereign. Families extended into clans, and groups of clans occupied villages or village groups. Village groups evolved new social and religious associations and patterns of authority extending beyond the family structure. Such new authorities evolved from the need for offence and defence, the marketing and exchange of agricultural produce, or the sharing of common sacred shrines. Associations based on age groups or common occupations such as hunters or priests were evolved, cutting across family groupings. In this way, social and political hierarchies and various concepts of the state emerged. Such states may be small or large, even extending into kingdoms and empires, depending on economic and technological factors. But there are hardly any peoples in Nigeria without a concept of the state and patterns of authority extending beyond the family unit. Just as strategically located states controlling access to trade and the necessary military capability evolved into major kingdoms and empires, so, it seems, could such kingdoms in the face of rival kingdoms or the intense competition among component units also evolve into series of small evenly balanced polities.

The powers and functions attributed to the state no doubt varied with the size and cultural complexity of the state; the larger states developing the more elaborate structure of administration, rituals and patterns of authority. However, some states carried over patterns of authority evolved for larger states even after the power and size of the states had diminished. Some rulers were essentially priests presiding over the community shrine, others derived their powers largely from the effectiveness of

their administration and military equipment; yet others were ritual rulers whose persons were sacred and whose physical health was deemed to affect the agricultural and other fortunes of members of the community.

Large or small, the concept of the state involved the vesting of authority on individuals or groups outside the family unit, set apart for purposes of administering in the common interest of the community. There thus emerged a hierarchy of political elites not needed within the family structure. Nevertheless, the basis of authority remained largely an extension of what existed within the family. Authority was personified in the ruler. The ruler was no longer selected on the basis of age alone but, once selected, he became father of all and, like the head of the family, was representative of the ancestors, spokesman of the group, enjoying the support of the gods and using religious sanctions to back up his authority.

Achieved status

Political culture, however, consisted of more than a reflection of attitudes bred within the family. Various historical factors making for social differentiation and the hierarchical structuring of the communities also exerted strong influences on its evolution. The recognition of the ruler as the representative of the ancestors and keeper of sacred communal shrines followed his selection and his performance of prescribed rituals. But his eligibility often derived from his being descendant either of the original founder of the community or of the conqueror of an existing community. Other families might also claim privileges entitling them to positions of authority on the ruler's Council. Such privileges brought with it access to other status symbols - the number of wives, children and perhaps slaves, the size of the farms, or the holdings in herds of cattle or goats. Similarly such status symbols might have been achieved through prowess in war or successful trading and the wealth thus acquired used to pursue political privileges. Historical factors of war or commercial development either through the internal network of markets or long distance trading across the desert or across the seas could thus exert their own influences on the evolving political culture as factors of change making for social mobility.

Such factors of change became a challenge to the privileges of the evolving political elite. Usually the ruler and the existing elite used their positions to acquire any new sources of wealth and power above other competitors - knowledge of iron smelting and skills in making iron implements; slaves, horses, muskets, gold, salt, cloth or other major trade items. The existing elite tried to ensure that such new sources of wealth and power were used only to strengthen their position or to broaden their base by recruiting new members to the elite. However, perhaps just as frequently, newly rich or powerful members rather than join an existing elite challenged it and introduced elements of competition and rivalry into the political system. There were wars, schisms and secessions, conquests, and changes of dynasties. Eventually such changes became adapted to existing traditions; traditions

were modified to validate the new positions and reconcile rivals as sons of the same father, or by giving one control over land and the other over the crown. Myths and traditions handed down were themselves a codification of consensus not always arrived at peacefully: they were manipulated in spite of rivalries and competition to encourage the spirit of continuity and stability within the political culture.

The Islamic factor

Initially the Islamic factor was treated as a new source of power and influence which the existing rulers and other political elite tried to monopolize to strengthen their position above that of potential rivals. Islam introduced writing and provided literate scribes who were found most useful at court. It also facilitated trade with North Africa and the Nile Valley. It introduced new principles of administration without at first revolutionizing the traditional concept of rulership or existing hierarchical structure of society.

The Jihad at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century attempted a complete revolution of the political culture. It shifted power from the existing Hausa political elite to a new elite, Fulani for the most part, and it replaced the ancient Kanuri Saifawa dynasty with the Kanembu line. More than that was the doctrine that power derived directly from God and not from the people or the founding dynasties. The emir was the candidate most acceptable to the local mallams and approved by the *Sarkin musulmin*. From the representative of the ancestors, the ruler became the vice-regent of God, himself subject to religious laws within a theocratic kingdom.

For the evolution of political culture in Nigeria, the interesting thing was, however, not only the innovation of these revolutionary doctrines, but also their accommodation and gradual adaptation to existing Hausa political institutions and the realities of the practical problems of government in the course of the nineteenth century. As the Fulani rulers moved away from rallying fellow Fulani flagbearers to recognizing the power of the Hausa elite and the problems of governing the Hausa masses, they intermarried, became Hausa-speaking and picked essential aspects of Hausa political culture to provide continuity with the past. The Kanembu dynasty in Borno did the same. Although Islamic law became prevalent, the pattern of authority, the concept of rulership and political values came to derive in significant ways from pre-Jihad values.

Christianity and Colonialism

In the course of the same Nineteenth Century, Christian missionaries along the coast attempted - with much less success - to advocate similar revolutionary changes: introduce Christianity and Christian social and moral values, stop the slave trade and, if possible, also abolish slavery. With the return of converted freed slaves, it was not possible for the existing political elite to monopolize the resources of the new religion to strengthen their own position. Rather, the missionaries who were rebuffed by large sections of the ruling elite made special appeals to the under-privileged

and those alienated from society. The little success that Christianity achieved became subversive of the existing order, strengthened the concept of secular political order and prepared the way for colonial rule.

The successful imposition of British colonial rule introduced far-reaching changes in the political culture. The British monarch became sovereign over the existing political elite in Nigeria. He became the source of power, and ultimate authority for law and order. Yet he was remote from the people and even his local representatives were rarely seen. For most Nigerians, existing rulerships, as modified in terms of succession and jurisdiction by the British, were responsible for running day-to-day affairs, except that they were responsible to the British and not to the people. They were also obliged to carry out British demands such as taxation, and the recruitment of forced labour, however unpopular with the people.

The concept of the state bred by the colonial situation was thus one alienated from the people, and in which authority is remote, arbitrary and incomprehensible. The values of the traditional political culture remained active, and it required that authority be personified. But the reality was a District Officer seen as an agent, not a sovereign, or the 'traditional' chief, better known and understood, but even less responsible. For the masses, political life was reduced to resisting aspects of colonial rule, especially those relating to the jurisdiction of local government councils and courts which might affect historical relationships of different polities. After the initial shock of harassment and reorganization, the traditional elite became beneficiaries of aspects of colonial rule as the colonial regime tried to associate them with colonial administration. This, however, weakened the position of the traditional elite without reducing the alienation of the people. Perhaps the most notable effect of colonial rule on our evolving political culture was the notion that the purpose of government is to exploit the governed and that it behoves all those wishing to avoid being exploited to seek control of government. This promoted the factor of competition in the evolving political culture at the expense of the traditional values of consensus.

Colonial rule opened up opportunities for some achieved status, notably through the acquisition of Western education and employment under the colonial regime or the local authorities. The beneficiaries who came to be known as the new elite were more of rivals and challengers than fresh recruits to the ranks of the traditional elite. The struggle between the old and the new elites for the rights of succession at the end of the colonial period became a feature of the political culture. Similarly, while colonial rule established the political framework for the Nigerian nation, colonial policies kept different Nigerian peoples apart in the guise of encouraging the traditional elite as local government authorities. Coupled with the uneven development of the country in terms of the spread of Western education, cash crops, roads and railways, colonial rule came to engender intense competition among the different Nigerian peoples as they contemplated their fortunes in an eventual independent Nigeria.

The First Republic

Thus the colonial situation hardly provided a useful background for operating written constitution along the Westminster model which presumed the existence of some agreement on fundamental values. The constitution worked out in a series of meetings between Nigerian political leaders and British masters made some effort to contain the inter-ethnic rivalries unleashed by colonial rule. The federal constitution attempted to delimit responsibilities between Federal and Regional governments but there were no such agreements as to values and attitudes to operate the constitution. The several governments came to be regarded as organizations aggressively pursuing interests of groups dominant within each Region.

In the ensuing political conflicts, there were no limits set for political rivalries. Undue pressure was exerted on the judiciary; politics vitiated attempts to conduct censuses; there was no consensus on the allocation of national resources and, increasingly, violence became a weapon in the political rivalries.

Politics became not merely a new profession, but also a new channel for recruiting members of the political elite. Accumulated capital was to be found in substantial quantities only at the disposal of the new governments and politics soon became an avenue also to contracts and commercial advantages. There were new sub-groups within the new elite - political, civil service, academic, professional and an incipient military group, - but the politicians tried to inject political considerations into every aspect of national life. Traditional values remained active in the political culture, but were not harnessed into the new system. Rather, they tended to be distorted in apparent efforts to justify the increasing corruption of the system. The attempt to involve the traditional elite in the political system through Regional Houses of Chiefs in the face of the all-pervasive struggle for Regional interests failed to concede an independent influence to the traditional elite or the traditional values they were supposed to represent. The take-over of government by the armed forces indicated the extent to which the system had broken down before the political culture had absorbed the changes brought by independence.

The period of military rule merely prolonged the period of gestation. In addition to sporadic use of violence for achieving political ends, it introduced organized violence as a factor in the political culture. The incipient military sub-group of the new elite was strengthened and widened because of the Civil War and the increasing number of governments they were called upon to control, four in 1966, twelve in 1967, and nineteen in 1976. Like the political group, they used political power to gain access to financial and commercial advantages which became substantial as oil revenues came to dominate the economy. Using early retirement from the army, they entrenched themselves in influential positions even outside the armed forces. For the rest, they supervised the political groups in attempts to draft a new constitution and provide fresh bases for the evolution of the political culture.

The Presidential System

The politicians adopted the Presidential system of government. This was not merely an attempt to replace the Westminster model by an American-type constitution. It was also to recall the traditional aspect of the political culture which personified authority in a father-figure. The attempt however stopped short of analyzing and trying to institutionalize the traditional values and obligations on which the authority and legitimacy of the father-figure rested.

The new constitution has introduced new rules for the political game, and in the years of operating it we are still testing the will to obey the rules. In particular, it does not appear that the politicians and the political parties are in a hurry to observe sections of the constitution calling for monitoring of the integrity, competence and accountability of major public functionaries. Secondly, we seem to be reluctant to limit the scope of politics. The constitution envisaged the President selecting a team of Ministers and Advisers and maintaining a government at a level outside party politics, a government with which all Nigerians irrespective of political alignment can identify, but this is yet to be. Thirdly, our evolving culture is yet to get outside the colonial framework that the aim of government is to exploit the people for the benefit of those in government. Fourthly, it remains to be seen whether we are prepared to operate an electoral system intended to reflect the wishes of the people, enabling them to elect representatives of their own choice, and change their governments peacefully when they are no longer pleased with their performance, - or whether the electoral system will only serve to perpetuate the rule of those in power until the military succeed in overthrowing them.

III

Kanem and Borno under three Dynasties: Some aspects of change and development C. 700-1900 AD

John E. Lavers

Introduction

No gathering concerned with political culture in the Nigerian region can afford to ignore the entity known to history first as Kanem and later as Borno. First appearing in the written records in the 8th century AD, Kanem already had a political system albeit of some simplicity. Borno, first as a province of the Saifawa state of Kanem and then as the centre of Saifawa power had a lasting impact upon the states and people of the Nigerian region. It was a centre of learning; many of its titles and aspects of its political system were borrowed by its neighbours. The present Emirate and State of Borno are but part of the former metropolitan province. The Caliphate at its greatest extent included Fezzan in southern Libya, much of Chad, Niger and the northern parts of Nigeria. One of the themes of this chapter which outlines some of the main stages in the growth of the Saifawa state is the nature of the relationship between Borno and its subordinates. Another theme is concerned with ethnicity, its role in the state and the ways in which unity was maintained. Such is the time span of Kanem and Borno history that only scant justice can be done to the actors involved. It is impossible to explore events in any detail. The period of the al-Kanemiyyin and of Rabih are, and must be, embarrassingly brief. Notwithstanding the short comings, it is hoped that the tale will be sufficiently clear to provide a background to those papers concerned with shorter periods of time and with smaller states.

The early period

The Chad region has rightly been called a linguistic shatter area. Speakers of Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan languages have intermingled over the millenia in a bewildering fashion.¹ Environmental factors have played an important role in the life of the inhabitants. In the south, agriculture dominates the economy supplemented by pastoralism; but as one moves northwards, pastoralism, first with the cow and then with the camel, becomes ever more important. Some at least of the early farming population were organized in villages, by the 5th century BC if we are to believe the evidence of Herodotus. The introduction of iron technology would have accelerated any tendencies towards centralization, as would have the raiding by the Garamantes from Fezzan. However it was the introduction of the camel and its adoption by the peoples of the central and southern Sahara not long before 500 AD that brought about the most important changes.²

The Tibesti Mountains in northern Chad, like other areas of the Sahara, were relatively well populated in periods of high rainfall but when dessication occurred some of the excessive population was forced to move. Most moved to the friendlier lands to the south. This was a long-term process. With the introduction of the camel those who remained in Tibesti found it easier to prey upon their kin to the south than to maintain themselves at home. Increased mobility enabled them to become long distance raiders.³ The men of the mountains — the *Tu Bu* — exploited their sedentary relatives, the men of the south — the *Kanem Bu*. Some raiders remained for long periods even settling and dominating groups of local communities.

Arabic sources indicate that by the 9th century AD the area was broken up into small states dominated by a semi-nomadic camel-owning ruling class. With the passage of time their numbers were reduced until one state alone survived—Kanem—which had absorbed its rivals.⁴ We speak of states but they were in reality small, simple, very loosely organized polities. Almost certainly there were similarities with the Tuareg confederations of a later period; groups of clans associated together under a supreme chief. The authority of such chiefs was limited, their powers being based upon persuasion rather than coercion.⁵ Perhaps like the Tuareg these were based upon further divisions into noble, vassal and servile groups. The Tubu who inhabit Tibesti at the present time seem closest to such a system. There one finds noble and vassal clans, a paramount — *the derdai* — with limited powers. The office is now held by the noble Tomaghera, a clan that played a leading role in the early history of Kanem. However this is an object lesson in the dangers of reading from the present into the past as the Tomaghera only moved back to Tibesti in the 17th or 18th centuries.⁶

Whatever the nature of this early society, sufficient evidence survives to show a gradual expansion from nuclear Kanem to absorb their immediate neighbours. By the 10th century they controlled the Kavar oases, until then a Berber dominated area. A major source of *alum* for the Mediterranean world, Kavar provided the rulers of Kanem with an important source of revenue. Other products such as slaves

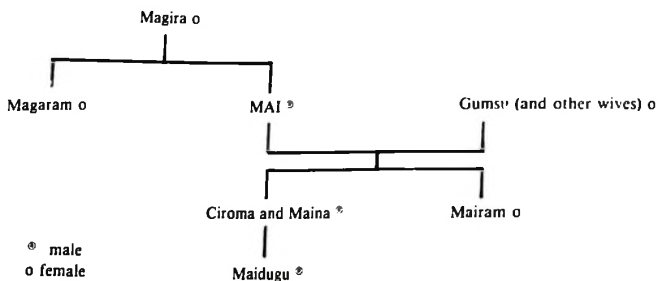
and skins had attracted muslim merchants for many years but in the 11th century muslim scholars began to make an appearance. The merchants were largely Ibadite heretics, while the scholars were mainly orthodox sunni Muslims. About the year 1080 AD the ruler of Kanem, mai Hummay, was converted; from the beginning Kanem was an orthodox state. The *Diwan al-salatin Barnu*, our main internal source, emphasizes the conversion with its implication of continuity although some evidence does exist to suggest that Islam was introduced by a new dynasty.⁷

Administration in the early period

The rulers of Kanem came to hold the title *mai*. Carried first by the ruler of the small state of Malal, known as MYWSY or Mai Usi, it seems to have been appropriated by his successful rival, the ruler of Kanem.⁸ According to tradition these rulers were from the ethnic group known as Magumi. They quickly became surrounded by elaborate rituals of kingship designed to distinguish them from ordinary mortals. According to al-Muhallabi (d.990 AD) the ruler was worshipped by his people; he was a divine king withdrawn from view. We may assume that he was believed to have supernatural authority with power over the elements. It is interesting to note that the *Diwan* refers to a number of these early rulers as 'Kings of the Earth', surely a reference to the ritual office common to many parts of West Africa.⁹

TABLE I

The institutionalized royal family in diagrammatic form



Was it at this time that the institutionalized royal family came into being? In its later form this consisted of the *mai*; his wives, headed by the *Gum-su*; his official mother and sister, the *magira* and *magaran* respectively; his senior son and official heir, the *ciroma* with the other sons and daughters, the *maina* and *mairam*; lastly the grandsons, the *maidugu*. Such systems are of great antiquity and are widely spread

in Africa. Many of the smaller states of the Chad Region have borrowed some or all of these titles modifying them to suit their own needs.

The importance of the royal family and of royal descent is indicated by the existence of Magumi clans or sub-clans descended from the early mais. For example there are the Ummewa descended from Mai Hummay, the Katuriwa from Mai Katur and Jilwa from Mai Jil or Abdul-Jalil.¹⁰

Not surprisingly evidence for the organization of the household and court at this early period is lacking although we do have a very tantalising reference in al-Muhallabi to the king's 'select companions', intimates who were allowed to eat with a divine being generally believed to need no food.¹¹ Evidence does exist to show that other groups were involved in the state other than the Magumi. For example the *Diwan* refers to the Kayi and the Tomaghera among others - all part of the debris left over from the collapse of Kanem's rivals or their allies in bringing about that collapse. It was women from these groups who mothered the mais. Abdullahi Smith has very plausibly argued that royal marriage was an important element in the cement holding society together.¹² Traditions from Borno indicate a belief in the existence of twelve major title holders singled out from the others. Al-Maqrizi (d.1442) drawing upon earlier material noted that in Kanem 'they have twelve kingdoms'.¹³ I would suggest that we interpret these facts as follows:

- a. the term kingdom, always loosely used in these sources, here refers to the tribes/clans that formed the heart of the state of Kanem.
- b. either (i) the clan/tribal chiefs were drawn into the court as titled officials or (ii) privileged associates of the mai were made responsible for clans acting as their representatives at court. If this is so then we would have here the origins of the *chima* or fief system.

There is some evidence to suggest that both (i) and (ii) occurred at different times.

Offices seldom remain static, their functions change over time: some titles would have fallen into abeyance, while new ones would have been created. Some clans would have declined in importance, others come into prominence. It is likely that offices became separated from their original association with ethnic units but the number twelve remained an ideal until the end of the dynasty.

The acquisition of new territories often inhabited by peoples of very different origin forced the mai to seek new ways of administering them. In some cases the defeated rulers or members of their families continued to rule; in others the defeated were ruled by governors or overawed by garrisons of slave troops settled at strategic points - this occurred in Kawar. It is likely that the *chima* system was intended to cover the new circumstances, the interests of the distant province or kingdom being supervised by a fief holder at court.

The early Islamic state

The introduction of Islam had little impact upon state policies other than the apparent intensification of military activity. From this time the *Diwan* laid increasing

emphasis upon military strength. Dunama (c.1080 AD) is credited with an army of 100,000 horsemen and more than 120,000 foot soldiers. The obvious exaggeration should not blind us to the author's intention of emphasizing a great increase in military resources. Expansion continued. A Kanemi presence was established in southern Fezzan by the end of the 12th century and there was an outright occupation by the middle of the 13th century AD.¹⁴ A series of campaigns established a Kanemi authority over the territories west of Lake Chad. In the east Kanemi subjects are said to have marched with Nubia. Undoubtedly in many cases the links were very tenuous.

Dunama Dibalami (c.1210-1248) is usually seen as a prime mover in these events. According to the *Diwan* he controlled 42,000 cavalry.¹⁵ However notwithstanding his apparent power, signs of instability manifested themselves at this time. The Tuaregs or at least some sections - former allies - now became enemies. Civil war broke out between his sons; a grandson was murdered. Rivalry between his heirs continued to the next century as two opposing lineages developed - the Dawudids and the Idrisids. Another branch of the family took advantage of the situation and in less than more than a decade (c.1376-86) succeeded in forcing the mai to abandon Kanem.

Islam and the Saifawa State

The adoption of Islam might not have had much impact on policies but it brought about many internal changes. The old pre-Islamic practices had to be abandoned. No longer could the *mai* pose as a divine king. New means had to be sought to replace the old religious sanctions. Islam provided those means. Many of the mai took the *hajj* - significantly Dunama b. Hummay is said to have undertaken three pilgrimages. Prestige could also be obtained by high ancestry. The claim of the mai to be descended from the Yamani hero Sai dhu Yazan - whence the name Saifawa - dates from this period. It was well known in the middle east by the middle of the 13th century.¹⁶ The basis for the claim probably derives from the similarity of meaning between Yaman, colloqually the south in Arabic and Kanem the south in Kanembu. The cycles of tales relating to the adventures of Sai and Antar in the *bilal as-Sudan* would have provided further 'backing' for the claim. Not satisfied with a south Arabian origin the Saifawa also claimed descent from the Qurayish. Such a claim would have been developed for them by scholars and Islamic advisors who came to play an increasingly important role in affairs from this time. It was on the advice of the *ulama* that Mai Umar moved from Kanem to Borno.¹⁷

While conversion resulted in the abandonment of divinity, many of the customs associated with kingship were maintained. The mai still remained secluded when giving audience. He still spoke through an interpreter or linguist. The mystique of the position was still preserved.

There was continuity in administration of conquered territories. Local dynasties survived in places. Hereditary governors were settled in Fezzan where they ruled from the newly built capital of Taraghan. A military garrison ensured the survival of

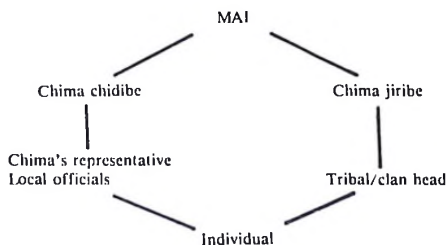
their authority to as late as the early 15th century.¹⁸ The conquests in Borno were administered or supervised in part by the *Kaigama* - a title derived perhaps from the province of Kaga; i.e. Kaga -ma, possessor of Kaga.¹⁹ The Yerima, a title first heard of c.1300 might have shared some authority with the Kaigama as the former's title comes from Yeri, a place name linked with the area between Borno and Air. Both titles have been widely borrowed by states established far beyond the borders of Borno proper.

The Saifawa in Borno

Saifawa influence in Borno dates from the late 12th century and more intensively from the 18th century. Al-Maqrizi lists the peoples attacked by the mai in a campaign in 1252-3.²⁰ Notwithstanding the presence of officials like the Kaigama most of the Chadic speaking inhabitants seem to have retained a considerable degree of autonomy. At times resistance to the Saifawa was strong - several mais lived, fought and died in the Komadugu valley area vainly seeking to suppress the So inhabitants.

When the Saifawa came from Kanem as fugitives from the Bulala, the Kaigama and Yerima exploited their weaknesses making and breaking orders at will.²¹ It was not until the accession of Ali b. Dunama c.1465 that royal authority was properly restored.

TABLE 2
Diagrammatic representation of the chima system



The evacuation of Kanem had many repercussions, some less obvious than others. One effect was the virtual disappearance of ethnicity as an element in the political fabric. We noted the evidence for the importance of ethnicity in early Kanem, the importance of clan and tribe. The divisive nature of such a system was overcome through marriage ties but breakdowns did occur. The Tubu wars of the 13th and the Bulala in the 14th century are examples. We hear little or nothing of ethnicity after the shift to Borno. It would appear that the move struck the system a damaging

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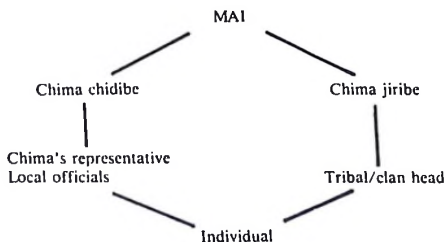
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blow, for some groups whether in whole or in part remained in Kanem while others accompanied the mai. In Borno clans became dispersed, sections living separate one from the other. Residence rather than ethnic identity became the key.

We may assume that it was from this period that the *chima* system began to assume its classic form with a division into territorial and ethnic fiefs. In the first case the individual was linked with the *mai* by a chain of obligation based upon land and residence through the *chima chidibe*. In the second, through the *chima jiribe* a man was joined with the mai through his clan head even if they lived far apart. That the latter system survived ensuring the maintenance of ethnic identity was in part due to its value as a means of appeal against the *chima chidibe*; but more importantly, it helped the Mais satisfy the demand for fiefs from ever hungry titleholders.

The Borno Caliphate

Overmighty titleholders, kinstrife, rebellious subjects as threats to Saifawa survival were terminated with the accession of Ali b. Dunama (1465-1494). Ali, commonly known as Ali Gaji, first as a power broker and then as *mai* brought peace. The Dawudids passed into obscurity leaving the Idrisids supreme in Borno. It was Ali who established a permanent capital at Birni Gazargamu and apparently other new settlements for he was praised as 'Ali of the tall walled towns'.²² Barth on the basis of information collected in the 1850's-but supported by other data, asserted that 'he then restored the equilibrium between the different officers of high rank', going on to remark upon the excessive power of some of them.²³ In particular the holders of the offices of Kaigama and Yerima continued to give trouble. It is to this period that we can date changes in function and holding of these titles.

The position of Kaigama had - it would seem - been held by royals. The fact that the children of this officer enjoyed the titles *maina* and *mairam*, prince and princess, albeit joined with their father's title i.e. *maina kaigamabe* must be a reflexion of this early status. From this time (although not consistently) the holder was of slave status. Military responsibilities superceded administrative functions. The holder was commander of the Borno army. Similarly the office of Yerima, whatever the original qualification, was now restricted to grandsons of the Mais, men whose own fathers were dead thus eliminating the holder from competition for succession to supreme power; no man could succeed unless his own father had ruled. We must emphasize that there is no direct evidence to link these reforms specifically with Mai Ali but it is difficult to see who else would and could have carried them out.

Ali was also a reviver of Islam. There had arisen, or more likely survived, many customs, infractions of the sharia: illegal exactions, and plurality of wives among them. Under the influence of a group of religious advisors he brought about changes in his own as well as his followers' affairs. It is probable that the division of the royal harim with its four titled wives and a number of titled concubines dates from

this period.²⁴ He was a keen scholar accepting the teaching of his mallams in Borno and even, when on the hajj, attending classes arranged by the Egyptian polymath Jamal al-Din al-Suyuti. This relationship was to have important repercussions for al-Suyuti spoke to the Abbasid Caliph in Cairo on behalf of the Mai. He asked 'the Commander of the Faithful (al-Mutawakkil Abd al-Aziz b. Yaqub) about his delegating to him (Ali) his authority over the affairs of his country, so that his rule would be legitimate according to the Holy Law. Al-Suyuti tells us in his autobiography that the Caliph approved the request and that he drew up the certificate of investiture.²⁵ The *Brief Diwan*, compiled in the 18th century, records that with Ali 'the count of Sultans is finished and that of the Khalifas begin.'²⁶

Within Borno Ali seemed to have confined his activities to improving security especially around the frontiers. He consolidated his own and his family's position laying a foundation upon which his heirs could build. He also seems to have taken some interest in the affairs of Fezzan - probably as a consequence of his passage through that land while going on the hajj - for it was certainly he or his son who was instrumental in bringing the Awlad Muhammad to power in Murzuq.²⁷

Idris b. Ali (1496-1519) took over both his father's advisors and his policies. In his time hostilities were renewed with the Bulala. The *mai* and his successors were able to inflict crushing defeats upon their adversaries, Idris was even able on one occasion to re-occupy the old capital of Kanem; but the enemy exhibited amazing powers of recuperation. It is from this reign that we have records of diplomatic and commercial missions with the authorities controlling the north African littoral. These links were formalised in an agreement between Borno and the Ottoman governor of Tripoli, Turghut Pasha, in 1554.²⁸

Tradition asserts, and is followed by many modern writers, that Borno reached the apogee of its power in the reign of Mai Idris b. Ali (1564-1596) known as Alawma; that with his death Saifawa authority diminished or even collapsed. It cannot be denied that he was a major figure in the history of Borno but his importance has been over-emphasized.

Idris was an innovator. He came to the throne as a young man and made the hajj soon after. This journey seems to have had an abiding influence on him; in particular his passage through Ottoman territories alerted him not only to the value of firearms but to the importance of discipline in their deployment. He employed military advisers, 'Turks by profession' to train his gunmen but it was Idris who extended the concept of discipline to units of slave spearmen and slave bowmen. What has been called the 'Mamluk phenomena', the extensive use of slave soldiers is a recurrent theme in the history of Borno and even of Kanem and one that deserves more detailed study.²⁹ Other innovations associated with Idris were the building of ribats to ensure the security of the frontiers, the establishment of stores and of ferries to facilitate the rapid movement of troops.³⁰

While we have detailed accounts of his campaigns it is clear that these were hardly wars of conquest. There is no evidence to show that he went beyond territories

already in some form of relationship with the Saifawa. His two greatest achievements in the military field were the elimination of the So who were forced to assimilate or to leave Borno and the ending of the Bulala wars with the partitioning of Kanem.

The Heirs of Idris

The Caliphate did not come to an end with the death of Idris. There were problems but they were not sufficient to threaten Borno. Fezzan had been occupied by the Ottoman in 1549, even before Idris came to power but good relations existed between Borno and the sublime Porte. Soon if not by this time the rulers of Fezzan were to pay allegiance to both Borno and the Ottomans.³¹ The Sultanate of Ahir was to give trouble; a new lineage antagonistic to Borno had come to power in this former dependency, but again Borno was able to resolve the problem. The overthrow of the Bulala was due more to the rise of the Baghirmi state in the south and the Tunjur to the east than to the actions of Idris; but, whatever the cause, Kanem failed to benefit for long. The collapse of the Bulala left a vacuum. Tunjur expansion and then its eclipse in the 1630's at the hands of Abd al-Kerim, founder of Wadai, caused considerable population movement. One son of Idris was killed fighting in the area but once again Borno was to surmount the problem. The men involved were Umar b. Idris (1619-1639) and his son Ali (1639-77).³²

Umar is remembered for his harshness. He was also a man capable of undertaking major innovations, major changes in the traditional system of administration. He it was who established the first Galadima at Nguru, apparently a son, with responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in the west. The establishment of a Viceroy, delegation of authority on this scale was a break with tradition. It was unpopular - we learn of subordinate rulers objecting to this severance of direct ties between themselves and the *Mai* - but protests were ignored.³³ It was most certainly Umar who set up the position of *Alifa* of Mao in Kanem with the intention of balancing the position of Galadima. The Alifas succeeded in bringing some order to Kanem and the territories of the east but they were never as successful as their western counterparts.³⁴ It was in the time of Umar that new buffer states were set up protecting the metropolitan territory from Tuareg raids. This was a long term practice of the Saifawa who encouraged directly or indirectly the growth of small states between themselves and potential adversaries. We might note that Gumel was one of the last of such states to be established in the 18th century.³⁵

It is with Ali b. Umar that we begin what might be referred to as a golden age. I would suggest that it was in his time that the state reached its greatest extent. Ali was a proven military leader. He defeated the Kwararafa; he inflicted defeats on the Tuareg, although not before they had almost taken his capital; his men maintained some peace in Kanem; but it was in the arts of peace that he was supreme. He had accompanied his father on the hajj and thereafter at approximately ten year intervals he made further pilgrimages. He died east of Cairo while returning from his

fifth hajj. He was aptly named 'Ali the bird' of whom it was said, 'to him the journey to Mecca was but a night ride'.³⁶ He was credited with miraculous powers. He could bring books from the library of al-Azhar simply by reaching out his hand. It was reported in his own lifetime that by the grace of the Prophet he could change himself into a cat; in Agades and in North Africa he was known as the 'Cat-Sultan'. Several years after his death the French Consul in Cairo reported that his tomb was the scene of local pilgrimage and that miracles were performed there.³⁷

I would suggest that Ali's widespread reputation for sanctity, the fact that he was regarded as a saint and worker of miracles, was more significant in the expansion of the Borno Caliphate than the military prowess of any of his forebears. I would argue that the majority of the states that regard themselves and were regarded as part of the Caliphate had placed themselves under the authority of the mai voluntarily. By seeking the protection of the *khalifa* they hoped to benefit from his *baraka*. Not only was he a saint but he, as the heir to the most ancient Islamic state in the *bilad as-Sudan*, was patron of one of the most prestigious centres of learning in the region. The relationship already existed between the mai and some of the older subordinate states—that is one of patron and client—a relationship that implied reciprocal obligations of support and protection. Borno did seek to keep some of its weaker and closer clients tied to her by force but the greater number were too distant to be coerced militarily. Most of our information relating to the dependent states comes from outside Borno. It is more often inhabitants of these client states who reported that their own rulers recognised Saifawa supremacy.³⁸

This golden age in which the system reached its classical form and its greatest extent, in which the great offices were supported by a multitude of smaller officials survived until 1808. It survived not because of its power but because nobody thought to challenge it. The first crack occurred in 1781 when the *mai* was defeated by what was regarded as a rebellious subordinate: Mandara. The defeat was of little importance in military terms but Borno had lost credibility, she had been challenged and had lost. It should not surprise us that Gobir - a client state - should refuse to make the customary gifts from this time.³⁹ What is of greater interest is the large number of states that continued to look to Borno right up to the fall of Birni to the jihadists. Most of the rulers of Hausaland maintained the link and it was as clients that they called for their patron's support in the jihad. It was in the same period that Borno called upon Wadai to act on her behalf in punishing the transgressions of the Sultan of Baghirmi who had married his own sister.⁴⁰ That it suited the *kolak* of Wadai to answer the call is unimportant; rather, we should note that the mai took it for granted that he would be obeyed.

The Heirs of the Saifawa

Mai Ahmad having failed in his attempt to fulfill his obligations to the client *sarki's* of Hausaland was soon on the defensive in Borno. Driven from his capital in

1808 the mai became blind and abdicated in favour of his son, Dunama. This apparently sensible act in a time of danger created a constitutional crisis. Never before had a mai voluntarily given up the throne. Never before had a mai succeeded through the direct intercession of his father and by-passing the electoral council. The traditional authorities were in disarray. Ahmad survived by calling in outside help in the form of a learned mallam. This man, Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi, had already clashed with the Fulani both militarily and intellectually. With the support of his students and their kin—mostly Kanembu and Shuwa Arabs—the jihadists were driven back on several occasions. Unfortunately each time he restored the mai and withdrew the Fulani advanced again. Birni was finally abandoned on the mallam's advice. Over a period of time the mallam received rewards to the extent that he came to control most of those parts of Borno unoccupied by the enemy. He took the title *shaykh* or *shehu* and ruled on behalf of the mai from a new capital at Kukawa. The mai was a puppet living nearby at Birni Kabela.

Al-Kanemi had schooled in Borno but while still young had accompanied his father on the *hajj*. He lived for many years in the near east witnessing the French invasion of Egypt and the Ottoman restoration. Adding the fruit of experience to a fine intellect he was more than capable of holding his own in debate with the leaders of the jihad. While he was no mean soldier he was neither able to recover his homeland of Kanem, which had fallen to Wadai, nor bring back provinces of Greater Borno under Fulani control. Al-Kanemiyyin Borno consisted, to all intents, of the former metropolitan provinces only.

A man of simple tastes, it is not surprising that his court was short on pomp and circumstance. It consisted primarily of his friends and students. It was the mai who sent Shettima Kanuri to bring some dignity to the proceedings of what was now the ruling institution in Borno. His power, initially based on the support of kin and friends, came to be based upon slave troops led by *kachellas*, themselves of slave origin. We have yet another example of the 'mamluk phenomena' in this instance possibly suggested by the shehu's experiences in Egypt.⁴¹

The Shehu died in 1837. Some of his associates had already gone before him; others were to die violently in 1846 when mai Ibrahim made a last and unsuccessful attempt to restore Saifawa rule. The mai was executed, his son died in battle. The Saifawa line was at an end. Unlike the mai's, the names of the companions of al-Kanemi lived on as titles, each man's heirs carrying that title as head of the house—even now Mallam Tirab, Ibrahim Wadai lives. The new title system was supplemented by the revival or perhaps transfer of some Saifawa titles. The two leading slave soldiers were popularly known as *kaigama of the left* and *kaigama of the right*. The title of *magira* was given to the mother of Shehu Umar. The Shehus took over much of the old administrative structure - the *chima* system continued although many or most of the fiefs were redistributed. However the restricted area of Borno and the precarious nature of the 19th century economy resulted in serious financial problems by the latter part of the century. In particular the shehus were unable to

reward their followers in the manner to which they were accustomed; their loyalty did not always survive. Even among the Kanembu and Shuwa, the two groups among whom sense of ethnic identity remained strong, loyalty to the dynasty was weak. In the case of the Shuwa it failed to survive the arrival of Rabih.

The Mahdist State of Rabih b. Fadlallah

Rabih b. Fadlallah was born in Alfaya of the Kings, today a suburb of Khartoum, about the year 1840. The son of a brickmaker he received a good education before gaining experience as an irregular cavalry-man in the Egyptian army. In 1863/4 he joined the merchant adventurer Zubayr al-Mansur in the Bahr al-Ghazal then an open frontier area. He quickly proved himself a fine soldier and administrator serving as governor of what is now eastern Central African Republic. He took a leading part in the overthrow of the Sultanate of Dar Fur and later was one of the chief supporters of Sulayman b. Zubayr in his revolt against the Egyptian authorities. He was among those who refused to surrender and some time after the recalcitrants fled west he was elected Amir of what has been called a 'mobile empire' or '*empire combattant*'.⁴² Between 1879 and 1893 he led an ever growing force of men of the most diverse origins. Organized into regiments, first eight, then twelve, they were strictly disciplined. He developed a most successful means of assimilating new recruits and captives into the military community. After his acceptance of the Mahdiyya in 1888 he moved west and joined forces with Hayat b. Said, another Madhist leader. Together they took Borno - it must be admitted the invasion was largely by chance where Rabih established a Mahdist state for the next seven years at the end of which time he was killed by the French.

From his capital of Dikwa he delegated authority to former officials of the al-Kanemiyyin who had pledged their loyalty. All the Kanuri were placed under the Dikwama for example. Large numbers of fiefs were brought together and administered by his officials. The Gujba region was placed under the local Kachalla, Abdullahi, former Kaigama of the left; the area to the north was under a certain Agit Ali, a Tunjur. Such men were responsible to regimental commanders in Dikwa. Developed from the *chima chidibe* system, the new fief holders were closer to civil servants than to courtiers. This fact and the fact that the local officials had considerable authority suggests, the modified system foreshadowed the arrangements in the colonial period with districts and district heads. Indeed the similarities were remarked upon by the colonial administrators. It was at this time that ethnicity received yet another blow. Under the new regime the Kanuri were simply Kanuri; the Shuwa who had gone over en-masse to the invaders were placed not under traditional leaders but grouped under men loyal to Rabih. Traditional titles continued to be in use. It was possible, for a price, to have the Amir confirm an appointment, but there was now no connection between the holding of titles and administrative responsibilities. The fee was simply a way of raising revenue. The only recognized titles were those associated with the army such as *sahib al-tairag*, *bulug*, etc.⁴⁴

Following the death of Rabih the situation was very confused. The shehus had been restored but they failed to re-establish the old administrative system being more concerned to direct their energies to paying off their debts to the French.⁴⁵ Even after Shehu Garbai came into 'British' Borno in 1902 it was several years before a proper administration was set up. It closely resembled that of Rabih.

Notes

Annotation has deliberately been kept to a minimum in what is essentially a broad survey rather than a detailed study.

- 1 Rhys. C. Carpenter, 'A trans-Saharan track in Herodotus', *J. Amer. Arch.* LX (1956) pp.231-242. See also A.H.L. Heeren's revised introduction to his *Ideen uber Politik, den Verkehr und den Handel vorn-ehmsten volker der s'ten welt*, London 1833.
- 2 J.E. Lavers, 'Kanem and Borno to 1808', *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, O. Ikime (ed), Ibadan, 1980, 187ff. R.W. Bulliet, *The Camel and the Wheel*, Cambridge, Mass., 1975, 117ff, advances the suggestion that the camel reached N. Africa from Arabia by way of the southern sahara and Nile valley. He makes a strong case.
- 3 Lavers, 'Kanem and Borno', p.189.
- 4 See the various fragments of information in the early Arabic sources now made available in translation in N. Levtzion and J.F.P. Hopkins, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, Cambridge, 1981.
- 5 J. Nicholaisen, 'Political Systems of Pastoral Tuareg of Air and Ahaggar,' *Folk*, 1 (1959) pp. 68-131 and *Ecology and Culture of the Pastoral Tuareg*, Copenhagen, 1963.
- 6 J. Chapelle, *Les nomades noirs du sahara*, Paris, 1957, pp.40-48.
- 7 D. Lange, *Chronologie et Histoire d'un Royaume Africain*, Wiesbaden, 1977. In this critical edition of the *Diwan* Lange discusses his evidence for dynastic change at this time, an issue he has developed in later articles.
- 8 Al-Ya'qubi, *Tarikh*, in Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus*, p.21.
- 9 Lange, *Chronologie*, e.g. mai Katur p.66.
- 10 H.R. Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs*, 3 vols., Lagos, 1928, vol.II, p.30.
- 11 Quoted by Yaqut, *Mucjam al buldan* in Levtzion and Hopkins, p.71.
- 12 A. Smith, 'The early states of the Central Sudan', J.F.A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds) *History of West Africa*, 2 vols. Vol.1, London, 1971, p.176.
- 13 Al-Maqrizi, *al-Khabar an ajnas al-Sudan*, in Levtzion and Hopkins, p.355.
- 14 J.E. Lavers, 'Fezzan: Saharan or Sudanic State?', paper presented to the Ahmadu Bello-Bayero University Seminar on the History of the Central Sudan before 1804, Zaria, 1979.
- 15 Lange, *Chronologie*, p.72. Al-Maqrizi speaks of an army of 100,000 men but adds that the horses were small, Levtzion and Hopkins, p.354.
- 16 Ibn Said, *Kitab bast al-ard*, writing in the mid-13th century refers to it. Levtzion and Hopkins, p. 188.
- 17 H. Norris, *The Adventures of Antar*, Warminster, 1980.
- 18 Lavers, 'Fezzan'.
- 19 Smith, 'Early states', p.180.
- 20 *Al-Khabar*, in Levtzion and Hopkins, p.354.
- 21 Smith, op cit.; Lange *Chronologie*, pp.77-8.
- 22 H.R. Palmer, *Borno Sahara and Sudan*, 1936, p.223.
- 23 H. Barth, *Travels and Discoveries*, New York, 1859, 3 vols. vol.II, p.589.
- 24 Muhammad Salih b. Ishaq, 'An account of Birni Gazargamu' in Palmer *Borno, Sahara and Sudan*, pp.33-35, for an account of the household in the mid 17th century.
- 25 E. Sartain, 'Jamal ad-Din al-Suyuti's relations with the peoples of Takrur', *J. Semitic Studies*, XVI (1971)

- 26 Translated by Palmer in his introduction to Ahmad b. Fartuwa, *Kitab fi sha'n Sultan Idris*, Kano 1932.
- 27 Lavers, 'Fezzan'.
- 28 Lavers, 'Kanem and Borno', p.195.
- 29 See D. Pipes, *Slave Soldiers in Islam*, Chicago, 1981 for a recent treatment of this phenomenon.
- 30 Ahmad b. Fartuwa, *The First Twelve Years of the Reign of Mai Idris, The Kanem Wars of Mai Idris*.
- 31 Pétis de la Croix, *Suite de remarques sur Tripoly de Barbarie*, app. *Tripoly de Barbarie autrefois les Lotophages*, Paris, Bibl. Nat. Nouvelles Acq. No. 7488.
- 32 Lavers, 'Kanem and Borno', p.201.
- 33 op cit.
- 34 J.C. Zeltner, *Pages d'histoire de pays du Kanem*, Paris, 1980, Landeroin in *Documents scientifique de la mission Tilho*, Paris, 1911, 2 vols, vol II, p.378ff.
- 35 Lavers, 'Kanem and Borno', p.208.
- 36 Palmer, *Sudanese Memoir*, II, p.38.
- 37 C. Beccari (ed) *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales*, vol XIV, *Relation et Epistolae variorum*, pars II, Liber I, 1914.
- 38 For example see the many interviews by U.J. Seetzen with Dar Fur, Wadai, and other pilgrims passing through Cairo between 1808 and 1810 published in Baron von Zach's *Monatliche Correspondenz*. Even Sinnar on the Nile was said to recognize Borno's supremacy.
- 39 Abd al-Qadir b. Mustafa, *Rawdat al-Afkar* - see Palmer's translation in *J. Afr. Soc.*, XV (1915-16). A Hausa translation appears in *Hausawa da Makwabtansu*, 2 vols, Zaria, various editions.
- 40 Lavers, 'An introduction to the history of the Sultanate of Bagirmi', *Annals of Borno*, i (1983) - in press.
- 41 Lavers, 'Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi' in *Les Africaines*, (ed) C.A. Julien et al., Paris 1978, vol VII, pp.47-71; L. Brenner, *The Shehus of Kukawa*, Oxford, 1973.
- 42 T. Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives*, Oxford, 1975, p.60.
- 43 W.R.R. Hallam, *The Life and Times of Rabih Fadl Allah*, Illfracome, 1976 is not very satisfactory treatment in English.
- 44 The French demanded a payment of first 30,000 and then 50,000 Maria Theresa dollars for restoring the Shehus.

IV

*The political system and administrative structure of Kanem Borno under the Saifawa**

M. Nur Alkali

It is difficult in a short space to discuss the political system and administrative structure of a kingdom that has survived for the best part of a millennium, and where neither the system nor the structure has remained static. The evolution of the political culture of the kingdom was influenced by a number of factors both external, as shown by the continuous process of migrations of various groups, and environmental as indicated by the sharp contrasts in the geographical features of the kingdom. The land of Kanem was a meeting point of several cultures - the indigenous Sudanic, the Berber and Arab — all coming together to form a unique culture which has survived to the present day. But the complexity of the culture and the longevity of the Saifawa rule should not form a barrier to our study of the system and the political culture. Despite the constraints in our access to information, and the obvious dangers of broad generalizations, it is possible to examine those basic features in the Saifawa political culture that have remained consistent for the greater part of their rule.

I shall examine the basic elements in the political system and administrative structure under the Saifawa rule. Some of the institutions of government which the Saifawa held sacred, such as the delicate position of the royal family who believed that the legitimacy of their authority derived from the claim of descent from Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan of Himyar, have constituted some of the basic features of their rule.¹ The importance attached to the institution of the kingship as the nucleus of authority was shown by the emphasis placed on the desire to maintain the integrity of the royal position. Throughout the period of Saifawa rule the royal family became the

nucleus from which the authority for leadership was derived. They produced the Mai (the King) who was regarded as the owner of the Land (Kema Lardema) and in whom the overall authority of the State was vested. I shall not go into the intricate and complex subject of the origin of kingship and the basis of legitimacy which have been the subject of debate among the Saifawa ulama themselves for a very long time. But in the conception of the ulama it was the will of God that, 'He has made certain people kings and has perfected the characteristics of those chosen to be kings. . .'² Related to this concept is their belief that 'kingship is a heavy burden and in truth those who carry it among the people are few, its bearer will approach God on the day of judgement exhausted by his tyranny'.³ Perhaps more significant than this is the assumption that Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan the great founder of the dynasty has 'imposed strict conditions on those claiming kingship and was severe in the criteria of worthiness for it.' These references from the Idara provide for us part of the basic concept that accompanies the office of the mai. But it is not only the Idara that emphatically projects the position of the mai and the qualities expected from him. Imam Ahmad ibn Fartua in his lengthy narrative of Mai Idris Alauma's reign sees kingship as the basis of survival of the state. For instance, the Imam sees that 'a place where there is an evil sultan is better than a place where there is none'⁵ implying of course that the absence of the Sultan is a symptom of anarchy. Sultan Umar ibn Idris writing to Sultan Barquq of Egypt in c.1391 re-states the importance of the office of the king: 'had it not been for the Sultans some of you would have eaten up others!'⁶

With all the conceptualization of the office of the Mai at the background some safety measures to protect the purity and sacredness of the kingship are provided. These are contained in the provision for accession to the office. Considering the importance of the office as the highest position in the state it is pertinent to ask who appoints the king, and who declares his appointment valid. The kingship was not an elective office where the entire kingdom was regarded as a constituency. The uncertainties involved are further beclouded by the fact that the period between the death of one Mai and the accession of another was the period most delicate for the security and survival of the state. In fact the traditions maintain that the death of a Mai was not announced until a new one was appointed within the shortest time possible. In short, both the death of the reigning Mai and the appointment of a new one were announced at the same time. The process of selection was a complex one even though it was a continuous exercise throughout the period of the reigning Mai. There were two groups of traditional kingmakers - the *mai kartawu* and the *mai bayatewu*. The first group were those involved in the actual selection of the mai and was composed of very senior State officials - the members of the Council (Majlis) and some members of the royal family. These were the Waziri, the Qadi Mainyin Kenandi (the Chief Judge), the Talba (the legal adviser), the Galtima (Governor of the West), the Yerima (Governor of the North), the Chief Imam (Imamul Idaini). In cases where disputes were likely to occur some senior members of the royal family such as the

Magira (the Queen mother) were often invited to participate in the process of selection. The task of selection does not seem to have been a very difficult one considering that a provision existed for the reigning Mai to choose a crown Prince and prepare him for leadership. According to the Idara it was the responsibility of the Mai to select an 'heir apparent to the kingship and sultanate whom he and his advisers will watch over in his performance in the matter of supporting the rights of God and man and discover his maturity and if he betrays the truth depose him and appoint another'.⁷ It is clear that it was not a matter for open candidature which involved all the members of the royal family. This would have made the task of the kingmakers rather difficult if not an impossible one. The reigning Mais also seemed to have adopted a tradition of appointing their eldest sons the Crown Prince with the title of the Ciroma. But the kingmakers were not simply a rubber stamp obliged to endorse the Mai's nomination of an heir—apparent. Thus, for instance, after the death of Mai Idris Alauma, his son Ciroma 'Biri was not chosen by the kingmakers to succeed him immediately.⁸ The criteria for the selection of the Mai seem to have been complex, as several able candidates often emerged especially with the emergence of factions within the royal family, the Council and the nobility. The guidelines as indicated in the Idara seem too broad and general and they allowed for a wide exercise of discretion by the kingmakers. According to the Idara, the person chosen to be king should be of 'sterling character and sound physique, devout, sincere, learned, gentle, just, refined, of sound judgement, zealous, abstemious, free of all vices, loving the Book of God, and knowledgeable in the Sunna of the Messenger of God, having all noble traits or most of them, a man who does not flinch from applying *hudud Allahi* and does not fear censure'.⁹ At a glance we can say that these qualities may simply have been the expectations of the Ulama for the office of the Mai. They are not different in many respects from the qualities of the Imam of the Muslim community as derived from the traditions of the Prophet Muhammed. Since by implication the Mai was expected to be the Imam he had to possess all those qualities prescribed for the Imam.

The selection of the new mai and the processes it had to pass through, complex as they were, did not seem to have taken a very long time for the *mai kartawu* to accomplish. Since the public announcement had to be made within the shortest time possible to avoid any dangers to security created by a political vacuum, the kingmakers had the responsibility to conclude all the essential processes without any serious rift among them. It is significant to note that in addition to other internal factors which might have helped to minimize the complexity of the selection process, there were some external factors which always forced the kingmakers to resolve their differences and arrive at some conclusive decisions. As might be imagined throughout the period of the Saifawa rule in Kanem and in Borno, the responsibilities of leadership shouldered by the Mais had been tremendous. The external threats to the security of the state beginning from the Bulala wars in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, renewed wars with the Bulala in the fifteenth and throughout

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to mention but a few, have all made the task of leadership a very crucial one for the very survival of the state. Even at a period when there was a civil war and dynastic crisis which led the kaigama to take over control of the state, an uninterrupted order of succession to the Maiship was maintained.¹⁰ The role of belligerent neighbours and the uneasy atmosphere created at the political boundaries of the state, the trade routes and the vassal states which constantly sought for protection from the centre, were some of the factors which made it necessary for a new mai to be installed soon after the death of the reigning one. But, in a sense, such additional factors also gave the kingmakers sufficient basis to arrive at a sound conclusion in their selection of a new mai whose eligibility was judged not only by his depth of learning and his being the favourite of the preceding mai but also by his ability to face the challenges of the time.

Following the selection process there was yet another set of procedures to confirm the new mai as the legitimate owner of the throne and secure public acknowledgement as the rightful choice. These were the accession rituals (bayate) which were performed by the second group of kingmakers - the mai bayatewu. The composition of this group was little different from that of the mai *kartawu* as most of the members of the latter group were also involved. They consisted of the Chief Imam who presided over the ceremony, the kaigama who guarded the Holy Qur'an at the installation square, the yerima who carried out the turbanding of the mai assisted by the kaigama. The membership of this group also included the *zanna ngijima*, the official praise singer of the royal Court, whose responsibility at the ceremony was to draw the attention of the mai and the audience to the great performances of the great Sultans and the history of the Saifawa dynasty. The ceremony began with a procession that led the mai to the installation square. He was placed on a heap of sand where the article of faith (Kalimatul Shahada) was written by the Chief Imam. The mai was made to swear upon the Holy Qur'an to preserve the purity of the royal office and to serve his people with honesty and justice. He was lifted three times from the ground after which the beating of the drums (the Maara) and the official bugle by the *zanna babuma* would follow. It was at this point that the *zanna ngijima* would deliver his long address in a form of a 'sermon' to the new Mai. He would draw attention to the performances of the great Saifawa Mais in war and in peace. The emphasis was always on their achievements rather than the failures even though in a form of warning some references were made to their shortcomings. His concluding remarks were significant as they contained warnings to the new Mai against indulgence in worldly vices and that, like his predecessors, his reign was only temporary in this world:

Your forefathers have fought three hundred and thirty three battles
and only lost three. But to-day they are nowhere to be seen.

The essence of the above remark from the *zanna ngijima* implied that despite their

fame and actions in their lifetime they were answerable to God on the Day of Judgement. But he still goes even further to make reference to the limitations of the Mai and his responsibilities to the people:

Your protection spreads like wings over your men;
Your men spread out behind you like wings;
I shall tell you of your greatness.
You are our protector whose acts are done at will;
You are the Sultan of all the great men.
Give us all the protection and we shall protect you
here on earth.¹²

According to the Ngijima the protection of the mai was the responsibility of his subjects. But political authority vested on the mai was a compromise between the rulers and the ruled. The mai was assured of protection so long as he protected his people. It is not within the scope of this chapter to discuss the implications of the Zanna Ngijima's address and his concept of inter-dependence between the rulers and the ruled. Suffice it here to say that his remarks were very significant considering the context in which they were made. It signified the concern of the people and particularly the Ulama and the nobility for the responsibilities of leadership vested in the Mai. Considering that his remarks were in a form of warning and made in public it was an attempt to show the supremacy of the state over the mai and his oath taken in public was his acknowledgement of this fact.

These accession rituals were very important preconditions for the confirmation of the mai's appointment. It was after these rituals that various groups of people—the members of the Majlis, the nobility, the representatives of the various ethnic groups and territorial heads would come in turns to pay their homage to the new mai. One very significant aspect of the processes of the appointment of the new mai as shown in the rituals, for instance, was the combination of the indigenous customs with those elements which were Islamic in nature and orientation. Indeed there was considerable emphasis on the Islamic orientation such as the prominent position of the Chief Imam, the Holy Qur'an and the article of faith incorporated as part of the rituals. At the same time the myth about the heap of sand on which the mai was placed, the lifting of the mai three times from the ground, and the Zanna Ngijima's sermon etc. provided the customary or traditional foundations of the rituals. It is safe to assume that those customs and traditions were simply a carry over from the pre-Islamic days of the Saifawa mais so clearly described to us by Al-Muhallabi in his account of Kanem.¹³ The fact that these rituals survived the coming of Islam showed how sacred they were to the people both in Kanem and in Borno. It was even more significant that they were not questioned by even the most notable of the Ulama such as the Chief Imam and the Talba. It is clear that in the conception of the Saifawa and the Ulama, incorporation of customary rituals into the political functions of the state did not necessarily negate the principles of the Islamic state. The reality of their position was that a complete divorce from their indigenous roots and a total adoption of a new social or political system, even if based on the force of

religion, was to make the concept of the state meaningless in the eyes of the people they served.

Next to the accession of the mai to the throne, it is essential to discuss the position of the royal family which, as noted earlier, was the source from which the office of the mai had emerged. In view of its importance in the political structure of the state, the royal family maintained some strict code of conduct for itself and some hierarchical organization within its membership. These were in the form of offices and titles which were given to members of the royal family to confer on them the responsibilities for managing the complex administrative set-up of the palace. This role was essential to the survival of the state because in the words of the *zanna ngijiba*, the collapse of the royal family was the collapse of the kingdom (*Mairi tartiya lardeye tarti*). It was the responsibility of the mai to maintain some stability within the royal family by strict adherence to the rules for the distribution of titles, offices and fiefs. Furthermore, the purpose was also to assure members of the royal family some responsibility in the running of the state administration. In the case of the princes, for instance, the distribution of titles and offices was also meant to ease any tension which might develop as a result of their idleness or redundancy. By the investiture of titles and offices and the grant of fiefs, such members of the royal family could also derive some revenue with which to maintain themselves. The exercise in a sense helped also to strengthen the overall financial position of the royal family.

Among the most important office holders of the royal family was the *magira* (the Queen mother) who, in a situation of a deadlock within the royal family arising from the choice of a new mai, could assume responsibilities of leadership in the state. The magira was the holder of the largest number of fiefs in the state many of which have survived to the present day. These were the mairari settlements often referred to in traditions as the 'settlements of a thousand slaves each.' The powerful position of the magira was shown by the role played by Magira Aisa Keli Ngermaram who emerged as a ruler of the state after the dynastic crisis which led to the assassination of Mai Ali the father of Mai Idris Alauma in c.1546, and the anarchy that followed afterwards. An even clearer example was the role earlier played by Magira Fusam Sakarammi who ordered the imprisonment of the Mai Biri ibn Dunama (c.1163-1190) who had ordered the execution of a thief instead of applying the Islamic legal tradition of cutting the hand of the thief.¹⁴ Such interventions raise issues in relation to the powers and limitations of the royal family. But more important than this was perhaps the clear desire to maintain some code of conduct for the highest office of the state and to preserve the position of the royal office.

Following the magira was the *gumsu* - the first and most senior wife of the mai whose responsibility was the management of the domestic affairs of the palace. She was assisted by the other three wives of the mai and the numerous concubines often brought into the palace. It might appear unnecessary to have an established administrative system within the context of the state on matters which seem domestic or private. But the royal family was a very complex organization and the amount of

management responsibilities within the family were equally heavy. Since these could distract the attention of the mai from other more pressing state issues they were not, in the real sense, to be considered simply his private or domestic affairs. The upbringing, control and discipline of the princes and the princesses, arrangement for social activities such as wedding ceremonies, naming etc., interaction with the outside community, and settling of family disputes within the palace, were not mere trivialities because these could develop into more difficult crises spreading beyond the limitations of the palace.

Outside the palace, the gumsu like the magira was also given her share of fiefs to be administered on her behalf by appointed officials of the royal court. It is not easy to determine the size of the gumsu's land but judging from the fragments that have survived to the present in the form of the gumsuri settlements, they were often vast extents of territory covering numerous farmlands on which her slaves worked. The 'Account of Gazargamo' written by Muhammad Salih ibn Isharq in c.1658 gives us some rough ideas about the position of the gumsu and her authority:

The courtiers of the Gumsu were sixty men, all of noble rank. There were fifty slaves who worked for her and twenty men at arms who went out to fight and who maintained the Gumsu's authority. Each one of these twenty men commanded a thousand slaves. Thus were they organized.¹⁵

The significance of Muhammad Salih's account is the emphasis placed on the direct loyalty of the gumsu's men to her. The reference to the slaves also shows how much in terms of the farm output went to the gumsu in the form of revenue. But the office of the gumsu was not a matter for open candidacy among the wives of the mai. In the same account and as shown by various references in the *girgam*, the gumsu was usually the daughter of the Talba, the legal adviser. The rationale behind this arrangement is not very clear nor are we sure of its practicability since it was likely to have Talbas without daughters when the Mai wanted one for a wife. Similarly one of the wives the *makitama* was said to be the daughter of the Sultan of the Bulala. This is also puzzling to us since the Bulala had been in conflict with the Saifawa Mais for nearly five hundred years. It is possible to assume that this development might have dated from the period of Mai Idris Alauma whose mother Amsa Aliram was a Bulala princess and during whose reign the war with the Bulala came to an end. Whatever could be said about these arrangements within the royal family the system functioned well since it has survived the Saifawa dynasty itself. Furthermore, we may have little doubt that such arrangements have also contributed substantially towards the stability of the overall political system of the state. But these were not without their disadvantages and weaknesses.

Elements of instability within the royal family

Judging from the administrative organization, we might assume that the royal family was built on a stable foundation. Perhaps the elaborate administrative structure

served as the basis for peaceful co-existence within the royal family during the developmental stages of the dynasty in Kanem. But as time went on, and with the intricate politics of the royal family, there must have been the possibility of rival claimants to titles and offices constituting a threat to the established order. For instance, at the death of one mai and the accession of another a new group of title holders may have to be established - there should be a new gumsu, the wife of the new mai. But the old gumsu who was probably the new Mai's mother could not automatically be installed as the magira if another magira was already in the office. This sudden collapse of the authority of the gumsu who had hundreds of followers could hardly be compensated. Some of her fiefs could still be left to her as a source of her revenue but most of them were to become part of the new gumsu's holdings. It would have been more favourable for the old gumsu if her son was on the throne but even this does not mean that the mai had to depart from tradition and install his own mother as the new magira. This would upset the balance of an established order of administration. But the old gumsu stood a greater chance to be appointed the magira if her son survived long enough on the throne. These uncertainties, no doubt, had the effect of building up tension within the state over a long period of time.

The royal family was only one of the organs of administration and did not function in isolation from other organs which were similarly important in the running of the state. Perhaps coming next in the hierarchy was the Council of state, the majlis whose role in relation to the royal family we have briefly mentioned above. The council was established in accordance with the Islamic principle of al-Shura (consultation). Neither the composition nor function of the majlis within the context of the Saifawa administration completely adheres to this principle. But the Council was a necessity even without the concept of al-Shura considering the complex network of administrative organs over a vast extent of territory at varying stages of development. It is fair to assume that its development began when the principle of the Islamic state was entrenched from about the eleventh century. The pre-Islamic divine kingship hardly required such arrangements on an elaborate scale. The majlis consisted of the *waziri* who was the mai's assistant in performing his political functions, the *qadi mainyin kenandi* who was the Chief Judge of the state and presided over the mai's court; and the *talba*, the legal adviser to the mai. The Council further consisted of the *kaigama*, the Commander in Chief; the *yerima*, Governor of the North; and the *galtima*, Governor of the West.

We can consider the members of the Council mentioned as carrying with them some state functions and responsibilities, but there seems to have been another category of members who performed nothing more than a passive role. They were largely connected with the maintenance of order, making remarks on the adjournment of meetings and other ceremonial functions. For instance, the *Zarma kura's* function was said to have been to remind the mai of the advice and 'warning' given

to him at the installation ceremony. Thus his remarks, *kana kauwa genas* (i.e. beware: remember the past and watch out for the future) was repeatedly made each time the mai appeared to have lost his temper.

What then were the functions of the Majlis? One of the most important functions as earlier mentioned was the selection of a new mai after the death of the ruling mai. It was however possible that in the selection of a new mai the Council might be enlarged to include some members of the royal family called upon to play a mediatory role when disputes were anticipated. Normally the Council discussed vital state issues and took decisions on them. It decided upon the declaration and conduct of war, appointment of new state officials their promotions or demotions, and the distribution of the fiefs. The Council also functioned as a Supreme Court where cases involving important state officials or land disputes were settled.

We must emphasize the point that the presence of a Council does not mean that its powers exceeded those of the mai. The decision of the Councillors was by no means final. There were two types of Council meetings. The first was that which was held without the mai and its decisions were later on forwarded to the mai for his consideration. The second was that which was presided over by the mai and decisions were finalized. The senior members of the Council could meet on their own and take some decisions of minor importance without necessarily drawing the mai's attention.¹⁶ In such cases only where their decision was likely to affect an important state policy would they approach the mai. These meetings were fairly regular and were held whether or not there were issues to discuss. The meetings could develop from the usual traditional homage paid to the mai everyday.

The mai's council was unlikely to function as a centre for controversy where issues were debated against the will of the mai. The members performed largely an advisory role. Though there could be divided opinions on whether war should be declared upon another territory, or who should be appointed to a certain post, the mai's intervention would normally settle the controversy. But this is not to say that the mai was therefore at liberty to take decisions arbitrarily. His decisions should conform with the opinion of the generality of the Majlis. The mai could not overrule every decision but to make his authority felt he might not accept every decision. He could be forceful enough where he knew he was right and the Council was wrong.

When the mai and his Council had decided, directions were given out in the mai's Court (Noguna) where most of the state officials assembled. It was a gathering of all the nobles held at least once every day to enable them pay their homage to the mai and receive the orders of the Council. The Kogunawa could be classified from the lowest rank of a servant (*waladi*) to the highest rank of a titled noble (Koguna Kagalawa).¹⁷ As a group they came third in rank after the royal family (including the Mai) and the Majlis. However, their importance is shown by the fact that the mai often conferred upon many of them various titles in order to secure their loyalty and services.

The point must be emphasized that the attainment of a title in the mai's Court was one of the most important qualifications for the acquisition of a fief in the state. It was also the highest status any individual who was associated with the royal palace strived to achieve. No person who was not close to the mai's administration could hope for a title or fief; and to qualify for either, one often started from the lowest rank, the *waladi*. The slaves who worked in the palace could also qualify for titles and offices.

There appears to have been two categories of titles in the Saifawa administration. First were the hereditary titles which were held by some respected families of the state. This was largely confined to the high ranking offices of the state - the members of the majlis, some members of the royal family and the kogunawa. Most of these high ranking officers such as the Waziri, the Mainin Kenandi, Talba, Galadima, Yerima, and Arjinoma seem to have been the descendants of the foundation families in the state. Likewise many among the kogunawa held hereditary titles. Here it must be pointed out that a hereditary title may not necessarily be confined to one particular family. In some cases two or three families might be entitled to one post in the state which was often to be rotated among them. Yet it seems that even in this system close association with the mai or his councillors and merit counted more than the hereditary or rotational device. This system, as might be imagined, gave rise to competition among the families concerned and it tended to enhance the degree of their loyalty to the mai.

The second category of titles were those conferred upon some nobles for life and on their death were declared vacant and given to others of good performance.¹⁸ Making some titles non-hereditary was a measure against the creation of too many titles which could become of little or no importance. It also provided a ground for competition among the kogunawa who had no titles.

The complex structure of these titles, reflected in the proverbial 'three hundred and thirty three', must have placed the mai and his council in a very delicate and difficult position of management. The distribution of the titles, the assignment of functions and the maintenance of a proper hierarchy placed an exceptionally heavy responsibility on the mai and his council. The mai's powers to confer and revoke titles had to be exercised with caution as mistakes could shake the whole basis of loyalty of his people. The multiplicity and duplication of titles which are features of a much later development appear to have been attempts to pacify the discontented as much as to reward new aspirants. For instance the aftermath of Mai Idris Alauma's wars witnessed a rapid expansion of the bureaucracy with more people holding to one office and a number of officers having virtually the same functions.

Not much is known about the traditional functions of most of the titles held by the kogunawa. But there seems to have been more ceremonial titles than those with specific functions. Among the latter there were offices which were responsible for trade, security, and protocol. The officer in charge of trade was traditionally known as the *zanna arjinoma* and one of his most important duties was to look after the

welfare of all foreign traders coming into the capital.¹⁹ He was responsible for the administration of the various markets which was largely carried out by the *mala kasuube* (head of the market administration) in every large market. The arjinoma's duties also included negotiation and purchase of certain valuable items such as horses, firearms and luxury items on behalf of the mai. The head of security was the *zanna ndubuwama* an officer who was responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the capital and outside. In cases of raids and attacks by robbers, the ndubuwama could organize expeditions (*kadu*) to pursue the criminals and rescue the victims. It seems, however, that due to the size and extent of the Borno kingdom in the later years of the sixteenth century, the functions of his department must have been greatly decentralized. The next important officer was the *zanna karedilima*¹⁹ whose functions correspond with those of the present day officers of protocol. He was responsible for the organization of ceremonies and receptions on special occasions such as the Sallah festivals. He welcomed important guests to the mai's Court and was responsible for their welfare.

It must, however, be noted that the *arjinoma*, *ndubuwama* and the *karedilima* were only some of the officers whose functions have so far come to light; but the variety of accounts with regards to the functions performed by many other officers suggest that there was also a system of non-specialization of functions through which any officer could be called upon to carry out some state function whenever there was the need.

System of fief administration

The mai was the supreme head of the state, the owner of the land (*kema lardema*) and also its protector. It was assumed that every piece of land (*cidi*) belonged to him and those who administered it did so on his behalf and in his name. Since the mai had the sole responsibility of giving out fiefs, some relationship with him was necessary for the acquisition of a fief. The relationship could be by blood as in the case of members of the royal family. It could also be that which existed between the mai and the members of the Council, who were themselves descendants of important families in the state, and the kogunawa who carried out the bulk of the administrative work on his behalf.

The ownership of certain fiefs, like some of the offices, were hereditary. But this hereditary status was confined to the high ranking officers of the state - members of the royal family, members of the Council and some powerful members of the Koguna group. The lesser nobility who were able to possess fiefs hardly ever gained any hereditary status. They held their fiefs for a lifetime only, after which they were declared vacant and given out to other members of the nobility.

One officer might have several fiefs under his administration in different parts of the state. The idea of giving out one large territory to an officer as a fief seems to have been avoided to minimise the dangers of such officers claiming excess of political power against the Mai's authority. The only exception was when it became

necessary to protect border territories against possible invaders in which case a strong representative of the mai was stationed to look after the security of the territory.²⁰

There were two types of fief holders: the territorial fief holder (*cima cidibe*) and the clan head (*cima jilibe*).²¹ The senior fief holders (*cima cidibe kura*; and the *cima jilibe kura*) resided in the capital where they could serve as the coordinators between the administration of their fiefs and the central government. They administered their fiefs through subordinates known as the junior fief holder (*cima cidibe gana*) and junior clan head (*cima jilibe gana*). The clan head was given the responsibility to administer the territories inhabited by his fellow clansmen. His appointment was often on the basis of acceptability of his leadership by his clansmen. This arrangement often applied to conquered territories where the clans and ethnic groups had only nominal loyalty to the central authority. Whatever the case, a representative of that group through whom they could get access to the central government resided in the capital and retained his position as the '*cima jilibe kura*'.

What then were the functions of the fief holders? The '*cima kura*' was responsible for an effective administration of the land assigned to him. This he did through close supervision and control of his representative, the '*cima gana*'. The '*cima gana*' was responsible for the collection of taxes (*hakki*) on behalf of the *cima kura*.²² In principle all the taxes collected were supposed to go to the Mai's treasury (*baitulmal*). The '*cima gana*' also exercised political authority over the areas he administered. He settled minor disputes among the people, supervised the proper and regular conduct of trade and farming. The most important function of the fief holders was to raise troops for the state army at the request of the central government. Most of the able bodied men, were recruited into the army in cases of emergency. In carrying out these functions successfully there was an intense co-ordination of efforts and delegation of authority between the *cima kura* and the *cima gana*.

It must be noted that the mai's court, presided over by the legal advisers, tried cases concerning land disputes among the fief holders. The Council was the body which decided whether a fief was to be confiscated from its holder or its size reduced. In general, the fief holders were to maintain law and order in their areas of jurisdiction and to see to the collection of taxes and the payment of tributes. They were also under instruction to keep well within their own boundaries. The performance of the *cima* was judged by his efficiency in administering his fiefs. Where the *cima* failed, it could result in the reduction of the size of his fiefs. Where he was absolutely incapable of performing his duties, it could even result in the confiscation of his fiefs though this applied more to the nobility than members of the royal family. On the other hand the successful *cima* was either rewarded with more fiefs or given another title which raised his status in the mai's court. Thus, the system of fief holding in Borno opened the way for competition among the followers of the mai through which he was able to secure the loyalty of the bulk of his subjects. It is not

easy, however, to determine through the administration of the fief, the amount of revenue that came into the state treasury, but there was no doubt that a substantial portion of this revenue went to the fief holders themselves.

Military organization

It is difficult to separate the administrative from the military organization of the saifawa because it was the same group of people who administered the land who also went out to fight. However, the saifawa military organization deserves separate consideration in the context of this study. The kaigama, who was the commander-in-chief had the direct responsibility for the organization, recruitment, discipline and training of the army (askerwa). During the dynastic crisis that preceded the emergence of Mai Ali Gaji in the early fifteenth century the kaigama appeared to have the powers to depose the mai himself,²³ but such powers were curtailed as a result of administrative reforms of Mai Ali Gaji.²⁴ The office of the kaigama was thereafter given to a person of slave origin so that the mai could be better assured of his absolute loyalty. Despite his responsibilities as a commander-in-chief, the ultimate powers over the army were vested in the mai. The subordinate status of the kaigama was shown when he paid his allegiance to the mai in the presence of all his soldiers in a great ceremony (tawur) before leaving for the battlefield.

The kaigama, in his task of organization of the army, was closely assisted by the *zarmas*²⁵ who were responsible for the organization of the various regiments. Traditions make references to 'the twelve flag bearers' (alamgu megun indin, or as Keelle put it, (alam megu nduri maibe) who were the regimental commanders. But it seems that all the zannas also had military functions to perform and it is therefore possible that there could have been more than twelve regimental commanders.²⁶ Among the members of the mai's Council, the mainin kenandi and the waziri also accompanied the army but the talba, according to tradition, remained in the capital and acted on behalf of the mai. Many of the princes were also expected to join the army.

There seems to have been a standing army in the capital comprising the military officers mentioned and their followers - the 'waladi' and other bodyguards who had no titles but were members of the Koguna group. The officers themselves had a large number of followers whom they closely supervised and controlled. There were several factors which made the task of recruitment relatively easy. First was the dependence of local inhabitants on the state for necessary aid from the main army against their raiding neighbours. This heightened the spirit of collective action and voluntary service among the great majority of people throughout the kingdom. The other important factor was the desire for booty and material gains on the battlefield. Thus when the signal drum (Tumbal) was beaten repeatedly in the cima's residence, hundreds of able-bodied people converged on the village where the first preparations were to begin. After the recruitment exercise, the various leaders of the territorial units converged on the capital followed by their recruits in procession. There were also exceptional groups recruited along the route through which the army passed.

At the capital there seems to have been a number of other preparatory activities. There was the *barga*, a kind of dance, in which all the soldiers participated. Another special dance limited to the military officers -the *kaigama*, the *zarmas* and the *zanna's*, was known as the *asker*. Both the *barga* and the *asker* had several purposes the most important of which was to raise the morale of the army and to promote the feeling of a common identity. War songs were sung, and praises showered on the *mai* and the great generals of the past.

We do not know whether this preparation extended to training in the use of the weapons such as arrows (*Kenyige*), battle axe (*chonge*), the *ngaliyau* (a curved sharp edged weapon), and shields (*ngwaa*).²⁷ What seems clear is that most of such weapons were carried by the footmen (*sati*). The horsemen were said to have normally carried spears (*kazaa*), a kind of harpoon (*bellam*), swords (*Kashagar*), and shields. There is little doubt that some training in the use of these weapons was carried out before leaving for the battle field.

It does not appear that the *mai* took part in these preparatory exercises. The progress of the recruitment and the training were notified to him from time to time. However, before the troops left the capital, a great rehearsal of the whole army was arranged in a ceremony known as the '*bata*' and '*tawur*'.²⁸ It was at this stage that the *mai* saw the organization and strength of his army. The *kaigama*, assisted by the *zarmas* and other military officers, arranged the horsemen in lines (*bata*). Most traditional accounts maintain that the footmen who carried the bows and arrows led the front line so that they could clear the way for the horsemen by attacking the first line of the enemy. Each of the lines were placed under the command of one military officer. It is not known whether the *zannas* commanded a single line each but it is more likely that there could be several lines under the command of one *zanna*.

It was after the organization of the army into their respective lines that the *kaigama* came to swear his oath of allegiance before the *mai*. He dismounted from his horse and with a bare head and bare feet he led his horse in front of the entire army. This ceremony in which the *kaigama* paid his allegiance to the *mai* was known as the *tawur*.²⁹ It emphasized the position of the *kaigama* as subordinate to the *mai* before the audience of his troops and demonstrated to the *mai* the strength of his army and that the preparation for war had been completed.

An account of military activity and strategy in the field lies outside the scope of this chapter but it is necessary to point out that an officer's performance on the battlefield also determined his appointment to a higher office in the *mai's* administration. In short, a military expedition was an important factor in any changes which might be introduced into the main administrative structure. Apart from the likelihood of some office holders losing their lives in the battlefield and creating vacancies in the administrative hierarchy, military organization was part and parcel of the *saifawa* political system. It was an important means by which the *mai's* territory could be expanded. Therefore, the spirit of courage and determination always

accompanied the ambitious soldier, and this in turn heightened the spirit of collective action for the mai's victory and the security of the state.

It is necessary to point out in conclusion that the above system in its totality only provided a broad picture of the Saifawa government in operation. The efficiency of the system depended entirely on the time and circumstances confronting the Saifawa at a particular moment. We can see for instance that in the sixteenth century when the mais were faced with the task of development and expansion, and the maintenance of security at the borders of the state, the system continued to function with some degree of efficiency. In the eighteenth century, however, when relative peace prevailed, the entire structure of government became excessively overloaded with titles and offices without functions thus leading to a speedy decline and collapse.

Notes

*Another version of this paper has appeared in *Studies in the History of pre-Colonial Borno*, NNPC, Zaria, 1983 p. 101.

- 1 Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan of Himyar was the great Arab hero who rose to power in the Yemen on the eve of the coming of Islam. The Saifawa mais of Kanem Borno claim their origin from this hero.
- 2 Muhammad Yanbu, *Idara fi Nizan al-mamlake wal Imara*. For an analysis on this unpublished document see K. Tijani in the second Interim report, Northern Administrative Research project (NARP) 1975, p.76.
- 3 The *Idara*, *Ibid*
- 4 *Ibid*
- 5 Imam Ahmad, *The First Twelve years of mai Idris Alauma*.
- 6 Al-Qalqashandi Subh-ul- Ashe
- 7 The *Idara*, *op.cit*.
- 8 Ciroma Biri (Ibrahim) featured prominently in the account of Imam Ahmad.
- 9 The *Idara*, *op.cit*.
- 10 See the 'Diwan of the mais of Borno' in Palmer, *Borno Sahara and Sudan (BSS)* for the coups staged by the kaigamas.
- 11 *The Song of the Zanna Ngijima* recorded in Field notes.
- 12 *Ibid*.
- 13 See Al- Muhallah, quoted in Trimingham, *History of of Islam in West Africa*, p.111
- 14 See the *Diwan*, *op.cit*.
- 15 Muhammad Salih ibn Ishaqu in *Bulletin S.O.A.S.*, London, V, 1929, pp.544-7 and 552-3
- 16 Taken for granted that the Council members always assembled at the Waziri's residence before coming to pay their homage to the Mai.
- 17 It was possible for one to attain the membership of the Koguna without necessarily being conferred with a title. It was a step towards the attainment of a title.
- 18 Most of the slaves and all the eunuchs who held titles fall within this category.
- 19 Tradition refers to the *zanna arjinoma* as the 'Kura Wasiliwabe' meaning head of the Wasili (term given to traders from North Africa).
- 20 One such exception, for instance, was the Galadima who was entrusted with the security of the Western territories of Borno.
- 21 For material on the fiefs some useful information came from the Magira, late Malam Mukar Maduwama (collection of praise songs in connection with the fiefs 'nazmu Wakkil Maibe') and Imam Bulama, Chief Imam Monguno. Field notes/Royal Family II.
- 22 Our information on the tax system and other revenue for this period is very scanty. However, there seems to have been a land tax (cidiram) which was obligatory on every farmer (see also Leo Africanus: *The History and Description of Africa*, trans. J. Pary 1600, pp.832-833).
- 23 See the *Diwan* and also A. Smith's '*The early states of the Central Sudan*' in Ajayi, J.F.A. and Crowder, M.: *A History of West Africa*, vol. 1, Longman, 1971. p. 180.
- 24 H. Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa* Vol. II, p.589.
- 25 The Zarmas were also known as the regimental commanders. The title was also held by an officer who led the mai's procession (see above). Perhaps what the two titles had in common was that one led a unit of the army and the other led the mai's procession. Koelle (*African Native Literature* pp. 259-60) also discusses the role of the 'Zarma'.

- 26 It is only if taken for granted that each Zanna led a unit of the army.
- 27 There appears to have been other weapons of which we have no details. Koelle for instance mentions the 'balamtami' a kind of 'battle axe suspended from the saddle bow' (see Koelle *op. cit.* pp.266).
- 28 Field notes: 'Kogunawa and Military' also Royal family I 'praise songs'. The Bata is still practised in Borno though now for ceremonial purposes only.
- 29 The 'tawur' is no longer observed in Borno.

V

Political centralization in the south of Borno: The case of Sukur in the 18th and 19th centuries

Bawuro M. Barkindo

I shall examine the attempt by the rulers of Sukur to build an indigenous centralized state which, if it had been successful, would have encompassed much of the hills and plains of the Upper Yedseram Basin situated in the south and south-west of Borno and Mandara respectively into one political entity. The failure by the Sukur rulers and the failure of their successors, the Fulbe and the British administrations, in that endeavour contributed in no small measure to the little respect in which traditional authority is held in the area.

Sukur is the name of a mountain kingdom situated in the District of Madagali of the present northern Gongola state. The kingdom consisted primarily of the hill village of that name and that of Damayi on the north-east corner of the same plateau. Two hamlets of Milding and Zugorio situated in the Maggar valley also acknowledged the rule of Sukur. As time went on, there were Sukur colonies at Mildo, Palam, Gulak and many others which appear to have been a calculated attempt by the kings of Sukur to effect a political domination of these areas.

The South of Lake Chad, 15th to the end of the 17th Century¹

The final migration of the Saifawa and their followers into Borno, following their conflicts with the Bulala, was to have far-reaching consequences for the earlier peoples living south of Lake Chad. By the period of the rule of Mai Ali Gaji (c.1465-1497) the Saifawa were fully established in the area and had already started their conquests in an effort to build a second Saifawa state. Faced with this aggressive behaviour, the earlier inhabitants had three options: to flee into inaccessible

areas and thereby maintain their independence; to stand their ground and face the enemy with their traditional small-scale social organization and thereby face annihilation or absorption; or to adopt protective responses through political centralization and co-operation with the new conquerors.

The first option was followed by many of the smaller groups or those who were least protected by nature (e.g. in the form of rivers, mountains or thick forests) and those who were forced to face the new conquerors without being given enough time to prepare a defence. These peoples simply fled into either the inaccessible marshy islands of Lake Chad and the riverine areas of the Shari-Logone or into the equally inaccessible areas like those of the Mandara mountains. Many of those who took this option were able to maintain not only their independence but, to a large extent, also some of their cultural characteristics till recent times.

The second option open to the earlier groups was to stand their ground and fight the new-comers. Several tactics were adopted with varying success. Many of the Sao and the Gamergu groups fought from their protective stockades and for a very long time were able to withstand the attacks of the Kanuri. Some of them even started joining together to form larger units or adopted 'hit and run' tactics² for the sake of surviving the enemy attacks. These and many other measures helped the indigenes to preserve their independence for a long time. One general observation however could be made about all those who adopted this second option: in the long run the majority were annihilated, dislodged and driven away from their original homes or absorbed by the new conquerors. Today the so-called Sao groups have completely disappeared; the Gamergu who remain and who still consider themselves as such are very few in number and outwardly their culture can hardly be differentiated from that of the Kanuri. That could also be said of some of the related Margi groups like the Chibok.

The third choice left to the earlier peoples was to adopt some form of protective response against the emerging power of this second Saifawa state. An important manifestation of this response was the formation of centralized chieftaincies. In their initial stages of growth these developing states often established some form of co-operation with Borno. This was the choice adopted by the Mandara (or Wandala), the northern Bolewa of Daniski (modern Fika), the people of Yamta (modern Pabir of Biu) and, up to the end of the sixteenth century at least, the Margi around Mulgwi. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, numerous centralized petty kingdoms had developed along the southern edges of the Borno state.

The people of Mandara appear to have been more successful in building a centralized state in the south of Borno.³ By the end of the seventeenth century the kingdom had managed to dominate most of the plains and hills east of River Yedseram and north of River Mangafe. Kerawa, the commercial and cultural capital was situated in a very fertile area which also happened to be one of the most important iron producing centres in the whole area south of Lake Chad and north of the Benue. From here iron, and implements made of iron, were exported to many areas

both within and outside the region. By the end of the seventeenth century, horses, slaves, eunuchs and ivory were also exported from Mandara. The development of the economy went hand in hand with political development. The political organization that emerged consisted of an elaborate court headed by the Tlikse-a-Wandala (King of Mandara) who gradually crushed all opposition from the traditional title holders and heads of various groups to become a very powerful ruler, not only recognized in his kingdom but respected also in many areas outside it. By the end of the seventeenth century all the well-known centres of worship in the area were effectively brought under his control. Many people from far and near journeyed to Mandara to consult the various shrines under the general supervision of the *Tlikse*. He was the greatest sacred king in the area.

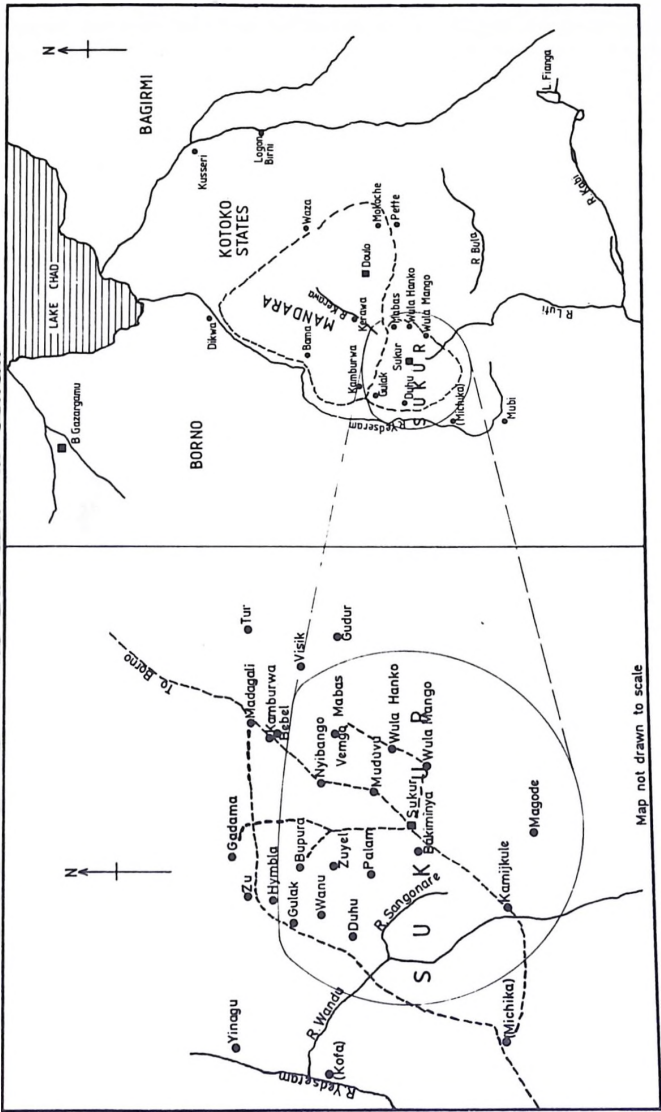
In addition to the economic and cultural factors, the Tlikse also came to build a very powerful military following (based on cavalry) second only to that of Borno. This was used for further conquests and for helping to maintain the economic, political and cultural dominance of Mandara in the area. Mandara was so much venerated that up to this date many of the groups who settled between Lake Chad and the Benue claim that Mandara was their ancestral home.

It was through these measures that Mandara gradually built a protection against Borno. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, Mandara started to reject the political tutelage of Borno with the latter periodically attacking Mandara to re-assert its dominance. By the seventeenth century Mandara had successfully thrown off the political dominance of Borno, but by then also her developing economy had already been drawn into the Borno economic orbit. Borno was not only the main gateway for Mandara trade but also her main source of a number of commodities which at that time Mandara could not do without. When Mandara adopted Islam at the beginning of the eighteenth century the state was also drawn into the cultural orbit of Borno.

By the latter part of the seventeenth century, areas on the southern edge of Mandara had started to adopt methods similar to those used by Mandara against Borno in the earlier period. Thus by the beginning of the next century, states had started to emerge in various stages of development in the southern fringe of the Mandara state. The most important ones include Sukur, Giziga, Tupuri and the Mundang.⁴ They also had political and cultural institutions which seem to have had some similarities to the pre-Islamic Mandara model. Our aim in this article is to examine the Sukur example.

Factors in the emergence of the Sukur kingdom at the beginning of the 18th century
Sukur boasts of a fine plateau whose good soil and adequate water supply ensures it to carry a moderate community of its own. In addition to its conducive environment the loftiness and extent of its plateau, towering about 2000 feet above the Yedseram valley, meant that it was in a better position to withstand invasions and sieges from the cavalry of Borno and Mandara than those on the plains or on smaller hills.⁵

SUKUR AND SOME OF HER NEIGHBOURS IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



Map not drawn to scale

Secondly, Sukur also developed an iron industry which supplied the needs of many of those peoples who settled between the mountains and the River Yedseram. Like Mandara it appears that Sukur also rose to prominence with the help of its iron industry. The working of iron was so important that it had a religious ceremony of its own, called the *zoku* or the festival of charcoal burning.⁶ The ceremony started after the rainy season when the ruler, the *Llidi*, declared it open with the sacrifice of a goat. He then commanded the womenfolk to go out and collect iron-ore. For the charcoal used in working the iron, Sukur depended mostly on her neighbours in the immediate plains. The *Llidi* personally entered into agreement with the various heads of the plain dwelling groups for the purpose of stocking wood in their land and burning it for the necessary charcoal. These were paid for by Sukur in *dubul* or iron bars. In fact every village in the neighbouring plains kept a special envoy called the *dokara* who conferred directly with the *Llidi* on arrangements and payments for charcoal burning in his area. The *dokara* had diplomatic immunity and is paid in *dubul* annually by the Sukur.⁷ Gradually the *dokara* started to take other responsibilities. He was often charged with gifts and special requests for the *Llidi* to solicit his help against unfavourable natural events like drought. The *dokara* was also often paid by the *Llidi* to report on the economic and political conditions of his area. One could only speculate on what would have been the final position of the *dokara* if the attempts by Sukur at political centralization had been allowed to flower.

Even today, Sukur - smelted iron bars are to be found in many markets situated in the northern parts of Gongola and the southern parts of Borno state. They used to be the means of exchange. They are still a very necessary part of bridewealth.⁸ The *Llidi* had a special relationship with the smiths who, it seemed, had been organized into some sort of guild. They were regarded as being outside the norms of the society since they were supposed to deal with the supernatural. In addition to the production of iron and iron elements, the male smiths were the diviners and undertakers while their wives acted as midwives in their societies. They never ate with the other people and their food included many things which were not normally eaten, like meat of dead vultures and donkeys. It was taboo for a non-smith to marry a smith daughter and vice-versa. The only exception was the *Llidi* who was permitted to marry a virgin smith-girl. It is said that both had dealings with the supernatural and both did not till the ground. In fact the *Llidi*'s claim to be descended from a union between a male stranger from Gudur and a blacksmith's daughter from Sukur.⁹ Finally, as we shall see, the smiths in both their professional and ritual roles played an important part in the political organization of Sukur. From the latter years of the seventeenth century, Sukur was attempting to challenge and if possible break the monopoly of Mandara in the production and supply of iron.

The emergence of Sukur was also facilitated by the temporary decline of Mandara. In c.1715 Tlikse Bukar Aji adopted Islam and, from that time onwards the rulers of Mandara embarked on attempts to make it a state religion.¹⁰ It took some decades before the Tlikses could subdue some of the traditional title holders and

heads of groups in Mandara and make them accept the new dispensation. This development coincided with the period when Borno launched several attacks against Mandara in another attempt to re-incorporate the stubborn state into the Borno polity. The external and internal problems of Mandara, temporary as they turned out to be, gave the Llidis a great opportunity to expand politically and economically at the expense of Mandara. Above all the acceptance of Islam by Mandara caused the Tlikse-a-Wandala to lose his position as a sacred king which he formerly enjoyed. For those who did not belong to the kingdom, a religious vacuum was created which the Llidi Sukur quickly filled.

The socio-political structure of Sukur in the 18th century

There are said to have been seven major groups in Sukur: the Habuga, Mithlim, Tuva, Zughi, Kighi, Abia and Gidam. They all lived in distinct wards, six of them in the Sukur village itself and one, the Abia at the nearby village of Damayi. Although they all spoke the same language and had the same cultural traits, nevertheless, before the emergence of the Gidam to power, they not only claimed different ancestry and origins but were feuding among themselves. They appear however to be occupational groups: the Habuga and Mithlim were regarded as the 'aborigines' since they were said to have been the first settlers. They were farmers and so appeared the Kighi. The Tuva and the Zughi were forging and funerary smith-guilds respectively.¹¹ As we said earlier, they were the producers of iron implements, diviners, magicians, undertakers, barbers, and midwives. The Abia are said to have been of Matakam servile origin who were allegedly settled at Damayi by the first Llidi. They were the musicians, dancers and of course the ones who undertook the difficult jobs such as building and digging. The Gidam were the dominant group divided into two sections, royals and commoners. The latter were mainly warriors and traders. It was the rise of Gidam which is said to have brought unity in Sukur 'when there were so many years of continuous rain and good harvest due to the magical powers of the Llidis'.¹²

The Llidis gradually laid the bases of their power by creating a sort of council of representatives from every one of the groups, each of whom was given some specific function. Gradually there emerged four components of the government: the Llidi, the councillors, the executives and the functionaries.

The Llidi or King

The Llidi must come from the royal branch of the Gidam group. He is normally supposed to be a Maina (Kanuri word meaning prince) that is, one whose father had attained the kingship. Often he was a former Makrama I (see table 1). In unusual circumstances, i.e. when the state suffered reverses like epidemics, droughts or series of military defeats under one branch of the ruling house, it was permitted to change the succession by appointing a Medugu (another Kanuri word: Madugu) i.e. a royal

prince but one whose father had died without attaining the office of the Llidi.¹³ One thing was however clear: no one was appointed a Llidi when his natural father was alive.¹⁴

The Llidi was originally recognized as the agent of the chief-priest of the Gudur shrine. All those peoples in the Yedseram valley and the adjacent mountains who recognized the Gudur shrine naturally recognized the religious authority of the Llidi. Gudur is recognized as the ancestral home not only by the Gidam of Sukur but also by many other peoples. In Nigeria alone, Gudur origin is claimed by the ruling houses in Guduf (now in Gwoza local government of Borno state), Palam, Gulak, Duhu, Mildo and Vemgo in the present Madagali local government (Gongola) and almost all the ruling houses among the Higgi in the present Chubunawa local government (Gongola).¹⁵ In the Cameroun Republic the Kapsiki, Bana, Matakam and Mofu claim that their ancestors came from Gudur.¹⁶ In the Nigerian area all those who claimed Gudur origin maintained hereditary ambassadors who were periodically sent to Gudur to consult the chief-priest at the shrine. They had to follow the prescribed route: Sukur—Wula—Mabas where permanent lodgings were always reserved for them. It appears, however, that the Gudur phenomenon was institutionalized by Sukur for its own political ends. This is because the Mofu, the Giziga and the Bana did not recognize the shrine of Gudur as a religious centre although they still claim it as their ancestral home.¹⁷

Gudur or Mpasaki is a small village on the edge of the Mofu plateau where it borders on the Diamare plain in the present Cameroun Republic. It is true that there is still a hut in Gudur which is supposed to house the oft-quoted shrine and those who are more informed state that inside the hut there is a large pot containing some fluid which is believed to have the power of solving all problems. But although there is supposed to be a chief-priest of the shrine no one has ever seen him since he was supposed to 'descend' only on particular nights.¹⁸

It seems the myth of Gudur was evolved by Sukur when the Llidi was attempting to replace the Tlikse of Mandara as the sacred king of the area. This is because the sacredness of the Llidi increased as Sukur became more and more powerful and, by the end of the eighteenth century, the Llidi had actually grown from an agent-priest to a sacred king who was consulted in his own right. That was the time when so many taboos were evolved around the person of the Llidi. He never ate in public and until the modern period he never left his village. Even now his food is prepared by a special wife and it is taboo for it to be put on the ground. When the special wife is sick or menstruating, the Llidi lived entirely on beer. This also happened when the Llidi was unavoidably forced to leave Sukur. In the latter case the Llidi's urine and spittle were carefully preserved and taken back to Sukur.¹⁹

The Llidi is prohibited from doing any manual work²⁰ and his farm in the middle of Sukur is ritually tilled by all the inhabitants of Sukur and on it a special corn is grown which is prohibited to all but to the Llidi and his immediate family. As is mentioned above, he is the only non-smith who is permitted to marry a girl from the

smith clan. His hair-lock, into which are braided the hairs of his ancestors is sacred and normally should not be seen by the human eye. Even in his sleep the Llidi has to wear a cap. Up to fairly recently, it was widely believed that the Llidi still continued to exercise the right of *jus primae noctis* (the right of the first night) with the brides of Sukur.²¹

The Llidi has a band of royal musicians consisting of the drummers and the horn blowers. The chief drummer - the *Legum* - was an important official of the Sukur court. The musicians played only for the Llidi and, with the Llidi's permission, during the installation of any of the chiefs whose appointments he had approved. Another important article of the Sukur royal regalia is the staff called the *mbari*. It is in the form of an iron walking-stick. It is handed to the Llidi during his installation ceremony by the senior member of the royal *Gidam*. It must never leave the Llidi's house again and it was never carried even during religious festivals. It is taboo for any woman to have anything to do with it.

As time went on, the Llidi came to supercede the chief-priest of Gudur even in religious matters. He came to be looked upon as the embodiment of the health of the whole kingdom and beyond. He was looked upon as the pivot of prosperity, the fount of the weal and woe, the source of rain, corn and rich harvests. Using his magical landcrabs, he is said to be able to see into the distant future. Many of the ambassadors therefore stopped at Sukur to consult the Llidi instead of passing to Gudur. It was the Llidi who sent to Gudur when he felt it necessary.

A few examples will help to illustrate the powers of the Llidi Sukur. In 1930 when the locust scourge first became severe, the Llidi was said to have collected one penny a head from every male among the Margi, Higgi, Matakam and even some Kilba. The purpose, it was further alleged, was for the Sukur smiths to smelt enough iron so that their colleagues at Gudur might construct a magical cauldron which would confine all the locusts in the world. The people of Sukur itself made a special contribution, each male member of the society contributed one sheep, one gown and one cone of (*mangul*) salt to the Llidi for the same purpose. In 1936 when the plague was drawing to its end, the Llidi ordered a thanksgiving sacrifice. Every man was asked to sacrifice a cock and each woman to crush an egg between her thighs and belly. These orders were carried from one market-place to the other by the special messengers of the Llidi. Most of the touring colonial administrative officers in this area reported an unprecedented shortage of eggs and chickens during the first six months of 1936.²²

When one considers that these episodes took place in the colonial period after the Llidi had lost so much of his former power one could not help but agree with the praise song, *sili ginda tidibu*, meaning 'his glory was great'.

The Councillors, Priests and Executives

With the rise of the *Gidan* to power, they attempted to form an administrative structure in which all the major groups in Sukur were represented. The community heads

were made into some sort of councillors and given specific functions to perform for the whole community. In addition all the priests of the major religious cults of the various peoples were also included. They were usually given some additional responsibilities which attached them to the person of the Llidi, but they continued to perform their religious functions although now on behalf of the Llidi and for the whole community. Finally some 'executives' were appointed by the Llidi. These were not title holders who held their offices only at the pleasure of the Llidi. Many of the latter were of servile origin, although there were some who were even priests. Except the *dallatu*, the executives did not belong to the grand council of Sukur where important decisions affecting the whole state were taken, including the election of the new Llidi; this was the prerogative of the councillors and the leading priests. Below is the structure of the Sukur central administration at the height of its glory. Unfortunately the table is incomplete since some of the offices were long extinct and forgotten.

TABLE I

An incomplete list of the officials of the kingdom of Sukur at the height of her glory

<i>Title</i>	<i>Group that supplied the title (where known)</i>	<i>Function</i>
Llidi	Gidam (royal)	King
Lluff (Councillor)	Habuga	Head of the Habuga. Presided over all discussions of the council including the election of the Llidi. He had a casting vote.
Makrama I (Councillor)	Gidam (royal)	Head of the royal ward. At the installation he donned the royal gown on the Llidi.
Makrama II (Councillor)	Mithlim	Head of the Mithlim. Represented the Llidi at all functions where it was a taboo for the latter to attend.
Fate Llidj (Councillor)	Gidam (royal)	Llidi's titular 'father' (no man is made Llidi while his natural father is alive). Chosen from amongst the senior <i>Meduzi</i> or ineligible princes.
Medella (Councillor)	Gidam (Commoner)	Head of the commoner <i>Gidam</i> , the <i>Wa</i> Leader.
I tagama (Councillor)	Tuva	Head of the forging-smiths. Confers hair locks on the new Llidi and on those Chiefs whose appointment had to be confirmed by Sukur. He was the chief castrator in the eunuch-making industry.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Group that supplied the title (where known)</i>	<i>Function</i>
Barguma	Zughi	Head of the funerary smiths. Responsible for the funeral arrangement of the Llidi which was undertaken by the Dainkirba. Supervises the tombs of and the sacrificial offerings to former Llidi's. He is also the comptroller of the royal treasury.
Lli Suku (Priest)	Habuga	Priest of Gumzum, a stone-shrine inside the Llidi's palace. On it where sacrificed all animals destined for the Llidi's use.
Disku (Priest)	Gidam (Commoner)	Priest of Tson, a hollow-stone shrine near the palace. He is responsible for all royal (free) women.
Mbusofai (Priest)	Mithlim	Priest of the Mijrik (fertility) Cult. Personal religious assistant to the Llidi.
Dainkirba (Priest)	Zughi	Priest of the funerary smiths. Appoints the day for the start of the <i>Yawal Diba</i> (Harvest ceremony). Prepares and buries the dead Llidi. Never visits the royal compound when the Llidi is alive. His house was recognized as asylum for any culprit who entered before capture.
Dallatu (Executive)	Appointment at Llidi's pleasure	Priest of the <i>Yawal Diba</i> . He occupied a royal compound. Appointment made afresh by each Llidi.
Bateri (Executive)	"	The Bailiff.
Zerma (Executive)	"	The Royal Herald.
Lligum (Executive)	"	Chief Drummer.
Birma (Executive)	"	Responsible for royal children and concubines.
Tdif (Executive)	"	Personal attendant to the Llidi.
?	"	Seven special messengers to Gudur.

Attempts at territorial expansion

After consolidating their powers at home, the Llidis embarked on external expansion. This, as we have seen, was based on the Sukur monopoly of iron, on the position of the Llidi as the agent of the chief-priest at Gudur, and as a sacred king in his own right who was believed to be not only a great diviner but had powers even over natural elements like rain and drought. Finally, where these proved ineffective, the Llidi had a powerful cavalry at his disposal with which to force the submission of the smaller chieftaincies.

Most of the neighbouring chiefs came to see themselves as the junior members of the royal *Gidam* which meant that the *Llidi* was the head of the senior royal house. For all these chieftains, a *Ptil* (i.e. chief) was not fully recognized until the *Ltagam* Sukur made his hair-lock, which needed the permission of the *Llidi*. Presents were continually sent to Sukur until the *Llidi* gave his consent.²³ Sometimes the *Ptil*-elect had to personally visit the *Llidi* and assure him of his continued allegiance.

As we have noted, the *Llidi* was recognized as having powerful magical powers. Ambassadors were sent with various presents and offerings not only to *Gudur* but also to the *Llidi* to solicit his help against natural disasters like rain, drought, epidemics or menace from leopards. In order to ensure the continual influence of Sukur, the *Llidi*s started to settle Sukur colonies in all the areas under their influence. The purpose was to ensure the political hegemony of Sukur by emphasizing the magical and military powers of the *Llidi* and by ensuring that the economic dominance of Sukur was maintained. In *Juyel*, for example, there were about five Sukur groups: *Kwobala*, *Habuga*, *Kigi*, *Kwolthe* and the common *Gidam*. Three of them supplied three of the leading councillors of *Juyel*.²⁴ At *Duf* two of the leading councillors, the *Lluffu* and the *Medugu* were representatives of the Sukur colony.²⁵

Outside this area the *Llidi*s, as we noted, were recognized not only as powerful kings but also as agents of the Sukur chief-priest. For example in the *Kilba* area whenever there was the menace of leopards, messengers were sent to the *Llidi* with gifts for it was one of the signs that he had been offended.

There is no doubt that in the last decades of the 18th century Sukur was the dominant power in the area. One could still see the traces of the former powers of Sukur. There is a paved stone causeway some five feet wide and 2 miles long which descends from the north-west Gate of the *Llidi*'s palace to the *Maggar* valley some 1500 feet below. There is no doubt that this was built by the labour of thousands of followers of the *Llidi*, both voluntary and enforced, in order to facilitate easier and swift movements of people and cavalry up and down the plateau. It has been described as a '... truly remarkable causeway, which even now ranks as a feat of engineering by its easy gradient and by the span and smoothness of the paving stones, many of which weigh hundreds of pounds.'²⁶ The *Llidi*'s palace occupies a space of about half an acre or fifteen times the size of a normal house (in the area).²⁷ It is surrounded by an unmortared stone wall about eight feet high. Outside the palace there are two enormous monoliths known ceremoniously as *Fula* and *Dura* (in commemoration, perhaps, of the first two legendary *Llidi*s): one is about twelve feet high, the other eight and both have a circumference of about eighteen feet. These form the entrance of the north-east gate of the palace which was used by the *Llidi* during the rainy season. The north-west gate which opened on the paved causeway was used during the dry season when the *Llidi* had more communication with his outside subjects.

Decline and collapse of Sukur

It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that the power of Sukur was accepted by all the peoples in the area. For example Mubi-Gela, Hong (Kilba) and Ngolo (Bazza) were also in the process of attempting to establish centralized chieftaincies although they were all overshadowed by Sukur. Although they respected and feared the Llidi, and although they still retained hereditary ambassadors who journeyed to Gudur through Sukur, nevertheless each of these chieftains saw himself as an independent ruler. The periodical raids by the Sukur cavalry failed to alter this fact up to the end of its period of glory.

In the neighbourhood of Sukur itself, there were some important areas which refused to accept the hegemony of Sukur. These were Kamburwa-Bebel, Disa, Hymbala, Zu, Madagali and all the peoples in the present Gwoza Local Government of Borno, except the Guduf. All of these peoples continued to recognize the hegemony of the ruler of Mandara as they used to do before the rise of Sukur. Up to the end of the period under study, Sukur failed to sway these peoples and one could still see this division among the peoples of the area.

Towards the end of the 18th century, a serious crack appeared to have developed even in the Wula-Mabas-Gudur cultural complex which was dominated by Sukur. Although both Wula and Mabas continued to recognize the seniority of Sukur, nevertheless they started to develop their own autonomous spiritual powers. Wula developed rain cult which came to be recognized by many of the Matakam—related groups who lived to the north-east of Sukur. The Mofu and other Matakam who lived to the south-east soon started going to Mabas with their rain and drought problems. Sukur had to resort to its cavalry in order to re-establish its influence. Several raids were launched against the Matakam and the Mofu. The raids brought many slaves (especially of Matakam origins) to Sukur. They are said to have been the ones who mainly built the Llidis palace and the paved causeway. Many of the eunuchs are also said to have been produced from the younger slaves raided from the country of the Mofu and the Matakam.²⁸

It is possible that Sukur could have solved all these internal problems and establish an enduring centralized state. Unfortunately, however, it also came to face external challenges, some of which it failed to surmount. The first problem ironically came out of the economic development of the kingdom itself. As with Mandara, economic success undermined the autonomy of Sukur. Gradually she was drawn back into the economic and cultural orbit of Mandara just as the latter was being drawn back into that of Borno. By the middle of the 18th century, although Mandara still avoided any military activity towards its northern and western borders, nevertheless, she had almost solved her internal problems and had also made an economic recovery. From the rule of Tlikse Bladi (c.1755-73) the smiths in the Mandara plains had started to specialize more and more in the production of ornaments made of iron, copper or brass. These included waist girdles, rings, bangles, pendants, snuff boxes and pipes, leaving the production of house-hold and farming

tools as well as weapons to their hill counter-parts.²⁹ From this time onwards, Mandara gradually regained its markets in the upper Yedseram basin ultimately including Sukur itself.

That was not all. As its economy developed and as it became more cosmopolitan and outward looking, Sukur discovered that it had to enter into economic relations with Borno and Mandara, especially the latter. Sukur needed the specialized metal products of Mandara; the Llidi and the leading men of the state needed the costly garments made or re-exported from Mandara or Borno; and, more importantly, Sukur needed a regular supply of horses from its northern neighbours in order to continue to replenish its cavalry. The Mandara breed was the most suited to Sukur's area of activities.³⁰ Naturally, Sukur had to develop a trade in goods with which to obtain the necessities from Mandara. The latter was in need of slaves and eunuchs both for domestic requirements and for re-export. Naturally, Sukur intensified its raids on the Matakam, Mofu and on any other people who showed the slightest resistance. Majority of the slaves brought home were exported to Mandara. It was also during this time that Sukur established itself as an eunuchs producer, mainly -except those reserved for the use of the Llidi - an export commodity for Mandara and Borno.³¹

The increased raids on its neighbours and the increasing demand for slaves as tribute and offerings added not only fear but hatred for Sukur among many of its neighbours. In Hymbala, for example, tradition has it that a certain Ptil (i.e. Chief) was deposed and the line of succession changed because he was found to have been sending his people's children to Sukur.³²

From c.1781, Sukur started to face more aggressive neighbours. This was the date when Mandara's glory reached its peak when it finally defeated an invasion from Borno. It resumed its suspended expansionist policies towards the west, directly challenging Sukur.³³ Both Kamburwa-Disa and Kamburwa - Bebel were re-activated as military out-posts of Mandara from where they raided down the Yedseram plains.³⁴ Places like Hymbala, Zu, Madagali and a host of others were thus strengthened in their open defiance against the growing power of Sukur. It is interesting to note, however, that the Mandara attacks were never directed against Sukur herself.

The problem of Mandara was not resolved by Sukur before an even more serious one, which finally put an end to the growth of Sukur, arose. This was the rise of the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Muslim Fulbe who happened to have been settling in this area responded to the Shehu's call.³⁵ Their first target was Mandara since they felt that it was not possible for them to establish any position in the area without first subduing Mandara.³⁶ There followed a series of conflicts between the Fulbe and Mandara from c.1813 to 1896. By 1830 the influence of Mandara had been broken in the area since, by then, the Fulbe sub-emirates of Fombina in the Yedseram basin were established and formally recognized.³⁷ These included the sub-emirates of Madagali, Kirchinga, Moda,

Michika, Uba, Mubi and Duhu which belonged to Ribadu. In their first dealings with Mandara, the Fulbe sought and obtained the support of Sukur. For example, the Fulbe of Madagali always withdrew to Sukur together with their cattle whenever they were hard-pressed by Mandara.³⁸ But besides giving asylum to the Fulbe, Sukur never participated in the Fulbe -Mandara conflict.

Ironically, it was the Fulbe who finally brought the end of the Sukur kingdom. Most of the sub-emirates mentioned above were created out of Sukur's area of influence. Sukur therefore was forced to shrink back to its former heartland. However, due to its natural defences and to its former glory, it was left alone by the Fulbe. It was not until the period of Hamman Yaji of Madagali (c.1902-1927) when, armed with modern rifles, the Fulbe attempted to subdue Sukur and integrate it into the Fulbe administration. Although Sukur put in an admirable resistance, the European colonial powers who soon took over the administration of the area and who believed that the rule of the Fulbe was to their advantage, saw to it that Sukur was finally and effectively brought under the rule of Madagali.

Conclusion

The political culture of Sukur was built around the person of the Llidi Sukur who was recognized as a sacred being by many of the peoples in the hills and plains of the upper Yedseram basin. He was supposed to have been in control of natural elements like rain, drought and disease. He was the mouth-piece of the Gudur shrine which was the dominant religious centre of the area. The magical powers of the Llidi, as we have seen, were supported by the economic and military dominance of Sukur upon most of the peoples in the area. Sukur came to develop an elaborate court with councillors, priests and executive personnel. Sukur people were settled in all areas where the Llidi's religio-political dominance was recognized. Their primary function was to enhance the personal standing of the Llidi. All the smaller chieftains must be anointed by the special messengers of the Llidi before they were recognized. This pre-eminence of the Llidi led to a father-son relationship between him and all those chieftains who recognized his rule. No doubt this led to the development of the political traditions of the area where most of the rulers were alleged to have been the descendants of either the brother or sons of the ancestor of the Llidi.

The arrival of the Saifawa in the south of Lake Chad and the subsequent rise of the second Saifawa state of Borno accelerated the evolution of centralized states which were in various stages of development by the time the whole area was conquered and colonized by the European powers. The first to form states were Mandara, Pabir, North Bolewa and the Margi of Yamta. By the end of the seventeenth century the same process had already started in the south, and in reaction to the earlier ones. Those in response to Mandara's expansion included the Tupuri, Mundang, Giziga in the south-west and Sukur, Gela, Ngola and Kilba in the south-east. Among the latter group, Sukur was the most successful although the development of

the state was not complete before it was stopped by the Fulbe and later sealed by the European colonial powers.

It is however to be noted that the Fulbe failed to continue the centralizing policies of Sukur. Instead of one state, several competing chieftaincies were created, although they all recognized the Emir of Yola as their suzerain. The only attempt to embark on territorial expansion in the area was by Haman Yaji of Madagali (c.1902-27) but he was some thirty years too late. He was deposed by the British authorities.

The Fulbe had not fully established their powers in the area before the arrival of the British who favoured balkanization of the administration. Determined to rule from Yola, the British authorities removed all the descendants of the earlier Fulbe rulers in the area and replaced them with the nominees of rulers of Yola. That brought bitterness on the part of the people who felt doubly slighted. This factor contributed in no small measure to the political environment of this area.

The attempt by Sukur to form a centralized kingdom in the area was the first and was only partly successful in uniting the plains and the hill-dwellers in the Upper Yedseram Basin. The failure of this attempt and the failure of the subsequent attempts contributed in no small measure to the little respect which the traditional authority in the area today enjoys.

Notes

I wish to thank John E. Lavers for his useful comments and suggestions during the various discussions that I had with him on this topic.

1. For a fuller discussion on this aspect see Barkindo, B.M. *The Origins and History of the Sultanate of Mandara to 1902*, Ph.D. Thesis, ABU 1980 Chap. IV esp. pp. 234-241.
2. Fartua, Imam Ahmed Ibn, *History of the First Twelve Years of the Reign of Mai Idris Alooma of Bornu*, Translated by H.R. Palmer, Lagos/London, 1926, pp. 23-24.
3. On 'factors that contributed to the emergence of the Mandara state see Barkindo, *Origins and History of Mandara*, pp. 241-246.
4. Ibid. See especially chapters two and seven.
5. Kirk-Greene, A.M.K. "The Kingdom of Sukur, a Northern Nigeria Ichabod" in *The Nigerian Field*, Vol. xxv, No. 2, April, 1960, p.67.
6. Sukur traditions, collected by the author 1972, 1979.
7. Personal communication from Alhaji Sanusi Shuwa, the present District Head of Madagali, July 1977.
8. For the value of the Sukur iron bars in the early part of the colonial period, See Kirk-Greene A.H.M., "Tax and Travel among the Hill-Tribes of Northern Adamawa" in *Africa*, 1956, pp. 369-79.
9. The traditions of close association between rulers and blacksmiths is widely spread in the areas around Lake Chad: e.g. Mandara, Bagirmi and Muniyo. See Barkindo, B.M. "Islam in Mandara: Its introduction and impact upon the state and people" in *Kano Studies*, Ns, 1, 4, 1979, p.31.
10. Ibid.
11. No information could be got on the Duwa smiths who are said to have been the rulers of Sukur before the Gidam. See Kirk-Greene, "The Kingdom of Sukur" p.71.
12. Macbride, "Sukur" in *Madagali Misc. papers*, 1937 in the archives of old Mubi provincial office.
13. Kirk-Green, *Kingdom of Sukur*, p.86.
14. This was the same amongst most of the Margi groups.
15. Field work in northern part of Gongola in 1972, 1977 and 1979.
16. Field work in Marghi-Wandala and Diamare provinces of the Republic of Cameroun in 1972, 1977 and 1979.
17. For more information on the Matakam and Mofu see J-Y Martin, *Les Matakam du Cameroun*, Memoires Osлом, Paris, 1970.
18. Although I saw the shrine, all those whom I interviewed confessed that they have never seen the chiefs and have never entered the hut.
19. The Wan Dore or sacred king of the Tupuri (now in the Cameroun and Chad Republics) was in the same position as the Llidi, see Barkindo, *Origins and History of Mandara* p. 121-122.
20. Ibid.
21. The Llidi refused to answer inquiries on this aspect.

22. Macbride, *Sukur*, P.3, Kirk-Greene, "Kingdom of Sukur", p.79.
23. Field work in Gulak, Duhu, Madagali and Sukur 1972, 1977 and 1979.
24. Macbride, *Sukur*, p. 9.
25. Ibid. p.3.
26. Kirk-Greene, "Kingdom of Sukur", p.73.
27. Ibid.
28. Field work in Mokolo, Cameroun, 1972, 1979.
29. See Barkindo, *The Origins and history of Mandara*, pp. 459-467.
30. Ibid, pp. 455-459.
31. Kirk-Greene, "The Kingdom of Sukur" pp. 86-87.
32. Macbride, "Shambula and Zu" in *Madagali Misc. paper*, 1936, p.2.
33. Barkindo, *Origins and History of. .Mandara*, p.42.
34. Ibid.
35. For more information on this see Sa'ad, A. *The Lamibe of Fombina*. ABU/Oxford Press, 1972.
36. Ibid.
37. For Fulbe-Mandara relations See Barkindo, B.M. "Mandara-Fombina Relations Before 1900" in *Kano Studies*, No. 2, 1, 1980, pp. 84-95.
38. Shrumpell, K. *The History of Adamawa*, Hamburg, 1912, trans. memo. p. 57.

VI

Political evolution or revolution?: The case of 'Kin Nupe' before the advent of colonial rule

Sa'ad Abubakar

The new Federal Capital territory, Abuja, is located on the eastern border of 'Kin Nupe' (Land of Nupe).¹ Thus, the Nupe speaking people occupy what can conveniently be termed 'Nigeria's heartland', spreading over an extensive area in present day Niger and some parts of Kwara states. In such emirates as Bida, Agae, Pategi-Lafiagi and Lapai, the Nupe form distinct majority and they are found as compact minorities at Zugurma in Kontagora, Shona and Share districts of Ilorin and at Egan of Koton Karfe.² Numbering well over a million, the Nupe-speaking people had been resident in the middle Niger region for well over a millenium before the 19th century. Their centre of gravity was the confluence of the rivers Niger and Kaduna. Lacking any form of a central military, spiritual or political authority, the various Nupe groups lived as distriinct cultural entities each speaking its own dialect. In the Kaduna-Niger confluence however, the Beni Nupe had developed a system of independent chiefdoms which, by the beginning of the 15th century operated as a loosely united confederacy.³ Traditions of the Beni suggest that the chief of Nku was more or less the most senior potentate and his influence extended over the other chiefdoms in the Kaduna-Niger confluence region.⁴ Thus, the nucleus for centralized kingdom was formed long before the advent of its legendary founder in the 15th century.

Towards political centralization: the emergence of a kingdom

It is generally agreed that even though the Beni Confederacy had an overall senior, Nupeland as a whole lacked an all embracing political system under a single leader.

The inhabitants of Nupeland acknowledged the political overlordship of the Igala kingdom, and the Atta based at Amagedde was the sovereign.⁵ However, it is not clear how that sovereignty was exercised over Nupeland. What we know is that tribute was sent annually to the Igala Kingdom. Traditions are silent on such issues as the appointment and deposition of chiefs of the various Nupe groups, the nature of military and economic relationship between Igala and Nupe. What is apparent is that by the 15th century Nupe vassalage to the Igala kingdom came to an end. According to tradition, the attainment of an independent statehood by the Nupe came through their association with the Igala. It is said that a Nupe wife of the Igala king gave birth to a prince called Edegi, better known in Nupe traditions as Tsaode.⁶ But unfortunately this prince was not destined to become an Atta. Thus, when his father, the reigning Atta, died Tsaode fled from the kingdom. This may have been because he had failed to win the succession from other rival claimants. But being a favoured prince it is said that he seized 'the essential insignia of office' of the Ataship and a 'bronze canoe'. With the assistance of the Kyede, the famous riverine Nupe who piloted the bronze canoe, Tsaode left the Igala kingdom and entered its Nupe dependencies. While in this area the half-Nupe Igala prince established himself at the confluence of the rivers Niger and Kaduna.

The new area into which the fugitive prince from Igalaland had entered was the country of the Beni, where already a proto-type centralized organization, 'the Beni confederacy' was in existence. As Ade Obayemi rightly points out, before the advent of Tsaode to this area, 'centres of local authorities' were gradually emerging.⁸ The village was basically autonomous, such as the Zam Nupe in the environs of Kutigi; as well as Fafie, Bida, Doko, Esa, Nupeko, Eda, Towagi, Egbe, Ewu, Yesa, Gaba and Panjuru each with an independent government headed by a chief or 'town king', but collectively forming a kind of confederacy with one chiefdom being accorded seniority.⁹ According to Frobenius the chiefs of some of these early Nupe chiefdoms possessed distinct insignia of office, such as *Malfasing* (metal fillet), *Rogo* (stone sphere) and a staff known as *Tsukunbu*.¹⁰ Quite clearly therefore the Nupe political system was gradually evolving from being an isolated independent village - level organization to a larger union on a wider scale. Even though an effective single leadership did not emerge, the various chiefdoms were prepared to accord seniority to one of their members. Thus when Tsaode came on the scene, the political situation of the region as well as the political orientation of the people in the Niger-Kaduna confluence area was conducive to the emergence of a centralized kingdom. Even so, this was not achieved instantaneously when Tsaode arrived. It is suggested that he had to use considerable political skill and military prowess to establish his authority first over the Beni chiefdoms and eventually over the entire Nupe speaking peoples. Nupeko, his nucleus and headquarters, gradually became the political nerve centre not just of the Beni, but also of all the various Nupe sub-groups such as the Kyede and the Gbadegi, forming what can conveniently be termed the Nupe mega-state in the middle Niger region.

From the information at our disposal, the Nupe mega-state that emerged had evolved from village level organization and Tsaode was the catalyst in that process of political evolution. The state was in short the by-product of a long process of political acculturation. Even without Tsaode a mega-state was certain to have emerged in the Niger-Kaduna confluence region. This is not, however, a denial that Tsaode and his associates, the Kyede, played a significant role in the establishment and development of the Nupe Kingdom. What is being emphasized is that their task was made much easier by the political forces that were operative at the time of their advent in the middle Niger region.

Indeed, following their activities and those of the subsequent power elite, Nupeland witnessed a number of fundamental changes in its body politic. Firstly, for the first time in their history a single ruler had emerged and his authority had extended over all the various Nupe sub-groups. Even though this ruler was only Nupe matrilineally, he was a sovereign based within, and not an outside authority as at the time of the Atta of Igala. Thus, for the first time the Nupe-speaking people of Central Nigeria were brought under the canopy of a single government. The 'village king' disappeared in favour of a 'people's king' and the autonomy of villages and communities dissolved in the mega-state. Secondly, unlike the previous Beni Confederacy which, though autonomous, acknowledged the over-lordship of the Atta of Igala, the new Nupe Kingdom was in all respects an independent sovereign state. Thirdly, the unification of the riverine Nupe (Kyede) and their sedentary kinsmen, the Beni, which enabled the emergence of the new kingdom, also provided a solid economic base upon which the prosperity and greatness of Nupeland was built. As Nadel clearly shows, much as land was essential to the Nupe, it was the Niger—the *ndaduma* (Father Niger) to the Nupe—that was the life centre of Kin-Nupe economically. The new dynasty (Tsaode) entered the country by way of the Niger, and majority of the Nupe-speaking people depended upon the Niger for their livelihood - fishing on the river, farming along its banks and in the fertile valleys, and as a waterway for commerce. There is no doubt at all that the Ndaduma was 'a vital artery of the political and economic organism'.¹² His 'chains' and bronze objects were widely distributed throughout Nupeland. This no doubt boosted the image of the new dynasty and entrenched its control of the people. The founder of the dynasty, Tsaode was deified and became an object of national veneration in the Nupe Kingdom. This, coupled with a ritual presence established by the dynasty along the river Niger, was largely responsible for maintaining law and order within the Kingdom. Lastly, the kingdom spread its control and influence over the neighbouring groups, such as the Gbari, Yoruba and Bariba, through the setting up of an effective army whose cavalry became well known as far as Benin and the Alafinate of the Yoruba to the southeast and southwest, respectively. In short, as Obayemi concludes, the Nupe Kingdom had by the end of the 16th century become 'one of the most powerful autochthonous states of the Nigerian area',¹³ a kingdom

which, undoubtedly competed with its contemporaries for supremacy in the Central Sudan.

The system of administration since the time of Tsaode in Nupeland was centralized under the Etsu. He was head of state, as well as the supreme pontif of Nupe religion. It is even suggested that the system was one of divine kingship.¹⁴ The office of Etsu was surrounded by ritual taboos. He usually wore only white dress, his food was prepared by his wives and he should not be seen eating by strangers. Even though only very little is known about the system of Nupe government before the 19th century, it is possible to draw the following conclusions based on the scanty evidence at our disposal.¹⁵ Firstly, that the Etsuship was hereditary, confined only to the descendants on the male line, of the founding father, Tsaode. The Etsu was also divine since the founder had become a national deity and so his position was more or less similar to that of the *Aku Uka* and the *Oba* of Benin. The Etsu was surrounded by three types of officials; the palace officials who saw to the daily needs of the ruler and his family, including the personal security of the incumbent. There were also civil officials whose duties affected the day to day affairs of the state, military officials whose duty was the defence of the kingdom against external aggression and the prosecution of war for the extension of the Etsu's jurisdiction or its enforcement over certain areas. Finally there were religious officials comprising priests of the major cults, such as the *Ndaduma*, *Ketsa* and *Gunnu*,¹⁶ which had considerable influence on the lives of the Nupe-speaking people. The various priests worked hand in hand with the Etsu. To this extent, therefore, the Etsu was not just a sovereign, but a 'god' in his own right and this was certainly the explanation for the enormous power of the Etsu in pre-19th century Nupeland.

The Advent of Islam and its effect on Nupe political development

Another important landmark in the history of Nupe's political development was the advent of Islam and its acceptance by the ruling dynasty in the 18th century. The history of Islam in Nupe certainly dates back well beyond the 18th century.¹⁷ After all, Nupeland was just to the south of the Hausa states where Islam was well established by the 15th century. There had been contacts between Hausaland and Nupe through trade between the northern and the southern kingdoms of the Nigerian region. Quite obviously, therefore, Islamic influence may have begun to penetrate into Nupeland even at the time Tsaode was trying to establish his authority in the Niger-Kaduna confluence area. However, it is possible that Islam did not become an important factor until about mid-eighteenth century. Before that period there were a number of Etsus who bore Islamic names, such as *Abdu Waliyi* (1679-1700), *Ibrahim* (1713-17) and *Abubakar Kolo* (1742-6). Even if this does not suggest acceptance of Islam, it is a strong indication of the presence of considerable Islamic influence in the Nupe Court.

By mid-eighteenth century the condition in Nupeland was such that Etsu *Jibrilla* (c. 1746-1759) could come out openly on the side of Islam.¹⁹ While the previous three

Etsu did not go beyond answering Muslim names, Jibrilla became an enthusiastic practising Muslim. It is no wonder therefore that traditions give him the honour of being the first Muslim Etsu in Nupe. The open acceptance of Islam by Etsu Jibrilla was significant not just for the dynasty but for the entire Nupe Kingdom. For the latter, it marked the close of its second process of political transformation, the first being its transformation from politically segmented dependant communities to a centralized independent pagan kingdom. From c.1746 the Kingdom of Nupe was transformed from a pagan kingdom to an Islamic state, the first of its type in the Central Nigerian area. It is unfortunate that little is still known about the extent of this transformation. The acceptance of Islam was not followed by sudden or dramatic changes in the nature of government or the functions of its leading officials. All military and civil officials retained their titles just like the title *Etsu* was retained by Jibrilla. However, Muslim religious (Imam) and judicial officials (Alkali) replaced the priests of the various cults in the Etsu's court and were in fact the most influential advisers of the monarch.

From Kingdom to Emirate

Less than a century after the reign of Etsu Jibrilla, the Nupe Kingdom once again ceased to exist as an independent kingdom. The Nupe state became part of a larger Islamic political system in the northern parts of the Nigerian area in the 19th century. The emergence of the Nupe emirate - as it came to be known - as part of the Sokoto Caliphate has been well studied by historians in the last decade.²⁰ There is therefore little need to repeat here how the Tsaode dynasty was forced out of power, except to emphasize that this was brought about by the Fulbe (Fulani) led by Mallam Dendo (Manko), an Islamic scholar closely associated with the Etsu's court at Jima.²¹ As a result of dynastic feuds the *Fulbe* scholar acquired considerable influence becoming what Nadel called 'the uncrowned King' of Nupe.²² Manko did not, however, declare himself Emir up to the time of his death in 1831. For the next five years, the Etsu maintained only a shadowy existence until the Fulbe finally took over the full reigns of power.

When in 1836, Usman Zaki, the son of Dendo was appointed Etsu Nupe, the Tsaode dynasty and the old Nupe Kingdom formally came to an end. Even before then the flag which Dendo received from the Emir of Gwandu was an acknowledgement of a superior authority. But from the point of view of legality Nupe vassalage began with effect from 1836. The new Etsu ceased to be sovereign; he was in fact an emir, the territory he governed an emirate and his government emirate-type.²³ As an emirate, Bida was part of the Sokoto Caliphate, but was placed under the general supervision of the Emir of Gwandu.²⁴ From 1836 onwards the appointment of the Etsu Nupe as well as his deposition, was vested in the Emir of Gwandu. Nupe acknowledged its dependence through the regular payment of tribute and *gaisuwa* (gifts) to the emirs in Gwandu. However, Gwandu had no direct say in the management of public affairs in Nupe. After all, in the Caliphate system both the Caliph

and the emirs under him had clearly defined functions and responsibilities which were derived from the Quran and the Sharia. Nupe was also expected to contribute its own quota for the joint defence of the Gwandu emirates within the Sokoto Caliphate.²⁵

Even though the Fulbe took over, the Nupe government which subsequently emerged differed from the previous 'Tsaode government' only in very minor aspects. When Etsu Jibrilla embraced Islam in 1746, he automatically became the Imam of the Community. He was also in law the highest judicial functionary in the state. With the establishment of Nupe emirate, the Etsus maintained these roles by appointing qualified personnel as *Imam* and *Qadi* (Alkali) under them. Similarly, the other leading offices in the government were retained by the Fulbe Etsus of Nupe emirate. According to Forde,²⁶ the government was made up of three major types of office holders as follows: The Sarakizi, which according to Nadel was a two-fold group of civil and military nobility, comprising the 'order of Town elders' and the 'order of warriors'. While the former comprised about thirteen officials headed by the *Ndeji*, the latter comprised twenty-four officials including such persons as the *Maiyaki* and *Ubandawaki*. The second group of offices was the Ena Manzi, largely scholarly in orientation. Put in simple terms, it was the order of Mallams which included the Imam, his *Naib* and *Muezzin*, the *Qadi* and his *Mofti* among others. The third class of state officials, lowest in rank was the *ena wuzi* (order of slaves). Within the Sarakizi for example were a number of minor office holders but whose duties were very crucial to the economic well being of the emirate.²⁷ These were the guild-heads such as Muku for (Brass workers); Dakodzi (blacksmith); Maji lantana (bead-workers); Ndako (Weavers); and Masaga (glass-makers). There is strong evidence for us to conclude that the emirate government of Nupe was as elaborate as the previous government it replaced. Infact, structurally, there were no significant differences. The major change was that whereas before 1746 the Etsu's government was free to operate in the best way those in authority deemed fit, after 1746, more especially after the Fulbe took over in 1836, the Nupe government was constrained by the need to abide by Islamic injunctions as stipulated in the Sharia and the Quran. Even though the institutions of Nupe government were not dramatically changed or altered after 1836, the actions of those in power had to be supported not by the exigencies of the moment but by the Islamic law as interpreted by the intelligentsia. The duties of the ruler and his lieutenants, as well as the responsibilities of subjects were clearly defined. The Emir (Etsu) and his officials were not law makers but law interpreters and enforcers.

Members of the royal nobility led by the *Etsu Shaba* and *Kpotu* owned the metropolis of the emirate i.e. the nucleus of the Nupe Kingdom (land of the Beni).²⁸ The family of Usman Zaki owned the country east of Bida, the family of Umaru Najigi the country in the South and the family of Masaba the country in the West. Bida, the capital of the emirate was also divided into three *ekpa*, each with its royal

palace and bearing the name of the founder of the dynastic house. This tripartite arrangement was reflected in the administrative affairs of Nupe emirate. The succession to the 'etsuship' was strictly rotational amongst the three royal houses. Members, supporters and clients of the three houses held responsible positions in the government. The system of rotational succession, no doubt, accounted for the balance of power within Nupe in the nineteenth century.

According to Nadel, Nupe emirate was divided into four zones for the purposes of political, judicial and tax administration.²⁹ The first two, the innermost core or the nucleus of the old Kingdom inherited by the Beni - Kyede, and the capital (Bida) have already been covered. The remaining two were the Zazi Kati (outside peoples) which comprised the conquered territories and peoples such as the Gbari, Gbira, Kamberi, Kakanda, Yagba and Bunu among others.³⁰ The 'outside people' were never administered fully by the central government. As a matter of fact the emirate government in Bida had never assumed jurisdiction over the country of the outside people. Each had its distinct political administration. Their 'dependence' on Nupe entailed only two things, annual tribute to Bida and recognition by others that these areas were under the protection of the emirate of Bida. These areas were visited periodically by the *tuci* (Ajele) to collect tribute and occasional gifts for the Etsu Nupe. Again these districts were divided in accordance with the tripartite arrangement within the emirate.

The fourth zone comprised the wider 'ring' of remaining towns and districts of the Kingdom. These were largely in trans-Kaduna. These districts and towns were administered as fiefs through *egba* - usually a member of the royal house, or a powerful non-royal official of the emirate.³¹ The fief holder was usually represented by his own trusted man who resided within the fiefdom.

What is evident from the foregoing is that the system of administration in Nupe emirate was not very different from that of the other emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate.³² Basically, the structure of the administration was the same; an emir at the apex who was responsible for the appointment and deposition of leading officials; the officials in turn administered districts and fiefs entrusted to them and were responsible for nominating village, town and district rulers subject to confirmation by the Etsu; they also collected tax for the emirate and part of what was obtained went towards paying their salaries and part to the state.³³ The resources of the emirate were augmented through booty of war, proceeds of the *esozi* (estates of the emir), profit from commerce, especially from kola trade which was under royal monopoly, and tolls on trade and craft guilds.³⁴ Quite obviously therefore the emir had large and varied income, from which he was expected to finance certain public works, repair or building of city mosques, maintenance of the palace, town wall and gates for the security of the capital. It was also from the emirate income that tribute and gifts were periodically sent to the Emir of Gwandu. The emir was also responsible for the upkeep of the disabled, the destitute and the poor within the emirate and its resources could legitimately be used to that end.

Conclusion

The political history of Nupeland from early times to the end of the 19th century is quite fascinating. Beginning from village level organization, the Nupe gradually developed chiefdoms within the confederacy for mutual security under the Atta of Igala. Eventually, a Nupe kingdom emerged under the Tsaode dynasty. The kingdom was an independent polity and the Etsu a sovereign. The independence of the Nupe and the sovereignty of their rulers started from the 15th to the beginning of the 19th century when the Tsaode dynasty finally disappeared. Indeed as Nadel puts it, 'the disappearance of the ancient Nupe kingship reflects the far reaching historical changes which Nupe Kingdom had undergone' in the jihad conquest. Before the acceptance of Islam by Etsu Jibrilla 'the link with magic, myth, ritual rules and taboos. . .³⁵ separated the Etsu from the people. Thus the operative political system was one of 'semi-sacred kingship'. The emblems of the ancestor King (Tsaode), the myth and rituals associated with his person all stood for the kingdom and its overriding unity. After 1836 the position of Nupe was politically different from what it used to be. The kingdom gave way to the emirate, the independence of the polity came to an end as Nupeland became part of a larger political system - the Sokoto Caliphate. Islam became the religion of state and as Nadel suggests, this transformed Nupe society from 'a mere holding together ultimately by coercion, into belonging together, the conscious belonging together that goes with a creed'. Islam as a religion of state as from 1836 stood for the overriding unity of the emirate within the Sokoto Caliphate. But unlike the old Nupe religion - composed of cults and myths - which directly buttressed state sovereignty and tied the Nupe to the institution of kingship, Islam gave the people a distinct legal standing on the same pedestal with their ruler. The 'Etsu' was not a sovereign, he was in fact a '*primus inter pares*', the highest rank-holder in a system whose main business was the interpretation and enforcement of Islamic system. The new emirate system was therefore a complete departure from the old Nupe system and the method of government also departed from it. Thus, the emergence of the Fulbe dynasty in 'kin-Nupe' as part of the Islamic revolution in northern Nigeria opened up a new chapter in the political history of the 'Ndaduma' people.

Notes

1. The term 'Kin Nupe' is geographic in the sense that it is applied to all the land inhabited by the Nupe people irrespective of political boundary.
2. See D. Forde (ed) *Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence*, (London 1970) p.17 and Nadel, S.F. *A Black Byzantium (The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria)* Oxford (1973) pp.12-13.
3. Nadel, *op cit* pp. 25-6. See also Ade Obayemi 'States and Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence Area' in Obaro Ikime (ed) *Groundwork of Nigerian history* I.U.P. Ibadan (1980) p.155.
4. Hodgkin, S.J. and Kirk-Greene, A.H.M. *Emirates of Northern Nigeria* (London 19) p.00. According to Obayemi, *op cit.* p. 154, it was the chiefdom of Tafie that enjoyed seniority.
5. Obayemi, *op. cit.* p. 154.
6. *Ibid.* See also Nadel, *op. cit.* pp. 44-5.
7. Obayemi, *op. cit.* p.154.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Nadel, *op. cit.* pp.25-26.
10. Frobenius, L. *The Voice of Africa* Vol. II (London 1913) pp. 608-9.
11. Obayemi *op. cit.* p. 160; (quoting S.F. Nadel, *The King's Hangmen* p.13).
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.* p.155.
14. Forde, *op. cit.* p.33.
15. The only published work dealing with the history of the Nupe in the 19th century is Nadel, S.F. *A Black Byzantium*. The work of M. Mason on the *Nupe Kingdom* in the 19th century is in press while S.A. Balogun's *Gwandu Emirates*, is still unpublished.
16. Forde, *op. cit.* pp. 45-6.
17. Nadel, S.F. *Nupe Religion* (London 1970) p. 232 ff. for the introduction and development of Islam in Nupeland.
18. *Ibid.* p.232. But in the appendix of his *Black Byzantium*, Nadel's list of Etsu Nupes there were at least six Etsus bearing Muslim names before Jibrilla. These are Mamman Wari (1670-9) Abdu Waliyi (1679-1700) Aliyu (Perhaps Aliyu 1700-9), Ibrahim (1713-17), Idirisu (1717-21) and Abubakari Kolo (1742-6) p.406.
19. Nadel, *Nupe Religion* p.232.
20. See M. Mason 'The Nupe Kingdom in the 19th century' (Ph.D. thesis, Birmingham, 1970) and S.A. Balogun 'Gwandu Emirates' (Ph.D. thesis Ibadan, 1970) *op. cit.*
21. See Nadel, *Black Byzantium* p. 78.
22. *Ibid.* p.80.
23. For details relating to this system, see S. Abubakar, 'The Emirate-type of Government in the Sokoto Caliphate' (Journal, Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. VII, No.2. June 1974) pp.211-229.
24. Nadel, *op.cit.* p.77.
25. Nupe was very much involved in almost all the major wars fought by the Emirs of Gwandu. Hodgkin and Kirk-Greene, *op. cit.* has documented instances when Nupe rallied to the aid of Gwandu.

26. Forde, *op. cit.*; pp.34-5: see also *Nadel, op. cit.* pp. 97-103.
27. *Nadel, op. cit.* p.103.
28. *Ibid.* p.89.
29. *Ibid.* p.115.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.* p.117.
32. See M.G. Smith *Government in Zazzau* (London 1960) and Sa'ad Abubakar *The Lamibe of Fofa* *bina*, A.B.U. Press, (1979).
33. *Nadel, op. cit.* p.90.
34. *Ibid.* pp.90-1.
35. *Ibid.* p.88.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Nadel Nupe Religion* p.233.

VII

Nineteenth century political culture in the Eastern states

E.J. Alagoa

It is not usual to find oneself in complete agreement with the definition of the subject of a seminar presented by the planners. Disagreement in such cases provides a starting point for discussion. In the present case, I agree with the position of the planners, and that leaves me with little more to do than to restate the problem in my own words.

It is, indeed, innovative of the Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture to put into public use the term 'political culture' through the organization of this seminar. It is not generally accepted in this country that culture is anything more important or serious than singing and dancing. Sometimes, the managers of cultural institutions give support to this superficial view of the meaning and scope of culture through the narrowness of the range of their activities. The Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture has given practical effect to the valid view of the matter, that man was a cultural animal before he was a political one.

The advantage of presenting politics in the perspective of culture is, that it makes the subject open to discussion in terms that ordinary people can understand. The subject of politics is thus placed in the domain of what it means to people, and outside the abstract theorising of the social scientists, and the manipulations of the politicians. The political institutions then, become cultural and organic phenomena growing out of the condition, traditions, and historical experience of the communities that fashion them.

My final point of agreement with the planners of this seminar then, is the historical perspective, which opines that political and cultural phenomena are not

static and defined once and for all time; that political cultures, like other cultural elements are dynamic, and change, develop, grow, shed old parts, and add on new ones. The salutary meaning of this view for us in the present is, that all the experiences of political development and experimentation carried out by all the Nigerian communities over the centuries are available for use of the present generation.

We cannot afford to take the view that any form of political culture is inferior and incapable of teaching us a lesson or two about the proper conduct of our affairs. We must look at each example with attention and respect. It is in this framework that I wish to discuss briefly the various ways in which peoples in parts of the eastern states of Nigeria organized their political affairs in the nineteenth century.

The eastern states in the context of this chapter comprise the south eastern region of Nigeria, namely the four modern states of Anambra, Imo, Cross River, and Rivers. The region may be subdivided into three units by geography and culture: the Igbo area, the Cross River valley, and the Eastern Niger Delta area. These three subregions belong together because of the things they share in culture and history, and because they are geographically contiguous. But none of them is completely homogeneous. That is why even those of them now comprised in a single state have demands for the creation of one or more new states. Each of the subregions is a complex combination of cultural subunits. There are overlapping lines of ethnic affiliation across the subregions and the boundaries of the modern states. The region has not been isolated from the rest of Nigeria. The Igbo subregion, for example, has had historical relations with the regions west of it across the Niger and north of it to the Benue. The Cross River valley too has historical relations and cultural links with the Benue valley as well as with the region east of it to the Cameroon Republic and beyond. The Niger Delta subregion, of course, continues westwards into the Bendel state and beyond into Ondo State. The complexities inherent in this situation may be presented simply in the following manner: First, it is planned to treat the internal elements of unity and diversity in each subregion. Second, the effects of neighbouring cultures on the subregion; and third, the impact of European intrusion in the nineteenth century.

By the nineteenth century, Europeans had been doing business with communities in the Eastern Niger Delta and the Cross River estuary for up to three hundred years. The nineteenth century brought new conditions of business, for example, in the change from the slave to the trade in local produce such as palm oil and kernels. Indeed, the century saw a gradual increase in the intrusion of the European visitors, who came first as traders, then consuls and missionaries. In the last two decades of the century, the British declared and effected the abrogation of the political sovereignty of the communities. These events constitute a gross external disruption which was more direct in the case of the coastal communities of the Niger Delta and the Cross River estuary than for the Igbo and Cross River valley subregions in general.

The political culture of the Igbo has been labelled variously as acephalous, stateless, and republican. The first term implies that Igbo communities do not have heads, or institutions of government with persons serving as chief or ruling political authority. The second term implies that Igbo communities do not possess formal structures of government with a hierarchical organization based on persons charged with functions of rule and government by the community at large. The republican label is intended to take the edge out of the pejorative implications of the first two by applying a form of government in which leadership is not prescriptive and permanent, but changeable, and flexibly assigned to persons of proven leadership capability.

The problems scholars have experienced in providing a simple characterization for the political culture of the Igbo underscores the complexity of the system, as well as the fact that the Igbo culture area is not a uniform and homogeneous entity. In terms of cultural heterogeneity or complexity, the Igbo culture area has been subdivided into as many as five units with further internal differentiations within each unit: (i) Northern or Onitsha Igbo, including Nri-Awka, Enugu/Elugu, and Onitsha (ii) Southern or Owerri Igbo, including Isuama, Oratta-Ikwerre, Ohuhu-Ngwa, and Isu-Item (iii) Western Igbo, including Northern and Southern Ika, Kwale, and Riverine Igbo (iv) Eastern or Cross River Igbo, including Ada or Edda, Abam-Ohafia, and Aro (v) North-Eastern Igbo, or Ogu Uku, including the Igbo of Abakaliki and Afikpo. (Forde & Jones, 1950, 1962, 10); (Onwuejeogwu & Okoh, 1981, 10).

In terms of political cultures also, it is unrealistic to attempt a blanket characterization of the entire Igbo linguistic/cultural area. All the three types of 'stateless' structures distinguished by Horton for agricultural communities are to be found among the Igbo, namely, (i) Segmentary-lineage systems, among a few central Igbo communities (Green, 1947) (ii) the dispersed, territorially defined community, and (iii) the large compact village type. (Horton, 1971, 1976, 72-113). The prevalence of these forms of non-centralized forms of political organization among the Igbo has given the false impression that the Igbo as a group can legitimately be characterized as acephalous, stateless or republican. Indeed, there occur also among the Igbo, a large variety of centralized forms of government. In the words of Professor Nzimiro:

Kings and titled chiefs might rule in one area (as in Aba, Onitsha, Osamari, and Oguta), while in others, such as Asaba and Aguleri, titled personnel and age grades combine. . . In Western Ibo areas, we find Kingdoms which differ from these Niger areas in details of structural organization. In some other Ibo areas, such as Nri, Ndi Nze (title associations) and heads of lineages (elders) combine in the rulership. (Nzimiro, 1972, xiv).

Most forms of political organization known to other communities were thus present in the Igbo sub-region of south eastern Nigeria. What needs to be noted are the

special developments that occurred in this part of Nigeria. The earliest known local centralising authority in the Igbo region was that of the Eze Nri, apparently to be related to the famous Igbo Ukwu bronzes. The influence of the Eze Nri was based solely on control of ritual over the titles of *Ozo* and *Eze*, the yam force *ifejioku* and the removal of abomination resulting from acts against the earth goddess, *Ana Ala*. The wide influence of Nri over parts of Igboland was superseded from the eighteenth century through the nineteenth by the rival and very different influence of the Aro and other oracle-based institutions. The Aro operated a successful oracle that served to solve political problems which proved intractable for the internal institutions of communities. By the mid-nineteenth century communities from beyond the Igbo region and deep in the Eastern Niger Delta were consulting the Aro oracle. Within Igboland, the Aro also operated a network of trading settlements and agencies. The Aro also utilized the support of head-hunting neighbouring communities as mercenary allies. The Aro system then, was the opposite of the Nri system in the form of the supernatural supporting agency, ritual service as against oracle authority; as well as the pacificism of Nri against the slaving militarism of the Aro.

The most significant external influence on Igbo political culture came from the Benin kingdom. Benin influence came as a direct threat to the influence of Nri in the Western Igbo area and over the areas along the River Niger. By the nineteenth century, all the Western Igbo area as well as Onitsha, Oguta, and the Ogbaru areas had been penetrated by Edo political institutions and ideas; and even by traditions of Benin historical origin as charters of the ruling dynasties.

It may be noted that the northern parts of Igboland in Nsukka and the Anambra valley were also influenced by the Igala kingdom; Idah influence also reached down the Niger to the Delta confluence and beyond. But, like the influence of the Ijo and Ibibio to the South-east, Igala influence on the Igbo has not left as clear a mark on Igbo political culture as the Edo. Benin has left the institution of kingship, *Obi/Oba*, along the western area of Igboland, and also affected the title system in these areas to a considerable extent.

It is necessary to state that European influence did not penetrate directly into the Igbo region before the end of the nineteenth century, except for the immediate shores of the River Niger from 1830 (see Afigbo, 1975, 47). The British view of the most potent political force in Igboland at the close of the nineteenth century may be seen in their attack on the Aro oracle in 1902 as the first step towards the conquest of Igboland. For the rest of the opening years of the present century, the British conquerors were forced by the dispersed nature of Igbo political culture, to undertake a very large number of 'punitive' expeditions. In the western Igbo area, opposition to the invader took the form of the guerrilla-type Ekumeku movement.

The Cross River valley is a great deal more diversified than the Igbo region in cultural composition. The largest single group is the Ibibio, sub-divided into several distinct units as follows: (i) Eastern or Ibibio (ii) Western or Anang (iii) Northern

Enyong (iv) Southern or Eket (v) Delta or Andoni-Ibeno (vi) Riverine or Efik. (Forde and Jones, 1950, 1962, 67). The upper part of the Cross River valley is occupied by a variety of cultural groups referred to generally as Ekoi by British colonial ethnographers. The peoples of the Ogoja area have historical links with the Benue valley and parts of the Cameroon.

The political culture of the area is predominantly of the category characterised as stateless (Horton, 1971, 1976). They are accordingly, of a type similar in general terms to the Igbo, but with peculiar characteristics, some of which they transferred to the Cross River Igbo. The use of secret societies for purposes of social control was developed to a high level in the Cross River valley. Every group in the region possessed one, usually several, forms and categories of these societies to perform various functions.

The *ekpe* society of the Efik was probably the most advanced level to which the idea of the secret society was developed. It developed from the *Egbo* or *Mgbe* of the Ibibio and Ekoi where it was a village organization based on veneration of the spirit of the leopard. By the nineteenth century, the Efik communities on the Cross River estuary had grown into urban size communities through participation in the Atlantic trade. *Ekpe* became the most viable institution for the control of the competing lineages and for regulating relations with the visitors. One change that came into the organization of *ekpe* was the increasing sophistication of the grading system. An 1828 account of *ekpe* in Calabar listed five grades; by 1846 had risen to ten, by 1858 to eleven, and at last count in 1964, the total number of grades was twenty three. (Noah, 1980, 70).

The wide range of functions performed by secret societies in the Cross River valley may be seen from those performed by *ekpe* in Calabar, (functions performed by several different societies in other communities). *Ekpe* performed civic duties like cleaning streets and burying dead members. It performed judicial functions and carried out its decisions through proclamations, ostracism of the offender or by execution in the last resort. It collected debts in the situation of the overseas trade both for local people and for visiting Europeans. It was able to enforce decisions even against European ships captains. In the circumstances, the nonarchical system of Calabar itself grew up in the nineteenth century in close relation to *ekpe*.

On the Cross River estuary, the most influential political authority had to establish a firm foothold in *ekpe*. It is not a matter of chance that several *obong* of Calabar also held the highest *ekpe* title of *eyamba*. In this way, the ruler was able to use the society to proclaim decrees to the populace and to enforce them.

The development of a monarchical political idiom among the Efik of the Cross River estuary would appear to be related to their participation in the Atlantic trade. The increasing numbers of foreign visitors active as traders and missionaries in the nineteenth century produced the need for a spokesman and leader. The existing lineage system together with the hierarchy of *ekpe*, which was itself related to wealth derived from the overseas trade, produced a monarchy. The long series of contests

for the position in Duke Town (Calabar) in the nineteenth century was a part of the evolutionary process.

The nineteenth century brought other changes in the political environment of Calabar. The *ekpe* consolidated the position of the free and rich, but largely kept the slave and poor in their place. This was dangerous since the slaves were concentrated in slave villages or plantations, especially after the exportation of slaves ceased effectively from about 1842. In the 1850s, the lower classes of Calabar society banded themselves together in the Order of Bloodmen to demand a fair deal. Such practices as the sacrifice of slaves at the funerals of Kings and chiefs had to stop.

The Niger Delta is inhabited mainly by Ijo, and by other migrants from the Cross River valley and from the Bendel State. Ijo political culture is largely village based, the biggest grouping being the *ibe* deriving its unity from the affiliation to a common ancestor. The village government relied on the primacy of age, but in cases also on the lineage of the first founder. The cult of a village god, and *ibe* god, was also important as a rallying point and as a source of sanctions in support of the political system.

This system of village government was modified among some communities of the Eastern Niger Delta from about the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries through the nineteenth century. Settlement in the salt water lower delta meant reliance on fishing, and trading to the hinterland and the fresh water delta for food crops. Long distance trade dictated certain modifications of the general Ijo system of loose small-scale organization. Leading traders organized lineages under their strict control. These were the new 'houses', *wari*. As in the case of Calabar, the onset of the Atlantic trade increased the need for central leadership. The lineage of the *amanyanabo* or founder took on the role of first among the house heads and the controller of the overseas trade, and therefore, of the first middleman trader.

This was the system that developed at the trading states or city-states of Bonny, Elem Kalabari, Nembe, Okrika, and Opobo. The house system developed at a fast pace in the nineteenth century with the change-over to palm oil and kernel. The slaves from the hinterland were no longer exported, but used as a labour force and a naval force for the protection of the trade. Internal struggle for political office and status depended on the amount of wealth in the form of war canoes, trade canoes and a force of retainers or house members.

Popular tradition presents the house heads or chiefs of these delta city-states as virtual despots, and the *amanyanabo* or kings as responsible and careful about the general welfare. However, even the house heads depended on the goodwill of the members. In such elections, even former slaves could be chosen if they were capable leaders and managers. The situation of competition between houses within the city states, and between the city-states for trading areas promoted a system geared to advancement by merit. But advancement to the position of *amanyanabo* remained restricted to membership of certain lineages.

The basic forms of Ijo political culture derive from the local environment and the people's adaptation to it. However, the Eastern Niger Delta has been in contact with both the Cross River valley and the Igbo hinterland. Trade routes were also opened to the Western Niger Delta, to the Itsekiri kingdom and regions in the influence of the Oba of Benin. The reputation of the Oba of Benin has resulted in various traditions of Benin origin of peoples, dynasties, regalia, and cults or cult objects. Delta trade canoes moved up the Niger beyond Onitsha and came in contact with the Igala kingdom. Cloth manufactured in the Ijebu country was also sold widely in the Eastern Niger Delta through Itsekiri middlemen. Some of this cloth was associated with royalty and the priesthood.

Thus, the south-eastern region of Nigeria presents one of the country's reserves of political experience garnered from a long history of change and response to challenge. The prevalent form of political culture has been of the type unhelpfully termed 'stateless' or 'acephalous' by the social scientists. But these terms are not capable of giving any idea of the reality of the varieties of political systems comprehended even within a single group such as the Igbo, Ibibio, or the Ijo. We find also that prior to the nineteenth century, each of the three subregions developed types of political culture more akin to the forms known to the social scientists as states. Even in the form of states, the varieties of adaptation of the existing systems in response to the concrete problems required to be solved was quite considerable.

The importance of this variety of forms for survival against challenges became quite evident at the time of British conquest from the end of the nineteenth century through the first three decades of the twentieth century. The delta state, Nembe, mobilised its forces against the British in an attack against the Royal Niger Company at Akassa in 1895, but was defeated within the year and the kingdom put under British rule. The 'stateless' communities took longer time to 'pacify'.

This brief summary of the political culture of the south-eastern region should lead to the conclusion that a detailed study would contribute to the national effort to develop a modern political system and a national political culture suitable for the twentieth century, and able to change to face the challenges of the twenty first century.

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VIII

Collision and coalition in the politics and society of Western Nigeria in the nineteenth century

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Introduction

Politics in nineteenth-century Western Nigeria began on a note of collision, that is on a note of conflicting views, values and interests, which dictated the tune for the whole of that century. Politics then, as now, had the usual meaning—the affairs or activities of those who are engaged in controlling or seeking to control a government or its offices or departments'.¹ But, unlike now, politics at that time was not guided by a written constitution or institutionalized multi-party structure. Rather, it was guided by what can be termed the traditional order, that is the socio-political organization that had kept the society together for centuries. This traditional order was being questioned in the nineteenth century from within and challenged from without. Within, ambitious folks became impatient with the principle of leadership by divine right or age. It was not that they wished to democratize the governmental processes as such. Far from it. If anything, they were lovers of power—absolute power. What they wanted was a situation where they, as individuals outside the established institutionalized circles - royal families, revered elders, chieftaincy lines, etc., could acquire power and exercise it, if possible, unfettered by existing societal normative values.

This involved a change in the concept of power. In the pre-nineteenth century setting, political power was regarded as a sacred trust to be exercised for the good of the community or society. In the nineteenth century, however, political power tended to be sought by a new class of people as a means to achieving personal or group aggrandisement as well as enhanced social, economic and religious status. To this

class of power-seekers, the good of society appeared to be secondary, if it mattered at all.

The danger posed to stability by this new notion of power within the society was further complicated by forces from without. Religio-economic forces from outside gathered momentum and blew over the society with consequences that were not only economic and religious, but also political and social. In the ensuing conflict, old political edifices were pulled down; old philosophies were shaken; new religious ideas were introduced; and existing economic patterns altered.

Nevertheless, what emerged was neither a total destruction of the old society nor the emergence of a totally new one. What emerged was a coalition of the new and the old; an alliance of persons and political groups; an amalgam or a synthesis of ideas; a co-existence of the old and the new religious beliefs, etc. The nature of the conflict and the resultant change can best be understood against the background knowledge of the machinery of politics in the society of Western Nigeria before the end of the nineteenth century. Only a summary of that background is feasible within the context of this discussion.² Even so, a neat summary is beset by a major problem which is a function of both the vastness of the area covered and the heterogeneity of the ethnic groups inhabiting it.

Western Nigeria with which we are concerned is bounded by the Gulf of Benue to the Atlantic Ocean in the south, the River Niger in the east, the River Moshi³ in the north and the Nigeria-Dahomey border in the west. That is an area of about 120,000,000 square kilometers.⁴ It comprised the Yoruba kingdoms, Benin kingdom, Itsekiri kingdom, Aboh kingdom and the non-centralized communities of Ukwani, Urhobo, Isoko and Western Ijo peoples. The area has had different nomenclatures since the turn of the century.⁵ Today, it comprises the new states of Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Bendel and the Yoruba-speaking area of Kwara. It is, as it was in the nineteenth century, inhabited by seven ethnic groups: Yoruba, Edo, Igbos of Aboh, Itsekiri, Urhobo, Isoko and Western Ijo.⁶ Over such a vast area and multiplicity of ethnic groups, uniformity of political and social organizations could hardly be expected. Nor should a static order be expected in societies that were dynamic. What is described therefore should be seen as an aggregate situation resulting from series of constitutional experiments and presumed to be operating in normal times.

The Established Order

However, at the risk of over-simplification, one can make broad generalizations. Generally speaking, politics in the entire area in this era was not organized on the basis of parties in the modern sense. The machinery for politics was the prevailing socio-political organization of the society. In so far as labels can be applied, two forms of socio-political organizations prevailed in the society of Western Nigeria before the nineteenth century. There was monarchy operating in the Yoruba

kingdoms (Oyo, Ife, Ijebu, Egba, Ekiti, Owo, Ondo, etc.), Benin kingdom, Itsekiri kingdom and Aboh kingdom. Then there was gerontocracy⁷ operating in the non-centralized communities of Ukwani, Urhobo, Isoko and Western Ijo peoples. It must be pointed out, however, that the nomenclature in each case only describes the apex of a rather complex structure. Only the bare outline of each can be given in the present discussion.⁸

First, the monarchical system. This is essentially a system in which the society was governed by or in the name of one person chosen from a family with an 'indefeasible hereditary right' and whose right to rule was divinely ordained. In theory, the ruler had an absolute power. In practice, however, the divine king was assisted by an institutionalized council of chiefs. Such council known as the *ijoye*, *igbimo* or *ilu* in Yoruba kingdoms, *ojoye* among the Itsekiri, *Uzama*⁹ in Benin, really constituted a check on the monarch's power. This was because such chiefs were themselves to a large extent representatives of other institutions—lineages, age-grade sets and titled societies—that formed the fabric of the society. In a situation where everyone belonged to a lineage and additionally to age-grades and/or one of the titled societies, it meant that the council of chiefs represented the people. The socio-political organization was such as to encourage the monarch to rule in the interest of the people as monitored through the chiefs. Chiefs were many and representing various interests; it was the balance of the interests that dictated what type of governmental policy or measure was acceptable in the long run. It is true that in some cases, e.g. in Oyo and Benin, the monarch and the chiefs on occasions embarked on power struggle for supremacy. Such struggles had only succeeded in tilting the scale slightly in favour of either the monarch or the chiefs; it never resulted in permanently establishing absolutism. Thus in Benin the attempt by the Oba, since the reign of Ewuare, to increase his power, vis-a-vis that of the *Uzama* (the hereditary chiefs) by creating new sets of chiefs, *the Eghaevbo n'Ogbe* and *Eghaevbo n'Ore*, ultimately increased the influence of the chiefly class.¹⁰ Similarly, the attempt of the *Oyo Mesi* in Oyo to maintain or increase their power vis-a-vis the Alaafin did no more than bring about the abhorrent aberration of the shortlived tyrannical rule of *Basorun Gaha*.¹¹ In the end, the *status quo* was restored under Abiodun who remained popular largely because he kept within constitutional limits.¹²

The tendency against absolutism was inherent even more in the gerontocratic system practised in the non-centralized communities of Ukwani, Urhobo, Itsekiri and Western Ijo for two main reasons. First, there was no centralization of power which could provide a suitable base for autocratic rule. The largest unit of government was the village; and the village in which each inhabitant knew virtually every other person's name, and was probably connected to most by family ties, could hardly accommodate institutionalized absolutism. Secondly, ultimate authority even within the small unit of administration was vested not in an individual but in a council of elders, usually heads of wards in the village. It was the council of elders, known as the *Ekpako* in Urhobo and Isoko, *Udokua* in Ukwani and *Okesuawei* in

Western Ijo, which took collective responsibility for the affairs of the village. Although each council had a chairman, usually the eldest of the elders, such chairman did not have an over-bearing influence in the council. He even hardly qualified to be called *primus inter pares*. Indeed, the spokesman, rather than the chairman, of the council had greater influence than any other in the village councils of Ukwani, Urhobo, Isoko and Western Ijo communities. And yet, in spite of his role,¹³ the spokesman, known as the *Otota* in Urhobo and Isoko, *Uge* in Ukwani, and *Ogulasuowei* in Ijo, had no base for undue exercise of power for two reasons. In the first place, he was more or less a co-opted member of the council. He did not necessarily belong to the age-set of elders and was only chosen 'because he possesses a commanding personality, a good speaking voice and a sound knowledge of the people's laws and customs'.¹⁴ In the second place, he could only voice out the wishes and decisions of the council.

From this brief outline, it can be seen that both the monarchical and the gerontocratic systems of government had this in common that they provided no opportunity for institutionalized absolutism. It was not that some individual functionaries did not dare to use the established system to become absolute. But the attempts by such men had led to instability as already pointed out in the case of Ewuare and his successors in Benin and of Basorun Gaha in Oyo. What is more, in such attempts none had tried to overthrow the established systems as the new power-seekers of the nineteenth century were to do.

Another remarkable common feature was that both monarchical and gerontocratic systems as practised in pre-nineteenth century Western Nigeria afforded the entire citizenry active participation in politics through their lineages, age-sets and titled societies. They indirectly influenced policies and directly helped in implementing such policies. What is more, their views and feelings directly and indirectly mattered very much in the processes by which the acknowledged rulers - monarchs or elders - were designated, maintained or removed if necessary.

Both systems prevented institutionalized absolutism by the accredited rulers; they also made it very difficult if not impossible for a parvenu to acquire power, much less absolute power, outside the established institutions of government. All the ingredients of power - military, economic and religious - were difficult to manoeuvre by an individual outside the institutionalized channels. There was usually no standing army in any of the polities or communities. Society depended largely on ad-hoc arrangements in times of crisis or war. Even in polities such as the Benin kingdom and the Oyo Empire where exigencies of defence and expansion led to the creation of a near-standing army,¹⁵ the control of such army was not vested in one man. There were, no doubt, powerful officers like the *Iyase* in Benin and *Are Ona Kakanfo* in Oyo, but their command was subject to other regulating factors. They had no direct control over other officers. In Oyo, for example, the 70 *Eso* who could be regarded as the standing officers were under the immediate control of the civil chiefs when not in the battle field. Besides, there were no rank and file except in war situations and

war situation could only be created through the monarch on the advice, or at least with the support, of the chiefs. The apparently powerful army commander could not, on his own, mobilize officers, not to talk of the rank and file.

Similarly, economic and religious weapons of power could not be used to advantage by a parvenu. Land for agriculture, as well as trade and industry, was usually under the ultimate control of the institutionalized rulers who held it in trust for the community. Religious organizations and functionaries could also be expected to cooperate with the institutionalized rulers for the good of the community.

It was under this kind of arrangement that the game of politics was played in Western Nigerian society in the pre-nineteenth century. It was an arrangement that had norms which regulated the occurrence of instability. And when and where crises occurred, they had been kept within proportions that did not tear to pieces the fabric by which society was held together.

Nineteenth Century Collisions

However, in the nineteenth century, forces were unleashed that collided with the norms regulating socio-political life in Western Nigeria. The forces acting severally, and in some cases jointly, upset the balance of power and altered the *modus operandi* of politics in the society. The first of these forces may, for want of a more suitable name, be termed military; the second was religious; the third was economic and the fourth, imperial. These forces operated with varying intensity territorially and in time perspective. But their effects were similar and had the common result of challenging the *status quo* and introducing a new concept of power and socio-political order. It helps analysis and understanding to identify these forces briefly. Identification, even in brief, presupposes a detailed knowledge of the origin or cause of all the forces concerned. No such pretension is made in this chapter, for, the origin or cause of one of the forces, at least, is enigmatic. This is the military factor. It is not enough to say that it was the product of the wars of the nineteenth century. That would look like using effect to explain cause, at least at the initial stage of the phenomenon. However, it is known that hot-headed folks¹⁶ arose in the course of the nineteenth century, particularly in Yorubaland, who were bent on discarding the existing power structure and establishing new ones. Initially, these folks were functionaries of the existing governments and owed their rise largely to ascription or to the establishment. But, they were soon out-numbered and out-played by men of talent seeking power not by ascription or through the establishment but by acquisition. To them what mattered was not hereditary rights or rights conferred by membership of age-sets or titled societies. Rather, they were relying on their physical and military powers as well as economic and organizational ability. The physical in this case was not just a function of stature and stamina. It was also a function of bravery and access to supernatural means like charms, and later firearms.

As mentioned earlier, we have no definite information as to what motivated them. It might be a reaction to incompetence on the part of some of the existing rulers such

as *Alaafin* Aole of Oyo. It might be a reaction to the weakening effect of successive struggles among the ruling families as in the cases of Lagos and Benin. It might be an attempt to find new power base to derive maximum economic benefit from the changing trade pattern of the nineteenth century as was the case in Itsekiri kingdom at least from mid-nineteenth century onwards. It might even have been due to the general epidemic of sheer ambition. Whatever the case, the course of the movement was certainly affected severally and jointly by the teachings of the two new religions permeating Western Nigerian society in the nineteenth century. First was Islam. Islam advocated a theocratic form of state organization based on Islamic ideology. A state or society not based on Islamic ideology was anathema and its ruler due for overthrow by force unless he got converted.¹⁷ Then there was Christianity. While the new religion did not advocate a theocracy the way Islam did, its tenets were in conflict with those of the indigenous religion which served as one of the pillars of the authority of indigenous rulers of the polities and communities of Western Nigeria. Its insistence on the worship of one God through Jesus Christ His Son who died to save mankind negated the existing practice of belief in one God who is hardly worshipped directly but communicated with through intermediaries like nature gods, deified heroes and ancestors. Besides, it negated the concept of regarding no Christian hereditary rulers as God's vice-regents on earth. This had political implications: it detracted from the awe and majesty with which traditional rulers were held and their authorities obeyed. Besides, Christianity introduced European culture, particularly the concept of individualism, which was in conflict with the corporative existence of society. Its insistence on monogamy and the observance of the *sabbath* had socio-cultural and economic implications. All these were capable of turning a ruler adherent against the established order.

Side by side with the crisis created by the new religions was the one created by the new economic order introduced by the Europeans.¹⁹ Hitherto, Europeans had been trading in slaves among other things. The organization of that trade had been based largely on an arrangement which confined the European traders to the coast while the African rulers or their agents organized the supply. In any case, the trade did not pose a threat to the sovereignty of their state or community. In the nineteenth century the attempt to abolish the slave trade and introduce the so-called legitimate trade had not only economic but also political implications. It involved, first, a division into and an inevitable clash between those interested in the new trade and those interested in a continuation of the old. It involved the incursion of Europeans and their agents into the hinterland and therefore a threat to the economic interests of the middle-men in the slave trade era. More important, it involved a threat to the sovereignty of African rulers. Indeed, the attempt by these rulers to resist encroachment on their economic and political power brought about the fourth and final force of collision in the politics and society of Western Nigeria, the force of European imperialism.

As pointed out earlier, the effects of the forces varied in intensity from time to

time and from place to place in the course of the century. As pointed out earlier, too, these forces acted jointly and severally. And this means that the nature of their combination varied from time to time and from place to place.

Collapse of Old Oyo

The first place to reflect the effect of these forces in the period under survey was the northern Yoruba area, particularly the Old Oyo Empire and its satellite kingdoms. Here, two of the forces severally and jointly brought collision in the politics and society in the area. The first was the enigmatic military factor and the second was Islam. At the turn of the century, the authority of Alaafin Aole was first challenged by functionaries of the central government. The reasons for their action is a matter for controversy.²⁰ Some see it as a repercussion for an alleged violation of oath of office by Aole. Some see it as retributive justice for the sins, not of Aole as such, but of the Oyo nation as a whole. Others attribute it to inordinate ambition on the part of certain functionaries of government. Whichever theory one believes is right is not the issue here. What is important is that there appeared a group of hot-heads who really wanted more power than the existing power structure gave them. No other reason than this seems able to explain the role of *Are Afonja*, *Basorun Asamu*, *Eso Owota Lafianu*, and provincial rulers like *Adegun of Ikoyi* and the *Opele of Gbogun* in the episode that brought about the collapse of the Old Oyo Empire.²¹ For example, there is evidence to indicate that the fundamental desire of *Afonja* was to carve out an empire of his own.²² His rebellion was designed to achieve just that. It is also known that *Adegun's* disloyalty to the Alaafin was in reaction to the latter's reluctance to sanction his unconstitutional bid to ensure the monopoly of succession to the throne of *Ikoyi* by his own line of the royal family.²³ Similarly for personal aggrandisement, *Asamu*, *Owota Lafianu*, *Edun of Gbogun* and others had defied Alaafin's orders and were bent on destroying his authority either to avoid reprisals or even in a bid to establish autonomous power bases for themselves.²⁴ They succeeded. But their victory was pyrric. The force they allied with in executing their plans eventually destroyed them. This was Islam, the second of the forces bringing about collision.

It happened that in the bid to strengthen their position, *Afonja* and his co-rebels sought the aid of the Muslim elements in *Ilorin* under the leadership of the cleric, *Alimi*.²⁵ Unknown to the rebels, *Alimi* and his men represented the force of Islamic revivalist movement engaged in establishing Islamic theocracies in West Africa in general.²⁶ To establish such a theocracy in what became Nigeria was the essence of the jihad of *Uthman Dan Fodiyo* which had begun in the Hausa states since 1804.²⁷ That jihad was carried beyond Hausa states by *Dan Fodiyo's* flag bearers of whom *Alimi* was one.²⁸ To *Alimi* and his men, neither Alaafin Aole nor *Are Afonja* nor any other unbeliever for that matter should be allowed to rule. And they just saw *Afonja's* invitation as a welcome opportunity to carry the jihad to Yorubaland.

Afonja was therefore not allowed to rule the state of his dream before he was toppled in c.1824.²⁹

Between then and c.1835 the jihadists devastated northern Yorubaland, culminating in the destruction of the Old Oyo Empire.³⁰ The confusion and commotion the phenomenon brought into the politics and society of Yorubaland can hardly be adequately described.³¹ Suffice it to say that it led to the destruction and desertion of many to safe centres in the south. The Egba who were the inhabitants of the immediate parts of these safe centres in turn felt unsafe and had to move under pressure further south. Their attempt to create elbow room for themselves in their new place of abode at Abeokuta made them clash with the Ijebu.³² Their further expansion to Egbado area made them clash with Dahomey which had imperial design in Egbado.³³ Above all, the crisis led to a break-down of the pre-nineteenth century power structure in Yorubaland.

This break-down was most welcome by the rising generation of power-seekers whose ambition we attempted to analyze earlier and the examples of whom we had seen in Afonja and others. They saw the break-down as an opportunity to establish new power bases. Thus Atiba in Ago Oja (later New Oyo), Kurunmi in Ijaye, Oluyole in Ibadan and Shodeke in Abeokuta quickly established nuclei of their respective states, each hoping to make his state succeed to the power and glory of the Old Oyo Empire and even move further to be *the power* in the whole of Yorubaland.

But their ambitions were mutually contradictory and eventually resulted in further collision and commotion. The details of the resultant almost century-long civil wars for hegemony in Yorubaland have been abundantly dealt with in existing works.³⁴ Only the effects of the struggle on politics need be stressed in this context.

While Atiba was making efforts to restore the old political order by reviving the glory of the Old Oyo Empire from his new capital, Kurunmi and Oluyole as archetypes of the new military elite were planning to prevent that. Not only did they embark upon military build-up, they fashioned new forms of government which were a substantial modification of, if not a total departure from, the existing political culture of Yorubaland. Kurunmi developed a military dictatorship.³⁵ With the multiplicity of war leaders in Ibadan, Oluyole could not develop a military dictatorship. Instead, Ibadan evolved a kind of monarchico-republican system.³⁶ It was republican in the sense that leadership was to be acquisitive rather than ascriptive. It was therefore open to all men of talent who could rise through the ladder of power by promotion. But it was also monarchical in that once at the top of the ladder, the ruler remained there for life and functioned in a king-like fashion except he did not wear a crown.³⁷ That notwithstanding, both Ijaye and Ibadan systems of government were new experiments in the political culture of Yorubaland. Each discarded the system of rise to power through hereditary royal family or established lineages. Besides, the experiments in new forms of government in Ijaye and Ibadan were an index of the impact of the military on politics in Yoruba society. They emphasized the dominant influence of the military class. In Ijaye, the chiefs were entirely

military. Although Ibadan eventually accommodated the non-military class in her political structure, the dominant influence of the military in the nineteenth century was not in doubt.

Indeed, the increasing influence of the military in government was a common feature in most Yoruba polities in the nineteenth century. Apparently justifying the military posture of administration in Shodeke's Abeokuta and other Yoruba polities in general, Professor Asiwaju has contended that 'in the disturbed conditions which the nineteenth century was generated all over Yorubaland, only a military type of government was feasible'.³⁸ It is relevant in the context of this essay to add that the disturbed conditions and the wars that generated them were largely the making of the new class who were bent on destroying or at least modifying the pre-nineteenth century power structure. It was perhaps not an accident that as pillars of the traditional order, the civil chiefs in general and the hereditary monarchs in particular suffered decline in their power and prestige. As Asiwaju has rightly asserted:

.in the abnormal circumstances of the last (nineteenth) century, Yoruba Obas as heads of civil governments lost control to warriors; in Oyo, the Alaafin's influence was eclipsed by warriors such as Oluyole, Ibikunle, Ogunmola and Are Latoosa. A similar eclipsing effect was produced in Eastern Yorubaland where no Oba in Ijesa and Ekiti could challenge Balogun Ogedengbe as commander of the Ekitiparapo army which fought against Ibadan in the Kiriji war of 1877-1893. In Ijebuland of the same period, an Awujale was actually exiled by Balogun Nafowokan.³⁹

This decline in the power and prestige of traditional civil chiefs was further affected by the new pattern of trade and the Christian religion introduced by the Europeans in the nineteenth century. As both forces had been operating in the coastal area and the immediate hinterland long before they affected other areas, it is appropriate to begin our analysis of their effects from there.

European Pressures

Christianity and European trading activities were not new to the coastal areas in the nineteenth century. From the late fifteenth century through to the eighteenth, various European traders - the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English, the Spaniards and the Swedes - had organized activities with the coastal peoples and those of the immediate hinterland to collect slaves and other products like ivory in exchange for their own goods. They had important stations around Benin, Ode-Itsekiri, Ijebu-Ode, Porto Novo⁴⁰ and a minor one in Lagos.⁴¹ Throughout the period, i.e. 15th-18th centuries, they relied on local rulers for the local organization and protection of their trade. They did not attempt to penetrate far into the hinterland. Similarly, the Christian religion which they introduced had limited impact.⁴² Their attempt to evangelize Benin was an abysmal failure. It is true that the Portuguese Capuchin Fathers had initial success in Ode-Itsekiri. That success, too, petered out by the eighteenth century.

In the nineteenth century, however, both European trade and Christianity had far-reaching consequences on the politics and society of Western Nigeria because of

the new method and zeal with which both were pursued. For economic and humanitarian reasons, Britain abolished the slave trade and eventually persuaded other Europeans to do so. In its place was to be trade in palm oil and other products, in which the Europeans had earlier traded, but lightly. The attempt to effect the abolition of the slave trade in West Africa brought about the British Naval Squadron having to patrol the coast. The limited success which the initial efforts achieved, brought other suggestions. Slave trade must be stopped at source. This would involve providing a substitute and gainful occupation for those who had been hitherto deriving benefits from the slave trade. Besides, it was felt that it would require introducing a new religion to change their heart. That religion, in the thinking of the abolitionists, was no other than Christianity which they too professed in their country. This was to be introduced in its vigorous form under the influence of the Evangelicals. Indeed the remedy was a package programme which was aptly put by Thomas Buxton, one of the foremost theorists of the Abolitionist Movement, when he wrote:

We must elevate the minds of her (Africa's) people and call forth the resources of her soil. Let missionaries and school masters, the plough and the spade, go together and agriculture will flourish, the avenues to legitimate commerce will be opened; confidence between man and man will be inspired; whilst civilization will advance as the natural effect, and Christianity operate as the proximate cause, of this happy change.⁴³

In other words, evangelization and education by missionaries and school teachers to change men's minds and ideas, and agriculture oriented towards the cultivation of new crops, were prerequisites for abolishing the slave trade and replacing it with the much-vaunted trade in agricultural and sylvan products.

The details of how the programme was carried out have already been well studied.⁴⁴ The relevant point here is the effect its prosecution had on politics and society of Western Nigeria. To begin with, both trade and Christianity had the effect of introducing new elements in terms of personnel and ideas into the social and political life of Western Nigeria on an unprecedented scale. European traders were now no longer content to stay on the coast to do business. They began to send their agents inland and they themselves soon followed, establishing branches of their companies. The earliest in this regard were the trading activities in the Aboh kingdom, of MacGregor Laird and his company from the 1830s. Soon after, other European traders began to penetrate other areas and their firms were building factories.⁴⁵ Their agents were flooding the society in the areas where they operated. The agents of Christian Missions too soon joined from the 1840s onwards in their attempt to preach the Gospel. They had their first bases in Badagry, Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ijaye, and other areas in Western Yorubaland as well as in Aboh. But they later spread to other parts.⁴⁶

Both traders and missionaries began to constitute new centres of authority which rivalled those of the traditional rulers. Traders wanted freedom of action to do their

business. Missionaries wanted freedom to propagate their gospel. It is true that the traditional rulers wanted the economic advantages from European trade and the technological advantages in terms of guns, etc. which the Europeans, including missionaries, possessed. But they resented the freedom of action which both traders and missionaries wanted. In this clash of interests, traders and missionaries alike saw the need for a new form of protection outside the control of the traditional rulers. Accordingly those of them from Britain, and they were in the majority, appealed to their home government which responded with the appointment of Consuls with the power to protect the interests of the traders and missionaries.⁴⁷ With the emergence of consular authority, the fourth factor, namely, imperialism, making for collision in the politics and society of Western Nigeria (and indeed the whole of Nigeria) began to operate in earnest. *De jure* the duty of the Consul was to find equitable solution to the conflict arising between traditional rulers and European traders operating in Western Nigeria. *De facto*, however, the Consuls beginning with John Beecroft, the first appointee in 1849, used their authority to support the claims of their countrymen and to suppress the power and authority of traditional rulers. The story of the conduct of the so-called Courts of Equity in Aboh, Itsekiri and other parts of Southern Nigeria is already well known,⁴⁸ and need not be repeated here. However some cases must be mentioned of how consular authority was used to rob traditional rulers of sovereign rights over their states.

Even before the scramble for Africa reached an active phase in the last quarter of the 19th century, the Consuls in Southern Nigeria had worked out a programme that eventually led to annexation of territories. First, the signing of anti-slave trade treaties was intensified. Then, any ruler who did not allow European traders and missionaries freedom of action, making any fuss about his sovereign right, was subdued by force of arms. Their action was often branded as humanitarian, backed as it was by missionaries. In a number of cases, traditional rulers, too, played into the hands of the Consuls by engaging in bitter rivalry and power struggle. Such struggle was either caused by succession dispute or was in response to one or more of the forces of collision plaguing the politics and society of Western Nigeria as analyzed above.

Lagos was the earliest example. Taking advantage of the succession struggle between Akintoye and Kosoko in Lagos, the British Consul, at the instigation of traders and missionaries, bombarded Lagos in 1851.⁴⁹ Kosoko, accused of engaging in slave trade and preventing legitimate trade, was deposed and Akintoye branded as an anti-slave trader was reinstated. However, in 1861 - only ten years later - Lagos was annexed, not because Dosumu, Akintoye's son and successor, was a slave trader, but because he was said to be too weak to rule. Towards the end of the 19th century, in 1897 to be precise, the British also organized an expedition against Benin and annexed the Kingdom on the pretext of avenging the murder of their Acting Consul, Phillips, by Oba Ovenramwen.⁵⁰ In point of fact, the action was taken to achieve 'the British desire to bring the trade of that kingdom under their effective

control.⁵¹ For similar reason, an expedition had earlier been sent against the Ijebu in 1892⁵² and against Nana in his stronghold at Ebrohimi in 1894.⁵³

But it must not be taken that the control of trade alone was the motivating factor for expeditions and annexations. At least that will not explain the bombardment of Oyo in 1895⁵⁴ i.e. a year after Ebrohimi. Oyo was in the heartland of Yorubaland; Lagos which was its most important outlet had been annexed in 1861. The British had helped to end in 1893 the last of the civil wars hampering trade in Yorubaland. As the Alaafin of Oyo was one of the most important and most renowned potentates in Western Nigeria, the bombardment of Oyo must be seen *inter alia*, as an example of a sheer desire to demonstrate the loss of sovereignty to the British by African rulers in Western Nigeria. It was an interesting episode in the series of collision in the politics of Western Nigeria in the nineteenth century.

Towards Coalition

Collision was to a remarkable extent accompanied or followed by coalition. Coalition is being used in this context in a loose sense to mean co-operation or compromise among rival persons and synthesis or co-existence of conflicting ideas. Ordinarily coalition is defined as an 'alliance of persons, parties or states' or as a 'fusion into one mass'.⁵⁵ In the technical sense, it is defined as 'a combination of political groups or forces temporary in nature and for specific purposes'⁵⁶ or as the '*joint use of resources to determine the outcome of a decision in a mixed-motive situation involving more than two units.*'⁵⁷ Both ordinary and technical definitions are based on the assumption that the existence of political parties or clearly identified groups are pre-requisites for coalition formation. But as pointed out earlier, no political parties or clearly identified groups on the basis of *agreed* common interests existed in the Western Nigerian society in the nineteenth century. Besides, our concept of coalition in this context goes beyond individuals or groups; it covers forces or ideas to which the famous social science theory of '*n*-person games'⁵⁸ in coalition may not strictly apply.

In politics, amidst the bitter struggles, even well known mutual enemies had occasions to co-operate. Thus, in spite of their respective bids for ultimate leadership in Yorubaland, the rulers of Ijaye and Ibadan had occasions to co-operate in fighting their enemies. Kurunmi of Ijaye helped Oluyole to achieve victory at the Gbanamu war c.1833.⁵⁹ The war was fought to settle the leadership tussle in Ibadan between Oluyole and Maye, the Ife war veteran. As a result, the hegemony of Oyo elements in Ibadan politics was ensured. Similarly, Oluyole helped Kurunmi to destroy Abemo, Ijaye's arch-rival.⁶⁰ Again in 1835 Ibadan and Ijaye jointly fought the Arakanga war against the Egba in a futile attempt to weaken Egba's growing military strength in their new home at Abeokuta.⁶¹ The same Egba fought on the side of Ijaye against Ibadan in the bitterly fought Ijaye war of 1860-1862.⁶² Similarly, the Ekiti kingdoms, hitherto renowned for their mutual isolationism, had to

forge a unity among themselves and an alliance with their Ijesa neighbours and other groups in their bitter struggle against Ibadan in 1878-1893.⁶³

Perhaps far more interesting are cases of alliances with foreign intruders. In spite of the fact that traditional rulers dreaded the threat which European traders, missionaries and British Consuls posed to their sovereignty, some of them collaborated with these foreigners in their struggle for power. The case of Akintoye's overtures to the British in his bid to regain the throne from Kosoko has been mentioned. In the Itsekiri Kingdom, the fall of Nana in 1894 was to a large extent brought about by the conspiracy with the British of his rivals led by Dogho.⁶⁴ The initiative for alliance with Europeans did not always lie with the Africans. European imperialists, too, took the initiative to reconcile with African rulers with whom they had quarrelled. Thus, after annexing Lagos, it was the British that took the initiative, for economic reasons, to reconcile with Kosoko who had earlier been driven away from Lagos. Indeed, against the wishes of their former allies, i.e. the pro-Akintoye chiefs, the British allowed Kosoko to return to Lagos from his exile base at Epe, though as a private citizen.⁶⁵ More important was the fact that the British had to reconcile with traditional rulers to carry out the administration of the various territories they annexed. They either quickly befriended the subdued incumbent rulers as soon as the smoke of expedition/bombardment died down, as it happened in Oyo⁶⁶; or quickly installed a collaborator as was the case in Itsekiriland.⁶⁷ Where they had to create an interregnum, as in Benin, it was not long before they arranged a restoration.⁶⁸

In economic matters, too, there was compromise. Britain abolished the slave trade but did not abolish slavery, at least in the nineteenth century in Western Nigeria as elsewhere.⁶⁹ Indeed, slaves were vital as labour force for the large-scale cultivation of the crops which the Europeans wanted grown to promote legitimate trade. Not only that, in an era when human labour (head portage or paddling the canoe) was still needed in transportation, slaves were economically useful in conveying the export crops to centres of collection. In other words, slaves still formed an integral part of the economic system of Western Nigeria until the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, manumission of slaves was to wait till the first two decades or so of this century.

Similarly, in religious matters, the new religions appeared to be in tacit co-operation with the indigenous religion. Both Islam and Christianity could not drive the traditional religion underground. Islam would even appear to have spread on a note of coalition with the indigenous religion. Having lost at the battle of Osogbo about 1840, the jihadists, it would seem, abandoned the campaign to extend the Caliphate. They allowed Islam to spread without advocating theocracy. Therefore, individual converts no longer had to be rebels against the authority of their non-Muslim rulers. Besides, some of Islam's cultural aspects did not conflict with those of the traditional society. For example, unlike Christianity, it did not advocate monogamy; Christianity which appeared less compromising with the indigenous culture was accepted only by a small percentage of the population. Indeed, as in

other parts of West Africa, evangelization and its hand-maiden, Western education, spread slowly until the pace was quickened in the colonial period.⁷⁰ Even then, Christianity, at least its adherents, could not escape compromising with aspects of the indigenous culture. For example, monogamy could not be enforced. And in times of crises, many a christian did not rely only on their faith in God through Jesus: they sought extra help and power from the traditional religious sources.

On the whole, then, it would appear that while collision was the unmistakable tune in the politics and society in nineteenth-century Western Nigeria, coalition formed its strong undertone. All the forces that impinged upon society with a view to bringing about change in political, economic, religious and social life had to recognize the resilience of the traditional structure. While it is true that some aspects of the structure collapsed under the impact of the new forces, some other aspects remained with which the new forces had to ally or to engage in continual strife.

The collision and coalition between the old and new forces in the politics and society of Western Nigeria survived the nineteenth century into the twentieth. Events in Ijebuland and Itsekiriland provide fascinating examples. In Ijebu, as Professor Ayandele has shown,⁷¹ the force of tradition as represented by the Awujale was attacked and courted at various times and in varying degrees by the forces of imperialism as represented by British administration, as well as those of Islam and Christianity as represented by the adherents of those two religions. In Itsekiriland, Professor Ikime has shown how the survivors of the nineteenth century power seekers collaborated with British imperialism to eclipse the monarchy for more than three decades in the twentieth century.⁷² Even when there was a restoration in 1936, the first restoration Olu, being a faithful adherent of the old order, was a misfit until 1950 when a new and less backward-looking incumbent learnt to accommodate the new trend in political affairs which the force of European culture and imperialism had introduced into the Itsekiri society.⁷³

Conclusion

Indeed, 'collision and coalition' can be seen on a wider perspective not only to have served as a fitting epilogue to this subject but also as an opportunity for some reflection on the theme of Nigeria's political culture. The reflection is based on issues that are either current or of common knowledge. We can therefore speak in general terms without bothering the reader with details, which are, in any case, well known to anyone familiar with Nigerian politics in the twentieth century. Since the turn of the century, traditional political institutions in Western Nigeria and, indeed, in the whole of Nigeria, have been attacked and at the same time courted by successive regimes. In the colonial regime, traditional rulers were first subdued by British administrators and later made the pillars of local administration under the famous Indirect Rule or Native Administration system. Not only that, they were made as buffer of the British Administration against the radicalism of the educated elite.⁷⁴ The educated elite on their part first attacked the traditional rulers as forces

of reaction who should be liquidated to pave way for democratic rule. Later, they had to mobilize the traditional rulers⁷⁵ in their struggle for independence. At independence, the House of Assembly co-existed with the House of Chiefs. Chiefs were also prominent in Local Councils. In spite of this, individual chiefs fell from grace to grass or *vice versa*, depending on how well they understood the game of the politics of survival.⁷⁶ When the First Republic collapsed in 1966, the Military regimes which lasted for the next thirteen years recognized the traditional rulers as a stabilizing force in their respective localities in particular and the country in general. Thus, they often held consultation with them. It is instructive that the first military Head of State⁷⁷ planned a meeting of traditional rulers in the country for Ibadan for July 30, 1966 presumably in an attempt to have firmer foundation for his six-month-old tottering regime. It is instructive too that those who toppled him did not allow him to hold the crucial meeting. Were they conscious that the support of the traditional rulers, if secured, might give the regime a new lease of life? If not, what made July 29 the best date and Ibadan the most convenient place for his assassination? In any case, it is instructive that the successors too did not change the previous ruler's policy of wooing the chiefs even though they changed every other aspect of his policy. Even in the Second Republic, where traditional rulers are said to be insulated from politics, the political usefulness of these traditional rulers is still a factor in politics. It is common knowledge that politicians as individuals and political parties as groups are still concerned about the traditional rulers' support, which they think could tilt the scale in their favour or against them. The nature of such support or lack of it, to a large extent, determines whether the relationship between the traditional rulers and politicians in particular localities shall be cordial or hostile. Indeed, as I see it, one of the dilemmas in our political culture as at now, indeed, since independence, is what to do with our traditional rulers in particular and our traditional political institutions in general. Seen by some as useful and by others as useless, regarded as indispensable by some and irrelevant by others, despised by some and revered by others, these institutions continue to serve as targets of collision and coalition that have characterized politics and society since the nineteenth century.

Notes

- 1 This is a simple definition taken from *Standard College Dictionary*, Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1968 edition, p. 1045. For more technical definition, see Julius Could and William L. Kolb, *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, UNESCO, The Free Press, New York, 1964, pp. 515-16.
- 2 The details can be got from the relevant sources cited later, particularly notes 8(a)-(c) below.
- 3 River Moshi was the boundary between the Old Oyo Empire and Borgu.
- 4 See *Annual Abstract of Statistics*, 1963 (Lagos, Federal Office of Statistics) cited in R.O. Ekundare: *An Economic History of Nigeria* (Methuen, London 1973) p. 7 approximately Area of the then Kwara, Western, Mid-western and Lagos States.
- 5 In 1900, Yoruba Kingdoms (except Ilorin and its satellite areas) formed part of the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos; Benin, Aboh, Itsekiri Kingdoms as well as Ukwani, Urhobo, Isoko and Ijo Communities formed part of Niger Coast Protectorate. In 1906, all the areas except Ilorin formed part of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria; Ilorin and its satellites belonged to the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria which was named Northern Region in 1946 and remained part of it until the creation of states in 1967 when it formed part of Kwara State. The remaining areas (i.e. outside Ilorin and its satellites) were constituted into Western Region in 1946. In 1954 the Federal Territory of Lagos was carved out of Western Region. The latter was sub-divided into West and Mid-West in 1962.
- 6 For short accounts of their origins, see I.A. Akinjogbin and E.A. Ayandele, 'Yorubaland up to 1800' and Obaro Ikime, 'The Peoples and Kingdoms of the Delta Province' chapters 7 and 5 respectively in Obaro Ikime, (Ed.) *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann, Ibadan, 1980.
- 7 Obaro Ikime (*op. cit.* p. 98) regards this description as over-simplification and over-generalization of a complex structure, but fails to provide an alternative label. As we have to use labels, and as we realize that it is a generalization of a complex structure, we stick to the label in the absence of an alternative.
- 8 (a) On the Yoruba, see J.A. Atanda, 'Government of Yorubaland in the Pre-Colonial Period', *Tarikh*, Vol. IV No.2, 1973, pp. 1-12, and G.O. Oguntomisin, the section sub-titled 'Traditional forms of Political organization, in Chapter I of his *New Forms of Political Organization in Yorubaland in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: a Comparative Study of Kurunmi's Ijaye and Kosoko's Epe*, Ibadan Ph.D. Thesis, 1979, p.14.
(b) On Benin see P.A. Igbafe, *Benin under British Administration*, Longman, London, 1979 chapter 1; also R.E. Bradbury, 'The Kingdom of Benin' in Daryll Forde & P.M. Kaberry (Eds.) *West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century*, O.U.P. London 1967. pp. 8-35.
(c) On Itsekiri, Aboh, Ukwani, Urhobo, Isoko and Western Ijo, see Obaro Ikime, 'The Peoples and Kingdoms of the Delta Province', *op. cit.* pp. 96-101.
- 9 Later the *Uzuama's* influence was checkmated by the injection into the Council of new sets of chiefs — the *Eghaevbo n'Ogbe* and *Eghaevbo n'Ore*.
- 10 A.F.C. Ryder, 'The Benin Kingdom' in Obaro Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, *op. cit.* pp. 113-116.
- 11 S. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* C.M.S. Lagos, (First published in 1921 reprinted 1960), pp. 168-182; R.C.C. Law, 'The Constitutional troubles of Oyo in the Eighteenth century', *Journal of African History*, Vol. XII, No. 1, 1971, pp. 31-34.
- 12 Johnson, *op. cit.* pp. 186-187.

- 13 See the functions in Ikime, *op. cit.* p. 97.
- 14 *Ibid*, loc. cit.
- 15 For information on Oyo army, see R.C.C. Law, *The Oyo Empire c.1600-1836*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977 chapter 9. There is no coherent information on Benin army, but for gleanings, see Ryder, 'The Benin Kingdom', *op. cit.*
- 16 Professor Ajayi has made a fascinating study of some of these folks in Yorubaland in his 'Professional Warriors in Nineteenth Century Yorubaland', *Tarikh* Vol. I, No. I, 1965, pp. 72-81. Their counterparts in Itsekiri-Urhobo area were the middlemen merchants of the nineteenth century typified by Nana whose career has been well studied by Obaro Ikime in his 'Nana Olomu: Governor of the Benin River' in *Tarikh* Vol. I, No. 2, 1965, pp. 37-50.
- 17 See for example J.O. Hunnwick 'The Nineteenth Century Jihads' in J.F. Ade Ajayi & Ian Espie (Eds.) *A Thousand Years of West African History* Ibadan University Press and Nelson, 1965, pp. 263-64. For a more elaborate study, see Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*. Longmans 1967; R.A. Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804-1900*, Longman, 1971.
- 18 Contrast the widely known teachings of Christianity as exemplified in the *Holy Bible*, and innumerable works with the tenets of African Traditional Religion summarised in Parrinder's *African Traditional Religion*, Sheldon Press London, 1974, Third Edition, (First Published in 1954).
- 19 For information on the new trade, see K.O. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1956. Chapters III-IV and in Ikime, *Nana Olomu*, *op. cit.*
- 20 See J.A. Atanda, 'The Fall of the Old Oyo Empire: A Re-consideration of its Causes', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1971, pp. 477-90.
- 21 See details in Johnson, *op. cit.* pp. 188-196.
- 22 *Ibid*, p. 193.
- 23 Oguntomisin, *op. cit.* pp. 100-101.
- 24 *Ibid*, loc. cit., Johnson *op. cit.* pp. 188-196 and 210.
- 25 Johnson, *op. cit.* pp. 193-194.
- 26 Hunnwick, *op. cit.* 262-263.
- 27 See Last and Adeleye, *op. cit.*
- 28 Johnson, *op. cit.* p. 142.
- 29 Law, *The Oyo Empire*, *op. cit.* p. 247.
- 30 Johnson, *op. cit.* Chapters VII & XIII.
- 31 For details see *Ibid*, chapters VIII-XII and J.F. Ade Ajayi, 'The Aftermath of the Fall of the Old Oyo Empire' in J.F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder (Eds.) *A History of West African History*, Longman, London, 1974, Vol. II Chapter 5.
- 32 S.O. Biobaku, *The Egba and Their Neighbours, 1842-1872*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1957, chapter II.
- 33 I.A. Akinjogbin, 'Dahomey and Yoruba in the Nineteenth Century, in J.C. Anene & G.N. Brown (Eds), *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Ibadan University Press & Nelson, 1966, chapter 16.
- 34 J.F. Ade Ajayi & R.S. Smith, *Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century*, Ibadan University Press and Cambridge, 1965, B. Awe, *The Rise of Ibadan as a Yoruba Power in the Nineteenth Century*, D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford University, 1964. S.A. Akintoye, *Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland 1840-1893*, Longman, London, 1971.
- 35 For the best account and analysis yet available of Kurumi's dictatorship see Oguntomisin, *op. cit.* chapter III.
- 36 For details, see B. Awe, *The Rise of Ibadan.*, *op. cit.* particularly chapter IV.
- 37 The Olubadan of Ibadan became a crowned Oba in 1978.
- 38 A.I. Asiwaju, 'From an Egba Refugee Camp to a Nigerian State Capital: Abeokuta, 1830-1930', Lecture delivered to mark the celebrations of the 150th year of Abeokuta at Abeokuta, 18 Dec. 1980, mimeographed, p. 12.

- 39 Ibid, loc. cit.
- 40 See a good summary in A.F.C. Ryder, 'The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade' in Obaro Ikime (ed.) *Groundwork*.
- 41 Oguntomisin; op. cit. pp. 130-131.
- 42 J.F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891* Longmans, 1965, pp. 2-7.
- 43 T.F. Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy*, London, 1840, pp. 282- & 511, quoted in J.F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions* p. 10.
- 44 See for example, K.O. Dike op. cit. and J.F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions*, op. cit.
- 45 Obaro Ikime: 'The Western Delta and the Hinterland in the Nineteenth century' in Obaro Ikime (Ed.) *Groundwork* pp. 262ff.
- 46 For Christian expansion, see Ajayi, *Christian Missions*, op. cit. and E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1841-1941*, Longman, 1966.
- 47 Dike, op. cit. chapter VII. Ikime 'The Western Delta and the Hinterland in the Nineteenth Century' op. cit. pp. 268-88.
- 48 From Dike, op. cit. and Obaro Ikime, *The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest*, Heinemann, 1977.
- 49 See J.F. Ade Ajayi, 'The British Occupation of Lagos 1851-1861: A Critical Review', *Nigeria Magazine*, No. 69. 1961, pp. 96-105.
- 50 See details in P.A. Igbafe, op. cit. chapter 2.
- 51 Ikime 'The Western Nigeria Delta and the Hinterland in the Nineteenth Century' op. cit. p. 278.
- 52 A.B. Aderibigbe, 'The Ijebu Expedition, 1892: An Episode in the British Penetration of Nigeria Reconsidered', *Historians in Tropical Africa*, Leverhulme Inter-Collegiate History Conference, S. Rhodesia 1962.
- 53 Obaro Ikime, *Merchant Prince*, op. cit. chapter IV, or shorter version of the same analysis 'Nana Olomu: Governor of the Benin River' op. cit.
- 54 See J.A. Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire*, Longman, 1973, chapter II.
- 55 *Standard College Dictionary*, op. cit. p. 259.
- 56 Could & Kolb; *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences* op. cit. p. 97.
- 57 William A. Garison, Coalition Formation in David L. Sillis (Ed) *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1966, Vol. 2, p. 531.
- 58 For the theory, see William H. Riker, 'The Study of Coalition' in David L. Sillis, (Ed.) op. cit. pp.524ff.
- 59 Johnson, op. cit. pp. 289-241.
- 60 Ibid, pp. 272-273.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ajayi & Smith, *Yoruba Warfare in the 19th Century*, op. cit. Part II Oguntomisin op. cit. pp. 278-299.
- 63 See S.A. Akintoye, *Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, 1890-1893*, chapter 3.
- 64 Ikime, 'Nana Olomu: Governor of Benin River', op. cit.
- 65 Oguntomisin, op. cit. pp. 332-350.
- 66 Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire*, p. 73.
- 67 As Dogho was in place of Nana Olomu. See Ikime, 'Nana Olomu: Governor of Benin River', op. cit.
- 68 Igbafe, op. cit. chapter 3.
- 69 B.O. Oloruntimehin, 'The Impact of the Abolition Movement on the Social and Political Development of West Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *African Notes*, Vol. VII No 1 pp. 4-53.
- 70 Ibid. p. 53.
- 71 E.A. Ayandele, 'The Changing Position of the Awujales of Ijebuland under Colonial Rule' in Michael Crowder and Obaro Ikime, (Ed.) *West African Chiefs: Their Changing Status under Colonial Rule and Independence*, University of Ife Press, 1970 pp. 237-151.

- 72 Obaro Ikime, 'The Changing Status of Chiefs Among the Itsekiri' in Crowder & Ikime (Eds.), *West African Chiefs, op. cit.* pp. 298-304.
- 73 Ibid, pp. 304 ff.
- 74 For example, early demands by the educated elite for representative government in which they could participate was often rebuffed by the British Administration on the ground that the traditional rulers rather than the educated elite were the representatives of the people.
- 75 The case for and against the value of the traditional chiefs, in this context has been ably summarized in Obafemi Awolowo, *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, Faber & Faber, London, 1947, chapter 7.
- 76 The career of Oba Erejuwa II, the Olu of Warri as depicted in Obaro Ikime, 'The Changing Status of Itsekiri Chiefs', *op. cit.* pp. 306 ff, is a good example of both phenomena. Contrast also the fate of Ooni of Ife, Sir Adesoji Aderemi, First African Governor in Nigeria, being Governor of Western Region in 1957-1962.
- 77 The late General Aguiyi Ironsi.

IX

The political system of Ibadan in the 19th century

Toyin Falola

Introduction

The nineteenth century Yorubaland witnessed protracted internecine wars.¹ These wars were accompanied by monumental changes, two of which are central to this chapter. The first was the emergence of refugee towns, and the second, which was related to the first, was the evolution of new forms of government in these refugee towns.² These demographic and political changes took place in the first half of the century, and were sequel to the fall of the old Oyo empire.³ The wars leading to the fall of Oyo brought about a large-scale migration of people from war-torn areas to relatively peaceful places. Civilians and soldiers alike in northern Oyo towns were forced by the Fulani invading soldiers to move southwards. Consequently, a number of towns in the south became hosts to these refugees who moved in large groups and carried with them their corporate identities. The host towns rapidly grew into big conglomerates made up of different refugee groups, each with its *oba* or *háale* and chiefs. New Oyo (Ago d'Oyo), Ife, Ogbomoso, Saki, Osogbo, Oke-Ito and Ife were the major examples of such conglomerates.

The refugees founded new settlements as well. Ibadan and Ijaye were two notable examples of new refugee towns founded by soldiers who displaced the Egba Gbagura, the original inhabitants of these two places, and forced other Egba to abandon central Yorubaland for a new home at Abeokuta in 1830. The Egba in turn invaded the Egbado, forcing the people in Ilaro, Ilobi and Eyo to found the new settlement of Oke-Odan on the Yewa river.

The refugees in their new homes had to modify or evolve new forms of government in order to solve the problems brought about by the wars - that is, problems of insecurity and of integration to new environments. Four major forms of political system emerged during the century: (a) composite administrative structure in host towns, as in the case of Ogbomoso; (b) military federation as in Abeokuta and Oke-Odan; (c) military dictatorship in Ijaye; and (d) military republic in Ibadan.⁴ This chapter shall examine the new form that emerged in Ibadan which grew to become the largest state in 19th century Yorubaland.

The establishment of a new government

Ibadan was converted from a war camp to a town early in the 1830s.⁵ In c.1829, Ibadan, an Egba town, received hundreds of Ijebu and Ife soldiers. These soldiers had earlier fought against Owu, a southern Yoruba state, from 1821 to 1825.⁶ After Owu's defeat, the allied army diverted its attention to the neighbouring Egba whom they accused of aiding Owu against them. In the encounters, many Egba towns and villages were destroyed. Ibadan, a small Egba settlement, was occupied by the allied army in 1829. Almost at the same time, numerous other soldiers and civilians began to join the army at Ibadan. This new group of people were mostly homeless refugees from northern Yorubaland.

Ibadan was now the home of a motley crowd of soldiers and restless civilians. Yet, it was still considered by the settlers as an *âgo* (hamlet) and a *bùdó ogun* (a military camp). Being a military camp, its administration inevitably fell into the hands of the war generals. Each of the major Yoruba sub-groups in the camp (i.e., Ife, Ijebu, Egba and Oyo) had war leaders and these constituted the governing council whose laws were binding on the members of the group. Every group, together with its governing council, occupied a distinct section in Ibadan: the Oyo and Ife lived at Ojaba, the Ijebu at Isale-Jebu and the Egba at Yeosa.

There was, however, an overall leader of the camp. As would be expected, he was the most distinguished of all the warriors. He was Okunade, the *Maye* (military commander) of the Ife army. Next to him was another brave and bold Ife general, Labosinde. *Maye* Okunade had been the head of the allied army and his military qualities had already been tested in the Owu war.

The *Maye* had little to do in terms of administration. The military councils administered in their respective domains. The *Maye* also had no revenue to run a separate administration. This was because taxes, tributes and gifts could not be collected from the people, most of whom preferred to be treated as soldiers and colleagues rather than subjects.⁷

Nevertheless, the *Maye* had an avenue to prove his mettle and employ his energy. He was actively involved in the conflicts among the leading generals representing the three major groups - Ife, Egba and Oyo. The conflicts centred on the control of the settlement. The Ife, claiming to be militarily superior, wanted to dominate all others; but the Egba resisted on the grounds that Ibadan belonged to them as of

right. The Oyo, too, joined in the struggle, mainly on the basis of their overwhelming numerical strength. Only the Ijebu kept aloof since they had the intention of returning home as quickly as possible. The conflicts united the Oyo and Egba against the *Maye*. To his rivals, the *Maye* 'was of an irritable temper, in manners rough and domineering'.⁸

The *Maye* was clever enough to realize that he could not deal with all the three groups at the same time. He confronted the Egba first. In one of the frequent altercations between the Egba and the Ife, an Egba chief killed an Ife chief. The *Maye* saw this as an opportunity to put the Egba under Ife's control and he planned a military attack on them. The Egba read the handwriting on the wall and, to avoid a total extermination of their war leaders, they all hurriedly left the camp and migrated to found a new settlement at Abeokuta in 1830.⁹

The expulsion of the Egba now left the Oyo and the Ife to face each other. Lakanle, the Oyo leader, was equally as brave as the *Maye*: in fact, he was the only soldier in the camp who could challenge the *Maye*. While the Oyo soldiers were respected and treated with dignity by the *Maye*, the civilians, especially the refugees, were not. The influx of the civilian refugees constituted a threat to the *Maye's* power and leadership mainly because the Oyo thus became more than the Ife, and number was one factor for military victory. The *Maye* was hostile to the civilians whom he handled 'with an iron hand, and denied. . . every security either of their goods or of their lives'.¹⁰ Early in c.1831, it was certain that there would be a war between the Ife and Oyo though it was not known when the war would break out. A quarrel by two Oyo and Ife private soldiers triggered off the war. The *Maye* killed the Oyo soldier and this provoked all the Oyo in the settlement. This culminated in the Gbanamu war which ended in favour of the Oyo. The Ife left the settlement, thus leaving only the Oyo in control.

Oyo's victory marked the beginning of a new period in Ibadan history. The soldiers who led their people to victory decided to transform the camp into a permanent town and from then on Ibadan ceased to be a camp. Consequently, a new political arrangement was called for in order to administer the town. It was certain that civilians would find it difficult to contest for power. Men from the royal families in Old Oyo and other places in northern Yorubaland would not have much claim to leadership. Leadership could also not be attained on the basis of being the founder or having blood relations with the founder, as was the case in most other Yoruba towns. Indeed, a peculiar feature of the history of the foundation of Ibadan was the absence of a founding lineage. The only group of people who were thus qualified to rule were the soldiers who had led the people to victory. One other factor came to reinforce the right of soldiers to rule: the crucial task of solving the problems posed by insecurity and wars. The civilians still feared Fulani attack and the revenge of the Owu and Egba. The security of Ibadan was also threatened by marauders and slave raiders operating in and around the town. Many people doubted whether a civilian government could cope with these problems of wars and

insecurity. Thus, it was popular among the generality of the people that soldiers, rather than a group of civilians, should lead.

From the foregoing, it is clear that two main reasons were responsible for the emergence of a military republic in Ibadan. The first was Ibadan's origin as a war camp and the influx of soldiers to the settlement in its early years. In the circumstance, the soldiers had to govern themselves. Secondly, the unsettled political crisis in Yorubaland early in the 19th century called for 'a state of military preparedness' which enabled Ibadan to develop a 'military propensity'.¹¹ To survive among the competing Yoruba states and withstand the Fulani attack, Ibadan needed soldiers who were endowed with the qualities of bravery, youthful vigour and leadership.

It was not difficult to choose the first military leader and his lieutenants; the most powerful was supposed to lead. The military elite unanimously appointed Oluyedun, a man respected for his military ability, dignity and age. Instead of taking the civilian title of *Baale*, he took that of *Are-Ona-Kakanfo*, a long-standing Old Oyo military title meaning the commander-in-chief of the army. The next in command was Lakanle, the leader of the Ibadan army in the Gbanamu war and a man popularly known as the 'bravest of the brave'. He took the title of *Otun Kakanfo* (deputy or right hand of *Kakanfo*). Five others were appointed as *Òsì* (left hand), *Èkerin*, (fourth), *Èkarun* (fifth), *Èkeja* (sixth) and *Are Abese Kakanfo* respectively. A chief of calvary, with the title of *Sarumi*, was also created. All these eight title-holders were the leading military figures in the society. Only a single civilian title, the *Babasàlè* - 'chief adviser' - was created. This was a post which carried no specific duties but which was created to honour Labosinde formerly next in rank to the *Maye*. It was agreed by the warriors to honour him because he did not support the *Maye* in the Gbanamu war. Labosinde, too, realized that this title was honorary and he made no effort to exert any control. His role was to mediate in conflicts among the principal warriors, and give advice when called upon to do so by the rulers. Thus, the eight members of this military oligarchy governed new Ibadan. They did not represent any quarter within Ibadan, unlike what obtained in most other Yoruba states. Virtually all of them were also new to exercising authority and this explained their cautious steps in the 1830s.¹²

Oluyole, the second ruler who succeeded Oluyedun in the mid-1830s and who ruled until 1847 firmly established the political system. Titles were given specific military-cum-administrative functions. New titles were also created to reward new competent warriors and to expand the bureaucracy. Oluyole himself assumed the Old Oyo title of *Basorun*, and the next person to him was made the *Balogun*, that is, commander of the army. The *balogun* also had two principal lieutenants, the *Otun*, 'general commanding the right wing of the army' and the *Osi*, 'general commanding the left wing of the army'. Three important new military titles were also created: the *Seriki*, the head of another group of warriors junior in rank to the *balogun*, the *Agbakin* and *Are Agoro*, both for brave generals.

Though these were military titles, the chiefs were expected to perform civilian duties as well. Indeed, Oluyole realized the needs for an effective civilian administration, even if title-holders would still be soldiers. Ibadan had to be administered by civil rather than military laws. More importantly, the leader of the political system should be seen not only as the head of all the soldiers but also of the civilians. Civilian duties were not, however, to be performed by civilians for three reasons. In the first place, distinguished warriors had to be rewarded with titles and co-opted into the political system in order to reduce tensions and conflicts. Secondly, war veterans could retire and spend their last days as administrators. Finally, the people would feel more secure if they knew that their affairs were being directed by those who were capable of defending them whenever they were attacked.¹³

Consequently, Oluyole modified the initial political system of a few military leaders governing the state. He created another distinct line of civil title holders who were expected to stay in Ibadan at all times. There would, however, be one overall leader, as symbolised by Oluyole himself. This leader would have to be able to combine military prowess with the ability to govern.

When Oluyole died in 1847, a system of government which made use of successful soldiers and a few distinguished civilians had emerged. This system operated for the remaining years of the century, though strong military leaders from time to time tried to introduce changes to satisfy their ambition for more power.

System of government

Power was divided and exercised by two major chieftaincy groups, one civil and the other military. The civil group of chiefs was made up of two categories, the *Baale* line who were males and the *Iyalode* line of chiefs who were females.¹⁴ The *baale* were not members of any particular ruling house. Rather, they were all veterans and must have distinguished themselves in war. The *baale* and his subordinate chiefs were expected to be knowledgeable in military history and warfare, and above all they must be familiar with the foreign policies of every major Yoruba sub-group and their neighbours.

The *baale* civil office holders were primarily charged with administering Ibadan, a difficult job considering the competing interest of the soldiers, the urban nature of the city and the fact that Ibadan became the capital of an empire. Yet, the *baale's* success or failure was measured by his performance, the economic prosperity of the town and the maintenance of peace and security. To discharge his duties effectively, the *baale* was assisted by a few other distinguished chiefs, all in the same civil chieftaincy group. These were the *Otun*, *Osi*, *Eketa* and *Ekerin Baale*. It should however be pointed out that these chiefs were not empowered to make laws without the approval of the military chiefs.

The second civil chieftaincy category was that of the *Iyalode*, mainly for women. The title was created early in the 1850s to reward Madam Subuola renowned for assisting the warriors. Other *iyalode* during the century were Efunsetan, Lanlatu

and Iyalaje. They also had their subordinates usually rewarded with the titles of *Otun, Osi, Eketa*, etc.

All these *iyalode* and their lieutenants had similar qualities: they were rich, generous to military leaders, powerful and had large numbers of followers. They possessed qualities similar to their male counterparts. Though they were not expected to go to war, they were expected to contribute to the debates leading to the declaration of war, to partly finance the war and to assist in organizing provisions for the soldiers. The *iyalode* performed other duties. They attended the meetings of the *Baale*-in-council where important matters of state were discussed; took special interests in the organization of markets and also represented the interests of women in a society dominated by men. The *iyalode* was very influential in the society. In the words of Anna Hinderer, the C.M.S. missionary who lived in Ibadan in the 1850s and 1860s, the *iyalode* was a chief 'to whom all the women's palavers. . . are brought before they are taken to the king. She is, in fact, a sort of queen, a person of much influence, and looked up to with much respect'.¹⁵

The two military categories of chiefs, and of course the most significant in the political system, were those of the *balogun* and the *seriki*. The *balogun* category was supreme, the most powerful and prestigious, being made up of the leading, renowned warriors. All *balogun* must participate in the decision leading to a declaration of war, lead in war and agree on the mode of terminating a war. The head of the *balogun* chieftaincy group was also known as *Balogun* and was generally acclaimed as the most powerful soldier in the army. The *balogun* was also heir to the *Baaleship*. As soon as the *Baale* died, the *balogun* would be called upon to assume office as the overall leader of Ibadan. Although many *balogun* desired to be *baale* so that they could attain the peak of their political career, some others did not. Four *balogun* refused to be *baale* during the century: Oderinlo in 1847; Akere in 1867; Osungbekun in 1893 and Akintola in 1895. One main reason for rejecting promotion to the exalted title of *Baale* was to enable the *Balogun* engage in more wars in order to make more wealth and further enhance his name. To many military officers, the *Baale* was a 'female title'¹⁶ meant for those who were tired of wars. The *balogun* chiefs could only continue to retain their images as heroes by going to war which brought them more followers whom they needed to build up and expand their private armies. Successes in wars also made them more popular and renowned.

The second military group was the *Seriki*, a junior military title to the *balogun*. The *seriki* line was made up of active soldiers some of whom were yet to distinguish themselves in major wars and some yet to lead a division of the army to victory. Nevertheless, there were usually highly experienced warriors among them who were yet to qualify to be *balogun* chiefs mainly because there were no vacancies in the *balogun* line for them to fill. The *seriki* chiefs performed functions similar to the *balogun*. Both the *balogun* and *seriki* chiefs were involved in the administration of Ibadan. No important decisions could be made in their absence. They constituted a

powerful provisional government even in the battle fronts and their decisions on political affairs were final.

All the principal figures in the four categories of chiefs formed the 'Igbimo ilu', 'town council' or the *baale*-in-council. They were about ten in number: *Baale*, *Balogun*, *Otun Baale*, *Otun Balogun*, *Osi Baale*, *Osi Balogun*, *Asipa Baale*, *Asipa Balogun*, *Ekerin Baale*, and *Ekerin Balogun*. In peace time, they all met once in five days in the *baale*'s residence to deliberate on important matters of state. Laws were made and reviewed, Consuls were appointed to represent Ibadan in other towns, and wars were declared, etc.¹⁷ In addition, the council took measures to enforce laws and try offenders. The council was the highest court in the land. It heard cases of arson, murder, theft, etc. It was also a court of appeal and its decisions on all cases referred to it by lineage heads and chiefs were final.

In view of the large size of the metropolis and the empire, administration was decentralized, with every military chief having an area of influence within the metropolis and in the colonies. Within Ibadan itself, lineage heads who could be warriors, exercised considerable authority on members of their compounds. Most of the steps they took and the laws they made were based on the unwritten constitutions of every lineage and they reflected the personality of the leader. The lineage head must administer the compound, the lineage land and other property. He settled quarrels among members and intervened in disputes between members of his compound and those of others. He tried as much as possible to prevent anything that could threaten the continued survival of the lineage and compound as an entity and those incidents which could bring his people to disrepute.

A number of compounds together with their lineage heads were in turn placed under a military chief known as the *Baba ogun* (war patron).¹⁸ Every distinguished warrior was a *baba ogun*, exercising control over numerous people living in scattered compounds. All major disputes beyond the control of the lineage heads were taken to the *baba ogun*. The *baba ogun* collected levies, tributes and taxes in the compounds under him, and mobilized eligible male citizens in those compounds to join his army in time of war. It was also the responsibility of the *baba ogun* to see to it that all laws made by the town council were adhered to by his subjects.

Similarly, vassal towns under Ibadan were divided into several parts, each under a military chief known in these towns as the *baba kekere*.¹⁹ It was his duty to monitor the developments in the colonies and to alert the Ibadan authority against any subversive activities. The *baba kekere* appointed residents (the *Ajele*) for the colonies. The *ajele* stayed in vassal towns where he saw to the collection of tributes and tax and organized contingents for Ibadan army during wars. He carried out all the laws made by the *baba kekere* and the Ibadan authority. The *ajele* behaved and lived like a king. He had a palace, a host of officials and a treasury. The rulers in the colonies were under him and they must obey all laws emanating from his palace. His

position 'had such potentialities that an ambitious *ajele* could and often did constitute himself into the effective head of the town; for his duties, too, were such as to make him a man of great influence and authority in the town'.²⁰

The resources to finance the administration of the state came from many sources. The military received gifts, bribes, tributes and taxes from the people in the colonies and the metropolis. Additional revenues also came from traders who paid tolls and market dues and from other professionals who must give part of their products to the military chiefs who were their patrons. Finally, the military had access to large spoils of wars.²¹

Features of government

Ibadan system of government had three main features. In the first place, leadership was collective. No one was powerful enough to disregard the views of others or to wield dictatorial political powers. Power was concentrated in the *Igbimo ilu* made up of ten prominent chiefs. There were leaders like Oluyole and *Are Latosa* (1871-1885) who were dictatorial but their excesses were checked by other military chiefs. Even in the case of the two rulers, they had to get the support of some other leading warriors for their actions.

Secondly, the appointment of chiefs was not hereditary. Titles were achieved through one's ability as a soldier and promotion was from a lower to a higher post or from one line to the other (that is, from the *Seriki* to the *Balogun* to the *Baale*). A class of *Mogaji* lineage heads was however established in the post-1830 era to enable the representatives of the leading families take titles from the lower rung of the ladder. The aim of this constitutional amendment was to immortalize the names of deceased heroes by rewarding their heirs with junior titles. The *mogaji* was however expected to be a brave, promising warrior before he could get a title, but if he got the title by default he would never be promoted. Other people seeking titles first struggled for the most junior offices in the *baale*, *balogun* or *seriki* lines. They were usually sponsored by the established chiefs. The effects of appointing and promoting people largely on merit have been commented upon by Awe:

This method of selection meant that Ibadan could look for leadership where it could best be found. Absence of hereditary succession also ensured that the government of Ibadan was never left in the hands of minors or men unfit to rule who had only succeeded to leadership by virtue of their birth.²²

Indeed, those who distinguished themselves at Ibadan were citizens of other towns. For example, *Balogun* Ibikunle (1851-1864) was from Ogbomoso, *Basorun* Ogunmola (1865-1867) was a native of Fesu near Iwo and *Are Latosa* (1871-1885) was from Ilora.

Finally, new titles were always created to reward those who distinguished themselves in military services. This was to prevent a situation where there would be powerful warriors without titles who might pose a potential threat to the system. All these features emphasized merit and competition; and made it possible for men of

humble origin to rise. The military qualifications for upward mobility made Ibadan a dumping ground for soldiers from different parts of Yorubaland and this meant that the most competent and astute among the soldiers would get titles. The open and competitive nature of the system engendered intense power rivalries and generated civil wars, feuding and vendettas.

Power struggle

One major distinguishing feature of the political system was that all titles had to be competed for, since all titles were not hereditary and not restricted to any particular lineage. Distinguished warriors, irrespective of their lineage and background, could be rewarded with titles and promoted from a lower to a higher office. Because of the promotional system, many soldiers who believed that they were competent aspired to power. They struggled and fought one another to get to power, to increase their power, to remain in power and to displace mediocres. The balance of power was never static; it continued to shift from one general to another on the basis of their wealth, prestige, influence and the ability to withstand political opponents. The competition for, and love of power lay at the root of all the conflicts among Ibadan warriors. Most of these conflicts centred on:

- (i) making sure that less competent warriors did not get power or get promoted above those adjudged to be more competent;
- (ii) the elimination of rivals;
- (iii) the liquidation of over-ambitious men; and
- (iv) the removal or relegation of senile leaders.

A common factor underlying all the above areas of conflict was the power which every warrior believed he had. A warrior who believed he was more powerful and popular than his colleagues or seniors strove to get a title or promotion as soon as there was a vacancy. Such a powerful warrior also tried all his best possible to displace less competent persons. This explained why there were conflicts because of (i) and (iv) above. There were cases of warriors who challenged one another at home and in the battle front simply to show their strength. According to I.B. Akinyele, the leading Ibadan chronicler:

If any man presumed to assume a title that he did not deserve, the man who had the right to the title would challenge the usurper when they got to the battle to come along with him to face the enemy. If the usurper was worsted in the fight, the rightful owner would assume the title in dispute from the very battle field.²³

Though the resolution of power rivalries did not always take the form narrated by Akinyele, it was usual for less powerful people to recognize the superiority of others by refusing titles and promotions, thereby allowing the most powerful to get what they deserved. But just as victory and bravery in war could catapult a person, so could losing a major war bring a chief to ridicule and 'send him on the downward path' in the military hierarchy.

Having attained a title, the chief must try to prove that he merited the award. He did this by being more energetic in war and more generous in spending. In doing this, however, he had to exercise caution lest he was accused of being too ambitious and seeking quick avenues to get another title. Other rivals were always watching an ambitious man and were always willing to eliminate him.²⁴ Like the well-established chiefs who were always careful not to offend their colleagues, the promising youths took similar cautious steps. In addition, they were always careful not to give the impression that they were in a hurry to rise to high and prestigious positions of authority. Those who did were quickly warned by their friends and relations. If they did not heed, they were always despatched to wars where they could meet their death. This could, however, prove to be a major advantage to those who were brave and lucky to survive such wars as they would gain more honour.²⁵

While military ability was important to secure a title and a comfortable place in the system, other factors were equally important and went hand-in-hand with military distinction. In the first place, a warrior must have a large body of followers. These followers were usually made up of relatives, dependants, war-boys, soldiers in training and most importantly, slaves. The quickest avenue to secure followers was by getting captives in wars. Such captives were retained to work in farms, as domestic labour and as soldiers. Distinguished and generous warriors attracted young men from different towns and lineages. These young men were always ready to attach themselves to a warrior until they too could stand on their own. Throughout the century, Ibadan received thousands of youths who escaped from the older, more conservative Yoruba towns. Ibadan provided these young men the attractions and the opportunities to become independent of their parents and to struggle for wealth and power.

Attention was also drawn to the heterogeneity of the traditional culture in Nigeria. Because of the wide variety of geographical conditions, economic and historical factors, religious practices and world-views across the country, there was not one single model of political culture. One of the values of exploring the evolution of political culture in Nigeria within its multi-ethnic and multi-cultural setting is to shed light on the extent to which some of the contradictions in Nigerian politics is due to clash of different norms which if better studied and understood, could each contribute something positive to the evolution of a truly Nigerian culture.

The participants did not ignore the question of definition or take it lightly. In particular, they emphasized that political culture is not about politics alone or simply about the ruling classes or groups. They agreed with the keynote address that it includes 'the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and the operating norms of a polity.' The problem, however, was whether or not we could see political culture purely in social terms or political power and administration independent of the economic base of society. To what extent has the economic

base of society fostered a kind of power-sharing in the interests of certain groups at the expense of others within the traditional system? And what is a *traditional* society? Can a traditional system incorporated into a new or foreign system be traditional any more? And are the traditional institutions compatible with democracy which allows the control of the political and economic process by the masses rather than the individual chief or ruler or ruling group? What aspects of the traditional system remain relevant to the evolving political culture of Nigeria and ought to be grafted on to the political system we now operate? These and other related questions underscore the conflict of tradition and modernity in our evolving political culture.

Secondly, and closely related to the first, all warriors struggled and competed for wealth. They needed money to buy arms and ammunition and other provisions for their private armies. They also needed money to entertain their followers and numerous visitors with food and European liquour, and to buy all sorts of colourful and expensive European clothes. Wealth did not however mean only money at Ibadan. It included extensive farmland, slaves, horses, big compounds and clothes. The most important were slaves: 'slaves are the only big wealth in the country;' wrote a contemporary, 'for nobody can be well off or have a big farm unless he has a few; nor can someone be a great warlord unless he can own 1,000 slaves.'²⁶ Farmlands were equally important; a successful warrior was at the same time a successful farmer. They needed big farmlands in order to feed their numerous followers and to have crops to sell in exchange for European goods and coastal articles such as fish and salt which could not be produced at Ibadan. The need for big farmlands also explained their ambition to own slaves who would cultivate the farms. The slaves were usually sent to live and work in the farms located outside Ibadan. In the words of Johnson:

The chiefs had large farms and farm houses containing from a hundred to over a thousand souls. . . These extensive plantations not only support their large establishments but also supply the market. . .²⁷

The warriors also actively participated in trade, their emphasis being mainly on the lucrative trade in slaves, palm-oil and palm kernels, all goods demanded by coastal traders and the Europeans. They were better placed to engage in trade than others because they had access to large farmlands and labour which provided the farm products, porters and slaves to facilitate trading and they could also provide the necessary security. They bought arms and ammunition, cloths and drinks in exchange for their products.

While trade brought wealth which could be used to take part in the power struggle, it was generally agreed by all the warriors that successful and wealthy traders who were not soldiers should be barred from contesting for power or holding titles. To use the money obtained from trading to build up a group of followers not for the purpose of fighting wars was frowned at. The warriors went as far as regarding those traders as lazy citizens. Such traders were usually at the mercy of the military chiefs who constantly imposed levies on them and demanded from them the

weapons to prosecute their wars. The war chiefs also expected the traders to sell their goods to them on credit. These measures were taken by the military to control traders and to emphasize the fact that money alone did not secure titles.²⁸

The propensity to accumulate wealth also brought about conflicts among the military. Any warrior whose accumulation was glaringly more than the others was seen as a threat. This is because accumulation enabled the warrior to recruit more followers and this was capable of tilting the balance of power in his favour. What most warriors did was to acquire money and spend it almost immediately on acquiring more luxuries and on entertainment. A famous example of a leading warrior whose wealth brought him into trouble was *Balogun Ajobo* in 1871.²⁹ Ajobo migrated to Ibadan from Ikire in the 1830s. He became the *seriki* early in the 1860s and by the late 1870s had risen to the prestigious office of the *balogun*. This was, no doubt, a brilliant career. His colleagues, especially those who regarded themselves as his senior in age and experience, were not too happy about Ajobo's military success. To crown it all, Ajobo had, by 1870, become very wealthy and generous. His generosity made him the most popular among the chiefs. Many 'war boys' wanted to serve under him, many compounds wanted him as their *baba ogun* and many vassal states wanted him as their *baba kekere*. Ajobo became swollen-headed with success, wealth and popularity. He began to treat his colleagues including the *baale* with contempt. The other chiefs could not tolerate this and they conspired to liquidate him. The opportunity came in June, 1871. *Balogun Ajobo*, contrary to the practice of collective action, single-handedly ratified the appointment of a new *Owa* of Ilesa, an Ibadan vassal town. The other chiefs condemned this action, rejected Ajobo's apology and promise never to repeat the mistake and handed him a *fait accompli*: he was ordered to leave Ibadan or commit suicide. On the 5th of August, 1871, Ajobo surrendered the staff of war and left for Iperu where he died a commoner.

One could however use abundant wealth to an advantage. A rich war chief could use his wealth to win the support of colleagues and junior chiefs, and by so doing forestall any attempt to humiliate him by his colleagues. *Are Latosa* for instance, spent a larger part of his wealth to win the favours of many junior military officers and to bribe one senior chief against another.

Besides the ability to control a large number of people and to acquire wealth, a warrior must be able to secure the necessary support of the most distinguished and senior chiefs who could use their power and position to influence the promotion or appointment of their favourites. This was, no doubt, another contributory factor to conflicts. The top-ranking chiefs usually had their favourites among the junior officers. To secure a higher title for their favourite, they could exaggerate his military potentials and brilliance. This system of patronage also encouraged bribery as the junior officers tried to impress their patrons with gifts. It is however to be noted that favouritism had its limit and was never allowed to make a mockery of the system. Indeed, this was impossible in a state which was always at war and which needed the

most able to fight; mediocre officers would simply be leading themselves to a slaughter house if they chose to lead an army to war.

A distinguished warrior who experienced disastrous military defeats, who failed in a major power tussle, or who lost the confidence of his colleagues could be reduced from grace to grass. Three options were open to his victorious colleagues to punish and humiliate him. The first was to order members of the public to plunder his compound in a practice called *ilé bibò*. All the goods in the compound would be confiscated and the unlucky young men and women who could not escape would be taken as captives. The aims of *ilé bibo* were to isolate the man in the town, reduce him to a commoner and sequester his property. The second option was to order the person to leave Ibadan. If he chose to go on an exile he was allowed to take only a single item each from his different types of property. Thus, the chief would take only a slave, a horse, few cowries and leave behind all other things including his farmland. The motive behind this was to prevent any attempt by him to use wealth, property or men at his disposal to stage a come-back. Finally, the person might be told to commit suicide. If he refused, his compound would be plundered. Since nobody wanted his compound to be plundered, most of the people involved usually committed suicide, if only to preserve their compounds and save their people. In cases where the men refused to commit suicide, they were secretly killed by their children or relatives in order to avoid plundering.

Conclusion

Ibadan started as a war camp and later developed into a town in the 1830s. Its earliest settlers were soldiers and refugees. Because of the circumstances surrounding its foundation, Ibadan evolved a political system which differed in many respects from the pre-1800 monarchical system. Ibadan started as a military state, with all chieftaincy titles except one, being military ones. Because of the need to administer the expanding town, and the security which the town itself enjoyed from the 1840s onward, a political system comprising both military and civil title holders finally developed. Whether civil or military, offices were held, not on the basis of hereditary rights but on promotion from the lowest to the highest titles. The system gave more power to the war chiefs who must be present whenever important decisions were to be taken.

Unlike Ijaye, no leader was able to establish a personal ascendancy. Oluyole and Latosa who tried it failed for two reasons. First, the warriors at Ibadan were many, and all of them were equally ambitious for power. Any over-ambitious person among them was always checked. Secondly, the features of promotion, and of hierarchical organization of titles which defined the place of everybody in the system prevented autocracy.

Notes

1. See J.F.A. Ajayi and R. Smith, *Yoruba Warfare in the 19th Century*, (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1971).
2. See Toyin Falola, 'Power Drift in the Political System of Southwestern Nigeria in the 19th century', *Odu: Journal of West African Studies*, forthcoming.
3. J.F. Ade Ajayi, 'The Aftermath of the fall of Old Oyo' in J.F.A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa Vol.2* (London: Longman, 1975), chap.5.
4. Toyin Falola, 'Power Drift. . .', *op. cit.*
5. The detailed story of the foundation of Ibadan can be found in B.A. Awe 'The Rise of Ibadan as a Yoruba Power', D. Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1964 and Toyin Falola, 'The Political Economy of Ibadan, c.1830-1900' Ph.D. thesis, University of Ife, 1981, chap.2.
6. A.L. Mabogunje and J.A. Omer-Cooper, *A History of Owu* (Ibadan, 1971).
7. Oral Interview: Mr Segun Olubukun, Alhaji Ajobo and *Balogun Asanike*, Dec. 1978.
8. The Rev. Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* (Lagos, 1921), p.235.
9. For details see S.O. Biobaku, *The Egba and their Neighbours 1842-72*, (Oxford, 1957), chap.1.
10. Johnson, *The History*. . . , p.239.
11. B.A. Awe, 'The Rise of Ibadan', p.97.
12. K. Morgan, *Akinyele's Outline History of Ibadan* (Caxton Press, n.d.) p.82.
13. Oral interview: *Oba* Daniel Akinbiyi, Chief J.A. Ayorinde, Jan. 1979.
14. There were, however, other non-political and hereditary civil titles. These included the *Babasale* (adviser to the ruler), the *Aboke* (the chief priest of the Okebadan goddess), and the *Oluwo* and *Apena*, two *Ogboni* titles.
15. A. Hinderer, *Seventeen Years in the Yoruba Country: Memoirs of Anna Hinderer* (London, 1872), p.97.
16. C.H. Elgee, *The Evolution of Ibadan* (Lagos, Govt. Printer, 1914), p.29.
17. Oral Interview: His Highness, the *Olubadan*, *Oba* Daniel Akinbiyi, Jan., 1979.
18. See E.N.C. Dickenson, *Intelligence Report on Ibadan Town*, 1938.
19. For details, see B.A. Awe, 'The Ajele System: study of Ibadan Imperialism in the nineteenth century', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, No. 3, 1964, pp.47-60.
20. B.A. Awe, 'The Rise of Ibadan', p.107.
21. Toyin Falola, 'The Political Economy of Ibadan', chap. 3.
22. B. Awe, 'The Rise of Ibadan', p.107.
23. I.B. Akinyele, *The Outlines of Ibadan History*, (Lagos, 1946), p.97.
24. Oral Interview: Messrs A. Adediran, K. Ladele and Chief Ayorinde, Feb. 1980.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Father T. Holley, *Le Grand Tour*, transl. by R. Hales, March, 1884.
27. Johnson, *The History*. . . , p.325.
28. I.B. Akinyele, *Iwe Itan Ibadan* (Exeter, England, 1950), p.209.
29. For his career, see K. Morgan, *Akinyele's Outline History of Ibadan*, Part II, (Caxton Press, 1971).

X

The Jihad and its role in strengthening the Sarauta (kingship) system in Hausaland in the nineteenth century: The case of Kano

Abdullahi Mahadi

In the last twenty years a lot has been written in one form or another about the Jihad which took place in the Central Sudan in the early part of the nineteenth century. For a variety of reasons, ranging from too many assumptions¹ and evasions to the apparently hazy conception of the pre-Jihad political and social systems in Hausaland, and the nature of the struggle which it engendered, as well as the nature of Islamic political system in the early period of Islam as opposed to that of the Abbasid era, some or many of those works on the political and social aspects of the Jihad have tended to side-track or obscure the fundamental cause and the outcome of the Jihad of the 19th century.

I shall examine briefly the major assumptions in relation to the causes and outcome of the Jihad as presented in the published works. In the course of this exercise I shall briefly present alternative views based on available evidence. In the main, I shall discuss how the rulers used the Jihad to strengthen the *sarauta* system thereby making it more pervasive and powerful than in the pre-Jihad period. The effect of this development on society shall also be briefly discussed.

Our main objective is to draw attention to what we consider central to the cause of the Jihad - the *sarauta* system - and show how, instead of the actualization of the hopes and aspirations of Shehu Usman dan Fodio and his supporters to replace the *sarauta* system with an Islamic state,² the *sarauta* system surreptitiously emerged even much stronger than ever before. Some explanations will be offered as to why such a genuine movement aimed at bringing social justice to the country fell far

short of the expectations of the *mujadid* and the *talakawa*, as far as the political and social systems were concerned.

II

The dominant theme in many of the published works in relation to the causes of the Jihad is that of racial conflicts between the Hausa and the Fulbe (fulani).³ This conflict has been presented in several forms, illustrated by the following assertions:

- (i) that the Fulbe seized power because they wanted to participate in the affairs of these states;
- (ii) that the Fulbe literate who were employed as scribes, etc. in the various governments of Hausa states were either jealous or contemptuous (by implication) of the supposedly illiterate Hausa rulers;
- (iii) that the conflict arose because of the constant disputes between the Hausa peasants and Fulbe nomads over grazing land or water holes.

None of these was a serious, if at all, issue in the Jihad. In Kano, and we believe elsewhere in Hausaland, quite a number of Fulani participated in the governments both at the state and village levels and by the eighteenth century they came to play important roles both in the political and military life of the state.⁴ Some of them remained with the king of Kano to the last day of the Jihad wars. The second allegation clearly contradicts the first claim - that the Fulbe did not participate in the government. But we are more interested in the assumption that they monopolized learning or knowledge and by extension that the Hausa rulers were illiterates. We have more than enough evidence to show that from about the first decade of the 15th century A.D. most of the kings of Kano were learned men.⁵ It is important to note that some of the *Ulema* (literati) who led the Jihad movement in Kano either had their education at the court of the kings of Kano⁶ or were taught by people connected with the court.

In discussing the third point the writers give a number of false impressions: First that there wasn't any political organization to regulate the relationship between the nomads and the peasants, secondly, that the various groups who inhabited *Kasar* (land of) Kano as well as the rest of Hausaland maintained the purity of their ethnic identity and thirdly that the various groups especially the Fulbe and the Hausa were always at each other's throats. It is clear that the early roles which the state of Kano played in economic activities included the delimitation of numerous *burtali* (cattle tracts) which traversed the territory of Kano from the North to the South and regional *burtali* which converged on several *raffuka* (lakes) in various parts of *Kasar* Kano. There were specific legislations which dealt with peasants who encroached on the *burtali* and the nomads who deliberately or otherwise allowed their animals to destroy crops.⁷

It must be noted that before the time of the outbreak of the Jihad the Fulbe and numerous other non-Hausa groups had been inhabiting Hausaland for centuries. Many of them settled in urban centres such as Birnin Kano, Dutse, Gadawur, and

Karaye while many others founded new towns such as Jahun, Sankara and Ringim which attracted many non-Fulbe population. There were inter-marriages and the attendant effects of assimilation and integration between the different ethnic groups. Economically the interaction between the nomads and the peasants was remarkable. The nomads supplied the farmers with various types of foodstuffs as well as bran and potash among others for their livestock. This relationship of interdependence was in fact an important aspect of the integration of the society.

III

The intensified dynastic struggles among the princes which resulted in their neglect of the affairs of society, the increasing demand for revenue to sustain the luxurious life style of the various categories of the rulers, and the irreligious practices which were sponsored or encouraged by the state sharpened the contradictions between the rulers and the other members of society.⁸

By the latter part of the eighteenth century, the members of the ruling class which consisted of the princes, slave officials and many members of the ulema and they included Hausa, Fulbe (Fulani), Arabs and other groups led an expensive life style which was paid for by the other members of the society. Apart from forcing people to pay all sorts of taxes, many of which were clearly illegal, series of raids were launched into the countryside for the purpose of acquiring slaves for exchange with cowries and other commodities needed by the rulers.⁹ At this time also, *wasau*, through which the King's men and princes simply seized private property was introduced.¹⁰ Girls and sometimes even married women were simply abducted.

These and many other related exploitative and tyrannical measures which because of the scope of the present Chapter cannot be discussed at length, widened the gulf between the members of the ruling class and the other members of the society. The *malaman kirgi* (ordinary literati who opposed the rulers and other literati who had connections with the court) therefore found it easy to mobilize the people, including the Hausa population against the rulers. It would appear that many of those who joined the Jihad leaders did so not because of religious motivation but due to their desire to overthrow the regime which they hated.¹¹ It may be necessary to point out again that there is no justification for regarding the Jihad as a racial conflict between the 'Muslim' and nomadic Fulbe (Fulani) on the one hand and the 'nominal' muslim and sedentarised Hausa on the other. Apart from the Fulbe who had strong connections with the court, most of the rich Fulbe clans, notably the Yarimawa, Jafunawa and several other clans simply refused to participate in the Jihad.¹² Even after the victory of the *Jama'a* these rich Fulbe clans refused to co-operate with the new rulers. We have every reason to believe that most of the Fulbe who led the Jihad movement were relatively poor.¹³ During the war many more Hausa people fought against the King than the Fulbe.¹⁴ It seems to us therefore that at least from the initial stages, before the elements of opportunism (motivated by the hope for offices) and parochialism set in, the dominant feature of the conflict involved a coalition of

the Hausa, Fulbe (Fulani), Arab, etc. nobility and other rich merchants on the one hand and the pious (and relatively poor) Fulbe (fulani) literati and nomads, many Hausa literati and peasants and other dominated groups on the other. The preaching of the literati provided the ideological weapon which mobilized the support of the *Jama'a*. A sizeable number of people, especially the relatively well-to-do remained neutral in the earlier stages of the conflict. They did, however, join the *Jama'a* when they realized that the rulers were fast losing the battle.

The hope of a better government encouraged many people to join and fight on the side of the *Jama'a*. It was this massive support as well as the indifferent attitude adopted by many peasants to the fate of the rulers that enabled the *Jama'a* to score easy victories against the forces of the rulers in most of the military engagements. Many of the towns in fact simply surrendered without fighting.

IV

A better government was indeed established;¹⁵ but it lasted for only a short time. Certainly by the end of the period of the second Emir, Ibrahim Dabo, the *sarauta* system had been restored,¹⁶ and from this time to the end of the 19th century the Emirs (and other members of the *masu sarauta*) seemed to exercise more authority over the society than any time in the earlier periods.¹⁷ It has indeed been asserted that the Emirs of Kano exercised more authority or power over their subjects than any ruler in Hausaland.¹⁸ 'The people of Kano fear their king very much: when he speaks everybody trembles. Everybody young and old is afraid and does whatever he says'.¹⁹ All other members of the ruling class including the court literati were also feared by the other members of the society.²⁰

These developments had a lot to do with the results of the jihad. The jihad strengthened the powers of the Emirs (and the other *masu sarauta*) in three main ways: the destruction of the autonomy of the major *garuruwa* (towns) and their integration into the central government - hence over-centralization, the use of religious ideology and propaganda and the enormous wealth which accrued to the state as a result of the economic expansion of the 19th century. Other factors such as the unprecedented increase in the number and growth of urban centres also had important effects on the development of the social relation between the rulers and the ruled.

In the course of the jihad wars, but especially in the process of putting down the numerous revolts which broke out in all parts of Kano on the accession of Emir Ibrahim Dabo to the throne, all the major territorial entities which enjoyed autonomy within *Kasar* Kano throughout the period before the jihad, were systematically rendered powerless through deliberate balkanization,²¹ appointment of loyal followers, including slaves and eunuchs, to thrones of the important towns and the establishment of numerous *ribats* which were mainly (at least initially) manned by military personnel to mount effective surveillance over rulers whose loyalties were in question. The constant military movements against rebels and the hostile neighbouring states, for instance Ningi and Damagaram, provided the state with an

opportunity to create a political and military atmosphere not different from that of a society living under a declared state of emergency.²² Any sign of dissent was regarded as a revolt against the state.

The members of the court *ulema*, who had become numerous in the 19th century, not only arrogated to themselves the responsibility of interpreting whether or not certain expressions amounted to declaration of revolt against the rulers, but also virtually declared any criticism of the policies of the *Jama'a* (i.e. those who led the Jihad movement) and their descendants (consisting of just about half a dozen families) who came to monopolize power at the state level throughout the greater part of the 19th century, as a heresy. 'Anyone who will hurt them by ugly words or deeds or disputes will be like a person who hurt the companions of the Prophet and most likely will be like the people of the fire. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said that my *umma* (community) will not be ruined except when the last generation would condemn the first one'.²³

The members of the society were constantly being reminded about their obligations to the rulers which included unreserved obedience even to tyrants.²⁴ In order to avoid being declared as an apostate, the consequence of which was severe, people found it wiser to submit to the authority of the rulers. Those who found the situation intolerable migrated to Ningi where they eventually founded a kingdom and became the arch-enemy of Kano throughout the second half of the 19th century.²⁵

While these factors helped in securing the submission of the society to the rulers, the enormous amount of wealth which the rulers came to acquire provided them with the means to finance the different varieties of expensive and luxury goods which formed part of the requirements of the *sarauta* system. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century the most important source of revenue included the *ghanima* (booty) in the form of slaves (who were sold), gold, silver, cowries and jewelry acquired through plundering the old towns such as Rano or towns and settlements of rich Fulbe clans such as Dambatta.²⁶

These sources of revenue enabled Kano as early as the 1820s to establish the finest and largest army in the caliphate.²⁷ In the middle and latter part of the century the state obtained enormous amount of revenue from the taxes levied on some of the manufacturing and commercial classes who had become numerous due to the economic opportunities provided in different forms by the establishment of the caliphate.²⁸

These factors and other privileges enjoyed by members of the ruling class, including the right of the descendants of the members of the *Jama'a* to rule while the other members of the society were to serve, and exemption from taxation, etc. enjoyed by the members of the ruling class of all categories, resulted in the increasing crystallization of classes in the society. Broadly there were three major classes in the society: the *masu sarauta* (ruling class), the *talakawa* (commoners), and the slaves who formed a substantial part of the population. We have every reason to believe that most of the slaves originated from within *Kasar Kano*²⁹ - victims of the

Jihad wars including those enslaved in the adjacent territories, many of whom were supposed to have been treated as *dhimmi* (protected non-Muslim people residing in an Islamic state).

Within each of these three broad groups there were subgroups. Within the rank of the *masu sarauta*, for instance, there were the princes (sons of the Emirs) who enjoyed more privileges than other *masu sarauta* of non-royal descent; the other members of the descendants of the *Jama'a*, who in their turn enjoyed other special privileges (not enjoyed by the third category mentioned below) such as permanent tenure since a member of this group could not be removed from office without prior clearance with Sokoto; and the third group such as the *dagatai* and other minor officials.³⁰ The fourth group consisted of the *atajirai* and other rich people as well as leading members of the Ulema. The first two, because of their wealth, had close relationship with the *masu sarauta* and some of them were appointed to important offices such as those of the treasury. Some of them also even maintained paramilitary forces. One of the important privileges which most of them enjoyed was exemption from payment of taxes.³¹ It follows then that the burden of taxation and forced labour fell on the *talakawa*, since slaves were exempted from these obligations. This hierarchical arrangement also had its attendant features. While those at the top echelon of the society enjoyed a lot of power and wealth, those at the bottom were powerless. It was a society of extremes.

V

It may puzzle many minds that within such a short time of the Jihad, described by many writers as a revolution, the very system which Shehu Usman dan Fodio campaigned against and which he successfully overthrew, re-emerged even with a greater force. Two broad explanations could be offered for this development. The first one had to do with the concept of government and the society which the Shehu and his immediate lieutenants wanted to create. In spite of the assertions of many scholars including Palmer³² and recently Thomas Hodgkin³³ and probably Abdullahi Smith,³⁴ about the fundamentalism of the *mujadid* and his lieutenants and the radical nature of their movement, from the sources they used, it seems clear to us that their constitutional doctrines were based squarely on the theoretical constructions of the late 'Abbasid Jurists and their actors. The sources most frequently quoted by Shaikh Usman dan Fodio on constitutional matters as well as his brother Shehu Abdullahi in his authoritative work, *Diya Ul-Hukkam*³⁵ support our assertion. The pattern of the Imamate derived from the works of the Abbasid scholars which is set out in the *Kitab al-farq*, the *Diya Ul-Hukkam* and other works of the Jihad leaders is clearly not that of the early *Umma* of Medina. It is a complex structure with a hierarchy of officials ranging from *Wazirs* (an office which was not in existence until the Abbasid period) down to market inspectors of weights and measures.³⁶ It seems to us that the difference in political and social organizations between the Abbasid political system and that of the *sarauta* system before the

Jihad, barring the superstitious³⁷ activities of the rulers of Hausa states was only a matter of scale. As a matter of fact, the tyrannical and oppressive rule of some of the Abbasid Caliphs and their subordinate officials exceeded those of the rulers of the pre-Jihad period in Hausaland. Some of the doctrines which originated from the Abbasid jurists and which were introduced into the Sokoto caliphate not only strengthened the *sarauta* system but also even made it more obnoxious. In the pre-jihad period, appointment to important state offices was based largely on merit and this explains why Kanuri, Arab and Wangarawa scholars occupied important positions in the government of the Hausa states. But after the jihad, offices at the state and local levels were tied to a handful of families thereby virtually excluding the greatest number of the members of the society from participating in the governments of their states. Hereditary rule³⁸ in many respects promoted nepotism. Similarly, as has already been mentioned, the apparent adoption of the doctrine of privileges and division of responsibility between the rulers and the ruled (i.e. while certain groups ruled, others served) promoted and perpetuated the myth of racial superiority which was completely contrary to the principles of Islam and which Shaik Usman preached against. Finally the advice of Shehu Abdullahi dan Fodio to the masses to obey even the tyrannical rulers³⁹ inadvertently (on the part of the learned Shehu Abdullahi) served as a tool for suppression in the hands of the rulers and at the same time as a dose of tranquillizer to the masses, hence strengthening the *sarauta* system.

But even assuming that the *mujadid* envisaged and established an Islamic state, patterned on that of the Prophet in Medina, it is doubtful if such a state could have endured. This is simply because many other movements in Islamic history, some of which even determined to create a communistic type of state,⁴⁰ reverted to the centralized and oppressive monarchical state system no sooner after they had violently overthrown the governments of people whom they had regarded as tyrants.⁴¹ The fundamental mistake of these revolutionaries or radical reformers has been their willingness, after they had overthrown their enemies, to accommodate the state machines, institutions and structures which had been used by their predecessors to oppress the society. By doing so the succeeding regime could then achieve no more than the management of the institutions of, for instance, the *sarauta* state. The new regime would sooner or later, due to certain social dynamics, revert to the same type of authoritarian government which had just been overthrown. Soon other revolutionaries would emerge whose purpose would be the overthrow of the government which they consider as one which had betrayed the cause of the masses of the people. And so the endless cycle of 'revolution' and counter 'revolution' would continue.

VI

We are of the view that a just and enduring state could come into existence only when the ownership of means and forces of production are collectively controlled

and owned by and used for the benefit of the entire society as well as creation of new productive relations. Anything short of this transformation will just not do.

The Jihad movements in Kano and elsewhere in Hausaland was a typical example of a revolution without transformation of the pre-existing structures of the social system. What the *Jama'a* succeeded in doing was the removal of the rulers from power and leaving intact the very well established state structures and institutions which the new rulers simply accommodated and even enlarged. The control of the major means of production, namely, land and labour by the *sarauta* state was more than ever before geared towards satisfying the material comfort of the rulers and greed of the big *attajirai*, two groups in the society whose interests were increasingly becoming intertwined. In the process the other members of the society were relegated to the position of mere supporters of the privileged groups.

The point must be stressed that the scramble for state offices which involved bribery and corruption on the part of the members of the ruling class⁴² was not motivated by selfless service to the society but by the fact that all successful candidates derived a lot of illegal wealth from the office which they virtually purchased. If the enormous responsibility imposed by Islam on all categories of state officials had been strictly adhered to and if public office holders were aware of the terrible consequences of even a slight abuse of public office as enunciated in the *Haddith* and the Quran, it is most doubtful if as many people would have gone forward for such offices. It is also to be noted that Islam discourages competition for public offices. Among the first injunctions to Muslims in matters pertaining to public office is 'that authority shall not be given to one who seeks it'.⁴³

VII

The first serious and genuine attempt to create a just society in Hausaland and elsewhere in the Central Sudan took place in the early part of the nineteenth century. However, due apparently to the clouded perception of the Jihad leaders, as regards the nature of the Islamic state they wanted to create, a situation which was largely brought about by their seeming over-reliance on the works of the Abbasid jurists, and their failure to stamp out⁴⁴ completely the deep roots of the *sarauta* system and evolve a new type of social relations rendered their efforts, politically and socially speaking, to fall far short of the hopes and expectations of the masses of the people of Hausaland.

From the point of view of the sharia, the correct designations of the caliphs and emirs of the Sokoto Caliphate, at least from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards should be 'Emperors' as far as the caliphs were concerned and 'Kings' (*Sara Kuna*) as far as the emirs were concerned. Their failure to adhere strictly to the principles of the sharia in their private and public lives disqualified them from being caliphs and emirs.⁴⁵ They could not be regarded as deputizing for the Prophet (as in the case of the caliphs) or deputizing for the Prophet's deputies (as in the case of the emirs) because they deviated from the path of the Prophet and the caliph by not adhering to the sharia.⁴⁶

Notes

- 1 One of the most serious shortcomings of some of the scholars who have produced works on the jihad was their inability to differentiate between the theories of government propounded in the works of the three Jihad leaders - Shehu Usman dan Fodio, Shehu Abdullahi dan Fodio and Muhammed Bello and the actual realities of political and administrative system which were practised in the caliphate in the nineteenth century. This indeed deserves further investigation.
- 2 It is not quite clear what type of Islamic state Shehu Usman Dan Fodio wanted to establish. While many writers including scholars like Thomas Hodgkin speak of the jihad as an attempt to restore the original model of the Islamic state as it was believed to have existed in the time of the Prophet and the first four caliphs', which would in effect have resulted in the establishment of a type of government which Abdullahi Smith describes as monarchy, both Shehu Usman dan Fodio and his brother, Abdullahi, paid much attention to the patriarchal caliphate of the late Abbasid era, a system which had seriously deviated from the original type of Islamic state. It was in fact the adoption of the Abbasid system that enabled the *sarauta* system to stage an easy and successful comeback.
- 3 A number of scholars have commented on the racial theory in relation to the Jihad. See Y.B. Usman, 'The Assessment of Primary sources: Heinrich Barth in Katsina 1851-1854', A paper presented to the Post-graduate Seminar, Department of History, A.B.U., Zaria, 30th April, 1977; A.M. Kani, 'The Political and Social basis of the Sokoto Jihad', A paper presented to the Post-graduate Seminar, Dept. of History A.B.U., Zaria, 1980.
- 4 Solken, H. 'Die Geschicchts Von Ada' in *mittheilungen des Seminars fur Orientalische Sprachen* Berlin XI, 1937; Anonymous, *Hausawa Da Makwantsu, Littafi Na biyu* (NNPC, Zaria 1971), pp. 54, 55, 58; Anonymous, *Tarikh Arbab hadha al-balad al-Musamma* Kano (ed.) and trans. by H.R. Palmer as 'Kano Chronicle' (Lagos, 1928), pages 125, 126.
- 5 *Ibid*, page 108.
- 6 Muhammad Salih, *Takyi Akhbar Jama'at As-Sheikh Al-hadhin Wama Jur Bainohum Wu Baina At-Taghut Min Al-Hurub* - - (collated and trans. by I.U.A. Musa and Abdullahi Mahadi, Dept. of History, A.B.U., Zaria, April, 1980), page 6(b).
- 7 The annual pattern of transhumance in fact minimised conflicts between the peasants and the nomads. During the farming seasons most of the animals were removed to the sahel regions to avoid the wet conditions in the Savanna regions. The animals returned only after much of the crops had been harvested and stored. Occasionally animals inevitably strayed into unharvested farms and caused some damages. But these occurrences never reached the alarming rate as presented in the various works. It is important to note that there is no mention of conflicts between the nomads and the peasants in the detailed list of the ills and problems which prevailed in the societies of Hausaland in the 18th century as provided in the writings of the Jihad leaders.
- 8 For general information on the bad practices perpetrated by the rulers in the society of Hausaland especially in the 18th century, see Usman dan Fodio, *al-gadat allati wajudu galayha as alfahum wa law canat gabiha* ('Kitab al-farg' ed. and trans. by M. Hiskett, BSOAS, XXIII, 3, 1960), pp.559-579.
- 9 Anonymous *Tarikh Arbab*, pages 123, 126.
- 10 Ibrahim Tahir, *Scholars, Sufis, Saints and Capitalists in Kano: A Pattern of Bourgeois Revolution in African Society*, (Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1975), page 202.
- 11 Anonymous, *Tarikh Arbab*, page 124.

- 12 Most of the Fulbe joined the jihad only after it had become clear that the ruling class had lost the war.
- 13 The members of the ruling class were in fact contemptuous of the literati who led the jihad movement. The King of Kano, Alwali, for instance regarded them as those 'to whom we used to give *Sadaka* (alms)'.
 14 NAK, SnP. 15, Acc. No. 289, Dawaki Ta Kudu District Assessment Report, 1937.
- 15 The type of government nearest to the ideals of the people was established in the time of the first Emir, Suleiman. During this time the principles of the sharia in all aspects of government were upheld. The favourable reaction of the society to Suleiman's policies is reflected in 'The Song of Bagauda' where it is stated that 'He (Suleiman) brought Islam; he drove away heresy. He administered the sharia unswervingly. There was no seizing of virgins, no confiscation and no sprinkling of dust on the head with the Fodio family'.
 16 Unlike in Suleiman's time, Dabo's period was characterised by 'pomp' and *mulki* (strong rule).
- 17 There is no doubt that the quality of Islamic jurisprudence improved after the jihad but for a number of reasons the authority of the Emirs of Kano, as well as their grip over the society, increased tremendously during the nineteenth century.
 18 Imam Imoru, 'Succession to Kingship - Nada Sarauta' in D.E. Ferguson, *Nineteenth Century Hausaland, Being A Description By Imoru of the Land, Economy and Society of His People* (Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles 1973), page 224.
- 19 Imam Imoru, 'The lands of the Hausa People - Kasashen Hausa' *Ibid*, page 146.
- 20 Many of the pre-jihad abuses and bad practices including *wasau*, and some of the irreligious practices such as ostentation, luxury and self-indulgence, virtually the natural accompaniment of the *sarauta*, persisted to the end of the 19th century. It is quite possible that a few of the rulers led almost ascetic life, but they could not have exercised much influence because they operated in a system.
 21 Anonymous, *Tarikh Arabub*, page 128.
- 22 This was particularly true of the periods of Emir Dabo and Abdullahi - spanning about sixty years.
 23 Muhammad Salih, *Takyid al-Akhbar*, page 31(b).
- 24 Abdullahi dan Fodio, *Diya Ul-Hukkam*, page 19; *Muhammed Bello, Usul al-siyasa*, page 41. Both of these documents have been translated and edited by Shehu Yamusa for his M.A. Thesis under the title: *The Political Ideas of the Jihad Leaders, being Translation, Edition and Analysis* (ABU, 1975).
 25 NAK, K/AR:5/2. *Tarikh Ningi*.
- 26 Muhammad Salih, *Takyid al-Akhbar*, pp. 21(b) and 22(a).
- 27 H. Clapperton, *Journals of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Soccatto*. Frank Cass London, 1966, p.182; H. Barth, *Travels And Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, vol. 1, Frank Cass, London, 1965, p.523.
- 28 These included slaves who performed different economic roles, and markets for raw materials and manufactured goods.
 29 Muhammad Salih, *Takyid al-Akhbar*, pages - 10(a), 11(a), 19(a), 19(b), 21(b) and 22(a); Denham and others, *Narratives of Travels and Discoveries In Northern and Central Africa In the Years 1822-1823, and 1824 Extending from the Great Desert to the 10° of Northern Latitude and from Kouka in Borno To Sackatou, The Capital of Felata Empire*, 2nd edition, (London, 1826), pages 28 and 29.
- 30 Apart from these there were very powerful slave officials such as Dan Rimi and Salama, who held the titles of 'Kofa' (door) through whom all *hakimi* (ministers?) had to conduct official business with the Emirs. In the later part of the century some of them became so powerful that they simply revolted.
 31 Through the *chappa* system (i.e. patron - client relationship with senior members of the ruling class), in addition to evading taxation, they cunningly extricated themselves from all forms of labour

demanded by the state. Their family, relatives and friends were also covered by the terms of the *chappa* system.

- 32 H.R. Palmer, 'An Early Fulani conception of Islam' *JAS*, XIII, 52, 1914, 410.
- 33 M. Hiskett, 'An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the 16th to the 18th century' in *BSOAS*, XXV, 3, 1962, page 592.
- 34 Professor Abdullahi Smith believes that the form of government which Shaikh Usman dan Fodio envisaged was not monarchy, or theocracy or aristocracy but monocracy. See Abdullahi Smith, 'The Ideal of Development Administration: An Historical Perspective' in *The Journal of Public Affairs*, vol.1 No. 2, May 1971.
- 35 This work was specifically produced for the Kano rulers as an administrative and political handbook.
- 36 It is not being suggested that any or all titles or offices created after the time of the Prophet and the first Rightly Guided Caliphs were un-Islamic. To believe so would amount to expecting the life of a society to remain static. What is being said is that, apart from their Islamic colouring, many of these offices were nothing more than instruments of oppression and exploitation whether in Baghdad or in the Provinces. As the Abbasid rulers became decadent they created more and more offices to satisfy their restless followers. The jurists often legalized the creation of such offices. It must also be noted that some of the titles had their origins in pre-Islamic Persian Empire.
- 37 By this we mean such things as sacrifices to *Iskoki* (spirits), etc.
- 38 Shaikh Usman Dan Fodio did indeed condemn hereditary rule in his *Kitab al-farq* in relation to his discussion of the pre-jihad sarauta system.
- 39 He has cited an Abbasid writer who claimed that this was based on one of the *hadiths*. But Shaikh Usman dan Fodio himself appears to have sanctioned rebellion against a tyrannical ruler who did not base his actions on the sharia.
- 40 The Ismaili, for instance. See Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, Hutchinson & Co., London, fifth edition, 1970, pages 108-110.
- 41 The best example was the case of the Ismaili in Ifriqiyya and Egypt. But this should by no means be regarded as a peculiar problem of Islamic revolutionaries. It has been the case with most other revolutions in other parts of the world.
- 42 Imam Imoru, 'Succession to Kingship - Nada Sarauta' in D.E. Ferguson, *Hausaland In the 19th Century*, page 224.
- 43 M. Hiskett (trans. and ed.) *Kitab al-Jurq*, page 570.
- 44 There was indeed an intense debate among the Jihad leaders, especially between Shehu Usman dan Fodio and Shehu Abdullahi dan Fodio on whether or not to eliminate the sarauta titles. According to Shehu Usman dan Fodio it did not matter whether or not the titles were retained. What mattered in his view was the adherence of the title holders to the principles of the sharia in the performance of their duties.
- 45 These included re-introduction of the hereditary system of succession, the levying of unIslamic taxes on the people, the methods used in appropriating and expropriating the people's properties, and several other irreligious activities.
- 46 The difference between these terms goes beyond mere nomenclature. They carry with them religious implications as shown in the following dialogues: 'Umar said to Salman: 'Am I a king or a Caliph?' and Salman answered: 'If you have levied from the lands of the Muslims one *dirham*, or more, or less, and applied it unlawfully, you are a king, not a Caliph'. And Usman wept', Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, page 64.

XI

Continuity and change in the political administration of the Nigerian emirates: The Kano example, 1900-1960

C.N. Ubah

Introduction

The word 'emirates' as applied to the territories under the Muslim emirs of Nigeria was a colonial adaptation. It was used to refer to all the territories under the jurisdiction of an emir in much the same way as a Caliphate represented for writers in English an agglomeration of territories under a caliph. An emir and a caliph were essentially Islamic rulers. The emir functioned under the principle of delegation of powers as a *naihb* (deputy, representative) of the caliph who exercised both temporal and religious leadership throughout his domain. One of the concerns of Usman dan Fodio was that the rulers of what we now refer to as the Sokoto Caliphate should be properly designated: the overall head of the community as the 'Amir al-Mumunin',¹ and the head of each major territorial sub-division as an Amir.² Before the imposition of British rule the head of the community was usually addressed in official correspondence, as Amir al-Mu'munin. His area of jurisdiction was known to include all the territories inhabited by believers who recognized his authority, but it was not customarily called a caliphate.³ The ruler of each major territorial sub-division to whom full powers had been delegated was also addressed in official correspondence as 'Amir', but the area under his jurisdiction was not formally known as an emirate although the idea was well understood. For instance, the emirate of Kano of the British period was precisely what had previously been known as *kasar* Kano (the land of Kano or all the territories directly subject to the amir of Kano). 'Sultan' was a convenient term which the British used to designate the successors to the headship of the caliphate which they had overthrown, and because the British believed that

with their occupation the caliphate had ceased to exist, they probably considered that it was anomalous to retain the title of Amir al-Mu'munin which implied some sort of imperial sovereignty. So they relegated the successor to that office to the politically less significant position of 'Sultan of Sokoto'.⁴

The concept of an emirate was crucial to the British administration of the muslim Northern Nigeria. With minor border adjustments in some cases, the emirs recognized by the British were allowed to retain intact the territories which they ruled before the advent of the new regime. An emirate of Sokoto was formed for direct administration by the Sultan when his caliphate had ceased to exist. The protectorate of Northern Nigeria was divided into provinces to each of which a Resident was assigned, and as the strength of political officers increased each province was divided into two or more Divisions under a District or Divisional Officer. A Division could consist of several emirates, but Kano emirate, the most thickly populated of the Nigerian emirates, stood out alone as a separate Division. At the beginning of colonial rule in 1903 Kano emirate had an estimated population of roughly 1,000,000. By the time of British withdrawal in 1960 the population stood at 2,952,904. Throughout the colonial period the emirate was a sensitive area from the British point of view because of its size, wealth, and traditions of government. For this reason, usually only very senior and highly experienced members of the colonial administration were posted to Kano to serve as Residents and District Officers in charge of the Province and the Division respectively. Some of the districts into which the emirate was sub-divided for effective colonial administration had resources in men and materials which were the envy of some of the smaller emirates in the Northern Provinces.⁵ In later years service at Kano as Resident was paraded with pride by senior British officers who aspired to the post of Lieutenant Governor of the Northern Provinces.

Because of the nature of their colonial policy the British did not at any time seriously consider the necessity for creating more emirates out of the existing ones. The bigger and richer an emirate the greater the respect accorded the emirs, at least so long as he did not stand in the way of the realization of colonial objectives. The Native Administrations of the emirates became part of the machinery, in fact the most important part, for colonial control and management. Initially the goals of the colonial authorities, were maintenance of law and order, economic exploitation of the emirates, and very limited forms of social improvements. Not until two or three decades later were serious programmes of improvement initiated in the wealthier emirates.⁷

The British certainly saw the retention of the emirate system as one of their major achievements in their administration of Nigeria. Today, Nigerians engaged in self criticism might ask - and very conflicting answers will be given to the question -whether the emirate system could foster rapid political, economic and social transformation. A question of this nature was actually raised at various times during

the colonial period, but by critics and rebels only. The orthodox and official view was that there was no viable alternative to the emirates.

The cornerstone of the British administration of the emirates was the emirship. Traditionally, the emirship as an institution was the backbone of the emirate system and, for reasons that are now very well known, the British decided that it should remain so. Writers on Northern Nigeria have often asserted that the powers of the emirs increased under colonial rule,⁸ or have quoted such opinions without any comment.⁹ The claim that the emirs became more powerful during the colonial period than hitherto is quite attractive and was possibly valid in some cases, but it has not been demonstrated beyond all doubts. In the particular case of Kano emirate, Fika asserts that the British approval of the actions of a particular emir 'made the ruler an unrestrained despot'.¹⁰ According to Paden, 'the executive powers of the emir. probably increased during the colonial period, both in the degree to which he could control territorial administrative appointments and in the actual number of functions to be performed'.¹¹ Evidently, the changing position of the emirs under colonial administration cannot be clearly demonstrated without a proper appreciation of the powers and privileges inherent in the emirship of the pre-British period as well as those which the institution retained or acquired during the era of British administration.

It has to be emphasized that under the theory of government held by the founders of the Sokoto Caliphate each emir had full powers to administer the territory assigned to him in the name of the Amir al-Mu'munin. The Caliphate was a unit, and in theory the responsibility for the spiritual and material welfare of all the believers belonged to the Caliph but, because of the practical impossibility of overseeing every part of the Caliphate directly, the Caliph delegated his powers to the emirs. Although the Caliphs retained the ultimate responsibility for all acts and omissions, the emirs were no doubt in effective control of their territories. Sokoto retained a nominal right of intervention in the affairs of the emirates and, in the course of the nineteenth century, assigned senior Sokoto officials to superintend the affairs of particular emirates¹² but, except in periods of crisis or emergency, the emirs were supreme in their internal affairs. As local chief executives they were responsible for all appointments, promotions, and dismissals to and from office. They made war and peace with or without reference to the Caliph and maintained an armed force or *dogarai* for security and to enforce their orders. They levied the *sharia* and extra-*sharia* taxes, and were at the apex of their judicial system appointing law officers who retained their positions subject to good conduct. They held their own courts which for all practical purposes were the highest tribunals in the land and which alone decided cases involving capital punishment. The emirs thus combined executive and judicial functions of government and this was perfectly legitimate under the essentially Islamic system of government which they operated. Although there was a large body of legislation in the form of Allah's own ordinances, Islamic rulers exercised discretionary power of legislation to supplement the divine law.¹⁴ In other

words, in the pre-colonial period the powers of the emirs were really quite enormous.

Evidence from Kano shows that, not infrequently, the emirs abused these powers and exercised a degree of despotism which those who see the pre-colonial period as good years gone by tend to ignore. Field informants spoke of illegal seizure of the property of the state, denial or miscarriage of justice by the Courts of the emirs, and other illegalities which the subjects, in their helplessness, left to Allah to avenge. After the fall of Kano to the British in 1903 Lugard selected as emir Muhammad Abbas, son of the fourth Fulani emir, Abdullahi, to succeed his brother, Aliyu Babba, who had ordered an ineffective resistance against his forces and was later captured and exiled to Lokoja. The British thus took over the function of appointing the emirs of Kano. A Resident was appointed to 'advise' the emir on the objectives and methods of British administration, but it was understood that the 'advise' of the Resident might at times amount to direct instructions which had to be complied with. In his speech to the chiefs of Kano after the appointment of Abbas, the High Commissioner announced the intention of his administration to impose what taxes it saw fit to pay for the cost of governing the emirate. It should be pointed out right away that this decision to take over matters of taxation detracted from the position of the emirs as Islamic rulers. Lugard also informed them of the outlawing of warfare and the abolition of the *dogarai*, and he made it clear that if the emir was ever under any necessity to enforce obedience to his 'legitimate' orders he should appeal to the Resident. An earlier proclamation made on the day Kano fell to the imperial troops had made possession of firearms without the permission of the Resident a punishable offence.¹⁵ Lugard had expressly stated his wish to rule through the emirs whose tenure of office depended on satisfactory conduct as determined by the Resident, the political officer on the spot. It is clear that if the emir could not or would not carry out the orders of the new administration he would be dismissed from office. Thenceforth the emir could not make any important appointment to or dismissal from his bureaucracy without the approval of the British. The judicial settlement involved the recognition of the emir's court and that of the chief Alkali of Kano as tribunals of 'A' grade having concurrent jurisdiction in all matters arising from the emirate.¹⁶

We obviously cannot agree with the contention that under British rule the emirs exercised powers or a degree of despotism which far exceeded what their predecessors were used to in the nineteenth century. During the colonial period the emirs' executive agents of government were not allowed to carry arms and this prohibition removed part of the awe in which the emirship was previously held. It is true that the ban on the *dogarai* was lifted once the loyalty of the emirs was assured and the issue of insecurity ceased to bother the British. It is also true that with improvements in communication the *dogarai* and other agents of the emirs easily reached more people even while inspiring less terror. This did not increase the coercive power at the disposal of the emirs. If anything, the emirs suffered a loss of

prestige in the eyes of those of their subjects who were aware of the conditions and practices of the pre-conquest era. With regard to the position of British political officers it is easily assumed that Residents, District Officers and others were used by the emirs to achieve their own ends and that the former were willing tools for manipulation. This picture is not borne out by the facts. Throughout the protectorate the first emirs had a very rough time indeed, and many of them were disposed of by officers who judged them incapable of being useful to the regime. Muhammed Abbas narrowly escaped deposition, but his retention of office was due to his willingness to give and take. After the first one or two decades of Indirect Rule many of the emirs had learnt when not to press their points of view too far, and political officers had also learnt when to act in deference to the wishes of the emirs and when to insist on points of principle. This was not true in every case as there were differences in character, ability, and disposition of men, both British and Nigerians, who operated the system.¹⁷ At the level of emir - D.O. relations, the major point of friction was the unsatisfactory state of the Native Administration: disregard of orders or slackness in carrying them out, extortion from and oppression of the peasantry, embezzlement of N.A. funds, undue interference with minor officials in the execution of their duties, questionable dismissals and appointments, impartiality in the administration of justice, and so on.

The point one has to make very strongly is that as far as the interest of the population in the rural areas were concerned, there was no fall in the standard of Fulani governments under the British. In the nineteenth century, the Caliphs were not unmindful of the conditions of the emirates from the standpoint of efficient government as understood by them, so the emirs could not altogether ignore them. But Sokoto was a very distant overlord and, except in situations of crisis, rarely intervened. Twentieth century conditions were entirely different. The overlord was on the spot. He might be handicapped by inadequacy of staff. Touring might be irregular and sometimes ineffective. Complaints against the emirs and their officials were not officially encouraged, but they were not completely set aside. Smith was probably guilty of exaggeration and certainly of undue generalization when he said that, 'the incapacity of the subject population of the emirate to complain directly to British officials in Zaria was itself largely due to the rules established by the British administration to govern its relations with the northern emirates; but lacking direct protection from the British, the population of the emirates remained defenceless against office-holders'.¹⁸ There is much evidence from Kano to show that complaints were frequently made to the D.O.s and the Residents by the *talakawa* (members of the commoner class). Many complainants actually went as far as Kaduna to talk directly to officials at the headquarters about alleged misdeeds by emirs and their officials. Some of them were given sympathetic hearing and returned to Kano equipped with letters urging the Residents to investigate their complaints. Many of these complaints were unsuccessful, but others were lucky to have their grievances redressed.¹⁹ The British held regular meetings with the emirs and, from

the 1920s or so, with their councils. In one form or another the issue of maladministration was raised and reprimands issued with firmness which varied from one emirate to another. Smith's view that the government of Zaria emirate in 1950 was 'an autocracy ineffectively supervised by the British'²⁰ was probably true of some emirates, but this is not to say that things were worse than they had been before the advent of the British. We are arguing in effect that by 1960 a few decades of colonial rule had succeeded in bringing about little change in the attitudes of rulers towards their subjects and in those of the subjects towards their rulers.

The claim that the powers of the emirs increased is not borne out by the fact that appointments, promotions and dismissals now had to be confirmed by the British. In the past the emirs did not need to plead with any one or present a special case to anybody before taking any of these measures. Now they had to show cause, and this must be clearly convincing or seemingly so. An emir's son who had no office might be recommended for one by his father when a vacancy occurred, and a District Officer with whom the emir had established a healthy relationship was unlikely to turn down the recommendation. Thus, in 1932 the sons of the Emir of Kano, Abdullahi Bayero (1926-53) were administering four of the twenty-six districts only a few years after their father's accession to office.²¹ There are numerous examples of the District Officer or Resident suggesting the promotion of a senior N.A. official from a small district, basing his opinion on ability and performance. The emir might not object, or if he had another candidate in mind a discussion on the merits of the individual candidates would then follow. The emirs have been unfairly blamed for the large number of dismissals which were effected under the British. Such annual turnovers were unprecedented, and they were due to the exigencies of the time. The code of conduct which colonial authorities impressed on N.A. officials emphasized efficiency, and this precluded extortion, corruption, oppression of the peasantry, and similar offences. N.A. officials, particularly district and village heads, were often alleged to have broken this code of conduct. Cases investigated and established by touring officers usually led to deposition, and emirs interested in particular cases did not always succeed in saving those concerned from disgrace. An emir could plead with the D.O. that an official against whom a clear case of misconduct had been made be given another chance, but if the D.O. insisted on his pound of flesh there was nothing else he could do. On the other hand, emirs did engineer investigations against the conduct of officials whom they wanted to get rid of but British staff were often on the alert to ensure that N.A. men were not dismissed except on grounds acceptable to them.

One of the most erroneous views on the position of the emirs under colonial rule is that they acquired from the British 'the right to appoint the personnel of the native courts' and that with the creation of the judicial councils 'the emirs were in fact given judicial powers which were co-extensive with the Alkalai's courts, both having concurrent jurisdiction'.²² We have already pointed out that traditionally the appointment of law officers (chief Alkalai: singular, Alkali) was the prerogative of the

emirs who also held courts that were ranked higher than those of their chief law officers. The emirs were not the gainers but the losers as a result of the innovations of colonial rule. Some chief Alkalai were given powers which they did not previously possess - for instance, the power to pass death sentence just as, or to the exclusion of, the courts of the emirs. Some of the Alkalai used their newly acquired position to embarrass their emirs, as some recent studies have shown.²³ At Kano the emirs managed to maintain the supremacy of their courts over those of the chief Alkalai.²⁴

This brings us to the question of 'Sole Native Authority' which is widely held to have contributed perhaps more than anything else to the making of the autocratic powers of the emirs during the colonial period. Dudley tells us that in the nineteenth century the emirs 'were never complete autocrats' but under the British the formation of Sole Native Authorities having powers to override their councils 'tended to turn the emirs into the autocrats they later became'.²⁵ It is important to understand the position of the emir in the government of Kano on the eve of the British occupation as a background to the proper appreciation of what British rule meant to the institution.

The opinion of the German traveller, Dr Heinrich Barth, who visited the Caliphate in the late 1840s and early 1850s with regard to the government of Kano is often quoted to illustrate what the position was at the time of British conquest. Barth says that 'the authority of the governor (i.e. the emir) is not absolute', and he goes on to name seven members of a council which worked in conjunction with the emir and whose views he could not fail to seek on important matters.²⁶ But it would be wrong to assume that, in the course of the fifty years or so which separated Barth's visit from the British occupation, Kano government remained static. There are very strong reasons for doubting whether there was ever a Council of seven, but the great merit of Barth's work is his recognition that the emir was advised by a council, although we are not told whether the emir was bound to accept the advice of his councillors. However, the Kano Chronicle records that a council of State or *Tara ta Kano* made up of nine senior officials was instituted by the famous Kano ruler, Muhammad Rumfa (1463-99).²⁷ Kano's oral historians were unanimous in stating that a council of nine was still in existence at the time the emirate fell to the imperial forces. The exact role of the council is not easy to determine. Oral accounts, while speaking of the autocratic character of the emirship, insisted that the emir necessarily consulted the councillors in important matters of state. Whether he was free to accept or reject advice is not altogether clear, but it would appear that a great deal depended on the character and personality of individual emirs. Under weak rulers such as Usman, during whose reign Barth visited Kano, the Chief executives would seem to have been guided by their Councillors, while under very strong and energetic emirs like Abdullahi (1856-82) and Aliyu (1894-1903) the councillors played a purely advisory role. In any case, the government of Aliyu was according to all oral accounts an autocracy of some sort, and this derived at least partly from the fact that he won the emirship by force in a disastrous civil war.

From the foregoing paragraph and in the light of what we have noted earlier concerning the functions and powers of pre-colonial emirs the argument that the autocratic emirship of the twentieth century was the making of the British administration is far from tenable. It is true that many of the emirs became 'Sole Native Authorities', with extensive powers under the Native Authority Ordinance of 1916 and the succeeding Ordinances on the subject,²⁸ but it is impossible to see in these ordinances anything new in the powers and functions of the emirs of the pre-British era. Section 5 of the ordinance made it a duty incumbent on the Native Authority to maintain order in the area of his jurisdiction and to exercise power over all natives residing in the area. Under section 6, the Native Authority was free to employ anybody to assist him in discharging his duties. Sections 7 and 8 made provisions for the detection and prevention of crimes and for the apprehension and trial of criminals. According to section 9 the Native Authority was under obligation to issue orders to be obeyed by his subjects provided that such orders did not contravene the provisions of any Ordinance. In order to underline the dependant position of the emirs in the new scheme of things, there were provisions for directing them as to what to do and for calling them to order in case of unsatisfactory conduct. Section 10 empowered a British administrative officer to direct the Native Authority to issue any order which the former deemed necessary in the public interest and should the latter neglect to do so the officer would then issue the order himself. In case the Native Authority had issued an order which in the opinion of the British officer should not have been issued he could be made to cancel it; and section 13 prescribed a heavy fine for the Native Authority if he was convicted on a charge of wilfully failing to discharge any of the obligations binding on him under the ordinance.²⁹ These obligations can simply be summarized as follows: maintenance of law and order (which was a primary responsibility of precolonial emirs) and the implementation of measures approved by or directed by the British (which left the emirs with little or no initiative of their own).

A major criticism of the idea of Sole Native Authority is that until its abolition in 1952 it took no cognizance of councils which had operated in the various emirates for many years before. Changes introduced in the conciliar system of Kano up to this time were quite revolutionary. Within the first decade of colonial rule members of the *Tara ta Kano* and other senior officials of the emirate administration who had hitherto resided in the capital and administered their fiefs scattered throughout Kano through intermediaries were sent out to the countryside to take a more direct and active part in the affairs of their territories which had been re-organized to make residence possible. This measure left the emir without a council; so, Abbas necessarily carried on as best as he could with the advice of his slaves. Kano palace slaves had grown into an effective machine which seemed to have reached its peak of power in the time of Aliyu. The policy of residence initiated by the British was partially aimed against them, and at first they and the emir had an identity of interest in seeking to make colonial administrative measures unworkable. Any attempt to

abolish the slave system would have met with very stiff resistance. The British decided to leave it alone and to persuade Abbas to restrict its activities to his purely personal affairs.

It was part of Lugard's policy that each emir should have a council and that each councillor should be resident at the capital and be given some responsibility of a very definite character.³⁰ In 1908 Resident Cargill set up a council made up of several officials including the *Waziri* who was designated principal councillor to the emir with responsibility to liaise between the emir and the Resident, the alkali to take charge of legal administration, and the *Ma'ajin Wateri* who looked after Kano city administration.³¹ This council was a dismal failure mainly because the *Waziri* was a slave of the emir who was forced to grant him freedom: this office which since the time of Aliyu had been next to the emir in importance had always been held by a prince of the blood, and the emir as well as the Kano nobility at large did not accept the innovation. The *Waziri* made matters worse by identifying himself with British interests, and the crisis which developed over this and other measures was terminated when Resident Temple dismissed the *Waziri* and offered the position to the Alkali of Kano. The council was reorganized and was made up of the emir, the *Waziri*, the *Ma'aji*, the Alkali, the Limam, and four other mallams, and it became the supreme court of appeal in respect of all cases within the emirate.³² It is interesting to note that the new *Waziri* was a member of the Gyanawa clan which had never held a political office, but the emir had to compromise because the British had decided not to give this position to a member of the royal family.

This experiment was not a success. Abbas was always more inclined to disregard his council; and to rely more on the advice of his slaves just as his immediate predecessor was said to have done; but to his credit, British officers said that he made serious efforts to keep them under control. The situation altered when Abbas died in 1919 and was succeeded by his senior brother who was both an old man and a weakling. Royal slaves came to the limelight again and attempted to run the emirship on behalf of the imbecile Usman. Colonial officials could not tolerate this resurgence of slave power, but they did not quite know what to do without precipitating a crisis. Usman did not die as early as they had hoped, and in 1925 their patience became completely exhausted. A new council of three consisting of the *Waziri* as the senior member and the *Madaki* and the *Sarkin Bai* both of whom had to be recalled as territorial administrators was formed to advise the emir. The *Waziri* was to advise on judicial matters, the *Madaki* on districts administration and the *Sarkin Bai* on the city and its various institutions. Luckily for the British Usman died less than a year later. Opportunity was taken to make confirmation of the emir-elect, Abdullahi Bayero, conditional on his disbanding the slave bureaucracy. He was told that time had so much changed that public affairs could no longer be properly conducted by palace functionaries.³³

The abolition of the system marked the beginning of a new era, for officials charged with specific duties could now administer their departments unhampered by

slaves who had in the past blocked access to the emirs, kept him in many cases ignorant of many of the things he should know, and lived on bribery and corruption. Although many of the slave offices were later resuscitated by Bayero's successor, Alhaji Muhammad Sanusi (1953-63), the holders were no longer regarded as slaves and in any case they functioned strictly as the domestic servants of the emir.³⁴

The membership of the council was increased to four in 1930 when the Ma'aji, the official in charge of the treasury and of financial affairs generally, was given a seat. The office of Ma'aji had gradually acquired a considerable amount of importance, and its holder was expected to possess much of the expertise of a professional accountant. Before the imposition of British rule and before the emir was granted a fixed stipend in 1909, the Ma'aji was in charge of state revenue which was not distinct from the emir's private purse. In 1937 this office lost its position in the council when the emir's son, the Ciroma, Muhammad Sanusi, was brought in as a member and charged with responsibility for putting financial matters before the council. In 1944 the council was enlarged by the entry of three new members, two district heads and a Mallam Bello, Headmaster of the Kano Middle School. Although Mallam Bello was a member of one of the most powerful ruling non-royal families of Kano (the Yolawa), his inclusion was quite a significant measure because he was the first relatively well educated (in the Western sense of the word) man to see service at this level.³⁵ For some time the Native Administrations of the emirates had been under mild pressure from the colonial administration to recruit Western-educated men and those of the *talakawa* class into their councils. So far Kano's response was cautiously and partially positive. When Bello became the Northern Minister of Community Development in 1952, his place in the council was taken by Alhaji Usman Gwarzo who was formerly a Visiting Teacher.

The emir's council was neither democratic nor representative. The emir was the Sole Native Authority, and membership of his council was something in the nature of a gift from the throne. The councillors were advised that they had a joint responsibility with the emir for the conduct of the N.A.s business. As already pointed out, the role of the council was purely advisory, and the emir was not bound to accept advice. The ideal aimed at was unanimity of opinion after members had been given an opportunity to express their views on issues. Unanimity was not difficult to achieve, but nobody was deceived. The British themselves knew and said that it was unreal because of the difficulty of making members express independent opinions.

The significance of the emir being above his council should not be exaggerated. The policy pursued and carried out at Kano was British policy. This left the Sole Native Authority with little or no initiative of his own to decide on very important issues. The British approach to politics in the emirates amounted to this: 'get the emir and you have got the Native Administration'. Once they had the support of the emir, the emir was certain to obtain the endorsement of the council. The autocracy of the emir was thus the autocracy of the British.

Criticisms of the emirate system increased with the end of the Second World War. At the Colonial office new ideas and temperaments were also changing the policies being pursued in the colonies. Sir Arthur Richards' Constitution and then that of Sir John Macpherson, defective as they were, raised issues which were diametrically opposed to the concept of Sole Native Authority and composition of emirs' councils. The emirates were not altogether insensitive to this wind of change, and in 1952 Sole Native Authorities were abolished upon a motion moved, interestingly enough, by the Sultan of Sokoto and passed by the Northern House of Chiefs.³⁶ Following the enactment of a new law the emirates were now to have Emirs-in-Council in place of the Sole Native Authorities. It was now mandatory for each emir to consult his council although he could still disregard its decision if he so wished.³⁷

By this time Abdullahi Bayero had ceased to be very active in public affairs owing to old age, and the Ciroma had been doing a great deal of the emir's work. On being elected on Christmas Day 1953 to succeed his father, Alhaji Muhammad Sanusi in a broadcast to the people of Kano promised to put their interests before everything else and to consult his council in everything.³⁸ The beginning of the new reign witnessed efforts to reorganize the council to make its members feel free to express independent opinion to make it more representative and the emirship itself less autocratic. The council as reconstituted, was made up of ten members, including four district heads. Mallam Bello resigned as Minister and resumed his position in the council. A notable addition was Kano's leading business magnate, Alhaji Alhassan Dantata who was appointed to represent the interests of the commercial community. Seven of the ten members of the Council came from the great families of Kano, and this was attributed to the fact that these powerful families were the first to be exposed to the Western-style educational system and therefore the best qualified to reap its benefits at the time.³⁹

From the late 1950s it became usual to address the members of the emir of Kano's council as Native Authority Councillors; some of those councillors interviewed even said that they were called 'Native Authority Ministers'. The membership was increased from time to time in recognition of the growing complexity of their responsibilities. More than ever before the necessity was felt of giving N.A. portfolios to people who had acquired a reasonable level of Western education and who could therefore be fairly expected to deal effectively with the manifold problems of a rapidly expanding economy and bureaucracy. By 1960 members of the Kano Native Authority council were a formidable assemblage and could be named among the ablest men the emirate had produced since the imposition of British rule. The membership included Alhaji Shehu Ahmed, a graduate of the Katsina College who succeeded his father as Madakin Kano in 1953 and was then a member of the House of Representatives;⁴⁰ Alhaji Inuwa Wada, Federal Minister of Works, who in 1958 was made councillor for Lands with the title of Magajin Gari;⁴¹ Mallam Ahmadu Rufai Daura, Schools Manager, who in 1959 received the portfolio for Education; and Alhaji Umoru Babura, Sarkin Fulani Ja'idanawa, a member of the Northern

House of Assembly who in 1961 was appointed Regional Minister of Establishments.⁴²

Muhammed Sanusi who had received the C.M.G. as far back as 1955 was thus running a quasi-cabinet system of government without a corresponding parliament, most of the members having been elected into either the Regional House of Assembly or the Federal House of Representatives. Virtually all of them had at one time or another attended a local government course in England. Most of the councillors still owed their positions to their birth and family connections in the first place, their experience and expertise being factors of secondary importance. We are told that the councillors were vocal, and this was not surprising. To the extent that each member was allowed a free expression of opinion, individual councillors might guide their colleagues competently in appropriate cases, but nobody was actually prepared to invite the emir's displeasure by arguing strongly against an opinion he was known to hold dearly. And the council, as constituted, was nonetheless both unrepresentative and undemocratic. Observers were not slow to recognize that such a situation was bound to create problems of one kind or another sometime in the post-independence period.

A dominant feature of the emirate system which colonial rule perpetuated was the principle of hereditary succession to offices, including the emirship itself. The founders of the Caliphate severely criticized the Hausa method of succession based on this privilege, but even in their own time the ideal of merit and the elective principle were abandoned. The office of Caliph became hereditary, and sooner or later the emirates followed what was happening at Sokoto. At Kano, power passed over to the descendants of the second Fulani emir, Ibrahim Dabo (1819-46). A council of four electors screened candidates for succession to the emirship whenever a vacancy occurred and made their recommendations to the Caliph who spoke the last word in the matter. The electors were members of four of the several powerful Fulani clans who had co-operated in the overthrow of the last Hausa ruler. These clans were the Yalawa, who held the office of Madaki; the Jobawa, who held the office of Makama; the Sullubawa, who held the office of Sarkin Dawaki Maituta; and the Dambazawa, who held the office of Sarkin Bai. All of these except the Sullubawa were ineligible for succession to the emirship.⁴³ Kano had a monodynastic system: For example, three sons of Dabo namely, Usman, Abdullahi, and Bello, succeeded him. The crisis and the civil war of the 1890s came about this way. On the death of Bello, his son, Tukur, and Yusuf the son of Abdullahi, both wanted the emirship. The caliph ordered the appointment of Tukur, and Yusuf took the path of revolt. When he died in course of the war his younger brother, Aliyu, took over the leadership of the faction and eventually succeeded in capturing Kano and disposing of Tukur. When the British took over Kano they offered Aliyu's senior brother, Abbas, the emirship which was thus retained in the house of Abdullahi.

During his speech at Kano, Lugard affirmed that 'the rights of succession, nomination, or election customary in the country would not as a rule be interfered

with'. At the end of Lugard's tenure as the High Commissioner, a fierce debate ensued among British Officers in the emirates on the merits and demerits of Direct and Indirect Rule, and even those who favoured Indirect Rule were not all committed to the retention of the Fulani in power because they believed that this was not the only option open to them. At the time of the crisis between British officers at Kano and Abbas, some of the former favoured the restoration of the old Hausa dynasty. The coming of Temple as Resident effectively settled the matter, for Temple was extraordinarily sympathetic to the Fulani cause. When Abbas died, the persons holding the electoral offices (to which the British added the *waziranci* or office of the Waziri) were summoned to make their recommendations. They failed to agree on any candidate, and Resident Arnett on his own authority recommended the late emir's senior brother, the Wambai Usman, to the Lieutenant Governor. Usman's eldest surviving son failed to carry the electors with him on the death of his father, and Abdullahi Bayero, the eldest son of Abbas, was selected. On the death of Bayero his son, Muhammad Sanusi, was the unanimous choice of the electors.

At the time it was first applied, the policy of retaining the emirship had a good deal of rationale. Politically, the emirs out of power constituted a serious security risk to the Lugard administration. Administratively they were indispensable, given the paucity of British political officers. Financially, Lugard's purse was hopelessly inadequate were it even possible to recruit a large number of European personnel. But as is now well known, what began as an administrative expedience was later built up into a large body of dogma. The emirship became a show-piece of British administrative talent in Nigeria. And coming as they did from a country with a monarchical system of government in which the monarchy itself was hereditary, the British were also impressed by the principle of succeeding to the emirship by hereditary right.

But not just the emirship. The electoral offices were hereditary in the families and the British were prepared to leave each family undisturbed in its heritage.⁴⁴ In the past century holders of other major offices within and outside the council of Nine were also recruited on the basis of birth and status. Certain positions such as Ciroma, Galadima, and Sarkin Dawaki Tsakar Gida were by custom preserves of members of the royal family, the first named being usually reserved for the son of the ruling emir. There were very few positions to which people could be appointed for reasons of merit or achievement. The British were not interested in innovations in this sphere: if the office-holders who customarily stayed at the capital and administered their fiefs in the countryside through agents (*jakadu*) were prepared to take up residence in the rural areas and rule directly the territories assigned to them, they could retain their offices. At first these office-holders or *hakimai* (singular, *hakimi*) objected to being sent away, but realizing the futility of resistance they gave up the struggle. By 1908 when the emirate had been divided into districts, the

hakimai had started to live in their district headquarters as district heads. Subsequently new districts were created out of the existing ones. Throughout the remaining part of the colonial period district heads rose and fell but the basic policy that they should be recruited from the traditional ruling class was maintained.

As one report put it:

In the case of the real territorial district heads, the choice (of successor in the event of a vacancy) would be made from any suitable person of rank available, and it is possible and sometimes advisable to promote a man from one district to another.⁴⁵

By the end of the colonial period most of the district heads could not read or write even in Hausa, but literacy was not a necessary qualification for such positions. But the district system was certainly a much sounder method of territorial administration than the one it superseded. Apart from making administration more effective, it brought government nearer to the people. The headquarters of the districts became much more than the walled cities of the country side they had been, centres of local development and improvements such as new roads and markets, wells, public latrines, and so on. The system resulted in the eclipse of the great *sarakuna* (singular, *sarki*) of the countryside (who were very powerful in pre-British days) except those who were raised to the rank of district heads.⁴⁶

In the area of village administration, the hereditary principle was not easy to apply. In the last century it worked in many areas but in others the emirs appointed whom they wished as rewards for services rendered or anticipated. This was particularly so in the time of Aliyu who used such headships to reward those whom he owed political debts during the civil war. Under the British the villages had to be reorganized not only to create units with very definite boundaries but also to make allegiance territorial.⁴⁷ The village heads were the last link between the emir and the people. They were responsible for the general welfare of their people, but their major duty was tax collection. Depositions for various offences each year created a large number of vacancies which were often sold to the highest bidder (even to people who were not natives of the villages) by district heads who had to recommend candidates to the emirs.⁴⁸ From the 1930s the British began to stress more strongly than ever that candidates for the post of village heads must have historical connections with the villages. Electoral councils were formed in the villages and were charged with the function of nominating candidates for the post of village heads. But up to the last decade of colonial rule many village headships were still being sold to the highest bidders. Incidence of bribery, corruption, extortion and other offences became so persistent that when Sir John Macpherson, the Governor of Nigeria, visited Kano in 1951 it was made a special theme of his address to the emir and his council.⁴⁹ British officials at Kano believed that the root cause of corruption lay in the pre-conquest custom of giving and receiving presents (*gaisuwa*). Although Muhammad Sanusi abolished the practice of *gaisuwa* in 1954 (some such measure

was probably taken in the last year or so of Bayero's reign) the attempt to stamp out bribery and corruption in the N.A. system by vigorous prosecution of offenders especially in territorial administration met with no success by the time of the British withdrawal.

It is clear from what has been said so far that sixty years of colonial rule brought in a lot of changes in the way the public affairs of the emirates were conducted. But in the midst of change there was a great deal of continuity. We may in fact go further and say that there were more elements of continuity than those of change in the field of political administration.

We have shown that the emirate as a concept predated the establishment of British rule in the emirates. However, the British expanded and maintained it in the interest of their survival. The bigger the emirate the better for the British provided that the emir was capable of exercising effective authority in furtherance of their ends. But the British attempted no amalgamations to produce larger emirates; on the other hand they did not create new emirates but of the existing ones for this would have weakened the emirs whose prestige they had promised to uphold. Although the emirs lost a number of powers to the British, scholars and others who thought that they should have lost much more began to argue that so far from being weakened the emirs actually increased in strength. The supporting evidence is weak, as we have attempted to demonstrate. As the British packed up in 1960 they left the emirs in very powerful positions, but they had also taken a lot of sting out of them.⁵⁰

However, traditional authorities - or those that were recognized - were assured of their place and status in society. The hereditary basis of authority was left sacrosanct. The Sullubawa were left in unfettered possession of the emirship, and district headships as well as membership of the emirs' councils were given out to the old ruling families. There were changes in the political fortunes of these houses, but the door remained closed to new seekers of power.

Notes

- 1 That is, 'Commander of the Faithful or of the Believers (Hausa: Sarkin Musulmi).
- 2 Meaning 'Commander', 'emir' is a corruption of the Arabic original.
- 3 'Caliphate' as applied to the dominion founded by Usman dan Fodio, was first used by D.M. Last. See his *Sokoto Caliphate* (London,) 1967.
- 4 Before the establishment of the Caliphate, the Habe rulers appear to have been usually addressed by foreign dignitaries as 'Sultan'. See, for instance, Muhammad al-Maghili's letter to the ruler of Kano, Muhammad Rumfa (1463-99) quoted by Usman dan Fodio in *Tanbih al-Ikhwan* translated by H.R. Palmer, *Journal of African Society*, vols. xiii-xiv (1913-1915). See also the use of this title in referring to Rumfa by the author of a seventeenth century document in M.A. Al-Hajj, 'A seventeenth Century Chronicle on the origins and Missionary Activities of the Wangarawa', *Kano Studies* vol. 1 No.4 (1968), p.11. 'Sultan' was certainly not the official designation of the Chief Executive of the Caliphate.
- 5 The area over which Lugard proclaimed a British Protectorate in 1900 was first known as the 'Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. With the amalgamation of 1914 it became known as the Northern Provinces, and with the developments following the end of the Second World War it was referred to as the 'Northern Region'.
- 6 One gets no other impression than this from the administrative records and Lugard's *Political Memoranda* (1906 and 1919) in which were embodied the administrative principles that guided the British for most of the colonial period.
- 7 These programmes, included provision of good roads, electricity, pipe-borne water, medical facilities, and so on. But important issues like industrialization and the training of high level manpower were not raised at all as they threatened the overriding consideration of dependency on the Metropolitan power.
- 8 See, for instance, B.J. Dudley, *Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria* (London, 1968), p.16.
- 9 For instance, A.F. Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Overrule, 1882-1940* (Ibadan, 1978), p.272.
- 10 Fika, *op. cit.*, p.164. The reference is to the first Fulani emir under the British, Muhammad Abbas (1903-1919).
- 11 J.N. Paden, 'Aspects of emirship in Kano' in M. Crowder and O. Ikime, *West African Chiefs* (Ife, 1970), p.167.
- 12 In the case of Kano emirate the official was the Waziri of Sokoto
- 13 Dispensation of justice was one of the major functions of an Islamic ruler.
- 14 This discretionary power is known as *siyasa*. As Joseph Schacht has put it, *siyasa* 'comprises the whole of administrative justice which is dispensed by the sovereign and by his political agents in contrast with the ideal system of Sharia, the religious law of Islam, which is administered by the kadi' See, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (London, 1964), p.54.
- 15 The text of the address to Kano leaders as well as the proclamation publicly displayed after the fall of Kano can be found as appendices 2 and 1 respectively in C.N. Ubah, 'Administration of Kano Emirate, under the British 1900-1930' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ibadan, 1973).
- 16 For the main body of Lugard's ideas on colonial administration in Northern Nigeria see his *Political Memoranda* (issued in 1906 and re-issued after the amalgamation in 1919).
- 17 This is especially clear in Robert Heusler, *The British in Northern Nigeria* (London, 1968), the chapter entitled 'D.O.s and Chiefs'.

- 18 M.G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau* (London, 1960), p.291.
- 19 For some of these complaints and the actions taken see S.N.P. 10/2, No. 52p/1914, 'Kano Provinces - Complaints'. Complaints of village heads against the District heads and of the *talakawa* against officials were very common in the late colonial period.
- 20 Smith, *op. cit.*, p.291.
- 21 Ubah, *op. cit.*, p.191.
- 22 Dudley, *op.cit.*, p.15.
- 23 Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 204, 214; P.K. Tibenderana, *The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule 1900—1946*, (Ph.D. thesis, University of Ibadan, 1974), p.326. I have not read the revised version of this thesis which is now in press.
- 24 For details see C.N. Ubah, 'Islamic Legal System and the Westernization Process in the Nigerian Emirates' (forthcoming in the *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, 1981).
- 25 Dudley, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 14.
- 26 Heinrich Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, vol.11 (London, 1857), pp.145-6.
- 27 'Kano Chronicle' in H.R. Palmer, *The Sudanese Memoirs*, vol.111 (Lagos, 1928), p.112.
- 28 The ordinance of 1916 was superceded in 1933 by a new ordinance which in turn gave way to the Native Authority ordinance of 1943.
- 29 The forerunner of the Native Authority Ordinance was the 'Enforcement of Native Authority Proclamation' which authorized the provincial courts to enforce the legitimate orders of the Native Authorities and at the same time allow these courts to set aside unjust orders of the Native Authorities. See *Laws of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria 1910*, p.611-12.
- 30 Lugard, *Political Memoranda* (1906), pp.199-200.
- 31 S.N.P. 7/10, A12, Kano Province Report No. 35.
- 32 S.N.P. 7/10 No. 6415/909, Kano Province Report No. 37.
- 33 S.N.P. 17/8, No. K105 Vol.III, Kano Province Annual Report, 1926.
- 34 The three most powerful slave officials were Dan Rimi, Shamaki, and Sallama. In 1972 I interviewed the holders of these offices who were then on the domestic staff of the present emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero.
- 35 I interviewed Alhaji Bello who at the time held the title of Makaman Kano and District head of the most populous district in the Northern states, in his headquarter of Dawakin Tofa on 9 August, 1972. He was a foundation student of the Katsina College from which he graduated in 1927.
- 36 C.S. Whitaker, *Politics of Tradition* Princeton, 1970, p. 100.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 Kano Prov. 5/1 No. 8328, Annual Report Kano Province, 1953.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 Alhaji Shehu Ahmed, interview at Kano, 10 August, 1972.
- 41 Since Alhaji Inuwa Wada could not be at Kano and Lagos at the same time, his work as councillor was carried on by one of the other councillors.
- 42 Alhaji Umaru Babur, Sarkin Fulani Ja'idanawa, interview at Garki, 12 August, 1972. Before he became Minister, Alhaji Umoru was councillor in charge of five departments - Agriculture, Veterinary, Forestry, Survey, and Sleeping Sickness.
- 43 The first Fulbe emir was a member of the Mundubawa clan. So, originally the Sullubawa were not royal.
- 44 These were, however, some significant changes. The district of Gwara under the Sullubawa holders of the title of Sarkin Dawaki Maituta ran into a series of difficulties which were finally resolved in 1916 by offering the title and the district to a member of the Dutse ruling house, Muhammed Nata'Ala who had acquired some rudimentary Western education and had done a nice job as district head at Dawakin Kudu. His appointment was apparently on merit, and he held it until 1942. In 1952 Alhaji Muhammad Sella Dandago who passed out of the Katsina College in 1932 was elevated to the

title. Dandago came from a Fulani family which had a relationship of clientage with the Sullubawa emirs. When I interviewed Alhaji Dandago on 29 June, 1972, he was still holding this title with responsibility for the administration of Kano city. Also the Jobawa lost their title of Makama to the Yolawa when Mallam Bello (interview cited) received it following the failure of the Jobawa to produce a suitable candidate.

- 45 S.N.P. 17/2 No. 16687 vol.1, Kano Province Annual Report, 1913.
- 46 That is, those of Kano, Dutse, Karaye, Gaya and Birnin Kudu. Rano was one of the states of the Hausa Bakwai but was absorbed by Kano early in the nineteenth century.
- 47 In pre-British times a *sarki* might claim and receive the allegiance of people who lived outside their borders.
- 48 The number of depositions for various offences in 1922 was no less than 150, and in 1939 80 village heads were dismissed for embezzlement.
- 49 For a note on the Governor's address see S.N.P. 16/6 No. 1078. There is overwhelming evidence that bribery and corruption were rife in all the emirates. In 1951 the Residents' conference arrived at the conclusion that 'the growing lack of enthusiasm for the N.A. idea among the younger educated elements was due in no small measure to the widespread corruption among Native Administrations'.
- 50 Whitaker has shown (p.101) that in 1952 the Northern House of Chiefs, after acknowledging the existence of bribery and corruption, passed a motion urging Native Authorities 'to make every effort to trace and punish offenders with strict impartiality'.
- 51 My chief informant at Kano, Mallam Hamza, told me no doubt with a degree of exaggeration that any of Aliyu's agents (*jakada*) of 1900 was more powerful than Muhammad Sanusi.

XII

The 1976 local government reforms as an aspect of Nigeria's Political Culture

Bashir Ahmed Ikara

... The truth is that the government... should decide, once and for all, whether Local Authority Councils and Local Councils should exist, and if they should, what functions they would perform. Indeed it would not be too far off the mark to suggest that if they should exist at all, they should be given *Constitutional recognition* with specific delegated functions which will then give them a character of *permanence* and *accountability*. . . In the circumstances, we even go further to suggest that if the Provincial Administration... is obliterated and the area Councils forged into Local Authority or local (government) Councils, Ministry representatives could be merged with the Councils so as to give each area an integrated approach to the problems of administration and a *local autonomy* which far exceeds a delegated power to decide. Not only would it dictate, then, that *more* functions should be given to the Councils, but it will also make the impact of government *more* practically felt by the people. . . (Bashir Ikara, 1971: 65-69)

The main contention of this paper is that the 1976 Local Government Reforms introduced by the Federal Military Government should be seen as the logical development of trends in Nigeria's political administration over a number of years during which ideas were generated, and crystallized, on participatory democracy for the purposes of national development even before Independence¹ as well as the contributions of contemporary scholars and Government functionaries. Even though the Federal Military Government publicised the introduction of the Local Government Reforms as its greatest achievement, Government merely 'introduced' the Reforms in 1976 when the mood of the nation was most receptive, and when the machinery for the return to civilian rule had to be set in motion. This may be

highlighted by the extent to which the Local Government Reforms exercise was based on the thesis which this writer presented in 1971 on *Field Administration in the North-Central and Western States of Nigeria*.² In that work, administration at the local level was approached from a national standpoint, perhaps for the first time. Recommendations for reforms included (i) complete autonomy for local government councils, (ii) the allocation of specifically defined functions and responsibilities to local government councils with financial provisions for them, and (iii) constitutional recognition of local government councils in order to ensure their permanence and accountability. By 1979 all of these recommendations had been implemented, including the provisions of section 7 in the new Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guaranteeing the Local Government system as a permanent feature of the country's political culture.³

The thesis surveyed the historical background of Field Administration in the North-Central and Western States of Nigeria from colonial times to the Military take over in 1966 as well as Nigeria's deplorable rural and urban conditions fully recognising that:

... in all the literature that has been written, attention has always been paid largely to the efficacy of one system or the other, or alternatively its gross inadequacy. Little has been said about the reciprocal values and benefits of a given system to the common man.⁴

The Colonial Political and Administrative Structure

Nigeria's political institutions of rulership in various forms exercised supreme authority over all their subjects before the advent of colonial rule. Particularly in the centralized states, the traditional ruler whether called emir, oba, obi, etc., - and each ethnic group had its own title - made the law, executed it and adjudicated over all cases including those involving life and death. This fusion of power and authority in one institution is of course, characteristic of traditional societies in many parts of the world.

The advent of colonialism, however, brought several changes. After various experiments, the structure of administration of the vast rural areas of the country under Her Majesty's Government was by 1939 based on the Colonial Secretariat organization which was the precursor of the Nigerian Field Administration and Ministerial organization. Supreme authority and responsibility were vested in the Governor, and the channel of communication to and from him was through the Chief Secretary who monopolised decision-making as long as he enjoyed the confidence of his governor and cleared major policies with the Executive Council. Nigeria was divided into three Regions: North, West and East, each divided into Provinces and these into divisions. Each Region was headed by a Lieutenant Governor (later called Chief Commissioner), each Province by a Resident, and each division by a District/Divisional Officer (D.O.). These, in addition to Departmental

Heads (professional and technical) were the Officers to whom the Chief Secretary delegated power in varying degrees and who were involved in the decision-making process. They were mostly British.

At the political level, the Native Authorities were retained in an attempt to decentralize and democratize the regional government administration. As a matter of practical expediency, Lord Lugard had introduced the system of 'Indirect Rule' (understood by many as a child of necessity) in which, at least in theory, the traditional rulers were constituted into Native Authorities as an integral part of the administrative machinery. This ambivalent system evolved systematically, and encouraged the existence of dual structures in the political culture: native courts and British courts, Nigeria Police controlled by British Officers and Native authority Police; the town of traditional habitation (birni) and the towns of strangers (tudun wada and sabon gari). Lord Lugard himself, the first Governor-General of Nigeria, did not see any duality in the system. Rather, as he put it:

There are not two sets of rulers—the British and the Native-working either separately or in cooperation, but a single Government in which the Native Chiefs have clearly defined duties and an acknowledged status equally with the British officials. (cited in Whitaker C.S., 1970:47)

Several reasons have been advanced for the introduction of this system into Nigeria. Sir Charles Orr, in *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, summarizes thus:

Indeed no other policy was at the outset possible, nor, had it been possible, would there have been any justice in sweeping away the Chiefs and rulers and setting up an alien rule in their place. A European staff large enough to administer the country and collect all the taxes would have been so costly as to be out of the question, nor with the country unmapped, unexplored, and practically unknown, would such a staff have had at their disposal sufficient local knowledge to enable them to do so. Clearly, the only possible method was to adopt the native machinery already in use and retain the Chiefs, appoint British officials to guide and advise them and to see that administration was carried out in such a way that its broad principles did not transgress modern notions of justice and clemency. (Quoted in A. Algazali: 1967:15)

But whatever other reasons might be adduced to explain the so-called Indirect Rule, the fact is that the colonial administration was not a 'Development Administration'. Nor did the ordinary citizen understand or demand any social services from their political institutions in return for the payment of tax. According to Algazali (1967:15)

... The Emir's subjects did not ask for, nor did they expect to be provided with, schools, hospitals, maternity clinics, motor roads, low cost housing, and water supply system and other related modern welfare state amenities. The common people only expected to be defended in time of war and to be treated justly.

It is important to note that the provinces formed the basis for the organization of regional functional Departments. In the North, the 'Native Authority' did the routine administration of law and order, justice, tax collection, education, conduct of public works, agricultural extension and veterinary services. The Government

through the Divisional Officer 'only checked, supervised, inspected, advised and prodded' (D.J. Murray 1970:95). The Resident was the Chief Executive and Co-ordinator of the activities of Departmental Agents at the provincial, as the Divisional Officer was at the divisional level. These 'Political Officers' were, again, at least in theory, to be 'mere advisers and whispers behind the throne and never for an instant the throne itself' (Oyinloye 1965:9).

It should be noted, however, that whether the system of administration was direct or indirect is really a matter of semantics. The administrative machinery of the 'natives', particularly in the northern part of the country, was no doubt preserved in the form of emirs, district and village Heads, native courts of justice, Islamic courts, 'pagan' courts, native councils, native police and native treasuries. Undoubtedly also, the district officer was instructed to realize that the Native Authority was the *de facto* and *de jure* government and that, at least theoretically, he was only to guide and advise the emirs and chiefs. He was neither to usurp their functions, nor create any impression that he was the ruler, nor instruct subordinate chiefs and district heads except through the Emir. He was to move close to the people, study their habits and behaviour, listen to their complaints and ensure that they were not oppressed; and, to do all these, he had to study their language and pass an examination in it before any promotion. Similarly, as an agent of law and order, his primary responsibilities included among others the need, indeed the necessity, to ensure the prevalence of contentment and feeling of well-being in his division, the absence of crime and violence, and the efficiency of the chiefs and native courts.

In practice, however, the district officer was a *Jack-of-all-trades* being from a postmaster to a customs officer, a school inspector, a road builder, a collector of statistics, an inspector of tax and court records, a court judge (Magistrate Grade II) and a Coroner who sat on inquests. He was the bridge between the central government and the Native Authorities as well as the communication link between the departmental officers and the Native Administration. The British colonial officer was the government in reality. All emirs and chiefs did his biddings and the people themselves knew exactly where power actually lay. The Hausa word *Zaki* i.e., 'Lion!', with which the colonial British officer (Governor, Resident or District Officer) was greeted by the people during the period was no doubt a clear recognition of this.

Although there were differences in the actual functioning of the Native Authorities in the northern and southern parts of the country, 'warrant chiefs' had to be created in some parts of the former Western Region and in the whole of the Eastern region—which led to bitter resentment in both areas—the district officer in the former Western Region performed basically the same functions as his counterpart in the North prior to 1952. He supervised such social amenities as market-places, abattoirs, dispensaries and roads in his division. He also supervised the courts and native authorities, issued the proclamation of tax collection under the tax ordinance of 1940 and supervised the disbursement of the colonial grants for local

development projects. He was also a Magistrate Grade III and a Coroner who conducted inquests. Commenting on the role of the administrative officer in the field in general, F.D. Magrath (1969:184) writes:

That concept of the administrative officer's general responsibility for his area arose principally from the fact that the line of executive political Authority went from the colonial Governor straight down to the Chief Commissioners in charge of groups of provinces and then to the Residents and District Officers. If any occurrence in an area had a political effect - and it is amazing that a variety of things did end up by having a political effect - it was the administrative officers who were going to have to cope with it and carry the responsibility even if the original occurrence took place in a departmental sphere of activity. . . . But the real point was that the provincial Administration was; so far as the country's internal affairs were concerned, the Executive embodiment of government on the ground - the telegraphic address of a District Officer was Executive.

In addition to the role and functions of the Colonial officers serving in Nigeria as outlined above, they were specifically instructed to shed their whiteman's feathers of civilization and superiority and come down to the level of the 'native' citizens in administering justice to the people: not to mock any superstitious beliefs, nor apply British notions of justice, even if it meant tolerating some measure of misrule. In particular, they had to have loyalty both to the colonial office and the people they served which required constant study and self discipline. One important aspect of such loyalty could be the promotion of trade by whatever means between Nigeria and Great Britain. They were required for example to collect samples of possible economic products for transmission to the Imperial Institute. All these were applied within limits and there were gaps always between spirit and practice.

The Spirit of Reform from Colonial Times to 1966

The Macpherson Constitution of 1951 made possible for the first time the participation of Nigerians in policy formulation and marked the beginning of the end of the Secretariat organisation. The years 1954-58 saw the integration or amalgamation of Departments with Ministries: as a result, the field organization had to be modified to suit responsible parliamentary governments in a federal state and to reflect the distinction between the political and administrative aspects of the work of colonial administration.

What is the nature of those reforms that long preceded the famous 1976 Local Government reforms? As far back as 1936, Walter R.S. Miller, the distinguished missionary of Wusasa, Zaria, had concluded in his book *Reflections of a Pioneer* (London, 1936) that:

. . . after living amongst the Hausa for thirty years and getting into very close contact with members of almost every group and social status, I am convinced that there is a growing dislike of the present system, and that before long, British administrators will be faced with a powerful plea for direct British rule, leading to a more progressive and widely based rule of the people for the people. . . unless the

present native administration can adapt itself to more modern ideas, I foresee a widespread revolt before long against obscurantism, tending towards more democratic institutions and a more representative administration'.⁵

Increase in the level and spread of Western education and in particular the introduction of parliamentary politics in the Northern Region in the early 1950s certainly sparked off resentment to the prevailing political traditions, and encouraged the demand for reform. People like Malam Aminu Kano, Ibrahim Imam of Borno, Abubakar Imam of Zaria, Ahmadu Bello of Sokoto, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of Bauchi (amongst others) who were later to become well-known leaders of political parties such as the NEPU, the UMBC and the NPC were outstanding critics of the Native Authority system. It is significant to note that although they were to differ later in party affiliations, they were all agreed on this vital question of the need for change in the Native Authority system. In an article published in the *Daily Comet* of 1st June 1950, an elementary school teacher in Kano, Yusuf Maitama Sule, later to be Nigerian Ambassador to the UN, said among other things:

The ordinary man, the 'talaka' whose views and opinions should be respected and listened to, and who should have a say in the government of his own country if at all we are being governed democratically, has been neglected. . . Having got an elected Council in the centre and another in the ward, Northerners should next look for an elected Emir. The Emir should be amenable to those he rules. . . If an Emir is really elected by his people he will be more respected by them, and, I believe, he will respect them more as his loyal subjects.

By far the most significant call for reforms in the Region was made by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (later to become the Prime Minister of Nigeria) when, in a speech delivered in the House of Assembly in Kaduna, on 9th August, 1950 while tabling a motion, he said, amongst many other things, 'let there be no misunderstanding, I have no axe to grind and wish no heads to roll in the gutters. I do not wish to destroy, I call for reform.' On the role of the ordinary citizens he complained thus:

. . . in practice their views have never been sought, their welfare seldom regarded and their helplessness shockingly abused. And in the Native Authority Ordinance they hardly find a place. Far from the chiefs having well-defined duties, one of the biggest defects of the system is the complete ignorance of everyone from top to bottom about his rights, his obligations and his powers. This ignorance must somehow be removed and the people made to realize that they too have a share in their own government. First, it is necessary for everyone in authority to understand that he is a public servant, fed and clothed by the public and to act accordingly. . . The illiterate mass of the people recognize no change in their status since the coming of the British. They are still ruled by might, and administration is still none of their concern. . . And for their part they should understand that the North enjoys freedom of speech and freedom of action within the law.⁶

The motion which he tabled prayed the House to recommend to His Excellency, the Governor, the appointment of an Independent Commission to investigate the system of Native Administration in the Northern Provinces and to make recommendations for its modernization and reform. The Northern public, he said, should be

given the fullest opportunity to discuss and criticize the report of recommendations before their final acceptance by the Governor. It is instructive that Balewa's final note in his speech was on the twin problems of bribery and corruption which have continued to plague our public life to this day:

Finally, Sir, I come to the sting in the tail. *No one* who has not lived amongst us can fully appreciate to what extent the giving and taking of bribes occupies the attention of all degrees to the exclusion of the ideals of disinterested service. Much of the attraction of a post lies in the opportunities it offers for extortion of one form or another. Unless the commission fully realizes the gravity of this problem, and tackles it with courage, any recommendations they make for superficial reforms are bound to fail. It is a most disturbing fact that few officials can afford to be honest.

By 1952 the Governor of the Northern Region had abrogated the status of emirs as sole Native Authorities hitherto conferred on them by the Native Authority Ordinance of 1933 and replaced it by a Chief-in-Council or Emir-in-Council system. Again, in response to radical criticism of the new system which allowed the Emirs and Chiefs to reverse the decisions of the Council with the support of the Governor, the system of 'Emir and Council' and 'Chief and Council' was introduced by the Native Authority Law of 1954. It may be noted in passing that the motion to abolish the sole Native Authority system and replace it with a Chief-in-Council or Emir-in-Council system was moved in the House of Chiefs by the Sultan of Sokoto and led to the enactment of the Native Authority (Definition of Functions) Law in July 1952. The Chief and Council system already provided for in this same law was meant for the non-emirate areas of the southern parts of Northern Nigeria. Under this system, the chiefs were bound by the majority votes of their Councillors in all matters. These Councillors included those with portfolios heading various departments and constituting an 'inner' Native Authority Council. Token financial provisions were made for District and Village Councils for expenditure on development projects in their areas approved by their respective Native Authorities. The 1954 Law also provided for the inclusion for the first time of some members, elected indirectly, on Native Authority Councils.

The agitation for democratic reforms of local government had manifested itself in the southern parts of Nigeria particularly in the Western Region since the colonial period and at least preceded, if it did not directly influence, that in the northern part of the country. In the Eastern Provinces, of course, where traditional rulers did not have any autocratic powers, the British had tried to institute 'warrant chiefs' and had encountered bitter resentment and revolt. Through the policy of Regionalization, however, the British succeeded in keeping a wedge between the regions and in preserving intact the customary institutions of the Northern Provinces as much as possible. In the words of the then Governor-General of Nigeria, Sir Arthur Richards, in his Despatch to the Secretary of State for the colonies dated 6th December 1944 (Lagos 1945):

What are needed are bodies where the affairs of each group of Provinces can be discussed. . . in this way a claim to representation would be created from the Legislative Council to the people through the regional Councils and the Native Authorities, and it would be a type of representation which would be in accordance with custom, would fit-in naturally with existing institutions and would be readily intelligible to the people themselves. . . The individualism and the craving to paddle their own canoes which distinguishes the people of the Eastern Provinces, finds no counterpart in the disciplined and conservative North, where respect and affection for the Chiefs is a very real factor.⁷

It was in the former Western Region that the agitation for democratic reforms was strongest and took roots at a much earlier period, along with the nationalist struggle for self-government in Nigeria. Indeed, when considering fully democratic local government in the North, the British were most concerned about the gloomy prospects of a violent revolutionary upheaval such as they had encountered in the southern part of the country. Thus, even with the advent of self-government some British officials, it is said, were willing to sacrifice the unity of Nigeria and its democratic development to the coherence of the Northern Nigerian Emirates and the perpetuation of their customary institutions.⁸

In point of fact it is rightly argued that 'the decision to develop responsible institutions at the regional level owed much to the consideration that it would permit the pace and extent of democratization to be adjusted to the distinctive conditions and culture obtaining in most of the Northern Provinces'.⁹ The decision to use the Native Authorities as the basis of representation under the 1946 Constitution is also part of this concern. It is even argued further that the entire course of Nigeria's post-war civilian Constitutional development - the movement from the essentially unitary structure of 1946 to 'strong' federation in 1951 and to 'weak' federation in 1954 - was determined largely by the attempt to perfect a Parliamentary system at the centre while keeping the door open for the survival of traditional institutions in the Emirates. Regionalization then clearly meant that the affairs of the Native Administration remained the responsibility of the regional Governors.¹⁰

Be that as it may, it is not clear whether the agitation for reform of local government institutions in the southern part of the country had any direct consequential influence on the Northern elites in their urge for reforms in the 1950s. What is quite evident, however, is that there was lack of any intimate contact or communication between the political elites in the northern and southern parts of the country. There was also the great empathy each group had for the traditions of its own Region; the identification of the British serving officers with, and their loyalty to their respective Regions; and the slow rate of 'modernization' of the Northern Region which deferred its achievement of self government to 1959 whereas the Western and Eastern Regions achieved their own in 1956. Yet, it is also clear that Tafawa Balewa, in moving his motion on democratic reforms of traditional rulership institutions in the Northern Emirates, was quite aware of what was happening in the southern part of the country when he said:

You will see that the motion concerns the North alone; and as the other Regions are dealing with the same problem in their own way, I hope I shall not be called upon to move this resolution in the Legislative Council: for it is here and now that a remedy for our disease must be found and applied with the least possible delay.¹¹

Thus, between the years 1952 and 1966 there were movements towards change and reform in the traditional political institutions throughout the country even if, by the dictates of circumstances, such movements were more rapid in some areas than in others. After the take-over of power in 1966, of course, the Military Government had to consolidate its position first and to fight the unfortunate civil war up to the end of that decade. By 1970 most Nigerians had become more conscious of their democratic rights and could demand more and better services from the Government. Hence the need to decentralize the administration of such services to the local level of society became more urgent.

It is important to note at this juncture, however, that even before the 1976 Local Government Reforms there were other reforms of local administration by the same Military Regime especially after the creation of twelve states in Nigeria in 1967. What distinguishes the 1976 reforms from the others is that, whereas the earlier reforms were undertaken by individual state governments, in 1976 the Federal Government aimed at unifying the structure, procedure and financial guarantees of local governments within a national framework. For example, in 1967, the Military Government in the Western state devised the process of democratization, decentralization and deconcentration by the Administrative Divisions (Establishment) Edict of 1967. This provided for twenty-eight Administrative Divisions (see B. Ikara 1971: 43-45 for full details) with power vested in the Governor for:

- (i) the transfer or adjustments with respect to the assets and liabilities of any local government council, provisional authority, joint board, joint committee or any committee established under any law;
- (ii) the transfer with his consent of any employee of any such council, authority, board, committee or any other body and for determining any question which may arise from such transfer;
- (iii) the transfer of any writs, process records or other documents relating to any such council, authority, board, committee or other body as aforesaid and for determining any question which may arise from such transfers.

Curiously, however, the Reform went on to transfer power to what was called a 'Sole Administrator' in each of the twenty-five divisions (three had joined the new Lagos State) who was also the Inspectorate/Divisional Officer. In his capacity as the latter he had overall authority in district affairs but did not co-ordinate the activities of other field departmental officers. The field organization did not at all conform to the new administrative set up. Because the traditional councils of Chiefs still existed and people were believed to have respected them more than they respected the State government, the Sole Administrator held constant meetings with them to sound out

their opinions and feelings on Government policies even though he was not compelled to do so by law (Ikara, 1971: 44). This was replaced in 1972 by the Council-Manager system modelled on the American and Canadian traditions. But as Adamolekun (1979:4) says:

Although the government paid some attention to the size of the Councils and the resources at their disposal, the critical pre-requisite of qualified staff who could really be called 'Managers' in the American tradition was not met. By the time the Western State was further sub-divided in April 1976, the Council-Manager System had not shown any sign of producing the desired results.

Similarly, the East-Central, Rivers, South-Eastern and Mid-Western states also sought to establish a local administration system in which there was a unified State Administration without *any autonomy at the local level*. Styled 'Development Administration' or 'Divisional Administration' System, the idea was to treat the administration of local affairs as an extension of the state administration with the proviso that the state officials responsible for the decentralized responsibilities of the state should work together and in association with selected/elected representatives of the people as Councils or Committees. The East Central State, in particular, made a deliberate attempt to ensure that the geographical areas of the local councils and committees coincided as much as possible with the natural boundaries of the various communities within the state.

In the Northern parts of the country, such reforms took the form of Area Councils or Development Administrations. The three Area Councils created in the North-Central State for example were typical of the others in character, purpose and functions. The local government reform of April 1969 clearly took a radical and practical step in the direction of greater participation of the people in the governance of their local affairs. As a result of the Reform:

- (i) Native Authority Councils in the State were dissolved and replaced with Local Authority Councils; each Council was enlarged and made more representative with members drawn from all the districts, the life of the Council being three-years;
- (ii) each Local Authority Council was to be composed of two-thirds elected and one-third nominated members, but pending the restoration of elective politics, members were nominated;
- (iii) the existing system of appointed portfolio councillors was replaced with a more democratic portfolio councillor system;
- (iv) in order to separate the legislative from the executive, portfolio councillors were responsible for policy making and the general supervision of Local Authority affairs, but did not exercise executive functions;
- (v) the existing portfolio councillors were retired but reconsidered for nomination into the local authority council and where suitable for appointment as portfolio councillors;

- (vi) employees of the Native Authority nominated to the council were made to resign their appointments or revert to proper local government service, the more qualified of them being absorbed into the state government service;
- (vii) the 'Native Authority', because of its derogatory connotation as a relic of the past colonial administration was renamed 'Local Authority' and the Administrative Officer in charge of Zaria Township was renamed 'Zaria Township Authority';
- (viii) the distinction between a Chief-in-Council and a Chief-and-Council was abolished. All chiefs were to act in accordance with the decision of the Local Authority Councils, but they retained their traditional authority to enable them continue to provide the right leadership required by the people.

The same Local Government reform provided for the decentralization and devolution of the powers of the Local Authority to another council called the Area Council. By the Instrument of 1st April 1970 under the Local Authority Law (cap 77) the Area Councils were created and gazetted on 9th July, 1970. The Instrument divided the two provinces, Zaria and Katsina, into three Area Councils each viz: Katsina into Dutsin-ma, Funtua and Katsina, and Zaria into Saminaka, Jama'a and Zaria. According to the State Executive Council, (N.C. Press Release No. 65 7/2/70):

The creation of Administrative Areas, the changes in the functions of Ministries and now this redefinition of division of functions are all parts of a broad policy of so reshaping the administration of the state that it can more effectively stimulate the economy and well-being of the people. This entails greater concentration and coordination of effort at clearly defined local levels because it is at these levels that both Ministries and Local Authorities effectively assist the people.

As pointed out earlier, the 1976 Local Government Reforms were inspired largely by the ideas generated over time on the need for democratizing the political institutions of power and authority existing at the time, for the purposes of local government. Even the 1969 local government reform in the North Central State and others in the northern parts of the country were said to have been inherited from the previous civilian government of the First Republic when the Military took over power in 1966. According to G.U. Summerhayes:

... The implication (of such reforms) is that local government was previously static *but* is now in a state of change. But with a few exceptions, the present local government reforms are not new departures but are the logical and inevitable consequences of reforms initiated by the former civilian government. Indeed, in the vast majority of cases, these reforms had been considered and evaluated at official level and were either under preparation for implementation or had been put aside for further consideration at some future date. (G.U. Summerhayes, 1969)

It was against this kind of historical background that the thesis earlier referred to proceeded to postulate some conceptual and structural frame of reference for further reforms. It is significant to note, as a comparison will show, that the research recommendations and the *Guidelines on Local Government Reforms* issued by the

Federal Military Government in 1976 were more than coincidentally similar in spirit and outlook to that conceptual framework even though individual states differed here and there in their implementation.¹²

The Conceptual and Structural Framework for the Local Government Reforms

The deplorable socio-economic conditions of life in the rural areas formed the conceptual framework of analysis in the thesis. The exploitation of the rural 'gentlemen of the countryside' in times of war as weapons of defence, who were completely ignored in times of peace, was highlighted. With little to eat and less to wear, the rural dwellers were seen to have led a life of complete resignation to fate and destiny. Although they had always paid their taxes, they were duped by the politicians into selling their votes on the expectation of immediate social and economic changes, joyful life and teeming pleasures, but all in vain. Modern social amenities conducive to better standards of living have always been the exclusive preserve of the urban dwellers, many of whom hardly pay any tax at all but persistently demand for 'more and better' from the government (see B. Ikara p. 11)

When the civil war broke out, it was the rural dwellers throughout the country that were siphoned from the bush, the slums and shanty houses to join the Army and defend the nation. Many of them were lured into their graves by attractive salaries. They were already on the edge of a living death before the war, and when it came they were ready to fight not so much to defend the nation as the 'territorial integrity' of their stomachs and of those of their friends and families. For those who died — and there were many thousands — it was a solace to die rather than return to the tortures of their 'living death'. As they marched romantically to their graves — the open air for most of them — life went on swinging for those in the urban areas (B. Ikara p. iii)

Mutual cohesion and harmonious co-existence as symbolized by exogamous marriages characterised life in the rural areas:

Resigned to 'fate' and destiny they eke out their humble existence on what benevolent nature can provide. They are mostly underemployed on the farm lands, illiterate, unaware and unconcerned about the world outside . . . they love to till the soil, to prowl in the dark jungles hunting and to climb the trees to eat the fruits or cut the foliage for the next supper. . . In some areas, quite often they discuss local politics but forget about it no sooner than the discussion is over. Although it is said that they put the future in the hands of God, I am inclined to believe that they have a budget 'planned' and printed in the mind and all economic activities are geared to the achievement of the objectives set out. The objectives, to be achieved by the end of the year, range from the payment of tax (first and foremost), to a change or increase in the number of attires and of wives for the head of the family, the most senior son or his immediate brother. In general, these rural dwellers, especially the aged amongst them, regard the cities as sacred places ordained only for a special class of inhabitants. Once in the city on business, they wear new attires (new because washed) and are extremely cautious in their dealings with the people of the city which they leave as quietly as they come to it. . . (Ikara, p. 6-7)

It was against this background that the work considered that in Nigeria more attention should be given to the *quantitative* aspect of Field Administration instead of paying lip service to the common man. And *unless the aim of public administration is to make citizens wretched in order to be able to govern them and enforce obedience*, any government can only justify its existence if it caters for the interest and welfare of its citizens (Ibid p. iii). The point was made that, unless this is done, 'when all the rural dwellers have rushed to the cities and the industrial centres, field administration, its organization and what have you would definitely fall into disuse: the rocks, the brooks, the trees, and the deserted huts and dilapidated shanty houses would require no human routine administration'. (Ibid, p. 73)

Some of the remarks and observations made therein with respect to the Area Councils in the North-Central State and the Divisional Areas in the Western State include the following:

- (i) With better roads linking the cities with the remotest areas, rural dwellers will be able to have more and better foodstuff and social amenities, and sell at higher prices. They will also be content to stay at home and to frequent the cities only when necessary. Currents of new ideas will continue to flood them and to change their current thinking and way of life. (Ibid pp. 18-19)
- (ii) The Administrative Officers sent to these Areas should be styled 'Chief Executives' and should be men of high calibre and personal integrity. The idea of sending inexperienced and ineffective new Administrative recruits should be discarded. (Ibid., p.67)
- (iii) In the North-Central State whether for now or for the future Provincial administration has no place in the structure and should wither away. The Provincial office is nothing but a 'post office' for transmitting messages from the field to the headquarters and *vice-versa*. Not only is it an expensive waste of manpower but also a clog in the communication medium between the centre and the field. (Ibid., p.73)
- (iv) A close look at *the functions delegated* to the (Area) Councils will reveal that most of them are of purely local significance and could best be provided by a *single Local Authority*; indeed the more so when most of the important functions hitherto provided by the latter had been centralized by the Government. (Ibid., p.65)
- (v) On the other hand, the policy of centralizing the functions of the local authority is subject to severe criticism. In the first place, it is unreasonable for the government to delegate such functions to the Council without equipping them with the necessary financial resources and qualified staff to enable them to achieve the set objectives. Nor is it rational for the government to rush in anger and disappointment at the failure of the council and 'snatch away' these delegated functions, upon which the

- authority and dignity of the councils were based, on the pretext that it will provide them in a better way. (Ibid., p. 69)
- (vi) In the present circumstances, we might even go further to suggest that if the Provincial Administration in the North-Central State is obliterated and the Area Councils forged into Local Authorities or local councils in a way similar to the Western State, then Ministry representatives could be merged with the councils so as to give each Area an integrated approach to the problems of administration and a local autonomy which far exceeds a delegated power to decide. (Ibid., pp. 76-7)
- (vii) [In the Western State] One does not need a second to wonder why the Local Councils could not provide services efficiently. One should not forget also the multiplicity of councils in the state which sinks the meagre local government resources into personal emoluments. Most of them were created to give local independence to clans and village groups or merely satisfy the prestige of local obas and elicit their co-operation. But since they had neither finances nor functions they degenerated into 'mere debating chambers' and in Western Ijaw and other areas sixteen local councils voted unanimously for their own liquidation and replacement by new District Councils — thirty were abolished between 1957 and 1963. (Ibid., p. 70)
- (viii) . . . It is readily observable that in both the North-Central and Western States the defects in the different existing systems of Field Administration are traceable to a single factor: This is the virtually total absence of delegated decision-making power to the field officials. . . (Ibid., p. 76)

The 1976 Local Government Reforms

The extent to which the Federal Military Government was circumspect in introducing radical reforms in local administration in 1976 is very difficult to determine. One thing stands out quite clearly, however: it took exactly a year to investigate fully the effect and significance of, as well as desirability for, such reforms. As the Army Chief of Staff put it in the foreword to *Guidelines on Local Government Reforms*, following extensive consultations and reports on reform commissions in different states, the Federal Military Government decided:

The whole country was divided into zones and each zone was asked to prepare papers on Local Government Reforms and particularly on the definition and functions of Local Government, the financing of Local Government Service structure, etc. The zonal reports were themselves widely circulated and discussed at various conferences held in Enugu, Kaduna and Ibadan. The final conference was held in Ibadan to reduce the recommendations of all the Committees plus all the observations made by local government practitioners, traditional rulers, local council administrators and any other interested parties. . . the document was further submitted again to a national conference of Traditional Rulers which was held in Lagos in

July, 1976. The Traditional Rulers at this conference expressed general agreement with the ideas contained in these reforms. . .

It was only after these consultations that the Federal Military Government felt convinced that the widest possible discussions amongst Nigerians who are likely to be most intimately connected with the practice of Local Government had taken place. . .

Taking note of the defects of the previous Local Government systems the Federal Government defined the new Local Government as:

. . .intended to stimulate democratic self-government and to encourage initiative and leadership potential. The Federal Military Government believes that it is only through an effective Local Government System that the human and material resources could be mobilized for local development. Such mobilisation implies more intimate communication between the governed and the governor. But above all, these reforms are intended to entrust political responsibility to where it is most crucial and most beneficial, that is, to the people. The Government hopes that these reforms would further enshrine the principle of participatory democracy and of political responsibility to every Nigerian. These reforms would mean nothing if they did not include the certainty that as from now, every stratum of the Nigerian society would benefit from the continued prosperity of this country, through the availability of amenities, indeed, necessities, such as electricity, adequate water supply, improved transportation, health facilities and so on. . .

Nevertheless, there are many areas in which the Military Government could have been more circumspect in introducing the Reforms of 1976. A major area was the ambivalent attitude of the reformers to traditional rulership institutions. While making sure that the traditional rulers were consulted and that they gave their tacit acceptance to the spirit of the reform — even development at the local level and participatory democracy — the government failed to clearly state their role in the new dispensation. For instance, should they be part of the implementation machinery like the Secretary to the Local Government Council and his staff carrying out Council decisions, or should they be part of the Council in the decision-making process and pass on policies to be implemented by the Council staff?

This issue was further complicated by the reform guidelines which sought to preserve what it called 'the organic unity of our traditional institutions and societies, without defining what that meant. In the absence of such a definition, many states in their local government Edicts reflected a structure with traditional Councils meant to deliberate over issues decided by the local government councils and to offer advice. The rivalry that ensued between them in terms of publicly demonstrating who had more power could have been forestalled by the reform.

Since the Local Government Chairmen were also members of the traditional Councils where they had to pay homage to the traditional rulers, relationship between them was bound to be tricky. Some Chairmen, anxious to demonstrate their newly acquired statuses, publicly showed signs of disrespect to the traditional rulership institutions. Similarly, civil servants, at the headquarters, whose responsibility it was to implement the Edicts and regulations and give them meaning and effect,

sometimes violated the spirit of the reform. Hitherto, fresh graduates were posted to the rural areas as Secretaries or District/Divisional Officers in the name of giving them practical experience. Since they often showed various signs of inexperience it was felt that under the new dispensation, more senior officers should be posted instead. In many cases in the northern states, however, it was the same young officers who were catapulted overnight to senior positions since the more experienced ones avoided working in the rural areas. Gone were the days when the white D.O. (Divisional/District Officer) rode on horse back or trekked for many miles in the bush to solve a local problem. We must also mention at this juncture that the Federal Military Government on coming into power in 1966 had taken over and centralized the judicial, police and prison administrations from the local authorities long before the 1976 reforms were even contemplated. This was seen as a necessary step if the traditional rulership institutions were to be insulated from partisan politics. With these instruments gone, however, and with the 1976 reforms, the public image of traditional rulers was bound to diminish, often considerably. The Local or Native Authority police in the northern states undoubtedly controlled power, based largely on their local knowledge of the area. The central Nigeria Police who replaced them in most cases do not even know the language of the area, and are unable to have access to local information. Yet, the *Guidelines* clearly stated that the functions to be delegated to the Council were those:

- which require detailed local knowledge for efficient performance;
- in which success depends on community responsiveness and participation;
- which are of a personal nature requiring provision close to where the individuals affected live, and in which significant use of discretion or understanding of individuals is needed.

A further point relates to the electoral processes of the local government councils in 1976. Since the Military was determined to hand over power, members of the Constituent Assembly had to be elected or selected on some geographical basis, and the proposed local government areas were found convenient as constituencies. It was therefore necessary to hold elections into local government councils throughout the country without any political party or manifesto or objective other than to serve as electoral colleges for the Constituent Assembly. The discretion was in fact given to states to organize indirect elections and many took the option. Similarly, the Council could nominate three amongst its members for the post of the Chairman but it was the state Governor who had the final say on who among them should be appointed.

Furthermore, the boundaries of the local government councils were not easy to determine, going by the Edicts. This gave rise to many disputes and subsequent readjustments of boundaries in some local governments long after their creation. In some areas it happened that the market or the hospital or the school belonging to a local government area was located in another local government area. Even in such

cases it was an uphill task to convince the traditional ruler of the area that it was not his territory that was being torn assunder. It is significant to note here that to this day a local government council is called 'Karamar Hukuma' in Hausa i.e., 'the small council' that succeeded the 'Babbar Hukuma' or 'big council i.e., the 'Native Authority!

Provision is made also in the *Guidelines* for the creation of 'subordinate councils' by the local government councils for certain delegated responsibilities. But to this day no local government council has created a subordinate council, and from all indications such a provision is redundant.

The provision that there should be a population of about 250,000 people per local government was also implemented rather arbitrarily for different reasons. First in the absence of any reliable census, the 1963 census was by law to be used as a point of reference. Neither the *Guidelines* nor the Edicts that followed them provided for some way of obtaining periodic and reliable statistics for the purposes of creating new local governments. Since the Census, if conducted at all, is conducted after every ten years, the implication was that local governments could only be created once after every ten years unless the state House of Assembly has amended the provisions of that Edict to conform to new demands. The truth, however was that many local governments began to be created (from the first day of their inception) as a result of other criteria than population. There was in fact debate as to whether or not there was need to amend the Constitution to create more local governments in the country.

A Prospective View

Before we examine the role of local government councils and traditional rulers in the future, it is important to draw attention to the fact that the system of local government in Nigeria has now been given *constitutional recognition* with defined functions and statutory allocation of *funds* as recommended in this writer's thesis of 1971 under reference. According to section 7 of the Constitution of Nigeria 1979:

- ...7—(1) The system of local government by democratically elected local government councils is under this Constitution guaranteed; and accordingly, the Government of every state shall ensure their existence under a Law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of such councils.
- (2) The person authorised by law to prescribe the area over which local government council may exercise authority shall:—
- (a) define such areas as clearly as practicable; and
 - (b) ensure, to the extent to which it may be reasonably justifiable, that in defining such areas regard is paid to:—
 - (i) the common interest of the community in the area,
 - (ii) traditional association of the community, and
 - (iii) administrative convenience.

This means in effect that the local government system has come to stay in Nigeria for as long as the Constitution lasts and if any changes were to occur any day in the

political system, it is unlikely that such changes would affect the local government system given its popularity. Secondly, this kind of permanent guarantee safeguards the system from the whims and caprices of state Governors particularly under the Military regime when local governments were dissolved on the slightest pretext. The local government Edicts also contain express provisions for dissolving local governments through judicial processes. Indeed, according to Adamolekun ((1979:3):

What distinguishes the 1976 local government reform from all previous reform exercises in the country is the formal and unequivocal recognition of local government with defined boundaries, clearly stated functions and provisions for ensuring human and financial resources. All the other aspects of the reform flow from this fundamental innovation and the success or failure of the entire reform exercise will depend on the extent to which the new local governments succeed in becoming an effective level of government after the federal and state level.

Yet if the local government system is to succeed for the future, many of the defects pointed out above should obviously be rectified. Secondly, certain crucial problems will have to be solved.

For example, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1979) accepts the continued existence of traditional rulership institutions and places them under the executive arm of the government to play an advisory role under section 178(1) at the state level, which provides for the establishment of 'Certain Executive Bodies' one of which is the state Civil Service Commission, the State Electoral Commission and the state Judicial Service Commission as Executive Bodies, while at the Federal level the council of State includes one traditional ruler from the State Council of Chiefs in each state (Section 140(1) and the Third Schedule). It should also be pointed out, that traditional rulership institutions exist under laws dating back to colonial times and no state Government has to this day made any attempt to repeal such laws.

The net effect of all this is that while traditional rulership institutions throughout the country clearly exist by law, such laws give no clear guidance as to their functions. Judging by the pronouncements of politicians and governments all over the Federation, opinion seems unanimous that they should be insulated from partisan politics as fathers of the land. This kind of attitude, however, is rather vague and has been the source of friction and conflict between the traditional institutions and the government in many states.

To say that they should not be involved in partisan politics as fathers of the land is to say that the President of the Republic who provides the focal point in the political process as the father of the land should not be involved in partisan politics. Yet, to place them in the Council of States at the Federal level is to immerse them directly in politics since they will have to debate issues with:

- (a) The President as the Chairman.
- (b) The Vice-President who shall be the Deputy-Chairman.

- (c) All former Presidents of the Federation and all former heads of the governments of the Federation.
- (d) All former Chief Justices of Nigeria who are citizens of Nigeria.
- (e) The President of the Senate.
- (f) The Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- (g) All the Governors of the States of the Federation.
- (h) The Attorney-General of the Federation.
- (i) One person from each State who shall as respect that State be appointed by the Council of Chiefs of the State from among themselves.

If in any state there is a conflict between the traditional ruler and the Governor, the Council of State can easily become the forum for extending the conflict to the national level if the particular traditional ruler is a member. Besides, in cases where a traditional ruler is anxious to safeguard only his position, he is likely to refuse to give his advice even when it is most crucial. The word 'advice' be it noted, appears quite elastic. For it is difficult to see how the Government can ignore the 'advice' of the Council of States on such *politically* vital issues as ' . . .the National Population Census and compilation, publication and keeping of records and other information concerning the same, prerogative of Mercy, Award of National Honours, the Federal Electoral Commission (including the appointment of the members of that Commission), the Federal Judicial Service Commission (including the appointment of members other than ex-officio members of the Commission), and the National Population Commission (including the appointment of members of that Commission; . . .' (3rd Schedule Part I—(1).

For a more stable structure there should be a Federal Council of Chiefs corresponding to the state Council of Chiefs if traditional rulers should feel free to tender their fatherly advice to the President of the Republic. The highest ranking traditional ruler in each state should be the member representing that state although this may not be obvious in every state. In place of the prevailing symbiotic structure there should be two parallel structures, traditional and modern, complementing each other with mutual respect.

With respect to functions it is important to note that apart from their advisory role in the Constitution no express provisions have been made for any functions to be performed by the traditional rulers. On the contrary section 39 (Sub-section 1-3) under the Fundamental Rights Chapter clearly contradicts all other provisions in the Constitution and by implication all existing Laws and Ordinances - or so it appears! It provides for the Fundamental Right to freedom from discrimination on any grounds in such a way that it makes the institution of traditional rulership possible only on an elective basis open to everybody to contest without discrimination and it bars any incumbent chosen on hereditary grounds from exercising executive or administrative action thus:— (Section 39):

- (1) A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person. . .
 - (a) be subjected either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government to disabilities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religions, or political opinions are not made subject; or
 - (b) be accorded either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any such executive or administrative action any privilege or advantage that is not accorded to citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religions, or political opinions.
- (2) No citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or deprivation merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth.
- (3) Nothing in subsection (1) of this section shall invalidate any law by reason only that the law imposes restrictions with respect to the appointment of any person to any office under the State or as a member of the armed forces of the Federation or a member of the Nigeria Police Force or to an office in the service of a body corporate established directly by any law in force in Nigeria.

Above all, it is important to note that merely recognising the institution at the state and national levels and not at the grassroots alienates it from the local people and from its own abode and this has led to a considerable loss of its public image in the rural areas. However, since the institution continues to play a vital role in local affairs even today in the way in which government activities and programmes are often transmitted far more effectively through it than through the megaphones of the Ministries of Information, its public image at the grassroots should be restored. For example, all health, agricultural, education and other programmes including the Operation Feed the Nation, the UPE etc. have involved traditional rulers in order to be effective. Most importantly is the traditional law and order function throughout the country and particularly during crises even under a military regime. Since no government has abolished the institution but, rather, more recognition tends to be given to it with better conditions of service and higher salaries, it should be made to function commensurate with the expenditure made for its sustenance.

In an effort to insulate the institution from partisan politics it is often treated as part of the Civil Service, and traditional rulers are addressed as public servants. Whatever the reason for this, this description violates the typical politico-cultural ethos of the institution since a ruler cannot at the same time be referred to as a servant. A distinction has to be made between those who rule and those who govern in our contemporary political culture.

One area in which the institution could serve a useful purpose is in that of religious observance. Although the Constitution guarantees the freedom of worship in order to avoid religious conflicts, it prohibits any religion to be declared and practised as a state religion. But this is only to the extent that whatever is done to one religion by the State should also be done to any other religion practised in the state. Unfortunately, however, this has been taken to mean that Government cannot interfere in any religious conflict even within one religion. The result is, of course, confusion, moral laxity, and cultural alienation particularly among the youth. There is no doubt that in a state with many religions — whether some are dominant or not — state interference may breed conflict and even bloodshed.

Yet, since religion is the guiding spirit of any community and indeed the foundation of its political culture and political institutions, traditional rulers should rightly fill in the vacuum created by state non-interference and attend to all religious matters including reconciling religious factions and inter-religious conflicts. Above all, no matter where they are, they should set the highest standards of moral probity for the people to emulate. Similarly, they should be appointed chairmen of Schools Boards to ensure discipline and moral conduct in schools by precept and practice.

Title holding should be restricted to the palace, and the holders of such titles who otherwise contest elections and expose the institution to challenges, abuses and ridicule from fellow contestants, should resign and help to restore the image of the institution. We need to shape our political behaviour and public conduct anew: no person in authority is known to be abused traditionally in the language and vocabulary that we now employ in reference to our public office holders today!

Another major area where traditional rulers could make substantial contribution to national development is in the promotion of the arts. Our traditional societies are occupationally differentiated as farmers, weavers, dyers, blacksmiths, etc. whose artistic works are daily being pushed out by foreign goods. Organized into guilds under a traditional ruler as the grand patron, they could be motivated to be more innovative, and could be assisted financially to promote their works to the highest level. Traditional rulers should also be made to patronise scientific inventions and do everything possible to make society more creative and productive.

All this presupposes that they will come directly under the aegis of the state government, and not under their respective local governments, which will be responsible for their salaries. The Chairman of the local government council should also be elected by 2/3 majority of voters in the area rather than through the nomination of three members one of whom is appointed by a state Governor at his discretion. This should further help to lessen tension between the traditional and elective heads of the Local Government.

Finally, it should be said that the structure postulated here presupposes the juxtaposing of traditional and modern political institutions as cultural resources with a clear line of authority and defined functions in such a way as to promote greater efficiency for the greater good of the Nigerian community. In these days of

fragmentation of local governments into smaller units of local administration, this kind of structure will enhance the co-ordination of development plans at units higher than the Local Government Unit for the overall development of the State and the nation.

To summarize, the following measures are recommended in order to ensure a sound and stable political culture for Nigeria:

- (i) Judging by the number of new classifications given to Emirs and Chiefs by various governments in Nigeria in recent years, and judging by the number of Ministers, Commissioners, Distinguished Senators, Honourable members of House of Representatives and State Houses of Assembly, distinguished Public Servants and leading businessmen who have acquired traditional titles within the same period, traditional rulers should be given well defined functions to perform by a Law enacted by the Federal and State Legislatures. Sections 39 and 178 of the Constitution should however be amended to effect meaningful changes.
- (ii) There should be a National Council of Traditional Rulers distinct from the National Council of States to deliberate on matters of national significance and advise the President accordingly. At the state and local levels, traditional rulers should be involved in integrative functions, rural development projects, school management, the maintenance of law, order and security, the promotion of development programmes within and across local government areas.
- (iii) All traditional title holders in active politics should renounce such titles or retire from politics in order to ensure the role of traditional rulers as fathers of the people.
- (iv) A distinction should be made between the traditional roles and statuses of Emirs, Obis, Chiefs, etc. throughout the country in the context of our contemporary political culture and those of politicians and officials in government.
- (v) The state government should be responsible by law for traditional rulers in terms of service conditions, appointments, etc. and should pay their salaries directly and not through their respective local governments.
- (vi) Local government Chairmen should be elected by the entire people of their respective local governments.
- (vii) Throughout human history rural life has been characterised by peace and tranquility, by the display of the highest moral standards of society and by the demonstration of the philosophy of earning a living through hard work, service to God and love of mankind. To that extent, it is the singular responsibility of all local governments in Nigeria to uphold and preserve

these cherished traditions of humanity and not to see their local governments as avenues for contract awards, cut-throat competitions, individualism and moral degeneration.

- (viii) Local Government Councils should not regard themselves as sovereign kingdoms and empires, self-reliant and self-sufficient, but as part and parcel of the federal and state political structure. They should, therefore, do their best to promote community and inter-ethnic understanding and mutual appreciation.
- (ix) Local Government Councils in Nigeria should see themselves as the primary centres for the development of initiative and creativity in the arts and in the sciences as well as for character formation and the development of a truly Nigerian personality. The pride of any ethnic group in Nigeria should be in the extent of its own contribution to the artistic, scientific and technological progress of Nigeria and in the number of men and women of excellence it is able to produce in positions of power and authority capable of leading Nigeria to greater heights.

Notes

- 1 See C.S. Whitaker, Jr. 1970, for the initiative taken by the colonial office in 1947 in response to nationalist pressure to move in the direction of democratization of Local Government in a "Despatch of the Secretary of State for the colonies" This also formed the main topic of discussion at the Cambridge Summer School conferences of 1947 and 1951, and the African Governors' Conference convened in Nov. 1947.
- 2 Submitted to University of Ife Institute of Public Administration in partial fulfilment of the Requirements for Post-graduate Diploma in Public Administration.
- 3 This writer was privileged to represent Ikara Local Government Area of Kaduna State in the Constituent Assembly which had ratified a motion too on the order paper pleading for statutory allocation of funds to local governments from the consolidated Revenue fund which is also part of the constitution. In October, 1979 he worked as the Secretary to Daura Local Government Council for six months in order to assess the operations of the new local government system and see what areas needed further reform. It was from Daura that he submitted a memo to the Okigbo Presidential Commission on Revenue Allocation urging for more funds to be provided for in the new Allocation formula for local governments.
- 4 See first paragraph of the thesis under reference.
- 5 See C.S. Whitaker Jr. (1970) op. cit.
- 6 Ibid., p. 97-98
- 7 Ibid., p. 53 footnote No. 29.
- 8 Ibid., p. 52.
- 9 Ibid., p. 53.
- 10 Ibid., p. 53.
- 11 Ibid., p. 97.
- 12 No claim is made to the original ideas behind the 1976 Local Government Reforms. It may be stated however that according to the former Permanent Secretary (Political), Cabinet Office, Alhaji Yahya Abubakar, the Federal Military Government gave specific directives to the Cabinet Office to collate within the shortest possible time available information on how to go about the reform. Dr. Onwurah, the Local Government Consultant to the Cabinet Office, confirmed that he personally travelled many times to the Institute of Public Administration of the University of Ife for consultation. The United Nations Consultant on Local Government to the Institute, who supervised the thesis and liked its contents but not its language, was appointed member of the National Co-ordinating Committee for the Local Government Reforms set up by the Federal Military Government in preparation for the 1976 Local Government Reforms. He had earlier made the thesis a reference text for students of Local Government at the Institute.

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XIII

The Military and Political Engineering in Nigeria (1966-79): An Overview

J. Isawa Elaigwu

In Nigeria's process of political development¹, the role of Military rulers cannot be ignored. After all, of Nigeria's first twenty one years of existence as a sovereign State, the Military ruled for thirteen years. It may be correct, therefore, to argue (no matter how humorously) that Nigerians are more used to military rule than democratic civilian rule. This does not mean that Nigeria has developed an authoritarian and militant political culture. But there is no doubt that the military has affected the political culture, what with the militarization of political language — 'Old brigade', versus 'New brigade' of politicians — and the political style displayed by some civilian politicians when they assumed power in 1979.

Today, literature on military intervention in politics is no longer scarce.² But this is not our focus in this paper. Here, we are more concerned about the performance of the military, especially, its performance in the political domain of the society. Among the reasons for the military's intervention in politics is the feeling that it can act as a political physician - if nothing else, that it can reusher order into the system. The experience of many countries have shown that if the military hops unto the political platform as physicians, it soon discovers itself as a patient infected by the disease of its predecessors it had set out to cure and/or prevent. At times, the military also discovers that instead of dampening crises, they heighten crises. While in some cases, as in Zaire, the military has institutionalized the political process from near chaos, in others they have accentuated political instability and triggered off numerous military coups as in the Republic of Benin.

But how good are the military as political engineers? Are they good crises managers? This is the focus of this paper. While we take cognizance of the economic

system, we shall limit our discussion to the military's role in the political system as state builders and social reformers in Nigeria.

For our purposes the term *political engineering* takes on a political connotation. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *Engineering* as 'the science concerned with putting scientific knowledge to practical uses. . .'; 'the planning, designing, construction, or management of machinery, roads, bridges, buildings, waterways etc.' and 'the act of manoeuvring or managing.'

For us, both definitions are pertinent. Political engineering is used here to refer to the process whereby scientific knowledge of politics and society is deployed to practical uses, such as establishing new institutions, and/or reorganizing existent institutions to achieve given political and social objectives. Naturally, this process involves the act of management - how to manage people. Government as an art involves management and manouvre. Our use of 'political engineering' is similar to Ali Mazrui's use of 'cultural engineering'.³ We are interested in knowing the extent of impingement of political factors on issues of 'social reform and national development',⁴ and the manipulation of human habits towards new areas of political development - under the leadership of the military.

Within this context, we suggest that:

- (i) Nigeria's military administration has engaged in fruitful exercises of political engineering, thus bequeathing to their civilian successors a solid state, even if within a fluid nation;
- (ii) no Nigerian military regime has been radical: succeeding military regimes have been either reformist or oriented towards guardianship role;
- (iii) demilitarization of the Nigerian military was in its own institutional interest;
- (iv) demilitarization of the Nigerian military has gone on without adequate and corresponding depolitization of the military; and
- (v) unless politicians are careful, the Nigerian military may come back, this time - as 'participants in the power equation'.

Let us turn to our first proposition to evaluate the performance of the military in political engineering as they embarked on structural and institutional reorganization as part of the state - building process.

Political Engineering and State-building

The Quest for a Model of Government

The first military regime under General Ironsi had inherited a number of problems from the civilian regime. Among such problems was the nature of Federal-State relations in the context of the aggressive centrifugal pulls from the regions. Secondly, the regime had to grapple with the issue of establishing itself in power and providing leadership. In addition, the nature of the coup⁵ had created problems of confidence among Nigerian groups and among members of the Armed Forces.

General Ironsi had to cope with these issues. These problems required political foresight and subtlety, patience and compromise. They required the skills of a reconciliation leader and yet the speed of a mobilizational leader.⁶

General Ironsi's reaction was to create institutions for an effective Military Administration. By Decree No. 1, 1966,⁷ the legislative and executive bodies in the regions and at the centre were suspended. Under this decree the Federal Military Government (FMG) had 'power to make law for the peace, order and good government of Nigeria or any part thereof, with respect to any matter whatsoever'.⁸ It also defined the distribution of functions and power between federal and state governments. The Military Governor of a region could not 'make law with respect to any federal matter included in the exclusive legislative list' and he was also precluded from making law 'with respect to any matter included in the concurrent legislative list' except 'with prior consent of the Federal Military government'.⁹ However, the Military Governor of a Region was allowed to make laws for the peace, order and good government of that Region.¹⁰

At the centre were two new institutions: the Supreme Military Council (SMC) and the Federal Executive Council (FEC) under the Chairmanship of the Head of the Federal Military Government (HFMG).¹¹ These two bodies were basically Military, except for the presence of the Inspector-General of Police, and later, the Federal Attorney-General) in the FEC. Under the Gowon Administration, some civilians were appointed members of the FEC. The Murtala and Obasanjo regimes maintained this tradition of co-opting civilians into the government.

The FEC was responsible for legislation with regard to Federal matters. It was to 'exercise general direction and control over every department of the government of the Federation'.¹² On the other hand, the SMC was the highest decision and policy-making body for the whole country. In terms of hierarchy of command, the governor was appointed by, and was responsible to, the HFMG who was also the Supreme Commander (later Commander-in-Chief)¹³ of the Armed Forces. It gave the impression of a Unitary form of government, but it was highly decentralized in practical operation of the system.

After establishing this administrative structure, Ironsi turned to the political problem of finding the appropriate model of government for Nigeria. This included finding adequate formula for Federal-Region relations which had pestered the civilian regime. The nature of Federal-Region relations was such that a Nigerian Head of State once remarked that:

... the regions were so large and powerful as to consider themselves self-sufficient and almost entirely independent.

The Federal government which ought to give lead to the whole country was relegated to the background. The people were not made to realize that the Federal government was the real government of Nigeria.¹⁴

In fact, at various times, the regions had threatened the authority of the Central government. Threats of secessions had come from the Northern Region (1950) the

Western Region (1953), the Northern Region (1953), and the Eastern Region (1964). Each region had used the threat of secession as a political capital extraction mechanism in their relations with the centre. Many observers had wondered whether the 'regional tails' were wagging the 'federal dog'.

This was the situation which Ironsi had inherited. He could have immediately taken action to centralize political power or create additional sub-national regions before the dust which followed the coup had settled down. He did not act quickly partly because of the circumstances in which he found himself - the Nigerian socio-political context which often immobilized its leaders.¹⁵ In part, Ironsi's hesitation was a result of his lack of capability to comprehend political situations fast enough and to respond accordingly.

He waited for five months before he opted for decisive action. Although he had set up a Constitutional Review Study Group to study the Constitutional problems of Nigeria and submit report to a Constituent Assembly, Ironsi moved to set-up a Unitary government on 24 May, 1966. By Decree No. 34, 1966 (which was essentially Ironsi's broadcast to the Nation) Nigeria became a Unitary State: it ceased to be a federation and was now to be called the Republic of Nigeria.¹⁶ All the former regions were abolished and were now to be referred to as 'groups of provinces' each under a military governor. The FMG was renamed, the National Military Government, and all the Civil Services of the country were to be unified. According to Ironsi, the decree was intended to remove 'the last vestige of intense regionalism of the recent past, and to produce that cohesion in government structure which is so necessary in achieving and maintaining the paramount objective of the National Military Government, . . . national unity'.¹⁷

While this decree existed more on pages of government files than on the ground, it challenged the security of the Northern Region.¹⁸ On May 27, 1966 the North reacted violently and indigenes of the Eastern Region became victims in bloody communal riots in most big cities in the North. The nature of the January coup in which the North had lost many of its political and military leaders had generated intense suspicions. Ironsi's ideas were, therefore, not given the opportunity to take off. Even within the Military, Ironsi had virtually lost his constituency among Northern officers and men. Hence, in July 1966, in a bloodily vengeful rising, Northern soldiers staged a coup which eliminated Ironsi.

Ironsi had made an attempt at introducing a new form of government. He failed in his bid at political engineering. Not only were his actions slow, he lacked effective communication channel to sensitize him to the political temperature. His action was ill-timed, coming after his credibility had started to erode amidst suspicions and fears. His failure to take prompt disciplinary action against the January mutineers also sealed his fate among Northern soldiers.

To Ironsi and his advisers¹⁹ the solution to the Nigerian political quest for an appropriate model of government lay in greater centripetal pull, greater centralization in Lagos. For a country of great diversity in language, culture and development,

Ironsi was sowing the seeds of discord and political violence. He probably forgot that if the Military had to rule, he could not play apolitical politics. In fact, he was a 'politician in uniform.' Political engineering consists of the ability to know the environment well, to feel the political temperature of the system and to know the limits to which decisions can be taken without threatening the basic consensual values that bind the society together.

But history is likely to be more lenient on Ironsi than his contemporaries were. In a way he was a victim of Nigeria's socio-political environment and ethnic perceptual prism. He was a creature of circumstances. He was the beneficiary of what had started out as a 'mutiny' and had ended as a Military coup. As this was a mutiny, he had to punish the mutineers in order to restore discipline in the Army and appease the North for the death of its military officers and political leaders. Yet as a head of government, he found it difficult to punish the executors of a coup which had brought him to power; and it would have alienated southerners who saw it as a revolutionary act. He tried to remain impartial, but was subjected to the strains of diverse centrifugal pulls of the Nigerian society.

If the civilian regime had over-emphasized centrifugal forces in Nigerian federalism, Ironsi's government had gone overboard in emphasizing centripetal forces in Nigerian political association. It had threatened the basic values and security of many Nigerian groups who saw the safeguards embedded in the federal system removed without adequate political arrangements to protect their interests. The May riots in the North confirmed this and the July 1966 coup was a rejection of this form of political engineering.

Amidst uncertainty and gloom which followed the July 1966 coup, Nigeria experienced three days of political interregnum at the end of which General (then Lt. Col. Gowon) emerged as a new Head of State. He ascended to power in circumstances of great difficulty and in the contexts of secessionist bids by the Northern hawks in the Nigerian Army. But the July coup, like the January coup, was only partially successful. Northern soldiers in the Eastern Region had not taken up arms. They were, it seems, insulated from this coup by distance and the *ad hoc* nature of the coup execution.

This gave Ojukwu a leverage in the Eastern Region. As Governor of the East and a member of the SMC, Lt. Col. Ojukwu refused to recognize the authority of Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon. This was another beginning of a fast drift towards disintegration in Nigeria. Nigeria's political problem had become more complicated because of the quarrel among military leaders. By virtue of their positions any conflict between the two leaders involved the whole country.

In an attempt to find a political solution to an essentially political problem, Gowon called an *ad hoc* Conference on Constitutional proposals to discuss an appropriate form of government and the nature of political association among Nigerians. But unfortunately the activities of the conference which had taken interesting but varied dimensions, were disrupted by further violence in the North and

was subsequently suspended indefinitely. Another attempt at finding a solution to Nigeria's quest for a model of government thus failed.

The graph of the political temperature had risen substantially by the end of 1966. Anxiety and uncertainty had pervaded the socio-political setting. It was, therefore, a relief to all Nigerians when it was announced that the SMC meeting which had proven difficult to hold in Nigeria was going to be held at Aburi, Ghana, at the invitation of General Ankrah, then Ghana's Head of State.

At Aburi the leaders agreed (among other things) that:

- (i) the Army was to be administered by the SMC - the Chairman of which was to be the Head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces;
- (ii) a military headquarters in which each region was to be represented, was to be set up under a Chief of Staff;
- (iii) in each region was to be established an Area Command, under an Area Commander;
- (iv) the SMC was to deal with all matters of appointment and promotions of people in executive posts in the Armed Forces and the police; and
- (v) Military Governors, for the duration of the Military Government, were to have control over Area Commands in their regions, for purposes of internal security.

By these agreements, the Nigerian Army had been virtually regionalized, even though Defence used to be in the exclusive legislative list which accrued to Federal Government.

In addition, the SMC was to make appointments into (i) diplomatic and consular posts, (ii) senior posts in the Armed Forces and the police and (iii) super-scale Federal Civil Service and Federal Corporation posts. These and other executive and legislative decisions affecting the whole country must be determined by the SMC, and in the absence of the meeting be referred to all the regional governors for their concurrence and comments.²⁰

The Aburi meeting was largely an attempt to resolve some issues of conflict which had polarized the relationship among the military rulers, with the hope that it would pave the way for the future settlement of the country's political problems. But instead of dampening conflict between the Federal and Eastern governments, the Aburi resolutions accentuated it.

Aburi resolutions and reactions to it later were indicative of the military's weakness in the politics of compromise and tolerance which had been typical of the Nigerian political system. The Aburi resolutions were interpreted in various forms. For Ojukwu it meant extreme decentralization which would give the Eastern Region full control over its affairs - a quasi-sovereign state sharing some essential services with other units of the 'federation'. On the other hand, Gowon saw it as a 'return to the constitutional position before January 15, 1966. . .'²¹ The two military leaders

must have thought along two and very different wave-lengths as much as they saw issues and Aburi resolutions through two perceptual prisms. Whatever the intention, there had been a greater centrifugal pull to which Gowon had acceded. It had been agreed that the regions were to be more autonomous in a *confederal* setting - an exercise done at the expense of the central government.

By March 1967, Ojukwu had threatened to take unilateral actions if Aburi resolutions were not implemented. But disagreements on details prevented implementation. However, on March 17, 1967, Decree No. 8 1967 implementing Aburi decisions came into effect.²² By its terms a *decree* (which was the prerogative of the FMG) was to come into operation 'only with the concurrence of the HFMG and of all the Military governors'. All legislative and executive functions were vested in the SMC and the FEC was to discharge only those functions that were 'especially delegated to it by the Supreme Military Council'.

For the first time, the concurrence of the HFMG and of all the governors, was made essential with respect to certain Federal matters in section 69 (c) of the constitution - Trade, Commerce, Industry, Transport, Armed Forces, Nigeria Police and Higher Education.²³ A regional governor had the power to appoint judges of the High Court while those of the Supreme Court were to be appointed by the SMC. All appointments into superscale, group 6 and above in the federal public service and posts of Deputy Commissioner of Police and above in the Nigerian Police were to be made by the SMC. Furthermore, the SMC was to make appointments of Ambassadors and High Commissioners. The HFMG had virtually been stripped of his powers.

Essentially Nigeria became a confederal state. The decree no doubt went very far to meet Ojukwu's demands. The regions became far stronger than the centre which hopped along as a lame duck. Ojukwu could have gotten from this decree what he had failed to get at the *Ad hoc* Constitutional conference. As Ojukwu's Chief Secretary admitted, Decree No. 8 'in my view faithfully implemented Aburi decisions'.²⁴ But Ojukwu rejected this decree and passed edicts seizing federal properties. Federal authority was no longer binding on the Eastern Region in any way.

Again Nigerian leaders had made an adjustment. They had moved from extreme centralization (under unitarism) back to quasi-federalism (of January 1966) and then to confederalism. And again, they had failed. As their search for a more conclusive form of political association continued, the issue of creation of more states became more prominent as an alternative solution to extreme decentralization of Aburi.

The Military and Structural Reorganization

Attempts to bring about peace in Nigeria and establish better understanding between Ojukwu and Gowon by various people, including the National Reconciliation Committee had failed. It had become evident to most Nigerians that Col. Ojukwu was going to lead the Eastern Region out of Nigeria. Statements like 'there is no

force in this country or in Black Africa to subdue us by force'²⁵ signalled to many Nigerians that a formal declaration was only a pole away. It had become clear that secession could not be avoided and that Nigeria could no longer remain one unless force was used. Thus, when on 26th May, 1967, the Consultative Assembly, the Chiefs and Elders of Eastern Nigeria were summoned to Enugu, it became very clear that the latent secession of that region was going to be made manifest by a formal declaration.

In the face of this imminent secession Gowon found himself powerless. If indeed, force was to be used in defence of the interests of the minorities in the Eastern Region, Gowon would have to declare a State of Emergency. He could not do this without the concurrence of the other military governors in accordance with the provisions of Decree No. 8. Yet pressure was mounting on Gowon to take a quick and decisive action before Ojukwu declared secession.

Gowon had promised the nation on 30 November, 1966, that as much as he would have liked to avoid bloodshed 'if circumstances compel me to preserve the integrity of Nigeria by force, I shall do my duty to my country'.²⁶ That duty to his country could, in the circumstance, only be performed by sidetracking the provisions of a decree to which he had been a party, as Ojukwu could not be expected to agree to the declaration of State of Emergency. Thus, when (without the concurrence of, at least, three military governors of the regions) Gowon declared a state of Emergency over the whole country on 27 May, 1967,²⁷ he in effect staged a coup.

Gowon, in his Broadcast assumed full powers and created twelve states in Nigeria²⁸. By creating states, Gowon for once, seized the political initiative from Ojukwu. He put Ojukwu on the defensive. It was therefore an anti-climax when Ojukwu declared secession of the Eastern Region of Nigeria as the new *Republic of Biafra*.

After twenty years of demands for the creation of additional subnational units, Gowon created twelve states by decree, three days before Ojukwu's formal declaration of secession. For political reasons, the number of states in the North was equal to those created in the South.

In a swift process of structural reorganization, Gowon had created a new federation based on small and more subnational units. This structural reorganization, Gowon contended, was designed 'to correct the imbalance in the administrative structure of the country', and 'to minimize future political friction and ensure a stable federation.'²⁹ Within the framework of smaller states, it was most unlikely that subnational units would 'consider themselves self-sufficient and almost entirely independent,' as the former regions had done.

Soon a civil war ensued and lasted for about 30 months with Nigeria emerging still as a single country. If the military were poor crisis managers and did not possess the capability for political compromise, they at least came out of the crisis with a stronger Nigeria than they had inherited (albeit not without much bloodshed).

State-building as used here refers to a process by which the central (or federal) government of a sovereign state makes its presence felt among the citizens by penetrating and controlling subnational political and/or administrative units. It is the ability of the central or federal government to maximize or at least, increase its authority by the use of certain institutions of penetration and control: the bureaucracy, political party, and/or the military.³⁰ This process demands skills in political engineering. It involves skills in planning, designing, construction, manouevring and management.

It is our contention that the performances of the Military under General Yakubu Gowon and Murtala/Obasanjo regimes successfully built a Nigerian State out of which a nation is being built. The deliberate actions aimed at centralization of power by the military regimes confirm this point. The very act of structural engineering in the form of twelve states was an act of state-building as it strengthened the authority and the scope of authority of the centre. Furthermore, when Murtala Muhammed improved on the twelve state structure by creating a nineteen state structure³¹, the states were further weakened in their relations with the centre, especially in terms of their resource bases and autonomy within a normal federal framework.

It is, however, important to illustrate a few of the deliberate actions taken by the military regime to build a stronger Nigerian State.³² While the war was on, Gowon appointed state governors with assignments to establish a framework of administration in the new states, which were launched on 26 May, 1968 - one year after their creation.

A number of legal/constitutional and administrative actions were taken to limit the authority of the new states. Among such actions was Decree No. 13, 1967 which repealed Decree No. 8, 1967, thus making it possible for Nigeria to return to the situation under Decree No. 1, 1966. By Decree No. 27, 1967 the FMG limited the 'legislative and executive powers of the twelve newly created states in Nigeria for the time being to residual matters.'³³ The States were permitted to take action on matters in the concurrent legislative list only with the 'specific consent of the Federal Military Government. . .' Thus the new states were limited in the early days of their existence to certain functions.

In some cases, the FMG took over direct administration of certain functions which had legally been under the jurisdiction of the regions. An example is the Marketing Board Reforms between 1967-73 in which the Federal government gradually asserted its control over the Marketing Boards in the country.³⁴ Decree No. 50 of 18 September, 1968 (the Central Bank of Nigeria Act, Amendment No. 3, 1968 Decree) asserted the supremacy of the federal government with regard to marketing boards. It stipulated conditions under which the boards could get advances and loans from the Central Bank, and specifically prevented them from fixing prices of commodities until after consultations with the military. The state marketing Boards were made financially dependent on the FMG. In fact, the Federal government took over price-fixing authority of state Marketing Boards in

1974/75 financial year, in addition to the abolition of export duties in 1973/74. These actions centralized Marketing Boards and prepared the ground for the major reorganization under the Muhammed and Obasanjo regime some years later. Only a military government could have taken this action with little opposition from the states.

Some other functions were also taken over from the states when the SMC announced that *Secondary and Primary education* would be moved from the residual list to the concurrent list. Similarly University education was moved from concurrent to exclusive legislative list 'in the best interest of an orderly and well-coordinated educational development in Nigeria.'³⁵ This policy aimed at preventing proliferation of state Universities remained in existence until October 1, 1979 when the Military handed over power to civilians. University education is now in the concurrent legislative list.³⁶

The introduction of *Uniform Income Tax* is also an example of the absorption of state functions and powers by the federal government. Decree No. 7 of 24 February 1975 - 'Income Tax Management (Uniform Taxation Provisions. . .) Decree 1975' introduced a uniform tax system, retroactive to April 1, 1974. This used to be a state function and had varied from one state to the other. Similarly, the abolition of 'Jangali' or the age-old cattle tax in order to bring relief to the cattle owner and retain his cattle in the country, was also an incursion into state powers. This tax had never been a federal tax. The states affected most by this decree were the Northern States which had derived local revenue from 'Jangali'.

Finally, the states were also heavily dependent on the FMG. For the period between 1967 and 1976 the states were dependent on the Federally-derived revenues between 30% and 90%. The soaring oil revenues which accrued to the FMG had given a great financial leverage over the states. While the debate on revenue allocation formula goes on, it is very doubtful that any state will attempt to challenge this federal 'might' based on petro-naira, even with the current oil glut.

There was no doubt that by the time General Yakubu Gowon was overthrown in 1975, he had actually succeeded in building the Nigerian State. The central government was recognized by all states and its presence was felt in all states. The federal government was no longer 'relegated to the background' nor could the states exhibit 'pretensions of sovereignty'.

The Muhammed regime which succeeded Gowon improved on what he inherited. All state coats-of-arms and flags which symbolized excessive autonomy of the states were abolished by the new regime. All television stations established by state governments were taken over the Federal Government as well as all remaining state Universities which had not been taken over by the FMG. A newspaper, such as, the *New Nigerian* was absorbed into federal outfit and major shares in *Daily Times* were purchased by the FMG. The Muhammed regime wanted to ensure that those traits of autonomy which enabled the governors under the Gowon administration to exhibit arrogance of power were removed, for greater centralization.

Thus, Muhammed created a new framework, the *Council of States*. The Council of States was established as a forum for discussion between the FMG and State Governors. State governor's presence in the SMC had generated ill-feelings in the Armed Forces, and had given the state governors leverage over their seniors in the barracks.

On the whole, no other set of Nigerian political elite inherited such unenviable liabilities as the military, and yet no other elite group in Nigeria had contributed so much to the process of state-building in Nigeria as the military. Not only did the military grapple with the techniques of government, they learnt the art of political engineering in the throes of crises and used it to salvage the country. Admittedly, Nigeria's military regime had many civilian incumbents, but the ultimate responsibility for decisions was the military's. If the military took the brunt for ill-advised decisions they had taken, they should also be allowed to bask in the glory of other decisions which were decidedly positive.

A number of factors helped the military. The soaring revenues from oil was highly propitious to its performance in state-building. Similarly, the twelve and later nineteen state structures were far more conducive to their centralizing process than the four regions. Perhaps, equally (if not most) important was the nature of military administration. It legislated by decrees and took decisions by consensus. One still remembers clearly the difficulty in creating states between 1960 and 65. Only one state was created within the period. One is also a witness to the present proliferation of demands for additional states and the legal and cumbersome constitutional procedures required. Not only did the military create states by decree, they also centralized the states by decrees.

We therefore, contend, that after the civil war, an organic Nigerian State, not 'a mere geographical expression' had been established. The blood of Nigerians transformed a 'mere geographical expression' into an organic State - it was a jump into statehood, albeit an expensive one. The military played a major part in this functionally painful drama. While the Nigerian State has come to stay, the nation is still being built. The process of nation building³⁷ is slow and tortuous, but it is in progress.

What were the basic characteristics of the various Nigerian Military regimes? This is our next focus.

Nigerian Military Regimes and Regime-Types

According to Claude Welch, (Jnr.) and Arthur Smith, Military intervention in systems (such as Nigeria) with 'medium levels of political participation will result either in a form of military *guardianship*, or in a *reformist* or *radical* military-based regime.'³⁸

The *guardian* role is when the Military regime's major preoccupation is the maintenance of law and order - a greater concern with political stability than with effecting social changes. Very often this concern emanates from the general political climate the military inherited. Such a regime relies heavily on coercion.³⁹

The *reformist* military regime is concerned mainly with 'creating a national identity and promoting orderly economic development.'⁴⁰ For such a regime economic development and industrialization are highly functional to the achievement of national and military power. Very often reformist regimes are idealistic and their programs are based on their military faith 'in problem solving by command decision. . .' It is not unusual for successful reformist military regimes to drift gradually to a guardianship role as demands for greater participation makes them rely more on coercion.

Radical military regimes very often act as 'the linkage of interest between military officers, who are essentially of the middle and lower middle classes, and the masses, who previously had been unintegrated into national political life.'⁴¹ Very often this sort of action requires a very high level of political consciousness which goads radical military regimes towards mobilization of the masses. The radical military must organize the masses towards the achievement of their goals. That is why very often it has to organize political parties for such purposes. Yet military values contradict this radicalism which makes incursions into the political arena. The military's antipathy for politics means that radical military regimes are very often shortlived. The military leader usually has charismatic qualities which must be routinized quickly to enable him perform. Such regimes have appeared in Libya, and briefly in Nasser's Egypt, Argentina, Iraq and Peru. The contradiction between military professionalism and sense of mission on the one hand, and the mass mobilizational structure, in the form of a revolutionally political platform, on the other, dilutes the radical contents of such regimes which then drift towards guardianship roles.⁴²

It is our contention that Nigeria has never had a radical military regime. We shall briefly look at each military regime to prove our point. Space prevents elaborate treatment. The Ironsi regime was obviously, neither reformist nor radical. It played a guardian role of restoring law and order and maintaining some level of political stability. Coming after the violence and relative breakdown of law and order during Nigeria's first republic, this was natural. His programme announced on January 17, 1966 did not indicate that he was going to embark on any social and economic reforms. He was only going to establish structures for a return to civilian rule in 1969. The Decree No. 33 enforcing law and order and proscribing ethnic associations was not a reformist measure but an indication of guardian role. The major reformist measure was the Decree No. 34 which would have changed the form of government. The communal and intra-military instability which followed this, bore testimony to the resistance to the measure.

Ironsi was a good military officer but a bad politician. Despite the military's self-delusion that it is possible to play apolitical politics, Ironsi was a politician in

uniform who was immobilized in the end, in part because of his lack of political sagacity and in part because of the socio-political circumstances in which he found himself.

The second military regime under General Gowon started out as a guardian regime. It was begotten in the throes of conflict and for a long time survived amidst crises. It obviously was more concerned about the maintenance of law and order, and some relative level of political stability. 1966-67 was a period in which Gowon and his colleagues sought for an appropriate formula to Nigeria's problems which were grounded on mutual fears and suspicions of domination among various Nigerian groups.

However, by mid-1967, the regime had taken on the first steps in the direction of political-reform with the creation of twelve states. The creation of states which opened the avenue for additional states later, was a major step in political engineering and reform to which Nigerians can now attest. The numerous demands for more states is an indication of the impact of this exercise done at the peak of Nigeria's crises. The country was later hardened in the crucible of a bloody civil war after which it emerged as a single entity.

Gowon was a *military reformer*. He was also a *reconciliation* leader. He was not a radical, nor could one detect radical pretensions in his actions. At the end of the civil war, he announced a nine-point programme 'to guarantee peace, stability and progress in the country. . .'⁴³ These included (i) reorganization of the armed forces, (ii) the implementation of the National Development Plan and repair of the damage and neglect of the War, (iii) the eradication of corruption in our national life, (iv) the settlement of the question of the creation of more states, (v) the preparation of a new constitution, (vi) introduction of a new Revenue Allocation formula, (vii) conducting a national population census, (viii) the organization of genuinely national political parties, and (ix) the organization of elections and installation of popularly elected governments in the states and in the centre.

Like a military reformer, Gowon was very idealistic. Some of his programmes could not have been achieved in his life time. He could never have been able to eradicate corruption in his life-time. Nor could the repairs of the damage and neglect of the civil war be completed before 1976, his target date for quitting the stage. Similarly, he underestimated the problems of the census exercise in Nigeria.

There was no doubt that Gowon did effect many reforms in Nigeria. The numerous transport infrastructure in Nigeria—network of roads and new airports—were initiated and started by his regime. Some of these programmes were completed by his successors. The expansion in the number of Universities also owed much to this regime. Similarly, other changes such as decimalization of currency, and the change to right-hand drive were to his credit. Thanks to petronaira, Gowon had stored some foreign reserves for Nigeria - over two and a half billion naira which was later expended. He successfully executed the Second Development Plan, 1970-1975 which had laudable reformist objectives of building, (i) a united, strong

and self-reliant nation, (ii) a great and dynamic economy, (iii) a just and egalitarian society, (iv) a land full of opportunities for all its citizens, and (v) a free and democratic society. He also initiated the Third Development Plan, 1975-80.

From an Armed Forces battered irredeemably in 1966, Gowon mobilized an Army to fight a successful civil war and came out with an army better organized than he had inherited. He did not grapple with the issue of demobilization which later became a difficult one to handle. His loss of contact with his military constituency in the period between 1973 and 1975 gradually eroded his credibility and his ability to perform the reconciliatory role of effecting a balance between military and civilian sectors of the society.

Similarly, the conspicuous consumption of his lieutenants and the sheer display of arrogance of their power further eroded his credibility. Corruption in his regime was so pronounced that many doubted if he could even minimize the extent of corruption, not to mention eradication of corruption. Gowon was not seen as personally corrupt by most Nigerian observers. One of the greatest shockers and dilemmas from which Gowon hardly recovered was the extent of politicization of the 1973 census exercise. It influenced his decision on revenue allocation which, he announced in 1974, would no longer be a constitutional issue. The public outcries about corruption, the census exercise and apparent indecision on Gowon's part, drove his regime from a reformist one to one of guardianship—relying increasingly more heavily on coercion. Once he lost his capability as a reconciliation leader with reformist objectives, and moved to a guardianship role, his regime drifted. Hence Gowon was subsequently gracefully eased out of the political arena.

His successor General Murtala Muhammed, was a fiery and unconventional, but dedicated soldier. Again Murtala, like Gowon was a social reformer and not a radical military ruler. It is our contention that any regime which came after Gowon would certainly grapple with some problems which Gowon found insoluble and which he had quietly tucked away under the *carpet*, waiting for a more conducive time for decision. The census issue, the renegeing on the promise to return to civil rule, the creation of additional states, the widespread corruption among public officers, and FESTAC.

Using radical, clean-up and legitimizing technique of a new regime, Muhammed took action on all these issues which nine years of political leadership had mollified Gowon from taking. The new break with an on-going drift gave the impression of radicalism. No doubt Muhammed was a man of action and did give the country a new sense of direction, but his programmes were aimed at demilitarization of the political system rather than one of mass mobilization or for effecting social and economic changes in the society at large.

In his broadcast on October 1, 1975, the late Head of State, General Murtala Muhammed announced a 'five-stage programme designed to ensure a smooth transition to civil rule by those elected by the people of this country.'⁴⁵

In the first stage a Committee on creation of additional states was to be set up, and to submit its report in December 1975. Preliminary steps towards establishing the new states were to be completed by April 1976. During this stage, also, a Constitution Drafting Committee was to be appointed and was expected to complete drafting a Constitution in September 1976.

The second stage in the process of demilitarization of politics included the establishment of the new states; the reorganization of Local Governments throughout the country and the conduct of Local Government elections without party politics; and the establishment of a Constituent Assembly (partly elected and partly nominated) based on the local government councils. This second stage which was to last two years, was expected to be completed by October 1978.

The lift of the ban on political activities to enable the formation of political parties, constituted the third stage. The ban was to be lifted in October 1978. The fourth stage comprised elections into legislatures at the state level as prescribed by the nation. And the fifth and final stage was elections to legislatures and offices at the federal level. These two last stages were to be completed by October 1, 1979. General Mohammed emphasized that his administration did 'not intend to stay in office a day longer than necessary, and certainly not beyond this date'.

Thus the regime had no programme for economic and social reforms. Worried about its institutional cohesion after the Gowon administration had refused to demilitarize, the new military regime worked out a clean package for disengagement.

In line with his promise, Murtala set up a panel on creation of states in August 1975. The report was submitted to him in December 1975 and he took decisive action by creating seven more states in February 1976. In reaction to widespread corruption, he purged the public service, giving it a real shock therapy. The implementation of the exercise could have been better handled, but in principle it was laudable. In essence, Murtala's was not a radical regime. It could have been reformist, but he never lived to demonstrate it. The states creation was certainly reformist. His early days in office were preoccupied with clearing legacies he had inherited. Perhaps, the greatest problem for Murtala was that he used mobilizational technique without mobilizational structures, such as parties, etc. In addition, he used a mobilizational technique in a Nigeria that, despite its pretensions, is a reconciliation system.

His successor General Obasanjo might have been intellectually sound and cool-headed, but he lacked charisma and leadership dynamism. His regime was colourless and banal. It was uneventful, except that he meticulously kept to his predecessor's programme of action. His greatest achievement was the meticulous supervision of the military disengagement process from the political arena. It is our contention that given the dissatisfaction under the Obasanjo regime, the military would have been badly battered in the process of another coup. It was in the self-interest of the military as a cohesive institution (albeit with some fissures on its wall) to have withdrawn quietly.

Obasanjo's was essentially a guardian military regime, carefully relying on its coercive capabilities to ensure its exit in 1979. The regime could not be absolved from corruption with confidence. Given the relatively shorter period in office than the Gowon administration, the allegations of wrongdoing were too difficult to be dismissed with a wave of the hand. Rumours of massive siphoning of public funds to private coffers went unattended. It was also a very insensitive regime, highly unresponsive to public outcries. But it did pave the way for a democratic government for which Nigerians must be grateful.

The process of demilitarization of the political scene has been effected, but one is yet to witness the process of depoliticization of the military. Paradoxically this process of military depoliticization entails politicization. It is politicization in the sense of politically educating the military to know the boundaries of the barracks and respecting legitimate civilian authority. This is not an easy task and needs systematic indoctrination programme. Otherwise, Nigeria may yet witness many more coups.

In addition, military intervention is also related to the performance of civilian rulers. The new political class in Nigeria does not seem to have learnt enough lessons from the past. They are still exhibiting lack of skills in the politics of tolerance and participation of political opponents, which doomed the First Republic to failure. The blatant and arrogant display of politically ill-gotten wealth seems to be a repeat performance of the past. Furthermore, if the experience of the past is anything to go by, the politicians must avoid tinkering with the internal organization of the Nigerian Military Services. The result of such reckless meddling with disregard to professional considerations of these institutions with monopoly over instruments of violence could be tragic for Nigeria's democracy.

Conclusion

We have argued that the Nigerian Military have been, on balance, good political engineers and that they have successfully built a Nigerian State. The process of nation-building is still going on. In addition, we have tried to show that the Military regimes in Nigeria have been either guardian regimes or reformist regimes. Nigeria has never had a radical military regime. But at least, the military did keep their promise to usher in a democratic political process. The extent to which the new democratic experiment operates efficiently and the span of life of this new system, depends very much on politicians and the uses they make of the power they have acquired.

Unless a new political culture emerges in which Nigerians practice the politics of participation, tolerance and compromise, the future looks gloomy. Political actors must realize that politics is a game and like all games unless there is a spirit of sportsmanship and adherence to the rules which govern the game, there can be no victors and losers, only chaos in which there is no surety about who will get hurt. Nigeria must start developing gradually an acceptable culture of politics and this is a task for all Nigerians, not just the politicians.

Notes

- 1 For some literature on *Political Development*, see, G. Almond, S. Flanagan and R. Mundt (eds.), *Crisis, Choice and Change* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973); Samuel Huntington, *The Change to Change: Modernization, Development and Politics*, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (1971), pp. 283-322; Almond, *Political Development: Analytical and Normative Perspective*, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 4 (January 1969), pp. 447-469; Lucian Pye, James Coleman, Sidney Verba, Joseph - a Palombara, and Myron Weiner (eds.), *Crises and Sequences in Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).
- 2 Nigeria's Military intervened in politics by 'supplanting' the civilian regime. It did not play the 'moderator' role as the Brazilian Army did between 1945-64. For more detailed discussion of the military's modes of intervention, refer to: Alfred Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1971), S. Finer, *The Man on the Horse-back* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), Luing and Alfred Stephan, *Latin American Institutional Development: Changing Military Perspectives in Peru and Brazil*, (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, April, 1971); Robert Price, 'A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in New States: Reference - Group Theory and the Ghanaian Case', *World Politics*, XXIII:3 (April, 1971, pp. 399-430; Eric Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Mufti: The Impact of Military Rule upon Economic and Social Change in the Non-Western States*, *American Political Science Review*, LXIV; 4 (December, 1970); Robin Luckham, *The Nigerian Military: A sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt: 1960-67* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Claude Welch Jr. and Arthur K. Smith, *Military Role and Military Rule* (North Scituate: Duxbury Press, 1974) Gwyn Harries -Jenkins and Jacques Van Doorn, (eds.) *The Military and The Problem of Legitimacy*, Beverly Hills California: Sage Publications Inc. 1976) and Henry Bienen (ed.) *The Military and Modernization* (Chicago: Aldine Atheton Press 1971); Brigadier Jemibewon, *The Combatant in Government* (Ibadan, Heineman, 1978)
- 3 Ali A. Mazrui, *Cultural Engineering and Nation-Building in East Africa* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1972) p. xv. According to Ali Mazrui, *Cultural Engineering* is used to denote 'a special approach to the problems of social engineering. We are focussing on the impingement of cultural factors on issues of social reform and national development. Cultural engineering becomes the deliberate manipulation of cultural factors for the purposes of deflecting human habits in the direction of new and perhaps constructive endeavours. Sometimes the effort consists in changing cultural pattern enough to make it possible for certain institutions to survive. At other times the purpose of cultural reform is basically attitudinal change.' (p. xv).
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Of the senior officers killed in the January coup. Lt. Col. and above, the North lost four out of five officers (Gowon being the only survivor); the West lost two of its six officers; the East lost none of its seven officers; and the Midwest lost one of its four officers. In addition the North lost its Premier and a Prime Minister while the West lost a premier and the Midwest lost a Federal Minister. The East lost no politician and the Premiers of the Midwest and the East were not arrested until well after the announcement of the coup.
- 6 A reconciliation leader relies for his effectiveness, 'on qualities of tactical accommodation and a capacity to discover areas of compromise between antagonistic viewpoints. He remains in control as long as he is successful in politics of compromise and synthesis. The reconciliation is quite often between antagonistic political interest groups. But in the present day Africa the reconciliation leader may have to perfect also in the art of reconciling the military with civilian sectors of authority.' Ali

Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: The Making of a Military Ethnocracy*, (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977), p. 7. The mobilizational leader has as his main drive, ideology, 'with an undercurrent of charismatic qualities which buttress his ability to mobilize the populace for a particular kind of social action.' For further reading on these types of leaders, see, David Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965) pp. 359-421.

- 7 *The Federal Republic of Nigeria, 'Constitution (Suspension and Modification) Decree (1966, No. 1)' in Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1966* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1966) p. A 3-11, 17 Jan. 1966.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 See Decree No. 22, 1966, schedule 2, section 97, in *Laws of The Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1966 op. cit.* p. 99.
- 12 B.J. Dudley, *Instability and Political Order: Politics and Crisis in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1973) p. 117.
- 13 The title of the Supreme Commander was changed at Aburi as a compromise between Ojukwu and Gowon. The title was changed to Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces. See an interesting discussion in Allison Ayida, *The Nigerian Revolution, 1966-1967* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1973) p.15.
- 14 Gowon, in *Faith In Unity, op. cit.* p. 108.
- 15 Nigeria's ethnic perceptual prism often stigmatized leaders before they were given the opportunity to perform as individuals.
- 16 Decree No. 34, 1966.
- 17 Republic of Nigeria, *Broadcast to the Nation*, by H.E. General J.T.U. Aguiyi-Ironsi (Lagos: Ministry of Information, 1966) p. 3.
- 18 The unification of the civil service especially was regarded as an attempt to swamp Northern civil service by Ibos.
- 19 Unfortunately Ironsi chose Ibo advisers such as Pius Okigbo, Mr. Nwokedi, Mr. Onyiuke, etc.
- 20 Republic of Nigeria, *Meeting of Military Leaders* (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information).
- 21 Gowon, Address to Head of Diplomatic Missions, March 1, 1967.
- 22 Decree No. 8, 1967.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 N.U. Akpan, *The Struggle for Secession in Nigeria* (London: FrankCass), 1972.
- 25 C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, *Biafra: Random Thoughts of C. Odumegwu Ojukwu* Vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), see pp. 146-176 for an interesting discussion.
- 26 Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Faith In Unity* (Lagos: Government Printer) p. 6.
- 27 See Decree No. 14, 1967 "States (Creation and transitional Provisions) Decree, 1967"
- 28 Soon after, the names of the governors of the states were announced. Below are the twelve states and their names.

States	Population (1963)	Governors
Benue-Plateau	4.00 million	Mr. J.D. Gomwalk (Chief Supt. of Police)
East-Central	6.22 million	Lt. Col. O. Ojukwu (Nigerian Army)
North-Central	4.09 million	Major Abba Kyari (Nigerian Army)
North-East	7.79 million	Major Musa Usman (Nigerian Air Force)

States	Population (1963)	Governors
North-West	5.73 million	Mr. Usman Faruk (Police Supt.)
Kano	5.77 million	Mr. Audu Bako (Deputy Police Commissioner)
Kwara	2.40 million	Major D. Bamigboye (Nigerian Army)
Mid-West	2.54 million	Lt. Col. D. Ejoor (Nigerian Army)
Lagos	1.44 million	Major M. Johnson (Nigerian Army)
South-East	4.63 million	Major U.J. Esuene (Nigerian Air Force)
Rivers	1.5 million	Lt. A. Diete-Spiff (Nigerian Navy)
West	6.9 million	Col. R.A. Adebayo (Nigerian Army)

- 29 Broadcast to the Nation by H.E. Major-General Yakubu Gowon, HFMG and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, on May 26 1968.
— *Faith In Unity*, *op. cit.* p. 108.
- 30 See. G. Almond and B. Powell, *Comparative Politics: Developmental Approach* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966) and J.S. Lewis "The Social limits of Politically Induced Change" in C. Morse, et. al. *Modernization by Design* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969) pp. 1-33.
- 31 The Seven new states were - Benue, Bauchi, Niger, Gongola, Ogun, Ondo and Borno States.
- 32 See J. Isawa Elaigwu, 'The Military and State Building: Federal—State Relations in Nigeria's 'Military Federalism' 1966-76' in A. Akinyemi, P. Cole and W. Ofonagoro (eds.) *Readings On Federalism* (Lagos: NIIA, 1979) pp. 155-181.
- 33 *Daily Times*, May 30, 1967, pp. 1 and 5.
- 34 See discussion in Elaigwu, *loc. cit.* pp. 172-173.
- 35 1973/74, Budget Broadcast by General Gowon (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, 1974) p. 15.
- 36 The Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1979), item K in the concurrent Legislative list.
- 37 The process of nation-building is infinite because it involves social integration of all groups within the political community as they develop a sense of oneness and national identity.
- 38 Claude E. Welch, Jr. and Arthur K. Smith, *Military Role and Rule* (Massachusetts: Duxbury Press, 1974) pp. 55-70.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 255
- 40 *Ibid.*, p. 63
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 65
- 42 'The thought of actually mobilizing and organizing the masses as a political resource is antithetical to their ingrained contempt for politics and to their sense of mission as professionals.'
- 43 Benue Plateau State Government, *Unity, Stability and Progress: The Challenge of the Second Decade of Nigeria's Independence* (Jos: Government Printer, n.d.) p. 2.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p. 3
- 45 Federal Republic of Nigeria, *A Programme For Political Action* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1975) pp. 5-6.

XIV

The New Political Infrastructure: Prospects for the Future

P.C.A. Daudu

This article was written before the Dec. 31, 1983 coup, and is published in its original form in spite of the changed circumstances.

Introduction

By the new political infrastructures, we mean the structures, function, behaviours of the operators, and the inter-relationships between the various institutions that constitute the current presidential form or system of government. They include:

- the 1979 constitution which is the current fundamental law by which the new system is imposed, operated and hopefully developed. It is made supreme over all other laws and can only be amended through very difficult procedures.
- Political parties (currently the five officially registered ones, namely; National Party of Nigeria, Unity Party of Nigeria, Nigerian Peoples Party, Great Nigerian Peoples Party and Peoples Redemption Party) are collectivities of citizens who claim to hold similar views or opinions about policies to be pursued in politics, namely, the authoritative allocation of values or resources, that, political parties recruit their membership from the politically motivated members of the population or citizens of the country. It is from their membership that representatives are elected by the citizens in general elections or selected by leaders of the parties after election victory to run government institutions through which resources are allocated and managed.

- National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly are the legislative institutions set up for making laws that govern the allocation of values or/and resources and any other matters that deal with the welfare of the citizens and the relation of the country with the rest of the world.
- The Executive (Chief Executives - The President and Vice-President, Ministers, Special Advisers and Assistants, non-career Ambassadors at the federal level; and the Governors, Deputy Governors, Commissioners, and Special Advisers at the State level) are the institutions established to execute the laws which more often than not initiate from them for the allocation of resources.
- The Judicature (the Courts system) is the institution established to adjudicate on the laws of the land, both constitutional and legislative).

This political infrastructure, by no means, forms the totality of the institutions in the present system. Political culture includes not only the current operating institutions which may be borrowed (parliamentary, military and non-presidential forms are all borrowed) but also the indigenous institutions such as the traditional rulers. Political culture also includes such elements as the assumptions, beliefs and habits of the people in operating the institutions.

Viewed in its proper dimensions our present political culture, therefore, includes the assumptions, fears, interests and habits of the following groups:

- (i) The traditional rulers who are the indigenous political institutions that provided the main political infrastructures in pre-colonial and colonial eras. In the present system, they have been kept out of the legislative, executive and judicial infrastructures and other functions which they fused together as their sole prerogatives in the precolonial and less so in the colonial era.

Despite the *dejure* and open deprivation of traditional rulers from the right of active participation in these infrastructures, they are nevertheless *defacto* part of the political culture. Indeed they are dormant political volcanoes which are capable of generating public eruptions to disturb the political atmosphere as the 1981 Kano riot in favour of the Emir of Kano has shown. Although the traditional rulers are openly warned to keep off politics yet their support is more often than not secretly courted by partisan politicians. The respect which many of the traditional rulers still enjoy among their people makes them vital institutions in our political culture.

- (ii) The Armed Forces who, having had the experience of wielding political power for thirteen years before handing over voluntarily to civilian politicians, remain potentially the most vital group of the political culture.
- (iii) Another powerful group may be called the young 'moguls' who command the modern sector of the Nigerian economy. These Nigerian entrepreneurs

are also keen in influencing political behaviour especially for their economic interests.

- (iv) There are also the various professional organizations and trade unions which are interested in the form of government and in political behaviour in order to wrest from the politicians the fulfillment of their demands or the satisfaction of their needs.
- (v) Left behind but still a significant part of the political system are the masses — the ordinary citizens. At least, they have the constitutional right to participate periodically in determining who should be elected to wield political power over them.

Political culture however includes more than the assumptions and expectations of different interest groups. It embraces the 'attitudes, beliefs, values, and skills which are current in an entire population, as well as those special propensities of that population.'² With regards to functions and relationships in a political system, the entire population may be categorized into four groups, politicians, fiduciaries, beneficiaries and spectators.

By politicians we mean the actors who participate in the process of government, that is in the authoritative allocation of rewards and costs within a whole society. Their role is to formulate policies or rather make decisions about who gets what, when, where and how:

The fiduciaries are political actors probably one degree removed from politicians in their influence. They are the agents of some powerful groups. Their role is to bargain with other groups on issues which their beneficiaries have interests in and to compete with other groups to affect policies of the politicians in government. As 'advocates' for the beneficiaries they are likely to acquire the lion's share of the resources allocated to their groups.

The beneficiaries are actors who are members of one or more interest groups. Their role is to establish demand priorities on the politicians, and thereby maximize their personal and group welfare.

The spectators are actors who are members of no group either because they are not interested in any issue or because they perceive that the value of and rewards from group membership is far less than the value of membership costs. They are prepared to accept their external effects from system decision made by other individuals especially the politicians.³

Two out of many pertinent questions need to be raised, and it is on these that we intend to focus attention:

- (i) What prospects have the new system in accommodating the various interest groups to a level of satisfaction minimally acceptable to each and all so as to preclude attacks that are capable of wrecking any of the infrastructures or the entire system?

- (ii) Will the current political infrastructures take root and be accommodated in Nigeria's political culture or will they be wrecked by the behaviours of the political actors?

To pursue these questions analytically; an if—then hypothesis is hereby proposed: If the operators of the political system, especially the politicians, manipulate their respective infrastructures to allocate the available resources to the various groups in a way that satisfies the interest priority demands of the various groups to a level of satisfaction minimally acceptable to each and all the groups, then the future prospects of the system are bright but if otherwise then the prospects are gloomy.

Political Infrastructures: Structure, Function and Operation

The 1979 Constitution

The 1979 Constitution⁴ as the new fundamental law of governance provides for the structures, functions, behaviours and relationships of the various operators. It distinguishes itself from the previous ones by its introduction of the executive presidency at the federal level and executive governors at the state level. It also provides for a division of power between the executive, the judiciary and the legislature.

It provides for such novel features as the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy (chapter II Section 13-22). Its Chapter IV containing sections 30-40 deals with these rights: right to life, right to dignity of human person, right to personal liberty, rights to fair hearing, private life, family life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, peaceful assembly and association, freedom from discrimination and freedom from compulsory acquisition of property without adequate compensation.

These provisions of the Constitution, if they are not mere verbiage but provisions that guide the actions of political actors, will mean a lot to the majority of Nigerians, the spectators. They raise crucial questions about the Constitution: What does it mean to the people in general and the various interest groups in particular? Will it be held in high esteem when providing such a social myth as equality before the law as in the American Constitution from which it borrowed copiously? Will it be treated normatively, that is actively and effectively used or nominally, that is quietly ignored when it does not suit a particular area or circumstance, or treated semantically, that is, frozen?⁵ Will it be able to integrate itself in the minds of Nigerians?

Since it has been posited that 'the actual values of a constitutional order can be tested only in the wear and tear of the political process',⁶ it is to the structure, functions, behaviour and relationships in the political infrastructures that we will turn to analyse the prospects not only of the constitution but also the totality of political culture which the constitution is attempting to foster.

Political Parties

Realizing the defects that characterized the political parties of the First Republic, Nigerian constitution makers stipulated some basic criteria for establishing new political parties of the Second Republic. New political parties were required to have supporters and offices in at least 2/3 of the states of the federation. It will be recalled that over 50 political parties were formed as soon as the ban on politics was lifted in 1978. Using the laid down criteria only five political parties were registered namely, the NPN, UPN, NPP, GNPP and PRP. After the five series of elections which brought into being the new form of government the five parties established these domains of hegemony: NPN won the Presidency, seven state governorships, and majority seats in 8 State Houses of Assembly. The UPN won five governorships and majority in the respective State Houses of Assembly. The NPP won 3 governorships and majority in the respective State Houses of Assembly, the GNPP won 2 governorships and majority seats in the respective State Houses of Assembly while PRP won 2 governorships and majority seats in only one State Assembly.

Since the inception of this form of government the parties have displayed a pathological misunderstanding of their role in a presidential system. They have adopted the idiosyncracies, nuances and practices of parties of totalitarian dictatorships and parliamentary democracies. Party leaders and functionaries not in government try to dictate the lines of action to their members in the legislatures or to their chief executives. Party leaders in the legislatures want to whip their supporters to toe their respective party lines. These practices and tendencies are not part of the political culture of the type of presidential system our constitution has contrived. In this new form, parties are expected to remain quiescent between elections and leave their legislators to be guided by national objectives, constituency needs and individual conscience. The attempt by party leaders and functionaries to introduce party discipline on members in a presidential system which makes opposition, vote of no confidence among other such practices unnecessary is creating crises between and within parties.⁷ The confrontational attitude, opposition mentality and intolerant behaviours of parties towards one another have also led to party clashes: UPN versus NPN in UPN controlled areas of Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo and Bendel states; NPP versus NPN in NPP controlled areas of Anambra, Imo and Plateau states; GNPP versus NPN in GNPP controlled areas of Borno and Gongola states; PRP versus NPN in PRP controlled area of Kano state and the shared area of Kaduna state; NPN versus all the others in NPN controlled areas of Sokoto, Niger, Kwara, Benue, Bauchi, Cross River and Rivers States. The worst areas of violent clashes resulting in destruction of property and life are Borno, Kano, Kwara, Ondo, Ogun and Oyo. There have been intra-party crises which are no less inclined to violence in all parties. The most serious ones are within the PRP and the GNPP.⁸ It is suggested that political leaders, party functionaries and other partisan politicians should reappraise their understanding of the proper structure, role, function, powers and even relationships of political parties in the type of presidential system

which Nigeria has adopted. Unless this is done they will, unwittingly, be jeopardizing the prospects of the whole political system.

Legislature: National Assembly and State House of Assembly

In the new form of government, the Constitution provides these structures with legislative function and powers: National Assembly consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives at the federal level (Sections 43-64) and House of Assembly at the State level (Sections 84-104). Of all the legislative powers bestowed on these structures, probably the most important for the welfare of the people and consequently the effect on the political culture are their powers and control over public funds. It is the National Assembly and House of Assembly which authorize the allocation of funds (sections 74-78 and 112-116 respectively).

The prospects of these structures becoming living institutions in our political culture will depend not on their formal functions and powers bestowed by the constitution but on the use to which the actors put them. The crucial questions are how well the politicians use these structures, their functions and powers in the allocation of values and resources. Will they be used to the benefits of all groups — politicians, fiduciaries, beneficiaries and spectators?

These are crucial questions if Nigeria wishes to escape the historical pothole to which most constitutions have fallen as pungently described below:

But the constitutions are indifferent toward the realities of the life of the people, incapable of satisfying the minimum of social justice and economic security that the common people believe themselves entitled to, the pretentious bills of rights to the contrary notwithstanding. The vital issues are no longer decided by constitutional processes but by the pressure groups operating outside and often in opposition to them. The constitution cannot, and does not bridge the gap between poverty and wealth. Everywhere . . . people distrust their governments, their officials, their parties and parliaments and their constitutions. The moral crisis of this age cannot fail to vitiate the moral value of a constitution that fails to provide tangible remedies for tangible grievances.¹⁰

This indictment on constitutions was no doubt applicable to the Nigerian Constitution of the First Republic. Hence the crises it faced and consequently its final revocation after a bloody coup d'état on 15 January, 1966.

Considering the previous failure which precipitated the civil disturbances, the fratricidal civil war and the thirteen years of military dictatorship, Nigerians should recognize the importance of political behaviour in the political process and development of a national political culture. This is especially important in Nigeria, a multi-national state which has nationalities with their political subcultures that are sometimes at variance with one another as well as with the formative national culture. Political behaviour is therefore crucial in a state that is in its formative and developmental stages, economically, socially and politically.

Of critical importance is the behaviour of politicians who have access to and do use the powerful political infrastructures for allocating the resources and values of

the nation to the various interest groups. The important question, therefore, is: How should the politicians especially those operating these infrastructures or institutions behave?

Before indulging in the rather normative or hortatory analysis which the above question demands, one should start with an analysis of what currently exists, however, exploratory or impressionistic. In other words how are Nigerian politicians currently behaving, generally? Or more pointedly, how are the political actors in the new political infrastructures behaving with the functions and powers bestowed on them by the constitution and the people who elected them as their representatives? What relationships are they fostering among the infrastructures and the operators? Do their current behaviours and relationships come close to the normative ones? It is the answers to these questions which will provide a basis for any realistic projection of prospects for the future not only of the new political infrastructures but also of the emerging political culture.

It will be recalled that the new form of government was launched on October 1st, 1979. As soon as civilian politicians took over the reins of power and the consequent allocative function of the nation's resources and values, certain behaviours became manifest. The members of the legislative houses — National Assembly and Houses of Assembly — began their stewardship to their electorates and the nation with series of demands for personal and collective benefits which they considered were commensurate with their position as the nation's law makers. They demanded high class office and residential accommodation, adequate loan to purchase cars and adequate car basic allowances. They demanded high salaries and other perquisites. They requested for personal aides in their constituencies. Even when some of these demands were met, they complained about their inadequacies.

They compared themselves with their counterparts, not in any of the developing countries, but in the most affluent of all countries - the U.S.A. They requested for facilities equivalent to those used to run the most developed economy and a constitution that took 200 years to mature.

On the excuse of going for parliamentary education or exposure, these political actors travelled out of the country to the most distant places as frequently as they found the opportunity. It will be interesting to know the costs and benefits of these tours to the political system, the economy and the political culture. One of such costs is the resultant effect on parliamentary attendance: on many occasions, absence and lateness of members have prevented the formation of the required quorums in the legislative houses. Such failures have resulted in no business being transacted — despite the myriad of problems of and demands from interest groups which cry for solutions by the nation's law markers.

By such initial behaviours, Nigerian parliamentarians have shown that when it comes to the allocation of resources and values their personal interests take precedence over those of the other interest groups. This may be understandable and natural but what is questionable and capable of disturbing the development of the

whole political system is the degree to which it is done. In other words, other interest groups including spectators would concede to political actors— parliamentarians, executives and party stalwarts—the right to choose first and possibly the lion's share of the allocated resources but are likely to raise political turmoil over delay or blatant injustice in allocating their shares to them.

After initial preoccupation with their personal interests, political actors now appear to be paying some of their attention to the interest of other groups and the nation. Even this change leaves room for some concern. The number and type of motions and bills—beside those sent by the executives and the judicature—emanating from the legislative houses do not give observers the confidence that the legislators have properly assessed the resources vis-a-vis priority needs of the people in order to arrive at optimum allocation of resources or values necessary to fulfil the objectives of the nation. It is hoped that as legislators mature in their new status, role and function, they would take more cognizance of the behaviours and relationships that are proper for utilizing the powers and values conferred on them to achieve national objectives. Failure to do this will diminish the prospects of these new political infrastructures, their functions, and powers, their inter-relationships and the behaviours of their operators, becoming acceptable aspects of our political culture.

Legislative Oversight

One important infrastructural provision is the power of legislative oversight. Specifically worth mentioning (besides those that are incidental to other powers) is the power of the National Assembly to conduct investigations which is contained in section 82 of the constitution. It provides that:

Each House of the National Assembly shall have power by resolution published in the journal or in the official gazette of the Government of the Federation to direct or cause to be directed an investigation into:—

- (a) *any matter or thing with respect to which it has power to make laws;*
- (b) *the conduct of affairs of any person, authority, ministry or government department charged, or intended to be charged, with the duty of or responsibility for, (i) laws enacted by the National Assembly, and (ii) disbursing or administering moneys appropriated or to be appropriated by the National Assembly.*

To make the function of legislative oversight crystal clear, subsection II provides that 'the powers conferred on the National Assembly under the provisions of this section are exercisable only for the purpose of enabling it (the National Assembly)

- (a) to make laws with respect to any matter within the legislative competence and to correct any defects in existing laws; and
- (b) to expose corruption, inefficiency or waste in the execution or administration of laws within its legislative competence and in the disbursement or administration of funds appropriated by it'.

These are considerable functions of Legislative oversight which properly carried out provides one of the basic tenets of checks and balances of the type of presidential system Nigeria has adopted to experiment upon but how effectively is this power being exercised to curb the excesses of the executives?

The Executive: The President and the Governors

The new form of government provides for a powerful executive at both the federal and state levels. At the federal level, the 1979 constitution in its section 122 has these provisions: (1) 'There shall be for the Federation a President'. (2) 'The President shall be the Head of State, the Chief Executive of the Federation and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria'.

These provisions among others, have bestowed on the President the function and powers of allocation of values and resources. His powers are only checked and balanced by the powers of the constitution, the National Assembly and the Judiciary (especially the Supreme Court).

At the state level, the 1979 constitution in its section 162 has this provision: (1) 'There shall be for each state of the Federation a Governor. (2) The Governor of a state shall be the Chief Executive of that state'. These and other provisions have conferred on the Governor of a State wide powers for allocating the state resources. Like the President, the Governor's powers are checked and balanced by the Constitution, the powers of the State Assembly and the judiciary.

As our concern here is on the prospects of these new political infrastructures or institutions taking root as part of our political culture— through the process of adaptation and acculturation—some of the pertinent questions to raise are: How have the current incumbents in their position as Chief executive behaved in using their function, role, status and powers to serve the needs of the interest groups, in particular, and the objectives of the nation in general? Are the incumbents succeeding in institutionalizing or integrating these new political infrastructures within the existing political culture? What are the incumbents doing that either enhance or inhibit the future prospects of these new institutions?

It is instructive that a proper assessment must perceive all the new political infrastructures or institutions as interdependent which must develop *pari passu*. The excessive speed of any one of them at the expense of the others may not augur well for the new system as a whole. With this in mind, one must assess the performance of the chief executives in relation to the other institutions in the new form of system of government.

The natural starting point of such an assessment is the President. The Executive President, as a new political institution, rather than being greeted with a befitting fanfare which he deserved was greeted with an electoral controversy that was determined by a judicial declaration in favour of the incumbent—Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari. Although the verdict of the electorates was clear from the common

sense point of view yet it was made controversial by the famous constitutional requirement of $\frac{1}{4}$ of $\frac{2}{3}$ to reflect representative acceptance. Although the courts confirmed the most popular of the presidential candidates, it led to disaffection of some sections of the populace towards the President. His portrait was refused display in public buildings of such disaffected sections. It led to criticisms, attacks and downright abuse on the incumbent. One State Governor even abortively attempted to bar the President from paying a visit to his state.

Despite these initial difficulties, the President has established the presidency with a team that is formidable in its professional, gerontocratic and temperamental varieties. It has within two years become a powerful institution. It is daily winning the confidence of its supporters and the angry notice of its detractors.

The five political parties shared the governorships of the states: NPN, 7; UPN, 5; NPP, 3; GNPP, 3; PRP, 2. Because of this representativeness - despite its skewness towards NPN and UPN—the new institution of civilian executive governorship was launched with fanfare. Its take-off was smooth. A few minor difficulties occurred here and there as the first few faltering steps were taken by the incumbents. Indeed, these state governors at first behaved like their military predecessors whose mere words were decrees in essence. But they were soon made to realize that the new political culture required them to put their words into bills which must be passed by their states' Houses of Assembly before becoming laws and such laws must not contradict the constitution or the Federal Acts.

It needs to be mentioned that Kaduna was the only exception to the rule of smooth take off of the governorships. This was because of the rather perplexing decision of Kaduna electorate which gave up to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the State Assembly seats to the NPN and gave the governorship to the PRP. The uncompromising postures of the Assembly and the then incumbent socialist oriented PRP Governor, led to his impeachment by the Assembly.

In the important function of allocation of resources to the citizenry many of the chief executives have generally behaved as astute politicians. Most of them have been carrying out their party programmes especially the NPN Governors with their food and shelter and qualitative education; and the UPN Governors with their four cardinal programmes of free education, free health, full employment and integrated rural employment. Thus, Governors have shared the available resources as rewards to politicians (which include themselves as first choosers and takers of the lion's shares), powerful individuals (fiduciaries), interest groups (beneficiaries) and leaving little or nothing to the communities (spectators,) who have none of the first three as their prominent sons and daughters. In other words, Governors have rewarded those who helped them to achieve election victory and at best ignored and at worst penalised those who did not (or do not still) support them. The politicians and fiduciaries have won individual posts—as ministers, special advisers, presidential liaison officers, chairmen and directors of Boards at federal level and commissioners, special advisers etc. at the state level. The beneficiaries have had projects

allocated in their communities. The spectators have generally watched helplessly as the resources are shared among the more influential.

Even the President, who has the whole country as his constituency and may be adjudged the most fair and statesmanlike in utilizing his allocative function and powers, has appointed ministers, special advisers, and special assistants including presidential liaison officers stationed in the states some of whom do not possess his qualities of fairness and tolerance. Some of these Presidential aides in their actions and utterances display tendencies of excessive partisanship, intolerance and hawkishness. These tendencies do not enhance the status, role, and function of the presidency. If unchecked by the President the actions of such aides are likely to sour the interdependent relationships of the Presidency with the other political infrastructures.

The Governors have, generally, tended to reward supporters and to ignore non-supporters or opponents. They have normally allocated available resources to politicians, powerful individuals, interest groups and communities in their respective political camps (in descending order of importance). They have, for example, created new local governments using rewards for supporters and political expedience as major criteria for such exercises. In performing their allocative functions they seem to have been guided by their ambition for a second term of office. The requirement of the constitution that a candidate for the office of Governor must have 'not less than one-quarter of all the votes cast in each of at least two-thirds of all the local government areas in the state' before being considered elected has placed an onus on the Governors to be fair in their allocation of resources. But then that fairness applies only to partisan supporters.

Governors, generally, show some enthusiasm in meeting some of the needs of their supporters. It is doubtful if their priorities are always right. They too, have been globe trotting in search of funds and technical partners to start industries and T.V. and radio stations while basic needs like potable water, electricity, agricultural inputs and extension services that can improve the welfare of their people are relegated to the background.

The Judicature

The new Constitution (Sections 210-359) provides for the Judicature; hierarchy of courts which deal with constitutional laws and legislative laws (criminal and civil), sharia (Islamic Law), and customary laws. For the purpose of this new form of government the Judicature, especially the Supreme Court, the Federal Court of Appeal, and the State and Federal High Courts, are empowered to adjudicate in constitutional matters between the Federation and any state, between the Federation and any citizen, and by extension between the new political infrastructures.

Since the inception of the presidential system, the Judicature has been playing a significant role in constitutional matters, which is influencing the operational development of the new political infrastructures. Easily preeminent of the cases

handled by the Judicature are these: The case instituted by the Unity Party of Nigeria presidential candidate, Chief Obafemi Awolowo against the Federal Electoral Commission and the National Party of Nigeria presidential candidate, Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari who had been earlier declared winner in line with Chief Richard Akinjide's legal mathematical interpretation of the constitutional stipulation of one quarter of two-thirds of the 19 states which a presidential candidate must obtain before being declared elected. The Supreme Court's judgement in favour of Alhaji Shehu Shagari was perceived by many Nigerians as sound. It was a judgement devoid of the kind of legal technicality which lacks common sense and justice. It is pertinent to mention that many Nigerians have been dismayed by some judgements based on legal technicalities that are devoid of common sense and justice. They are dismayed because such judgements decided on legal technicalities rather than the facts of the case or evidence go against the sense of justice in many indigenous sub-cultures.

Another celebrated case concerned the deportation of Alhaji Darman Shugaba, majority leader of the Borno State House of Assembly, to Chad, on the order of then the Minister of Interior, Mallam Maitama Bello Yusuf on the allegation that the deportee was not a Nigerian. The way he was deported was as undemocratic as it was uncivilized in that he was bundled out in the early hours of one morning without notice and without provisions. In the case that ensued, the High Court of Borno State declared him a citizen of Nigeria and awarded costs and compensation in his favour. The Federal Government appealed against the decision. For well over a year nothing further was reported on the case. Because the case was on appeal on account of the awards made in favour of Shugaba it was not liable for any comment at the time of writing beyond the saying that 'justice delayed is justice denied.'

There have been several constitutional cases all over the country especially between legislators or politicians and the chief executives of their respective states. The states that featured most prominently in such cases were Lagos, Bendel, Anambra and Kaduna. Generally the judgements have been fair and in consonance with common sense.

The most recent and probably the most celebrated, constitutionally, was the case on the Revenue Allocation Act brought by the Bendel State Government against the Federal Government. The Supreme Court in its unanimous judgement declared the Act 'null and void and of no effect'. Although some federal political actors regarded the decision as a pyrrhic victory for the State Government which thereby lost in financial terms, to many non-partisan and objective minded Nigerians, the victory was an important one as it exposed the brazen day light rape of the constitutional procedures for passing bills which were violated by the process used in passing the revoked Act. By that judgement, the Supreme Court reassured Nigerians that it was prepared to play its role as impartial adjudicator in constitutional matters.

It is suggested that the Judicature should be granted its autonomy and made a self accounting unit, independent of the executive branch, similar to the status which the

legislature has granted itself. If this is done it will be free to act impartially on constitutional issues and thereby save the political infrastructures from being unduly misused and abused by political actors.

Conclusion: The 1979 Constitution

It is debatable whether some of the provisions of the new constitution which its framers deliberately introduced to serve as panacea for the ills and abuses of the parliamentary constitution of the first republic are working smoothly. Some of such provisions seem to have created new problems, for example, the provision that forbids carpet crossing by parliamentarians has now created parliamentarians who, having been dismissed from their parties, were obliged to sit independently because the constitution prohibits them from joining any of the registered parties.

It appears that some of the checks and balances introduced to obviate the excesses of any of the institutions have fulfilled their function in Nigeria, a multinational state with heterogenous assumptions, interests and fears which often breed confrontations, oppositions and victimization. A major shortcoming of the constitution is excessive cases of impeachment of a chief executive by legislators without equivalent provision for recall of indolent unaltruistic chief executive and legislators by the electorates (the spectators). It is sad that electorates are made to watch some of their representatives serve only their selfish interests or sit only as bench warmers for four years without any power of recalling them.¹⁰ Perhaps it is this area that needs amendment rather than such frivolous amendment once mooted by legislators on the membership of the National Economic Council which would exclude Governors merely because some legislators felt that some of the Governors should be deflated a bit.

The constitution succeeded in maintaining an uneasy peace in the country. It has not been smooth sailing. The working of any constitution depends on the operators. Where clashes have occurred they have been the work of the operators. An example is where Governors deliberately refuse to assign functions to the Deputy Governors or to meet in Cabinet regularly as provided by the constitution. It is imperative that all Nigerians, politicians (especially chief executives, legislators and party functionaries), fiduciaries, beneficiaries and even spectators pledge themselves to make the 1979 constitution work in order to guarantee good government which is the only way to enhance the prospects of the new political infrastructures becoming accepted parts of the emerging national political culture.

Legislature: National Assembly and State House of Assembly

Mention has earlier been made of some ills, especially structural, functional and behavioral, that were plaguing the new legislative houses in our new form of government. It was by no means an exhaustive list. Sympathisers may argue that after thirteen years of military dictatorship, some of the attitudes and behaviours of the

military must have filtered through to the civilian population especially the politicians who as heirs must have watched the military men as they ruled. Furthermore, the art of compromise, an attribute of politics which was being learnt by politicians during the first republic, was nipped in the bud on 15 January, 1966.

Nevertheless, there are still serious shortcomings and acts of misbehaviour that are current among many members of our legislative houses. As an adapted institution, the new legislature must through the performance and behaviour of the members establish and prove its utility to the public before it can be accepted as part of the emerging national political culture. If members of the legislature fail, this new political structure has a high probability of being dumped in the dunghill of Nigerian history like the previous parliamentary form.

Pre-eminent among the shortcomings and acts of misbehaviour crying out loud for cure and purging are the following:

- High infatuation of many legislators for their status, position, powers and privileges without corresponding understanding and or love for the attached functions, roles and responsibilities.
- Low level of knowledge of too many legislators about the resources of this country or sections from which they come, as well as the priority needs of the country as a whole and the respective sections of the legislators concerned; and lack of perception of, or interest in, how best to match the country's resources with the priority needs of the people.
- Lack of honesty of purpose, dedication to duty and conscience for what is right for the whole country or sections of it by many legislators who, instead display high sense of selfishness (not even self enlightened interests), low sense of duty and insensitivity to the legislative function and responsibilities to which they have been elected. In other words, many legislators—senators, members of the House of Representatives and State Houses of Assembly - have failed to demonstrate the required honesty, dedication and conscience needed to tackle many public issues, measures, policies and bills that are brought before them.
- Failure of many legislators to follow such basic golden rule of doing to others as they would have others to do unto them, much less the more difficult rule of altruism and devotion for the good of others which people who decide to become legislators should learn, understand and practice.
- Failure to provide leadership in their demands, behaviours and relationships by most legislators. It appears that such legislators have failed to realize that Nigerians are now more perceptive and critical than they were during the First Republic.

To enhance the prospects for the institutionalization of the legislature into the formative national political culture, it is necessary that some 'mind management' takes place among its members. As soon as they are elected, they should start business with an orientation on their mission, role and function which may be contained in

the maiden speeches of the speakers and other knowledgeable members, or in a special seminar arranged for the orientation of the new legislators. This is necessary for the purpose of the future evaluation of the performance of individual members and the legislative houses in general.

It is also necessary that legislators develop initiatives for evolving the system they are operating rather than globe-trot to study ready-made systems that are contrived to satisfy the needs of different societies. As for the lack of adequate knowledge and concern for resources vis-a-vis priority needs of the people, legislators should use their available aides, paid and unpaid, to study the resources and priority needs and work out optimum allocation formulae which should form the basis for their motions and bills. The practice of proposing motions or formulating measures in vacuum or rather without marrying resources and priority needs of the people should be discontinued. Legislators should be in the vanguard of educating citizens to the realization that no government however rich can provide all the needs of its people, and that citizens are expected to join government in providing such needs. The practice of legislators, chief executives or any powerful individuals giving the impression that governments are bottomless pits of unlimited resources which should provide all the needs of the people must be stopped.

Chief Executives

Because the chief executives—the President and the Governors — are easily the most important in the political function of allocation of resources, their actions and behaviours probably have the greatest influence and effect on the future prospects of this new form of government. By the same token, they have the greatest capacity, through their actions and behaviours for promoting or hindering the institutionalization of any or all of the new political infrastructures into our emergent national political culture.

The President appears, to this writer, to be excessively preoccupied with travelling abroad and around the country. The enormous problems besetting this country requires the maximum personal attention of the executive President and all his aides. Nigerians opted for an executive President. Executive Presidents, unlike ceremonial presidents, are normally not globe trotters and host to all sorts of visitors. This writer has often wondered how much time the Executive President has left after the great amount of time spent on travelling abroad and internally and on receiving all sorts of visitors and ambassadors. What time has the President to actually study or examine properly the policy measures proposed by his aides to be able to eliminate contradictions and those motivated by purely selfish interests of the initiators and even add his contribution to provide his own stamp and sense of direction as the chief executive of this potentially great country bedeviled with great problems?

Taking cognisance of the large retinue who accompany the President on his travels could the benefits of such travel ever match the costs? The costs are further heightened in this society of 'eye service' for when the 'cat is away the rats will play.'

Another shortcoming is the slow approach to tackling many pressing problems by the President. The President needs more promptitude in taking decisions to tackle incipient problems. On many occasions problems which could have been tackled promptly to save a lot of headaches and heartaches are allowed to simmer for an unnecessarily long time before being attended to by the President or his aides.

As for the incumbent Governors, a sizeable number display intemperance and intolerance in their actions, behaviours and utterances. Sometimes their reactions to issues are very peevish and unbecoming of such leaders of government and people. To heighten their prestige, Governors should take a cue from our traditional rulers who have learnt to control their demeanour and maintain their dignity inspite of provocations, criticisms and even deprivation of their age old rights, privileges and powers.

Another major shortcoming of many Governors is their habit of taking the lion's share of the allocated resources. No systematic study has been undertaken on what the various Governors have allocated to their respective hometowns, villages or clans. It will therefore be unfair to mention names on the basis of insufficient data. Governors must however, abide by the criteria or principles of fair share and equal opportunity in order to heighten their prestige, and stave off demands for balkanization of their states and the component local governments, which only creates heavy administrative costs and benefits for a few powerful individuals (politicians, fiduciaries, beneficiaries) without improving the welfare of the masses (spectators). The principle of 'federal character' should apply more to the allocation of resources in the form of sharing amenities by the President and the Governors to all communities and less to sharing of appointive posts and contracts to only their respective party supporters or those in accord with them. The latter are definitely less limited in spread as regards federal character than the former, that is the different communities of this country. Glaring denials of fair share and equal opportunity merely on party basis will not heighten the prospects for the future of both the President and the Governors. It cannot be overemphasized that the war and booty mentality of politics by all shades of politicians hamper the future prospects of the new political system as a whole.

The Judicature

The Judicature is the last hope for equality and justice in this society where might is right and where the rich and powerful sometimes flout the laws with ignominy. This country needs a Judicature that is manned by judges who are upright, fearless and just. Its members must be motivated. They must be allowed to enjoy the confidence of the people by non-interference from the wielders of political power. This can only be achieved by making the members of the Judicature free from manipulation which economic and political vicissitudes are capable of imposing. The chief executive must support and promote the autonomy of the judiciary as the third arm

of this new form of government. Citizens and interest groups must desist from criticising the judicature whenever court judgements are not palatable to them or favourable to their interests. On the other hand, members of the Judicature must through their judgements which must be objective and non-partisan, through the actions, deeds and behaviours outside the courts uphold their impartiality and high prestige respectively. With such displays of character, members of the judicature will be able to act as the impartial adjudicators on constitutional disputes between governments, between citizens and governments, and between interest groups and governments. By so doing, the Judicature will heighten its own prestige as well as save the other new political infrastructures from falling into disrepute and danger of possible extermination as institutions of our formative national political culture.

Notes

- 1 Curry, R.L. & L.L. Wade, *A Theory of Political Exchange: Economic Reasoning in Political Analysis 1968*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1968 p. 40.
- 2 Almond, G.A. & Powell, G.B. *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston 1966, p. 23.
- 3 See Curry & Wade, *op. cit.* pp. 41-44 for definitions of the four terms.
- 4 Federal Republic of Nigeria: *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979* Federal Ministry of Information, Printing Division, Lagos. n.d.
- 5 Karl Loewenstein, 'Reflections on the value of Constitutions in our Revolutionary Age', in Eckstein, Harry & Apter, David E. *Comparative Politics, A Reader: The Free Press of Glencoe*, 2nd printing, 1964 pp. 149-163 see p. 154.
- 6 Karl Loewenstein, *Ibid.*, p. 161.
- 7 Dr Ibrahim Tahir: Recent Radio Interview Broadcast over Radio Nigeria, Kaduna Friday 23/10/81 held similar views which were expressed eloquently.
- 8 Cf. Prof Eme O. Awa, *Daily Times* Monday, 26 October, 1981 p. 3.
- 9 Karl Loewenstein *op. cit.* p. 161.
- 10 Cf. Prof Eme O. Awa *op. cit.* p. 3.

APPENDIX I

MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

1. Dr Bashir Ikara — Director, Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture — **Chairman**
2. Prof. P.C.A. Dauda — Dept. of Administrative Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria — **Member**
3. Dr Bawuro M. Barkindo — Dept. of History, Bayero University, Kano — **Member**
4. Dr Ibrahim Y. Yahaya — Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages, Bayero University, Kano — **Member**
5. M. Isa Alkali Abba — Dept. of History, Bayero University, Kano — **Member**
6. M. Abdullahi Mahadi — Dept. of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria — **Member**
7. Mr Dan'Azumi Kudara — Ministry of Education, Kaduna — **Member**
8. Mal. Danlami Yusuf — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Member**
9. Mal. Mustapha Mamman — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Member**
10. Mal. Mohammed El-Idris — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Member**
11. Miss Mairo Pate — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Member**
12. Mal. Yusuf Hamdany — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Member**
13. Mr Daniya Mawure — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Member**
14. Mr George J. Lawal — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Member**
15. Mr Thomas Achia — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Member**
16. Mr Ayuba Adon — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Member**
17. Mal. Sa'ad U. Mohammed — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Member**
18. Alhaji H.M. Wada — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Member**
19. Mr Segun Ogun — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Public Relations Officer (PRO)**
20. Danjuma B. Habu — Council for Arts & Culture, Kaduna — **Secretary**

APPENDIX II
MEMBERS OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING COMMITTEE

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Dr Bashir Ikara | — Chairman |
| 2. Prof. P.C.A. Daudu | — Member |
| 3. Dr Bawuro M. Barkindo | — Member |
| 4. Dr Ibrahim Y. Yahaya | — Member |
| 5. M. Isa Alkali Abba | — Member |
| 6. M. Abdullahi Mahadi | — Member |
| 7. M. Mustapha Mamman | — Member |
| 8. Danjuma B. Habu | — Secretary |

APPENDIX III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS: NATIONAL SEMINAR ON NIGERIA'S POLITICAL CULTURE

Name	Address
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4. Alhaji Yahaya Abubakar	Inst. of African Studies, Univ. of Ibadan
5. Prof Mahdi Adamu	Dept. of History, A.B.U, Zaria
6. Dr P.O. Adegbile	Dept of Textile Technology, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna
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10. Mal. Abubakar A. Aliyu	N.T.A., Kaduna
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12. Yohanna Allahmagani	A.B.U., Zaria
13. Dr J.A. Atanda	Dept. of History, Univ. of Ibadan
14. Isaiah Balat	Katsina Steel Rolling Mills, Katsina
15. Dr Bawuro Barkindo	Dept. of History, Bayero University, Kano
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22. Dr J.I. Elaigwu	Dept. of Political Science, Univ. of Jos
23. Aboki Galadima	Min. of Social Development, Kaduna
24. Yohanna Gamba	Min. of Education, Kaduna
25. Dr Tahir Gidado	Centre for Adult Educ., A.B.U., Zaria
26. Dr Saidu Goje	Min. of Information, Kaduna
27. Alhaji A.B. Hussaini	Dept. of History, A.B.U., Zaria
28. Samson O. Ichapa	National Council for Arts & Culture
29. Iyortange Igoil	C.N.C.S., A.B.U., Zaria
30. Dr Bashir Ikara	Director, Kaduna State Council for Arts & Culture
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36. John E. Lavers	Dept. of History, Bayero University, Kano
37. Abdullahi Mahdi	Dept. of History, A.B.U., Zaria
38. Alhaji Haruna Mashi	House of Assembly, Kaduna
39. Ade Obayemi	Dept. of History, University of Ilorin
40. Prof Eghosa Osagie	Dept. of Economics, Univ. of Jos
41. Enock Oyedele	Dept. of History, University of Nigeria, Nsukka
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48. Dr C.N. Ubah	Dept of History, University of Nigeria, Nsukka
49. Dr Yusuf Bala Usman	Governor's Office, Kaduna
50. Prof G.N. Uzoigwe	Dept. of History, University of Calabar
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53. Simon Yohanna	A.T.C., Kafanchan
54. R.M. Zarruk	Institute of Education, A.B.U., Zaria
55. Mallam I.T. Abdullahi	
56. Saleh Abubakar	
57. Sanusi Abubakar	
58. Umaru Adamu	
59. W.I. Adesida	
60. Masuhu Agaji	
61. ASP S.A. Agoyi	
62. Garba M. Ali	
63. Chika Anyasodo	
64. D.A. Coomasie	
65. Alhaji Dahiru Dankabi	
66. J.O. Dangana	
67. Mrs Margaret Deboles	
68. E.U. Egweh	
69. Alhaji Umaru Ejant	
70. Alhaji Abubakar Garba	
71. M.A. Hassan	
72. Mal. A. Ibrahim	
73. Abdulkadir I. Isa	
74. J.S.K. Kore	
75. Engr. (Alh.) M.S.S. Mazai	
76. Alhaji Jibirin Mapah	
77. Fred Okonta	
78. Alhaji Bello Sanni	
79. Prof A.J. Temu	
80. Dr Ibrahim Usman	
81. A.L. Vigo	
82. Aba L. Waje	
83. Jimoh Yakubu	
84. Alhaji Ibrahim K. Yunusa	

APPENDIX IV
RESOLUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON
'PERSPECTIVES ON NIGERIA'S POLITICAL CULTURE FROM 1000 A.D. TO DATE'
ORGANIZED BY THE KADUNA STATE COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE
2ND-5TH NOVEMBER 1981

The National Seminar on 'Perspectives on Nigeria's Political Culture from 1000 A.D. to date' organized by the Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture (2nd-5th November 81) examined political ideals and norms of the Nigerian society, the attitudes, beliefs and sentiments which govern behaviour within our political system. The seminar recognises that Nigeria's political culture during this period, presents a broad spectrum of change and continuity in a manner that the two, rather than being mutually exclusive, are complementary through constant accommodation of new styles of government and administration and the adaptation of the traditional political culture of the people. The modern political culture of Nigeria, therefore, is an amalgam of the political cultures of the indigenous traditional rulerships, the caliphate systems of Kanem — Borno and Sokoto, the colonial rule, the parliamentary system of the First Republic, the military regime of Ironsi, Gowon, Murtala Muhammed/Obasanjo, and the new Presidential form of government including various aspects of their norms and values as reflected in the political behaviour of those in power. These together continue to influence our concept of authority within the contemporary political culture.

Fully recognizing the dynamics of change and continuity within Nigeria's political culture therefore, this seminar resolves that traditional rulers should be recognized as traditional institutions that can be properly accommodated as part of our modern political culture with adequate and clearly defined roles in the ceremonial, integrative, developmental and religious functions of the communities.

Given the Republican status of Nigeria and the new Presidential system of government as well as the difference in role and status of a traditional ruler from place to place within the indigenous political culture of Nigeria, the seminar recommends that wherever there is a demand for elective traditional rulers, opportunity should be given to the people to elect them. In the same way, the modern political leadership should recognize the wishes of the people in the appointment of their traditional rulers.

In order to reflect fully the democratic principles of the presidential system of government to the local level of society, a local government chairman should be elected from within the local government area serving as his constituency.

The seminar also recognizes the need to evolve a desirable political behaviour for Nigeria. To achieve this, the current political practice has to be adjusted to suit our national goals and aspirations. This would entail the use, in a *new way*, of our human and material resources to solve the basic problems of our people, such as in agriculture, in the promotion of indigenous technology, and in the provision of basic infrastructure for development. This would *seriously* require a radical change and re-orientation in the financial management of both the private and public sectors of the Nigerian Community. In particular, the system of contract awards should be completely reviewed to eliminate fraud, wastage, indolence, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness. Since Nigeria exhibits the typical characteristics of a corporate political culture, this kind of *moral regeneration* cannot be achieved without a change in the system of financial and social welfare administration in the country and a corresponding attitudinal change on the part of public officers, and the Nigerian society at large. The seminar resolves that the attitude of regarding the award of contracts as the only way of executing public projects should be changed. Rather, if our traditional values and structures are revamped, such public projects could more effectively be carried out through communal, co-operative and direct governmental labour than through the contract system.

On the other hand, a society in which virtue appears to have no reward, and public officers have to *grab* in order to satisfy social expectations should change its attitude *sooner* than later. The seminar finds

it suspiciously alarming that public officers in Nigeria are neither able nor anxious to implement the constitutional provisions relating to the moral conduct of public officers.

Fully recognizing that the traditional systems and structures were criticised as being corrupt in spite of the checks and balances, the seminar finds the gap between 'ideal' and 'reality' even wider in our contemporary political culture. It therefore resolves that, all the mechanisms for ensuring the *accountability* of public officers should be enforced *forthwith* and that all *surplus acquisitions* should be *confiscated* in order to pave the way for a sound and stable political culture for Nigeria.

It is important to note that the seminar was attended by eminent practitioners and scholars including political advisers to State Governments, Commissioners, Secretaries to State Governments, Heads of Civil Service, Permanent Secretaries, University Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments, Research Fellows and Lecturers as well as eminent Professors of History, Archeology, Political Science, Economics, and Sociology from various Nigerian Universities and many of whom are directly engaged in the promotion of arts and culture in the country.

(Signed)
Bashir Ikara
Conference Chairman

Index

- Aba, 79
Abakaliki, 79
Abam - Ohafia, 79
Abbas, Muhammad, 132, 133, 136, 137, 140
Abbasid
era, 118
jurists, 125
political system, 125
Abdul-Jalil, *Mai*, 21
Abdullahi dan Fodio, 123, 124
Abemo, 96
Abeokuta, 92, 94, 104, 105
see also Egbas
Abia, 55
Abiodun, 87
Aboh Kingdom, 86, 87, 94, 95
Abubakar, Sa'ad, 67
Abuja, 67
Aburi, (Ghana) 178-179
'Account of Gazargamo', 39
Ada, 79
Adamolekun, L., 156, 164, 171
Adedeji, A., 171
Adegun, 91
Afigbo, A.E., 80, 84
Afikpo, 79
Afonja, *Are*, 91, 92
Agae, 67
Agbakiri, 107
Ago oja, 92
Aguleri, 79
Ahmed, Shehu, 139
Ahmad, *Mai*, 27-28
Ajayi, J.F. Ade, 8, 10, 101
Ajele, 110-111
Aji, Tlikse Bukar, 54
Ajoba, *Balogun*, 115
Akassa, 83
Akere, 109
Akingbade, J.K., 171
Akinjide, Richard, 203
Akintola, 109
Akintoye, 95, 97
Akinyele, I.B., 112, 117
Al-Aziz b. Yaqub, ai-Mutawakkil Abd, 25
Al-Kanemi, Muhammad al-Amin, 28
Al-Kanemiyyin, 18
Al-Kanemiyyin Borno, 28
Al-Kerim, Abd, 26
al-Mansur, Zubayr, 29
Al-Maqrizi, 21, 23
Al-Muhallabi, 20, 21, 37
Al-Suyuti, Jamal, 25
Alagoa, E.J., 84
'alangu megun indin', 45
Algazali, A., 149, 171
Ali b. Dunama, 23, 24
Ali b. Umar, 26-27
Ali Gaji, mai, 24-25, 38, 45, 50
Alimi, 91
Aliram, Amsa, 39
Alkali, 71, 72, 137
appointment of, 134-135
Alkali, M. Nur, 33
Alum, 19
Amagedde, 68
amanyanabo, 82
Amir al - Mumunin, 129, 130, 131
Anambra State, 203
Ankrah, *General*, 178
Antar, 22
Aole, Alaafin, 90, 91
Arakanga War, 96
Are Agoro, 107
Are Ona Kakanfo, 88, 107
Area Council, 156, 157, 159-160
Argentina, 184
Arnett, 141
Aro, 79
Aro oracle, attack
by the British, 80
Asaba, 79

- Asamu, Basorun, 91
 Asiwaju, A.I., 93, 101
asker, 46
 Atanda, J.A., 85
 Atiba, 92
 Atlantic trade, 81, 82
 Atta of Igala, 68, 69
atajirai, 123, 125
 authority concept
 and family, 11-12
 autocracy, 3
 Awolowo, Obafemi, 203
 Ayandele, E.A., 98, 102
- baale and *baaleship*, 104, 107, 109
 functions of, 108
 baale-in-council, 110
Baba Kekere, 110
Baba ogun, 110
Baba sale, 107
 Babba, Aliyu, 132, 135, 136
 Babura, Umoru, 139
 Badagry, 94
 Baghirmi, Sultan of, 27
 Bahr al-Ghazal, 29
 Baker, C.A., 171
 Balewa, Abubakar Tafawa, 152, 153, 154-155
Balogun, 107, 109- 110
 Bana, 56
Baraka, 27
barga, 46
 Barghirmi State, 26
 Bariba, 69
 Barkindo, Bawuro, M., 50
 Barquq, Sultan, 34
 Barth, Heinrich, 24, 135, 145
Basorun, 93, 107
 bata, 46
bayate, 36
 Bayero, Abdullahi, 132, 134, 135, 137, 139, 141
 Beecroft, John, 95
 Bello, Ahmadu, 152
 Bello, Mallam, 138, 139
 Bendel State, 203
 'Beni confederacy', 68, 69
 Beni-Nupe, 67
 Benin, 69, 90, 93, 97
 annexation of, 95
 Benin Kingdom, 86, 87
 and Igbo political culture, 80
- Benin, Republic of, 92
 Biafra, Republic of, 180
 Bida, 67, 68, 71, 73
 division into ekpa, 72-73
 Bilad - as - Sudan, 22, 27
 Birni, 28, 119
 Birni Gazargamu, 24
 Bladi, Tlikse, 61
 Bonny, 82
 Borno, 18, 21, 22, 26-29, 50, 52, 61, 62
 attack against Mandara, 55
 Caliphate, 24-26
 Saifawa influence, 23-24
 bribery, 142, 143, 153
brief Diwan, 25
 British administration, 50, 130, 131, 138
 see also colonial authority
 British Expedition, 80
 Bulala, 25
 overthrow of, 26
 Bulala war, 26, 35, 39, 50
 Bunu, 73
Burtali, (Cattle Trade), 119
 Buxton, Thomas, F., 94, 102
- Caliph
 redesignation, 125
 succession method, 140-141
 Camel, introduction of, 19
 Cameroun Republic, 56
 Cargill, 137
 carpet crossing, 204
 cattle tax, *see* 'Jangali'
 census (1973), 186
 Central Sudan, 118
 Chad region, 19, 21, 203
 Chibok, 51
 Chief commissioner, 148
 Chief-in council, 153
 Chieftaincy institution, 7, 87
 centralized, 51
 Chima system, 21, 23, 24, 28, 38, 39, 73, 141
 administration of, 143-145
 Christianity, 4, 14-15, 93, 98
 in Western Nigeria, 90, 93-94
 Cidi, 43
 'cima gana', 144
 'cima jilibé', 44
Croma, 20, 35
 Civil war, 16, 155, 158, 180

- Coalition**, 96-98
 definition of, 96
 coercion, 184, 186
Colonial authority,
 goals of, 130
 political and administrative
 structure, 148-151
colonialism, 4, 5, 14-15, 63, 64
confederation, 179
Constitution, 16, 17
 indictment of, 197
 Macpherson, 151
 of 1979, 163-164, 192, 195, 204
Consul, 78
 appointment of, 95
 contract award, 214
corruption, 142, 143, 153, 186, 187
Council of chiefs, 87, 155
Council of States, 164, 165, 183
Council-Manager system, 156
Courts of Equity, 95
Cross River Valley, 78
 political culture, 80-82

Dabo, Ibrahim, 121, 140
dagarai, 131
dagatai, 123
Dahomey, *see*
 Benin, Republic of
Daily Comet, 152
Daily Times, 182
Dakodzi, 72
Damagaram, 121
Damayi, 50, 55
Dambatta, 122
Dambazawa, 140
Daniski, Northern Bolewa, 51
Dantata, Alhassan, 139
Daudu, P.C.A., 171, 192
Daura, Ahmadu Rufai, 139
Dawudids, 22, 24
Decree No. 34, 1966, 176
demilitarization, 187
Dendo, 71
Derdai, 19
Development Administration system, 156, 157
Dibalami, Dunama, 22
Dikwa, 29
District Officer, 15, 134, 148, 150, 162
 role of, 150-151

Divisional Area, 159-160
Diwan, 21, 22
Diwan al-salatin Barnu, 20
Diya-ul-Hukkam, 123
Dogho, 97
dokara, 54
Doko, 68
Dosumu, 95
dubul, 54
Dudley, B.J. 135, 144, 145
Duhul, 56, 63
Duke Town, *see*
 Calabar, 82
Dunama, 22, 28
Dura, 60
Dutse, 119

East Central State, 156
Eastern Niger Delta Area, 78
 political culture, 82-83
Eastern Region, 153
 political culture, 77-84
Ebrohimi, 96
Eda, 68, 69
Edegi, *see* Tsaode
Edo, 86
 political institution, 80
education, 182
Efik, 81
Efunsetan, 108
egba, 73
Egba (people), 92, 96, 105
 migration to Abeokuta, 106
Egba Gbagura, 104
Egbado, 92, 104
Egbe, 68
Egbo, 81
Eghaevbo n'ogbe, 87
Eghaevbo n'ore, 87
Egypt, French invasion of, 28
Ekiti Kingdom, 96
Ekoi, 81
Ekpako, 87
ekpe, 81-82
Ekumeku movement, 80
Elaigwu, J. Isawa, 173
Elias, T., 171
Electoral offices,
 succession method, 141-142
Elem Kalabari, 82

- Emir, 3, 14, 71, 72, 73, 129
 council of the, 135, 137, 138
 criticism of, 152
 powers of, 131-132, 135, 136
 redesignation of, 125
 under colonial rules, 5, 131, 132-143, 150
 Emir-in-Council, 139, 153
 Emirate system, 129, 130
 criticism of, 139
 retention of, 130-131
 succession method, 140-141
 Ena Manzi, 72
ena wuzi, 72
 Enugu, 79
 Esa, 68
 Eso, 88
 Esozi, 73
 ethnicity, 29
 Etsu, 70
 succession to, 73
 eunuch, 61, 62
 European pressures, 93-96
 Ewu, 68
 Ewuare, 87, 88
 Executive, 206-207
 assessment of, 200-202
 Eyo, 104
 Eze, 80
 Eze-Nei, 80

 Fadahunsi, I.O., 171
 Fafie, 68
 Falola, Toyin, 104
 Family, concepts of authority, 6, 11-12
 Federal Executive Council, 175
 Federal Military Government
 achievements, 147
 FESTAC, 186
 Fezzan, 19, 22, 25, 26
 fief system, *see*
 chima system
 field administration, 148, 159-160
 Fika, A.F., 131, 144
 first night, right of, 57
 First Republic, 5, 16
 collapse of, 99
 Fombina, 62
 Forde, D., 72, 75, 79, 81, 84
 Frobenius, L., 68, 75
 Fula, 60
 Fulani, *see* Fulbe

 Fulbe, 4, 14, 50, 62, 63, 64, 71, 72, 74, 141
 and Hausa conflict, 119

 Gaa (Gaha), *Basorun*, 77, 78
 Gaba, 68
 Gadawur, 119
gaisuwa, 142
 Galadima, 20
galtima, 34, 40
 Gamergu, 51
 Garbai, Shehu, 30
 Gbadegi, 68
 Gbanamu War, 96, 106
 Gbari, 69, 73
 Gbira, 73
 Gela, 63
 gerontocracy, 87, 88
ghanima (booty), 122
 Gidam, 55
 Giziga State, 52, 56, 63
 Gobir, 27
 Gongola State, 50, 54
 Governor, powers of, 200
 Gowon, Yakubu, 175, 177, 179, 180, 181, 182, 185
 loss of credibility, 186
 Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), 192, 196, 201
 Green, M.M., 79, 84
 Guduf, 61
 Gudur, 54, 57, 60
 shrine, 56
Guidelines on local Government reforms, 157-158, 160, 163
 Gulak, 50, 56
 Gumel, 26
Gumsu, 20, 38, 39
Gunnu, 70
 Gwandu, 72
 Emir of, 71, 73
 Gwarzo, Usman, 138

 Habuga, 55
Hajj, 22
hakimai, 141, 142
hakki, 44
 Hausa, 14
 and Fulbe conflict, 119
 Hayat, b. Said, 29
 Herodotus, 19

- Higgi**, 56, 57
Hinderer, Anna, 109
Hodgkin, Thomas, 123, 128
Hong (Kilba), 61
Horton, R., 79, 81, 84
House of Representatives, 197
hudud Allahi, 35
Hummay, mai, 20, 21
Hummay, Dunama b., 22
Hymbala, 61, 62
- Ibadan**, 92, 93, 94, 99
 leadership tussle, 96
 new government, 105-108
 political culture, 92-93, 104-117
 power struggle, 112-116
 system of government, 108-111
 features of, 111-112
Ibe, 82
Ibibio, 80, 81
Ibikunle, Balogun, 93, 111
Ibn Dunama, mai Biri, 38
Ibn Fartua, Imam Ahmed, 34
Ibn Idris, Sultan Umar, 34
Ibn Isharq, Mohammad Salih, 39
Ibrahim (1713-17), 70
Ibrahim, mai, 28
Idah, 80
Idara, 34, 35
Idris Alauma, mai, 34, 35, 38, 39, 42
Idris b. Ali, mai, 25, 26
 heirs of, 26-27
Idrisids, 22, 24
Ife (people), 104
 exit from Ibadan, 106
Ifejioku, 80
Igala Kingdom, 68, 80
Igbimo ilu, 87, 110, 111
Igbo, 3, 78
 political culture, 79-80
see also Eastern Region
Igbo - Ukwu bronzes, 80
Ijaye, 92, 94, 104, 105
 personal ascendancy, 116
 war, 96
Ijebu, 92, 93, 98, 105, 106
 expedition against, 96
 soldier, 105
Ijebu-Ode, 93
Ijesa, 97
- Ijo**, 80
 political culture, 82-83
Ijoye, 87
Ika, 79
Ikara, Bashir Ahmed, 8, 10, 147, 155, 156,
 158, 171, 215
Ikime, Obaro, 98, 102, 103
Ilaro, 104
ile bibo, 116
Ilesa, 115
Ilobi, 104
Ilorin, 91
Imam, 35, 71, 72
Imam, Abubakar, 152
Imam, Ibrahim, 152
Imamul Idaini, 34
 impeachment, 7, 201, 204
 imperialism, 95, 97, 98
 Independence, struggle for, 99
Indirect Rule, 5, 98, 133, 141, 149
Iraq, 184
iron
 industry, 51-52, 54
 technology, 19
Ironsi, Aguiyi, 103, 174, 175, 176-177, 184-185
Islam, 4, 14, 91, 98
 and indigenous religion, 97
 and Saifawa State, 22-23
 effect on Nupe, 70-71, 74
 in Western Nigeria, 90
Isoko, 86, 87, 88
Isu-Item, 79
Isumu, 79
Itsekiri Kingdom, 86, 87, 90, 97, 98
Iyalaje, 109
Iyalode, expectations of, 108-109
Iyase, 88
- Jabawa**, 140
Jahun, 120
Jakadu, 141
Jama'a, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125
 'Jangali', 182
Jibrilla, Etsu, 70, 71, 72, 74
Jihad, 4, 14, 27, 62, 74, 91, 92, 97
 causes of, 119-121
 mistakes of, 124
 results of, 121-123
 sarauta system, 118-128
Jil, mai, 21
Jilwa, 21

- Jima, 71
 Johnson, Samuel, 114, 117
 Jones, G.I., 79, 81, 84
 Judicature, 193, 202-204, 207
 judicial, 162
 Judiciary, 200
jus primae noctis, 57
 Juyel, 60
- Kadu*, 43
 Kaduna, 133
 Kaduna State, 201, 203
 Council for Arts and Culture, 1, 8, 77
Kaigama, 23, 24, 36, 40, 45
 Oath of allegiance, 46
 Kakanfo, 107
 Kamberi, 73
 Kambur wa-Bebbel, 61, 62
 Kamburwa-Disa, 62
 Kanem
 administration in, 20-21
 early Islamic State, 21-22
 early period, 19-20
 meaning of, 22
Kanem Bu, 19
 Kanembu dynasty, 14
 Kano
 court of appeal, 137
 emirs' council, 139-140
 jihad and sarauta system, 118-128
 major classes, 122
 political administration, 129-146
 population of, 130
 slave system, 137-138
 village administrations, 142
 Kano, Aminu, 152
Kano chronicle, 135
 Kanuri, 51
 Saifawa dynasty, 14
 Kanuri, Shettima, 28
 Kapsiki, 56
 Karaye, 120
 Katur, mai, 21
 Katuriwa, 21
 Kawar, 21
 cases, 19
 Kayi, 21
 Kelle, 45
Kema lardema, 34, 43
- Kerawa, 51
 Ketsa, 70
Khalifa, 27
 Kighi, 55
Kilab al-farq, 123
 Kilba, 57, 63
 Kin Nupe, *see* Nupeland
 Kirchinga, 62
 Kiriji War, 93
 Kogunawa, 42-43
 Kolo, Abubakar, 70
 Kontagora, 67
 Korton Karfe, 67
 Kosoko, 95, 97
 Kpotu, Etsu, 72
 Kukawa, 28
 Kurunmi, 92, 96
 Kutigi, 68
 Kwale, 79
 Kyede, 68, 69
- Labosinde, 105, 107
 Lafiagi, 67
 Lafianu, *Eso* Owota, 91
 Lagos, 90, 93, 94
 annexation of, 95, 96
 bombardment of, 95
 Lagos State, 203
 Laird Macgregor, 94
 Lakanle, 106, 107
 Lake Chad, 22, 50-52
 Land, 89, 114
 Lanlatu, 108
 Lapai, 67
 Latosa, *Are*, 93, 111, 115, 116
 Lavers, John E., 18
 legal system, 7
 Legislative oversight, 199
 Legislature, 197-199, 204-206
 Libya, 184
 literati, *see* *Ulema*
 Llidi, 54, 55-57
 Local administration,
 reforms of, 155-157
 Local Authority Council, 156-157, 159-160
 Local Government,
 demand for reforms, 152-158
 Local government council
 boundary readjustment, 162
 constitutional recognition, 163-164

- electoral process, 162
- population, 163
- 'subordinate council; 163
- Local government reforms, 147-172
 - conceptual and structural framework, 158-160
 - prospective view, 163-169
 - recommendations for, 148-157
 - 1976 reforms, 5-6, 160-163
- Lokoja, 132
- Lugard, Lord, 132, 137, 140, 149

- Margi, 51, 57
 - of Yamta, 63
- Masaba, 72
- Masaga, 72
- Masu Sarauta*, 122, 123
- Matakam, 55, 56, 57, 61, 62
- Maye*, 96, 105, 106, 107
- Mazrui, Ali A., 174
- Mbari*, 57
- Mgbe*, 81
- Michika, 63
- Milding, 50
- Mildo, 50, 56
- military regime, 5-6, 16, 93, 173-191, 193
 - achievements, 147, 185-186
 - basic characteristics, 183-188
 - depoliticization of, 188
 - political engineering, 174-179
 - structural reorganization, 179-183
- Miller, Walter, R.S., 151
- Mithlim*, 55
- Moda, 62
- Mofu, 62
- Mogaji, 111
- Mohammed, prophet, 35, 125
- monarchy, 86-87, 88, 141
- monogamy, 97, 98
- Moore, Eric, 190, 196, 197, 199
- Moshi River, 86
- Motu, 61
- Mpasaki, 56
- Mubi, 63
- Mubi-Gela, 61
- Mundang, 63
- Muhammad, Awlad, 25
- Muhammed, Murtala Ramat, 175, 181, 183, 186, 187
- Mujadid*, 119

- Muku, 72
- Mundang State, 52
- Murray, D.J., 150, 171
- Murzug, 25
- myth, 14

- Nadal, S.F., 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75
- Nafowokan, Balogun, 93
- Najjigi, Umaru, 72
- Nana
 - expedition against, 96
 - fall of, 97
- National Assembly, 193, 197-200, 204-206
- National Party of Nigeria, (NPN), 192, 196, 201
- National Reconciliation Committee, 179
- Native Administration System, 98, 130, 133
- Native Authority, 149, 150, 152
 - code of conduct, 130
 - criticisms of, 152
 - police, 162
 - renaming, 157
- Native Authority Council, 139, 153
- Native Authority Law (1954), 153
- Native Authority Ordinance (1933), 136, 153
- Ndaduma*, 69, 70
- Ndako, 72
- Ndeji*, 72
- Ndi Eze, 79
- Nembe, 82, 83
- NEPU, 152
- New Nigerian*, 182
- New Oyo, 104
- Ngermaram, Magira Aisa Keli, 38
- Ngola, 63
- Ngolo (Bazza), 61
- Nguze, 26
- Niger - Kaduna Confluence, 67
- Niger River, 69, 86
- Niger State, 67
- Nigerian Army
 - regionalization of, 178
- Nigeria - Dahomey Border, 86
- Nigerian Peoples Party, (NPP), 192, 196, 201
- Nigeria Police, 162
- Nile Valley, 14
- Ningi, 121, 122
- Noah, M.E., 81, 84
- Noguna, 41
- North Africa, 14
- North Bolewa, 63

- North-Central State
 Area Councils, 159-160
 local government system, 156-157
 Northern People's Congress (NPC), 152
 Northern Region
 coherence of, 153-154
 demand for reform, 152-153, 154-155
 local government reforms, 156-157
 May riot, 176, 177
 political administration, 129-146
 Nri, 79
 Nri - Awka, 79
 Nubia, 22
 Nupeko, 68
 Nupeland
 advent of Islam, 70-71
 emergence of a kingdom, 67-70
 kingdom to emirate, 71, 74
 political evolution, 67-76
 Nzimiro, I., 79, 84
- Oba*, 80, 104
 Obasanjo, Olusegun, 175, 181, 182, 187-188
 Obayemi, Ade., 68, 69, 75
Obi, 80
 Ode-Itsekiri, 93
 Oderinlo, 109
 Ogbaru, 80
 Ogbomoso, 104, 105
 Ogedengbe, Balogun, 93
 Ogoja, 81
Ogulasuwei, 88
 Ogunmola, *Basorun*, 93, 111
 Oguta, 79, 80
 Ohuhu-Ngwa, 79
Ojoye, 87
 Ojukwu, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu, 177, 179, 180
 Oke-Iho, 104
 Oke-Odan, 104, 105
Okesuawei, 87
 Okoh, N., 79, 84
 Okrika, 82
 Okunade, *Maye*, 105
 Old Oyo Empire,
 collapse of, 91-93, 104
 Oluyedun, 107
 Oluyole, 92, 93, 96, 107, 108, 111, 116
 Onitsha, 79, 80
 Onwuejogwu, M.A., 79, 84
- Opobo, 82
 Oratta-Ikwerre, 79
 Orr, Sir Charles, 149
 Osamari, 79
 Osogbo, 104
 battle, 97
 Osungbekun, 109
Ota, 88
 Ottoman, 25, 26, 28
 Overnamwen, Oba, 95
 Owenwene, O. 171
 Owu, 105
 Oyinloye, O., 150, 171
 Oyo, 88, 97, 106
 bombardment of, 96
Ozo, 80
- Pabir, 63
 Paden, J.N., 131, 144
 Palam, 50, 56
 palm-oil and kernels, 78, 82, 94
 Palmer, H.R., 123, 128
 Panjuru, 68
 Pasha, Turghut, 25
 Pategi, 67
 Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), 192, 196, 201
 Peoples Republic of China, 6
 Peru, 184
 Phillips, 95
 political culture, 77-78
 definition of, 3, 11, 113
 dual structure, 149
 evolution of, 10-17
 issues and processes, 1-8
 political party, 192
 in Presidential system, 196-197
 political scene,
 demilitarization of, 186-188
 political sovereignty, abrogation of, 78
 politics, lifting of ban, 187
 Port-Novo, 93
 Portuguese Capuchin Fathers, 93
 President,
 function of, 200
 Presidential system 7, 17
 1979 constitution, 195, 204
 executive, 200-202, 206-207
 future prospects, 192-209
 judicature, 202-204, 207-208

- legislative oversight, 199-200
- legislature, 197-199, 204-206
- political parties, 196-197
- prison administration, 162
- production, means of, 124-125
- province, 148, 149
- Ptil*, 60
- Public officer, 125
 - accountability-of, 214, 215
- Public Service, purge of, 187

- Qadi Mainyin, 34
- qadi mainyin Kenandi, 40
- Qadi, 72
- Quran, 72

- Rabih, 18
- Rabih b. Fadlallah, 29-30
- rain cult, 61
- Rano, 122
- religion, 167
 - sanction, 12
- Resident, 132, 133, 148, 150
- Revenue Allocation Act, 203
- Ribadu, 63
- Richards, Sir Arthur, 139, 153
- Riggs, F.W., 171
- Ringim, 120
- royal family, 38-39
 - elements of instability, 39-43
- Royal Niger Company, 83
- Rumfa, Muhammad, 135
- Russia, 6

- Sai, 22
- Saifawa, heirs of, 27-29
- Saifawa rule, 18-30, 33-47, 50-51, 63
 - elements of instability, 39-43
 - fief administration, 43-45
 - military organization, 45-47
 - Royal family, 20, 38-39
- Sakarammi, Magira Fusam, 38
- Saki, 104
- Sankara, 120
- Sanusi, Muhammadu, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142
- Sao, 51
- Sarakizi, 72
- Sarakuna, 142
- Sarauta system
 - role of jihad, 118-128
 - strengthening of, 124
- Sarkin Bai, role of, 137
- Sarkin Musulmin*, 14
- Sarumi*, 107
- Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan, 33, 34
- Secessions,
 - threats of, 175-176, 180
- Second republic, 188
- secret society, 81
- Senate, 197
- Seriki*, 107, 109-110
- Shaba, Etsu, 72
- Shagari, Shehu Musa, 200-201, 203, 206-207
- Share districts, 67
- Shari-Logone, 51
- Sharia, 24, 72, 125, 131
- Shaykh*, see *Shehu*
- Shehu, 28
- Shodeke, 92
- Shona, 67
- Shugaba, Darman
 - deportation of, 203
- slave trade, abolition of, 94, 97
- Slavery, 97, 114, 120, 122
 - in Kano, 137
- Smith, Abdullahi, 21, 123, 128
- Smith, Arthur, 183, 191
- Smith, M.G. 133, 134, 145
- Sokoto Caliphate, 4, 71, 72, 73, 74, 129, 131
- 'Sole Native Authority', 135, 138
 - abolition of, 139
 - criticism of, 136
 - modification of, 153
- State
 - concept of, 15
 - creation of, 179, 181, 185, 187
 - two thirds of, 203
 - traditional concepts, 12-13
- State Governments, 16
- State House of Assembly, 193, 197-199, 200, 204-206
- stateless society, 3
- status, achieved, 13-14, 15
- Subuola, 108
- suicide, 7
- Sukuh
 - councillors, priests and executives, 57-59
 - decline and collapse, 61-63
 - factors in her emergence, 52, 54-55
 - Llidi, 55-57
 - political cnetralization in, 50-66

- socio-political structure, 55
- territorial expansion, 59-60
- Sule, Yusuf Maitama, 152
- Sullubawa, 140, 143
- Summerhayes, G.V., 157, 171
- Supreme Court, 203
- Supreme Military Council, 175

- Talakawa*, 119, 122, 123, 133, 138, 152
- Talba, 34, 39, 40, 45
- Tara ta Kano*, 135, 136
- Taraghan, 22
- tawur, 45, 46
- Tax ordinance, 150
- Temple, 137, 141
- Tibesti Mountains, 19
- titles, categories of, 42
- Tlikse-a-Wandala, 52
- Tomaghera, 19, 21
- Towagi, 68
- trade, 90, 94, 114, 151
- tradition, 14
 - and modernity, 3, 114
- traditional culture
 - heterogeneity of, 2
 - traditional Kingmaker, 34, 35
- traditional order, 85
- traditional political institution, 99
 - change and reform, 151-155
- traditional ruler and rulership, 4, 7, 8, 95, 207
 - elective, 214
 - presidential government, 193
 - prospective view, 163-169
 - reconciliation with, 97
 - role of, 161-162, 164
 - stabilizing force, 98-99
 - under colonial authority, 5
 - see also* sarauta system
- traditional society, 3, 10
 - administrative structure, 148
- traditional title, 6
- traditional value, 4, 16
- Tsaode, 68, 69, 70
 - Dynasty, 71, 74
- Tuareg confederations, 19
- Tubu*, 19, 22
- Tunjur, 26
- Tupuri State, 52, 63
- Tura, 55

- Uba, 63
- Ubah, C.N. 129
- Ubandawaki*, 72
- Udokua*, 87
- Uge, 88
- Ukwani, 86, 87, 88
- ulama*, 22, 34
- Ulema*, 119, 121, 122
- Umar, mai, 22
- Umar b. Idris, 26
- UMBC, 152
- Ummenwa, 21
- Uniform Income Tax, 182
- Unitary government, 176
- Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), 192, 196, 201
- Upper Yedseram Basin, 50
- Urhobo, 86, 87, 88
- Usman, 137
- Usman, Wambai, 141
- Usman dan Fodio (Uthman dan Fodiyo), 4, 62, 91, 118, 123, 129
- USSR, *see* Russia
- Usama*, 87

- Vemgo, 56

- Wada, Inuwa, 139
- Wadai, 26, 27, 81
- Waladi*, 42
- Waliyi, Abdu, 70
- warrant chief, 3, 150, 153
- Wasau*, 120
- Waziri, 34, 40, 45, 137
- Welch, Claude (Jnr), 183, 191
- western education, 5, 98, 152
- Western Ijo people, 86, 87, 88
- Western Nigeria, 85-103
 - collapse of Old Oyo, 91-93
 - demand for reform, 153-154
 - established order, 86-89
 - European pressures, 93-96
 - nineteenth century collisions, 98-91
 - political systems, 105
 - towards coalition, 96-98
- Western State,
 - Administrative Divisions Edict (1967), 155
 - Divisional areas, 159-160
- Whitaker, C.S., 149, 170, 172
- Wraith, R.E., 172
- Wulla, 56, 61

Yagba, 73
Yaji, Hamman, 63, 64
Yalawa, 140
Yamani, 22
Yanta, 51
Yazan, Saidhu, 22
Yedseram, 56, 62, 64
Yedseram River, 52, 54
Yeriman, 23, 24, 34, 36, 40
Yesa, 68
Yewa River, 104
Yola, 64
Yoruba Kingdom, 69, 86
Yusuf, Maitama Bello, 203

Zaki, Usman, 71, 72
Zam Nupe, 68
Zanna, 45
zanna arjinoma, 42-43
zanna Karedilima, 43
zanna ndubuwama, 43
zanna ngijiba, 38
zanna ngijima, 36, 37
Zaria, 133, 134
zarma, 45
Zarma Kura, 40
Zazi Kati, 73
zoku, 54
Zu, 61, 62
Zughi, 55
Zugorio, 50
Zugurma, 67

Evolution of Political Culture in Nigeria consists of essays that provide valuable background to politics in Nigeria. Proceedings of a national seminar on Nigeria's political culture, the essays also explore the basic assumptions and values underlying political behaviour and the interaction between culture and politics. The role of traditional rulership institutions in the evolution of Nigeria's political culture is also examined in depth.

This book should appeal to politicians, traditional rulers and local government officials. Scholars in sociology, political science, history and law will also find it of immense value.

ISBN 978 054735 (Nigeria)
0 16 875365X (Outside Nigeria)

University Press Limited
Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture