

Ethnicity and elite interests in Nigeria

ETHNICITY VERSUS ELITE INTEREST
AND BEHAVIOUR AS SOURCES OF
CONFLICT AND INSTABILITY IN
THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

by

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ABSTRACT

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This study attempts to assess the extent to which instabil-
ity in the Nigerian political system is the result of ethnic an-
tagonism or of divergent elite politico-economic interests.

Most scholarly treatments of African politics have explained
political conflict in terms of ethnic antagonism, and in regard
to Nigeria, political analysts have more often than not attributed
the instability of the political system to tribalism or the
cultural pluralism of Nigerian society.

Our study questions this approach to the analysis of Niger-
ian politics, and suggests that tribalism is not the instinctive
behaviour of groups in multi-ethnic Nigerian society, but rather
an instrument of mass political mobilization used by elites who
seek political power and the material rewards it brings. In the
study we show how political leaders manipulate ethnicity to
acquire political power which in turn is used for the embourgeoise-
ment of politicians and some government and party functionaries.

Resumé

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Cette étude s'efforce d'évaluer la mesure avec laquelle l'énstabilité du système politique Nigerien est le résultat d'antagonisme ethnique ou de divergences d'intérêts parmi l'élite politico-économique.

La plupart des discussions académiques concernant les politiques africaines ont expliquées un conflit politique en terme d'antagonisme ethnique, et en rapport avec le Nigéria, les analystes en politique, et en rapport avec le Nigéria, les analystes en politique ont souvent attribué l'instabilité du système politique à l'organisation tribale et au pluralisme culturel de la société Nigérienne.

Notre étude met en question la méthode de cette analyse des politiques Nigériennes, et suggère plutôt que le mode tribal n'est pas le comportement instinctif de groupes multi-ethniques de la société Nigérienne, mais plutôt un instrument de mobilisation politique des masses, utilisé par l'élite qui recherche une puissance politique et la rétribution matérielle qu'elle apporte. Dans cette étude, nous démontrons également la manipulation de l'ethnicité par les politiciens en vue d'acquérir une puissance politique qui est utilisée à la fois pour

PREFACE

One of the substantive concerns of recent empirical research in comparative politics, especially in the study of political development, has been the issue of instability in 'developing' political systems. This study shares the same concern, and offers an interpretation of Nigerian politics in the early 'fifties and 'sixties which enable us to understand the subsequent instability of the political system in the critical period between 1962 and 1964. Concretely, the study attempts to assess the extent to which political conflict in multi-ethnic Nigerian society is based on 'ethnic' antagonism, and on divergent elite politico-economic interests.

Most scholarly treatments of African politics have explained political conflict in terms of ethnic antagonisms, and in regard to Nigeria, political analysts have more often than not attributed the instability of the political system to tribalism or the cultural pluralism of Nigerian society.

Our study questions this approach to the analysis of Nigerian politics, and suggests that it is not inevitable that the relationship of groups in a poly-ethnic society must always be shaped by ethnic antagonism. Rather, tribalism becomes salient in the relationship of groups under certain identifiable contexts, usually in situations of competition over the distribution of economic resources and opportunities for social

mobility, which in a developing country like Nigeria, are under the near monopolistic control of government.

Hence the more significant variable in the analysis of conflict and instability in the Nigerian political system is not cultural pluralism, but the politics of pluralism which induces the emergence of ethnicity as both an ideology, and an organizational weapon in mass politics. In our study, we attempt to show how political leaders manipulate ethnicity to acquire political power which in turn is used for the embourgeoisement of politicians and some government and party functionaries.

Contributions to knowledge

This study advances the understanding of Nigerian politics in the following significant ways:

1. The systematic analysis of the causes of tribalism debunks the view prevalent in most scholarly works on Nigeria that tribalism is a primordial loyalty causing conflict, and underscores the contingent nature of tribalism and its role in the politics of allocation in a multi-ethnic society.
2. Our evaluation of government-sponsored socio-economic development marshals empirical data to show that Nigeria is more of an elitist than a tribalistic society. Most studies of new nations, and in particular of Nigeria, have usually rested the question of whether stratification is occurring or not, on definitions with little or no empirical content.

In our study, we reject such an approach and adopt the alternative approach of reconstructing the facts of inequality on which stratification is based.

3. Our study enhances the utility of 'elite' as an explanatory tool in Nigerian politics by specifying the empirical meaning of the concept in the Nigerian context, and indicating how it can aid understanding of the pattern of political development in Nigeria. In particular, the use of the elite concept enables us to gain insight into how the preferences of a few Nigerians shaped the evolution of political institutions in the country, and how the economic interest of similar individuals shaped governmental economic policies and the institutions of economic development. The Nigerian political system is thus shown to be essentially a framework of elite political accommodation. The inference is that since elite actions and decisions are crucial variables in the establishment of Nigeria's federal political system, an analysis of conflict and instability in that system, must necessarily focus on the actions, perceptions and behaviour of elites.

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I am indebted to the Head Librarian of the Central Library in Enugu, Nigeria, and the Head Librarian of the University of Ife, Nigeria, for sparing me the tedious task of tracking down numerous official documents, statistical materials, journals and newspapers.

I would also want to express my infinite gratitude to several politicians and former cabinet ministers in the first

government of independent Nigeria, for giving me an inside view of political bargaining among the different elites in that government, and for discussing with me their own role in the politics of the period. Their cooperation has no doubt enhanced whatever merits can be claimed for this study. In view of the prevailing anti-political climate in the country, I have taken meticulous care to ensure that my interpretation of Nigerian politics respects their wishes for anonymity.

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Maduka L. Nwakwesi.

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Chapter I

THE ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT IN MULTI-ETHNIC POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The Problem Defined

Almost without exception, the new states of Tropical Africa came into formal existence in the last decade or so, and within this period, virtually all of them have been through one or more of the following crises: military coups, secessions, civil wars, pogroms and assassinations of political leaders.

To some extent, these crises were anticipated by scholars studying African countries and other new states. Publications on developing countries fully described the heterogeneous cultural, social, linguistic, religious and ethnic factors found within these countries.¹ African states in particular, were characterized as weakly legitimated because of the arbitrary groupings of incompatible ethnic groups within geographical boundaries established by the colonial powers. The material for irredentism was therefore said to be ubiquitous in the continent.²

Not surprisingly, the concern of scholars was with devising a formula which would bring about an 'integrative revolution' to reconcile what Clifford Geertz has called the 'social givens'

of traditional society with the developing civil society; the aim being to divest primordial sentiments of their legitimizing force with respect to governmental authority.³ As Fallers remarked, African states

tend to be congeries of traditional societies in varying stages of modernization, held together by the leadership of elites whose common culture is largely alien to the traditional cultures and discontinuous with them. 4

Both Guy Hunter and Melville Herskovits pointed out that the great issues facing Africa relate to tribalism, the conflict between traditionalism and modernity and the fragility of governmental institutions due to their lack of legitimacy and authority.⁵ Stanislaw Andreski observed that

the principal source of weakness of all modern institutions in Tropical Africa, is the incompatibility between their functional requirements and the traditional patterns of social solidarity. 6

And John Day noted that although Africans aspire to the broader unities of nationalism and pan-Africanism, "the instincts of Africa are to fissiparity".⁷

In spite of the assumption of instability, the literature on development was suffused with the optimistic view that once development was initiated, it would proceed on its own momentum.⁸ This optimism was soon challenged by more perceptive students of development who already detected tendencies towards "political decay"⁹ and "breakdowns of modernization"¹⁰ in developing countries. Thus, it must have been with a feeling of

dè jà vu that scholars viewed the political upheavals which engulfed the continent of Africa during the last decade. Yet, self-fulfilling prophecies cannot be a substitute for scientific inquiry; the task remains of explaining these events, of searching for answers to why they happened when they did.

Explanations involving some form of cultural and structural pluralism are prevalent in the literature on political development and integration. Nigeria always rated as one of the least integrated countries in the literature. The various classificatory schemes put Nigeria nearer the non-integrated end of the "integrated-non-integrated" continuum. Although these two concepts were not always used, the implications of similar concepts were not lost on the reader. The Nigerian political system was said to be an example of the plural as opposed to the monistic model,¹¹ a reconciliation system as opposed to the mobilization system,¹² pragmatic-pluralistic pattern but not revolutionary centralizing trend¹³ and so on.¹⁴

It is tempting therefore to explain Nigeria's political instability by pointing to her undoubted heterogeneity.

Indeed M.G. Smith asserts that

differences in structural composition simultaneously describe the variety of political forms and processes, and explain differences in the scale, order, and co-ordination of politics. 15

Events in Africa confirm the poverty of such an explanation. The incidence of instability appears to be independent of the characteristics of regimes. Military coups and other civil strife have occurred just as frequently in reconciliation systems as in mobilization systems, in pluralistic systems as in monistic ones.¹⁶ The classification of African governments by structure may be useful for comparative purposes,¹⁷ but if we wish to get at the rhythm of political life in these countries, we must also study the process of institutions in the unique setting of each country.

In a recent article, Aristide Zolberg almost overstates the case for the study of the processes of political interaction, by asserting that

the most salient characteristic of political life in Africa is that it constitutes an almost institutionless arena with conflict and disorder as its most prominent features. 18

He warns against the reification of African governmental institutions in relation to their societies, and affirms that until an unspecified level of institutionalization is reached, a study of the pattern of force and violence provides a better means of understanding African political life.¹⁹

Zolberg's conclusion is at variance with the findings of other scholars, who note that Africa's embryonic institutions exert a modicum of influence on the behaviour of actors.

Engholm and Mazrui describe how Buganda used constitutional means and procedures in its attempt to retain its privileged position in Uganda society.²⁰ And Luckham²¹ shows that the disintegration of the Nigerian military in 1966 was not due to the fact that the military had no structure, but to the peculiar tensions generated within the military structure by societal pressures and the policies of political elites. To explain the malaise in the Nigerian military therefore, one must show how societal pressures distorted the command structure in the military. This calls for a study of both structure and process.

In an earlier work,²² Zolberg made an important contribution to the analysis of African political systems by observing that political scientists have been focussing on political structures without seeing them as organizations operating in an environment not coterminous with the nation territorially defined. This suggests that the structural focus of analysis fails to take into account the fact that organizational activity can modify structure itself. Hence to understand the role of structures, we must look at the organizational activities of individuals and groups.

Raymond Firth writes that

In speaking of social organization we are not dealing with any isolable, concrete social identity. Our analysis refers to a field of social action which is identified in terms of

pattern-sequence.... In the concept of social structure, the qualities recognized are primarily those of persistence, continuity, form and pervasiveness through the social field.... The concept of social organization has a complimentary emphasis. It recognizes adaptation of behaviour in respect of given ends, control of means in varying circumstances, which are set by changes in the external environment or by the necessity to resolve conflict between structural principles. If structure implies order, organization implies a working toward order - though not necessarily the same order. 23

The distinction between structure and organization is instructive for the analysis of conflict in African societies. Too often scholars are quick to deduce primordial conflict from the cultural mosaic of new nations without considering how organizational variables like class interests, ideology or leadership can modify or shape 'ethnic' conflict. The mere existence of different cultural categories is not enough to account for conflict, there must be the politicization of cultural differences before these become relevant in conflict-situations. Therefore we must inquire into the process of politicizing ethnicity, into the ideology, interests, and motives of leadership groups which rationalize the politics of ethnicity. In short, we cannot take for granted that tribal discontinuities are inherently conflict-producing, but rather we must seek to explain the organizational variables which make them so. When we do this, we may find that the organizational variable plays a more significant role in causing conflict than the structural variable.

Our dissertation stresses the problematic relationship between structure and organization. It attempts to assess the extent to which political conflict in multi-ethnic Nigerian society is based on the structural fact of tribe, and on the organizational variable of elite politico-economic interest. This is not to say that ethnicity and elite interest are the only factors impinging on a conflict situation. However to make analysis more manageable, research must focus on a few variables which are significant for theoretical and analytic purposes. We focus on ethnicity and elite interest because we think that an analysis based on these, promises to yield more useful insights into the relationship of groups.

The formulation of our research problem is deliberately open-ended so as to counteract the fallacy of a uni-causal explanation. The great drawback of categorical concepts like 'tribe' or 'elite' is that they encourage a seriously oversimplified view of societal dynamics. We tend to think in 'either-or' terms - conflict is based on ethnicity or on elite interests. Hence we fail to see the multidimensionality of conflicts. But when categorical concepts are viewed as variable concepts, we begin to think in terms of the extent to which a given factor is present. Thus in the study, we acknowledge that elite-based conflicts in Nigeria seldom remain elite-based, that they quickly become enmeshed with ethnic-based cleavages which distort and obfuscate elite-mass lines.

This fact notwithstanding, we hold that it is possible to identify elite cleavages and then to show how these are distorted by ethnic factors.

The Concept of Tribalism

Cultural pluralism has been viewed as a major issue of political development in African states, and the plural society model as the most appropriate framework for the study of the process of integration and disintegration in Africa. Cultural pluralism in the African context is usually synonymous with 'tribalism'.²⁴

We use the term 'tribe' as a cultural variable to denote a primary group with common customs, a distinct language and common myths.²⁵ Economically, the tribe is a self-sufficient unit thriving on subsistence agriculture, handicrafts, village industry and barter. This economic basis of tribe has been radically transformed with the introduction of the money economy, wage labour and an embryonic national framework of economic transactions.

Basically, membership in a tribe like membership in a family, is natural to all mankind and is not necessarily antithetical to membership in a wider association like the nation-state. People usually feel a consciousness of a shared culture with some human aggregate. We reserve the term 'tribalism' for a defensive or aggressive assertion of this consciousness, or its exploitation for personal or group

material interests. 'Tribalism' and 'ethnicity' are used interchangeably in the dissertation.

The literature on African political development is full of accounts of how tribalism helps or hinders the process of national integration, but mainly of how it is the source of the crisis in legitimacy and authority of African political systems.²⁶ The literature is largely descriptive, with little or no theoretical appreciation of the changing roles of ethnicity in a society undergoing the ferment of social change, and of the dynamic rearrangement of ethnic loyalties and customs to meet new political challenges. All that the literature offers is a static, albeit graphic account of the multiplicity of cultural groups within each African state, together with the inference that this heterogeneity is the cause of conflict and instability.²⁷

However, we cannot assume that cultural difference per se cause conflicts unless we can relate them to politico-economic cleavages in society. Even then, we must ascertain whether the assertion of ethnic distinctiveness is not really an expression of interests which are not ethnic, but which relate to political and economic interests. In short, we must switch from the cataloguing of the consequences of differing cultures, to the analysis of the causes of tribalism.

Tribalism as an Ideology

The search for causes of tribalism leads invariably to

a consideration of the sort of social conditions which render tribalism salient in political competition. We ask questions like: Why does ethnicity become intense at certain time-periods in a country's socio-political development than at other time-periods? Why is the incidence of tribalism greater among ethnic elites who are in power or who seek power?

In groping for answers to questions like these, we hit upon the concept of 'tribal ideology' as the explanatory key to understanding the role of ethnicity in social change. Ideological tribalism, which is the same thing as political tribalism, provides the "conceptual map"²⁸ with which ethnic elites relate themselves and their followers to the new African societies.

I recognize the hazard in referring to tribalism as an ideology. Tribalism is not for example the kind of highly organized system of beliefs and values about society which communism, socialism or democracy is. Nevertheless, it performs a similar role in political mobilization. The crucial difference is that whereas communism, socialism and democracy are abstract ideologies which different groups attempt, to a more or less degree to actualize in their societies, tribalism is the ideology of a culturally distinct group. Whereas formal ideologies like communism and democracy are available for mobilizing diverse groups, tribalism is a defensive ideology which aims to dramatize the uniqueness of a particular group viz-à-viz other groups. Where formal ideologies look outward

to global acceptability, tribal ideologies aim at exclusiveness. It is in this sense that tribal ideology is dysfunctional to nation-building in a multi-ethnic society.

Ideology is a protean concept which means different things to different writers. Insofar as one can discern a common basis, the definition of ideology as "an organization of opinions, attitudes and values - a way of thinking about man and society",²⁹ seems to accomodate the points of view of most writers. Ideology can also be viewed as a plan of action, or a programmatic set of ideas.

Tribalism as an ideology is rarely such a formalized system of thought and behaviour. The first definition is preferable because it articulates an essential aspect of tribalism, when it suggests that ideology is idiosyncratic, that is, the personal beliefs of an actor. Thus, the easiest way to ascertain an individual's ideology is to ask him, or to read about it if he has articulated it in writing. Unfortunately, tribalism is not amenable to such treatment. Few leaders in a multi-ethnic society will admit to being tribalist in their beliefs since tribalism is generally condemned as a divisive factor in such societies. For the same reason, few leaders will dare to put down their tribalist feelings in writing.

The study of tribal ideology therefore calls for a different approach, an approach which reconstructs the premises of behaviour, which recreates the psychological and operational

environment³⁰ in which behaviour takes place.³¹ By doing this, we uncover the underlying social conditions which shape behaviour; hence individual actions which taken by themselves are meaningless, become intelligible. This approach is similar to Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge which he describes as a "theory of the social or existential determination of actual thinking".³²

Briefly, we postulate that tribalism as an ideology, is a psychological response to the cultural 'strains' experienced by the Nigerian political elites in their attempts to define an identity for themselves and their followers in the new political order. We also suggest that ideological tribalism involves the manipulation of ethnic symbols in the mobilization of political power from which the ideologues benefit financially and materially.

These two dimensions of ideology, the interest and psychological dimensions, are currently the main approaches in the study of ideology.³³ The two dimensions are not mutually exclusive, in fact they can operate simultaneously and even reinforce each other. Thus tribalism (the psychological dimension), blurs differences in wealth and rank by putting a premium on in-group solidarity, while differences in wealth and rank (the interest dimension) requires tribalism to divert attention from in-group inequalities to out-group hatreds. Tribalism therefore can become a cynical camouflage for continuing privilege.

Every political ideology is more or less a reflection of the social environment in which it thrives, and must to a certain extent explain that environment or lose any meaningful appeal. As Clifford Geertz has noted, ideologies are "maps of problematic social reality".³⁴ What realities in Nigerian society are reflected and explained by the ideology of tribalism?

First, there is the threat of cultural dis-orientation and even rootlessness brought about by the impact of the Western culture on the traditional culture. Ideological re-traditionalization aims to stabilize the identity of the individual, and to provide him with a symbolic framework for mediating social changes. Examples of ideological re-traditionalization are literary works which aim to revive pride in ancient ethnic institutions and customs, to glorify ethnic ancestors and to stress the military and cultural virtues of particular ethnic groups.³⁵

Lucian Pye explains the psychological reactions of Burmese politicians and civil servants to social change, by pointing to the fundamental discontinuity in their socialization in traditional and Western culture. This lack of correlation between traditional and Western socialization "reduces the prospects of the individual's finding a firm and reassuring sense of identity".³⁶ The failure to resolve this identity crisis means that politicians and others associated with power lack a collective image of who they are, and feel an acute sense of ambivalence and inadequacy in their pursuit of development goals.

Ideology is a response to this feeling of personal insecurity. As Apter has noted,

what gives an ideology its real force and conviction during its period of maximum effectiveness is its contribution to establishing identity and solidarity. If an ideology can reduce anxiety and increase self-confidence, it can displace fear to a foreign or outside group, and if it can give individuals a sense of their own worth and significance, then an ideology will be powerful on an individual level. In other words, it must satisfy an identity function. 37

Geertz points out that ideology plays a marginal role in politics embedded in "ancient opinions and rules of life", but that

when those hallowed opinions and rules of life come into question, the search for systematic ideological formulations, either to reinforce them or to replace them, flourishes. The function of ideology is to make an autonomous politics possible by providing the authoritative concepts that render it meaningful, the suasive images by means of which it can be sensibly grasped. 38

Another aspect of Nigerian society which is conducive to the growth of tribal ideology is the phenomenon of status insecurity which results from rapid social mobility and new criteria of evaluating social rank. Modernization induces a reversal between traditionally high-ranked ascribed status and the achieved status emphasized in a transitional society. In a fairly homogeneous society, the dialectical opposition of ascribed status to achieved status is known as traditionalism. In multi-ethnic African states however, colonial policies and the differential impact of modernization often result in the

monopoly of ascribed or achieved status by one tribe or a group of tribes. After these states gain independence, efforts by one tribe or groups of tribes to equilibrate their achieved and ascribed status or to reinforce their ascribed status by greater achievement, are viewed as threatening by other tribes. As in the words of Marshal McLuhan, "when our identity is in danger, we feel certain that we have a mandate for war. The old image must be recovered at any cost".³⁹ Militant tribalism is the ideology of self-preservation for those threatened with a reversal in status.

Tribalism could also be the ideology of those trying to upset the status-quo. As P. Mercier notes,

... modern differentiations arising from the degree of economic and educational development, the nature of religious transformations, etc, cumulates with traditional differentiations. The stress on the latter serves as a means of expressing, among other things, the grievances concerning disequilibria and inequalities caused by the former. 40

J. S. Coleman argues that early differentials in educational attainments

provide a partial clue to the later manifestation of Ibibio and Ibo tribal consciousness, and to a Yoruba reaction that had a significant effect on the evolution of the nationalistic movement. During the three decades following 1921, the Ibibio and Ibo ~~fought~~ desperately to overcome their early handicap, and in the post war period the same urge animated the Hausa-Fulani in the north. Uneven acculturation, resulting in part from the uneven tribal acquisition of Western education and the uneven spread of 'status' employment, produced competitive tensions within the educated categories which were powerful stimulants to tribal as well as to territorial nationalism. 41

In Colonial Nigeria, the British ascribed to the Ibos a lower status than to the Yorubas and Hausas. The rationale for this was that a tribe like the Ibos, without chiefs or kings, was a less developed tribe.⁴² But the receptivity of the Ibos to modernization⁴³ soon enabled them to achieve high-ranking positions in government and business. This upward mobility by some members of the Ibo tribe was viewed as threatening by other ethnic groups. Subsequently, the assertive nationalism of the Ibos was regarded by the other ethnic groups as a camouflage to 'Ibo-nize' Nigeria, and hence provoked regionalist or tribalist sentiments in other Nigerians.

Tribalism is thus a phenomenon of a multi-ethnic society undergoing the process of modernization, and manifests itself in the competitive struggle for the benefits of modernization. The ascriptive nature of tribalism minimizes uncertainty by excluding competition in recruitment for jobs, and in the allocation of economic resources. Tribalism therefore ensures the attainment of certain tangible 'goods' which tribal ideologues fear will be attained with difficulty or not at all, in fair and open competition.

A third aspect of Nigerian society which fosters tribal ideology is the environmental constraints of scarcity which seems to encourage a wrong conception of politics as a zero-sum game in which the gains of one actor are equal to the losses of all other actors. Political tribalism encourages

groups to conserve their interests rather than hazard them in open competition with other groups. This is seen to be all the more imperative since political losses cannot be recouped by alternative outlets. But since political competition is inevitable in an interacting society, the strategy of groups is to exploit tribalism in order to protect and add to their interests. The dominant view is of a fixed scarcity of desired societal goods, so that much of political and economic life is seen as a struggle of one group to expand its share at the expense of other groups. The Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe captured the mood well when he made one of his characters say,

By the way, Odili, I think you are wasting your talent here. I want you to come to the capital and take up a strategic post in the civil service. We shouldn't leave everything to the high-land tribes. My secretary is from there; our people must press for their fair share of the national cake. 44

When the total product is seen as fixed, the idea that all groups can benefit from co-operative action is unlikely to take root, for as Pye observes,

people are not sure what they should get from any relationship, and so they are never sure whether they are getting what they should. The concepts of friend and foe become blurred. Above all else, the individual cannot be sure about the actions of others because he cannot be sure about himself. 45

The essential unpredictability of the social situation gives rise to what Hirschman⁴⁶ calls "group-focused strategy"

which is in fact a "defensive ego-focused strategy" by those who fear that they will be bested in competition and who believe that emphasis on group-focused change would enable them to maintain their position. As Hirschman observes, however,

group-focused image of change is incompatible with any large-scale development aiming at a fundamental transformation and modernization of an economy. It is the very nature of such development that priorities are established and that certain activities and communities receive temporarily preferred treatment; that economic opportunities are created through public investment in transportation, power, irrigation, etc., which may be siezed by some individuals but will be left unexploited by others; and that in general social mobility will be vastly increased as whole social classes and groups are created ex novo through industrialization and urbanization. 47

Thus far, we have tried to show how situational factors influence the behaviour of groups, and how an ideology articulates specific contents of a social environment to guide behaviour. We have also tried to show that the Nigerian social milieu is favourable to the emergence of groups of persons whose power is dependent on ethnic solidarity - a solidarity constantly reinforced by the menacing competition of other ethnic groups.

It is not surprising therefore, that the incidence of tribalism is more frequent among Nigerian elites, for since they belong to the more mobilized sectors of society, they feel the insecurities of social change more, and hence seek the security provided by tribalism. Indeed, tribalism has been

described as "the competitive struggle for modernization between elite members of different ethnic groups".⁴⁸ As Abner Cohen puts it,

Tribalism is a process by which a group from one ethnic category, whose members are involved in a struggle for power and privilege with the members of a group from another category, within the framework of a formal political system, manipulate some customs, values, myths, symbols, and ceremonials from their cultural tradition in order to articulate an informal political organization which is used as a weapon in that struggle. 49

In viewing tribalism as an ideology and hence as an organizational weapon in mass politics, we are able to explain the sociological paradox which results when scholars view development as a dichotomous process between modernity and traditionalism: namely, the persistence of ethnic solidarity in the midst of social changes brought about by industrialization and social mobilization. Many writers have pointed to this paradox as proof of the continuing vigour of kinship solidarity.⁵⁰ We maintain however that political tribalism or ideological re-traditionalization is a different phenomenon from the parochialism of traditional society. Crawford Young⁵¹ cites the 'Bangala' as an example of artificial ethnicity which had no basis in traditional or rural society. Other scholars have noted the emergence in the cities, of new forms of ethnicity considerably larger in scope than the lineages of traditional society.⁵²

In effect, ethnicity is a response to the forces of modernization, and ethnic boundaries are fluid in keeping with the changing conception of the self.

The evolution of an Ibo identity is illustrative of the development of new solidarities which had no counterpart in traditional society. The experience of the Ibos can be duplicated among other ethnic groups too. Writing of Ibo society before the advent of colonialism, Ottenberg observes that

no political superstructure, such as a federation, a confederacy, or a state existed. The Ibo units remained a relatively balanced grouping of independent political structures which never developed into a large formal organization, though some units absorbed or conquered others, some died out, some fragmented, and some changed their characteristics through immigration and emigration. 53

Writing of Ibos in the context of Nigerian society, Paul Amber observes that "modernity brought the Ibos a self-consciousness and distinction as a people that they never had before, heightening their tribal loyalties and finally resulting in demands for their own state".⁵⁴

These observations highlight the element of contingency which characterizes ethnicity itself. Clifford Geertz is therefore mistaken in describing ethnic solidarity as 'primordial sentiments' if by the term he means that ethnicity is atavistic, for in fact ethnicity is a by-product of the modernization process. Only an analysis which holds tribalism constant when everything else in society is in a state of flux, can discern a similarity between traditional ethnicity and political tribalism. Such an analysis will preclude any temporal perspective, denying the element of change and process. It is only by recognizing the contingent nature of tribalism that we are obliged to study the process by which hitherto heterogeneous categoric

groups are turned into composite solidarities. By recognizing the phase character of tribalism we become sensitized to other cleavages like stratification. By acknowledging that tribalism is not instinctive, but proceeds from social learning, we are able to examine the political manipulation of tribal symbols to validate and obfuscate emerging inequalities in access to the desired material things in society.

We postulate the 'withering away' of tribalism in its conflict-producing form, and the increasing relevance of cleavages based on the emerging inequalities in socio-economic well-being. Kinship affinity may remain, but it will be shorn of its political significance. Edward Shils has noted that

The need for connections or relationships of a primordial character will be endemic in human existence as long as biological existence has a value to the individual organism. Ethnic identification ... is a manifestation of this need. Traces of the sense of affinity and of shared primordial properties occur also in the phenomenon of nationality. 55

But 'ethnic identification' symbolizing a shared consciousness is one thing, and a defensive assertion of that consciousness (tribalism) quite another thing. We hold that the former could exist without the latter.

Ali Mazrui writes that African politics in the post-independence era has been characterized by what he calls the "retribalization of politics, the resurgence of ethnic loyalties in situations of rivalry in the arena of resource allocation and domestic power politics".⁵⁶ It is incorrect to speak

of 'retribalization' or 'resurgence' of ethnic loyalties if we mean by these terms that ethnic loyalties had lain dormant only to burst forth in the era of modern politics. The fact is that contemporary tribalism is the result of the politicization and manipulation of ethnicity in contexts which are not traditional, and in which the interests at stake have been generated by the development process.

The meaning of tribalism in Nigeria

Our dissertation is a study of the uses of tribal sentiments in a struggle for power which benefits not the tribal communities, but a tiny minority of each tribal unit. Our emphasis therefore is on the distribution of the desirable things which power brings (wealth, status, prestige, honour). If the struggle for power is truly an ethnic struggle, and if as is often asserted, the ethnic group is a solidary cultural entity, one would expect that some ethnic mechanism exists for the more or less equitable distribution of the fruits of victory. But if no such mechanism exists, and if a recognizable group has a continuous and differential access to the fruits of victory, then we are not justified in calling such struggles ethnic struggles, and in not differentiating the privileged group from the rest of the community.

The meaning of Nigerian tribalism is simply this: that Nigerians of diverse ethnic backgrounds who occupy elite positions in government and business attempt to, and actually fill

the few remaining elite positions with elite members of their own tribe. These elites also use their high office to enrich themselves and to favour elite members of their own tribe in the award of government contracts, loans, scholarships, etc. The deprived elites of other tribes, jealous and alienated, organize the rank and file of their tribe into a hostile opposition to the benefitting elites and their tribe. With the proper juxtapositioning of statistics on employment, government grants etc., the elites convince their fellow tribesmen that they are really the victims of a conspiracy in high places to deprive them of a fair share of the national 'cake'. Usually the co-option of the elites of the protesting tribe into the government, is enough to cause the protest to fizzle away. Hence tribalism is primarily an elite phenomenon, conjured up in the complex politico-economic bargaining between different ethnic elites.

Political scientists make the mistake of assuming that a categoric group (whose interests are usually diffuse and various), is involved in a struggle or seek power, when actually only certain sections within the group do so. It is as though the interests at stake are known to everyone in the categoric group, and that everyone is equally interested in their realization.⁵⁷

Clearly the views of political scientists on ethnicity and conflict, have been greatly influenced by the arguments of the pluralist school.⁵⁸ Hence it is necessary to turn now to a consideration of the writings of that school of thought.

The Pluralist School of Thought
and the Study of Conflict

Probably the most systematic discussion of ethnicity and conflict in social science literature, is found in the writings of the so-called pluralist school. Pluralists view each of the multi-ethnic states in Africa and Asia as a special type of society composed of separate cultural sections, each of which is factually a society to itself with its own basic institutional patterns. Each has its own kinship and mating system, its own religious beliefs and practices, socialization system, recreational activities, values, language, etc. This rickety cultural mosaic is held together by the political domination of one cultural section.

In the words of M. G. Smith,

Pluralism is quite distinct from other forms of social heterogeneity such as class stratification in that it consists in the co-existence of incompatible systems. Plural societies depend for their maintenance on the regulation of intersectional relations by one or other of the component cultural sections. When the dominant section is also a minority, the structural implications of cultural pluralism have their most extreme expression, and the dependence on regulation by force is greatest. 59

Smith distinguishes a heterogeneous society thus:

In heterogeneous society the majority of the members share all or most of the common basic institutions, namely, kinship, education, economy, government, law and cult, despite institutional differences of a secondary level in the economic, educational, occupational, and even religious spheres. 60

This distinction implies that heterogeneity is a condition for stability, for as Smith has stressed, "one of the major problems that face emergent nations with a recent colonial past consists in effecting the transition from pluralism to the heterogeneity requisite for their transformation into cohesive national units".⁶¹ The new states have been unable to achieve this transition, and

Their vicissitudes and upheavals declare their generic fragility, the product of their plural character and base. To anticipate the smooth development of such societies into nations, or even any rapid, continuous process of modernization within them, is antihistorical and antiempirical in the extreme. ⁶²

For as Smith has affirmed, "instability inheres in the combination of equally autonomous segments differentiated by structure, size, ethnic and institutional background, interest, need and power"⁶³

Leo Kuper⁶⁴ agrees with Smith's basic formulation of pluralism, and seeks to highlight the plural nature of new states by distinguishing it from the pluralism of Western democracies. The pluralism of the latter is a "system of constitutional checks and balances designed to effect a separation of powers among the legislature, the executive, the administrative sector, and the judiciary, and in this way to ensure pluralism in the structure of authority".⁶⁵ This system Kuper calls the 'equilibrium' model of pluralism to emphasize its stability.

The 'conflict' model of pluralism is typified by the new states where the "social basis is a medley of peoples living

side by side, but separately, within the same political unit".⁶⁶ Here pluralism takes the form of dissensus, and of conflict between racial, tribal, religious and regional groups. Kuper adds that in the 'equilibrium' model,

the bonds between the plural sections are primary, and the state, as a political entity, expresses this basic social integration. In the 'conflict' model, the state precedes and constitutes society; it is the state that is primary and imposes some measure of ordered relations on otherwise hostile or dissociated groups. 67

The 'equilibrium' model leads to democracy "in the sense of popular choice among competing candidates", whereas the 'conflict' model leads to despotism in the sense of domination by a minority cultural group.⁶⁸

Critique of the 'Plural Society' Model

M. G. Smith's and Leo Kuper's formulation of pluralism contain several fallacies. First, heterogeneity is not a condition for cohesive national units as Smith claims, but merely a characteristic. In addition, social scientists now discredit the notion of 'requisites', 'stages', and 'patterns' in political development since experience has shown that development is not a unilinear process, but that it is apt to take a variety of forms. As C. W. Anderson et. al. have stated,

One sometimes derives the impression of a drab cultural uniformity emerging in the world as nations in the process of change are 'forced', by the logic of the modernization process itself, to adopt the social norms and social systems 'requisite' to economic and political modernization. 69

It is therefore essential to stress the diversity of response to the problem of cultural pluralism.

David Apter sees modernity as choice, and a political system as "a system of choice for a particular collectivity".⁷⁰ Different political systems confronted with the challenge of cultural pluralism will respond differently. In the one, cultural pluralism could be magnified, while in the other, it could be minimized. The ideological denial or acceptance of cultural pluralism has profound significance for social reality. The fact that some political systems tend to minimize cultural differences by emphasizing emerging unifying factors, while others magnify cultural differences by emphasizing ethnic distinctiveness, suggests that it is not the pluralism of politics but the politics of pluralism that we ought to be studying.

In our view, conflict in a multi-ethnic society is not motivated by such intangibles as ethnic honour, or by the incompatibility of ethnic institutions, or indeed by the attempt of one ethnic group to impose its unique institutions on others. When Nigerian publicists, scholars, and even politicians describe tribalism as evil, they do not mean to condemn Nigeria's rich and diverse cultural heritage as illustrated in her intricate tribal dances, in her works of art, in her music, folklore, and in her diverse tribal organizations which cater to the ritual and spiritual needs of her people. When Nigerians condemn tribalism, it is usually in reference to the practice of discriminating in favour of elite members of one's own tribe in employment, the award of scholarships, etc., without regard to merit considerations. In other words, tribalism in the Nigerian

context refers to certain unjust practices of discrimination by those in positions of authority, and not to conflicting ethnic institutions as such.

Smith writes that

... when two or more peoples having differing institutional systems are 'shuffled together' by historical circumstances into a common inclusive aggregate, the probabilities that an immediate functional correspondence can be established between their several institutional systems are rather low, ... 71

The fact however is that the problem in the new states is not one of effecting 'functional correspondence' between differing ethnic institutions, but one of acculturating all ethnic institutions to a common political structure determined by the former colonial rulers. The bureaucracy, parliament, judiciary and other institutions of the state are derived from colonial models. Colonial agreements determined who should belong to which political community. Only the selection of personnel to run this prefabricated structure is left to local participants.

The problem is not one of institutional incompatibility, for as Mercier notes,

Tribalistic movements or 'tribal nationalisms' often express less a rejection of the political framework constituted by the territory (the latter tends to impose itself as given), than a search for equilibrium within a system progressively accepted by all. 72

Before independence, expatriate colonial officials performed the task of acculturating ethnic groups to the bureaucratic

superstructure which the colonial rulers had set up. After independence, the task of performing a similar function devolves on the new elites who are indeed 'native foreigners', given the cultural gap (Western education and values) which separates them from a majority of their countrymen.⁷³ The basic problem since independence has been how fast the Westernized elite could mobilize the masses to participate meaningfully and productively, not in ethnic institutions, but in the institutions bequeathed by the former colonial rulers.

Another fallacy in the pluralist formulation is the contention that ethnic differences are so intrinsic and irreconcilable, that the relationship between ethnic groups must always be shaped by conflict. To view conflict as a condition of pluralism as Kuper's formulation (equilibrium model vs. conflict model) implies, is untenable because it is too suggestive of basic incompatibility, whereas we are saying that incompatibility arises out of the process of living together, that is, as a result of some already existing integration. We do not expect groups of people who have nothing in common to be involved in conflict, rather it is the common awareness of commonly desired interests which leads to conflict.⁷⁴ Karl Deutsch puts it thus;

Groups locked in conflict are part of one system. The fate of one cannot be understood or predicted without knowing something about the actions of the other. They belong together, but in a rather unhappy sense. ⁷⁵

Smith and Kuper speak of 'sharp cleavages', of 'disparate ethnic groups', of 'groups that mix but do not combine', of 'dissensus' and of 'systematic disassociation' between ethnic groups. Such descriptions are ahistorical since instances abound during the period of the nationalist drive for independence and after independence, when different ethnic groups joined for a common cause. In Nigeria, the major political parties began as conglomerations of tribal unions. The NCNC had a total of 101 tribal unions within its ranks during 1944-1951.⁷⁶ In 1960, the predominantly Ibo NCNC and the Hausa-Fulani dominated NPC formed a coalition to govern Nigeria at the federal level. In 1964 Yorubas in the Action Group and Ibos in the NCNC set aside their differences to form the UPGA to fight the federal elections.

The Nigerian example is illustrative of the fact that tribalism is not the result of disassociation between ethnic groups, as the pluralists claim, but the result of the increasing interactions between ethnic groups within the context of new political situations. These facts again suggest that it is the politics of the situation not the pluralism that we should be examining. The intent on mummifying and exaggerating tribal differences leads the pluralists to ignore the organizational dimension which can modify plural reality. In particular, the possibility of inter-tribal cooperation is not even considered.

Summary and Conclusions

It seems to us that pluralists mistake political or ideological tribalism for the concrete essences of new states. In the process, they ignore the unifying acculturative processes of urbanization, industrialization and the increasing inter-ethnic social transactions which are co-opting great numbers of individuals into a national communication network. This process of social mobilization is, in essence, a process of deppluralizing society.⁷⁷ But the concept of pluralism with its imagery of fissiparity imposes hyperbole upon its users.

The fundamental problems of multi-ethnic states remain how to develop an economic base capable of sustaining the rising expectations of their peoples, and how to devise an equitable system to share out the burdens and benefits of the modernization process.⁷⁸ In the attempts to tackle these problems, the divisions and identities inherited from the past are often incorporated in the present, but the basis of contemporary conflicts is not explicable by reference to the past alone. As M. Edel has observed

...however much tribal affiliation and identification may enter, the issues and conflicts of today are rooted in problems and social interactions of today, and are not just atavisms rooted in some pre-existent past and continuing on a momentum of traditionalism. ⁷⁹

We have tried to show that the fact that certain societies can be distinguished ethnically or culturally is only the first step in explaining conflict in such societies, and that the

differentiations in themselves do not constitute an explanation. Pluralists provide an accurate description of polyglot communities, but since 'conflict' is built into their model, the temptation is strong to end further enquiry once the ethnic landscape is faithfully mapped out. As R. L. Sklar commented of the Nigerian war,

By and large, journalists who write about the melancholy events are content to cry 'tribalism', and opinions of journalists weigh heavily on the students of contemporary history. It takes intellectual courage and a measure of theoretical conviction to resist them. The tyranny of day-to-dayism (or journalistic scholarship) is not less stultifying to political science than the older African tyranny of administrative scholarship. Deference to the stereotypes of the mass media can be as shortsighted today as deference to the biases of the colonial administrator. 80

Pluralism thus hinders analysis of conflict in multi-ethnic states by precluding all cleavages except ethnic ones, and by categorizing individuals in one or another ethnic group. That political scientists should adopt a similar approach in their study of African politics is rather strange, since much of the literature on development is suffused with the intimate relationship between social mobilization and political development. As Giovanni Sartori remarks,

mobilization does not convey the idea of individual self-motion, but the idea of a malleable, passive collectivity which is being put into motion at the whim of persuasive and more than persuasive - authorities. We say that individuals 'participate', but we cannot say about the same individuals that they 'mobilize' - they are mobilized. 81

Hence the pertinent questions raised by our dissertation are: who does the 'mobilizing', and in pursuit of what interests?

The 'Elite' Approach to the
Study of Political Conflict

The attempt to answer the above questions leads us to 'elite' analysis of political conflict. It is in this area however that one comes up against the opinion of a good many social scientists concerned with African development. These social scientists regard existing African societies as classless, and where stratification is occurring, it is asserted that it is in such a rudimentary stage that it does not warrant analysis.⁸² More generally, the argument is made that kinship, clanship, tribe or other communal relationships frustrate, and hence preclude the existence of classes.⁸³

Thus Lloyd Fallers asserts that,

in the short run, extended kinship solidarities will tend to check the development of clearly defined strata. . . . Welfare-state policies in education and other fields, policies which modern populist politics make almost inevitable, also will mediate against the solidification of the new elites into hereditary estates or castes. 84

R. Melson and H. Wolpe remark that "judging from the experience of post-colonial regimes, it would seem that it is communal conflict and not class conflict which is most likely to undermine fledgling democracies".⁸⁵

It is surprising that while the concept of stratification is pivotal in several theories of social dynamics,⁸⁶ one finds that it is underplayed by scholars treating African societies which are presently most involved in the dynamics of social change. Political scientists have generally accepted the

contention of African leaders that 'class' analysis is irrelevant to their societies.⁸⁷ They have therefore tended to concentrate on such factors as the properties of political development, political culture, national integration, and on such 'input' aspects of politics as parties, interest groups, bureaucracies, etc., and have mostly ignored the 'output' aspects of politics. It is my contention that the lack of concern with stratification in the literature on development, is related to the failure to analyze the outputs of government or what Pennock has called 'political goods'.⁸⁸

If 'output' were examined in the context of its impact on groups in a country, inequalities would have been glaring and would have provoked theoretical consideration. But to analyze 'output' is to steer political analysis to evaluation of governmental actions, and this, modern political science especially in its 'behavioural' variety, has shrunk from doing.⁸⁹

In a way, the political scientist's preoccupation with increasing the capabilities of government is similar to the economist's concern with maximizing Gross National Product. The economist is however beginning to realize that growth alone is not development, and that concentrated wealth is as dysfunctional to the economy as the distribution of non-existent wealth. The political scientist on the other hand, still rivets his attention on the accumulation of power, and is not overly troubled by its concentration.⁹⁰ Indeed the developmental political scientist welcomes any mechanism like the single-party system which aims to aggregate and mobilize political power.⁹¹

The concern with the accumulation of power strikes one as an unusual preoccupation for Western political scientists who, trained in the liberal tradition, have been taught the virtues of checks and balances of power, of consitutionalism, of group representation, of federalism as a means of decentralizing power. One defence could be that the priority given to mechanisms for accumulating power, reflects the concern of the developing countries themselves, where the creation of power (rather than its containment), is of the utmost immediacy to political leaders. Many political scientists would agree with the observation of Henry Bienen that "the difficulty of Africa is not the constitutional dispersal of authority but the low level of political capacity at the center".⁹² But the bias towards problems of power accumulation and a refusal to acknowledge that distribution is simultaneously taking place, robs the study of political development of many interesting findings in the area of group relations in developing countries.

A major aim of our study is to reconstruct the facts of inequality on which stratification rests, and to indicate how these are reflected directly and indirectly in the political interaction of groups. As part of this effort, we will seek to plot the differential access to governmental 'output' enjoyed by groups of Nigerians, and to show how inequality in access creates the conflict situation in which ethnicity is employed in the striving to secure ever greater access to government 'output'.

The focus of groups on the government stems from the preponderant position of the state in most developing economies.⁹³ The state is often the largest employer of labour and the owner of most important productive forces. The state thus has at its disposal enormous economic resources which are not matched by those of other organizations in the country. In addition, the state has a monopoly over legitimate physical coercion, and those who control the state can apply the state's force to secure compliance with a given set of distributive policies.

The questions raised by our dissertation are: who participates in the allocation of state resources, with what effectiveness and with what means? Karl Deutsch answers the question of who participates, by distinguishing two types of citizens in his concept of social mobilization: the 'mobilized' belong to the politically relevant strata of the population, the 'non-mobilized' consist of the mass of isolated, subsistence - farming, tradition-bound and politically apathetic villagers, who are not usually included in the political process.⁹⁴

Zolberg while accepting this distinction, points out that the 'non-mobilized' participate in politics of some sort.⁹⁵ His observation is well taken in so far as it implies that the non-mobilized are prey to the political manipulation of the mobilized, that they 'participate' only on cue from the mobilized.

Following up Deutsch's dichotomy, Zolberg distinguishes two systems of allocating values in a developing country: the

'modern' system and the 'residual' system. The 'modern' system deals with such state activities as entrepreneurship, regulation of economic and social activities, taxation, re-distribution of income, etc., the 'residual' system is based on traditional norms and customs, and deals with matters which the state has not yet seen fit to undertake.⁹⁶

The concern of our dissertation is with the modern sector and the mobilized groups which participate in the process of allocation in that system. Because of Nigeria's federal framework, it is possible for groups to participate in several levels of the modern sector - national, regional, provincial and town. The importance of ethnicity and 'class' must therefore vary at each level of the modern sector. Indeed other variables like personality differences, could supplant ethnicity and 'class' at certain levels. Our analysis is pitched at the national level because participation at this level calls all cleavages into play, especially those of 'class' and ethnicity, and because participation at this level has implications for the well-being of the political system as a whole.

The most important element which underlies the allocative process is power,⁹⁷ defined as participation in the making of governmental decisions, or the ability to get one's interests reckoned with or taken into account in government decision-making. Thus defined, power is a most important resource in the allocative process, and forms the basis of our treatment of elites. Lenski

defines classes as "groups of people who stand in a common position with respect to some attribute which functions as a resource in the distributive process"⁹⁸ Power functions as a resource in the elites' relationship to government output.

For any statement on the power of a group to have meaning, we must make explicit the scope and degree of that power. For example, the power necessary to participate in the modern sector, may be hopelessly inutile in the 'residual' sector of the political system, and even in the modern sector, power may be serviceable only when insignificant interests are at stake. To get around this problem, R. Dahl has proposed the concept of 'issue-area'. He writes that "we can distinguish power in one issue-area from power in another, general power over many issue-areas from the specialized power of an actor who participates in only one issue-area".⁹⁹

The issue-areas which are central to our analysis are those relating to participation in government decisions affecting the allocation of society's resources.

The power groups which are relevant to our analysis are the elites of communal political parties, the fledgling bourgeoisie which generally tends to overlap with the elites of political parties, the administrative elite, the educated or professional elites, the military elite and the labour sub-elite. Collectively, we call these elite groups the political class to highlight their special relationship to state and para-statal institutions, and their capacity to influence public policies in their own interests.

We reserve the term 'ruling elites' for the leaders of the party or parties in power, and the civil servants who are close to, and strongly influence the decision-making process. Djilas calls the politicians and bureaucrats who control the economies of communist states the 'new class',¹⁰⁰ Dumont refers to similar groups in Africa as 'une bourgeoisie de la fonction publique'.¹⁰¹ We use the term 'ruling elites' to distinguish actual control of government from influence on government. Thus we can say that political and administrative elites both control and influence government, whereas the military (except when it governs), and the trade unions influence government. The influence of organized labour on government is not as broad and pervasive as that of other elite groups. We refer to trade unions as a 'sub-elite' to underline this fact.

The criterion for elite membership is thus political effectiveness in influencing the allocation of government output on on a continuing basis. For a group to qualify for elite membership, its organization must show some persistence and must give the group a leverage for influencing government policies and decisions. In addition, the benefits accruing to the group from government policies in the form of wages, subsidies, social welfare, must exceed the contribution of the group to government revenues in terms of taxes. In other words, governmental remuneration to elite members bears little or no relation to the value of the services rendered, and is neither related to the level of income of the mass of the people nor to the economic circumstance of the country.

Our formulation of the elite concept is thus more specific than Pareto's which stresses the psychological make-up of elites, and views the elites as "the strongest, the most energetic, and most capable - for good as well as evil".¹⁰² Our formulation is similar to that of Mosca¹⁰³ and Michels¹⁰⁴ who stress that elite power is based on organizational abilities, and to that of C. Wright Mills¹⁰⁵ who views elite power as dependent on the positions elites hold in a number of key societal institutions.

The concept of elite like that of power, is a troublesome concept for political science. It has been used flexibly to mean the same thing as 'decision-makers', 'oligarchy', 'ruling class' and 'community leaders'. Attempts have been made to delimit the concept by specifying its contents, such as that elites have common social background, community of interests, consciousness, etc. Thus Daniel Bell asserts that "one cannot have a power elite, or a ruling class, without community of interests".¹⁰⁶ James Meisel finds the elite syndrome in what he calls the 'three C's' - group consciousness, coherence and conspiracy (the last term meaning a 'common will to action' rather than 'secret machinations').¹⁰⁷ Mills warns however that "... the social origins and careers of the power elite do not enable us to infer the class interests and policy directions of a modern system of power".¹⁰⁸

Our position is that the 'three C's' or any other sets, cannot be exhaustive of the characteristics of elites, and that the 'three C's' need not operate simultaneously. The burden

of our argument with regard to Nigeria is that the elites, especially the elites of communal political parties, are conscious of their interests,¹⁰⁹ and are defending these interests through the strategy of political tribalism or the manipulation of ethnic symbols.

Our formulation of the elite concept then justifies the concentration of analysis on the above-mentioned groups. The elites of communal political parties form the government, and hence in theory, the enormous economic resources of the government are within their control. And given the absence of effective legal restraints (legislative or judicial)¹¹⁰ on executive power, or societal restraints (trade union, voluntary organizations, business organizations),¹¹¹ the elites of ruling political parties are in fact accountable only to themselves for how they dispose of government output.

The bureaucracy in developing countries share power with the political elites, but are not burdened with the latter's theoretical public accountability. According to F.W. Riggs,

A phenomenon of the utmost significance in transitional societies is the lack of balance between political policy-making institutions and bureaucratic policy-implementing structures. The relative weakness of political organs means that the political function tends to be appropriated, in considerable measure, by bureaucrats. 112

In Nigeria, the one factor which has reinforced the power of the bureaucracy is the increasing governmental intervention in the economy. The power of the bureaucratic elite has become pervasive because of government initiatives in economic development

planning, in the provision of community services, in the setting up of public utilities, of radio, television, newspapers, and of government's regulation of social life in general.¹¹³

The bureaucracy in many African countries, is in a strong position to influence the formulation and execution of government output and to ensure that its interest are not jeopardized in governmental allocations. As V. C. Ferkiss has remarked in reference to Nigeria and Ghana,

the position and power of the bureaucracy is reinforced by the almost total absence of any competing social elites. The university professor is a government employee, the businessman is dependent on government loans, the contractor or land speculator on government favour, even the university student is dependent on the government for his room, board, and tuition. 114

Though the political elites control the bureaucracy under the law, the need never arises to exercise this control since as in Nigeria's former three regions, there were no basic disagreements between the political elites and the bureaucratic elites. Both shared similar educational experience, values and political outlook.

The military in African countries have been described as these countries' best organized trade unions,¹¹⁵ acting always to protect their corporate interests without regard for the interests of other segments of society.

What makes the power of the military so credible is of course its "control of the instruments of violence",¹¹⁶ and

the general awareness that these instruments can be used to topple the government. It is this factor which sets the mood of the relationship of the military with politicians and with the process of allocating government output. The ability of the military to influence government output is reflected not only in the military's pay and perquisites for being an 'ornament' of the state, but also in the diversion of scarce resources from economic development to the purchase of armaments and other military expenditures.

It sounds paradoxical to speak of a labour elite, but I use the term to emphasize the disparity in income and political influence between the small organized labour in urban areas and the mass of unorganized peasantry. An F.A.O. report states that in 1963/64 about 80% of Nigeria's economically active population was engaged in agriculture.¹¹⁷ In 1963, there were between 530,000 and 800,000 wage earners in Nigeria out of a population of 55½ million.¹¹⁸ The average monthly wage for labour in Nigerian cities was £7½ in 1964,¹¹⁹ while Nigeria's per capita income per annum was between £25 - £30.

Elliot Berg contends that political factors are an important reason for the disparity in urban wages and agricultural incomes. He writes that

One of the more tangible political gestures open to new African governments is the introduction of a general increase in wage rates. This was an important factor in the several wage increases that occurred in Ghana since independence in 1957. It was also a factor in Nigeria, where, partly because of political competition between the regions, Western Nigeria

raised its wage level well above the level prevailing in other regions, ultimately forcing some of the others to match the increase. 120

When organized labour contemplate their lot, their model is not the mass of peasant farmers who are worse off than themselves, but the other elite groups. Thus the memorandum of the Joint Action Committee of Nigeria's trade unions to the Morgan Commission on the review of wages, read in part:

... in the Federal Ministry of Works ... six watchmen and gatekeepers earn between them £710 ... by contrast the Minister of Works earns £2,700, the Director of Federal Public Works £3,180 and the Technical Engineering office £3,640 ... earnings of salaried persons range from more than £10,000 p.a. to less than £48 p.a. in Nigeria. 121

Judged in terms of salary differentials, it is difficult to justify grouping trade unions with the leaders of political parties, the administrative elite and the military elite. Yet because of their strategic location in the modernized sectors of the economy, organized labour wields a political influence neither related to its numerical strength nor to its position in the government pay scale. The explanation of its influence lies in the fact that government is heavily involved in the economy, and so any trade union strike is inevitably a direct confrontation between government and workers. The political leaders are anxious to avoid such confrontations which may further weaken the fragile basis of their authority. Trade unions have capitalized on this fact to gain pay increases for their members.

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that we are justified in focussing analysis on the above elite groups. No other groups in the country have as much access to governmental output as even the least powerful of the elite groups.

The Nigerian elites do not however possess equal power to influence governmental decisions. If we judge power by the number of issue-areas an elite effectively participates in, it is obvious that political elites have general power over many issue-areas, while other elites have power only in issue-areas where their vested interests are at stake. Because of the comprehensiveness of the power of political elites, schisms are more rife among them for political elites tend to mirror the cleavages and discontinuities of the society. Therefore when we speak of elite conflicts, we mean primarily political elite conflicts. While political elite conflicts are almost a 'normal' feature of the allocative process, confrontations between the military, labour or indeed civil servants, and the political elites are rare occurrences.

In subsequent chapters of our study, we will show that elite groups supplied the dynamics in Nigerian politics, and that strains in the political system resulted when a realignment of social forces threatened to undermine the balance of power and interests among these groups vis-à-vis state institutions. Elite conflict, not ethnic conflict will therefore be shown to be the most prominent feature of the Nigerian political system.

Goals of the Dissertation and
the Hypotheses to be Tested

Our dissertation will analyze Nigerian politics between 1954-64, and will aim:

1. to underline the monopoly of modern political activity by elite groups, and so to identify elite politico-economic interests as the key basis of conflict in politics;
2. to illustrate the 'class' content of political authority by indicating how elite economic interests shaped governmental policies and the institutions of economic development;
3. to emphasize the organizational aspects of politics by pointing to the role of tribalism both as an ideology and an organizational weapon in conflict among elite groups;
4. to explain the dynamics of elite conflicts by reference to social mobilization and the changes induced by it in those governmental institutions which formed the basis and focus of elite interests and power.
5. to explain the instability of the political system between 1962-64 in terms of conflict between opposed elite interests couched in the symbols of ideological tribalism.

A fundamental proposition in our analysis is that given the pre-eminent role of government in the economic development of Nigeria, politics was dominated by groups anxious to enrich themselves through control of political power or through ability to influence government policies.

A complimentary hypothesis is that the instability which characterized the Nigerian political system in the period 1962-64, derived from concrete, antithetical interests which can be more appropriately described as elite-oriented rather than ethnic-oriented.

In our usage, an interest is elite-oriented if its realization benefits a specific and identifiable minority, whereas it is ethnic-oriented when it benefits a majority of the ethnic group. For example, if political authority is used to enrich a particular minority, it becomes an elite instrument and an object of elite interest, whereas if policies are directed towards the general welfare, political authority becomes 'national', communal or ethnic. This approach helps clarify the relationship between communal and individual interests. It makes clear that the interests of a categoric group are not necessarily the same as the interests of certain sections within it.

The answer to the question whose interests are served by government policies, comes from an examination of both the sources of government revenues, and the programmes or projects on which government spends its money. In Nigeria, peasant

agriculture production constitutes the single most important foreign exchange and revenue earner for government-sponsored economic development. Do peasants, who constitute an overwhelming proportion of the population, derive benefits from government policies and expenditures commensurate with their tax burden in underwriting development expenditures? We will search for the answer to this question in the records of government expenditures on development in the years between 1954 and 1964. The year 1954 is important because it marked the introduction of federalism in Nigeria, and the devolution of significant powers over development expenditures on indigenous Nigerian political leaders.

The records of government expenditures enable us to assess the orientation of the government over the years. They give a useful insight into the calibre of the government because the records represent actual commitments rather than mere political promises. We are thus able to assess the relative priorities accorded to various societal goals, judging from the magnitude of funds expended on such goals. We can estimate what percentage of government expenditures is directed to prestige projects in urban areas, to welfare projects which benefit the majority in the rural areas, and to development projects which aid capital formation and increase gross national product. In short, we will seek to answer the question which underlies all discussions of classes and elites: who gets what and why?

Chapter II of the dissertation will examine the costs and

benefits to Nigerian groups of government-sponsored economic development. In the study of new nations, scholars are content to rest the question of whether stratification is occurring or not, on definitions with little or no empirical content. We reject such an approach as bordering on casuistry, and in Chapter II, we adopt the alternative approach of re-constructing the facts of inequality on which stratification is based.

FOOTNOTES

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Chapter II

THE 'CLASS' CONTENT OF POLITICAL POWER IN NIGERIA

The purpose of this chapter is to substantiate the major hypotheses which we proposed earlier, namely, that Nigerian society is more of an elitist than a tribalistic society, that the power of elites stems from their control of, or influence on, the machinery of government, and the use of this machinery to further their private economic interests. The chapter will stress the dominant role of government in Nigerian economic development, and will examine how elite interests shape governmental economic policies and the institutions of economic development.

Since it is our contention that political authority in Nigeria subserves elite interests more than any other interests, this chapter will examine the pattern of governmental revenues and expenditures so as to determine whether there is even a rough correlation, between tax burdens that groups of Nigerians bear in underwriting development expenditures, and the benefits derived from government-provided services.

When we speak of government revenues and expenditures, we do not mean to leave the impression that Nigeria has just one decision-making unit allocating expenditures and raising revenues. Nigeria is a federation, and during the period with which this dissertation deals, had three, and subsequently four regional governments plus the federal government in Lagos. The various governments also created statutory corporations which were

empowered to make expenditures. Our use of the term 'government' or 'government sector' is intended as a shorthand way of describing the activities of all levels of government and quasi-government bodies. Whenever necessary however, the federal or regional government or the statutory corporations are referred to by name in describing certain government activities.

Income reallocation and the political process

The issues of redistributational equity and the quality, rather than the quantity of economic growth are increasingly receiving attention in the literature of development.¹ As G. K. Helleiner writes, "equity in the distribution of income and rights, the tax burden, and government provided services are fundamental to the quality of a society's development".²

However, it is often argued that in a developing country, preoccupation with distribution will retard economic growth, by sharing out the small resources which should be devoted to investment. The advanced nations we are told, were not burdened with the problems of distribution during the early decades of their industrialization, and only countenanced the issues of distribution after a substantial rise in their gross domestic output. This is true, and we can explain the difference by pointing to the changed view of the purpose of development. If the welfare of the individual was not a topic of importance in the early decades of Western industrialism, it is very much the core concern of today's development efforts. All economic

development plans nowadays, profess a dedication to the raising of the standard of living for the masses of people. In the words of Nigeria's Second National Development Plan, "The ultimate goal of economic development is the welfare of the individual".³

Since economic development is for all the people, it requires their enthusiastic support. A society characterized by great inequalities, cannot elicit much commitment for its goals from those citizens (usually the majority) who feel alienated from its policies. The realization of more equal social opportunities can however be a spur to economic growth, by acting as an incentive for people to identify their interests with the interests of the nation, and so give of their best to the development effort.

The argument about premature redistribution loses validity when it is realized that economic development without distributional justice is a recipe for political violence and governmental instability. On the other hand, an equitable distribution of development burdens and benefits garners support for the regime and helps economic growth. As Gunnar Myrdal remarks, - "... the improvement of the lot of the poor ... is sometimes not only compatible with, but a condition for, the attainment of higher levels in all income brackets, including the higher ones".⁴

The Role of Government in
Nigerian Economic Development

Any discussion of the quality of socio-economic development

in Nigeria must necessarily center on the role of government, since government is the prime mover of economic growth. The dearth of private capital and of managerial and entrepreneurial skills, has impelled the government to undertake those development tasks which private initiative cannot cope with. Government development efforts have been in the direction of supplying infrastructure, especially transport facilities, of raising productivity in agriculture, and of building a manufacturing sector based on modern technology.⁵ The Western Nigerian official statement on development frankly admits that,

The primary function of a Government is the provision of those public services without which individual effort and initiative would be futile - education and health services, water, electrical energy, and that network of communications without which private enterprise could not flourish. 6

The development aims of other regional governments have also concentrated on the provision of social infrastructure.⁷

The key role of government in Nigeria's economic growth is best illustrated by the share of government in gross capital formation, since this is more indicative of the degree of government effort to transform the economy. Table 1 shows that government investments account for an average of 42.5% per annum of the gross capital formation in the Nigerian economy between 1957 and 1964. Table 2 shows that under the first National Development Plan, 1962-1968, government sources account for about two-thirds of the total projected investment of £1,183.3 million.

TABLE 1

GROSS FIXED CAPITAL FORMATION BY THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS IN NIGERIAAT 1957-1958 PRICES

(£ million)

	<u>1957/58</u>	<u>1958/59</u>	<u>1959/60</u>	<u>1960/61</u>	<u>1961/62</u>	<u>1962/63</u>	<u>1963/64</u>
Public Sector*	38.2	49.5	63.8	60.8	55.5	55.5	54.8
Private Sector	61.1	59.0	63.5	66.1	84.6	82.1	98.2
Total	99.3	108.5	127.3	126.9	140.1	137.1	153.0

(% composition)

Public Sector*	38.6	45.6	50.2	47.8	39.6	40.1	35.8
Private Sector	61.4	54.4	49.8	52.2	60.4	59.9	64.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* includes state-owned corporations.

Source: Economic Indicators, vl. 2 No. 11, Federal Office of Statistics, Lagos.

TABLE 2

GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE CAPITAL FORMATION UNDER THE NATIONAL PLAN

(1962-1968)

	(£ million)	Percent
All Governments	793.8	67.1
Federal Statutory Corporations	173.3	14.6
Federal Government	232.5	19.6
Eastern Regional Government	68.4	5.8
Northern Regional Government	88.9	7.5
Western Regional Government	81.3	6.9
Unallocated	149.4	12.6
Private	389.5	32.9
	<hr/> £ 1,183.3 <hr/>	<hr/> 100.0 <hr/>

Source: Federation of Nigeria, National Development Plan, 1962-68, pp. 36,41.

The dominant economic position of government in Nigeria's economic life means that government activities and policies have far-reaching effects on the life-situations of millions of Nigerians. The government and its corporations for instance are the single most important employer of wage labour in the country, (see Table 3), and set the pattern of employer/employee relations for the private sector. Government enterprises consume a considerable stock of the nation's available goods and services in carrying out their programs,⁸ and the level of their demand determines the cost of similar goods to private consumers. Invariably government provision of free services (or at nominal charges), involve a transfer of income from certain categories of persons to others, since the services have to be paid for by taxes from the public.

TABLE 3

REPORTED EMPLOYMENT IN ESTABLISHMENTS OF TEN OR MORE

<u>Type of Employer</u>	(In Thousands)				
	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>
Government & Government Corporations	274	277	286	235	519
Private	167	147	179	188	-

Source: Federal Office of Statistics, Reports on Employment and Earnings Enquiry (various years).

Given the fact that there is no necessary connexion between taxes paid and benefits received, it is possible for

government to take away more in taxes from certain groups of individuals than they receive in benefits. For example, in a predominantly agricultural economy, a program of economic development which concentrates infrastructure investment in urban growth centres, transfers income from the rural areas which generate the bulk of development revenues to the urban areas.

The variety and extent of government influence on the social and economic life of its citizens, range from the imposition of direct and indirect taxes which reduce the disposable income of people, to outright grants in support of the incomes of other groups of people, to the reduction of the prices of certain commodities and services (subsidies) for yet other groups.

The near-monopoly of economic power enjoyed by government, makes it essential that we examine how those who control the government and influence its policies use this power. We already observed that it is in the nature of governments that they discriminate between different sections of the population, and that the power or influence of particular groups determines whether government policies are favourable or unfavourable to such groups.

This chapter will therefore compare and contrast the contributions made to the financing of government economic programs, and the services received from government, by those groups we have categorized as the Nigerian elites and the rest of the population. The goal is to assess the extent to which government

economic policies have strengthened or weakened elitist tendencies in Nigerian society, to indicate the type of relationship that exists between elites (especially politicians and civil servants) and the institutions of economic development, and finally, to evaluate the quality of government-sponsored social and economic development in the light of the stated social objectives of the ruling elites.

The Elites' View of Development

A reading of Nigeria's Development Plans, shows that the ruling elites are aware of the important role government can play in obviating the gross inequalities of socio-economic under-development. The elites know that when economic growth is left entirely to market forces, it is usually accompanied by a crisis in the process of distribution and relations of production. Unless government regulates economic life, the growth of aggregate national income could lead to ever greater urban-rural social and economic disparities, to the concentration of wealth in ever fewer hands, and to unemployment for the majority whose labour becomes redundant in a capital intensive economy.⁹

The elites' justification of government planning as a strategy for economic development is as a device not only for bringing about a fast rate of economic growth, but also for ensuring a more equitable distribution of the benefits of development. The ex-Premier of Western Nigeria, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, writes that

The duty of a good government is clear. In vesting it with authority the populace have acted jointly and as equals. It is not open to the government to prefer the members of its own hierarchy or some of the members of the community in the provision of amenities. It must devote identical interests to the welfare of all citizens, and it must display special concern for the afflicted and those whose talents are in danger of being buried or destroyed. ...In other words, in order to achieve equality of opportunity, the amount of attention and assistance required from the government is bound to vary as between one citizen and another. Broadly speaking, the poorer or less fortunate the citizen, the greater the attention he requires from the government; and the richer or more fortunate the citizen the less. 10

Awolowo's libertarian philosophy of social welfare was embodied in his government's development plans,¹¹ and similar sentiments are expressed in the various national plans. Thus the 1962-68 First National Development Plan seeks as one of its priorities

to achieve a modernized economy consistent with the democratic, political, and social aspirations of the people. This includes the achievement of a more equitable distribution of income both among people and among regions. 12

The 1970-74 Second National Development Plan, lists as one of its five principal national objectives the establishment of a just and egalitarian society, and goes on to state that,

A just and egalitarian society, puts a premium on reducing inequalities in inter-personal incomes and promoting balanced development among the various communities in the different geographical areas in the country. It organises its economic institutions in such a way that there is no oppression based on class, social status, ethnic group or state. 13

However, as our analysis will show, there is a rather wide

gap between elite pronouncements and actions, between elite promises and performances. Popular criticisms of elite privileges prompted the political and administrative leaders to affirm certain egalitarian principles which, judging from their subsequent policies, they had no intention of carrying out. It is obvious that any concerted attack on inequalities would require the selfless commitment of the elites since it is they who are above the masses in income, in education, in political power and social status. It is the elites therefore who must bear the brunt of any levelling reforms. That the elites are not willing to suffer a lowering in their standard of living is evident from an analysis of three crucial areas which represent the index of stratification in Nigerian society: wages, taxation and government-provided social services.

Wages in Nigerian society

Wages and salaries are among the key factors in the economic and social life of any community, accounting for as much as eighty percent of total national income in most countries.¹⁴ Indeed wages are such an important indicator of social well-being that once we know what a man's wage is, we can pretty well guess his education, the neighbourhood he lives in, his life expectancy, etc. As Gerth and Mills have stated,

Everything from the chance to stay alive during the first year after birth to the chance to view fine arts, the chance to remain healthy and grow tall, and if sick to get well again quickly, the chance to avoid becoming a juvenile delinquent - and very crucially, the chance to complete an intermediary or higher educational grade, 15

- all depend on one's income.

In the short-run, inequalities in wages are manifest in differences in life-styles. In the long run, income inequalities could lead to the accumulation of wealth, to unequal social opportunities, and to the rise of a rentier class living off the profit of capital.

Wages in Nigeria take on added significance for the important reason that the prevailing wage structure is the result of political expediency, rather than the measure of the productivity of labour. During the period of the country's colonial status, the colonial power related the salaries of the expatriate staff to the British wage-structure without regard to the economic circumstances of Nigeria. In addition, the colonial power granted generous allowances as an inducement to its nationals to work in Nigeria. With the 'Nigerianization' of many top posts, indigenes who replaced expatriate officers insisted on receiving the wages which accrued to expatriates, including allowances for oversea leave, children, car and medical expenses.¹⁶

The new political leaders were not anxious to reform the wage structure since they themselves were not averse to the big increases in income which their new positions of power would bring them.¹⁷ Rather than reform the wage structure, political leaders tended to placate potential sources of opposition (e.g. the Army and Trade Unions), with pay boosts which were scarcely related to productivity, and minimum wage legislations unrelated to Nigeria's economic circumstances.¹⁸

For example, in announcing a pay rise of 25% for soldiers, the Federal Minister of Defence remarked that "The army is like an engine and must be regularly lubricated if it is not to lose its efficiency".¹⁹ The Premier of Northern Nigeria gave workers in his region a 10% increase on the national wage settlement after the 1964 nation-wide strike, in appreciation he said, "of the good leadership and maturity shown by the labour leaders in bringing to an end the last nation-wide strike. We hope they will appreciate this gesture and reciprocate accordingly".²⁰ The 1964 federal election was of course scheduled for December.

Political considerations in the determination of wages have resulted in a situation in which labour is paradoxically more expensive than capital in an underdeveloped country like Nigeria. Economists point to the fact that entrepreneurs will employ unskilled and semi-skilled labour as long as the cost of labour relative to productivity is not unduly high. Once wage costs increase unduly, there is a striving by entrepreneurs to save labour costs by capital substitution.²¹ The trend to capital substitution is increasingly evident in Nigerian industrial production as Table 4 shows. Between 1962 and 1965 labour costs in selected industries just about doubled while capital costs more than trebled and value-added more than doubled. In other words, firms increased their productivity with less labour employment. In 1962, wages formed a little more than one-seventh of gross output, in 1965 it formed less than one-tenth.

TABLE 4

YEAR	Number Employed	Wages & Salaries (£)	Gross Output (£)	Industrial or Capital Costs (£)	Value Added (£)
1962	58,277	10,974	82,201	41,356	41,845
1963	65,798	13,317	136,701	81,769	54,930
1964	76,342	16,520	179,389	110,656	68,733
1965	95,614	21,401	222,436	136,140	86,296

Source: Industrial Surveys, 1962-1965, Federal Office of
Statistics, Lagos.

The trend in capital substitution partly accounts for the high level of unemployment in Nigerian cities, as high as 17% in 1963.²² Also, high labour costs partly account for the unprofitability of most public statutory corporations which are labour-intensive.²³ Trade union activities to boost wages thus benefit the few who are lucky to get employment, and impoverish the majority who are not as lucky.

In spite of concessions to trade unions, gross inequalities in income persist in the Nigerian wage structure. Table 5 shows that Nigeria's per capita income was £24 in 1962-63 and £26 in 1967-68. Table 6 is a sample of the wages paid to various grades of workers in the public services. The Table shows that the highest paid staff receives an average income of over thirty times that of the lowest paid staff, and the lowest paid staff

TABLE 5

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT AND PER CAPITA INCOME 1962/63 - 1967/68

	<u>1962/63</u>	<u>1963/64</u>	<u>1964/65</u>	<u>1965/66</u>	<u>1966/67</u>	<u>1967/68</u>
	(£ m)	(£ m)	(£ m)	(£ m)	(£ m)	(£ m)
Total G.D.P. at Current Prices	1315.4	1403.2	1457.0	1540.3	1605.0	1670.0
Assumed Population (million)	55.7	57.2	58.8	60.2	61.7	63.3
Assumed annual % rise in population	0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Real Per Capita Income (£)	24.0	25.0	25.0	25.7	25.6	26.0

Source: Compiled from, Federation of Nigeria, Gross Domestic Product, of Nigeria, 1958/59 - 1966/67; Federation of Nigeria, National Development Plan, 1962/68, Lagos, Federal Ministry of Economic Development 1962.

TABLE 6

SAMPLE OF ANNUAL WAGES PAID TO SELECTED GROUPS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICES 1962-1967

	1962/63	1963/64	1964/65	1965/66	1966/67	% increase 1966/67 over 1962/63	Maximum Earnable Wage
	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(%)	(£)
Daily Paid Labour and Semi-skilled	90	92.0	95	97.10s	105	17	140
Artisan and Skilled Labour	156	162.10s	167.15s	188	205	13	240
Clerical class	198	204	210	231	240	20	828
Executive class	648	675	702	786	822	27	1,584
Administrative class	720	762	804	924	972	35	1,584
Sub-supervisory	1,500	1,560	1,620	1,680	1,740	16	1,740
Supervisory, University Professor, Cabinet Minister	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	3,000
Ratio of Supervisory to Lowest Salary	1:33.3	1:33	1:32	1:31	1:29		1:21
Ration of Lowest Salary to percapita G.D.P.	1:3.8	1:3.7	1:3.8	1:3.8	1:4.3		
Ratio of highest Salary to G.D.P.	1:125	1:120	1:120	1:116	1:116		

Source: Calculated from T. Elwood and R. R. Olisa, Report on the Grading of Posts in the Public Services of the Federation of Nigeria, Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1966.

receives over three times the per capita G.D.P. The highest paid civil servant receives an average of about 120 times the per capita G.D.P.

These relationships are exploitative both of the lowest paid staff and of the millions of peasants not in wage employment. The bitter trade unions' resentment of the income gap between their members and the higher classes of the civil service is reflected in this statement by the United Labour Congress:

Independence Day, October first 1960, freed us from colonial domination. It did not, unfortunately free us automatically from colonial institutions. The edifice of privilege remains; only its proprietors are different.... This situation, in which a senior official may receive fifty times the salary of a junior official, or a daily labourer, is politically explosive and economically intolerable The United Labour Congress of Nigeria will fight against the continuation of this exploitation of class by class as fervently as it fought against imperialism.... 24

While one must concede that labour has a reasonable ground for complaint, one must nevertheless add that labour's self-righteousness is tarnished by its acquiescence in a wage structure which allows it to receive more than three times the per capita G.D.P. in wages, to the detriment of the majority who are non-unionized workers.

The paradox of a minimum wage being at the same time exploitative, is the peculiar condition of underdeveloped countries in which the majority of workers eke out an existence in the agricultural sector. In more developed countries, minimum wages are usually below the per capita income. For example, in 1963

the per capita G.D.P. in Canada was \$2,258 whereas the minimum wage was \$2,160 - and lower in some regions.²⁵ The opposite is true for Nigeria where the minimum wage is over three times the per capita G.D.P. because of the subsistence wages of agricultural workers.

Trade union activity in Nigeria is limited to the civil service, public corporations and the big European firms - areas where wages and conditions of service are favourable compared to the agricultural sector. In spite of this, Nigerian Trade Unions concentrate their efforts on closing the income gap between them and the Higher Civil Service, and ignore the gap between organized and unorganized labour.

Table 6 indicates that the ratio of lowest wage to per capita G.D.P. is rising whereas the ratio of highest wage to per capita G.D.P. is falling. Indeed it is correct to say that the grievance of organized labour is not wholly accounted for by low wages, seeing that organized labour represents the elite of the millions of subsistence-living unorganized peasantry. The grievance of organized labour is strongly motivated by its feeling of deprivation viz-a-vis the conspicuous consumption of elite groups, especially politicians and higher civil servants. This much is clear from a statement made before the 1964 strike of the Trade Unions, by S. U. Bassey, a co-chairman of the Joint Action Committee of the Trade Unions:

We don't attempt to justify the Unions' position in economic terms or to say just where the Government is going to find the money. That is their job. All we can see is that they are spending plenty on themselves. It's time we got our fair share. 26

No doubt, the salaries, allowances and other emoluments of politicians (especially ministers and parliamentary secretaries), offer a dramatic contrast to the lot of organized and unorganized labour, as Tables 7 and 8 show.

To the high salaries of ministers, parliamentary secretaries and senior civil and military personnel must be added other fringe benefits like subsidized housing, car and children allowances and free medical services, which in effect constitute a wage supplement. Government provides accommodation for ministers in "Ministers' Row" Ikoyi - a string of houses costing £30,000 each. Those ministers who live in their own houses are paid £2,500 as rent by the government. The Ministers also get allowances for telephone services, electricity, postage and the use of their private cars.

The government provides subsidized housing for senior and middle grade civil servants, or part-monthly payment towards the rental of non-government accommodation. Table 9 shows the annual loss incurred by the Eastern Nigerian Government on government-provided accommodation. In the words of the Morgan Report, it is an

anomaly that a senior official at a salary of over £2,500 per annum pays about £150 per annum rent for a house in about one acre of gardens and greens and in addition could have an electric bulb changed for him by the Government by merely presenting the burnt out bulb to the Ministry of Works and the plumbing done free for him by merely lifting the free telephone installed in the house, whilst a subordinate directly under him and on a salary of under £700 per annum, pays, if he is lucky, £240 per annum for a little flat-let at, say Surulere or Uwani Layout, and this, in addition to furnishing and equipping the flat-let. 27

TABLE 7

SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES GRANTED TO MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

	Prime Minister (£)	Cabinet Minister (£)	Minister without Cabinet rank (£)	Parliamentary Secretary (£)
Salary	4,500	2,700	2,250	1,800
Car Basic Allowance	960	960	960	650
Entertainment	700	360	360	360
Rent on Ministers' Homes	-	2,500	2,500	-

Source: Report of the Accountant - General of the Federation.

TABLE 8

SALARIES PAID TO MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES IN THE REGIONS

	North (£)	West (£)	East (£)	Mid-West (£)
Premier	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600
Minister with Cabinet Rank	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700
Minister of State	2,700	-	2,160	-
Parliamentary Secretary	1,800	1,350	1,350	1,350

Source: Regional Governments' Estimates.

TABLE 9

Total number of senior civil servants	2,516
Total number of senior civil servants in quarters	<u>699</u>
Number not in quarters	1,817
Total number of junior civil servants	12,732
Junior civil servants in quarters	<u>1,206</u>
Junior civil servants not in quarters	11,517
Total number of civil servants (Senior & Junior) not in quarters	13,434
Average annual cost of Maintenance of Government Quarters	£110,000
Average annual rent collected from quarters	£ 47,000
Average annual loss	£ 63,000

Source: Report of the Commission on the Review of Wages, Salary and Conditions of Service of the Junior Employees of the Government of the Federation and in Private Establishments 1963-1964, p. 58.

Ministers, parliamentarians, top civil servants, army officers, and university lecturers are entitled to a loan from the government for the purchase of cars for their own use. The government in addition grants them a monthly car basic allowance for the maintenance of their cars as well as travel costs if they use their cars for official duties. The car basic allowance in effect amounts to a gift with which to repay the loan. The Morgan Report estimates that the governments of the federation disburse between one percent and 2.5 percent of their revenues yearly in payment of car allowances to a few civil servants.²⁸

Table 10 shows that between 1960 and 1963 the total amount paid out in car basic allowances rose by 58%. Yet the Director of Federal Audit reported in 1963 that,

Official transport is continually being misused in the majority of Ministries. Most senior service officers are in receipt of a Motor basic allowance which is paid to enable the officer to own and maintain a motor vehicle and use it on Government duty when required. If a Ministry vehicle is used on duty and by an officer who is drawing basic allowance, then, by regulation, the officer is required to pay for its use.... However, Ministry vehicles are regularly used on duty by officers drawing basic allowances, but no payments are made for the use of the vehicles. Similarly, house to office and other private journeys are carried out in Ministry vehicles without payment being made. 29

The wage policies of the government are contributing to the stratification of Nigerian workers, by heaping privileges on upper and middle grade workers. According to urban consumer

price indices,³⁰ rent and transportation take up a high proportion of the wages of unskilled urban workers. Some workers pay as much as 13 to 25 percent of their monthly earnings on transportation.³¹ The higher civil servants on the other hand, are provided with transportation and housing at subsidized rates.

TABLE 10

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON BASIC ALLOWANCES, 1960 - 1963

	<u>1960/61</u>	<u>1961/62</u>	<u>1962/63</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	(£)	(£)	(£)
Federal	318,000	436,558	503,415
North	331,153	374,390	389,714
East	224,809	257,077	288,964
West	355,824	412,312	498,026

Source: Morgan Report, p. 64

The wage structure also exacerbates the already considerable income gap between workers in wage employment and those in the subsistence sector. With income differentials stretched well beyond the requirements of incentive, it is no wonder that the wage structure has attracted thousands more people to the city than there are jobs.

Taxation in Nigeria

When we turn to an analysis of how government raises the

revenues with which it finances wages and its development programs, we uncover even more glaring inequalities in the tax incidence, that is, the tax burden on various income groups.

As we stated earlier, government expenditures on social services, on civil service housing, on car basic allowances, on roads etc., must be paid for from tax revenues, and one of the knotty questions confronting policy-makers is who should pay the taxes?³² The question is really the same as what groups should be deprived of part of their disposable income so that government can provide the services in question. Should the tax fall only on those who benefit from a service, e.g. a tax on gasoline being used mainly for the construction of roads rather than low-income housing. Should the tax fall on everybody regardless of benefit criteria? If the tax is to fall on everybody, should it be proportional, that is, should it take an exact proportion of each person's income? Should the tax be progressive or graduated, that is, take a higher fraction of income from the man with high income? And finally, should the tax be regressive, that is, take a smaller fraction of income from high-income people than it takes from low-income people.³³

It is evident from this discussion that the power to tax is intimately linked with the redistribution of incomes among various economic groups. Taxation can therefore reduce inequality in incomes or exacerbate it.

Most modern governments, conscious of the need for equity

in the distribution of burdens and benefits of government programs, rely on taxes of the benefit type, and on progressive taxation which links the amount of taxation with the ability to pay. Governments commit themselves to the provision of a decent standard of living for all citizens, while realizing that certain groups who benefit from a particular expenditure (e.g. welfare recipients) cannot be expected to support such expenditure with taxes, so the rich are taxed and the resources transferred to the poor.

Taxes can be classified as 'direct' or 'indirect'. 'Direct' taxes (e.g. the personal income tax, community tax) are levied directly on people. 'Indirect' taxes (e.g. import duties, export duties and excise taxes) are levied on goods and services, and thus indirectly on people. For example, taxation on imported goods or on domestic production (excise tax) earns revenue for the government and indirectly reduces the real income of private consumers by raising the prices of the taxed commodities.

In terms of 'regressivity' or 'progressivity', direct taxes are progressive, whereas indirect taxes are regressive since they tend to take away an exact proportion from each income group. There are of course many borderline cases which do not fit into this mould. For example, a poll tax of £1 per head is a direct tax, but nevertheless very regressive since it takes a larger fraction of income from the poor than the rich. Similarly, an indirect tax on luxuries like cars and stereo sets, might well be as progressive as a direct tax.

Douglas Dosser observes that "The conventional position is that the 'just treatment of unequals' (vertical equity) is best achieved by direct taxes and that the 'equal treatment of equals' (horizontal equity) can be achieved at least as well by indirect as direct taxes".³⁴ On equity grounds therefore, a government cannot rely solely on indirect taxes without effectively balancing these off with a direct and progressive income tax.

The major taxes in the Nigerian fiscal system are import duties, export duties, export sales tax, excise tax, community tax, personal income tax and the companies tax. The main sources of revenue for the federal and regional governments are indirect taxes, especially import duties, export duties, and excise taxes. Import duties are the tariffs charged on various imports into Nigeria, excise duties are taxes imposed on products manufactured locally.

Indirect Taxation

Export duties are levied on those export crops which are marketed through Regional Marketing Boards,³⁵ mainly groundnuts, groundnut cake and oil, cocoa, palm oil, palm kernels, raw and seed cotton, and rubber, all of which bear ad valorem duties of ten per cent. The Regional Governments also impose a produce sales tax on each ton of export crop. In addition, Marketing Boards fix the price they would pay for each export crop in advance of the buying season, the object being to stabilize producer

income by breaking

the direct link between the producers' price and world market prices, the existence of which in the past has caused the local purchase price to reflect every vagary of speculation on the world's markets. 36

This policy meant that when world prices were high, producer earnings were lower than the amount realized from oversea sales. The Marketing Boards retained the profits. When world prices were lower than the prices paid to producers, the boards were expected to finance the loss from the accumulated profits of previous years. In practice however, Marketing Boards generally fixed producer prices below world prices, and in later years contributed increasing portions of their accumulated profits to the revenues of Regional Governments. Thus the practical effect of stabilization has been the imposition of another tax on farmers' incomes.³⁷ We shall return to this point when we discuss tax incidence.

Table 11 shows the recurrent revenues of federal and regional governments from 1961/62 to 1965/66, and Table 12, the contribution of each tax to total revenues in the same years. Table 13 illustrates the percentage share of direct taxes and indirect taxes of total tax revenues and of total recurrent revenues for 1961/62 and 1964/65.

It is evident from these tables that Nigerian Governments depend overwhelmingly on indirect taxes for their revenue. Bearing in mind what was said earlier of the regressivity of indirect taxes, it is obvious that the burden of financing govern-

TABLE 11

FEDERAL AND REGIONAL RECURRENT REVENUES, 1961-1966

(£' Millions)

Financial Year	Net Federal Govt. Rev.	Total Regional Govt. Rev.	Total Federal & Regional Rev.	North	West	East	Mid-West
1961 - 1962	(£) 65.76	(£) 65.14	(£) 130.90	(£) 22.80	(£) 23.92	(£) 19.08	(£) -
1962 - 1963	66.86	68.94	135.80	22.80	24.45	21.69	-
1963 - 1964	75.57	70.66	146.23	25.31	19.40	22.18	3.77
1964 - 1965	85.83	89.28	175.11	33.46	20.87	26.71	8.24
1965 - 1966	94.30	94.88	189.18	32.59	22.39	29.97	9.93

Source: Federal and Regional Governments' Estimates and Official Gazettes, various years.

TABLE 12

TAX REVENUES OF THE FEDERAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

(£ ' Millions)

	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962/3</u>	<u>1963/4</u>	<u>1964/5</u>	<u>1965/6</u>
<u>Direct Taxes:</u>					
Personal Income Tax	6.7	9.0	9.5	10.2	13.9
Companies Tax	5.9	5.7	5.6	5.4	7.5
Petroleum Profits Tax	-	-	-	0.4	1.3
Community Tax (in the North only)	1.1	0.5	0.9	0.9	0.8
Cattle Tax (in the North and East)	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
<u>Indirect Taxes:</u>					
Export Tax	13.1	11.8	14.2	14.4	15.9
Import Duties	57.0	60.8	63.4	83.4	74.9
Excise Taxes	6.4	7.1	9.8	13.6	21.6
<hr/> Total Tax Revenue	<hr/> 93.6	<hr/> 98.7	<hr/> 107.2	<hr/> 131.8	<hr/> 139.3

Source: Federal and Regional Governments' Estimates, and Official Gazettes, various years.

TABLE 13

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT TAXES IN FEDERAL AND REGIONAL TAX AND RE-
CURRENT REVENUES 1961-1962 and 1964-1965

(in %)		
	<u>1961/2</u>	<u>1964/5</u>
Direct taxes as a % of total tax revenues	18.2	19.0
Direct taxes as a % of total recurrent revenues	13.0	13.6
Indirect taxes as a % of total tax revenues	81.8	82.0
Indirect taxes as a % of total recurrent revenues	59.0	62.3

Source: Calculated from Tables 11 and 12.

ment falls more heavily on the low-income groups than on the high-income groups.

The extent of dependence by government on indirect taxes is illustrated by Tables 14 and 15. In 1963/64 for example, revenues from indirect taxes made up 58% of all Federal Government revenues and 67% of the revenue of the new Mid-West Region - (see Table 16).

The intolerable burden of indirect taxes on Nigerian farmers of export crops requires special mention. We already noted that these farmers' crops are subject to three types of levies, the export duty, the produce sales tax and the withholding by the Marketing Boards of a portion of producers' income in the form of the difference between local and world market prices. Table 17 compares world prices with producer prices for three major Nigerian export crops. In some years the Marketing Boards withheld nearly half of the producers' potential income.

The main reason for heavy taxation of export crops is their high revenue-yielding potential. Export crops are the main source of foreign exchange for Nigeria, and an important source of revenue for regional governments. Table 14 indicates the extent of dependence of Regional Governments on revenue from export taxes.

Another reason for heavy taxation of export crops, is the difficulty of assessing and collecting other forms of taxes. Export crops are easy to measure, control and tax since they are

TABLE 14

REVENUES FROM EXPORT TAXES AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL REVENUES

1959/60 - 1963/64

	<u>1959/60</u>	<u>1960/61</u>	<u>1961/62</u>	<u>1962/63</u>	<u>1963/64</u>
Federal Government	-	-	-	-	-
Norther Nigerian Government	29.1	26.5	27.2	26.0	28.0
Western Nigerian Government	46.7	41.4	29.1	29.0	29.0
Eastern Nigerian Government	25.8	20.2	16.0	11.1	10.4
Mid-West Government	-	-	-	-	29.0

Source: Official Estimates of the Regional Governments.

TABLE 15

ANNUAL REVENUES OF FEDERAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS FROMIMPORT DUTIES AND EXCISE TAXES 1960/61 - 1963/64

(in £ Millions)

	<u>1960/61</u>	<u>1961/62</u>	<u>1962/63</u>	<u>1963/64</u>
Federal Government	33.940	34.837	39.538	40.913
Northern Government	8.460	9.162	10.177	10.733
Western Government	8.245	8.983	9.708	8.240
Mid-West Government	-	-	-	2.167
Total	57.780	60.852	68.062	72.368

Source: Federal and Regional Governments' Official Estimates.

TABLE 16

REVENUES FROM IMPORT AND EXCISE DUTIES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL

REVENUES 1960/61-1963/64

	<u>1960/61</u>	<u>1961/62</u>	<u>1962/63</u>	<u>1963/64</u>
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	48.5	53.0	57.4	58.0
NORTHERN GOVERNMENT	48.0	40.9	43.5	44.0
WESTERN GOVERNMENT	40.4	37.5	39.3	42.0
EASTERN GOVERNMENT	42.2	42.0	39.6	45.4
MID-WEST GOVERNMENT	-	-	-	67.0
<hr/>				
ALL GOVERNMENTS	46.4	46.5	49.1	51.4

Source: Official Estimates.

TABLE 17

WORLD AND PRODUCER PRICES OF NIGERIA'S MAJOR
EXPORT CROPS, 1955 - 1965 (£)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>COCOA</u>		<u>PALM OIL</u>		<u>PALM KERNELS</u>	
	World Price (£)	Producer Price (£)	World Price (£)	Producer Price (£)	World Price (£)	Producer Price (£)
1955	360	193.0	82	46.7	52	29.7
1956	215	192.3	93	43.9	53	28.6
1957	182	143.0	92	44.4	51	28.3
1958	291	142.6	83	49.9	56	26.7
1959	283	142.4	77	40.6	70	27.2
1960	220	153.0	81	41.9	61	26.8
1961	169	141.5	66	46.8	43	30.0
1962	162	92.5	59	36.0	43	26.0
1963	176	97.5	63	36.0	49	26.0
1964	180	110.0	65	28.0	41	28.0
1965	144	112.5	76	28.0	51	28.0

Sources: Western Region Marketing Board, Annual Reports, 1955-1965.

Eastern Nigeria Marketing Board, Annual Reports, 1955-1965.

Ayo Ogunseye, "Marketing Boards and the Stabilization of
Producer Prices and Incomes in Nigeria",
Nigeria Journal of Economic and Social Studies,
vol. 7, No. 2, July 1965, pp. 131-143.

marketed through the Regional Marketing Boards and since they leave Nigeria through a few ports.

On equity grounds however, the heavy taxation of exports imposes an extra burden on one class of workers, which is not borne by others. Already farmers as well as other income groups are subject to import duties, excise duties and the income tax, so that export taxation amounts to double taxation of farmers' income.

It is often argued that export taxation is justified as a supplement to the income tax which is difficult to assess and collect in an underdeveloped country. It is argued further that export crop revenues in high world price periods involve a large element of windfall gain which ought to be taxed. These arguments are however of doubtful validity. Export taxation falls only on crops not consumed internally, and therefore is not an income tax supplement on all output. In addition, a majority of farmers are small operators whose annual incomes without export taxation, would still have been well below the incomes of politicians and senior civil servants, and so could not be termed windfall profits.³⁸ The regressivity of export taxation is evident in the fact that it does not discriminate between producers. The rich peasant who produces relatively large quantities of crops has the same proportion of his export crop income withheld as the poor farmer who produces a much smaller quantity.

Direct Taxation

Direct taxes in Nigeria also show the regressivity charac-

teristic of the indirect taxes discussed above. This is clear from an examination of the various tax laws operative in the country.³⁹

Each of Nigeria's tax systems specifies the rate at which each income group must be taxed, as well as personal exemptions, allowances or reliefs for dependents, etc. In all the tax systems, taxation for the majority is not based on earned income but on an assumed minimum income for every man who is not engaged in full-time studies or apprenticeship. This form of assessment is used because of the difficulty of determining how much a non-wage earner is worth in Nigeria, since no records are kept by self-employed people.

The assumed minimum income is £60 in the East and £50 in the West and Mid-West. These assumed incomes are more than double the per capita annual income, and so are not related to the true income of millions of Nigerians. Whether employed or not, a man pays tax of £3 in the West, £1. 17s. 6d. in the East, £1. 5s in the North and 10s in Lagos on the assumed minimum income.

The divergencies in assessment result in the unequal distribution of tax burdens among similar income groups in different parts of the country. Also given the poll tax nature of the income tax, it is not surprising that many self-employed people who earn over £50 or £60 are taxed at the assumed minimum income.

Table 18 indicates the average rate of tax on incomes

TABLE 18

COMPARATIVE AVERAGE INCOME TAX RATES ON INCOMES BETWEEN

£50 and £700 (single person)

(in %)

Gross Income (£)	50	100	200	300	400	500	600	700
Federal (Lagos)	1.0	0.5	0.5	1.0	2.0	2.6	3.0	3.2
West and Mid-West	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.5	6.5
North	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.5	3.7	4.0
East	1.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.2	5.6	6.0	6.0

Source: Federal and Regional Income Tax Laws.

between £50 and £700. Apart from the tax system of Eastern Nigeria, all the tax systems show a high degree of regressivity. For example in the North, West, Mid-West and Lagos, a single person earning £50 pays the same tax as a single person earning £300.

Table 19 compares tax burdens for certain income groups in Nigeria with tax burdens for similar groups in selected foreign countries. The Table shows that in each income category, the tax rates in the foreign countries are more progressive than the rates in Nigeria.

In all the tax systems in Nigeria, tax-payers are grouped into two: those whose incomes are below £300 are generally assessed flat rates by local government bodies, those whose incomes are above £300 are assessed under a Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system. This system incorporates generous allowances for those whose incomes are over £300 - allowances which are not granted to the lower income groups. (See Table 20). Over 80% of Nigerian tax payers are assessed tax on incomes under £300.⁴⁰

The generous tax reliefs under the PAYE system include non-taxation on the first £300 of income for a man or woman living in Lagos, on the first £240 for a man or woman living in the North. Low-income people are however taxed on an assumed income of £50. High-income people are granted allowances for children under sixteen years of age or undergoing full-time instruction as students or apprentices. Under the Lagos Tax Law and the

TABLE 19

RELATIVE INCOME TAX BURDENS, SELECTED INCOME LEVELS(TAX RECOMMENDED TO THE NEAREST £) .

(Single Person)

Income (£)	Lagos	Western Nigeria	Northern Nigeria	Eastern Nigeria	East Africa	United Kingdom	U.S.A.
500	10	18	16	28	28	49	47
1,000	53	42	54	75	115	192	137
2,000	258	227	202	286	363	493	341
3,000	550	452	440	597	725	795	589
4,000	918	772	747	947	1169	1097	880
5,000	1372	1192	1129	1372	1663	1440	1218

Source: J. F. Due, "Income taxation in Tropical Africa", British Tax Review, July-August, 1962.

Northern Nigeria Tax Law ₦60 is granted for each child, up to a maximum of four children. In the West ₦40 is granted for each child up to a maximum of four children, in the East ₦40 is granted per child up to a maximum of three children. The cost of childrens' education is also deductible from taxable income in all the tax systems except that of Eastern Nigeria. Other deductions include actual premiums paid on life insurance, actual amounts spent on dependent relatives, and expenditure incurred on oversea travels. Table 20 lists the various tax systems.

These generous concessions account for the fact that high-income people in Nigeria are not contributing as much to the financing of government as their counterparts in foreign countries. And in spite of the concessions, the incidence of evasion and tax avoidance is highest among middle and upper income groups.⁴¹

Other sources of revenue for high-income people in Nigeria are not included in the tax base. For example, many elite people own buildings in urban areas which they rent out to businesses and as accomodation for families. Yet such rental income is not taxed, also dividends, capital gains and foreign income are not included in taxable income.

This discussion on taxation in Nigeria leads to one important conclusion: the elites have refrained from imposing on themselves an equitable share of the burden of financing government, and have shifted the major burden on low-income groups by exploiting import duties and taxation of export crops as the major sources

TABLE 20

PERSONAL INCOME TAX ALLOWANCES IN NIGERIA

(in £'s)

	<u>Federal</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>North</u>
(a) Single Person (Male)	£300	None	None	£240
(b) Single Person (Female)	£300	£300	£100 provided income is less than £400	£240
(c) Married Man	£100 in addition to the personal allow- ance	£200 in addition to the personal allowance	No allowance if income exceeds £100 but tax rates are low	No special allowance
(d) Exemptions for Children	£60 for each child (up to a maximum of four children main- tained and either under 16 years of age or undergoing full-time instruction as a student or an apprentice)	£40 per child. Conditions same as for Federal Income Tax	£40 for each child up to a maximum of three children	£60 for each child. The stipulations are the same as those in the Federal Income Tax Act.
(e) Children's education	Cost of school bills to the extent that they exceed £60, subject to a limit of £190. This brings total allow- ance (d) and (e) to a maximum of £250 per child	Cost of maintenance and education if it exceeds the basic allowance of £40 up to a maximum of £210. This brings the total allowance (d) and (e) to £250 per child. The extra allowance permitted is subject to a limit of £240.	None	Same as in the Federal Law but subject to a maximum of £500 for any number of children

(TABLE CONT'D)

TABLE 20 (CONT'D)

PERSONAL INCOME TAX ALLOWANCES IN NIGERIA

	(in £'s)			
	<u>Federal</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>North</u>
(f) Dependent relatives	Actual amount spent subject to a maximum of £100	Actual amount spent up a maximum of £50	None	Same as in the Federal Law
(g) Life Assurance	Actual premium paid on the life of the taxpayer or his spouse subject to a maximum of one fifth of the taxpayer's total income or £1,000 including contributions to pension or provident funds	Actual premium paid subject to a maximum of one fifth of total income or £500, whichever is less	Actual premium paid subject to a maximum of one fifth of total income or £1,000, whichever is less	Actual premium paid subject to a maximum of one fifth of total tax-payer's income or £300, whichever is less
(h) Oversea Passage allowance	None	None	None	Expenditure incurred in the previous year by the taxpayer on himself or his dependents on transport to and from any place outside Nigeria in pursuance of the terms of his employment in Nigeria, subject to a maximum of £100 for one person and overall maximum of £600

Sources: Federal and Regional Income Tax Laws as amended; Income Tax Management Act, 1961.

of government revenues (See Tables 14 and 15). Whatever contributions elite groups make through indirect taxes, e.g. import duties, are nearly offset by the negligible impact of direct taxes on elite income.

The lack of a progressive system of income taxation accounts for the small share of personal income tax revenues in total revenues, as Tables 21 and 22 indicate.

A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Government Expenditures

In order to gain a complete picture of tax burdens on various income groups in Nigeria, it is necessary to consider government revenue and expenditure together. We have already examined the various sources of governmental revenues, and established that low-income people contribute a higher proportion of their income to government than do high-income people. Now we must consider how the incidence of development burdens and benefits relate to each other in the structure of government policies and expenditures.

First, we inquire into the pattern of government expenditures, assessing the relative priorities of various programs by the magnitudes of funds expended in their execution. Next we consider to what extent certain government programs are likely to benefit low-income people as opposed to high-income people and vice-versa. We admit of course that in most cases, it is not possible to state with mathematical certainty what portions of

TABLE 21

REVENUES FROM THE PERSONAL INCOME TAX, 1959/60 to 1963/64

(In £'Thousands)

	1959/60 (£)	1960/61 (£)	1961/62 (£)	1962/63 (£)	1963/64 (£)
Federal Government	2,350	2,953	2,786	1,916	2,100
Norther Nigeria Govt.	1,313	1,479	1,408	2,087	2,555
Western Nigeria Govt.	390	333	1,477	2,349	2,090
Eastern Nigeria Govt.	2,520	3,034	3,466	3,427	3,930
Mid-West Government	-	-	-	-	208
TOTAL	6,573	7,779	9,137	9,779	10,883

Source: Official Estimates of the Federal and Regional Governments

TABLE 22

REVENUES FROM THE PERSONAL INCOME TAX AS A PERCENTAGE OF

TOTAL REVENUES, 1959/60 to 63/64

	1959/60 (%)	1960/61 (%)	1961/62 (%)	1962/63 (%)	1963/64 (%)
Federal Government	4.0	4.2	4.5	2.8	3.0
Northern Government	7.3	8.4	6.3	9.2	10.0
Western Government	2.0	1.4	6.2	9.4	10.5
Eastern Government	17.0	18.0	18.0	11.0	17.0
Mid-West Government	-	-	-	-	0.7

Source: Official Estimates

government expenditures benefit what income group. Yet it is possible to isolate specific groups benefitting from social services which government provides free or at a subsidized rate to users. Subsidies or free services involve a redistribution of income from one group to another and so it is necessary to indicate who the net beneficiary is.

For example, when government uses tax money to construct civil service houses or ministers' mansions without exacting a fair price for the provision of these amenities, there is a redistribution of income from low-income people (who pay most of the taxes) to high-income civil servants and politicians. When electricity, telephones and sewerage facilities are provided in urban areas for high-income people at subsidized rates, there is a transfer of income from the poor to the rich. When taxes are used to finance inflated wages, there is a redistribution of income from the poor to overpaid civil servants.

It is also possible to assess the benefit/cost aspect of government policies and expenditures in terms of geographical regions, especially rural/urban. This is a rather more difficult task and inevitably involves an element of artificiality, since we seek to compartmentalize government activities into rural/urban. There are clearly backward and forward linkages between government expenditures in the rural and urban areas which our analysis cannot easily untangle. Nevertheless, our simple dichotomy is a useful guide in assessing the locational emphasis of government expenditures.

Urban towns are the political and commercial nerve centers of Nigeria. Because of their importance, they have long attracted a disproportionate share of governmental social amenities. During the colonial period, urban status was a dominant factor in the siting of modern amenities. For example we learn from a 1917 government Handbook that

government medical officers are posted to various stations, and there are European hospitals at Calabar, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos Lokoja, Onitsha and Warri at which European Nursing Sisters are stationed. 42

The towns listed are all urban towns.

In the era of independence, government leaders have shown by their programmes that they favour the concentration of amenities in urban areas. Housing projects, hospitals, and universities are located in or near urban centers. Special incentives are given to industries to locate in urban towns. For example, the Western Nigeria Development Plan 1962-68 states that,

In order to facilitate the establishment of industries in the most favourable industrial zones in the Region, Government has established industrial estates in Ikeja and Mushin, near the Federal Territory of Lagos, providing some 200 acres and sixty-two acres of industrial sites respectively. These estates are provided with basic facilities such as access roads, railways sidings (where possible), water and electricity supplies, telephone facilities, street lights and facility for trade effluent disposal. Associated with the Ikeja industrial estate is a housing estate for the accommodation of industrial labour and management personnel. 43

Thus it is the policy of Nigerian governments to use the cities as economic growth centers.

The increasing pace of industrialization in urban areas is illustrated by the higher concentration of manufacturing plants in these areas than in other parts of the country. For example, in 1965, Lagos alone had 35% of industrial plants in the country, and Port Harcourt, Aba, Kano and Kaduna accounted for another 37%.⁴⁴

The concentration of administrative, commercial and industrial activities in urban towns makes these towns a natural habitat for Nigerian elite groups.⁴⁵ Urban towns also attract thousands of unskilled Nigerians drawn there in search of the 'good life'. The urban populations have been growing at between two and four times the rate of growth of the national population, indicating significant rural migration to urban centers.⁴⁶ The population of Lagos for example grew from 230,256 in 1950 to over 650,000 in 1963.⁴⁷

With the growth of urbanization, new social problems arise: overcrowding, slum formation, unemployment, plus the gradual weakening of the traditional social security system of extended families. The pressure is on the government to provide more health facilities, schools, employment, etc. for the urban populations, and it responds by concentrating the bulk of social overhead expenditure in the urban areas. Government reaction is partly dictated by the needs of stability, for a disgruntled urban unemployed can cause troubles for the regime.

However, the attempt to give the city a higher quality of

social life relative to the rest of the country, causes more people to migrate to the city thereby putting a serious strain on available social amenities. Such strain is illustrated by the acute shortage of water, electric power, transport, housing and sewerage facilities which characterize all Nigerian cities today. The unemployment condition also worsens, in spite of the concentration of most industrial activities in the urban areas. The creation of new jobs has just not kept pace with the influx of new migrants. According to the 1970 to 1974 National Development Plan, 20% of Nigeria's population live in cities, and 80% of estimated unemployed in 1969/70 were in the urban areas.⁴⁸

The rural migrant soon discovers that the so-called glamour of urban living is largely illusory, and that unemployment is the lot of the unskilled in an urban setting. Such disillusioned migrants are easily mobilized by radical movements which seek the overthrow of the regime. Hence government policies of encouraging the growth of urban areas at the expense of the rural areas, sow the seeds of governmental instability.

The rapid growth of urban areas undermines governmental legitimacy and hence stability in another respect. The high incidence of bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria today can be traced to cumulative pressures of urban living, for example, the high cost of living, but in particular the conspicuous consumption and elaborate lifestyles indulged in by members of the elite. Wages are higher in urban areas, but so also is the competition

for status and for the possession of those consumer durables (cars) and non-durables (girl friends) which are the mark of status among elite Nigerians. Many government officials accept bribes to augment their income, so as to be able to fulfill some of the expectations induced by urban living.

As Labanji Bolaji puts it,

The obvious motive for corruption of office is the desire for money and the luxuries which it can buy; money to build a decent house of your own; money to set your wife up in a thriving business; money to keep a string of girl friends; money to send your children overseas; money to buy a car which will be the envy of the neighbourhood and the talk of the town. 49

Many people in Nigeria are increasingly aware that much of the manifestations of affluence among the elite cannot be attributed to visible and legitimate sources of income, but are due to the abuse of official power for private monetary gain. This fact tends to detract from the respect and support which government decisions ought to command from the governed.

Government policies have had a more deleterious effect on rural areas. Thus the policy of the Marketing Boards of withholding a high proportion of potential producer incomes, continues to depress farm incomes relative to wage incomes in other sectors of the economy, as Table 23 shows. The Table indicates that not only are wages in other sectors of the economy higher than in farming, but that wages in non-rural occupations are rising faster than in farming.

TABLE 23

SECTORAL INDICES OF AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME

(Agriculture = 100)

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1967</u>
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	100	100	100	100	100
Mining	137	130	135	139	113
Construction	176	181	214	219	217
Commerce	245	301	395	402	417
Services (including Govt.)	196	197	218	223	226

Sources: Digest of Statistics, April and July, 1968,
Annual Abstract of Statistics, various years.
Industrial Surveys of Nigeria, 1962, 1964, 1965.

TABLE 24

INDICES OF PRODUCER PRICES AND PRICES IN THE MANUFACTURING AND
SERVICE SECTORS

	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Cocoa Producer Price 100		89	94	98	107	57	80	82	87
Manufactured Goods 100		101	105	108	110	110	110	113	115
Service Industries 100		101	109	115	116	116	117	-	-

Sources: Central Bank of Nigeria, Annual Reports; Annual Abstracts of Statistics, 1968.

In addition, while the prices government Marketing Boards pay for farmers' produce have shown some decline, the cost of manufactured goods and other services to the farmer has steadily increased, as Table 24 indicates. In other words, the terms of trade between industrial goods and farm products have been moving against farm products.

Apart from the adverse terms of trade, the financial condition of farmers is further worsened by the governments' extensive reliance on indirect taxation, especially import duties, for its revenue. The consequent increase in the cost of manufactured goods is passed on to consumers. Trade unions in urban areas have long persuaded government to link urban wages to the cost of living index,⁵⁰ and civil servants get an automatic annual increment on their salaries. But due to the relatively unorganized character of rural income earners, they have not been able to press for higher incomes to offset the rise in the cost of living consequent upon increases in import tariffs and other government economic policies.

The policies of the government have thus contributed to the economic unattractiveness of life in the rural areas, and so are responsible for the heavy migration from rural to urban centers. Those who migrate are usually the younger elements, so that rural economic activities are left in the hands of the older, less productive members of the rural society. Unless government adopts policies which will enhance the incomes and standard of living of rural dwellers, continued heavy migration will threaten organized social life in the rural areas.

So far government is doing very little to improve the quality of life in the rural areas. As we already noted, government is trapped in the vicious circle of committing more and more resources to the cities to compensate for pressures on available amenities, by the influx of new migrants. Meanwhile the rural areas which still contain an overwhelming proportion of the total population get progressively less attention.

The 1962 - 1968 National Development Plan is illustrative of this neglect. The Federal Government planned to spend £10.3 million in Lagos alone for health facilities whereas the combined expenditure of Regional Governments on health, was less than £7 million. Similarly, the Federal Government planned to spend £23.2 million in Lagos for Town and Country Planning whereas the combined regional expenditure on this item was £18.5 million.

With a population less than one percent the total Nigerian population, Lagos is certainly getting more than its share of governmental attention. But then the elites rarely justify expenditure on the basis of how many people it would benefit. They are intent on transforming Lagos and the other regional capitals, even if this means that temporarily the hinterlands do without the barest minimum of social amenities. This pattern of expenditure is in the interest of the elites, for the bulk of expenditures in cities are directed towards making life more comfortable for them. In Lagos and in each regional capital, expensive government-run television stations provide entertainment

for the elites who live in these cities and their environs.

A substantial proportion of the money earmarked for Town and Country Planning in Lagos was used for reclaiming swamp land for elite housing on Victoria Island, and for other elite housing projects in Ikoyi, Apapa and Surulere. For the Regional Governments, Town and Country Planning really meant Town planning, so they spent the money earmarked for Town and Country Planning on middle-class housing estates in their capitals, e.g. Bodija and Uwani estates. The bulk of the money for health in Lagos went into the construction of impressive buildings for Lagos University Teaching Hospital, providing not only jobs for elites but advanced and high-cost special treatment which only the elite can afford.

All this is not to disparage progress, but to point out the inequity of using tax-money extracted primarily from rural areas and from a particular income group (farmers), to subsidize services for a few thousand people in the cities. It would of course be different if the people who benefited from government services paid for the services, either through commensurate tax contributions or through direct payment for the services in question. This has not been the case.

Even businessmen default on the nominal rent charged for providing them with equipped industrial estates. A study of one such estate (the Yaba Industrial Estate), concluded that

The Estate falls far short of covering its costs.
We have already seen that the Estate is subsidized

in various ways. Even with these subsidies, receipts barely cover current costs, leaving nothing to cover the depreciation of the capital investment. Thus the Estate has certainly not been a commercially viable venture. 51

A Functional Analysis of Government Expenditures

Our assessment of government expenditure is guided by two questions:

- 1) What group (elite or low-income people) is more likely to benefit from particular expenditures?
- 2) Are the expenditures more likely to benefit the rural or urban areas?

We noted earlier that there are various spending units in the Nigerian government sector. However only the federal and regional governments are assigned functions under the constitution, while the public corporations are the creatures of either level of government. The constitutional allocation of functions is formulated in two lists: 'The Exclusive Legislative List' contains items over which only the Federal Government has jurisdiction, 'The Concurrent Legislative List' contains items over which both the Federal and Regional Governments have jurisdiction. The Regions have residual powers over all non-listed items.

Each level of government directs its expenditure towards fulfilling its constitutional responsibilities, and this partly accounts for the different emphasis of federal and regional governments on particular fields. Under the Federal Constitution of

1954, the Federal Government was assigned exclusive responsibility for defence, aviation, nuclear energy, posts and telegraphs, mines and minerals, railways, and trunk roads. The Federal Government has concurrent jurisdiction with the Regions over higher education, industrial development, industrial and scientific research, electricity, gas, water-power, insurance, etc. Agriculture and most social services, especially health, and education below the university level, are not mentioned on either the 'Exclusive' or 'Concurrent' lists and so are reserved for the Regions. The Federal Government can however make grants to the regions on items (e.g. agriculture) which are reserved for the Regions. The 1960 Independence Constitution, which is basically similar to the 1954 Constitution, adds 'Lagos Affairs' and 'External Affairs' to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

In Tables 25, 26 and 27, we analyze government expenditures by purpose, distinguishing expenditures on general services from those on community services and social services. The following is a full description of these categories as contained in a United Nations manual⁵² on the functional analysis of government expenditures:

<u>General Services:</u>	administration, armed forces, police, law courts, prisons.
<u>Community Services:</u>	water supply, fire protection, sanitation, etc.
<u>Economic Services:</u>	agriculture and industrial development, provision of fuel and power, subsidies to manufacturing and construction, transport, communications, research, loans to financial institutions, business.

Unallocable:

expenditures not clearly identified with particular services, e.g. interest payments and transfers of money abroad.

Using the above categories, we reclassify the capital expenditures of Nigerian governments between 1954 and 1962, and 1962 to 1968. 1954 marked a watershed in the political development of Nigeria, for in that year a federal constitution was introduced which devolved great responsibilities for development on Regional Governments. Table 25 indicates how the federal and regional governments shared Nigeria's development burdens in the period 1954 to 1962.

1962 marked the start of Nigeria's first National Development Plan. Tables 26 and 27 show the estimated and the actual expenditures of each level of government on particular services. The magnitude of expenditures is taken to indicate a government's priorities (planned or unplanned) on certain services. For example, all the governments gave administration a low priority in their estimated expenditure under the 1962 to 1968 Plan, (See Table 26). Actual expenditures indicate however, that administration assumed a much higher priority than the planners estimated (Table 27).

The functional classification of government expenditures, informative as it is, is nevertheless an initial step in our analysis of the quality of government-sponsored socio-economic development in Nigeria. The classification enables us to identify and to compare the social priorities of different

TABLE 25

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF TOTAL FEDERAL AND REGIONAL

GOVERNMENT CAPITAL EXPENDITURES, 1954-1962

(£ 'millions)

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT		NORTHERN REGION		EASTERN REGION		WESTERN REGION	
	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure
<u>General Serv.</u>								
Administration, police, justice, etc. *	149.0	34.7	45.5	31.6	24.9	22.5	37.7	22.5
<u>Community Serv.</u>								
Water supply and Sewage, fire service, libraries, sports facilities, etc.	2.5	0.7	0.713	0.5	0.363	0.3	1.3	0.8
<u>Social Services</u>								
Education	25.7	5.9	29.5	20.5	40.9	36.0	58.3	35.0
Health	20.0	4.8	16.0	11.1	11.1	10.0	14.6	8.7
<u>Town & Country Planning</u>								
(Residential Estates, Govern. Staff Housing Scheme)	15.3	3.5	7.0	4.8	6.2	5.6	9.4	5.6
<u>Economic Services</u>								
Agriculture	6.3	1.5	15.0	10.4	5.2	4.7	14.9	9.0

* Federal expenditure includes armed forces.

(CONT'D)

TABLE 25 (CONT'D)

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT		(£ 'million) NORTHERN REGION		EASTERN REGION		WESTERN REGION	
	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure
<u>Transport and Communications</u>								
Including Roads, 143 Bridges, Railways		33.4	15.7	10.9	8.9	8.1	14.2	8.5
<u>Trade and Industry</u> 17.7		4.1	3.5	2.1	2.2	1.9	4.6	2.5
<u>Unallocable</u>								
Interest on Public Debt	12.5	2.9	1.7	1.3	0.483	0.43	2.1	1.3
Transfer to Individuals	24.6	5.8	2.5	1.9	1.1	1.0	0.824	0.5
Transfer to Regional or Federal and Municipal Government	3.1	0.8	6.0	4.1	9.3	8.4	5.3	3.1

Sources: Calculated from Annual Reports of the Accountant-General of the Federation of Nigeria, (various years); P.N.C. Okigbo, Nigerian National Accounts, 1950-57, Enugu, Government Printer, 1962; Annual Abstract of Statistics (various years); Eastern Region, Outline of Development Plan, 1955-60, Enugu, 1955; Northern Region, A Statement of Policy on the Development Finance Programme, 1955-60, Kaduna, 1955; Development of the Western Region of Nigeria, 1955-60, Government Printer, Western Region, Nigeria.

TABLE 26

PLANNED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS1962 - 1968

(£'million)

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT		NORTHERN REGION		EASTERN REGION		WESTERN REGION	
	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure
<u>General Services</u>								
Administration	43.195*	10.6	0.993	1.0	2.067	2.7	1.114	1.2
Judicial	0.272	0.1	-	-	0.250	0.3	0.442	0.4
Information	2.351	0.6	0.0088	0.08	0.450	0.6	0.773	0.8
<u>Community Services</u>								
Water supply & sewage	1.863	0.3	7.442	7.5	5.100	6.7	9.853	10.8
Social Welfare - fire service, libraries, sports facilities	2.689	0.7	2.439	2.4	0.534	0.7	3.010	3.3
<u>Social Services</u>								
Education	29.154	7.1	18.949	19.2	8.850	11.5	12.855	14.1
Health	10.304	2.5	3.317	3.3	1.819	2.4	1.636	1.7
<u>Town & Country Planning</u> (Residential estates, Housing Corporation, Government staff Housing Scheme)								
	23,160	5.6	6.000	6.0	3.306	4.3	9.280	10.3

* Federal expenditure includes armed force

TABLE 26 (CONT'D)

(£ 'million)

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT		NORTHERN REGION		EASTERN REGION		WESTERN REGION	
	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure
<u>Economic Services</u>								
Agriculture	20.446	5.0	22.494	22.6	30.361	40.0	18.439	20.3
<u>Trade & Industry</u>								
(Industrial estates, etc.	44.030	10.7	9.864	10.3	12.930	17.0	23.445	25.9
<u>Transport (in- cluding Roads and Bridges)</u>								
	103.957	25.1	24.660	24.9	8.850	11.6	6.350	7.0
Electricity	98.140	23.8	1.500	1.5	0.600	0.8	1.500	1.6
Communications	30.000	7.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Unallocable</u>								
Financial obligation	2.200	0.5	-	-	0.120	0.1	1.600	1.7

Sources: Calculated from National Development Plan, 1962 to 1968, Lagos, Federal Ministry of Economic Development, 1963;
National Development Plan, Progress Report, 1964, Apapa, Federal Ministry of Economic Development, Nigerian National Press, 1965;
Annual Abstracts of Statistics, various years; and Economic Indicators, various quarters, (various quarters) Federal Office of Statistics, Lagos.
P.N.C. Okigbo, Nigerian Public Finance, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1965.

TABLE 27

ACTUAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS1962 to 1968

(£ 'millions)

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT		NORTHERN REGION		EASTERN REGION		WESTERN REGION	
	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure
<u>General Services</u>								
Administration	90.528*	+106.1	4.031	+305.9	2.619	+ 26.7	6.349	+469.9
Judicial	0.764	+180.8	0.009	-	0.170	- 32.0	0.304	- 31.2
Information	2.071	- 12.0	0.613	+569.5	1.543	+249.9	0.453	- 61.4
<u>Community Services</u>								
Water	0.689	- 63.2	7.809	+ 31.9	5.009	- 1.8	9.240	- 6.2
Social Welfare (fire service, libraries, sports facilities)	0.554	- 79.4	2.090	- 14.3	0.374	- 30.0	0.704	- 76.6
<u>Social Services</u>								
Education	24.678	- 15.0	10.001	- 47.2	2.899	- 67.3	8.076	- 37.2
Health	2.995	- 71.0	3.123	- 5.8	0.703	- 61.4	0.639	- 60.1
Town & Country Planning (Residential Estates, Government Staff Housing, etc.)	14.919	- 35.6	0.311	- 94.8	1.717	- 48.0	2.683	- 71.1

* Federal expenditure includes armed forces.

TABLE 27 (CONT'D)

(£ 'million)

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT		NORTHERN REGION		EASTERN REGION		WESTERN REGION	
	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure	Expen. (£)	% of Total Expenditure
<u>Economic Services</u>								
Agriculture	10.961	-45.8	11.084	-50.7	15.882	-47.7	14.596	-20.8
Trade & Industry	12.402	-71.8	10.965	+11.1	10.280	-20.5	13.890	-40.8
Electricity	74.535	-24.1	0.014	-99.1	0.367	-38.9	-	-
Communications	11.042	-63.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transport	95.679	- 8.0	12.286	-54.5	5.505	- 1.8	7.691	+21.1
<u>Unallocable</u>	4.799	+118.1	0.623	-	1.422	+118.5	6.039	+275.0

Sources: Calculated from National Development Plan, Progress Report, 1964; Annual Abstract of Statistics, various years.

.. Second National Development Plan, 1970 to 1974.

Nigerian governments, but it reveals nothing more than the pattern of expenditures. It does not tell us whether monies budgeted for particular services were actually spent on the services, nor does it tell us what was actually accomplished by the government. More importantly, in regard to our concern in this dissertation, functional classification cannot tell us whether government expenditures have narrowed social inequities or merely exacerbated them. In short, it cannot answer the question which is at the basis of our interest in government expenditures: who gets what and why? The answer to this and similar questions requires an interpretation of the gross data on expenditures, using information from other sources.

The Pattern of Government
Expenditures: An Interpretation

One important feature in our functional classification of government expenditures is the high priority accorded social services in the period 1954 to 1962 and the low priority social services assumed in the 1962 to 1968 period. In the years 1954 to 1962 the Eastern Nigeria Government allocated 51.6% of its total expenditures to social services, but allocated only 18.2% to the same services in 1962 to 1968. The Northern Nigeria Government allocated 36.4% in 1954 to 1962 and 28.5% in 1962 to 1968. The Western Nigeria Government allocated 49.3% in 1954 to 1962, but only 26.1% in 1962 to 1968. This decline in the expenditures on social services was not a reflection of less popular demand for social services, or of an

assessment by government leaders of the growing adequacy of social service facilities. The decline represented a deliberate policy-choice of government leaders to down-grade social services in the 1962 to 1968 Plan period in favour of economic services.⁵³

Why did government leaders spend so much money on social services between 1954 to 1962? More particularly, why was there so much commitment of funds to education? Two explanations are possible. The first explanation relates to the personal beliefs of the leaders who regarded education as the key to Nigeria's future political and economic development. Coleman remarks that Africans have a

strong conviction that the real secret of the white man's strength and superiority was not his religion, but his education. Thus, in the new scale of values, education was not simply a desirable thing in itself, like medical services or good roads, but the absolute precondition for political, economic and social emancipation of the race. 54

S.O. Awokoya as Minister of Education in Western Nigeria, reflected this desire for education when he remarked that "We are gradually coming into the world heritage of knowledge. It is a legacy which we have missed for ever so long. We must therefore acquire our rightful portion of this heritage with great avidity."⁵⁵

Some government leaders also believed that a literate population would lead to a more participant form of government. In the words of Chief Obafemi Awolowo,

To educate the children and enlighten the illiterate adults is to lay a solid foundation not only for future social and economic progress but also for political stability. A truly educated citizenry is, in my view, one of the most powerful deterrents to dictatorship, oligarchy, and feudal autocracy. 56

Another explanation was the desire of political leaders to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the populace by proving that they could provide certain social amenities which the colonial authorities had long denied the people, and which traditional chiefs did not have the resources to introduce. The struggle for Nigerian independence was really a struggle of educated elements against the foreign rulers and their domestic collaborators in the persons of traditional chiefs. In this struggle to win the minds of the Nigerian masses, the educated elements were initially handicapped by their curious position in Nigerian society; their claim to speak for Nigeria rested on their Western education which is alien to the majority of their countrymen. They could not appeal to the populace on the basis of modern political or administrative power for this was monopolized by the colonial power, nor could they appeal to the populace on the basis of traditional authority, only a few of the educated elements came from chiefly families.

Educated Nigerians had to resolve this crisis in their legitimacy if they hoped for widespread popular support. As Obafemi Awolowo remarked at the time,

Given a choice from among white officials, Chiefs, and educated Nigerians, as the principal rulers

of the country, the illiterate man, today, would exercise his preference for the three in the order in which they are named. He is convinced, and has good reason to be, that he can always get better treatment from the white man than he could hope to get from the Chiefs and the educated elements. 57

Colonial officials were well aware of the mistrust existing between educated Nigerians and the illiterate majority. They constantly ridiculed the claims of educated Nigerians to speak for all Nigerians, and preferred instead to deal with traditional chiefs as the natural leaders of the people. As one former administrative officer put it,

not only is the literate class a tiny fraction of the population, and unrepresentative of the interests of the Nigerian population as a whole, but their bluff can be called easily now. 58

The introduction of the MacPherson Constitution in 1951 allowed educated Nigerians to share power with colonial officials for the first time in Nigeria's colonial history. The Constitution established a Regional Executive for each Region. The Regional Legislature was permitted to legislate on such subjects as Agriculture, Education, and Public Health. The Central Government which was still controlled by a Colonial Governor, could legislate on all subjects, including those on which the regions legislated. Although this and other features of the constitution angered Nigerian nationalists, the real chance that a political party could come into power in a region and implement its social programs was attractive enough.⁶⁰ The MacPherson Constitution therefore stimulated increased political

activity on the part of Southern Nigerian nationalists to capture power in the Eastern and Western Regions.

Once in positions of semi-authority, southern political leaders were confronted with the fact that their power was circumscribed by several factors. First their political resources were quite small given the limited scope of their legislative power under the MacPherson Constitution. Party organization was almost non-existent, and so party discipline and loyalty which were essential to the leaders' continuance in office could not be assured. Many members of the Legislatures ran as independents and were persuaded to join one of the parties after the elections. There was no guarantee that such members could not join a rival party when it suited their interests to do so. Indeed the Action Group was able to become the majority party only after some NCNC legislators and some 'Independents' were coaxed into joining it. As J. S. Coleman observes of this phenomenon,

The emergent majority parties (in Tropical Africa) have acquired sudden landslide accessions of strength as a result of independents or Attentistes declaring their membership in the victorious party. 61

The political leaders also had to work with a bureaucracy which was expatriate and colonial. If policy conflicts developed between the nationally-minded political leaders and the colonial ruler, the civil servants could not be counted on to support the political leaders. Nor could cautious colonial civil servants be counted on to execute faithfully the audacious

programs the political leaders intended to introduce. Chief Awolowo describes the older colonial officials as "extremely overbearing, static in their outlook, fossilised in their ideas, and irredeemable in their dislike for the educated Nigerian nationalist".⁶² The AG leader further states that at the time of taking office, he and his Ministers had information that "the officials with whom we were to associate in executing these policies neither believed in nor had sympathy for them".⁶³

All these disabilities would have paled if there was enthusiastic popular support for the political leaders; but the mistrust felt for the educated Nigerian in earlier years still had its hangover. Nevertheless, the problem of consolidating political power could virtually be solved if political leaders could provide services for which there had long been popular demands, but which the colonial power was unable or unwilling to provide. The provision of social welfare especially in the form of schools and hospitals was to be the means of winning broad popular support.

When the Western Nigeria Legislature met for its first budget session on the 18th of February 1952, Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the Action Group, stated one of the principles which would guide his government's policies thus:

.... As far as possible expenditure on services which tend to the welfare, and health and education of the people should be increased at the expense of any expenditure that does not answer to the same test. 64

The single most important piece of social welfare legis-

lation in Western as well as Eastern Nigeria was that which introduced universal, free, and compulsory primary education in the two regions.⁶⁵ The Western Region education proposal called for the introduction of free primary education on a year-by-year basis beginning in January 1955. In Eastern Nigeria, the Universal Primary Education scheme (U.P.E.) was planned to begin in January 1957.

The provision of free primary education suited well the objective of winning popular support for the political leaders. In the first place, there was a strong desire for education among the populace - a desire which was then articulated by ethnic organizations like the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and the Ibo State Union. As one Ibo leader put it,

...education is the only real agent that will give rebirth to the dying embers of the Ibo national zeal.... It will be the means to free the Ibos from the throes of both mental and moral thralldom ... 66

The Yoruba cultural organization Egbe Omo Oduduwa had as one of its objectives,

... to plan for the improvement of educational facilities ... especially by means of scholarship awards by the society ... (for) the pursuit of secondary and university education by Yoruba boys and girls. 67

A government policy of free primary education would therefore be consonant with the desire of that articulate section of the populace.

Primary education was also suitable for the leaders'

objective because it would make a much wider impact than any other social service. It would enable previously disadvantaged groups, e.g. girls, whose schooling most parents traditionally considered less important than that of boys, and certain 'backward' areas by-passed by missionary education activities, to be exposed to some education. Indeed under the U.P.E. scheme the Eastern Region Government hoped

... to disperse opportunities for education extensively, in order to destroy once and for all the notion that certain areas are earmarked and favoured for the purposes of educational development and advancement at the expense of so-called 'neglected areas'. 68

In spite of the popularity of U.P.E. in the Western and Eastern Regions, the scheme had all the earmarks of precipitate action. This was especially true in Eastern Nigeria where, in spite of shaky finances, the government adopted the free primary education scheme so as not to give political advantage to its political rival the Action Group. In reply to a legislator's criticism of his primary education policy, the Minister of Education stated:

We have heard that in the Federal Government (Lagos), universal primary education will be introduced in 1957. The West has already introduced this. I would just ask the Honourable Member: Where do you want us to go? 69

In both regions the number of children presenting themselves for school in the first year of U.P.E. far exceeded the assumptions of political leaders and their planners. In the Western

Region, instead of the 170,000 pupils expected to register, 390,000 turned out. The total primary school population jumped from 456,000 in 1954 to 811,400 in 1955 - a one year's increase of 78%.⁷⁰

In the Eastern Region enrollment jumped from 742,500 in 1955 to 1,209,200 in 1957 - an increase of 63%.⁷¹ This unexpected rise in enrollment created a severe shortage of trained teachers to man the primary schools. To ease the shortage, both regions recruited thousands of Nigerians with only six to eight years of primary schooling, to teach in the U.P.E. schools. A Federal Government Report on education in Nigeria, stated that in 1958 nine-tenths of the teachers in primary schools were not trained for their jobs.⁷²

Not suprisingly the standard of primary education dipped considerably. Graduates of U.P.E. schools were barely literate when they left school. What was more ominous however, was that most primary school graduates felt that their training qualified them for white-collar jobs in the cities, away from the exacting labour of farming. Thousands of them trooped to the cities to swell the ranks of the unemployed. In the words of the Banjo Commission Report,

It was hoped that the literate primary school leavers would go back to be better farmers, carpenters, bricklayers, etc., but all the pupils themselves want to be are junior clerks in offices. 73

Meanwhile both the Eastern and Western Nigeria governments

were finding it difficult to fund this mammoth education scheme. Education costs were already taking up as much as 40 to 50 per cent of their total budgets, yet new school buildings and facilities still required to be provided. The Eastern Nigeria Government had budgeted £2,886,000 for education, but by mid-1957, the Ministry of Education had spent £2,560,000 above this estimated expenditure.⁷⁴ In desperation, the Eastern Region Government reintroduced fees in February 1958 for the higher years of primary school, and the Western Nigeria government dropped the compulsory aspect of U.P.E.

It is significant that in Eastern Nigeria, the U.P.E. scheme was inaugurated in 1957, the year of the Eastern Regional elections, and that the government waited till after the elections to announce the reintroduction of fees. During the debate on the reintroduction of fees, government leaders more or less admitted the mistake of the free primary education scheme. The Premier, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe remarked that education would cost the Region £6,950,000 in 1958/59, £8,264,000 in 1959/60, £9,603,000 in 1960/61, £10,985,000 in 1961/62, and £12,425,000 in 1962/63. He added that "These increases are astronomical and they are certainly beyond the financial capacity of a territory of this size with its limited and stunted economic development".⁷⁵

One of the Ministers contrasted Eastern Nigeria with the United Kingdom which he said had followed

the pattern of industry and increased productivity first, free education second. Never free education

first, as there must be jobs for the newly educated to take up, and only industry, trade and commerce can provide such jobs in bulk We must hesitate to create political problems of unemployment in the future. 76

A leading member of the opposition put his finger on the underlying cause of the government's troubles when he said: "We are very much in sympathy with the Government for undertaking a scheme without any planning".⁷⁷

In assessing the impact of free primary education in Eastern and Western Nigeria, we can say that the U.P.E. scheme achieved the important political objective of enhancing the legitimacy of the political leaders in each region. The political party which initiated the education program in each region won successive regional elections.⁷⁸ U.P.E. was well received in the so-called 'neglected' areas. As a legislator from one of these areas commented,

U.P.E. is a necessity. It is the only social service which meets the needs of every community in the Eastern Region. Take all social services one by one and you would find that many of them do not go to rural areas. Big roads do not pass through all villages but every village has a school. 79

On the crucial question of ensuring equal opportunity of social mobility through education, the policy of free primary education was a failure and a fraud. In the first place, the political leaders and their planners were well aware that government rarely provides free services as such, and that all government services are ultimately paid for by taxes from the people. Indeed in 1952, the Western Region government imposed a flat tax

of ten shillings on every adult in the region to help pay for the impending education and health programs.⁸⁰ Because the tax took the same proportion of income from every one, poor people were in effect subsidizing the social services for the rich. The stress on the 'free' aspect of the education policy therefore amounted to an exercise in mass deception.

Secondly, any egalitarian impact which U.P.E. may have had, was undercut by the reintroduction of fees in Eastern Nigeria, and by the rise in both the Eastern and Western Regions, of a private school system supported by high income people including politicians.⁸¹ In Eastern Nigeria, the reintroduction of fees forced many parents to withdraw their children from school because of inability to afford fees. One newspaper columnist described the burden of fees on a farmer with an average family of four children thus:

the man will be faced with the problem of finding about £10 enrollment and school fees. This of course excludes school books, uniforms and other contributions. Then in addition, he is called upon to pay taxes and rates amounting to at least £2. Nor is this all. Local community projects including new school buildings and upkeep of old ones, roads, maternity centres, etc., will entail a minimum contribution of not less than £5. The implications of all these are that the poorest of farmers who lives from hand to mouth will be called upon under the arrangements to provide more than he can ever hope to earn in a year for the education of his children. 82

The immediate explanation for the rise of a private school system was the poor quality of education under the U.P.E. scheme.⁸³ The objective of the private school system was to offer high

quality primary education to those who could pay for it. The products of this school system would thus have a better chance of passing entrance examinations to the few good secondary schools.

The governments of Eastern and Western Nigeria had committed so much of their expenditures to primary education that very little resources were left for the development of secondary school education. The cost of secondary school education, about £60 to £70 per year is more than the average Nigerian can afford. Indications are that the cost of secondary education would rise further, because high-income people are willing to pay for 'trimmings' that have snob value. In the words of the Ajayi Report,

the new Nigerian elite are demanding a higher standard and those who run schools respond to their prodding, and put up the fees to pay for the extras. It was even suggested that many of the elite would be happy to pay higher fees if it means that there would be less competition for their children in the better schools. 84

In their study of Nigerian elites, Hugh and Mabel Smythe point out that a secondary school education is the minimum prerequisite for joining the ranks of the elite.⁸⁵ Also the Ajayi Report remarks that

Good secondary education is the passport to the highest positions in society. The standards of living of Nigerians is becoming increasingly differentiated. But the average Nigerian at the moment apparently does not worry too much about this because with good secondary education his child could rise to the top and he will at once become associated with the higher standards. If

increasingly the average person begins to find this passport beyond his means, the class structure will fossilise and discontent will grow. 86

Since a secondary school education is an important channel to elite status, did the policy of universal primary education equalize access to this channel? The answer is no. The U.P.E. scheme did little to narrow social inequalities, especially since those who obtained primary education were too poor to afford the cost of secondary school education.

The structure of public expenditure on education indicates, at least by implication, that it is government policy to reserve secondary education to a small proportion of the population.⁸⁷ In 1966 public expenditure on education were apportioned as follows: 54% primary education, 16% secondary education and 17% university education.⁸⁸ In 1963 there were just over 200,000 students enrolled in Nigerian secondary schools, a very insignificant proportion of Nigeria's fifty-five million population (See Table 28).

The small number of secondary school places, coupled with the high cost of secondary education, mean that only a small proportion of primary school graduates can attend secondary school,⁸⁹ and that this proportion is made up mostly of children from high-income families. Since government pays the cost of educating a secondary student to the tune of 85% or £1,000,⁹⁰ poor peoples' taxes subsidize the education of rich peoples' children. As the

TABLE 28

SECONDARY EDUCATION (1960 - 1963) ENROLMENT (in thousands)

	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>Lagos</u>	<u>Total</u>
1960	6	22	101	5	134
1961	6	25	128	7	166
1962	7	32	144	10	193
1963	9	39	150	11	209

Source: Federal Ministry of Education: Statistics of Education in Nigeria 1963,
Series No. 1, vol. 3, Lagos, 1965.

Ajayi Report puts it,

... schools which cater only for an elite class that can pay high fees and yet continue to receive grants from public funds are in effect making the poor subsidize the rich. It is more usual for the rich to be asked to subsidize the poor. Public assisted education therefore must not be allowed to become a privilege for the rich alone. 91

Government Expenditures in the
1962 to 1968 Period

Turning now to the pattern of expenditure in the 1962 to 1968 period, we find that economic services are accorded the highest priority, accounting for 64.2% of total estimated expenditure during the period. Social services are accorded a lower priority than in the 1954 to 1962 period, accounting for 22% of total estimated expenditure as compared to 37.8% of total actual expenditure between 1954 and 1962. General Services are accorded a low priority accounting for 4.5% of total estimated expenditure.

However, a review of actual capital expenditure in 1962 to 1968, shows a serious distortion of these priorities. Administration emerges as an item of highest priority, while all other items show various degrees of under-expenditure (See Table 27)

The expenditure on General Services reflects the wage increases awarded to Trade Unions after the national strike of 1964, the millions of pounds spent in organizing two disputed censuses, and the additional expenditures incurred as a result

of enlarging the central cabinet after the 1964 Federal Election.

In 1963 a new Region (the Midwest) was created out of the old Western Region. The cost of providing new administrative buildings, new ministerial and civil service quarters and other facilities for the new Region is included in the actual federal expenditure on administration. Defense expenditure which is subsumed under administration in our classification, shows a steady increase during this period. For example, in 1962/63 there was an over-expenditure of 6.7% in the Plan target for defence, in 1963/64 there was an over-expenditure of 8.1%.⁹² Table 29 shows the increases in the defence budget. Indeed in the 1962 to 1968 Plan, defence accounts for £30 million of the estimated £43.9 million capital expenditure on administration.

TABLE 29

	<u>Total expenditure on Armed Forces</u>	<u>% of Federal recurrent budget</u>
	(£)	(%)
1961/62	4,564,000	8.5
1962/63	4,707,000	7.8
1963/64	5,588,000	7.6
1964/65	6,591,000	8.8
1965/66	7,847,000	9.1

Source: Accountant General's Annual Reports.

An Interpretation of the
1962 to 1968 Expenditures

How do we account for this switch in priorities from social services in 1954 - 1962 period to administration in the 1962 to 1968 period? It is difficult to adopt a benefit/cost approach to defence expenditures since it is usually assumed that national security is something enjoyed equally by everyone.⁹³ The assumption is untenable however in situations where there are no credible threats to national security, and yet a build-up of defence forces is given priority. In such situations, it is possible that political leaders perceive a greater threat to their regime from domestic sources, so that huge defence expenditures are a sop to retain the army's loyalty.

In Nigeria, the fear of internal subversion is an important element in explaining the disproportionate expenditure on the armed forces. The leaders of the Northern Peoples' Congress, the dominant political party in the Federal Government, were quite aware of the intense dislike most southern nationalists had for them. The NPC, a basically regional party founded to defend the traditional social order of the North, came to power in the Centre under a constitution which guaranteed northern dominance over the two southern regions. (We will deal with post-independence politics in greater detail in subsequent chapters, so a brief recapitulation will suffice here).

Southern attempts to dislodge the Northern Peoples' Congress from power took different forms before the actual military coup

of January 1966. First, southern politicians believed that the 1952 Census, the basis on which Northern Nigeria was assigned a majority of representation in the Federal Government, was rigged in favour of the North by British colonial officials. They therefore hoped that an indigenous census count would show that more people live in Southern Nigeria than in the North. Southerners were sadly disappointed when the census count of 1962, and the 1963 recount necessitated by evidence of rigging in different parts of the country, revealed that the North still contained a majority of the Nigerian population.

In 1962 some elements in the Action Group tried to organize a popular revolution to end NPC rule, but the plot was discovered by the Federal Government, and many AG leaders including Chief Awolowo were gaoled.

Other attempts to dislodge the NPC were made through the ballot-box. Southern political parties were optimistic about weakening the electoral support of the NPC in the North by winning over more northern constituencies in elections. In the 1959 Federal Election, opposition parties in the North (mostly allies of Southern political parties), won thirty-three seats and 35% of the popular votes. Southerners hoped that their northern political allies would improve on their performance in subsequent elections. This optimism quickly faded when in the 1961 Northern Regional Election, the NPC won 156 seats and the opposition 9. Again, in the 1964 Federal Election, the boycott of the election by the NCNC and the AG enabled the NPC and its Southern allies

to make a clean sweep of the North and parts of Western Nigeria. During the crisis which followed the 1964 election, the President of Nigeria Dr. Azikiwe, himself a southern nationalist, tried in vain to persuade the Heads of the armed forces and of the police to take over the government.⁹⁴

The 1964 Federal Election and its aftermaths convinced all southern nationalists that only a radical revision of the constitution could end the domination of the Federal Government by the NPC. Northern leaders for their part, were determined to maintain their dominance, refusing to contemplate any but the most minor alterations of the constitution. As one Northern Minister remarked on the Southern demand for a review of the constitution,

We are in the majority in this House and so you cannot put ideas in out heads. We see nothing wrong with the Constitution.... If we are going to review a certain portion, it will be very slight. Generally speaking we see nothing wrong with the Constitution. 95

In all these political manoeuvrings, the army held the trump card since its intervention in politics could end the plans of the NPC leaders to consolidate their hold on the Federal Government. The NPC leaders had reason to doubt the reliability of the army as an instrument of their policy. Although northern riflemen predominated in the Nigerian army, the officer-corps was overwhelmingly dominated by southerners. Northerners made up only 14% of Nigerian army officers. The police force also showed a preponderance of southerners. (see Table 30)

TABLE 30

<u>Regions</u>	<u>% of army recruits 1946-58</u>	<u>% of army officers 1960</u>	<u>% of police in 1955</u>
North	62.5	14	17.5
East	25	66	45.5
West	11	17	33
Others (Southern Cameroons)	1.5	-	4

Sources: Army Statistics from House of Representatives Debates,
7 February 1959, written answer.

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Press, 1962, pp. 46 and 56.

NPC leaders feared that in their confrontation with southern politicians, the latter would count on the sympathy of southerners in the army officer-corps and in the police. The strategy of northern leaders was to increase northern representation in the officer-corps. In 1961, the Minister of Defence instituted a regional quota system for recruitment into the officer-corps. In all future recruitments 50% of cadets must be northerners, 25% Westerners and 25% easterners.⁹⁶ That this policy was dictated by concern over the army's loyalty, is clear from this statement by Alhaji Tako Galadima, the NPC Minister of State for the Army:

We introduced a quota system in the Army, thus
preventing the possible fear that the Army

would sometimes become unreliable. If any part of the country is not represented in the Army, we may harbour some fear that a particular section will begin to feel that it is being dominated. 97

The government also moved to retain the loyalty of the soldiers with higher pay and improved living conditions. Between 1958 and 1960 the pay of ordinary soldiers, but not of officers, doubled and in 1963 all soldiers received a twenty-five percent increase in pay. Between 1962 and 1966 the government spent over £10 million on building and rebuilding army barracks.⁹⁸ Within the same period the number of soldiers increased by about 3,000 bringing the full strength of the Nigerian army to about 10,500 men.⁹⁹

The expenditure of so many million pounds on so few soldiers certainly enables the army to enjoy a standard of living unattainable by the majority of Nigerians, a standard of living which is nevertheless paid for by taxes from the majority.

Apart from the heavy expenditures on the armed forces, the payment of politicians' salaries also account for the sharp increase in the cost of administration during 1962 to 1968. In 1963/64 Chief Akintola used ministerial appointments to lure members of the Action Group and the NCNC to the support of his new party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party. As a result, forty-nine of the fifty-eight supporters of the government were either ministers or parliamentary secretaries.¹⁰⁰ After the 1964 Federal Election, the Prime Minister formed a broadly based

government of NPC, NCNC and NNDP members. The cabinet consisted of fifty-four members, double the number before the election.

These new appointments involved expenditures for more official limousines, more ministerial houses, plus salaries and allowances for the new administrative posts required for each ministry. Since these appointments were not made necessary by the administrative needs of the country, but by the need to conciliate squabbling politicians, expenditure on the new ministries constituted an intolerable burden on the tax payers of Nigeria. More importantly, the increased expenditure on administration diverted scarce resources to the non-productive sectors of the economy, the result could be a slow down of the economy and a further depression of the standard of living of the masses.

The high priority given to administration was symptomatic of the increasing divorce of government from popular control, and of government activities from an assessment of the needs of the people. Whereas in the 1954 to 1962 period, politicians cultivated popular support and were willing to be judged by the electorate on the basis of their record, the trend in the 1962 to 1968 period was to increasing use of government machinery to fabricate popular consensus, and to silence opposition. Between 1954 and 1960 popular support was essential to the politicians in their struggle against colonialism. The people were the greatest power resource of the politicians because other sources of power were either limited, e.g. executive authority, or were controlled by the colonial power, e.g. civil service, police and the military.

At independence, these bureaucratic sources of power became available for the use of politicians. Thenceforth the army, the police, the courts and the civil service were to be a more potent and a more reliable power resource for politicians.

The increasing reliance on bureaucratic power was clearly dictated by the need for political survival. The rationale of politics as far as the elites were concerned, had changed from oppositional activities to the colonial power, to the defence of the political status quo which was the basis for their continued exercise of power. The supreme need to stay in power could not be hazarded by reliance on a capricious electorate. Control of institutional sources of power assures certainty, and with this control popular consensus could be managed at election time. Chief Akintola used this technique skilfully in 'winning' the 1965 Western Nigeria election.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter we have attempted to show that Nigerian elites make only a token contribution to government revenues, and that the greater burden of financing government is borne by the mass of Nigeria's peasantry. Yet because of their control of, and influence on, government resources, the elites allocate to themselves generous salaries, get housing, transportation and other social services at subsidized rates, and generally concentrate government expenditures in the urban areas where they live and work. Political authority therefore serves the interest not

of the majority, not of an ethnic group, but of the few government and party functionaries.

In this regard, Nigerian elites are merely continuing a tradition in Nigerian politics which dates back to the colonial period, and which in a sense is embedded in traditional social life, namely, that political power is to be used in the interest of those who govern. The emirs have always formed a ruling class in the Hausa-Fulani areas of Nigeria, Obas in Yorubaland live in comparative affluence, marry many wives; even among 'chiefless' Ibos, successful men buy titles which accord them special privileges.

The British continued this tradition, and when they were in power, they gave themselves the best houses, high salaries and preferential treatment in all aspects of life. The Nigerian elites see no reason for reforming the use of political authority now. When a newspaper editorial¹⁰¹ criticized the Minister of Aviation K. O. Mbadiwe, for using his office to obtain land which he then leased to the government at fantastic personal profit, another Minister came to his defence with this statement:

To say that financial transactions in land and landed property by many leading citizens of Nigeria has not become a gainful pastime is to start deceiving ourselves. All top Nigerians, Ministers, Parliamentarians, top civil servants, journalists, hold positions of trust in one form or the other. They all indulge in these transactions. When it suits our purpose we quote conventions surrounding the British parliamentary system. When it again suits our purpose, we close our eyes to certain practices, all in the name of Nigerian way of life! Our journalists must make

up their minds which system they are going to uphold in Nigeria. The British parliamentary conventions or the Nigerian way of life as it exists today, where everybody regards it as fair to make money.

If we have made up our mind that Nigerian public men be they Ministers, Parliamentarians, Judges, top civil servants, should not be associated with business in any form or shape and should not in any way be found to indulge in financial transactions connected with land and landed properties..., then let the Prime Minister make a public statement laying down this code of self-abnegation by those who have come out to serve the public and then our new way of life begins. 102

Chief Balogun spoke for other Nigerian politician-businessmen, and was well aware that the Prime Minister was not interested in laying down a code of behaviour for Ministers. In 1963 the Prime Minister made a remarkable retort when the probity of his Minister of Finance, Chief Okotie-Eboh was attacked by the Action Group Opposition. He criticized allegations that the Minister had corruptly used his political office to help his private businesses, and observed that,

a large number of Hon. Members, not only in this Federal House but also in the Regional Houses... have got their private business interests.... I hope it is not being suggested that if a businessman gets elected into Parliament and becomes a Minister, such a businessman should no longer have business interests because he is a Member of Parliament or a Minister. 103

The President of Chief Balogun's Party, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe also saw nothing wrong in mixing politics and business entrepreneurship. In his 1957 presidential address to the Aba Con-

vention of the NCNC, Dr. Azikiwe admonished his leftist critics:

Let us not make a popular mistake by assuming that a normal acquisition of wealth is wrong for society. It is not inconsistent with Socialism for a Socialist... to acquire a limited amount of wealth to enable him to co-exist successfully with his capitalist counterparts. It is not the volume of wealth that makes it obnoxious to the Socialist, but it is the use to which wealth is put that matters. If some of us had not accumulated wealth in the dim and distant decade when the oppressor was in his heyday, it would have been impossible to found this great Party.... Nevertheless, the well-to-do among us must now use their wealth in a philanthropic manner, if they had not already been doing so, for it is said: 'Unto whom much is given, much is expected'. 104

In Chapter III we will examine the relationship of political party elites to the institutions of socio-economic development, and the misuse of public monies for partisan political purposes and to enrich the elites of ruling political parties.

FOOTNOTES

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Chapter III

POLITICAL PARTY ELITES AND THE INSTITUTIONS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This chapter will examine the proposition that the movement for national independence in Nigeria, was dominated by business-minded groups whose economic ambitions (interests) were frustrated by the twin forces of foreign political control and the concentration of economic power in the hands of expatriate firms. What this group of Nigerians wanted most was to wrest control of the levers of economic power from the expatriate firms; in short, to replace the foreign capitalist group with a home-grown one.

The strategy they adopted was to agitate for political independence since they calculated that political independence would enhance their capacity to manipulate the Nigerian economy. Thus the nationalist movement in Nigeria was initiated and masterminded by bourgeois or elite elements intent on satisfying their economic interests through control of political power.

The Birth of a Nigerian Bourgeoisie

In Southern Nigeria, the impact of Western economic forces had given rise to an embryonic capitalist class in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Nigerians in the Oil Rivers area acted as middlemen between European traders on the coast, and Nigerian producers of palm oil and palm kernels in the hinterland. They brought palm oil to the coast and sold it to European

traders in exchange for goods which in turn were sold in the hinterland. This group of Nigerians made profit on their business transactions, but was subsequently eliminated by the British when it resisted penetration of expatriate firms into the hinterland market.¹

The penetration of expatriate firms into the hinterland did not however eliminate the need for Nigerian middlemen. During the period between the World Wars, European firms engaged Nigerian middlemen as agents to purchase cash crops, especially cocoa and palm produce, for export to Britain and other world centers. The European firms usually advanced cash to the Nigerian middlemen for the purchase of the cash crop, and then bought the produce from the middlemen. The profits made by Nigerian middlemen enabled many of them to start their own businesses in areas of economic activity not dominated by expatriate firms, for example, contracting, transport and retail of local foodstuffs. In this way, Nigeria's embryonic bourgeoisie was formed.

This bourgeoisie was however a very underdeveloped capitalist class. The interests of its members were mercantile, not industrial. The incidence of bankruptcy was high among the group for capital was in short supply, and credit was non-available. British banks which dominated the banking business, systematically discriminated against Nigerian entrepreneurs in the extension of credit. A report of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development noted that since British banks

came to Nigeria primarily to render services in connection with international trade, their relations have been chiefly with the European trading companies and with the government; their lending to, and their business contacts with Africans have been very limited.... They have played virtually no part in developing local African entrepreneurship.... 2

Most of the early Nigerian capitalists were illiterates and so could not readily perceive the linkage between their individual grievances and the colonial domination of Nigeria. It remained for educated Nigerians to provide adequate summations of individual grievances and to relate these to the national grievance against foreign political domination.

The ability of educated Nigerians to manipulate modern ideas, enabled them to restate the seemingly private troubles of Nigerian entrepreneurs as public issues, the solution of which required a revamping of the economic and political institutions of Nigerian society. Hence, even if the grievances of Nigerian entrepreneurs could be assuaged by a change in colonial economic policies, the grievance of the nation could not be placated by such ameliorative measures, but by a fundamental overhaul in the political relations between Nigeria as a colonial society and the coloniser. Dr. Azikiwe perceived the situation this way:

After having studied the history of man through the ages, I have come to the conclusion that control of political power is the only key which can open the door of happiness and contentment to man as a political animal. Without political power no country can live a full life. 3

It is correct to say that in championing the cause of

Nigerian entrepreneurs, educated Nigerians were not merely rendering an altruistic service. Many educated Nigerians were themselves businessmen, for in colonial Nigeria, business activity was the only meaningful channel open to men of talent; all opportunities in the colonial bureaucracy being closed to educated Nigerians save for a few perfunctory roles. Some educated Nigerians were able to go into business with the financial help of some of the earlier entrepreneurs.⁴

Educated Nigerian businessmen also encountered the frustration of their economic ambitions by expatriate firms, and the discriminatory financial practices of foreign banks. In a letter which Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe wrote to his business associate Mr. A. K. Blankson, he recounted how his application for a loan of £1,000 to extend his business was turned down by a British bank even though he had offered his landed property worth £2,000 as collateral. He said:

You know that I was frustrated because of the shoddy way and manner the Manager of the Marina Branch of the Bank of British West Africa Limited treated me with rebuff. Not only did he keep me standing in his office, for some minutes, but he was curt and condescending, as if I was seeking a favour.... I returned home and sent a letter to the Manager and predicted that, other things being equal, I would yet found a bank, if for nothing else, to teach alien banks to respect African business on its own right and to reckon with African patronage of banks as a factor in the economy of the country. You will remember that this influenced me to insist that when freedom comes, all banks must be nationalized, and I had to incorporate it in the Party Manifesto when I drafted it for the Kano Convention in 1951.... 5

Thus Dr. Azikiwe was able to transmute a personal affront

to an affront on Nigeria as such, and to get his political party to insist on avenging this affront by nationalizing foreign banks in an independent Nigeria. This ability to convert private troubles into public issues, is the measure of the qualitative difference between the grievance of the educated Nigerian businessman and his illiterate counterpart. The strategy of the educated politician-businessman who led the nationalist movement, was to emphasize the exploitation of Nigeria rather than of a few individuals, and so to involve millions of Nigerians whose interests were yet diffuse and unaggregated, in the individual grievances of a few people whose immediate interests were frustrated by foreign political and economic control.

Our argument is that educated Nigerians provided the intellectual underpinning of the nationalist movement, and the predominately illiterate business group, the financial wherewithal to support the movement. The objective of the two groups was however the same - to bring about the political independence of Nigeria which they hoped would also mean unencumbered economic activities for educated and illiterate businessmen. As Frantz Fanon has observed,

... the national middle class constantly demands the nationalization of the economy and of the trading sectors. This is because, from their point of view, nationalization does not mean placing the whole economy at the service of the nation and deciding to satisfy the needs of the nation.... To them, nationalization quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period. 6

The extent of collaboration between businessmen and the intelligentsia in Nigeria, is illustrated by the composition of the first elected Houses of Parliament, and of the key offices in the political parties. Table 1 illustrates the occupational background of Members of Nigeria's first Regional and Federal Parliaments. The Table shows that 39 percent of those elected into the Western House of Assembly in 1952 were businessmen, and 49 percent of representatives from Western Nigeria in the Federal House of 1957 were also businessmen. In the two Southern Regions where the nationalist movements were concentrated, the preponderance of elected representatives with backgrounds in business and the professions is quite remarkable.

In the North, the number of politician-businessmen is negligible as compared to the overwhelming proportion of members with a background in the traditional bureaucracy of the emirate system (which in terms of prestige and superiority of status is the social equivalent of the professions in Southern Nigeria). M. G. Smith notes that in Northern emirate communities traditional values do not allow businessmen to play significant political roles in society. He writes that "Wealth carries great prestige, but little political weight in traditional terms; this means that a merchant, however successful, is debarred from investing his capital in purchase of important political office".⁷

Thus the pattern of political activity in Northern Nigeria contrasts sharply with that in the South. Whereas the rising class of intelligentsia and businessmen in Southern Nigeria was

TABLE 1

OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND OF MEMBERS OF NIGERIA'S FEDERAL & REGIONAL LEGISLATURES

(in percentages)

1952-1957

<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>Western Region</u>				<u>Eastern Region</u>				<u>Northern Region</u>			
	<u>Regional House</u>		<u>Federal House</u>		<u>Regional House</u>		<u>Federal House</u>		<u>Regional House</u>		<u>Federal House</u>	
	1952	1956	1952	1957	1952	1953	1952	1957	1952	1956	1952	1957
Educators	29	33	25	20	39	28	45	28	5	7	2	10
Lawyers, Doctor, Journalist	21	19	38	23	21	20	22	20	2	1	2	0
Businessman	39	38	25	49	22	30	18	26	3	16	0	5
Native Authority & Local Government Official	7	2	9	0	17	18	15	15	89	75	95	63

Sources: Who's Who in the Eastern House of Assembly, 1952; Who's Who in the Western House of Assembly, 1952; Northern Regional Who's Who, 1952; Who's Who Northern Regional Legislature, 1957; Who's Who in Nigeria, 1957.

attempting to use the nationalist movement as an instrument to express its interests, the hereditary ruling elite (Sarakuna) in Northern Nigeria was attempting to use modern political activity to mediate and blunt social changes which might undermine the traditional basis of its power.

Leadership in northern society is ascriptive, and recruitment to political roles is restricted to Native Authority employees, many of whom are of noble birth. Table 2 indicates that 93 percent of NPC Members in the Federal Legislature were associated with the traditional emirate bureaucracy. C.S. Whitaker's study of Northern society confirms the continuing leadership of the traditional ruling class in modern political activity. He states that the sarakuna (ruling class) formed 85.3 percent of the membership of the Northern House of Assembly between 1961 to 1965.⁸

Another way of ascertaining the collaboration of intelligentsia and businessmen in Southern Nigerian politics is to examine the composition of the nationalist parties themselves. Table 3 shows that 30 percent of the inaugural members of the Action Group in 1950 were businessmen. Table 4 indicates that in 1957, 43 percent of the members of the National Executive Committee of the NCNC, and of the NCNC Regional Working Committees were businessmen.

The leadership of Nigeria's political parties was therefore recruited primarily from among the intelligentsia, businessmen and the Northern traditional ruling class. In the South, the

TABLE 2

OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND OF MEMBERS OF THE FEDERAL HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

(in percentages)

1960-1964

<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>NCNC</u>	<u>ACTION GROUP</u>	<u>NPC</u>
Teachers	40	43	-
Lawyers	16	24	-
Businessman	32	33	5
Others (University Lecturer, Journalist, Trade Unionist, Clerk, etc.)	12	-	2
Native Authority Employee (a)	-	-	93

(a) includes N.A. teacher, village head, District Scribe etc.

Source: The biographical notes of Members is drawn from Guide to the Parliament of the Federation, Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1961.

TABLE 3

OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND OF INAUGURAL MEMBERS OF THE ACTION GROUP, MARCH 26, 1950.

AND OF

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BETWEEN 1950 AND DECEMBER 1953.

(in percentages)

Businessman	30
Barrister	18
Journalist, editor of newspaper, reporter	7
Teacher, school proprietor	18
Others (Pharmacist, natural ruler, clerk, unknown, retired civil servant, etc.)	27

Sources: Calculated from - Minutes of the Action Group, March 26, 1950.
Report of the Owo Conference, April 28-29, 1951.
Minutes of the Central Executive Committee, May 26, 1951.
Report of the Benin Conference, December 17-20, 1952.
Report of the Warri Congress, December 15-17, 1953.

TABLE 4

OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

AND OF

THE REGIONAL WORKING COMMITTEES OF THE NCNC, 1957-58.

(in percentages - %)

Businessman	43
Barrister	25
Educator	14
Retired civil servant, trade unionist, Medical Practitioner	13

Sources: Calculated from: Official Minutes of the Seventh Annual Convention of the NCNC, Aba, October 1957.
Official Minutes of the NCNC National Executive Committee Meeting, Lagos, June 15, 1958.

trend has been towards a fusion of the intelligentsia and business groups into a single ruling elite with a common interest in the exploitation of state economic resources for private gain.

Politicians and the Institutions
of Economic Development

In the last years of colonial rule, a large accumulation of capital was made by four government Commodity Marketing Boards, viz, the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board, the Nigeria Groundnut Marketing Board, the Nigeria Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board, and the Nigeria Cotton Marketing Board. The system of differential prices paid to peasant producers of export crops during the post-Korean War period when world prices for raw materials were high, enabled these boards to accumulate large reserves of capital.⁹ Table 5 shows that the total accumulation of capital by Nigeria Commodity Marketing Boards had reached almost £120 million by 1954. This was a form of state capitalism, and as we shall see presently, the major beneficiaries of the funds thus accumulated were the politician-businessmen who controlled the state's economic institutions.

Following the introduction of federalism in Nigeria in 1954, the Nigeria-wide Commodity Marketing Boards were dissolved, and their functions devolved on Marketing Boards organized by the component Regions of the Federation. From then on, each Regional Marketing Board handled all the export crops grown in the Region. The Eastern Region Marketing Board handled the bulk of exported

TABLE 5

CAPITAL ACCUMULATION BY NIGERIAN COMMODITY MARKETING BOARDS1947-1954

(£ ' millions)

	Cocoa	Palm Oil & Palm Kernels	Groundnuts	Cotton	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Initial Reserves	8,896.6	11,457.0	4,487.8	250.0	25,091.4
Trading Surplus	33,797.4	21,060.5	22,483.6	6,986.6	84,310.1
Excess of income over expenditures	3,349.3	2,497.3	3,563.9	1,102.7	10,513.2
TOTAL	46,043.3	35,014.8	30,535.3	8,321.3	119,914.7

Source: Calculated from Annual Reports of Nigerian Marketing Boards (various years).

palm oil and palm kernels, the Northern Region Marketing Board handled groundnuts and cotton and the Western Region Marketing Board dealt mainly in cocoa.

In addition to the devolution of functions, the unspent reserves accumulated by the various Nigeria Commodity Marketing Boards were distributed to the Regional Marketing Boards in proportion to their contribution to the accumulated reserves. Table 6 shows the amount received by each Region. These large sums of money formed the financial basis of economic development efforts in each Region.

All the Regional Governments were conscious of the unsuitability for rapid economic development of government departments as constituted under the civil service system. The governments were also aware of the dearth of Nigerian entrepreneurs with the necessary capital to undertake major schemes of economic development. Consequently, each Regional Government set up Statutory Corporations to carry out aspects of the Region's social, economic and industrial development. These corporations were not to operate to the exclusion of private enterprise, but rather to complement and encourage it. The Western Nigeria Government defined the role of the Western Region Production Development Board (later the Western Nigeria Development Corporation) as follows:

- (a) the undertaking of those projects for which individual initiative and private capital are not forthcoming, i.e., to be complementary to, and not competitive with private enterprise;
- (b) the undertaking of those types of enterprise for which the minimum economic unit, and so the capital requirement are large;
- (c) the attraction, so far as possible, of outside capital to these enterprises, subject to adequate safeguards. 10

TABLE 6

TOTAL CAPITAL TRANSFERRED FROM NIGERIAN COMMODITY MARKETING BOARDSTOREGIONAL MARKETING BOARDS

(£ 'Thousands)

Marketing Board	Eastern Region £	Northern Region £	Western Region £	TOTAL £
Cocoa	176.1	135.5	32,625.1	32,936.7
Oil Palm Produce	11,248.4	484.5	10,199.0	21,931.9
Groundnut	39.6	24,722.6	-	24,762.2
Cotton	-	7,309.2	73.0	7,382.2
TOTAL	11,464.1	32,651.8	42,897.2	87,013.0

Source: Annual Reports of the Marketing Boards (Various Years)

At independence, there were six corporations in operation in Western Nigeria; namely, the Western Region Marketing Board, the Western Nigeria Development Corporation, the Western Region Finance Corporation, the Western Region Housing Corporation, the Western Nigeria Printing Corporation and the Western Nigeria Government Broadcasting Corporation.

In Eastern Nigeria, the Regional Government created six corporations on the recommendation of Dr. Azikiwe and L. P. Ojukwu who had undertaken an Economic Mission to Europe and America on behalf of the regional Government. Their Report called for "the creation on a large scale of six statutory corporations ... as essential adjuncts for the stimulation of investments in the Eastern Region".¹¹ By 1956, four public boards and eight corporations were created; namely, Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation, Eastern Nigeria Finance Corporation, Eastern Nigeria Cinema Corporation, Eastern Nigeria Printing Corporation, Eastern Nigeria Pharmaceutical Corporation, Eastern Nigeria Tourist Corporation, the Sports Commission, Library Board, Scholarship Board and Economic Planning Commission.

The main source of funds for these corporations was the money withheld from peasant producers by the Regional Marketing Boards. A secondary source of funds was the Regional Governments themselves. However, since the Regional Governments depend on the Marketing Boards for a substantial portion of their revenues (see Table 7), it is correct to assume that the funding

TABLE 7

SOME USES OF REGIONAL MARKETING BOARD FUNDS, 1955-61

(£ 'thousands)

	Eastern Region	Northern Region	Western Region
Various Grants to Regional Governments	7,500.0	-	25,589.1
Various Grants to Regional Development and Finance Corporations	2,800.0	1,883.2	-
Loans Outstanding to Federal Government	1,816.9	3,323.6	-
Loans Outstanding to Regional Development and Finance Corporations	500.0	-	4,200.0
Equity Investment in Nigerian Private Companies	3,545.0	276.0	3,080.0
Loans Outstanding to Nigerian Private Companies	-	800.0	6,288.2

Sources: Annual Reports of the Marketing Boards, Report of Coker Commission of Inquiry into the Affairs of Certain Statutory Corporations in Western Nigeria, 1962, VI. IV, Appendix 11.

of development institutions was mainly the financial responsibility of the Marketing Boards.

The Regional Marketing Boards furnished investment loan and capital to statutory corporations and regional development corporations for agricultural and industrial projects. The development corporations included subsidiary Loan Boards and Finance Corporations which made grants to local government authorities, private firms and individuals. These financial and development institutions gave rise to extensive networks of administrative and commercial patronage under the control of the leaders of the ruling political parties.

As far back as 1954, the International Bank Mission to Nigeria observed in its report that

The need for self-help is not understood by the African businessman who looks to the Government, and the Government alone, for financial assistance in the expansion of his business, instead of going with others, in a partnership or other form of common enterprise. 12

Once a substantial control over development institutions devolved on indigenous political leaders, politician-businessmen were able to reap the benefits of their support of the nationalist movements, as the new political leaders devised elaborate government arrangements to aid private enterprise.

Patronage for the politico-business class took various forms. For example, only politically loyal supporters were appointed to directorships and membership of boards, government contracts were awarded to the businesses of government supporters,

party supporters received preferential treatment in the grant of loans, and appointments as Licensed Buying Agents for the Marketing Boards were strictly based on party loyalty.

Thus 70 percent of the Board Members of the Northern Region Development Corporation between 1950 to 1958 were NPC legislators and 25 percent were traditional rulers who supported the NPC.¹³ All the Board Members of the Western Region Development Corporation between 1959 to 1962 belonged to the Action Group,¹⁴ and all the Board Members of the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation between 1961 to 1964 belonged to the NCNC.¹⁵ Table 8 is a list of the Chairmen and Members of the Boards of some major development corporations in Nigeria in 1961. All the Chairmen and virtually all the members of the boards belong to the ruling political party in the region which owns the corporation. Public officials appointed on a partisan basis generally upheld the policies of the political leaders who appointed them, even when the public interest was injured by such policies. This was manifest in Western Nigeria where many officials dutifully cooperated with the leaders of the Action Group in their schemes to defraud the Western Nigeria Government (See pp. 195-205).

Party political considerations played an important role in determining which individuals and which businesses should get government loans. Thus a majority of the loans granted by the Western Region Finance Corporation between 1956 to 1962, went to Action Group members and to businesses owned by Action Group

TABLE 8

MEMBERSHIP OF MAJOR NIGERIAN PUBLIC CORPORATIONS

Corporation	Chairman & Board Members	Party Affiliation
Western Nigeria Development Corporation	A. O. Rewane (Chairman)	Action Group (Warri), Political Secretary to Chief Awolowo
	<u>Executive Directors</u>	
	Chief S. O. Lanlehin	Action Group (Party Treasurer). Member, House of Assembly (Ibadan)
	Chief J. F. Odunjo	Action Group (Egbado)
	Chief B. O. Olusola	Action Group (Ekiti)
	Ayo Akinsanya, Esq.	Action Group (Ibadan)
	<u>Directors</u>	
	Dr. V. A. Onyenuga	A. G. (Ibadan)
	Oba Isaac Ade Famodun II, Owa of Igbajo Ayo Adelowo, Esq. Chief N.A. Mene-Afejuku	
	Lawrence Omole F. O. Folarin A.O. Adedeji Oba Aiyeola, Ewusi of Makun	Action Group (Ilesha) A. G. Remo
Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation	Dr. G. C. Mbanugo (Chairman)	N.C.N.C.; Chairman N.C.N.C. Eastern Work- ing Committee
	<u>Members</u>	
	Mr. A. W. D. Jumbo	N.C.N.C. (Port Harcourt)
	Mr. O. Archibong	N.C.N.C. (Calabar)
	Mr. E. A. Agim	N.C.N.C. (Obudu)
	Chief I. Nwadinobi Chief P. W. A. Orji	N.C.N.C. N.C.N.C. (Owerri)

TABLE 8 (CONT'D)

MEMBERSHIP OF MAJOR NIGERIAN PUBLIC CORPORATIONS

<u>Corporation</u>	<u>Chairman & Board Members</u>	<u>Party Affiliation</u>
Northern Region Development Corporation	Alhaji Aliyu Turakin ZAZZAU (Chairman)	N.P.C. (Zaria), Native Administration Councillor
	<u>Members</u>	
	Mallam Mamman Dan Karfalla	N.P.C. (JOS), Hausa Businessman, N.A. Councillor
	Mr. A. A. Abogede	N.P.C. (Kabba)
	Mallam Idi Maska	N.P.C.
	Mallam Ado Bayaro	N.P.C. (Kano)
	San Turaki Muhammadu	N.P.C.
	Mallam Usman Bida	N.P.C. (Bida)
	Alhaji Yahaya	N.P.C. (Kano)
	M. Bakari Dukku Bauchi	N.P.C. (Bauchi)

Sources: Annual Reports, Northern Region Development Corporation.
Annual Reports, Western Region Development Corporation.
Annual Reports, Eastern Region Development Corporation.

supporters.¹⁶ In Northern Nigeria, the Leader of Opposition in the House of Assembly accused the government's Cooperatives Loan Boards of favouring members of the governing NPC and traditional rulers.¹⁷

The party in power awarded contracts to business organizations which supported the party, and attempted to create conditions favourable to their businesses. The Northern Contractor's Union which supported the NPC was able to pressure the Northern Nigeria Government into restricting the business activities of non-Northern contractors. The Government instructed Provincial Tenders Boards to exclude non-Northern contractors from all but a few specialized tasks "which are not at present within the scope of contractors of Northern origin".¹⁸ The Northern Amalgamated Merchants' Union, an ally of the NPC, was also agitating for the extension of the 'Northernization Policy' to the transport and retail businesses in which Southerners were actively involved.¹⁹

In Western Nigeria, the Regional Tenders Board awarded its major contracts to firms like T. A. Oni and Sons, J. F. Ososami, and Unity Contractors, all of whose proprietors were prominent members of the Action Group.²⁰

The Federal and Regional Governments were committed to the wide-scale development of private business enterprise through public financial support. According to the Western Nigeria 1962 to 1968 Development Plan,

Of the total planned capital expenditure in the current plan period over 70 percent of the anticipated development funds has been directly allocated to productive investment, and social services which indirectly contribute in providing the proper economic and social conditions under which private enterprise could thrive. This reflects the importance Government attaches to private enterprise being the principal operator in the process of economic growth. 21

The National Plan 1962 to 1968 states:

The private sector of the economy has grown vigorously and it is the aim of the Government to enable it to grow with increased vigour in the future.... It is the intention of the Governments to enable Nigerian businessmen to control increasing portions of the Nigerian economy, not through nationalization, but by the accelerated training of businessmen, the provision of advisory and training service, and the improved flow of capital and technical and market information. 22

As we shall show, this policy of unbridled capitalism resulted in the concentration of the wealth of the country in the hands of a small group of people, mostly politicians many of whom were also business entrepreneurs. The state in Nigeria therefore came very close to conforming with the classic formulation of Marx and Engels: It became in the most literal sense, the instrument of the ruling elite, "the executive committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie".²³

Nigerian political parties dominated the key social institutions which were crucial in the allocation of economic opportunities in the society. The apparatus of political control reached into almost every important socio-economic activity, and leaders of political parties did not hesitate to manipulate this

apparatus to punish recalcitrance or challenges to their authority. Thus in 1958 when a group of NCNC members led by Dr. K. O. Mbadiwe, formed itself into the NCNC Reform Committee to challenge the leadership of Dr. Azikiwe,²⁴ Dr. Azikiwe responded by squeezing the rebels out of the NCNC patronage system. Dr. O. N. Egesi was removed from membership of the board of Eastern Nigeria Cinema Corporation,²⁵ and Mr. L. N. Obioha, a prominent businessman and Vice-Patron of the NCNC Reform Committee, was disqualified as a Licensed Buying Agent under the soya bean marketing program of the Eastern Region Marketing Board.²⁶ Before the termination of Mr. Obioha's license, Dr. Azikiwe had declared that the government "would be foolish to renew Mr. Obioha's produce buying license in view of the fact that he had joined the Mbadiwe conspiracy to overthrow the Government unconstitutionally".²⁷ Dr. Azikiwe also warned other members of the NCNC Reform Committee to return to the fold or face deprivation of their party-supported privileges:

NCNC rebels who fail by today to withdraw their signature from the infamous Mbadiwe document demanding the resignation of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, National President of the Party and Premier of the Eastern Region, may have their property confiscated should they be indebted to the Eastern Government unless they are able to pay up such debts, at once. Others who are members of Government Boards or Corporations will be thrown out, while contractors will be blacklisted. 28

The Misuse of Public Funds by Politicians

Apart from the dispensing of administrative and commercial patronage to members of the politico-business class, there were

instances of the use of public money for the private gain of leaders of political parties. An example of this was the investment of £2 million in the African Continental Bank by the Government of Eastern Nigeria. The decision to invest this amount in the bank arose from the report of the economic mission which Dr. Azikiwe, Premier of Eastern Nigeria and L. P. Ojukwu, a prominent NCNC businessman, had undertaken on behalf of the Eastern Nigerian Government.

The report urged the Regional Government to create a Finance Corporation which should be empowered to invest public funds in private business and financial enterprises, and to make loans available to hard-pressed African businesses. The report further recommended that

the Eastern Region Finance Corporation should make a substantial investment in an indigenous bank to enable the Corporation always to control not less than three-fourths of the equity of that bank. That done, the Finance Corporation should use the bank for purposes of economic development of this Region. We also recommend the increased use of such bank by the Government of the Eastern Region, the statutory corporations, Local Government bodies and other Government agencies. Provided that the requirements of the Banking Ordinance had been met, such a bank should not only be used as depository for official and semi-official funds, but it should be the nucleus for a central bank envisaged by the International Bank Mission. The strengthening of indigenous banks will facilitate the mobilization of domestic capital. 29

The report further recommended that the Eastern Nigeria Marketing Board should grant the Finance Corporation two million pounds, which the Corporation should then invest in an indigenous

bank. In June 1955, the Marketing Board advanced two million pounds to the Finance Corporation which then proceeded to invest the money in the African Continental Bank. Mr. Ojukwu was at that time Chairman of the Eastern Nigeria Marketing Board.

In 1954 the International Bank Mission had warned of the danger that

decisions regarding transfers of government deposits to African commercial banks would not always be free from party-political motives; this might have most serious consequences for the independence and integrity of the banks. 30

The investment in the African Continental Bank was clearly of the type the IBRD Mission warned against.

At the time of the investment, the African Continental Bank was owned by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Premier of the Eastern Region and President of the governing NCNC. Azikiwe had established the bank to help finance his other businesses; namely, the African Book Company Limited, the African News Agency Limited, the Associated Newspapers of Nigeria Limited, Nigerian Commodities Limited, the Nigerian Paper Company Limited, the Nigerian Printing Supply Company Limited, the Nigerian Real Estate Corporation Limited, Suburban Transport Limited, the West African Pilot Limited, and Zik Enterprises Limited.³¹ Some of these companies sustained severe financial losses in the late 'forties, and relied extensively on borrowing from the African Continental Bank for their operating expenses. Mr. Ojukwu, who was himself a director of several European and Nigerian businesses, personally

guaranteed overdrafts given by the ACB to the Zik Group of Companies.

On August 4, 1956 the British Government appointed a Tribunal of Inquiry to investigate the transfer of funds to the African Continental Bank, following a charge by an NCNC Legislator in the Eastern House of Assembly that Dr. Azikiwe abused his power in allowing public funds to be invested in his bank. The Tribunal was to inquire into:

- (1) allegations of improper conduct on the part of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Premier of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, in connection with the affairs of the African Continental Bank Limited,
- (2) the circumstances in which securities, or the proceeds of securities, belonging to the Regional Marketing Board were transferred to the Eastern Region Finance Corporation and the circumstances in which such proceeds were invested in or deposited with the African Continental Bank Limited by the Eastern Region Finance Corporation. 32

The Tribunal found among other things that because of the extensive borrowing of the Zik Group of Companies from the ACB, the bank was insolvent when the Finance Corporation made its investment of two million pounds. This investment, therefore, saved the bank and the Zik Group of Companies from liquidation. In the words of Tribunal members,

Statements were laid before us to show the position of the Bank and the Zik Group of Companies at 31st March, 1955. From these it was clear that the state of insolvency which then existed throughout the whole organization (with one exception) could only result in the liquidation of the Bank and the Companies in the Group, unless substantial amounts

of new capital could be provided.... We were told by Dr. Azikiwe and other witnesses, that the question of liquidation would never have arisen as the African Continental Bank possessed 'immeasurable goodwill' which would enable it to raise any capital required in the event of a crisis The fact remains that no serious attempt was ever made to obtain new capital from any source other than the Finance Corporation. 33

The Tribunal concluded that,

Dr. Azikiwe ought to have relinquished his financial interest in the Bank when the proposal to inject public monies into it was first mooted, and that he was guilty of misconduct as a Minister in failing to do so. 34

Later, the African Continental Bank was 'nationalized' by the Eastern Nigeria Government, and in his autobiography, Dr. Azikiwe reports that the terms of the settlement enabled his companies which had invested in the ACB, to earn 7 percent annually on their investment during a twenty-eight year period.³⁵ In other words, the Zik Group of Companies earned dividends totalling 196 percent of their original investment, as a result of the amount paid for the African Continental Bank by the Eastern Nigeria Government.

In Western Nigeria, a more thorough commission of inquiry unearthed extensive instances of the use of public money to enrich members of the Action Group, the governing political party in the Western Region. The Federal Government of Nigeria appointed this commission in 1962 to inquire into the affairs of six statutory corporations in Western Nigeria.³⁶ The report of the commission is an exposé of the devious ways politicians

and businessmen in Nigeria collaborated to share out the economic resources of the state among themselves.

The most revealing sections of the commission's report are those which deal with the relationship between government development institutions and certain private businesses, viz, the National Bank of Nigeria Limited, the Agbonmagbe Bank, the Merchant Bank Limited and the National Investment and Properties Company Limited.

The inquiry revolved on how the Western Region Marketing Board had disposed of the huge capital it accumulated from its export of cash crops. Table 9 shows that since its inception, the Marketing Board had received £64,221,933; made up of £42,547,189 from the liquidation of the Nigerian-wide Commodity Marketing Boards, and the balance from trading surpluses. Of the total resources, £31,176,014 was spent as grants to the Western Nigeria Government, £10,108,152 was invested in Nigerian companies, etc. As a result of all these activities most of the financial resources of the Marketing Board were depleted by 1962.

The Report of the International Bank Mission revealed that as far back as 1952, the Western Regional Production Development Board had invested two million pounds in the National Bank of Nigeria.³⁷ The National Bank which was incorporated on the 11th of February 1933, was the oldest private bank in Nigeria. Nearly all of its directors were members of the Action Group.

TABLE 9

WESTERN REGION MARKETING BOARD: FUNDS RECEIVED AND USE MADE
OF THOSE FUNDS BEFORE AND AFTER 1959

(£ ' Millions)

Receipts from:

Liquidation of former Nigeria-wide Commodity Boards	42,547,189
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Trading	16,618,361
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Other Revenue	5,056,383
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TOTAL	£ 64,221,933
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Use Made of these Funds:

Grants to Western Region Government	31,176,014
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Investment in private Nigerian Companies	10,108,152
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Loans to Regional Corporations	14,200,000
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TOTAL	£ 55,484,166
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Balance of Assets	£ <u>8,737,767</u>
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Source: Coker Report, Volume 4, Appendix II

The Chairman of the Board of Directors, Dr. Akinola Maja, was popularly known as the 'Father of the Action Group', the General Manager of the bank, Chief T. Adebayo Doherty, was Vice-President of the Lagos branch of the Action Group and a founding member of the party.

These facts led, Mr. A. M. F. Agbaje, a member of the NCNC Opposition in the Western House of Assembly, to move a motion calling for a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the circumstances of the investment in the National Bank. Speaking on his motion Mr. Agbaje said:

But for the report of the International Bank Mission we, and for that matter the public at large, would not have known or heard anything about the investment of this fabulous sum of £2 million of public funds in the National Bank of Nigeria Limited. The channel through which this money passed into the bank is dubious ... that is why the public must know the relationship between (a) The National Bank of Nigeria and the Amalgamated Press Limited, (b) The National Bank of Nigeria and the Action Group, (c) The National Bank of Nigeria and the Mutual Aid Society Limited, (d) Amalgamated Press Limited and Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Premier of the Western Region, and other persons of note who are members or supporters of the Action Group. 38

In reply, Chief Awolowo denied any wrongful transactions, and added:

I believe that it is generally known that one of the cardinal policies of this Government is the studied encouragement of indigenous banking institutions In the course of my speech on a Motion calling upon this Honourable House to approve the proposals in the Sessional Paper just mentioned I said, 'The Government intends to pursue vigorously its policy of giving financial

assistance to indigenous Banks so that they may be better able to provide credit facilities to Nigerian businessmen and women and others who have profitable projects on which to invest the funds thus provided them' 39

The Opposition motion for an inquiry was defeated in 1956, but in 1962 the Coker Commission of Inquiry confirmed the suspicions of members of the Opposition. The Commission found that the National Bank had used much of the monies deposited in it by the Western Region Government "for the purpose of making loans and advances, either to directors of the bank or to institutions in which directors are jointly or separately interested".⁴⁰ In the words of the Commissioners,

We know that since the deposit of £1 million with the Bank in 1955, the Bank has virtually constituted itself into a banking asylum for the Action Group. Almost all the many accounts of the Action Group were kept in almost all the Branches of the Bank and the various statements of accounts produced before us show that considerable overdraft facilities were granted in respect of these accounts.⁴¹

The finances of the National Bank were in poor shape mainly because of

- (1) The huge loans outstanding in the names of the erstwhile Directors of the Bank and/or persons or companies in which they are interested, and
- (2) The loans to the Action Group which are operated in various names and which are not secured in any shape or form. 42

The Western Nigeria Marketing Board also invested £200,000 in each of two private Nigerian banks; namely; the Agbonmagbe Bank Limited, and the Merchants Bank Limited. The Agbonmagbe Bank was owned by Chief Okupe Agbonmagbe, a leader of the Action

Group in Ijebu-Remo. All the Directors of the Merchants Bank were members of the Action Group, and one of the Directors, Chief M. A. K. Sonowo, was an acknowledged Action Group stalwart.

The Commissioners found that the decision to inject monies into these banks was personally taken by Chief Awolowo and by Chief S. L. Akintola, and that the normal controls over public expenditures were totally ignored in making the investment. In 1960, one of the directors of the Merchants Bank, Mr. P. J. Osoba, was convicted and sentenced for stealing a sum of £35,000 out of the sum deposited with the Bank by the Western Region Marketing Board. During the course of the Inquiry, the Merchants Bank went into voluntary liquidation thus making it impossible for the Marketing Board to recoup its investment in this Bank.

By far the greatest amount of money invested by the Western Region Marketing Board in a Nigerian Company, was made in the National Investment and Properties Company. In the words of the Commissioners,

Any description of the activities of the Western Region Marketing Board necessarily involves a discussion of the affairs of the National Investment and Properties Company since the major activities of the Western Region Marketing Board, at any rate since the year 1958, had revolved around the National Investment and Properties Company, a private company in which the Western Region Marketing Board had invested well over £6½ million of its funds in circumstances that call for the closest scrutiny. 43

The National Investment and Properties Company was owned by four prominent Action Group businessmen holding high positions

in the party hierarchy - Dr. Akinola Maja, 'Father of the Party'; Alhaji S. O. Gbadamosi, Federal Treasurer; Chief S. O. Shonibare, Federal Publicity Secretary; Mr. Alfred Rewane, Political Secretary to Chief Awolowo and also Chairman of the Western Nigeria Development Corporation and of the Corporation's two subsidiaries, Nigersol Construction Company and Nigerian Water Resources Development.

The Coker Commission focused on the relationships between the National Investment and Properties Company and the Western Nigeria Marketing Board, the Western Nigeria Development Corporation and the Action Group. The Commission found that even before the NIPC became incorporated as a company, it applied for and received a loan of £750,000 from the Western Nigeria Marketing Board.⁴⁴ Of this loan, £660,498 was used by the Directors of NIPC to settle the overdraft in the account of the Action Group with the National Bank.

In 1960, Mr. Rewane, Chairman of the Western Nigeria Development Corporation and a director of NIPC, applied to the Western Region Marketing Board for a loan of £3 million to finance the activities of Nigersol Construction Company Limited and the Nigerian Water Resources Development Limited, both subsidiaries of WNDC. The two subsidiaries actually needed £800,000 therefore, the Board of Directors of the two companies requested Rewane to investigate and report on the possibility of depositing the balance of £2.2 million in a finance house or banking in-

stitution. Within two days of the request, Rewane reported that the NIPC would accept the amount on short-term deposits.

The Commissioners observe that

It is manifest from the evidence that at the time that Rewane was applying for the loan of £3 million for the two companies ... he knew that only an amount of about £800,000 would be required by these two companies, and yet he asked for and obtained a loan of £3 million from the Western Region Marketing Board, only to deposit a total of £2.2 million with the National Investment and Properties Company Limited. We know that this money or a considerable portion of it eventually found its way into the Action Group, and indeed when the National Investment and Properties Company Limited was called upon to repay the money, it was unable to do so. 45

The Commission concluded that the National Investment and Properties Company was formed to finance the Action Group, and that Chief Awolowo both organized the company, and nominated the Directors of the company. The NIPC made a sum of £4 million available to the Action Group between February, 1960 and September, 1961.⁴⁶

The Coker Report also records a most spectacular speculation in real estate involving the NIPC, the Action Group and the Western Nigeria Government. In 1958 Dr. Akinola Maja, 'Father of the Action Group', a Director of the NIPC and of the National Bank of Nigeria Limited, and Chief T. Adebayo Doherty, General Manager of the National Bank, bought a piece of land in Moba village for £11,000. Barely a month after this purchase, the land was sold to a certain Mr. Allison for £150,000. In

1959, Mr. Allison sold the land to the National Investment and Properties Company (of which Dr. Maja was a Director) for £718,260. In 1961 the NIPC sold the land to the Western Nigerian Government for £850,000.

The Commissioners found that all the documents pertaining to the Moba land were fake and that Dr. Maja and Chief Doherty had not paid even a penny for Moba estate. The amount paid by the Western Nigeria Government was immediately withdrawn from the accounts of the NIPC and credited to the Action Group. The Commissioners concluded:

It seems clear to us on the evidence that the sale of Moba to the Western Nigeria Government at the price of £850,000 is a most elaborate and criminal conspiracy to obtain that amount of money from the Government for the benefit of the Action Group Chief Awolowo who was and is at all material times the Federal President and Leader of the Party knew all about the scheme and in fact, in our view, actually engineered it. 47

All these financial deals by the Action Group were clearly inconsistent with the party's professed faith in socialism;⁴⁸ the evidence uncovered by the Coker Commission indicates that the party was using public money to enrich a few of its members. Nor were these deals consistent with the professed aim of the Western Nigerian Government to concentrate expenditure on the productive sectors of the economy - the grant of £6½ million to the NIPC for speculation in landed property can scarcely be called expenditure on 'productive development'. Above all, these financial deals were clearly at odds with Awolowo's libertarian

philosophy of social welfare by which he insists that it is not open to government to discriminate in favour of members of its own hierarchy in the provision of amenities, and that the poorer and less fortunate citizen deserves more governmental attention than the richer citizen.⁴⁹

The findings of the Coker Commission clearly indicate that the Government headed by Awolowo favoured business groups and the Action Group political party more than poor citizens. The monies withheld from poor peasant farmers by the Western Region Marketing Board were used to finance the private business activities of a few rich individuals, and for the support of the political aims of the Action Group which at all times, represented only a fraction of the population of Western Nigeria.

There have been no comprehensive inquiries into the activities of other Nigerian political parties and the Regional Governments which they controlled. It is more than likely however, that if inquiries were held into the activities of the Eastern and Northern Regional Governments, the type of anomalies which characterized the activities of the Western Nigeria Government would have been found to be present in the other governments too.

The facts contained in a few isolated inquiries into development institutions in Northern Nigeria, reveal a similar tendency on the part of politicians to enrich themselves from public funds. The Northern Nigeria Development Corporation advanced a loan for £106,000 to the Premier of the North for a

farm project at Bukura. Interest was charged at the ridiculously low rate of 1 percent per annum, and the first repayment of principal and interest was not to be expected until six years after the full amount of the loan had been taken up. The NNDC recruited an Agricultural Manager to manage the Premier's farm, and paid the Manager's salary from NNDC funds.⁵⁰

The Military Government's White Paper also shows that after the Northern Nigeria Government instructed the NNDC to embark on poultry farming with a view to teaching Northern Nigerians the techniques of this type of farming, the NNDC bought the Premier's poultry farm for £20,000.

The NNDC offered loans to secure political support for the Northern Peoples Congress and most often loans to individuals were used for purposes other than those mentioned in the loan application (e.g. private houses etc.). Many of the loans were never repaid, and the total of bad debts stood at £400,000 in March 1965.⁵¹

Another Military Government White Paper shows that the Northern Nigeria Housing Corporation granted special building loans to Ministers and Provincial Commissioners at fixed rates of £4,500, and £3,000 for Parliamentary Secretaries.⁵² Whereas ordinary loans were paid out in instalments, and borrowers had to carry out construction to a certain stage before subsequent instalments were paid; special loans were paid in one sum. It was thus possible for a Minister or Provincial Commissioner to

obtain loan for a house and to use the money for other purposes.

Other inquiries into government development institutions in Nigeria reveal the fact that politician-businessmen and some civil servants, used their control of development institutions to enrich themselves and to advance the fortunes of their private business enterprises. In the Eastern Region, the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation invested £1 million in the African Real Estate and Investment Company Limited, at the time when Dr. G. C. Mbanugo, Chairman of the Eastern Working Committee of the NCNC, was Chairman of the publicly owned ENDC and of the privately owned African Real Estate Company. Dr. Mbanugo was able to suppress the mention of this investment in the Corporation's Annual Reports even though the loan amounted to 37.6 percent of total loans granted that year.⁵³

In Western Nigeria, the Coker Commission found that the Western Region Finance Corporation granted a loan of £120,000 to the Nigerian Fishing Company while Chief Sonowo, a prominent member of the Action Group and Managing Director of the Company, was a board member of the Western Nigeria Finance Corporation. Mr. B. O. Aina, Secretary of the Western Region Finance Corporation, awarded contracts for partitioning the corporation's new office premises and for furnishing it, to his own private company. Chief Akin-Olugbade, Chairman of Western Region Finance Corporation and of the corporation's subsidiary G. L. Gaiser (Nigeria) Limited, sold the Nigerian Engineering and Transport Company, a

company which he owned with Chief Shonowo, to G. L. Gaiser Limited. Chief Shonowo was, at the time, one of the Managing Directors of G. L. Gaiser. The Nigerian Engineering and Transport Company was worth only £700, but G. L. Gaiser paid £8,249 for it. G. L. Gaiser Limited deposited £40,000 in the Merchants Bank - a bank in which Chief Sonowo was a major shareholder. Chief Akin-Olugbade, Chairman of the Western Nigeria Finance Corporation paid £60,000 to Ikorodu Ceramics Industries, a company owned by Alhaji Gbadamosi, R. A. Allison and Dr. Akinola Maja all of whom were Action Group politicians, "without obtaining any documents whatsoever to support the payment".⁵⁴

The Development Corporations of the Federal Government have also been subjected to similar abuses by politician-businessmen. An Inquiry into the affairs of Nigeria Airways,⁵⁵ describes the so-called 'Operation Fantastic' organized by Dr. K. O. Mbadiwe, Federal Minister of Aviation, for the purpose of advertising the inaugural flight of a Nigeria Airways plane to New York. The Council of Ministers rejected the proposals of 'Operation Fantastic' as too expensive, and decided instead on a small-scale ceremony in Lagos and New York.

Dr. Mbadiwe defied the Council and went ahead with his project. When the Nigeria Airways sent its bills to the Ministry of Aviation for settlement, the new Minister of Aviation, Dr. J. A. Wachuku, addressed a letter to K. O. Mbadiwe which said among other things that

.... The records show that the whole operation in respect of which Nigeria Airways was made to spend so heavily was more of a campaign for the Ojike Memorial Medical Centre (a private venture by Dr. Mbadiwe) than of one for advertising the Nigeria Airways and its operations to the outside world. Besides, most of the invitees to this 'Operation Fantastic' appear to be your friends and relations some of whom never returned with the flight but were left in the United States and are now pursuing courses of study in universities in that country. 56

An Inquiry into the Nigerian Railway Corporation shows that Dr. Ikejiani, the Chairman of the Corporation awarded a contract of £1.2 million to NEMCO, a company in which he was a major shareholder.⁵⁷ Dr. Ikejiani and Mr. Egbuna, General Manager of the Nigerian Railway Corporation were directors of a private company, the United Transport Contractors (Nigeria) Limited, which carried out transport business in competition with the Railway Corporation. An Insurance Company, African Underwriters Limited of which Dr. Ikejiani was a director, acted as Insurance Brokers to the Railway Corporation.

The typical view of many elite Nigerians that being 'in power' entitles them to do what they liked with government resources, is illustrated by this incident cited in the report of the inquiry into the Nigerian Railway Corporation. Mr. A. B. Onuorah was posted to the construction work of the Bornu Railway Extension, and he took with him his two private cars which he conveyed at the expense of the Corporation. He was only entitled to take one car and charge the cost of its transportation to the Corporation, therefore he was asked to refund to the Corporation

the money paid for transporting the second car. Mr. Onuorah was incensed, and wrote the following letter to the government accountant at Bauchi:

With reference to your letter ... of 17th May, 1961 you are welcome to £13 ls of my money, but please convey my congratulations to your Peeping Tom Organization. I will not forget this in a hurry. 58

It is clear that Mr. Onuorah is not denying that he illegally conveyed one of his cars at government expense, he is just sore that the government accountant was daring enough to do his duty.

The behaviour of the Nigerian elite reminds one of Fanon's characterization of leaders in some developing countries:

Before independence, the leader generally embodies the aspiration of the people for independence, political liberty, and national dignity. But as soon as independence is declared, far from embodying in concrete form the needs of the people in what touches bread, land, and the restoration of the country to the sacred hands of the people, the leader will reveal his inner purpose: to become the general president of that company of profiteers impatient for their returns which constitute the national bourgeoisie. 59

The Nigerian politician-businessman elite is not motivated by tribal sentiments, but by the need to foster the economic interests of members of the elite.

Since the politico-business class represents primarily its own interests, how then do we account for the persistent notion that the struggle of this group to gain access to government power is the struggle of a whole tribe? The explanation which we support in this dissertation is that which accounts for conflict by reference to the ideology of tribalism. We maintain

that tribalism is both an ideology and a catch-phrase fashioned and used by the elite to mobilize support in a milieu where other catch-phrases would be more or less ineffective.

Whoever seeks political power in Nigeria must come to grips with the fact that he needs a 'battle-cry', an ideology which elicits loyalty because it summarizes attitudes or a sense of 'belonging-ness' which is widely shared by the largely illiterate electorate. Tribalism is such an ideology.

When complex socio-political issues are formulated as involving merely a choice between Ibo rule or Yoruba rule, the average Nigerian voter cannot but vote for the party of his own tribe. What the Ibo party or the Yoruba party will do with power when it acquires it, is usually not a consideration in the mind of the voter. Nor are the political parties unduly concerned about this, for what they ask of the mass of the electorate is for power to rule in general, not for power to implement concrete programmes or any set of political beliefs.

There may be party manifestoes, but these are meant for the tiny segment of the electorate in the towns and cities who can read and understand English. Chief Awolowo recalls that

In the regional elections of 1951, the Action Group was the only party that published policy papers as well as a manifesto. Dr. Azikiwe himself condemned this innovation, and regarded it as an attempt on our part wantonly to deceive the voters. He was confidently of the opinion that policy papers were unnecessary and should never be published for the purpose of elections. It was when a party had won an election, he argued,

that it should essay to declare and publish the details of the policy it would pursue in office. This was the NCNC stand...60

The average Nigerian voter supports the party of his own tribe in the belief that he can expect justice from politicians who are his kinsmen, than from politicians of the other tribes. However, as we have shown in this chapter, Nigerian politicians are not motivated in their actions or policies by tribal interests, or by the need to serve the interests of a majority of their fellow tribesmen. Evidence has been adduced to show that it is the need to foster the interests of elite persons which motivates Nigerian politicians. In the circumstance, tribalism as the ideology of the elite, is a cynical camouflage for elite privileges.

All of this leads one to wonder why Nigeria's electorate did not vote out this self-seeking elite, but successively confirmed it in power to continue its corrupt practices. One possible answer is that given by Wraith and Simpkins;

In theory the self-regulating processes of democracy ought to banish bribery and corruption from public life, for if public men are corrupt they will not survive the next election; in practice, few democracies are of the quality which would ensure this. Freedom means freedom to do wrong as well as to do right, and lacking the discipline imposed by an educated electorate many governments and local authorities in developing countries have chosen to go on doing wrong because they know that the voters either will not care, or will not understand, or will not find out. 61

More importantly, the experience of Nigeria is that when a ruling

ethnic elite has lost the confidence of even its ethnic electorate, the elite still manages to 'win' power. The elite simply uses the machinery of government under its control to rig the electoral figures in its favour.

In Chapter IV we will discuss how elite preferences shaped the development of political institutions in Nigeria.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter III

1. The history of the Oil Rivers trade is excellently documented in K. Onwuka Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1956.
2. The Economic Development of Nigeria, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1955, pp. 156-157.

Also W. T. Newlyn and D. C. Rowan, Money and Banking in British Colonial Africa, Ocford, Clarendon Press, 1954, p. 118.
3. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Political Blueprint of Nigeria, Lagos, 1943, p. 54.
4. Nnamdi Azikiwe recounts the financial help of L. P. Ojukwu in founding the Zik Group of Newspapers, in My Odyssey, An Autobiography, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1970, p. 286. Chief Obafemi Awolowo also refers to the help of a friend in his first business venture. See Awo., p. 92.
5. This letter is reproduced in Report on Banking and Finance in Eastern Nigeria, Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1956, pp. 12-13.
6. Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, New York, Grove Press, Inc., 1963, p. 152.
7. Economy of the Hausa Communities of Zaria, H.M.S.O., 1955, p. 100.
8. C. S. Whitaker, The Politics of Tradition, Continuity and Change in Northern Nigeria, 1946-1966, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1970, p. 326.
9. See Chapter Two for a description of this system of differential pricing.
10. Western Region of Nigeria, Development of the Western Region of Nigeria 1955-1960, Laid on the Tables of the Western Regional Legislature as Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1955, pp. 35-36.

See also Annual Report of the Western Region Production Development Board, 1955-56, pp. 7-8.

10. (Cont'd)

- A similar policy objective is contained in Fourth Annual Report of the Northern Region Development Corporation, 1958-1959, p. 7.
11. Economic Rehabilitation of Eastern Nigeria, Report of the Economic Mission to Europe and North America by Nnamdi Azikiwe and L. P. Ojukwu, Enugu, 1955, p. 12.
12. The Economic Development of Nigeria, IBRD, p. 32.
13. Annual Reports, Northern Region Development Corporation (various years).
14. Annual Reports, Western Region Development Corporation (various years).
15. Annual Reports, Eastern Region Development Corporation (various years).
16. Coker Report, Volume IV, Appendix 42. See also allegations by a member of the NCNC Opposition, of favoritism in the granting of government loans, in Western House of Assembly, Debates, Official Report, December 1956, pp. 34,36.
17. Speech by Ibrahim Imam, in Northern House of Assembly Debates, March 14, 1963, p. 341.
18. Notice by the Ministry of Finance, Northern Region, "Provincial Tenders Boards", Nigerian Citizen, November 8, 1958.
19. See Speech in the Northern House of Assembly by Alhaji Ahmadu Dantata, a general merchant and transporter, who was the acknowledged spokesman of N.A.M.U. - Northern House of Assembly, Debates, February - March 1957, pp. 76-77, 361-366.
20. See the list of Contracting Firms in the Contract Register, Western Ministry of Works and Transport.
21. Western Nigeria Development Plan 1962-68, p. 56.
22. National Development Plan 1962-68, p. 24.
23. K. Marx and F. Engels, The Communist Manifesto, edited with introduction by S. H. Beer, New York, Appleton - Century - Crofts, Inc., 1955, p. 12.
24. See Daily Times, June 16, 1958.

25. Daily Times, July 15, 1958.
26. Daily Telegraph, September 9, 1958.
27. The West African Pilot, July 26, 1958.
28. The West African Pilot, July 14, 1958.
29. Economic Rehabilitation of Eastern Nigeria, p. 22.
30. The Economic Development of Nigeria, IBDR, p. 159.
31. These companies are listed in Nnamdi Azikiwe, My Odyssey, An Autobiography, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1970, pp. 387-390.
32. Report of the Tribunal Appointed to Inquire into Allegations Reflecting on the Official Conduct of the Premier of, and Certain Persons Holding Ministerial and Other Public Offices in the Eastern Region of Nigeria, Cmd. 51, London, H.M.S.O., 1957.
33. Ibid., p. 30.
34. Ibid., p. 42.
35. My Odyssey, p. 311.
36. See Report of Coker Commission of Inquiry into the affairs of Certain Statutory Corporations in Western Nigeria, 1962, Federal Ministry of Information, Printing Division, Lagos.
37. Economic Development of Nigeria, IBRD, p. 159.
38. Western House of Assembly Debates, Official Report, December 1956, p. 44.
39. Ibid., p. 51.
40. Report of Coker Commission of Inquiry, Volume II, p. 2.
41. Ibid., p. 51.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., Volume I, p. 41.
44. Ibid., p. 61.
45. Ibid., p. 71.

46. Coker Report, Volume 4, Appendix 22 and 23.
47. Ibid., Volume III, p. 33.
48. See A. G. Manifesto for an Independent Nigeria, October 2, 1960.
49. See footnote 10, Chapter Two; also Obafemi Awolowo, The People's Republic, Ibadan, Oxford University Press, 1968, Chapter 8.
50. A White Paper on the Military Government Policy for the Reorganization of the Northern Nigeria Development Corporation, Kaduna, Government Printer, 1966, p. 2.
51. Ibid., p. 37.
52. Government White Paper on the Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Affairs of the Northern Nigeria Housing Corporation, Kaduna, Government Printer, 1966, p. 5.
53. See G. K. Helleiner, "The Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation: A Study in Sources and Uses of Public Development Funds, 1949-1962", The Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies, 6, 1, (March 1964), 98-123.
54. Coker Report, Volume II, p. 49, also Volume IV, Appendix 41.
55. Report of Inquiry into the Affairs of W.A.A.C. (Nigeria) Limited Otherwise known as Nigeria Airways, for the Period 1st March, 1961 to 31st December 1965, Lagos, Federal Ministry of Information, 1968.
56. Ibid., pp. 93-94.
57. Report of the Nigerian Railway Corporation Tribunal of Inquiry Appointed Under the Tribunal of Inquiry Decree, 1966, to Inquire Into the Affairs of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, Lagos, Federal Ministry of Information, 1967, p. 298.
58. Ibid., pp. 93-94.
59. Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, p. 166.
60. Awo., p. 225.
61. Ronald Wraith and Edgar Simpkins, Corruption in Developing Countries, London, George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1963, p. 196.

Chapter IV

THE ELITIST ORIGIN OF NIGERIAN FEDERALISM

The year 1954 marked a watershed in Nigeria's political development, for in that year, Nigeria broke with her past of unitary and quasi-federal constitutionalism, and adopted an orthodox federal system. The changes which took place can be summarized in several ways.

Politically, whereas the regions were formerly dependent on the centre, under the 1954 constitution, they were granted substantial legislative autonomy. The 'residual powers' hitherto vested in the Central Government were transferred to the Regional Governments. Central legislative powers were enumerated and strictly defined. Legally, regional legislation could no longer be abrogated by the Centre, as was the case under the 1951 Macpherson Constitution. Administratively, both the regional and federal governments were each to have their own public service. The judiciary was also federalised. Fiscal arrangements were initiated to ensure that "the principle of derivation is followed to the fullest degree compatible with meeting the reasonable needs of the centre and each of the regions".¹ In this way, it was hoped that adequate resources would be available to the regions for the discharge of their functions. The best way to summarize the political changes in 1954 is to say that Nigeria adopted a full-fledged federal system in which both the regional and federal governments became

co-ordinate and 'independent', each in its own sphere.

Though Nigeria adopted a federal constitution in 1954, federalism as an ideal attracted politically conscious Nigerians before that date. As far back as 1942, Nigerian members of the West African Students' Union had submitted a resolution to the Governor of Nigeria which included the demand for a "United Nigeria with a Federal Constitution based on a Swiss or U.S.A. model with necessary modification".² This was the first mention of federalism in the constitutional history of Nigeria.³

Zik followed up this suggestion in his Political Blueprint of Nigeria (1943), in which he called for a federal commonwealth of Nigeria made up of eight 'protectorates' whose boundaries followed ethnic lines. The N.C.N.C. adopted Zik's suggestion and incorporated it in its 'Freedom Charter'. The 'Freedom Charter' provided for the organization of Nigeria as a federal commonwealth of ethnic states.

In 1942, the Ibadan branch of the Nigerian Youth Movement under the leadership of Awolowo, had adopted a resolution, as follows: "What we of the Nigerian Youth Movement are visualizing is a Nigeria in which the various linguistic units will federate to form a single nation...."⁴ At the 1950 Ibadan Conference, the Northern leaders joined their Southern counterparts in agreeing that Nigeria should become a federation.⁵

In spite of this general advocacy of federalism, Nigerian leaders were not sincere believers in federalism as a process of

government. Their main concern was to exploit federalism for tactical political advantage in their struggle for the leadership of Nigeria. For example, Zik's flirtation with federalism came to a temporary end in 1951, when he and the N.C.N.C. reversed their position on federalism and opted for unitary government. The following reason was given for this change of policy:

That in view of recent divisionist tendencies in the country and to accelerate the attainment of our goal for a united Nigeria, a unitary form of government with the acceptance of the principle of constituencies will be better for Nigeria and the Cameroons. 6

In reality, the N.C.N.C.'s rejection of federalism stemmed from the party's realization that it could not win a national election under a federal structure based on three regions. Federalism under the regional set-up then existing in Nigeria, would have meant that the ethnic bases of N.C.N.C. support would be controlled by the anti-N.C.N.C. Yoruba elite, and by the equally anti-N.C.N.C., anti-nationalist Hausa-Fulani ruling class. A federation of ethnic states promised a chance that the N.C.N.C. might be able to forge a winning coalition of non-Yoruba and non-Hausa ethnic groups. However, since the dominant tendency in the country was towards the retention of the three regions, the N.C.N.C. felt obliged to reject federalism, and to advocate unitary government because the latter framework would better safeguard the the party's areas of support.

In 1953, the temporary alliance between the Action Group and the N.C.N.C. encouraged Zik to abandon his party's stated

preference for a unitary government, and to again accept the principle of federal government for Nigeria. He and Awolowo agreed to press for a federation with strong regional autonomy at the London Constitutional Conference later that year.⁷ Awolowo recalls in his autobiography that on the issue of federalism, "It did not take us any time to persuade Dr. Azikiwe".⁸ Thus we see that Zik had a pragmatic attitude towards federalism,⁹ adopting it when it was serviceable to his party's interest, and discarding it when it was expedient to do so.

The Yoruba Elite and Federalism

The opportunistic preference for federalism was also manifest in the posture of the Yoruba elite of the Nigerian Youth Movement who later formed the Action Group political party. When the Yoruba elite monopolized politics in Nigeria, little was heard of organizing Nigeria into a federal state. However, as soon as this hegemony began to be effectively challenged by non-Yoruba elites, the Yoruba elite adopted federalism as a tactic to safeguard its spheres of interest.

Prior to Zik's return to Nigeria after nine years of study in America, and three years of journalistic work in the Gold Coast, the business, professional and political activities of Lagos and Nigeria were dominated by Yorubas.¹⁰ Coleman estimates that in 1921, the Yorubas made up 78 percent of the professional people in Nigeria.¹¹ The first Ibo professional man was Doctor Francis Ibiam who returned to Nigeria in 1935, the other Ibo pro-

professional was a lawyer, L. N. Mbanefo who returned to Nigeria in 1937.

African membership of the Legislative Council between 1923 and 1946 was also dominated by Yorubas.¹² The Yoruba city of Lagos where most of the Yoruba professional class lived, was a Crown Colony governed under different laws from the rest of Nigeria. The residents of Lagos prided themselves with being British subjects, while other Nigerians were condescendingly referred to as 'colonials'. Lagosians were not amenable to native customary laws, and the system of indirect rule was not extended to the colony. The British way of life predominated, and was intensely emulated and imitated by Lagosians.

Above all, the residents of Lagos and Calabar enjoyed the rare privilege of electing their own representatives to the Legislative Council.¹³ With all these blessings, it was no wonder that the Lagos Yorubas felt a keen sense of superiority to other Nigerians in the provinces. The Ibos in particular were contemptuously referred to as kobo-kobo (the backward ones).

When Azikiwe joined the Nigerian Youth Movement in 1938, that sole nationalist organization was controlled by the cream of the Yoruba middle class; yet it was not exclusive or tribal in orientation. As part of its effort to achieve a national following, the Movement organized branches in urban centres in Western, Eastern and Northern Nigeria. The 'Nigerian Youth Charter' which embodied the official program of the Movement, stressed the theme

of inter-tribal cooperation as a condition for national unity. As Awolowo who was a leading member of the Movement has stated:

There was no iota of tribal taint in its programme.... The credit for the genesis of political awakening throughout the country, and of fostering this awareness without the slightest appeal to tribal or ethnic sentiments, belongs alone to the Nigerian Youth Movement. 14

Nevertheless, the fact remained that the 'national' character of the Movement depended largely on the membership of Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Ibo, and Ernest Ikoli, an Ijaw. Azikiwe was the idol of many non-Yoruba, predominantly Ibo working class people in Lagos, and so was able to add mass support to the elitist base of the Youth Movement. Another asset which Azikiwe brought to the Movement was his newspaper, the West African Pilot. Awolowo credits the paper with disseminating to the literate sections of the country, "The anti-imperialist campaign which Herbert Macaulay had begun years before, and the new nationalism which the Nigerian Youth Movement had initiated in 1934...."15

The Nigerian Youth Movement embodied conflicting elite interests and tribal tensions which ultimately wrecked the organization. These conflicting interests and tensions were mirrored in, and dramatized by the activities and aspirations of Azikiwe.

Zik's emergence in Nigerian politics was the first serious dent a non-yoruba Nigerian was to make in the monopoly of politics by the Yoruba elite. Zik therefore had to reckon with the reaction of the established Yoruba elite, and the contempt with which the Ibo people were held in certain Yoruba circles. He was idolized by thousands of Ibo and other non-Yoruba artisans resident in Lagos,

who for many years had no spokesman, and who consequently felt that they were on the periphery of Lagos and Nigerian politics. Also Zik's journalistic endeavours, and his preaching of a new, militant and racially conscious nationalism, earned for the Youth Movement the support of hitherto uncommitted educated Nigerians of all tribes. Within the circle of the Youth Movement, Zik was affectionately known as the 'Evangelist of the New Africa'.

The influence and prestige which Zik enjoyed through the medium of his newspaper the West African Pilot, and the political recognition which his nationalist activities brought him, were not palatable to the Yoruba elite which controlled the Youth Movement. Awolowo writes of Zik thus:

It seemed clear to me that his (journalistic) policy was to corrode the self-respect of the Yoruba people as a group; to build up the Ibos as a master race; to magnify his own vaunted contributions to the nationalist struggles... 16

Zik himself may have resented the complete control which the Yoruba elite held in Nigerian politics, and may have felt that the Ibos were entitled to more representation in the governing of Nigeria.¹⁷ He was never nominated by the Nigeria Youth Movement to contest any of the Lagos seats to the Legislative Council; the most recognition he received, was to be appointed a member of the Central Executive of the N.Y.M. In the Legislative Council election of 1938 the N.Y.M. nominated three men to contest the Lagos seats -- H.S.A. Thomas, Dr. K. Abayomi, and O. Alakija -- all were Yorubas. In 1940 another Yoruba, Jibril

Martin was nominated by the N.Y.M. to fill the seat left vacant by the death of O. Alakija.

Zik finally broke with the N.Y.M. over the nomination of a candidate to contest the 1941 bye-election to the Legislative Council. The general meeting of the Youth Movement had chosen the Vice-President of the Movement, Oba Samuel Akisanya to contest the seat for the N.Y.M. The Central Executive Committee of the Movement however reversed this decision, and nominated the President of the Movement, Mr. Ernest Ikoli to contest the seat. Zik alleged that the selection of Mr. Ikoli reflected the deep-seated tribal prejudice which animated the leadership of the N.Y.M.¹⁸ Oba Akisanya was an Ijebu-Yoruba, and the Ijebus were generally despised by other Yorubas.

The Ikoli-Akisanya crisis conditioned the organizational development of political activity in subsequent years, and set the stage for the inter-ethnic elite struggles which characterized Nigerian politics in the late 'forties and early 'fifties. In particular, the crisis permanently estranged the relationship of Zik and Awolowo - two men who later became leaders of the N.C.N.C. and the Action Group respectively. The crisis left a residue of distrust which no doubt contributed to the regionalization of nationalism in Nigeria, and consequently to the absence of a united Nigeria-wide political party.

In 1944 Zik played a leading role in bringing together various organizations in Lagos to form the N.C.N.C. At its

inauguration, the N.C.N.C. included political parties, for example the Nigerian National Democratic Party, trade unions and tribal organizations. The N.C.N.C. quickly became the most important Nigerian nationalist organization, and monopolized the Nigerian political stage.

The Yoruba elite of the N.Y.M. viewed the emergence of the N.C.N.C. with alarm, more so as a candidate of the N.C.N.C./N.N.D.P. alliance defeated a candidate of the N.Y.M. in the Legislative Council election of 1945. In the 1947 election, three members of the N.C.N.C./N.N.D.P. alliance, N. Azikiwe, A. Adedoyin and Olorun-Nimbe won all the Lagos seats to the Legislative Council. In view of these developments, the Yoruba elite of the N.Y.M. cast about for ways and means of protecting its position. Awolowo feared that "Nigeria under a unitary constitution might be dominated by those, whatever their number, who owed greater allegiance to ethnic affinity than to principles and ideals."¹⁹

The device which the Yoruba elite came up with, was the simple one of regionalizing political affairs to coincide with linguistic units in the country.²⁰ Awolowo believed that under a federal system, "each ethnic group could develop its own peculiar culture and institutions in accordance with its wishes, and the inter-tribal acrimony and the jockeying for leadership which were rearing their heads would cease."²¹

In his book which was written in 1945 but published in 1947, Awolowo argued that "Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere

geographical expression".²² Consequently he asserted that a federal constitution was the only political framework suitable for Nigeria. He called for a more or less hands-off policy as between the tribes. "Strictly speaking", he wrote,

The political structure of any particular national group is primarily their own domestic concern. The others may criticize it in the same way as French and Russians may criticize the British Constitution. But they have no right to try to interfere effectively in the shaping of such a Constitution.... As long as every person in Nigeria is made to feel that he is a Nigerian first and a Yoruba or Ibo, or Hausa next, each will be justified to poke his nose into the domestic issues of the others. The only thing of common interests to all Nigerians as such, and in which the voice of one must be as acceptable as that of any other, is the constitution of the central or Federal Government of Nigeria. The constitution of each national group is the sole concern of the members of that group. 23

Then as if to rule out the possibility of a single nationalist organization embodying the interests of various sections of Nigeria, Awolowo advocated the devolution of power to the educated elite of each ethnic group. He wrote:

It must be realized now and for all time that this articulate minority are destined to rule the country. It is their heritage. It is they who must be trained in the art of government so as to enable them to take over complete control of the affairs of their country. Their regime may be delayed, but it cannot be precluded... the sole preoccupation of the masses is the search for the necessities of life. It is a matter of indifference to them how they are governed or who governs them, as long as they are not disturbed in their normal economic pursuits and social recreations.... The educated minority in each ethnical group are the people who are qualified by natural rights to lead their fellow nationals into higher

political development. Unless they desire a change, it would be futile to impose it upon their group. 24

In 1951 Awolowo and other members of the Yoruba elite formed a political party - the Action Group to implement the political ideas which Awolowo articulated in his book. The party's declared policy was to work for Nigerian "unity through federation". Its immediate objective however was to capture political power in the predominantly Yoruba Western Region.

The View from the North

So far, we have made little reference to the Northern leaders in our analysis of the manipulation of federalism in the jockeying for leadership in Nigeria. This is because up till the late 'forties, overt nationalistic political activities were the monopoly of educated Southern Nigerians. The reasons for this are traceable to both the authoritarian political structure of Northern society, and to the policy of indirect rule.

Northern society is rigidly stratified, the most significant division being that between the sarakuna or ruling class, and the talakawa or commoners. Membership of the sarakuna is determined by birth, and the highest status is accorded to its members.²⁵ This fact is underscored in the Hausa saying "Zuriyan Sarki ba talakawa ne ba" (literally, The descendants of a chief never become commoners")

In the emirates, the talakawa are by definition excluded from participation in the traditional system of government and

politics. It is possible however, for a commoner to join the sarakuna by being appointed to a high non-hereditary office, in recognition of his personal loyalty to the emir. Thus Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, former Prime Minister of Nigeria, and Alhaji Maitama Sule, former Federal Minister of Mines and Power, are slave-descendants, and yet rose to prestigious positions in the traditional emirate system.

The flexibility of the traditional emirate system in co-opting educated men like Sir Abubakar into positions of power, meant that the small class of educated Northerners did not feel the frustration of being excluded from the share of power, which was the lot of their southern counterparts. In the South, the exclusion of educated Nigerians from both the native administrations and the colonial bureaucracy, inclined many of them to nationalistic activities. On the other hand, the educational system in the North was carefully geared to the requirements of the native administrations, so that the anomaly of an Azikiwe obtaining university degrees which would encourage him to compete for status with the colonisers did not arise. Thus, whereas the educated southerner was more inclined to demand the abolition of the indirect rule system which constricted his ambitions, the educated northerner, finding his ambition realized within the native administration system, was more apt to call for mild reforms of the system.

The colonial government's policy of indirect rule was designed to preserve traditional systems of government.²⁶ The

northern emirs, supported as they were by the colonial administration, were implacably anti-nationalist, and doggedly opposed to social and political reforms. Lugard's policy of indirect rule as it was originally conceived, never envisaged that Nigeria would become a self-governing country. For many years, Lugard's successors were divided as to whether the native administrations should be developed into independent native states, or integrated into a parliamentary government on a Nigeria-wide basis. Although certain over-zealous colonial officials in the North were already preparing some of the emirates for eventual independent existence²⁷, no overall official policy had crystallized with regard to the political future of the native administrations.

In the midst of this official irresolution, nationalist elements in the South began to force the pace of political development in the country. The colonial administration felt powerless or unwilling to resist the nationalist demand for self-government, and grudgingly began to concede the principle of self-government for a united Nigeria. As a result, the false security into which the northern emirs had been lulled, and the dream of independent native states patterned after immemorial customs, suddenly began to evaporate.

The northern chiefly aristocracy sensed that its position would be endangered if educated southern nationalists were to take over the government of Nigeria. To begin with, certain ideals which the southern nationalists professed, like democracy, popular elections of political rulers, parliamentary government

etc., struck at the basis of hereditary autocracy. Nor were the emirs unmindful of the nationalists' bitter denunciation of the policy of indirect rule, of charges that indirect rule had preserved the emirates as a sort of museum specimen, and of demands that the talakawa be liberated from the "feudal emirate autocracies".²⁸

Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, writes in his autobiography that after he visited Lagos for the first time in 1949, and met southern politicians of the calibre of Azikiwe, he was convinced that "we in the North would have to take politics seriously before very long. If we did not do so we should be left far behind the future governmental development of Nigeria".²⁹

The original involvement of northern leaders in Nigerian politics could therefore be viewed as an act of self-defence. It was not so much that the northern leaders feared that educated nationalists would govern Nigeria to the detriment of northerners in general. The fear was that the way of life which gave them (the northern elites) a privileged position in northern society, would be swept away under a regime of southern nationalists. The crucial difference between the northern aristocracy and the southern nationalists was that unlike the latter whose aim was to acquire and exercise power, the Hausa-Fulani leaders were primarily interested in conserving the power which they already wielded, from encroachment by power-starved southern politicians, and from subversion by populist ideas emanating from the south. Thus the reaction of the northern elite to nationalist political

activities was that of a class-conscious group intent on preserving the perquisites of its social position.

The posture of the northern leaders inclined them to defence of the status quo, including the prolongation of colonialism. Failing that, they were determined to demand as much leeway in the governing of Northern Nigeria as would render southern interferences in the social and political affairs of the North ineffectual.

The first salvo in what was to become a regular exchange of threats between northern and southern political leaders, came in a speech by the Hon. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to the first session of the enlarged Legislative Council. In the speech, he vigorously disputed the claim of the N.C.N.C. to speak for all of Nigeria, and expressed the view that the demand for independence was premature. He contended that the emergence of a certain degree of unity among Nigerians should be the precondition for the demand of self-government, and affirmed that such unity was non-existent. He ended his address on this truculent note:

We shall demand our rights when the time is ripe. We do want independence and we shall fight for it if necessary, but I should like to make it clear to you that if the British quitted Nigeria now at this stage the Northern people would continue their interrupted conquest to the sea. 30

(a reference to the Fulani Jihad of the 19th century which was halted by British colonial rule.)

The distrust which northern leaders felt for southern

nationalists was again dramatized during the ill-fated 'self-government in 1956' motion tabled by a member of the Action Group. On March 31, 1953, Chief Anthony Enahoro tabled a private member's motion calling on the Central Legislature to accept "as a primary objective the attainment of self-government for Nigeria in 1956".³¹ He added that "this motion is an invitation to the Honourable Members of this House to associate the highest legislature of our land with the expressed desire of the peoples of this country... for political autonomy in 1956".³²

This apparently innocuous motion plunged Nigeria into a constitutional and political crisis. The political crisis resulted when the northern members of the Legislature opposed the fixing of a date for Nigerian independence. Speaking for the North, the Sardauna of Sokoto, leader of the Northern Peoples' Congress, moved an amendment to substitute 'as soon as practicable' for the date '1956'. He affirmed that the North was not prepared for independence, and would resist the attempt of southern politicians to thrust independence on the whole country.

According to the Sardauna, should the North accept independence in 1956, this would be tantamount to mortgaging its political and economic future to southerners who are educationally superior to northerners. "With things in their present state in Nigeria", he said, "the Northern Region does not intend to accept the invitation to commit suicide".³³

Northern leaders were not opposed to independence as such, but to the demand of independence in 1956 which they viewed as an attempt by southern politicians to take advantage of the North's prevailing unreadiness for modern political activity. The Sardauna articulates the fear of the northern elite when he notes in his autobiography that if Nigeria had attained independence in 1956, educated southerners would have dominated the civil services, mainly because there were few trained northerners.³⁴ In addition, southern politicians would control Nigeria politically, since "The political parties in the South were more highly developed than were ours ..."³⁵

In the event of independence leading to southern political control, the North would be left with "quite simply, just nothing, beyond a little window dressing".³⁶ This would seriously threaten the social position of the aristocratic leaders of the North, for southern politicians would be counted on to implement the radical social reforms which they had long advocated for northern emirates.

The debate on the independence issue was acrimonious in the extreme. When it became evident that northern leaders would use their majority in the Legislature to defeat the motion, members of the Action Group and the N.C.N.C. walked out of the Legislature in protest. When the House reassembled on April 1, 1953, some Action Group members opened up with broadsides against the North. The leader of the N.P.C. was visibly angered by the disparaging things that were said of the northern leadership. In a very brief reply, he stated: "The mistake of 1914 has come to

light and I should like to go no further".³⁷ He was referring to the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914.

After the prorogation of the House, the northern representatives were booed and insulted by Lagos crowds as they left the Legislature. Northern leaders believed that the crowds were organized by southern politicians to intimidate northern representatives.³⁸ Many northern representatives vowed never to return to the South for further legislative meetings.

The immediate effect of the independence debate, and of the treatment which northern leaders received from the Lagos mob, was that the North began seriously to contemplate secession. The Sardauna of Sokoto writes in his autobiography that

Lord Lugard and his Amalgamation were far from popular amongst us at that time. There were agitations in favour of secession; we should set up our own; we should cease to have anything more to do with the Southern people, we should take our own way. 39

According to the Sardauna, northern leaders found the idea of immediate secession "very tempting",⁴⁰ but held back from this course of action because of the realization that the North needed southern ports for the evacuation of its produce.⁴¹ He noted that

There was, indeed, the rub. We had no sentimental illusions about leaving the others: they had acted in such a way that it was abundantly clear to us that they would sooner see the back of us, but what about this transport difficulty? 42

Northern leaders rejected secession on the grounds of economic

expediency, but resolved to press for a

looser structure for Nigeria while preserving its general pattern - a structure which would give the Regions the greatest possible freedom of movement and action; a structure which would reduce the powers of the Centre to the absolute minimum and yet retain sufficient national unity for practical and international purposes. 43

These general aims were consolidated in an 'Eight-Point Programme' approved by the Northern House of Assembly on May 23, 1953.⁴⁴ This 'programme' demanded a customs union for Nigeria in place of the existing quasi-federal arrangements.

Prior to the approval of the 'Eight-Point Programme', the northern elite revealed another instance of its disenchantment with southerners, when it master-minded the Kano riots of May 16, 1953. The immediate precipitant of the riot was the scheduled political tour of Northern Nigeria by S. L. Akintola, an Action Group leader. Coming on the heels of the independence debate and of the unfriendly treatment of northern leaders by the Lagos mobs, this tour was viewed by northern leaders as an 'invasion' of their homeland. Mallam Inua Wada who was secretary of the Kano branch of the N.P.C., and later Federal Minister of Works, convened a meeting of the Native Administration sectional heads in Kano to tell them of plans for the riots. He told the group:

Having abused us in the South, these very Southerners have decided to come over to the North to abuse us, but we have determined to retaliate the treatment given us in the South We have therefore organized about 1,000 men ready in the city to meet force with force ... we are determined to show Akintola and his Group what we can do in our land when they come... the Northern Peoples' Congress has declared a strike in all Native Administration Offices for Saturday, 16-5-53 ... we shall post sufficient number of men

at the entrance of every office and business place ... we are prepared to face anything that comes out of this business ... 45

Although the colonial administration banned proposed Action Group meetings in Kano, N.P.C. leaders in Kano encouraged Hausa mobs to attack southerners resident in the city. Many employees of the Native Administration were given a holiday to participate in a procession to the part of town inhabited by southerners. Skirmishes broke out, and in four days of rioting 36 people were killed and 241 wounded.⁴⁶

As a result of the rioting, and of the political crisis which preceded it, the Secretary of State for the Colonies "regretfully" announced in the British House of Commons that the Nigerian Constitution "will have to be redrawn to provide for greater regional autonomy and for the removal of the powers of intervention by the Centre in matters which can, without detriment to other Regions, be placed entirely within regional competence".⁴⁷

The mood of the northern leaders, and the Colonial Government's preference for a constitution which "will provide for greater regional autonomy", ensured that the tight political arrangements under the 1951 constitution would be considerably modified under the 1954 constitution. Northern leaders took their 'Eight-Points-Programme' to the London Constitutional Conference on the review of the 1951 Macpherson Constitution. They reluctantly abandoned the 'Programme' only when southern

leaders proposed a federal system which would allocate specific powers to the central government and leave all other powers to the regions.

The leader of the northern delegation, the Sardauna of Sokoto, says this of the conference:

I did not open my mouth during the first five or six days of the Conference. This gradually alarmed the other delegations and the Colonial Office people. They feared that the Conference might break down and come to no conclusion. It was only when I finally agreed to the Federal principle that confidence returned to the meeting. I was very disappointed that we had to modify our Eight Points Programme. 48

Federalism as a Device to
Balance Elite Interest and Power

Our discussion so far illustrates how the anxiety of both the Yoruba elite and the northern ruling class regarding their social position in Nigerian society, led them to espouse federalism. The emergence of the N.C.N.C. goaded the rising class of Yoruba professionals to take steps to safeguard its interests, against the newer leadership represented by Zik and the N.C.N.C. Since the Yoruba elite of the N.Y.M. and later of the Action Group, could not break the N.C.N.C.'s hold on Lagos politics or effectively counter its growing national appeal, it sought to limit the organizational activities of the N.C.N.C. into the hinterland, by the invocation of ethnicity, and the advocacy of regionalism and federalism.

Also the northern ruling class opposed accelerated political changes when it feared that early independence would

prejudice its social position in northern society. The advocacy of a customs union and the later support for federalism, were literally a demand that the control of northern society be left in the hands of its ruling class. In 1953, the northern ruling class opposed independence for Nigeria in 1956, but accepted it in 1960 even though the North was still educationally and economically inferior to the South. The difference from 1953 was that northern leaders were politically dominant in the country in 1960, and could use their political power to control the pace of change or blunt the intensity of particular changes which threatened their position.

We regard federalism as a device to balance the power and interests of diverse elites within a pluralistic institutional framework. Implicit in this view of Nigerian federalism, is the contention that a disturbance in the equilibrium of elite interests and power, would lead to the instability of the federal arrangement. An explanation of conflicts within the Nigerian political system would therefore involve an understanding of the changing balance of power between ethnic elites.

Various writers on integration have, like us, assigned a prominent role to the activities of elites in political integration and disintegration. In their study of North Atlantic integration, Deutsch and his collaborators observe that "active direct popular support played a minor role in the early stages of integration and amalgamation movements".⁴⁹

This emphasis on elites is even more relevant to today's developing countries because of the underdeveloped nature of democratic politics in many of them. Basic decisions are made by the leadership oftentimes over the indifference of the mass of the people. This gives the elite a manipulative role which is of course used to urge the people to assent to more or less integration. Thus William Foltz contends that the thoughts and actions of a few political leaders in Senegal and Sudan were the crucial variables in the founding and disintegration of the Mali Federation. "The federation", he says, "was created at the summit, and was also destroyed there".⁵⁰

Other scholars attempt to explain the adoption of federalism by reference to the social, cultural and economic conditions of the countries concerned. Thus W. S. Livingston writes that

The social diversities that produce federalism may be of many kinds. Differences of economic interests, religion, race, nationality, language, variations in size, separation by great distances, differences in historical background, previous existence as separate colonies or states, dissimilarity of social and political institutions ...⁵¹

all of these may give rise to a demand for federalism. R. L. Watts argues that in the new federations, ethnic, cultural and social diversities are prominent and deep, and that the difficulty of reconciling these diversities within a single polity invariably led to the demand for a federal solution.⁵² M. Stein asserts that "ethnic and linguistic factors are determining ones in the decision concerning the nature of the larger political order that each community wishes to establish in union with other com-

munities".⁵³

Explanations like the above, underplay the political choices involved in constitution-making, and confer a deterministic quality on sociological diversity. Cultural or sociological diversity in itself cannot constitute an explanation of the adoption of federalism, for as we have argued, social diversities in themselves have little political relevance. Social differences have meaning in politics only when people wish to preserve imagined group uniqueness, and when they fear that this uniqueness is threatened by influences from another group. In such a situation, cultural diversity becomes not only an aspect of the 'general culture' but more crucially, an aspect of the political culture.⁵⁴ In short, cultural diversity becomes politicized.

There is no inevitability between social diversity and the adoption of federalism, as the above explanations seem to imply. Societies employ instrumentalities for the expression of social diversities in accordance with the degree of importance which the leaders of such societies attach to the diversities in question. Thus some societies which would seem to be highly diversified, adopt a set of institutions that are nearly unitary; while other societies that seem to be nearly unified adopt institutions that are federal. Countries like the United Kingdom, Ghana, South Africa, New Zealand, Ceylon and Indonesia have strong cultural differences, and yet have adopted unitary constitutions with varying degrees of decentralization to placate

regional differences. On the other hand, Australia with its greater social homogeneity operates a set of federal institutions.

These facts point to the need for an explanation of federalism based on criteria other than sociological diversity. We contend that the power relations prevalent in a society constitute the basic ingredients of the set of institutions the society adopts for governing itself. Hence to explain the adoption and maintenance of a set of institutions, we must first understand the dominant interests which subtend the institutions. This is why in our explanation of the genesis of Nigerian federalism, we focus analysis on the divergent interests of Nigerian elites.

Explanations based on cultural diversity seem to leave the inference that with greater social unity, federalism would cease to be necessary. Experience proves however that federal institutions die hard. Since societies are seldom ever static, we expect social diversities to wax and wane in intensity with the passage of time. However, in older federations like Australia and the United States of America where societal processes have operated in the direction of greater social unity, we find that federal institutions continue to express pristine social diversities. In other words, the greater unity of social reality has outstripped formal structural and institutional arrangements.

Some political scientists attribute the continued vitality

of federal institutions to vested interests, especially to the interests institutionalized in political parties. Thus Morton Grodzins argues that American political parties perform a decentralizing function in American government, and that governmental decentralization serves the interests of power groups at the state and local government levels.⁵⁵ W. H. Riker argues that the party system is the single most important factor which maintains the federal bargain.⁵⁶ He asserts that "the proximate cause of variations in the degree of centralization (or peripheralization) in the constitutional structure of a federalism is the variation in degree of party centralization".⁵⁷

Thus we have a situation in which the adaptation of the constitutional structure to the social structure, is controlled by political parties which are themselves extra-constitutional, and which represent only a small, politically active segment of the population. Because these political groups profit from the condition of a divided governmental jurisdiction, they have a vested interest in the continuance of federal arrangements. For them, the constitution acquires all the aura of a revered institution, to be defended as a value in itself. The constitution becomes a value which determines diversity, not an instrumentality which reflects existing diversity.

Our argument is that federalism is adopted and maintained by political leaders for reasons other than simply the fact of cultural diversity. Political leaders have alternative forms

of government to choose from - alternative forms which though limited, are nonetheless real. Therefore federalism exists where political leaders choose that form of government. The question is why federalism? In regard to Nigeria, we have argued that the need of elites for secure spheres of interests made federalism necessary. Hence it is from the perspective of elite interests rather than from that of ethnic diversity that we can more meaningfully explain the introduction and operation of federalism in Nigeria.

Federalism permitted dominant ethnic elites to retain control over those matters which would affect the social and political structures in their respective regions.⁵⁸ Thus the regions exercised exclusive jurisdiction over local government, chieftaincy affairs, judicial procedure within the region, the staffing of the regional public service, education up to the secondary school level, social services, and regulations governing elections to the Regional Houses of Assembly.

These matters were vital to the social and political development of each region, and meant in the case of the North, that the fate of traditional emirate institutions were left in the hands of politicians who were closely associated with the emirates. Indirect elections through the native administrations ensured that the emirs who headed these emirates could influence the composition of the regional legislatures. Politicians who owed their appointment to the emir, could hardly be expected to enact measures which would revolutionize the autocratic traditional system of the North.

More importantly, the regionalization of political and economic power, opened up new opportunities for acquiring wealth and prestige in each region. In the North, access to these opportunities and perquisites were controlled by politicians who also held high traditional offices in the emirate system.⁵⁹ In this case therefore, modern forms of power reinforced the traditional. In the East and West, the new opportunities were monopolized by the educated elements of the dominant ethnic groups who controlled the N.C.N.C. and the Action Group. These parties, through control of regional economic institutions, had considerable influence on the distribution of economic opportunities and hence on social stratification in their respective regions.

Dominant ethnic elites therefore benefitted by the establishment of a federal system which created for them an exclusive preserve of jobs, offices and opportunities for acquiring new wealth. As F. G. Carnell has correctly observed: "Only too often, one of the main purposes of federalism in the new states has been to legitimize a number of local spoils systems however inefficient they may be".⁶⁰

The 1954 Federal Arrangement

Under the 1954 Constitution,⁶¹ the three regions of east, west and north were retained as in the Macpherson Constitution. Federal powers were reduced and defined, and regional powers were residual. A list of federal powers included among others,

the subjects of defence, external relations, foreign trade, custom and excise duties, currency, etc. The federal government had concurrent powers with the regional governments in no fewer than twenty-two different fields, among which were higher education, industrial development, industrial and scientific research, electricity, insurance, etc. The constitution did not specifically mention agriculture, or primary and secondary education, or even health. So these high-priority development functions were reserved to the regions.

Under the constitution, the Central Legislature was composed of 184 members, fifty percent of whom represented the North, and the remaining fifty percent, the South. The constitution therefore provided for equality of representation between North and South even though according to the 1952 census the North was more populous than the South.

The principle of equality of regional representation was also extended to the composition of the Central Council of Ministers. The 1954 Constitution was unlike most federal constitutions in not providing for an Upper House or Senate through which the regions could participate in the legislative activities of the Federal Government. The normal practice in federations has been for the constitution to provide for equality or near equality of representation among all the federal units, in a Senate or Second Chamber. The 1954 Constitution did not introduce a Second Chamber, rather the Central Cabinet doubled as a policy-making body for the whole country, and as a representative body for the

regions. The Governor-General appointed three ministers from each region to the Central Cabinet.

For the first time in Nigeria's political evolution, each region was to have its own public service and judiciary. The staff of each region's public service was to be recruited by that region, and each regional public service was to be independent of other regional public services as well as of the federal public service. This aspect of the constitution was most welcome to northern leaders. The Sardauna writes that

This matter of a separate Public Service was important to us. As you see, it made it possible for us to select whom we wished for our jobs here, and made it impossible for the Federal Government to flood us with Southern staff to the exclusion of our own people. That was one of our greatest fears and one which was entirely justified. 62

Fiscal Arrangements

The constitution adopted the derivation principle as the main criteria for revenue allocation. While the federal government had jurisdiction over export and import taxes, excise duties, company tax, mining rents and general sales tax, the regional governments were given jurisdictions over produce sales tax and individual income tax. The basis of the allocation of revenue varied from tax to tax. The whole of the proceeds from export duties on produce, and from royalties, were to go to the region from which the produce or mineral was extracted. Half of the excise duty on beer and the whole of the duty on tobacco and petrol were to go to the regions in proportion to consumption.

Finally, one half of the net proceeds of import duties - other than tobacco and petrol - was to be shared out among the regional governments - the north and east each receiving 30 percent and the west 40 percent.⁶³

To further ensure the financial solvency of regional governments, the Nigeria-wide Commodity Marketing Boards were dissolved, and their financial assets transferred to regional marketing boards in proportion to each region's contribution to the accumulated capital.

Thus the 1954 Constitution tried as much as possible to approximate the formula of orthodox federalism as spelled out by K. C. Wheare.⁶⁴ According to Wheare, a federal system implies "equal and co-ordinate jural status" between the federal and regional governments; the self-sufficiency of federal and regional governmental machinery - legislative, executive and judicial; a distribution of functions of such a kind that neither the federal nor regional governments, if they chose to exercise their powers to the 'full', could nullify the activity of the others; and the requirement that both federal and regional governments must each have under its own independent control financial resources sufficient to perform its exclusive functions. Wheare's formulation of the federal principle is of course an ideal construct, one which cannot easily be implemented in practice. Many writers have noted the difficulty or impossibility of finding elastic sources of independent revenue for regional governments.⁶⁵ Inevitably, the asymmetry between regional func-

-tions and regional financial resources has compelled regional governments to rely increasingly on federal grants for the bulk of their revenues. Nor has it been possible for federal and regional governments to escape the socio-economic and political consequences of their interaction within a common political framework. Since neither level of government operates within a socio-economic vacuum, the independence of each level of government has been affected by the activities of the other.⁶⁶

Consequently, political scientists have tended to de-emphasize Wheare's 'dual federalism', and to stress 'co-operative federalism'.⁶⁷ The concept of 'co-operative federalism' is a short hand way of describing the extensive inter-government political and administrative co-operation, and the financial dependence of regional governments upon central governments, which have characterized all extant federal systems. J. A. Corry describes the trend to 'co-operative federalism' thus:

It has arisen because several separate governments share a divided responsibility for regulating a single economy and social structure. It is most unlikely that any constitution could be devised which would enable each to perform its specific functions adequately without impinging seriously on the others. So their activities are inevitably mingled and co-operative arrangements must be worked out. In the result, formal powers are not co-terminous with operating responsibilities; the two levels of government as well as the several state and provincial governments interpenetrate one another in many places and ways. Under the heat and pressure generated by social and economic change in the twentieth century, the distinct strata of the older federalism have begun to melt and flow into one another. 68

In spite of the illusion of 'independence' within a federal

system, it was nevertheless the prospect of autonomy which attracted Nigeria's regional elites to the idea of federalism. The Sardauna of Sokoto was disappointed that the North had to give up its 'Eight-Points-Programme', but expressed satisfaction that federalism meant that

The Federation would get on with its own share of work and responsibility, and would leave the Regions strictly alone to deal with theirs The Regional Legislatures should become sovereign, and no power in Nigeria should be empowered to alter their decisions on their own subjects. 69

Chief Obafemi Awolowo also stressed the equality between regional governments and the federal government which he believed the constitution guaranteed. He was satisfied that

An important step had ... been taken ... towards the achievement of true federalism in Nigeria. The central and regional governments were now equal in status in their internal relationship, and residual functions were vested in the regional governments. 70

Azikiwe affirmed that "Nigeria will become a federation of equal states, with the jurisdiction of the Federal Government prescribed, leaving the residuary powers to the co-ordinates of the federation ...".⁷¹

Nigerian leaders therefore tended to think in terms of 'dualistic federalism', and to view federal/regional relationships in strictly legal terms. The emphasis was clearly on the 'independence' aspect of a federal arrangement, and not on the co-operativeness which was essential if the federal system was to evolve smoothly.

The main preoccupation of Nigeria's leaders was with the

enhancement of regional autonomy to the disregard of any stable central leadership. The leaders of the three main political parties remained in the regions. This is understandable since the balance of political power at that time was with the Regions, and regional political roles were more attractive than federal ones. For example, more prestige was attached to the post of Regional Premier than to that of a Central Minister. The 1954 Constitution made no provision for the post of Federal Prime Minister. The central cabinet continued to be presided over by the British Governor-General.

Northern political leaders were not averse to the lack of a powerful political office at the centre, for this accorded with the preference they expressed in the 'Eight-Points- Programme', for a central agency to represent the regions, instead of a strong central executive.⁷² Also, the absence of the post of federal prime minister coincided with the thinking of Northern leaders that such a powerful office was inconsistent with what they interpreted as the 'sovereignty' of the regions under the federal system. Indeed in 1956 when the question of creating the office of prime minister was being discussed, and when it was uncertain who would assume the role, the N.P.C. issued a statement in which it warned that the Northern Region would not support the creation at the centre, of any political office superior to the position of a regional premier.⁷³

Another factor which persuaded Nigeria's political leaders to remain in their respective regions was the prospect of early

self-government in the regions. The British Government held the view that full independence to the country should take the transitional road of regional self-government. It had pledged itself to grant self-government to those regions which desired it.

In choosing to remain in their respective regions however, the political leaders greatly weakened the prestige of the federal government and made the task of the central cabinet most difficult since each minister looked to his leader in the region for guidance. The central cabinet remained a standing committee of the three regions devoid of leadership because there was no member of sufficiently national stature to assume political direction of the country, and because neither the Northern Peoples' Congress nor the two Southern parties (A.G. and N.C.N.C.) commanded a Nigeria-wide majority representation in the Central Legislature.

The Trend Towards Consolidation of Regional Power

As we have already stated, the basis of the 1954 political settlement was regional autonomy which it was hoped, would guarantee that each regional elite would be free to run its region as it saw fit. In accordance with the emphasis on regional autonomy, the distribution of legislative functions was clearly aimed at preserving the bulk of the responsibility for social and economic development, for regional governments. The federal government was entrusted with the overall financial management

of the economy, while the actual execution of economic development was left for the regions.

For some years after 1954, the practical effect of the thorough-going regionalization which covered the bureaucracy, the judiciary and the marketing boards, was the relegation of the central government to a surbordinate position viz-a-viz the regional governments. The hope of regional fiscal self-sufficiency seemed to be realized, as the export prices for regional agricultural products remained buoyant. Regional government revenues were increasing faster than federal revenues. For example, whereas federal government revenues rose by only 74.4% between 1954 and 1959, that for the three regions combined rose by 181.5%, with a breakdown of 94.4% for the North, 214.2% for the East, and 247.2% for the West.⁷⁴ Table 1 indicates that during the same period, the total recurrent revenues of Nigeria was shared on about a fifty-fifty basis between the federal government and the regional governments.

Apart from the equality of financial resources which appeared to be developing between the federal and regional governments, the active involvement of regional governments in the economic development of their regions enhanced their position in the eyes of the Nigerian masses. The relative appeal of the central and regional governments depended on their ability to satisfy popular demands for the material benefits of modernization. The regional governments had constitutional responsibility for the provision of social welfare, and so it was to this level of government that most Nigerians directed their request for social

TABLE 1

FEDERAL AND REGIONAL RECURRENT REVENUES, 1955-59.

Financial Year	Net Federal Govt. Revenue	(£ 'millions) Total Regional Govt. Revenue	Northern Region	Western Region	Eastern Region
1955 - 1966	34.10	33.05	11.67	12.37	9.01
1956 - 1957	41.52	40.24	13.60	14.77	11.87
1957 - 1958	40.92	40.71	13.05	14.96	12.70
1958 - 1959	45.22	44.24	15.03	15.90	13.31

Source: Annual Abstract of Statistics, (various years) Federal Office of Statistics, Lagos.

amenities. The central government remained remote from the social and economic life of the bulk of Nigerians.

The Consolidation of
Regional Political Power

Nigerian politics in the period after 1954 was characterized by the increasing dominance of each of the three main parties in one region. The Northern Peoples' Congress monopolized politics in Northern Nigeria, the Action Group was dominant in Western Nigeria, and the N.C.N.C. held the stage in Eastern Nigeria politics.

The increasing regional solidarity in the electoral support of the political parties tended to emphasize the political autonomy of the regions. Table 2 shows that the N.C.N.C. increased the percentage of seats it controlled in the Eastern Region Legislature from 76% in 1957 to 86.2% in 1961. Table 3 shows that the Northern Peoples' Congress increased the percentage of the seats it controlled in the Northern Legislature from 77% in 1959 to 94.1% in 1961.

The trend to one-party dominance in the regions gave the regions added weight in their dealings with the federal government. Again Tables 2 and 3 show the dominant position of regional political parties in federal politics. For example, the N.C.N.C. controlled 79.4% of federal seats in Eastern Nigeria in 1959, and 91% in 1965. The Northern Peoples' Congress controlled 77% of federal seats in the north in 1959 and 97% in 1964.

TABLE 2

FOUR ELECTIONS IN EASTERN NIGERIA, 1957-65.

	March 1957 46.8% Polling (Regional)		December 1959 74.4% Polling (Federal)		November 1961 57% Polling (Regional)		March 1965 41% Polling (Federal)	
	% Votes	% Seats	% Votes	% Seats	% Votes	% Seats	% Votes	% Seats
N.C.N.C.	63.2	76.0	64.6	79.4	79.2	86.2	75.4	91.0
A.G. (U.N.I.P.)	17.0	21.4	23.0	19.1	15.5	10.2	6.5	6.0
Others	19.6	2.3	12.3	1.4	5.0	3.4	18.0	3.0

TABLE 3

THREE ELECTIONS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA, 1959-64.

	December 1959 89.2% Polling (Federal)		May 1961 66% Polling (Regional)		December 1964 57% Polling (Federal)	
	% Votes	% Seats	% Votes	% Seats	% Votes	% Seats
N.P.C.	60.8	77	69.2	94.1	82	97
A.G.	17.3	14.3	14.6	5.3)		
)		
N.C.N.C./N.E.P.U.	16.1	4.6	14.2	.6)	11	2.5
Others	5.7	4	1.8		7	.5

Source: Electoral Commission, Report on the Nigerian Federal Elections, Lagos, 1959.
 Electoral Commission, Report on the Nigerian Federal Elections of 1964, Federal
 Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1965.
 J. P. Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, pp. 527-539.

These figures indicate that members of the central legislature were increasingly becoming representatives of regional power blocs, rather than members of political parties committed to the enhancement of the authority of the federal government. In other words, the absence of a federal power base drawing support from the regions, but independent of the regional power systems, tended to weaken the relative political will of the central government.

Even in foreign affairs, the central government seemed to play a less prominent role than the regional governments. For example, the central government had no representation outside Nigeria before 1960, whereas the regions had separate 'offices' in Britain.

The regional basis of party power therefore weakened the federal government, especially in the five years following the 1954 political settlement. The organization of the central government during this period also added to its relative ineffectiveness. For whereas party government flourished in the regions, the central cabinet and legislature were organized on a regional rather than a party basis. No party had a clear majority in the federal legislature, and so there was no identifiable political leadership. The N.C.N.C. appointed six of the nine ministers in the central government by virtue of winning a majority of the federal seats in Western and Eastern Nigeria, in the 1954 federal elections. The N.P.C. had more seats in the federal legislature than the N.C.N.C., but not enough to have an

overall majority. The situation therefore was that the N.C.N.C. dominated the central executive, while the N.P.C. controlled the largest bloc of parliamentarians in the Federal House. The N.P.C. and the N.C.N.C. formed a coalition at the federal level, and were joined for a time between 1957 and 1959 by two members of the Action Group.

The formation of a coalition, first between two of the three major political parties and later, all the major parties, did not strengthen the central government perceptibly. Dependent upon a coalition of regional political parties, the federal government tended to be reluctant to exercise its full constitutional powers. For example, although the federal government had concurrent jurisdiction with the regions over industrial development, it practically abdicated this important area to the regions in the period before 1960. The regions took the lead in initiating bold social and economic programs.

Between 1954 and 1959, the Nigerian federation looked more like a confederation of autonomous regions. There were few points of friction between regional elites, as each elite seemed content to immerse itself in the political and commercial affairs of its own region. Nigeria remained relatively stable during this period.

However, the prolongation of this stability rested on the continued equality of regional governments both among themselves, and vis-à-vis the federal government; the capacity of regional governments to sustain their political and economic sphere of

autonomy, and the maintenance of the constitutional balance of functions and of power between the regional governments and the federal government.

The ability of the regions to safeguard their constitutional position is vital to the stability of the federal bargain because as we noted earlier, the prospect of regional autonomy was what Nigerian elites found most attractive about federalism. A persistent theme in elite political thinking in Nigeria had been the idea that no region should be allowed to gain domination over the others, and that no region need suffer domination from another. Consequently, secession had generally been favoured by elites as a legitimate response for a region threatened with political domination.⁷⁵ As Okoi Arikpo puts it,

The threat of secession is not new to Nigerians. When in 1953 the present leaders of the N.P.C. feared political and economic domination of the North by the South, they threatened secession. A few years later, the Action Group, faced with the combined opposition of the East and North, and believing that the political influence of the West fell far short of its economic contribution to the prosperity of the Federation, threatened secession. In 1965 the leaders of Eastern Nigeria, finding that, despite the now favourable economic position of the region, their political influence was weakened by the N.P.C./N.N.D.P. alliance, threatened secession. 76

The test of the durability of the 1954 federal bargain thus rested on whether the federal system could pursue the goal of regional security for ethnic elites, while simultaneously tackling such challenges from its operational environment as social mobilization, economic development, popular political participation

and social welfare. To the extent that the coherence of the elite political bargain is maintained while the political system tackles its environmental challenges, the governmental framework retains its stability.

In Chapter V we will examine the changing balance of power between federal and regional governments, and discuss the consequences of this change for the stability of the federal system.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter IV

1. Report by the Conference on the Nigerian Constitution, H.M.S.O., Cmd. 8934, 1953, p. 17.
2. N. Azikiwe, "Evolution of Federal Government in Nigeria", West African Pilot, October 24, 1955.
3. Ibid.
4. Quoted in Awo., p. 165.
5. Proceedings of the General Conference on Review of the Constitution, January 1950, Government Printer, Lagos.
6. Forward to Freedom and Progress, National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, Yaba, 1951, p. 26, Quoted in Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, p. 324.
7. Daily Times, 27 November, 1953.
8. Awo., p. 181.
9. At the 1954 N.C.N.C. Convention, Zik affirmed that the social diversity of Nigeria made federalism imperative. The party's reversal of policy in 1951 he said, was a tactical manoeuvre to counteract the policy of regionalization in the Richards' Constitution. West African Pilot, January 8, 1954.
10. See The Nigerian Bluebook 1930-1940, for a staff and professional listing of Nigerians.
11. op. cit., p. 143.
12. J. Wheare, The Nigerian Legislative Council, London, Faber and Faber Limited, 1949, Appendix 11, p. 198.
13. Ibid., p. 56.
14. Awo., pp. 123, 131.
15. Ibid., p. 132.
16. Ibid., p. 135.
17. See Zik's article in West African Pilot, 20 May, 1941.

18. The West African Pilot, 22 February, 1941. See also Zik's subsequent account of the crisis, in Zik: A Selection From the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1961, p. 309.
19. Awo., p. 164.
20. See the article by Chief Bode Thomas, in Nigerian Daily Times, 11 October, 1947.
21. op. cit., p. 163.
22. Path to Nigerian Freedom, p. 47.
23. Ibid., p. 53.
24. Ibid., pp. 63-64.
25. See M. G. Smith, "The Hausa System of Social Status", Africa, vol. 29, 1959. Also M. G. Smith, "Kebbi and Hausa Stratification", British Journal of Sociology, 12, (1961), 52-61.
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28. The West African Pilot, 8 May, 1950.
29. My Life, Cambridge At the University Press, 1962, p. 65.
30. Legislative Council Debates, First Session, March 24, 1947, p. 212.
31. House of Representatives Debates, March 31, 1953.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.

34. op. cit., pp. 110-111.
35. Ibid., p. 111.
36. Ibid.
37. House of Representatives Debates, April 1, 1953.
38. Ahmadu Bello, My Life, p. 135.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., p. 136.
43. Ibid.
44. Northern Regional House of Assembly Debates, May 23, 1953.
45. Report on the Kano Disturbance, 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th May, 1953, Government Printer, Kaduna, 1953, Appendix B, p. 46.
46. Ibid., p. 21.
47. House of Commons Debates, 515, May 21, 1953. Also Report of the Conference on the Nigerian Constitution, Cmd. 8934, of 1953, p. 3.
48. My Life, p. 150.
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See also K. C. Wheare, Federal Government, New York, Oxford University Press, 4th ed., 1964, p. 37.

K. W. Deutsch, et al., op. cit., pp. 37-38.

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59. See Chapter Three, Table 1.
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Chapter V

DEVELOPMENTS IN NIGERIAN FEDERALISM

Constitutional Developments

Although the basic features of Nigeria's federal system were settled in the constitution of 1954, a series of constitutional conferences between 1957 and 1960 added significant provisions. These conferences were the loci of further elite deliberations on how political and economic power within the federation were to be apportioned among the regional elites. The decisions taken by elites at these conferences are significant for their impact on the 1954 federal bargain. They highlight a series of discrepancies between elite preference for regional autonomy, and the centralizing implications of proposed constitutional changes.

The conference of 1957 decided that the office of Prime Minister of the Federation should be created.¹ The Governor-General was empowered to appoint as Prime Minister the person who appeared to him to command a majority in the House of Representatives. The Central Executive Council, by political arrangement among the main parties, was to be a National Government composed of all three parties. Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was subsequently appointed Prime Minister, and he formed an all-party government.

The creation of the office of Federal Prime Minister removed

a serious defect of the 1954 Constitution, namely, the lack of political leadership in the central executive. Alhaji Abubakar was not one of the 'Big Three' of Nigerian politics. However, since Zik, Awolowo and the Sardauna were premiers of their respective regions, and were not members of the Federal House, Alhaji Abubakar was a logical choice for Prime Minister. He was leader of the N.P.C. at the federal level, and his party accounted for the largest bloc of members of the federal legislature.

The creation of the post of Prime Minister doubtlessly enhanced the prestige of the central government, and diminished somewhat the glamour which the post of regional Premier had enjoyed as the highest and most powerful political office a Nigerian politician could occupy.

Another important change which the 1957 conference introduced, was the decision to elect the 320 members of the enlarged Federal House on a population basis,² rather than on the basis of equality of representation between North and South. This was a major concession on the part of southern politicians, especially since the 1952 population census showed that the North was more populous than the South.

A couple of factors influenced this southern concession. First, there was the desire to maintain a united front with the North in the demand for Nigerian independence.³ Second was the misplaced expectations of the N.C.N.C. and the A.G. that

their northern allies (Northern Elements Progressive Union and United Middle Belt Congress) would win substantial seats from the N.P.C.

The decision to allocate federal seats on the basis of population controverted the assumption of regional equality which inspired the 1954 constitution. It made possible the subsequent hegemony of the North in federal politics. Northern predominance in turn strengthened the central government, since that government could count on the loyal support of all but a few, of the northern members of the central legislature.

The Independence Constitution of 1960 introduced significant provisions which had implications for the distribution of legislative powers between the federal government and regional governments. Section 65 of the Constitution stipulates that "Parliament may at any time make such laws for Nigeria or any part thereof with respect to matters not included in the Legislative Lists as may appear to Parliament to be necessary or expedient for the purpose of maintaining or securing peace, order and good government during any period of emergency". Section 66 reads:

During any period in which there is in force a resolution of each House of Parliament supported by the votes of not less than two-thirds of all the members of that House declaring that the executive authority of a Region is being exercised in contravention of section 80 of this Constitution, Parliament may make laws for that Region with respect to matters not included in the Legislative Lists to such extent as may appear to Parliament to

be necessary for securing compliance with the provisions of that section.

These two provisions laid open the possibility that the federal government could take over all the authority of a region, sack its government and suspend its constitution, simply by declaring through a two-third majority vote in Parliament, that a state of emergency exists in the region, or that the regional government was prejudicing the exercise of federal powers. As we shall see later, the federal government invoked Section 65 of the Constitution to justify its take-over of the governing of Western Nigeria in 1962.

Even in normal times, the 1960 Constitution seemed to guarantee federal legislative supremacy. Section 64(4) states that

If any law enacted by the legislature of a Region is inconsistent with any law validly made by Parliament, the law made by Parliament shall prevail and the Regional law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.

This section of the constitution not only establishes the supremacy of all Federal Laws over Regional Laws on the concurrent list, but also makes a mockery of the federal principle of co-ordinate jural status between federal and regional governments.

It is surprising that the Regions, having consolidated their social and political position in the period between 1954 and 1960, should have approved the Independence Constitution which set up a strong federal government. Given the fear which

each ethnic elite harboured about being dominated by another ethnic elite, one would have thought that a constitution which set up a strong federal government that was bound to be dominated by the North, should have been rejected by the South. In retrospect, it seems that at the time, neither the southerners nor the northerners appreciated fully the potential power of the federal government. Regional political leaders were quite impressed with the elaborate, but subsequently ineffective provisions of regional autonomy embodied in sections (4) and (5) of the Independence Constitution.⁴

Political Developments

After the 1959 federal election was held, none of the three major parties won sufficient seats to form a government alone.⁵ It became evident therefore that a government could be formed only by a coalition of the political parties. First the Action Group made overtures to the N.C.N.C. to form a coalition government. The N.C.N.C. preferred however to implement a pre-election understanding with the N.P.C. to form a coalition government.⁶ It was clear that N.C.N.C. leaders had not overcome their bitterness to, and distrust of, the Action Group leadership which dated back to the Ikoli-Akisanya crisis.

In an address to the national executive committee of the N.C.N.C. just after the election, Zik left no doubt that the N.P.C. was his choice for a coalition partner. He asked rhetorically:

Was it the N.P.C. or the Action Group which confiscated the landed property of the National President of the N.C.N.C. and refused to pay him compensation on the pretext that a third party claimed the land, whilst in fact twelve parcels of land, formerly belonging to nine owners, were involved? Was it the N.P.C. or the A.G. who financed the lawyers who represented Mr. E. O. Eyo during the Foster-Sutton tribunal? Was it the N.P.C. or the A.G. who financed the lawyers who, when they advocated for the C-O-R State before the Minorities Commission, insulted the Ibo people? 7

The N.P.C./N.C.N.C. coalition government seemed to be an ill-assorted group of men lacking any unity of purpose. The N.C.N.C. had little in common with the N.P.C. in the realm of government policy, and though there was an 'understanding' between the top leadership of both parties, tension persisted between their rank and file. Given the rather precarious nature of the coalition, many observers did not rate the survival of the coalition government very high. Nevertheless, the coalition government gained in cohesion, and Ministers of both parties discovered a new community of interest in the control of the power and patronage of the central government.

It was clear however that the stability of the coalition was predicated on the general understanding that each party's control of its regional power-base would not be prejudiced.⁸ This meant that each party undertook to minimize its support for opposition parties in the other's region. In the spirit of this understanding, the N.C.N.C. pressured its northern ally, N.E.P.U. to tone down its criticism of the N.P.C. Zik argued that

in view of the cordiality which exists in the personal relationship of N.C.N.C. leaders and the N.P.C. leaders, coupled with the fact that goodwill and mutual respect are very important to the successful existence of a Cabinet, especially in a Coalition Government, the N.E. P.U. leaders should be persuaded to modify their attitude and give the N.C.N.C. leaders a fair chance to work out a modus vivendi (with the N.P.C.) in the interest of national solidarity. 9

For its part, the A.G. accepted exclusion from power at the federal level, in the belief that its control of the Government of Western Nigeria would remain undisturbed. Chief Enahoro, a leading Action Group spokesman, was of the view that the maintenance of democratic stability in Nigeria required that the Action Group's role as Federal Opposition should not be imperilled by any attempts of the federal coalition to weaken A.G. strength in the West.¹⁰ He believed that

the fact that the opposition were themselves in control of a territorial government gave them a sense of responsibility, for they were obliged in many matters to work with the Federal Government and therefore to place the national interest above party advantage. By reason also of this circumstance, the opposition did not feel the sense of frustration which exclusion from office might have aroused in them, and they were enabled to satisfy the material demands of their supporters. 11

Thus both the federal coalition parties and the Action Group Opposition viewed the preservation of regional security as essential to their role in the federal government. It soon became clear however that the coalition parties were not willing to extend the principle of regional security to include the Action Group-controlled Western Region. In 1962, schism in

the leadership of the Action Group served as a convenient pretext for the federal coalition to decree a state of public emergency in Western Nigeria, and to take over the governing of the region.

The N.P.C. and the N.C.N.C. had a common dislike of the Action Group, which since 1956 had been advocating the creation of states in the 'minority areas' of the North and East. The determined effort of the Action Group to win political support in the 'minority areas' was viewed by the coalition partners as an attempt to whittle down their power-bases in the regions. The action of the federal government in taking over the Western Nigeria Government therefore smacked of a desire to settle old scores with the Action Group. The top leaders of the party were placed under restriction, the affairs of the Western Nigeria Government were probed, and the misuse of public funds by the Action Group was exposed by the Coker Commission of Inquiry. Chief Awolowo and other leaders of the Action Group were found guilty of conspiracy to overthrow the federal government, and were jailed for long terms of imprisonment.¹² Finally to hoist the Action Group with its own petard, the Midwest Region was carved out of the Western Region.

The actions of the federal government in the West assailed an important condition of inter-regional elite co-operation under Nigerian federalism; that condition being the principle that each elite would be allowed to run its region without undue extra-

regional interference. Leaders of the N.P.C. and the N.C.N.C. had taken more interest in the destruction of the power-base of a rival elite, than in the preservation of the principle of regional autonomy which formed the basis of the stability of Nigerian federalism. In the process, they radically restructured the federal-regional balance of power, by extending federal powers beyond the intended limited participation in intra-regional affairs.

By its treatment of the Yoruba elite of the Action Group, the Federal Government exposed the vulnerability of regional power systems, and forewarned other regional power-groups of the precariousness of their existence. The precedent ensured that in the future, a Federal Government which had a two-thirds majority in Parliament, could destroy the power-base of a hostile regional elite simply by declaring that a state of public emergency existed in the region in question. As we shall see later, the N.C.N.C. was confronted with the implications of this extension of federal powers when it came to its turn to play the role of opposition to the N.P.C. during the 1964 federal election.

In appraising the operation of the federal system in Nigeria, especially with reference to the significance of the use of emergency powers, Kalu Ezera has commented:

First, a federal structure for Nigeria, ... has been evolved from the original unitary set-up. Secondly, the equal and co-ordinate relationship between the Centre and the Regions, once weighted in favour of the latter, has been gradually modified,

by centripetal forces, in the direction of national centralization; and the regions, though still regarded as autonomous component units of a federal state, are, in increasing measure, becoming the subsidized administrative organs of the federal government.... All these features tend to suggest that federalism, at least, in Nigeria, has entered a new phase in which co-operation and central leadership and not necessarily equality and independence between the units are the guiding principles. 13

Economic Developments

Apart from political developments, another major factor which undermined the equilibrium of the 1954 settlement, was the increasing centralization in economic and financial matters. Between approximately 1956 and 1960, the asymmetry between regional functions and revenues became so glaring that all the regions were finding it difficult to carry out all the functions assigned to them by the constitution. The instability in regional finances, stemmed from the excessive dependence of regional governments on revenue from the export trade in agricultural products. (see Table 14, p. 95). Export trade is of course affected by the vicissitudes of world market prices.

In 1953/54, the aftermath of the Korean War brought about a boom in the prices of primary products. This was significant to those formulating the 1954 Constitution since rising export prices offered the possibility of reinforcing the equal and co-ordinate jural status of the regions with fiscal self-sufficiency. It was therefore not surprising that the constitution stipulated

that all revenues from export duties on primary produce should be returned to the regions on the basis of derivation.

The first decline in the world prices for primary produce began in the period 1955/56. Taking 1954 as the base year, where for the period 1957 to 1962 the volume of exports of primary products rose by 47.2 percent, the money value rose by 37.8 percent while prices fell by 4.8 percent.¹⁴ The effect of this was immediately reflected in regional government current revenue. Thus, whereas revenue almost doubled in 1955, from £6 million in 1954 to £11.67 million for the North, from £5 million to £9.01 million for the East, £7 million to £12.37 million for the West, in 1956 increases in all regional revenues rose by only about two million pounds.¹⁵

From about 1958, instead of the annual budgetary surplus to which regional governments were accustomed, all the regions except the East (whose budgetary position improved due to oil revenue) were faced with recurrent deficits. Between 1962 and 1966, the Western Region Government was able to balance its budget only once, and the Northern Region Government only twice. (see Table 1).

While some of the regions were having difficulty in balancing their budgets, the Federal Government was generating substantial surpluses on current account each year between 1962 and 1966. The comparative financial status of the various governments is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

SURPLUS (+) OR DEFICITS (-) OF GOVERNMENTS ON CURRENT ACCOUNT

(£ ' million)

	Federal	North	West	East
1962 to 1963	+9.8	-1.8	-0.5	+3.8
1963 to 1964	+3.2	+0.6	+0.3	+2.9
1964 to 1965	+11.4	+3.5	-0.1	+2.6
1965 to 1966	+11.7	-3.3	-1.8	+5.1

Source: Annual Abstract of Statistics, (various years);
Economic Indicators, (various quarters), Federal Office of Statistics, Lagos.
Digest of Statistics, Accountant-Generals' Report, Regional Estimates.

The key to the problem is that while regional revenues proved inelastic and in fact declined, the regions had to pay for all the services that involved the heaviest and most rapidly increasing expenditure. In particular, education, agriculture and health, steadily increased in cost, making it difficult for the regions to expand much needed social services. In the face of the gross imbalance between regional functions and regional revenues, the regions had very little choice but to turn to the federal government for financial support.

The federal government's financial position was strong, not only because it financed low-priority, low-cost, non-developmental projects, but because the constitution entrusted it with the major revenue sources, and the overall management of the financial and monetary system of the economy. The federal government was therefore able to exploit a greater range of revenue sources than did the regional governments. For example, the federal government had jurisdiction over export and import taxes, excise duties, company tax, mining rents and general sales tax. Although the federal government was required by law to share a certain percentage of the revenue from some of these taxes with regional governments, the decision as to the amount of tax to be paid under each tax was a federal decision. In other words, these taxes could respond to the revenue needs of the regions only if the federal government agreed to increase the rates.

In addition to its control of the major tax sources, the federal government had exclusive constitutional powers over the issuance of bills of exchange and promissory notes, the borrowing of moneys outside Nigeria for the purposes of the Federation or of any Region, and the borrowing of moneys within Nigeria for the purposes of the Federation. It also had constitutional power to control capital issues, foreign exchange, currency, coinage and legal tender. The public debt of the country was also the exclusive responsibility of the federal government.

The taxing powers of the federal government together with its control of the financial and monetary system, afforded it a leverage with which to encroach on the 'independence' of the regions if it chose to do so. This is a possibility which was not perceived by the champions of regional autonomy when the 1954 constitution was drawn up. At that time, regional political leaders thought mainly in terms of the legal relationships between the centre and the regions in a federal system. It seems possible that they did not understand the implications which fiscal arrangements had for the legal autonomy of the regions. They were satisfied that the constitution guaranteed the equality of the regions with the federal government, and that since the organization of the federal government rendered it politically subservient to the regions, the regional sphere of autonomy was secure.

For the first few years after the introduction of the 1954

constitution, the federal government maintained a low profile as far as its involvement in socio-economic activities was concerned. It lacked the political will to exploit its considerable financial authority for the purposes of economic development.

However, from 1958 on, the federal government began to exert considerable influence on the financial and monetary affairs of the country. It established the Central Bank in 1958, and has since relied on the bank as a source of additional credit for the financing of federal-sponsored economic development. Apart from the issuance of treasury bills, the bank has provided the federal government with advances averaging £71.8 million per annum since 1962.¹⁶ In addition, the Central Bank was expected to contribute £63 million towards the financing of the federal programme under the first National Development Plan, 1962 to 1968.¹⁷

The emergence of the Central Bank as an important revenue-yielding institution for the federal government, added a new dimension to federal/regional fiscal relationship under Nigerian federalism. Through the Central Bank, the federal government was able to mobilise additional financial resources which were non-existent before the bank was created, and which consequently were not explicitly mentioned in the constitutional allocation

of financial resources. The regional governments were therefore disadvantaged by the fact that they possessed no constitutional means of exerting control on the financial resources generated through the Central Bank, and no institutional means of compelling the federal government to share such resources with the regions.

The trend towards increasing centralization of financial matters was evident in the decision of regional governments to transfer their constitutional right to borrow domestically for their own purposes, to the federal government. The decision was taken in the light of the fact that the local loan market relied heavily on the support of the Central Bank over which the regions had no control. The right to borrow was therefore meaningless when another level of government exclusively controlled the 'thing' to be borrowed. In addition, the regions were aware that domestic borrowing was intimately linked with the control over monetary policy which was a federal responsibility.

Consequently, at the first meeting of the Loans Advisory Board in 1958, the regions agreed to grant the federal government the exclusive right to raise loans domestically, both for its own use and for the use of the regions. The amount of loans raised by the federal government from year to year, was made possible by credit creation by the Central Bank, and part of the proceeds was distributed to the regions on the basis of

negotiation with the federal government. Usually, the federal government unilaterally decided how much of each year's loan it wanted to retain for itself, and then assigned the balance to regional governments. It is therefore not surprising that the Federal Government has received the lion's share (65.7%) of loans raised between 1959 and 1966, and the Northern, Western, Eastern, and Mid-Western governments received 12.9%, 9%, 8.8% and 3.6% respectively. Table 2 shows the amount received by each government from loans raised by the federal government.

The federal government further tightened its control over the financial and monetary system by passing the 1962 Banking Amendment Act.¹⁸ The Act aimed to secure control over the level of prices, the balance of payments, and to regulate the structure of interest rates. Regional Governments and their development corporations were required by the Act to deposit part of their reserves with the Central Bank. Through this measure the federal government sought to control the financial policies of regional governments, and in particular, the prices which regional marketing boards paid to primary crop producers.

Marketing Boards financed their purchase of crops through sale of regional government bonds to commercial banks. The 1962 Act empowered the Central Bank to fix the liquidity ratio of banks and to determine what assets would be accepted in assessing the liquidity ratio of commercial banks. A regional government which refused to comply with federal directives, could

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROCEEDS OF THE INTERNAL BORROWING OF
NIGERIA AS OF 1966 (£ ' million)

	<u>Federal</u>	<u>Western Region</u>	<u>Eastern Region</u>	<u>Northern Region</u>	<u>Mid-West</u>
Funded	42.89	8.86	10.56	17.05	3.60
Unfunded	9.61	1.00	1.00	-	-
Floating Debt	34.00	2.00	-	-	1.00
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TOTAL	86.50	11.86	11.56	17.05	4.60
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Source: Federal Government Estimates, 1967 to 1968.

find that its marketing board might not be able to raise a loan through the banking system to finance its operation. The Central Bank would simply instruct commercial banks not to accept the regional government's bonds as 'liquid' assets.

The Central Bank has on its own extended credit to regional marketing boards. In 1962 it provided short-term credits of £13 million for the operations of the Northern Nigeria Marketing Board. In 1965, the Bank financed the purchase of cocoa in Western Nigeria to the extent of £14.4 million.¹⁹

The control of the credit system gives the federal-owned Central Bank a powerful tool for influencing the financial policies of regional governments. Prior to 1962, regional governments were able to tailor the prices paid to peasant producers for their crops, to suit revenue needs. Sometimes a regional government sought to gain political advantage by raising the prices paid to farmers. After 1962, regional governments could no longer juggle prices without consultation with the federal government. This meant that the hope of augmenting regional revenues through reducing the prices paid to peasant producers, became contingent on federal acquiescence and goodwill.

Perhaps the most decisive factor which established federal economic supremacy, was the Six-Year (1962-68) National Development Plan.²⁰ This Plan placed the initiative for economic growth on the federal government. The federal government and its agencies were expected to provide money equivalent to rough-

ly 61 percent of the total planned expenditure of approximately £670 million. The federal government also undertook to make grants to the regions to carry out functions which are constitutionally regional responsibilities. Thus the federal government agreed to grant over £30 million to the regions for the expansion of agriculture, and over £5 million for the improvement of primary and secondary education. It also granted £4.646 million to regionally-owned universities.²¹

In addition to its superior economic resources, the federal government became the main channel for transmitting foreign loans and grants to economic development projects in the regions. Both the federal and regional governments relied heavily on foreign aid to augment the domestic financial resources earmarked for economic development. Thus the 1962 to 1968 National Plan states that:

The Governments of the Federation expect to receive approximately one-half of the cost of the capital programme in foreign loans and grants. They expect, therefore, to contribute about half the cost of the capital programme out of their own resources, in addition to meeting all recurrent expenditure commitments, with the possible exception of certain education and health expenditures which may also qualify for external assistance. 22

Given the significance of the foreign aid component of Nigeria's development efforts, the federal government acquired great strategic importance since most foreign donors of financial and technical aid preferred to channel their aids through the central government. Indeed some foreign governments,

observing strict diplomatic protocol, insisted that the approval of the Nigerian national government was essential, before they could fund any regional development project.

Thus with the introduction of national planning in Nigeria, the economic power of the federal government became assured. The federal government was in a position to affect the relative development of each region both because of its superior economic resources and because of its role as co-ordinator of national planning. The total commitment of Nigerians to quick industrialization therefore created a high degree of inter-government interdependence unforeseen at the time the federal constitution was formulated.

Some commentators have remarked that this was not interdependence but a clear drift to federal supremacy. K. W. J. Post observed as early as 1962 that "this National Plan anticipates thereby a growth of federal powers not by constitutional revision but by the logic of events and the implications of economic development".²³ And J. P. Mackintosh went as far as to say that "an examination of financial and economic policies suggests that in these matters, Nigeria is beginning to operate in much the same way as a unitary state".²⁴

Be this as it may, it is clear from the experience of other federations that the example of Nigeria is not unique. R. L. Watts has stressed the effect of economic development on other Commonwealth federations where the creators

... usually started with declarations of the federal principle which echoed or even cited the traditional view of dualistic federalism in which each level of government was sovereign and independent of the other within its prescribed fields. But economic and political realities forced the founders and their successors to be pragmatic rather than dogmatic in their application of the federal idea. Invariably in the area of economic policy they found it impossible to divide the functions of general and regional governments into two isolated compartments and have been forced to recognize the interdependence of governments. 25

This development corresponds with the observation of E. B. Haas²⁶ and A. Etzioni²⁷ that integration of the economic sector of society tends to 'spill-over' into other sectors, thereby causing extensive political re-adjustments. The process of economic development in Nigeria enlarged the scope of the federal government and necessitated the co-ordination of political and economic matters on a national level.

However, this increase in the authority of the federal government proved to be dysfunctional to the federal system. For whereas regional elites advocated the 'federal principle' to secure equal and co-ordinate jural status for regional governments and the centre, the operation of economic and political factors resulted in the subordination of the regions to the centre. Whereas federalism was viewed as the most suitable framework for guaranteeing the minimal extra-regional political interference desired by regional leaders, the new centralization in political and economic affairs rendered the concept of regional security unviable.

Even as late as 1961, regional elites were still thinking in terms of regional autonomy, and were still cherishing a strictly legalistic construction of federal/regional relationships. They seemed unaware of the potential power of the federal government as trustee of the constitution - a position which could allow it to exert considerable influence over the legal structure and its interpretation.

Thus in his autobiography which was written in 1961 and published in 1962, the Sardauna explained that the Northern Nigeria Government celebrated Regional self-government and not national independence, because it believed that the former was more important than the latter. He affirmed that

... though we formed part of the Federation, the latter had no control over our administration and internal affairs, and to the man in the street the Federation is a long way off and more than nebulous. Thus, what happened in Lagos was not of great consequence here in the North. 28

In 1960, Awolowo believed firmly that

... our Constitution does not provide that the Federal Government can sack or dismiss any Regional Government nor can it dismiss any Regional Legislature, and any opinion to the contrary is heretical and grossly prejudiced. 29

The actions of the federal government after 1961 must no doubt have convinced the leader of the N.P.C. and the leader of the A.G., that they had misjudged the power of the federal government to intervene in strictly regional affairs. During the Western Nigeria crisis, the Action Group's legalistic construction of the powers of the Federal Government, failed to

persuade the Supreme Court. The court refused to substitute its own definition of 'emergency' for that of the majority in Parliament, and refused to consider whether the Federal Government was entitled to the range of powers it employed in the Western Region. The justices remarked:

We ... feel that on the question of whether or not there were sufficient grounds for Parliament to declare a state of emergency, it is unnecessary for us to rule on the submission that if Parliament acted mala fide in making a declaration of a state of public emergency, the court could hold it invalid, since it is impossible to say in the present case that there was no ground to justify a declaration: it is not for the court to go outside the provisions of section 65(3) of the Constitution of the Federation defining emergency. 30

What can be inferred from the Supreme Court's inaction, is that the court regarded the definition of 'emergency' as a political issue, not amenable to legalistic treatment. The decision or indecision of the court, laid open the possibility that the Federal Government could discover an 'emergency' in another region in the future.

In Chapter VI, we will relate the dynamics of elite conflicts and system instability to the changing balance of power between the regional institutions on which the power of ethnic elites is based, and the federal institutions. By 1962 to 1964, Nigeria's federal system had evolved to the stage where the former dominance of the regions was being undermined by the increased power and assertiveness of the Federal Government. In the years following the 1954 political settlement, the Federal Government

had, contrary to the expectation of regional elites, gradually built up a great deal of authority in the economic field, in the maintenance of law and order, and over the legal system. The Federal Government was ceasing to be merely primus inter pares, and was gradually becoming the supreme political body. Consequently, no regional elite could feel secure in its home region, unless it could also control the Federal Government.

Thus, it was not by chance that the period of accentuated 'tribalism' (1962 to 1964), coincided with the search by ethnic elites for a new equilibrium of power within the federal system. As Robert Lynd has noted,

... organized power tends to be most alert and active precisely at the hinge-points of change, where new options, or loss of customary ones, impend. 31

FOOTNOTES

Chapter V

1. Report of the Nigeria Constitutional Conference; 1957, Cmd. 207, 1957.
2. Ibid.
3. The southern delegations to this conference were overly circumspect in their pronouncements and policy proposals, in order not to offend the sensibilities of the northern leaders. For example the Action Group as a party was committed to the creation of three more states in Nigeria, as a means of forestalling northern domination. The N.P.C. was however opposed to the creation of new states. The Action Group delegation decided not to press the issue as a party, although delegation members from minority areas could submit memoranda in their own individual capacity. Even the leader of the delegation, Chief Awolowo, was allowed to raise the issue of the creation of states only after he promised that "whilst I was prepared to argue as forcefully as I could a case for the creation of the three proposed states, I would try to be objective and not to say anything that would be offensive to the N.P.C." Awo. p. 189.
4. Awolowo's own interpretation of Section 65 completely ruled out federal take-over of a regional government. In 1960, he affirmed that "there is no provision at all under ... Section 65 which enables the Federal Government to sack a Regional Government, or to dismiss a Regional Government or to dissolve a Regional Legislature. There is no such power at all...." Federal House of Representatives Debates, November 29, 1960.
5. See K.W.J. Post, The Nigerian Federal Election of 1959, Oxford University Press, 1963.
6. Ibid., pp. 300-301, 315-316.
7. Presidential Address delivered at the meeting of the National Executive Committee of the N.C.N.C., which was held at the Lagos City College, Yaba, on December 22, 1959, (Mimeograph copy).
8. This understanding dated back to the time of the 1959 Federal Election campaign when the N.C.N.C. aimed much of its attacks on the A.G., while deliberately courting favour with leaders of the N.P.C. See N.C.N.C. - N.E.P.U. "Joint Manifesto", Daily Times, October 5, 6, 7, 1959.

9. Zik: The Autobiography of Nnamdi Azikiwe, p. 206.
also Daily Times, December 23, 1959.
10. Chief Anthony Enahoro, Fugitive Offender, The Story of a Political Prisoner, London, Cassell & Company, Ltd., 1965, p. 167.
11. Ibid., p. 379.
12. The Western Nigeria crisis of 1962 is well documented in J. P. Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, Chapter X.

See also Enahoro, op. cit. pp. 181-205.
R. L. Sklar, "Contradiction in the Nigerian Political System", in Journal of Modern African Studies, 3,2, (1965).
13. "Federalism and the Quest for National Unity in Africa, with Particular Reference to Nigeria", Paper Prepared for the International Political Science Association Conference, 1963, pp. 18-19.
14. Statistical and Economic Review, United Africa Company, 29 April, 1964, p. 24.
15. Annual Abstract of Statistics, Federal Office of Statistics, (various years).
16. See the Annual Reports of the Central Bank of Nigeria, (various years).
17. See National Development Plan, 1962-68, p. 49.
18. Banking Amendment Act, 1962, Clause 6C, Federation of Nigeria Official Gazette, vol. 49, No. 26, March 30, 1962.
19. Annual Reports of the Central Bank of Nigeria, 1962-66.
20. Federation of Nigeria, National Development Plan, 1962-68, Federal Ministry of Economic Development, Lagos.
21. See "Federal Government Development Programme", in National Plan, pp. 55-102.
22. National Plan, p. 32.
23. "Nigeria Two Years After Independence", World Today, 18, (November 1962), 469.
24. "Federalism in Nigeria", in Political Studies, 1962, p. 245.

25. "Recent Trends in Federal Economic Policy and Finance in the Commonwealth", in J. D. Montgomery and A. Smithies, eds., Public Policy, 14, (1965), 400.
26. The Uniting of Europe, Stanford University Press, 1958.
27. "The Dialectics of Supranational Unification", in International Political Communities, An Anthology, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966.
28. My Life, p. 227.
29. Federal House of Representatives Debate, 29 November, 1960.
30. See Chief Williams vs. The Federal Government, Federal Supreme Court 66/1962; also Adegbenro vs. Attorney General of Federation of Nigeria F.S.C. 170/1962.
31. R. S. Lynd, "Power in American Society as Resource and Problem", in C. J. Larson and P. C. Wasburn, eds., Power, Participation and Ideology, New York, David Mckay Company, Inc., 1969, p. 50.

Chapter VI

ELITE BEHAVIOUR AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Structural Implications
of Nigerian Federalism

The political system which was inaugurated by the 1954 federal constitution and consolidated by the 1960 Independence Constitution, is of the type which Karl Deutsch has referred to as 'amalgamated but not security-community'. By amalgamation is meant "the formal merger of two or more previously 'independent' units into a single larger unit, with some type of common government after amalgamation".¹

In 1954, the Nigerian Federation was not a 'security-community' because 'amalgamation' occurred without integration which Deutsch equates with a 'sense of community'. Deutsch writes that

a security community is a group of people which has become 'integrated', and 'integration' is defined as the attainment within a territory of a 'sense of community' and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a 'long' time, dependable expectations of 'peaceful change' among its population. 2

Federal systems at their inception are not security communities in the Deutschian sense, because there is no real assurance that members of the system will not fight each other physically or prepare in a large scale for the outbreak of civil war in the future. Identity with the new central institutions is low among members of the various cultural sub-sections, and inter-sub-cultural agreement on political goals is minimal, and exists

only at the inter-cultural elite level. The hope of federal theorists is that some measures of mass inter-cultural linkage would occur as the system gained legitimacy, and that increased inter-territorial communications and trade would generate solidarity among the units. The question however is this: how can such a political system maintain its stability and coherence long enough for the forces of social mobilization to build up its legitimation among the various sub-cultures?

Many theorists of political integration would answer that the probability of such a political system remaining stable is quite minimal, in view of its obvious lack of cultural homogeneity, and more importantly, of a common political culture. Thus Leonard Binder argues that the stability of political systems in developing countries will ultimately depend on the integrative process, and that "national integration requires the creation of a cultural-ideological consensus of a degree of comprehensiveness that has not yet been seen in these countries".³ J. S. Coleman and C. G. Rosberg maintain that political integration and hence stability in African states requires "the progressive reduction of cultural and regional tensions and discontinuities on the horizontal plane in the process of creating a homogeneous territorial political community".⁴

This equation of cultural homogeneity with political stability is implicit in most other theories of political integration.⁵ These theories do not however tell us how a national political culture can be instituted in a culturally fragmented country.

The assertion is simply made that a common political culture is a prerequisite of integration, and as support for this claim, Anglo-American democracies are cited as examples of a high degree of cultural homogeneity being responsible for prolonged stability in political systems.⁶

Since only Anglo-American democracies are fortunate enough to be endowed with a high compatibility of major values among their populations, the inference is that instability will characterize all other political systems until they become like the Anglo-American systems. Thus G. Almond contrasting the Anglo-American democracies and the Continental European democracies, writes that the latter are characterized by a "fragmentation of political culture" with separate "political sub-cultures". Their instability and immobilism is "a consequence of the (fragmented) condition of the political culture".⁷

In chapter one of this study, we disputed the logical premise of the cultural explanation of conflict and political instability. Here, it is sufficient to repeat that there is no a priori relationship between cultural homogeneity and political stability. In our view, political stability or instability in 'developing' political systems depends more on the actions and behaviour of political elites than on the cultural milieu of these countries.

Given the co-existence of distinct sub-cultures within a country, and the absence of a cohesive national identity or

basic agreement on goals, the elites of various subcultures can nevertheless decide jointly to underplay their cultural differences, and to establish a common political system for all the cultural sections. We have argued that in Nigeria, the adoption of federalism was an example of such a joint decision by elites. Federalism was seen both as a device for balancing the interests and power of ethnic elites, and for rendering workable the contrary desires of elites for unity in the performance of certain governmental functions, and for the preservation of regional autonomy in the performance of other functions.

The distinctive hall-mark of such a political framework is thus overarching collaboration at the inter-ethnic elite level, concomittant with persistent cultural cleavages and latent dissensus at the inter-ethnic mass level. Ethnic elite collaboration is a possibility which the theory of cultural pluralism does not take into account in its overemphasis on cultural diversity. In Chapter I of this study however, we use the concepts 'structure' and 'organization' to underscore the fact that an organizational variable like leadership can modify the apparent disintegrative effects of a multi-ethnic political structure. The resulting political system is stable, not because it is undergirded by cultural homogeneity or by a basic inter-cultural consensus on politics, but because of the coincident interests of elites and the convergent agreement of elites to work together.

The emphasis in this kind of political system is on conciliation rather than on consensus, for inter-cultural consensus is minimal and forever shifting. It is the actively conciliatory role of elites that prevents the shifts of consensus from wrecking the political framework.

When we speak of overarching elite collaboration, we do not mean to rule out conflict in the interaction of elites with one another. Conflict after all is a built-in aspect of a federal government which deliberately divides the governing of a single 'national' territorial area between two levels of government. Jurisdictional conflicts are bound to arise, and indeed are regarded as a necessary feature of federal government if the federal goal of 'unity in diversity' is to be maintained over time.

Another reason why the potentiality of conflict is present under a federal arrangement, is that a federal constitution can at best only symbolize a precarious or provisional system of order. The constitution does not embody agreements worked out by Nigerian groups through generations of living together. Rather it contains assumed agreements borrowed from the experience of European countries. But as Bernard Crick has noted, consensus derives from the process of practical reconciliation of the interests of various groups within a state.⁸ Federalism purportedly furnishes the instrumentalities which would enable otherwise conflicting groups to conciliate their differences within a com-

mon political system. And the greatest hope of the advocates of federalism is that the cumulative conciliation of differences would lead to the greater integration of the political system.

If as we have argued, elite actions and decisions are the crucial variables in the establishment of Nigerian federalism, it follows that an analysis of conflict and instability in the Nigerian political system must necessarily focus on the actions, perceptions and behaviour of elites. We intend to follow this line of analysis, but first, we must examine the nature of group conflict under federalism.

Game Theory and the Analysis of Conflict

The study of conflict is intimately linked with the study of patterns of social behaviour - how a group reacts in a situation of competing interests, how the group perceives the situation, how it assesses its gains and losses in the conflict situation, and what strategies or tactics it adopts to maximize its gains and minimize its losses. This is the starting-point for game theorists, and we hope to rely on the insights of game theory for an understanding of the behaviour of Nigerian elites when confronted with the changed balance of power which we delineated in the last chapter.

Using the insights of game theory, we will seek to understand why certain strategies were adopted, and to consider whether such 'moves' were 'rational' in terms of the stability of the federal system. Above all, we will seek to demonstrate the role

of ethnicity in the complex bargaining for power between elite groups. Our purpose here is not so much to give a general exposition of game theory, as to select from it those elements and techniques which seem most useful in clarifying our understanding of group conflicts.

The first thing to notice about game theory is that it deals with 'bargaining situations', or with situations in which competing interests interact.⁹ In game theory, bargaining situations are classified into two types of games, namely, the 'zero-sum game' and the 'variable-sum' or 'nonzero-sum game'. In the two-person zero-sum game, the interests of players are held to be exactly opposite. In such games, one player always wins the exact amount of 'payoff' or reward that the other player loses. The players are not motivated to cooperate because they have no common interest to promote by cooperation. A situation of pure conflict therefore prevails.

By contrast, the nonzero-sum game is one in which the sum of the 'payoffs' to each player is variable and not constant. The interests of the players are not completely opposed or completely identical, but similar in some respects and dissimilar in others. This is the mixture of conflict and common interest that epitomizes a bargaining situation.

A bargaining situation thus implies conflicting interests that need to be conciliated, not the intractable irreconcilability of pure conflict. Here, though conflict provides the dramatic element, mutual dependence is part of the logical structure,

and demands some kind of collaboration or mutual accomodation - if only to avoid the mutual destruction of potential gains. It is for this reason that the nonzero-sum game is closer to the normal forms of social interaction and transactions, than the zero-sum game. There is hardly ever a functioning political system in which the participants have no common interest whatsoever. Hence in anearlier portion of our dissertation, we disputed the claim of the pluralist school of thought that the social situation in a multi-ethnic society is analogous to a pure conflict relationship, or a zero-sum game. The pluralists speak of 'sharp cleavages' between ethnic groups, but fail to mention the equally important aspects of co-operation among them.

Federalism encourages the operation of the bargaining relationship that is reflected in a non-zero-sum game, with each unit or component of the federal system developing a pay-off matrix in its strategy of play. The process of conciliating competing interests, of adjusting the constitution to reflect the power of new claimant social forces, is analogous to a bargaining situation in which each actor formulates his strategy in a way that maximizes his gains and minimizes his losses.

We do not imply that only crude self-interest motivates the actors in a federal bargaining situation. We already said that a bargaining situation is similar to a non-zero-sum game in which, although the actors have divergent interests, they

also have a common interest in preventing the bargaining structure from disintegrating. In a federal situation, the elites of the component units generally accept the continuance of the bargaining structure, i.e., the federal system. Thus in 1961, the Sardauna of Sokoto affirmed that the North had moved away from the secessionist posture it adopted during the 1953 political crisis. He declared: "...we see clearly now that Nigeria must stand as one...".¹⁰ And Chief Awolowo noted in his assessment of the prospects of Nigeria's stability, that "The important point to be borne in mind is that all the leaders of opinion in Nigeria are unanimous in their determination to keep the constituent units in the country together".¹¹

Towards a 'Model' of Elite Behaviour
Under Nigerian Federalism

The underlying premise of Nigeria's federal system is as we have noted, that the political system would establish a sphere of political and economic security for each regional elite. Several implications flow from this idea of regional security. The first of these has to do with inter-ethnic relations at the elite level, inter-ethnic relations at the mass level, and elite-mass relations within each ethnic group.

Nigerian federalism as a framework of elite accommodation, implies that high policy issues which affect the distribution of power within the political system, are to be settled at the elite level, with minimal ethnic mass involvement. This is necessary because direct popular involvement in conflict resolu-

tion, would introduce into the conciliation process groups which are not identified with negotiating the existing political order, and which as a result, may not acquiesce in the institutionalized procedures for resolving conflict within that order. The demands made by such groups on the political system may not be tempered by the norms of an accommodationist political framework, while the behaviour of the groups may not be disciplined by the attitude of inter-cultural co-operation which enables ethnic elites to stabilize the political system. The direct intrusion of new social forces into the bargaining process may therefore overwhelm the conflict resolving mechanisms of the system, by burdening them with demands and emotions unsuited to the reconciliational nature of the polity.

A key element in the stability of Nigeria's federal bargain, is thus a measure of ethnic 'mass' political apathy in regard to critical issues which affect the balance of power within the political system. Almond and Verba make a somewhat similar point in their analysis of the relationship of the 'civic culture' to democratic stability. They conclude that limited mass political activism and elite political leadership are important factors which aid democratic stability; and that control of elites by non-elites will create governmental ineffectiveness and instability. They write:

If elites are to be powerful and make authoritative decisions, then the involvement, activity, and influence of the ordinary man must be limited. The ordinary citizen must turn power over to elites and let them rule. The need for elite power requires

that the ordinary citizen be relatively passive, uninvolved, and deferential to elites. 12

Apart from elite political leadership, Nigeria's federal bargain has implications for relations among elites themselves. In Chapter V of this study, we discussed the structure of the 1954 federal arrangement, and the assumptions of equality between regions, which inspired major aspects of the constitutional framework. Here we can attempt to derive from the assumptions of the constitution certain rules of behaviour the observance of which would stabilize the bargaining situation initiated by the federal constitution. These rules describe the characteristic behaviour of the component units in support of the federal bargain.

The following are the rules of unit behaviour:

Rule 1:

Act so as not to eliminate a member-unit or an important 'actor-unit' from the bargaining process. Accept all important 'actor-units' as equal. By 'actor-units' we mean the elite groups who act on behalf of member-units of the federal system.

Rule 2:

Act to oppose any coalition or single unit which tends to assume a position of hegemony in the system.

Rule 3:

Permit a defeated actor-unit to re-enter the bargaining situation as acceptable role players or act to bring in another accredited actor-unit to represent the member-unit.

In a three-unit bargaining situation like that created by the Nigerian federal system, there is a strong possibility that two units will 'gang up' against a third. If the third unit is not eliminated but merely defeated, it is possible that it will

participate in a new coalition with the weaker of the two other units. The probability of such an outcome is necessary to the stability of the bargaining situation.

The rules outlined above, set the limits of behaviour within which a federal bargain like that which was struck in the 1954 constitution, will remain stable over time. All the rules are interdependent, and the breach of any of them will lead to the instability of the system.

Rule 1 however is the key to the stability of the federal bargain, for it says something about the indestructability of the component units of the federal system. This is crucial if any bargaining can proceed, for if a member-unit can be destroyed, we no longer have a situation of bargaining but a situation of domination. The unit that can do the destroying is said to be dominant. Rule 1 therefore posits the unconditional viability of all member-units, if the bargaining process within a federal arrangement is to continue. Without this immunity to destruction, the bargaining situation degenerates into a game of survival for the unit whose position of unconditional viability suddenly changes to one of potential elimination.

In a federal arrangement like Nigeria's, with its assumption of equality and balance of power between member-units, conflict arises when a unit attempts to change the bargaining equation by augmenting its capability to control or influence the bargaining process, irrespective of the desires of other units. For example, we have argued that political authority forms the

basis of elite power in Nigerian society. Therefore we would expect conflict to result when any 'actor-unit' attempts to 'invade' the regional sphere of political authority of another 'actor-unit'.

Since under a federal system no unit is permitted to destroy another, some form of procedural resolution of conflict is in order. In procedural resolution, the units have to stay together and live with each other; conflict is not permanently resolved, but institutionalized in a way that renders it amenable to rational control.

We may distinguish three types of procedural conflict resolution in a bargaining situation. The first is reconciliation, the second is compromise, the third is litigation. To each of these forms of conflict resolution, there corresponds an appropriate set of procedures. Thus reconciliation results when, through debate or discussion, there is a convergent modification of views among the parties to the conflict. Compromise is the end result of the bargaining process, and involves an element of political 'give and take' between the parties to a conflict. Litigation as a form of arbitration is resorted to when the other two procedures fail to resolve the conflict.

Testing the 'Model' in Nigerian Politics

Our approach in applying the model to Nigerian politics is first, to indicate how elite political decisions and power calculations contributed to the dis-equilibrium of the 1954 political

bargain. Then to show how the inability of ethnic elites to redress this imbalance through negotiation and agreement, led them to engage in disruptive and competitive behaviour rather than in co-operative behaviour to control and use the resources of the central government. Finally, we will examine the process whereby ethnic masses were drawn into what was essentially an elite-induced conflict situation, within an elite-oriented political framework.

In Chapter V of our study, we showed how the process of social mobilization led to the growth in federal powers which was not anticipated by regional political elites when the 1954 constitution was formulated. We also argued that the resultant centralization in economic and political matters had a destabilizing effect on the political system. The increase in the authority of the central government accentuated the structural imbalance of the federal system, because the powers of the Northern Region whose representatives controlled the federal government, became considerably enhanced.

After the 1959 federal elections, the Northern Peoples' Congress won 134 of the 174 seats in the North, to form the senior partner in a federal coalition government with the N.C.N.C. After the Action Group crisis of 1962, several members of Parliament crossed over from the Action Group to the N.P.C. thus enabling the N.P.C. to form a government alone if it so desired. After the 1964 federal elections, the N.P.C. won a total of 169 seats in the North, sufficient to give it an absolute majority

of 12 in the Federal Legislature. Given the political weight of the N.P.C. in the Federal Government, the federal superordination which we described in Chapter V, meant that in practice, the Northern Region was dominant over the rest of Nigeria. The North's hegemonic position therefore breached the rule of equality between regions which inspired the federal constitution.

In a way, the North's superior political position was due in part to the bargaining skill of the northern elite, and in part to the miscalculations of southern elites. Right from the time of the northern elite's first involvement in national politics, its attitude to leadership in Nigerian politics has been one which can be best summarized by the phrase 'domination or secession'.¹³ What is more, this attitude sufficiently communicated itself to the other parties in the bargaining situation, namely, the colonial government and southern elites, that these groups had to make continuous concessions to prevent the North from carrying out its threat of secession. The northern elite's commitment to 'domination or secession', thus put the onus of deciding the outcome of most bargaining encounters on the other bargainers; it had the effect of rigging the bargaining equation in a way that other parties were under compulsion to make concessions to the northern elite.

Thus after the 1953 political crisis during which the northern elite made overt threats of secession, the Colonial Secretary unilaterally announced the revision of the constitution to allow

for greater regional political autonomy. This move was clearly aimed to placate the fear of the northern elite that southerners would dominate Nigeria under a unitary constitution. Again in 1957, southern politicians who were anxious to maintain a united front with the North in the demand for independence, did not oppose an amendment to the constitution which provided for the distribution of political power on a population basis.¹⁴ This constitutional amendment set the stage for the North's subsequent domination of the country. Hitherto, the northern elite had been opposed to the grant of independence, but seeing that it could no longer continue to obstruct its realization, decided on the strategy of strengthening the North's position in independent Nigeria. The Sardauna admits that the constitutional amendment "played into our hands".¹⁵

The primary objective of southern elites during constitutional conferences was to bring about the speedy demise of colonial rule, and only after that, to worry seriously about internal political power relationships. In their determination to liquidate colonialism, southern political elites were willing to make concessions on important political questions. Their hope was that after independence, the constitution would be overhauled in order to take care of outstanding political issues.¹⁶

The strategy of southern elites can be gleaned from this statement in the 1964 Election Manifesto of the N.C.N.C./A.G. alliance:

... From the early forties up to 1960 the one overriding aim of all social and political forces in Nigeria was the termination of foreign rule. To this end all other interests were subordinated. 17

This statement of course refers only to N.C.N.C. and A.G. leaders who liked to think of themselves as the only progressive social and political forces in the country. The statement was not intended to apply to N.P.C. leaders who as we have shown, were initially opposed to accelerated independence for Nigeria. Unlike the southern elites, the northern elite did not subordinate everything to the overriding goal of independence, but rather took advantage of southern political idealism to secure a hegemonic position for itself in independent Nigeria.

One consequence of the southern elites' strategy of glossing over important political problems until after independence, is that the independence constitution became a patently artificial instrument, unreflective of the relative strength of the various power groups within the country. Sklar observes that under Nigeria's federal system,

the constitutional allocation of power is inconsistent with the real distribution of power in society. The constitution gives dominant power to the numerical majority - i.e., ... to the North - but the real distribution of power is determined by technological development, in which respect the south is superior. 18

Another consequence of the South's strategy, is the impermanence which the independence settlement came to acquire in southern elite political thinking. Proposals for alterations of the constitution and for the creation of more states in the North began to be made soon after independence, and increased in

frequency with the passage of time.¹⁹ But southern elites' hope that after independence, Nigerians would on their own make necessary changes in the constitution, did not materialize. Southern calls for constitutional changes were met with northern elite indifference.²⁰ The resulting frustration of southern elites was one factor militating against the stability of the constitutional framework.²¹

By far the most important factor responsible for strengthening the political position of the northern elite, and thus undermining the principle of regional equality, was the decision of the N.C.N.C. to form a coalition government with the N.P.C. after the 1959 federal election. The formation of this dominant coalition to control an increasingly powerful federal government, indicates that Nigerian elites did not understand the basic reconciliational quality of the political system which they were operating. The exclusion of an important regional elite, i.e., the Action Group elite, from the exercise of power at the centre, was inconsistent with the principle of regional political equality which inspired the 1954 federal bargain. The N.P.C./N.C.N.C. coalition therefore breached Rule 2 of our 'model' of elite behaviour.

Nigerian political leaders operated on the assumption that parliamentary government, with all its British peculiarities, was the most suitable form of government for Nigeria. This, in spite of the fact that Britain's structure of government was not federal, but unitary, and in spite of the fact that the

British population was at a different level of political maturity than Nigeria's. The dominant elite view was that to model Nigerian government after the parliamentary practice at Westminster, was a sure way of proving to the world Nigeria's readiness to assume the responsibilities of self-government. In a speech to the national executive committee of the N.C.N.C., Nnamdi Azikiwe pointed out that parliamentary democracy

has been used as a criterion to determine the political maturity of any people under the rule of others and we can be no exception. As a matter of fact, it is a declared policy of Britain that no colony can be considered ready for self-government until it has made parliamentary democracy a political reality. In plain words, Britain is unwilling to confer the honour of self-government on any of its colonial territories until there is a full-fledged two-party system in operation. 22

Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the Action Group also believed that parliamentary democracy was the best form of government for Nigeria. He strongly condemned those European writers who argue that emerging African countries cannot practice Western parliamentary democracy, and suggested that their writings revealed the workings of racist minds who "still regard an African society as a group of inferior races".²³

Thus the structure of the government of independent Nigeria was strongly influenced by the elites' belief in a two-party system of government - a belief based essentially on the idea that the 'Westminister model' would work as effectively in Nigeria as in Britain. But as we have pointed out, the stability

of Nigeria's federal system was predicated on the political co-operation of three powerful regional elites, so that any governmental arrangement which substituted this co-operation with competition between a government and an opposition, ran the risk of undermining federal stability.

Nigerian leaders did not consider this possibility when they undertook to graft a parliamentary form of government onto Nigeria's multi-cultural political system. They seemed more intent on satisfying the Westminster definition of democracy, than on adapting democratic government to Nigeria's peculiar political situation. In the thinking of Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Unless an Opposition, as a 'Shadow Cabinet' which is capable of replacing the Government exists, democracy becomes a sham".²⁴ The leaders of the Action Group also believed that for democracy to thrive in Nigeria, there must be an official opposition to the government. They accepted exclusion from power at the federal level in the conviction that "by providing a strong, virile and constructive opposition (the Action Group) will ensure the enthronement of democratic practices - a task to which all Nigerian nationalists dedicated themselves during the long struggle for national independence".²⁵

Contrary to the belief of Nigerian leaders however, democracy does not simply mean parliamentary government as practised at Westminster. Democracy also means the opportunity to be represented in political decision-making. In Nigeria, this opportunity cannot be assured for all regional political parties

by the device of a 'government and an opposition', but by a coalition government in which all important elites are represented. Parliamentary government of the Westminster type encourages competition for power between the 'ins and the outs', and this in turn diminishes the positive value of political co-operation which is essential for the stability of a multicultural political system.

Where co-operation occurs, it has a strong streak of opportunism, usually because such co-operation is based on the calculation of pragmatic interests rather than on the commitment to co-operation as a stabilizing principle of the political system. Hence when co-operation is no longer serviceable for the attainment of certain interests, or when the achievement of certain interests is blocked, competitive behaviour quickly supplants co-operation. Such competitive behaviour is intrinsically different from the conflict which we posited as a normal feature of federal government, for it does not aim at balance, but at hegemony.

We will illustrate these points by analyzing the calculations behind the decision of the N.P.C. and N.C.N.C. elites to form a coalition government - a coalition which at first sight is incongruous given the ideological and social differences between the two elites.

Some writers²⁶ have suggested that the reason why the N.C.N.C. agreed to participate in a coalition government with

the N.P.C. rather than with the Action Group, was the fear that the North might secede if the two southern parties formed a government. To accept this view without qualification, would be to argue that the N.C.N.C. acted with complete altruism, and that the interests of the party and its leadership played a minimal role. The 'national interest' argument does not highlight the calculation of payoff and reward which was implicit in the N.C.N.C. decision. It also underplays the bargaining skill of the northern elite.

Prior to the 1959 federal election, rumor was rife that there was an 'understanding' between Zik and the Sardauna of Sokoto, that Zik would be the first Prime Minister of an independent Nigeria, in an N.P.C./N.C.N.C. coalition government.²⁷ This, more than any other reason, may have encouraged Zik to press for the coalition with the N.P.C., even against considerable opposition within his own party.²⁸ It is not an exaggeration to say that the N.C.N.C. leadership must have felt that the honour of leading the government of independent Nigeria, was the rightful due of Nnamdi Azikiwe who was doubtless, the most prominent Nigerian nationalist.

True enough, the Action Group offered Zik the Prime Ministership, if the N.C.N.C. would join it in a coalition government. Apart from the major obstacle posed to such a coalition by the abiding distrust between the leadership of both parties, the general feeling among N.C.N.C. members was that the Action Group would be a more difficult ally to deal and bargain with.²⁹

The N.P.C. leadership was on the other hand perceived as unambitious, simple-minded and willing to play second fiddle to educated southerners in the actual operation of modern government. The northern elite was believed to be disinterested in wielding power at the national level.³⁰ The Sardauna after all had repeatedly stated that he was interested in the North to the exclusion of any other part of Nigeria,³¹ and Sir Abubakar was known to have a strong distaste for partisan politics, and to want to retire to his farm in Bauchi.³²

The N.P.C.'s assumed disinterest in wielding power, plus the North's lack of trained people, promised the N.C.N.C. an influential role in a government supported by the N.P.C. majority, but relying on the N.C.N.C. for the formulation and execution of major policies. These perceptions and calculations are crucial to an understanding of the tensions which subsequently developed within the N.P.C./N.C.N.C. coalition.

During negotiations on the exact terms of the coalition government, the N.C.N.C. received its first jolt in the insistence of the N.P.C. that Sir Abubakar should become Prime Minister. In addition, the N.P.C. insisted on retaining certain key ministries - Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations,³³ Defence, Internal Affairs, Commerce and Industry, Mines and Power, and Lagos Affairs. Thus the so-called pre-election offer of the Prime Ministership to Zik, was merely a tactical manoeuvre by the N.P.C. to elicit the cooperation of the N.C.N.C. for the formation of an N.P.C. - dominated coalition government. Having

publicly committed the N.C.N.C. to alliance with the N.P.C., Zik could not very well back away from the commitment, even though the expectations of the N.C.N.C. were not fulfilled by the coalition agreements.

Zik refused to serve in the coalition government, explaining:

Out of my own volition, I made it clear that I did not intend to serve my country in any official capacity in this Coalition Cabinet for personal reasons. I begged my colleagues to respect my feelings in this regard and not to press me to change my decision on this issue, which is one of the very few irrevocable decisions in my life.... Satisfactory arrangements have been made about my present and future political status in the scheme of things, and I am quite satisfied with them. 34

No one was surprised that Zik refused to serve in the coalition cabinet. It was obvious that short of the Prime Ministership, Zik could not with dignity, serve in any secondary post. He subsequently became President of the Senate, Governor-General, and first President of Republican Nigeria. All these were largely ceremonial roles, and though in 1959 he had declared that he was satisfied with the coalition government's arrangements for his political future, his subsequent behaviour and pronouncements indicated that he was restive in these roles as time went on.

His yearning for greater political involvement was evident during the 1964 election crisis, when his actions seemed to suggest that he did not accept his role as that of a mere figurehead.³⁵ In 1965 he published an article entitled: 'Essentials for Nigerian

Survival', in which he argued for more executive powers for the President. He explained that

The majority of Nigerians are still illiterate; their cultural development is still limited to the tribal level, comparatively speaking, so that it is the source of power and show of authority that appeal to the primitive mind, the poverty-stricken opportunist and the sophisticated careerist. Psychologically, the tendency to worship and flatter the Head of Government, even at the expense of the Head of State, must naturally lead to mutual jealousies, unless those concerned are incapable of being infected by the virus of inordinate political ambition. Nigeria simply is not ready to have a constitutional Head of State with hollow power working parallel with a power-loaded Head of Government. 36

The N.C.N.C.'s inability to secure the post of Prime Minister for their leader, and Zik's subsequent relegation to politically impotent roles, no doubt began to convince N.C.N.C. members that they struck a poor bargain in 1959.³⁷ This view was reinforced when negotiations over the Six-Year Development Plan indicated that the N.P.C. was prepared to drive a harder bargain than the N.C.N.C. expected, in regard to the share-out of central government resources.

The northern elite was eager to use its preponderant political position in the Federal Government to transfer economic resources to the development of the North. The bargaining weight of the northern elite is reflected in the 1962 to 1968 National Development Plan in which the bulk of Federal Government capital expenditure was ear-marked for the North. The Niger Dam Project

(£68.1 million) in the North, represented slightly more than 10 percent of spending under the Plan. Most of the £29.7 million for defence was to be spent in the North, so also was the £39.2 million for health and education. The Bornu Railway Extension was granted £12 million, and another £35.3 was to be spent on improving roads in the North.

In 1963, the Federal Government decided to grant £4 million to regional agricultural projects. The Eastern and Western Regions whose projects were more advanced and therefore had a demonstrated need for financial help, argued that federal aid should be given to the most suitable and better-prepared schemes. The Northern Regional Government pressed for the distribution of the money on a population basis, with funds not tied to any particular regional projects. The North's argument prevailed, and the money was arbitrarily divided in the proportions of £2.2 million for the North, £1.1 million for the East, and £700,000 for the West.

The 1962 to 1968 National Development Plan included proposals for a £30 million steel mill that would use Nigerian ores, limestone and coal.³⁸ The Plan suggested that the steel mill complex could be sited in either Onitsha in the East or Idah in the North,³⁹ but later an expert feasibility study was known to favour the Onitsha site as the most economically efficient. In view of the strategic role an iron and steel industry could play in stimulating the growth of secondary manufacturing in a

region, it soon became clear that the experts would not have the final word in its location, and that political considerations would play a decisive role.

The North was able to use its superior power in the Federal Government to force a compromise on the issue of location, rather than allow the East to win total possession of this strategic industry. In the spirit of political bargaining, the National Executive Council decided in May, 1964 to have two steel mills, one at Idah (North) and one at Onitsha (East). The decision was defended primarily on the ground that it would foster 'lasting national unity'. No consideration was given to the economic viability of the two steel mills, and it seems certain that had they been built, they would quickly have swollen the ranks of white elephant schemes resplendent in the country's public economic sector.

The behaviour of the northern elite in the bargaining over central government resources, made it clear that the N.P.C. was determined to use its control of the Federal Government to narrow the economic disparities between the North and the South. But since the bulk of foreign exchange for economic development derived from southern oil (especially from the oil well in Eastern Nigeria), it was inevitable that the southern elites would vigorously oppose a policy of reallocation.

Apart from reallocating economic resources, the northern elite was known to believe that the North's preponderant pop-

ulation and political power had to be reflected in the Federal Civil Service and in other institutions of the Federal Government. Northerners formed less than one percent of the senior personnel of the federal civil service at the time of independence. The Federal Government slowed down the 'Nigerianization' of senior posts in the federal civil service to allow time for more northerners to be trained to take over the jobs from expatriates.⁴⁰ The Federal Public Service Commission was instructed to give preference to applicants from the North even though they may have only the minimum qualification requirements.⁴¹ Some senior government personnel were asked to vacate government-provided quarters for junior officials coming from the North to Lagos.⁴² Finally, as part of the policy of increasing the 'northern presence' in federal institutions the Federal Government imposed a quota on recruitment to military schools on the basis of 50 percent from the North, 25 percent from the East and 25 percent from the West.

In addition to these measures, the northern elite was vigorously pursuing a policy of 'Northernization' in its home region. The aim of the policy was stated as follows:

It is the policy of the Regional Government to Northernize the Public Service: if a qualified Northerner is available, he is given priority in recruitment; if no Northerner is available an Expatriate may be recruited, or a non-Northerner on contract terms. 43

In practice, Northernization was being directed much more vigorously against southerners, while the Northern Region Government gave preferential treatment to people from Muslim countries like

Pakistan, Sudan and Egypt. In 1963 an N.C.N.C. newspaper, the West African Pilot, compared 'Northernization' to Apartheid by saying that both "boil down to one thing - DISCRIMINATION. We cannot preach unity and oneness and pursue a policy of separateness".⁴⁴

The policies of the N.P.C. leaders at the federal and regional levels, alienated N.C.N.C. leaders and strengthened the already growing conviction within the party that further trends to the consolidation of N.P.C. hegemony had to be checked. As early as one year after independence, the N.C.N.C. began to show signs of restiveness in its minor role in the coalition government. The party elite began to shift from co-operative behaviour toward the leadership of the N.P.C., to confrontation. The first of these moves came in 1961 when the N.C.N.C. openly backed its ally the Northern Elements' Progressive Union in the Northern Region General Elections. The Action Group also gave vigorous support to its ally, the United Middle Belt Congress.

Both the A.G. and the N.C.N.C. were hopeful that their northern allies would improve on their electoral performance during the 1959 federal elections⁴⁵ and win a significant portion of seats from the N.P.C. Such an eventuality would relax the stranglehold which the N.P.C. appeared to have on Northern Nigerian politics, and would promise the probability that at the next federal election, the southern parties and their northern allies would win enough seats to throw the N.P.C. out of power at the Centre. The separate 'moves' of the two southern parties

thus conform with Rule 2 of our 'model', which enjoins all units to oppose the attempt at hegemony by any unit within the federal system.

The N.P.C. for its part, was bent on proving that its control of Northern Nigeria was unshakeable. The northern elite was in no mood to leave its political future to electoral chance, and so applied violence and intimidation to cow the opposition parties. According to Africa 1961 many supporters of opposition parties lost their lives in 'mysterious circumstances'.⁴⁶ Some opposition supporters were even deported from Nigeria 'on legalistic pretexts'.⁴⁷ The U.M.B.C. leader, Mr. Tarka, was arrested just before the election, and charged with a crime said to have been committed several months before.

Africa 1961 concluded that

what the intimidation has done is to break the spirit of many of the party activists who can see little except years of persecution ahead. By these means against the activists, the N.P.C. prevents the opposition parties from organizing the areas where voting might with an effort be swung against the N.P.C. through the fostering of ethnic hostility to the party, or of dissatisfaction with a corrupt administration. 48

The result of the election confirmed an axiom in Nigerian politics that the party in power could never be ousted from office through the ballot-box. The N.P.C. simply employed its control of electoral machinery to virtually eliminate the regional opposition parties from the Parliamentary process. The party won a lopsided victory, capturing 160 seats while the Action Group

won nine seats and N.E.P.U. one seat. Fourteen N.P.C. candidates were returned unopposed. The important message which the northern elite wanted to convey to the elites of the N.C.N.C. and the A.G. was that the N.P.C. would continue to control northern politics, thereby assuring a Northern majority at the Centre for an indefinite period of time.

In 1962, the N.C.N.C. had another opportunity to attempt to bring about a more acceptable balance in its bargaining weight vis-a-vis the N.P.C. The opportunity was the crisis in the Action Group and in the Government of Western Nigeria. Both the N.P.C. and the N.C.N.C. collaborated in the strong actions the Federal Government took to destroy the Action Group and discredit its leadership. But the calculations of the two parties were entirely different.

For the N.C.N.C., weakening the Action Group and therefore capturing power in the West, was part of its strategy of attempting to augment its bargaining capability in the Federal Government. The N.C.N.C. was the opposition party in the West, and enjoyed a not inconsiderable support in some sections of Yorubaland. Were the N.C.N.C. to capture power in Western Nigeria, it would be in a position to force a North-South confrontation, or phrased differently, to alter the bargaining structure from a three-to a two-person game situation. The two-person game would have the advantage of leaving open the option of a 'grand coalition' once the N.P.C. leadership recognized that the parties in the changed bargaining situation were

more or less evenly matched.⁴⁹

In addition, an N.C.N.C. Government in Western Nigeria might be more favourably disposed to the creation of the Mid-West Region, an N.C.N.C. stronghold and an area where there had been a consistent and persistent demand for a separate Region. An N.C.N.C. in control in the East, West and Mid-West would enjoy an absolute majority in the Senate, and would be in a strong position to challenge the N.P.C. in the play of federal politics. A Senate controlled by the N.C.N.C. could turn the tables on the N.P.C. in the bargaining between the partners in the federal coalition, since the Senate could constitutionally delay all non-money bills of the N.P.C. dominated Lower House.

The N.P.C. did not originally appear to have power considerations in its approach to the split within the Action Group. The A.G. party crisis was seen as an opportunity to break the party which the northern elite regarded as the implacable foe of the North. The N.P.C. leadership was so blinded by its dislike of the Action Group, that it did not give sufficient thought to how some of the measures it supported to punish the A.G., would affect its own power relationship with the N.C.N.C. For example, the destruction of the A.G. in the West would strengthen the N.C.N.C. since that party already formed a virile opposition in the West, and was organized enough to step into the power vacuum which would result from the decline

of the A.G. By the same token, the excision of the Mid-West Region from Western Nigeria would redound to the political power of the N.C.N.C. stronghold.

Once the northern elite realized that the N.C.N.C. might reap most of the political benefits from the destruction of the A.G. and the creation of the Mid-West Region, it became crucial for it to forestall N.C.N.C. moves. The northern elite was anxious to avoid a North-South confrontation in Nigerian politics, for this would throw in relief northern domination of the federation; whereas alliance with one of the southern parties would give an N.P.C. - dominated federal government the semblance of a national government.

After the period of Emergency in Western Nigeria, the N.P.C./N.C.N.C. federal coalition restored the Akintola faction of the Action Group to power in the Western Nigeria Government. Akintola meanwhile had formed a new party, the United Peoples' Party. The reinstatement of party government in the West was not an indication that the N.P.C. and the N.C.N.C. had accepted the new Western Region elite as essential actors in the bargaining situation. The West was still a pawn in the power struggles between the N.C.N.C. and the N.P.C.

In keeping with its ultimate goal of capturing power in the West, the N.C.N.C. agreed to enter into alliance with Akintola's U.P.P. to form an N.C.N.C./U.P.P. government in the West. For both parties however, this was a marriage of convenience.⁵⁰

As far as the N.C.N.C. was concerned, the U.P.P. and Akintola were expendable items once it could get a toe-hold on the government. Akintola on the other hand saw the N.C.N.C., and not the N.P.C. as the real threat to the interest of Western Nigeria. In his view, the N.C.N.C. was an Ibo party, and he would not be instrumental in subordinating Yoruba interests to Ibo interests. His willingness to form a coalition with the N.C.N.C. was merely a delaying tactic to give him time to seek agreement with the N.P.C. leadership.

But for the self-centered calculations which motivated the N.C.N.C. and Akintola, the N.C.N.C./U.P.P. alliance was a rational 'move' which would have stabilized the political system, by balancing the political weight of the Northern monolith with the combined political forces of the South. However, Akintola's attempts at rapprochement with the northern elite threatened to restore the three-person bargaining situation which had enabled the North to play off the southern regions against each other, in order to maintain its own political dominance. The N.C.N.C. therefore felt compelled to make overtures to the defeated rump of the Action Group, as part of its strategy of crystallizing southern political forces to checkmate northern political dominance. Akintola's move to conciliate the northern elite, and the N.C.N.C.'s countermove to undermine Akintola's power-base with the help of the A.G., therefore prolonged the political uncertainty which followed in the wake of the Federal Government's action against leaders of the Action Group in 1962.

Our analysis so far shows how elite decisions shaped the evolution of the Nigerian political system immediately before and after independence. By 1961/62, the federal system was in disequilibrium because of the increasing centralization in political and economic affairs, the preponderant bargaining position of the northern elite in the federal government, but most of all, because of the federal government's violation of the principle of regional security in its actions against the A.G. elite.

The treatment of the Action Group was a clear assault on the fundamental principle on which the stability of the federal system rested, namely, the mutual recognition of spheres of interests and autonomy for regional political elites. The elimination of the Action Group from the bargaining process changed the 'rules of the political game', and therefore was bound to have repercussions throughout the whole political system.

What was needed to stabilize the political system, was a concerted effort by elites to negotiate another political bargain which would reflect the new centralization of power, by balancing the interests of ethnic elites within the central government, and not by the device of regional security as was the case with the 1954 federal bargain. Until new rules could be established however, the political field of action would be analogous to a 'gambler's environment' in which the end justifies the means, and the conception of what is permissible or impermissible is solely dependent on the objectives of the protagon-

ists. Nigerian politics after 1962 lacked any 'boundary determining rules' within which the political game could be played out without threatening the political survival of the country itself.

The vulnerability of regional power systems to central authority evoked two paradoxical reactions from regional political elites. On the one hand, each ruling ethnic elite sought to protect its power-base in the region, by attempting to be in power in the federal government; and on the other hand, each relied on appeals to ethnic exclusiveness to ward off federal government encroachment on its regional power-base. As we shall see presently, both strategies compounded the growing instability of the political system.

The inter-regional elite struggles for the control of the federal government was of course encouraged by the idea implicit in parliamentary government, that power can be acquired and legitimated by winning an electoral majority. But as we have argued, governmental legitimacy in a reconciliational political system like Nigeria's, cannot depend on majority rule alone; it must also be based on the mutual political accommodation of regional elites. Hence the aspiration of regional elites to achieve control of the federal government to the exclusion of one another, could only have serious unstabilizing effects on the political system, especially given the fact that no regional elite could feel safe trusting its political future in the hands of another regional elite,⁵¹ and that the northern

and southern elites represented diametrically opposed interests and perspectives in Nigerian politics.

In terms of our model of elite behaviour, the effort of regional parties to win majority representation at the centre is inconsistent with Rule 2 which enjoins elites to oppose any coalition or single unit which tends to assume a position of hegemony in the political system. The model predicts that such inconsistency could lead to the instability of the political system.

According to our model also, reliance on ethnicity to defend a regional statusquo would undermine a key element in the stability of the federal system, i.e., that a measure of ethnic 'mass' political apathy is essential, so that elites can negotiate and compromise with one another without fear that their decisions might be vetoed by anomic participation in the political process.

By invoking ethnicity, an elite group is in effect serving notice that it might carry political conflict over 'value' allocation outside 'rational' channels, unless it gets what it considers to be a fair deal in the bargaining for power with other regional elites. This threat in itself raises fears for law and order, since the emotional intensity of ethnic conflict is not easily susceptible of control, once it bursts forth. Therefore, if the 'rational' procedures of conflict resolution are allowed to fail, the lack of alternative institutional procedures to manage mass ethnic involvement in the bargaining

process would lead to violence. And violence creates an atmosphere in which compromise is difficult, thereby threatening the persistence of the political system. Since the political elites have a mutual interest in the preservation of the political system (which after all is the source of their status and perquisites), there is a strong compulsion to settle the conflict at the elite level, before the involvement of mass emotion makes the conflict unmanageable.

Sometimes however, other elites refuse to be black-mailed by the invocation of ethnicity, and in turn use appeals to ethnic symbolism and fears, to counter-attack the position of the aggrieved elite. The conflict then becomes thoroughly 'tribalized', the bargaining processes become emotionally charged, and a grave political crisis settles on the bargaining structure, i.e., the political system.

Between 1962 and 1964, the Nigerian political system was virtually immobilized by this form of political bargaining whereby ethnic elites sought to gain vantage positions in the political process, and to influence each other's political behaviour by charges and counter-charges of tribalism.

The contests for power between the N.P.C. and the N.C.N.C. which we discussed earlier, were quiet manoeuvres in which each party elite's major concern was to consolidate its political position for the ultimate showdown - the 1964 Federal Election. That event was to determine who would win the coveted prize, -

control of the Federal Government and its enormous resources. The preliminary struggles for power did not adversely affect the N.P.C./N.C.N.C. coalition at the Centre, because they were only tangentially related to the struggle to control the Federal Government. After all, even if the N.P.C. lost political ground in the South to the N.C.N.C., it would only be forced to make some concessions and the defeat by itself would not necessarily cause it to lose control of the political plum - the Federal Government. The one event which threatened to do this, was the census count of 1962 and 1963, and its repercussions strained the N.P.C./N.C.N.C. federal coalition to the utmost limit.

The census count had grave implications for the power of political elites, because of the Constitution's provision that the number of inhabitants in each electoral constituency should be as nearly equal as possible.⁵² This means that after a census, constituencies have to be redrawn and the region with a majority population would have majority representation in Parliament. Given the tendency of each region to support a particular party, the result of the 1964 Federal Election, and the question of who would control the Federal Government, could very well be settled by the result of the census count.

The N.P.C. Federal Minister of Economic Development, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, was speaking with tongue in cheek, when he declared in Parliament that "the conducting of a census in Nigeria is not a political matter".⁵³ While acknowledging that the

census would provide a basis for the distribution of seats in Parliament, the Minister considered this "the least of the important reasons for which we in Nigeria conduct our census".⁵⁴

In spite of the Minister's disclaimer, there was no doubt that the foundation of N.P.C. power at the federal level rested on an ascriptive factor, i.e., population. The 1952/53 Census was the basis for allocating the majority of the 312 seats in the Federal House to the Northern Region. The North was assigned 174 seats, the East 73, the West 62 and Lagos territory 3. Southern politicians clearly hoped that the results of the 1962 census would show the population of the North in the minority, thereby ending the North's absolute power at the Centre.⁵⁵ To this end, the governments of Eastern and Western Nigeria mounted a major propaganda campaign to encourage people in their regions to 'count themselves in'. The governments stressed the importance of the census for local council representation, and for determining the amount of government amenities allocated to particular areas.⁵⁶ In Eastern Nigeria, the various Village and Town Improvement Unions worked hard to enumerate people in their area, and sent word to their sons and daughters ordinarily resident in other parts of Nigeria, to return home to be enumerated. Thousands did so.

When the results of the census was handed to the N.P.C. Federal Minister of Economic Development, he delayed public disclosures of the figures. This led to suspicions in the southern press that the N.P.C. was juggling the census figures.⁵⁷ On

November 15, 1962, the Daily Times alleged that census counts were still going on in the North, whereas all counts were supposed to have ended on 21 May. An N.P.C. official indirectly acknowledged the validity of this allegation by admitting in an interview, that 20,000 Ibos living in the Gboko Division of Northern Nigeria had to be counted again because during the census, they had travelled to Eastern Nigeria to be counted, so as to swell the population there to the disadvantage of Northern Nigeria.⁵⁸

The unofficial results of the census indicated amazing percentage increases in the population of each Region. The East showed an increase of 71 percent, the North 30 percent and the West 70 percent. This meant that had the figures been accepted, the dominant position of the North in the federation would have come to an end. The N.P.C. Minister in charge of the census lost no time in dismissing the figures as 'false' and 'grossly inflated', and went on to accuse the East of rigging its figures.⁵⁹ The Minister read from the report of the Chief Federal Census Officer which stated that "the figures recorded throughout the greater part of Eastern Nigeria during the present census are false and have been inflated. The figures for the five divisions of Awka, Brass, Degema, Eket, and Opobo, which have recorded increases of over 100 and 120 percent, can certainly be rejected out of hand".⁶⁰ According to the Minister, no adverse criticism was made of Northern Nigeria census figures in the report.

The attack on Eastern Nigeria brought sharp reactions from N.C.N.C. parliamentarians. The N.C.N.C. members demanded the resignation of the N.P.C. Minister in charge of the census, and also the resignation of the Chief Federal Census Officer.⁶¹ On December 7th, 1962 an N.C.N.C. parliamentarian, D. N. Abii, demanded a full debate of the census issue.

When his motion was defeated, several members of the N.C.N.C. walked out of the House. The Prime Minister thought the matter so serious that he took the unusual step of openly rebuking the Minister in charge of the census, for his tactless statements in reference to some Regions.⁶² The Prime Minister then announced that the 1962 census would be cancelled, and another census taken the following year under his supervision.

The result of the 1963 Census was officially published on February 24, 1964. Table 1 compares the 1963 results with the population figures from the 1952/53 Census. The political significance of the 1963 census figures was that the North retained its majority representation in the Federal House. The census results meant that seats in the Federal House would be allocated in the following proportions: North 167, East 70, West 57, Mid-West 14, Lagos 4.

This renewed prospect of northern political domination was a great disappointment to those southern elites who had hoped that the census results might promise something different. The President of the N.C.N.C., Dr. M. I. Okpara, led the majority of

TABLE 1

REGION	POPULATION 1952-53 (in thousands)	POPULATION 1963 (in thousands)	% increase
North	16,840	29,809	77.0
East	7,218	12,394	71.7
West	4,595	10,266	123.4
Mid-West	1,492	2,536	70.0
Lagos	272	665	144.1
All Nigeria	30,417	55,670	83.0

the southern elites in attacking the census figures. He repudiated the figures as grossly inflated and therefore worthless, and warned that his party and the Government of Eastern Nigeria would resist any attempt to use the figures as the basis for the 1964 federal elections.⁶³

The President of the N.P.C., the Sardauna of Sokoto, announced on the other hand, that his government believed that the Census had been "properly and efficiently conducted and that no better organization could have been made".⁶⁴ He deplored the fact that in rejecting the Census figures, Dr. Okpara had singled the North out for detailed criticism, and warned:

I am quite capable of mounting counter-charges. I do not however like my present attitude to be misunderstood for cowardice. I want to make it categorically clear that my people, my government and my party are fully prepared at any hour of the day, in any eventuality to meet any challenge. If therefore unfair and baseless attacks persist against us we shall be forced to break the unilateral truce which I have maintained and retaliate fearlessly and in the manner in which we are attacked⁶⁵

The Sardauna then stated that the Government of Northern Nigeria was prepared to use the census figures for demarcating constituencies in the regional legislature.⁶⁶ The inference was that the Federal Government should do the same in regard to the Federal Legislature.

Once the two main protagonists had been heard from, it remained to see on whose side the other regions would throw their weight. The Premier of the Mid-West at first supported the

President of his party Dr. Okpara, but later reconsidered his position. The new Mid-West Region was heavily dependent on the Federal Government for much of its capital expenditure outlay,⁶⁷ and Chief Osadebay must have thought that it was imprudent to antagonise the northern elite over the census issue. He announced that he would accept the census figures 'in the interest of national unity'.⁶⁸

In Western Nigeria, controversy over the census results triggered off a realignment of political parties which considerably compounded the power struggle over the census count. The Western Parliamentary members of the N.C.N.C. rejected the census figures, but Chief Akintola whose United Peoples' Party was in coalition with the N.C.N.C., accepted the census figures on behalf of the Government of Western Nigeria.

On March 10, 1964, Chief Akintola dissolved the N.C.N.C./U.P.P. coalition government, and announced the formation of a new party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party. The new party included the Southern Peoples' Congress, an ally of the N.P.C. in Ibadan, ex-U.P.P. members and fourteen N.C.N.C. members of the Regional House of Assembly. Chief Akintola then called on the Ministers who served under the N.C.N.C./U.P.P. coalition to declare for the N.N.D.P. or quit their posts. As the Ministers did not wish to go into opposition, a majority of them complied, including the Parliamentary leader of the Western N.C.N.C., Chief Fani kayode. Thus Chief Akintola was able to exploit the census controversy to dispense with the N.C.N.C., and to achieve his

long sought-after rapprochement with the northern elite.

In a sense, the census controversy was the opening shot in the campaign for control of the power of the Federal Government after the 1964 election. Both the leadership of the N.C.N.C. and of the N.P.C., were very much aware of what the defeat of their position on the census issue would mean for their electoral chances. Dr. Okpara acknowledged this much when he declared:

Since the mere publication of the census figures precludes a leader of a major political party from aspiring to the leadership of the nation, something must be wrong with the set-up in Nigeria where one can already know that he has won and his opponent lost a general election on the basis of census figures. 69

The N.P.C. leaders won the first major challenge to their power in the Federal Government, by convincing a majority of the regions to accept population figures which confirmed a status quo of northern dominance. Only the N.C.N.C. Government of Eastern Nigeria remained recalcitrant. The northern elite could not belittle the opposition of the N.C.N.C., for there was a real chance that the attitude of the party might encourage people to impugn the legitimacy of a government elected on the basis of the contested census figures. Therefore the N.C.N.C. leaders had to be 'persuaded' to fall in line, and the most effective bargaining tactic to hand was tribalism.

The strategy was to put pressure on N.C.N.C. leaders to modify their behaviour, otherwise Ibos living in the North would be dispossessed. The Northern Government newspaper issued an

ultimatum to the N.C.N.C. to accept the census or withdraw Ibos from the North.⁷⁰ The paper described the Ibos as being "so industrious, migratory ... impenetrably united tribesmen".⁷¹ For the census they "fly to the East, inflate the population there and return smiling to continue to thrive affluently in the North".⁷² The paper also carried a cartoon depicting Ibos as cannibals. The caption read: "A feast - could this be the reason why the population is low".⁷³

In the Northern House of Assembly, statements were made to the effect that Ibos should be deprived of their residential plots and market stalls, that Ibo permits to run hotels be terminated, that Ibos in the federal civil service in the North be thrown out, and that Ibos should be repatriated to the East. The following is a sample of statements by Members of the House of Assembly.

Mallam Muhammadu Mustapha Gyari:

On the allocation of plots to Ibos, or allocation of stalls I would like to advise the Minister that these people know how to make money and we do not know the way and manner of getting about this business ... We do not want Ibos to be allocated with plots, I do not want them to be given plots.... 74

Mallam Mukhtar Bello:

I would like to say something very important that the Minister should take my appeal to the Federal Government about the Ibos in the Post Office. I wish the numbers of these Ibos be reduced ... There are too many of them in the North. They were just like sardines and I think they were just too dangerous to the Region. 75

Alhaji Usman Liman Sarkin Musawa:

What brought the Ibos into this Region? They were

here since the Colonial Days. Had it not been for the Colonial Rule there would hardly have been any Ibo in this Region. Now that there is no Colonial Rule the Ibos should go back to their Region. There should be no hesitation about this matter. Mr. Chairman, North if for Northerners, East for Easterners, West for Westerners and the Federation is for us all - Applause. 76

In response to all these requests for Ibos to be thrown out of their jobs in the North, the Premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello assured the Members: "It is my most earnest desire that every post in the Region, however small it is, is to be filled by a Northerner".⁷⁷ -- Applause.

Thus these statements 'tribalized' the complex political issues involved in the census controversy. The northern elite was using Ibos living and working in the North as 'hostages' in the bargaining with leaders of the N.C.N.C. The danger was that the generality of the population might not understand the speeches of politicians in this light, and so might be incited to acts of tribal violence.

The northern elite knew that Ibos in the North were not a parasitic group, but an important asset in the economic activities of northern communities. They were aware that an exodus of Ibos would have a crippling effect on the northern economy, yet they spoke as though Ibos were a liability to the economy. Some less sophisticated northern officials proceeded to carry out the threats issued by politicians, by depriving thousands of Ibos of their market stalls. The Sardauna subsequently intervened to halt further mass evictions.⁷⁸

Even with the threats by northern leaders to dispossess Ibos, the Eastern Nigeria Government stood firm by its rejection of the census figures. The editor of the Eastern Government newspaper, M. C. K. Ajuluchuku stated:

I think the N.P.C. leaders are merely bluffing. They know that Dr. Okpara means to stand firm and that the East is ready to march, albeit constitutionally. The North cannot afford a break-up of the Republic. 79

The paper carried stereotypes of the North, describing the northern elite as 'cattle-rearing legislators' and 'the nomadic herdsmen of the N.P.C.' It warned the northern elite to desist from acts which might break the federation, and suggested that the collapse of the Nigerian federation would be an economic disaster for northerners since they have nothing up there to eat. They have no access to the sea.⁸⁰

The Ibo State Union quickly joined the fray. In a newspaper advertisement,⁸¹ it asserted that the Ibo nation was threatened with annihilation, and called on all Ibos to be vigilant and to close ranks. In reference to the tribalist statements by northern leaders, the newspaper advertisement stated:

These attacks and pronouncements against the Ibos make it clear beyond all doubt that there is a well-laid plan and organized conspiracy to isolate, crush and totally annihilate or reduce all Ibos to the status of slaves in Nigeria ... 82

In the Western Region, the Ibos were also under pressure from Akintola's new N.N.D.P. The new party made it plain that its sole raison d'être was to bargain for more elite employment

for Yorubas in the Federal Government, and to increase the flow of federal aid and amenities to the Western Region. The party apparently judged that the most effective means to achieve its objectives was the tactic of tribalism. In a statement announcing the inauguration of the party, the Yoruba leaders complained that "notwithstanding our wealth and high social advancement, Western Nigeria has become a mere appendage in the community of the Federal Republic mainly because its people are disunited and disorganized".⁸³ The statement emphasized claims of job discrimination, asserting that Yorubas "have been superseded by relatives, tribesmen and clansmen of Eastern N.C.N.C. Chairmen, who shout the slogan of 'One Nigeria' more than anyone else".⁸⁴

In a White Paper,⁸⁵ the Government of Western Nigeria emphasized that Yorubas must unite against the Ibos if they "want to be able to enjoy a fair share of the riches and good heritage of their own country and fatherland".⁸⁶ The White Paper regretted that

...there are among Leaders of a certain part of the Federation, ... (people) who appear to regard the Federal Government as a limited liability company, of which only their kith and kin should be the sole shareholders. Although they do not hold even a quarter of the shares at the moment, they apportion to themselves and, to the detriment of the people of Western Nigeria, more than a lion's share of the dividends. The imbalance must be removed. To succeed in doing so, those who suffer as a result of it, that is the people of Western Nigeria, must band themselves together. 87

The White Paper then canvassed the tribal background of

senior personnel in the Nigerian Railway Corporation, the Nigerian Ports Authority, the Nigerian Airways, etc., and concluded that the majority of the senior staff in these corporations were Ibos.⁸⁸

The Nigerian Railway Corporation bought a full-page newspaper advertisement to deny the charges,⁸⁹ and the Ibo State Union replied with allegations of job discrimination against Chief T. O. S. Benson, the Yoruba Federal Minister in charge of the Nigerian Television Service.⁹⁰

The preceding analysis indicates that Nigerian political elites were increasingly unwilling to isolate and conciliate political conflicts at the elite level. The capacity to do so is essential to the stability of the Nigerian political system which as we stated earlier, is a system of elite accommodation, not of ethnic mass involvement. The elites were unwittingly engineering the collapse of the political structure by relying on ethnic mass involvement to solve the balance of power problems in an elite-oriented political system.

The tribal recriminations over the census were still going on when the elites began to prepare for the next event in the continuing struggle for power. That event was the 1964 Federal Election. It highlighted the reliance of regional elites on ethnic chauvinism in their bid for power at the Centre. The elites seemed insensitive to the fact that in espousing tribalism they were undermining the inter-cultural peaceful co-existence which is the essence of Nigeria's political community.

The first move in the 1964 electoral struggle was made on June 2, when the President of the N.C.N.C. announced that the party was opting out of the coalition with the N.P.C., at the dissolution of Parliament. The N.C.N.C. intended to fight the federal election in alliance with the Action Group.⁹¹ On the same day, N.P.C. leaders announced in Kaduna that they would drop the N.C.N.C. from the coalition in favour of the N.N.D.P., and that if necessary, the N.P.C. would rule alone after the election.⁹²

The N.C.N.C./A.G. Alliance became known as the United Progressive Grand Alliance (U.P.G.A.), and the N.P.C./N.N.D.P. Alliance as the Nigerian National Alliance (N.N.A.). The two alliances were supported by minor parties in the North and South, for example N.E.P.U. and U.M.B.C. supported the U.P.G.A. in the North, while the Mid-West Democratic Front and the Niger Delta Congress supported the N.N.A. in the South.

Both Alliances went through the ritual of issuing manifestoes, but it was obvious that the issue was not differences in party policies. The real issue was whether the North would continue to dominate the federation with the help of a weak southern ally, or whether an alliance of southern parties led by the N.C.N.C., would succeed in taking power from the northern elite.

The northern elite viewed the evolution of the new alliances with great anxiety. It had been a cardinal policy of N.P.C. leaders to work against a situation which might polarize Nigerian

politics into a North-South confrontation. And yet, here were the South's two most popular political parties banding together against the N.P.C. This was exactly the sort of development which the Sardauna described in his autobiography as dangerous to northern interests. He had said that

... a sudden grouping of the Eastern and Western parties (with a few members from the North opposed to our party) might take power and so endanger the North. This would, of course, be utterly disastrous. It might set back our programme of development ruinously. It would therefore force us to take measures to meet the need. What such measures would have to be is outside my reckoning at the moment, but God would provide a way. 93

True enough, the N.P.C. had the support of the N.N.D.P., but that party was only a make-shift parliamentary organization and had never tested its strength at the polls. On the other hand, the southern opposition to the N.P.C. was truly formidable. The Action Group was still the major political force among Yorubas, and was generally expected to win an election contest between it and the N.N.D.P. in the Western region. The N.C.N.C. formed the Government of Eastern Nigeria, and had won a decisive victory in the Mid-West Election of 1964. All in all therefore, the alliances signalled a political cleavage on a North-South basis, and the N.P.C. had ended up with a situation it always tried to avoid.

To the southern parties, the North-South polarization was no less dangerous. The N.C.N.C. had the most to lose if the election challenge to the northern elite's political hegemony failed. Already, some northern leaders were quietly pointing

out that unless N.C.N.C. leaders behaved, the N.P.C. could contrive to discover a state of emergency in the East, and mete out the same treatment to Ibo leaders as was done to the Yoruba elite of the Action Group. The Rivers State would be created, and all the oil revenues from that area would be lost to the Ibo elite.

The policies advocated by each Alliance in its election manifesto also raised the costs of political defeat for the contestants. The U.P.G.A. Manifesto committed the Alliance to the creation of more states in the North as a means of checking northern political domination.⁹⁴ Alterations to the constitution would grant the Senate (dominated by the southern parties) concurrent powers with the House of Representatives, and the President, himself a former leader of the N.C.N.C., would be given executive powers over the Public Service Commission, the Electoral Commission, the Census and the Audit.

The U.P.G.A. Manifesto severely indicted the outgoing N.P.C. - dominated federal government for its incompetence in the management of the economy, and for its suppression of human rights and vitiation of democratic principles. (Paradoxically the N.C.N.C. was a junior partner of that government). If victorious at the polls, the U.P.G.A. would replace the corrupt society which N.P.C. policies have given rise to, with a "socialist society founded on the three cardinal principles of social justice, national greatness and international brotherhood".

Such a society would be organized in such a way that it would be impossible for "the feudal northern elite to ever gain power again".⁹⁵

The N.N.A. Manifesto stopped short of endorsing the immediate creation of states, by saying that "If there is real reason and necessity to create new states out of any of the existing regions, the Alliance believes that the provisions of the Constitution are adequate".⁹⁶ Since section 4(4) of the Republican constitution requires that a proposal for the creation of new states must receive the support of two-thirds of members of parliament, the N.P.C. could use its numerical majority to block the creation of states in the North. The implication here is that northern political dominance at the Centre could continue into the indefinite future.

Instead of the creation of new states, the N.N.A. promised that it would make every effort "to see that all ethnic groups are adequately represented in the civil service, the diplomatic service and in the service of the statutory boards and corporations of the Republic".⁹⁷ During the census controversy of 1963, the N.N.D.P. had accused Ibos of dominating most federal government posts. An N.N.A. government would therefore be counted on to remove some Ibos from their strategic positions in federal government institutions.⁹⁸

If victorious at the polls, the N.N.A. would "preserve and reform when the need arises, the democratic institutions which have been entrenched into the Republican Constitution".⁹⁹

Sir Abubakar later confirmed that an N.P.C. - led government would not contemplate altering the constitution in response to the demands of the U.P.G.A.¹⁰⁰

The N.N.A. characterized U.P.G.A. policies as promising "a vague, ill-understood Utopia", and charged that U.P.G.A. leaders

want Nigeria to take a leap into the dark unknown, flying on the wings of dangerous doctrines which have never been tried in the African atmosphere. They first want to destroy all such institutions as chieftaincy which have served Nigeria so well. They will then establish a ruthless dictatorship and impose the will of a section on the rest of us. 101

Given the high political stakes involved in the election, and the perception of all elites that victory for one elite would mean political ruin for the others, the election contest became quite literally a struggle for survival. In such a struggle, no quarter was expected from the opponent and none was given.

The nervous anxiety of all elites led them to use every conceivable tactic to ensure victory. In particular, politicians freely incited ethnic communities against one another, the aim being to ensure communal voting on election day. The Sardauna of Sokoto even saw the electoral struggle as a 'Jihad' (holy war), and reminded Muslim northerners that it was a religious duty to ensure that none of the constituencies of Northern Nigeria went to the southern politicians. He added that "the Ibos have never been true friends of the North, and will never be"¹⁰²

In the West, the N.N.D.P. called on all Yorubas to rally to the banner of the N.N.A., charging that the U.P.G.A. was the vehicle of Ibo domination of Nigeria. The Yorubas should reject the Action Group which had sold out to the N.C.N.C., and support the N.N.D.P. which stood for Yoruba unity, and which in alliance with the N.P.C., would give the Yorubas a better deal in the share-out of federal government posts and financial resources.¹⁰³

The U.P.G.A. replied with anti-Northern statements accusing the Hausa-Fulani leaders of the N.P.C. of harbouring an ambition to dominate Nigeria for ever. The U.P.G.A. leaders would thwart this 'inordinate ambition' by creating more states in the North, and instituting social reforms to liberate the northern masses from the 'oppressive, feudalistic and reactionary rule' of the Hausa-Fulani overlords.¹⁰⁴ Dr. Okpara, leader of the U.P.G.A. charged that the N.N.D.P. in the West, 'is the baby of the N.P.C.' and that Chief Akintola is 'the Afonja of our times'.¹⁰⁵ - (a reference to the 19th century Yoruba chief whose collaboration helped the Fulanis to conquer parts of Yorubaland).

In a broadcast to the nation, the President of the Republic, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, appealed to politicians to exercise restraint on the tactics used in the election campaign. He wondered why politicians "take delight in beating the tom-tom of tribal hatred and fouling the air ... with vituperations against ourselves, all in the name of politics". "Some of our leaders" he noted, "have carried their propaganda of hate to such an extremity that private

armies are said to be organized in order to liquidate political opponents¹⁰⁶

The President's appeal went unheeded. The election campaign was increasingly characterized by thuggery and victimization of opposition candidates in all regions.¹⁰⁷ Malpractices were more blatant in the North where Native Authority officials used every means at their disposal to harass and imprison many members of the opposition.¹⁰⁸ Some opposition candidates were kidnapped and held in jail till nominations closed. Reports of violent attacks on U.P.G.A. candidates filled the southern press. Headlines like the following were common:

... the U.P.G.A. candidate for Akwanga constituency in the coming federal elections, Malam Iliya Remi, was recently at the Lafia Alkali Court sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labour after being found guilty of unlawful assembly. 109

In another appeal to politicians, the President, Dr. Azikiwe, pointed out ten instances in which the actions of those in political authority amounted to a "calculated deprivation of Nigerian citizens of their constitutional right to freedom of association".¹¹⁰ The President warned that

Should our political leaders ... prefer to crucify the unity of this country on the Golgotha of their inordinate ambition for naked power, then hundreds and thousands of Nigerian patriots, who sacrificed dearly for its unity and its freedom, must take note and pass this doleful information to posterity. 111

Dr. Azikiwe apparently believed that the acute tribal tension which gripped the country at the time of the election, might

lead to a disintegration of the federation. He ended his address on this prophetic note:

And I have one advice to give to our politicians: if they have decided to destroy our national unity, then they should summon a round-table conference to decide how our national assets should be divided before they seal their doom by satisfying their lust for office. I make this suggestion because it is better for us and for our many admirers abroad that we should disintegrate in peace and not in pieces. Should the politicians fail to heed this warning, then I will venture the prediction that the experience of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be child's play, if it ever comes to our turn to play such a tragic role. 112

When nominations closed on December 19th, the N.N.A. had elected 66 members unopposed, all but two of them in northern constituencies. The U.P.G.A. had elected 15 members unopposed, all of them in the East. Most of the uncontested constituencies in the North, were a clear case of northern authorities forcibly preventing opposition candidates from filing nomination papers. In the East however, the uncontested seats were genuinely the result of a lack of opposition candidates. The Action Group, the N.C.N.C.'s traditional opponent, was an ally in the election, and small splinter parties opposed to the U.P.G.A. simply did not have the resources to challenge the U.P.G.A. in every Eastern constituency.

The U.P.G.A. contemplated the situation posed by the large unopposed returns of the N.N.A., it had counted on winning at least twenty-five seats in the North to obtain a majority at the Centre. Indeed the U.P.G.A. was so confident of victory that

earlier in the campaign, the U.P.G.A. leader **was** able to say (in reference to the suggestion that the North might secede if the N.P.C. lost the election),

that no region or party would be allowed to opt out of the federation because it suffered an electoral defeat. This would be unconstitutional; we would not allow anybody to secede. 113

However, as polling day drew near, U.P.G.A.'s optimism had faded into despair. With the N.N.A. already having a head-start of 66 elected members, U.P.G.A.'s chances of forming the next government appeared quite slim. The party leadership therefore decided to demand a postponement of the election, failing which, Dr. Okpara hinted that the East would consider secession.¹¹⁴

When the demand for postponement was not heeded by the N.N.A. - dominated Federal Government, the U.P.G.A. boycotted the election, precipitating a major political crisis. For the U.P.G.A., the decision to boycott the election was a big blunder, since a boycott could not affect the legality of the election, should the Federal Government decide to hold it as planned. The northern elite ignored the threat of the U.P.G.A., and used its power in the Federal Government to push through the election.

The boycott was completely effective in the East and Lagos, but in the North, West and Mid-West, the election was held as planned. The N.N.A. won an overwhelming victory, competing against a token opposition or no opposition at all. But it soon became apparent that the President, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe,

would not reappoint Sir Abubakar on the basis of the disputed election. For five days after the election, the political system was strained to the utmost limit by the refusal of Dr. Azikiwe to reappoint the Prime Minister, and Sir Abubakar's insistence that the President had no choice in the matter.¹¹⁵ Dr. Azikiwe thought that section 84(1), 85, and 87(1) of the constitution enabled him to rule the country directly, or to appoint a caretaker government until new arrangements could be made for a fair election. However, all the Attorneys-General of the federation contested the President's interpretation of the constitution. The Federal Attorney-General and Minister of Justice advised that:

Section 84 and 85 of the (Independence) constitution did not necessarily confer absolute executive powers on the Head of State and that the Republican Constitution did not give the President and Governors such executive powers ... the President had no power to form an interim or provisional government or to assume powers of the Parliament or of the Cabinet. ¹¹⁶

The President subsequently reached a compromise with Sir Abubakar, much to the disappointment of the leaders of the U.P.G.A.¹¹⁷ Part of the compromise was that in return for his reappointment, the Prime Minister should form a broadly-based national government, that fresh elections should be held in constituencies where the numbers voting had been so small as to make a mockery of democracy, and that a commission be set up to review the constitution.¹¹⁸

The important thing to note, is the rapidity with which national political life returned to the patterns which prevailed before the election. The Prime Minister appointed two N.C.N.C. members to his cabinet, and promised to appoint more after elections in Eastern constituencies. Reading the tribal villifications in the speeches of politicians, and recalling the violence which attended the campaign, one would have gotten the impression that the divisions and animosities between Nigeria's tribes were so basic and so irreconcilable. Yet, there in the cabinet headed by an Hausaman from the North, were Ibos and Yorubas agreeing to work together (as they say), 'in the interest of national unity'. It would seem that the phrase 'in the interest of national unity' became operational only when it came to the share-out of federal posts and patronage among elite politicians.

One cannot help detecting a certain cynicism in the attitude of Nigerian politicians who seek power by playing on the tribal emotions of a largely illiterate electorate, but who eschew similar ethnic sensibilities in forming political alliances which advance their own personal interests. The N.C.N.C. accepted the humbling terms of the compromise with the N.P.C., and agreed to participate in a broad-based national government, not just out of considerations for national unity, but mainly because its leaders were afraid of the hazards of opposition life. Given the pre-election threats of the N.P.C. to destroy the power-base of the N.C.N.C. in the East, and given the aggres-

sive anti-Ibo campaign of the N.P.C.'s ally, the N.N.D.P., the risks of being in opposition were too high for the N.C.N.C. By joining the government, the N.C.N.C. elite could better safeguard its position in the East, and forestall any Federal Government move against the Region.

The apparent rapidity with which politicians 'reconciled' their differences after the 1964 election, point up an important logic of Nigerian politics, namely, that governing elites are aware of their common dependence on the political system for status and material well-being. Consequently, though there might be contests for power, there is always room to compromise differences in order not to jeopardize the persistence of the political system.

Nigerian politicians became quite adept at this type of manoeuvring. Their special political aptitude can be described as a seemingly infinite capacity for compromise; so that even as certain conflicts edged them to the brink of disaster, they never allowed themselves to go over, and always bargained their way back to a compromise. It is interesting to contrast the 'flexibility' of the politicians, with the rigid approach of military officers who not understanding the bargaining element of the Nigerian political system, brought disaster on the country by their uncompromising impetuosity.

One must not assume however, that politicians pay no price for their exploitation of tribalism in bargaining contexts.

Many a politician will testify that it is not always as easy to shut off the flow of ethnic antagonisms and violence, as it is to turn it on. In other words, there is an element of capriciousness in ethnic mass behaviour, such that if ethnic outburst is not quickly brought under control, it might threaten the position of elites who instigated it in the first place.

For example in 1961, the internal security situation in southern Nigeria deteriorated to the extent that the Premiers of Eastern and Western Nigeria were forced to appeal to their followers to desist from acts of lawlessness motivated by ethnicity. In a joint statement after the meeting of the Nigerian Police Council at Kaduna, the two Premiers said:

In the interest of solidarity of the Federation of Nigeria and the unity of her people, we individually and collectively, after mutual consultations and friendly exchange of views, solemnly resolve to use our influence to persuade all our men in authority to exercise these powers fairly and in a manner conducive to the peace and progress of the Federation. We also agree to dissuade such of our sympathizers as may be tempted to take the law into their own hands and to indulge in any excess in the treatment of their fellow compatriots but to think always of the good name of Nigeria and treat all Nigerian citizens irrespective of their political affiliation as brothers. We appeal to all leaders of our Parties to use their influence to ensure the continuance of law and order, peace and harmony among the people of Nigeria. 119

Needless to say, statements like the above have only a limited effect on ethnic antagonisms. The reason being that while elites can meet and conciliate their differences, no such

institutions exist to manage mass ethnic conflicts. Invariably therefore, the elites are forced to use police powers to stop the emotional excesses which they helped to incite in the first place; and valuable government attention and resources are diverted into the maintenance of domestic peace and order. This reallocation of society's resources away from the positive goals of economic development, into the essentially negative goal of internal security, promises to cripple efforts to raise the standard of living of the masses - a feat whose accomplishment might strengthen the legitimacy of the elites in the eyes of the populace. We already alluded to this distortion of social objectives in our analysis of government expenditure patterns.¹²⁰

The use of ethnicity to mobilize ethnic mass involvement in elite power conflicts thus runs the risk of accentuating the vulnerability of the political system to mass anomic participation, with all its attendant consequences for the stability of the system. The events following the 1965 Western Region Election, illustrate what happens to a political system when masses of people who are unfamiliar with the operational rules governing that particular political system, are encouraged to participate in resolving power conflicts within the political structure.

Both the NCNC-led UPGA and the NPC-dominated NNA viewed the 1965 Western Region election as the continuation of their struggle for the political control of Nigeria. Hence, the participation of other regionally-based communal parties in the

election, not only rendered ethnicity politically relevant, but gave the election the status and significance of a national contest for power. Charges of Ibo domination and Hausa domination were so rampant, that the election sounded increasingly like a replay of the 1964 Federal Election.

For the UPGA, the election offered just another opportunity to check Northern domination of the Federation. Its ally in the West, the Action Group, was regarded as the party supported by most Yorubas. Consequently, the UPGA hoped that with an AG victory in Western Nigeria, and with the NCNC in power in the East and Mid-West, an anti-northern block could be formed in the South, strong enough to check Northern domination of the federal government. The UPGA would then have achieved the objective which it failed to achieve in the federal election of 1964. For the NPC, the election offered the means of continuing the north-south parliamentary alliance which was the mainstay of its control of the Federal Government.

The rigging of the election by the NNDP government provoked bloody conflicts between the followers of Chief Adebgenro the AG leader, and the followers of Chief Akintola. Meanwhile, both Chief Akintola and Chief Adebgenro were claiming the Premiership of the region, each basing his claims on his own interpretation of the election results.

The struggle for power between the two leaders, and the acts

of lawlessness it provoked in their followers, resulted in a widespread outbreak of thuggery, damage to property and loss of life. The Federal Government hesitated to declare a state of emergency in the Region, and thereby intervene to restore order. It had not shown a similar hesitation in its intervention in the affairs of the Region in 1962, when there was a far less obvious threat to law and order. The difference is that in 1965, the governing party in Western Nigeria, the NNDP, was an ally of the NPC. The NPC-controlled Federal Government was stalling in the hope that the disorders would blow over, without the necessity of federal action to remove an ally from power.

Meanwhile, the security situation deteriorated, heightening the possibility of military intervention in politics. For as H. O. Davies observes, the military "... constitutes an alternative ruling elite to politicians; and the army is as much interested in stable government as any political party. If the government is threatened with collapse through the maladministration of the politicians, the army cannot be expected to endure the ensuing chaos passively. It is ready and eager to step in and fill the vacuum".¹²¹

The regime of politicians was ended on January 15, 1966, by a military coup precipitated by the inability of the governing elites to control the behaviour of their supporters, and to contain the repercussions of the communal conflict inspired by politicians, during and after the 1965 Western Nigeria Election.

Our 'model' posits two basic conditions for the stability of a reconciliational political system like Nigeria's. The first condition refers to elite-mass relations, and suggests that conflicts over the distribution of power in the political system ought to be settled at the elite level with minimal ethnic mass involvement. The second affirms the indestructability of component units of the political system, and the legal and political equality of regional elites. We have attempted to show that in the play of Nigerian politics, the above conditions were undermined by the tactical unwillingness of politicians to isolate and deal with power conflicts at the elite level, and by the actions of the Federal Government against the Action Group elite in 1962.

At a stage in the political development of Nigeria, when cooperation among political leaders was imperative for the survival of the political system, the elites allowed a succession of crisis to erode whatever confidence they had built up among themselves in operating the political system together. The Western Region Emergency of 1962, the Census Controversy of 1962-63, the aftermath of the Federal Elections of 1964 and the West Regional Election of 1965 - all exposed the inability of governing elites to effectively conciliate critical power issues facing the political system. With the national leadership thus stultified by these crises, the army intervened to give political direction to the country.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER VI

1. K. W. Deutsch et al., "Political Community and the North Atlantic Area", in International Political Communities, An Anthology, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966, p. 2.
2. Ibid., p. 3.
3. "National Integration and Political Development", American Political Science Review, LVIII, 3, (1964), 630.
4. Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa, Berkeley and Los Angeles; University of California Press, 1964, p. 9.
5. See the statement by G. Almond and S. Verba that "The relationship between political culture and political structure becomes one of the most significant researchable aspects of the problem of political stability and change". Civic Culture, Boston and Toronto, Little, Brown and Company, 1963, p. 33. Also, P. E. Jacob, "The Influence of Values in Political Integration", in P. E. Jacob and J. V. Toscano, eds., The Integration of Political Communities, New York, J. B. Lippincourt Company, 1964, pp. 209-10.
6. G. Almond and G. B. Powell, Jr., Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach, Boston, 1966, pp. 259-66.

E. Nordlinger, "Democratic Stability and Instability, The French Case", World Politics, XVIII, October 1965.
7. "Comparative Political Systems", Journal of Politics, XVIII, 3, (1956), 398-9, 405-8.

Also "Political Systems and Political Change", American Behavioural Scientist, VI, 5, (1963), 9-10.
8. In Defence of Politics, revised edition, Penguin Books, 1964, p. 24.
9. Our discussion of game theory draws from the following works: John von Neuman and Oskar Morgenstein, Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour, 2nd ed., Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1947.

Thomas C. Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1960.

R. Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa, Games and Decisions, New York, Wiley, 1957.

9. (Cont'd)

Richard C. Snyder, "Game Theory and the Analysis of Political Behavior", in Stephen K. Bailey, et. al., Research Frontiers In Politics and Government; Brookings Lectures 1955, Washington, D.C. Brookings, 1955.

10. My Life, p. 228.

11. Awo., p. 300.

12. Op. cit. p. 343.

13. See speech by the Hon. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to the first session of the all-Nigeria Legislative Council, Legislative Council Debates, First Session, March 24, 1947, pp. 208, 212.

Sir Ahmadu Bello, My Life, pp. 69, 229. Also speeches by members of the northern delegation to the 1950 Ibadan General Conference, in Proceedings of the General Conference on Review of the Constitution, January, 1950, Government Printer, Lagos, pp. 67, 218.

14. Probably the southern elites calculated that a future census would show that more people live in the South than in the North. This would be one way of ending the Northern political domination which the 1954 constitution appeared to entrench, by granting the North 50 percent of the seats in the Federal House.

15. My Life, p. 205.

16. For example during the 1958 Constitutional Conference, the Secretary of State for the Colonies threatened that if southern politicians insisted on the creation of new regions before 1960, the British Government would be forced to postpone granting Nigeria her independence in that year. Though southern politicians believed that new regions were necessary to counteract the monolithic power of the North, they nevertheless agreed to postpone coming to grips with the problem of northern domination, rather than risk not having independence in 1960. See Report by the Resumed Nigerian Constitutional Conference, held in London in September and October 1958, H.M.S.O., London, 1958, sections 44-50.

17. The Manifesto of the United Progressive Grand Alliance 1964.

18. R. L. Sklar, "Contradictions in the Nigerian Political System", The Journal of Modern African Studies, 3,2, (1965), 201.

19. See Zik's discussion of the constitution in "Call for a Republican State", Daily Express, November 18, 20, 23, 1961. Dr. Okpara, leader of the NCNC called for the revision of the constitution to ensure representativeness of all sections of the country in the federal government. See West African Pilot, December 18, 1962. Also the call for constitutional review made by other southern politicians in Sunday Post, January 20, 1963, West African Pilot, August 13, 1964. See finally the Proposals for the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, sessional Paper No. 3 of 1963, Lagos, 1963.
20. See the retort of Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim to one such call in footnote 95, Chapter 2.
21. In his analysis of Nigerian political problems, M. I. Okpara, President of the NCNC, zeroed in on regionalism and the "fact that the most important principle of federation namely, that there should not be one state so much greater than the rest combined that it can bend the will of the federal government. Until these two threats are removed, they labour in vain who labour for Nigerian unity and solidarity". "Okpara Speaks of Crusade for Freedom", Nigerian Outlook, 14 October 1964.
22. "Extract from a Presidential address presented at the meeting of the National Executive Committee of the NCNC held in Owerri Hall at Port Harcourt on October 3, 1952", in Zik: A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe, p. 85.
23. Awo; p. 302-303.
24. Zik: A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe, p. 98.
25. The UPGA Manifesto, 1964, p. 1.

See also Chief Anthony Enahoro, Fugitive Offender, pp. 168-170.
26. R. L. Sklar, Nigerian Political Parties, p. 510.
K. Ezera, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria, Cambridge At the University Press, 1964, pp. 263-64.

K. W. Post, "The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, The Decision of December 1959", in J. P. Mackintosh, op. cit., pp. 420-26.
27. Neither Zik nor the Sardauna have ever put the text of this 'understanding' in writing, nor is there any other published source that claims authoritative knowledge of what the 'understanding' entailed. My own interpretation of the 'understanding' reflects the general belief among NCNC campaign workers in Enugu, of whom I was one.

28. Zik acknowledged a serious disagreement in the party over the possibility of coalition with the NPC, in Presidential Address delivered at the Meeting of the National Executive Committee of the NCNC, which was held at the Lagos City College, Yaba, on December 22, 1959, (Mimeograph). Also Daily Times, December 23, 1959.
29. Interview with two ex-NCNC cabinet Ministers now in self-exile. In view of the prevailing political climate in Nigeria, the interviewees requested to remain anonymous.
30. Ibid.
31. See for example his statement reported in Daily Times, November 28, 1959.

The Sardauna's exclusive interest in the North was reiterated in 1962 when he said: "Consolidation of the North is what is uppermost in my mind and which I have achieved with God's help. And to show our thanks to God we shall continue to rule justly as we have hitherto done in the past" Sunday Post, March 4, 1962.
32. In a letter written by Sir Abubakar in 1957, to Sir Bryan Sharwood Smith, Governor of the North, Sir Abubakar confided: "There is much talk now about a Prime Minister for Nigeria after the Constitutional Conference and my name is being freely suggested as one. Now I do not like to be a Prime Minister under the present arrangements and I also do not like to continue with my stay in Lagos. I am very tired of politics and I am seriously thinking of retiring quietly at the end of the year". Quoted in Sir Bryan S. Smith, "But Always As Friends", Northern Nigeria and the Cameroons, 1921-1957, London, George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1969, pp. 363-4.
33. This portfolio was subsequently given to an NCNC Member, Mr. Jaja Nwachuku.
34. Presidential Address to N.E.C. of N.C.N.C., 1959, op. cit.
35. See J. P. Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, pp. 589-96.
36. Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Essentials for Nigerian Survival", Foreign Affairs, 43, 3, (April 1965), 459.
37. Interview with former NCNC Federal Minister.
38. National Plan, p. 61.

39. Ibid., p. 62.
40. An NCNC Member of Parliament in reference to the Federal Government's reluctance to 'Nigerianize' the post of Secretary to the Prime Minister, remarked: "If the Prime Minister feels that Nigerianization means Southernization, then let him Hausanise it". Kalu Ezera in House of Representatives Debates, April 4, 1960.
41. Interview with ex-NCNC cabinet Minister.
42. Daily Times, November 29, 1961. See also the motion by Senator Fagbenyo - Beyioku calling on the Federal Government to stop discriminatory practices in the Public Service. Senate Debates, November 28, 1961, cols. 949-954.
43. Northern Region of Nigeria, Report on the Public Service Commission for the Period 1st. November 1954 to 31st. December, 1957, Kaduna, 1958, p. 7.
44. November 9, 1963.
45. The NEPU and the UMBC together polled over 35 percent of the popular vote in Northern Nigeria during the 1959 Federal Election.
46. "Northern Nigerian Manolith", Africa 1961, No. 16, August 4th, 1961, p. 6.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
See also J. O'Connell, "The Northern 1961 Election", Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies, July, 1962.
49. In December 1962, the President of the N.C.N.C., Dr. M. I. Okpara called for a United Front Government at the Centre, in which all the regions would be assigned specific proportions of Federal Government posts. West African Pilot, December 18, 1962. The N.P.C. had rejected the idea of a coalition government which included all the parties, since the N.P.C. was politically dominant and would gain little from such a coalition. But if a North-South polarization of Nigerian politics were to materialize, the N.P.C. might well prefer a grand coalition to a mutually destructive power struggle with the South.
50. The discussion in this section relies mainly on the author's personal observation, reconstruction of each party's strategy from newspaper accounts, and interviews with former N.C.N.C. and U.P.P. members.

51. The distrust which Nigerian regions feel for one another is eloquently articulated in this statement by the Northern delegation to the constitutional conference of 1966: "We all have our fears of one another. Some fear that opportunities in their own areas are limited and they would therefore wish to expand and venture unhampered in other parts. Some fear the sheer weight of numbers of other parts which they feel could be used to the detriment of their own interests. Some fear the sheer weight of skills and the aggressive drive of other groups which they feel has to be regulated if they are not to be left as the economic, social, and possibly political, under-dogs in their own areas of origin in the very near future. These fears may be real or imagined; they may be reasonable or petty. Whether they are genuine or not, they have to be taken account of because they influence to a considerable degree the actions of the groups towards one another.... Memorandum submitted by the Northern Region, The Ad Hoc Conference on the Nigerian Constitution, Lagos, 1966, p. 1.
52. See Section 46(2) of the Independence Constitution, and Section 51(2) of the Republican Constitution.
53. House of Representatives Parliamentary Debates, 18 August, 1962.
54. Ibid.
55. The following arguments supported this hope: (1) Southern politicians believed that during the 1952-53 Census count, thousands of southerners refused to be enumerated because they thought that the census data would be used by the British for tax purposes. (2) It was pointed out that medical treatment had spread further in the South than in the North, and that consequently infant mortality rates in the South had declined dramatically.
56. S. A. Aluko, "How Many Nigerians? An Analysis of Nigeria's Census Problems, 1901-1963", The Journal of Modern African Studies, 3, 3, (1965) 371-392.
57. See Nigerian Outlook, October 17, 1962.
58. Daily Times, November 15, 1962.
59. Quoted in House of Representative Debates, 5 December, 1962, columns 2374-2738.
60. Ibid.
61. Daily Times, December 6, 1962.

62. House of Representatives Parliamentary Debates, 5 December, 1962, Columns 2850-2860.
63. See Daily Express, February 29, 1964.
West African Pilot, February 29, 1964.
64. West African Pilot, February 29, 1964.
65. Ibid.
66. Morning Post, March 4, 1964.
67. For example, in 1963-64, the Mid-West government received 72% of its total revenues from federal grants. See Federal Government Estimates 1963-64.
68. Daily Times, May 9, 1964.
69. Morning Post, March 10, 1964.
70. Nigerian Citizen, March 7, 1964.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Northern Nigeria Legislature Parliamentary Debates, House of Assembly Official Report, Session 1964-65, Government Printer, Kaduna, 1965.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Morning Post, March 25, 1964.
79. Nigerian Outlook, March 18, 1964.
80. Nigerian Outlook, March 21, 1964.
81. West African Pilot, March 24, 1964. Also Morning Post, March 24, 1964.
82. Ibid.
83. Daily Times, March 11, 1964.

84. Ibid.
85. White Paper on the New Political Alignment in Western Nigeria, Containing Serious Charges against the N.C.N.C. as the Enemy of Western Nigeria by some of the Leading Members of the Party, Western Nigeria Official Document No. 1 of 1964.
86. Ibid., p. 3.
87. Ibid., p. 4.
88. Ibid., pp. 8-14.
89. Morning Post, April 3, 1964.
90. West African Pilot, April 9, 1964.
91. West African Pilot, June 2, 1964.
92. Daily Express, June 2, 1964.
Nigerian Citizen, June 2, 1964.
93. My Life, p. 229.
94. U.P.G.A. Manifesto 1964.
95. West African Pilot, October 12, 1964.
96. N.N.A. Manifesto 1964.
97. Ibid.
98. The removal of the Ibo Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos in 1965, and his substitution by a Yoruba (Dr. Biobaku) was viewed in some quarters as part of the fulfillment of the N.N.A. election pledge.
99. op. cit.
100. Daily Express, December 28, 1964.
101. N.N.A. Manifesto 1964.
102. Daily Express, July 30, 1964.
103. Morning Post, August 19, 1964.
Also Nigerian Outlook, August 30, 1964.
Also UPGAISM - The Truth Unexpurgated, NNDP official Publication, 1964.
104. Nigerian Outlook, August 30, 1964.
105. Daily Express, August 31, 1964.

106. Message by His Excellency the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Broadcast to the Nation on the occasion of the Republic Day Anniversary October 1, 1964, (Mimeographed).
107. The campaign is excellently described in Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, pp. 576-85.
108. The Big Fraud, U.P.G.A. Publication, United Press Limited, Yaba, 1964.
109. Nigeria Outlook, October 6, 1964.
110. Appeal to the Leaders of the Nation Broadcast over the Network of the Nigerian Television Service at its Victoria Island Studio on 10th December, 1964, by the Rt. Hon. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (Mimeographed).
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid.
113. Nigerian Outlook, October 5, 1964.
114. West African Pilot, December 22, 1964.
115. See, Sixteen Days of Political Crisis from the State House Diary, Federal Ministry of Information, Nigerian National Press, Apapa, 1965.
116. The Attorney General's opinion was later published in Daily Times, January 13, 1965.
117. See for example the statement by R. A. B. Okafor in Daily Times, January 8, 1965; also the statement by the Secretary General of the Zikist Movement, in Nigerian Outlook, January 11, 1965.
118. Morning Post, January 5, 1965.
119. Joint Statement on Law and Order by Dr. M. I. Okpara, Premier Eastern Region, and Chief S. L. Akintola, Premier Western Region, Kaduna, 1961, (Mimeograph). See also Nigerian Outlook, September 18, 1961. Daily Times, September 18, 1961.
120. See Chapter Two.
121. Nigeria: The Prospects for Democracy, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961, p. 76.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

One way of summarizing the arguments in our thesis, is to say that elite interests and aspirations shaped Nigeria's federal political system, and that the political system in turn was undermined by the decisions and behaviour of elites. In each instance, tribalism was only incidental to the conflict over elite interests, a manifestation rather than a cause of political conflict.

We have shown that political elites are the upper stratum of Nigerian society, and that the basis of their power lies in the control of the economic resources of government. Politicians as a group are a new breed in Nigerian society. No other indigenous group had wielded as much power and on a Nigeria-wide basis before the emergence of politicians.¹ Politicians were not preceded by economic and social aggregates, other than the tribe whose languid life was propped up by colonial, administrative measures. There were no proletariat, landed gentry or industrial bourgeoisie to speak of, and no organized society-wide interests from which politicians could expect support or opposition.

Whereas in older societies politicians arose from, and defended pre-existing organized interests, politicians in Nigeria emerged into a society which is relatively unstructured and without organized country-wide interests. The temptation has there-

fore been strong for Nigerian politicians to fill in the vacuum created by the absence of historic socio-economic interest groups in Nigerian society. This has meant that politicians have been mainly preoccupied with the acquiring and retention of governmental power, for government is the engine of economic power in Nigerian society. Hence it is mainly from the standpoint of power seekers and power wielders rather than from the fact of cultural heterogeneity that one can more meaningfully view the Nigerian political process.

In Nigeria as in most developing countries, the profession of politics yields a higher dividend to those who succeed, than any alternative vocations. The dearth of capital, the shortage of entrepreneurial skills and the low level of industrialization have diverted the energy of ambitious Nigerians to politics and bureaucracy, but especially to the former. Politics in Nigeria has therefore become a means of social and economic mobility to those with 'low opportunity cost'. By virtue of their control of the machinery of government, politicians have enormous economic resources at their disposal. In addition, their public role enables them to have fore-knowledge of projected economic plans and to utilize this knowledge in aggrandizing personal economic interests.²

The great social opportunities afforded by politics, explain the fierce partisanship of Nigerian politics, and the grim determination with which those in authority defend their positions, especially as they do not wish to re-live the experiences of a

recent past of poverty. As Chinua Achebe writes in his political novel on Nigeria,

We ignore man's basic nature if we say, as some critics do, that because a man like Nanga had risen overnight from poverty and insignificance to his present opulence he could be persuaded without much trouble to give it up again and return to his original state. A man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes is more reluctant to go out again than another who has been indoors all the time. The trouble with our nation ... was that none of us had been indoors long enough to be able to say 'To hell with it'. We had all been in the rain together until yesterday. Then a handful of us - the smart and the lucky and hardly ever the best - had scrambled for the one shelter our former rulers left, and had taken it over and barricaded themselves in. And from within they sought to persuade the rest through numerous loudspeakers, that the first phase of the struggle had been won and that the next phase - the extension of our house - was even more important and called for new and original tactics; it required that all argument should cease and the whole people speak with one voice and that any more dissent and argument outside the door of the shelter would subvert and bring down the whole house. 3

An important feature of the Nigerian political process which our dissertation has highlighted, is the fact that politicians exercise their power without public accountability or with qualified accountability to an insignificant proportion of the Nigerian population. The great majority of Nigerians are indifferent to politics, or more accurately, do not possess enough educational training to understand the manoeuvrings of those in power. Only a small body of Nigerians in the civil service, the universities, the military and the trade unions display an intelligent understanding of politics, and seek to influence the

uses of political power. As we have shown in Chapter II, government policies are aimed to placate these mobilized sections of the population.

The lack of accountability to the majority of the population is evident in the relationship between a Nigerian politician and his constituency. This relationship is not of the kind suggested by democratic theory, that is, of a politician being the servant of his constituency. Chief H. O. Davies, a prominent Nigerian politician, asserts that politicians in Nigeria consider themselves as the bosses of their constituencies rather than their servants.⁴ Writing of the social distance that develops between the electorate and politicians, he hints that this is due in part to the fusion of the secularistic role of the politician and the traditional role of chiefs. Most of the politicians acquire the title of chief, and are thus able to buttress their 'modern' power with the customary loyalty and deference accorded to chiefly status. H. O. Davies illustrates this point with the role and position of a Nigerian cabinet minister:

His few visits to the village area, to open a new school, factory or hospital are heralded with pomp and ceremony. It is considered a great privilege if he accepts an invitation to preside over a social function in the town. The minister, who formerly eked out a miserable existence as party secretary, now has a sizeable bank balance. While he lives in the palatial ministerial residence, he can afford to build a private house for himself. This anti-colonial comrade who was previously obliged to negotiate long distances on foot is now driven short distances in a luxurious car. Economically, minis-

terial government is a restratification of a society into a new form of plutocracy, at the top of which are the new well-to-do and all-powerful ministers. 5

In view of the uses of political power for the aggrandizement of elite persons, tribalism in political contexts can only be a tool in the hands of those who are in power or who seek power. The more tradition-bound elements in Nigerian society - the masses, are not the contestants for power in the political arena. The rural masses are ethnic-oriented in the sense that their purview does not extend beyond clan and home-village. Political elites on the other hand reject ethnocentrism as a value, and generally regard the whole of Nigeria as their field of operation. Nonetheless politicians are the ones who evoke ethnic symbols in situations of political conflict.

In the dissertation, we have tried to show that the interest of elites in what political power brings, and their behaviour in the quest for this power, are more important variables in the Nigerian political process than the variable of cultural heterogeneity. In our view, political stability or instability therefore depends on how different elites perceive their interests, and what they do to safeguard those interests.

We have indicated in our study that Nigerian political unity was forged on the anvil of elite compromise, that is, on the mutual recognition by elites of each other's sphere of politico-economic interests. We also pointed out that in order

for federal unity to continue, political action must be guided by this principle of mutual elite political accomodation - a principle which C. J. Friedrich describes as 'federal behaviour'.⁶ According to Friedrich, 'federal behaviour' "proceeds in the spirit of compromise and accomodation. It is moulded by the knowledge that there are many rooms in a house that federalism builds".⁷

Our study suggests that Nigerian elites frequently ignored the principle of 'federal behaviour' in their dealings with one another. The elites strove to control the resources of the central government to the exclusion of one another.

We can now summarize the relationship between ethnicity and elite interests in Nigerian politics. Prior to 1954, political tribalism had its basis in the competition between ethnic elites for control of the socio-economic resources of government. After 1954, tribal particularity became institutionalized in a federal system which granted spheres of socio-economic control to the elites of each of Nigeria's three largest ethnic blocs. The result was a federal equilibrium which moderated the virulence of inter-ethnic elite political competition.

However, the neutralization of this equilibrium in the period 1962 to 1964, led to a revival of the fears that one ethnic elite might dominate another politically. The insecurity induced in the minds of all elites by the weakening of the 1954 federal bargain, caused elites to resort to a well-tried and successful

weapon - political tribalism - to protect their sphere of politico-economic interests from encroachments by other elites.

Thus, while the existence of a federal equilibrium tended to inhibit the disruptive potential of political tribalism, the absence of equilibrium tended to provoke a resort to political tribalism in an effort to restore equilibrium. The acute tribal tension in Nigerian politics between 1962 and 1964 was, in keeping with this line of reasoning, engendered by the search of ethnic elites for a new political equilibrium to replace the shattered 1954 federal bargain.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter VII

1. Hugh H. Smythe and Mabel M. Smythe, op. cit. p. 44.
2. See Chapter Three.
3. C. Achebe, A Man of the People, New York, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967, pp. 34-35.
4. op. cit. p. 72.
5. Ibid.
6. Trends of Federalism in Theory and Practice, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1968.
7. Ibid. p. 39.

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