

Kingship in the Age of Extraction: How British Deconstruction and Isolation of African Kingship Reshaped Identity and Spurred Nigeria's North/South Divide, 1885-1937

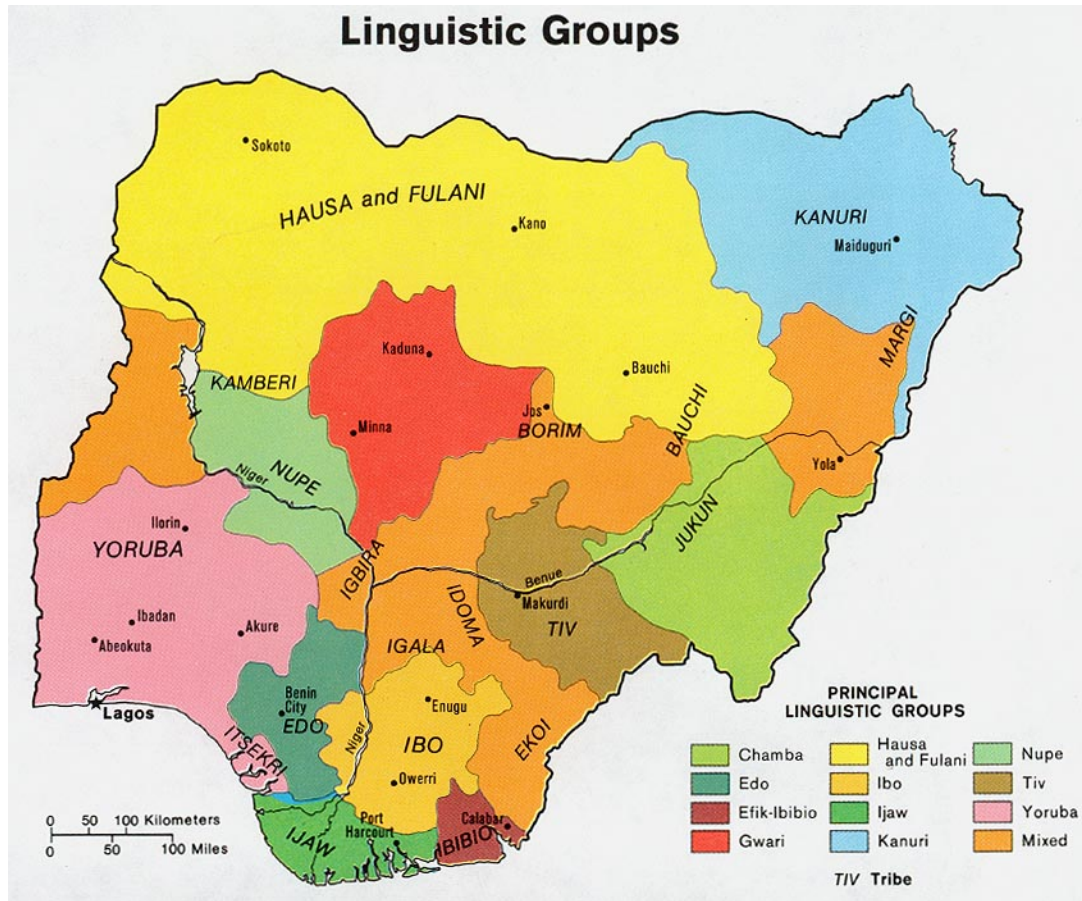
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Honors Thesis
Rice University
Fall 2014-Spring 2015

This thesis is dedicated to all of those whose tireless efforts and support made this work possible: my loving mother, my selfless father, my wonderful advisor Dr. Jared Staller, and our miraculous program director Dr. Lisa Balabanlilar. Thank you all for your encouragement and assistance, this thesis is for you.

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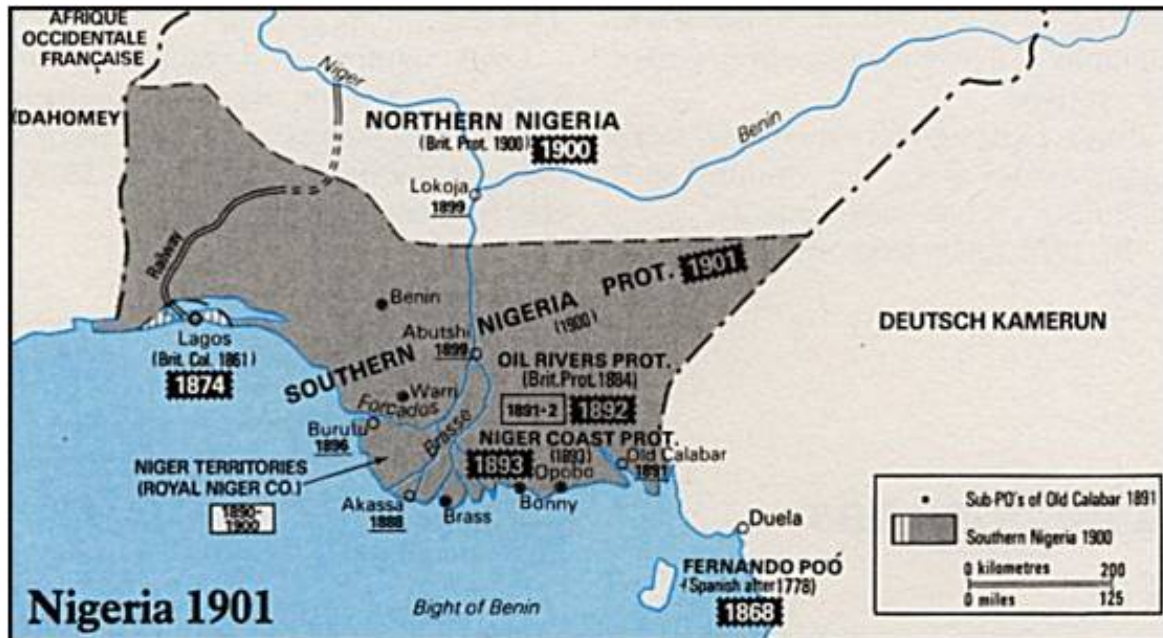
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Nigeria's Linguistic Groups by Most-Populated Region



¹ This map is a general representation of Nigeria's major linguistic groups based on region. Nigeria has hundreds of people groups, so this map is representative of only the major population pockets of the largest groups; Central Intelligence Agency, "Map of linguistic groups in Nigeria," (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979).

Map of Southern Nigeria's Three Colonial Entities



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² This map shows the three colonial entities (Lagos Colony, Royal Niger Company, Oil Rivers Protectorate) in southern Nigeria after the creation of the Southern Nigerian Protectorate in 1900; Dead Country Banknotes and Stamps, "Niger Coast Protectorate, 1893-1900," (WordPress, 2012).

On August 6, 1861 after eleven days of resistance, Oba Dosunmu, the Yoruba King of Benin, surrendered the port city of Lagos to Commander Beddingfield of the HMS *Prometheus* and Acting British Consul William McCoskry.³ With the signing of the Lagos Treaty of Cession Lagos was made into a crown colony in 1862 and governed by direct British rule. Yet as British influence in Nigeria continued to expand over the next several decades, Britain's Colonial Office attempted to limit colonial spending and govern Nigeria indirectly. In trying to apply the same system of indirect rule that was utilized in British Sudan and Egypt, the institutions of colonialism came into direct conflict with the established institutions of Nigerian kingships.

In the southern regions of Nigeria, Africans lived under the governance of traditional chiefs and kings. Having been elaborated on for hundreds of years, the institution of these African chieftains and kings created both a symbiosis and an anomaly among African peoples living in the Delta and coastal regions of Nigeria.⁴ The common institutional function of southern Nigerian kings and queens was to physically embody the traditions and histories of their respective peoples, though the specific political and religious functions of these kings differed from people group to people group.⁵ Through their possession and successful use of power objects and connection to their peoples' ancestors, southern Nigerian kings and queens were considered the living spirits and embodied composite identities of their people. Southern leaders held a social authority

³ Adeyemo Elebute. *The Life of James Pinson Labulo Davies: A Colossus of Victorian Lagos*. (Lagos: Kachifo Limited/Prestige), 143.

⁴ *Niger Delta- Nigeria's southern most region, originally referred to as the Oil Rivers Protectorate from 1885 until 1893. Consists of a belt of mangrove swamps extending 100 kilometers inland.

⁵ E. C. Ejiogu. *The Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria: Political Evolution and Development in the Niger Basin* (College Park: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011), 12.

with all the obligations and responsibilities for their peoples' social well-being, regardless if other local rulers retained commercial or martial authority.

In northern Nigeria, established Muslim oligarchies of Hausa states controlled the region as political sovereigns.⁶ Similar to the sultanates and emirates that the British had encountered previously in Egypt and Sudan, the northern Nigerian emirs came to power through conquest and legitimized their rule as an expansion of Islam.⁷ Unlike their southern counterparts who operated without assumed hereditary lineages, northern emirs consolidated their rule into political dynasties, binding their subjects together through the community of Islam. Proponents of the Islamic principal of the *umma*, the idea of a universal Muslim brotherhood, these northern rulers used this religiously inscribed ideal to create a political atmosphere where all northern Muslims belonged to a greater Islamic community despite ethnic inequalities and distinctiveness.⁸ Therefore, instead of hundreds of people groups with their own traditional local rulers, the emirs' political centrality provided a religious framework for self-identification where peoples who would have otherwise identified more locally now recognized themselves foremost as a Muslim within a geographically large Muslim regional commonality.

As British colonial power in Nigeria expanded from 1885-1914, the Nigerian political landscape was divided between a culturally heterogeneous south with immeasurable resources and trade goods, and a (relatively) culturally homogeneous north devoid of profitable resources. In order to maximize the colony's economic output, the

⁶ *Hausa- The Hausa or Hausa-Fulani are the main ethnic group of northern Nigeria whose powerful Sokoto Caliphate conquered most of the north in 1804.

⁷ F. Okediji. *An Economic History of the Hausa-Fulani Emirates* (PhD diss: Indiana University, 1972), 52.

⁸ Adam J. Silverstein, *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 17.

British invested their manpower and industrial resources overwhelmingly in the south.⁹ In the rich Delta and coastal regions the British sought to actively replace the diverse southern institutions of kingship with homogeneous colonial institutions in order to transition the richer half of Nigeria into a Western colonial conglomerate that was administered by the Colonial Office. As the symbols of local identities of Delta and coastal regions peoples were systematically replaced by British colonial institutions, southern peoples were forced to adopt new means of self-identification through the expanding British colonial institutions.¹⁰ Through the army, the church, universities, and the colonial office, the scores of divergent peoples in the Delta and coastal regions became inescapably linked together as “Nigerians” in the new colonial system.

Conversely, established political systems and Islamic regional unity offered the British an opportunity to govern the resource-poor north without costly, direct involvement. Conquered sultans and emirs retained their privileged positions with minimal loss of authority and British interference. However the lack of colonial financial investment almost immediately spurred a wealth gap between the north and south. As the flow of goods and monies shifted from the north’s traditionally Mediterranean-oriented trans-Saharan trade networks south to the Atlantic ports of Lagos and Port Harcourt, the north became economically isolated from its historic power source resulting in economic collapse.¹¹ With an increasing wealth gap throughout the British colonial period, northerners saw themselves politically and culturally cut-off from the south, incentivizing

⁹ Michael J. Watts, “Peasantry, Merchant Capital, and Colonial State: Class in Northern Nigeria, 1900-1945.” (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1987), 59.

¹⁰ Tekena N Tamuno. *The Evolution of the Nigerian State; The Southern Phase, 1898-1914* (Bristol: Western Printing Services Ltd, 1972), 60.

¹¹ F. Okediji. *An Economic History of the Hausa-Fulani Emirates*, 52.

more strident coalescence around the commonality of Islam-dominated schools, militaries, and mosques.¹²

Thus, the colonial era can be seen as a clash of two cultures between competitively proselytizing and exclusivist ideologies: Islam and Modern Nationalism. Between the deconstruction of kingship in the south and the isolation of similar institutions in the north, the economic growth of the Nigerian colony cemented a dichotomous, geographic means of Nigerian self-identification. Northerners continued, and arguably increased, their homogenous and increasingly geographic identification as Muslims; southerners, through their new identification within colonial institutions, began to think of themselves for the first time transregionally as homogeneously “Nigerian.” These political and identity divisions along a line of colonial investment created both political and personal boundaries, which still dominate Nigerian politics.

Historiography:

Following the Berlin Conference in 1885, whereby European powers attempted to regulate the so-called “Scramble for Africa,” colonial enterprises crafted the territorial borders of the African continent to suit European economic interests. Despite the directives of Berlin however, overlapping zones of influence pitted European powers against one another in a dash to secure territorial integrity through established economic presence.¹³

Nigeria’s early period of colonial expansion from 1885-1914 was characterized by unprecedented and rapid economic growth, one consequence of which was a de-

¹² Maj. Gen Hafiz B. Momoh, “Evolution of the Nigerian Armed Forces.” *Nigeria: A People United, A Future Assured*. Vol. 1. (Calabar: Gabumo Publishing Company, 2000), 445.

¹³ A. Oyewolfe, *Historic Dictionary of Nigeria* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press Inc. 1987), 5.

emphasis of the importance of African oral histories. Throughout the coastal regions of West Africa African peoples customarily conveyed their historic record through the passing down of oral histories. Village law and ancestral traditions were passed down over generations in oral histories and physically embodied and performed in the customs, dress, and possessions of a people's chieftain or king.¹⁴ However with the expansive rise of the British Colonial Office and Western educational and religious doctrines in southern Nigeria, the average African was suddenly thrust into a system that demanded written records and spurned the contents of oral histories. The new British institutions conglomerated the numerous peoples of southern Nigeria into a new system of communication that subverted individual and uniquely local, oral histories and obscured their daily importance.

As a result of colonialism's devaluation of traditional histories and the adopted strict adherence to Western-styled education, African primary sources related to this work are rare. Though some Nigerians today lived through the last period of European colonization, the African historic record is disconnected between the early periods of colonial expansion (1885-1914/ 1914-1937), and the post-WWII colonial era. The lack of primary African documents therefore means this thesis must rely on the records and historiography of the Colonial Office in order to understand the alterations of Nigeria's African societies. In exploring the regularity of British colonial records, the historic value of Colonial Office documents comes, not from the accepted patterns of expansion and profits, but from the irregularities within the superincumbent doctrine of empire. For the thesis I will examine G.I. Jones' *Annual Report from the Bende Division*, a record of

¹⁴ Philip Curtin, Steven Feierman, Leonard Thompson, Jan Vansina, "African History." *African Economic History*. (African Studies Program: Madison, 1979), 171.

colonial governance in the south, and Walter Crocker's *Nigeria: A Critique of British Colonial Administration*, an examination of colonial governance in the north.

In seeking to examine these imperialist primary sources, there is the inevitable difficulty of trying to comprehend the intricacies of a colonized society through the words of an imperial magistrate who may not have grasped something he saw first-hand. For this thesis therefore, it is crucial to understand pervasive biases inherent in the observing culture's paradigm. Once the reader removes the political, religious, racial, and social overtones of the documents themselves, what remains are crucial glimpses into colonial Nigerian societies, from which we can begin to piece together an African historic record.

Additionally, it is difficult to find a term that encompasses the appropriate duties and symbolism of kings, chieftains, and emirs in Nigeria. In a region where self-identification stems from one of hundreds of localized, ancestral histories, it is impossible to accurately represent the intricacies and oftentimes, subtle differences between various African power structures. Within Nigeria each king, chieftain, or emir held a form of social power as the nexus of their peoples' connection to their past.¹⁵ Yet beyond this vague commonality of power, it is extremely difficult to ascertain the precise nuances of each type of kingship. Understanding this, my thesis will use the term "kingship" to refer to the overarching, abstracted institutionalism of Nigerian rulers, including the Igbo's consensus-based government structure, rather than the specifics of each individual group's power structure. The amount of authority wielded by localized monarchs and chieftains varied considerably across Nigeria, but for this thesis, the historic importance

¹⁵ Jane I. Guyer, "Traditions of Invention in Equatorial Africa," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Indianapolis, 1996), 11.

of “kingship” is not in unique, local details, but rather in its uniform, orchestrated change by outside authorities who were, perhaps willingly, unaware of Nigerian nuances.

The South: Declining Kings, Direct Rule

West Africans had been trading with European coastal communities for over a century before the British occupation of port-city of Lagos in 1861.¹⁶ Formed primarily throughout the late 1600 and 1700s, a mutually dependent bond between European traders and African middlemen was created that centered on the selling of African slaves. African large-scale merchants or “Big Men,” captured slaves by raiding neighboring peoples or the rounding up of cultural dissidents and outsiders through judicial institutions within their own communities. A collection of slaves would then be sold to European traders in exchange for a variety of luxury goods.¹⁷ In selling slaves to Europeans housed only on the coasts, African Big Men acquired a distribution power within their own communities. Control over the distribution of luxury goods such as Indian cloths, beads, alcohol, and outdated guns, transformed West Coast Africans’ “utilitarian needs...into conveyed identities,” and the subsequent fueling of Africans desires for expressive commodities gave African middlemen local influence through the “judicial distribution” of their acquired goods.¹⁸

However the British Parliament’s outlawing of the slave trade in 1807 seriously threatened the position of many Nigerian Big Men. The political status of the merchant-middlemen class had become directly tied to their ability to supply luxury goods to their dependents. Over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries, slaves had become the sole export good for a vast majority of Nigerian traders tying their local political power to

¹⁶ Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760-1900*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 60.

¹⁷ Phyllis Martin, “Power Cloth and Currency on the Loango Coast,” *African Economic History* 15, 1986: 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 1-3.

European market demands for slaves.¹⁹ With the post-1807 loss of a steady slave demand, Nigerian Big Men needed to find a new commodity good to offer to the British in order to ensure a continued supply of luxury good to protect their own distributive power. Yet by the 1850s the introduction of medicinal quinine and improved flat-bottomed naval ships allowed the British to expand further into the interior of Nigeria at a rate too fast for the merchant-middlemen class to establish trade with new commodities.²⁰ Essentially, British partnering with eager African peoples further inland nearer the sources of natural resources swiftly undermined Big Men in the Delta and coastal regions who had previously been the middlemen of these trades. Unable to rapidly adjust their commercial system and often times unwilling to abandon a previously lucrative trade network from which they derived power and prestige, Nigerian traders instead turned the slave trade inward as an African-to-African market.

Especially prominent in Yorubaland in southwest Nigeria, southern Nigerians' desire to continue slaving internally pitted militarized African traders against one another as Big Men sought to monopolize a shrunken market. Simultaneously, and ironically, Nigerians continuation of the slave trade provided an excuse for the British to embark on campaigns of military annexation under the humanitarian guise of enforcing a worldwide end to slavery.²¹ By 1888, the three British colonial entities of the Royal Niger Company (south-central), the Crown Colony of Lagos (southwest), and the Niger Coast Protectorate (southeast) were actively campaigning against rivaling Big Men throughout

¹⁹ Tekena N Tamuno, *The Evolution of the Nigerian State*, 24.

²⁰ Toyin Falola and Emily Brownell. *Landscape, Environment and Technology in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa* (New York: Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, 2012), 10.

²¹ E. C. Ejiogu. *The Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria*, 32.

southern Nigeria.²² Particularly in Yorubaland, infighting amongst the merchant-middlemen class exhausted Africans ability to rival British firepower, encouraging additional British inland expeditions.

The British had depended increasingly on coastal Big Men while their control of Nigeria was limited to coastal enclaves, however improvements in technology and an increase in military presence made relationships with African merchant-middlemen economically obsolete.²³ Coupled with British economic detachment from the Big Men, the humanitarian cause of ending the African-to-African slave trade offered an excuse for the British to legitimize usurping the authority of local Nigerian elites. However, while conflicts in the 1880's were sometimes headed by kings or chieftains of a people who cohesively opposed British incursions, a significant portion of British campaigns were waged against the Big Men themselves rather than against a specific people.²⁴ Though powerful in terms of wealth and local influence, Big Men were rarely ever kings or chieftains. Big Men were the economic drivers of the community but did necessarily hold cultural importance and people might turn on them if a better option presented itself. As a result, instead of entire communities waging war against the British, the African side of slavery conflicts was often one of private forces combating British expeditions.

Effectively, the concentrated victories of the British over the slave-based merchant-middlemen class, were successful in clearing away the Nigerian slave trade thus weakening the economic base of British rivals in the colony. In the Delta region Urhobo Chief Nana was removed by British soldiers after refusing to stop his

²² S.W. Peters, "Energy Resources and Energy Policy." *Nigeria: A People United, A Future Assured*. Vol. 1. (Calabar: Gabumo Publishing Company, 2000), 76.

²³ Michael J. Watts, "Peasantry, Merchant Capital, and Colonial State," 63.

²⁴ Joseph Adebawale Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire: Indirect rule and Change in Western Nigeria, 1894-1934* (Bristol: Western Printing Services Ltd. 1973), 14.

involvement in the Yoruba slave trade and the King of Onitsha's town was blockaded with armed British steamers when he failed to comply with British demands proscribing slaves.²⁵ In the case of the Urhobo, British direct military occupation not only eliminated the slave trade locally but placed increased strain on its continuation by depriving slave-traders of viable African markets. However, the removal of local, powerful elites meant that swaths of African peoples were "conquered," without their kings or chieftains ever having opposed the British. Whether intentionally or not, the British pragmatically removed the economic and martial elites of southern Nigeria from their newly acquired territories but in the process did nothing to challenge each community's spiritual elites, whose cultural epitome the British did not understand.²⁶ In short, the military's removal of the Nigerian Big Men thrust British colonial authority into Yorubaland and Igboland where it was not naturally ready to govern.

Despite the suddenness of British presence, southern Nigerians soon experienced a rapid influx of industry and Western culture, which immediately demonstrated a contrast with their existing practices. A bank rush introduced a specie monetary system under the British Bank of West Africa and Barclays Bank that replaced Nigerians' bartering systems; traditional palm oil "plantations" were taken over, staffed with laborers, and began producing palm oil and palm kernels at an industrial rate.²⁷ However, widespread African resistance to the introduction of these commercial changes challenged new British economic hegemony. Between 1886-1899 there were fifty armed

²⁵ T. E. A. Salubi, *Witness to British Colonial Rule in Urhoboland and Nigeria* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2008), 241; John E. Flint, *Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 89.

²⁶ Tekena N Tamuno, *The Evolution of the Nigerian State*, 57.

²⁷ Edet B. Akpakpan, "The Colonial Economy, 1860-1960." *Nigeria: A People United, A Future Assured*. Vol. 1 (Calabar: Gabumo Publishing Company, 2000), 121; Stella A. Effah-Atloe "Women in the Development of Nigeria Since Pre-Colonial Times." *Nigeria: A People United, A Future Assured*. Vol. 1 (Calabar: Gabumo Publishing Company, 2000), 353.

revolts against the Royal Niger Company alone, and in a year's span from 1901-1902, southern Nigerians revolted thirty times against their regional colonial entities.²⁸ For colonial administrators during British expansion in Nigeria, the resilience and volume of African revolts showed that the British could not merely annex their newly acquired territories without deconstructing Africans' diverse political and social structures.

Having eliminated the most militant and well-funded opposition from the middlemen slavers, the political removal of Nigerian kings and chiefs was a simple enough task. The British interpretation of kingship marked kings and chiefs as political opponents and those who opposed colonial sovereignty were targets to be combated, removed, and replaced with British administrators. Yet as previously mentioned, southern Nigerian societies were politically heterogeneous, and no two could be deconstructed the same way. While the colonial experience for southern Nigerians was unique from village group to village group, the British sought to impose homogenous order through two distinct policies: 1) remove and replace existing monarchs or chieftains with a British administrator. 2) insert a solidified, but theoretical, "African" political system into communities that were not previously centralized. Both policies were intended to expand British influence through two different mechanisms of governance. However, in examining the effects of these policies on the Oyo Empire and the various people groups of Igboland, it becomes apparent that in the Colonial Office's removal or alteration of African governing structures, Nigerian cultural values that had become synonymous with kingship were drastically changed.

²⁸ E. C. Ejiogu. *The Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria*, 69.

One of anthropologist Stanley Diamond's key findings during an American conference on colonialism in Africa, was that Nigeria was, "the symbol of investment of British energy and pride in Africa...[and was] an arena for the most comprehensive colonial experiment in indirect rule."²⁹ However while indirect rule proved to be the guiding philosophy in northern Nigeria, I maintain that in the Nigerian south, indirect rule proved impossible to effect. Despite the wishes and claims of numerous British administrations in Nigeria, African life and daily disputes were interfered with too frequently in Nigeria's colonial history for its government's policy to be classified as "indirect rule." While indirect rule was frequently employed by colonial powers in order to manage larger territories, I argue that southern Nigeria was simply too diverse and too important of a territory to be managed without constant colonial interference. The British customs office alone from 1891-1930 was tasked with regulating trade over five hundred miles of coastline ports, starting from the western French colony of Dahomey all the way to the eastern border with the Cameroon territory.³⁰ Yet in the case of the customs office, as was the case in nearly all economic and security agencies in Nigeria, commercial and societal performance did not falter despite the vast area and heterogeneity of southern Nigeria. Regardless of Colonial Office attempts and experimentation with indirect rule, such success was only possible through *direct* British rule in the south. Consistent, direct involvement in African affairs allowed Western institutions to take root amongst southern Nigerians, gradually replacing the removed African kings and their associated institutions.

²⁹ Stanley Diamond, *Nigeria: Model of a Colonial Failure* (New York City: American Committee on Africa, 1967), 6.

³⁰ James Ibrahim, "Security Agencies and Paramilitary Organizations." *Nigeria: A People United, A Future Assured*. Vol. 1 (Calabar: Gabumo Publishing Company, 2000), 451.

Oyo Empire (Yorubaland):

The Oyo Empire provides perhaps the most clear-cut example of Nigerians' loss of kingship and the shift towards self-identification as a homogenous nation. Systematically deconstructed from 1888-1901, the south's largest and quite heavily militarized kingdom was the first to experience active restructuring. Under Nigeria's first High Commissioner, Sir Ralph Moore (1900-1903), the Colonial Office actively removed all kings and powerful chieftains from the south, but was immensely skeptical of imposing direct British rule in the newly conquered Yorubaland. According to Moore, "the European element of colonial administration is too small and individually changing to really govern the natives."³¹ Although Moore adamantly believed in removing openly oppositional African leaders, he was concerned that a foreign system of government would cause even more rebellions and that direct rule would forfeit any chance at normalizing relations with Yoruba chiefs still outside the British sphere.³²

In hopes of fermenting a tradition of colonial indirect rule in 1900, Moore selected five of the remaining major chieftains of the Oyo Empire and, at his discretion, eight to twelve minor chieftains to compose a political entity called the Ibadan Council. Based in a major epicenter of the Oyo Empire, the Ibadan Council was entrusted with a vague authority over legislating justice, road construction, trade, agriculture, and sanitation in Yorubaland.³³ Underneath the Ibadan Council were local, native councils, whereby still-in-place localized elites were allowed to govern local areas, or if no local elites existed, the High Commissioner could create a local council.

³¹ John M. Carland, *The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd, 1985), 45.

³² Joseph Adebawale Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire*, 22.

³³ *Ibid*, 34.

However, Moore's new governmental structure was based on the assumption that the Oyo Empire had been an empire of a single, Yoruba people group. In actuality, the Oyo Empire was at best, a loose federation of dozens of people groups under the broad community of the Yoruba culture. With the removal of the Oyo Empire's King Adeyemi, the king's marriages, personal connections, and military alliances that had bound these Yoruba groups together were gone, along with the central point of identity within the Oyo Empire.³⁴ Under the Oyo Empire the numerous Yoruba groups had been brought together under a common king, whose existence represented the union and braiding of all distinct aspects of individual cultures that made "Yoruba culture" into a singular identity. Yet once the institution of kingship was deconstructed, the corporate identity of the Yoruba disintegrated. The removal of the *only* person with connections to every Yoruba, whether real or imagined, eliminated group ties to other Yoruba, destroying their basis on which to ally with one another in troubled circumstances or to mitigate violence amongst themselves. Simply put, without the kingship of the Oyo Empire, the Yoruba's reciprocal obligations were removed, disrupting the personal patterns of Yoruba interactions with one another.

Thus, when the High Commissioners appointed local elites in local communities, the problem of a broadly communal (or regional) identity with its resultant obligations and privileges such as the Yoruba identity, became further strained. The legitimization of local power among Africans was inseparably tied to an individual's connection to the ancestors of the people group.³⁵ However, it was not uncommon for the British to appoint new African elites who had no established connection to their peoples' history and thus

³⁴ Joseph Adebawale Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire*, 34.

³⁵ Philip Curtin, Steven Feierman, Leonard Thompson, Jan Vansina, "African History," 172.

from the local peoples' perspectives no local authority. While creating significant problems of authority within local councils as well as the Ibadan Council at-large, the lack of political authority among Africans would ultimately lead the average Nigerian to seek administrative services and opportunities from an entity outside of their traditional practices. As the colonial system continued to grow, the commercial lure of the British system and the potential for self-betterment only increased average Nigerians' desires to venture outside of their traditional homes.

Again restructured in 1901 under the Colonial Office's Native Council Ordinance, the Ibadan Council became directly linked to local, native councils as a court of appeals and was tasked with overseeing local councils in addition to enforcing its own legislation.³⁶ Yet the legitimacy of newly appointed African rulers remained severely strained. In addition to a lack of ancestral legitimacy the new African political elite were given measures of authority that had previously not existed within most African groups. The power of colonial-appointed Nigerians surpassed the tradition authority of southern kings and chieftains, and the federalist concept of a political entity that was beholden to another one, was a completely foreign ideology.³⁷ For newly elevated Nigerians, the lack of pre-established, peripheral authorities created difficulties in native Nigerians' governments as local councils rarely recognized the Ibadan Council's authority and local councils often tried to overextend their political power.

In 1913, Yorubaland's power imbalance peaked in a revolt over the issue of tolls. To combat the loss of revenue from palm oil that the British extracted from their lands a coalition of Ijesa chiefs erected a series of toll blockades for ship captains along the Ogun

³⁶ Joseph Adebawale Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire*, 37.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 42.

River. Though made illegal by the Ibadan Council, the tolling of palm oil shipments continued until the British army was dispatched to remove the Ijesa by force.³⁸ The British army's Ijesa expedition confirmed the new Ibadan Council political system, the product of British indirect rule, was a failure.

Moore's original goal had been to establish a Nigerian political structure that would allow the British to indirectly govern the interior from Nigeria's major coastal cities. However, without the common arch of kingship to bind them as reciprocally obligated members under a single identity, each African people group uncertainly vied with its neighbors for political, economic, and cultural supremacy. The Ijesa chiefs' rejection of the Ibadan Council's authority and the Council's inability to enforce its own regulations merely highlighted the structural gap in southern Nigerian colonial society following the removal of Oyo kingship. The loss of the Oyo identification created a lull in communal sentiment in Yorubaland, whereby the common southern Nigerian born into the Oyo Empire expected a culturally uniform entity that no longer existed, and thus they were not bound to it. Conversely the repeated interference of the British in local politics, whether by show of force or pressured suggestion, made the Colonial Office a direct presence in of southern Nigerians' lives. As in eastern Igboland (discussed below), repeated British interference gradually pulled the average African politically, economically, culturally, and even geographically towards Western culture, as southern Nigerians identities, in this case the Yoruba in particular, became increasingly synonymous with the institutions of colonialism.

Igboland:

³⁸ Joseph Adebawale Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire*, 44.

In both Yorubaland and Igboland (southeast Nigeria), African groups had no pre-established, secular entities with authority to intervene in local disputes. Either the local chief or an overarching monarch depending on a people group's power structure handled disagreements, exchanges [of what?], and misdemeanors.³⁹ Combined with a collective, communal ethos, traditional inter-politics politics of Nigerian groups saw either the community or the chieftain's world as an absolute judgment. Yet with the introduction of the British Colonial Office and the removal of African kingship, the previously unchallengeable word of one's people was now rivaled by an option of appeal or claim to outside authority.

Though the British maintained throughout Nigeria's colonial period that they ruled the colony indirectly, the inabilities of their puppet African councils to administer their districts and frequent uprisings demanded constant British involvement, often involving military expeditions. The ability of native councils to "call in the British" to impose their rulings or for individual Nigerians to petition the rulings of a council to a British magistrate, quickly created a political crutch that both native councils and average Nigerians overly relied upon.⁴⁰ As a result, the legitimacy of ancestral Nigerian authority was eroded, and along with the decline of traditional politics, Nigerian self-identity based on people groups was de-emphasized in favor of elevation through the colonial system.

In the case of Igboland no "cultural pinpoint" or cultural embodiment in the form of a King existed before colonialism.⁴¹ Instead the overarching political system of Igbo groups was akin to direct democracy, whereby the *Ama*, or village council, consisted of

³⁹ A Oyewolfe, *Historic Dictionary of Nigeria* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press Inc. 1987), 4.

⁴⁰ G.I. Jones, *Annual Reports of Bende Division, South Eastern Nigeria, 1905-1912* (Reprint. Cambridge: African Studies Center, 1986), 14.

⁴¹ E. C. Ejiogu. *The Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria*, 75.

all adult males, who were in turn the heads of their own *Ezi*, or household compound. While senior members of the *Ama* and distinguished elders wielded influence in decision-making, each adult male could speak and “vote” on key decisions facing the *Ama*.⁴² Yet with the introduction of British oversight following the Colonial Office’s Arochuku expedition of 1901-1902, the Igbo’s *Ama* decision system was rapidly replaced in favor of widely unpopular native councils with restricted numbers of participants.

From the onset of the colonial occupation of Igboland, African political and cultural institutions were directly challenged. The Arochuku expedition was undertaken by the South Nigerian Regiment, a Nigerian military unit consisting of 25 British officers and 1729 African riflemen, immediately introducing non-Igbo Africans into a position of authority within Igboland.⁴³ Politically, Moore’s ordinance established native councils within the Colonial Office’s various administrative divisions of Igboland, often instilling councils with authority over several communities who had no relation to one another. The hierarchical political system as well as the overt societal introduction of non-Igbo Africans with authority over common Igbo citizens, created a more violent divide between the Colonial Office and the Igbo than existed in other southern regions. Continued friction between Igbo villages and British magistrates spurred a repetitive cycle of violent African insurrections, followed by colonial interventions that simultaneously degraded local council’s legitimacy and raised the stature of adherence to British institutionalism.

As previously mentioned, riots and armed revolts against the colonial-backed native governments occurred frequently. Between 1902-1909, five distinct armed revolts

⁴² Ibid, 75

⁴³ G.I. Jones, *Annual Reports of Bende Division*, 6.

occurred in Igboland along with three separate guerilla insurrections.⁴⁴ Determined to quell African unrest, which had already begun to affect British coal extraction around Enugu, the Colonial Office issued the Seditious Offenses Ordinance of 1909, granting the colonial government the power to forcefully subdue any gathering, speech, or publication it deemed riotous.⁴⁵ Contrasting to Moore's desire for indirect rule, the 1909 ordinance provided a legal framework for British authorities to have a direct presence in troubled areas. As the native councils repeatedly failed, the number of troubled areas ballooned, creating a growing demand for British direct rule, which now took the form of legalized military pacifying expeditions. In Igboland in particular, an unstable cycle emerged of native councils passing legislation, civilian discontent and pockets of unrest, British military intervention, and direct, British rule established locally. While British magistrates and military forces would often move between troubled areas, the presence of colonial officials created at least a rotational form of direct rule. Once British intervention and local administration became a political option, it became a crutch that the native councils could not walk without, keeping the British increasingly involved in African politics and society.

Indirect rule continued to be impossible into the late 1930s. When Welsh anthropologist Gwilliam Iwan Jones arrived in the Bende Division of Igboland in 1935, he inherited "a pile of notes, hidden away in the back of a cupboard in my office, still tied together with obsolete red, or rather pink tape," and any reports belonging to his

⁴⁴ E. C. Ejiogu. *The Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria*, 70.

⁴⁵ Tekena N Tamuno, *The Evolution of the Nigerian State*, 31; A. Oyewolfe, *Historic Dictionary of Nigeria*. Metuchen: Scarecrow Press Inc. 1987, 82.

predecessors had been “eaten by white ants.”⁴⁶ Much like the ill-kept records that Jones discovered on his arrival, the colonial-created African elite were continually unable to establish any legitimacy amongst Africans and their constant need for British military and administrative intervention hamstrung any colonial attempts to create a political mechanism to support indirect rule. After more than three decades of colonial governance, Igboland’s government still operated as a fire brigade, constantly maneuvering directly to put out fires where native councils and courts failed.

According to Jones in his report on the state of the Bende Division, “I regret none of the native staff can be reported very favorably...the confidence of the natives however in the court when cases are heard without a European present have been very greatly shaken and retarded by the malpractices of some chiefs and clerks.”⁴⁷ While a certain degree of Jones’s disdain can be attributed to elitist and perhaps racist viewpoints, the merit of his report is that native disdain for the colonial-created elite is still an active concern thirty years after their creation. Coupled with the personal corruption of native councilmen and chiefs, the lack of an internal, legitimate government amidst the ongoing Nigerian self-identification crisis, meant that African groups began to look an external authority. Even Igbo groups, whose unrest continued into the 1930s, slowly gravitated away from traditional African politics and society due to the ineffectiveness of the new “African” system. Instead most Africans began to paradoxically look to the only consistent authority in Igboland: the British. Over time, in seeking political and societal order from the British, Africans began a movement away from a singular identity as an

⁴⁶ G.I. Jones, *Annual Reports of Bende Division*, 7; The Colonial Office converted colonial districts into “divisions” of approximately 1,000 square miles with between 100,000-200,000 peoples.

⁴⁷ G.I. Jones, *Annual Reports of Bende Division*, 11.

“Igbo” or “Yourba,” and initiated a shift towards a Western-influenced identity of being “Nigerian.”

Towards “Nigerian-ness”:

The gravitation in the south toward being “Nigerians” is pattern of individual choice that occurred gradually over several decades. It cannot be stressed enough that the south’s heterogeneity is too vast for any single trend to hold true for the entire region. Within the diversity of the south is a certainty that local group identity never truly disappeared for average Africans, and in many ways has remained a vibrant factor in Nigerian politics until the present. Rather, my argument of a shift in Africans’ self-identification is meant as an attempt to categorize the south’s first real movement towards regional unification. While traditional and ancestral ties were never completely severed, for average Africans the removal or deconstruction of their native kingship challenged their self-identification in a way that could not be supported by the new native councils and courts. Throughout the south and across people groups this loss triggered a desire for order and communal identity that, for the first time in centuries, could only be found outside of village compounds. The resulting pattern of political and societal subscription to British-created “Nigerian-ness,” bound southern peoples together and created a cultural unity that had never before existed.

As Africans began to subscribe to British authority and culture, the commonality of avenues for self-advancement and self-identity triggered migrations to coastal cities. A town of less than ten thousand people pre-colonialism, by 1928 the colonial capital of Lagos had swelled to over 127,000 persons (1,300 were European), compared to only less than 45,000 persons in Freetown, the epicenter of French West Africa, and only 21,000

persons in the Accra, the capital of the neighboring British Gold Coast colony.⁴⁸ A year later the town of Enugu, previously uncharted before the discovery of coal, became the headquarters of the Colonial Office's Southern Provinces, and the small fishing community of Port Harcourt grew to over 15,000 persons as Africans moved to work in the coal shipping boom.⁴⁹

The growth of African populations in coastal cities created to support the colonial system further homogenized the numerous people groups of southern Nigeria. While the argument can be made that African migration to coastal cities follows a classic pattern of people moving toward the employment opportunities created by British economic expansion, I disagree that this is the only reason for African movement. Within Nigeria's economic growth the movement of Africans into cities, the seat of colonial authority and the epitome of British culture, cannot be a mere coincidence. The south's numerous ancestral differences did not disappear in everyday life, but the geographic shift of Africans into the strongholds of British presence suggests the emergence of African identity in line with colonial influence. The south's need for an external authority and its loss of kingship-centric identification spurred the blending of African tradition and British influence that resulted in the birth of the south's unifying identity of being "Nigerian."

⁴⁸ British Naval Intelligence Division. *French West Africa: Volume One; The Federation*. Geographic Handbook Series. Directorate of Naval Intelligence: London, 1943, 363.

⁴⁹ British Naval Intelligence Division. *French West Africa: Volume One*, 123.

The North: The Costs of Neglect, Indirect Rule

Unlike the south, northern Nigeria's pre-colonial history was dominated by centralized, dynastic rulers. From 1380-1759 the north was primarily under the rule of the Bornu Empire. Following the collapse of the caravan-based trading power, Hausa sultanates dominated the north.⁵⁰ City-based Hausa sultans frequently engaged in limited warfare with one another for political dominance, yet the existence of even embattled "city-state" sultanates provided a much more solidified, transregional identity than existed in the south, regardless of northerners' ancestral or cultural identities. With the emergence of the three large sultanates of Gobir, Kano, and Zamfara, political identification was a ubiquitous reality in the north without posing immediately conflict to local cultural identities, creating an established practice of multi-layered identification.⁵¹

Contributing to the north's pattern of centralized rule was its lack of ethnic diversity as compared to the south. While the south is frequently over-simplified into a southeast Igboland and a southwest Yorubaland, hundreds of people groups held influence in the south, creating, as previously mentioned, a vast cultural diversity. In the north however, one ethnic group, the Hausa, was considerably larger than other groups and, as a result, formed the majority of ruling dynasties over disgruntled minority communities. However in 1804, the exiled Islamic scholar Uthman Ibn Fodio assembled an army of Fulani herdsmen and conquered the majority of Hausa sultanates by 1809. Primarily pastoralists who organized militarily to protect their cattle, the Fulani, prior to 1804, were a sizable minority ethnic group. Most Fulani groups embraced Islam as an alternative to Hausa

⁵⁰ Kabiru Sulaiman Chafe, "Challenges to the Hegemony of the Sokoto Caliphate: A Preliminary Examination." (1994), 99.

⁵¹ Ibid, 99.

dominance.⁵² Once Fulani Muslims mixed with Hausa urbanites through conquest, the introduction of Islam altered northerners' opportunities for self-perception. In Uthman's new Sokoto Caliphate, rather than subjugate the Hausa, the cultures of the Hausa and the Fulani gradually blended together, arguably creating a new ethnicity: the Hausa-Fulani. With the merging of the north's two largest people groups, self-perception outside of the Hausa-Fulani culture complex was greatly reduced. While other people groups were still extant, the reach of the now expanded dominant group strengthened the existing notion of regional identification with an overwhelming political group. In short, the Hausa-Fulanis' strong, centralized political identity meant that northern kingship in the form of [what? sultans? emirs?] became an established method of self-identification throughout the north.

The Sokoto Caliphate's dominance remained unchallenged until 1903. The last major state to fall to European colonialism, the Sokoto Caliphate was conquered by the British under Frederick Lugard in 1903 ushering in a paradoxical period for the north under indirect rule.⁵³ The Colonial Office saw the north as economically irrelevant but sought to hold it as a buffer zone against French and German colonial incursion into southern Nigeria. As a result the British acquired northern Nigeria with little intention of investing capital or manpower in it. Northern Nigerians were familiar with British conquest in India and their intervention in the Yoruba civil wars that led to the downfall of the Oyo Empire in the south, which discouraged the kind of prolonged resistance to British firepower that had occurred in the south. Yet when the British captured the north their lack of direct interest in their new colony profoundly altered northerners' identification.

⁵² Hamza Muhammad Maishanu and Isa Muhammad Maishanu, "The Jihad and the Formation of the Sokoto Caliphate." *Journal of Islamic Studies*. (Sokoto: Usmanu Danfodiyo University, 1999), 120.

⁵³ Ibrahim Hamaz, "Amirul Inglis?": Lugard and the Transformation of the Northern Nigerian Aristocracy, 1903-1918," *Nigeria in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, North Carolina Press, 2002), 119.

The once all-powerful sultans and emirs had been defeated on the battlefield, yet their conquerors seemed uninterested in governing the region leaving many of the defeated northern rulers in place without the political legitimacy they once held.

The fall of the Sokoto Caliphate triggered a complex contradiction in the eyes of average northerners. The British held the title of *muquaddam*, or “great chieftains of chieftains,” yet the north’s sultans and emirs remained in charge of most administrative duties. According to Diamond this paradox created, “a laboratory wherein indirect rule was elaborated as a philosophy and systematically applied as an ultimately desirable program.”⁵⁴ While such an arrangement allowed the British to influence their colonial buffer zone from a removed place of authority in the south, the “ultimately desirable program” created a similar loss of identity in the north as direct rule had in the south. The political dominance of the Hausa-Fulani was effectively broken by British conquest, and though the Colonial Office restored many rulers to their holdings, in reality, the self-identification that had been synonymous with Hausa rule for centuries was destroyed. Without the unifying yoke of absolute Hausa-Fulani rule, the north unilaterally turned to its only remaining widespread institution: Islam.

Whether under the political shadow of the Hausa sultanates, bound by trans-Saharan caravan traders, or by similar pastoralist cultures, northerners had become accustomed to identifying with some form of overarching political and cultural system. Even if these systems did not bind the *entire* north together, it at least incentivized a commonality between people groups who would otherwise have none. Between 1804-1903, northerners had been inseparably bound together by politics. Yet once the British stripped away the political legitimacy of the Hausa-Fulani rulers, northerners sought a new

⁵⁴ Stanley Diamond, *Nigeria: Model of a Colonial Failure*, 9.

institution to bind them. Though Uthman's Islamic teachings had taken hold in the Sokoto Caliphate, it was not until the northern rulers lost their political legitimacy that average northerners rallied around Islam as their primary identity.

Defeated sultans and emirs latched onto Islam as a new, legitimizing political pillar. In addition to holding their populaces together with the notion of a Muslim *umma*, political attachment to Islam meant that Nigerian rulers were afforded a kind of legitimacy from the Colonial Office, albeit a begrudging one. Having already established political arrangements when faced with Muslim rebellions in Egypt, Sudan, and Afghanistan, the British partly justified indirect rule in the north with the notion that an overhaul of colonial bureaucracy and administration was not needed in a united region already governed by Islam.⁵⁵ British aversion to interfering in Muslim customs led the Colonial Office to further retreat from administering the north, while simultaneously granting the northern elite a new legitimacy through religion. As average northerners' political identification with Hausa sultans shifted towards a regional identification with Islam, rulers such as the Emir of Kano and the Sultan of Sokoto maintained their old political power by becoming the new leaders of the Islamic community. Without challenging ethnic or ancestral differences within the north, the Muslim sovereigns served to further unify the north under a single community affording them religious clout that still holds sway in modern Nigeria politics.

The Rule of Islam:

⁵⁵ Andrew E. Barnes, "Christianity and the Colonial State in Northern Nigeria, 1900-1960" *Nigeria in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, North Carolina Press, 2002), 281.

Two decades before Lord Lugard's troops marched on the Sokoto Caliphate, one of Britain's most eminent African explorers, Joseph Thomson, conducted trading negotiations in the north on behalf of the Royal Niger Company. In 1885 the Sultan of Sokoto and the Emir of Gandu granted exclusive trading rights to the Royal Niger Company along the Benue and Niger Rivers.⁵⁶ Yet more impactful on the north than the minor ceding of palm oil fields to British control was the restriction in the treaties on "communications with foreigners coming up the river."⁵⁷ Binding these treaties upon their descendants, the Sultan of Sokoto and the Emir of Gandu solidified an early divide between British traders on the Atlantic coast and northern Nigerians that set the British apart from northerners as distant and untouchable. Thomson's treaties opened the north for colonial expansion, yet the clear cultural separation kept British presence in the north aloof. With fewer northern areas of economic interest to the British, colonial presence there became concentrated in specific places, leaving the rest of the north under the rule of Islamic leaders.

Prior to 1903, northern Nigerian law and ethics remained somewhat secular. The "Africanness" of Islam in the north was apparent to British company surveyors who noted that there were distinct approaches and methods to how different northern groups practiced Islam.⁵⁸ While Nigerian Muslims might study Arabic, most aspects of their worship would be conducted in their native languages, and while men might wear turbans, imams still encouraged northerners to wear their traditional dress. Even the imams

⁵⁶ John E. Flint, *Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria*, 89.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 90.

⁵⁸ Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History* (Ibadan: Oluseyi Press Limited, 1980), 358-359.

themselves, the teachers and bringers of Islam, often freely drew upon traditional practices and were more likely than not referred to by local titles than as an imam.⁵⁹

Yet following the collapse of the northern elite's political power, the use of Islam as a pillar for political legitimacy wiped out many traditional practices in the north. At the same time that sultans and emirs asserted themselves as Islamic leaders of the Nigerian umma, the northern populace had already been turning more towards Islam and away from their cultural practices. Trans-Saharan Arabic traders had brought language, food, and music from the Maghreb, the Levant, and the Persian Gulf, which had already begun to assimilate into northern cultures, particularly the Hausa-Fulani culture.⁶⁰ This gradual Islamization of the north had begun prior to the British campaigns, but the domination of Islam truly began after the British conquest. While the northern elite sought to use Islam as a means of reestablishing their authority, the average northerner's perception of Islam changed as well, altering Islam from one aspect of self-identity, to the only aspect that had not been physically bested by the British. At a remarkable pace marriage, inheritance, education, and general world-view in the north became Islamic, and nearly all traditional festivals, rituals, and forms of worship vanished.⁶¹ Coupled with the geographically removed specter of the Colonial Office, the growing political authority of Islam meant that northern Nigerians became versed in more standard Arabic literature and Islamic law with limited interference from Western culture.

In 1900 Lord Lugard was appointed High Commissioner of Britain's limited territories in northern Nigeria. Included in his inaugural report to the Colonial Office on the state of the north, Lugard stated that "trade cannot be established on a satisfactory

⁵⁹ Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History* (Ibadan: Oluseyi Press Limited, 1980), 359.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 359-360.

⁶¹ Ibid, 365.

basis until the northern Hausa states are included in the provinces of the protectorate [of Nigeria] and rendered safe for small traders.”⁶² Yet once the Hausa states were formally brought into the Nigerian Protectorate, the Colonial Office was unwilling to invest general capital in the north. The colonial model of the south, prioritizing raw material extraction and maximizing crop exports, had produced by 1935 nearly 19 million pounds in trade out of British West Africa’s 39 million pound profits, more than the entire profits of French West Africa.⁶³ The south had made Nigeria the most profitable territory in West Africa (the second-most profitable territory on the Continent behind South Africa), and the Colonial Office was unwilling to invest in the north simply for the sake of small, trans-Saharan traders.⁶⁴ Lord Lugard left Nigeria as Governor of Hong Kong from 1906-1912, and with his departure Western influence in the north shrank considerably.

Without the constant British interference that facilitated the expansion of colonial institutions in the south, northerners’ commitment to Islamic institutions became powerful enough in the north to force concessions from the few British laws that were administered. While the north was never militarily able to oppose colonial rule after 1903, the collectivism of Islam in the region meant that colonial officials were willing to incorporate changes to colonial law. A parallel court system quickly emerged whereby a colonial court held jurisdiction over government employees and non-natives, and the Islamic Qadis held jurisdiction over everyday, northern Nigerian cases.⁶⁵ The reach of the Qadis’ courts incentivized peoples’ participation within the Islamic institutions in the

⁶² F. Okediji. *An Economic History of the Hausa-Fulani Emirates*, 55.

⁶³ British Naval Intelligence Division. *French West Africa: Volume One*, 334.

⁶⁴ Okello Oculi. “Green Capitalism in Nigeria.” *The African Bourgeoisie: Capital Development in Nigeria, Kenya, and the Ivory Coast* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1987) 169.

⁶⁵ Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 455; dual court systems were utilized throughout the British Empire in an Islamic context.

north, which led colonial officials to be increasingly willing to appease the mass culture of the north. For example, in 1912 northern elites accumulated enough popular support to pass and enforce a liquor ban. While custom duties on liquor in the south represented more than 64% of all customs revenue there, the Colonial Office was willing to restrict the expansion of the liquor trade in the north in order to appease the northern elite and “buy” their loyalty.⁶⁶

Perhaps the most shocking example of British deference to northern Islamic law came in the form of the Colonial Office’s attempts to combat slavery in the north. The crusade to end slavery had legitimized the British occupation of Lagos and the conquering of the Oyo Empire and some Delta regions in the south, but in the north the Colonial Office was willing to negotiate a continued form of slavery. After subjugating the north the British outlawed the practice of “slave-raiding,” but not the practice of owning slaves.⁶⁷ In effect, it became illegal to capture new slaves, but not to own a slave once s/he came into your possession. All children born after 1901 were considered free, yet it was still possible to enslave those who were born prior to 1901. Effectively, British concession on slave holding laws for the sake of political security did little to combat slavery, but merely altered the pool of who could be considered a slave.

While the colonial slave trade had not directly altered the north’s relationship with slavery, possession of slaves was a pillar of the northern elites by the time of British expansion northward. From the various Maghreb, Levant, and Persian Gulf influences that flowed into northern Nigeria, northern elites were well versed in the Quran and its interpretation of slavery. According to the Quran it was illegal to force another Muslim

⁶⁶ Tekena N Tamuno. *The Evolution of the Nigerian State*, 83.

⁶⁷ Stanley Diamond, *Nigeria: Model of a Colonial Failure*, 14.

into slavery, yet the Quran makes no mention of slavery of non-Muslims.⁶⁸ For northern elites the Quran's silence on the ownership of non-Muslim slaves appears to have supported the institution of slavery so long as it was directed at infidels.

By the time of the collapse of the Sokoto Caliphate the enslavement of non-Muslims had become an established practice. In his journal Walter Crocker, a political officer dispatched to northern Nigeria in the 1930s, comments freely on what he describes as the "plight of the pagans" in the north. Lord Lugard's defeat of the Sokoto Caliphate had initially freed northern pagan peoples such as the Butawa and the Warjawa around Kano from the political subjugation of the Hausa-Fulani emirates.⁶⁹ Yet British withdrawal from everyday governance of the north meant that the northern elites re-subjugated non-Muslims, this time as slaves. Though slave raiding was illegal, enforcement of the law meant that a British magistrate would have to see a slave raid taking place or else the slave owner fell under the protection of slave holding laws.⁷⁰ According to Crocker, the plight of these non-Muslims resulted either from British ignorance or indifference, resulting in non-Abrahamic groups either being enslaved by northern elites or being forced to flee into the south where they were swallowed by the expanse of Christian missionaries.

In Crocker's writings British deference to Islamic law allowed the loss of identity of northern non-Muslims. Although the colonial government maintained a certain clout of higher authority, the northern sultans and emirs wielded a day-to-day influence that affected the lives of the average northerner profoundly. Northern Nigerians turned

⁶⁸ Adam J. Silverstein, *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction*, 30.

⁶⁹ Walter R. Crocker, *Nigeria: A Critique of British Colonial Administration*. (London: George Allen & Ulwin Ltd, 1936), 89.

⁷⁰ Stanley Diamond, *Nigeria: Model of a Colonial Failure*, 16.

inwardly towards Islam as the local, spiritual influence of sultans and emirs grew with British absence. In the south, Africans began to become “Nigerians” as a result of their interactions with a constant British presence, providing an external means of self-identification following the collapse of the old African systems. However in the north, while the British held the title of *muquaddam* their inconsistent presence was insufficient to fill northern Nigerians need for a new collective identify following the political collapse of the Hausa-Fulani institutions. As the average northerner turned to Islam as a new means of regional identification, the north paradoxically coalesced into a region of Muslims while the south became a region of Nigerians.

Colonial Inadequacy:

By the time of Walter Crocker’s appointment to northern Nigeria in 1936, Nigeria had been divided into 23 provinces with 11 in the south and 12 in the north. In contrast to the more compact southern provinces, by the 1930s the northern provinces comprised two-thirds of Nigeria’s land area and more than half of the colony’s population. Yet when Crocker arrived in the north to begin his colonial tour he wrote openly about the lack of colonial development. Less than 13% of the north was within one square mile of any kind of vehicular road, and illiteracy, despite Islam’s emphasis on education, was reported as high as 95% with only one in every 20,000 young boys receiving any kind of grammar school education.⁷¹

The rapid success of southern ports had eliminated the need for trans-Saharan caravans through the north, forcing the north into a regionally isolated and impoverished market system. The economic situation was so dire that in 1936 food was hard to come

⁷¹ Stanley Diamond, *Nigeria: Model of a Colonial Failure*, 18.

by and the Colonial Office was forced to import nearly 45,000 cattle, and over 115,000 sheep and goats from French Niger, the poorest colony in West Africa, in order to keep the north fed.⁷² At a stop in Kaduna in 1936 where the residents were forced to drink tinned milk, Crocker remarks that a government-sponsored dairy farm would have more than paid for itself many times over.⁷³ Yet repeated north/south discrepancies in colonial investment continually isolated the north and fueled an engrained, inward reliance on Islam to provide for self-identity.

Throughout Crocker's tour of the north his journal entries show the irregularities of British investments in the north. After arriving in Kano, Crocker describes the newly constructed residency of the Northern Provinces' Lieutenant Governor and the adjacent administrative buildings: "it is said openly in the Service [British Army]...that no substantial purpose was served by at least some of these expensive and disturbing changes."⁷⁴ More important than an example of either colonial corruption or sheer opulence is Crocker's recording of the British army's awareness of spending discrepancies. In calling the new constructions "disturbing," the words of British military men add an additional level of perspective of how great the northern wealth gap had grown by the 1930s. In short, the men who were stationed in the north to protect these buildings and enforce their rulings had little idea of what each building housed or how it operated. As Britain's physical presence within the north grew, its soldiers' disdain for the lack of "substantial purpose" of their government's buildings offers a rare glimpse into the irregularities of colonial governance and the reality of indirect rule.

⁷² British Naval Intelligence Division. *French West Africa: Volume One*, 330.

⁷³ Walter R. Crocker, *Nigeria: A Critique of British Colonial Administration*, 123.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 25.

Perhaps the most telling example of colonial inadequacy and discrepancy in the north can be found in examining the city of Jos. Located in the north's Bauchi Plateau, the small town of Jos grew from less than 2,000 occupants in 1921 to almost 12,000 in 1931 as a direct result of colonial investment.⁷⁵ A small-scale indigenous industry before colonization, tin mining in the Bauchi Plateau was commercialized in 1906 by the Royal Niger Company. In an unprecedented economic swing, by 1913 colonial investment in tin mining around Jos exceeded £4 million and the completion in 1914 of a railway through the Bauchi Plateau made Nigeria the fourth largest tin producer in the world.⁷⁶ Stretching from Port Harcourt to Jos the Nigerian railways selectively opened this sliver of the north to a compilation of 3,500 cargo train cars in under a decade, creating an oasis of colonial investment.⁷⁷

As the industrial growth spread across colonial Africa, towns that previously depended on water-based trade routes and caravans were rapidly replaced with railway towns. The railways brought colonial investment and across Nigeria urban growth resulted more from migration than from natural population increases. Individuals and families were drawn to cities for their new facilities, the possibility of social elevation through better schooling, and higher income levels.⁷⁸ However, while the rapid growth of Jos is not an anomaly within Nigeria as a whole, such rapid growth and profitability in a single decade is abnormal in northern Nigeria. Colonial interest in commercial tin mining brought the full weight of British investment to an otherwise forgotten village and turned Jos into a commercial hive. Aligning Jos with southern juggernaut cities such as Lagos or

⁷⁵ R. K. Home, "Urban Growth and Urban Government: Contradictions in the Colonial Political Economy." *Nigeria: Economy and Society* (London Rex Collings, 1976), 41.

⁷⁶ A. Oyewolfe, *Historic Dictionary of Nigeria*, 317.

⁷⁷ British Naval Intelligence Division. *French West Africa: Volume One*, 373.

⁷⁸ R. K. Home, "Urban Growth and Urban Government," 39.

Port Harcourt or even to pre-established northern cities like Kano would be an overstatement. Yet the underlying importance of examining Jos's explosive growth is that the British had the economic and logistic ability to take a northern village and push its importance onto a global stage. When combined with Crocker's first-hand encounters of colonial oversight, the example of Jos serves to highlight the widespread discrepancy that dominated the rest of the north.

On his first journey to Jos by train Crocker relates his approval for the layout of the city. While his testimony has pervasive biases, Crocker's details offer an insight into the level of discrepancy between Jos and the other "inadequate" places Crocker observed:

The Station is laid out admirably, occupying a hill and commanding fine views of the river on two sides. The Government bungalows, of which there are a dozen, are well built and of a good size...The native town is more than a mile away, always a matter of importance not only for hygienic reasons, but because the nervous strain felt by most Europeans from native drumming and similar noises...is thus eliminated...Great credit is due to whoever was responsible for the layout, which is a surprising departure from what is usual in Northern Nigeria at least.⁷⁹

Underneath the elitist biases of his writing, Crocker's records give a reader a rare physical depiction of colonial Jos. The presence of well-constructed government housing is indicative of a strong, permanent colonial presence, a rarity in the north outside of the traditional stronghold cities such as Kano or Kaduna. Even the separation of Africans and Europeans indicates Jos' elevated status as enough higher class Europeans lived or passed through Jos for the city to have to counteract "nervous strains." Crocker's final comment

⁷⁹ Walter R. Crocker, *Nigeria: A Critique of British Colonial Administration*, 124.

that Jos is a departure from typical conditions in the north is an obvious statement about the ad hoc nature of indirect rule, but one that adds credibility to the remainder of his writings.

For Crocker the journey from the south to the north was so drastically different that by the time he reached Jos, at that point a town with only twelve government houses, it seemed like a paradise. Crocker's depiction of luxurious colonial buildings that served no function and of a general lack of colonial drive are a departure from standard British reports and give him a divergent credibility despite his biases. His relation of the poor conditions of the north and the vast discrepancy in colonial distribution of resources highlight the major factor of the north's inward identification. To northern Nigerians the lack of colonial regulation and investment in the north manifested in an economic favoritism for the south, and while southerners gradually embraced colonial institutions, northerners actively countered them and rejected affiliation with the south.

The Amalgamation: One Nigeria, Two Identities

From the early-1850s to 1914 the Colonial Office ran all British operations in Nigeria without significant interference from the British executive headquarters at Whitehall. However beginning with the acquisition of the northern provinces in 1903, a movement for the amalgamation of the north and south into a single colony rapidly gained prominence among London MPs. At the center of Parliament and Whitehall's desire for the amalgamation of Nigeria was an 1897 memorandum on British possessions in West Africa written by Herbert J. Read.⁸⁰ A colonial official serving in southern Nigeria, Read argued that colonies in the British Empire were less successful when a Governor was allowed to rule like a despot. Much like High Commissioner Moore, whom he served under, Read believed that Nigeria was too vast to govern directly and that the nature of the colony demanded indirect rule. Understanding this Read published a section on Nigeria in his memorandum outlining five key developments he believed would allow the Colonial Office to more effectively govern the south: 1) the amalgamation of the three separate southern zones into one "colony of the south" 2) the development of an African police force modeled after the Irish constabulary 3) the training of a small, professional army of four to five thousand Africans led by British officers 4) the construction of a railway stretching from Lagos to the then-Sokoto city of Kano 5) the establishment of coin-based currency to replace cowry shell bartering and slave trading.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Herbert J. Read, "Memorandum on British Possessions in West Africa." *The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd, 1985), 26.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 28.

There is no indication that Read's memorandum had a direct affect on Whitehall policy, yet each of his five points of development were eventually put into place. In 1900 the Royal Niger Company's charter was revoked and by 1914 the three southern regions had been unified into the Southern Protectorate of Nigeria. Read was an imperialist and believed that effective governance would ultimately come from developing a colony's natural resources.⁸² As the south became an economic juggernaut and the number of insurrections began to decrease, Whitehall slowly started to build on Read's policies of southern amalgamation. Although his memorandum only argued for the collective unification of the southern provinces, British leaders quickly began putting pressure on the Colonial Office to organize plans for the amalgamation of all of Nigeria.

The world stage of European politics made amalgamation even more attractive for British politicians. The so-called "Scramble for Africa" had ended with the collapse of the Sokoto Empire and Nigeria had quickly emerged as the "lion of West Africa."⁸³ Under the 1914 Mineral Oils Act the Nigerian Bitumen Corporation had achieved a monopoly on sand oil deposits and had sunk fifteen oil wells into the Niger Delta. At the same time the British navy eagerly awaited an alternative to Persian oil from Iran. Political tensions in Europe were mounting and a unified Nigeria was unanimously recognized as a strategically invaluable colony.⁸⁴ Yet as the Colonial Office returned Lord Lugard from Hong Kong to oversee the amalgamation of Nigeria and to serve as its first Governor, African identity was disjointed. As a result, increasingly colonial-

⁸² John M. Carland, *The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914*, 31.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 31.

⁸⁴ Uwatt B Uwalt. "Foreign Participation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry." *Nigeria: A People United, A Future Assured*. Vol. 1. (Calabar: Gabumo Publishing Company, 2000), 173.

dependent southerners and increasingly isolated northerners moved towards contrasting identities, while the British simultaneously pushed them into a single political entity.

The Coordination Failures of Amalgamation:

Lord Lugard undertook Nigeria's official amalgamation on January 1st, 1914 with the understanding that Britain's full industrial and military resources would be at his disposal. Yet while immediate issues of coordination and leadership sparked violence in both the north and the south, Europe erupted into the chaos of WWI and Lugard was left bereft of British assistance. Faced with five separate Igbo revolts in 1914 and skirmish warfare along both of the colony's borders from German Togo and Cameroon, average Nigerians suffered from continued colonial neglect during the first five years of unification.⁸⁵

While the newly unified Nigeria's magistrates attempted to combat violent episodes in the south, their counterparts in the north attempted to combat the same issues in the north without coordination. This split left Lugard's forceful political unification often in direct contrast to the disjointed reality of a deepening split between the north and the south.

After the amalgamation Nigeria operated in reality as a politically dichotomous colony loosely unified under a single Governor. Separate Lieutenant Governors, each with their own secretaries, supervised the north and the south and the two regions were allocated separate annual budgets.⁸⁶ Legal issues and policies in the north were declared by proclamation from the Governor, while political matters were passed through a Legislative Council in the south. In theory the Legislative Council held authority over all of Nigeria, yet the vast majority of its legislation was targeted at economic statutes

⁸⁵ Maj. Gen Hafiz B. Momoh, "Evolution of the Nigerian Armed Forces," 443.

⁸⁶ A. Oyewolfe, *Historic Dictionary of Nigeria*, 6.

relating only to the south.⁸⁷ As a result of a greater legislative presence in the south as well as a physical presence in Lagos, southern Nigerians gradually became accustomed to the political legitimacy of an overarching legislative body and executive authority.

Particularly after 1923 with the introduction of four elected African members, three from Lagos and one from Calabar, the Legislative Council gained a form of legitimacy among Africans.⁸⁸ Southern ability for self-advancement through the colonial political system, though very limited, created an aura of advancement within the British system that incentivized southerners to think of themselves as Nigerians. Representative developments such as the formation of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1922 by Nigerian nationalist Herbert Macaulay increased the pull of southerners' identity towards colonial institutions.⁸⁹ Although the NNDP's popularity was limited to Lagos, the existence and physical presence of political possibilities created legitimacy for colonial institutions that was gradually absorbed into southern Nigerians' identities. In short, as political options became available to southerners, they began to think of themselves as citizens of a modern nation.

Conversely in the north, rule by occasional proclamation and lack of representation in the overarching Nigerian government only reaffirmed the constant authority of local elites and the endurance of Islamic law. The northern Lieutenant Governor was the only member of the Legislative Council from the north and if Crocker's records are any indication of colonial activity, requests brought to the Council by the northern Lieutenant Governor were most likely very limited. Islam was the constant for northerners and any achievable avenue of self-advancement for Africans

⁸⁷ Ibid, 191.

⁸⁸ A. Oyewolfe, *Historic Dictionary of Nigeria*, 192.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 236.

relied upon being a good Muslim rather than a good citizen.⁹⁰ As previously mentioned, the lack of an organized food cultivation system following the collapse of the Sokoto Caliphate agriculturally challenged the north. Difficulties in securing agricultural sustainability pushed northern Nigerians to increasingly seek sustenance and patronage from northern elites, who could be expected to assist their fellow Muslims. Until livestock populations stabilized, by the late-1930s nearly all non-Muslims had left the north and the remaining Muslim population was multilaterally bound to the Islamic elite.

Several institutions in unified Nigeria did exist in both the north and the south but suffered from a crippling lack of communication with their counterpart during the colony's crucial transition period. The south's first police force was organized in Lagos in 1865 and the deputized "Glover's Hausa Guards" served as an early constabulary force. By 1888 all three protectorates of southern Nigeria had established police forces and in 1906 all three were integrated into the Southern Nigeria Police Force.⁹¹ As a precursor to eventual amalgamation, the Colonial Office was pressured in 1908 to form the Northern Nigerian Police Force. Unlike their southern counterpart, the north's policemen were armed with carbines and bayonets and operated more as an occupying garrison than a police force.⁹² Both police force branches operated under their own Inspector-General, but only the south police force allowed Africans to join. In the south the police force represented an opportunity for Nigerians to earn a steady wage, albeit a low one, and despite its corruption, the institution of the police was ubiquitous, giving the colonial government another layer of legitimacy and daily presence.⁹³ However in the north the

⁹⁰ F. Okediji. *An Economic History of the Hausa-Fulani Emirates*, 67.

⁹¹ James Ibrahim, "Security Agencies and Paramilitary Organizations," 450.

⁹² Ibid, 451.

⁹³ Ibid, 452.

police force usually comprised of white males, denying northerners another opportunity to earn wages and served as a daily reminder of the presence of foreigners in all governmental institutions.

Though neither police branch operated in the same way, the Colonial Office considered both to be of equal caliber. Yet after the amalgamation both police forces remained independent and neither made any serious efforts to coordinate with the other.⁹⁴ Organized prisons were developed in the south as early as 1872 and as large coastal and Delta towns emerged each one had its own prison constructed. However in the north the police force did not coordinate with the south to establish a regulated prison system and most capital offenses were handled by the British military while any minor offenses were adjudicated by the Qadis courts per the old colonial agreements.⁹⁵ The discrepancy in the administering of justice between the north and south was a crucial gap to Africans as the south was introduced to modern institutionalized legal upkeep and the north was subjected to a dual court system without a framework of judicial precedent. The lack of coordination between northern and southern police forces effectively acclimated Africans to two divergent legal and penal systems, yet claimed that all Nigerians were citizens of a unified colony. This major pillar of the allegedly unified Nigerian colonial government remained divided until 1930.

Like the unequal penal system, vaccine distribution was uncoordinated throughout Nigeria. From early British expeditions into southern Nigeria, disease-control had been a prime concern of the Colonial Office. Quinine served as the popular drug to counter malaria and the British were active in draining, grading, and treating mosquito-breeding

⁹⁴ Stanley Diamond, *Nigeria: Model of a Colonial Failure*, 24.

⁹⁵ Tekena N Tamuno. *The Evolution of the Nigerian State*, 84.

areas with oil or other larvacides. By 1937 it was estimated that 48.6% of southern Nigerians had malaria parasites in their blood, yet very few Africans died from malaria due to the pertinence of sickle-cell anemia in the south.⁹⁶ While the distribution of vaccines for southerners was by no means universal, channels did exist for southerners to receive vaccinations, particularly in commercially successful areas. Diseases that affected Nigerians throughout the whole of the colony were also potentially treatable in the south as an offshoot of vaccinations for Europeans. As previously mentioned, British resources were immeasurable in what they could achieve in a relatively short time period. The desire of the Colonial Office to vaccinate all Europeans in the south meant an influx of medicinal resources in areas where European populations were largest.

On balance the introduction of vaccines to areas with high European populations stalled the countering of deadly diseases in the north. In a reciprocal circle, Europeans did not reside in the north in part because of its numerous diseases and, consequently, since Europeans did not reside in the north in large numbers there was not an attempt to vaccinate the population until 1937, half a century after similar attempts in the south. Almost ironically British presence provided access to vaccinations, but the Colonial Office had intentionally limited its presence in the north and the resulting northern isolation prolonged the spread of diseases. The north's larger population was especially vulnerable to diseases such as yellow fever and small-pox, diseases that were relatively much less deadly in the south due to exposure to European vaccines.⁹⁷

From 1903-1937 virtually no northerners received the vaccinations that were offered to their southern counterparts, further widening the colonial rift between the two

⁹⁶ British Naval Intelligence Division. *French West Africa: Volume One*, 129.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 133-145.

regions and creating a self-perception of the north as an victimized party in a forced colonial union. As vaccines provided southerners another reason to look towards the colonial institutions for improvement (with a resulting incentive to identity as Nigerian), the lack of medicinal assistance in the north further discredited colonialism among northerners who continued to look towards the Islamic elite for assistance. Only with French assistance in 1937 were over 264,000 smallpox vaccinations performed in the north, but by the late the 1930s the effects of colonial discrepancy were already well implanted.⁹⁸

Employment and Identity Evolution:

As previously stated the removal of traditional kingship structures throughout Nigeria introduced the institutions of colonialism to African societies. While the institutions themselves were crucial in the creation of two separate, Nigerian identities and will be discussed in the next chapter, equally as important to the evolution of self-identity in Nigeria was the pragmatic outcome of institutionalism: civil employment. Before colonialism the vast majority of Nigerians in both the north and the south were involved in agriculture. Whether working on small farm plots, as small-scale fisherman, or as hunters, “employment” in Nigeria pre-1850s consisted for most Africans of some manner of subsistence agriculture to support a local community headed by a king or a chief.⁹⁹ Above the large agricultural group were the small, powerful merchant groups who also fell under the ceremonial ancestral influence of their king or chief, albeit to different levels of obedience. Yet despite the divergent authority trading brought individual merchants, the vast majority of Africans throughout Nigeria worked as farmers or

⁹⁸ British Naval Intelligence Division. *French West Africa: Volume One*, 117.

⁹⁹ Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City*, 24-25.

gatherers under a king or chieftain-centric system that was dependent on agriculture. Individual prosperity was defined by one's cultivation or hunting prowess all based on their peoples' traditions that were embodied through the institution of kingship.

The removal of kings and chieftains in the south and the isolation and the restructuring the northern elite shifted an individual's self-worth away from the fields and towards wage-paying industries. Introduction of a cash-based currency in the 1890s rapidly commercialized Nigerian identity whereby the measures of success for Africans was no longer only defined by farming or fishing skills but could now be defined by the gaining and maintaining of dutiful employment.¹⁰⁰ The migration of Africans to cities, particularly in the south, triggered an institutionalized employment boom. While more than half of Nigerians remained in their traditional villages, the emergence of a commercial identity led many Africans to seek work in the cities. By no means did commercialization replace local African identity, however, the physical migration of Africans out of their home villages and a continuous population growth in cities suggests a rise in the importance of colonial institutionalism and a decline in the forefront importance of local traditions. Nigeria's rapid expansion into a colony of global interest drew African priorities away from local identity and into the rapid pace of a colonial economy. Instead of communal effort, each African had to maintain his or her value as a worker or be replaced by the next person standing in line. This gradual devaluation of traditional institutions ultimately generated of a new class divide between capitally successful Nigerians and rural Nigerians, which only aggravated tensions between a relatively wealthy south and a poor north.

¹⁰⁰ Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City*, 120; Tekena N Tamuno. *The Evolution of the Nigerian State*, 12.

The most attractive industry for Nigerians to pursue was a career in the colonial government. Almost exclusively offered in the south, civil servant careers for Africans offered direct access into the bureaucracy of the colonial government and, consequently, a raised status above other Nigerians. The defining quality for obtaining a job as a civil servant was a “Western-education,” although the quality of education changed considerably throughout the colonial period. A “qualified” Nigerian from 1885-1904 had completed a missionary-sponsored primary school, yet from 1904 on a “qualified” Nigerian required a university degree.¹⁰¹

In 1904 only three universities existed in southern Nigeria and barely any primary schools existed in the north. The rapid raising of requirements for African civil servants reflects an active campaign by the Colonial Office to force Africans out of colonial bureaucracy in order to attract more British civil servants to Nigeria. Expansion into the north, rising competition between colonial powers in West Africa, and the unprecedented growth of the railway industry drove a demand for quality clerks, bureaucrats and magistrates.¹⁰² Under Lord Lugard, the Colonial Office believed that London-trained civil servants would not accept postings in Nigeria with a large portion of Africans in the civil service and, as a result, attempted to phase out Africans by raising education requirements dramatically. However, by 1906 the exclusion of Africans from the civil service backfired tremendously when British bureaucrats did not arrive in large enough numbers to sustain the continuous demands of Nigeria’s economy.

¹⁰¹ Otoni Nduka, “Colonial Education and Nigerian Society.” *Nigeria: Economy and Society* (London Rex Collings, 1976), 35; Dr. Adekola Junair and Dr. Akon Esu, “Educational Development: Traditional and Contemporary.” *Nigeria: A People United, A Future Assured*. Vol. 1. (Calabar: Gabumo Publishing Company, 2000) 251-252.

¹⁰² Tekena N Tamuno. *The Evolution of the Nigerian State*, 32.

In 1906 southern Nigeria comprised over 6% of all trade in Africa and would expand to nearly 10% by 1928.¹⁰³ At the advice of John Holt, a well-respected African-based merchant, the British Secretary of State Lord Elgin reversed colonial policy and attempted to maximize African involvement in civil service. As the economy expanded and an insufficient number of London-trained clerks came to Nigeria, the Colonial Office began a campaign of rapid university construction in order to supply the expanding economy with quality bureaucrats. At the end of 1906 southern Nigerians could attend three new universities in the Delta region: St. Paul's College at Awka, Oron Training Institute at Oron, and Wesleyan Training Institute at Ibadan.¹⁰⁴ Yet despite new colonial investment, very few Nigerians were able to pass university entrance exams and during the first two decades of university schooling, only between 200-300 southern Nigerians completed secondary school to fill the demand for over 5,500 "white collar" posts. To combat terribly low levels of African graduates the Colonial Office issued government scholarships to sponsor the training of individuals for a specific industry, but these efforts were largely unsuccessful. Only 51 students qualified for the railroad scholarship program in 1910 and by 1914 that number shrank to 17.¹⁰⁵

To the Colonial Office, a continued shortage of civil servants and the lack of any immediate success from their sponsored universities suggested that British institutions did not have any significant impact on the majority of Nigerians. Igbo and the Ijebu people groups continually resisted British institutions into the 1920s and, as previously discussed, Gwilliam Jones was still commenting on the lack of skill his native clerks in

¹⁰³ British Naval Intelligence Division. *French West Africa: Volume One*, 333.

¹⁰⁴ Dr. Adekola Junair and Dr. Ekon Esu, "Educational Development," 256.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 257.

1936.¹⁰⁶ Yet the true measurement of institutionalism among Nigerians was not the vast majority who did not immediately succeed, but the small minority who did. Employment in colonial, white-collar work and education through the colonial system brought a few southerners close to Western institutional logic and, in effect, created the first wave of Nigerian leaders. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the founder of Nigerian nationalism and the first President of Nigeria, attended two British schools and worked for a newspaper, and each of Nigeria's military Heads of State originally served in and received training from the colonial army.¹⁰⁷

Although only a few Nigerians achieved the apex employment opportunity of white-collar jobs, this new institutionally connected class created a new legitimacy for colonialism and simultaneously amplified the south's movement towards "Nigerian-ness." If a few Nigerians could climb the social ladder, then it was possible for any Nigerian, at least in the south, to improve his or her social standing. Despite not immediately creating a large middle class, the upward movement of even a few Nigerians cemented the allure of the Western model of government, and for a large portion of southerners placed commercial success and regional cohesion ahead of local traditions. A common practice among southerners was for the man of the house to work in the city and send his wages back to his family in the village, but such a distant connection only delayed a gradual decline of local identities.¹⁰⁸ The plodding pull of commercial commonality ultimately created an economic identity around the idea of a middle class, despite the small number

¹⁰⁶ Otoni Nduka, "Colonial Education and Nigerian Society," 47.

¹⁰⁷ A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, *The Principle of Native Administration in Nigeria: Selected Documents* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 83.

¹⁰⁸ Chukwuemeka Onwubu, "Ethnic Identity, Political Integration, and National Development: The Igbo Diaspora in Nigeria," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 13, No. 3 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 402.

of Nigerians who were actual middle class. As Yoruba, Igbo, Ijaw, and Efik men and women spent the more and more time in the city, colonial institutionalism slowly pulled southerners into an economic homogeneity that became a pseudo “Nigerian” identity.

Conversely for those southerners who remained in their traditional villages and for the majority of northerners, the lack of British economic expansion in those regions meant that an economically-spurred identity revolution did not take place. While special attention was given to the production of industrial materials, the production of both food and cash crops remained in the hands of peasant households on small land plots with low-efficiency technology.¹⁰⁹ Palm oil was the most important export from Nigeria from 1865-1889, with a yearly rate as high as 35,500 tons at its apex, but palm oil sharply declined as colonial interests switched to coal and the mineral trade.¹¹⁰ The disinterest of the Colonial Office led rural southerners to pursue cocoa growing. Particularly popular in Yorubaland, cocoa required minimal effort to cultivate and provided a means for impoverished families to earn a small extra wage. In the north many farmers were drawn to the British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA), a colonial-funded company, which provided free seeds and cotton gin services to create a cotton culture in Africa. Beginning in 1902 the BCGA originally tried to grow cotton in the Delta region, but after the company was unable to persuade southerners to abandon cocoa in favor of cotton they relocated to the north.¹¹¹ However British cotton practices and northern Nigerian cotton practices were often incompatible and after a briefly successful stint the BCGA abandoned Nigeria and the north’s pre-existing cotton culture was thrown into disarray.

¹⁰⁹ Edet B. Akpakpan, “The Colonial Economy, 1860-1960,” 120.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 121.

¹¹¹ A. Oyewolfe, *Historic Dictionary of Nigeria*, 69.

Within the loss of agriculture as their primary means of subsistence many African groups began to question their traditional identities. Before colonial introduction most people groups held the prestige of men and women equal. Men were considered hunters and warriors, but the role of women as the primary food provider through agricultural cultivation afforded women an equal, though different, prestige as men.¹¹² Yet the rise of industry and the rise of western banking, bureaucracy, and shipping disenfranchised women as income earners as only men were given the most lucrative jobs. The economic isolation of African women ultimately lowered the status of previously well-established families and disintegrated the traditional systems of different, yet equal roles.¹¹³ As previously mentioned a Nigerian needed to complete the missionary-dominated education system before being eligible for a job. Men received religious and clerical training throughout their education while women were only schooled in “domestic science,” creating a gender gap of potential wage earners. With men traveling to the cities to find work and women remaining behind employed in devalued subsistence agriculture, the traditional systems that existed under pre-colonial kingship continually eroded. Southern and northern identities were gradually replaced with either a competitive and commercial national identity, or a victimized and detached Islamic identity as a result of an emerging class conscious Nigeria.

Status systems akin to modern class-consciousness had always existed throughout Nigeria, but from 1889 until the late 1930s drastic discrepancies in individual commercial success marked Nigeria’s first defined class separation. Major port cities were equipped with rarities such as electricity and cold storage, while more rural areas oftentimes lacked

¹¹² Stella A. Effah-Atloe “Women in the Development of Nigeria Since Pre-Colonial Times,” 354.

¹¹³ Ibid, 355.

even basic colonial necessities.¹¹⁴ The export of goods created purchasing power amongst the emerging African middle class, effectively increasing the gap between the African poor and relatively wealthy Africans. Agricultural products were gathered and organized to feed the cities, leading to the specialization of rural areas and a form of forced attachment of rural Africans to agriculture. British-organized collection and distribution food systems further placed the idea of the city on a pedestal, and simultaneously kept rural Africans bound to agriculture.¹¹⁵ Although instead of primarily creating an internal class conflict in the south, discrepancy of wages and lifestyle cemented the allure of the capitalistic system.

The largest wage discrepancy between Nigerians existed in the Colonial Office's creating of the carrier labor system. Originally implemented as a means of rapidly expanding the colony's infrastructure the Colonial Office designated carrier labor to men, women, and children as punishment for felonies. Yet by the early 1900s the Colonial Office was too thinly staffed to effectively keep record of all felonies warranting carrier labor. The consistent demand for expanding infrastructure led the British to empower their appointed chiefs to assign men and women to government projects.¹¹⁶ According to law Nigerians were supposed to work on a construction project for only six days, but colonial chieftains often ignored regulations that the British did not enforce. Carrier labor marked poor Nigerians as socially beneath the chieftains who assigned them labor as well as the city-dwelling Nigerians for whom the construction projects were indirectly built. Though the wealthiest Nigerians paled in comparison to colonial officials, the income

¹¹⁴ G.I. Jones, *Annual Reports of Bende Division*, 6-7.

¹¹⁵ R. K. Home, "Urban Growth and Urban Government," 56.

¹¹⁶ Tekena N Tamuno. *The Evolution of the Nigerian State*, 235.

gap between white collar, city Nigerians and rural Nigerians was large enough to incentivize the new national identity.

As Nigeria's middle class expanded, a new wave of Big Men slowly emerged following the colony's independence. Bankers, generals, and oil tycoons, routinely sought recognition of their institutional prestige on a national stage and only distinguished their traditional identities when it was to their political advantage.¹¹⁷ During the colonial period Africans who were able to secure a job within a British institution formed Nigeria's first true middle class. Out of their economic success the Western colonial model took root within Nigerian society as the African wealthy sought to expand their commercial or political strength upon a national stage. The conglomeration of a "Nigerian" identity took precedence over an individual's group identity as the African middle class grew larger. For rural peoples in the south and throughout the isolated north the mentality of being a "Nigerian" did not take root easily, but the institutional success of some southern Nigerians gave credence to the idea of a singular "Nigerian" identity in response to the successful Nigerian national economy.

¹¹⁷ A. Oyewolfe, *Historic Dictionary of Nigeria*, iv-xii.

The Church, the Mosque, the University, and the Army

Nigerian identity was tied to commerce in a gradual, social process as people interacted with the hurried growth of the colonial economic institutions. From 1890-1912 the previously non-existent banking sector ballooned uncontrollably and sparked a competitive bidding war leaving only the British Bank of West Africa and Barclays Bank as monetary giants by the end of 1912.¹¹⁸ Coal fueled cheap growth of railroads in such volume that Nigeria became self-fueled by 1916 with a production of 24,000 tons of coal, and the early introduction of oil well drilling from 1906-1912 brought over a hundred thousand pounds of investment into the Niger Delta.¹¹⁹ By 1937 the export value of Nigerian ports dwarfed those of the rest of colonial West Africa with exports from Lagos valued at over 9.5 million pounds and exports from Port Harcourt valued at over 3.8 million pounds.¹²⁰

Within the colony's vibrant economy, Nigerians were exposed to different British institutions that created a small Western-styled middle class and a minority wealthy elite, but left a majority of Nigerians in poverty. Yet without traditional kingship on which these poor people could rely for support, modern institutionals became the major defining entities of the colony's new "Nigerian" identity. At its colonial peak Nigeria comprised nearly 10% of all trade in Africa, but behind the colony's success was a capitalist competition that eroded the value of communal aid and promoted self-preservation and social climbing. With the slow decay of communal social structures southerners

¹¹⁸ Chibuikwe Ugochukwu Uche, "Foreign Banks, Africans, and Credit in Colonial Nigeria, c. 1890-1912." *The Economic History Review*. Vol. 52. No. 4. London: Economic History Society, 1999. 671; Stella A. Effah-Atloe "Women in the Development of Nigeria Since Pre-Colonial Times," 351.

¹¹⁹ S.W. Peters, "Energy Resources and Energy Policy." *Nigeria: A People United, A Future Assured*. Vol. 1. Calabar: Gabumo Publishing Company, 2000. 76.

¹²⁰ British Naval Intelligence Division. *French West Africa: Volume One*, 365.

increasingly identified themselves by their profession, level of income, and social status, while northerners ever more stridently identified as Islamic and as a commercially neglected region. Each British institution affected every Nigerian differently but within the growth, expansion, and revisions of the colony's major institutions it is possible to infer overall changes to the Nigerian self-narrative and the cementing of a north/south divide.

The Church:

Southerners converted to Christianity in small, local pockets from the late fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, but Christianity did not become regionally popular until the 1840s. In 1842 the first permanent Christian missions arrived in the small Delta villages of Badagry and Abeokuta under Methodist ministers Rev. T. B. Freeman and Mr. William de Graft.¹²¹ Undertaking the goal of ministering to ex-slaves from Sierra Leone who returned to their home villages in Nigeria, the success of the Methodist mission rapidly encouraged permanent missions from other denominations. Presbyterian missions were soon established in Calabar, and throughout the southeast Anglican and Methodist mission were established in the Delta and central-south regions as Catholic missions soon became ubiquitous throughout the south.¹²²

Until Ralph Moore's attempts to strengthen colonial presence throughout the south in the early 1900s, missionaries had unparalleled access to African populations. Missionaries lived within local communities and offered an alternative community to socially marginalized Africans. Membership in the community of God granted ostracized

¹²¹ A. Oyewolfe, *Historic Dictionary of Nigeria*, 114; Otoni Nduka, "Colonial Education and Nigerian Society," 11.

¹²² *Ibid*, 114.

Africans status within the Christian family and afforded the missionaries and the Church itself a wide range of influence. Converts to Christianity experienced a new communal society and their conversion opened them up to more restricted means of self-improvement. As kings and chieftains were removed, bought, and converted across the south the tradition religious connection to a people's ancestors was rapidly replaced with translations of the Bible into several Nigerian languages by the 1880s.¹²³ Although the traditions of connection to one's ancestors continued, the rise of the Church's spiritual authority replaced the religious importance of southern kings and Westernized southerners' spiritual identity. Christianity therefore offered pariahs and underlings within African social systems a spiritual place within God's (allegedly egalitarian) Kingdom through prayer and service and a physical place within the colonial system through Western education.

While some groups such as Igbo and Ijebu strongly opposed missionary education originally, churches became not only a gateway to Heaven, but also a gateway to relevance within unstoppable colonial expansion. Until 1898 all education in Nigeria was under the direct control of various Christian missions and until 1942 missionaries still controlled more than 90% of primary and secondary education. The development of religious schooling largely stemmed from three leading missions: Methodist Church of Scotland Mission, Church Missionary Society (CMS), and Roman Catholic missions.¹²⁴ During colonial expansion in the south Christian missions attempted to permeate Nigerian society as much as possible, but the missionaries' proselytizing agenda originally meant a very limited scope of education for young Africans. Although men

¹²³ Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 365.

¹²⁴ Dr. Adekola Junair and Dr. Akon Esu, "Educational Development: Traditional and Contemporary," 243.

received clerical training in primary school, the lack of standardized education system resulted in an unregulated range in the quality of African education in the south. When missions inescapably became neglected by their patron churches back home the quality of staff within the missions themselves deteriorated, producing inadequately educated Nigerians at the same time that the colonial economy expanded and demanded highly-trained white collar workers.¹²⁵

Yet despite the decline in quality of mission-run schools the Colonial Office was slow to invest in secular education and the Church remained the primary provider of Western-styled education throughout the colonial period. If southerners wanted their children to climb the colonial social ladder than they sent them to a mission primary school. However as missions began to lose funding the larger, better-equipped organizations retreated to larger cities, leaving rural populations at an even greater disadvantage. By 1882 CMS had 17 primary schools operating in Lagos alone but very few schools operating in rural areas.¹²⁶ In a reciprocal cycle the lack of quality education in rural areas drew more migrants to the cities and the increased number of students overly taxed the remaining missionaries, which ensured few southerners met Colonial Office education standards.

Churches and missions had access to Nigerians but could not provide, either intentionally or not, a level of primary and secondary education that was satisfactory to the Colonial Office. The Governor of Lagos Colony in 1898, William MacCullum's description of Nigerian graduates as "illiterate and incompetent" was a continued stigma that G.I. Jones repeatedly encountered three decades later as he described his Nigerian

¹²⁵ Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 572.

¹²⁶ Dr. Adekola Junair and Dr. Akon Esu, "Educational Development: Traditional and Contemporary," 244.

staff as “slow and useless.”¹²⁷ Throughout the colonial period the education of Nigerians presented a paradox to the Colonial Office who wanted a quality workforce but did not want to invest in education. In 1919 the colonial government spent less than 1% of its budget on education, less than £50,000. Yet as the colony of Nigeria expanded and grew in global stature, the Colonial Office decided to take a direct interest in the primary and secondary education of southerners. Churches continued to be in the best position to reach southerners and Colonial Office focused on applying pressure for reform within missionary schools instead of primarily creating brand new educational institutions.

Following the Le Zoute International Conference on Christian Missions in Belgium in 1926, the Colonial Office began strictly enforcing the quality of education in southern Nigeria.¹²⁸ The Le Zoute New Education Code encouraged all missionaries of every denomination of Christianity to maintain active registration of all teachers, enforce the closure of illegal or illegitimate schools, and require missionary schools to appoint their own school supervisors.¹²⁹ While the various forms of the Church reformed their education systems internally the Colonial Office acted a means of enforcement on behalf of their parental foundations in Britain. If mission schools did not meet their school supervisor’s standards the Colonial Office closed the school. Simultaneously by 1929 the Colonial Office increased its budgetary support of Nigerian education to 4% of the overall budget at over £260,000, although the Church remained the primary investor in education until the late 1940s.

¹²⁷ E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1966), 286; G.I. Jones, *Annual Reports of Bende Division*, 43.

¹²⁸ Ironically the Le Zoute Conference altered missionary beliefs that native beliefs and traditions were fundamentally against Christianity and encouraged missionaries to find parallels within local traditions. In Nigeria kingship and its surrounding traditions were already thoroughly deposed before 1926.

¹²⁹ Otoni Nduka, “Colonial Education and Nigerian Society,” 54.

For southern Nigerians any upward movement in the new colonial society required direct contact with the Church's education hegemony. However while the Church provided the economic stepping-stone of a Western education for southerners, the lack of Church presence or government schools in the north meant that northerners were denied the style of education needed for climbing the colonial ladder. Before missions could establish footholds in the north Lord Lugard signed an agreement with the Sultan of Sokoto in 1903 guaranteeing that Christian missionaries would not interfere with Muslim religion.¹³⁰ As a result the northern population of Christians remained insignificantly small and the vast majority Muslim northerners did not receive the Western-styled education that was needed for upward mobility in the colonial system. While few companies or colonial institutions ventured into the north from the 1880s to the late 1930s, any positions potentially available to northerners required the Church-sponsored education that only existed in the south.¹³¹ Thus, as southerners slowly conformed to a Christian indoctrinated education system, the north had to rely on its own Islam-guided education system, which further divided the two regions between a Christian south and a Muslim north.

The Mosque:

As previously introduced, by 1903 Islam had become not only become the spiritual staple of nearly all northerners but also the political legitimacy of elites, the unifying identity of the region, and a means of social support. Yet while Islam became the all-encompassing northern identity, it never developed the singularity between different branches that

¹³⁰ A. Oyewolfe, *Historic Dictionary of Nigeria*, 114.

¹³¹ Northern colonial anomalies, such as tin mining around Jos, if they hired Africans, overwhelmingly hired Church-educated southerners. Called *akawuna* by the Hausa-Fulani, these southerners often looked down on northern culture and thought of themselves more as Europeans than as Nigerians

existed within southern Christianity. In the south different Christian traditions were accepted without any noticeably competition or violence, but in the north Sunni Muslims clashed over their beliefs. These violent religious contentions not only made identifying as a proper Muslim the battleground for religious extremism, but also kept mosques from having the same universal legitimacy as the Church in the south. No matter the branch of Christianity in the south, each church and church-affiliated school was afforded legitimacy by southerners since it was a denomination of Christianity and could lead to skills useful for the colonial jobs. Conversely for northerners, a person's specific spiritual leader and specific spiritual community could incite conflicts with other northern Muslims who were competing more intensely over fewer social and economic resources.

The chief divide amongst northerners emerged during the late 19th century within the Sokoto Caliphate as a result of both Middle Eastern and Sudanese influence and poor governance by the Sokoto elite. Mahdism arrived in Nigeria in the late 1890s and proselytized that Mahdi, the prophesized redeemer of Islam, would soon cleanse the corruption and spiritual lapses of Muslims who had veered from the true path of Islam.¹³² Poor rural northerners were drawn to Mahdism as the idea of cleansing society in order to make arrangements for the second arrival of the Messiah appealed to northern Muslims living under the yoke of all-powerful sultans and emirs. Although any attempts by small numbers of Madhist rebels to overthrow the Sokoto Caliphate were quickly crushed, small pockets of intensely Mahdist northerners believed that other northerners, particularly the wealthy, were not pious Muslims.¹³³

¹³² Adam J. Silverstein, *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction*, 31.

¹³³ Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 447.

Immediately following British conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1903, the Colonial Office came into direct contact with Mahdists engaging in renewed efforts to cleanse the north of impure Muslims also resolved to remove the British from northern Nigeria. In 1903 at Burmi and again in 1906 at Satiru, Mahdist rebels attempted to oust British military garrisons from the region.¹³⁴ Both revolts were easily suppressed largely due to the lack of support for the Mahdist rebels among the northern elites. To the majority of northern elites, Mahdism represented, if not an extremist form of Islam, then a clear and present challenge to the sultan and emirs' authority as religious leaders. However a few elites were sympathetic to Mahdist rebels and saw Mahdism as a means to expel the Colonial Office. For example in 1906 Emir Yero of Katsina refused to resupply the British fort while it defended Katsina from a Madhist rebellion, but when the rebels were repulsed Yero was deposed and his Dallazawa dynasty disappeared.¹³⁵ Again in 1907 two leading emirates, Magajin Gair and Ajayi Ogidioulu, revolted against the Emir of Ilorin and led six hundred "hunters" to attack the Emir's Residency.¹³⁶

Mahdism regained prominence during World War I. Many Emirs and Sultans contributed generously to the British war effort, but a few were willing to take bribes from German forces in Cameroon in order to hide German incursions into Nigeria. Northerners in rural populations where Mahdism had a strong presence attempted to take advantage of British-German fighting in order to reassert a purer form of Islam and to push the European conflict out of northern Nigeria.¹³⁷ At the peak of German incursion in 1916 a Mahdist revolt of Mai Rigan Karfe (The Man with Chain Armor) arose on the

¹³⁴ Ibid, 449.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 450.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 450.

¹³⁷ Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 452.

Benue Plateau with the goal of combating both the British and the Germans, as well as Muslims they deemed had backslidden.¹³⁸ Mai Rigan Karfe raged havoc throughout 1916 until the British army killed a large number of fighters at Nukko Hill and sentenced Mai Rigan Karfe to death in Lagos.¹³⁹ Despite a few limited pockets of armed resistance until 1918, Mai Rigan Karfe's death marked the end of violent Mahdism. Following the conclusion of World War I Mahdism remained prominent in a few rural areas as a passive form of resistance to corruption among northern elites and to colonial rule.

As a result of Mahdism northerners became internally divided within the north's singular, Islamic identity. From a colonial standpoint rebellions and revolts led to more stringent martial control of the north by British forces and led to deposition of more traditional rulers and the appointment of more colonial puppet rulers. However in addition to pitting pockets of rural poor against their regional elite, Mahdism introduced the legitimization of extremist violence in the north. Despite the lack of colonial investment, northern Nigerians were not unaware of developments in the Arab World following WWI.¹⁴⁰ The portioning of the Ottoman Empire and the movements towards independence within Iraq, Syria, and Egypt during the 1920's and 1930's further increased northerners' resentments towards prolonged British colonization. Mahdist rebellions, although unsuccessful, appealed to some northerners as a means to strike back at both elite corruption and British colonial hegemony.

The brief rise in popularity of extremism not only increased northerners' reliance on their local mosques and imams for spiritual guidance, but also splintered the north's singular Sunni Muslim identity. Although Mahdist violence fizzled away after WWI, its

¹³⁸ Ibid, 453.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 453.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 460.

polarizing doctrine of violence against fellow Muslims who were deemed impure turned isolated pockets of Muslims against the north's greater Muslim commonality. As a result, northerners began to look singularly to their local mosques and imams for spiritual and communal identity. This internal identity focus combined with the lack of colonial investment to form festering resentment of southern institutionalism as northerners became increasingly economically and socially isolated from the south's communal "Nigerian" evolution. Ultimately this divide afforded more social and political power to individual mosques and imams than existed for southern churches, and created an identity reliance on local mosques at the expense of developing broader identity sympathies with other Muslims or with southern Nationalists.

University:

The introduction of Western-styled education in Nigeria rapidly overturned centuries-old African education systems. Pre-colonialism education in Nigeria was an oral, communal custom, whereby any lesson or skill that a child needed was taught within the local community and by parents, grandparents, elders, and neighbors.¹⁴¹ However as early as fifty years before the Colonial Office's rule was established in Lagos, missionaries installed a new, standardized education system. The construction of physical schoolrooms, introduction of uniforms, set timetable for lessons, and the daily isolation of students from the rest of the community profoundly shifted children's development away from their traditional homes.¹⁴² As previously mentioned formal universities did not open in Nigeria until 1904, yet the beginning with the indoctrination of a common school system

¹⁴¹ T. E. A. Salubi, *Witness to British Colonial Rule*, 1.

¹⁴² Otoni Nduka, "Colonial Education and Nigerian Society," 26.

under early missionaries altered African identities by creating an “education style” gap between children and their parents.

Virtually no form of colonial-sponsored, secular education was available to northerners. Nearly all of the Colonial Office’s limited funding for education remained in the south and the sons and daughters of emirs and sultans attended universities in either Britain or the United States.¹⁴³ If northern Muslims wanted to attend university they would, in short, have to leave the north. In theory intelligent northerners could migrate southward into Muslim Yorubaland to attend university, yet once a northerner migrated to the south they would typically remain there.¹⁴⁴ All the job prospects for a university graduate were in the south and in the increasingly rare event a northerner migrated southward, received a university education, and then received a posting in the north, they would be socially isolated from their northern kin. As northerners grew increasingly resentful of British rule any northerner who cooperated with the British system became a societal outcast.¹⁴⁵ Therefore with extremely limited opportunities for any secular education, let alone secondary education, and the certainty of societal banishment for the few who qualified to journey southward, northerners became educationally isolated from the south as well.

In the south, despite discrepancies in the education level of their students, missionary schools were impressively successful in single-handedly transforming Nigerian childhood education. Without the financial support of the Colonial Office for over fifty years Catholic and evangelical education transformed the traditional oral and gradual education standard into a, theoretically, standardized Western system. However

¹⁴³ Toyin Falola, *Nigeria in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Carolina Academy Press, 2002), 243.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 252.

¹⁴⁵ Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 573.

as already discussed Christian educators in the south viewed secondary schooling for Nigerians as superfluous and next to no funding existed for it from British parent missions.¹⁴⁶ By the early 1900s classroom education had become the norm over a few generations, but the colony's economy continued to grow exponentially and religious primary schooling was not producing the quality and quantity of educated Nigerians the Colonial Office wanted. In response to an increasing need for more Nigerians in the workforce with reliable training the Colonial Office began a gradual process of creating a state-owned alternative to religious education.

In 1909 King's College opened in Lagos as the colonial government's first state-owned secondary school. As Nigeria's first secular secondary school it was founded with a concrete mission¹⁴⁷:

To provide for the youth of the colony a higher general education than that supplied by the existing Schools, to prepare them for Matriculation Examination of the University of London and to give a useful course of Study to those who intend to qualify for Professional life or to enter Government or Mercantile service.¹⁴⁸

The Colonial Office hoped that King's College would begin a tradition of local Nigerian higher education, which would eventually be supplemented with further education in Britain.¹⁴⁹ However the number of students who initially succeeded in meeting Colonial Office standards were few, spurring the creation of specialized

¹⁴⁶ Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 571.

¹⁴⁷ King's College was originally only open to male students, but during the 1920s admitted gifted women until the opening of Queen's College, Lagos in 1929, after which King's College reverted back to being a men's school.

¹⁴⁸ British Colonial Office, "Mission of King's College, Lagos," (Government edict: Lagos, 1909).

¹⁴⁹ A. Oyewolfe, *Historic Dictionary of Nigeria*, 183.

technical schools to act as direct feeders into the Nigerian workforce. As the colonial government gradually increased its funding for education between 1909-1935 a relative surge of technical and vocational schools occurred in the south. By 1926 thirteen Teacher Training Schools maintained student populations of at least 320 and by 1932 engineering and agricultural specific programs were introduced at Yaba College in Lagos.¹⁵⁰

Although the empirical number of university students appears small, secondary education greatly altered Nigerian identity by legitimizing and prioritizing peaceful protest to colonial rule and creating a colony-wide aversion to armed resistance. While university enrollment remained lower throughout the colonial period, the goal of secondary education became commonplace throughout Nigeria. Although a pattern of military coups and dictatorships occurred from the 1960s-1990s Nigerians did not largely recognize the legitimacy of their later military governments.¹⁵¹ During the growth of universities throughout Nigeria a general shift in common belief occurred in both the north and the south that independence through violence was either morally wrong or unachievable. With the decline of violent Mahdism in the north and the suppression in 1929 of the last extensive Igbo uprising in the south, movements towards independence and protests to colonial rule became institutionalized in both regions.¹⁵²

While the low number of highly educated Nigerians meant that the effects of peaceful protests and attempts at institutional reform were very limited, the crucial observation to make is that they occurred at all. The emergence of nationalism in Nigeria was very gradual and occurred across several decades, but even the limited presence of a few university-educated Nigerians in the 1920s and 1930s calling peacefully for

¹⁵⁰ Dr. Adekola Junair and Dr. Akon Esu, "Educational Development: Traditional and Contemporary," 252.

¹⁵¹ Toyin Falola, *Nigeria in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Carolina Academy Press, 2002), 6.

¹⁵² E. C. Ejiogu. *The Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria*, 204.

independence and the creation of a Parliamentary government is significant.¹⁵³ The actions of educated Nigerians may not have had an immediate or profound effect on the Colonial Office, yet their actions reveal a Nigerian adoption of Western institutionalism and principles. Instead of a singular people opposing the British in Yorubaland or Igboland, young men educated through the colonial system began calling for a united, institutionalized opposition to foreign colonial rule. In effect, these colonial educated Nigerians accepted the principles and models of their university education and Western-style government and applied them to the idea of a united Nigerian people.

In 1934 the Nigerian Youth Movement was founded to combat a series of injustices surrounding Yaba Higher College. Opened in 1932 the Yaba Higher College in Lagos was created along the same basis of previous government-owned universities in order to provide technical and vocation training to Nigerians who would then join the colonial civil service. However in what was viewed by Nigerians as an attempt to prolong colonial control over the highest-paid civil service jobs, the most talented students at Yaba Higher College were delayed in graduating and then sent to Britain for additional schooling where they received little to no additional training.¹⁵⁴ Yet even though the protests achieved limited success, from an identity standpoint the formation of the Nigerian Youth Movement marks a crucial turn in the evolution of Nigerian-ness.

Former university students successfully managed to organize protests, and through partnering with local Nigerian newspapers such as the *Daily Times Nigeria* managed to distribute their message across the southwest.¹⁵⁵ For the Nigerian Youth Movement, their protests were not simply for Lagos or for one particular social or ethnic

¹⁵³ E. C. Ejiogu. *The Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria*, 206.

¹⁵⁴ Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 578.

¹⁵⁵ Toyin Falola, *Nigeria in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Carolina Academy Press, 2002), 143.

group, but rather their protests were aimed at the idea of equal opportunities for all “Nigerians.” In the adoption of a “pan-Nigerianism” the Nigerian Youth Movement built upon the commercial and institutional ties that had already begun to emerge in the south. Regardless of whether a student was Yoruba, Igbo, or Ijaw, all students deserved the same opportunities within the colonial system. Although the Colonial Office largely ignored the movement’s demands, the protest’s blending of university-educated leaders with the new idea of pan-Nigerianism, although gradual, highlights the emergence of a new Nigerian identity and its roots in colonial institutionalism.

The Army:

As the Colonial Office’s authority expanded deeper into Nigeria it required an increasingly large number of soldiers to defend the colony’s borders and to enforce colonial laws. Beginning in the early 1860s various battalions of the West Indian Regiment were garrisoned in Lagos to help assert British authority following the conquest of the city.¹⁵⁶ However the West Indian Regiment suffered heavy casualties from prolonged expeditions in the tropical climate and malaria. Faced with increasing public pressure the Colonial Office began a recruitment campaign to hire Nigerian men to serve in para-military constabularies. Modeled after the eighteenth century Irish Constabularies, the government’s Nigerian forces were localized units who trained alongside the West Indian Regiment and were equipped with muskets.¹⁵⁷ Under the authority of white army officers, the Colonial Office introduced the first Nigerian thirty-

¹⁵⁶ Maj. Gen Hafiz B. Momoh, “Evolution of the Nigerian Armed Forces,” 443.

¹⁵⁷ Maj. Gen Hafiz B. Momoh, “Evolution of the Nigerian Armed Forces,” 443.

member constabulary know as the “Glover Hausas,” into service in 1863.¹⁵⁸ Following the Glover Hausa’s immediate successful arrest of the King of Calabar during an anti-Ekpe expedition, the Royal Niger Company, the Crown Colony of Lagos, and the Niger Coast Protectorate each formed their own collective constabulary networks.¹⁵⁹

Between 1863-1900 the constabularies offered southern Nigerians of impoverished backgrounds the opportunity to earn a consistent wage and provided former societal outcasts with a measure of colonial authority. Particularly in rural and isolated areas the uniform of a colonial constabulary signaled that the men in military garb held institutionalized power. For teenage boys and young men who were social outcasts or were the children of shunned parents, the constabularies offered not only consistent wages, meals, and clothing, but also the euphoria of authority that their traditional systems had denied them.¹⁶⁰ Despite its localized corruption and cases of abused authority, the constabulary method offered a respectable means of self-advancement in the colonial system and helped to provide a sense of a cohesive “Nigerian” identity. As localized constabulary units evolved into protectorate-wide units, the constabularies were introduced to institutionalized, military discipline that attempted to engrain the idea of unit-based and national loyalty, despite ethnic differences. The continued evolution of the Nigerian constabularies into a full-fledged military regiment created an institution of Nigerians who, at least in theory, were collectively loyal to Nigeria, albeit colonial Nigeria.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 444.

¹⁵⁹ *Ekpe* was a secret-society movement popular in Calabar connected to the spirit of the Leopard. Found throughout the Cross Rivers area in southeast Nigeria the British believed the *Ekpe* society was working with the King of Calabar to undermine British authority. The arrest of *Ekpe* leaders in 1863 was the first successful police operation in colonial Nigeria; Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 254.

¹⁶⁰ T. E. A. Salubi, *Witness to British Colonial Rule*, 7.

While the West Indian Regiment was used for most of the heavy fighting, Nigerian constabularies saw limited military action in several expeditions against the Kumasi (1873-4), the Akuna (1894), the Brass (1897), as well as in a few campaigns in the north as far as Kano.¹⁶¹ By 1900 the Colonial Office, faced with depleting West Indian battalions and the increased threat of German and French incursions into northern Nigeria, combined all constabularies into the Royal West African Frontier Force (WAFF). Tasked with defending British mercantile interests from German and French intervention, the WAFF's formation and deployment of several units to the north marked the first time in Nigeria's history that southern Nigerian soldiers held authority over northerners.¹⁶² While traders had traveled from the south to the north before colonialism, the WAFF brought southerners into the north in far larger numbers. For northerners the presence of the WAFF was a united conglomerate of southerners rather than a compilation of different southern groups.¹⁶³ Therefore as thousands of southerners were slowly coalesced by military institutionalism, northerners viewed the WAFF as unwanted invading soldiers who shared equal authority with the British.

Following the combat success of the WAFF the Colonial Office in 1901 combined four battalions of constabulary forces into two battalions of a united Nigerian Regiment. Trained under 27 white officers, the new Nigerian Regiment was given military-issued rifles and 75mm artillery and earned distinction in World War I during for

¹⁶¹ Maj. Gen Hafiz B. Momoh, "Evolution of the Nigerian Armed Forces," 445.

¹⁶² Nigeria's current North/South divide has made recent efforts against Boko Haram difficult in that northerners hate having southern soldiers in the north. However this presents a paradox for Nigerian leadership as Nigeria's best military units are comprised of almost entirely southerners as a result of colonial influence on the south; Maj. Gen Hafiz B. Momoh, "Evolution of the Nigerian Armed Forces," 448.

¹⁶³ Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 580.

service in Cameroon (1914-1916), and the East African Campaign (1916-1918).¹⁶⁴ However it was not until 1918 that the Nigerian Regiment's actions had its largest impact on Nigerian identity. The outbreak of Adubi War, or the Egba Uprising, occurred in response to colonial taxes on the Egba people. In response to continuously high taxes thirty thousand Egba attacked railway lines and killed a British magistrate and the colonial proxy Egba chief.¹⁶⁵ In cooperation with British units the Nigerian Regiment aided in suppressing the Egba and was awarded the African General Service medal.¹⁶⁶

The Adubi War marks the first coordinated military action of a Nigerian unit killing other "Nigerians." While the nature of a revolt would suggest that Nigerian identity was, at the very least, heavily divided, the action of a centralized military force defending the sovereignty of Nigeria actually strengthened popular gravitation towards a singular identity. Although Nigeria was still a British colony, the increasing number of Nigerians in military units and the increased usage of Nigerian units by the Colonial Office indoctrinated Nigerians to a common law, enforced by Nigerian policemen and soldiers.¹⁶⁷ It could be argued that the Nigerian Regiment existed merely as an arm of the Colonial Office, which would be correct in the simplest form of the argument. However while the Nigerian Regiment's allegiance was to the Colonial Officer during the colonial period, the philosophy of loyalty to a centralized state despite personal ethnic, religious, or cultural identity permeated Nigerian ranks and ultimately spread "Nigerian-ness" to the soldiers.

¹⁶⁴ During the East African Campaign against Italian forces the Nigerian carried out the fastest advance in military history at the time; Maj. Gen Hafiz B. Momoh, "Evolution of the Nigerian Armed Forces," 444.

¹⁶⁵ T. E. A. Salubi, *Witness to British Colonial Rule*, 254.

¹⁶⁶ Maj. Gen Hafiz B. Momoh, "Evolution of the Nigerian Armed Forces," 449.

¹⁶⁷ T. E. A. Salubi, *Witness to British Colonial Rule*, 271.

As the Regiment moved across the colony and came in contact with Nigerians, particularly southerners, the army was slowly recognized as a consistent means of unified authority. By no means did social cleavages disappear within Nigerian units and corruption and social divides are still present within the Nigerian army today. Yet the importance of the army as a colonial institution was its perceptions by civilians. At the same time that Nigerians were receiving secondary education and beginning to organize pan-Nigerian movements, the army represented Nigerians' successful military exploits and served as an example of honor and professionalism.¹⁶⁸ As Nigeria moved closer towards independence the military gained an increasingly important role as a consistent pillar of stability, and as the new state emerged Nigerian identity looked to the military and its leadership to govern when civilian governments failed to provide for the country.

¹⁶⁸ While corruption and scandal are commonalities in the Nigerian army today, during colonial times the army was viewed quite positively. Although corruption and violence was present during the colonial period, Nigerians' ability to fight for themselves instilled a kind of national pride.

Conclusion

Nigeria's political route since independence has been frequently marred by dictatorial regimes and corrupted elections. Since Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1999 under former Head of State Olusegun Obasanjo (southern Christian), Nigerians have generally accepted the political convention that the Presidency should rotate from a northerner to a southerner. However Obasanjo's northern Muslim successor Umaru Yar'Adua died in the third year of his term and his Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan (southern Christian), has been in office ever since which seems unfair to northern Muslims. As the 2015 Presidential elections continue to be delayed, northerners face Muslim-to-Muslim violence by the terrorist insurgency of Boko Haram and southerners face the uncertainty of what the potential of a northern President might mean.¹⁶⁹

To the outside observer today, Nigeria is a state whose political troubles are sunk in its oil wells. Yet in truth the difficulties facing Nigeria are reflective of colonialism's alteration of Nigerian society, and in order to truly understand Nigeria's complex landscapes, one has to understand the evolution of complex national identities. As modern states emerge, each of them are influenced, driven, or in some extreme cases formed entirely around ethnic, religious, and cultural histories. However within some states with sizable minority populations, a counter-cultural form of nationalism is created, whereby a specific group's culture, beliefs, or history becomes a call for that group's own

¹⁶⁹ President Jonathan's greatest success in office was his establishment of Amnesty for southern oil rackateers in the Niger Delta. While the north has experience violence from Boko Haram, the south has not experienced large-scale violence in over a decade. However many northerners, particularly Jonathan's own Ijaw supporters fear that a northern President (who should be elected by convention), may end Amnesty programs in the Delta.

state.¹⁷⁰ Whether in the Basque region of Spain, in Iraqi and Turkish Kurdistan, in Quebec, or in Scotland, self-identity around a specific culture can directly lead to nationalist movements.¹⁷¹ These movements can either result in violent struggles (Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions), prolonged postponement (Morocco's Western Sahara region), or in independence referendums (Scotland in 2014). Yet regardless of the various effectiveness of identity-driven nationalist movements, states with large populations that share a common social cleavage eventually must deal with their identity crisis in some capacity.

Nigerians, however, face an ongoing identity crisis whereby it can be difficult to conceptualize a singular Nigerian identity. Yet herein lies the value of understanding colonial influence on Nigerian identity: Islam and Modern Nationalism are so generationally ingrained that these two competing ideologies supersede all other social cleavages on a national scale. Nigeria's north/south divide is a rift created as two supremely opposite regions were morphed into two distinct colonies and then abruptly joined together. As northerners of different ethnicities were coalesced into Northern Nigeria, Islam became the uniting identity category that grew in importance as the effects of colonial neglect grew more pronounced. On balance, the institutionalization of hundreds of groups of southerners as a result of a loss of traditional kingship placed southerners in colonial positions and institutions that would eventually lead to pan-Nigerianism. Rather than the single group counter-culture nationalism prevalent in many states, Nigerians instead face a unique challenge as the ethnic, religious, and culture

¹⁷⁰ Craig Calhoun, "Nationalism and Ethnicity," *Annual Review of Sociology* (Palo Alto: Annual Reviews, 1993), 220.

¹⁷¹ Igor Calzada, "Post-independence in Scotland, Catalonia and the Basque Country: city-regional small nations beyond nation-states," *OpenDemocracy*. (London: OpenDemocracy Online, 2014), 1.

cleavages of several hundred groups have been consolidated and generalized into a north/south regional divide. As a result of direct rule through the deconstruction of kingship in the south and as a result of indirect rule and isolation of kingship in the north, Nigerians' identities have been ideologically blended, but geographically placed into contention.

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