NIGERIA: THE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT OF LEGITIMACY SYSTEMS
ON POLITICAL STABILITY IN THE FIRST REPUBLIC

A THESIS

submitted by

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to

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA,
WINNIPEG, CANADA.

JUNE 1979

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The failure and breakdown of parliamentary democracy in Nigeria which led to the fall of the first republic in 1966 may be attributed to many factors. Much of the literature on Nigerian government and politics has blamed the fall on the inadequacies of the Constitution of the republic.[1] There were others who saw the Nigerian situation basically in terms of inter-regional conflicts — Kenneth Post and Michael Vickers,[2] for example, proposed that the survival of the Nigerian polity is a factor of the rigidity of flexibility of the central system (the federal government) in a situation of conflicting sub-systems (represented by the different ethnic groups that make up the whole system). Although these approaches have helped to draw attention to the tensions which were a product of conflict of structures within the first republic, many of these studies have been concentrated on explanations of inter-"tribal" or inter-regional rather than intra-regional conflicts. While this thesis recognizes the existence of inter-regional conflicts in the first republic, it also contends that these conflicts were only reflections of a prolonged conflict between opposing systems of legitimacy.[3] The conflict between these opposing legitimacy systems (traditional and modern-African) was inevitable as each tried to control the political system in the first republic. In addition, this thesis contends that the conflict of legitimacy systems was not limited by regional boundaries.[4] The conflict was first fought in each of the regions and resolved prior to independence in 1960. However, attempts which were made to resolve the conflict at the national

level failed and lead to a series of crises which weakened the republic and finally brought it down in 1966 when the armed forces established a new system of legitimacy.

In this thesis, attempts shall be made to prove the hypothesis that the survival or stability of a political structure, in this case, Nigeria, (measured in terms of continuity) is dependent on the legitimacy system on which it is established.[5]

The approach to this study is, first, to examine the origin and development of the conflict between the legitimacy systems in the polity. It shall be done through a brief examination of the systems of legitimacy on which the major traditional political systems were based prior to colonization. This shall be followed by an examination of the types of systems of legitimacy which emerged during colonization (that is, the colonial-traditional system,[6] and the "modern-African" system),[7] and the basis of conflict between the systems. Finally, there shall be a discussion of how the conflict was resolved in the regions, and how failure to arrive at a compromise at the national level led to the series of crises which accounted largely for the political instability and ultimate fall of the republic in January 1966.

It is necessary at this juncture to explain and define some of the terms and concepts used in this thesis.

As the title of the thesis suggests, the intention is to examine the relationships between the conflict of systems — of legitimacy and political stability in Nigeria's first republic (1960-1966). Thus, the term "Effects" refers to the consequences of the conflict on political stability. "Stability", as it is used here, is meant to refer to the continuity of the political system. Thus, a system which does not

experience serious disruptions within a period of ten years would be regarded as being more stable than one which did experience it within the same period.[8]

Although a republican constitution was not adopted until October 1963, the term "first republic" has been used to refer to the period from independence in October 1960 to the fall of constitutional government in January 1966.[9] In the course of the analysis, the terms "structure" and "system" will be used interchangeably. The reason for this is that since these terms come very close to each other in meaning (according to common usage), and since it would be beyond the scope of this study to make distinctions between them (which, in itself, is another topic of research), it has been decided not to engage in the exercise of making distinctions. Hence, reference to political "structure" or "system" would refer to a political framework which could include groups, organizations or institutions which participate in politics.[10] "Legitimacy" is another important term which needs to be defined here.

Legitimacy

The notion of legitimacy is central to the topic of the thesis, hence, it is important to explain here what is meant by the term. The term "legitimacy" is often used interchangeably with "authority" and "legality", or a combination of both. Some authors such as M.G. Smith[11] and A.C. Janos[12] have attempted to draw a distinction between these terms while others simply didn't see any need for such distinctions. Since the intention here is to give a definition of legitimacy which

would be used in the analysis of the following chapters, it is not

intended to go into detail about what constitutes "power", "authority"

and "legality" as distinct from "legitimacy".

David Apter has suggested that "legitimacy" is "a matter of con-

science".[13] According to Apter, the "moral basis of politics determines

the meaning of legitimate authority", and "authority" may be defined as

"political morality in a particular setting".[14] M.G. Smith perceives

legitimacy as an "order of norms" and principles constituting the trad-

itional moral system, all the elements of which are not adequately

represented in law.[15] A central theme in the conception of legitimacy

by David Apter and M.G. Smith is the notion of "morality" or "system of

norms". Another conception of legitimacy to be considered here is that

of Andrew C. Janos who defines legitimacy as

> the ability[16] to evoke compliance short of coercion.
> It is a psychological relationship between masses
> and elites, involving acceptance by the mass of a
> claim by an elite to act in the name of the community
> .... legitimacy derives from compliance with certain
> processes — elections, hereditary succession — that
> are regarded as the right and morally just ways of
> determining who should make decisions for the commun-
> ity and in what manner.[17]

What can be deduced from these definitions is that the principles

of legitimacy are normative — hence, legitimacy involves the compliance

by a community with certain norms which are operating within the society

at a particular time. Contrary to Janos' view, however, the view in

this thesis is that the compliance needed for legitimacy may be obtained

by the use of an agency of coercion to destroy an existing set of norms

and to create or super-impose a new set of norms from which succeeding

governments would derive their legality. In other words, systems of

legitimacy are subject to change, through coercion or by any other

means.[18] Hence, we can only speak of legitimacy (as Apter puts it) "in a particular setting". Effective change of a system of legitimacy, however, is dependent on two factors:

(a) the popularity of the deposed regime

(b) the effectiveness of the methods employed in destroying the old legitimacy.

Smith describes what happens in the former situation thus:

> When a political group seizes command of a state by coup, its rule may or may not at first lack legitimacy, depending on whether the repudiation of allegiance to the former government is regarded as morally justifiable or obligatory. If the coup ended a regime which lacked popular support and consensus, even though its methods were unconstitutional, its legitimacy could be claimed and perhaps established on these grounds.[19]

It could be rightly claimed that this was what happened in Nigeria when, immediately after the coup which ousted the civilian government in 1966, the people showed their support for the new army regime although it had come to power in an unconstitutional manner.

In the latter case, a regime may remain in power and later be accepted as legitimate irrespective of the popularity or loyalty given to the former government, provided that that regime has the means of keeping itself in power and evoking compliance with its policies through the threat or actual use of coercion. Colonialism is a good example of this. Colonial powers, especially the French acquired their colonies in Africa mainly through conquest. Each colonial power employed a different means of legitimizing their rule and making the people comply with government orders. After about a century of colonization, during which the people were re-socialized, the colonized peoples have in most cases, accepted the rule of their colonizers as "legitimate". The

Islamic empire of Northern Nigeria — the Sokoto Caliphate — is another example. After destroying the authority of the Habe rulers through jihads,[20] the jihadists proceeded to re-orient the conquered peoples by imposing the Islamic religion on them. The religion, on the other hand, helped to legitimize the new system by discrediting the old system as "paganistic" and "evil".

What can be derived from the above is that a system of legitimacy may be destroyed and replaced with a new system through the process of re-socialization.[21] Since legitimacy is based on a system of norms, as has already been stated, it could be replaced by new sets of norms depending on the situation. Also, Janos'[22] view is shared here that legitimacy is conferred on a government by the people — that it involves a psychological relationship between the masses and the ruling elite in which the masses accept the claims of the ruling elite to act in the name of the community. It is this view of legitimacy that will be used in the analysis.

Modernization

Although this study is meant primarily to examine the conflicting systems of legitimacy and the consequences for political stability in the first republic, this will be done in the context of political development or modernization.[23] It is necessary then that the notion of "modernization" be defined too.

David Apter defined modernization as "the spread of roles which, functionally linked and organized in industrial settings, make their appearance in systems lacking an industrial infrastructure".[24] It is

a process of "increasing complexity in human affairs within which the polity must act".[25] Hence, it involves "choice" and the "ranking of priorities"[26] by individuals and governments. Lucian Pye describes modernization as a process involving the "creation of adaptive and purposeful organizations".[27] In Samuel P. Huntington's view, the process of modernization is a multifaceted one which involves changes in all areas of human thought and activity.[28] A common theme in these views of modernization is that it involves change. In the political arena, the process of change, according to Huntington, would involve the disintegration of traditional political systems and the replacement with modern systems characterized by rationalized authority, differentiated structure and mass participation in politics.[29] He describes rationalized authority as the single secular authority which replaces a large number of traditional authorities during the process of modernization.[30] The notion of inevitability of conflict is built into this hypothesis, since there is a high probability that traditional authorities would not relinquish power easily. In the case of Nigeria, chances of a conflict between traditional and modern forces were greater because of the nature of some of the traditional systems in the country[31] and the rate at which changes were taking place.[32] It is this conception of political modernization as a process involving the change of traditional systems into modern systems that will be used in this thesis.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER I

1. For example, R.L. Sklar argued that the Constitutional allocation
of power is inconsistent with the real distribution of power in
Nigerian society. See "Contradictions in the Nigerian Political
System," The Journal of Modern African Studies, III, 2 (1965),
pp. 201-213. There were also arguments that the regional demarca-
tion within the federation was unfavourable and the constitutional
provisions for regional boundary adjustments were too rigid. See
J.P. Mackintosh, "Federalism in Nigeria," Political Studies, x,
3 (1962), pp. 223-247. B.J. Dudley, "Federalism and the Balance
of Power in Nigeria," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies,
IV, 1 (March, 1966), pp. 16-29. B.O. Nwabueze, Constitutionalism
in the Emergent States (London: C. Hurst, 1973), pp. 112-123.

2. See K. Post and M. Vickers, Structure and Conflict in Nigeria, 1960-
1966 (London: Heinemann, 1973).

3. The term "legitimacy" is defined below (in this chapter).

4. That is, none of the conflicting systems was limited to any one
region. There were traditional and modern-African systems in both
the Northern and Southern regions. Hence, there were also intra-
regional conflicts which helped to produce a measure of political
stability in the regional structures after independence.

5. The intention in this thesis is to prove that there is a causal
relationship between the instability and fall of the first republic
on the one hand, and the conflict between systems of legitimacy in
the republic on the other. By 1960 when Nigeria became independent,
there were two major systems of legitimacy operating and trying to
gain control of the central government. These systems have been
named "traditional" and "modern-African" in the thesis. The former
was represented by the Northern Peoples' Congress (N.P.C.) which
controlled the government of Northern region, while the latter was
represented mainly by the Action Group (A.G.) and the National
Council of Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.) who controlled the Western
and Eastern regions respectively. These two systems came into con-
flict at the national level. Attempts to reach a consensus failed,
and the series of crises generated from this conflict had disruptive
effects on the political system of the first republic, and was largely
responsible for its fall.

6. See Edward Feit, "Military Coups and Political Development: Some
Lessons from Ghana and Nigeria," in M.E. Doro and N.M. Stultz (eds.),
Governing in Black Africa (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall,
1970), pp. 221-232.

7. The term "modern-African" has been adopted by the writer because the
bulk of Nigerians who derive their legitimacy from this system were
neither sufficiently "westernized" to fit into the set of Western

(European) institutions on which the state was patterned at independence, nor were they truly traditional enough to fit into the traditional setting. See the section on "The emergence and development of the 'modern-African' structure" in Chapter II below for further explanation.

8. Disruptions to the functioning of the political system may lead to change for 'good' or 'bad'. However, it is a matter of individual opinion whether a change has been for 'good' or 'bad' (for example, some people may regard a socialist revolution as change for bad, while others may disagree with this view). The important thing is that if the functioning of the political system has been disrupted by the change, the system may be said to be unstable.

9. The reason for this is that it is more convenient for analytical purposes, to take the whole period (1960-1966) as a unit for analysis rather than divide it into two parts. Also, since the change to republican status did not have any significant effect on the conflict situation under study, it would not be a worthwhile exercise, neither would it help the course of the research if the period were divided into two.

10. A. Rapoport, "Some System Approaches to Political Theory," and M.G. Smith, "A Structural Approach to Comparative Politics," in D. Easton (ed.), Varieties of Political Theory (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1966).

11. M.G. Smith, Government in Zazzau, 1800-1950 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960).

12. A.C. Janos, "Authority and Violence," in H. Eckstein (ed.), Internal War (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964).

13. D.E. Apter, The Politics of Modernization (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 16.

14. Ibid.

15. Smith, op. cit., p. 20.

16. Probably of the governing elite.

17. Janos, op. cit., p. 132. D.J.M. Muffett holds similar views about legitimacy. See his "Legitimacy and Deference in a Traditional Oriented Society," African Studies Review, XVIII, 2 (September, 1975), pp. 101-115.

18. For example, through gradual change.

19. Smith, op. cit., p. 21.

20. "Jihad" is the name given to the Islamic holy war directed against non-Islamic or pagan Habe Kingdoms. See footnote 13.

21. That is, through a process of re-education. See, for example, J. Russell, "Replication of Instability: Political Socialization in Northern Ireland," British Journal of Political Science, VII, 1 (January, 1977), pp. 115-125 and E.S. Greenberg (ed.), Political Socialization (New York: Ahterton Press, 1970).

22. Janos, loc. cit.

23. That is, the conflict of legitimacy systems in Nigeria's first republic was generated by the process of modernization. As the party moves from a "pre-modern" (or traditional) to "modern" state, conflict between traditional and modern forces was inevitable. See reasons in S.P. Huntington's hypothesis of political modernization mentioned below.

24. Apter, op. cit., p. V.

25. Ibid., p. 3.

26. Ibid., pp. 9-10.

27. L.W. Pye, Politics, Personality and Nation-Building (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 39.

28. S.P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 32.

29. Ibid., p. 35.

30. Ibid., pp. 34-35.

31. In particular, the highly centralized traditional system of the Hausa-Fulani in Northern Nigeria. See below, Chapter II.

32. That is, the extent to which changes have taken place within a certain period of time.

CHAPTER II

SYSTEMS OF LEGITIMACY IN NIGERIA

One of the first things that a regime concerns itself with on assuming governmental power is to seek to legitimize its rule. If the regime is established on an already existing system of legitimacy, then it would have no problems getting the people to comply with its rule. However, if in the process of coming to power the regime displaces a legitimate government, the regime would have to face the problem of justifying its rule if it hoped to continue in power without any serious challenges. The process of legitimization allows the people to perceive the regime as a just one, and, as Smith puts it, the legitimacy so obtained serves as a base or foundation for the continuity or perpetuation of the governmental system.[1] The issue of legitimacy has constituted a major problem to some regimes in Nigeria. It has caused instability in the political system, especially in cases where the old system of legitimacy persists and comes into constant conflict with the newly established system. It was the conflict between the persisting traditional systems and the newly established Western democratic system[2] which helped to destroy the first republic in Nigeria five years after independence. In order to have a better understanding of the nature of the conflict, we should first examine the systems of legitimacy on which the major traditional political structures (which persisted after independence) were based. Reference to their historical contexts, as Thomas Hodgkin has argued, would give us a better understanding of the institutions and values of contemporary African societies.[3]

Systems of Legitimacy of the Major Traditional Political Structures

Nigeria is made up of over two hundred ethnic groups, each having its own customs, traditions and language.[4] Traditionally, many of these ethnic groups had their own independent political structures, and each political structure had a system of legitimacy by which authority is legitimized. For analytical purposes, these systems of legitimacy shall be classified into three main types in this thesis.

The first type is characterized by systems in which the major source of authority is God — the supreme being — whose laws must be obeyed by the society. These laws are documented in religious books,[5] and the human incumbent of the post of authority is perceived as a representative of the supreme being and exercises authority as long as his rule does not contradict the religious laws.[6] In such systems, the ruler is regarded with reverence by his subjects, but is not made the object of worship. Thus, for a man to qualify for the position of authority in this type of system, he must share the same religious beliefs with the rest of the society and belong to the only religious group recognized by the society. He would also remain the legitimate authority as long as he promotes the interests of the community's religion — which must be his major pre-occupation.

The second type is characterized by systems in which authority is vested in human beings who have been deified. In other words, the society perceives the human authority as a supernatural being who can employ supernatural powers to ensure compliance with his laws. Hence, his person is worshipped. This type of legitimacy system is different from the first type described above in that the human incumbent of the position of authority enforces his own laws and not those of a supreme,

supernatural being as is the case in the first type. Also, the society

in the second type is not organized on the principles of a religion[7] and

the authority is not under any obligation to promote the interests of

any religion in the society as is the case in the first type. Thus,

religious beliefs are not a major determining factor in the selection of

the authority in this type of society.

The third type is characterized by systems in which authority is

vested in human beings. In this case, the human authority is neither

deified (as is the case in the second type) nor under any obligation to

enforce religious laws or promote religious principles (as is the case

with the first type). In this type of system, freedom of religion is

allowed, and the authority is neither seen as a representative of another

being, nor perceived as possessing supernatural powers as is the case

with the first and second types respectively.

For the purposes of analysis in this thesis, it is necessary that

names be given for each of the types of systems described above. The

first type may be described as a "sacred-religious system"; and the

second and third types as "sacred non-religious" and "non-sacred non-

religious" systems respectively.[8]

The Sacred-Religious Type

In this type, the community perceives the legitimate authority

not only as "Sacred" and "Divine", but also as belonging to a particular

religious group and promoting the interests of this religion — which

must be a major preoccupation of the authority. Thus, the authority

is derived from the religious principles on which the whole society is

organized, and, hence, destruction of those religious principles would result in an undermining of the authority on which the society has been established. Examples of this type of system are the Sokoto Caliphate and the Kanem-Bornu empire in the Northern part of Nigeria.

The Sokoto Caliphate was established at the start of the nineteenth-century as a result of conquests in "holy wars" or jihads started by a Fulani-Muslim scholar, Uthman dan Fodio.[9] The jihads, which started in Gobir in 1804, spread quickly throughout the whole of Hausaland in Northern Nigeria. By the end of the century, the muslim jihadists were already in control of a vast area of territory which they ruled according to the Islamic codes.[10] The empire which emerged as a result of the various conquests extended from Sokoto in the North-East to Yola in the East, and from Katsina in the North to Ilorin in the Yoruba-speaking South-West. Although the jihad was fought in different areas by different groups, all jihadists acknowledged the supremacy of the Caliph[11] at Sokoto from whom they received their authority to wage a jihad against any of the "pagan" kingdoms.[12] The success of the jihad ensured the replacement of the Habe[13] authority all over Hausaland with a new authority based on the Islamic religion. The Caliphate was made up of Emirates,[14] each of which was administered by an Emir who was directly responsible (at least in theory) to the Caliph in Sokoto. The authority of the Caliph himself has been described thus:

> The central authority of the Sokoto Caliphate
> was the Caliph. From a viewpoint of purely
> Islamic constitutional theory, he embodied the
> Caliphate, and his authority was subject only
> to conformity with the Shari'a, the enforcement
> of which was his raison d'etre.[15]

In effect, the authority of the Caliph (and subsequently the Emirs too)

emanated from the Shari's — the Islamic Code —, and they also had to enforce these codes in their areas of jurisdiction in order to justify their rule. Since the major reason for fighting the jihads in the first case was to overthrow the paganistic system of the Habe rulers and replace this with an Islamic system, it is not surprising that the jihadists should use the Shari'a to justify their control.

Thus, in the Sokoto empire (which formed the greater part of Northern Nigeria in the first republic), legitimate authority was constituted in the Caliph (later known as the Sultan) and in the Emirs whose appointment had to be approved by the Caliph.[16] The Caliph and the Emirs were seen by their subjects as divine rulers carrying out the divine will in the state.[17] Their authority was based on the Shari'a, and they held office as long as they ruled according to these codes. It is important to note too that the authority had to be a muslim.[18] Hence, a person who does not become a muslim could not rise to a position of authority. If such were allowed to happen, it would signify a defeat of the goal of society which was primarily to organize the society along Islamic lines. In this light, then, one could imagine the shock to this muslim society at the thought of being ruled by a non-muslim or an "infidel" authority. The Caliphs were all the more revered when later incumbents of the post traced their lineage through Uthman dan Fodio to the prophet Mohammed, who founded the muslim faith.

This was the system of legitimacy on which the authority of the Hausa-Fulani rulers of Northern Nigeria was based prior to colonization. A similar system was operating in the Kanuri area of Bornu in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria. There, the Fulani jihadists failed to overthrow the traditional system, which, of course, was already based on the

Muslim codes. The effects of the jihad could be seen in the establish-
ment all over Northern Nigeria of hierarchical governments whose legiti-
macy were based on the Islamic laws. This system persisted throughout
the Colonial period and became a major force in the conflict with other
legitimacy systems of independence. Their roles will be discussed later
on in the thesis.[19]

The Sacred-Non-Religious Type

In this type of system, the legitimate authority is perceived by
the society as "divine" and is sometimes worshipped. However, the system
does not attach any importance to the religion of the incumbent of the
post. Furthermore, the authority is not under any obligation to promote
a particular ideology or religion within the society. Examples of this
type are the Kingship systems in Oyo, Benin, Onitsha and other parts of
the Western, Mid-Western and Delta areas of Nigeria.

The structure of government in such societies is usually monarchical
with the monarch or king at the apex. Methods of selection of the king
and the ruling elite vary from one society to the other; but once
selected, the rulers are imbued with the divine nature.[20] Each society
performs certain ceremonies or rituals on the installation of the king
or chief; and the people were led to believe that the incumbent of the
post acquired some supernatural powers as a result of these rituals,
and so he was perceived and treated as a divine ruler. When religious
influences were introduced into these societies through European
Christian Missionaries or Muslims from Northern Nigeria, some of the
rulers who assumed authority belonged to one religious group or the

other. However, membership of a religious group was not employed as
a criterion for the selection of rulers, and neither were rulers under
any obligation to force their subjects to become members of a religious
group.

In the Yoruba kingdoms of Western Nigeria, the king is known as
the "Oba". Robert Smith describes the Oba in this manner:

> The Oba's office and person were sacred; he
> was the priest and protector of his people,
> and they (i.e. the people) naturally wished
> to live in his shadow. [21]

Professor Crowder has also suggested that the people perceive sacred
kingship as

> the source of good order, regular rainfall and
> other benefits. So they grouped together and
> demanded a prince of the royal blood to rule
> over them or sent a leader to be initiated into
> the mysteries of sacred kingship. [22]

In some cases, these rulers were deified and dramatic legends were woven
around them. [23]

Just like those of the North, most of the traditional political
structures based on the system of legitimacy described above were pre-
served by the colonial administrators. The consequences of the per-
sistence of these structures for the first republic will be discussed
in later chapters.

The Non-Sacred Non-Religious Type

In the non-sacred, non-religious system, authority is neither per-
ceived as sacred nor is it based on any religious principles. This
type of authority can be found mainly in small (or what may be referred

to as "stateless") societies. A very good sample is the Ibo and Ibibio communities in the Eastern part of Nigeria.[24] Here, the political structure is so decentralized that the largest political unit had traditionally been the village group.[25] The basic social unit among the Ibo and the Ibibio has been a single extended family or, in some cases, a kindred system composed of such families.[26] In these societies, authority lies in the head of each household. He performs the "rituals, moral and legal rights and obligations" for the family.[27] He is the "governor of the family and its trustee", and he "receives obedience and tokens of respect, but is expected to spend most of his money on bride-prices, funeral expenses, and assisting members of the family in numerous other ways".[28]

Where the family unit is larger, the family head, known as the "Okpara",[29] who usually was the oldest member of the family group, holds the authority. The Okpara functions as the chief priest and the ceremonial head uniting the component parts of the family. However, he is not entitled to interfere in the everyday affairs of the households which make up the family unit —[30] each household has its own head who constitutes the authority for the household. It could be seen from this that the Okpara is neither a ruler nor is he perceived as the authority for the group. Although he is respected, he is neither deified nor regarded as a "divine ruler". The structure of the society is loose, and authority may reside in the head of any household irrespective of his religious beliefs. It should be noted, however, that the extent of authority in the Ibo society is greatly limited compared to that of a Yoruba "Oba" or Hausa-Fulani "Emir". Also, a family would not look at or regard its head as possessing "divine" qualities in the

same way as the Yorubas or Hausa-Fulanis would regard their rulers. The emphasis in this type of system is on individual qualities and achievements. Moreover, the system tends to encourage upward mobility, since any member of the family could qualify to hold authority. This system of legitimacy is also opposed to any strong form of centralization of authority.

Each of the three types of legitimacy systems that have been discussed so far could be found in each of the three regions of Nigeria at Independence. This is not to suggest, however, that a particular type was limited only to one region. For example, the sacred non-religious type extended to some parts of the Eastern region, while the sacred-religious type extended to Ilorin in the West. This was the situation in Nigeria at the advent of colonial rule.

Introduction of Colonial Administration

British acquisition of territory in present-day Nigeria started with the colonization of Lagos in 1862, and was completed with the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates into one political unit called "Nigeria" in 1914. Prior to colonization, however, the peoples of Nigeria — especially those in the coastal towns — established strong economic relationships with both the British and other European nationals. Alan Ryder,[31] for example, put the date of the first Portuguese contacts with Nigerian coasts between 1469 and 1475, while Bradbury[32] made reference to Portuguese records of visits from an ambassador of the Oba of Benin to Portugal in the reign of Dom Joao II (1481-1495). The trade in slaves helped to intensify this

relationship, bringing more Europeans to the coasts of Nigeria in search of slaves. It also provided the British government with a good reason for intervention in the affairs of the coastal states of Nigeria in order to enforce its decision to stop the slave trade in the early part of the nineteenth century.

The major reason for the British government's intervention in the political affairs of Nigeria's traditional states leading to the colonization of the latter by the former, could be said to be economic — namely, Britain's determination to stop slave trading in these African states and to replace this with "legitimate" trade. J.E. Flint has linked the British anti-slave trade policy of the early nineteenth century with the economic situation of Britain during this period.[33] He maintained that Britain was going through its industrial revolution. Hence the need for raw materials for its industries such as dyes, gums and vegetable oils which could be obtained cheaply from West Africa. In addition, British industry needed a market. Thus, if the African was left a free man and given purchasing power through legitimate commerce, this would bring more value to Britain than slavery. In pursuance of the anti-slave trade policy, the British government stationed a naval squadron which patrolled the coasts of the Niger.[34] In these circumstances, conflict and intervention were inevitable. In 1837, the regent of Bonny, Alali, was overthrown for refusal to stop trading in slaves, and was replaced with young King Willian Dappa Pepple, who quickly signed a treaty with the British to secure his position.[35] In 1852, King Kosoko of Lagos was removed by the British for the same reason, and was replaced with Akintoye, who also signed a treaty of protection with the British.[36] As British intervention

widened in scope, the government of Lord Palmerston decided to appoint

John Beecroft as the First Consul to the Bights of Benin and Biafra in

1849.[37] This marked the beginning of British administration in Nigeria.

Beecroft soon started to act, and was treated as de facto governor of

the area.[38]

By 1914, the unification of British Colonial administration in the

various parts of Nigeria was completed with the amalgamation of the

Northern and Southern protectorates under Sir (later Lord) Frederick

Lugard. The administration, which was headed by a Governor-General,

based its right to rule mainly on conquest.[39] The source of authority

for the administration was from Britain, where it was exercised by the

Prime Minister on behalf of the Crown through the Colonial Office in

London. The structure of authority of the colonial administration is

partly illustrated in Crocker's complaint about educated Nigerians who

sent petitions simultaneously to the King, the Prince of Wales, the

Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Governor and the Resident.[40]

In this regard, the legitimacy system on which the administration was

established should not be confused with that operating in Great Britain.

While the legitimacy system of the latter could be referred to as

"liberal-democratic", that of the former was clearly authoritarian-

dictatorial.[41] There was no doubt that disobedience of the orders of

the colonial authority carried grave consequences. Sir Charles Orr's

description of the relationship between the Resident and the Emir conveys

this when he wrote:

> There was no need to define the relations between
> the Emir and the Resident. The latter gave orders,
> the former obeyed them — or disobeyed them only
> in secret, and at his peril. [42]

The administrative system itself was hierarchically-structured and was highly centralized, all administrators (present in the country) being under orders from "the top".[43] This was the system that was super-imposed on the traditional systems of Nigeria.

As would be expected, the attempt to impose foreign rule met with considerable resistance from some of the traditional states and empires in Nigeria. Prominent among the traditional rulers who resisted were Nana of Itsekiri, Jaja of Opobo, Overami of Benin and, more importantly, the Caliph of Sokoto who refused to surrender to the invading forces until his armies were totally dispersed.[44] A simple and rather logical explanation often given by many scholars for this resistance is the un-willingness of the traditional ruler to be subjected to a more powerful force. However, another explanation for it could be found in Afigbo's view that resistance to alien rule is to be seen as a last move by the traditional societies to secure the independence of their systems to preserve their systems from being changed by foreign rule.[45] The im-plication of Afigbo's explanation is that resistance to foreign rule came from the whole society (and not from a ruling oligarchy) which per-ceived the victory of the colonial forces as spelling the destruction of its traditional systems. With this explanation in mind, certain conclusions can be drawn if we consider the case of the Hausa-Fulani in the North, where the British met with the toughest resistance. Firstly, the Hausa-Fulanis were resisting foreign domination. Secondly, the invading alien system was non-Islamic; hence, it was not qualified (in Islamic terms) to set up a just rule over a predominantly muslim society. Thirdly, there was the fear that defeat of the caliphate was synonymous with total destruction of the system. Their fears were

allayed, however, after the British administrative "machine" had started functioning, and the people discovered that it was helping to preserve their traditional systems rather than destroying them.

Development of the Colonial-Traditional Structure (the Indirect Rule System

In the initial conflict between the colonial and traditional systems, the colonial system emerged victorious. However, the major traditional structures were preserved, and these structures allied with the colonial structures in a joint-rule which is popularly referred to as "Indirect Rule". The alliance of the colonial and traditional structures (the Indirect Rule system) was meant to be conceived of, not as a "dual" system, but rather as a single (unified) system of government. This view was expressed by Lord Lugard, who first introduced the idea into Nigeria in 1904, when he said:

> The system of Rule was essentially one, and one only, in which each of us, as subjects of His Majesty bore our respective parts and carried out that portion of the work which might be assigned to us. [46]

Thus, the new structure that emerged after colonial conquests in Nigeria was neither purely British (Colonial) nor purely traditional, but, instead, a strange mixture of both in which both structures seemed to share power equally.[47]

From the British point of view, there was no doubt as to who was the senior partner in the alliance. The development of the new system had been inevitable in the first case — it was the most rational alterna- tive for the British in a situation where lack of funds and shortage of

administrative officials would have made direct control of a vast country like Nigeria an impossibility.[48] The intention of the British was to consolidate the already existing centralized hierarchically-organized traditional systems, and to rule the people through their traditional authorities. The proclamation of appointment given to traditional chiefs expresses the intention of the British when it states:

> it is not the intention of the Governor to strip
> you of all authority, but to the contrary he wishes
> to rule together with you, to strengthen your
> authority and that of the law of the land and to
> perpetuate the customs of the people in so far as
> this does not stand in the way of what is just,
> and in that of good government, and (in so far as)
> it tends to humanity, that is to say the duty of
> one man to another. [49]

British policy, in adopting this system, was thus geared towards the preservation of the authority of traditional rulers and using them to rule the people. Thus, to the British, the Emir (or the Oba as the case may be) was no longer a sovereign, but held power by grace of the colonial government. According to Professor Crowder,

> his authority was reduced by the knowledge that,
> if he stepped over the uncertain boundary of rules
> for good government laid down by the British, he
> could be deposed. [50]

Sir Charles Orr also confirmed the supremacy of the British in this alliance when he wrote that the policies of the traditional rulers were subject to a veto by the British official.[51] However, this veto was practically never used.[52] Sir Charles lamented that the traditional rulers were shorn of little of their "actual power".[53] In this case he was referring to the perception of authority from the point of view of the natives under this new structure of government. The colonial government wanted to ensure "minimum interference with 'native society'"[54]

so as to disabuse the minds of traditional authorities that the powers

and authority reposed in them were given grudgingly or of necessity.

They also wanted to correct the notion that there were two separate

systems of rule, viz., that of the native chiefs and that of the British

Government, which might work harmoniously or might tend to friction.[55]

Hence, they vested more powers in traditional rulers than they had ever

exercised even before colonization.[56]   Dudley describes the enhanced

position of the Emir in Northern Nigeria thus:

> With little check from the British Residents,
> an established and secure income, divorced from
> most responsibility, either to the people or to
> the "expatriate" officials, given wide political
> power and authority over the judiciary through
> their control of appointments, the Emirs became
> more and more autocratic in their attitude towards
> the mass of the people. [57]

Traditional authorities collected taxes over half of which were paid

to the Colonial authority,[58] and also exercised judicial powers through

the Native Courts in the West and Alkali Courts in the North.[59]   Although

traditional authorities were not allowed to keep any army, they could

call upon the "Forces of the Crown" to enforce their policies.[60]   The

presence of the British helped to secure the position of the traditional

ruler and reduced threats of deposition from within by rivals.[61]   However,

the majority of the governed were under the jurisdiction of traditional

authorities.   According to Sir Charles Orr,

> it was many years before the natives realized
> that the European had come to stay, and did
> not intend, after a brief temporary occupation,
> to vacate the country and leave it to relapse
> or collapse into the precise state in which he
> found it. [62]

Margery Perham also wrote that the European officers only "supervise,

tour, advise, and report ..."[63]   The fact that the traditional ruler's

position is permanent while the British official is changed frequently
as a result of reposting[64] also helped to enhance the authority of the
traditional rulers.

An important point to note about the Colonial-traditional structure
is that, while the traditional structure still appeared to the mass of
the people as the "Legitimate Authority", the removal of conflict between
the two structures (the colonial and the traditional) helped to extend
legitimacy to the colonial structure from the native's point of view.
This, in other words, means that the native, even without an understanding
of the relationship between the two structures, extended his loyalty to
the "ally" of the "legitimate" (from the traditional point of view)
authority. The "ally" of the traditional authority, on the other hand,
possessed the power to ensure continued compliance with the policies
of the traditional authority. These two structures thus helped to
legitimize each other — the traditional structure legitimizing the
colonial structure in the traditional context,[65] and the colonial
structure legitimizing the traditional structure in the modern context.[66]
The stability of the colonial-traditional structure rested on these
legitimacies.

The Emergence and Development of the "Modern-African" Structure

After the First World War, Nigeria and her West African neighbours
witnessed the emergence of a new class which immediately started to make
its impact on the political scene. This new class, which has been
termed "Modern-African", was, as the term suggests, a product of modern-
ization[67] influences on Africans, and — especially in this context —

on Nigerians.

The spread of European influences in Nigeria brought about certain changes including changes in the values and attitudes of the people, increased literacy, rapid growth of urban populations and increased economic activity as the first set of industries started to turn out "made in Nigeria" goods to the waiting market. On the political scene, the country witnessed the emergence of a class of literate Nigerians[68] who started to put pressure on the colonial administration to introduce changes which would enable the African to participate in his own government. The stages of development of this class of Africans may be divided into two parts: the pre-Second World War period; and the post-Second World War period.

The first stage started at about the end of the First World War and lasted until the beginning of the Second World War. The class of Nigerian politicians that emerged during this period is what Feit has referred to as the "Old Politicals".[69] Feit describes this group as "a congeries of notables or relatives of traditional rulers".[70] They were an educated class — some of them had received higher education in Britain. Their political activity has been described as

> marginal, if not trivial, and concerned either
> grandiose schemes for "West African Union" or
> the role of some chiefly house, such as the
> controversy over the House of Docemo in Lagos.[71]

This class of educated elite, under the leadership of men like Herbert Macaulay and J. Egerton Shyngle, joined with their counterparts in Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia to form the National Congress of British West Africa in March 1920.[72] The Congress made only moderate demands, considering the issue of self-government as a very long-term prospect.

Its immediate demands included the inclusion of elected representatives on the Legislative and Executive councils of the British West African territories. These councils performed only advisory functions and did not represent a danger to the colonial power. Nor did they interfere much with the running of the colonial-traditional system.[73] It was also this class of "Old Politicals" that formed the first Nigerian political party — the Nigerian National Democratic Party — in June 1923.[74] Webster has, however, suggested that the activities of this party were strictly confined to Lagos —[75] a fact which colonial administrators never hesitated to put before the class. Referring to this class of African politicians, Lord Lugard wrote:

> Europeanised Africans represent no tribe or community, but form a class apart in the principal cities of the West Coast .....[76]

The second stage of development of the modern-African class started after the Second World War, although the leaders during this later stage (whom Feit referred to as "Political entrepreneurs")[77] had emerged just before the start of the War. The post-war leaders included Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.

Unlike the "Old Politicals" of the pre-war era, the post-war breed of politicians were more organized under political parties, and their activities were broader, cutting across regional boundaries in many cases. In terms of their demands, their major goal was self-government (independence) for Nigeria within the Commonwealth. Since the leaders themselves were the product of the modernization process, they drew their followings — to start with — mainly from discontented and un-employed primary school graduates and semi-literate populations of urban centres who had come to the towns and cities for economic purposes.[78]

These people themselves were products of the various processes of change (or modernization) which were already having effects on various aspects of life of the local populations.

The modern-African structure based its claim to authority on the Western ideals of liberalism and democracy from which, in theory, it derived its legitimacy. As a result, the political parties (which they created as their instrument of mobilization) and the party news-papers geared their efforts towards educating the masses about their rights to autonomy (of which they had been deprived by the colonial power) and the ideals of a modern state. These socialization processes were directed towards the undermining of the authority of the colonial-traditional structure. The colonial administration perceived the awakening of the masses to their rights to self-government as a threat to their (colonial) authority, while the traditional authorities saw the movement as a threat to their continued rule, since independence was meant to transfer power into the hands of democratically-elected representatives of the people, and not traditional oligarchies. The greater the number of people who were re-socialized by these political parties, the firmer the system of legitimacy on which the structure was established, and the more the system of legitimacy of the colonial traditional authority was undermined. This was the basis of the con-flict between the modern-African structure and the colonial structure on the one hand, and the modern-African structure and the traditional structure on the other hand.

One other point to note about the modern-African structure is the destabilizing effect of modernization on the structure.[79] It has already been mentioned that this structure owes its existence to modernization

influences, and that its system of legitimacy is based, in theory, on
newly acquired modern norms. In practice, however, the majority of the
people who belonged to this structure did not, in spite of their educa-
tion, fully assimilate the modern norms on which they hoped to build
their state of independence.

S.P. Huntington's explanation of how social and economic moderniza-
tion can have disruptive effects on politics and political institutions
will be useful to us here.[80] He has stated that:

> Modernization . . . tends to produce alienation
> and anomie, normlessness generated by the conflict
> of old values and new. The new values undermine
> the old bases of association and of authority
> before new skills, motivations, and resources can
> be brought into existence to create new groupings.[81]

In Nigeria, the modernization process brought into existence a class of
people who had exchanged some of their traditional values, attitudes
and expectations for modern Western values at the initial stages of
the process. This new class of "modern-Africans" included literate and
semi-literate Nigerians who immediately started demanding certain
"rights" to which they should be entitled in a modern setting.[82] Un-
fortunately, the colonial structure was not prepared to make any con-
cessions at that time since it was viewed as a challenge to their author-
ity.[83] The hostile attitude of the colonial authority towards this new
class only worsened the situation as the frustrated class, rather than
continue in the process of change, reverted back to traditional values
in a frantic search for identity. Thus, while holding on to "modern"
values with one hand, this class took "pride in their race, its customs,
and its history"[84] with the other. The result was the emergence of a
class which was neither truly traditional, no "sufficiently Westernized",

as Feit puts it,[85] to fit into the set of Western institutions on which

the state was established at independence. This class could thus be

referred to as "normless", adopting any set of norms that suited it as

the situation demanded. This state of normlessness was later to have

disruptive effects on the politics of independent Nigeria.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1. Smith, _loc. cit._

2. This refers to the government established by the 1960 constitution and which was modelled on the Westminster parliamentary style.

3. T.L. Hodgkin, "Relevance of 'Western' Ideas for African States," in J.R. Pennock (ed.), _Self-Government in Modernizing Nations_ (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1964), p. 63.

4. _Encyclopaedia Britannica_ (15 edition; Chicago: Benton, 1974), XIII, p. 189. The major ethnic groups are: the Hausas (about 6 million) and the Fulani (about 5 million) in the Northern region; the Yorubas (about 10 million) in the Western region; and the Ibos (about 7 million) in the Eastern region.

5. For example, the Christian's Holy Bible, and the Muslim's Holy Quran (or Shari'a).

6. This situation is similar to that found in Theocratic states.

7. That is, in the second type, the society allows freedom of religion and there is nothing like a "state" religion.

8. The typologies used here stress only the values and ideals of the different traditional communities in Nigeria rather than their structures. It is hoped that this would emphasize the importance Nigerians placed on certain values/ideals in the organization of traditional societies. David E. Apter's typologies which stress values and structures in categorizing authority-types in modernizing nations have been of great use in the development of these typologies. See Apter, _op. cit._, pp. 22-31.
   The criteria used here — "Sacred" and "Religious" — both show the degree to which certain values are employed in the constitution of authority within the different communities. Thus, a society, where the authority is perceived not only as "Sacred", but must also identify with a particular religious group, would be more rigid and opposed to change than one in which the authority is only perceived as "Divine" or "Sacred", but may or may not belong to any religious group.

9. R.A. Adeleye, "The Sokoto Caliphate in the Nineteenth Century," in J.F.A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), _History of West Africa_ (London: Longman, 1975), II, p. 58.

10. M. Last, "Reform in West Africa: The jihad Movements of the Nineteenth Century," in Ajayi and Crowder, _op. cit._, p. 13.

11. The "Caliph" is the title given to the head of the Caliphate (empire), and Uthman dan Fodio was the first Caliph. See Adeleye, _op. cit._, p. 72.

12. _Ibid._, p. 73.

13. This was the "pagan" authority that was overthrown by the Fulanis during the Jihads.

14. Emirates are similar to provinces, each headed by an Emir.

15. Adeleye, _op. cit._, p. 72. (Italics are mine.) Shari'a is the Islamic law.

16. See S.J. Hogben and A.H.M. Kirk-Green, _The Emirates of Northern Nigeria_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 22, and Adeleye, _op. cit._, p. 85.

17. See Sir A. Bello, _My Life_, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 283.

18. Rebellion against the ruler is viewed as a grevious sin in Islam unless the apostasy of the authority can be proved. See Hogben and Kirk-Green, _op. cit._, p. 119.

19. See Chapter III.

20. For example, the Alafin (King) of Oyo, once selected, takes on the titles of "Companion of the Gods", "Owner of the Land" and "Lord of Life". See M. Crowder, _A Short History of Nigeria_ (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 57.

21. R. Smith, _Kingdoms of the Yoruba_ (London: Methuen, 1969), p. 107. (Brackets mine.)

22. Crowder, _op. cit._, pp. 54-55.

23. This was especially the case in the first period of the Oyo empire where the "Alafins" were deified and worshipped. _Ibid._, p. 59. See also P.C. Lloyd, "The Traditional Political System of the Yoruba," in R. Cohen and J. Middleton (eds.), _Comparative Political Systems_ (New York: Natural History Press, 1967), p. 278.

24. With a few exceptions such as Onitsha and Aboh where the system is Monarchical like that of the Yorubas. See E. Isichei, _A History of the Igbo People_ (New York: MacMillan, 1976), p. 23.

25. C.K. Meek, _Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe_ (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), p. 89.

26. J.S. Coleman, _Nigeria: Background to Nationalism_ (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), pp. 28-30. See also Meek, op. cit., p. 88.

27. Meek, _op. cit._, p. 98.

28. _Ibid._, p. 104.

29. Meaning "Elder Brother".

30. Meek, op. cit., p. 105.

31. A.F.C. Ryder, Benin and the Europeans, 1485-1897 (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), p. 24.

32. R.E. Bradbury, Benin Studies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 33.

33. J.E. Flint, "Economic Change in West Africa in the Nineteenth Century," in Ajayi and Crowder, op. cit., p. 391.

34. W.B. Hamilton, "The Evolution of British Policy Towards Nigeria," in R.O. Tilman and T.Cole (eds.), The Nigerian Political Scene (London: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 19.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., p. 21. See also Crowder, op. cit., p. 155.

37. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 20.

38. J.E. Flint, "Nigeria: the Colonial Experience," in L.H. Gann and P. Duignan (eds.), Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), I, pp. 232-235.

39. This was the case especially for the Northern parts of Nigeria which had to be "pacified" (or conquered). See Hogben and Kirk-Green, op. cit., pp. 131-133. In cases where treaties of cession were signed with the British in return for protection, these were done mainly in the face of threats of conquest. See J.D. Hargreaves, "The European Partition of West Africa," in Ajayi and Crowder, op. cit., pp. 402-423, and Afigbo, Ibid., pp. 417 and 425.

40. W.R. Crocker, Nigeria: A Critique of British Colonial Administration (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1936), p. 210.

41. See R. Heussler, The British in Northern Nigeria (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 29. Edward Feit has also written that "The Colonial System fell far short of the Western Ideals." See Feit, op. cit., p. 223.

42. Sir C. Orr, The Making of Northern Nigeria (London: Frank Cass, 1965), p. 221.

43. See Crocker, op. cit., p. 238.

44. Afigbo, op. cit., pp. 425 and 433.

45. Ibid., p. 425.

46. Quoted from B.J. Dudley, _Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria_ (London: Frank Cass, 1968), pp. 13-14. (Italics are mine.)

47. The new structure was evolved only in Northern and Western Nigeria, where the traditional systems were centralized enough to permit these. An attempt was made to introduce it to the Eastern Region, but it failed. Hence, the East was ruled directly by the British. See Coleman, _op. cit._, pp. 51-2.

48. See Croker, _op. cit._, p. 213; Sir W.N.M.G. Bart, _Nigeria Under British Rule_ (London: Methuen, 1977), p. 271; and Dudley, _Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria_, p. 15.

49. Heussler, _loc. cit._, See also Sir F.D. Lugard, _The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa_ (4th ed.; London: Blackwood and Sons, 1929), pp. 197 and 200 ff.

50. Crowder, _op. cit._, p. 235.

51. Orr, _op. cit._, p. 221.

52. _Ibid._

53. _Ibid._

54. Crowder, _op. cit._, p. 236. See Lugard's instruction to Political and Administrative Officers serving in Nigeria in Lugard, _Political Memoranda_ (3rd ed.; London: Frank Cass, 1970), p. 9. See also Bello, _op. cit._, p. 108.

55. Quoted from M. Perham, _Native Administration in Nigeria_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 48.

56. Dudley, _Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria_, pp. 15 ff.

57. _Ibid._, p. 16. In carrying out government work, Lord Lugard instructed that the "orders (to the natives) must be given not by the Resident or any of his staff, but by the Head Chief. See Lord Lugard, _Political Memoranda_, p. 17.

58. Geary, _op. cit._, p. 271.

59. Dudley, _Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria_, p. 15.

60. Geary, _op. cit._, p. 272.

61. Crowder, _op. cit._, p. 235.

62. Orr, _op. cit._, p. 221.

63. M. Perham, "Nigeria Today: Rule of the Emirs," _The Times_ (London), December 29, 1932, p. 9. See also Lugard, _Political Memoranda_, p. 199.

64. Orr, op. cit., p. 222.

65. Crowder, op. cit., p. 236.

66. Lugard's introduction of the Indirect Rule System served to legitimize the continuance (or preservation) of traditional ("primitive") systems under a modern state setting. This view was also expressed by Feit, loc. cit.

67. See the introduction for a definition of modernization.

68. It is this group of Nigerians that Lord Lugard referred to as "Europeanised Africans". See Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, p. 79.

69. Feit, op. cit., p. 224.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid. See also Crowder, op. cit., p. 257.

72. K.W.J. Post, "British Policy and Representative Government in West Africa, 1920 to 1951," in Gann and Duignan, II, p. 39.

73. Feit, op. cit., p. 224.

74. Post, loc. cit.

75. J.B. Webster, "Political Activity in British West Africa, 1900-1940," in Ajayi and Crowder, op. cit., p. 581.

76. Lord Lugard, The Dual Mandate, p. 80.

77. Feit, op. cit., pp. 224-5. Feit has maintained that these post-war politicians were not supported by "mass parties" but rather by "political machines" which existed almost exclusively to stay in power.

78. Lois Mitchison, Nigeria: Newest Nation (London: Pall Mall Press, 1960), p. 80.

79. See Huntington, op. cit., pp. 36-39.

80. Ibid., p. 36.

81. Ibid., p. 37.

82. For example, the right to equal opportunity of employment and right to participate in government.

83. This was in the first three decades of this century when the "Modern-African" class emerged as a political force in Nigeria.

84. Perham, "Nigeria Today," p. 10.

85. Feit, op. cit., p. 224.

CHAPTER III

CONFLICT OF LEGITIMACIES IN NIGERIA

In chapter two, the various types of systems of legitimacy which operated in the Nigerian political system prior to independence in 1960 were considered. This chapter shall identify the conflicting systems, and examine the underlying theory behind the conflict. Later we shall consider some cases of the manifestation of the conflict and how the conflict was resolved at the regional level.

Prior to Independence, the major systems of legitimacy which operated in Nigeria could be categorized as follows:

1. The Colonial system

2. The Traditional system

3. The Modern-African system.

A fourth system was the combination of the colonial and traditional systems in which they legitimized each other. As has already been mentioned, the fourth type could be found mainly in parts of the Northern and Western regions, where the Indirect Rule system was most successful. Apart from the initial conflict between the colonial and traditional systems at the time of colonization, these two systems complemented each other throughout the period. However, during this same period, there was constant conflict between the modern-African system and the Colonial system on the one hand, and the traditional systems on the other. Although the traditional systems had their own differences which were enough to cause serious conflicts on their own, each operated independently of each other, and there was no basis for conflict. It is important to note here, however, that the pre-

independence conflicts did not result in any major disruption of the
political system of Nigeria because of the superior coercive power of
the Colonial system which acted as a stabilizing force in the conflicts.

In October 1960, Nigeria became an independent nation, and with
independence came the withdrawal of the colonial structure from Nigeria.
As has already been mentioned, the colonial structure helped to keep the
system stable with its coercive power. Having realized the importance
of its role as a stabilizing force among the conflicting systems in
Nigeria, the British signed a military pact with the first Nigerian
government by which Britain would use Nigeria as a military base —[1] a
sure way of securing access to Nigeria to keep the system stable, but
without violating Nigeria's sovereignty. However, this pact lasted for
only fifteen months before it was abrogated after a series of protests
by the Opposition party. British withdrawal from Nigeria by 1960 led
to the intensification of the conflict between the remaining antagonistic
systems at two levels: the regional, and the federal. At the regional
level, the conflicts were resolved either through the domination of the
regional governmental structure by one of the conflicting systems (as
was the case in the Northern and Eastern regions), or through a compromise
worked out between the two conflicting systems — just like the colonial-
traditional alliance (as was the case in Western Nigeria). How these
resolutions were arrived at will be discussed later. At the national
level, both systems perceived the danger that the intensified conflict
constituted to national stability, and so some attempts were made to
resolve the conflict. These attempts failed, however, and this failure
accounted for the major national crises which eventually brought down
the republic. The fall of the republic will also be discussed later.

It is important at this stage to consider the underlying theory behind these conflicts.

The Theory Underlying the Conflicts

The key word underlying the conflict of legitimacy systems in Nigeria is "modernization". Since the term has been defined in the previous chapter, time will not be wasted in a re-definition here. S.P. Huntington made mention of the various aspects of life in which the process of modernization can take place. These include psychological, intellectual, demographic, social, economic and political areas of life.[2] Our attention here will be focused on the political aspect of modernization. According to Huntington, political modernization involves three things: rationalization of authority, differentiation of new political functions and the development of specialized structures to perform those functions, and increased participation in politics by social groups throughout society.[3]

"Rationalization of authority" involves the replacement of "traditional, religious, familial, and ethnic political authorities" by a single secular political authority.[4] Differentiation of new political functions and development of specialized structures involves the separation of such functions as the legal, military, administrative and scientific from the political realm. These would then be performed by new structures which would be autonomous and specialized, but subordinate to the political structure.[5] Lastly, there should be an increase in mass participation in politics — that is, political participation should not be limited to a relatively small group of aristocratic and

bureaucratic elites.[6] Rationalization of authority is of the utmost

importance in the three processes of political modernization outlined

above, since, without it, political modernization may not take place at

all.[7] The conflicts in Nigeria arose as a result of attempts to ration-

alize authority.

British policies for Nigeria after the Second World War were

directed towards transferring power to Nigerians. Having preserved the

traditional political systems they met in the country, the decade of

the 1950s found the British in a dilemma as they realized that Nigeria

would soon become independent. Power would have to be handed over to

a "modern" structure (modelled along Western lines), and not the tradi-

tional structures which they had preserved. Although the British did

not encourage the development of a modern political structure in Nigeria

throughout their period of control, one did emerge, and, in spite of

the opposition from both the British and the traditional systems, it

developed rapidly and was ready to contest power by 1960. Since the

modern structure which emerged had the goal of turning Nigeria into a

"Modern State", rationalization of authority was an inevitable first

step that had to occur if these goals were to be achieved. Conflict

between the modern structure and the traditional structures was inevit-

able in the process of rationalization of authority — especially as

the new legitimacy was to replace the old (traditional) one. This,

then, was the basis of the conflict of legitimacies in Nigeria.

Conflict and Resolution[8] of Conflict in the Regions

The Northern Region:

In the Northern region, the process of political modernization started relatively late. Political modernization itself is a function of other processes of modernization. A re-socialization process has to take place first, and this comes in the form of Western education. It is after the people have acquired new values through education that they can start thinking of changing their environment along the lines of the newly acquired norms. Nigerians first had access to European education through the efforts of European missionaries. However, Northern Nigeria was excluded from the spread of these influences through an agreement between Lord Lugard and the Sultan of Sokoto by which Lugard promised that he would not interfere with the traditional Islamic system in the North.[9] In keeping with this agreement, Lugard would not allow European missionaries to extend their activities to Northern Nigeria. On the other hand, the colonial structure in the North was too conservative to interfere with the Koranic schools in the region by setting up schools offering European education. As a result, the Northern societies were shielded from modernizing influences which would have produced men who would challenge traditional authority until after the Second World War. This was a major reason for the weakness of the challenge to traditional authorities in the North.[10] In explaining the weakness of the challenge to traditional authorities by the first class of educated Northerners, Professor Ezera[11] attributed this weakness to:

1) lack of social and economic mobilization in the North which prevented the emergence of a "middle class"[12] to come between the aristocratic ruling

Emirs and court officials on one hand, and the
illiterate craftsmen and peasantry on the other.

2) the official policy of the colonial administration
which discouraged the emergence of any group that
would challenge the traditional authority.

3) a lack of basic freedoms in the Northern region
"which British administration tended to condone
in order to prevent any challenge to the Northern
oligarchic emirates which unlike their loosely
organized counterparts of the Western Region,
tended to be monolithic and totalitarian".[13]

4) "the isolationist and illiberal policy of the Emirs
that stifled dissent — prevented the emergence of
any cultural or political group that could have any
resemblance to those in the south".[14]

The challenge to traditional authority in the North came first in
the formation of the Bauchi Improvement Union — a quasi-political
organization — by Mallam Sa'ad Zungur, Mallam Aminu Kano, and Mallam
(later Sir) Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in 1943. However, the Union soon
became defunct due to hostility from the Emir of Bauchi.[15] The next
challenge came in the founding of a Pan-Northern Nigerian Cultural
Organization known as "Jami'yyar Mutanen Arewa" (Northern Peoples'
Congress) in 1949.[16] The N.P.C. was determined to exist in spite of
the opposition from Emirs and British Colonial administrators, so it
appealed to the traditional rulers for support. One could have wondered
what prompted the need for a "cultural organization" in the North in
1949 — a time when there was no apparent danger to the culture of the
region which was rather thriving under the colonial policy of non-
interference. It was also at about this time that new political parties
were being formed in the Southern regions, where pressure was being put
on the Colonial administration for constitutional reforms. In any case,
the traditional rulers of the North were not deceived by the declared

intention of the N.P.C. However, some new developments in the country

forced the traditional authorities of the North to change their initial

attitude of hostility to the N.P.C. to one of acceptance.

As has already been mentioned, Southern political parties were

bitterly protesting against the introduction of a new constitution by

Governor-General Richards in 1945. They argued that the peoples of

Nigeria were not consulted about the provisions of the constitution

prior to its introduction, and they demanded a democratically-elected

legislature for each region and for the federation. The success of

these protests led to the introduction of a new constitution in 1951

by which, for the first time, Nigerians were to elect their representa-

tives directly in the Western democratic manner.[17] These events had a

great impact on the conflict between the traditional system and the

emerging modern system in the North. The traditional authorities, for

the first time, had to face the bitter reality that the colonial structure

would soon be withdrawn from the country. What really caused them great

concern was not so much the withdrawal of their colonial allies as the

fact that government would be handed over, not to a traditional structure,

but to a modern one modelled along the lines of the one operating in

the colonial country. The introduction of the 1951 constitution was

only the first of the radical changes which might lead to the total

destruction of the traditional system and its replacement by a modern

system. In order to survive, the traditional structure of the North

thus decided to "reform" itself by changing its attitude towards the

N.P.C. from one of hostility to a position of alliance. Since the N.P.C.

could be transformed from a cultural organization into a vehicle of

mobilization in a modern political situation, traditional authorities

gave their approval for the N.P.C. They turned it into a political
party to mobilize support for their authority in a modern political
setting. Thus, the Sultan of Sokoto, who was traditionally regarded
as the head of the Hausa-Fulani empire of the North, became the presi-
dent and leader of the N.P.C. In order to compensate the "modern-
African" class of the North which founded the N.P.C., some of their
leaders were given executive positions in the cultural organization-
turned political party.[18]

Thus, the conflict of "rationalization of authority" was resolved
in the Northern region with the traditional authorities taking over the
political mobilization structure of the modern-African class and leaving
that class the choice between disintegration and fusion with the tradi-
tional system. The N.P.C. itself became, as Professor Dudley puts it,
"an aggregation of emirate interests" as it became "anchored" to the
native traditional authority.[19] The authority of traditional rulers
was far from being undermined in this situation, as the vast majority
of the people of the region still gave their loyalty to their tradi-
tional rulers under the new democratic situation not because they were
now the "elected" representatives of the people, but because, as
Professor Dudley states:

> When the ruler gives an order, he has to be
> obeyed, not because his order falls within
> the field over which he has authority, but
> because he is a ruler. [20]

The conflict of legitimacy systems in the North was only partially re-
solved, however, since the major forces in the conflict reached a com-
promise. This helped to reduce conflict to the barest minimum such
that neither of the systems would be threatened with destruction.

Mallam Aminu Kano, for example, broke away from the N.P.C. in criticism of its anti-reform policies. He founded his own party called the Northern Elements Progressive Union (N.E.P.U.)[21] which advocated political and social reforms in the North and allied itself with the Southern parties in post-independence elections. The United Middle Belt Congress (U.M.B.C.), led by Joseph Tarka, was another party formed in opposition to the N.P.C. However, in spite of their alliances with Southern parties, the opposition parties in the North failed to threaten the authority of the traditional rulers which had been firmly established in the N.P.C. The weakness of the opposition helped to keep the political system stable in a society where, traditionally, opposition to the ruler was regarded as a crime.[22]

The Western Region:

In the Western Region, the situation was different from that of the North. Unlike the North, which was protected from European modernizing influences, the Western region threw its doors open wide to these influences right from the start. Professor Ezera noted, for example, that even before the British finished the process of colonization, Yorubas of the Western region had been visiting Europe for education and business.[23] It was also the first area in which European missionaries established schools, hospitals, and so on. In an article written in 1932, Margery Perham described the Yorubas of the Western region as "the most sophisticated people of Nigeria".[24] The effect of this education was to produce a new class of literates who had great hopes of replacing the Colonial government with a modern government of their own. As this new class continued to put pressure on the colonial authority

for constitutional reforms, it was inevitable that conflict should arise between it and the traditional authorities who perceived the demands of the new class as a threat to their authority. Unlike what transpired in the North, however, the resolution of the conflict of rationalization of authority took a different form in the West, with the modern-Africa class emerging as the "senior partners" in the alliance of the two systems.

As has already been mentioned, the traditional systems in the West were monarchies based on "sacred non-religious" systems of legitimacy. Since this type of system is less rigid than that of the North, it was possible for many states to exist independently of each other and without fear of being annexed through the spread of an ideology by a powerful leader, such as was the case in the North. One of the results of this was the emergence of many independent authorities in each of the traditional states in the region. A uniting factor in the whole system, however, was the fact that each unit within the system (that is, each state) viewed its own authority as "sacred" or "divine", as was discussed in the previous chapter. When British Colonial administration was introduced into the region, the British preserved the traditional authorities and ruled through them (as they did in the North) through the Indirect Rule system. The major differences between the challenges to traditional authorities in the North and the West lies in the impact that the emerging class of "modern-Africans" had on the traditional systems in the two regions. While the traditional authorities in the North were able to arrest the threat to their authority from the emerging class, their counterparts in the Western region found it too difficult to head off this class. The inability of the traditional authorities in the

West to put down the challenge to their authority was due partly to

the impact of modernization,[25] which was greater in the region than

in any other part of the federation,[26] and partly to the structure of

the traditional system in the region, which was not centralized as

compared to that in the North. Hence, it was difficult for the tradi-

tional authorities to unite in the face of the challenge to their

authority. Rather than unite, some of the traditional authorities

sought to preserve their authority by seeking an alliance with the

new class, and both parties in the alliance attempted to legitimize

each other in the process. The result of this alliance in the Western

region was the formation of the Action Group party in 1951. Traditional

rulers were given top posts in this party, but control of party organs

was predominantly in the hands of the modern-African class, who also

produced the leader in the person of Obafemi Awolowo, and the deputy

leader in the person of S.L. Akintola. As a gesture of goodwill for

their being integrated into the new political structure, traditional

authorities conferred chieftaincy titles on the leaders of the modern-

African class[27] and urged the rural populations (over whom they still

had a lot of influence) to support the Action Group as the regional

party. Thus emerged the "modern-African" class dominating the political

structure of the Western region while at the same time accommodating the

old traditional system rather than destroying it — a situation which

was exactly opposite to that of the North, where it was the traditional

system which accommodated the "modern-African" system. In both the

North and the West, the persistence of the traditional systems until

independence was greatly encouraged by the colonial-designed constitu-

tions of 1945 and 1951 by which the Northern and Western regions were

given a "House of Chiefs" as the second chambers of the regional legis-
latures.[28] These second chambers were exclusively reserved for tradi-
tional authorities in the two regions, and the provision was the very
antithesis of the theory of political modernization which advocates
removal of traditional authorities as a first step. The politicians
of the North did not object to the adoption of this legislative struc-
ture in the independence Constitution, because it favoured the tradi-
tional-dominated political structure in the region. In the West,
politicians accepted the adoption of the system at independence, because
an objection to it would have disrupted the alliance between the tradi-
tional and modern-African systems, thereby reviving the conflict between
the two systems which had been reduced by the formation of the alliance.
Thus, by 1960, the conflict of legitimacy systems in both the Northern
and Western regions had been resolved, helping to create a certain
amount of stability in the political structures of the two regions.

The Eastern Region:

The conflict of rationalization of authority in the Eastern region
was resolved in a different way from the other two regions. While we
may refer to the process as being "incomplete" in both the North and
the West because of the persistence of great numbers of traditional
rulers (authorities) in the two regions, the process was relatively
more complete in the East — even though not every single traditional
authority was removed in the region.[29] The process of rationalization
of authority was more successful in the East than in any of the other
two regions because traditional authority was more decentralized as
compared to the other two regions. Since traditional authority in the

region lies mainly in the head of each household, it was easier for this system of legitimacy (non-sacred and non-religious) to be broken down and replaced with a new system. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the traditional system of legitimacy encouraged upward social mobility more than any of the other two types in the federation. Since authority need not be "sacred" nor belong to any religious group, it was easier for the new class of modern-Africans (nationalists) in this region to assume authority without posing any serious challenges to the traditional authorities, the bulk of whose influence had never extended beyond the family or village groups.

It should also be mentioned that, unlike what happened in the other two regions during the Colonial period when the authorities of the traditional systems were preserved and greatly enhanced through the system of Indirect rule, the Eastern region was exempted from the Indirect Rule system after an earlier attempt to introduce the system into the region had failed. The failure of the Indirect Rule system had been due mainly to the highly decentralized structure of societies in the region. Hence, the East was ruled directly by the British for the major part of the colonial period. Direct British rule and increased nationalist activities in the region in the post-World War II period both helped in the breakdown of the traditional authority of the head of the household. The extended family structures were broken down and replaced by nuclear family structures (a factor of social modernization), and loyalties were broadened as the rural populations shifted their loyalties from the family to more encompassing cultural unions and organizations.[30] These later provided the membership for the major political party in the region — the National Council of

Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.), led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe.

The process of rationalization of authority has also had an integrating effect on the region as Ibos were made to see themselves as a unit — a "tribe" — for the first time in centuries.[31] Thus, the conflict of legitimacies in the Eastern region was resolved with the replacement of a large number of traditional authorities with the secular authority of the modern-African class of the region.

In the final analysis, resolution of the conflict of legitimacy systems in each of the regions of Nigeria resulted in the emergence of a traditional-dominated structure in the North as against the modern-African-dominated structures in the West and the East. This brought about another conflict at the national level whose resolution proved to be much more difficult in the years just before independence and in the first five years after independence. It was the failure of Nigerian leaders to resolve this conflict at the national level that led to the series of incidents causing instability and finally bringing down the first republic.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER III

1. See N.J. Miners, <u>The Nigerian Army 1956-1966</u> (London: Methuen, 1971),
   p. 60-61, and J.P. Mackintosh, <u>Nigerian Government and Politics</u>
   (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), p. 101.

2. Huntington, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., pp. 32 and 33.

3. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 34.

4. <u>Ibid</u>.

5. <u>Ibid</u>.

6. <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 34 and 36.

7. It is possible, as Huntington has suggested, that the other two
   processes — differentiation of functions and structures, and in-
   creased participation in politics by social groups throughout
   society — take place in a traditional society. These, however,
   should not be taken as "complete" modernization. <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 35-6.

8. Resolution of the conflict was not "total" such as to remove <u>all</u>
   conflicts. It only helped to reduce conflict to the barest minimum
   and maintain stability in the regions.

9. Crowder, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 236.

10. Coleman, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 139.

11. Kalu Ezera, <u>Constitutional Developments in Nigeria</u> (Cambridge:
    Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 94.

12. This refers to an educated class who occupy the professional and
    business positions and also man the government and mercantile
    services as clerks.

13. Ezera, <u>loc</u>. <u>cit</u>.

14. <u>Ibid</u>.

15. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 95.

16. The founding members of the Northern People's Congress included
    some of the former leaders of the Banchi Improvement Union. Having
    realized the hostility generated by the perception of B.I.U. as a
    political organization directed towards the undermining of the
    traditional-colonial authority, the leaders of this new organization
    (N.P.C.), for survival reasons, declared that the N.P.C. had no
    political motives but was "purely" a cultural organization. The
    truthfulness of this declaration could be judged by the participation

of the N.P.C. in the elections of 1951 — two years after its formation.

17. Ezera, op. cit., p. 125., O.I. Odumosu, The Nigerian Constitution: History and Development (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1963), p. 79., Okoi Arikpo, The Development of Modern Nigeria (England: Penguin, 1967), p. 75., T.D. Elias, Nigeria: The Development of its laws and Constitution (London: Stevens and Sons, 1967), p. 39., Royal Institute of International Affairs, Nigeria: The Political and Economic Background (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 45.

18. For example, Mallam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was made deputy-leader of the N.P.C. He later led the party at the National level and became the first Prime Minister, while the party leader, the Sultan of Sokoto, chose to stay in the Northern region as premier of the region. See B.J. Dudley, "The Northern Peoples Congress," in Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, pp. 371-2.

19. B.J. Dudley, "Traditionalism and Politics: A Case Study of Northern Nigeria," in Government and Opposition, II, 4 (July-October 1967), p. 515.

20. Ibid., p. 514. (Italics are mine.)

21. Ezera, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

22. Dudley, "Traditionalism and Politics: A Case Study of Northern Nigeria," op. cit., p. 516.

23. Ezera, op. cit., p. 89.

24. Margery Perham, "Nigeria Today: Rule of the Emirs," The Times (London), December 29, 1932, p. 10.

25. This refers to the spread and proliferation of modernizing influences through what may be referred to as "agencies of modernization," such as missionaries.

26. Ezera, loc. cit.

27. M. Crowder, "Colonial Rule in West Africa: Factor for Division or Unity?," Civilisations, Brussels, XIV, (1964), p. 170.

28. See Proposals for the Revision of the Constitution of Nigeria (London: Colonial Office, March 1945), p. 7., The Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1951 (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1951), Chapter II, Sections 15, 16, 25 and 27.

29. The few centralized monarchical systems in the region persisted, but they did not pose any serious challenge to the modern-African system.

30. Ezera, op. cit., p. 90.

31. Huntington, op. cit., p. 38.

CHAPTER IV

INDEPENDENCE AND THE CRISES THAT FOLLOWED:
THE EFFECTS OF THE CONFLICT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The December 1959 Federal elections in Nigeria were very important
to all the political groups which contested them, because the results
were used to determine which political party would form the first gov-
ernment of Independent Nigeria in October 1960. The major contestants
in the elections were the N.P.C. representing the Northern region, the
A.G. representing the Western region, and the N.C.N.C. (and their N.E.P.U.
ally) representing the Eastern region. As has already been mentioned,
the conflict of legitimacies at the federal level was mainly between
the traditional-dominated system of the North represented by the N.P.C.
and the modern-African dominated systems of the South represented by
the A.G. and the N.C.N.C. However, the attitudes of the N.P.C. leaders
towards the Southern politicians in the years before and after independ-
ence consistently showed a desire on their part to resolve the conflict
with the South by maintaining the status quo and refraining from inter-
ference in the affairs of the other regions. The N.P.C. was ready to
cooperate with the other regional-based parties at the federal level
through the forming of coalition governments. The N.P.C.'s effort to
resolve the conflict through alliances had been persistently resisted
by the A.G. which could not see any rational basis for an alliance
(especially when it was evident that the North would dominate such an
alliance). Thus, the A.G. continued to condemn the N.P.C. and the
autocratic methods of the Emirs while at the same time agitating for
the creation of more regions. This would have amounted to a Middle

Belt State being carved out of the Northern region, a Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers state being carved out of the Eastern region, and a Mid-West state being carved out of the Western region.[1] Creation of new states would have broken up the power of the N.P.C. over the whole of Northern Nigeria, thereby creating smaller political units which would be easier for the A.G. to penetrate and possibly control.[2] The N.C.N.C., on the other hand, was, by 1957, experiencing strained relationships with the A.G. and was responding more towards the North's offer for a national alliance. There were reasons for this. The N.C.N.C., as the oldest political party in Nigeria, was, by the middle of the 1950s, beginning to feel that the acquisition of power at the federal level was its rightful due. Since the delimitation of constituencies for the 1959 federal elections was carried out on the basis of population (thereby giving the Northern region 174 seats and the two southern regions combined 138 seats), it seemed logical to the N.C.N.C. that, if they still nurtured the hope of obtaining power in an independent Nigeria, their best bet would be to abandon hostility towards the North, and move instead towards an acceptance of the status quo and cooperation with the N.P.C.[3] In addition, the N.C.N.C. was opposed to a further creation of states in Nigeria. The party viewed the A.G.'s call for a Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers state as an attempt by the A.G. to control these areas of the Eastern region where support for the N.C.N.C. was already weak.[4] Thus, as Nigeria approached independence, the N.C.N.C. came to regard the A.G. as its "enemy" and favoured more cooperation with the North. This situation left the A.G. as the only party which continued to pose a threat to the existence of the traditional system of the North by advocating radical democratic reforms for the country, hoping itself

to triumph one day.[5]

The situation of conflict described above was reflected in the alliance between the N.P.C. and the N.C.N.C. after the 1959 federal elections. The N.P.C., having won 148 of the 312 seats, entered into an alliance with the N.C.N.C.-N.E.P.U. alliance which had 89 seats. The A.G., with 75 seats, remained the official opposition to the new government.[6] Thus ended the first major attempt to resolve the conflict at the national level. As will be seen later on in this paper, the N.P.C.-N.C.N.C. coalition broke up before the next elections scheduled for 1964, and this intensified the conflict as the N.C.N.C. and the A.G. alliance faced the Northern N.P.C. in the 1964 elections. Meanwhile, let us consider other manifestations of the conflict between traditional systems and the modern system, each of which took Nigeria's first republic a step further towards destruction.

The 1962 Western Region Crisis

Prior to, and shortly after Independence in 1960, the Western region of Nigeria was controlled by the A.G. party. The leader of the party, Chief[7] Obafemi Awolowo, was also premier of the Western region between 1951 and 1959, while the deputy-leader of the party, Chief S.L. Akintola, led the national wing of the party in the federal parliament as the Opposition leader. During the 1959 elections, Awolowo resigned his premiership of the region, hoping to become federal prime minister should his party win the elections. Akintola was brought back to the region as premier while Awolowo led the national wing of the party.

Unfortunately, the A.G. lost the elections and Awolowo had to

content himself with being leader of the Opposition while Akintola continued as premier of the Western Region. This situation continued until 1962 when the public became aware of the tensions within the party. The relationship between Awolowo and Akintola became strained as Akintola refused to consult the party and have the party approve his government's policies for the region. The party then broke up into two opposing factions as members took sides in the dispute. On May 10, 1962, the governor of the region, Sir Adesoji Aderemi (who was also the Oni of Ife),[8] tried to reconcile the two factions by consulting with them. This meeting, and others too, failed to yield any good results. Soon, a joint meeting of the West and Mid-West Executive Committees of the party was convened and it found Chief Akintola guilty of "maladministration, anti-party activities and gross indiscipline". Akintola was then asked to relinquish the offices of deputy leader of the party and of premier of the region.[10] This he (Akintola) refused to do, but rather petitioned the Governor to dissolve the regional House of Assembly. He also asked the Speaker of the House to summon a meeting of the Assembly in order to test his popularity as premier. None of these requests were granted. Instead, on May 21, 1962, the Governor of the region revoked Akintola's appointment and appointed the new A.G. leader in the House of Assembly, Alhadji D. S. Adegbenro, as the new premier.

Akintola quickly reacted in two ways: First, he wrote a letter through the prime minister asking the Queen to revoke Sir Aderemi's appointment as Governor. Secondly, he filed a suit in the Ibadan High Court challenging the legality of his removal from office by the Governor without a vote of the Lower House of the Legislature. In his defense, the Governor claimed he had acted on a document allegedly signed by

sixty-six A.G. members of the House of Assembly declaring loss of confidence in Chief Akintola as premier.

A meeting of the House of Assembly was summoned on May 25, to allow the new "premier" Alhadji Adegbenro to seek a vote of confidence. Akintola and some of his ministers who still remained loyal to him arrived early at the legislative chamber and occupied the official seat on the Government Benches. In order to avoid any incident, Adegbenro and his supporters did not contest Akintola's claim to the official seat. However, the deliberations had hardly started when a member of Akintola's faction of the A.G. started an uproar. A great commotion followed in the House and members had to rush out of the chamber in panic.[11] A member of the Adegbenro faction later sought the permission of the prime minister to allow the police to remain in the chamber during the next sitting of the House later that day, but this was opposed by the Akintola faction. The prime minister also issued a statement declaring that there would be no police protection within the Chamber of the House. The statement declared:

> If, however, any party insists on being offered
> police protection within the chamber, the police
> may be so present, but the Federal Government
> will not accept any decision reached as a result
> of such proceeding in the chamber. [12]

The second attempt to hold the meeting resulted in a far greater uproar than the first, and this time the police had to use tear gas to disperse the members of the Assembly, and the chambers were locked up. In a nation-wide broadcast later that day, the prime minister informed the nation of his government's intention to use the emergency powers conferred on him under section 65 of the constitution, with regard to the situation in the Western region. Four days later, the Federal

parliament passed a resolution declaring a state of emergency in the Western region, and suspending the constitution of the region while the emergency lasted.

Chief Awolowo, as leader of the Opposition in the federal parliament, criticized the prime minister for refusing to accept a decision taken in the House of Assembly while the police were present in the Chamber. The prime minister was accused of engineering the whole crisis in order to take over the government of Western Nigeria. Awolowo's motion that a state of public emergency did not exist in the West was defeated.

The prime minister appointed Dr. M.A. Majekodunmi, the Federal Minister for Health, as the administrator for the region while the emergency lasted. Dr. Majekodunmi had wide legislative powers conferred on him as he exercised executive authority in the region. He was responsible only to the prime minister who appointed him.[13]

The crisis itself could be explained in a simplistic way as a clash of personalities between the leader of the A.G., Chief Awolowo, and his deputy, Chief Akintola. However, there was more to the crisis than personality clashes. J.P. Mackintosh has tried to explain it as a clash of ideologies.[14] Awolowo and the loyalist faction of the A.G. represented the original ideology of the party which advocated continued party efforts to bring about democratic reforms not only in the Western region, but also in other regions of the federation. This was the view that challenged the traditional systems of the North and called for creation of more states in the federation. Akintola and his faction, on the other hand, represented a shift in opinion. After becoming the premier of the Western region, Akintola became more convinced that it

would be in the best interests of the party if it abandoned its policy
of interfering in the affairs of other regions in return for a recogni-
tion by the other parties of the A.G.'s supremacy in the West.[15] From
Akintola's point of view, the election of 1959 had cost the party much
money, but few political gains had resulted. If the A.G. should abandon
its position of interference in other region's affairs and join the
federal coalition government, it would not only ward off the danger of
the region being reduced through the creation of the Mid-Western region,
it would also prevent indirect attacks on the party's government from
the N.P.C.-N.C.N.C. coalition government.[16]

This suggestion was totally unacceptable to Chief Awolowo and the
radical faction of the party. It should be mentioned here that while
Chief Awolowo was premier of the Western region, the party had already
embarked on a radical policy which was designed to undermine the remain-
ing authority of the traditional rulers in the region in a systematic
manner. In 1955, Awolowo's government had introduced a "Chiefs Law"
which provided for a system of election of traditional rulers by a
council of "local kingmakers".[17] One of the advantages of this law to
the party was the succession to traditional posts was democratized to
a certain extent, and traditional rulers who opposed the party's policies
could be removed by these "kingmakers", who were open to party influence.[18]
This policy had created an enemy for Awolowo and the party (especially
among traditional rulers who resented the party's policies). Hence,
the 1962 conflict served as an occasion for "old" enemies of the party
to come out into the open by taking sides in the conflict on the side
of Akintola.

Another element in the conflict was the support given to Akintola

and his group by the traditional-dominated system of the North. This
support was extended through the federal government when the federal
government chose the Coker Commission[19] of Inquiry to look into the
disturbances. The Commission exonerated Akintola and blamed the other
faction of the A.G. for corruption. The federal government, acting on
the Coker Commission's report, reinstated Akintola as premier of the
West. Meanwhile, Chief Awolowo and twenty-six other members of the A.G.
were charged with treasonable felony and conspiracy. They were found
guilty and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Five months after
Akintola had been re-instated as premier, the Privy Council advised the
Queen, concerning an appeal made to it by Adegbenro, that Adegbenro was
the rightful premier of Western region. In response to this decision,
the government of Akintola[20] passed an amendment to the constitution of
the Western region banning all appeals to the Privy Council. This was
made retroactive to 1960. The federal government also announced its
support for the amendment when, in an emergency session on June 6, 1963,
the federal parliament ratified the constitutional amendment nullifying
the Privy Council ruling against Akintola.

There are certain points to note about the crisis. It weakened the
Action Group party as a significant modern force in conflict with the
traditional-controlled N.P.C. which controlled the federal government.
It has already been mentioned that Akintola and his supporters were in
favour of joining the federal coalition government. J.P. Mackintosh
has suggested that the federal prime minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa,
encouraged Akintola's faction to cause the disturbances in the region's
House of Assembly in order to give the federal government a good reason
for intervention.[21] Also, when the federal government did intervene,

it went all out to deal a final blow to the A.G. with the intention of smashing the party. It was difficult, for example, to establish the partiality of the emergency administration set up by the federal government in the region. The administration released all pro-Akintola and N.C.N.C. men under detention while A.G. men were either detained or restricted to very remote areas (such as villages) in the region so that they could abandon "all conduct likely to arouse political passions".[22] Among other things, the Coker Commission of Inquiry set up by the Federal government to investigate allegations of corruption against A.G. administration in the Western region was a deliberate act which was meant to soil the reputation of the party's leaders and to demoralize the party.[23] It is rather surprising that the commission found only those members of the A.G. who remained loyal to the party guilty of corruption while dissident members were exonerated. Also, the treason trial brought against the leaders of the party during this period was more of a political manouevre than a crime against the law of the nation. Apart from denying the accused the opportunity of being represented by lawyers of their own choice,[24] prosecution witnesses were either politicians who were seeking favour with the federal government[25] or men with criminal records.[26] This trial deprived the A.G. of its ablest leaders.

In the midst of the investigations and trials, the federal government moved to reinstate Akintola as the rightful premier of Western region, rather than allow the people to decide on this issue in an election. Mackintosh interpreted this move as a deliberate one by the federal government to ensure that the A.G. was not returned to power through an election.[27] In order to keep the government in power long

enough for the electorate to endorse the regime, the prime minister

took two of Akintola's men (who were in the federal parliament) into

the Federal Cabinet.[28]   This move portrayed the intention of both

Akintola and his group to end their long conflict with the N.P.C. and

enter instead into cooperation with the party. The A.G. was shattered

as an effective force against the N.P.C. such that the prime minister,

Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa could announce, in December 1962, that he

did not recognize anyone as leader of the Opposition because:

> The whole idea of an Opposition, I think, is
> that the Opposition should provide an alternative
> Government. .... A handful of twenty people
> here cannot provide an alternative Government.[29]

With the A.G. successfully removed as an effective opposition to the

N.P.C.-controlled federal government, the N.C.N.C. soon became aware

of the incompatibility of the systems[30] in the federal alliance. This

awareness made the N.C.N.C. shift positions again, this time replacing

the A.G. as the major opposition to their (N.C.N.C.'s) "allies" in the

major crises that followed.

The 1963 Census Crisis

National census was, and still is, an important issue in Nigeria

for various reasons. In the first place, census figures show the

regional distribution of the Nigerian population. This is important

because it determines the delimitation of federal constituencies, and

it also plays an important role in the allocation of federal revenue

to the regions and for economic planning. According to the last census

held before independence (the one taken in 1952/53), the Northern region

had a population of seventeen million, while the Eastern and Western

regions had populations of seven million and six million respectively.[31]

It was on this basis that seats were allocated in parliament during the

1959 election. According to the constitution, a new census had to be

held in 1962.

A considerable sum of money was spent on the count.[32] However,

there was a disagreement over the results. Before the official figures

were released, there were rumours that preliminary figures of the count

stood at:

Northern Region	11 million
Eastern Region	10.5 million
Western Region	8.5 million
Lagos (federal territory)	600 thousand[33]

The Minister for Economic Development, Mallam Waziri Ibrahim, who

was a Northerner and a member of the N.P.C., quickly denied this report,

and claimed that the preliminary figure for the North was already over

21 million, but that the figures for both the Eastern and Western regions

were near the unofficial figures stated above. Soon, the Ministers for

Economic Development in the West and East announced a higher figure for

their regions than that which was given for their regions in the un-

official report. In a national broadcast on August 19, 1962, Mallam

Ibrahim dismissed an Eastern region claim that a village of 20,000 people

had been discovered in that region.[34] He also speculated that the final

figures for the North would be in the vicinity of 30 million. Mallam

Ibrahim was bitterly criticized by both the N.C.N.C. and A.G. for this.

He was booed and jeered in the federal parliament, and the N.C.N.C.,

the A.G., and the U.M.B.C.[35] members staged a walk-out when the N.P.C.,

supported by the U.P.P., refused to allow a debate on the Minister's speech. In a cabinet meeting held on December 7, the N.C.N.C. demanded that a new census be undertaken. However, the prime minister promised not to take any action until after meeting with regional premiers to discuss the issue. After the meeting, the prime minister announced that the results of the 1962 census have been nullified as a result of loss of confidence in the figures. The premiers also agreed that each of them should be responsible for the census in their region. It should be noted, however, that the final figures for this census were never released. A new census was planned for late 1963 and this time, United Nations advisors and some specially trained Nigerians were to assist in the census.

The new census was conducted in November of 1963 and the preliminary figures announced in February 1964. The figures showed Nigeria's population distribution thus:

North	29,777,986
East	12,388,646
West[36]	12,811,837
Lagos (federal territory)	675,352
Total	55,653,821 [37]

These new figures were accepted by the premiers of the North and of the West, but were rejected by the East and the newly-created region of the Mid-West, as well as by the A.G. and U.M.B.C.[38] The N.C.N.C. tried to press for no change being made in the membership of the Lower House of parliament, but rather that the senate be given equal power and its membership increased. These proposals were not accepted. The N.C.N.C.-controlled government in the Eastern region then proceeded to

file a suit with the Federal Supreme Court seeking an order restraining

the federal government from accepting or acting on the new census figures.[39]

The federal government filed a counter-motion objecting to the action

being heard at all. However, the court heard the case and, in its judge-

ment, the court declared that no legal right of the government of the

Eastern region had been infringed by the federal government's acceptance

of the census figures.[40]

Having lost the legal battles, the N.C.N.C., along with the A.G.

and their allies, threatened to boycott the coming federal election due

in 1964, with the probable consequence of jeopardizing the political

stability of the nation.

In this crisis, the modern system of legitimacy was represented

by the N.C.N.C., having shifted its former position of cooperation with

the traditional-dominated N.P.C. (which was already gaining an upper

hand in the conflict of legitimacy structures after the defeat of the

A.G.) to that of antagonism to the party. Although the N.C.N.C. still

remained within the federal coalition government, the party had realized

by 1963 that abandonment of the original conflict with the traditional

system was too great a price to pay for the small share of the federal

government's power which the party had as an ally of the traditional-

dominated N.P.C. Although the N.C.N.C. had ministers at the federal

level, in practice, federal government policies were dictated by the

N.P.C.[41] whose national representatives were the "able lieutenants" of

the party leader, the Sultan of Sokoto.[42] Thus, the N.C.N.C., having

been frustrated in not getting real power, returned to its former policy

of attacking the system in the North. Since constituencies would be

created in accordance with the census figures, the N.C.N.C. saw the

dangers in disproportionate census figures which would give the North

a population which was more than the other two regions combined. This

was the reason why the new census figures were rejected by the N.C.N.C.

premiers of the Eastern region and Mid-Western region. Dr. Michael

Okpara, the N.C.N.C. premier of the East had declared:

> I regret that the inflations disclosed are of
> such astronomical proportions that the
> figures .... taken as a whole, are worse than
> useless. [43]

The fears of the N.C.N.C. were, indeed, confirmed when the announcement

of new constituencies gave the Northern region 167 constituencies as

against 145 constituencies in the remaining regions of the federation.[44]

This meant that if the N.P.C. could concentrate all its efforts in

winning all (or almost all) the seats in the North in any election, it

would be assured of a majority in the federal parliament, and hence it

wouldn't need to seek alliances with any party in order to maintain a

majority in the federal parliament. The N.P.C. did not hesitate to

convey this message to the N.C.N.C. by not showing any willingness to

keep the N.C.N.C. in the federal alliance. This apart, N.C.N.C.'s

position had been worsened by the new (Akintola's) U.P.P. government

in the West who were only too eager to replace the N.C.N.C. ministers

in the federal Cabinet. Akintola's U.P.P. government therefore accepted

the census figures on behalf of the West, leaving the N.C.N.C. govern-

ments in the East and the Mid-West to face the federal might of the N.P.C.

which had already been demonstrated against the A.G.

The defeat of the N.C.N.C. suit praying the Supreme Court to re-

strain the Federal government from acting on the new census figures

marked the beginning of the renewed conflict between the N.C.N.C. and

the N.P.C., and it also reflected the disintegration of their alliance.
It was rather ironic that the two major parties which formed the first
coalition government in Nigeria would file suits against one another in
the law courts while at the same time refusing to break the alliance.
This only shows the value placed on the exercise of power by the leader-
ship of the N.C.N.C. After this first defeat, and faced with doubts
about N.P.C.'s willingness to cooperate with the party in the next gov-
ernment, the N.C.N.C. made up its mind to revert to its old ally, the
A.G., and the old ideology of undermining the traditional and "conversa-
tive" system in the North. This was the situation as the country pre-
pared for another federal election — barely ten months after the census
crisis.

The 1964 Federal Election Crisis

Hardly had the country got over the census crisis than preparations
were made for the next federal election — scheduled to take place in
December 1964. As the election day approached, new alliances were formed
which also reflected the basic conflict between the traditional-dominated
and modern-dominated systems.[45] The major alliances which emerged and
contested the elections were the Nigerian National Alliance (N.N.A.)
and the United Progressive Grand Alliance (U.P.G.A.). The N.N.A. was
dominated by the N.P.C. and some smaller parties who hoped to have a
share of the power should the alliance win the elections. Among these
were the Nigerian National Democratic Party (N.N.D.P.);[46] the Mid-West
Democratic Front (M.D.F.); the Dynamic Party led by a professor of
mathematics, Dr. Chike Obi; and the Niger Delta Congress (N.D.C.).

Akintola's party, the N.N.D.P., saw no other alternative than alliance with the N.P.C. if the N.N.D.P. wanted to continue holding power in the Western region. It had already been discussed how this party (then known as U.P.P.) was backed up by the N.P.C. government in its struggle with the A.G. for the control of the Western region. Also, alliance with the N.P.C. brought prospects of federal ministerial positions for N.N.D.P. leaders, in addition to the latter's having a "free hand" in the running of the Western region's government. As regards the M.D.F. and N.D.C., these were parties representing minority peoples of the Mid-Western and the Eastern regions. Since they were agitating for the creation of their own states, they saw the N.P.C. as the right ally to help them achieve this aim as it had already done in the Eastern region (through the creation of the Mid-West). In addition, N.P.C.'s policy of non-interference in other region's affairs was acceptable to those parties which placed more priority on their separate existence as a state than on criticizing the system on which the government of Northern region was based. These parties had no immediate ambition of contesting the elections outside their own areas, hence the issue of replacement of the persisting traditional structures in other regions with modern structures was a long-term matter for them. There were also the possible benefits of having members in the federal cabinet should the N.N.A. win the elections. These reasons caused the M.D.F. and the N.D.C. to choose the N.P.C. as their ally. The position of Dr. Chike Obi's Dynamic Party was totally different from the others. The party's membership was limited to a small following in Lagos, and the major aim was to obtain a position of influence in the new government. Since the N.P.C. appeared to Dr. Obi as the party that would win the elections,

the most rational step to take in order to increase his chances of becoming a federal minister was to join the N.N.A.

On the other hand, the U.P.G.A. was made up of the N.C.N.C., A.G., N.E.P.U. and U.M.B.C. alliance (or Northern Progressive Front - N.P.F.). The N.C.N.C., having made a total break with the N.P.C.,[47] decided to champion the challenge against the traditional-dominated system in the North. A.G.'s stand remained the same as before — non-compromise with the traditional-dominated N.P.C. or any government formed by this party or its allies. N.E.P.U.'s stand too changed only slightly. It has already been mentioned in the previous chapter how Alhadji Aminu Kano broke away from the N.P.C. when the traditional rulers of the North took over complete control of the party. Aminu Kano's party, the Northern Elements Progressive Union, had since allied with the N.C.N.C. and joined the modern structures of the South in advocating reforms in the North. However, as independence approached and the N.C.N.C. moved towards an alliance with the N.P.C., the N.E.P.U. allowed itself to be drawn into the compromise.[48] As the N.C.N.C.-N.P.C. alliance broke up, the N.E.P.U. once again reverted to a criticism of the Northern system along with the N.C.N.C. The reasons for this strong relationship between the N.E.P.U. and the N.C.N.C. is a subject for future research. This relationship was slightly broken, however, when N.E.P.U. entered first into an alliance with the U.M.B.C. before joining the U.P.G.A. The United Middle Belt Congress (U.M.B.C.), on the other hand, represented minority peoples of the Benue and Plateau areas of the Northern region. These areas, inhabited mainly by the Tiv group, had traditional systems which could be classified along with the sacred-non-religious systems of the West and Mid-West. Also, the Sokoto empire, from which the

Emirates of the Northern region derived their authority, did not extend

to this area which was regarded as "pagan" by the muslim North. Thus,

the U.M.B.C., led by Joseph Tarka, was pressing hard for the creation

of a Middle Belt region. This was a major reason for the party's

alliance with the A.G. in pre-Independence days and shortly after Inde-

pendence. Although the party was being controlled by the modern class

in the area, some of the traditional structures persisted just as in

the West. The traditional-dominated N.P.C. used these structures in

their attempts to undermine the basis of authority of the U.M.B.C.[49]

Thus, apart from calling for the creation of a Middle-Belt region, the

party was totally against the persistence of traditional structures as

a political force in the modern setting. This explained the reason for

its alliance with the N.E.P.U. and both parties joining the U.P.G.A.,

which represented the modern force against the traditional structure

of the N.P.C.

As election day approached, the N.P.C. made practically no attempt

to contest the seats in the Southern regions, but instead concentrated

all its attention on winning all the seats in the North — "at all costs"

—[50] and leaving the Southern allies in the N.N.A. to fight for Southern

seats. Between December 20 and 22, 1964, the N.N.A. announced that 66

of their candidates had been returned unopposed.[51] This claim was

challenged by the U.P.G.A. who had nominated candidates for all the

seats in the North. It was left for the Federal Electoral Commission —

the sole body charged in the constitution with the responsibility of

conducting elections — to clarify the situation. Mr. Eyo Esua, Chair-

man of the Commission, made an emergency broadcast to the nation on

December 22, in which he admitted that there had been some irregularities

in the nomination of candidates. He cited three cases in the North

and one in the East to back up his claim. He went on further to warn

that his Commission had power under the constitution to postpone the

elections in view of these irregularities.[52] Two days later, the U.P.G.A.

leaders called for Army supervision of the elections and also threatened

to boycott the elections if it was not postponed. The next few days

saw the nation in a state of confusion with threats of a boycott of

elections and secession from the federation. The president of the re-

public, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, and the prime minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa

Balewa, disagreed on the postponement issue. While the former wanted

postponement, the latter was against it. Two members of the Federal

Electoral Commission also resigned in the midst of the confusion after

failing to persuade their colleagues on the Commission to postpone the

elections.[53] The U.P.G.A. soon announced their boycott of the elections

because they "had reason to believe that (they) would not be free and

fair".[54]

The elections were held on December 30. They were completely boy-

cotted in the Eastern region. However, the boycott was not successful

in the West and the Mid-West. In order to avoid defeat from the M.D.F.,

the N.C.N.C. premier of the Mid-West ordered his supporters to the polls.[55]

In the West, the boycott resulted in a poor turnout which made it possible

for the N.N.D.P. to "win". In the North, the N.P.C. "won" all the seats

in that region. Thus, the N.N.A. "won" over 200 of the 312 seats in

the House of Representatives in this election.[56] It was reported that

just over 4 million Nigerians cast their votes in that election — out

of the 15 million eligible voters in the country.[57]

The atmosphere became very tense in the country after the elections

as the president, Dr. Azikiwe refused to re-appoint Balewa as prime

minister despite this N.N.A. "victory". This situation continued for

about five days while a series of meetings was held with the president

in the State House to resolve the conflict. During this crisis, the

East threatened more than once to secede from the federation. Both

Azikiwe and Balewa held separate meetings with the service chiefs (the

heads of the Nigerian armed forces) where each tried to win them over

in case they would be needed in the resolution of the conflict.[58] In

this, Balewa, as the prime minister, succeeded in winning the loyalty

of the service chiefs (who pointed out that they were to receive their

operational orders from the prime minister and not the president, accord-

ing to the constitution.)[59]

An agreement was finally reached on January 4, when the N.P.C.

agreed to form a "broad-based" government which would include all the

parties in the federation.[60] However, the A.G. was never included in

such a government.[61]

This crisis reflected the two major systems in their most serious

conflict since Independence in 1960. The weight of the N.C.N.C. on the

side of the uncompromising modern structure of the A.G. helped to in-

tensify the conflict. The conflicting structures also introduced a new

element into the conflict. The U.P.G.A. invitation to the army for

supervision of the elections in order to ensure a fair election, and

the subsequent consultations held with the army chiefs by the president

and prime minister, could be interpreted as attempts by the conflicting

structures to bring in an arbitrator in the form of the armed forces.

For the first time, the armed forces were given the cue that, should

they take over the government in a coup d'etat, they would have the

support of the modern structures of the country. This was a first step
towards the coup of 1966. The army was now being made aware of the
potential role it could play — as a stabilizer in the situation.

This crisis also revealed the true nature of the control that the
traditional system of the North had over the whole federation. The
U.P.G.A. boycott of the elections was responsible for over 10 million
of the 15 million voters not casting their votes.[62] If, in spite of
their "majority", the N.N.A. could only poll 4 million out of the 15
million who registered as voters, then it is possible to conclude that
the majority of the nearly 30 million people in the North were not
participating in the political process — yet these people were "ade-
quately" represented both at the regional and federal levels by their
"elected" leaders, who were no more than a handful of traditional
authorities in control of a political machine — the N.P.C. The threats
of the East to secede from the federation came out of N.C.N.C. fears
that exclusion from a federal government that would be formed on the
basis of the disputed results would expose the party to N.P.C. reprisals
which may be worse than that suffered by the A.G. at the hands of this
party. Also, the Sardauna of Sokoto's vow that even if his party (the
N.P.C.) should lose the elections, "it will definitely not enter into
any agreement or coalition with the N.C.N.C."[63] was enough to cause
great concern in the "power-hungry" N.C.N.C. executive. After the dead-
lock had been resolved and the N.P.C. had agreed to include two N.C.N.C.
members in its cabinet, one of the N.C.N.C. members chosen by the N.P.C.
did not even bother to wait for his party's approval before accepting
the offer —[64] an indication of his priorities and low sense of party
discipline. The decision of the A.G. to remain outside the "broad-based"

government was an indication of the determination of this party not to compromise with the traditional system even if it entailed complete destruction of the party. The A.G. was the only major political party which had refused to compromise in the conflict with the traditional system of the North even after the latter had succeeded in displacing the party in its (the A.G.'s) own region. However, the A.G. continued to wait and hope for another chance of regaining power within the Western region in the modern democratic manner. This chance did not come until October 1965. The failure of the A.G. to compromise was a major factor in the prolongation of the conflict which reached its peak with the army coup d'etat of January 1966.

The 1965 Western Region Elections Crisis

The settlement agreed upon after the 1964 federal elections was described as a "narrow escape" —[65] but this escape was not to last long for the republic. The nation had barely ten months to rest before it was plunged into a further crisis which dealt it the "final blow". The people of Western Nigeria, having suffered humiliation in the 1962 crisis when the leaders of the majority party in the region (the A.G.) were imprisoned and an unpopular pro-N.P.C. government was imposed upon them, looked forward to the time when they would be free to elect leaders of their own choice to rule the region.[66] This opportunity came in October 1965. However, the government of Chief Akintola was determined not to give up political power so easily.

Prior to the election which was scheduled for October 11, the N.N.D.P. announced that 16 of their candidates were returned unopposed.[67]

During the elections, gross irregularities were reported in connection

with the conduct of the election. N.N.D.P. leaders and electoral

officers under their influence tried to dump over 500,000 ballot papers

into the ballot boxes, while some "pregnant" N.N.D.P. women were dis-

covered to be pregnant with ballot papers under their dresses. There

were also cases of ballot boxes which were already filled with "votes"

even before elections started.[68]

The N.N.D.P. were declared "winners" in the election and Governor

Fadahunsi proceeded to appoint Chief Akintola for another term as premier

of the region. All along, the U.P.G.A. protested about the election,

and their own version of the election results was being announced over

the broadcasting service of Eastern Nigeria where the government was

N.C.N.C. The U.P.G.A. claimed they had "won" the elections and their

Western region leader, Alhadji Adegbenro (A.G.), proceeded to form an

"interim government". Members of this "government" were immediately

arrested and charged with illegal assumption of office. A.G. members

couldn't stand another unjust defeat at the hands of the N.N.D.P., and

they resorted to violence. Immediately, law and order broke down com-

pletely in the region. There was rioting, arson, looting and murder.

The N.N.D.P. government could not convene House meetings for fear of

mass rebellion.[69] These disturbances continued and spread to some parts

of the capital city, Lagos, cutting it off from the rest of the country

as it became unsafe to travel by road. The prime minister refused to

declare a state of emergency as he had done in 1962. He claimed there

was no analogy between the wave of violence in the region and the situa-

tion which led to the declaration of a state of emergency in 1962.[70]

This violent situation was brought to an end when a group of young army

officers staged a coup d'etat in January 15, 1966, using the situation in the West as their major reason for taking over the government of the federation.[71]

This crisis was the final one which provided the army with a good excuse for taking over the government of the federation. The unwillingness of the N.P.C.-controlled federal government to interfere in the situation on this occasion was because of their alliance with the N.N.D.P. It was clear to many Nigerians and foreign observers that the 1965 Western region elections had been rigged.[72] But this act of breaking the rules of the democratic game (which would be regarded as a great crime in a truly modern state) did not bother the traditional-controlled N.P.C. structure since the party itself was not organized on democratic principles.[73] By not interfering in the situation in the Western region, the traditional system hoped to keep its ally, the N.N.D.P., in power in the Western region. These hopes were dashed, however, when a new modernizing structure intervened in the conflict to maintain stability. This new structure was the Nigerian army.

The 1966 Military Coup d'etat

The army was first made aware of its role as a force to be reckoned with in Nigerian politics during the 1964 elections crisis where the representatives of the conflicting systems approached the heads of the armed forces in a bid to win them over to their respective sides in the conflict. The significance of this is that the army now realized that it might be needed to help in resolving a future conflict between the traditional system of the North and the modern system of the South.

The fact that, conventionally, politics was outside the scope of the armed forces made the forces keep out of politics and rather observe the events, hoping that the politicians would resolve their conflicts peacefully. However, having been invited into the conflict by the politicians themselves, the army decided to take the next opportunity of a crisis to intervene. This came about ten months after the federal elections crisis. The army, led by a group of young officers, assassinated the premiers of the Northern and Western regions and the prime minister of the federation. There was no doubt about the partiality of this coup — especially since nearly all the politicians who were assassinated were either members or very close allies of the dominating traditional system, while the leaders of the modern system were only detained by the coup plotters. Also, the fact that the young officers were among the first set of educated (graduate) Southern officers who benefitted from the policy of Nigerianization of the Officer Corps of the Nigerian army[74] must have influenced these men and made them take sides with the modern rather than the traditional system in the conflict. These reasons apart, it has been suggested that the officers acted the way they did because of a rumour that the Sultan of Sokoto (leader of the N.P.C.) and Chief Akintola (leader of the N.N.D.P. and premier of the West) were planning to crush their military and political opponents in a "blow" which would bring final victory to the traditional-dominated system.[75] The fear of the rumoured "purge" made the officers act quickly, eliminating their perceived opponents. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the partiality of the first coup. However, it is important to note that, even though the disturbances which followed the disputed 1965 elections in the Western region were limited only to that

region and Lagos, it provided "sufficient" excuse for the army to over-
throw the government of the federation. The army suspended the con-
stitution and banned political parties. Army rule brought into exis-
tence a new system of legitimacy which was neither traditional nor
modern, but where authority is determined by membership of the hierarch-
ically-structured armed forces. The people first welcomed this new
system partly because its existence as a political structure helped to
resolve the conflict between the traditional and modern systems which
had led the nation through a series of shattering crises only shortly
after Independence.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

1. K.W.J. Post, The Nigerian Federal Election of 1959 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 19, Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, p. 437.

2. Professor B.J. Dudley has argued that the Northern system was a "closed" system in which opposition to the government was countered with hostility from the government, hence, opposition parties found it difficult to penetrate the system. See Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria, pp. 263-268.

3. Post, op. cit., p. 160, and Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, p. 423. The N.C.N.C. had already formed an alliance with the N.E.P.U. — the opposition party to the N.P.C. in the North.

4. These were the minority areas of the former Eastern region of Nigeria. By Independence in 1960, statistics showed that the Ibos comprised 68.5% of the population of Eastern Region. The remaining 31.5% was made up of minorities which included the Ibibio (10.3%), the Annang (6%), the Ijaws, Kalabaris, Efiks and others (15.2%). Similarly, the minorities in the Northern region (which included the Tiv, Yoruba, Birom, Igala and so on) made up 39.7% of the population, while the Western region had 26.1% as minorities. See Stokke Olav, "System Transformation in Nigeria," Cooperation and Conflict, 6, (1971), p. 153.

5. Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, p. 443.

6. Post, op. cit., p. 349.

7. The traditional title bestowed on many of the politicians of the first republic was honorary and carried no traditional authority with it. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, it was a means of legitimizing this modern class of politicians in the traditional context.

8. "Oni" is the title for the traditional ruler of Ife, and he was also regarded as the "father" of the Yorubas.

9. Odumosu, op. cit., p. 277.

10. Ibid.

11. Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, pp. 447-450 gives a detailed account.

12. Ibid., p. 279.

13. Ibid., p. 284.

14. J.P. Mackintosh, "Politics in Nigeria: The Action Group Crisis of 1962," Political Studies, XI, 1 (1963), pp. 126-155.

15. Ibid., p. 139.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. For example, the Alafin (King) of Oyo was deposed in 1956 for opposing party policy.

19. Denis J. Worrall, Nigerian Federalism: Its Genesis and Development, Doctoral Dissertation, Cornell University, 1965, p. 268, (unpublished).

20. Akintola made a break with the A.G. in August 1962 when he and his small group of supporters (at the regional and federal levels) formed a party called the United Peoples' Party (U.P.P.). This party, in alliance with the N.C.N.C. opposition in the West, was able to maintain a small majority over the remaining A.G. members in the House.

21. Mackintosh claimed that it took some time before less than 10 members of the Akintola group managed to dsrupt the meeting of about 108 members of the House. Without the cooperation of the opposition N.C.N.C. members, this would not have been possible. See Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, pp. 456-7.

22. This was the reason given for the restriction of the A.G. members. Ibid., pp. 450-451.

23. Ibid., pp. 452-453.

24. A British lawyer, Mr. Dingle Foot, Q.C., who was to appear for some of the accused was ordered to leave the country without any official reason. See Odumosu, op. cit., pp. 299-301; Worrall, op. cit., p. 268; and Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, p. 454.

25. Mackintosh, Ibid., p. 455.

26. One of the major prosecution witnesses had a pending case on charges of forgery and breach of the peace. These charges were suspended until after the conclusion of the treason trial. Ibid.

27. Ibid., p. 458.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p. 104.

30. That is, the traditional and modern systems with the traditional system dominating the alliance.

31. Worrall, op. cit., p. 282.

32. About £1.5 million. Ibid.

33. Ibid., p. 283.

34. Ibid.

35. The United Middle Belt Congress — the Northern ally of the A.G.

36, The number for Western region includes that of the newly created
37 Mid-Western region whose count was given as 2,533,337. The Mid-
    West was carved out of the West in 1963 — partly as a result of
    the destruction of A.G. power in the 1962 Western region crisis.
    See Worrall, op. cit., p. 286, and Mackintosh, Nigerian Government
    and Politics, p. 552.

38. The reasons for this will be discussed later on in the paper.

39. Worrall, op. cit., p. 289.

40. Ibid.

41. Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, p. 137.

42. J.P. Mackintosh, "Federalism in Nigeria," Political Studies, X, 3,
    (1962), p. 235. Also Nigerian Government and Politics, p. 64.

43. Mackintosh, Ibid., p. 552.

44. Others were: East — 70 constituencies
                   West — 57 constituencies
               Mid-West — 14 constituencies
                  Lagos — 4 constituencies
    See Worrall, loc. cit., and Crowder, op. cit., p. 323.

45. There were some deviances however. Reasons for these deviances will
    be given later on in the discussion.

46. The N.N.D.P. was formed by Akintola after persuading the Yoruba
    members of the N.C.N.C. opposition in the West to join with his
    U.P.P. in forming a new party. See Mackintosh, Nigerian Government
    and Politics, p. 105.

47. Ibid., p. 564.

48. See map 2 (in the appendix) for a diagrammatic explanation of these
    alliances.

49. For further discussion on this, see Dudley, Parties and Politics in
    Northern Nigeria, pp. 183-190.

50. A.A. Nwankwo and S.U. Ifejika, The Making of a Nation: Biafra
    (London: C. Hurst, 1969), p. 74.

51. _Ibid._, p. 80.

52. _Ibid._, p. 81.

53. The members who resigned were Mr. Aniagolu and Mr. Akenzua, repre-
    senting the Eastern and Mid-Western regions respectively on the
    Commission. _Ibid._, p. 82.

54. _Ibid._.

55. E.O. Anise, _The Impact of the Federal Structure and Party System
    on Political Integration in Nigeria 1946-1970_ Doctoral Disserta-
    tion, Syracuse University, 1970, p. 429 (unpublished).

56. _Ibid._.

57. _West Africa_, January 9, 1965, p. 43. See also Mackintosh,
    Nigerian Government and Politics, pp. 597-607.

58. _Ibid._, pp. 590-592.

59. _Ibid._.

60. Anise, _op. cit._, p. 430; _West Africa_, _loc. cit._; and Nwankwo and
    Ifejika, _op. cit._, p. 83.

61. Mackintosh, _Nigerian Government and Politics_, p. 596.

62. _West Africa_, _loc. cit._.

63. Mackintosh, _Nigerian Government and Politics_, p. 564.

64. _Ibid._, p. 596.

65. See editorial in _West Africa_, _op. cit._, pp. 29-30.

66. _West Africa_, October 16, 1965, p. 1151.

67. This was doubtful. The A.G. claimed they were not allowed to
    nominate candidates for these constituencies because electoral
    officers were kidnapped and taken to the North so that they
    wouldn't receive nomination papers from the opposition candidates.
    Those who received nomination papers from A.G. candidates were
    dismissed and replaced with new electoral officers who refused to
    recognize the certificates of validity issued by the dismissed
    electoral officers. See Nwankwo and Ifejika, _op. cit._, pp. 91-2;
    and _West Africa_, October 16, 1965, pp. 1151 and 1155.

68. Nwankwo and Ifejika, _loc. cit._; and _West Africa_, _loc. cit._. A
    correspondent of the _West Africa_ claimed that he was an eye witness
    where a "pregnant" woman was discovered to have ballot papers inside
    her robes on examination.

69. Anise, op. cit., p. 432.

70. West Africa, November 20, 1965, p. 1295.

71. Richard L. Sklar, "Nigerian Politics in Perspective," in R. Melson and H. Wolpe (eds.), Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1971), p. 49.

72. Ibid.

73. The Daily Times (Lagos), December 14, 1963, described the N.P.C. thus: "it is merely a political expression for an existing system of administration dyed in religion and innate traditions." See Dudley, Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria, pp. 116-148.

74. Miners, op. cit., pp. 108-129.

75. Sklar, loc. cit.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to draw attention to the important role
played by a system of legitimacy in keeping a political structure stable
in the case of Nigeria. It commenced with an analysis of the systems
of legitimacy which operated in traditional societies in Nigeria prior
to colonization. These were classified into three main categories: the
sacred-religious system, the sacred non-religious system, and the non
sacred non-religious system. The first type was represented by the
Islamic empire of the Hausa-Fulani (the Sokoto Caliphate) and the Kanuri
empire of Kanem-Bornu. The second and third types were represented by
the monarchical systems in Southern Nigeria and the decentralized
societies of the Ibos and Ibibios in Eastern Nigeria respectively. It
has also been observed that, although each of the types of legitimacy
systems mentioned above could be found in each of Nigeria's three
regions at Independence, they were not entirely restricted by regional
boundaries. For example, the sacred non-religious type which was pre-
dominant in the Western region also extended to some parts of the
Eastern region.[1] At the same time, the sacred-religious type which was
predominant in the North extended so far as Ilorin in the West. The
political structures which were based on these systems of legitimacy
enjoyed a great amount of stability (in terms of their continued exist-
ence over relatively long periods of time).[2]

Consideration has also been given to how the British colonial
structure was super-imposed on the various traditional political systems
in Nigeria mainly through conquest. A major reason for the British

intervention in the political affairs of Nigeria's traditional states
has been given as economic — that is, Britain's determination to re-
place slave trade with "legitimate" trade.[3] It was concluded that early
resistance to imposition of colonial rule should be seen as an attempt
by traditional societies to prevent the destruction of their systems
and their replacement by alien systems.[4] The significance of this is
that, rather than being limited to the ruling oligarchies in the tradi-
tional systems, the resistance involved whole societies fighting to
secure the independence of their systems. In spite of the initial con-
flict with the traditional systems, the colonial system did not owe its
stability to its continued use of force.[5]

In 1914, the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates
under Lord Frederick Lugard completed the unification of British colonial
administration in various parts of Nigeria. This administration based
its right to rule mainly on conquests. The introduction of the Indirect
Rule system marked the beginning of a new structure — the colonial —
traditional structure. The new structure was neither purely British
(colonial) nor traditional, but it helped to remove conflict, with the
combining structures legitimizing each other. The traditional structure
legitimized the colonial structure in the traditional context, while the
colonial structure legitimized the traditional structure in the modern
context. It is on this that the stability of the colonial-traditional
structure rested.

Apart from the traditional and colonial systems, the "modern-African"
system is another system of legitimacy which has been identified in this
thesis. It emerged during colonialism as a result of the spread of
modernizing influences. The development of the modern-African class

came in two stages: the first stage started at about the end of World
War I and lasted until the beginning of World War II.   Leadership of
the class during this period was provided by such renowned nationalists
as Herbert Macaulay and Egerton-Shyngle.   The second stage of development
commenced at about the end of World War II under the leadership of
Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and other poli-
ticians of the first republic.   This class based their claim to authority
on Western ideals of liberalism and democracy, hence, they established
political parties to resocialize the people and to lay claim to power
as the true representatives of the people in a modern setting.[6]   The
greater the number of people that were re-socialized by this class, the
firmer the system of legitimacy on which their structure was established,
and the more the system of legitimacy of the colonial-traditional author-
ity was undermined.   This was the basis of conflict between the modern-
African structure and the colonial structure on one hand, and the modern-
African structure and the traditional structure on the other.   A major
shortcoming of the modern-African class was identified, however.   This
was the destabilizing effect of modernization on the structure.   Thus,
although this class based its claim to authority on modern Western
principles of liberalism and democracy in theory, their disillusionment
with the colonial administration made them identify themselves with
certain traditional values or norms.   The result was the emergence of
a class which was neither truly traditional nor sufficiently "westernized"
to fit into the set of Western institutions on which the state was estab-
lished at independence.   Members of this class thus adopted any set of
norms that suited them as the situation demanded.

The conflicting systems of legitimacy were identified.   During

colonization, the conflict was primarily between the colonial and the traditional systems. After the establishment of colonial rule, however, the modern-African system emerged and came into conflict with both traditional and colonial systems. This situation lasted until independence in 1960 when the colonial structure was withdrawn, thereby leaving the traditional and modern-African systems in a struggle for power. Within the regions, partial resolution was found to the conflict.[7] This resulted in a traditional-dominated structure in the North, and modern-African dominated structures in the West and East. This, however, did not eliminate the conflict at the national level in which the traditional-dominated North had to face the modern-African dominated South in the first few years of independence. Attempts were made by both sides to reach a compromise and avoid the destruction of the first republic, but these were unsuccessful. Their failure to arrive at a compromise was caused by the parties' unwillingness[8] to be dominated in any alliance that would be formed. This accounted for the intensification of the conflict after independence. It was also manifested in the series of post-independence crises which Nigeria went through until the army intervened in 1966.

There has already been a discussion in chapter II as to how the major aim of the modern-African class was to bring about the process of political modernization in Nigeria. This process involves what Huntington[9] has described as "rationalization of authority", that is, the replacement of a large number of authorities by modern secular authority. Having failed to get the British to destroy the authority of traditional rulers under colonialism, and since independence was approaching and it appeared that the traditional-controlled N.P.C.

structure would defeat the other parties in any future federal elections, some of the modern-African political parties started to shift their ideological positions from that of non-compromise with any traditional system to that of cooperation and alliance with the system. The reasons for this shift could be because of a desire to share power with the traditional system in an independent Nigeria, or it could be due to the fear that the traditional system might succeed in destroying all opposition after taking control of the federal government at independence. This shift was noticeable in N.C.N.C. policies between 1957 and 1960 when the party drifted gradually from that of strong alliance with the A.G. to that of antagonism to the party and cooperation with the N.P.C. in 1960.[10] It was also the desire to maintain the status quo by securing N.P.C. promises not to interfere with A.G.'s power in the Western region which made Akintola and his supporters favour a policy of cooperation with the N.P.C. Since the majority of the A.G. disagreed with Akintola over this issue, he broke away from the party and formed his own party, the N.N.D.P., which immediately entered into an alliance with the N.P.C. Thus, the deviant positions of these parties should be seen as a desire to consolidate their hold on power by seeking to resolve the existing conflict situation through alliances with the opposing system in the conflict. The deviancy also created a third group in the conflict — a group of "normless" structures[11] which neither adhered strictly to the norms of the modern system, not to those of the traditional system throughout the conflict. These structures could be on the side of the traditional structure at one moment, and against it the next. A good example of this is the positions taken by the N.C.N.C. between 1960 and 1966. As has already been discussed in the previous chapter, the party

was in an N.P.C. coalition government against the A.G. in the 1962 crisis.[12]   In the 1963 and 1964 crises it was on the side of the A.G. against the N.P.C.[13]   However, it accepted a rather humiliating position[14] in an N.P.C. government after the resolution of the 1964 crisis.   The state of normlessness could also be said to have accounted for the N.N.D.P. alliance with N.P.C., and the attempt by both parties to keep the former in power in the Western region by employing means which showed their total disregard for modern Western democratic norms.[15]

Having analysed the reasons for the fall of the first republic, the next question which comes to mind, is "what are the hopes for the survival of the second republic?"   A detailed answer to this question is beyond the scope of this study.   However, we might examine this issue briefly in the following section.

Prospects for the Second Republic

Since January 1966, there have been three successive army regimes in Nigeria.   The first regime, headed by the late Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi, lasted from January 1966 to July 1966.   It was replaced by a regime headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Yakubu Gowon (later General Gowon) which lasted for nine years.   General Gowon's regime was noted for fighting the civil war of 1967-1969 in order to stop the Eastern region from seceding.   However, his regime too was overthrown in July 1975 by the present military regime which was first headed by the late General Muritala Muhammed, and later by General Olusegun Obasonjo.   One thing that is common to each of the army regimes is that they realized the need for a single system of legitimacy as a prerequisite for national

unity or integration. Hence, each of them tried to develop a system which would supersede the old conflicting systems and, at the same time, would be acceptable to the peoples of Nigeria.

The regime of General Ironsi set about this task in a rather confused way, displaying its lack of political acumen.[16] He suspended the constitution and banned political parties and "tribal" associations.[17] In May 1966,[18] he issued a decree abolishing the regions and unifying all public services in the country.[19] Thus, without first legitimizing his own regime and making it acceptable to the people, General Ironsi made the mistake of embarking on major constitutional reforms. This was a main factor in the downfall of the regime, as both traditional and modern elites challenged the legitimacy of the army regime which made constitutional changes without a referendum.[20]

Gowon, who succeeded Ironsi in July 1966, assured the nation from the start that his regime was only "transitional" and that, once a new constitution had been approved by referendum, his military government would "fade away".[21] His regime gained the approval of the people when it immediately summoned a small group of representatives of Nigeria's four regions to Lagos to discuss the constitutional future of the nation.[22] This action helped to give the regime a temporary type of legitimacy as the people perceived it as an arbitrator in the old conflict between the traditional and modern-African systems. However, the regional delegations failed to arrive at a compromise on which type of constitutional arrangements to adopt. Other events[23] caused the situation to deteriorate such that the question of legitimacy of the Gowon regime was relegated into the background as the nation was thrown into a state of civil war. The civil war itself served as a basis for

unification as the conflicting systems in the three[24] regions under

Gowon's regime were brought together in a bid to achieve a new aim

which is symbolized by the regime's war slogan: "To keep Nigeria One,

is a task that must be done". At the end of the war, attention was

once again focussed on the issue of the legitimacy of Gowon's regime.

This he (Gowon) avoided by outlining a nine-point programme[25] of re-

construction, and promising to hand over power to a representative

government by 1976. When, by October 1974, the regime announced that

its stay in power had been extended indefinitely, there were sharp

reactions and open protests over this announcement, especially from

the modern-African class.[26] Nine months later Gowon's regime was over-

thrown by General Muhammed. The new regime immediately set October 1979

as the final date for army withdrawal — the present regime under General

Obasouji is still following the programme set out by Muhammed.

Thus, the Nigerian armed forces could be said to have succeeded in

setting up a temporary system of legitimacy between 1966 and the present

time. One other thing that could be said about the army regimes in

Nigeria is that they had attempted to develop a system of legitimacy

which would be acceptable to the nation and which would replace the

temporary system that they had built. The new system envisaged by the

army is meant to serve as a basis for the political structures of the

second republic, and it was modelled along modern Western democratic

lines. In the process of building this new system of legitimacy, it

was inevitable that the political power of traditional rulers be drasti-

cally reduced such that the system would no longer be able to compete

with the modern system at the state or national levels. The army

achieved this in the following manner: firstly, by suspending the

Constitution of the first republic, and placing a ban on political

parties. The military regime paved the way for reforms without fear

of serious opposition from the old conflicting systems. Secondly,

during the thirteen-year period of military rule, the armed forces

were fully integrated[27] and used to coerce any serious opposition to

the military regime's policies. This had the advantage of reducing

opposition, especially from traditional authorities who could be easily

replaced at will by the regime. Thirdly, the military rulers put away

the conflicting classes (the "old" politicians of the modern-African

class and the traditional ruling elite)[28] and depended mainly on the

civil servants.[29] Thus, for the first time since independence, the

rural populations were able to feel the impact of another authority

(that of the army and civil servants) which was greater than their

traditional rulers'. Also the fact that Commissioners[30] chosen by the

army rulers were selected without regard to the social status or popu-

larity of such persons[31] helped to undermine the influence of tradi-

tional rulers over their subjects. Fourthly, the breaking down of old

regional boundaries first into twelve, and later into nineteen states

resulted in the breakdown of old traditional empires too. The new

states were created without regard for the boundaries of old traditional

empires. In many cases, new names were given to these states and new

leaders emerged in the states who made no attempt to associate with

the traditional system of legitimacy.[32] Fifthly, the introduction of

the National Youth Service Corps — a scheme in which graduates from

Nigerian Universities and higher institutions are sent into the rural

communities for one year — helped re-educate the rural populations

about the importance of putting national loyalty above sectional/ethnic

loyalties.[33] This programme also helped in both ethnic and elite-mass integration.[34] Sixthly, the introduction of a new system of local government by which traditional rulers are restricted to politics only at this level. According to the new system, traditional rulers may be presidents of elected local government councils provided that "the great majority of people, and the minority peoples" accept such a traditional ruler, and that they refrain from any kind of political partisanship so as to be the "impartial fathers of their people".[35] If they desire to stand for election, they would have to resign their traditional roles.[36] This reform, which was incorporated into the new constitution for the second republic, dashed the hopes of the traditional elite for holding on to their traditional posts and competing for votes in future elections. In the final analysis, the military has succeeded in eliminating one of the competing forces in Nigerian politics by reducing the power of the traditional elite such that they would no longer be able to challenge the legitimacy of the new political system under the second republic. This, in other words, is what the process of rationalization of authority meant to achieve in bringing about political modernization in a state.[37] It has also increased the chances for political stability in the second republic since there is now a uniform system of legitimacy for the whole federation.

One other factor which may pose a threat to the stability of the second republic is that of military coups d'etat. Difficult as it is to prevent ambitious military officers from planning coups, it also cannot be denied that a popular and efficient government would deprive the power-hungry officers of an excuse for taking over the government. However, a democratic government does not necessarily have to be "good";[38]

hence, the second republic is still faced with the possibilities of coups. This danger has been greatly reduced in the following ways: first, the problem of legitimizing a military regime in the post-1979 era will not be an easy one in Nigeria. The military regimes that the country has had so far have been accorded a temporary legitimacy partly because of the crises which arose out of the conflict of legitimacies in the first republic. Since the chances of such conflicts have been greatly reduced, it is not likely that the army would have an excuse as they had in 1966. Secondly, the constitution of the second republic has outlawed coups.[39] This also helps to complicate the issue for future coup planners as the legality of such a government could be easily challenged on the basis of the provision of this constitution whose legitimacy has already been established.[40] Thirdly, the chances of a coup d'etat succeeding in Nigeria as at present is very slim. There would have to be a general consensus (especially among the officer corps) within the force before such a coup could be successful.[41] There is also the obstacle of the growing size of the military. In the first two coups of 1966, the size of the Nigerian army was put at about 10,000 men.[42] However, because of the civil war, the army grew from about 10,000 in 1966 to about 250,000 in 1970.[43] This increase in size makes the job of a coup planner more difficult from the practical point of view — and this is especially so in view of the fact that the army has now stationed units in each of the nineteen states of the federation. This was the technical problem encountered by the last coup plotter (Colonel Dimka) when he failed to get the support of army units in the Northern and Eastern states.[44] In view of all the factors mentioned above, it is possible to expect the second republic to survive for some time, and give

Nigerians the type of democratic society that they had hoped for since
1960.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER V

1. See Chapter II above, pp. 19 ff.

2. That is, when compared with the post-independence structure which existed for only five years.

3. See Chapter II above, pp. 20 ff.

4. Ibid., pp. 22 ff.

5. The colonial system owed its stability to its preservation and legitimization of the traditional systems in the modern context (see Chapter II above). It is interesting to note that the Royal West African Frontier Force, which was the British Colonial force in West Africa, was made up of Africans (who were recruited by traditional chiefs) under the command of European officers. See Crowder, "The 1939-45 War and West Africa," in Ajayi and Crowder, op. cit., pp. 598-599.

6. See Chapter II above, pp. 29 ff.

7. See Chapter III above, pp. 42 ff.

8. The Northern Peoples Congress (N.P.C.) was not prepared to be a junior partner in any alliance with the southern parties. The Action Group (from the West), on the other hand, would not accept any compromise short of total control of the federal government by a modern-African-dominated party. (See Chapter IV above, pp. 54-77)

9. See Chapter II above, pp. 30 ff.

10. See Chapter IV above, pp. 54 ff.

11. Huntington, op. cit., p. 37, describes a situation of normlessness which may be created during the process of political modernization. The state of "normlessness" of some of Nigeria's political parties was due to their failure to fully dissimilate the modern norms of Western Political institutions.

12. See Chapter IV above, pp. 56-63.

13. Ibid., pp. 63-77.

14. The party was offered only two ministerial positions in an N.P.C.-dominated government after series of negotiations. This was in spite of the fact that the N.P.C. leader had vowed never to enter into alliance again with the N.C.N.C. See Chapter IV above, pp. 74-75.

15. See Chapter IV above, pp. 75-77.

16. Sklar, "Nigerian Politics in Perspective," p. 51.

17. Ibid.

18. This was just about four months after he came to power.

19. This decree was never implemented until Ironsi's regime was over-
thrown two months after its promulgation. Thus, Nigeria was a
unitary state "constitutionally", but a federal state structurally
between May 24 and July 29, 1966. See West Africa, August 13, 1966,
p. 907.

20. Ibid., and Sklar, loc. cit.

21. West Africa, August 13, 1966, p. 907.

22. B.J. Dudley, "Nigeria Sinks into Chaos", The Round Table, (London),
January 1967, p. 45.

23. The Northern populations were incited by their rulers to attack the
Ibos living in the North. They were made to believe that the Ibos
were planning to dominate the North by all means. Ibid., pp. 46-47.

24. These were the Northern, Western and Mid-Western regions.

25. See West Africa, October 10, 1970, p. 1205.

26. In October 1974, Dr. Tai Solarin circulated a statement entitled
"The Beginning of the End", accusing the Gowon regime of staying in
power against the wishes of the people. Part of the statement reads:

    The army came to power because the people wanted it in power.
    It is in the interest of the army itself that it should quit power
    when the people thought they have had its fill. An actor steps off
    the stage whilst the ovation from the audience is loudest. To wait
    for that ovation to peter out to nothingness before stepping off is,
    to put it the crude way, allowing the latrine-fly to meet the bush-
    toileting man yet toileting. Tafawa Balewa's government waited until
    it was forced out. Ironsi's government waited until it was shown the
    way out ..... Unless the Military Government has the courage to call
    it quits on 14 January, 1976, a chain of events might be set in motion,
    the end of which nobody would be able to predict.
        (See Africa Currents, London, 1 (Spring 1975), pp. 12-13).
    Solarin was detained for this, but his detention sparked off protests
    by University undergraduates which led to the closure of the Univer-
    sities for over three months. Gowon was overthrown barely five months
    afterward.

27. It was necessary for the army to be prevented from taking sides in the
old conflict, hence, there was need for unification.

28, There were five exceptions to this, however.

29. _West Africa_, January 22, 1966, p. 81.

30. Another name for Ministers under the army regimes. They had wide powers even over traditional rulers.

31. It was regarded as degrading for a traditional ruler to have to take orders from a military or civilian commissioner who, but for the situation, would have been regarded as a "nobody" within the society. Civilian commissioners no longer needed to take on traditional titles in order to be recognized as the authority in the local context.

32. Some of the new states were named after the rivers in them: "Kwara" state (local name for River Niger); "Ogun" state; "Rivers" state; "Cross River" state; and "Imo" state. Some of the new leaders who emerged were University professors and successful businessmen. See Alhaji Yusuf Dantsoho, "The Grand Old North is dead," in _The Punch_ (Lagos), September 13, 1978, p. 1.

33. The writer had the privilege of being among the third set of corpers to be posted to the Rivers state. He was surprised at the respect given to N.Y.S.C. members even by traditional rulers who saw them as "agents" of the federal government. Many of the rural populations were eager to know more about the structure, functions and powers of the federal government.

34. N.Y.S.C. members were usually posted to states other than their own state of origin, hence, there were chances for inter-ethnic mingling.

35. _West Africa_, August 30, 1976, p. 1245. See also N.Y. Akpan, "Nigeria's Local Government Revolution," in _West Africa_, September 6, 1976, p. 1277.

36. _West Africa_, August 30, 1976, p. 1245.

37. See Chapter 1 above, p. 7.

38. There are a lot of value judgement in the determination of what is "good".

39. _The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979_, Chp. 1, Sec. 1 (2); West Africa, September 4, 1978, p. 1727; _The Punch_ (Lagos), June 1, 1978, p. 1; and _Sunday Times_ (Lagos), February 12, 1978, p. 2.

40. That is, by the present military regime, as has already been discussed above.

41. Colonel Dinka's attempted Coup of February 1976 failed because of lack of consensus. Muhammed's 1975 coup, on the other hand, succeeded because of the general agreement within the armed forces that Gowon had to be removed, hence, it was carried out without bloodshed. See _West Africa_, August 4, 1977, pp. 886-7; and _West Africa_, February 23, 1976, p. 230.

42. <u>West Africa</u>, October 10, 1970, p. 1177.

43. Miners, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 95.
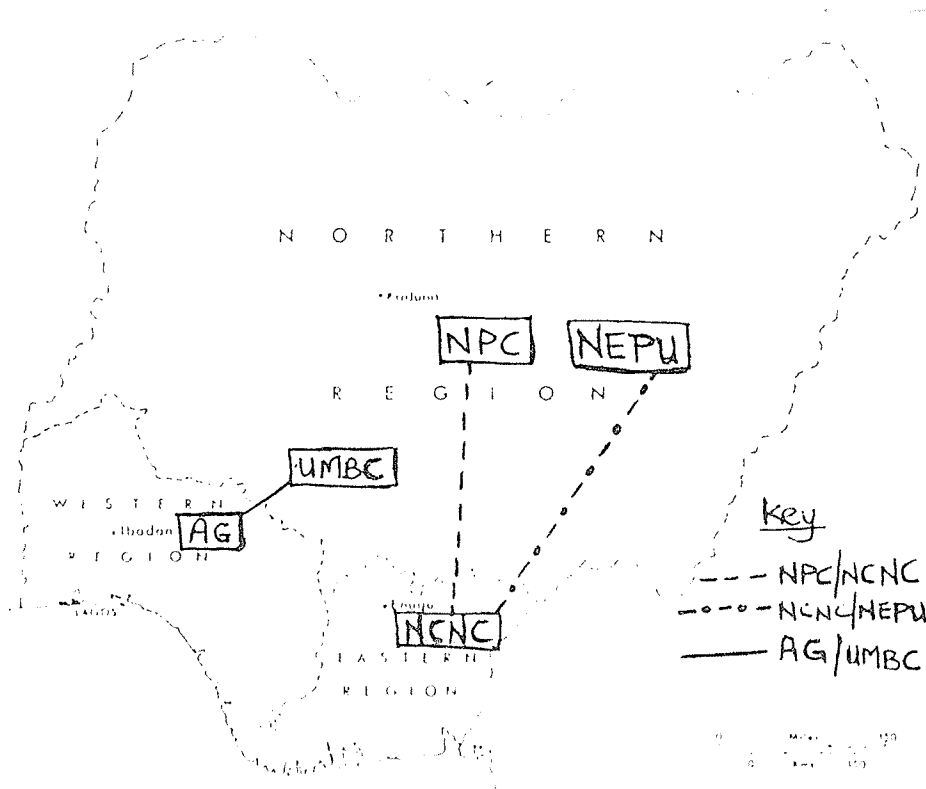
44. <u>West Africa</u>, February 23, 1976, p. 230.

APPENDIX

Political Parties of the First Republic

A.G.	————	Action Group
D.P.	————	Dynamic Party
M.D.F.	————	Mid-West Democratic Front
N.C.N.C.	————	National Council of Nigerian Citizens
N.D.C.	————	Niger Delta Congress
N.E.P.U.	————	Northern Elements Progressive Union
N.N.A.	————	Nigerian National Alliance (an alliance of N.P.C./N.N.D.P./M.D.F./D.P./N.D.C.)
N.N.D.P.	————	Nigerian National Democratic Party
N.P.C.	————	Northern Peoples Congress
N.P.F.	————	Northern Progressive Front (an alliance of N.E.P.U./U.M.B.C.)
U.M.B.C.	————	United Middle-Belt Congress
U.P.G.A.	————	United Progressive Grand Alliance. (an alliance of N.C.N.C./A.G./N.P.F.)
U.P.P.	————	United Peoples' Party

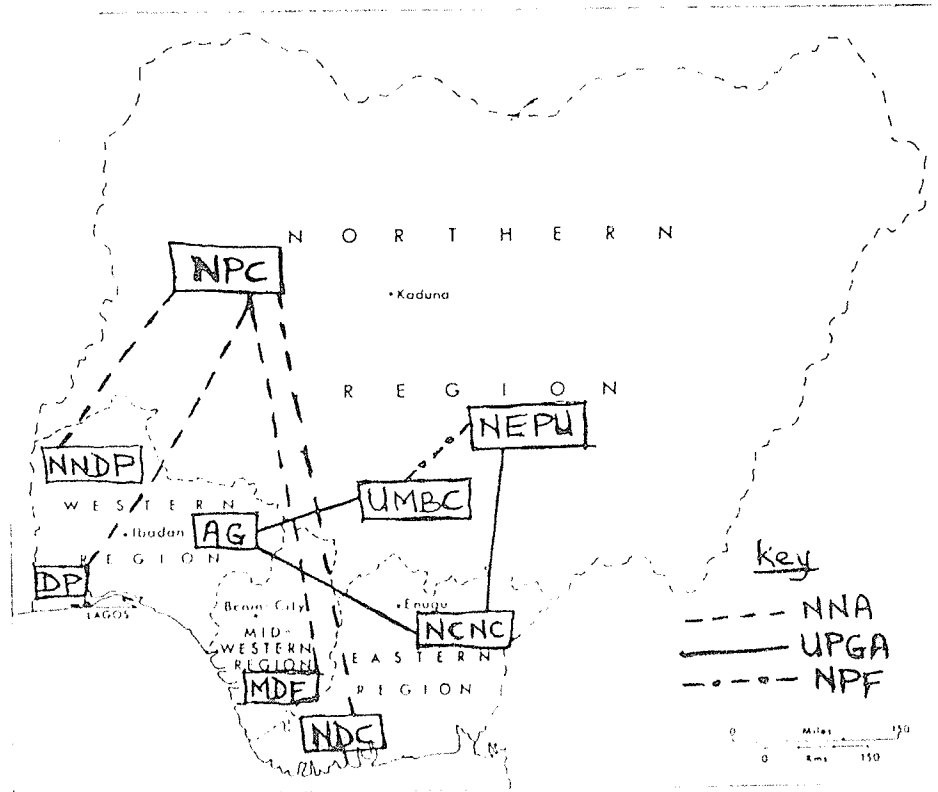Map 1. Nigeria's Three Regions, 1960.

N O R T H E R N

•Kaduna

R E G I O N

W E S T E R N
•Ibadan
R E G I O N

LAGOS

•Enugu

E A S T E R N
R E G I O N

Miles
0 ————————— 150
0 ————————— 150

63

Map 2. Major Party Alliances for the 1959 Federal Election.

Map 2. Major Party Alliances for the 1959 Federal Election.

Map 3. Nigeria as a Federation of Four Regions, 1966.

N O R T H E R N

•Kaduna

R E G I O N

W E S T E R N
•Ibadan
R E G I O N

Benin·City
•
MID-
WESTERN
REGION

LAGOS

•Enugu

E A S T E R N
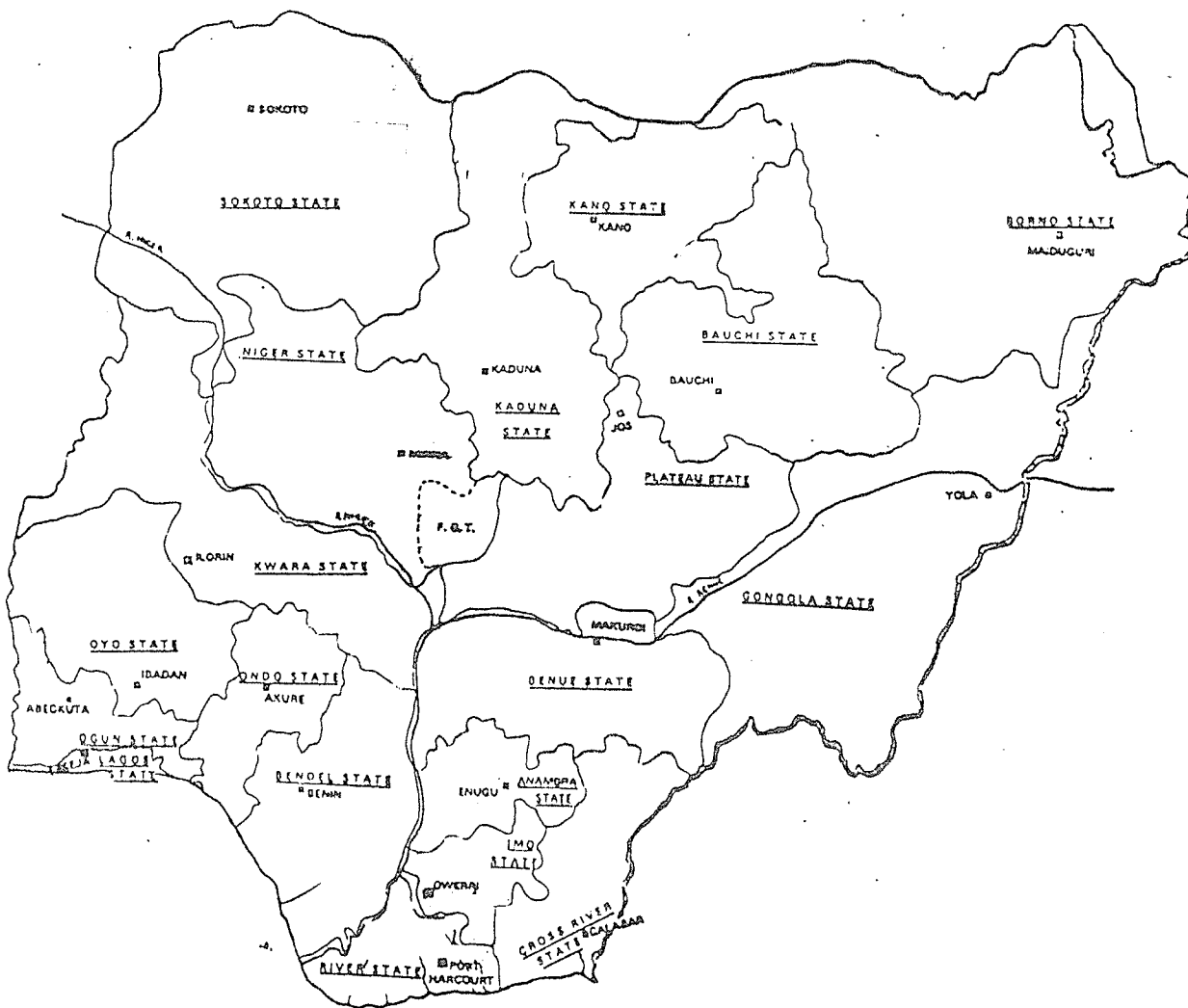R E G I O N

Miles   150

Kms   150

Map 4. Major Party Alliances for the 1964 Federal Election.

Map 5. Nigeria's Twelve States, 1967.
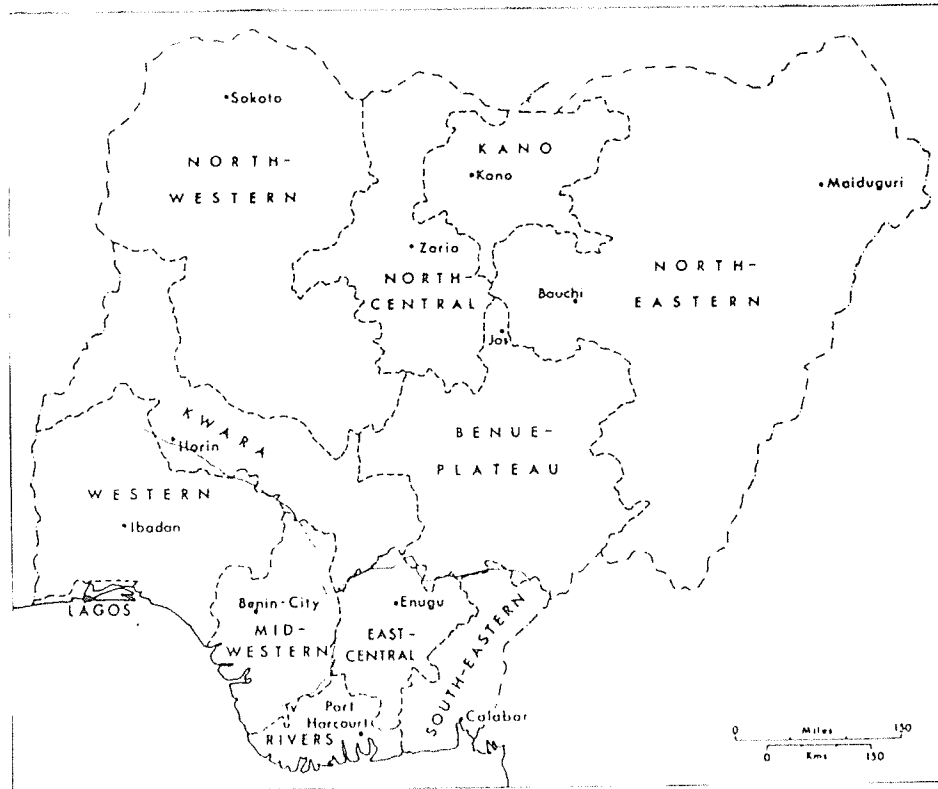
Map 6. Nigeria's Nineteen States, 1976.

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