

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS  
OF MILITARY INTERVENTION IN NIGERIAN POLITICS

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
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## ABSTRACT

The main thrust of this study is to analyze the socio-historical preconditions for military intervention in Nigerian politics. Specifically, this study analyzes the social and historical reasons why failure in nation-building results in military intervention in Nigerian politics.

The literature in this subject reveals three major explanations: societal factors, military factors, and a combination of societal and military factors. These perspectives share one common characteristic: they neglect historical considerations and the role of external factors, such as international organizations and the older nation-states, which may well account for their failure to explain why some African states have never experienced military coups.

I suggest that a more feasible explanation for military coups in Africa, in general, and Nigeria, in particular, must set societal and military factors in a historical context that takes into account the problems of nation-building in the modern world-system of nation-states.

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DEDICATION

DEDICATED TO MY FAMILY

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

The political dilemma of the Third World can hardly be understood except in the context of Western colonization and imperialism. According to Huntington (1968: 199-200),

A...source of radical praetorianism is Western colonialism. In Africa, the Middle East and South Asia it weakened and often completely destroyed indigenous political institutions. Even where it took the form of "indirect rule", it undermined the traditional sources of legitimacy since the authority of the native rulers was clearly dependent on the power of the imperialist state.... The combination of colonial opposition to political organization plus colonial haste to provide national independence granted indigenous elites the latter before they had constructed the former.

Thus, after the nationalism<sup>1</sup> in the Third World that accompanied the end of the Second World War the European powers started granting political independence to their colonies, and the international political arena was thronged by a new group of states, political units, which, unlike many of the European states, were multi-ethnic, if not multinational. The primary task of the leaders of the new states then became the creation of nation-states<sup>2</sup> out of the

<sup>1</sup> By "nationalism" is meant "an awareness of membership in a nation (potential or actual), together with a desire to achieve, maintain, and perpetuate the identity, integrity, and prosperity of that nation" (Rejai and Enloe, 1979:14).

"skeletal states" they inherited from the colonial masters (Rejai and Enloe, 1974:35).

But nation-building--attempts at creating a nation state out of a heterogenous group of people--is invariably a difficult and time-consuming task, made more so by the fact that Third World nation-builders are confronted with some unique problems.

The first major problem unique to nation-building in the Third World is that while nation-builders in earlier times had many options (such as liberal-democratic, authoritarian, fascist, and populist forms) from which to choose, Third World statesmen have very few. For while it can be said that, in the industrialized world, nations generally preceded states, the reverse is the case in most of the Third World where the colonial governments left behind "frameworks for political decision-making" or "skeletal states". These "skeletal states" predisposed Third World countries to building particular types of nation states which are generally incongruent with their traditional political structures (Rejai and Enloe, 1974:35). It is in light of this incongruence that the systemic problems which seem to precipitate military interventions in Third World

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<sup>2</sup> A nation-state is a nation that possesses political sovereignty (Rejai and Enloe, 1979:15). A nation is a relatively large number of people who feel that they belong together by virtue of sharing one or more such traits as common language, religion or race, and common destiny (Rejai and Enloe, 1979:14).

states must be understood.

The second unique problem is the pressure of time, for while it took the European nation-states several centuries to become integrated, in the existing world-system of nation-states the new states are pressured to become integrated quickly. Pressure of time is a direct consequence of the conditions of dependency in the modern world, the present form of which essentially began in the late 1940's. By successfully vindicating the principles of the Rights of Man which the Western powers had betrayed in the 1920's and 1930's, the Second World War brought about two momentous developments: first, the granting of independence, within twenty years, to the great majority of territories colonized by the Western powers, and second, "the realization that the grant of political freedom must be supplemented by substantial economic aid if the new countries were to develop into viable modern states" (Waterlow, 1967:73). But the nature of economic aid in the modern world is such as to bring about dependency and underdevelopment and thus hinder the creation of viable states for "the annual outflow of the poorer nations in the form of interest on capital and loans, negotiated profits and the like, now exceeds the inflow of new investments and aid" (Lloyd, 1972:50).

Economic aid is, however, not the only source of the conditions of dependency and underdevelopment of the Third World; another major source is foreign ownership and control

of export industries. In general, both the agricultural and mineral exports of Third World states are controlled by capitalists (through multi-national corporations) in the industrialized states. Examples of agricultural exports include sugar from plantations of Latin America which were generally established in the 16th century; tea from plantations established in the mid- 19th century; and palm-oil from estates of the ex-Belgian Congo established at the dawn of this century. Mineral exports include the tin from mines established in Bolivia in the 1920's; the oil from wells in the Niger delta of Nigeria in the early 1940's; and copper from mines of Zambia established in the 1930's (Lloyd, 1972:47-48).

Since a state's economic development depends on the rate of savings within it, foreign ownership of corporations does not necessarily lead to economic development in the Third World, because these corporations tend not to reinvest their profits there. Furthermore, the presence of foreign-owned corporations results in a "continuous backwardness of agricultural production" in the Third World due to their use of local labor that would otherwise have produced food crops (Lloyd, 1972:46). At present, the transfer of raw materials from the Third World to the Industrialized World is conservatively estimated at \$7 million U.S. per hour. Added to this is the fact that the large-scale production by the Industrialized World of synthetic and substitute goods

in direct competition with the major agricultural exports of the Third World has led to a steady decrease in the price of these exports. For example, the income from 25 tons of rubber which could buy six tractors in 1960 could buy only two in 1975. Clearly, the prospects for the production of artificial coffee, cocoa, and tea (as disclosed by a U.S. Congressional Committee) is hardly seen as good news in those Third World countries which export these agricultural products.

In short, dependence in the modern world tends to lead to political and economic underdevelopment in Third World countries which are now compelled to quickly become nation-states. Rivkin (1969:8) clearly points to this pressure of time in contemporary nation-building when he notes that

The leisurely pace of nation-building in Biblical times, in the American Revolutionary Period, and more recently in the era in which the older Commonwealth States of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand evolved, no longer seems possible, or at any rate tenable for Africa and Africans.

He argues further that the need to build nation-states out of heterogenous elements in the shortest possible time has become the justification for many African leaders who resort to "authoritarian and coercive courses of political action." It is perhaps because the military is usually the major means in such a course that has led Horowitz (1984:62) to assert that the military is the dominant institution in Third World states.

But while the study and explanation of coups has received considerable attention since the late 1950's when newly independent states in Asia and Africa were succumbing to military rule, many questions remain unanswered (Lyon, 1985:9). This shortcoming is probably due to two factors: first, only a few writers have attempted to place military interventions<sup>3</sup> in a larger theoretical context and second, most writers believe that these events do not follow any general pattern and are essentially idiosyncratic social and historical phenomena (Decalo, 1973:113).

The major arguments regarding the preconditions for military intervention in politics can be grouped into three general schools of thought. One school stresses societal factors; that is, the socio-political contexts in which armies operate. Huntington's (1968) argument that military intervention can be construed as one index of low levels of political institutionalization and Finer's (1975) interpretation of military interventions as indices of inadequate political culture may be included here. A second school, whose chief proponent is Janowitz (1964), stresses organizational characteristics of the military. A

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<sup>3</sup> Finer (1976:77-78) has identified four types of military intervention, depending on their level of "completeness"--influences, pressures or blackmail, displacement (that is, replacing one civilian government with another civilian government), and supplantment (that is, placing a civilian government with a "military government"). This thesis is essentially concerned with supplantment, an event that has occurred in Nigeria twice--January 1966 and December, 1983.

third school, whose chief proponent is Gutteridge (1975), stresses a combination of societal and military factors. These explanations have a common shortcoming: they tend to emphasize only factors internal to specific countries. My main argument, however, is that these factors have to be considered in a historical context. Specifically, Nigeria's colonial legacy leaves her, like other Third World countries, in a peripheral position in the modern world economy, that not only has hindered efforts at nation-building, but has made her susceptible to military intervention.

#### 1.1 THE PROBLEM

The main thrust of this study is to analyze the social and historical preconditions for military intervention in Nigerian politics. Specifically, this study analyzes the social and historical reasons why failure in nation-building<sup>4</sup> results in military intervention in Nigeria instead of, for example, in the formation of a one-party state as in some African countries such as the Ivory Coast. To this end, this study investigates the general proposition that military intervention in Nigerian politics is due to three interrelated factors:

<sup>4</sup> For our purposes, failure in nation-building will be defined as the absence of two or more of the following four characteristics of modern nation-states: centralization of political authority, expansion of functions over previous political forms, proliferation of legal standards, and a high degree of social mobilization and political participation.

1. The weakening in legitimacy of indigenous civilian governments during the first years of independence.
2. The existence of organizational, ethnic, and regional problems within the army.
3. The absence of an acceptable external force to guarantee civilian rule during nation-building.

The importance of these factors can hardly be overstated. The weakening in legitimacy was due to the existence of frequent fundamental disagreements among Nigerian leaders of different regional and ethnic backgrounds regarding the authoritative means for nation-building. These schisms the consequence of Nigeria's colonial legacy, resulted in, among other things, the undermining of the electoral process through violence and fraud.

Similarly, the army's problems stemmed primarily from the haste in "indigenization" as well as its politicization through recruitment practices and its persistent use (by both colonial and indigenous governments) as a police force. It is interesting to note, in this regard, that the Ivory Coast, the only West African state which has so far not experienced a military coup, did not have an army of its own until the first anniversary of its independence in 1961 (Gutteridge, 1975:47).

The importance of an external legitimating force in understanding military coups in Africa is underlined by the

instrumental role played by British forces in putting down the January 1964 army mutinies in Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya--the latter two of which have not yet experienced a successful military coup. Furthermore, it is quite probable that the success of the Ivorian president, Houphouet-Boigny, in putting the Ivorian army in the background while seemingly guaranteeing himself tenure for life is, at least, partly attributable to the fact that the French government, unlike the British government, retains a "highly mobile formation" for the purpose of quelling rebellions in its former colonies, on invitation (Gutteridge, 1975: 2 and 12). Thus, in the case of Nigeria, the abrogation in 1962 of the defence pact with Britain may well have increased the likelihood of the January 1966 coup. This of course does not mean that the abrogation of the defence pact was a cause of that coup.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES

This study has three basic objectives: first, to assess existing theoretical explanations for military interventions; second, to analyze the factors predisposing the military to intervene in Nigerian politics; and third, to propose an alternative explanation for military intervention in Nigerian politics.

### 1.3 ORGANIZATION

The second chapter reviews the literature on the preconditions for military intervention in politics. This review is focused primarily on three general perspectives. One stresses societal factors (that is, the socio-political contexts in which armies operate); a second stresses military factors; and a third stresses the combination of societal and military factors. It is argued that while each of these perspectives has some merits, they, nonetheless, do not provide an adequate explanation for military intervention in Nigerian politics. This weakness is evidently a consequence of their failure to take into account the effects of historical factors such as colonialism and imperialism which are external to individual states.

The third chapter is concerned with setting military intervention in Nigerian politics within the framework of a general theory of state and nation building which incorporates most of the aforementioned explanations. Specifically, this chapter first traces the emergence of the modern nation-state and then outlines the historical factors (such as the colonization and subsequent partitioning of Africa) which necessitated particular efforts at nation-building in Nigeria.

The fourth chapter is concerned with outlining the historical foundations of military intervention in Nigerian

politics. It attempts to show that colonization not only destroyed Nigeria's indigenous social, political, and economic structures, but left as a legacy an ill-equipped and internally fractured army which reflected the country's socio-political problems.

The fifth chapter outlines briefly the immediate stimuli to the January 1966 and December 1983 military takeovers in Nigeria. Particularly, it considers the 1962 and 1965 crises in the western region, the 1963 federal census crisis, and the 1964 federal election crisis as paving the way for an internally fractured army to intervene in 1966; and the timing and nature of the 1979 transition from military to civilian government as a stimulus to the December 1983 military coup.

Finally, the sixth chapter views military intervention in Nigerian politics in the context of the problems of nation-building in the modern world system.

## Chapter II

### EXPLAINING MILITARY INTERVENTION IN POLITICS

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature on military intervention in politics with a view to showing the limitations of the various perspectives in the Nigerian context.

A review of the literature on the propensity of the military to intervene in African politics reveals three general schools of thought. One school stresses societal factors (that is, the socio-political contexts in which armies operate); a second stresses military factors; and a third stresses a combination of societal and military factors.

#### 2.2 SOCIETAL FACTORS

Studies which attempt to explain military intervention in terms of the socio-political contexts in which armies operate tend to concentrate on three fundamental precipitating conditions: systemic disequilibrium, low levels of political institutionalization, and inadequate political culture.

### 2.2.1 Systemic Disequilibrium

As the term implies, systemic disequilibrium refers to the condition in which one or more of the various components of a social system are seen as out of balance with the others. According to its proponents, such as Nelkin (1968) and Diamond (1984), systemic disequilibrium, in the context of military intervention in politics, is associated with and results from factors such as persistent economic problems, corruption and governmental ineptness, intensive inter-elite strife, and legitimacy problems.

(A) Corruption and governmental ineptness. These two factors--along with economic problems--are probably the reasons most often cited by the military for intervening in politics. For example, the Nigerian army ( Regime of Hope 1984:9-10) gave the following eight reasons for staging the December 1983 coup:

1. The grave economic predicament and uncertainty which the inept and corrupt civilian leadership had imposed on the nation for the past four years.
2. The harsh and intolerable conditions under which the citizens were living.
3. The economy was badly managed.
4. The country had turned into a debtor and beggar nation.

5. A scarcity of food and essential commodities for the people.
6. Social services were in a shambles as the hospitals were reduced to mere consulting clinics without drugs, water and equipment.
7. The non-payment of salaries to workers for upwards of eight months.
8. Unemployment figures had reached embarrassing and unacceptable proportions.

(B) Intensive inter-elite strife. First (1970:1x) argues that "the army coup d'etat is plainly a short-circuit of power conflicts in a situation where arms do the deciding;" and further "power lies in the hands of those who control the means of violence. It lies in the barrel of a gun, fired or silent" (First, 1970:6).

(C) Legitimacy problems. Barrett (1984:1394), for instance, argues that the average African soldier is, on one hand, loyal to his home government and, on the other hand, anachronistically loyal to the erstwhile colonial government. He adds

When this subconscious duality is aggravated by blatant mismanagement of national affairs, and open disenchantment on the part of the populace, the military force is granted a form of spontaneous legitimacy.

Similarly, Ladeinde (1979:14-18) argues that the 1966 military intervention occurred because of the failure of

Nigerian political leaders to resolve at the federal level problems due to the coexistence of a traditional system of legitimacy in the north and a hybrid system in the south that combined traditional African and "modern" European ideas.

The systemic disequilibrium position can be generally criticized on a number of grounds. First, this argument uncritically accepts formal organization theory as the explanatory framework for military behavior (Price 1971:400). Put differently, African armies are not necessarily as unified, disciplined, and apolitical as formal organization theory implies. Zolberg (1968) has pointed out that, in Africa, "far from being a model of hierarchical organization... [the army] tends to be an assemblage of armed men who may or may not obey their officers" (Luckham, 1971:2). Indeed, it can be argued, as Barrett (1984) did, that it is because, in general, African armies are neither representative of a monolithic group nor necessarily immune to the antagonisms which exist in the larger society that counter-coups occur. He notes that there are within the Nigerian army establishment "representative elements of all the local society" ( West Africa July 9, 1984:1395). That is to say the Nigerian army is so politicized that there exists within it the same ethnic, regional, and other antagonisms that exist in the larger society.

Second, the systemic disequilibrium argument generally accepts the rationales advanced by the military at the expense of other motives (such as the ambitions of some army officers), especially when, as in the civilian government led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari in Nigeria, the toppled government was overtly corrupt and inept. Thus, in a recent article that clearly epitomizes the systemic disequilibrium argument applied to the December 1983 coup in Nigeria, Diamond (1984:905) argues that

What caused the coup was not the ambition of the soldiers but the decay of the country under four and a quarter years of civilian rule. This decay had three components: staggering corruption, crippling economic waste and mismanagement, and the vitiating of the electoral process through violence and fraud.

But it seems more socio-historically valid to agree with Austin (1969:65,69) that in Africa, governmental ineptness is "usually [only] an additional weight in the balance on the side of intervention [that is often] used ex post facto to justify intervention." Gutteridge (1975:13) lends credence to Austin's position when he asserts that

The nature of a regime's deficiencies is rarely at the time of take-over clearly defined: their cataloguing and enumeration are matters for subsequent enquiries which help to keep the virtues of the usurpers in public mind.

In short, governmental corruption and ineptness cannot be credibly regarded as a "cause" but, at best, a retrospective justification of military intervention in African politics.

Third, since all African states are afflicted with the whole range of systemic problems, the systemic disequilibrium argument is inadequate to explain why countries such as the Ivory Coast, Kenya, and Tanzania not only have never experienced successful coups, but seem to experience fewer coup attempts than most of the other African countries. Zolberg (1968:71-72) has argued that "it is impossible to specify variables which distinguish as a class countries where coups have occurred from others which have so far been spared." He further argues that "military coups are likely to occur anywhere in the region [that is, Africa] because of the fundamental and lasting characteristics of political life." Given these characteristics of African states, proponents of this approach tend to explain the persistent absence of military coups in some African states as, more or less, "luck". Thus, Zolberg (1968:72) argues that

Whether or not a major military intervention occurs in a given African country at a particular time is related to highly specific and circumstantial features of that country's current political situation, rather than to any basic deviant political characteristics.

Fourth, while the systemic disequilibrium argument may well account for the relatively greater frequency of military coups in "less developed" as opposed to "more developed" countries, it cannot be used as a valid indicator of impending military intervention. For example, the Ugandan coup of 1971 which brought Idi Amin to power

occurred at a time when the economy was making a turn for the better (Decalo, 1973:111). Furthermore, as Gutteridge (1975:13) has pointed out, if economic stagnation and a depressed standard of living could generate coups, then "their frequency would be even greater than it is".

### 2.2.2 Low Levels of Political Institutionalization

Huntington (1965:417) construes military intervention in politics as "one index of low levels of political institutionalization." Other indices include "extreme democracy" and "tyranny" (Huntington, 1965:417). In his view, countries with low levels of political institutionalization are those

Where private interests dominate public ones, where there is an absence of civil obligation and civic duty, where, in short, political institutions are weak and social forces strong (Huntington, 1965:416).

Huntington regards Third World countries as the embodiments of these characteristics and argues that these societies are "politically undeveloped" or "corrupt". Thus he contends that a theory of "political decay" or a model of a "corrupt political order" is necessary for "analyzing the political processes of the countries that are called developing" (Huntington, 1965:415). He further argues that

The evolution of many contemporary new states, once the colonial guardians have departed, has not deviated extensively from the platonic model. Independence is followed by military coups as the "auxiliaries" take over. Corruption by the oligarchy inflames the envy of rising groups. Conflict between oligarchy and masses erupts into civil strife. Demagogues and street mobs pave the way for the despot (Huntington, 1965:416).

According to Huntington (1968:32-33), the process of modernization is multifaceted and involves change in the psychological, intellectual, demographic, social, economic, and political areas of human endeavor. But, in his view, change does not necessarily occur at the same rate in these areas of life; nor does change in one area necessarily lead to change in the others. Indeed, he argues that the social and economic aspects of modernization often have negative effects on politics and political institutions. Specifically, he (1965:386) contends that, in general, the process of modernization in Third World states begins with the social and economic aspects which lead to rapid increases in both social mobilization and political participation, but to the undermining of political institutions. This is to say that insofar as it leads to rapid increases in mobilization and participation, modernization does not lead to political development but to political underdevelopment (or decay) and, thus, to unstable governments.

To emphasize this argument, he cites de Tocqueville's statement that "...if men are to remain civilized or to become so, the art of associating must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased" and claims that "in much of the world today, equality of political participation is growing much more rapidly than is the art of associating together." It is

this gap between mobilization and political participation, on the one hand, and political institutionalization, on the other, that Huntington sees as primarily responsible for political instability in the Third World (Huntington, 1965:417). In other words, the military intervenes when political institutions are too underdeveloped or weak to cope effectively with the increase in citizen participation necessitated by economic growth.

In Huntington's terms, military behavior cannot be understood simply in terms of the organizational characteristics of armies but in terms of the socio-political condition of the society in which they operate. He argues that

As society changes, so does the role of the military. In the world of oligarchy, the soldier is a radical; in the middle-class world he is a participant and arbiter; as the mass society looms on the horizon he becomes the conservative guardian of the existing order. Thus, paradoxically but understandably, the more backward a society is, the more progressive the role of its military; the more advanced a society becomes, the more conservative and reactionary becomes the role of its military (Huntington, 1968:221).

The implication of this argument is that military intervention in Third World politics can be prevented by increasing the levels of political institutionalization, which could be done through "institution building", the formation of adaptable, complex, autonomous, coherent political organizations--such as political parties and trade

unions. While institution-building may be regarded as one of the steps in nation-building, Huntington sees it having one major advantage over the latter: it requires less time.

He says:

Nations are one type of social force, and historically they have emerged over long periods of time. Organization building, however, differs from nation-building. Political organizations require time for development, but they do not require as much time as national communities (Huntington, 1965:418).

These arguments can be refuted on at least three grounds. First, there is an inherent failure to distinguish between military institutions in different societies. As was earlier mentioned, while formal organization theory may adequately explain the behavior of the armed forces of most Western states, it cannot do the same when applied to the armed forces in Third World states, since the latter are not necessarily as unified, disciplined, and apolitical as formal organization theory implies. Second, there is an assumption that army officers are necessarily oriented to the middle-class and never identify with the masses (Gutteridge, 1975:8). It is, after all, quite conceivable that the army officers of some states such as the Philippines find it more desirable to act as conservative guardians of the existing oligarchic order than to act as radicals. Third, since it can be taken as axiomatic that all African states have low levels of political institutionalization, Huntington's argument does not account for some African

states having political organizations such as one-party systems, while others have military governments.

### 2.2.3 Inadequate Political Culture

According to Finer (1976:77-148), levels of military intervention in political life are closely related to the level of a society's political culture. He argues that a society's level of political culture is high when

The 'political formula', i.e. the belief or emotion by virtue of which the rulers claim the moral right to govern and be obeyed, is generally accepted. Or, to say this in another way...where public involvement in and attachment to these civil institutions is strong and widespread (Finer, 1976:78).

There are three criteria of political culture by which the attachment to and involvement in a regime's institution can be assessed: first, whether or not there is public consensus on the procedures for transferring power; second, whether or not there is public consensus as to who or what should constitute the sovereign authority; and, third, whether or not the public is proportionately large and well organized into powerful associations such as churches, labor unions, and political parties (Finer, 1978:78).

Using these criteria, Finer identifies four levels of political culture: first, "mature political culture" where all three criteria are fulfilled; second, "developed political culture" where the second of the criteria is not fulfilled; third, "low political culture" where the first

and third criteria are not fulfilled; and, fourth, "minimal political culture" where essentially none of the three criteria is fulfilled. In his view, examples of the first type of political culture include Britain, the United States, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, Canada, and Australia; those of the second include Japan between the two world wars, and the U.S.S.R.; those of the third type include Argentina, Spain, Egypt, Pakistan, and Iraq; and those of the fourth include Haiti, Paraguay, and the Congo (Finer, 1976:79-80).

These four levels of political culture form the parameters of the level of military intervention in politics. Thus, in countries of "mature political culture", military intervention is limited to influence; in countries of "developed political culture", to influence and/or pressures (blackmail); in countries of "low political culture", to influence, blackmail, displacement; and in countries of "minimal political culture", to influence, blackmail, displacement, and supplantment, the highest level of military intervention.

There are three objections to Finer's approach. First, it seems not to recognize that the three inter-related criteria of "political culture" are capable of independent variation. Second, despite the presupposed existence of a negative relationship between levels of political culture and levels of military intervention, the range of variation in

political culture that exists between countries in which military coups d'etat have occurred is extremely wide, ranging, for example, from countries such as Greece to others such as Togo or Nigeria (see, eg, Luckham, 1971:4-5). Third, this approach does not provide an adequate explanation for the absence of coups in some African states such as the Ivory Coast that clearly fall into the category of societies with minimal political culture.

### 2.3 MILITARY FACTORS

The principal proponent of this approach--commonly referred to as the "internal characteristics" model--is Janowitz (1964) who contends that military intervention in the political affairs of Third World countries can be explained mainly by reference to the internal structure of the military. He suggests that military intervention in Third World politics can be explained in terms of the ethnic, social, professional, and generational composition, as well as the size and training of their armies. Some of the other arguments from this perspective are reviewed below.

#### 2.3.1 The Influence of Foreign Military Training

Price (1971) used the Ghanaian military coup which overthrew President Kwame Nkrumah's government as an example of the influence of foreign reference groups on the officer corps of African armies. He argues that

The training process undergone by the officer corps of many of the new states is such as to

produce reference-group identifications with the officer corps of the ex-colonial power and concomitant commitments to its set of traditions, symbols and values. Such identifications and commitments are seen to affect the behavior of these officers... in their relation with civilian authorities... (Price, 1971:407).

Price relied on the memoirs of Brigadier Afrifa and Major-General Ocran, both of whom were among the leaders of the group of officers who organized the above mentioned coup, Price contends that that coup was staged because the officer corps of the Ghanaian army perceived Nkrumah as being unnecessarily hostile to the British Commonwealth and, ultimately, to Britain, a state to which, because of their military training, they had personal identifications to such an extent that it competed with their home-state (Ghana) as a reference group (Price, 1971:410).

The use of reference group theory in explaining military intervention in politics poses an obvious methodological problem, namely, to what extent can a positive correlation be said to exist between overt behaviour and attitudes or values? A second problem with Price's argument is that since military intervention in politics violates the Sandhurst formula of the political neutrality of the army (Luckham, 1971:1), it would seem that an internalization of the "traditions, symbols, and values" of the British army would preclude the staging of coups. Ohene (1984:13) aptly points to the traditional political neutrality of the British army as compared to the stance of its African counterparts when she argues that

Nigeria did not have half the problems that confront Mrs. Thatcher today before Maj-Gen. Buhari was convinced that enough was enough, nor did Ghana before Flight-Lieutenant Rawlings felt he would be failing to do his duty if he did not throw out the elected government.

A third weakness of Price's argument lies in its reliance on the memoirs of two ex-army officers whose records are rendered quite suspect by their political involvement in Ghana.

### 2.3.2 Professionalism

The view that military intervention occurs in response to civilian governments' tampering with the professional integrity of armies is articulated by Finer (1975:20-26) who sought to refute Huntington's (1972:80-85) argument that military intervention can be averted through "objective control", that is, maximizing professionalism, with its emphasis on political neutrality and a technocratic outlook.

According to Finer, there are three reasons why professionalism may lead to military intervention. First, "the military's consciousness of themselves as a profession may lead them to see themselves as the servants of the state rather than of the government in power." Second, as specialists in their field, "military leaders may feel that they alone are competent to judge on such matters as size, organization, recruitment and equipment of the forces." Third, a professional army would see itself as "the nation's custodian against foreign foes" and as such would refuse to be used as a police force.

In a few specific cases in Africa this argument has some validity. For instance, the first successful West African coup was staged by the Togolese army of 250 men whose demand for a five-fold increase in size was refused. But this was an "umpire coup" displacement because the two former sergeants of the French army who led the coup replaced the assassinated Togolese president, Olympio, with a new civilian government which agreed to their demand (Miners, 1971:2-3).

Notwithstanding its validity in some cases, the argument regarding the relationship between political tampering with the army and the occurrence of military interventions can be rejected on the grounds that such interference has not always resulted in military intervention (Decalo, 1973:114). A second major weakness of this argument lies in its reliance on formal organization theory which, as pointed out above, is not valid in the African context.

### 2.3.3 The Personal Ambition of Some Army Officers

According to Decalo (1973:111-112) most of the 18 reasons later cited by General Idi Amin for toppling Milton Obote's civilian government "related to problems afflicting Uganda even before independence, and cannot be regarded as having been particularly acute in the months just prior to the takeover." In his view, Amin's coup was motivated by personal reasons among which was his fear of being removed

from the post of Commander of the Army, because his authority had been previously curtailed by the creation of two other parallel command positions (Decalo, 1973:112). With respect to the 1965 military coup which toppled President David Dacko's government in the Central African Republic, Decalo (1973:111) argues that:

The most important 'cause' for the coup was the personal ambitions of Colonel Jean-Bedel Bokassa, the Chief of Staff, who had already manifested his inclinations on a number of occasions, including when he had 'taken over' the Ministry of War on his own initiative.

In West Africa a good example of a coup that was apparently staged solely for purposes of personal advancement is the 1967 unsuccessful coup in Ghana, "Operation Guitar Boy", which was aimed at toppling the military government of Brigadier Afrifa. Lieutenant Arthur, the coup leader, testified at his court-martial that the coup was staged because he felt that "there were too many senior officers, some of them young, who were preventing the promotion of others" (Miners, 1971:173). Furthermore, Arthur claimed he staged the coup with the hope of becoming the first African lieutenant to successfully topple a government (First, 1970:5).

Nevertheless, the argument that the primary reason for military intervention in African politics is the personal ambition of army officers has a number of weaknesses. First, it is quite improbable that there are no army

officers with political ambitions in those African states with civilian governments and armies. A more probable explanation for the absence of coups in African states such as the Ivory Coast is the nature of the relationship they maintain with some Western states. Second, and for the purposes of this thesis, most important, in states such as Nigeria the military is only one of many avenues for achieving social power, as Decalo himself concedes (Decalo, 1973:115; see also Dowse, 1969:226). Indeed, it can be argued that, if nothing else, because so-called military governments in Nigeria have actually been "military-led participatory governments" in which some civilians hold key positions in policy making areas (Barrett, 1984:1444), the Nigerian military is not necessarily the most desirable avenue to social power. The validity of this point is underlined by the fact that some senior Nigerian army officers (e.g. Major-General Joe Garba, Nigeria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations) consider military rule an aberration (see, e.g. West Africa August 27, 1984:1752)--a testament to the fact that the military members of Nigerian "military governments" are usually only in power for relatively brief periods of time. Put somewhat crudely, the Nigerian situation is such that politically ambitious citizens need not join the army in order to realize their ambitions; and those already in the army may well find it advantageous to resign their positions.

#### 2.3.4 Excessively Large Armed Forces

It was at least partly on the assumption that armies which are large both in relation to 'defence functions' and to the total population of their countries are likely to intervene in politics that the former colonial governments left African states with relatively small, ill-equipped armies. In any event, as Gutteridge (1975:9) states, "only Nigeria, in the aftermath of civil war [which occurred after the first two military coups], and possibly one or two other countries, such as Ethiopia, have large armed forces by global standards".

The validity of this assumption has been undermined several times since the 1960's. For example, the first successful West African coup was staged in 1963 by the Togolese army which then numbered 250 (Miners, 1971:3). But perhaps the most interesting example is that of the Sierra Leonean army which successfully overthrew a civilian government when it numbered less than 50 (First, 1970:5).

#### 2.4 A COMBINATION OF SOCIETAL AND MILITARY FACTORS

Some observers believe that military intervention in African politics can be understood only by placing equal emphasis on both societal and military factors.

Luckham (1971), for instance, holds that the primary 'cause' of the January 1966 military coup in Nigeria is a linkage between military organizational strain and cleavage,

on the one hand, and conflict on regional and ethnic lines, on the other. He argues that this organizational strain resulted primarily from the haste with which the army was Nigerianized.

Gutteridge (1975) who shares this view states that

The general proposition that military take-overs in Africa reflect urban and intellectual discontent, as well as a vacuum of national power and infrastructural underdevelopment within recently independent states, while being at the same time the product of the characteristics of particular military sub-communities and their leaders, seems a reasonable proposition with which to begin (Gutteridge, 1975:8).

In general, while arguments that strive to understand military intervention in African politics in terms of both societal and military factors may be said to be more valid than those which stress only one of these two factors, they nonetheless have a major shortcoming, namely, their inability to explain why some African states have never experienced military coups.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

A critical look at the various explanations for military intervention in African politics reviewed above suggests that they generally limit their explanations to factors within specific territories. This neglect of the influence of "external" factors--such as international organizations, the older states, and multi-national corporations--in a progressively "interdependent" world may well account for

the failure of these arguments to account coherently for military intervention in African politics. The next chapter presents the historical theory of nation-building on which this study is based.

Basically, this perspective suggests the existence of a world system in which the Third World states occupy peripheral positions relative to the core of the older nation-states of Western Europe and North America. It is argued that the occupation of peripheral positions in the world system precludes successful nation-building and generally make Third World states very susceptible to military intervention. In short, this theoretical perspective stresses both internal (that is, societal and military) and external factors in explaining military intervention in Nigerian politics.

## Chapter III

### NATION-BUILDING IN THE MODERN WORLD

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Most of the factors already identified in the literature as explanations for military intervention in African politics cannot be regarded as major causes but, at best, as immediate precipitating factors which are themselves consequences of colonialism. This chapter is essentially concerned with outlining an alternative framework focusing on nation-building for understanding military intervention in African politics. In doing this, I shall trace the emergence of the modern nation-state and review briefly the major theories of nation-building.

#### 3.2 THE STATE

The term "state" refers to "an independent and autonomous political structure over a specific territory, with a comprehensive legal system and a sufficient concentration of power to maintain law and order" (Rejai and Enloe, 1979:15).

This definition points out two important characteristics of the state: first, sovereignty and, second, monopoly over the 'legitimate' use of violence --usually as a last resort (Arendt, 1970:47). With regard to the question of

sovereignty, it can be argued that while a colonial regime is the immediate central political authority over a specific territory, it cannot be regarded as a state because its power of coercion is derived from an external political authority. It was with the question of the state's monopoly of the use of violence that Weber (1921) was concerned when he defined the state as "the rule of men over men based on the means of legitimate, that is, allegedly legitimate, violence."

According to Miliband (1982), the term state refers to "a number of particular institutions which, together, constitute its reality, and which interact as parts of what may be called the state system". The state system consists of the following institutions: the government, administration, the police and the armed forces, the judiciary, subcentral (that is, state, provincial, or regional) governments and legislative assemblies. The authority of the state is usually defined by a constitution, just as are the relationships between the various institutions within the state system.

Miliband's conceptualization of the state is important because it helps clarify the general misconception regarding the relationship between the state and the "government of the day", a misconception that has led to misunderstandings regarding the nature of state power (Miliband, 1982:46).

While it is the government that speaks in the name of the state and exercises its monopoly of violence, this does not mean that the government inevitably controls that power. But in general, "the formal constitutional position of the administrative and coercive elements is to serve the state by serving the government of the day" (Miliband, 1982:47:49).

### 3.3 THE NATION

A nation is a relatively large group of people who feel that they belong together by virtue of sharing one or more such traits as common language, religion or race, common history or tradition, common set of customs, and common destiny (Rejai and Enloe, 1979:14). In this respect, at least with regard to people's feelings of solidarity and sharing in a common heritage, a nation is similar to a tribe. However, as Coleman (1965:160) has pointed out,

[A nation]...is a post-tribal, post-feudal terminal community which has emerged from the shattering forces of disintegration that characterize modernity...It is the result of modern technology.

It should be noted that a nation cannot be said to exist until the vast majority of the citizens of a state (e.g., Nigeria) give their allegiance to it and think of themselves primarily as, in this case, Nigerians rather than as members of ethnic and regional groups such as Ibo, Yoruba, and Hausa.

The distinction between a state and a nation is important because it helps us to understand why most Third World states often experience difficulty maintaining law and order in their territories. The elementary forms of a nation must exist in order for the state system to function properly because a certain amount of cooperation among the "politically relevant strata" of a society is a precondition for the proper functioning of the state (Foltz, 1967:124-125).

#### 3.4 THE NATION-STATE

A nation-state exists when a group of people feel that they are members of a "nation" identified with a particular state (Jordan, 1969:28). Put differently, a nation-state is a "nation that possesses political sovereignty" (Rejai and Enloe, 1979:15). Orum (1983:284) sees the modern nation-state as having the following four features:

1. Consolidation of policy-making--that is, the centralization of political authority.
2. More functions than previous political forms--that is, for example, the creation of a "welfare system" and the establishment and maintenance of national defense.
3. Proliferation of legal standards--a feature that has led to "distinctive and formidable bureaucracies" to which Max Weber first gave considerable attention.

4. An expansion of the citizen's role in public affairs--a feature that is underlined by the fact that "twentieth-century leaders of democratic and totalitarian regimes seem to find it necessary to clothe the legitimacy of their rule in the guise of widespread popular support" (Orum, 1983:284).

Tilly (1975:27) asserts that the nation-state first emerged in 16th century Europe agreeing, with Friedrich (1963:29) that "if there was a state in antiquity it was not a nation state." In this view, the modern nation-state is primarily a consequence of capitalism and industrialism, historical phenomena which, respectively, first occurred in 16th and 17th century England. In short, the integrative forces which led to the emergence of the nation-state are seen as having emanated in large part from capitalism and industrialism. This assertion underscores the fact that while Britain became a nation-state in the 16th century, France became a nation-state in the 18th century, and Italy and Germany became nation-states in the mid-19th century.

Not all scholars agree fully with this view, for while conceding that modern nation-states would not have emerged without the Industrial Revolution, they argue that the French Revolution made France the the first nation-state, an argument which implies that for a territory to be considered a nation-state the majority of its citizens must be actively involved in the political process (Rejai and Enloe, 1969:16).

Modern nation-states assume many different forms such as liberal-democratic, authoritarian, fascist, and populist (Tilly, 1975:629). Furthermore, in the case of Europe, the particular form a nation-state assumed was, for the most part, accidental. According to Tilly (1957:633),

The major forms of political participation which westerners now complacently refer to as "modern" are for the most part unintended outcomes of the efforts of European state-makers to build their armies, keep taxes coming in, form effective coalitions against their rivals, hold their nominal subordinates and allies in line, and fend off the threat of rebellion on the part of ordinary people.

### 3.5 THEORIES OF NATION-BUILDING

Tilly (1975:602) has identified three general types of theories of state- and nation-building--developmental, functional, and historical<sup>5</sup>--which attempt to provide answers to, at least, the following three questions:

1. Under what conditions do national states (rather than some other sort of political structure) become the dominant organizations in an area?
2. What are the chief forms taken by national states, and what causes one or another of them to appear?
3. What determines how strong, durable, effective, and responsive to its own population a national state is (Tilly, 1975:602)?

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that not only would some of the scholars placed within any of the three schools of thought probably reject such placement, but they may not even regard themselves as theorists of nation-building.

The first of these types--the developmental--is the most pervasive in western social science for, as Tilly (1975:603-604) has pointed out, "Marx, Weber, and Durkheim were all developmentalists of sorts." Developmental theories propose that social development invariably follows a standard path and springs from forces which are internal to particular social units; that is, in general, societies, like living animal or vegetable organisms, are seen as passing through certain fixed qualitative stages towards maturity.

The emphatically developmental theories of nation-building are those which deal with concepts such as "political modernization" and "political development" processes which are seen as leading to a lessening of ethnic consciousness in favor of identification with the state. Thus Huntington (1968) can be seen as a developmentalist; and Parson's (1971) work in which he traces the emergence of Western states and concludes that not only is the modern nation state the inevitable outcome of complexity in other realms within individual states, but there exists an evolutionary path toward democracy in the modern world, can be seen as based on a developmental model of nation-building.

To the three questions with which all theories of nation-building are concerned developmental theories propose the following answers.

1. [The] development of complex social organization in other regards determines the formation of differential, centralized, territorially consolidated governments.
2. The forms range along a principal continuum from "undeveloped" (characterized by low levels of political participation, by lack of popular representation and little redistributive activity) to "developed" (characterized by extensive participation and representation, vigorous redistribution); the various forms succeed each other in an evolutionary progression whose timing depends mainly on nonpolitical transformations: the accumulation of wealth, the formation of complicated communications systems, and so on.
3. [The] position it has reached in the evolutionary progression. All these characteristics rise with political development, although only some of them enter into the definition (Tilly, 1975:612-613).

Developmental theories have some major weaknesses. First, they do not clearly state "whether the development in question is a continuous process, an end state or a structural transformation". Second, they do not clearly state "whether there are one or many paths which qualify as developmental" (Tilly, 1975:604). Third, the assumption that modernization dissolves ethnic loyalties can be empirically refuted. The evidence indicates an increase in ethnic consciousness in multi-ethnic states world-wide irrespective of form of government, geographical location, and level of economic development (Connor, 1979:24).

The basic difference between developmental and functional theories is that the latter do not specify any standard

stages, sequences, or trajectories by which national states of a certain kind emerge, "but they do state what else must be present if a national state is to exist" (Tilly, 1975:621). Put differently, while developmental theories are essentially concerned with the processes which produce national states, functional theories are essentially concerned with the concomitants (or preconditions) of national states. These preconditions include linguistic, religious, and ethnic homogeneity, all of which are factors internal to particular social units.

Anthropological treatments of the state are generally functional in nature, just as is Lenski's (1966) comparisons of the political structures of agrarian and industrial societies.

Functional theories do not adequately explain the emergence and transformation of nation-states (Tilly, 1975:624). For example, the assertion regarding the necessity of a common language for the formation of nation-states is undermined by the fact that Switzerland and Belgium which have four and two official languages, respectively, are nonetheless nation-states. The assertion regarding the necessity of a common religion for the emergence of nation-states can be refuted on the grounds that not only do most nation-states lack a common religion, but citizens are not usually required to practise the same religion. Finally, the assertion regarding the necessity of

a common ethnic heritage for the emergence of nation-states can be refuted on the grounds that, as Connor (1979:20) has pointed out, "of a total of 132 contemporary states only 12 (9.1%) can be described as homogeneous from an ethnic viewpoint". In short, most nation-states---and the USA and USSR are prime examples---are composed of people of various ethnic backgrounds.

In these terms, the emergence of nation-states cannot be adequately explained in terms of the existence of a common language, religion, or ethnic background. This, of course, does not mean that these factors will not facilitate the formation of nation-states for there is a positive relationship between "homogeneity of population and the legitimacy of political institutions" (Tilly, 1975:17).

In summary, developmental and functional theories of nation-building have one common weakness: they focus only on factors internal to particular states. They thus treat societies as isolated and more or less self-contained entities and fail to take into account the effect of international structures of domination on nation-building (Tilly, 1975:622).

Historical theories of nation-building seek to account for the characteristics of any particular nation-state through its particular relationship to some historical transformation affecting the world as a whole" (Tilly,

1975:624). It was from this perspective that Hinze (1962) argued that World War I "transformed what had been essentially a European state system into a world system" (Tilly, 1975:626).

These theories propose the following answers to the three aforementioned questions with which all theories of nation-building are concerned:

1. National states become dominant organizations as the capitalist system expands, and as particular parts of the world become integrated into that system;
2. The chief forms taken by national states depend on the identities of their dominant classes, and
3. The economic strength of those dominant classes (modified by the extent and character of their dependency on the dominant classes of other states) determines the strength, durability, effectiveness and unresponsiveness of the state (Tilly, 1975:629).

In short, the historical theories of nation-building take into account how the "structure of world markets, the operation of economic imperialism, and the characteristics of the international state system affect the patterns of political change within countries in different parts of the world" (Tilly, 1975:620). From this perspective, what the Third World has in common is its relationship to external forces such as the threat and reality of outside

intervention, the visible and concealed roots of dependence, mounting national indebtedness, and the "prospect of stability in massive want and conspicuous corruption" all of which aggravate its poverty, dependence, and problems of nationhood (First, 1970:7).

In its various forms, the notion of interdependence among states is concerned with the practical and theoretical issues first dealt with by Karl Marx and later expanded upon by Max Weber. Perhaps the most suggestive theoretical treatment of this notion is that of Wallerstein (1974) whose major premise is that the emergence of capitalist agriculture in 16th century Europe resulted in the emergence of a world-system whose foundation and core is the world-economy. In his view, while the world-system is dynamic and today larger than ever before, the countries--mainly those of Northwestern Europe--which long ago established positions of dominance as core states still maintain this position, while others--the developing countries in the Americas, in Africa, and in Asia--are junior members relegated to peripheral and semiperipheral positions.

In this scheme, the world-system is held together by a complex network of ties which is manifested in the specific forms of economic, political, and social exchanges that flow from one country to another. Furthermore, this system is seen as operating on the basis of a division of labor and

specialization such that the labor forces in some countries, mainly the peripheral and semiperipheral ones, are primarily concerned with the production of raw materials, while those of the core countries are primarily concerned with manufacturing final products, some of which are sold to the former countries. Because this system is based upon the world-economy, the capitalist classes which developed from the capitalist mode of production--classes which belong almost exclusively to the core states--contribute more to its survival and expansion and, thus occupy a more prominent position than other actors, including heads of state, in the world-system. Lastly, the situations and interests of the capitalist classes are seen as transcending the boundaries of nation-states.

Perhaps the most extensive application of this world system model has been done by Harry Magdoff (1969), Andre Gunder Frank (1969), and Walter Rodney (1972). Magdoff provides evidence which gives credence to the claim that the world-system has changed little since the 16th century and that a new form of imperialism arose after World War II which replaced Britain with the United States as the dominant economic and political power.

Similarly, Rodney (1972) has shown the existence of a positive relationship between the development of Europe and the underdevelopment of Africa. In his view, underdevelopment is not the absence of development but a

phenomenon which "expresses a particular relationship of exploitation: namely the exploitation of one country by another". Thus for Rodney, it is more accurate to speak of "underdevelopment" than it is to speak of "developing" since the latter creates the impression that Third World states are emancipating themselves from the relationship of exploitation, while in fact they are becoming more backward as a result of newer and more intensive methods of exploitation (Rodney, 1972:22).

From this frame of reference on nation-building my emphasis will be on showing how Nigeria's colonial and neocolonial experiences make her susceptible to military coups. It is argued that colonialism and neocolonialism combine to make it very difficult for the existence in Nigeria of a favorable environment for the concomitants of nation-building. These concomitants include economic development and the growth and spread of nationalism (Orum, 1983:285-289). In this context, economic development refers to the development of industry in such a way that Third World countries are no longer dependent on "the precarious sale to the advanced countries of one or two cash crops or minerals to earn the money to buy machines and consumer goods.". In other words, economic development refers less to economic self-sufficiency than to the creation of a "diversified economy in which capital can be accumulated locally...and trade with foreign countries carried out on

equal terms" (Waterlow, 1967:76). The growth and spread of nationalism requires a vast expansion in education which can hardly be achieved without significant economic and technical aid from the West.

Historical theories of nation-building call for the tracing of transformations throughout the world (Tilly, 1975:603). For this reason there has been very little empirical verification apart from works such as Robinson's (1976) "The World-Economy and the Distribution of Income Within States: A Cross-National Study" (Orum, 1983:309).

### 3.6 SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN NATION-BUILDING

There is at present no consensus on the criteria for ascertaining success or failure in nation-building (Orum, 1983:303-304). Some scholars--such as Huntington (1968)--define success in nation-building in terms of "political order" or "stability" and, thus, describe the successful nation-state as one without significant instability or violence. Others--such as Kesselman--hold views exactly opposite and define success in nation-building in terms of change or upheaval directed against governments deemed to be extremely oppressive of citizens' civil and political rights (Orum, 1983:304). A third group--among whom is Lipset (1963)--view success in nation-building in terms of the establishment of democratic governments such as those of Western Europe and the United States. A fourth

group hold views totally contrary to those of which Lipset is representative and view success in nation-building in terms of the establishment of communist regimes.

Following Orum (1983:304), success in nation-building is defined in this thesis in terms of the presence of the following four features of a modern nation-state: centralization of political authority, expansion of functions over previous political forms (that is, for example, the institution of welfare schemes), proliferation of legal standards, and a high degree of social mobilization and political participation. In contrast, failure in nation building is defined in terms of inability to establish two or more of these features. These criteria for measuring success and failure in nation-building are preferred to the ones earlier mentioned because they lend themselves more easily to empirical verification.

## Chapter IV

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the historical preconditions of military intervention in Nigerian politics in the context of nation-building based on a skeletal state structure inherited from the British colonial government in October 1, 1960.

The name Nigeria (Niger--area) was coined in the 19th century and refers to the geographical area traversed from north-west to south by the river Niger. Prior to the colonial period, this area consisted of many kingdoms and chiefdoms which formed part of the so-called "belt of the great Empires of the Western Sudan" ( Africa Year Book and Who's Who 1977:654).

Contemporary Nigeria has an area of approximately 356,669 square miles (923,773 sq. km.), is divided into 19 states and comprises: three large ethnic groups which together make up approximately 50 percent of the country's total population--in the North, the Hausa, and, in the South, the Yoruba and the Ibo; 12 other ethnic groups whose population range from between one and three million each; and several

hundred groups varying in size from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands (van den Berghe, 1979:163-164). The country's population is between 80 and 100 million. [The results of the 1973 population census were abandoned in August 1975 because they were considered inaccurate. However, a population estimate based on electoral registration in 1978 is 95 million and the World Bank has an estimate of 81,039,000 (Paxton, 1983:923)].

Nigeria is a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and produced 73.3 million tonnes of crude oil in 1981. Oil exports account for 93 percent of the country's total exports (Paxton, 1983:925). The country's agricultural exports include palm produce (from the eastern states); rubber (from Bendel state); cocoa (from the western states); and groundnuts, cotton, and hides and skins (from the northern states).

#### 4.2 THE PRE-COLONIAL LEGACY

One of the most important features of contemporary Nigeria is its ethnic and linguistic diversity. But this diversity has proved to be a disadvantage with regard to nation-building for, as Schwarz (1965:10) has pointed out,

A common history can help hold a nation together, but the most significant general comment that can be made about pre-colonial history in Nigeria is that it is not Nigerian history but rather the history of different tribes, or, occasionally, groupings of tribes.

Historically, at least three types of political structures existed in pre-colonial Nigeria. Ladeinde (1979:12-19) has created a typology of pre-colonial Nigerian political structures which would be very useful for the purpose of this thesis. In the first type of system, the "sacred-religious", the major source of authority was God. The ruler was perceived to be God's representative, but he was not made an object of worship. He remained in power (that is, was not deposed) as long as he promoted the interest of the society's common religion (Ladeinde, 1979:13-16). This type of political structure, represented by the Hausa-Fulani emirates of northern Nigeria, was established in most of northern Nigeria when the nomadic Fulani--led by a Fulani-Muslim scholar, Uthman dan Fodio--conquered the Hausa during the jihads ("holy wars") of the early 19th century. While the original conquerors portrayed themselves as holy men, their sons, having claimed the existing titled offices, established themselves as secular rulers and created new offices for their kin. Hausa commoners had no direct representation on the governing councils, having, at least tacitly, accepted an inferior status. Ultimately, however, the perpetuation of Fulani rule rested upon physical coercion (Lloyd, 1975:41).

Unlike the first type of political structure, the second type, the "sacred-non-religious" was not organized on the basis of a common religion. Thus the ruler did not rule

within any guidelines based on a common religion, and he was not considered the representative of a superior being; rather, he was deified and worshipped. He was also perceived as possessing supernatural powers with which he could enforce compliance with his laws. This was the dominant type of political structure in the Oyo, Benin, Onitsha, and delta areas of southern Nigeria (Ladeinde, 1979:16-17).

In the third type of political structure, the "non-sacred-non-religious" type, there was no common religion; nor was the ruler considered to be the representative of a superior being. Instead, authority was vested in the ruler, who was neither obliged to enforce any religious laws (as in the first type), nor deified (as in the second type). This was the dominant type of political structure in the Ibo and Ibibio areas of southern Nigeria.

It was these substantially different traditional socio-political structures that the British government merged, imposing a political system that became the colony of Nigeria.

#### 4.3 THE COLONIAL LEGACY

Although Europeans had been in contact with Nigeria since the 15th century (Forde, 1964:130), colonial administration was not imposed until 1861, and even then it was restricted to the South. While there may not be general agreement regarding the motives behind the British colonization of Nigeria, it is hard to deny the existence, in the late 19th century, of conditions which favored such action. First, since Britain was going through the industrial revolution, she not only needed African raw materials such as dyes, gums, and vegetable oils for her industries, but she also needed a market for her products. Those needs (for raw materials and trading partners) led to the British government's introduction of its anti-slavery policy in 1807, which necessitated the creation of the West African Squadron of the Royal Navy. It was with the aid of this squadron that the British government deposed African kings who did not favor its policies and replaced them with other Africans who were more tractable (Hamilton, 1962:9; Flint, 1975:391-392). The prevailing laissez-faire attitude towards trade provided British traders with competition from African middlemen as well as French and German traders. Consequently, British traders--like their European counterparts--started lobbying their home government for the establishment of colonies in Africa which they felt would allow them "direct access to the markets in search of cheaper produce" (Flint, 1975:400). Lugard (1929:613),

Nigeria's first Governor-General, aptly illustrates the economic reasons for the colonization and partitioning of Africa when he states

The partition of Africa was, as we all recognise, due primarily to the economic necessity of increasing the supplies of raw materials and food to meet the needs of the industrialised nations of Europe. It is a cheap form of rhetoric which stigmatises as "common greed" the honourable work by which men and nations earn their bread and improve their standard of life.

The second condition which favored British colonization of Nigeria is that there was political conflict in the Kingdom of Lagos which began when the British government dethroned King Kosoko of Lagos (who resisted British interference with his trade in slaves) and, in 1852, enthroned his nephew, Prince Akitoye, in his stead (Africa Year Book 1977:657). This political conflict in Lagos--and its geographical location in the Atlantic coast--made that area much more conducive to colonization than the northern parts of the country which were not colonized until 1900-1906.

In accordance with the Selbourne Committee Report of 1899, Nigeria was (in 1900) divided into three parts--the colony of Lagos with its own Yoruba Protectorate, the Southern Protectorate, and the Northern Protectorate (Nicolson, 1969:35). This division lasted until 1906 when the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos was merged with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form the Colony and

Protectorate of Southern Nigeria ( Africa Year Book 1977:659). The Orders in Council which created Nigeria can be regarded as the first attempt at making the country into a multinational state (Obasanjo, 1981:1).

The Northern and Southern regions of Nigeria were administered through strikingly different methods. Under Sir (later Lord) Frederick Lugard, the Northern Protectorate was governed through "indirect rule"--a system whereby the British administrators ruled through traditional rulers who, at least theoretically, retained control over their subjects.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Southern Nigeria, under Sir Walter Egerton, was administered through "direct rule". Such a basic difference in administration was unnecessary especially since the Orders in Council setting up the Protectorates were almost identical in wording (Nicolson, 1969:37).

The reasons for and consequences of the two forms of rule are interesting. It has been suggested that "direct rule" in Lagos was considered justifiable on two grounds. First, since the Treaty of Cession had conferred British citizenship on Lagosians, they legally owed allegiance not to the chiefs but to the British Crown. Second, because of

<sup>6</sup> It has been suggested that Lugard's real concept of indirect rule was neither direct nor genuinely indirect, "but a dishonest use of indirect rule as an expedient leading to the establishment of a complete alien control" (Nicolson, 1969:212). Crudely put, Lugard, who was an army general, probably intended to establish a system of military despotism.

the slave trade, Lagos chiefs were considered "essentially cruel, evil, and oppressive rulers" (Nicolson, 1969:52). It is , therefore, hardly surprising that once Lagos was acquired there was no serious thought of putting it again "under the rule of chiefs, or of including the traditional chiefs in the institutions of government" (Nicolson, 1969:52).

Since indirect rule required that the British government be responsible only for the maintenance of law and order in northern Nigeria, the religious and educational activities of Christian missionaries, which were totally unrestricted in the south, were restricted in the north. Thus, while the Southern government concerned itself almost exclusively with the construction of roads and the development of trade and commerce, the Northern government concerned itself with educational and social development in addition to constructing roads and developing trade and commerce. Given the fact that both governments were allocated proportionally equal revenue, their differential concerns resulted in great disparity in the economic, educational, and social development of the two regions ( Africa Year Book 1977:659). There were other reasons why the South was more economically, educationally, and socially developed than the North.

For instance, while the North was dependent on direct taxation--a system that could not be effectively monitored

given that, among other things, the administration did not have valid and reliable census data--the South depended on customs duties and other forms of indirect taxes (Nicolson, 1969:105). In other words, differential systems of taxation contributed to differential economic resources which contributed to differential educational and social development. But perhaps indirect taxation would not have done much for the North since "Lugard showed no sign of grasping the idea of an administration devoting itself to creating favorable conditions for trade" (Nicolson, 1969:134).

By 1912 the British government felt that, with Northern Nigeria always operating at a deficit, the administration of the country had become too much of a financial burden (Nicolson 1969:181). The British government thus decided to amalgamate the prosperous South with the economically weak North. This was an onerous task for not only were the people inhabiting these regions different in terms of religion, customs, and language, but the regions had been subjected to drastically different methods of administration.

Surprisingly, Lugard (who had resigned in September, 1906) was, in 1912, chosen for the task of amalgamation. Thus when the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria were officially amalgamated on January 1, 1914, Lugard was appointed

Nigeria's first Governor-General (Arikpo, 1967:37). But Lugard's claim of having completed the administrative and other tasks necessary for the effective amalgamation of Nigeria is debatable. According to Nicolson (1969:180), "easily the most remarkable thing about Lugard's 'amalgamation' of Nigeria is that it never really took place". What Lugard clearly did was complete his destruction of the precariously cordial relationship between the government and people of Southern Nigeria within five months of his arrival in the south.

He extended indirect rule to the South, disregarding the various suggestions to divide the country into anything from three to seven states with the excuse that such a move would be too expensive (Jordan, 1969:299; Nicolson, 1969:192,208). Lugard's insistence on retaining the two unequal divisions of the country might have been due to the fact that he wanted to retain a considerable amount of control over the two Lieutenant-Governors (of Northern and Southern Nigeria) and, thus, over the whole country (Nicolson, 1969:192).

One of the dramatic ways in which indirect rule negatively affected the South was in its apparent requirement of a "direct" system of taxation resulting in very disruptive riots, at different times, in both the western and the eastern provinces (respectively, the "Egba uprising" and the "Women's War") of that region.

Lugard's appointment as Nigeria's first Governor-General was made in spite of the fact that the colonial office in Lagos not only lacked confidence in his judgement, but had doubts regarding his mental health (Nicolson, 1969:196). Nevertheless, he remained Governor-General until the end of the first World War (Nicolson, 1969:25).

He was succeeded by Sir Hugh Clifford, under whom the British administrators attempted to improve economic and social conditions in Nigeria, but funds and other resources were scarce. As Sir George Fiddes put it, "You cannot have an A-1 administration on a C-3 budget" (Nicolson, 1969,216). After the second World War the British government felt that the need for reconstruction at home made it economically unfeasible to maintain control of Nigeria. But independence was not granted until 1960, by which time colonial rule had successfully set in motion the forces that brought about the regional and ethnic conflicts which have hindered subsequent attempts at nation-building.

#### 4.4 THE ORIGINS OF THE NORTH-SOUTH AND ETHNIC CONFLICTS

Lloyd (1970) points out that:

Nigeria's problems...derive in large measure from the tensions which have arisen between the larger ethnic groups [and] the hostility derives...not from the ethnic differences, but from competition between peoples for wealth and power.

Perhaps the best way to identify the source of this conflict is by analyzing Nigeria's constitutional background,

representing as it does the colonial government's policy of "divide and rule".

Modern nationalism began in Nigeria in the 1920's with the formation of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) under the leadership of Herbert Macaulay (Coleman, 1958). But it was not until 1934 when the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) was formed that this new method of struggle against colonialism extended beyond Lagos.

Just four years after it was formed, the NYM successfully challenged the NNDP in the election for the Lagos town council. At this time the former had branches in many southern Nigerian cities and in such northern cities as Jos, Kaduna, Zaria, and Kano. As a means of ensuring that it was perceived as a powerful national political organization, the NYM's leaders included Kofo Abayomi, Nnamdi Azikiwe, H.O. Davies, Obafemi Awolowo, Ernest Ikoli, and Samuel Akisanya, men who were considered more interested in furthering the course of the nation than that of their particular ethnic or regional group. But the NYM remained a national political organization only until 1941 when it split permanently over the nomination of a replacement for Kofo Abayomi on the Legislative Council (Oyediran, 1979:6). As a result of this split, "The NYM was left with an almost entirely Yoruba membership, and thus began the political tension between Ibo and Yoruba that has plagued Nigerian politics ever since" (Schwarz, 1965:51). According to Oyediran (1979:7),

By 1948 Azikiwe had ceased to be Zik of Africa but Zik of the Ibo nation and soon Awolowo emerged as champion of Yoruba nationalism first through the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and soon after as leader of the Action Group political party.

At least partly because of the divisions among Nigerian nationalists, up to the end of the second World War no serious attempt was made to change the constitution under which the country was governed. And when a new constitution--the Richards Constitution--was introduced in 1946, Nigerians were hardly consulted in its formulation despite the fact that it was expected to last nine years (Oyediran, 1979:3). This virtual exclusion of Nigerians is understandable given the general attitude towards colonials and considering that Sir Arthur Richards who was then governor of Nigeria "seemed to have a special knack for antagonizing the educated elements" (Coleman, 1952).

The primary features of the Richards Constitution, which is generally regarded as the first step towards a federal system of government in Nigeria, include the following:

1. creation of three regions--north, west, and east--each governed by a chief commissioner;
2. creation of three regional Houses of Assembly at Kaduna (northern region), Ibadan (western region), and Enugu (eastern region) empowered to discuss general legislation and to pass their respective budgets;

3. selection of membership in each of the three regional Houses from existing native authorities, who in turn selected five of their members as representatives to the central Legislative Council which met successively in Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna, and Enugu;
4. creation of a House of Chiefs in the Northern region (Oyediran, 1979:3).

Some observers regard the Richards Constitution as a catalyst for Nigeria's dilemma of nationhood. For Ezera (1960:76-84), although the constitution was successful in integrating northern and southern Nigeria in a common legislative council, it nonetheless brought about the concept of regionalism which can be construed as the beginning of the process of fragmentation in Nigeria. For Awolowo (1947:124-134), while this constitution appeared to be more reasonable than the one it replaced, it actually contained some of the same objectionable features in addition to its own, and generally fell short of expectation. Specifically, he regarded the system used for establishing the size of the regional councils as anomalous, condemned the system of nominating as opposed to electing members of the Legislative Council, and called for greater decentralization.

Nevertheless, the introduction of the Richards Constitution represents a hallmark in Nigerian history. Indeed, one of the reasons the year 1948 can be regarded as

the starting point of the transition from British to Nigerian rule is because it was in that year that the financial provisions in this constitution came into effect.<sup>7</sup> These provisions gave the 28 unofficial members (all of whom were Nigerian) of the 44 member national Legislative Council the power to "oppose, delay, and obstruct official proposals, and to deny officials the men, money and materials needed for the officially proposed ten-year programme of development" (Nicolson, 1969:251).

During the period of the Richards Constitution, ethnic rivalry was limited to the south. But, largely because of the nationalist fervor which accompanied the end of the second World War, this constitution met with constant opposition. As a result, with the arrival of a new governor, Sir John Macpherson, in 1948, an attempt was made (between 1949 and 1951) to drastically change it (Oyediran, 1974:4). The process of drawing up what became known as the Macpherson Constitution not only gave Nigerians the first opportunity for active participation in the formulation of a constitution, but it also had the effect of including the north in ethnic rivalries.

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<sup>7</sup> A second reason 1948 is generally regarded as the beginning of a transitory period in Nigeria is because it was in that year that the new Governor-General, Sir John Macpherson, and his Chief Secretary introduced a Nigerianization program to promote Nigerians to senior positions in the civil service and in the army.

The first indication of this extension of ethnic rivalry was the sentiments of regionalism which were forcefully displayed at the General Conference (for drawing the Macpherson Constitution) held at Ibadan in 1950. Fifty of the fifty-three members at this conference, which was called to consider the recommendations of a constitution drafting committee, were Nigerian--32 of whom were Southerners and 18 Northerners. The major issues which confronted the conference were: the size of regional units in the federation, regional representation in the central legislature, revenue allocation, franchise and citizenship, ministerial responsibility, and the status of Lagos. It was in addressing these issues that sharp north-south disagreements came to the fore. The Southern delegation was vehemently opposed to its Northern counterpart's demands for a fifty percent representation at the Central Legislature, and per capita division of tax revenue. For its part, the Northern delegation was just as vehemently opposed to the Southerners' demands for cabinet responsibility at the central and regional levels, as well as a change in the existing regional boundaries (Oyediran, 1979:7).

While the conference was still in session, the Emirs (traditional rulers) of Katsina and Zaria stated that if the Northern delegation's demand that the Northern region be granted fifty percent of the seats in the proposed House of Representatives was not met, they would seek "separation

from the rest of Nigeria on the arrangements before 1914" (Oyediran, 1979:7). The northern delegation won on this issue as well as on that regarding the redrawing of regional boundaries. But this victory was a loss for the country since it almost guaranteed that, outside some violent means such as a military coup, Southerners could not realistically aspire to top political positions, in spite of the fact that most of the "modern nationalists" who started the struggle for Nigeria's independence were Southerners. As to Kirk-Greene (1971:9) notes, this decision to allow the north's claim "was one that was to dominate the shaping of Nigeria's political culture until the First Republic exploded sixteen years later".

The Macpherson Constitution had important unique features some of which are listed below.

1. The three regions were changed from mere administrative units to political entities vested with executive and legislative powers.
2. A federal House of Representatives, whose elected members were 50 percent Northerners, 25 percent Easterners, and 25 percent Westerners, was formed.
3. The legislative power of the House of Representatives was restricted with regard to bills relating to public revenue and the public service. Specifically, the House of Representatives could discuss bills, motions, and petitions concerning money only upon the recommendation of the governor (Oyediran, 1979:5).

The rigid and complicated nature of the Macpherson constitution drew many criticisms; Awolowo (1960), for instance, referred to it as "a wretched compromise between federalism and unitarianism".

The crises which arose as a result led to its breakdown after only two years. But within this period it had contributed its share to Nigeria's socio-political problems so that by 1951 three major political parties had emerged on ethnic and regional lines (Mackintosh, 1966:chapter XII).

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe led the Ibo-dominated National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) associated with the Eastern region; Obafemi Awolowo led the Yoruba-dominated Action Group (AG) associated with the Western region; and Alhaji Ahmadu Bello led the Hausa-dominated Northern Peoples Congress (NPC). Philosophically, the AG was the most radical in its opposition to the colonial administration while the NPC was the most conservative; the NCNC fell somewhere in-between the two extremes (Jordan, 1969:1-41-144).

The first of these parties, the NCNC, was formed in 1944 under the leadership of Herbert Macauley. Initially, the NCNC was essentially a Nationalist movement (called the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons) and its membership was limited to "groups and organizations such as trade unions, town unions, existing political parties, and

ethnic unions" ( Africa Year Book, 1977:660). But when Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe emerged as its leader upon the death of Herbert Macaulay in 1946, the NCNC became representative of the interests of Eastern Nigerians and was soon renamed the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens. The AG and the NPC which emerged in 1951, represented, respectively, the interests of Western and Northern Nigerians.<sup>8</sup>

In spite of their differences, these political parties had a common goal: the ousting of the colonial government. Largely because of their efforts, a new constitution, named after Oliver Lyttlelton, the British Colonial Secretary who was the central figure in its formulation, was introduced in 1954. This constitution formalized the federal system of government in Nigeria and represents the foundations upon which the Federal Republic of Nigeria was established on October 1, 1963. It provided for "separate governors, separate premiers and cabinets and legislatures, separate judiciaries, separate public service commissioners, marketing boards and development plans" (Oyediran, 1979:5-6). With its introduction, "outside the Federal Civil Service, only the army appeared to be a genuinely national institution" (Kirk-Greene, 1979:11).

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<sup>8</sup> A catalyst for the differences among these parties was the introduction of the financial provisions of the Richards Constitution, an action that made the problem of allocating fair shares of revenue among the three regions (Lagos here considered part of the Western region) "the most serious and intractable political issue" (Nicolson, 1969:253).

On October 1, 1954, in accordance with its provisions, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, leader of the NPC, became Premier of the Northern Region; Chief Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the AG, became Premier of the Western Region; and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, leader of the NCNC, became premier of the Eastern Region. But this arrangement only served to increase the demands of minorities throughout the country for the creation of additional states which they believed would preclude the possibility of their being neglected and oppressed by the three major ethnic groups--the Hausa, the Yoruba, and the Ibo. The NPC was vehemently opposed to the creation of states, especially in the north, because it believed that dividing the north would reduce the party's relative advantage over the AG and The NCNC, both of which, the AG especially, supported in principle the creation of states (Africa Year Book, 1977:665).

Because of the fears of Nigerian minorities, particularly, it became apparent to both the British colonial administration and Nigerian nationalists that the Lyttlelton Constitution needed to be replaced, and arrangements were made to review it. But the subsequent constitutional conferences of 1957, 1958, 1959, and 1960--which culminated in the granting of political independence to Nigeria on October 1, 1960--had the same effect as that of 1950 (for drawing the Macpherson Constitution), namely strengthening the regional

legislatures at the expense of the federal legislature (Obasanjo, 1981:3). More important, the complex method of amendment required by the Independence constitution meant that, once independence was achieved, constitutional change was likely only through violence (Miners, 1971:10).

Apart from the problems inherent in the Independence constitution, nation-building in Nigeria was, from the start, made especially difficult by the pre-independence political division of the country which made the Northern region more than two-thirds of the country and led, in the early 1960's, to the hegemony of that region (Diamond, 1970:22-23). This situation was dramatically demonstrated when, upon attainment of independence in October 1960, the federal government initiated steps towards establishing diplomatic relations with the state of Israel. Sir Ahmadu Bello, the moslem premier of the Northern region (who later became Vice-President of the World Islamic League), was strongly opposed to this initiative by the federal government. He is reported to have said, "To my mind, it [Israel] does not exist. And it will never exist...I don't know what it is".

The two "Christian" premiers of Southern Nigeria had a completely different attitude towards Israel, with which they had established economic ties prior to independence. For instance, Dr. Michael Okpara, leader of the NCNC and premier of the Eastern region is reported to have said: "I

myself am almost an Israelite. I love and admire Israel...." And, while on a visit to Israel, Chief Akintola, premier of the Western region is reported as saying, "You can be assured of our friendship and support at any place, and we promise never to withdraw this". The federal government (led by Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa<sup>9</sup> a Northerner and a Muslim) tried not to take sides in the dispute between the north and the south. But by failing to open an embassy in Tel Aviv--even after the Israeli government had opened one in Lagos--the Nigerian government was perceived, at least by southern Nigerians, to have yielded to pressure from the North (Akinyemi, 1974:102-104).

There is some suspicion that at least part of Nigeria's dilemma at the end of the colonial period was deliberately concocted by the colonial government which was persistently at variance with "nationalists", most of whom, because of the influence of Western education and Christianity, were Southerners. The contention is that once the British government realized it could not hand over power to the traditional rulers through whom it had governed in the "indirect rule" system but to the "nationalists", it decided to "punish" the latter by aggravating, if not creating, ethnic and regional problems in the country.

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<sup>9</sup> Balewa was appointed Prime Minister in 1957 (Jordan, 1969:303).

In any case, the regional and ethnic problems that are part of Nigeria's troublesome colonial legacy are reflected not only in the state's governmental and administrative subsystems, but in the military forces as well.

#### 4.5 THE NIGERIAN ARMY

##### 4.5.1 Early History

The Nigeria Regiment of the West Africa Frontier Force (renamed the Queen's Own Regiment after the Queen's visit to Nigeria in 1956) was established when Lord Frederick Lugard amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914. It consisted of "several local forces raised in the second half of the nineteenth century to carry out the British conquest of what is now Nigeria" (Miners, 1971:12).

In the South, the first of these local forces--"Glover's Hausas"--was a constabulary force organized by Lt. Glover in Lagos in 1863 from runaway slaves who had attached themselves to him when he returned by land to Lagos after experiencing a shipwreck in Jebba. The second major military force was the "Oil Rivers Irregulars" (later--in 1891--the Niger Coast Constabulary) which was raised in Eastern Nigeria after the creation of the Oil Rivers Protectorate in 1885. When the colony of Lagos and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated in 1906, these two military forces were merged to form the Southern Nigeria Regiment ( Nigeria Year Book, 1983:60).

In the North, the major military force was Sir George Goldie's chartered company's constabulary--the Royal Niger Company Constabulary--raised in 1866. In 1900 Lord Lugard reorganized these soldiers to form the Northern Nigeria Regiment which participated in the expedition against Sultan Attahiru Ahmadu of Sokoto, which led to the formal annexation of the whole of Northern Nigeria (Miners, 1971:12).

With the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria on January 1, 1914, the Northern and Southern regiments were merged to form the Nigeria Regiment ( Nigeria Year Book, 1983:60). After the formal colonization of Nigeria the British government continued using the Nigerian Forces in punitive expeditions to ensure control of the whole country. It is worth noting that while these operations were generally brief, not only were they frequent (there were 23 such expeditions between 1900 and 1914) but the colonial government valued them to the extent of creating campaign medals (the Africa General Service Medal and Clasp) to honor some soldiers who participated in them. The last full-scale punitive expedition in Nigeria was to suppress the rebellion of the Egba people (who lived around Abeokuta in Western Nigeria) against the imposition of Lugard's version of "indirect rule" in their area. This expedition engaged about 10 companies of troops and resulted in the death of about 500 "rebels" (Miners, 1971:12,13).

After the Egba uprising, the colonial government continued to use Nigerian troops for maintaining internal security, though in a less dramatic way. (For instance, in parts of the North--particularly in the "Middle Belt"--troops were often sent to enforce payment of taxes). There was, however, one notable exception to the less violent use of the army in an incident commonly referred to as the "Yakin Mata" in the Eastern region--the "Women's War" of 1929-1930, when the imposition of direct taxation in that area resulted in furious riots by women traders. Troops were ordered to shoot at sight anyone attempting to destroy government property (Miners, 1971:13).

The Nigerian Army was also employed in various operations outside the country; in the Ashanti War of 1900, which was the result of persistent Ashanti (in Ghana) resistance to British rule; in the conquest of German Kamerun during World War I in 1914; and in the campaign against von Lettow in German East Africa (Tanganyika) in 1916.

During the second World War Nigerian troops also participated in the operations which resulted in the liberation of Ethiopia from the Italians and the restoration of Emperor Haile Salassie to his throne, as well as in India where they fought in the Burma campaign as part of the 81st and 82nd (West Africa) Divisions (Miners, 1971:13).

Besides its use in such times of great crises the role of the Nigerian army was mainly symbolic, serving as a "visible demonstration to the populace of the coercion upon which colonial rule was based [for] external security was provided by Britain" (Luckham, 1971:88).

#### 4.5.2 Administration

Between the two World Wars, the Nigerian Army was financed entirely by local revenue, an arrangement that allowed the colonial Government of Nigeria to determine the composition, organization, and strength of the army "subject to the sanction of the Secretary of State for the colonies". But while the Nigerian government thus had control over its army, the limited revenue raised locally imposed great restraints on its size and equipment; for example, in 1935 the Nigerian Army had only two lorries--one in Lagos and the other in Kaduna (Miners, 1971:15-47).

With the outbreak of the second World War in 1939, however, the Nigerian government--along with all other governments in British colonies--had to place its army under the authority of the Army Council in London, an arrangement which continued until April 1, 1958 (Miners, 1971:17,60). While this new arrangement was financially expedient for the Nigerian government, it was generally opposed by members of the Nigerian legislature where one member had this to say:

I ask myself is the Nigeria Regiment no more nor less than the British army stationed in this country, subject to the Army Council of the

British War Office? Is the Nigeria Regiment just  
Nigeria in name? (House of Representatives  
debate, March 21, 1955:415, cited in Miners,  
1971:18).

Although attempts were made to promote Nigerians to senior positions in the army as part of the Nigerianization program which was introduced in 1948, proposals to establish a West Africa Military Academy to train African cadets for commissions were rejected by the Nigerian government on two grounds. First, the cost was considered excessive and, second, nationalist leaders felt that officers in the Nigerian Army ought to have qualifications that would be as internationally recognized as those of their counterparts in the British Army. It was to address these concerns that six places per annum were reserved for Nigerian officer cadets in the eighteen month course at Sandhurst (Miners, 1971:34,52).

Efforts to Nigerianize the army did not meet with much success, so that when the Nigerian government took over control of the Nigerian Army from the British War Office in 1958, the latter had only 32 Nigerian officers--a net increase of 17 officers (or 7% per annum) from January 1956 when only 15 of the 250 officers in the 6,650-man army were Nigerians (Miners, 1971:15-18). Even at this relatively high rate of increase, it would have taken 25 years for the army to be completely Nigerianized. But it was quite unlikely that this rate of increase could be maintained by

depending on Sandhurst where only nine Nigerian cadets were expected to graduate by August, 1960--two months before independence. In order to meet the need for commissioning a reasonably large number of Nigerian officers before Independence (it was felt that expatriate officers would have divided loyalty once Nigeria became independent), the practice of sending secondary school graduates to the thirty-month course at Sandhurst was changed to a program of sending these recruits--as well as "regular soldiers"-- to the Mons Officer Cadet School in England where they could graduate within twelve months (Miners, 1971:49-52).

Largely because of this change, at Independence on October 1, 1960, the Nigerian Army which then numbered 7,500, had 61 Nigerian officers,<sup>10</sup> 57 of whom held combatant commissions (Miners, 1971:52). This was a relatively small army for a country whose population was estimated at forty-five million, especially in comparison with a country such as Argentina, with half Nigeria's population, which had an army of 120,000 (Miners, 1971:2). The British colonial government, however, considered the ill-equipped, small-sized Nigerian Army quite adequate, since it was not anticipated that it would be required for other than "internal security duties and minor frontier incidents" (Miners, 1971:61).

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<sup>10</sup> This figure represents only 20% of the total number of officers. The other 80% were expatriates (Miners, 1971:54).

Nevertheless, considering the conflict-torn political environment in which Nigeria's army existed, the haste in Nigerianization resulted in organizational strain which played an important role in the military intervention of January 15, 1966. This haste necessitated the adoption of a recruiting pattern which "put the military system ...out of balance" by bringing about

a high concentration over the years of particular ethnic/regional groupings at certain levels of the hierarchy, a high concentration of Ibos towards the top and of Northerners towards the bottom (Luckham, 1971:9).

In addition, it undermined the normal relations of command and control. As Luckham (1971:3-4) put it,

normal relations of command and control were undermined because there was little difference in age and experience between officers at upper and lower levels of the hierarchy; and career expectations had to be adjusted to a situation in which promotions were alternately very fast and then very slow, in which mobility from posting to posting was very rapid and organized career lines difficult to establish.

Another source of the army's organizational strain was the politicization of recruitment into its officer corps. Historically, the majority of Nigerians have regarded the Army as "an alien institution to be ignored or despised" (Miners, 1971:32). This attitude was based upon two factors: first, the composition of the army, and second, the brutality of the soldiers against their fellow countrymen--for instance, the Niger Coast Constabulary was so brutal that it was known in the 19th century as the "Forty Thieves" (Miners, 1971:29).

The way in which the composition of the army influenced the attitudes of Nigerians towards this institution was clearly stated by Sir Ahmadu Bello, the late Sardauna<sup>11</sup> of Sokoto:

When the British came to the North, they started recruiting their army of soldiers by getting slaves who ran away from their masters, labourers from the market and so on, and had them enlisted in the force. They had a bad start, then. (House of Representatives Debate, 19 August 1952, 216, cited in Miners, 1971:29).

The army's low reputation among Nigerians who had other opportunities of employment continued until, at least, the mid-1960's. According to Miners (1971:27),

The pattern in all three regions was the same: the best recruiting areas were those farthest from the regional capitals, in economically depressed parts with few natural resources. Few recruits came from the cocoa-producing areas of the West, or the main groundnut- and cotton-producing areas of the North. Similarly in the Eastern Region there were more alternative opportunities for employment in the Ibo heartland and along the lines of the railway than in the more sparsely populated minority areas where the roads were bad and few.

Nevertheless, nationalist leaders were intent on changing the army from an institution whose rank and file were dominated by Northerners to a strong national institution with proportional representation from all regions of the country. This was a very difficult task because Southerners were generally less interested in joining the army than their counterparts in the North. During the second World

<sup>11</sup> Sardauna (roughly, Captain of the Bodyguard) is a title "restricted to members of the ruling house of Sokoto, one of the two Fulani capitals" (Schwarz, 1965:13).

War, however, the recruitment drive in the South created a dichotomy within the army, with the infantry (whose recruits were not required to have any formal education) dominated by Northerners and the trades and clerical sections (whose recruits were required to have a relatively high level of literacy) dominated by Southerners (Miners, 1971:24-25).

This division became more pronounced when Southerners began responding positively to the recruitment drive. Between 1956 and 1960 the number of officers of Eastern origin increased from five--33% of the Nigerian officer corps --to thirty-nine--68% of the Nigerian officer corps (Miners, 1971:52).

The predominance of Easterners in the officer corps of an army whose rank and file were mostly Northerners caused great anxiety, particularly among Northern politicians. One Northerner, Abdullahi Magajin Musawa appealed to the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, himself a Northerner, saying that "it would be a good idea if we equalized our army officers...so that the officers in the Eastern region, the Northern Region and the Western Region are equalized". However, Musawa's appeal was rejected on two grounds: first, it was argued that adopting a quota system would defeat the purpose of creating a strong National army which, by definition, should be "supra-tribal"; and, second, Northerners were generally not educationally qualified for the officer corps while Westerners were not interested in joining the army (Miners, 1971:53,27).

The rejection of Musawa's appeal was only a temporary setback for advocates of a quota system. By 1958 the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), because of its numerical strength in the legislature, had won the debate, and it became government policy from that year that the army rank and file would be composed as follows: Northern region, 50%, Eastern region, 25%, and Western region, 25%.<sup>12</sup> Apart from the introduction of the quota system, recruitment into and promotion within the army was highly politicized as a result of the debate, between, especially, the NPC and the NCNC over the applicable criteria. The NPC got its way and from 1958 the basis for recruitment and promotion became "courage" and not "educational qualifications" (Oyediran, 1979:23-24).

But, despite the politicization of army recruitment, a successful coup or mutiny was quite unlikely until, at least, 1961. The reason for this was not so much the presence of the British colonial structure as the method of British administration that secured the loyalty of the Nigerian Military Forces to the British Government. This attachment was dependent on at least four factors: first, all the senior officers and many of the non-commissioned officers (NCO's) and warrant officers (WO's) were British; second, since most of the troops were recruited from the socio-economically backward areas of the country which were

<sup>12</sup> The same quota system was adopted for the officer corps in 1961 (Miners, 1971:98).

not yet touched by nationalist agitation, the soldiers generally found the pay and condition of service quite attractive; third, "the battalions were rotated every few years so that they could not form close links with the local population"; and fourth, the politically conscious Southerners were "neutralized by being mixed with Northerners in the battalions, or were separated in small specialized units where they could do no harm" (Miners, 1971:100-101).

#### 4.6 CONCLUSION

Nigeria's colonial legacy thus left it with three related major problems that have plagued subsequent attempts at nation-building:

1. an exacerbation, if not creation of ethnic and regional problems.
2. a constitution which almost guaranteed that any political change had to be made through violence.
3. an ill-equipped and internally fractured army which reflected the country's socio-political problems and whose basic orientation was antithetical to the proper functioning of a modern nation-state.

According to Schwarz (1965:23),

Colonial rule left a new country with a measure of both political and economic unity, but the British did more to unify the country economically than politically. And the political unity that did develop stemmed much more from Nigerian assimilation of alien ideas than from any design

of the colonialists. Even economically, much that was done by Britain was in her interest and not in the interest of the colony.

The plausibility of the argument regarding the negative consequences of Nigeria's colonial legacy on present attempts at nation-building is indicated by the fact that the first attempt at military intervention in Nigerian politics coincided with Independence on October 1, 1960. This attempted coup, which was organized by junior officers of Eastern Region Origin in the first battalion in Enugu, had very little chance of success for at least two reasons. First, all the senior officers were British and second, the mostly Northern infantrymen who had just recently received substantial salary increases were not likely to revolt against the civilian authorities (led by the NPC) on the orders of junior officers from the East (Miners, 1971:130).

## Chapter V

### THE IMMEDIATE ANTECEDENTS OF THE 1966 AND 1983 MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Considering the nature of Nigeria's socio-political history, it is hardly surprising that the military has overthrown elected civilian governments twice since independence in October 1960; indeed, the surprise is that it took up to five years for the first supplantment to occur. This chapter examines the specific immediate conditions that stimulated the army's intervention in politics: the Action Group crisis of 1962, the census crisis of 1964, the federal election crisis of 1964 and the Western region crisis of 1965 leading to the 1966 coup; and corruption, governmental ineptness, and vitiation of the electoral process, prior to the 1983 coup.

#### 5.2 SIGNPOSTS TO THE JANUARY 1966 MILITARY COUP

Nigeria's first two pre-independence general elections in 1954 and 1959 revealed the supremacy of each of the three political parties within the three major ethnic groups. The results of the 1954 elections were as follows: NCNC 56 seats (32 from the East); the AG 23 seats (18 from the West); the NPC 79 seats (all from the North); the United

National Independence Party (UNIP) 4 seats (all from the East); and "other" 11 seats (Jordan, 1969:303). In the January 1959 elections to the 312-member House of Representatives, the NPC won 148 seats (all from the North), the NCNC-NEPU alliance 89, and the AG and its allies, the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers State Movement and the United MiddleBelt Congress (UMBC), 75 seats (Africa Year Book, 1977:666).

Curiously, although the two major Southern parties, the NCNC and the AG, had enough seats to form a coalition government after the 1959 elections, the former found it more advantageous to join with the NPC in forming a government. As a result, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, deputy leader of the NPC whom the British colonial government appointed prime minister in 1957, retained that post, while Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, leader of the NPC, premier of the North and Dr. Nnamdi 'Azikiwe',<sup>13</sup> president of the NCNC, left the premiership of the Eastern Region to Dr. M. I. Okpara to become president of the senate. The AG, under the leadership of Chief Awolowo, was the official opposition party. But this allocation of positions (which was in effect when Nigeria became independent) served to bring to light the country's problems rather than eradicate them.

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<sup>13</sup> Azikiwe succeeded Nigeria's last British Governor-General, Sir James Robertson, on November 16, 1960 and became Nigeria's first President on October 9, 1963 when the country became a republic (Africa Year Book, 1977:667).

The first major problem manifested itself as the AG crisis of 1962.

#### 5.2.1 The 1962 Action Group Crisis

Although organizational strains within the AG had become evident in 1959, the major source of the 1962 crisis within this political party was the failure of Chief Awolowo to become prime minister, otherwise the main point of his disagreement with Chief Akintola might never have been made public (Oyediran, 1979:13). When Awolowo decided to resign his position as premier of the Western region to become the official opposition leader in the federal legislature, disagreements arose within the AG regarding who should replace him. Against Awolowo's wish, Chief Akintola became premier and soon began to disregard his party's leader, Awolowo, in his policies. Apart from personal issues, the disagreements between Awolowo and Akintola centered primarily on Prime Minister Balewa's idea of achieving national unity through the formation of a coalition government that would comprise the three major political parties, a proposition which Akintola strongly supported in spite of Awolowo's vehement opposition.

At the federal legislature in Lagos, Awolowo and his party, the AG, had great success and popular support in making a series of attacks on Balewa's government with regard to popular issues such as colonialism, the economy,

and corruption. The central focus of Awolowo's attacks on colonialism was the defence pact signed between Nigeria and Britain on the eve of the former's independence, a pact which Awolowo (who was a signatory to the original draft) claimed was "extorted from the Nigerian government by Britain as a condition for granting independence" (Oyediran, 1979:13). Awolowo played upon strong public opposition to this pact to such an extent that university students, particularly those at the University of Ibadan in Western Nigeria, rioted within the premises of the federal legislature. The opposition to this pact was so strong that it had to be abrogated in January, 1962.

Awolowo's criticisms of the laissez faire orientation of the economic policies of Balewa's government were somewhat less effective than his attacks on colonialism. Awolowo, an avowed socialist, advocated "radical" economic policies, such as the nationalization (that is, government control) of all major sectors of the economy, which the federal government generally opposed in the belief that such policies would frighten away much needed foreign capital (Oyediran, 1979:14).

Awolowo's criticism of corruption and governmental ineptitude was so vehement that the federal legislature voted in 1961 to censure him upon his arrival from London where he had lectured Nigerian students on these issues. But because Awolowo's (and his party, the AG's) continued

support for minority movements ensured his popularity among certain sectors in the country, the only way the NPC/NCNC coalition government could deal effectively with him was to counter-attack by capitalizing on the AG's organizational strains.

At the 1962 AG convention in Jos, Awolowo cajoled enough support out of fellow party-members to have Chief Akintola relieved of the premiership of the Western region. But, only six days after this decision, the rift within the AG led to fighting in the legislative chamber of the Western House of Assembly, and the presence of policemen in anti-riot gear did not prevent the outbreak of violence at a reconvened meeting. It was this obvious split within the AG that provided Balewa's government the much needed opportunity to punish Awolowo and his allies. In response to these events, the federal prime minister instructed the police to clear the chamber and lock it, and declared a state of emergency in that region. The regional government was suspended (the governor, premier, ministers, president of the House of Chiefs, speaker of the House of Assembly and the superintendent-general of local government were dismissed) and Dr. M. A. Majekodunmi was appointed special administrator with considerable powers to run the affairs of the region.

In October 1962 Chief Awolowo was put under house arrest for six weeks in connection with the events in the Western

region. He and 27 of his allies were arrested on November 2, 1962 and charged with three counts of "treasonable felony, conspiracy to commit a felony, and conspiracy to effect an unlawful purpose; all charges related to an alleged attempt to overthrow the Federal Government by force" (Africa Year Book, 1977:667). The trial lasted from November 12, 1962 to June 27, 1963 and the judgements which were delivered on September 11, 1963, covered 400 foolscap pages and took eight hours to read. Awolowo and 24 of his allies were found guilty on some or all of the charges and were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from two to ten years. Awolowo was found guilty on all three counts and sentenced to a total of ten years with hard labor; and the appeal against his conviction was denied in the Federal Supreme Court judgement delivered on July 1, 1964 (Africa Year Book, 1977:667).

In January, 1963, Chief Akintola, whose dismissal from the premiership of the Western Region by Awolowo's supporters within the AG party sparked the violent incidents in the Western House of Assembly, was reinstated as premier having won an appeal to the Supreme Court questioning the right of the regional governor to dismiss him from office without a formal vote of no confidence being passed against him by the House.

The political fortunes of the two wings of the AG reflected their opposite orientation towards Balewa's

federal government. While Awolowo's wing which was persistently at odds with the federal government had serious political problems, Akintola's wing which had a cordial relationship with the federal government prospered. After their expulsion from the AG, Akintola and Rosiji, the party's general secretary--along with their allies within the party--formed a new political party, the United Peoples Party (UPP), which later merged with a Yoruba-dominated wing of Azikiwe's party, the NCNC, in the Western region to form the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). The federal government supported the NNDP "both through the administration of the Western Region and other channels" such that Akintola won a vote of confidence at the reconvening of the Western House of Assembly on April 8, 1963 and thus resumed leadership of the region until the coup of January 15, 1966 (Oyediran, 1979:15).

Perhaps the final blow to the AG came in September, 1963 with the creation of a fourth region, the Mid-West, out of the AG-dominated Western Region, when the minorities of the Benin and Delta provinces voted overwhelmingly in a plebiscite to be separated from the Yorubas. The NCNC won the election to the new region's House of Assembly and Chief D. C. Osadebey resigned the Presidency of the senate, which he had assumed upon Azikiwe's appointment as Governor-General, to become premier of the Mid-West. (Dr. A. A. Nwafor Orizu, who was also a leading member of the NCNC, succeeded Osadebey as President of the Senate.) But

the apparent demise of the AG did not prevent Nigeria's regional problems from manifesting themselves in the form of a census controversy.

### 5.2.2 The 1964 Census Crisis

Censuses represent a perennial source of political conflict in Nigeria because not only do they determine the relative numerical strength of each region, province, or state in the federal legislature, they also determine the revenue which the federal government allocates each region, province, or state. For example, the 1952-3 census gave the Northern region 174 of the 312 seats in the federal House of Representatives where the Eastern Region had 73 seats, the West 62 seats, and Lagos 3 seats (Oyediran, 1979:16). Thus the political hegemony of the North is grounded primarily on a census commissioned by the British colonial government.

The hopes of Southern politicians that the 1962-3 census would alter the balance of power in their favor was badly shattered when that census revealed that the country's population had risen since 1952-3 as follows: the Eastern region, from 7.2 million to 12.3 million (an increase of 71 per cent); the Western Region, from 6.08 million to 10.34 million (an increase of 70 per cent); and the Northern Region, from 16.8 to 21.8 million (an increase of 30 per cent). The British officer, T. Warren, who was in charge of the census presented a report in which he regarded the

Northern figures as normal and the Eastern and Western figures as "grossly inflated". The checks conducted in selected areas of the country in response to Warren's report confirmed the population of the Eastern and Western Regions, but indicated that the population of the Northern Region had actually increased by 80 per cent and not 30 per cent (Oyediran, 1979:16).

The resulting political tension was so great that the prime minister had to take it upon himself to oversee a recount. The final results announced in February 1964, were as follows: Northern Region, 29.8 million; Eastern Region, 12.4 million; Western Region, 10.3 million; Mid-West Region, 2.5 million; and Lagos, 700,000. Thus the country's population was officially stated as 55.7 million, a 74 per cent increase from the 1952-3 census (Oyediran, 1979:16; Africa Year Book, 1977:668). These results were promptly rejected by all the Southern premiers except Chief Akintola, premier of the Western region, who owed his position mainly to the 'good will' of the federal government. Chief Osadebey, premier of the Mid-West Region later accepted the census results "for the sake of national unity", thus leaving only the government of the Eastern Region at variance with Balewa's federal government. The events that followed the 1962-3 census not only shattered Southerners' hopes of breaking the political hegemony of the north at the federal level, but they gradually turned the

north-south conflict of the 1950's into a north-east conflict, "with the other governments in the country [those of the Western and Midwestern regions] whose survival depended upon Northern Region support serving as appendages to the North" (Oyediran, 1979:17).

### 5.2.3 The 1964 Federal Election Crisis

One of the immediate consequences of the census controversy was the formation of new political alliances for the December 30, 1964 federal election. The NPC which had teamed up with the NCNC in forming the federal government now teamed up with Akintola's NNDP in forming the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA), under the leadership of Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and premier of the Northern Region. The NCNC joined the AG in forming the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) under the leadership of Dr. Okpara, premier of the Eastern Region. The smaller political parties later joined one or the other of these two alliances. The Mid-West Democratic Front and Dr. Chike Obi's Dynamic Party joined the NNA while the Northern Elements People's Union (NEPU) and the United MiddleBelt Congress (UMBC) joined the UPGA.

As a consequence the 1964 federal election was contested by two major political alliances, the NNA and the UPGA. While the UPGA's campaign centered on restructuring the Nigerian federation in order to achieve national unity

through the creation of more states, the NNA sought the same end essentially through the provision of job opportunities at the federal level to all ethnic groups.

Opposition politicians throughout the country alleged that their party members were not allowed to campaign freely, the most vociferous allegations coming from Dr. Michael Okpara, premier of the Eastern region. Although the President, Dr. Azikiwe, believed these charges, his attempts to postpone the elections proved unsuccessful because of NNA opposition. It was during this election campaign that Easterners first threatened secession.<sup>14</sup> The frustration of UPGA leaders at the malpractices during this election campaign was based primarily on the fact that the distribution of seats in the Federal House of Representatives--North 197, East 70, West 57, Mid-West 14, and Lagos 4--was such that while the NNA could form a majority government simply by winning all the Northern seats, the UPGA needed a substantial number of Northern seats in order to form a government (Oyediran, 1979:18).

The election campaign became so violent that the UPGA decided to boycott the election, after failing to convince the electoral commission that the elections should be postponed because its members were not allowed to campaign

<sup>14</sup> This was the fourth time in Nigeria's history, and the first time since independence that secession had been used as a political weapon; Northern political leaders made similar threats in 1950 and 1953 and Western political leaders in 1957 (Oyediran, 1979:290).

freely in the North and the West. This boycott, which was a total success in the East, a complete failure in the North where it was most needed, and only marginally successful in the West where NNDP supporters voted, turned out to be extremely harmful to the AG which otherwise had a good chance of winning in the Western Region.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the election results which gave the NNA a decisive win, with the NPC winning 162 of the 167 seats in the North and the NNDP winning 36 of the 57 seats in the West, were vehemently rejected by UPGA leaders. The President, Nnamdi Azikiwe, whose constitutional duty it was to appoint as prime minister the leader of the political party which had the greatest number of seats in the House of Representatives, threatened to resign rather than perform this duty, because the then prime minister, Tafawa Balewa, had refused his advice to abandon the election results and call another election. Thus began a stalemate which resulted in the absence of a formal federal government in Nigeria for three full days--the first of its kind in the country's political history. On January 4, 1965, however, the President re-appointed Balewa as prime minister, when both feuding leaders reached a compromise based on a plan drawn up by the chief justices of the federation and of the Eastern region, respectively, Sir Adetokunbo Ademola and Sir Louis Mbanefo. The basic provisions of this plan were as follows: the

formation of a broadbased national government, the holding of elections in all areas where there had been a total boycott (notably, the East), legal settlement of all grievances, and the establishment of a commission to review the constitution.

The final results of the new elections held in March 1965 were as follows: NPC 162 seats, NNDP 36 seats, NCNC 84 seats, AG 21 seats, Northern Peoples Front (NPF) four seats, Independents five seats, and one seat undecided. Thus the total for the House of Representatives was as follows: NNA 198 seats, UPGA 108 seats, Independents five seats, and one undecided seat (Oyediran, 1979:19, Jordan, 1969:306). In the final analysis, it was the AG which suffered the greatest loss from both the election boycott and the plan drawn up by the two chief justices, since it was excluded from the broadbased national government that was formed. But the AG was still enough of a force to turn the Western region elections of 1965 into a disaster.

#### 5.2.4 The 1965 Western Region Crisis

The first elections to the Western House of Assembly since the AG crisis of 1962 were scheduled for October 11, 1965. Both the NNDP which had assumed and retained power with the support of the federal government, and the AG which, since the events of 1962 had been relegated to the back benches in the federal and provincial legislatures, considered these elections crucial for their long term survival.

Accordingly, the NNDP used to the fullest its advantages as the incumbent. In an attempt to secure the votes of cash crop farmers, the NNDP regional government raised the price it paid to cocoa farmers to N240 a ton (one Naira (N) is approximately \$1.35 US), N60 more than the actual selling price of this crop. (Soon after the elections the price was reduced to N130 per ton, N50 below the selling price.) Promises of development projects were made daily by NNDP ministers both at the federal and regional levels. For example, some federal ministers promised to establish a N20 million steel industry in Ondo division and a N10 million development in Ibadan division. Furthermore, elected local government councils were dissolved and replaced with management committees made up of NNDP supporters while traditional rulers were warned not to oppose the government. As the election day drew nearer speeches by NNDP members emphasized Yoruba unity and the fruitlessness of maintaining close relationships with the Ibos, an obvious attack on the AG which had formed a coalition with the Ibo-dominated NCNC.

In contrast to the NNDP, the AG had two major problems. First, although the overall responsibility for the elections lay with the chairman of the federal electoral commission, the actual organization of the electoral administration was in the hands of local government officials who were members or supporters of the NNDP. Second, the AG/NCNC alliance now experienced internal conflict which resulted from the

nomination of candidates, when the original agreement to divide the 94 seats equally between the two parties broke down.

Campaigning was disrupted by supporters of both the NNDF and the AG to such an extent that on September 19, 1965 the federal government placed a ban on all meetings and processions and sent thousands of policemen to maintain law and order in the Western region. But the primary consequences of this action were to increase the violence which now was focused on policemen and electoral officers. In addition to this violence, a major factor responsible for the collapse of the electoral administration was the manipulation of electoral officers by politicians. For example, through this practice which the AG tried unsuccessfully to stop through the High Court, some NNDF candidates were declared unopposed as early September 30 (Oyediran, 1979:22).

Election day (October 11, 1965) was marked by rioting in various parts of the region. Indeed there were so many incidents of arson, murder (by both policemen and thugs), and general rebellion against governmental authority that the army had to move in to maintain law and order.

### 5.3 THE JANUARY 1966 COUP AND THEREAFTER

These four political crises which in various ways centered on regionalism and ethnic divisions set the stage for the first military takeover which itself reflected --and exacerbated --these same problems. On January 15, 1966, a section of the Army led by Major Chukuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, an Easterner, assassinated the Prime Minister and the Premiers of the Western and Northern regions in its attempt to overthrow the Federal and Regional governments. This action crippled the Federal government to such an extent that on January 16, 1966, the Acting President of the country, Dr. Orizu--the President, Dr. Azikiwe had left the country for medical reasons--announced in a radio broadcast that the Council of Ministers had "voluntarily and unanimously decided to hand over the Government of The Federation to the Armed Forces" under the leadership of Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi, an Easterner (Africa Year Book and Who's Who, 1977:668-669).

The coup in which almost all the politicians and Army officers killed were from the North and the West, led to riots in the Northern region which were followed by a counter-coup staged on July 24, 1966 by a section of the Army led by Northerners. This counter-coup, which resulted in the assassination of the head of state, Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi, had two aims: first, revenge upon the East by the North and, second, destruction of the country which

was prevented only because of the counsel and hard work of some eminent Nigerians and foreigners.

The planners of the countercoup were, however, faced with the important task of replacing the assassinated head of state with an army officer who would be acceptable to the Northerners. To this end, many army officers of Southern origin were bypassed and power was handed over to Lieutenant-Colonel (later General) Yakubu Gowon, a Tiv, who was the highest-ranking Army officer of Northern origin (Obasanjo, 1981:6-7).

Under Gowon's leadership (which was greatly influenced by Northern interests), the massacre of the Ibos in the Northern region intensified to genocide (Diamond, 1970:23). On August 13, 1966 Gowon's Government implemented the first of five recommendations made by an ad hoc Conference of the representatives of the various regions which deliberated upon ways to stop the killings in the North and thereby preserve the country. This recommendation required that all military personnel be posted to barracks within their respective regions of origin. On this basis, military personnel of Eastern origin were posted to Enugu, the capital of the Eastern region, while those of non-Eastern origin stationed in Enugu were moved to Kaduna and later to Lagos to form the Sixth Battalion of the Nigerian Army. This regional posting of soldiers had two consequences. First, it "split the last institution symbolizing Nigeria's nationhood

and national cohesion" and second, it made the Easterners feel alienated from the rest of the country (Obasanjo, 1981:8).

Despite the relocation of military personnel, the killings in the North continued. By October 1966, about 30,000 Easterners (mostly Ibos) had been killed while approximately two million others had returned to the East as refugees (Diamond, 1970:23). In an ill-conceived attempt to frustrate secessionist tendencies among Ibo intellectuals, Colonel Gowon, in a May 27, 1967 nationwide broadcast, announced that his government had divided the country into 12 states. Three of these states were to be in the East and six in the North, while the West and the Mid-West provinces, as well as Lagos territory became the other three states.

This creation of states was seen by Ibo leaders as the final straw, and, on the same night that Gowon made his announcement, the Eastern Nigerian Consultative Assembly empowered its military governor, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, to declare the Eastern region the Independent Republic of Biafra. Colonel Ojukwu made this declaration on May 30, 1967 (Africa Year Book, 1977:670).

On July 6, 1967 the Federal Government announced its decision to take "clinical police action" to end the rebellion in Eastern Nigeria. On that same day, Federal troops fired the first bullet (Obasanjo, 1981:13) and the

war that ensued--the "Biafran War"--was to continue until January 29, 1970 (Africa Year Book, 1977:67).

Gowon's term as head of state lasted until July 29, 1975 when he was ousted by the Armed Forces in a bloodless coup while he was attending the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Kampala, Uganda (Africa Year Book, 1977:672). General Gowon was replaced by Brigadier (later General) Murtala Ramat Muhammed, a Northerner, who was the Inspector of Signals in the Nigerian Armed Forces and Federal Commissioner for Communications in the Gowon administration.

General Muhammed was assassinated on February 13, 1976 in an unsuccessful coup staged by a group of dissident soldiers who apparently intended to return Gowon to power. His successor was Lt. General (later General) Olusegun Obasanjo, a Westerner, who was the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, in the Muhammed administration. The Obasanjo administration remained in power until October 1, 1979 when the military handed over power to a civilian government led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari.

The Shagari administration remained in power until it was ousted by the military coup of December 31, 1983--two months after it was re-elected to office.

#### 5.4 SIGNPOSTS TO THE DECEMBER 1983 MILITARY COUP

The primary difference between the putsch against Balewa's civilian government in January 1966 and that against Shagari's civilian government in December, 1983 is that, unlike the former, the latter is generally not perceived as ethnically motivated (Barrett, 1984:1529). Indeed, hardly anyone would deny that the December 1983 military coup had at least three immediate precipitating factors which I have already linked to Nigeria's colonial legacy: governmental corruption, economic waste and mismanagement, and the undermining of the electoral process through violence and fraud (Diamond, 1984:905). Before dealing with these factors it is necessary to analyze the political parties of Nigeria's second period of civilian rule.

##### 5.4.1 The Political Parties

It is necessary to distinguish between political associations and political parties, in the Nigerian context. According to Nigeria's Electoral Decree of 1977 political associations must be registered with the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) in order to qualify as political parties. Thus, organizations such as the Nigerian Advanced Party (NAP) led by Tunji Braithwaite and the Movement of the People led by Afro-beat musician Fela Anikulapo Kuti were officially recognized as political associations not political parties. Unlike the former, the latter were permitted to engage in political activities such as the

nomination of candidates for federal and other elections and to canvass for votes for such candidates. To qualify for registration as a political party, a political association must, in addition to having an equipped and operating office in the capitals of at least 13 of the 19 states, satisfy the following conditions:

1. the names and addresses of national officers must be registered with FEDECO;
2. party membership shall be open to every Nigerian irrespective of place of origin, religion, ethnic group, or sex;
3. a copy of the constitution must be registered with FEDECO, and amendments to the constitution must be registered within thirty days;
4. the name, emblem, or motto of the party [must be] national and not ethnic, religious or parochial;
5. the headquarters of the party [must be] located in the federal capital (Yahaya, 1979:272).

On the basis of these criteria FEDECO registered as political parties only five of the 19 political associations that applied for such accreditation. These five were the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), the National party of Nigeria (NPN), and the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP).

There were at least 50 political associations in operation during Nigeria's second attempt at civilian government (the Second Republic). While most of these associations were formed by persons who were either relatively unknown or who had not participated actively in previous governments, the three major ones--the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN)--were led by men who had participated actively in previous governments. Furthermore, the formation of these three political associations was announced on or before September 28, 1978 which was the first full week after the ban on political activities imposed in 1966 was lifted, a clear indication that some clandestine political activities had long existed in the country, in spite of successive military regimes (Yahaya, 1979:269).

The formation of the UPN was announced just one day after the ban on political activities was lifted. However, its leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, had difficulties attracting many of his former political associates, such as S. G. Ikoku, Chief Anthony Enahoro, and J. S. Tarka, into his new party. Furthermore, all the prominent Northerners whom Awolowo invited to join the UPN refused.

The NPP was formed as the result of the coalition of three political associations--the Club 19 (a protest group which consisted mostly of "representatives of minorities"

and anti-Awolowo elements), the National Council of Understanding, and the Lagos Progressives. The leading members of the NPP included former politicians like Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, Chief Akinfosile, and Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya. But, despite the extensive political experience of its leadership, on November 17, 1978 the NPP officially split into two factions at its first national convention held in Lagos. Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim led the faction consisting of members of the National Council of Understanding while Chief Ogunsanya led the faction composed of members of Club 19 and the Lagos Progressives. The Waziri Ibrahim faction continued with the convention, adopted the GNPP as its official name, and elected Ibrahim as its presidential candidate. The Ogunsanya faction retained the old name, NPP, and elected Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (who joined after the split) as its presidential candidate at its December 9, 1978 convention held in Lagos.

The leaders of the NPN had been top politicians during Nigeria's first attempt at indigenous civilian government (the First Republic) and top officials of Gowon's military government. The most prominent members of the NPN included Majors General Adeyinka Adebayo and Hassan Usman Katsina who were senior political officers in Gowon's regime; Chief Anthony Enahoro, Alhaji Shehu Shagari,<sup>15</sup> Chief A. Y. Eke,

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<sup>15</sup> Shagari, who later became President of Nigeria, was a top member of the NNA which ruled the country between 1964 and 1966 (Yahaya, 1979:273).

and Alhaji Ali Monguno who were civilian commissioners under Gowon's military regime; and Alhajis Umaru Dikko, H. Dantoro, and Maitama Sule who were state commissioners in Gowon's regime (Yahaya, 1979:271).

The PRP was a direct outgrowth of the political association, the National Movement. The decision to convert this political association into a political party caused so much infighting that many of its prominent members such as Alhaji Aminu Kano and S. G. Ikoku gave up their memberships. Thus, the PRP which was meant to be the political vehicle of the intellectuals was plagued by so many organizational and ideological problems that it became more or less a nonentity, if not a nuisance to the country.

The policies of the political parties of the Second Republic were remarkably similar to those of the three major parties of the First Republic. The UPN's manifesto of social welfarism with promises of programs such as free education at all levels and free health care was remarkably similar to that of the defunct AG; the NPN was remarkably similar to the NNA in its commitment to the maintenance of the existing social order; and, as Barrett (1984:1395) has pointed out, "the NPP and the GNPP were pale shadows of the NPN at the level of economic action, and even paler shadows of the UPN in terms of political rhetoric." In contrast to those of the other parties, the PRP's manifesto took into account the country's socio-economic and political

realities; however, the PRP lacked the human and organizational resources to be a significant power in the federal legislature.

In light of the remarkable similarities in personnel and policies between the political parties of the First and Second Republics, it is hardly surprising that the latter would be plagued with the same problems as the former: corruption, governmental ineptness, and undermining of the electoral process.

#### 5.4.2 Corruption

Corruption in Nigeria is not new; nor is it limited to any particular type of government. What made corruption during Shagari's civilian administration particularly devastating is that it occurred when the country was clearly less able to afford it. The unprecedented economic boom which Nigeria enjoyed during the 13 years of military rule from 1966 to 1979 as a result of revenue earned from crude oil, was fast turning into economic recession as a result of the oil glut in the world market. The devastating effect on Nigeria's economy of this precipitous decline in crude oil revenue, from a peak of \$24 billion US in 1980 to \$10 billion US in 1983, can hardly be overstated (Diamond, 1984:908-909).

In general, corruption was epitomized by the inflation of contracts (by 50 to 100 per cent) in order to cover the cost of bribes given to ministers and parties, as well as by

commissions given to politically connected agents or middlemen. Such padding of contracts meant that only about half as many projects as could have been undertaken were actually completed--a fact clearly evident in, among other things, the number of unfinished hospitals, public housing projects, and ungraded roads throughout the country.

The Nigerian media, especially the print media, became quite adept at exposing corruption. In 1983 alone these exposés included the following: a press report from London, England of fraudulent import-export transactions exceeding \$6 billion US; the strange exhaustion by June of the \$2.5 billion US annual allocation for import licenses; the arrest of several top officials of the Federal Capital Development Authority in Abuja (the country's future capital) over an alleged \$20 million US fraud; the disappearance of millions of dollars worth of building materials from the warehouse of the Nigeria National Supply Company; the acceptance of large sums of money as bribes by Nigerian legislators deliberating on the renewal of a monopoly contract to a Swiss firm; and the revelation by a Federal Minister that the country was losing more than \$65 million US per month to "ghost workers" and other forms of payroll fraud. The fact that no serious attempts were made by the federal government to investigate any of these charges in court only served to deepen civic malaise and generally undermine the legitimacy of the civilian government (Diamond, 1984:906).

Corruption led to massive destruction of important government property in attempts to cover up misdoings. Examples in this respect include the destruction, by mysterious fires, of several buildings including the headquarters of the Ministry of External Affairs and of the Federal Development Authority in Abuja. Perhaps the greatest public outcry against Shagari's government came in January 1983 when a mysterious fire razed Nigeria's architectural masterpiece, the 37-story headquarters of the Nigerian External Telecommunications Company in Lagos. According to Diamond (1984:907):

To both ordinary Nigerians and the country's intelligentsia--students, intellectuals, professionals, and military officers--[this fire] symbolized the rapaciousness of the ruling elite. Students quickly took to the streets in Lagos and several state capitals, chanting and carrying signs calling for the return of the military.

But rather than abandoning their corrupt activities, the politicians and civil servants ignored public opinion, assumed the bearing of an aristocracy (one politician was reported to have a solid gold bathtub appraised at \$5 million US), and generally distanced themselves from the governed. While no one may ever know exactly how much government revenue was embezzled or misappropriated during Shagari's civilian government (October 1979 to December 1983), some Western diplomats and economists have unofficially estimated the private wealth exported overseas by top government officials at \$5-7 billion US (Diamond, 1984:908).

Closely related to corruption was the economic waste and mismanagement which characterized Shagari's administration.

#### 5.4.3 Economic Waste and Mismanagement

The Shagari administration came to power at a time when changes in the world economy were plunging Nigeria into economic recession. Added to this is the fact that the successive military governments from July 1966 to October 1979 followed a pattern of rising expenditure (in capital and social services) which was sustained for two basic reasons: first, the military regimes existed during a period of economic boom, and second, the cost of running a military administration is considerably less than that of running an open democratic system, since, unlike the latter, the former does not require a large number of legislative and executive institutions and offices (Barrett, 1984:1489).

The civilian administration realized that the economic decisions of its immediate predecessors had committed the country to high capital expenditure (which required foreign credit) and development of social services which made the US \$8 billion foreign currency reserves they inherited illusory. To counterbalance these policies President Shehu Shagari instituted austerity measures.

In any event, the deterioration of the economy led to a sharp decline in imports, particularly of industrial raw materials and basic commodities. This resulted not only in

the laying off of tens of thousands of workers, but--aided by ruthless hoarding--in the skyrocketing of the prices of staple food and basic commodities. Meanwhile, the political elites and other well-connected individuals continued to drain the scarce foreign exchange resources on luxury imports and foreign travel.

At the state level, teachers and civil servants were generally unpaid for up to six months, a condition which led to strikes and the temporary closing down of schools and some state governments. In response to a threatened national strike on the eve of the elections, the civilian federal government provided emergency loans for the re-opening of those state governments that had been shut down, but by January 1984 some schools had remained closed for up to one year. Furthermore, hospitals were generally ill-equipped and understaffed while the frequency of water and electric power interruptions increased to unprecedented levels (Diamond, 1984:908-910).

Despite the manifest corruption and economic waste and mismanagement, it is quite probable that there would not have been a military takeover in December 1983 had the state and national elections of August and September 1983 been free and fair.

#### 5.4.4 The August-September 1983 Elections

The conduct of the most recent elections in Nigeria did not differ significantly from those of the first period of civilian rule. The primary reason for this is the unrestricted re-entry of the old political warhorses--notably Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe--into active politics, an event that resulted in the rejuvenation of old rivalries rather than the formulation of new principles of unity. This easy return of the old politicians may well have been the fundamental flaw in the transfer of power from the military to the civilians in October 1979 (Barrett, 1984:1395).

In any event, the August-September 1983 elections were characterized by grave and massive fraud engaged in by all the parties, but most systematically by President Shagari's ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN). The vitiating of the electoral process took several forms:

Ballots were obtained in advance of the polling days and thumbprinted in assembly-line operations for candidates of the ruling party. Electoral officers at virtually every level were bribed to falsify election returns. Hired agents carrying fraudulently accumulated voter registration cards were sent or driven about town to vote ten or twenty times in a single election. Elsewhere, whole communities were disenfranchised by administrative ineptitude or deliberate sabotage (Diamond, 1984:911).

Furthermore, in many of the less developed northern states, NPN agents collaborated with electoral officers, the police, and in some cases, traditional rulers, in preventing opposition party agents from exercising their basic

constitutional right to observe the voting and poll-counting from start to finish.

When the election results were finally announced, the NPN "not only reclaimed the presidency with a decisive first-ballot victory, but increased its governorships from seven to thirteen, and its standing in the National Assembly from a very shaky plurality to two-thirds" (Diamond, 1984:911). Only few of the election results were overturned in court, and all but one of the incredible gubernatorial results were upheld. In the overturned case, an apparently defeated governor of an opposition party was found to have been actually re-elected by more than one million votes.

Thus, the elections which cost approximately \$405 million US (more than 10 per cent of the the federal government's recurrent budget for 1984) turned out to be a sham and a disaster for the country. More than 100 persons were reported killed and up to \$100 million US in property was destroyed by the rioting that accompanied the announcement of the gubernatorial election results in some states (Diamond, 1984:911-912).

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

In light of the preceding discussions it is hardly surprising that the army Generals (who were the young colonels who staged the 1975 coup against Gowon's government) would intervene in politics--especially since many of the leading politicians were the same ones overthrown in the January 1966 coup (Barrett, 1984:1489). In any case, this coup replaced Shagari's civilian government with General Muhammadu Buhari's military government that seems to see its primary task as the salvaging of the country's economy.

Thus we see that it is hardly possible to offer a credible explanation for military intervention in Nigerian politics without taking into account the impact of the country's socio-political and institutional problems. Yet, as can be seen from the preceding discussions, these problems are directly related to Nigeria's colonial legacy. This is to say that, for example, the immediate conditions that stimulated the January 1966 coup --the AG crisis of 1962, the census crisis of 1964, the federal election crisis of 1964, and the Western region crisis of 1965-- are direct consequences of Nigeria's colonial legacy of, among other things, the unequal political division of the country.

Nevertheless, in order to understand why these problems led to military interventions, we must take into account the army's basic orientation. The rapid indigenization and

persistent use of the army as a police force by both colonial and indigenous governments led to its politicization so that it came to see itself as a plausible alternative to indigenous civilian governments. This contention is given credence by the fact that the first attempted coup coincided with independence on October 1, 1960-- prior to the four crises that precipitated the January 1966 coup.

## Chapter VI

### CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, the two military supplantments in Nigeria -- those of January 1966 and December 1983 -- cannot be explained merely in terms of societal and military factors or a combination of both. Apart from the general failure of such perspectives to give due emphasis to the impact of colonization on Nigerian society and army, they generally ignore the influence of external power centers on Nigeria's present socioeconomic problems. This study is based on a perspective that sees societal and military factors in the context of nation-building in the modern world of nation-states.

Nigeria's colonial legacy left it with major problems that have plagued subsequent attempts at nation-building: regional and ethnic divisiveness which its independence constitution exacerbated, and a problematic army.

The origins of Nigeria's current regional and ethnic problems can be traced to the pre-independence constitutions. For example, the Richards Constitution divided the country into three more or less autonomous regions thereby encouraging many Nigerians to identify more with their region of origin than with the country as a

whole. Furthermore, its financial provisions served as a catalyst for the formation of three ethnically and regionally based political parties: the Action Group (AG), identified with the Yorubas in the Western region; the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), with the Ibos in the Eastern region; and the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), with the Hausa-Fulani in the Northern region. Thus, not only were the country's regional problems intensified, but the fears of ethnic minorities that they would be dominated by the three major ethnic groups were substantiated. Furthermore, Southerners were dissatisfied with the independence constitution that gave the Northern region more than half the seats in the federal legislature. They greatly desired constitutional change, and some, such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who began the struggle for Nigeria's political independence believed they were best qualified to rule the country. But given the Northern majority in the federal legislature, constitutional change was likely only through violence.

The second major consequence of Nigeria's colonial legacy was the army's internal problems which stemmed from two related sources: haste in indigenization prior to and immediately after independence; and politicization of the army. On the one hand, the haste in indigenization not only led to the concentration of Southerners in the officer corps and Northerners in the rank and file, but undermined the

normal relations of command by putting many young, inexperienced officers in charge of older veterans. On the other hand, the army was politicized because of its persistent use as an internal police force as well as the adoption in 1961 of a quota system of recruitment into the officer corps which gave the Northern region 50%, the Eastern region 25%, and the Western region 25%. At the same time, the politicization of the army probably induced some of its officers to begin thinking of themselves potential successors to civilian rulers whom they considered corrupt and inept.

To this legacy of its colonial past must be added those problems which result from Nigeria's peripheral position in the modern-world system. According to Wallerstein (1974), after achieving political independence, the "developing" states in the Americas, Africa, and Asia had hoped to become full partners in the world system; instead they were relegated to marginal positions in relation to the core industrialized states of Northwestern Europe and North America. The world-system operates on the basis of a division of labour in which the peripheral states are forced to engage mainly in the production of the raw materials which the core states require for their industries. This circumstance severely limits the economic development that is a necessary condition for successful nation-building by the developing states

The conjunction of a colonial legacy and a peripheral position in the world-system has had two consequences which are important for understanding military supplantment in Nigeria: the pressure to become a nation-state quickly and Nigeria's dependence on external forces such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the core states.

#### 6.1 THE PRESSURE OF TIME

The pressure of time in nation-building has led to major conflicts among Nigerian leaders of different regional and ethnic backgrounds. These include the following: the gross inflation of census figures, the undermining of the electoral process through violence and fraud, and the increasing range of the state's economic activities, which encourages corruption and governmental ineptness. As shown in chapter five, these factors were the immediate antecedents of the January 1966 and December 1983 military interventions in Nigerian politics facilitated by the absence of a military pact with a core state. While the "majors' coup" of January 1966 did not directly accomplish its purpose of ousting Balewa's civilian government, it nonetheless revealed the divisions within the army because it was foiled by other troops led by the then Head of the Nigerian Army, Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi. The immediate events that led to this coup were not military but societal problems related to nation-building (the 1962 AG crisis, the 1964 federal census crisis, and the 1965 Western region

crisis) which the junior officers, rightly or wrongly, construed as signals of the destruction of the newly independent state.

Thus, military intervention in Nigerian politics can be seen as the attempt of the most powerful, if not the least divided, institution in the country to contribute directly to the process of nation-building. In this sense, the first attempted coup -- that of October 1, 1960 -- may be understood as an attempt by elements of the army dominated by Southerners to overcome the Northern political hegemony imposed on the country by the former colonial administration. Similarly, the January 1966 coup can be seen as an attempt by the majors to prevent the apparent breakup of the country because they felt the civilian administration was incapable of so doing.

Perhaps the best way to view military interventions in the context of nation-building is to analyze the policies and objectives of the military governments. The first military government (Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi's regime of January- July 1966) was invited by the civilians to take over on short notice and consequently did not have any stated political, economic, or foreign policies to implement (Ofoegbu, 1979:24); its relationship to nation-building must therefore be traced to actions by the military in 1964. Just before the December 1964 federal general election the army paraded in Lagos as a warning of its possible intervention.

This action necessitated a meeting between the military chiefs and the prime minister, Tafawa Balewa to discuss ways to avert a coup. During this meeting the military chiefs are reported to have stated categorically that the president, Nnamdi Azikiwe, did not have control over the armed forces (Oyediran, 1979:290). Specifically, they stated that the army was an ombudsman independent of the political institutions. Thus, the "majors' coup" was foiled not because the senior army officers endorsed the actions of the civilian administration but because they believed a coup was not called for at the time.

In any event, in the July 29, 1975 coup which replaced Gowon's military regime with Mohammed's and which set the stage for the return to civilian rule in October 1979, the military clearly saw its intervention as part of the process of nation-building. In his October 1, 1975 independence day address to the country, General Mohammed said:

The ultimate aim [of this government] is to forge a viable political system which will be stable and responsive enough to the needs and realities of this country. This is not an exercise that begins and ends in the mere drafting of a constitution. Viable political institutions only emerge from hard experience and practice and the corporate experience of all is what matters ... (cited in Adekson, 1979:218).

It was in pursuit of this aim that Mohammed's government proposed a five-phase program for return to civilian rule, a summary of which is outlined below.

Phases

Programs

Phase I

Creation and establishment of new states

- (August 1975-April 1976); drafting of a constitution (October 1975-September 1976)
- Phase II            Local government reorganization, reforms, and elections; summoning of a Constituent Assembly to deliberate on a draft constitution (September 1976-October 1978)
- Phase III           Electoral constituency delimitation; lifting of the ban on political party activities (October 1978)
- Phase IV            Holding of elections for legislative and executive offices at the state level
- Phase V            Holding of elections for legislative and executive offices at the federal level; and handover of power by October 1, 1979 (Adekson, 1979:220).

Although Lt. General Mohammed was killed in February 1976 in an unsuccessful counter-coup, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, a senior member of his government who replaced him, returned power to a civilian government headed by Alhaji Shehu Shagari on schedule. By 1979, the army had established itself as a formidable political force in Nigeria, so much so that in 1979 Alhaji Shagari was reported to have said, "In this country there are, in the end, only two parties, the civilians and the soldiers" (Time, January

16, 1984:25). Thus, the December 1983 coup was an attempt of the then Nigerian de facto 'opposition party' (the military) to remove, perhaps reluctantly, what it believed to be an inept civilian government and assume power. It is therefore not surprising that the policies of the Buhari administration appear to be substantially similar to those of the Mohammed/Obasanjo administration. For example, the former's War Against Indiscipline (WAI) whose targets include disorderliness in public places, cheating, ethnic chauvinism, tax evasion, indolence, and disrespect for life and property, is clearly a continuation of the purgative operations of the latter (Africa, May 1985:25-26).

While the armed forces of established nation-states are generally seen as institutions whose constitutional role is to serve civilian governments by defending against external aggression, the army in Nigeria has, in addition, the task of holding the nation together when the latter is threatened by the actions of its civilian governments. In this respect, there is some continuity with the colonial pattern, since the Nigerian military acts like a police force, except that now the threat of disorder stems not so much from the general population as from its elected leaders. Ironically, Nigerian civilian governments conceive of the army as having two roles: defending the state against external aggression, and assisting civilian leaders, where necessary, in the maintenance of internal stability (Nigeria

Year Book, 1983: 107). Despite its own internal divisions, the army is generally perceived by civilian rulers as the most "national" (that is, unified) institution.

Thus the pertinent question is not why the Nigerian military intervenes in politics but why it is reluctant to rule. This reluctance is indicated in its handover of power to Alhaji Shagari's civilian government in October 1979 and by the statement of a senior officer that "military rule is an aberration and should not be a permanent feature of a country's national life" (West Africa, 1984:1752). Such attitudes point to the influence that the world system dominated at the core by civilian-led nation-states has on Nigerian army officers. The desire of the military leaders to place Nigeria in a respectable position in the world system (in which the U.S.A. has long replaced Britain as the most powerful nation-state) is revealed by the fact that the same army which suspended a British-type constitution in 1966 authorized and supervised the drawing of an American-type constitution about 13 years later. Thus, the December 1983 military take-over reveals a major dilemma of demilitarization: in October 1979 the army handed over power to civilian politicians (most of whom had participated in previous civilian and military governments) only to have to stage another coup when the latter's actions were no different from those which precipitated the January 1966 coup.

## 6.2 EXTERNAL FACTORS

The other major consequence of Nigeria's peripheral position in the modern world-system is that the creation of an environment conducive to nation-building, especially economic development, depends considerably on external powers such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the core states. For example, the economic prosperity of the Gowon/Mohammed/Obasanjo military regimes as well as the economic hardships under both the Shagari civilian and present Buhari military regimes have more to do with fluctuations in the world demand for crude oil (the country's primary export) than with the economic policies of these governments.

It is, in a sense, the recognition of the influence of global factors on the Nigerian economy that precipitated the December 1983 military intervention. The present head of state, General Buhari pointed out that the Shagari administration was overthrown because the military believed the latter lacked the will to remedy situations, such as massive unemployment and food shortages, which army officers believed they could. But whether or not the army will succeed in effecting the programs for which it apparently staged the December 1983 coup remains to be seen. Since this coup the weight of international circumstances (such as global economic recession and the oil glut) and the influence of external powers (such as the IMF and Nigeria's

trading partners in the West) have had a great impact on Nigeria.

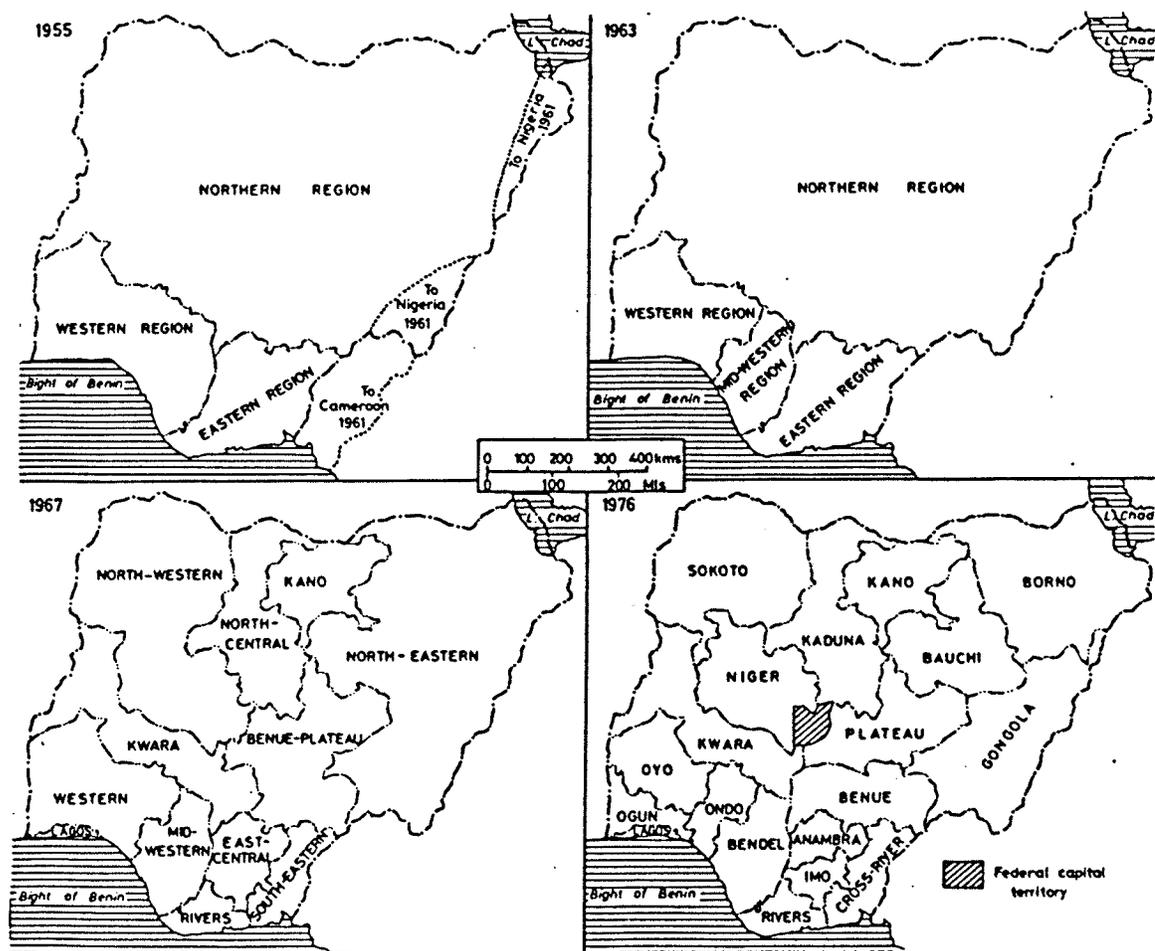
Perhaps the greatest direct external pressure on Nigeria comes from the IMF, an organization whose loan policies towards peripheral states have, in recent years, led to food riots in Jamaica and Egypt, and the downfall of some governments, such as the 16 year old regime of Sudanese President Gaafar Nimeiri. In order to understand why a loan from the IMF often leads to political upheavals in the Third World we must look at the creditor's terms for lending. Irrespective of local factors, the IMF generally lends money only under the following conditions: massive devaluation of local currency; a freeze of wages; increased exports (which, under the devalued currency, would just about amount to throwing away whatever is exported); liberalization of the economy (a measure which almost guarantees that the monies the IMF lends to the Third World return to the West); restraint in public spending (a measure which generally results in the curtailing of programs such as free education and free medical care, as well as the abolishing of subsidies on basic food-stuffs); and the scrapping of local price controls (Africa, May 1985:42).

Progress in nation-building and the viability of the Nigerian state under the Buhari administration depends, to a large extent, on the ability of the latter to withstand pressures from the IMF. So far the administration has

refused to yield to IMF demands that it devalue the country's currency by 60 percent, liberalize imports (that is, remove restrictions on the importation of all goods), and remove subsidies on crude oil exports. This refusal has made it impossible to reschedule an insured trade debt of \$2 billion US because creditors in the core states have indicated that they would not renegotiate without an IMF package (New African, December 1984: 21). Nevertheless, the Buhari administration is enjoying some apparent success through its adoption of a strategy of counter-trade (bartering crude oil for imports) that counteracts restrictions in cash flow imposed by the world system. In this way, not only does the Nigerian government cope with the IMF, but it now has the opportunity to sell crude oil above its OPEC quota--1.45 million barrels per day, according to Nigerian officials, and 1.3 million barrels per day, according to OPEC officials. Perhaps the most significant consequence of Nigeria's strategy of counter-trade is that former minor trading partners such as Brazil Austria, Italy, and France are now replacing Britain, West Germany, and the U.S.A. as Nigeria's major trading partners. For example there is hardly any doubt that "Britain will this year lose its historical position as Nigeria's largest supplier to either Brazil or France" (Financial Times, June 5, 1985:16).

In effect, Buhari administration must reckon with both internal and external forces which make its task of nation-building onerous. It must reconcile the demands of conflicting ethnic groups in the country, while resisting pressure from external interests whose demands would further unsettle an already fragile national structure. Moreover, although it is a military regime, all this must be done under the watchful eye of the military which considers itself, and, in fact, is, a considerable political force to be employed in the service of building the nation. This means that in the existing circumstances, any administration, civilian as well as military, has to live with the threat of military intervention, for its conduct will be closely supervised and assessed by an army that is evidently prepared to intervene if it deems such action to be in the national interest.

Appendix A  
NIGERIA IN MAPS



Source: Barbour, Oguntinyinbo, Onyemelukwe, and Nwafor (1982:39)

Appendix B

NIGERIANIZING THE OFFICER CORPS, 1949-1960

DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICERS BY TRIBAL/  
REGIONAL ORIGIN, OCTOBER 1960

North	West (not Ika-Ibo)	East (plus Ika-Ibo)	South Cameroons	
<i>Serving Soldiers originally given Short Service Commissions</i>				
—	Adornulegun Shodeinde Adebayo Ogundipe Fajuyi	Bassey* Nwawo † Njoku Ekpo* Okonweze † Akagha Okafor, D.O. Okafor, D.C. Okoro Brown*	Ironsi Imo Ekanem* Trimnell † Effiong* Ogunewe Adigio Ivenso Ochei †	Malonge
(nil)	(5)	(19)	(1)	
<i>Officers Commissioned after course at R.M.A. Sandhurst</i>				
Maimalari Kur Muhammed Largema Pam Gowon Katsina Akahan	Ejoor † Banjo	Kurobo* Madiebo Okwechime † Nzeffli † Nwajei † Keshi † Nzeogwu †	Anwunah Uregbe Ogbonnia Eze Ezeugbana Ude Chude-Sokei	—
(7)	(2)	(14)	(nil)	
<i>Graduates given a Regular Commission after a short course</i>				
—	Olutoye	Ojukwu	—	
(nil)	(1)	(1)	(nil)	
<i>Short Service Commissioned Officers (not serving soldiers)</i>				
Kyari	Sotomi Obasanjo	Amadi Igboba †	Aniebo	Kweti
(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	
8	10	37	2	
14%	17.5%	65%	3.5%	

Notes: \* denotes an officer whose place of origin is in the Calabar/Rivers/  
Ogoja area of the Eastern Region.  
† denotes an officer whose place of origin is in the Mid-West. (All  
are Ika-Ibo, except Ejoor-Urhobo.)

In a few cases there is some doubt if an officer who served for a short  
time in the ranks should be classified in the first group or the last  
(e.g. Igboba). All those in the last group did not serve long enough  
in the ranks to be given immediate promotion to lieutenant on com-  
missioning.

There was one other officer commissioned before 1960, Lt. Onuagu-  
luchi (East, short-service commission, 1956); he died in a traffic  
accident in 1959.

Source: Miners (1971:51).

## Appendix C

### NIGERIANIZING THE OFFICER CORPS, 1960-1965

#### SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS BY RANK AND TRIBAL/ REGIONAL ORIGIN, JANUARY 1966

	<i>North</i>	<i>West and Mid-West (not Ika-Ibo)</i>	<i>East and Ika-Ibo</i>	
Maj.-Gen.			Ironsì	
Brigadier	Maimalari	Ademulegun Ogundipe		
Col.	Kur Muhammod	Adobayo Shodeinde		
Lt.-Col.	Largema Pam Gowon	Fajuyi Ejoor Banjo	Bassoy Njoku Imo Ojukwu Efiiong	Nwawo Uncgbo Kurobo (acting)
Sub-total	5	7	9	
Majors (substantive)	Katsina Akahan	Olutoye Adekunle Obasanjo Sotomi Adegoko Rotimi Ayo-Ariyo	Trimnell Ekpo Okwechimo Anwunah Madiobo Nzeffili Ogunowo Akagha Nwajci Eze Okonwezo Okoro	Nzocgwu Ude Ivenso Kalu Keahi Ifeajuna Okafor, D.O. Anuforo Chude-Sokei Anicbo Obicnu
Sub-total	2	7	23	
Grand Total	7 (13%)	14 (26%)	32 (60%)	

*Notes:* This table refers to officers holding combatant commissions only, and does not include such officers as Col. Peters in the Army Medical Service.

All information is taken from the notices of promotions in *Federal Gazettes*; it is possible that one or two officers may have been promoted substantive major before January 1966 whose notification has been omitted from the *Gazette*.

Major Adekunle has been placed in the Western column. He is the son of a Northern mother and a Yoruba father, educated in the North at Okene, so he might have been placed in the Northern column.

Officers are listed in order of seniority; all the left-hand column of Eastern majors are senior to those on the right.

Source: Miners (1971:123).

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