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## IKENGA

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TAXONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE DAHOMEAN DOKPE  
IN 1972: VOLUNTARISM IN EXTRA-KIN ASSOCIATIONS <sup>1</sup>

By ERIC J. ARNOULD

**Introduction**

IN this paper I hope to show through a brief discussion of ethnographic data from Southern Dahomey in which developmental processes are emphasized that the social structural category "voluntary association" lacks definitional rigor. Since there is even some question as to the real content of such a category, it surely obscures significant features and variations in the institutions so labelled. Specifically, I will discuss the often-mentioned Dahomean dokpe in relation to certain key changes in Dahomean social organization during a three hundred year period.

Known from Herskovits <sup>2</sup> as the men's cooperative work group, the dokpe has frequently been termed a voluntary association. Strictly speaking this cannot be the case since membership in the local dokpe was in fact an ascribed status for all young men as early as the eighteenth century. In a longer paper I maintain that this mandate for collective action emerged in response to specific ecological pressures in the gap of Benin.<sup>3</sup> Later as the association assumed an important integrative role under the Dahomean proto-state,<sup>4</sup> powerful moral and even coercive sanctions arose to insure reciprocal behaviour among members and a relationship of subordination to elders.

Membership in the dokpe is still nominally compulsory in many rural areas today. But recent cultural impositions and agriculturative developments, including incipient class formation, in Dahomey have contributed to the emergence of a work ethic different from the old tradition of labor recruitment. The idea of voluntarism expressed to me as "bonne volonte" (good will) is a significant feature both motivating, and in the negative case, limiting, for work parties in both rural and urban areas. I follow Anderson <sup>5</sup> in seeing the emergence of bonne volonte as the point of convergence of certain elements and sub-systems undergoing rapid changes in Dahomey. If Herskovits' account is correct, although my own field work and that of others suggests that he may have ignored local variations in the organization of his time,<sup>6</sup> this phenomenon constitutes a major break with past traditions. But it is only this momentary outcropping of certain structural tensions which allows us to speak of the dokpe as a voluntary association.

**The Problem of Association**

There was a difficult taxonomic dilemma I encountered in trying to think of the dokpe as a voluntary association which made me wonder if this term is in need of clarification. This recalls Lowie's frustration with sodalities: "a congeries of diverse associations set off by negative rather than positive criteria, they defy classification."<sup>7</sup> Robert Anderson, writing in

1. This paper is a revision of a paper read to the Northeastern Anthropology Association, Spring 1973 meeting in Burlington Vermont. My own materials on the dokpe were gathered during a three month period of intensive fieldwork conducted in 1972 under the supervision of Dr. Ronald Schwarze.
2. Melville J. Herskovits, *Dahomey: An Ancient West African Kingdom*, (Evanston, Illinois, 1938 rep. 1967) Vol. 1, 63.
3. Eric J. Arnould, *The Dahomean Dokpe From the Mid-1600's Until 1972: Some Speculations From the Standpoint of Ecological or Cultural Materialism*, (Bard College, Annandale, N.Y., 1973), pp. 6-17.
4. Stanley Diamond, "The Rule of Law Versus the Order of Custom," *Social Research*, Vol. 38, pp. 42-72, 1971.
5. Robert T. Anderson, "Voluntary Associations in History," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 73, p. 209, 217, 1971.
6. Herskovits, p. 64, note 2.
7. Robert Lowie, quoted in Anderson, p. 64

1971, could still say that associations "yield almost no defined regularities."<sup>8</sup> I am sure this difficulty is an artifact of our confusion rather than a quality of associations themselves.

Today sodalities or associations sometimes have the adjective "non-kin" added to them, yet this does not help us sort out what we mean by those shadowy entities termed common interest groups, mutual aid groups, so-called secret societies, warrior societies, self-interest groups, nativistic churches, millennial cults, voluntary associations, etc. For instance, simply because recruitment and membership criteria in these groups do not appear to be encompassed by kin relations does not mean they are not a part of kinship in a particular society.

The diachronic emphasis I gave to my limited work with the *dokpe* suggested several lines of inquiry to be considered in attempts to clarify a taxonomy of what I term extra-kin associations in non-Western societies. The generalization made by Meillassoux<sup>9</sup> that associations are contextual and not given entities can be our starting point. This is important because one confusion seems to stem from the fact that extra-kin associations occur in different historical epochs and for particular cultures on different evolutionary levels. I hypothesize that the types of associations which characterize different epochs will be themselves of different, mutually exclusive types.

There are perhaps two alternating phases in the history of associations which may nonetheless develop in parallel fashion in unrelated cultures. The first kind, which has been dealt with by Anderson, herald an evolutionary leap, exhibit diversity of manifest function and purpose, and variable incorporation of structures and functions old and new. Of this type are most so-called voluntary associations. Membership is achieved rather than ascribed. Anderson thinks he can show that voluntary associations occur between the great evolutionary crests in history in situations of rapid change and intercultural exchange.<sup>10</sup> They are the recurrent medium of change appearing in advance of substantive corporate bodies and assisting the resocialization of the population to new cultural materials. Thus millennial cults and nativistic churches might fall in this category as well as ethnic urban associations.

The second type of sodality is essentially conservative, encourages internal cohesion and adjustment. They frequently crosscut structural divisions created by kinship and other associations. Totemic groups probably provide the best example of this kind of sodality which may also include mutual aid groups with intermittent instrumental functions, age-grades, etc.

There is one point to be made clear which also may resolve some confusion. Although these two types of association tend to be mutually exclusive at a particular moment, viewed diachronically, an association might conceivably be transformed into its opposite type due to historical vicissitudes. I hope to show that the *dokpe*, which combined features of the mutual aid group and age-grade in one era, has presently taken on at least one function of the so-called voluntary association. The source of this dialectical shift in Dahomey is the incursion of European culture. It may be that this kind of shift has occurred in other traditional associations in West Africa and that some of our current confusion concerning the genesis of extra-kin associations stems from this kind of disruptive development.

Particular associations may also be distinguished along the axes of recruitment and participation. I call attention to this because of its importance for clarifying what is meant by voluntary association. Cross-cutting, adjustive associations are frequently formed by the periodic mobilization of a socially universal recruitment procedure like birth or age. There may be some degree of individual choice of sodality but participation is required. In

8. Anderson, p.213.

9. Claude Meillassoux, *Urbanization of an African Community: Voluntary Association in Bamako*, (Seattle, 1968) p. 146.

10. Anderson, p. 213.

voluntary associations at the other end of the recruitment axis, membership may be subject to group approval, but the individual decides to join or not. Meillassoux notes<sup>11</sup> that age for example may still be a criterion of membership in voluntary associations, but unity of purpose independent of membership criteria is emphasized, as for example in a sports association.<sup>12</sup>

In an age-grade or totemic group in which membership is demanded because it provides a crucial form of social definition and differentiation, there is no choice as far as participation is concerned either, as this provides content to that definition. But, in so-called voluntary associations membership need not entail participation since I will show that the dokpe provides an example of voluntary participation found in conjunction with an association which has nevertheless ascribed membership like age-grades and other cross cutting associations. Thus it seems appropriate to distinguish an ethic of voluntarism apart from any so-called voluntary association as I tentatively suggested above.

### The Dokpe

In Dahomey today one may isolate several mutually reinforcing historical tendencies whose intersection has led to new variations in both the patterns of recruitment and in the participation in the activities one finds associated with the present-day dokpe. Among these factors are the spread of metropolitan style primary education,<sup>13</sup> the development of wage labor and cash-cropping,<sup>14</sup> the emergence of alternative avenues to economic advancement and to the procurement of prestige,<sup>15</sup> the slight attention being paid by government agencies to the development of an economically and socially sound rural society,<sup>16</sup> vastly increased possibilities for travel, and in response to these factors, a progressive weakening of the corporate land-holding lineage,<sup>17</sup> and the build-up of strong intra-familial tensions.

An initial reading of the literature on the tokpe, derived from Herskovits<sup>18</sup> might suggest that because of its pan-village basis of recruitment, inherent levelling mechanisms and emphasis on cooperative effort, the association was structurally pre-adapted to integrate local groups and perform resocialization functions under the impact of colonialism. But the dokpe does not exhibit the corporate structures of some Mesoamerican communities<sup>19</sup> and some new urban tribal associations in West Africa;<sup>20</sup> the dokpe is an archaic institution of the adjustive type. But the reasons why the particular factors enumerated above should have decisively limited the transformation of the dokpe into an association of the generative and assimilative type do not become clear until several problems in the existing literature have been cleared away.

A typical cumulative, but a historical list of tasks attributed to the dokpe follows.<sup>21</sup>

(a) performance of horticultural and productive tasks for the infirm and aged without fixed reimbursement, (b) aid to any dokpe to fulfil his obligations to his father or in set-

11. Meillassoux, p. 58.

12. In a detailed study of association it is of course crucial to pay close attention to age, sex, and economic status of members and location, size, and number of similar associations in conjunction with the factors discussed in the text.

13. Maximilien Quenum, *Au Pays des Fons*, (Paris, 1938), p. 54.

14. Kenneth Little, *Some Aspects of Urbanization South of the Sahara*, (Reading, Massachusetts), p. 31. Robert F. Stevenson, *Population and Political Systems in Tropical Africa*, (New York, 1968), p. 215.

15. Virginia Thompson, "Dahomey," *Five African States: Responses to Diversity*, Ed. Gwendolyn W. Carter (Ithaca, N.Y., 1963), pp. 183-196. R. Grivot, *Reactions Dahomeans*, (Paris, 1954), p. 103.

16. Claude Tardits, "Development du Regime D' Appropriation Privee des Terres de la Palmeries du Sud-Dahomey," *Aspects Sociaux de l' Industrialisation et l' Urbanization en Afrique au Sud du Sahara*, Ed. C. Darry Forde, (Paris, 1956), p. 313.

17. Adolph Alindele and Cyrille Aguessy, *Le Dahomey, Le Dahomey*, (Paris, 1956), p. 313.

18. Herskovits, pp. 63-77.

19. Manning Nash, "Machine Age Maya: The Industrialization of a Guatemalan Community," *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, Vol. 60, 1958.

20. Little, p. 31.

21. Karl Polanyi, *Dahomey and the Slave Trade: An Analysis of an Archaic Economy*, (Seattle, 1956), p. 54.

ting up his own household, (c) assistance to individual dokpe in performing the yearly bride service due his in-laws, (d) work in the fields of rich men whose dependent labor force is insufficient for a particular task, and (e) participation in the extensive funeral ceremonies establishing the ancestors of a local kin group.<sup>22</sup>

Such a cataloguing obscures the fact that the dokpe acquired these various roles over a period of three centuries, and in response to fluctuating ecological and political pressures that demanded internal adjustments of Dahomean society. The first three tasks form a complicated bundle at the core of the dokpe which discloses the shifting imbalance between available land and labor resources in pre-state Dahomey (sixteenth century). Certain endemic problems grew out of the relation between the ecological peculiarities of the gap of Benin,<sup>23</sup> and migration patterns of incoming groups. These groups refugees from neighbouring states, developed nucleated settlements to thwart would-be slavers and to control trade routes.<sup>24</sup> They possessed a system of segmentary, ranked lineages grouped into diffuse clans. Internal tensions naturally arose among agnatic kinsmen due to the gerrymandered trusteeship of land and labor resources in the groups' defensive sphere. An on-going contradiction developed between the expansionary fissioning process of the lineages with resultant labor loss, efforts to limit the economically active population within the group, and the necessity of maintaining a defensively viable unit.<sup>25</sup> Out of these disharmonious subsystems or elements, the dokpe arose a sufficient cross-cutting adjustive response. Local labor forces were coordinated through the leadership of the dokpegan, divisive differences in the productive capacities of the kin groups levelled, and the internal cohesion of the village promoted by the oblique extension of inter-group obligations.<sup>26</sup>

The dokpe overcame a special difficulty which was produced by an alternative response to resource imbalances slaving. Ultimately the descendants of slaves taken in raids prior to the expansion of European slaving practices were absorbed into the local populations. Thus this work force, initially without inheritance rights, finally brought increasing strain on the system of land tenure.

Besides the manifest productive activities, the second and third categories of dokpe activities indicate important socialization functions which participation involved. In the mutual exchange of goods (gifts of food and drink) and services (labor), reciprocal relations were fostered between antagonistic generations. But as with some African age-grades,<sup>27</sup> the dokpe nevertheless maintained the structural hierarchy imposed by the land tenure system. While reinforcing the material precedence and prestige of the elders who sponsored the dokpe (built up in part through years of service in the dokpe), rebellious tendencies among young men temporarily excluded from a say in lineage affairs were rechanneled into competitive labor on utilitarian projects.<sup>28</sup>

The fourth type of service mentioned in the catalogue-work in the fields of rich men has an entirely different origin than that sketched above. The dokpe was coopted as a king of corvée during the period of indigenous state development (17th through 19th centuries) by bureaucrats charged with coordinating the steadily expanding tribute-collecting apparatus.<sup>29</sup>

22. Herskovits, pp. 352-402.

23. Polanyi, p. 10, 11, 17.

24. Stevenson, p. 169, 218

25. Cf. Arnould, p. 12

26. The dokpe was the minimum labor resource to which all men had access regardless of rank or kinship relations. See Arnould, pp. 6-17.

27. See Philip and Iona Mayer, "Socialization by Peers: The Youth Organization of the Red Xhosa" *Socialization: The Approach From Social Anthropology*, A.S.A. Monograph 8, (London, 1970), pp. 159-190. Paul Spencer, "The Function of Ritual in the Socialization of the Samburu Moran," *Socialization by Peers*, p. 157.

28. Arnould, pp. 42-44, 64-66.

29. Diamond, p. 58.

The final category of activities, participation in the ritual affairs of local kin groups, appears to have arisen out of the more general attack of the state on the autonomy of the local groups. There seems to be no reason to discount an oral tradition which recounts how the early kings introduced new burial customs in Dahomey.<sup>30</sup> Bureaucratization and codification of the burial ceremonies and cult of the ancestors through concentrating ritual authority in a court-appointed dokpegan has been seen as an attempt to rechannel ritual priority and tribute to the royal court.<sup>31</sup> This seems plausible since this was the ceremonial apparatus which governed the transmission of rights in lineage, land and labor. Contrary to the state's intent, the codification of the ceremonies led to a reintegration of solidarity at the village level even if the autonomy of the lineage declined. This conservative, reintegrative response was due to the important roles already established for the dokpe and its traditional leader, the dokpegan, who personified male communality.<sup>32</sup>

This important event in the history of the dokpe and its continued importance in rural life and firm position in the social structure are reflected in its remarkable resiliency in the face of the efforts of the proto-state (17th through 19th centuries) to manipulate it for corvee labor and military conscription.<sup>33</sup>

### Factors Conditioning the Present Modifications of the Dokpe

I will now examine in greater detail the forces which are presently encouraging the disjunction of the dokpe with past roles, and the reorganization of the indigenous community under the self-reciprocating pressures exerted by culturative trends in modern Dahomey.

A decline in infant mortality rates, and in war and raiding deaths, improvements in medical care, and increases in economic surpluses due to the collapse of the kingdom's tribute-collecting apparatus spurred Fon parents to channel their more numerous progeny into mission and government established schools in the early part of this century.<sup>34</sup> This may be seen as a response to re-emergent pressures on labor resources, though less certainly than in the case of the origin of the dokpe. The form that such primary education has continued to take is such that it orients Fon youth (largely male) away from the life of rural horticulture and provides them with new goals and minimum skills necessary for administrative jobs. Nowadays, once entered upon a school career, few youths willingly return to rural life.<sup>35</sup> In fact they seek to escape from the network of reciprocal kinship obligations which they see as inhibiting realization of Western-style goals.<sup>36</sup> This large group of educated and largely disaffected people has been migrating to the cities en masse<sup>37</sup> only to find the swollen state bureaucracy and stagnant private sector of the economy has no place for them.<sup>38</sup>

In order to pay the steadily rising head tax and to purchase desirable imported commodities, poorer Dahomeans have taken to wage labor on newly consolidated plantations or on rural or former nobles' farms.<sup>39</sup> As a result, wealthy men frequently find it more economical to employ day laborers than to fete local dokpe, especially in the busy rainy season.

Paid occupational specialities and prestigious commodities intrude even more directly on the traditional sphere of dokpe activities. Nowadays, rather than convene a dokpe,

30. Herskovits, p. 66

31. Diamond, p. 58

32. Herskovits, p. 65

33. The state's attack, it should be noted, was necessarily muted by the dependence of its local agents on the fruits of dokpe's productive labors, particularly in horticulture and road-building.

34. Grivot, p. 29.

35. Quenum, p. 18

36. See P.C. Lloyd, *Africa in Social Change*, (Baltimore, 1966), p. 100 for a general discussion of his development

37. Grivot, p. 29

38. Thompson, p. 241

39. Tardits, p. 313



basis for this relation between land and labor was the continued existence of the corporate land-holding lineage which is now in a decline. Summarizing the factors involved, one must include gross population increases in lower Dahomey, and the end of the necessity for nucleated defensive units. The imposition of a cash economy has led to shifts in land tenure practices towards legal, contractual ownership of *alienable* property, and the development of plantation agriculture at the expense of small-holding.<sup>46</sup> It is particularly this last factor which has led to a decline in collective action in the sub-structure called the dokpe which arose from this basic structure.

By comparison, an activity in which the dokpe and the dokpegan still enjoy widespread prestige is the funeral ceremonies and ancestral cult. These ceremonies, an ideological bulwark of local social hierarchies,<sup>47</sup> remain strong in both urban and rural area even where the dokpe's other functions have been superceded. In fact, I postulate that whatever prestige still accrues the dokpegan in more instrumental spheres stems largely from his guardianship of the traditions surrounding the ancestral cult and the periodic reenactment of traditional belief. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that these ceremonies continue to be of importance, and not simply because of fear of ancestral retribution should they be discontinued, but because the allocation of rights in family land and other property, and the validation of existing hierarchies of authority takes place in these ritual contexts.<sup>48</sup> Given the increased potential for accumulation of capital, contingent upon the development of private property and a Western market economy in Dahomey, these ceremonies may be charged with even greater affect and anticipatory tension<sup>49</sup> than previously. The dokpegan continues to ease the kin group and the community through these difficult transitions by means of strict performance of associated rituals and unquestioning obedience to his commands.<sup>50</sup> The dokpegan's authority may then spill over into other areas since his power to intercede with the ancestors is continually reinforced.

Except among the most acculturated elements these ceremonies remain a crucial subsystem of the social machinery, but in urban areas there is a tendency to limit the number of participants and role of the dokpe, and to incorporate Christian rituals into the ceremonies. Where traditional ritual suffers, one of the most important supports for dokpe solidarity is undermined.

### Association Today

As a co-variant of the decline in economic value of the corporate land-holding lineage of community ritual in urban areas, and of consensual support for the dokpegan and lineage elders, the forms of social definition and differentiation provided by the dokpe have become outmoded and are increasingly seen as obstacles to personal goals.<sup>51</sup> It is in this context that voluntarism or "bonne volonte," a good-will predicate of self-interest, has emerged in rural areas, but this is just a remnant of old sanctioning mechanisms which once enforced participation in the dokpe. Thus, a labor party will not activate successfully unless there is a perceived probability of a future reciprocity among the group members. It took special pressures exerted by the Prefet, a prominent fonctionnaire, and the chief, including the offer of wages gathered village-wide, to induce the dokpe in a village near Abomey to build a new school/chapel. These new organizational difficulties are a source of anxiety to some while others appear indifferent to or unaware of the modifications in dokpe organization. Migrant laborers and students demonstrated the greatest sensitivity to the processes of change in the community, but the structural aspects of this modification go unperceived.

46. Tardits, p. 313.

47. Herkovits, p. 194.

48. See Jack Goody, *Death, Property, and the Ancestors*, (Stanford, 1962).

49. Goody, p. 276.

50. Herkovits, p. 365-6.

51. Compare Little, p. 31.

masons and carpenters will be called in to construct houses and compound walls of cement and corrugated metal, and to replaster older dwellings. This craft specialization, while alienating the dokpe from some of their more valuable roles, has also brought new models of wage labor into rural communities which affect dokpe organization and socializing functions. Refusals to work have occurred when prospective rewards offered the dokpe did not meet the group's expectation or the individual expectations of most acculturated youths.

Since the rise of the European styled state, which has incorporated the old kingdoms within its boundaries, traditional political hierarchies have been superceded in practice and thought.<sup>40</sup> The lines of political power have been redrawn. Locally, the village chiefs, frequently drawn from the ranks of the old noble families, have emerged as the primary political figures.<sup>41</sup> The chief who passes on the demands of the state to the populace reinforces his position through state sanctioning power and through control of taxes, a portion of which he appropriates for his own use.<sup>42</sup> Under the chief the dokpe seems to reassume the form of corvee: participants seek patronage or to pay a debt. The increased authority exercised by the chiefs since the collapse of the kingdom's bureaucracy has been accompanied by a decline in the authority of the traditional dokpegan who is largely excluded from access to the modern state's chartering power. He has become dependent upon the chief for support when he has no particular resources of his own.

The dokpegan's diminished prestige is only one aspect of the more general decline in power and prestige suffered by lineage elders. This decline may be traced in part to a perception on the part of their dependents of real and/or imagined alternative avenues to wealth and prestige. For example, younger officials are sometimes found in rural compounds whose economic clout far exceeds that of most elders. In addition educated youth and returned labor migrants with independent resources have contributed to the spread of new norms of interpersonal behaviour. This emergent two-track system, one traditional, one acculturative, has left the dokpe and the elders suspended in between two conflicting hierarchies with political, economic, and symbolic components.

The proximity of individuals with differing cultural experiences and expectations has occasioned sharp inter-generational competition for resources for diverging purposes and interpersonal ambivalence between migrants and stay-at-homes.<sup>43</sup> Potential dokpe are no longer united in a mutual appreciation of a given position in an accented social structure.<sup>44</sup> In short, there has been a breakdown in the consensus which formerly endured the participation by the whole community in the activities associated with the dokpe. I found many young men who have an acute perception of the dokpe as a marginal or interstitial social category which no longer serves their interests. In some cases one may even term the response to old obligations anomic and at least very alienated.<sup>45</sup> These developments are both cause and reciprocal effect of the breaking up of the lineage's politico-economic structure.

I have largely left to one side the question of the dialectical relation between land and labor which in a longer paper I postulate as the material heart of the origin and development of the dokpe. This imperative, in one form or another, maintained the institution until recently, but the quality of this relation has undergone considerable and unevent change due to many qualitative factors, some of which were outlined above. The implicit

40. See Thompson, "Dahomey," for a general discussion of the new forms of political activity in Dahomey. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Elites in French-speaking West Africa: The Social Basis of Ideas," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 3 (1965) p. 133 for a discussion of the changing roles of elites.

41. Thompson, p. 169.

42. Thompson, p. 168.

43. Cf. Wallerstein, "Elites in French-speaking West Africa," p.17 for a general comparison.

44. Polanyi, p. 66.

45. Compare Yehudi Cohen, "The Establishment of Identity in a Social Nexus," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 66 (1966), pp. 529-552.

Despite apparent attacks on structural supports for the dokpe, the pattern of and need for collective action is still found in Dahomey.<sup>52</sup> But other types of extra-kin associations formed by the intersection of new variables have arisen not as alternatives to, but as replacements for the dokpe in the society which is on the verge of an evolutionary transformation in social relations. All these associations exhibit voluntary recruitment procedures to a greater degree than the dokpe and reflect a new emphasis on individual goals and Western structures and interests. By the same token official government-sponsored groups, like agricultural cooperatives with enforced recruitment, have not been successful.

In some cases the new associations ensure participation through - traditional forms of ritual contract which carry the threat of supernatural sanctions.<sup>53</sup> The tontine, with an emphasis on egalitarian participation, frequently uses such sanctions. This organization bears some similarity to the old craft guilds, in that resources are pooled by means of periodic individual contributions which are then payed out to a single individual as his name comes up on a rotating roster.

As one moves away from this form of association into clearly transplanted associations like the labor unions, the boy scouts, or other youth groups, with established hierarchies of offices, participation is ensured through a clear-cut community of interest and structural position.

A youth group located in Abomey was particularly interesting in this regard. Both a bureaucrat and several members acknowledged that this organization had replaced the old dokpe for educated youth: the members felt it was inappropriate for them to engage in manual labor.

However, the association still provides them with an arena for display and achievement through theatre and sports groups. It has a large number of offices both traditional and modern which distribute prestige. The official made it clear that the group was encouraged in order to provide a kind of "appeasement" status for urban youth and to keep them out of subversive political activity and delinquency. It also provides the framework for socialization of new norms of national patriotism and fraternity. The administration's fear of uncontrolled youth is well founded. Lacking secure productive roles in society these people have contributed to the overthrow of several governments.

Thus I postulate that there is also a probable link between voluntarism in the traditional dokpe and the development of new extra-kin associations in which membership reflects shifting individual interests, transformed by modernizing pressures in Dahomey. But both the idea of voluntarism in the dokpe and the types of associations characterized by voluntary recruitment and participation now found in Dahomey mark a transitional phase in social relations between compulsory, adjustive associations which emerged in the kinbased society, and the loose friendships and shifting associations which are characteristic of European class-based society.<sup>54</sup> This is not to argue a deterministic convergence in the global development of associations. Dahomey will continue to reflect the peculiarities of that society,<sup>55</sup> but inasmuch as Dahomey seems to be moving toward a neocolonial class-based society, associations there and in Europe may come to differ not so much in function and structural position as in form and manifest purpose.

The point I am most interested in making is that made by Meillassoux<sup>56</sup> that voluntary associations and voluntarism in West Africa indicate the existence of new social dilemma and represent the point of convergence of many social forces. That such groups come into

52. Quenum, p. 232

53. W. J. Argyle, *The Fon of Dahomey: A History and Ethnography of the Old Kingdom*, (Oxford, 1966), pp. 161-167 gives an extensive of imperfect discussion of contracts and supernatural sanctions.

54. Compare Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Concept of man in a Capitalist Society*, (Cambridge, 1971).

55. This is implicit in the argument of Little in *Some Aspect of Urbanization south of the Sahara*.

being and dissipate at a high rate and that traditional associations have undergone dissolution in many cases is not so much a problem as indicative of the acculturative functions of the former, and that the adjustive functions of the latter no longer correspond to social reality. The emergence of voluntarism in the dokpe is simply one manifestation of this momentary social event.

There is a minor counter-current to "bonne volonté" in the local dokpe which I have not yet noted. When it was asked of elders what could be done to insure the participation of young men in the dokpe, a frequent response was that physical sanctions could and would be applied as in the old days. I found it impossible to record more than one definite case in which this defence of the elders' authority occurred. I suspect that such threats were largely wishful thinking. The royal pretenders to whom complaints of this nature may be brought hardly have the authority to carry them out as they did in pre-colonial days. Offenders can simply disappear from a few days until the affair blows over. The absence of complicity with the modern state on this matter has limited the ability of local leaders to carry out physical punishments without inordinate increases in inter-generational conflict and a subsequent decrease in the dokpe's efficiency.

### Conclusion

In this paper I have used the dokpe as an example of the confusion which results from the indiscriminate application of the term cooperative labor group or voluntary association to groups whose structural position in society is not fixed. Using the diachronic approach one finds that even though the same native label is applied, the characteristics of the dokpe have frequently changed in response to factors external to the function of that group. Using what criteria or what dimension, therefore, is one to call the dokpe a voluntary association, mutual aid society, self-interest group, or whatever? The crucial questions seem to relate to the group's failure, as an example of an adjustive, cross-cutting institution with compulsory membership and participation, to become an adaptive tool of resocializing forces in a changing society. In the case of the dokpe we have seen that it has been largely unresponsive to the latter functions and may be called a voluntary association only negatively, and in opposition to its former pivotal role in Fon society.

I stress again the need to pay attention to the particular characteristics of associations in their social context rather than to lump them under one or a multitude of convenient but fuzzy labels. It seems crucial to keep an historical perspective in mind especially in regard to associations which have persisted through time in order to determine the potential of these associations to become transformed or superseded by social currents extrinsic to the associations themselves.

Finally, I hope that I have also shown that voluntarism is an ideal which should be treated separately from the concept of voluntary association. It does not seem that voluntary association is a diagnostic label. Voluntarism may constitute a basic organizational principle of the diverging associations which characterize a period of rapid social change. But, it may effect participation only. On the other hand, one can see that at a certain stage in the development of social relations, voluntarism may emerge in formerly compulsory associations either as a remnant of former sanctions or a transfusion from new non-compulsory associations. Of this the dokpe is an eloquent example.

56. McIllassoux, p. 146.

\*This article is derived from Alfred O. Ukaegbu, "Marriage and Fertility in East Central Nigeria: A case Study of Ngwa Igbo Women." Chapter 5. An unpublished Ph.D thesis held by the University of London and submitted in October, 1975.

**RURAL FERTILITY IN IMO STATE OF NIGERIA\***

by

ALFRED O. UKAEGBU, Ph.D.\*\*  
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Perhaps one part of Nigeria where socio-economic planners know little or nothing about its demographic characteristics is the eastern sector. For Nigeria as a whole, and, in deed, for most of tropical Africa, the scarcity of reliable statistics is a great problem. With specific reference to Nigeria, reliable statistics for planning purposes are needed, not only at the national level, but also at the local and state levels where regional differences may make nonsense of the basic data employed for planning at the national level.

In the absence of a useful national population census, the demographic characteristics of the south-western sector of Nigeria are being accumulated by means of social surveys, thanks to the activities of the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (Ibadan), Department of Sociology (Ibadan), Institute of Population and manpower studies (now Department of Demography and Social Statistics), (Ife), and Human Resources Research Unit (Lagos), etc. Social and economic planners can thus draw from the reservoir of information from these bodies.

With respect to the eastern sector of the country however, the picture is different. Until now very little or nothing has been done to obtain plausible demographic estimates of the region. Ekanem (1973) attempted to derive certain indices from a KAP survey of parts of eastern Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> Hitherto the scanty ideas available about the demographic characteristics of the region had depended upon the incomplete and the controversial population censuses of 1952/53, and 1963 respectively.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to add to the scanty data in the eastern Nigeria by the application of a single retrospective demographic inquiry. Further, the results of the analysis presented here could provide a more valid basis for intelligent guessing in the process of socio-economic planning in the eastern States, especially in the Imo State which is the survey state, than the above census data.

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\*This article is derived from Alfred O. Ukaegbu, "Marriage and Fertility in East Central Nigeria : A Case Study of Ngwa Igbo Women" Chapter 5. An unpublished Ph.D thesis held by the University of London and submitted in October, 1975.

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1. Ita I. Ekanem, "Fertility in Eastern Nigeria." Paper presented at the Workshop on Population Research in Africa. Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research. Lome', Togo, July 1973.
2. Examples of such studies include: (a) E. Van de Walle, "An Approach to the study of Fertility in Nigeria." *Population Studies*, Vol. XIX (1), 1965, p. 5 ff; (b) A. J. Coale and F. Lorimer, Summary of Estimates of Fertility and Mortality in Tropical Africa." *The Demography of Tropical Africa*. W. Brass et al., Princeton University Press, 1968, pp. 179-186. (c) H. J. Page and A. J. Coale, "Estimates of Fertility and Child Mortality in Africa South of the Sahara." Seminar on Population Growth and Economic Development. University College, Nairobi, 14-22 December, 1969; (d) P. O. Olusanya, "Population Growth and Its Components: The Nature and Direction of Population Change." *Population Growth and Socio-Economic Change in West Africa*. eds., J. C. Caldwell et al. The Population Council, New York 1975.

## Methodology

The Ngwa Igbo currently married women who live in the southern portion of the Igbo region were selected to typify the fertility characteristics of the area. This clan unit was selected because its population density compared closely with the average rural density of the entire Igboland (compare 578 and 605 persons per square mile respectively for the survey area and the entire rural Igboland).

A three stage cluster sampling with a fixed sample size in each cluster and with probability of selection proportional to size in 1963, was used to select a total sample of 1,672 wives, representing 37 per cent of all eligible wives in 16 sample villages. The interviewing was made in August and September 1974 by a core of 20 teachers specially trained for the survey work.

Because the sampling frames used at the various stages were not unbiased estimators of the eligible women, the final sampling frames were weighted to restore the balance in the sampling fractions. The weighted data (comprising a total of 2,466 cases) thus formed the basis of the analysis and results presented in this paper. A full description of the sampling scheme is given elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

The measures of fertility described below were derived from the responses of the survey wives to the questions about the following: (i) total children ever born alive to the woman; (ii) total live births to the woman in the past twelve months; (iii) total female children ever born alive to the woman; (iv) total female live births to the woman in the past twelve months. The data from those questions were applied to all women 15-49 years old enumerated in the survey households, assuming that all births occurred to currently married women in these age groups. This assumption implies that all births occurring to widows who themselves constituted 5.6 per cent of all the women aged 15-49 years, were excluded from the estimations—a factor which could lower the fertility levels estimated in this paper.

The level of fertility has been determined in terms of the following indices: (i) total fertility rate, that is, the average number of children born alive to women up to the end of their child-bearing period at age fifty; (ii) crude birth rate; (iii) gross reproduction rate; and (iv) net reproduction rate. Because the recorded age and fertility data were affected by age mis-reporting among women, it was necessary to correct the fertility data before any estimates could be made. The problem then was to find a way of identifying the proportions of women whose ages had been misreported in each age group, and to re-allocate them together with their births into their true age classes.

The method employed for this correction was that developed at the Office of Population Research, Princeton University and described by Van de Walle in 1968.<sup>4</sup> The method assumes that the nature of the transfers is such that women who misreport their ages are shifted only from one age class to the next either backward or forward. The method is also flexible in that it enables the correction of both the current and the retrospective fertility data under three assumptions, namely:

- (i) that the transferred women have a lower than average fertility and parity, their fertility being only half of the fertility of the women recorded in their real age classes;

3. See, A. O. Ukaegbu, "Marriage and Fertility in East Central Nigeria: A Case Study of Ngwa Igbo Women." *op. cit.* Chapters 1, 2, and Appendices to Chapter 11.

4. E. Van de Walle, 'Note on the Effect of Age Mis-reporting'. *Demography of Tropical Africa*, by W. Brass et. al. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1968. pp. 143-150.

- (ii) that they have the same (average) fertility as the women in their real age classes;
- (iii) that they have above average fertility than women in their real age classes, their fertility being one - fourth higher.

In this paper the possible ranges of age specific fertility rates and mean parities under the three assumptions are presented for purposes of comparison with the recorded fertility data. However, the closeness of the second assumption to the recorded fertility data indicated the need to give greater attention to it in preference to the others. Accordingly, the data on the assumption of same fertility were smoothed by the application of the polynomial functions calculated by Brass.<sup>5</sup> Thus the basis of the estimation of fertility levels is the smoothed and corrected data.

## Results

### *Total fertility rate (TFR) and Age specific fertility rates (ASFR)*

The absolute distribution of births in the past twelve months to women by age group of those women is shown in the Appendix Table 1. The data on births in the past twelve months was used to determine the shape of the age specific fertility distribution, and also to determine the total fertility. The responses to the question on total children ever born alive were combined with the data on births in the past twelve months to determine the total fertility rate by the application of the Brass' method of estimating TFR in developing societies.<sup>6</sup>

Table 1 presents the data on the recorded, corrected, and smoothed ASFRs per thousand women and their relative distributions. The recorded ASFRs represent more or less a plateau in the age groups 25-34 years, peaking only slightly in the age group 25-29 years. But graduation of the corrected ASFRs locates clearly the peak of the fertility curve at the age group 25-29 years. See figure 1.

Generally the ASFRs are high between the ages 20-24 and 34-39 years and low in the youngest and oldest age groups of women. Graduation of the data showed that the ASFRs in the age groups 15-19 and 45-49 years are about equal, representing just under 4 percent each of the total fertility. In all these conditions the total fertility is high, varying between 7,500 and 7,900 per thousand women, and settling around a mean of 7,600 per thousand women.

Attempts were made to adjust the total fertility rate for possible under-reporting of births arising from memory errors especially among the older women, and from faulty measurement of the reference period of twelve months by all women. The method employed for this adjustment was the Brass' fertility technique mentioned above. This method assumes, among other things, that: (a) the chief source of error in reporting births in the past year is imprecise reference period; (b) the younger women report the number of children ever born with good accuracy; and (c) all births occur in marriage. Thus the requirements for locating and calculating the adjustment factors are the ratio of the ASFR of the young women aged 15-19 years to the ASFR of the women aged 20-24 years, and the mean age of fertility distribution ( $\bar{m}$ ). The calculation of the adjusted TFR by the application of the method is presented in Table 2.

5. W. Brass, 'The Graduation of Fertility Distribution by Polynomial Functions.' *Population Studies*, XIV (2), November 1960, (Table 1), p. 151, (Local fitting), pp. 156, 157.

6. W. Brass, 'Uses of Census or Survey Data for the Estimation of Vital Rates.' Paper presented to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, African Seminar on Vital Statistics, Addis Ababa, December, 1964.

**Table 1.** Recorded, Corrected and Graduated Age Specific Fertility Rates per Thousand Women under Assumptions of Lower, Average, and Higher than Average Fertility, Ngwa Igbo, Nigeria, 1974.

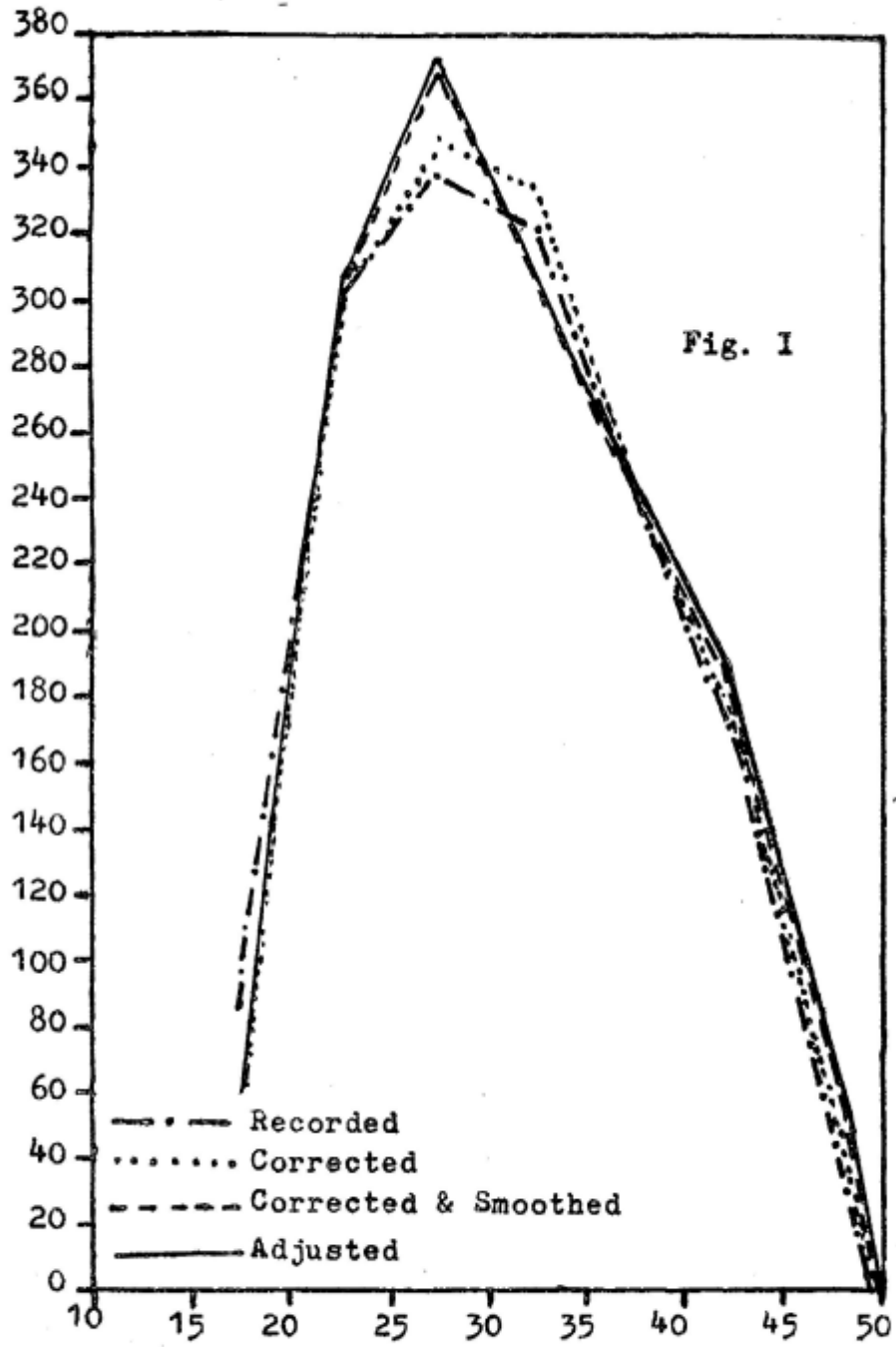
Age group (years)	Corrected under assumptions of:-												Graduated under assumption			
	I				II				III				II			
	ASFR	%	ASFR	%	ASFR	%	ASFR	%	ASFR	%	ASFR	%	ASFR	%	ASFR	%
15-19	86.0	5.7	80.8	5.4	60.6	6.8	87.1	5.5	59.1	3.9	300.0	19.7	300.0	19.7	300.0	19.7
20-24	300.4	19.8	279.1	18.7	299.2	27.3	308.5	19.6	300.0	19.7	300.0	19.7	300.0	19.7	300.0	19.7
25-29	338.7	22.3	344.2	23.0	348.1	25.6	350.0	22.2	369.8	24.3	350.0	22.2	369.8	24.3	369.8	24.3
30-34	324.2	21.4	321.4	21.5	335.7	20.0	335.7	21.3	301.2	19.8	335.7	21.3	301.2	19.8	301.2	19.8
35-39	240.6	15.9	236.5	15.1	241.2	11.6	247.1	15.7	244.8	16.1	247.1	15.7	244.8	16.1	244.8	16.1
40-44	172.3	11.3	183.1	12.3	172.2	6.7	183.1	11.6	189.8	12.5	183.1	11.6	189.8	12.5	189.8	12.5
45-49	54.3	3.6	59.6	4.0	64.2	2.0	64.2	4.1	55.4	3.7	64.2	4.1	55.4	3.7	55.4	3.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,516.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,494.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,521.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,575.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,520.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,575.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,520.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,520.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total fertility</b>	<b>7,582.5</b>		<b>7,473.5</b>		<b>7,606.0</b>		<b>7,878.5</b>		<b>7,600.5</b>		<b>7,878.5</b>		<b>7,600.5</b>		<b>7,600.5</b>	



Table 2. Estimation of the total fertility rate by the application of the Brass' fertility method, Ngwa Igbo, Nigeria, 1974.

Age group (year)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
		$f$	Cumulative fertility $F$	Multipliers $K$	$fk$	$F + \frac{fk}{F}$	Mean parity $\frac{fk}{F}$	Ratio $\frac{P}{F}$	Adjusted on $f_3$
		(2)	(3)	(4)	(2) $\times$ (4) = (5)	(3) + (5) = (6)	(7)	(7) $\div$ (6) = (8)	(9)
15-19		0.2995	0	.351	.094	.094	.1145	1.22	0.3025
20-24		1.5000	0.2995	.554	.831	1.1305	1.0720	0.95	1.5150
25-29		1.8490	1.7955	.596	1.102	2.8975	2.9285	1.01	1.8675
30-34		1.5060	3.6445	.616	.928	4.5725	4.5710	1.00	1.5211
35-39		1.2240	5.1505	.639	.782	5.9325	5.9310	1.00	1.2362
40-44		0.9490	6.3745	.679	.644	7.0185	7.0160	1.00	0.9585
45-49		0.2770	7.3235	.794	.220	7.5435	7.5390	1.00	0.2798
Total fertility rate		7.6005	7.6005						7.6806

Note: (i)  $f_1/f_2 = 0.200$ ;  
(ii)  $\bar{m}$  calculated from the recorded data = 30.8 years;  
(iii)  $\bar{m}$  estimated (from the formula:  $\bar{m} = 2.225 (P_3/P_2) \div 23.95$ ) = 30.0 years — the basis of estimation.



The P/F ratios are smooth from the age group 20-24 to the oldest. A P/F ratio of unity is reached, not at the age group 20-24 but at the next higher age group, 25-29 years confirming a late start of child-bearing. Although the method suggests the use of the  $P_2/F$  ratio as the adjustment factor for every other ASFR, in this case, the  $P_3/F_3$  ratio was considered to be the more realistic adjustment factor. The resulting estimate of TFR of 7.68 is not, however significantly different from the graduated TFR or from the other unadjusted rates indicating that errors arising from memory lapse or poor reference period or both were probably minimal and insignificant.

In order to check the consistency of the estimate of the TFR a method devised by Brass and considered useful when large age errors are suspected in the fertility data was applied to the recorded data. The method is expressed as follows:<sup>7</sup>

$$\frac{CT}{W} = F \left[ \frac{n-m}{n} + \frac{P}{2n} (m(n-m) - 40) \right]$$

Where:

- W. = the total number of women aged 15-44 years;
- CT = the total number of children ever born to them;
- m = the mean of the age specific fertility distribution minus 15 years;
- P = the average proportional change in the number of women over 15-44 years (a downward slope makes P negative);
- n = the age range;
- F = the total fertility rate.

The merit of this method is that it is not affected by the pattern of age mis-reporting since all women are considered together. Applying it to the recorded fertility data with an estimate of  $\bar{m} = 30$  years, the resulting estimate of TFR is 7.32. This estimate of TFR is only 3.7 per cent and 4.5 per cent below the recorded and the adjusted TFRs respectively. Thus the above results indicate that the total fertility rate in Ngwa Igbo probably lies between 7.3 and 7.9.

### Total children ever born alive

In situations where the existing data on current fertility either do not exist or, where they exist, are considered unreliable, the average number of children ever born alive to women aged 50 and over may be used to approximate the total current fertility. Sometimes where both sources of data do exist they may be compared in order to examine changes in fertility levels. In this study attempts were made at this kind of comparison, but the limitations imposed by the choice of the sample population upon the parity data could only allow for the comparison of the women under 50 years of age. The most important limitation is that about a third of the women aged 50 years and over were widowed and the calculation of mean parities excluding them would have biased the results significantly because some of those widows might have completed child-bearing before their widowhood. Other less important problems relate to the tendency for the women aged 35-39 years to over-re-

7. W. Brass, 'The Derivation of Fertility and Reproduction Rates from Restricted Data on Reproductive Histories.' *Population Studies* Vol. 7, Section 2, 1953/54, pp. 137-66.

port their live births, or perhaps, to have recorded a temporary excess of births at some stage of their family formation and which was not shared by their neighbouring age cohorts; some of the women aged 40 years and over might have omitted some of their children, especially those who died in infancy.

Table 3 presents the data on the mean parity of women aged 15-49 years. The recorded data are shown along with the corrected and the smoothed mean parities, and they are all compared with the recorded TFR of 7.6 children. This comparison shows that the completed family size, when unsmoothed, may be lower than the current fertility by about 10 per cent. However, the smoothed mean parity suggests that both the current and the retrospective fertility are about the same, indicating that there is more or less no appreciable changes in fertility levels between the younger and the older women.

### Crude birth rate (CBR)

In the absence of under-reporting of current births and of the total population of the survey households, children born alive in the past twelve months are used to provide a measure of the crude birth rate. The recorded CBR is 50.0 per thousand, and the recorded crude death rate is 20.4 per thousand, implying a rate of natural increase of 29.6 per thousand or a rate of population growth of 2.96 per cent per annum. An attempt was made to check the recorded CBR by deriving a CBR from a stable population model based upon the reported age distribution of all females in the survey households. It was assumed that the female population had some features of a stable population, such as stable age structure and fairly stable fertility, with mortality declining slowly. The Coale - Demeny 'West' model was used for this exercise.<sup>8</sup> The resultant estimates of female birth rates obtained

Table 3. Recorded, Corrected and Graduated Mean Parities by age group of Women, Ngwa Igbo 1974.

Age group (years)	Recorded	Corrected under assumption of:			Graduated under assumption II Average parity
		I Lower parity	II Average parity	III Higher parity	
15-19	.183	.165	.181	.185	.114
20-24	1.245	1.058	1.210	1.245	1.072
25-29	2.710	2.735	2.755	2.675	2.928
30-34	4.409	4.099	4.116	4.123	4.571
35-39	6.501	5.106	5.557	5.187	5.931
40-44	6.125	6.667	6.667	6.667	7.016
45-49	6.810	6.860	6.890	6.911	7.539
Total	3.998	3.813	3.911	3.856	4.167
Index: TFR 7.60 = 100.0	89.6	90.3	90.7	90.9	99.2

Note: The index (total fertility rate as recorded) is compared with the mean parity at the age group 45-49 years.

8. United Nations, *Manual IV. Methods of Estimating Basic Demographic Measures from Incomplete Data*. (New York), ST/SOA/series A/42, pp. 100, 101.

by attributing the characteristics of the selected model population to those of the survey female population are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Derivation of birth rates based on the reported age distribution of Ngwa Igbo females by the application of a stable population model, Ngwa Igbo, 1974.**

Stable Population Model :		Coale - Demeny 'West' Stable Population		
Age (yrs.)	C (x) Reported proportion up to age (x)	Values of various C (x) in female stable population with r = 3.1%		Birth rates from proportion in column 2
(1)	(2)	Level 11 (3)	Level 13 (4)	(5)
5	.183	.196	.180	.0473
10	.333	.350	.332	.0465
15	.477	.479	.457	.0513
20	.589	.594	.563	.0509
25	.665	.674	.651	.0496
30	.741	.746	.724	.0505
35	.791	.805	.875	.0479
40	.846	.853	.835	.0496
45	.887	.891	.786	.0503

The birth rates were derived by the conventional method of interpolation between relevant age distributions from the selected mortality levels. The female CBRs thus derived range between 46.5 and 51.3 per thousand. Considering the median value at age 25 as the approximate CBR for females, the male CBR can be estimated, given a sex ratio at birth of 1.037<sup>9</sup> and assuming a sex ratio of 1.03<sup>10</sup> for the whole population. The male birth rate is obtained from the expression:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Male CBR} &= \text{Female CBR} \times \frac{\text{Sex ratio at birth}}{\text{Sex ratio of the total population}} \\ &= 49.6 \times \frac{1.037}{1.03} = 49.9 \text{ per thousand.} \end{aligned}$$

The estimate of the total birth rate was calculated from the female birth rate directly from the expression:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total CBR} &= \text{Female CBR} \times \frac{\text{Female population}}{\text{Total population}} \times (1 + \text{Sex ratio at birth}) \\ &= 49.6 \times \frac{7.269}{14.053} \times 2.037 = 52.3 \text{ per thousand.} \end{aligned}$$

It will be seen from these estimates that the crude birth rate in Ngwa Igbo probably lies between 49 and 53 per thousand.

9. The recorded sex ratio at birth (125.3) is unrealistic. Sex ratio at birth was therefore, estimated by grouping children aged 0-14 together by sex.

10. A sex ratio between 1.02 and 1.04 males per female is considered to be the African standard. See, United Nations, *Manual IV, op. cit.*, p. 51.

### Gross reproduction rate (GRR)

The gross reproduction was estimated on the basis of responses to the questions of female live births in the past twelve months and the number of female children ever born to women as well as by the application of stable population models to the recorded age composition of women. Both the recorded and the corrected female ASFRs and the mean female parity yielded an identical result of GRR of 3.4, giving the impression that the female births were probably completely reported. The implied TFR on the above GRR is 6.9, an underestimate of 10 per cent from a TFR of 7.6. What seems likely is that female births were under-reported or that female children's mortality was higher than male children's mortality. This assumption is based upon the fact that the reported sex ratio of children aged 0-4 years was as high as 117.1 males per 100 females, and the sex ratio at birth was reported to be 125.3.

Since both the reported and the corrected GRR were unsatisfactory, an alternative method of estimation of GRR was considered. On the assumption that fertility is constant and that mortality has either been constant or declining slowly, the GRR was estimated by selecting a suitable stable population model and attributing to the actual population age distribution the characteristics of the stable population as in the case of the CBR above. The same levels of mortality employed in the estimation of the female CBR were used to estimate the GRR. In addition, an intermediary mortality level (level 12) was included by interpolation between levels 11 and 13. For each of the models selected the corresponding GRR was either read off or interpolated between adjacent models. The results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Gross reproduction rates derived from the Coale-Demeny 'West' Stable Population Models for the Ngwa Igbo women, 1974.**

Index:	Mortality Level					
	11		12		13	
	$e_0^o = 45 \text{ yrs.}$		$e_0^o = 47.5 \text{ yrs.}$		$e_0^o = 50 \text{ yrs.}$	
(age)						
$C(x)$	( $\bar{m} = 29$ )	( $\bar{m} = 30$ )	( $\bar{m} = 29$ )	( $\bar{m} = 30$ )	( $\bar{m} = 29$ )	( $\bar{m} = 30$ )
Years						
0-4	3.82	3.98	3.51	3.65	3.22	3.35
0-14	3.64	3.80	3.58	3.73	3.51	3.65
0-14						
15-44	3.66	3.82	3.59	3.74	3.51	3.65
10	3.86	4.04	3.55	3.70	3.25	3.38
20	3.72	3.88	3.66	3.81	3.59	3.73
25	3.54	3.76	3.49	3.63	3.43	3.57
30	3.59	3.74	3.54	3.68	3.48	3.62
35	3.93	4.11	3.63	3.78	3.34	3.47
40	3.53	3.52	3.49	3.63	3.44	3.58
45	<b>3.56</b>	3.71	3.53	3.67	3.48	3.62

Considering the estimate of  $\bar{m}$  (30.0 years), it will be seen that the estimate of the GRR for proportions of the population over 10 years lie between 3.5 and 3.74 whether the  $\bar{m}$  is assumed to be 29 or 30 years, and these estimates will yield a TFR between 7.1 and 7.6.

### Net reproduction rate (NRR)

In the absence of a suitable life table for Nigeria, the NRR was estimated by the application of stationary populations as substitute life tables. Suitable model life tables from both the Coale-Demeny 'West' model and the Brass' model life tables which bracket the proportions of the female population aged 15-49 years, and also contain the estimated proportions of children dying at ages 2, 3, and 5 were selected. As in previous estimations, the NRR was estimated in the conventional way by applying the corrected female ASFRs to the female life table probability of daughters surviving from birth to age x. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Net reproduction rates estimated from model life tables for Ngwa Igbo women, 1974.

<i>Model Life Table:</i>					
<i>Coale - Demeny 'West' Model</i>			<i>Brass' Model</i>		
<i>Mortality Level (Females)</i>			<i>Mortality Level</i>		
11	12	13	50	55	60
o c = 45 yrs. o	o c = 47.5 yrs. o	o c = 50 yrs. o	o c = 45 yrs. o	o c = 47.5 yrs. o	o c = 50 yrs. o
2.10	2.21	2.36	2.23	2.34	2.44

The table shows that the net reproduction rate probably lies between 2.1 and 2.4.

### Population growth rate (r)

Estimating the population growth rate is made difficult because of the unavailability of previous data upon which the rate could be calculated. However, the stable population models used in the estimates of the CBR, GRR, and NRR bracket growth rates varying between 2.8 and 3.6 per cent per annum. As shown above in connection with the CBR, the difference between the reported CBR and CDR indicated a rate of population growth of 2.96 per cent per annum.

### Estimate of the true rate of natural increase

The substitute model life tables from the Coale-Demeny and the Brass' model, at the mortality levels 12 and 55 respectively were used to calculate the mean length of generation (30.5 years) and the true rate of natural increase in the conventional way from the expression:

$$r = \left( \frac{1}{T_x} \right) \log_e R_0$$

where:-

- Tx = the mean length of generation;  
 Ro = the net reproduction rate;  
 r = the true rate of natural increase.

The resulting estimate of r is 2.7 per cent per annum.

### COMPARISON OF THE FERTILITY INDICES WITH PREVIOUS ESTIMATES

A quick summary of the fertility indices estimated for the Ngwa Igbo above is necessary to facilitate comparison with previous estimates by independent researchers who used sources other than a single, retrospective, demographic inquiry. For the Ngwa Igbo, the CBR was estimated to lie between 49 and 53 per thousand; the TFR between 7.3 and 7.9; the GRR between 3.5 and 3.74; the NRR between 2.1 and 2.4. Although the choice of plausible values within these ranges is a matter of personal discretion, the results of the analysis in this paper indicate that a choice of CBR of 50 per thousand, TFR of 7.6, GRR of 3.6, NRR of 2.3 and a growth rate of 3 per cent per annum may be approximately correct. These indices provide evidence that the Ngwa Igbo of the East Central State of Nigeria contains one of the high fertility rural populations in Nigeria. It is against this background of high fertility that comparisons of the indices of fertility can be made.

Both Table 7 and Figure 2 represent data on the estimates of the TFRs and ASFRs in selected parts of rural Nigeria (especially from the south-eastern Nigeria) by a number of independent researchers. Considering first the age specific fertility rates, it will be seen from figure 2 that:

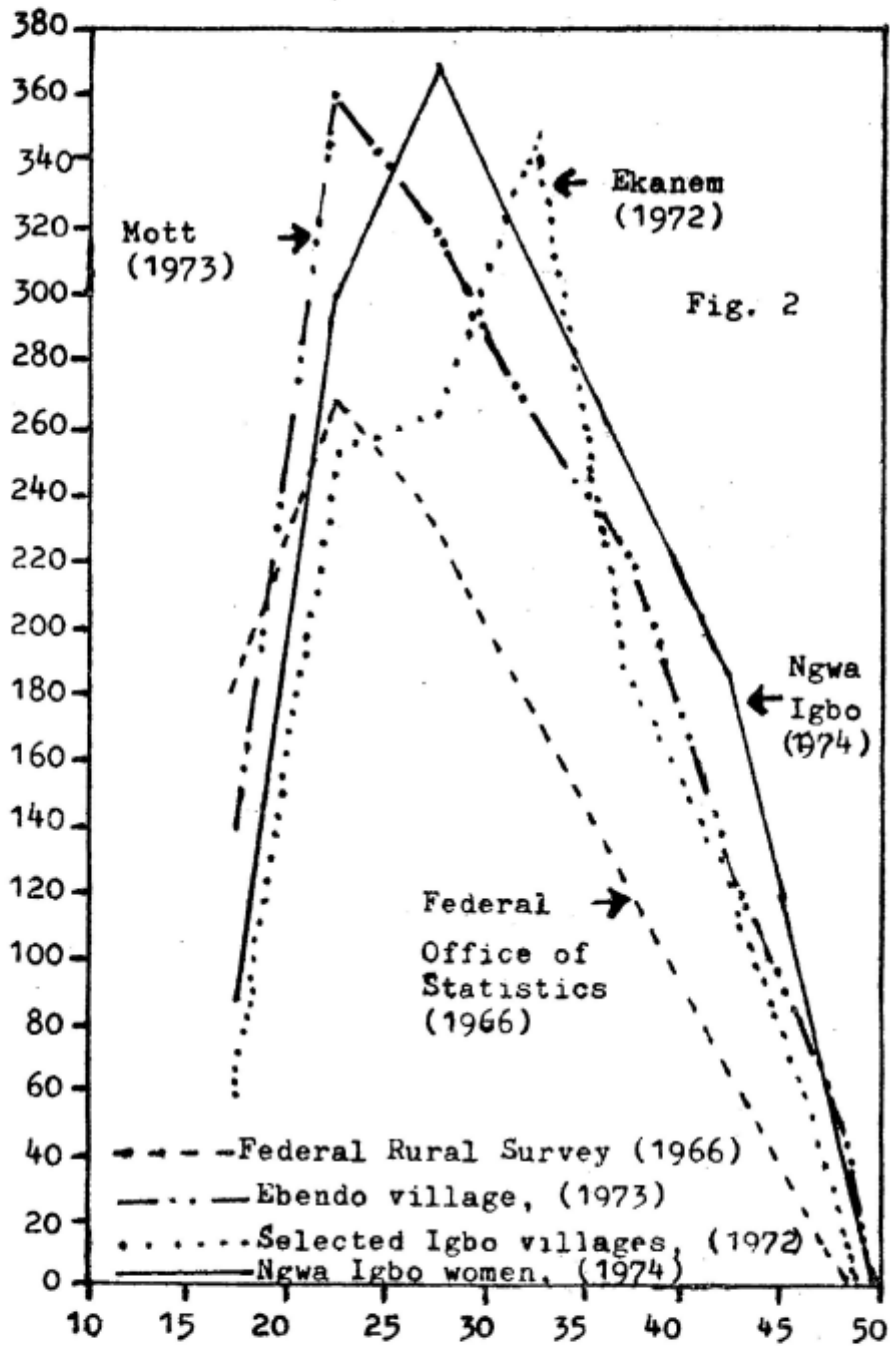
Table 7. Comparison of estimates of total fertility rates in selected parts of rural Nigeria.

Rural Nigeria	Ngwa Igbo	Selected rural Igbo	Owerri province (Igbo)	Mbioto Ibiobio villages	Ebendo village (Mid- Western Igbo)	Rural Western State	Rural Mid- Western State
(1966) <sup>a</sup>	(1974)	(1972) <sup>b</sup>	(1952/53) <sup>c</sup>	(1971) <sup>d</sup>	(1973) <sup>e</sup>	(1971) <sup>f</sup>	(1971) <sup>h</sup>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
5.42	7.68	6.28	8.10	8.00	7.40	6.80	8.90
Index: Col. (1) = 100.0	141.7	115.9	149.4	147.6	136.5	125.5	164.2

Note: The dates in parenthesis refer to the years of collecting the basic data, not to the years of publication of the reports.

- Sources: a. Federal Office of Statistics, 'The Rural Demographic Sample Survey: 1965-66. Lagos. October 1968.  
 b. Ita I. Ekanem, 'Fertility in Eastern Nigeria'. Op. cit., 1973.  
 c. H. J. Page and A. J. Coale, 'Estimates of Fertility and Mortality in Africa south of the Sahara'. op. cit., 1969.  
 d. D. Lucas, *Ibibio/Kwale Survey, Draft Report on the 1971 Mbioto Enumeration*. Human Resources Unit, University of Lagos, 1973.  
 e. F. L. Mott, *The Dynamics of Demographic Change in a Nigerian Village*. Human Resources Research Unit, University of Lagos, Monograph No. 2, 1974.  
 f, g. G. M. Farooq and I. I. Ekanem, 'Early Demographic Transition: The Case of South-Western Nigeria'. op. cit., 1974.





- (a) the fertility rates in the Igbo - speaking rural Nigeria are much higher than the rural average for the country as a whole;
- (b) in the age group of women 15-19 years, the ASFRs of the Igbo women tend to be lower than the overall national average during the reference period;
- (c) the fertility rates of the Igbo women tend to reach a peak later than other rural women in Nigeria, suggesting a relatively late age at marriage or age at first child-bearing.
- (d) at the older ages (40 years and over), the fertility rates of the Igbo women are comparatively higher than the national average, suggesting a greater unwillingness among the Igbo women to cease child-bearing until they reach menopause.

The data in Table 7 show that the total fertility in parts of Eastern Nigeria exceeds the national rural average by 40-49 per cent in all but Ekanem's study.

The estimates of fertility levels in Ngwa Igbo confirm earlier reports of Van de Walle,<sup>11</sup> Coale and Lorimer,<sup>12</sup> and Page and Coale that the level of fertility is very high in Eastern Nigeria. Even though the above researchers made use of the incomplete Nigeria Population Census of 1952/53 in the estimation of fertility indices, yet the results obtained from the survey data of the Ngwa Igbo are markedly similar with the earlier ones. Those earlier reports estimated the CBR in the Eastern Nigeria to lie between 51 and 55 per thousand; GRR between 3.5 and 4.1; and TFR between 7.1 and 8.1. The indication that the level of fertility has been more or less stable during the past twenty years separating the collection of basic data is clearly demonstrated by comparing the mean values of three fertility indices obtained from these sources—1952/53 Nigeria Population Census and the Survey Data from Ngwa Igbo (1974):-

Source of data	Fertility indices:- (mean values)		
	CBR	GRR	TFR
(i) 1952/53 population census (eastern Nigeria)	53	3.8	7.6
(ii) Ngwa Igbo survey data	51	3.6	7.6
% difference from (i)	-4.0	-5.6	—

The differences between the earlier and the current estimates are trivial no matter the technique of estimation.

Notable deviations from the above estimates are those reported by Olusanya<sup>13</sup> and Ekanem. Using the Nigerian Population Census data of 1963 Olusanya estimated for the eastern Nigeria a CBR of 55.7 per thousand, and a GRR of 3.2. In comparison with the above estimates this CBR represents an over-estimation by 11 percent, and an under-estimation of the GRR by 11 per cent judging from the results of the Ngwa Igbo. In comparison with Van de Walle's estimates, Olusanya's estimates of the GRR is even lower by

11. E. Van de Walle, 'An Approach to the Study of Fertility in Nigeria'. *Population Studies*, 19 (1), July 1965, pp. 5-16.

12. A. J. Coale and F. Lorimer, 'Summary of Estimates of Fertility and Mortality in Tropical Africa'. *Demography of Tropical Africa, op. cit.*, pp. 179-186.

13. P. O. Olusanya, 'Population Growth and its Components, the Nature and Direction of Population Change: *Population Growth and Socio-Economic Change in West Africa*. edited by J. C. Caldwell et. al. The Population Council, (New York), 1975.

16 per cent. The apparent inconsistency in the estimates based upon the Nigeria population census of 1963 is an indicator of the poor quality of the basic data used for the estimation.

The second lower estimate was reported by Ekanem who used the data obtained from a KAP survey of selected villages in the East Central State of Nigeria. He recorded a CBR of 43 per thousand, a GRR of 3.2, and a TFR of 6.3.<sup>14</sup> Again, in comparison with the results from the Ngwa Igbo, Ekanem's results are 14, 11 and 17 per cent, respectively, lower than those of the Ngwa Igbo. Yet the two surveys were taken two years apart, in 1972 and 1974 respectively!

It is doubtful whether Ekanem's results would suggest a falling trend in fertility. Recent studies in the neighbouring States of Nigeria do not give support for a declining rural fertility in the south-eastern sector of the country. Instead, they tend to indicate that the entire Niger Delta region of southern Nigeria (comprising the then East Central, South Eastern, Rivers, and the Mid-Western States) probably forms a high fertility belt. Other studies in recent years which provide additional clues for this observation include those of Lucas on the Mbioto Ibibio of the South Eastern State (1974); Mott on the Ebendo Mid-West Igbo village (1974); and Farooq and Ekanem on the rural population of the Mid-Western State.<sup>15</sup>

In their respective survey areas, Lucas reported a TFR of 8.0, Mott reported a TFR of 7.4, and Farooq and Ekanem reported a TFR of 8.9. Whereas these estimates compare closely with a TFR of 7.6 in the Ngwa Igbo, they show substantial increases over a TFR of 5.4 reported for the entire rural population of Nigeria in 1966 by the Federal Nigeria Office of Statistics. Even in the rural Western and Kwara States of Nigeria, the TFR of 6.8 in either case which was reported by Farooq and Ekanem is lower than the estimates in the Ngwa Igbo, Mbioto, and the rural Mid-Western areas by 10.5, 15, and 24 per cent respectively.<sup>16</sup>

### Conclusion

The fertility indices of the Ngwa Igbo are high enough to confirm earlier reports of Prothero<sup>17</sup> and Stevenson<sup>18</sup> that rural eastern Nigeria has one of the densest rural populations in Africa. The fertility indices from the Igbo region and its neighbouring ethnic groups are also high enough to warrant the proposition that the entire Niger Delta region of Southern Nigeria is probably a zone of highest rural fertility in West Africa, and certainly one of the highest rural fertility zones in Nigeria.

The fact that current estimates of the level of fertility still compare closely with earlier reports based upon the data obtained in 1952/53 suggests that the fertility level in the Igbo rural area has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years or so. With a birth rate of over 50 per thousand and a death rate of about 20 per thousand, the product of these two factors is a rate of population growth that appears to settle around 3 per cent per annum—a growth rate rarely observed elsewhere in West Africa.

14. I. Ekanem's adjusted rates are, however, higher: the adjusted CBR is 50 per thousand, and the adjusted TFR is 7.1.

15. G. M. Farooq and I. I. Ekanem, 'Early Demographic Transition: The Case of South-Western Nigeria'. Paper presented at the Inaugural Conference of the Population Association of Africa, University of Ibadan, 9-14 May, 1974.

16. G. M. Farooq and I. I. Ekanem, *Ibid.* p. 14.

17. M. R. Prothero, "The Population of Eastern Nigeria". *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, (7), 1955, pp. 165-70.

18. R. F. Stevenson, *Population and Political Systems in Tropical Africa*. (New York), Columbia University Press, 1968. p. 190.

## Appendix

The method of correction of the recorded fertility and parity data involves the fitting of a model stable age distribution to the actual female population. Any differences observed in their relative distributions are assumed to be due to transfers of women from one age class to the next as a result of error in the estimation of their ages. Other assumptions of the method include: (a) that the youngest age group of females (who do not give births) are correctly reported; (b) that the nature of the transfers is such that women who estimate their ages wrongly shift only to the adjacent age classes either backward or forward. Thus, the missing women in the age group 15-19 are shifted either to the age group 10-14 or to the age group 20-24 years.

Correction begins by calculating the proportions of the recorded and stable female populations per 1000 and taking the cumulated difference in each age group. The cumulated differences (stable minus reported) represent the proportions per 1000 women who misreported their ages. Having identified the proportions of transferred women in each age class, the recorded ASFRs and mean parities can now be corrected under three assumptions, namely,

- (i) that the transferred women have the same (average) fertility as the women in their true age class; or (ii) that they have lower than average fertility, their fertility (parity) being only half of the fertility (parity) of the women in their true age class; or (iii) that they have higher than average fertility (parity), their fertility (parity) being one-fourth higher. For fuller details of the methods of computing the corrected ASFRs and mean parities, the reader is referred to: Brass et al, *Demography of Tropical Africa*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1968, pp. 143-50. The absolute distribution of current and retrospective fertility by age group of Ngwa Igbo women when corrections have been made is given in the Appendix Tables 1 and 2 respectively. These distributions form the basis of the results presented in this paper.

**Table A1. Recorded, Stable and Corrected numbers of live births in the past twelve months to women by age group, Ngwa Igbo, 1974.**

Age group (years)	Recorded		Stable		Corrected under assumption:		
	Women	Births	Women	Births	I Lower fertility	II Average fertility	III Higher fertility
15-19	814	70*	792	76	64	48	69
20-24	556	167	645	188	180	193	199
25-29	555	188	520	179	179	181	182
30-34	367	119	420	139	135	141	141
35-39	399	96	340	72	77	82	84
40-44	296	51	273	51	50	47	50
45-49	221	121	218	12	13	14	14
Total	3,208	703	3,208	717	698	706	739

**Note:** \* Includes 7 births reported by women under 15 years;  
 † Includes a birth reported by a woman over 49 years.

**Table A2. Recorded, Stable, and Corrected numbers of children ever born alive to women by age group, Ngwa Igbo, 1974.**

Age group (years)	Recorded		Stable		Corrected under assumption:		
	Women	Births	Women	Births	I Lower parity	II Average parity	III Higher parity
15-19	814	149*	792	161	131	143	146
20-24	556	692	645	782	682	780	803
25-29	555	1,504	520	1,428	1,422	1,433	1,391
30-34	367	1,618	420	1,890	1,722	1,729	1,732
35-39	399	2,594	340	1,953	1,705	1,889	1,764
40-44	296	1,813	273	1,808	1,820	1,920	1,820
45-49	221	1,505	218	1,536	1,496	1,502	1,507
Total	3,208	9,875	3,208	9,558	8,978	9,296	9,163

**Note:** \* Includes 7 births to women under 15 years.

## RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL FACTORS IN FERTILITY BEHAVIOUR

By ADEYEMO ADERINTO

**Introduction, Scope and Objective**

The study of fertility differential between various population groups has become increasingly important in recent years. Interest in differential fertility emanates from the desire for rapid economic growth through the control of excessive population growth. Most of the studies on fertility differentials have shown fertility to be linearly and negatively associated with Socio-economic status whether measured by income, occupation or education. This pattern has been so consistent over the years that it has almost assumed the force of law particularly in the relation between fertility and education.

Of equal importance to Nigeria, is the relationship between fertility and religion. Such knowledge about the relationship between fertility and religion is crucial for both the designing and implementation of population policy programmes. In this field, not many studies have been done. Ekanem in his study of the correlates of fertility in Eastern Nigeria made this remark— "It is difficult to be sure how much of the observed fertility in a given community can be ascribed to religion per se"<sup>1</sup>.

Ekanem reported a higher fertility rate for catholic than that for the non-catholic. This higher fertility rate among catholics is always explained by the fact that catholic have a pro-natalist attitude whereas attitudes more favourable to family planning and limitation are found in other non-catholic religions. If this proposition is valid, we would expect a higher fertility rate among the catholic than among other religions.

The evidence regarding the strengthening of differentials in fertility by religion also came from a private survey by the Survey Research Centre at the University of Michigan U.S.A. The authors stated in 1963 that "in contrast to the contraction of fertility differentials or most of the variables discussed here, religious differences in fertility are larger and are apparently growing"<sup>2</sup>. The authors found that the fertility rates are highest for catholic, intermediate for protestants, and lowest for Jews.

The fertility differential among religions has its roots in the attitudes toward family planning. Roman Catholic teaching, which praises celibacy in religious vocation, holds procreation to be, not a general duty, but rather an obligation for those who choose to marry. The ground for this procreational duty as Pope Pius XI indicated is the "increase and multiply" injunction in Genesis<sup>3</sup>. This was later modified by Pope XII in 1951. After referring to the procreative duty of married couples state that "serious reasons such as those found in the medical, eugenic, economic and social indications" can exempt for a long time, per-

\*Adeyemo Aderinto is a Research Fellow in the Human Resources Research Unit of the University of Lagos. I am grateful to Dr. Mott, one time Population Council Consultant to the Human Resources Research Unit for his collaboration during the early stage of the research. However I am solely responsible for any errors in the article.

<sup>1</sup>I. I. Ekanem, "Correlates of Fertility in Eastern Nigeria" Nigerian Journal of Social and Economic Study Vol. 16, No. 1 March 1974 p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>C. F. Westoff, et al., Family Growth in Metropolitan America (Princeton, 1961).

<sup>3</sup>Genesis 1.28 9: 1, 7. These injunctions did much to shape the pronatalist ethos of historic judaism, the religious duty later being defined as the procreation of at least two children. On contemporary Judaism see R. M.

haps even for the whole duration of marriage from this positive duty"<sup>1</sup>. As regard family planning devices, Pope Pius XII made it clear that in regard to means, any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offence against the law of God and of nature. Thus, it is held that any conjugal act involving a physical or chemical barrier to the union of sperm and ovum is vitiated in its integrity or essential nature and hence is gravely sinful. The traditional recommendation of abortion was extended by Pius XII in these words: "Every attempt on the part of married couple during the conjugal act or during the development of its rational consequences, to deprive it of its inherent power and to hinder the procreation of new life is immoral"<sup>2</sup>.

In one sense, the protestant methods have been more pro-natalist than other branches of christianity in that marriage has been viewed as a religious vocation. Furthermore, Luther regarded procreation more as a blessing than a command. The contemporary protestant consensus on responsible parenthood holds the marital act to be the servant of the "one flesh" union and that husband and wife are free to use the gift of science to serve the needs of that union, whether to facilitate conception or to limit it. This decision requires that various considerations be weighed: The prospect for health of future child, the right of children to love and nurture in the full sense, the health of the mother-wife, the claim of the couple's vocation etc. As regard the type of family planning devices, the principles stressed in various statements, are that the methods be mutually acceptable to husband and wife, injurious to neither spouse nor to new life, and sufficiently effective to meet the need of the couple<sup>1</sup>.

If religious belief and practices play important role in fertility behaviour, we will also expect a very high fertility rate among the moslems. The strong pro-natalist orientation of Islam stems less from direct injunction to "increase and multiply" than from the support of conditions which make for higher fertility. Children are viewed as among the richest blessings granted by Allah. Predominant among the pro-fertility factors is the prevalence of polygamous marriage. Celibacy is contrary to the ethos of Islam; a man who abstains from marriage because he is terrified of a family can't belong to Islam. The marriage permissions given the man in Sura IV, 3 stressed the importance of marriage and motherhood for the status of woman. Similarly the sanction for the early marriage of a widowed or divorced woman, all contribute to the prevalence of marriage state. Another factor is the positive value attached to sexual intercourse with the bond of marriage, a value reflected in moslem concepts of Paradise.

The most important pro-natalist factor in Islam stems from a strong belief in the active providence of Allah. It is Allah who creates sexuality and determines pro-creation or barrenness. "He multiplieth you in the earth"<sup>1</sup>. A tradition once quoted the prophet as saying, "whichever soul is destined to come to this world shall come"<sup>2</sup>. The concept of predestination gives a strong sense of fate to the ethos of Islam which undoubtedly does much to sustain high fertility patterns. Since this includes trust in the beneficent characteristic divine providence, any question of restricting the number of offspring tends to appear as lacking in piety.

<sup>1</sup>R. M. Fagley "The population Explosion and Christian Responsibility" (New York 1961) p. 101.

<sup>2</sup>Address to Italian Catholic Union of Midwives (October 1951) A. As 43, (1951) p. 832.

<sup>1</sup>R. Freedman, D. Goldberger and D. Stesinger "Current Fertility Expectations of married couples in the United States" *Population Index* Vol. 29, No. 4, (1965) p. 378.

<sup>2</sup>F. M. Fagley, "Doctrine and Attitudes of Major Religions in regard to fertility" World Population Conference Bgrade 1965 Vol. 2, (Un. 1967) p. 82.

In this paper we shall attempt to answer three main questions: Are there any differences in the Fertility behaviour of different religious groups among the university of Lagos Junior and intermediate staff (subsequently referred to as Junior staff). If so, does the pattern of differences conform with the traditional model? If not, what are the probable factors explaining the deviation from the model. For our present purpose, we will select catholic, protestant and moslem as the three main religions in Nigeria. The study is divided into four parts. The first part deals with the data for the study and methods used to obtain them, the second deals with the socio-economic characteristics of the survey, third with fertility attitudes and family size and the fourth with the discussion of the findings:

Specifically, the following hypothesis were tested:

- (1) Moslems are more polygamous than other Religions.
- (2) Moslems have more children per family unit than christians and similarly Catholic have more children than protestants.
- (3) An average Christians is more educated than an average Moslem.
- (4) Marriage type is a function of education, specifically the poorly educated are more likely to have polygamous marriage than the more and better educated.

### Methodology

The data upon which this paper was based were originally collected by Dr Frank Mott from a sample survey of 444, about 40 percent of the junior staff of the University of Lagos. The survey was carried out in March 1974. The interviewers were Dr Mott's second year Sociology students<sup>1</sup>. A complete list of junior staff was obtained and a stratified sample was selected. To reduce the level of bias, the number of samples chosen were proportionate to the total size of each sub-group in the total population of the University of Lagos. Thus of the total sample of 444, 95 (21.4 percent) were catholics, 242 (54.5 percent) protestants, 91 (20.5 percent) were moslems, the remaining 16 (3.6 percent) were either traditional or non-religion.

### Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of The Sample

Analysis of the age composition of the data (in Table 1) shows that 46.5 percent are between 20-29 years old, 36.4 percent in the 30-39 years age category and 17.1 percent are 40 years or above. When this is analysed on religious basis, it is observed that the catholic and the moslem are over represented in the 40 year old categories than their proportion to the total sample: while the protestant is over represented in the young age 20-29 more than its proportionate share of the total sample.

From the perspective of education (Table 2) an average junior staff is a drop-out from the various educational levels. 276 (i.e. 62.6 percent) were drop-out and only 37.4 held various certificates. In addition, 34.4 percent have primary or less education, 50.9 percent attended secondary education (completed or not completed). Only 14.6 percent (65) had more than school certificates.

About 92 percent of the University of Lagos junior staff are married of which 78.4 percent were monogamous and 12.6 percent polygamous - Table 4. As would be expected the marital status changes with advancement in age. The proportion of non-married age 20-29 was 16 percent. This dropped to approximately 3 and 4 percent for age

<sup>1</sup>Sura LXVIII, 24 of XLII 49-50: This is a major theme in the Quran.

<sup>2</sup>The data were given to the present author when Dr. Mott who carried out the original survey was leaving the University after the expiration of his contract appointment with the population Council.



cohorts 30-39 and above 40 years respectively (Table 10). Another important observation is that over 50 (39 out of 56) percent of those who were polygamously married were above 40 years old. Secondly over 66 percent of those with polygamous marriage have only primary school or less education (Table 4). From this, one could make a tentative conclusion, subject to further empirical research, that the type of marriage tends to be somehow associated with both education and age. In table 4 the percentage of polygamous marriage falls with improvement in education, from 24.2 percent from primary or less education to 7.5 percent and 3.1 percent for secondary and post-secondary respectively.

## **The Findings**

### **Hypothesis 1:**

In any multi-religious/cultural society like Nigeria there is an inherent tendency to attempt to compare the various religious and cultural values. Such a comparison has centered on the association of the various religions with the type of marriage systems prevailing in the society. There is such belief that the moslem are more polygamous than the christian religions. Islam for example, through the teaching of Mohammed has a tradition for marrying many wives. On the other hand the christian religion, be it catholic or protestant, was handed over with a tradition of celibacy or at best monogamy. To test this hypothesis, the respondents were asked: How many wives do you have? Since we want to examine the impact of religion, the analysis was made on religious basis. Of the 40 unmarried junior workers, 20, 50 and 25 percent are catholic, protestant and moslem respectively. 348 people (i.e. 78.4 percent) married only one wife. Table 5 shows the distribution of monogamy 21.3 percent are catholic, 58.6 protestant and 16.7 moslem. The proportion of monogamy is considerably lower for moslem. Similarly the data on polygamous marriage showed the following distribution:- 23.2 percent for catholic, 32.1 percent for protestant and 41.1 percent for moslem. Although the proportion of monogamous marriage was found very low for moslem, it has the highest rate of polygamy. When each religion is examined with regard to the degree of polygamous marriage, 25.3 percent of the moslem family population is polygamous compared 7.4 percent for protestant and 13.7 percent for catholic. This confirms the tendency of a higher polygamous marriage among the moslem.

### **Hypothesis 2:**

The corollary of this conclusion is that the moslem family size is larger than the christian family and that even among the christians an average catholic family has a larger number of children than an average protestant family. This proposition emanates from the fact that if moslem marriage ordinarily is polygamous one would expect the number of children in the family to be larger, each wife competing for children, each one trying to outpace the other.

When the question was asked, what do you consider the "best number of children"? The responses are analysed in Table 6. The catholic indicated 5.1 children, protestant 4.9 and the moslem 5.1. Although there appears to be some differences - the "best number" is highest for catholic and lowest for protestant as expected, the difference is not significant at 5% level. To reduce the level of abstraction a more direct and more intimate question was asked. This was - How many children do you desire to have? Table 7 gives the result. Moslem desire many more children than both catholic and protestant at age below 30. But at older age 40 and above, catholic desires slightly more children than the other two religions. However when we applied chi-square analysis, the differences are not statistically significant at 5 percent level. One consistent pattern that should be observed, is that older workers of any religion desire more children than the younger ones. We also analysed the "number of children everborn" by religion in Table 8. Although there are minor variations,

the difference is also not statistically significant at 5 percent level. With 45 and at 5 per cent significant level the test statistics is  $X^2 = 61,656$ . The computed  $X^2$  from the data is 57.188. Testing the hypothesis  $H_0$  (No difference) we cannot reject the null hypothesis since it does not fall in the rejection region and we will conclude that there is not enough evidence to show difference in their mean "number of children everborn". Similarly the data on the number of children alive (Table 9) shows some variation but here again the differences are not statistically significant at 5% level of confidence.

### Hypothesis 3:

It has frequently been asserted that Islamic religion retards formal education in Nigeria. The relative educational backwardness of the Northern States of Nigeria vis-a-vis the Southern States have been associated, in the main, to the predominant influence of Islamic religion in the north. This belief has been maintained over the years although without the benefit of any statistical support. The question can thus be asked - is there any relationship between the religions and the level of education? Specifically are the christians more educated than the moslem?

Table 3 shows how the various religions are distributed among the various layers of education. There does not appear to be any consistent pattern of distribution. The distribution seems to be roughly the same with no religion scoring consistently higher than the others. When we compare the performance of christian vis-a-vis moslem the same inconsistent pattern is observed. When education is further broken down, we observed that no single university graduate fell into the sample for moslem. This may largely be due to sampling error. This conclusion is confirmed by "no difference" result from the chi-square analysis. This analysis shows that we do not observe any marked difference in the level of education of the junior staff based on religion. Therefore the analysis does not provide enough evidence that one religion is more predominantly represented in the lower echelon why another is over represented in the upper segment of the junior staff.

### Hypothesis 4:

The fourth and last proposition we examined was - that the poorly educated people are more likely to have polygamous marriage than the more educated ones. From tables 4 and 10 we examined first the percentage distribution of the sample for each educational level. From table 4 it could be seen that, of the 153 staff with primary or less education, 24.2 percent were polygamous. This contrasts with 7.5 percent for secondary and 3.1 percent for post secondary education. Also analysing the breakdown of the 56 polygamous marriages we found that 66 percent (37 out of 56) of this has primary school or less education and only 4 percent had education above higher school certificates level. All these indicate quite clearly the falling proportion of polygamous marriage with higher education. Of particular note is that of the 6 university graduates included in the survey, all of them married, none of them has a polygamous marriage. The conclusion of inverse association of polygamous marriage with higher level of education was found to be statistically significant at 1 percent level. Table 10 illustrates the tendency for the older workers to be polygamous than the younger ones. 38.1 percent of junior workers who are over 40 years old are polygamously married. This contrasts sharply with 5.9 percent and 9.2 percent for workers in 20-29 and 30-39 age brackets respectively. This corroborates our earlier finding that people age 40 years and above are predominantly represented in the category of people with primary or less education. The implication here is that older workers are less educated and have a greater tendency to marry more than one wives.

## Discussions

Analysis of the data on the University of Lagos junior staff yielded a number of important demographic conclusions.

Firstly, our finding upholds the common belief that the moslems are more polygamous than the christians. The tendency has its origin from the moslem marriage institution. According to Dudley Kirk, (1965) the traditional moslem family is strongly patrilinear and patrilocal<sup>1</sup>. Polygamy was customary and moslem doctrine prescribes that in the event of plural marriage, the husband must treat his wives equally. Divorce is theoretically easy, restrained, only by the fact that the husband must return the dowry with the wife. The doctrine is favourable to early remarriage of the widowed and the divorced. This contrasts sharply with the near-absolute celibacy doctrine of catholic and the emphasis on monogamous marriage by the protestant religions.

Secondly, although we have found higher rate of polygamous marriage among the moslem, our data did not support a significantly larger family size among them vis-a-vis other christian religions. We have in fact found that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean "number of children everborn" between the religions. Moslem doctrine holds that pleasures of the flesh and specifically sexual intercourse are a God-given virtue to be enjoyed and conjugal obligation to be fulfilled. While Islam imposes dietary restrictions and puristic injunctions relating to art and music, there is striking absence of the virtue that is placed on sexual asceticism in christianity and other religions. Consequently it is astonishing that our result did not uphold higher fertility among the moslem. A plausible explanation for this has to do with the sampling. Lagos is a highly urbanized city with a high degree of material development. The general belief of high fertility among the moslems is invariably based on the assumption, as Kirk himself stated, that—"all moslem countries have low indices of material development and except in tropical Africa, these are usually lower than those of non-moslem neighbours"<sup>1</sup>. This is completely different for moslems in Lagos. The moslems and the christians, having lived together for many years under the changing social conditions, it is quite normal to expect a certain interaction, a kind of dialogue between the community of believers to the extent that the values of one influence the others and vice-versa. Thus polygamy is probably more a spectacular feature of moslem institutions than a decisive fact of moslem natality.

Thirdly, our result did not support the claim of higher education among the christians than the moslems. This conclusion, however should be interpreted with a great deal of caution. The whole sample was taken from what we can call special area educationally, education being a sufficient conditions for working in that community. It may well be that if the samples were taken between two religiously stratified and geographically different areas such as North and South, our results would be different. As indicated above, the extent of social interaction and dialogue in Lagos may have changed the lower premium paid to education by the moslem institutions. However this investigation has not succeeded in demonstrating convincingly, that there is any difference in the level of education by religion. There may be a difference but further empirical investigation is needed to remove any skepticism in the matter.

Fourthly, we have found polygamy linearly and inversely associated with the level of education. Thus with the spread of higher education throughout Nigerian, it could be expected that the moslem institutions which lend support to polygamous marriage system will give way. The effect of this change on fertility behaviour is however unclear.

<sup>1</sup>Dudley Kirk, "Factors Affecting Moslem Natality" *World Population Conference* (1965) Vol. II p.1 54-1Ibid.

## Conclusions

We may conclude that an understanding of the attitude and practices of the community of believers is necessary for a full picture of the position of a given faith in relation to fertility. However to establish a correlation between religious affiliation and differences in fertility behaviours or desired size of family is only a first step. More sophisticated instrument and analysis are required to distinguish the influence of religious teaching and beliefs from that of closely associated non-religious factors. This is a complex exercise. The complexity begins with the intervening of religious beliefs and ethnic mores and folk-ways which help to give colour to the total religious mosaic but which need to be distinguished. An analysis of such ethnic differences is necessary to determine the full significance of differences between the religious communities. The non-statistically significant differences in religious fertility behaviour is important to Nigeria in many respects. First the claim that family planning programmes would be inhibited in the moslem communities has no statistical justification. It may well be that the religious difference in regard to fertility are narrowing, as concern for a smaller and better educated family continues to spread. Secondly, that more important factor of fertility behaviour is education and the organizations concerned with family planning are well advised to stress the role of proper information in terms of methods and cheap means of family planning.

TABLE 1

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF JUNIOR STAFF BY AGE AND EDUCATION

<i>Age</i>	<i>Primary or Less</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Post Secondary</i>	<i>Total</i>
20-29	19.9	66.0	14.1	100.0
30-39	37.7	45.0	17.3	100.0
40+	67.1	22.4	10.5	100.0
	34.5	50.9	14.6	100.0

TABLE 2

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS JUNIOR STAFF BY CERTIFICATION AND ETHNICITY

	<i>Drop-Outs</i>	<i>Graduates</i>	<i>Total</i>
Yoruba	178 (59.1)	123 (40.9)	301 (100.0)
Non-Yoruba	102 (71.3)	41 (28.7)	143 (100.0)
	280 (63.1)	164 (36.9)	444 (100.0)

**TABLE 3**  
**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF JUNIOR STAFF BY EDUCATION AND RELIGION**

Religion	Primary or Less	Secondary	Post Secondary	Total
Catholic	28.1	18.5	13.8	(21.4)
Protestant	50.3	57.3	58.0	(54.7)
Moslem	21.6	20.0	20.0	(20.5)
Others	-	4.2	9.2	( 3.4)
	100.0	100.0	100.0	444 (100.0)

**TABLE 4**  
**NUMBER OF WIVES BY EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS**

Education	0	1	2+	Total
Primary or Less	8 ( 5.2)	108 (70.6)	37 (24.2)	153 (100.0)
Secondary	22 ( 9.7)	187 (82.7)	17 ( 7.5)	226 (100.0)
Post-Secondary	10 (15.4)	53 (81.5)	2 ( 3.1)	65 (100.0)
	40 ( 9.0)	348 (78.4)	56 (12.6)	444 (100.0)

**TABLE 5**  
**NUMBER OF WIVES BY RELIGION OF RESPONDENTS**

Religion	0	1	2+	Total
Catholic	8 (20.0)	74 (21.3)	13 (23.2)	95
Protestant	20 (50.0)	204 (58.6)	18 (32.1)	242
Moslem	10 (25.0)	58 (16.7)	23 (41.1)	91
Others	2 ( 5.0)	12 ( 3.4)	2 ( 3.6)	16
	40 (100.0)	348 (100.0)	56 (100.0)	444

**TABLE 6**  
**BEST NUMBER OF CHILDREN BY RELIGION**

Religion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Row Total	Mean Value
Catholic	3	0	3	6	16	27	20	1	5	7	88	5.1
Protestant	5	2	1	12	67	76	39	8	8	7	225	4.9
Moslem	2	0	4	6	22	15	16	4	3	7	79	5.1
Others	1	0	0	2	6	5	0	0	0	1	15	4.3

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\*The total does not add up to 444 due to non-responses by 37 respondents.

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## ETSU NUPE MUHAMMADU AND THE BRITISH, 1900-1916

By C. N. UBAH

One of the principal characters in the history of British occupation and administration of Northern Nigeria in the first two decades of the present century was Muhammadu, Makun Bida and later Etsu or Emir of Nupe.<sup>1</sup> Nupe territory was part of the Western portion of the Sokoto Caliphate which came into being as a result of the nineteenth century *jihād* led by Usman dan Fodio, and currently it is included in the Niger state under Nigeria's nineteen state structure. Briefly put, what at present is known about Muhammadu is that he was installed Etsu Nupe after the Royal Niger Company's military expedition against that emirate in 1897,<sup>2</sup> that he was later dispossessed by Etsu Abubakar whom the Company's forces had dethroned,<sup>3</sup> and that he was finally restored by the Lugard administration following another military action which brought Nupe under effective British occupation in 1901. Little or nothing is known about the Makun's role in the Anglo Nupe war of 1901 which resulted in the fall of the emirate and the restoration of Muhammadu as emir. The Makun occupied the Nupe emirship in the critical years of British administration during which profound social and administrative transformation took place, but again his place in the history of Nupe during this period has received no attention from scholars.

This paper is an attempt to fill part of the existing gaps in our understanding of modern Nupe. First, Muhammadu is presented as a diplomat whose skilful efforts to avert the Anglo-Nupe war of 1901 were thwarted by men and circumstances beyond his control. In the second place, an attempt is made to demonstrate that as an emir he recognized the limits of his power in the context of a colonial regime, a situation which substantially accounted for the relative facility with which colonial innovations were introduced into Nupe.

It was as Makun Bida and next in the line of succession that Muhammadu prepared for the Royal Niger Company's invasion of Nupe in 1897. With the subjugation of Nupe and the flight of the Emir Abubakar the Makun was promoted to the emirship, but Abubakar later returned and reinstated himself after the withdrawal of the Royal Niger Company's forces. The company was in too wretched a state to mount another war, and in 1899 it formally ratified the *fait accompli*. Adeleye has convincingly shown that during the period of hostility between Nupe and the Company the Makun remained loyal to the emir.<sup>5</sup> Muhammadu's acceptance of the emirship can be justified on the ground that for all practical purposes there was a vacancy in the position and the Muslim community could not be left leaderless.

In 1900 Lugard took over the administration of Northern Nigeria and inherited at peace agreement reached under Abubakar between the Company and the Nupe. A lasting peace under the new protectorate administration seemed an illusion, and soon there was a considerable deterioration in Anglo-Nupe relations. Another military confrontation appeared

1. 'Makun Bida' was one of the principal offices of state in Nupe emirate. 'Etsu' was the traditional title of the Nupe.
2. J. E. Flint, *Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria* (Oxford, 1966), p.254.
3. Flint, p. 298.
4. See also R. A. Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804-1906* (London, 1971), p. 229.
5. Adeleye, *op.cit.*, p.184.

highly probable, and once again the Makun's loyalty to the emir was subjected to a severe test. It was in these circumstances that Muhammadu played the role of an astute diplomat. He neither totally threw his lot with the emir nor made himself an instrument of British conquest. But he did not sit on the fence, ready to throw in his lot at the last moment with the eventual winner. In fact, the outcome of any renewed fighting between the two sides was at no time in doubt, so that a traitor's or a political adventurer's role was easy right from the start. But the evidence available at present suggests that the Makun placed the welfare of the Nupe people before his and Abubakar's future and was not interested in a war that could pave the way for his reinstatement. His aim was to seek peace and avoid war, and neither Abubakar's policy nor that of the British seemed to him likely to achieve this end.

At the very time the protectorate of Northern Nigeria was taken over by Lugard, another war between the British and the Nupe did not in the least seem likely. Abubakar had accepted the proclamation establishing a protectorate over his territory,<sup>6</sup> and on one occasion he sent a present of two bullocks to the High Commissioner through William Wallace,<sup>7</sup> a former agent of the Royal Niger Company and at the time the most senior of Lugard's subordinates. There appears to be no doubt that both the Emir of Nupe and the British officials were quite sincere in their original protestations of peace. But amicable relations could not be maintained for long largely because the price at which peace could be bought appeared too high and intolerable to both sides. A point which Lugard persistently stressed in his letters to Abubakar was that the latter should give up slave raiding and the plundering of neighbouring villages because these were acts which would bring him into trouble with the British.<sup>8</sup> He also required him to give up military collaboration with a colleague, the emir Ibrahim Nagwamatse of Kontagora, who bore the title of Sarkin Sudan. Abubakar denied that Ibrahim was engaged in offensive warfare, and claimed that his military actions were purely of a defensive nature. Though he did not say whether Lugard's charge of military co-operation with Kontagora was true or not, he made it clear that the two emirs inherited a tradition of mutual assistance in matters of warfare.<sup>9</sup> In a subsequent letter to Adamu Jakada, one of the most influential personalities in Lugard's espionage network, the emir claimed that he had ignored enemy challenges and insults just in order to be at peace with the British. He thought that the whitemen should be advised to intervene and stop further provocations.<sup>10</sup> It would seem that some of Nupe's neighbours and vassal groups were seizing the opportunity of the whiteman's presence to embarrass Abubakar militarily and politically and that in the opinion of the emir Lugard, who had forbidden him to fight, was doing nothing to call them to order.

By the end of 1900 Angol-Nupe relations had so much deteriorated that the outbreak of war between the two sides early in 1901 did not come to anybody as a surprise. The cause and course of that war have been adequately dealt with,<sup>11</sup> but what has not received attention is the strenuous effort made by the Makun to avert armed confrontation. Because of his relations with them during the days of the Royal Niger Company the Makun stood higher than Abubakar in the estimation of the whitemen after the transfer of the administration to Lugard. Neither the emir of Nupe nor the Makun knew anything of the head of the new protectorate government, so Wallace became the main link between the High Commissioner and the Bida administration. It was through Wallace that they learnt of the change of

6. *Ibid.*

7. N.A.K. S.N.P. 10/1/1, Arabic Letter Book No.1 (hereafter abbreviated *ALB*), p. 19. 'N.A.K.' refers to the holdings of the National Archives, Kaduna. The 'Arabic Letter Book' is a record of correspondence to and from the protectorate government and is an important source for this study.

8. *ALB* pp. 13, 37, 91.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 21 Abubakar to Lugard (undated).

10. *Ibid.*, p. 77, Abubakar to Adamu Jakada (undated).

11. Adeleye, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-9



government, and both men attempted to make friendship with Wallace a cardinal issue in their dealings with the protectorate government. Like Abubakar, Muhammadu sent through Wallace a present to Lugard when the latter assumed duty. Extant correspondence shows that he was in closer contact with Wallace and hence with the colonial administration than the emir. When Wallace was about to go on leave, Muhammadu asked to be directed to his successor.<sup>12</sup> One Davidson formally introduced himself as such and asked the Makun to be as friendly disposed to him as he had been to his predecessor.<sup>13</sup> Muhammadu had no difficulty in establishing amicable relations with Davidson, sending and receiving presents in kind.

Thus, though both the emir and the Makun made offers of peace and friendship to the British it was the Makun who made more serious efforts to get on well with them. British officials for their part communicated directly with the Makun in response to his own initiatives, quite often ignoring - except when they wanted to issue threats - the head of the administration at Bida. Perhaps from the very beginning the colonial administration was not quite favourably disposed towards the emir who had seized his position in defiance of the Royal Niger Company. Apparently, from the point of view of the British administration he had not done enough to repair his image. The Makun, on the other hand, not only deserved the sympathy of the new administration but had actually shown more enthusiasm for the British presence. In fact on at least one occasion when the emir launched an attack against one of the neighbouring tribes, the Gwari, the Makun did not hesitate to denounce the action and report the matter to Wallace.<sup>14</sup> But it was quite unlikely that by so doing the Makun sought to work down Abubakar's emirship in the hope of obtaining the position himself. On the contrary, the deprecated extreme measures which might result in British troops being unleashed against Nupe people once more. The Makun was aware that, as they had been constantly warned, war against neighbouring tribes was inconsistent with peace with the British and should be avoided. In bringing the issue of Abubakar's aggression to the attention of the British, the Makun did not simply mean to discredit the emir. Above all, he wanted to impress it on them that this was not the action of all Nupe people: it was only the emir's party that had embarked on war, while his own faction had remained committed to peace with the British.<sup>15</sup> Apparently, his calculation was that if the British insisted on taking retaliatory measures they might restrict their action to the offending party rather than mount a full scale war against the emirate as a whole.

One might be tempted to regard Abubakar as a nationalist and dismiss Muhammadu as a stooge of British imperialism. But, as we have already noted, both men had welcomed the imposition of British rule - certainly not out of choice. But the Makun appears to have realized to a greater extent than the emir that the power of the British had come to stay and that realism demanded that one should come to terms with it. To ignore or kick against it as Abubakar was at times inclined to do would be disastrous in its consequences. On the other hand, Muhammadu was not an uncritical supporter of the British. For instance, he did not close his eyes against what he regarded as acts of oppression and depredation committed by British troops from Wushishi stationed at Summaji, not far from Bida. Abubakar had bitterly complained to the High Commissioner of the conduct of this detachment of soldiers from Wushishi, and the Makun, whatever his disagreements with the emir on other issues, fully supported him. The Makun was in touch with Davidson on this development, but perhaps finding him unable or unwilling to intervene effectively, he sent

12. *ALB*, p. 49.

13. The Makun's letter reached Wushishi, the seat of Lugard's administration, after Wallace had proceeded on leave.

14. *ALB*, p. 37.

15. *Ibid*, p. 79. As Adeleye has shown (p. 228), there were by this time three political groups at Bida only one of which stood for war.

a note directly to the High Commissioner. He told Lugard that colonial troops were plundering their farms, beating up people and seizing their property, that he remained dedicated to peace but that British actions were not compatible with this end.<sup>16</sup> This letter, which was accompanied by a present, was not a threat but an appeal to the High Commissioner's conscience.

The charges levelled against British troops were denied by both Lugard and Carnegie, Davidson's successor. In a letter to the emir, the High Commissioner claimed that Nupe and Kontagora were committing more heinous atrocities against their neighbours than those which Abubakar had protested against, and he warned that unless Bida gave up 'robbery' and 'slave raiding' trouble was bound to ensue again between Nupe and the British.<sup>17</sup> In his own letter Carnegie told the emir that although the allegations were unfounded none the less they would be investigated; at the same time he ludicrously considered that it was unbecoming of a king 'to complain of his farm being raided when he and his people are treating others in like manner.'<sup>18</sup> These denials were not at all convincing and must have been frustrating to the Nupe administration. There is no doubt that some British troops constituted the kind of menace which was the subject of Nupe's protests, and irrespective of their opinion of Abubakar the British ought to have attached some importance to the views of the Makun. There were at least three letters from him to Davidson on this issue, and in what appears to have been his last despatch to the High Commissioner in this connection the Makun reaffirmed his peaceful intentions and passionately entreated him to withdraw the offending troops.<sup>19</sup> There is no indication that anything was done to reassure Nupe that the British were worried about their condition.

It was not only to the British that the Makun directed his appeal. He also attempted to communicate with people who were closely connected with the British administration and who, he believed, were in a position to present the Nupe case sympathetically. The best known of such efforts was his letter to Adamu Jakada in which he requested him to ask the High Commissioner to order his soldiers to put an end to the acts of oppression they were committing against the people of Nupe.<sup>20</sup> Significantly enough, Adamu Jakada was the trusted agent who, on the revocation of the Company's charter, had informed Abubakar of the establishment of a new administration which had no intention of dealing harshly with anyone or of tampering with his property. The emir himself informed Adamu Jakada that the behaviour of the whitemen constituted a breach of the treaty of peace and friendship entered into by the two sides.<sup>21</sup> Though he did not specifically request Adamu to mediate in the matter Abubakar no doubt expected him to discuss it with Lugard.

One cannot say exactly what role, if any, Adamu Jakada played in the crisis. It may have been quite inconsequential. What is certain is that by the end of 1900 the existing tension so far from diminishing actually continued to mount. On one occasion Abubakar's troops were involved in clashes with some whitemen who were trying to cross the Kaduna river.<sup>22</sup> This may have been the emir's reply to the turbulence of the Summaji detachment. Adeleye has shown that in December fear of Nupe - Kontagora combination alerted the British into organizing a preventive guerilla warfare against the two emirates<sup>23</sup>. Abubakar

16. *ALB*, p. 79, Makun to Lugard, late September, 1900.

17. *Ibid*, p. 91, Lugard to Abubakar, 6 October, 1900.

18. *Ibid*, p. 105.

19. *ALB*, p. 125.

20. *Ibid*, p. 73.

21. *Ibid*, p. 75.

22. *Ibid*, p. 135, Makun to Wallace.

23. Adeleye, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

had had occasion to deny all charges of robbery and slave raiding and had told Lugard not to listen to malicious rumours which were only aimed at inciting the British against the Nupe.<sup>24</sup> This was transparently no more convincing than Lugard's denial of the charges preferred against British soldiers at Summaji. However, the action against Bida was not decisive as the British troops led by Major O'Neill were unable to storm the city and seize the emir.<sup>25</sup> But a final assault on Bida could not be postponed indefinitely, and the British once more bade their time.

It seems that it was in this charged atmosphere of the imminence of another British offensive that the Makun again appealed to Adamu Jakada and this time specifically requested him to mediate. All he asked for was that Adamu should work for the restoration of peace and friendship between the whitemen and the people of Nupe. It was his opinion that peace was necessary for the preservation of Islam, and he did not hesitate to emphasize that this religion was their common heritage.<sup>26</sup> But the Makun probably suspected that at his best Adamu Jakada could do very little in changing Lugard's plans, and therefore he also addressed himself directly once again to the High Commissioner:

Muhammadu was speaking not for himself or for the Nupe administration as such but for the silent majority who had no effective voice in determining the policy towards the British. He must have felt that the kind of sentiment expressed in the letter was strong enough to move any human being. We do not know what efforts, if any, the Makun made to prevent the emir from committing what he himself regarded as acts of war. But he surely held the view that the British had their own share of the blame because if the soldiers had not looted farm produce, Abubakar would not have behaved the way he did.<sup>28</sup> Lugard's reply was characteristically unrealistic. First, he claimed that his soldiers had nothing to do with pillaging of farms; they simply drove back Nupe 'raiders' who were harrasing 'lesser people'. In the second place, he urged the common people of Nupe, who were bound to suffer as a result of Abubakar's misdoing, to arrest and hand him over to the High Commissioner as the price of peace.<sup>29</sup> In other words, war alone would settle the issue: either a civil war in Nupe or a British invasion. Lugard himself must have known that the former was inconceivable.

Even then Muhammadu did not consider that peace had no chance at all. He sent another desperate note to Lugard, but he did not say much that was new. He harped on his loyalty to the British dating back to the days of the Royal Niger Company and wondered whether this was not enough to make the High Commissioner abandon the path of war and pardon the man who, he claimed, sought to bring destruction to his people.<sup>30</sup> But the fate of Nupe had long been decided, and this particular letter arrived only seven days to the departure of the military expedition which occupied Bida after some resistance on 19 February, 1901.

The flight of Abubakar and the submission of Nupe were followed by the appointment of the Makun as the new Emir. Lugard had no serious option in the matter of choosing a successor to the emirship. The accession of Muhammadu marked the beginning of a new era not only in the story of Anglo-Nupe relations but also in the history of Nupe. On the one hand, Muhammadu's thorough understanding of the ability of the alien power to make and unmake predisposed him to the British as masters. On the other hand the reign witnessed major efforts to westernize Nupe's political, social, and economic institutions.

25. Adeleye, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

26. *ALB*, p. 131.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*, p. 135, Lugard to Makun, 15 Jan., 1901.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 155, Makun to Lugard, received on 12 Feb., 1901.

The colonial situation placed considerable constraints on the Nupe emirship. Although no emirate of the Sokoto Caliphate claimed anything amounting to autonomy in the nineteenth century, each emir had full powers to administer his territory as a deputy of the Caliph. With the establishment of the protectorate, the wide powers which colonial officials claimed for themselves with regard to the administration of the emirates were inconsistent with the position of the emirs as Islamic rulers. The essential role of the emir, as seen by the administering power, was to ensure that colonial objectives were not frustrated. In Nupe, Muhammadu's approach to the issue of relations with the British was essentially pragmatic, but underlying his whole policy was the principle of peace. He recognized that harmonious relationship with the colonial regime demanded the abandonment of certain basic ideas which were regarded as sacrosanct in the pre-British society. But where he considered that adherence to tradition would not provoke repressive measures the emir conveniently behaved as if the British were not there. The latter, too, occasionally had to make their own sacrifices of principle in the interest of peace. These statements deserve some illustrations.

One of the novelties of twentieth century, Nupe was the coming of the Christian missionaries. The first years of Lugard's administration coincided with a vigorous offensive by the missionaries to penetrate the emirates. With the coming of a Christian power which claimed suzerainty over the Muslim emirates the enthusiasm of the missionary bodies to preach the gospel there with the co-operation of the colonial regime was fired. If Lugard was ever convinced of the necessity for the proselytization of the Muslims of Northern Nigeria he soon realized that unrestricted missionary enterprise in the emirates could be politically risky. During his years of office first as High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria and then as the Governor-General of Nigeria he made the establishment of Christian missionary stations in any emirate conditional on the consent of the emir.<sup>31</sup> In 1903 both the Church Missionary Society and the Sudan Interior Mission set up missions at Bida with the 'concurrency' of the emir.<sup>32</sup> Muhammadu was thus the first Muslim emir to allow Christian missionaries to establish bases in his capital, but one suspects that the emir's consent was not given as a matter of choice. After all, he was as much concerned as any other Islamic ruler in the region with the problem of safeguarding what he saw as the true faith.<sup>33</sup> Since it was unlawful for Muslims to sponsor proselytization - such as was implicit in the permission extended to the missionary bodies - one can easily imagine the amount of bitterness which was felt towards Muhammadu not only by his subjects but also by his brother emirs. It is possible that Muhammadu acted on the assumption that the missionaries were incapable of doing any harm to Islam. More likely, however, he did not want to injure the feelings of the High Commissioner. On being contacted on the issue by Lugard the new emir of Bida must have believed that rejection of the idea could raise grave difficulties, including the possibility of conflict with the British. There is no doubt that the High Commissioner would have felt himself unduly humiliated if Muhammadu had withheld his consent. He certainly would not have reacted violently, but the emir had no such assurance. The emir's state of mind on the question of the proper attitude to the British was reflected in his public statements. Major Burdon, one of Lugard's closest lieutenants and the first Resident for Bida, told the High Commissioner of Muhammadu's injunction to his people: 'they must obey (the British) or they would all be sent to prison'.<sup>34</sup> If Ibrahim of Kontangora could be led into exile in chains, the emir is said to have argued, who were they to resist? His view was that it was better to bear acts of injustice with patience in the name peace than to invite disaster through defence of principle. It was the point of view the ex-emir Abubakar never fully endorsed and it proved to be his undoing.

31. C. O. 583/67, Lugard to Walter Long, 25 Sept., 1918.

32. S. F. Graham, *Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria 1900-1919* (Ibadan, 1966) p. 27.

33. This is quite clear from one of his letters to Adamu Jakada, already cited.

34. N.A.K. S.N.P. 7/3, No. 11/1902, Burdon to Lugard, 7 April, 1902.

Though propagation of Christianity was declared to be the principal aim of the missionary stations in Nupe there were also important subsidiary objectives. Chief among these was the introduction of the Western-style educational system. It is true to say that no serious missionary work was conceivable without an educational programme. This further complicated the problems of the missionaries, for they had to combat not only Islam but also the system of education traditionally associated with it.<sup>35</sup> It has been pointed out elsewhere that opposition to western-type education centred on its non-Islamic character.<sup>36</sup> Yet the Emir of Nupe did not hesitate to allow the introduction of this alien culture and became the first Muslim ruler in Northern Nigeria to give it a chance. His unpopularity in Bida the evidence for which is not lacking in the colonial records must have been undoubtedly connected at least in part with his policy towards Christian missions and Western education.

The strategy adopted by the C.M.S. was to establish a school in each of the missionary bases set up in Nupe emirate. Five stations were organized within the first two years: these were Bida, Lokoja, Gbebe, Kpata, and Akabe.<sup>37</sup> An average enrolment of 120 pupils was claimed for each station in 1904. In the case of Bida, most of the leading men are said to have sent their children to the school, among them the son of the emir.<sup>38</sup> Given the deep-rooted hostility to Western education, it is not difficult to see that many of the children must have been, literally speaking, conscripted into the schools. In spite of the imposing number of students on paper, attendance dropped from twenty to one, and at one stage payment of fees to pupils was introduced as an inducement.<sup>39</sup> By the time the colonial administration came up with the idea of government-sponsored provincial school to which all the emirs were expected to 'contribute' pupils the whole question of Western education was nothing new to the people of Bida. In 1910 Bida sent twelve pupils to the provincial school at Kano, and four years later an autonomous provincial school was established in the town itself. In the same year, a school committee was set up with the Resident as chairman and a number of native officials, including the emir, the Waziri, and the Alkali, as members.<sup>40</sup> The setting up of the new provincial school had been specifically asked for by Muhammadu<sup>41</sup> who along with several other emirs had apparently become jealous of Kano's position as the centre of secular education in the protectorate. The composition of the school committee reflects the importance which the government attached to the participation of the Bida Native Administration in the new educational effort. The emir had no cause to regret his attitude to the initiative of the C.M.S. in pioneering the scheme, if only because time was proving that the Quranic system of education traditionally known to the people was utterly inadequate to deal with the problems and issues generated by the establishment of British rule. How far Islamic religious studies were incorporated in the curriculum of the provincial school is not known yet, but that Islamic education showed a great deal of dynamism during the colonial period has been established by Nadel.<sup>42</sup>

In the early years of British administration one of the sources of friction between the colonial regime and the various emirate governments was British policy on territorial administration. It is now a well known fact that in Nupe as elsewhere in the Sokoto Caliphate the emirate was divided into fiefs each of which was placed under a central

35. For aspects of this educational system see B. Tukur, "Keranic Schools in Northern Nigeria" *West African Journal of Education*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1963.
36. C. N. Ubah, *Administration of Kano Emirate under the British 1900-1930* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ibadan, 1973), p. 396.
37. N.A.K. S.N.P. 7/6, No. 283/1905, Report on work of C.M.S. in Northern Nigeria 1904.
38. *Ibid.*
39. N.A.K. S.N.P. 7/9, No. 1865/1908, Annual Report, 1907.
40. N.A.K. S.N.P. 10/2, No. 449p/1914, Mid-year report, 1914.
41. Graham, *op.cit.*, p. 96.
42. S. F. Nadel, *A Black Byzantium* (Oxford, 1942) p. 383.

government official who resided not in his fief but in the capital of the emirate and administered his fief through agents. A fundamental objective of the colonial administration was to eliminate the system of intermediaries and to compel fiefholders to reside in their territories and play direct role in the government of the country-side.<sup>43</sup> This scheme for administrative re-organization was bitterly resented in many of the emirates. In Kano, for instance, attempt to enforce it resulted in a crisis of a considerable magnitude between the emir and the local representatives of the colonial regime.<sup>44</sup> But the situation in Nupe seems to have been markedly different. As was the case elsewhere there was stiff resistance on the part of office holders to the policy of residence. But there was the important difference that the emir himself was in support of colonial policy: he is said to have used his influence to persuade his officials that it was in their ultimate interest to leave the capital and reside in the districts.<sup>45</sup> British officials did not disguise their feeling that the success of the new policy in Nupe was due to the personal role of the emir.

It seems quite impossible that Muhammadu's sincere feelings on this aspect of colonial policy could have been different from those of his counterparts in other emirates. The argument put forward by British officials that the traditional method of administration divorced responsibility from office did not sound convincing anywhere. Nor was it likely that Muhammadu did not share the view of his fellow emirs that if the state officials were exiled to their fiefs central control over them would become ineffective and they would become overmighty subjects. But he had had a longer history of direct dealings with the whitemen than any other important ruler in the protectorate. Experience had taught him that the British were unlikely to give up so fundamental an issue on which much of their administrative principles rested. Muhammadu's position appears to have been that there was no point mounting obstruction to this policy since such action was bound to be futile and was even likely to force the British to take desperate measures. Wisdom dictated that one should come to terms with innovation as an alternative to being swept away by the merciless forces of change.

It is not being argued that the emir's white colleagues in the government of Nupe always found him satisfactory as an administrator. On the contrary there is a lot of evidence to show that to the end of his days Muhammadu did not give up certain aspects of administrative practices which were his by heritage. Two examples will suffice. The first deals with the position of the emir in the judicial administration. Under an Islamic polity, the head of government was also the head of the judiciary. The ruler combined in himself both executive and judicial functions, and although there were experts in law appointed to judicial positions they functioned under the principle of delegation.<sup>46</sup> In the emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate the chief executives held courts which functioned both as tribunals of first instance and as courts of appeal. The British introduced the novel and puzzling idea of separation of powers between the executive and the judicial arms of government. None the less, the courts of some of the emirs were later recognized as judicial councils, Lugard only insisting that they should now be placed under the supervision of his Residents, that they should be formally constituted by warrant signed by him, and that they should exercise concurrent jurisdiction with the Alkali's court set up at the capital of each Muslim city.<sup>47</sup> Nowhere did the judicial council work to the satisfaction of the Resident, and by 1906 all of them except that of Kano had had the warrants establishing them revoked.<sup>48</sup>

43. F. D. Lugard, *Memorandum on the Taxation of Natives in Northern Nigeria* (1907), pp. 6-7.

44. Ubah, *op.cit.*, *passim*.

45. N.A.K. S.N.P. 7/9, No. 1865/1908, Annual Report, 1907.

46. For details see the relevant chapters in Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Liebensny (eds.), *Law in the Middle East* (Washington, 1955).

47. Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, *passim*.

48. See Report No. 551 in Lugard, *Annual Reports Northern Nigeria 1900-1911* (builder's title, University of Ibadan Library).

Muhammadu shared with other emirs the difficulties of operating the new system. A common charge was that the emirs often ignored or overruled their judges and thus sought to undermine the new judicial system. The problem of the relations between the Alkali and the emir was bound to be there, whether a judicial council was officially recognized or not. In 1909 the Emir of Bida was accused of handling cases which, according to the British way of looking at the matter, were no concern of his; he had often been told that his role was to investigate cases brought before him and then forward them to the Alkali for sentence.<sup>49</sup> There are two probable reasons why he did not give up his interest in judicial matters in spite of colonial policy. In the first place, Muhammadu continued to regard the dispensation of justice not only as one of the powers inherent in the emirship but also as an obligation which he owed to God. If he gave up the role of mediating in disputes among his subjects who regarded this function as central to his position his prestige and influence would considerably diminish and those of the Alkali would correspondingly increase. Apparently no other administrative innovation could have more shattering effect on the emirship than this.

Secondly – and more importantly – the emir must have known that the British were unlikely to treat him harshly for violating the judicial code. They themselves were inconsistent in their policy: they were committed, under the Indirect Rule principle, to preserving the power and authority of the emir, but here was an administrative regulation which would produce just the contrary effect. Notwithstanding what might be said in theory, colonial officials at Bida were neither interested in bringing the emir down nor in seeing him considerably weakened. As the District Officer reported and the Resident agreed:

The advice of the Governor's Office<sup>51</sup> was that so delicate an issue needed a cautious handling, and hope was expressed that the emir would soon die and leave the officials freer.<sup>52</sup> If the emir knew – as one might rightly suspect – that local British officials (whose views were what actually mattered) were secretly in sympathy with him there was no reason why he should tamely give up his judicial functions. Aware of his own strength he was not slow to exploit their weakness.

The second example relates to appointments to the principal offices of state, and in particular to district headships. In the nineteenth century, the multi-dynastic nature of the emirship was reflected in the distribution of titles which were linked with certain functions as well as rights and privileges.<sup>53</sup> Succession to the emirship was rotated among three of the seven sons of Mallam Dendo, the first Fulani emir of Nupe. These were: Usman Zaki, Masaba, and Umoru Majigi.<sup>54</sup> Colonial policy was that only such titles as could play a useful role in the new administrative system should be recognized, while others were to be swept away.<sup>55</sup> Available information shows that a large number of the Nupe titles survived colonial innovations. Under Muhammadu, recruitment of personnel for the district headships continued somehow to respect the tripartite interests in the internal politics of Nupe.

However, by 1909 the way the various offices had been distributed was not satisfactory from British point of view. The chief office in Nupe was held by Muhammadu, who belonged to the House of Umoru Majigi. Besides, five of the ten district headships were also

49. N.A.K. S.N.P. 7/10, No. 3185/1909, Report for March, 1909.

50. *Ibid.*

51. The official designation of Lugard's two successors: Girouard (1907–1909) and Bell (1909–1912) 'Governor'.

52. N.A.K. S.N.P. 7/10, No. 3185/1909, Report for March, 1909.

53. Nadel, *op. cit.*, pp. 88–9, *passim*.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

55. Lugard, *Memorandum on the Taxation of Natives* ... p.9.

held by members of this House, among them the son of the emir.<sup>56</sup> The Resident Mr. H. G. Goldsmith, complained that 'In the distribution of appointments the emir has been inclined to favour his own family at the expense of the members belonging to the families of Masaba and Usman Zaki.'<sup>57</sup> The British obviously liked to see an equitable distribution of offices among the competing dynasties. Goldsmith had wanted not to ratify the appointment of the emir's eldest son to the headship of Bete-Labozhi district. But when Muhammadu made his displeasure known the Resident gave up his opposition, arguing that in view of the services he had rendered to the British administration, the emir was 'entitled to ask this special favour for his son'.

The point being emphasized here is that the emir knew when not to easily give up an opinion he firmly held. There was nothing in the administrative regulations which specifically made it illegal for any segment of the ruling nobility to attempt to monopolize offices. Before the imposition of British rule each House on coming to power seized every possible opportunity to strengthen its position and improve its fortunes.<sup>58</sup> Muhammadu was thus following precedents, but the Resident reserved the theoretical right to refuse to endorse any appointment made by the emir if he considered the candidate incapable of discharging the responsibilities of the office. But, interesting colonial theories on several issues apart, a large part of what happened in practice was dictated by the existing relations between the emir and the British officials. His fifteen years of rule ended in 1916 without anything which can be called a crisis in emir - British relations, and the rule was seen by the British themselves as a great success. This success, however defined, was due not only to Muhammadu's ability to manage the British but also, one must admit, to the spirit of compromise displayed by local British officials.

The picture of Muhammadu presented in this paper with regard to his dealings with the British is firstly that of a seasoned diplomat and secondly that of a shrewd, calculating administrator. It will be entirely unsatisfactory to regard him as an instrument of the British conquest of the Nupe or as a mere stooge of British imperialism. In the circumstances of the period, British occupation of Nupe was inevitable: whether the Makun was aware of this or not his position was that the British should be given no excuse for a war that would do Nupe no good. As emir he realized that changes were bound to be introduced in the administration of Nupe, whether he co-operated or not in bringing them about. Essentially a man of the old order, Muhammadu's policy was to preserve that order as far as possible while at the same time keeping out of harm's way by avoiding open confrontation with the British. The extent to which he succeeded was demonstrated by his fifteen years of continuous rule during which he earned the admiration of colonial officials without dangerously impairing his image before his people.

56. N.A.K. S.N.P. 7/10, No. 560/1909, Annual Report, 1908.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Nadel, *op.cit.*, p. 89.



## ROGER CASEMENT AND THE ARO

BY DAVID NORTHRUP

DESPITE some five centuries of direct contact at the coast, it is remarkable how little firsthand knowledge Europeans had of south-eastern Nigeria in the 1890s. During the nineteenth century riverine explorations had added immense new information to the knowledge of those portions of the region along the Niger and cross rivers, but there was no counterpart here to the cross-country treks of Clapperton and others in northern and south-western Nigeria. Indeed the early missionaries were criticized for having too little of the spirit of David Livingstone because they stuck so close to their original bases in old Calabar, Onitsha, and the Delta towns<sup>1</sup>. It is true that the establishment in 1849 of permanent British consuls for this area had increased access to information about the coastal and riverine communities and their small spheres of influence, but the terms of this arrangement precluded much direct contact with the hinterland communities unless the consuls were willing to endure the wrath of these middlemen<sup>2</sup>. The imperial ventures against Jaja and other coastal rulers from the 1880s signalled just such a change in policy, but in fact by the time of the establishment of the Oil Rivers Protectorate in 1891 little was known of most inland portions of the region. Not until after the dramatic military expeditions of the late 1890s and early twentieth century against the Aro and others were Europeans in a position to traverse these areas at will<sup>3</sup>.

These violent events have rightly overshadowed the smaller number of peaceful explorations undertaken just before them by individual or pairs of Europeans (with, of course, their African guides and porters<sup>4</sup>), but these preliminary explorations are of considerable interest to historians because they provide rare firsthand accounts of life at a time before the disruptions of 'pacification' and colonial rule<sup>5</sup>. The overland expeditions undertaken by Roger Casement in 1894 as a member of the Niger Coast Protectorate's Survey Department are among the earliest and least publicized of these preliminary explorations. Casement, of course, having spent a good part of the previous decade in King Leopold's Congo, went on to become famous for his role in the exposure of the monstrous excesses

## Notes

1. The missionary Hope Waddell notes such criticism and replies to it in the conclusion to his *Twenty-Nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1863), p. 656.
2. The first formal attempt to traverse the overland portion of the region ended with the death of its leader in April 1832, C. H. Coulthurst, just as he was beginning his planned route from the Enyong Creek to the Benue Valley. See 'Failure of another Expedition to Explore the Interior of Africa', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, II (1832), 305-12. Waddell relates that four European supercargoes made a successful excursion from Bonny to Ohambele in 1850, but the implicit threat of a direct trade with the Igbo so alarmed the Bonny middlemen that they expressly forbid any further excursions to their hinterland. See *Twenty-Nine Years*, pp. 417-19.
3. Cf. J. C. Anene, *Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885-1906* (Cambridge: University Press, 1966); A. E. Afigbo, 'The Aro Expedition of 1901-1902', *Odu* (New Series), 7 (April 1972); Obaro Ikime, *The Fall of Nigeria* (London: Heinemann, 1977).
4. Of whose experiences and observations exasperatingly little is known, but see the pioneering effort by Donald Simpson, *Dark Companions: The Africa Contribution to the European Exploration of East Africa* (London: Paul Elek, 1975).
5. Of course the earliest firsthand account of the inland portions of the region was Olaudah Equiano's account of his early life, enslavement, and travels to the coast, which is presented with an excellent introduction and notes by G. I. Jones in Philip D. Curtin, ed. *Africa Remembered* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), pp. 60-98. The major pre-expeditionary excursion was by Major Arthur Glyn Leonard, Notes of a Journey to Bende' *Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society*, XIV (1898), 190-207. Much geographical information, obtained from Leonard's and Casement's expeditions and from unnamed 'Native informants' is summarized on the 'Aro Expedition Sketch Map', enclosure in No. 381: Moor to Colonial Office, 24 November 1901, C. O. 520/10.

there as well as similar horrors in South America, and achieved a permanent place in Irish history for his role in the Easter Rising of 1916, for which he was executed<sup>6</sup>. Given the weight of these his other interests it is understandable that Casement made no effort to publicize his observations and discoveries aside from filing his formal reports. Casement undertook four exploratory journeys in 1894: in March an attempted journey from Itu to Esene which succeeded only in reaching Ibiaku, a journey along with a Mr. Bouchier from Esene to Ikot Osong (some six miles above Eket) in April, another journey with Bouchier from Okoyong to Okurike and back in May, and a journey from Oron attempting to reach Eket which succeeded only as far as Ntaenyang Beach on the Effiat Creek in June<sup>7</sup>.

Of these four brief surveys the most interesting to historians in terms of what was observed and inferred, both correctly and incorrectly, is the first, the unsuccessful journey from Itu to Ibiaku, for it reveals much about the relations of the Aro and the Ibibio and thus about the economic and political situation in this locale at that time.

The first day of the journey from the market called Urua Edik on the right bank of the Enyong Creek was uneventful. Accompanied by three guides furnished by the important Efik trader, Coko Otu Bassey, and by 40 carriers, 'partly Government Krubos, and partly Calabar natives'. Casement made good progress; he noted:

Our road for the first two or three miles lay over a range of wooded hills rising some three hundred feet above the Cross river, their summits and sides diversified by large yam plantations. Several villages, Use [Use Ikot Oku], Ikorobong [Ikot Obong], and Ikoriroba, inhabited by Ibibios, were passed within the first hour and a half—their inhabitants seeming to be all busy at work in the fields around their villages. Payments of tobacco and cloth, loudly clamoured for at Ikoriroba by a crowd of armed men, had to be made before this village was left behind. A few cattle wandered about in the clearings between the different compounds, but scarcely any goats, sheep or fowls were to be seen. The bearing of the natives was, while not unfriendly, marked by certain surliness and dislike to the presence of whiteman. The paths were so deeply trodden by constant traffic that in places they consisted of only a rut no broader than the foot, while the sides in these places, were frequently from ten to twelve feet high, and so close together that an ordinary load was with difficulty carried through.

About a couple of miles beyond Ikoriroba the small stream Deum was passed, flowing East, and about knee deep and twenty feet broad. After passing another stream flowing in the same direction we arrived at 2 o'clock at the village of Ikorusen [Ikot Usen], where, owing to heavy rain, we halted for the day in the house of a friend of Etun, the chief guide sent by Koko Bassy. At this village the Ibibio inhabitants did not come in any numbers to visit me, although a larger payment of cloth and tobacco had to be made to them than at Ikoriroba. Those that appeared were friendly, and brought a goat as a present in the evening.

The next day the party set out from Ikot Usen, passed uneventfully through Mbiabong Anan, crossed the empty market place of Urua Ntuk Eben, and reached the Iyere River, which Casement noted 'was the largest body of water yet passed. It lay level with the path, being crossed by a bridge of felled palm trees with a bamboo fence.' However, by mid-morning when Casement reached the large village of Ibiaku at the southern end of Ibiono clan territory, he found his guides and carriers 'halted in a clearing under big trees, with an angry crowd of armed Ibibios dancing and shouting round them, and clashing

6. The importance of Casement's other activities in and out of the Foreign Service has led to an understandable neglect of his Nigerian service by his two recent biographers: Brian Inglis, *Roger Casement* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), and B. L. Reid, *The Lives of Roger Casement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

7. The typescripts (with handwritten corrections) of Casement's journeys from Itu and from Esene are in Foreign Office file 2/63/322/36 and 337-50 and are printed in *Parliamentary Papers* 1895, Command Paper 7596 as appendices 7 and 18 to 'Report on the Administration of the Niger Coast Protectorate, August 1891 to August 1894'. The typescript of the journey from Okoyong, along with a printed version, is in F. O. 2/64/60-75. The typescript of the journey from Oron is in F. O. 2/64/19-29, with a Confidential Print in F. O. 881/6546. Casement's 'Sketch Map from Itu to Use and Ibiaku' and his 'Rough Sketch of the Country between the lower courses of the Opobo and Cross River' (for the journeys from Oron and Esene are in F. O. 2/64/30A-B).

8. In Casement's typescript each sentence forms a separate paragraph. When quoted here the sentences have been grouped into more logical paragraphs.

swords and matchets in our faces.' The crowd, refusing to be placated by the usual gifts of cloth and tobacco, released a swarm of bees against the intruders. They then 'seized all the loads but one, and also some of the carriers, and endeavoured to drag them away.'

As this was going on Igbo friends and relations of his chief guide arrived on the scene and eventually persuaded Casement to come with them to the 'king' of the neighbouring village of Use, an old man named 'Urofia', i.e., Udofia, who was able to restore the loads and men in short order by sending messengers 'to call in the Inokun people, the beginning of whose country lay just beyond Urofia's village. . . . . Inokun, of course is an Ibibio name for the Aro, but Casement was under a serious misapprehension in thinking that Aro country began just west of Use. Further on in his report he elaborated on this remarkable and revealing geographical confusion:

The Ibibios, whose country I had passed through in the fifteen or sixteen miles traversed from the Enyong market, had no power beyond this point, for I was now on the Southern confines of the Inokun people, a branch of the great Ibo family and whose country extends north of this to Unwana on the Cross river...

The Inokuns are a pure bred Ibo race I believe, and are proud of their name and tourage. The name Inokun, appears to apply to a large extent of country, stretching in its smaller limits from the Qua Iboe to the Cross River between Latitudes 50 and 60 North; while the people of Bende and even further west are considered as Inokuns.

What in fact Casement had reached was a large colony of Aro settled in the no-man's-land between the Ibibio clans of Ibiono and Itak. A 1931 Intelligence Report suggests that the foundation of this colony had occurred 'at least four generations ago',<sup>9</sup> but its mature development and size at the time of Casement's visit in 1894 indicate a much older date is to be assumed. Casement correctly noted that 'all of the Inokun of that part belonged to the section of the Inokun people having Abia Nkita, or Ibibio Nkita for their chief town; that it lay about a day's march up north', that is, the settlement was a colony of Arochukwu village of Obinkita. More precisely the village was a foundation of the Ndi Okoro kindred (*umunna*) of Obinkita, whose four other kindreds operated in the northern Anang, southern Anang, Opobo, and Ngwa areas.<sup>10</sup> At the time of Casement's the Ndi Okoro colony had grown into a substantial settlement and was divided into different family groups which were at odds with other. Casement soon found himself in the middle of this conflict:

The leader of the Inokuns, an old man named Okurunkue, wished me to go to his town to sleep there, but Etun advised me not to go, as Okurunkue was not the Inokun king, and if I went to his town to stay, the king would be very vexed and I should find trouble in getting his consent to my passing on to Opobo. Accordingly I went on with Etun to the house of an Inokun named Abgu, who had already been advised by Koko Bassy of my coming. . .

Their local king was an old man named Okrafio, who, however, was not cordially recognised by the Okurunkue, one faction, whose chief, an elderly keen-witted trader named Udo Kerewkwe, came frequently to see me in the hope that I would go to reside with him and thus increase the influence of his faction at the expense of Okrafio.

After lengthy palavers extending over the better part of two weeks, it was resolved that King Okrafio would be Casement's patron for the journey to Esene. At this point, however, the true extent of Aro control began to come to light. Although the Ndi Okoro colonists (when united) were a powerful force in their immediate area, their ability to travel out, and thus their ability to facilitate Casement's movements, were severely circumscribed by their acrimonious or dependent relations with other powers in the region. Casement learned:

9. R. J. N. Curwen, 'Intelligence Report on the Ediene and Itak clans of the Ikot Ekpene Division, Calabar Province', 1931, p. 17, National Archive-Ibadan, Colonial Secretary's Office, file 26/2/27615.
10. For this and other information I am indebted to the following sources, all interviewed separately at Obinkita, Arochukwu, on 13 February 1973: interview with Mr. Fidelis Emmanuel Sunday Okoro of Ndi Okoro, interview with Messrs. Kanu Merem and Kanu Nwankwo of Ndi Akweke, and interview with Chief Robert N. Asiegbu, head of Ndi Chioka. It proved impossible to find any resident of the Ndi Okoro colony who was willing to be interviewed.

However, the route to Esene was by no means under Inokun control as Casement soon earned, much to his regret:

The Ebum<sup>11</sup> and Abia Nkita Inokuns are at war with one another, and the entire country seems to exist in a state of continued feud. The people of the district I visited had not been to Bende for four years, owing to the killing of several of their principal men there, nor do they ever visit Aquita [Akwete] (which they call Eta) the country between their towns and the district being hostile to them. . . .

The Inokun who had come to my help against Ibiaku traded they told me chiefly with Opobo natives at Esene, although some few of them went to the Itu markets.

However, the route to Esene was by no means under Inokun control as Casement soon learned, much to his regret:

Finally it was determined that all should unite in helping me to go to Esene; but then, for the first time, I learnt of the presence of a third party whose consent was necessary to this, in the person of the king of Anang whose country lay right on the Esene roads some three hours march beyond Okrafio's. I was informed that all the roads down to Esene lay in his power—that his people were very bad, and exceedingly fond of fighting, and that unless my Inokun friends could get his consent to my passing through his country, it would be quite impossible for them to help me, and equally impossible for me to go on without their help.

Indeed on this point they were painfully clear, for on all sides I was assured that, if I moved on my own responsibility, not one of us would ever come out of the country that lay beyond. When I hinted at a rush through the Anang country with only a few picked carriers, Etun implored me not to think of it; 'for', said he, with an expressive movement of his lips, 'you'll be killed—and eaten, and I shall die too;' nor would any prospect of bribe or present induce him, or any of the Inokun to advance without the complete accord of all the people on the line of route. Ahgu said that no man dared help unless the Chiefs had all agreed, and that no chief or single village dared, alone, to assist me unless all the others had decided to let me pass. He added that . . . he feared the king of Anang would not allowed me to go on until he had consulted the people of Abia Nkita. . . .

On the Wednesday, my guides from Koko Bassy, with Ahgu, went with Okrafio's people to Anang and on their return in the evening at 7. p.m. I learnt that the people of Anang would certainly kill us if we attempted to pass, and that the King would not allow us into his country.

The king did hold out the possibility that, after consultation 'with all the other Inokun', an overland journey to Esene might be permitted when the new yams were ripe some months later in the year, although no further negotiations in fact appear to have taken place.

The identity of the King of Anang is puzzling, since no such office existed and the Anang are characteristically divided into small political units. It is possible that he was a fabrication of the Inokun intended to halt the advance of the British without their having to bear the blame for doing so, although the fact that Casement's guides were taken along to meet with the king casts considerable doubt on so devious a course of action. More likely he was a real personage, probably a powerful chief or trader in the Abak area, who was fearful of upsetting the delicate political and economic balance in this area to his own detriment. Rather than wishing to maintain the *status quo*, the Inokun of the Ndi Okoro settlement appear to have desired to make use of a limited British presence to enhance their own power in what had become a precarious trading situation. For them freer movement of trade would have been a boon not a threat. This at least was the very reasonable assessment Casement formed of the situation:

I have no doubt the Inokun will prove friendly to the whiteman when once their country is opened up, and will welcome the presence of any official with power to open to them the markets of their neighbours, now closed: and strong enough to enable them to use the paths and trade routes now barred by the hostility of other branches of their own race. . . . In conclusion, I believe that the results of the conference next July, of all the Inokuns interested in the Esene road will be that an invitation will be sent to Itu for the whiteman to return; and that whoever then goes will find no difficulty in the way of the accomplishment of the journey I have been forced to leave only begun.

11. I. e., Ibom village in Arochukwu, whose citizens traded with Enyong and Ada (Afikpo) according to T. M. Shankland, 'Intelligence Report on the Aro Clan, Calabar Province', 1933, appendix IV, NAI CSO 26/3/29017.

Casement's adventures are a useful illustration of the way the Aro operated in this region. It is all too easy to suggest, as British officials of this period often did, that the Aro controlled the political life of this region or even that they were a quasi-government over it.<sup>12</sup> The reality was otherwise. It should in no way detract from the very real importance of the Aro to point out that they were too few in number to have been able to dominate this region and too shrewd to have wanted to. While they did sometimes resort to force to obtain what they wanted,<sup>13</sup> their more usual ploy was negotiation and appeal to others' self-interest. Even the Ndi Okoro settlers, who formed the largest Aro colony among the Anang and Ibibio, are shown devoting considerable time and energy to maintaining good relations with neighbouring chiefs (the 'kings' of Use and Anang) and with only moderate success.

Still more revealing is the decentralized (indeed, fractured) structure of the Aro. One village of Arochukwu might be at war with another, as was the case of Obinkita and Ibom whose conflict was four years old at the time of Casement's visit.<sup>14</sup> The different patrilineages of Obinkita also operated independently with separate routes and settlements between Bende and the Coast. That this sometimes necessitated separate negotiations with a single important local authority is illustrated by the King of Anang's insistence on consulting with the other Inokun in his area before giving a decision to Ndi Okoro. Finally, within the single colony of the Ndi Okoro major traders with their families and supporters vied for influence. Of course, this is not to say that the Aro were incapable of uniting. Indeed, their survival as traders depended on maintaining working relationships with each other, which were reinforced by annual meetings at Arochukwu, regional conferences, as well as the local palavers that Casement observed.<sup>15</sup> What is important to remember is that unity was not achieved easily and that long periods of conflict could and did occur. While the survival of the entire network of Aro trade depended upon periodic agreements, the day to day survival of a particular Aro settlement and its trade also depended upon cordial relation with powerful non-Aro and upon the existence of the multitude of alternate routes which criss-crossed the region.

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12. The latter belief had found a modern supporter in R. F. Stevenson, *Population and Political Systems in Tropical Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), chapter IX 'High Density and State Formation in Southeastern Nigeria: The Ibo Problem.'
  13. As the Ndi Okoro settlement grew fighting occasionally broke out with its Ibibio neighbours, which the Aro inevitably won by calling in Abam mercenaries, according to Chief James Russell of Ikot Akpan Odung, Itak, and Chief Thompson Ekpo of Ibiaku Ikot Udo, Ibiono, interviewed separately on November 1972.
  14. When Major Leonard reached Bende two years later he commented on Aro disunity in similar terms: The fact was that the Aro people were split up into factions on the question of trade factions that were not merely jealous of but inimical to each other and here at Bende, the central market and common meeting ground presumably of all factions, they were not nationally united, although they struggled hard to make it appear so.' See his 'Journey to Bende', p. 205.
  15. For further detail see F. Ifeoma Ekejiuba, 'The Aro Trade System in the Nineteenth Century', *Ikenga*, I. 1 (1972), 11-26 and 'The Aro System of Trade in the Nineteenth Century', *Ikenga*, I. 2 (1972), 10-21

## PROVIDING FOOD FOR NIGERIA'S TEEMING POPULATION

By FOLAYAN OJO\*

**Introduction**

THE goal of all economic activities is the satisfaction of human wants. With advancements in various spheres of human endeavour, such wants have multiplied from the earliest most basic ones, comprising food, clothing and shelter. Food has, however, remained the most crucial need. It is not surprising, therefore, that the issue of providing enough food for expanding population is a very old one. Malthus and many other economists have examined seriously the problem of population growth as it relates to food supply.

Nigeria has a population of approximately 80 million, and it is generally believed that it has been increasing at a relatively high rate of 2.5 per cent annually. Relatively speaking, the country has a large population with about one in every five Africans being a Nigerian. The main causes of population explosion in the developing countries including Nigeria are the considerable decline in death rates, especially the fall in infant mortality rates due to medical technology, and the continuing high birth-rates. With the advent of high increases in population that are not matched with corresponding increases in food production, the issue of how food supply can keep pace with demand has become quite topical. Stated most simply, how to feed the teeming population has become one of the main concerns in Nigeria as in other developing countries. This phenomenon is very much unlike what has been happening in the advanced countries where the agrarian revolution, which was a prelude to the industrial revolution, increased food supplies quite tremendously. This, coupled with the subsequent very moderate, sometimes zero or even negative, population growth, has alleviated any food shortage.

In this paper, an attempt will be made to highlight some important issue in respect of food/population problem with particular emphasis on the Nigerian situation. Such issues are food demand and supply, nutritional requirements, food imports and the expansion of food production. The major constraints that beset Nigeria's agricultural sector in general and the food sub-sector in particular along with some policy recommendations will also be highlighted.

**Food Demand**

According to Table 1, the demand for food in Nigeria increased at an annual rate of 3.1% during the 1961-74 period. The demand for food is a derived demand with the growth of population and per capita income being the main determinants. Thus, the yearly rate of expansion of food demand is given by:

$$Df = p + cy$$

where  $p$  and  $y$  are respectively the rate of growth of population and per capita income, while  $c$  is the income elasticity of demand for food. Of these two sources of the growing demand for food, population growth is the dominant one, particularly in the developing countries

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TABLE I

## FOOD AND NUTRITION IN SOME WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Country	Annual Growth Rate 1961-74 (%)			Per Capita Daily Supply 1974	
	Population	Food Production	Domestic demand for food	Calories	Protein (grams)
Gambia	2.1	3.2	-	2,320	58.2
Ghana	3.1	3.4	3.2	2,318	53.4
Liberia	1.8	1.5	1.8	2,013	36.0
Nigeria	2.6	0.6	3.1	2,085	46.3
Sierra Leone	2.3	3.0	3.9	2,224	50.9

Source: **Selected Demographic and Socio-Economic Indicators in West Africa**, FAO, Rome, April, 1977.

where it takes care of about 70 per cent of the increase in aggregate demand for food (5). However, with population growth being very low, zero or negative in the advanced countries, it would seem that increasing affluence is the more important claimant on food resources. The value of the parameter  $c$ , that is the income elasticity of demand for food, is much higher in the developing countries than in the high-income countries of Western Europe and North America, being about 0.6 in the former and 0.2 or 0.3 in the latter (10). In other words, given a certain increase in per capita income, relatively more of it is spent on food purchases in the developing countries than in the advanced ones.

In Nigeria, changes in per capita income seem to have greater impact on food imports than on the demand for locally produced food items. Put differently, the income elasticity of import demand for food is much higher than the income elasticity of demand for non-imported items. Olayide and others (12) have calculated income elasticities for 35 food items in Nigeria's food demand. All the eight commodities (wheat, butter, poultry, fish, milk, eggs, cheese and refined sugar) that have income elasticity of demand of 1.0 or above are conspicuous in the country's import items. On the other hand, most of the other 35 food items such as maize, millet, yam, cassava, plantain and beans, which are produced locally have relatively low income elasticity of demand, being between 0.2 and 0.4.

### Food Supply

Generally, food supply seemed to have lagged behind food demand in many developing countries. A survey carried out by the FAO (5) indicated that during 1952-72, food production lagged behind population growth in 34 of the 88 developing countries for which relevant data were available. Nigeria was one of those countries where food production failed to keep pace with population growth. With an estimated annual population increase of 2.4 per cent in the country during the two decades, the average annual rate of growth of food production was only 2.0 per cent as against a 3.1 per cent annual rate of growth of domestic demand for food. Olatunbosun and Olayemi (11) have also shown the unsatisfactory trend of food production in Nigeria. During the decade 1959/60-1968/69, outputs of yam and cocoyam fell, those of guinea-corn and millet remained virtually unchanged, whilst only those of cassava, maize, rice, cowpea and melon rose slightly. It is not surprising, therefore, that between 1961 and 1974, Nigeria registered an annual growth rate of only 0.6% in food production (the lowest among the five West African countries shown in Table 1) while Ghana registered an annual growth rate of 3.4%.

There was, however, no apparent excess demand pressure for food prior to the Nigerian civil war. Hence, it would seem that although food supply might not have kept pace with demand before the civil war, the situation was never serious. During the war, there was noticeable pressure on food demand and hence food prices rose considerably. This was due mainly to the complete stoppage of the production of some food items in some war-affected areas, the withdrawal of active labour force from the agricultural sector as a result of enlistment in the army, and the massive purchase of food to feed the enlarged armed forces. The pressure on food demand seems to have continued since the end of the war and this in part accounts for the massive importation of some essential food items.

If food demand outstrips supply, the result is likely to be a significant increase in food prices, thereby accelerating the consumer price index. For example, from 1970 to the first ten months of 1971, Nigeria's urban consumer price index rose by 15.2 per cent with the increase due almost entirely to a 27 per cent increase in the price of food (14, p. 47). Also showing the importance of the food component in aggregate consumer price index is the fact that "with 1960 as a base, food prices rose by 120.8 per cent by 1972 while the prices of other goods rose by about 87.4 percent" (13). These are indications that the provision of enough food for the people is an important anti-dote against inflation. The inflationary consequences of a given percentage rise in food prices is usually much more serious in the developing countries than in the developed countries. This is due to the dominant position of food as a wage good in the former where about a half of total consumption expenditure is spent on food as against about a quarter in the latter (10).

### Nutritional Requirements

The problems of food supply and demand are not limited to quantitative considerations, there are also the qualitative aspects. The former are concerned with inadequate supply of food to meet the energy requirements of the body while the latter refer to the body's needs for particular nutrients. To examine the qualitative aspects of Nigeria's food intakes, it is necessary to look at the consumption pattern or the intakes of the various types of food ingredients (e.g., calorie, protein, etc.) and compare them with estimated minimum nutritional requirements.

The estimated average minimum calorie requirement is about 2,240 calories per person per day, while the average protein requirement is estimated to be about 70 grams of crude protein (6, p. 103). The average caloric intake of Nigerians is about 2,100 per head per day, while protein intake is less than 50 grams per head per day. (As shown in Table 1, the per capita daily supply of protein was only 46.3 grams in 1974). Not only are these supplies below the indicated minimum requirements, they are far below those in many industrialised countries. In the United States, for instance, the estimated supply of calories is about 3,300 per head per day, while that of protein is 97 grams per head per day (5).

Of greater concern in the Nigerian case, however, is the great importance of cereals (mainly rice, millet and maize) in the provision of calories. While cereals accounted for 988 calories per head per day in Nigeria, they accounted for only 652 in the U.S. Thus, cereals contributed 45 per cent of aggregate daily calorie supply in Nigeria. Worse still, Nigerian diets are strikingly deficient in protein and fats. The average contribution of meat, milk and fats and oil towards the supply of calorie requirement per head per day was about 41, 10 and 230 respectively in Nigeria, while the corresponding figures for the U.S. were about 659, 384 and 586 (4).

With the level of calorie intake per head per day being inadequate and with the balance being lop-sided in favour of carbohydrate foods, i.e., to the neglect of protein and fats, it would seem that the average Nigerian is under-nourished and malnourished. In any case where under-nutrition and mal-nutrition are highly pronounced, they lead to "severe debility, which interferes with the individual's capacity to work and lowers his production and



earnings" (3, p, 12). These economic effects of low dietary underlines the fact that any serious measures aimed at raising economic productivity should include those to improve the nutritional status of the labour force.

### **Food Import**

The failure of Nigeria's food supply to keep pace with expanding demand was partly responsible for the substantial rise in food import bill. Table 1 shows the absolute and relative shares of food imports in total imports during the third quarter of this century. The value of food imports rose from only ₦6.6 million in 1950 to a high of ₦298.8 million in 1975, at an annual growth rate of about 16 per cent. Except during the early 1960s and during the 1967-69 civil war, the increase in the absolute value of food imports was continuous. During the latter period, the value fell in line with the decline in the value of aggregate imports which was caused by war-time restrictive measures aimed at dampening consumer demand. During the review period, food imports as a proportion of total imports did not exhibit any distinct pattern. It was lowest in 1950 at 5.5 per cent and was highest in 1957, at 12 per cent.

It has been estimated that Nigeria's food imports constitute only about five per cent of her aggregate food supply (11). However with the recent massive importation of food items such as frozen meat, milk and rice aimed at combating inflation, the import component of the country's food supply is likely to increase, if only temporarily. It is important to note that food imports consist of very high quality, protein-yielding food items like stockfish, milk and wheat.

Table 3 summarizes the absolute and relative shares of the main food items in total food imports for selected years during 1960-74. Some features emerge from the table. First, is the marked decline in the relative importance of stockfish which accounted for about a third of total food import bill in 1960, and by 1974 its share had become negligible at 0.1 per cent. There was also a drastic fall in the value of stockfish import. Counteracting this phenomenon, however, was a significant increase in the importation of other types of fish. In 1960 when imported stockfish was worth ₦15.9 million, other types of imported fish were worth only ₦0.5 million, and by 1974, the latter amounted to about ₦8.0 million while the former amounted to only ₦1.6 million (8). Secondly, when comparing the figures for 1960 with those for 1974, the relative importance of imported sugar was almost constant, the tremendous rise in value notwithstanding. Definitely, the relative value of imported sugar would have risen considerably but for the impressive increase in import replacement of sugar. Thirdly, the relative share of milk increased significantly due to lack of effective domestic substitute and the high income elasticity of demand for milk.

In order to prevent any unnecessarily high increase in the importation of food, Nigeria should intensify her own food production, since she has most of the resources (labour, land etc.) that are essential for the acceleration of food production.

### **Expanding Food Production**

There are two important ways of ensuring that food demand does not outrun supply. One is to limit population growth, while the other is to intensify food production. The latter approach seems to be the way out for Nigeria within the foreseeable future since she is not committed to the pursuance of any aggressive policy to reduce population growth, say through birth control (7, p. 293), and since the death rate would probably fall further as medical technology expands.

There are two principal methods of expanding food production. These are expanding the area under cultivation, and increasing the yield of cultivated land through the adoption of higher-yield seedlings and the use of machinery, fertilizers, and the like. The latter

**TABLE 2**  
**NIGERIA'S TOTAL AND FOOD IMPORTS, 1950-75**

Year	Total Imports (₦ million)	Food Imports* (₦ million)	Food Imports as % of Total
1950	120.6	6.6	5.5
1951	166.4	11.4	6.9
1952	222.8	13.6	6.1
1953	211.2	19.2	9.1
1954	224.4	24.0	10.6
1955	272.6	26.0	9.5
1956	305.2	32.0	10.5
1957	304.6	36.6	12.0
1958	332.6	36.4	10.9
1959	352.2	41.6	11.8
1960	425.6	47.8	11.2
1961	444.0	45.4	10.2
1962	406.4	47.0	11.6
1963	415.2	43.8	10.5
1964	507.8	41.2	8.1
1965	550.2	46.0	8.4
1966	512.7	51.6	10.1
1967	447.1	42.6	9.5
1968	365.2	28.4	7.8
1969	497.4	41.7	8.4
1970	760.0	57.7	7.6
1971	1,078.9	87.9	8.1
1972	990.1	95.1	9.6
1973	1,224.8	126.2	10.3
1974	1,717.4	154.8	9.0
1975	3,717.4	298.8	8.0

\*Food and live animals, i.e. SITC O

Sources: R. Robson & D. A. Lury (eds). *The Economies of Africa*,  
(London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1969)., Central  
Bank of Nigeria, *Economic and Financial Review* (Various Years).

TABLE 3  
IMPORTS OF SELECTED FOOD ITEMS BY VALUE (N000)  
AND AS PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL IMPORTS, 1960-74

	1960		1962		1964		1966		1968		1970		1972		1974	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
1. Stockfish	15,870	3.7	14,566	3.6	12,578	2.5	11,706	2.3	2,328	0.6	2,080	0.3	1,625	0.2	2,090	0.1
2. Sugar	7,632	1.8	6,906	1.7	6,022	1.2	4,744	0.9	3,492	1.0	11,400	1.5	21,160	2.1	26,230	1.5
3. Milk	3,864	0.9	4,464	1.1	6,558	1.3	4,744	0.9	7,382	2.0	13,686	1.8	24,749	2.5	42,360	2.5
4. Other Dairy Products	473	0.1	1,598	0.4	494	0.1	5,208	1.0	398	0.1	468	0.1	847	0.1	1,537	0.1
5. Cereals (All Products)	2,774	0.7	5,262	1.3	7,548	1.5	12,582	2.5	9,738	2.7	15,360	2.0	31,014	3.1	45,975	2.7
6. Flour	6,352	1.5	6,062	1.5	494	0.1	3,456	0.7	-	-	600	0.1	1,140	0.1	970	0.1
7. Others	10,859	2.5	8,128	2.0	7,548	1.4	9,128	1.8	5,054	1.4	14,100	1.8	14,569	1.5	35,603	2.0
Total Food Imports	47,824	11.2	46,985	11.6	41,240	8.1	51,568	10.1	28,392	7.8	57,694	7.6	95,104	9.6	154,765	9.0

- negligible

Sources: Federal Office of Statistics, Nigeria Trade Summary (Various Years).

comes under the rudiments of the "green revolution", a term which came into popular use in the late 1960s to describe the introduction and the marked spread of high-yielding wheat and rice. In India, where the "green revolution" has been effective, wheat production expanded from 11 million tons in 1965 to 27 million tons in 1972, thereby giving the country an "increase in a major crop unmatched by any other country in history" (1).

Nigeria seems to be in a position to adopt both approaches to the expansion of food production. However, with the large availability of uncultivated land and with the increasing influx of rural labour to urban areas which, in effect, may lead to an increase in the land/labour ratio, one may advocate the concentration of efforts on the application of an intensive farming technique that will enhance higher yields per hectare.

If and when it becomes imperative to expand significantly the area of land under cultivation, Nigeria does not seem to face any major problem. At present, a high proportion of her land resources is unutilized. According to a World Bank Report (14, p. 78), it has been estimated that only about 23-35 per cent of the suitable land, and only about 11-16 per cent of the land cultivable or potentially suitable for agriculture is presently under utilization. And according to the Third Development Plan (7, p. 63), of the country's aggregate land area of about 98 million hectares, only 34 million hectares or about a third constitute the area presently cropped. Furthermore, the potentially suitable area is estimated at about 71 million hectares, meaning that less than half of the cultivable land is being utilized. This shows that Nigeria has abundant land resources on which many crops can be grown, and due to the varied climatic conditions, practically all tropical food crops can be produced. These include yams, cassava, rice, millet, maize, beans, palmoil, groundnuts, fruits and vegetables.

Another way of increasing food supply without necessarily expanding food production is to reduce the high wastage of food both on the farm, in storage, and in the process of transporting to the market. Olatunbosun and Olayemi (11) have estimated the amount of food wasted between the farm and the ultimate consumers. Examining 13 food crops, wastage rates in 1968/69 varied between 4 per cent and 50 per cent of output for melon seeds and yams respectively. Worse still, these estimates represented just a part of overall wastage since loss on the farm, which is usually very high, was not included due to the problem of estimating it. This indicates that only a fraction of the quantity of food available for the market usually gets there. These researchers (11) have thus noted that "food supply can be increased by more than 20% without any increase in production, by eliminating much of these unnecessary wastes".

The Nigerian Federal Government seemed to have recently realized both the strategic importance of intensifying food production and the danger of increased dependency on food imports. A programme, known as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) was launched by the Government in May 1976, the objective being to make the nation self-sufficient in basic food needs by involving non-farmers in the provision of food supplies. The Government implored institutions such as schools, colleges, universities and the armed forces and individuals to endeavour to grow part, if not all, of their own foods and to dispose of any surpluses in the market. The slogan all over the country has thus become "Whatever your profession, farm". The OFN programme which is one of the most publicised of all government programmes, has engendered some degree of enthusiasm in farming by non-farmers, and has created the awareness to grow more food. The phenomenon has been summarized this way "As one travels across the country, one can see the explosion in the number of small compound farms, gardens, etc., these give a vivid impression that the idea has caught on and indicate that modest contributions can be made in this way in self-sufficiency in food" (2).

The objective of the OFN programme, i.e., self-sufficiency in food supply, is noble and commendable. Undoubtedly, individuals, schools, colleges, and other establishments have contributed towards the expansion of food production since the launching of the programme.

An important question, however, arises: How appropriate is the idea of trying to make everybody a farmer? There is no gain-saying that Nigerian small farmers are the central figures in any meaningful attempt at agricultural revolution. They form the basic units of production and constitute the main strength in food production. Definitely, the degree of success in the attempt to achieve the noble objectives of feeding the nation, reducing food importation to the barest minimum, and possibly exporting food surplus, will depend on the extent to which Nigeria fully and realistically motivate the farmers to be more efficient and more productive. In a world that is becoming more and more complex, the country cannot but fall in line with the inevitable intensification of specialisation or the division of labour. If one looks at the development of agriculture in the advanced countries, it is clear that they never tried to make everybody a farmer. Instead, these countries have increased the quality of their farmers and not the quantity, through mechanisation and the provision of soil-improving and soil-enriching inputs. For example, about a century ago, close to a half of the U.S. population were farmers, while today only about 2 per cent are feeding the nation and increasing the food export. So great is that country's agricultural productivity that in 1973, she exported two-thirds of the wheat, half of the soybean, and 40 per cent of the corn crop (9).

The OFN programme should, therefore, be seen as a very short-term measure. In the long-run its lofty objectives can be achieved only by making Nigerian farmers more efficient and more productive. It becomes relevant then to examine the problems that hinder agricultural development in general and food production in particular.

### **Problems**

The Nigeria agricultural sector faces several constraints. The most serious ones, some of which are peculiar to the food sub-sector are as follows:

The defective land tenure system, whereby farmers own fragmented and uneconomic holdings that are often several miles apart, has been a major problem area. Excessive fragmentation, which stems from inheritance law and customs, is wasteful of time, labour, capital and land. For examples, time is wasted in supervision from one plot to another and it may be necessary to duplicate farm implements.

There are manpower problems in form of shortage of qualified manpower to carry out extension services and rapid depletion of rural labour caused by rural-urban migration of people in search of wage earning jobs. The latter has resulted in the concentration of farm labour in the hands of elderly people with the attendant problem of declining productivity.

There are inadequate storage facilities which, coupled with transportation and distribution bottlenecks, account for the high degree of food perishability and wastage. Poor storage facilities also explain why many local food supplies such as maize, vegetables and fruits are essentially seasonal (being abundant at harvest times) with the inevitable result of wide fluctuations in consumer prices.

The prevailing system of farming is a major impediment to agricultural development. Farmers practise a backward technique of production in form of very simple and manually operated implements, that is, the hoe and cutlass energy-exerting technique.

Lastly, there are inadequate supplies of agricultural inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers, chemicals and credits. For example, the average level of fertilizer consumption of Nigerian farmers is 1.28 kilograms per cropped hectare as against the recommended average of 18.18 kilograms per hectare (13).

### **Suggestions**

Providing appropriate solutions to the problems just discussed is fundamental to Nigeria's drive to produce enough food to feed her growing population. As such, some solutions are now suggested.

The first major point is the urgent need for a reform of the land tenure system through the aggregation of small and scattered holdings into fairly large farms thus eliminating the potential move towards further fragmentation. Such a reform has to precede any serious move towards mechanisation since it is very difficult to work with machines (e.g. ploughs) on small plots of land.

Secondly, Nigeria should replace the traditional hoe and cutlass technique by a mechanized system, initially laying greater emphasis on the application of small mechanically powered machines, rather than heavy ones, so as not to aggravate the unemployment situation. The abolition of import duty on all types of machinery imported for food production announced in the 1976/77 Budget is clearly a move in the right direction. Government should undertake heavily subsidized tractor-hire service and should also encourage small farmers to pool together in co-operatives for the ownership of farm machinery.

Thirdly, there is need for the provision of adequate storage facilities which will curb food wastage and make food more market-oriented. Unless this is done, the outcome of increased food production may be detrimental to the interest of farmers who will be forced to sell the bulk of their food supplies at lowered prices at harvest periods. Also, the provision of adequate feeder and access roads should be accorded high priority so that food distribution system will be improved.

Any successful intensive agriculture cannot but be research-intensive. By and large, Nigeria is still untouched by the "green revolution." Investment in agricultural research both in terms of manpower and financial resources should, therefore, be given high priority. There are great potentials for higher yields as regards crops such as rice, cassava and maize etc., if research efforts are intensified along with an accelerated use of inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides.

Fifthly, government should make concerted efforts to raise rural income as a way of reducing the urban-rural income gap and to provide more basic amenities in the rural areas in order to stem the tide of rural-urban migration. Also, manpower for agricultural extension services should be expanded with a view to accelerating the flow of research information to farmers.

Lastly, the production of fish and livestock which are important sources of high protein needs should be greatly expanded. Such an expansion will improve the highly unsatisfactory nutritional content of the diet of the average Nigerian.

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HOW DO THE IGBO UNDERSTAND THEMSELVES? A PRELIMINARY  
STUDY OF MUTUAL INTELLIGIBILITY IN THE IGBO CULTURE AREA

By E. NQLUE EMENANJO

*This paper is in six parts.*

In Part I we present without comments the views of four well-informed non-Igbo on the question of mutual intelligibility among the Igbo.

In Part 2 we enumerate with some discussions a number of assumptions which are made in this study.

In Part 3 we put forward a number of proposals which seem to us to account from a linguistic angle for the phenomenon of mutual intelligibility and discuss how these operate in the area of phonology.

In Part 4 we discuss briefly the place of meaning in language.

In Part 5 we discuss Meaning and the three levels proposed in Part 3.

Finally in Part 6 we conclude with regard to the perennial question of what constitutes a language or a dialect.

The following excerpts are from four respected non-Igbo who have bothered to look into the question of how the Igbo understand themselves.

'... The unsophisticated rural people probably do find a strange dialect disconcerting. But what seems to happen when two travelled people of different dialects meet is that each will try to find forms of speech of the most general acceptance whenever possible. A sophisticated Owerri man from whom I sometimes took down texts used to give them to me, at times, in his native Owerri town speech and, at times, in what he called 'Spoken Union'. And he was quite conscious of what he was doing.'

D. Westermann: 'The Linguistic Situation and Vernacular Literature in British W. Africa',  
*Africa* 2.4: 337-351. Oct. 1929.

'In my tour I collected records of ten or eleven dialects of Ibo and talked with a number of educated Africans. We discussed among other matters, the question of dialects and I asked them all the same question. "Do you when you leave your part of the (Ibo) country use your own dialect, or do you modify it?" The answer in every case was, "We modify it".'

Ida C. Ward: 'A linguistic Tour in Southern Nigeria',  
*Africa*, 8.1: 92-93, Jan. 1935.

'But the picture (of the 'kinds of dialectal variations that occur' in Ibo country) would be incomplete without a reference to the way in which the Ibo in particular deal with them. 'Not only is an intelligent Ibo able pretty quickly to understand and learn a strange dialect, but there is undoubtedly a tendency for strangers to modify their local speech when talking with each other.'

M. M. Green: 'The Present Linguistic Situation in Ibo country',  
*Africa*, 9: 515. 1936.

'If one asks how Igbos manage to communicate across dialect boundaries, the answer is that they may speak English, they may actually learn a more widely used or more prestigious dialect, they may use some form of Pidgin Igbo, or they may take advantage of the considerable common vocabulary and of the systematic sound-shifts which these wordlists show to exist. There is one other striking unifying factor which is obvious from these lists. This is the extraordinary stability of tone through the whole range of the dialects studied. Igbos who speak or understand other dialects than their own are relying to a very great extent on tone. Tones (are) one of the principal means to mutual intelligibility of dialects;

R. G. Armstrong: *A Comparative Wordlist of Five Igbo Dialects*, Institute of African Studies, U.I. Occasional Publication, 4:4-5, 1967.

The following assumptions underlie this study.

The full answers to the question of mutual intelligibility or inter-communication among any culturally homogeneous people cannot be given by linguistics alone. Other disciplines especially anthropology, ethnology and psychology have valid and relevant contributions which structural linguists very often overlook and/or underplay.

Long before the evolution of what is now known as Nigeria there existed a geographically delimitable and culturally homogeneous area which Ward (1935)<sup>1</sup> and Green (1936)<sup>2</sup> after her referred to as 'Ibo country'. The British administrators who worked in this area between 1910-1934 compiling intelligence reports for the British Government, (some of these administrators were trained and competent anthropologists/ethnographers) referred to the 'natives' of this 'Ibo country' as the 'Ibo-speaking peoples of South-Eastern Nigeria'.<sup>3</sup> Long after Nigeria's independence, and, perhaps, more importantly, long after the 1967 creation of states, a 'native' ethnographer/anthropologist, Onwuejeogwu (1972) using 'six distinctive culture themes', only one of which is linguistic, recognized an Igbo culture area, hereafter referred to ICA. According to Onwuejeogwu this area is 'delimitable by an imaginary line running outside the settlements of Agbor, Kwale, Obiaruku, Ebu, (West Niger Igbo area), Ahoada, Diobu, Umuagbaya (Port-Harcourt area), Arochukwu, Afikpo, Ndinioafu, Isiogo (Abakaliki area) and Enugu Ezike (Nsukka area) and Nzam'.<sup>4</sup> Neither the creation of states in 1967 and 1976 nor the end of the civil war has left Nigerians in doubt about the 'character' that is identified as the Igbo man. In fact other Nigerians now have the sinister saying that 'an Igbo man is an Igbo man whether he comes from the Rivers State or Anambra State or Imo State or Bendel State!' Therefore post-war and pre-1976 demands for 'political' and 'linguistic' autonomy by various groups in the ICA can only deceive people whose only informants are well-placed civil servants or government-owned newspapers like 'The Tide', 'The Star' and 'The Nigerian Observer'.

From a linguistic point of view, the people who live in any given culture area constitute a 'linguistic' or 'speech' community. And as Martinet (1967) has pointed out 'the notion of linguistic community is not only useful ("as a pragmatic assumption, at least at a certain

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

In this study we employ an orthographic convention; except where otherwise stated. Tones are fully marked.

1. Ward, I. C. (a) 'A Linguistic Tour in Southern Nigeria' *Africa* 8.1: 92-93. Jan. 1935.  
(b) *Ibo dialects and the development of a common language*. Heffer Cambridge, 1941.
2. Green, M. M. (a) 'The Present Linguistic situation in Ibo country'. *Africa* 9: 515, 1936.  
(b) *Igbo Village Affairs*. Frank Cass and Co., London, 1965.
3. Some of these are Major A. G. Leonard, Norcote Thomas, 1910-1914, Meek and Talbot 1914-32, Jeffrey 1933, Forde and Jones 1937.
4. Onwuejeogwu, M. A. 'The dawn of Igbo civilization' *Odinani* 1:15-56; relevant section is reprinted and expanded in Ogbalu, F. C. and Emenanjo, E. N. (Eds.) *Igbo Language and Culture*, O.U.P. 1975. See also Hambly, W. O. *Culture Areas of Nigeria*, Chicago 1935.



stage of linguistic research") but unavoidable in linguistics as soon as a language is conceived as an instrument of communication. Because communication implies community'.<sup>5</sup> If therefore we study language from a functional viewpoint as Martinet has done, we will agree with him that 'no (linguistic) community is linguistically homogeneous: no two persons use a language in exactly the same way: the same situation will elicit different linguistic reactions from different onlookers; no two persons will use or understand the very same vocabulary; even the highly structured aspects of language such as morphology may differ in important respects from one speaker to another *without impairing mutual understanding and even without being noticed by the interlocutors*'<sup>6</sup> (*underlining mine.*)

The fourth assumption made in this study is that the indigenous Igbo political culture has a corresponding effect on the linguistic situation in the whole ICA. Igbo political organisation<sup>7</sup> is one in which every Igbo town or clan was by and large a self-sufficient and self-governing democratic republic or kingdom (in a few cases). Thus the Igbo town or clan was fully independent and individualistic in everything including the speech variety used therein. In the words of Green (1936) 'the uncentralized nature of Igbo social organisation is paralleled by that of their language, the two factors clearly reacting on each other mutually as cause and effect. Each village group tends to have its own local form of speech, but there is enough evidence to show that in certain cases the language spoken over a considerable area though it varies from place to place may yet be considered as belonging to one dialect type'.<sup>8</sup>

Another assumption made is that acephalous as the Igbo were and atomistic and fragmented as each of their various speech varieties were, the indigenous people in the ICA have always communicated all through their history. Migrations, trade, different types of alliances and covenants, marriages, wars and festivals provided avenues for direct and indirect contacts. And whenever all these people met they did not speak English, (for English came only at the beginning of this century), and they did not use interpreters. And yet they communicated.<sup>9</sup>

The sixth assumption we make in this study is that there are different varieties of the language spoken in the ICA. We do not yet know the exact number of these varieties nor the exact extent over which each variety is spoken. But we do know, however, that due to historical, economic and socio-political factors two varieties have established themselves as 'focal' varieties in the whole of the ICA. These are 'Central Igbo' and a generalised Ònìchà which we shall hereafter refer to simply as Ònìchà in contradiction to E. Ònìchà which is the form of Igbo spoken in Enu Ònìchà or Onitsha Inland Town. Central Igbo is the one that is formally written and taught and spoken by the Protestants, among others, in a good part of what is now Imo State. Ònìchà on the other hand, is that one that is often used by most travelled people for inter-group communication in a good number of urban centres in Igboland, as well as elsewhere where Igbo people meet. Of the two varieties of Igbo, it seems that for historical and linguistic reasons, Ònìchà established itself as the more popular one. Ònìchà is perhaps the (most prestigious) variety which most travelled Igbo

5. Martinet, A. *A Functional view of Language*. O.U.P. 1967, p. 104.

6. *Ibid.*, p.

7. See (a) Afigbo, A. E. 'The Indigenous political Systems of the Igbo', *Tarikh* Vol. 4, No. 2, 1972, pp. 13-23.

(b) Nzimiro, I. *Studies in Ibo Political Systems*. Frank Cass, London, 1972.

(c) Henderson, R. N. *The King in Everyman*. Yale.

(d) Green, M. M. *Igbo Village Affairs*. Frank Cass and Co., London, 1965.

8. Green, M. M. 'The Present Linguistic situation in Ibo country'. *Africa* 9: 511-512, 1936.

9. My mother told me how in their youth they travelled to Umunede in Ika Division and Kwale and traded with these people. Each trader/buyer spoke his own variety and they communicated. Onwuejeogwu noticed during his field work that at Igiritta and Okomoko traders from Mbaise, Emekuku and Owerri, converged with their Ikwere trade partners each tader speaking his own dialect. See Ogbalu, F. C. and Emenanjo, E. N. *Igbo Language and Culture*, p. 10.

people speak when they wish to be 'genteel' or wish to escape being looked down upon on account of their speech, and are, therefore, saved from many unpleasant humiliations!

The last assumption which we make in this study is that any two people from any parts of the ICA can communicate as Westermann, Ward, Green, and Armstrong have correctly observed. But there are a number of variables which are tied up with the speakers' backgrounds, educational attainments, experience, especially in terms of travelling, religious affiliation, etc. On the whole, however, this is how two 'strange' Igbo people understand themselves:

- (i) They may speak English or any other language which they have acquired; this is usually the case with the 'educated' or the 'travelled' ones.
- (ii) They may speak Englishbo - a mixture of English and Igbo.<sup>11</sup>
- (iii) They may speak Central. This is the case with people from a good part of Imo State. Some people in Anambra State, notably in Orumba, Aguata, Nnewi, Idemili and Udi divisions, among others, whose home dialects share many identical phonological and syntactic features with Central, naturally and effortlessly speak Central. Again most Protestants as well as people who have studied Igbo formally in the schools and churches tend to speak Central unconsciously.
- (iv) They may speak the 'more' prestigious of the two varieties of the discussants.
- (v) They may speak Ònìchà, for reasons already stated in 2.6 above.
- (vi) They may speak Modern Igbo,<sup>12</sup> a mixture of Central, Ònìchà and their dialects. Is this what Armstrong<sup>13</sup> means by 'Pidgin Igbo?'
- (vii) Each of the two speakers may speak his own dialect. This may be modified or unmodified depending on a number of factors some of which are socio-political. On the whole, however, the tendency is for two people from different parts of the ICA to modify the variety they speak. As of now we cannot quantify the form and extent of the modification but certain things are obvious: this modification or adjustment is mutual and consciously manipulated, not automatic.<sup>14</sup> Referring to what we call mutual adjustment as compromise, Martinet (1967) observes 'compromise is universal (in the ICA); just like charity it begins at home, and just like charity it extends to the whole of the (linguistic) community, it takes place among those who FEEL THEY BELONG TO THE SAME LANGUAGE... and BELIEVE THEY SPEAK ALIKE IN ALL RESPECTS'.<sup>15</sup> (capitals mine).

10. See (a) Emenanjo, E. N. 'Central Igbo - An Objective Appraisal in Ogbalu, F. C. and Emenanjo E. N. *Igbo Language and Culture*, pp. 114-137.

(b) Ward, I. C. *Ibo dialects and the development of a common Language*, Heffer 1941.

The popularity of Ònìchà and the possibility of this evolving into the standard spoken if not written Igbo was made in a number of papers presented at the Seminar on the Problems of the Igbo Language and culture, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1971. As we pointed out in 'Central Igbo - An Objective Appraisal, even though Onicha forms are known and imitated in a good number of urban centres the 'coloration and texture' of the Igbo spoken in the urban areas vary from centre to centre e.g. the form of Igbo spoken in Aba and its environs has a southern Ngwa coloration different from that in Owerri with an Uratta coloration or that in Onitsha and Enugu and their environs with their Ònìchà coloration. It is however, necessary to point out that the division between 'Central' and Ònìchà did not run along dialectal lines, as there are lots of common dialectal features between Owerri - Òmuahia (central) Igbo and the Igbo spoken in Orumba, Aguata, Nnewi Udi, Abakaliki, which were often popularly classified as Onitsha in the former simplistic two-fold division into Onitsha and Owerri.

11. B. U. Nwafor: 'Englishbo or the spoken language of the Educated Ibo' *Ibadan* 29: 41-44, July 1971.

12. See the reference in 10 (a) above.

13. See Armstrong in 1.4.

14. See the views of Westermann, Ward and Green in 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 respectively.

15. Martinet, p. 104.

It is because the *ika* in Bendel State and the *Ọhụhụ* in the Imo State *know* and *feel* that they belong to the same linguistic community (linguistic differences notwithstanding) that accounts for why the *ika* and the *Ọhụhụ* can communicate via mutual adjustment, even though they are separated by some 230 km. And yet the *ika* cannot communicate with his next-door *Ẹsan* state-neighbour with whom he is separated by only 20 km!

It is necessary to add that when two 'strange' Igbo communicate either one or a combination of the seven of so possibilities listed above can be employed simultaneously by each or both of the speakers.

Whatever anyone has to say about language as a system, it is first and foremost a system linking meaning with sound, as Chafe (1970) puts it<sup>16</sup>. If therefore we are to understand mutual intelligibility and mutual adjustment among other linguistic phenomena, we should try, first of all, to understand what is happening in the areas of sound (phonology) and of meaning (semantics.)

We wish to put forward the proposal that the reason why two different Igbo people can understand themselves with or without mutual adjustment is that each of them operates three different but complementary levels of phonology and of semantics. The three levels are what we simply call:

- (i) the Basic level
- (ii) the Deep level
- (iii) the Surface level.

As our definitions will show later on, our use of the terms 'Basic' 'Deep' and 'Surface' may have little in common with the use of these terms in modern post-chomskyan linguistics.

The Basic level is the one that was (and is) common to all varieties in the ICA. It is the level that belongs to the PROTO variety. It is an abstract level that can still be reconstructed. With respect to phonology it is to be equated with meta-phonology while with respect to meaning it is to be equated with absolute cultural meaning. The basic level seems a passive one which though not used by any is built into the system of every native speaker. At the basic level there are no varieties but one basic VARIETY. It is the level at the sub-conscious of native speakers.

The Deep level is the level that is used by every native speaker when he is speaking his variety with another first speaker of that variety. By this definition, therefore, it can be inferred that the deep level will vary from area to area in the ICA.

The Surface level is the level that is used by every native speaker when he speaks his or another's variety with a 'stranger'. While the deep level varies from area to area, the surface level varies not only from speaker to speaker but also from occasion to occasion.

The three levels are complementary as we have already said. Although the basic, the deep and the surface levels overlap and at times may be difficult to separate, the distinction is there. As we shall show later most people who are concerned with lexicostatistics are operating with data from the surface level only.

### **Phonology and The Three Levels**

At the Basic level of phonology we want to argue that all varieties indigenous to the ICA have the following phonological features:

16. Chafe, W. L. *Meaning and the Structure of Language* Chicago, 1970, p. 10.

- (i) a  $(C)_S^T$  syllable structure where C=Consonant, T=Tone and S=Syllabic (i.e. vowel or syllabic nasal).
- (ii) a IO-vowel system and vowel harmony.<sup>17</sup>
- (iii) a complex consonantal system which may have had as many as the 64 consonants that Armstrong has recognised for Ọlọ (Ọlọ Town (Orlu) is not very far from Isu Ama from where the significant migrations started in part of Igbo-land.
- (iv) distinctive aspiration and nasalization.<sup>17</sup>
- (v) extensive and probably distinctive palatalization and labialization.
- (vi) vowel assimilation and consonant contraction.
- (vii) a register tone system with two phonemic tonemes, and downdrift-automatic and non-automatic.

It is because all speakers in the ICA have the above, built into their subconscious that accounts for why a native speaker can *hear* and understand the sounds which the other makes irrespective of the variety.

At the Deep level of phonology, the picture is somewhat changed from what it is at the basic level, thus:

- (i) all varieties have and retain their  $(C)_S^T$  syllable structure.
- (ii) the vowel system is reduced to 8 for most varieties. It is significant that the varieties that still have the 9-vowel system are those at the boundary of the ICA: ịka Ụkwụ̀nị, ịzi, ịkwere, Nsụ̀kà. Vowel harmony is still retained at the deep level.
- (iii) the consonant system is reduced from 64 in Ọlọ to 60 in Ọ̀wèrè, to 55 for Ọ̀hụ̀hụ̀, until we reach 28 in E. Ọ̀nị̀chà.
- (iv) distinctive aspiration and/or nasalization are retained in the varieties at the culture centre as in Ọlọ and Ọ̀wèrè, and in some of those at the culture margin, in ịka and ịkwere.<sup>17</sup>
- (v) palatalization and labialization are reduced from area to area, though their realizations differ from area to area.
- (vi) vowel assimilation and consonant reduction are retained in all the varieties.
- (vii) a register tone system with reduced tonemes to the extent that in most varieties we have two distinctive tonemes and a juncture or phonetic feature of downstep, while in ịzi according to Bendor - Samuel and Meier we have in addition to the two phonemic tones in other varieties 'three tonal features, downstep, upstep and latent low together with a number of tonal rules'.<sup>18</sup> In all the varieties studied so far, tone performs not only lexical and grammatical function, but seems stable throughout the whole ICA. According to Armstrong 'there is the extraordinary stability of tone through the whole range of the (five) dialects (varieties) studied. Igbos who speak and understand other dialects than their own are relying to a very great extent on tone'.<sup>19</sup>

It is of course true that some lexical items have different lexical tones in the different varieties, ñgwerè/ñgwèlè 'lizard' (generic), è/ihlè/èshishlè 'afternoon'. It is also true that some grammatical tone sequences may vary from one variety to the other to the extent that there is an area in Njikoka/Aguata axis where the people are said to speak with àgbò enū which I have analysed as an utterance final higher-than high tone. Interesting as these lexical and gra-

17. See Williamson, Kay (a) 'The sound system of proto-Lower Niger, Mimeograph.  
(b) 'Proto-Lower Niger vowels some first thoughts'. Mimeograph. Paper read at the Linguistics Seminar, U. I., 2 Feb. 1975.

18. John Bendor - Samuel and Paul Meier: 'Izi' in *Studies in Nigerian Languages*, 1974, pp pp27-28.

19. Armstrong, R. G. *A Comparative wordlist of five Igbo Dialects*, pp. 4-5.

mmatical tones may be they do not inhibit communication. A speaker who uses ñgwerè has no difficulty whatsoever in understanding ñgwèlè. And other Igbo people have no difficulty understanding the àgbò enū people.

The evidence we have in what happens at the deep level explains why even if the different speakers insist on using their respective varieties communication is still possible. The point is that in the linguistic repertoire of each native speaker there are built-in mechanisms which can encode and decode the phonological information received at a speed that no computer can handle or quantify. It is as a result of this encoding and decoding that those who do not have distinctive aspiration and/or nasalization can understand without difficulty those who have these features. Thus the Enūàn speaker knows that the Òwèrè man's ara 'breast' is his ala while the Mbàise man's ìdhà 'to fall' his ìdà.

At the Surface level of phonology, there is a conscious effort on the part of all to give up those peculiar phonetic/phonological features which are found in the respective varieties. The picture that emerges is thus:

- (i) a (C) <sup>T</sup>S syllable structure.
- (ii) an eight vowel system and vowel harmony.
- (iii) a drastically reduced consonant system until we reach a maximum of 30 or so for most speakers of standard Igbo.
- (iv) Non-distinctive aspiration and nasalization.
- (v) a regularized/standardized use of labialization and palatalization to the extent that people use or give up these in accordance with the general practice in the ICA. Thus with respect to labialization an E. Ònichà or an Ìka would say egwu instead of egu 'play' while an Ìlàà (Enūan) speaker would say òkù instead of òkù 'fire.'
- (vi) regularized use of vowel assimilation and consonant contraction.
- (vii) A regularized register tone system with two tones and downstep.

In Table I we shall use the case of consonant phonemes to illustrate how the regularization/standardization takes place with regard to some consonant phonemes.

TABLE I  
CONSONANTS: TABLE OF MUTUAL CONSONANT ADJUSTMENTS

Ìgbòqùzò	sh	—>	h	as in	àhù	and not	àshù	'body'
Ìka	k		k		òkà		òkà	'corn'
Ìzi	ph		f		afò		ephò	'belly'
m̀bièri	? bh f		t b p		bàta ibà ìpù		bà?a ìbhà ìfù	'enter' 'to catch' 'to go out'
E. Ònichà	g hw r v		gw k r f		egwu okwu àrù ofe		egu ohwu àrù òve	'play' 'word' 'body' 'soup'
Òwèrè	ʧ r sh v w		t d s b b		àtò idi mmā isi ibu ò b̀l̀l̀à		àtò r̀ri mmā ishi ivu ò ẁl̀l̀à	'three' 'to be good' 'smell' 'load' 'any'
Òz̀b̀b̀l̀ù	gh		w		ewu		eghu	'goat'

NOTE: —> = (becomes; ? = glottal stop; ʧ = ingressive glottalic stop; = a fortis roll)

Surface level: Among the things which Table 1 reveals are:

- (1) there is a systematic correspondence of consonants in the different varieties.
- (2) the consonants that are preferred or these which are now going currency seem to be the Onicha ones. The reason for this may be because the 28-consonants used for writing Igbo are closer to those of Ònìchâ than to those of other dialect.

In conclusion we would like to say that at the surface level there is a conscious and mutual effort among nature speakers to give up the idiosyncratic aspects of their 'deep' varieties for the more generally accepted and acceptable ones. And we observe that what they give up include 'non-essential' even if phonemically significant features like aspiration, nasalization excessive palatalization and labialization and tonal features like agbò enu found in Njikoka/Aguata; the ultimate syntactic low tone found in Aguleri, or the tonal features noticed in Izi, or the unusual use of nominal prefixes found in Ikwere etc. As Jespersen observes in another content, 'what disappears is for the most part those peculiarities which people first notice in others and are inclined to make fun of'. And when these peculiarities disappear, we have not only mutual adjustment but the beginning of a standard/common language in the culture area.

### Meaning and Language

If two individuals belong to the same culture area, they speak in terms of cultural concepts. Cultural concepts are expressed through idioms. And idioms as the semanticists and the ethnologists hold are the conveyers of cultural meaning. With two people in the same culture area the culture meaning which each will encode in the variety of the language used for communication will normally be those which are common to other members of the cultural/linguistic community. The listener then grasps from the linguistic utterance the cultural meanings encoded in it by the speaker. Meaning, cultural meaning is the *raison d'être* of language for without it we have strings of noise and no language.

Because cultural meaning is the heart of communication, when people communicate they are more normally intent upon understanding what is said and hardly upon observing the way it is said. In other words, people hardly notice divergencies in the different varieties they speak or hear. Even where they notice these, they overlook them since these do not inhibit effective communication. While in the area of phonology it is possible to work out a one-to-one correspondence with respect to phonemes, in the area of meaning the case is more complex. For while, at times, we can work out a morpheme-to-morpheme or a word-to-word correspondence, we know from the works of Bloch,<sup>20</sup> Wells<sup>21</sup> and Leonard Bloomfield,<sup>22</sup> as well as from the ways idioms operate, that the meaning of an utterance or of a syntactic structure is more than the sum of the meanings of its different constituents put together. In other words, in language words are more meaningful in utterance than in isolation. At the same time however, we can argue that in the area of meaning we can work out a concept-to-concept or idiom-to-idiom correspondence between the different varieties spoken in the ICA.

See Table 2.

20. Bloch, B. *Linguistic Structures and Linguistic Analysis*. Report on the 4th Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Teaching. Ed. by Archibald Hill. 40-41 Washington D. C. Georgetown University.

21. Wells, R. 'Immediate Constituents', *Language* 23: 81-117.

22. Bloomfield, L. 1933. *Language*. New York: Holt.

TABLE 2: TABLE OF 'CONCEPTS' CORRESPONDENCE

CONCEPT	ÌKA	ENUÀNÌ	E. ÒNÌCHÀ	ÒWERE	MBÌÈRÌ	ÒZUÌTEM	UKWUÀNÌ
Morning Greeting. 'Are you up from sleep'	Ì tēhìy	Ì putago yàlā	Ì putago yàlā	Ì rì ykpa le	Ì meena ykpa ole	Ì bọola chi	Ì Ì (putago) yàlā Ì (pusawo) ulā
Perfective; Affir- mative: 'He has gone.'	O jomele	O jegego	o jebego	o jecle	O jecna	O jebela	O (jebego) (jebewo)
Perfective-Unful- filled: 'He should have gone'	Nkà ò jemele	Nta o jebego	o ka ejebego	o gáará (eje) (ije)	U káará (eje) (ije)	ogaára (eje) (ije)	o ká ejebegoli
Future: Negative 'He will not go'	O jekp	O ma eje	O ma eje	O gahi (eje) (ije)	O gahi (eje) (ije)	O gahi (eje) (ije)	o mā-eje
Indicative: Negative 'He did not go'	O jeni	O (jesho) (jehq)	O jero	O jeghij	O jeghi	O jeghi	O jena
How is it?	Nani o mè	Ka ka o di	Kèdu ka o di	Oliá	Oliá	ólio U di aghil	Ndec ele o di
Since	Kéte	Eshi	Eri	Ke nìgbé	Ke nìgbé	Ka (mgbé) (nza)	Esi
Tell lies	-gha ygha	(-si ási) (tu ntu)	(-si ási) (-tu ntu)	-gha ygha	-gha ygha	-gha ygha	(-tu ntu) (-si ási)
Meeting	ógwa	(izu) (nzuko)	(izu) (nzuko)	ógbakó	ógbakó	nzuko	iizu
Age-grade	ógbo	ógbo	ógbo	ógbo ebiri	ógbo ebiri	uké ebiri	(ógbo) (òtu)
Box	ekpeti	akpáti	akpá ti	igbe akpáti	igbe akpáti	igbe akpáti	akpati
Dance (play)	egu	egwu	egu	nkwa egwu	nkáwa egwu	(uri) (nkwa) (egwu)	egwu
Preparation for New Yam Festival	Usezi	Ifèjioku	Ifèjioku	(Ajoku) (Njoku)	(Ajoku) (Njoku)	(Ajiku) (Njoku)	Ufèjioku

### Observations

- (i) Two different people who use the different varieties in the ICA do communicate without an interpreter.
- (ii) The apparent structural differences between the ways the various concepts are expressed in the different varieties will be interesting, exciting and revealing to diehard structuralists. Using this type of evidence structuralists would be in order if they set up each variety as a fully independent language! But if such structuralists take a functional view of language as Martinet (the renowned French linguist) has done, they will agree with him that 'unbiased observation shows that when people understand each other they do so in spite of differences which affect not only irrelevant trimmings but sometimes fundamentals'.<sup>23</sup>
- (iii) Even taking the data in Table 2 as they are, we can see a lot of similarities beneath the apparent dissimilarities. Notice:
- (a) the identical syntactic tone patterns in some of the verb forms; the Perfective: Negative; the Future: Negative, Interrogation. This is further confirmation of that stability of tone patterns which Armstrong talked about.
- (b) correspondence between some morphemes  
 E.  $\text{Ōnìchà}$  Perfective marker is =go; =Enuànj  
 =gɔ =jka=le =Ukwuàni =wo; =Òwèrè  
 =la; =Mbjèrì =na.
- (iv) We require the services of a combined inter-disciplinary team of linguistic semanticists, psychologists, psycholinguists, ethnologists, anthropologists/ethnographers, anthropological linguists and statisticians to describe and quantify the intricate processes of encoding and decoding which go on to bring about communication between two 'strange' people in the ICA. The fact that we cannot now explain and quantify these as we can do, for example, in the area of phonology, does not mean that it is impossible or that what we are saying is incorrect. It is a fact, and a linguistic-semantic fact that the people in ICA can understand themselves without an interpreter. And Chafe has this to say about semantic fact 'the observation of semantic fact is impossible without an expenditure of cerebral energy..... Semantic observation seems to lead inevitably to controversy on particular points. I do not take such controversy to mean that semantic facts do not exist, or that they are hard facts, but only that they are often frustratingly hard to ferret out'.<sup>24</sup> And I agree with Chafe. With some humility linguists do now accept that we are still far from understanding the semantic structure of language.

### Meaning and The Three Levels

The things that happen at the three levels of phonology are easier to capture, define and equate than those happening at the three levels of meaning. This is not only because meaning is a very elusive thing but also because the following variables play more significant roles in semantics than in phonology: age, experience, especially in traditional education, mores and ethos, experience in terms of formal education and modern travels, linguistic competence, sex and location in the culture area. The corollary of this above observation about variables is that the linguistic results and the objectivity of any linguistic researcher will be

23. Martinet, A. *A Functional view of Language*, P. 104.

24. Wallace, L. C. *Meaning and the Structure of Language*, pp. 11-12.



affected by the ability with which such a researcher is able to evaluate each piece of information received and to slot such information in its correct place on the scale of variables. More than in phonology it requires experienced native-speakers' competence to appreciate fully what happens at the three levels of meaning.

At the basic level, we deal with conceptual meaning. It is at this level that concepts, idioms, words and syntactic structures have their fullest cultural semantic specifications. Thus the older and more experienced one is the greater is one's knowledge of these specifications. Although we do not yet fully understand the nature of the basic level of meaning, we find it plausible to postulate that at this level morphemes, words and idioms are to be regarded respectively as bundles of simultaneously occurring semantic units.

At the deep level because of certain geo-political reasons among others, the 'basic' meaning of a morpheme, word, idiom and construction understandably sheds off some of its basic meanings leaving certain 'local' realizations or 'meanings'. At times such a meaning may have a tenuous link with the basic meaning where the words etc. are cognate. At other times such a meaning is an applied or extended meaning of the basic meaning. At times the meaning may be a 'specialized' remnant of the basic meaning. In other words, the local meaning of a cognate word, etc, may emphasize, directly or indirectly, literally or metaphorically one or the other of the features that make up the bundle of semantically occurring semantic units. Or again if the location of the variety is such that it shares boundaries with another culture area, it may borrow even a word of the type that is to be found in classic test list devised by Swadesh. For example the basic Igbo word for fish is AZU. This is known and used by ALL in the ICA, including the elders in W.Izi. But in W. Izi, the word emà has been borrowed from the Ọbùbra people. It is unfortunate that because all the varieties used in ICA do not have a tradition of writing, and of written literature, people, especially the younger and inexperienced ones will tell you categorically that such and such a word does not exist in their variety. My own personal experience with the words ụzụzụ 'dust' mkpumè 'a ritual stone used by rain doctors' which I thought did not exist in my own Enuàni (Igbòzọ) variety has taught me some humility! To get the basic and the deep level meanings of morphemes, words etc., we have to go to the aged and the experienced who in the absence of written traditions and definitive dictionaries are the living encyclopaedia of cultural meaning in the ICA.

At the surface level, we notice that in the spirit of the evolution of a Standard variety which will have an acceptability throughout the ICA, certain morphemes, words, idioms can be said to be stabilizing the meanings. While the meaning that is being stabilized may be the common basic one, certain local or deep meanings are also being stabilized or allowed as synonymous meanings. And to achieve this 'standard' meaning certain features or strands of the basic or local deep meaning are deliberately ignored. And when a thing is ignored for too long it tends to be forgotten. Thus when at the surface level people use words other than the standard ones, they do so with qualifications. Thus if at the surface level an Igbòzọ (Enuàni) man is speaking with another Igbo who is not an Enuàni, he could use àjàdù and qualify it thus, Ya bù ife ndị Igbò ndị ọzọ nà-àkpọ àkwúnàkwunà i.e. 'What other Igbo people called prostitute. In this way effective communication is achieved.

There is no doubt that the meanings which are entered in word lists and in non-etymological dictionaries are for the most part from the surface level.' Linguists should know this and be honest enough to own up that if they rely entirely on information elicited from this level the result of their lexicostatistics is bound to be faulty.

25. See (a) John Bendor-Samuel and Paul Meier 'Some contrasting features of the Izi verb system', *JAL*, VI Pt. 1., 30-41.

(b) Meier: 'Igbo Dialects and the Development of Standard Igbo', Paper read at the Seminar on Igbo Language and Culture, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, August 1974.

Let us now trace the history of four concepts through the three levels of meaning.

1. *Ajàdú:*  
*Basic Level:* woman whose husband is dead; and is not re-married into the husband's family; and is not re-married outside the husband's family because no one can pay or is willing to pay her ngò 'bride wealth'; is disregarded by dead husband's family and yet this woman must feed, clothe herself, children etc.  
*Deep Level:* (a) Woman whose husband is dead, a widow. In a good number of the varieties spoken the ICA in the Igbo heartland  
(b) 'A prostitute' used in varieties spoken in Enuàṅ.  
*Surface Level:* Àjàdú = widow (standard meaning)  
Akwúnà (kwúnà): prostitute, (Standard meaning)
2. *Ɔjòku:*  
*Basic Level:* Yam-force plus all the rituals connected with this performed before new yam is formally eaten.  
*Deep Level:* *Ifèjòku:* Yam -force plus rituals performed in late August or early September in Ibusa (Igbòuzò) Enuàṅ.  
*Ifèjòku:* Yam - force plus rituals performed sometime between September and November.  
*Ajòkù:* Yam-force plus rituals performed sometime between August and November in Owèrri.  
*Surface Level:* Emume Ìrì Jì Ọhụrụ, with timing still unspecified for all areas.
3. *Stone (generic)*  
*Basic level:* Ìkpumè 'boulder (generic)'  
*Deep Level:* Ìkpumè 'stone' for a good number of places in the ICA, but a ritual stone used by rain-makers in Enuàṅ Igbo-uzò) where òkwutè is now the generic term for 'stone'. Ìkpumè and òkwutè (òkutè) generic for stone throughout the ICA.  
*Surface Level:*
4. *Idì:*  
*Basic Level:* Ìdì 'To be at a place'  
Ìnò 'To be at a place'  
*Deep Level:* Ìdì 'To be at a place' for (— animate) nouns used in a number of Northern varieties but for (+ animate) nouns in some Southern varieties.  
Ìnò 'To be at a place' for (+ animate) nouns used in a number of Northern varieties but for (— animate) nouns in some Southern varieties.  
*Surface Level:* Ìdì 'To be at a place' for (— animate) nouns.  
Ìnò 'To be at a place' for (+ animate) nouns.

Some observations which we would like to emphasize are that:

- (i) Some cognate words may have slightly different meanings in isolation. But when used in utterances with their 'deep' meanings they are fully understood.
- (ii) Some cognate words used for expressing one concept may be long or short depending on the variety. Again the length or otherwise does not inhibit communication when used in context.
- (iii) Certain varieties have got completely different and non-cognate words to express the same concept. In the context of usage, communication is still possible, because such words are still used with other words etc. in the utterance to express the concept... Let us repeat that the expression of a concept

which is nothing more than a cultural experience is not done on a morpheme-for-morpheme word-for-word basis. Structural linguists whose sole concern is with cognates are unfortunately concerned with some of the units of language in isolation on a word-for-word basis.

If with all we have explained two Igbo people say they cannot communicate it must be because either

- or (i) they have not sufficiently developed the skill of listening
- or (ii) they are so rustic and untravelled that they are afraid, or ashamed to make the necessary adjustments,
- or (iii) they are educated, travelled and conceited and therefore ashamed or unwilling to generate the goodwill to *hear* themselves,
- or (iv) they are simply daft and unintelligent and 'incapable' of listening meaningfully to 'outsiders' or 'strangers' irrespective of their education and travels,
- or (v) they are just being dishonest and giving non-natives the sort of answers such non-natives would like to hear.

There is a lot that is common to all the varieties spoken in ICA which makes mutual intelligibility possible. Even on the basis of lexical items alone, the 1050 words sampled by Armstrong reveal to him that there is a 'considerable common vocabulary' between five of the dialects (varieties) studied'. Does this not suggest that something is clearly wrong with the sampling of 100 words used by other analysts? Is the fault with the methodology employed-lexicostatistics? Or is it with the interpretation of the feed backs from informants? Or is it with the researchers themselves? Do the researchers have sufficient linguistic competence in one of the varieties spoken in ICA? Are the researchers knowledgeable about the culture of the people whose language they are analysing? If Paul (and Inge) Meir<sup>25</sup> and Bendor-Samuel<sup>26</sup> had some competence in other varieties spoken elsewhere in the ICA they would have known that *m̄m̄ēē* (Izi *m̄ēē*) 'blood' and *Ōbhàrà* (*Ōbàlà*) 'blood' are not cases of non-cognation. In all varieties spoken in the ICA, these words are synonyms. Again *òkpà* 'leg' and *ùkwù* 'leg' are not cases of non-cognate words but of synonyms. Again if these Europeans had taken the geographical location of *izi* into consideration as well as considered the fact that the Izi variety has not had the same exposure as some other more central varieties on account of geo-politico-socio-cultural factors relating to the Izi as a people, their sampling would have been much more objective. Such objectivity would have been evidenced by the observation that while the Western Izi who live close to the Obubra have *emà* for 'fish' the older *izi* here as well as the Eastern *izi* have *azù* for 'fish'. Again if these analysts had placed all their cards face upwards they would have realized that the fact that an Izi word is not cognate with an *Ōwèrè* one does not mean that it cannot be cognate with a word in another variety elsewhere in the ICA. Thus *izi òha* 'comb' is cognate with *Enuàni òha* 'comb' but not cognate with *Ōwèrè mvò* 'comb'. *Izi òkòko* 'flower' is cognate with *Abàchà òkòko* 'flower' but not with *Ōwèrè ituru*.

The surprising thing is that it is with this type of data elicited from people whose linguistic competence is questionable and analysed by non-native Europeans who do not even speak Izi, let alone any other variety spoken in the ICA that Izi is treated as 'a marginal Igbo dialect'<sup>26</sup> or as 'a language within the Igbo language cluster of the Eastern Kwa group'.<sup>27</sup>

26. Ibid.

27. J. Bendor-Samuel and Paul Meier: 'Izi' in *Studies in Nigerian Languages*, 1794, p. 27.

See also J. B. Samuel and Paul Meier: *A Grammar of Izi: An Igbo Language*.

With regard to the question of what constitutes a language or a dialect, how should we get about the situation in the ICA? We have shown that in spite of apparent and real linguistic differences communication is possible across the different varieties in the ICA. If we choose to call each of these varieties a 'language' then there is no objection provided we are consistent in referring to similar situations in other culture areas as 'languages' too. It would be double standards to call what is called a 'language' in the ICA a different name elsewhere. However it would seem to me extremely absurd to refer to the varieties spoken in Asaba, Agbò, Kwale, and Diobu, as different languages when the people call themselves Igbo and their language Igbo.

Again it is disturbing that we should, following the examples in Europe set up certain varieties spoken in Echie and Ika as languages 'in accordance with the feelings of their speakers'<sup>28</sup> or because 'the speakers of Ika and Echie tend to regard themselves as speaking languages which are distant from Igbo'<sup>28</sup>. 'Feelings' we know is a very subjective non-linguistic thing. And if we carry this to its logical conclusion we shall soon find that there are as many languages as there are towns or clans or divisions or states in the ICA. For us to be able to understand how these feelings came about we need to answer certain pertinent non-linguistic questions. At what point in time in the history of these people did this 'feeling' start? Who are the leaders or protagonists of this 'feeling'? For we know that this 'feeling', which is quite recent, has been followed by the following:

- (a) introduction of orthographic practices different from the Official Igbo Orthography: such that we now have in places *mèè mpfū* instead of *maī nkwū* 'palm wine';  
*Ahwàmephwùlèy* instead of *Ahàmefùle* 'male name'  
*Wosu (h)* instead of *Nwaosu* 'male name'  
*Rumukroshe* instead of *Umukroshe*
- (b) towns, clans, divisions have had not only to change their names but also to re-write their history especially with reference to their origins.

At times this 'feeling' is given government 'backing.' The Echie-Ikwere people in the Rivers State are no longer referred to as Igbo but as non-Ijò. I know that in the very recent past an indigent university student of Igbo parents, and who was offering Igbo as one of his subjects was faced with the option of losing his State given scholarship or dropping Igbo. The poor indigent student was wise to give up Igbo. Such a student would be foolish to own his Igbo ancestry if he is ever to finish his studies and return to his home state! In the recent past I had the privilege of serving on the government sponsored Bendel Language Committee, as the representative for Anjocha Division. Mr F. N. Okunbor, of Ika Grammar School, a bona fide representative of Ika Division and the Secretary of the Ika Language Committee kept drumming it into the heads of those who wanted him to say otherwise that Ika is a dialect of Igbo. Any group that has gone through the traumatic experiences of the Igbo speaking peoples in the recent past can appreciate why certain people are prepared to say they are not Igbo if only there will not be a 'repeat' of those terrible experiences.

Again if we want to call each variety spoken in each town, clan or division in the ICA a dialect, we have no objection provided we do not go to the ridiculous extent of saying that there are as many dialects as there are towns or clans or divisions in the ICA. Some varieties are more closely related than others. Such varieties can be said to form a 'dialect cluster' or a 'dialect type'.

28. Kay Williamson (a) 'The Lower Niger Languages' *Òdoma* 1.1, 1973, p. 34.

(b) *An Introduction to Ika and Ukwuani*

Occasional Publication No. 14, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

(c) *Reading and Writing Ikwere*, 1970.

Putting our views more concretely, the people in the ICA speak one language — the Igbo language. This language has a number of dialects. Izi, Ika, Ikwere, Òwèrè, Ònìchà Enuàń, ụkwuàń are all recognized dialects of Igbo<sup>29</sup> A dialect is made up of scores of 'dialect clusters' or 'dialect types' which may or may not correspond to the local varieties spoken in towns and/or clans and which may or may not be geographically contiguous.

Finally whatever may be the merits of lexicostatistics, Hymes has warned that it 'is not a short cut. It does not replace other methods and information must be incorporated with them into a consistent body of knowledge'.<sup>30</sup> In other words lexicostatistics can and should be used with the criterion of mutual intelligibility to show how closely related are the dialects of the language in the ICA.

The arguments we have adduced in this paper confirm the need to heed the warning of linguists like Driver 'that lexicostatistics be confined to well documented languages of Indo-European, Semitic, Hamitic etc and less attention should be given to American Indian and other pre-literate language families at present,. And even when using lexicostatistics for the well documented languages. Driver suggests that we should ideally have more tests of the reliability of eliciting from informants and of matching cognates, by comparing the results of two or more linguists working independently on the same language. Such replication is standard procedure in laboratory science,.<sup>31</sup> We have no doubt that any of two or more honest and objective linguists who do not speak any of the varieties in the ICA and who work independently will come to the same conclusions as Armstrong. All these varieties in the ICA are dialects of the same language because of the 'considerable common vocabulary... the systematic sound shifts (and)... the extraordinary stability of tone which make mutual intelligibility possible'.

29. These dialects can be further classified by whatever criteria the analyst chooses. One could, for example, classify these dialects using geographical factors thus: peripheral dialects like Izi, Ika, Ukwuàń Ikwere, Nsukà; non-peripheral dialects like Enuàń Ònìchà, and Central dialects like Òwèrè, Olu, etc. One can also use socio-cultural factors to classify the dialects into those whose native speakers have had a lot of exposure like Òwèrè, Ònìchà and those whose speakers have had minimum or little exposure like Izi, Ika, Nsukà, Udi, Akanu etc. One reason why Ika Izi, Nsuka, among others, are frequently regarded as separate languages rather than as dialects of Igbo is because the speakers of these dialects are rather 'backward' and consequently have not had the opportunity of speaking their dialects before and/or with the other Igbo people, who because of their exposure to Western Education, modern travels and big time party politics have emerged as influential teachers, scholars, civil servants, traders, politicians and even statement. When, therefore people say they do not understand Izi or any other dialect, they may be unwittingly saying that they have not had frequent contacts with such people to necessitate their hearing, evaluating and understanding their type of Igbo. Again, when people say that they do not understand Ika or any such variety of Igbo, they may be unconsciously saying that they cannot bring themselves 'low' to hear the variety of Igbo spoken by their socio-cultural 'inferiors'. For very often, when people cast off their prejudice they do hear and manage to understand them!

30. Hymes, D. H. (1960) 'Lexicostatistics so far' *Current Anthropology* 1:1.

31. Driver, H. E. As in 30.

