Education and Ethnic Politics in Nigeria

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F. Harbison and C. Myers regard education as « the key that unlocks the door to modernization » (1). Some argue that « without it, Africa's peoples would be unable to enter the modern technological world » (2). J.S. Coleman believes that it is indispensable for promoting intergroup communication « which is critically important in resolving the « two most general and most fundamental problems in political modernization, » namely the « changing of attitudes and reducing the gap between the ruling elites and the less modernized elites » (3). According to these and many other views education is positively associated with (a) social and psychological changes which alter both traditional patterns of behavior and individual's perception, and (b) the emergence of new political structures, widened political participation and a less parochial attitude to life. (4) Therefore it is predicted that greater achievements in education will help to moderate conflicts based on differences in the values of traditional structures.

Thus Nigerian leaders consistently pressured the colonial administration to devote a much larger share of resources to mass education. (5) And when they assumed governmental powers they expanded educational opportunities. In 1955 the nationalist government of Western Nigeria embarked on a program of universal free primary education. It was emulated two years later by the Eastern Nigeria regime. Education is still one of the major priorities of the Nigerian Federal and State governments. A substantial expansion has taken place at all levels of education in Nigeria since the advent of the first missionary schools in the late nineteenth century. For example, secondary school enrollment in Southern Nigeria doubled from 24,000 in 1955 to 48,000 in 1960 and more than doubled again to 116,000 by 1965. Similarly the number of secondary schools in Southern Nigeria rose spectacularly from 84 in 1952 to 176 in 1957, 296 in 1961 and 417 in 1963. (7) A program of free and compulsory primary education throughout the federation is scheduled to commence in September, 1976. (8)

Nevertheless, inter-ethnic (9) conflict has degenerated into open strife and civil war. In fact, the educated segment of the population, far from being immuned to these conflicts, has in certain cases been actively involved in them. A good example is the Lagos University

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crisis of 1965 in which the post of Vice-Chancellor was contested on ethnic grounds. And the Federal Military Government blames Ibo University professors and lecturers at Ibadan and Nsukka for instigating the Biafran secession on grounds of narrow ethnic interest.

This lack of empirical conformity to the optimistic view of the relationship between education and national integration has been recognized theoretically by David Abernethey. (10) Simililarly, E.A. Ayandele blames the educated Nigerian elite for the socio-political instability of the period prior to Military rule (11). In 1967 Alan Peshkin also found the Nigerian educational system incapable of fostering national integration. (12) However, the explanations which these analysts suggest for this counterproductive role of education in interethnic integration are fundamentally weak.

Of course, education is a crucial agent of social change. The direction of such a change is determined not by the form but by the content of education. This point is widely recognized. It is quickly and frequently noted that the content of Nigerian education had the effect of recruiting Nigerians into various religious denominations and the colonial or inherited colonial institutions ; it was illequipped to instil in them the right orientation to the society and its political system. (13) But the role of education in socio-political change is discussed as if the nature of the economic structures of society is an indifferent condition of such change. Very little is said of the reciprocal impact of the nature of organisation of society on education.

The theoretical arguments of this paper content that education is a significant factor in the emergence and persistence of ethnic politics in Nigeria because the colonial and post-colonial ruling class defined it essentially as a scarce commodity in a society pervaded by scarcity. Mere specifically it argues historically that (a) given the nature of the socio-economic organisation of Nigeria education is a vital but scarce commodity, (b) competition for it creates personal socio-economic insecurity which is ameliorated by ethnic identification and solidarity, (c) and as the intensity of this competition increases inter-ethnic hostility is exacerbated. The paper goes on to suggest that a positive role for education in the creation of inter-ethnic harmony is only possible when education ceases to be a scarce commodity through a succesful propram of free education up to the University level.

COLONIAL EDUCATION AS A SCARCE MARKETABLE COMMODITY

Colonialism discrupted the organic link between the precolonial pattern of social relations, symbols, technology and physical environment of the Nigerian population. It did so more rapidly in the South than in the North. The imported and dominant British technology did not act to modify the indegenous one but completely ignored it. Therefore, it was divorced from the needs, interests and resources of the

colonized people. Under the circumstances the precolonial social relations and symbols could not support it. The colonialists had to set up a new set of social relations and symbols linked to the imported technology. But such a link could not be organically related to the vast majority of the population.

Therefore, in order to make the colonial system work the commanding heights of the colonial economy were dominated by foreign ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, foreign production relations which unjustly exploited the labor of the vast majority of Nigerians, foreign work roles, and a skewed distribution of the surplus from production in the direction of the metropole and its citizens. They were buttressed by British socio-political norms, symbols and institutions. The overall purpose of colonial enterprise was as a British educator put it, « one of exploitation and development for the people of Britain — it was to this purpose that whatever education as was given was directed. » (14)

The need for the colonialists to cut costs and concentrate their limited foreign manpower forced them to confine their activities to colonial enclaves (urban centers). These areas were the peripheral nerve centers of imperialism. Foreign firms organised their investments there because of the high income consumer demand of the high income groups which lived there. Colonial governmental policies emphasized the expansion of these enclaves. But foreign personnel was inadequate to man the various colonial enterprises. Local labor was required.

Several devices were used to procure this labor. Although he recognized the use of pressure to obtain labor for the railway and mines, G.K. Helleiner argues that in general the colonialists merely dangled « sufficiently attractive prizes before the producers' noses to persuade them to convert potential into actual surpluses by increasing their output. » (15) While this may have been the case for such products as palm oil and groundnuts which were consumed locally it certainly was different for cocoa which was introduced from outside the country. In any case the assertion ignores the compulsion inherent in the enforcement of British currency as the only means of economic exchange, and the introduction of fixed recurrent taxes whose equivalent was hitherto unknown in the country except in the Northern emirates. It also neglects the effects of the accummulation of surpluses by the Marketing Boards even during times when the peasant producers suffered from severe economic scarcity. Most people entered the colonial enclaves because of the impact of these measures on their ability to maintain a decent livelihood.

Colonial education, particulary in the South, was designed to prepare these entrants for meaningful participation in the colonial enclaves. Initially Nigerians were needed essentially as clerks and artisans in the Civil Service and commercial firms, and as subordinates in the army and police force. Later a small beginning was made in training them for higher positions in the technical services. A fitful

effort was also made to train native administration officials and chiefs' sons. It sought not to prepare the individual to live effectively in his traditional environment but to make him capable of imitating and transmitting to future generations of Nigerians foreign structures, symbols and norms, which are beneficial to metropolitan private capital. Colonial education was imparted largely by the Christian missionaries. In addition to the goal of preparing the Nigerians for employment in the colonial administration, mines and private firms they also sought converts to Christianity and their respective denominations.

This origin of colonial education in the socio-economic and political activities of the colonial enclaves had three important consequences for the emergence and persistence of ethnicity in Nigeria. First, the centrality of metropolitan profit motive in colonialism ensured that educational expenditure would be tailored to the profits accruing from colonial activity. During the years before the Second World War the colonial government devoted most of its expenditures to administration, defense, and the preservation of law and order so crucial for profitable activities by metropolitan entreprises.

TABLE I

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE PER ITEM AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE

	1930-31	1933-34	1938-39	1947-48	1961-62
Administration	18.3	18.4	14.1	13.5	16.6
Defense	8.0	8.1	6.1	3.5	8.3
Justice and Police	9.2	8.0	8.0	11.9	9.4
Education	6.4	6.2	5.3	12.2	6.1

Source : G.K. Helleiner, *Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria* (Homewood, Illinois, Irwin Inc., 1966).

According to Governor Bourdillon of Nigeria : « a low percentage expenditure on social services is inevitable in a poor country like Nigeria in which essential expenditure on administration and security, and on the service of the public debt must absorb an unduly large percentage of the available revenue. » (16) Lord Lugard contended that in the face of limited potentalities for the growth of job opportunities an increase in the number of educated Nigerians would lead to political instability in the future. (17)

In 1938, a public Board of Education observed that « this country is in the invidious position of providing fewer opportunities in regard to elementary education than any other British possession in Africa.» (18) As late as the early 1950s, Nigeria still had a lower percentage of children of school age actually in school than any other African territory. For example, the percentage of children of school age actually in school were : Northen Rhodesia 46%, Gold Coast 45%, Belgian Congo 42%, Kenya 32%, Uganda 28%, and Nigeria 19%. (19) Education was a marketable commodity. The government brought as much as was profitable and the rest was sold to the local population.

Second, to the colonized Nigerian education was a very scarce commodity. Entrance to a good gainful colonial employment particulary in the South required some level of colonial education. Employment in a good office provided at one and the same time relatively high income, high security, high social status and a good opportunity to escape from what in the new colonial environment had become tiresome, tedious and non-lucrative traditional agricultural work.

Thus those who had savings spent them on the education of their children because they saw that only the educated salaried people enjoyed any form of socio-economic security. In fact, education was regarded as an investment for the future. In the absence meaningful old age security benefits educated children were expected to look after their ageing parents. Therefore one's children as well as others were trained. Communities occasionally got together to educate some of their sons and daughters. But although education was a highly valued social resource it was a very scarce one.

The British colonialists believed that the payment of school fees was not only a good way of financing education but also a useful device for building character. Prior to 1955 parents in the South paid 4 or 6 Nigerian Pound year to send a child to primary school. The cost of tuition and boarding in the predominantly boarding secondary schools averaged 30 Nigerian Pound a year. (20) Only the few financially able families, those on scholarship, and those whose families made heavy sacrifices could pay such fees. The costs of books, school uniforms and incidental expenses added to the burden. The resultant impact on the ability of the population to acquire education is evident in the comparative dropout rates of the primary school pupils in the various regions in 1965. The percentages of those initially enrolled who did not complete the sixth year were as follows : West 55 %, Mid-West 58 % and East 74 %. Only in the East did pupils pay fees. That the 10 Nigerian Pound enrollment fees paid from primary class four in the East deterred many prospective pupils is reflected in the dropout figure from primary three to four. In the East it was 33 % but only 8 % in the West and 8 % in the Mid-West. (21)

The colonial government's scholarship program left much to be desired. It started in 1938 as result of pressure from Nigerian nationalists and was only expanded in 1948. By 1944 only 40 government

scholars were studying abroad. But by 1950 the number had increased to 207 ; that year alone 111 overseas scholarships were awarded. (22) Similarly, government support for post-secondary education did not begin untill 1930 when the Yaba Higher College, Lagos was opened. In 1948 the University College, Ibadan superseded the Lagos institution as the premier post-secondary institution in the country. Later in the 1950s, three colleges of Arts, Science and Technology were established.

In terms of both costs and job opportunities Nigerian nationalists were much more optimistic of the prospects for universal free primary education than their colonial rulers. Moved by a strong nationalistic fervor but largely unguided by an adequate analysis of the colonial socio-economic structures they could not comprehend the effects of colonialism on socio-economic scarcity. Therefore, prior to independence nationalist-led governments embarked on programs of universal free primary education. But they were soon brought face to face with the harsh realities of life in a colonial situation.

Third, since Western education particularly in the South ignored the precolonial physical environment and therefore did not train the Nigerian to live successfully in that surroundings its value was confined to the acquisition of gainful employment in the colonial enclaves. It was essentially worthless outside these enclaves. Therefore, its value as a commodity was closely tied to the availability of employment in the new order. The less the opportunity for such employment the greater its scarcity rating. Under such conditions its market value increased ; its buying power became more valuable.

The colonial socio-economic structures were incapable of sustaining the increasing demands for employment by the growing crop of educated Nigerians. (23) Urban unemployment has continued to pose serious problems for the country. Migration from the rural areas to the cities has continued despite the hundreds of thousands already unemployed or severely underemployed in these cities. The effects of the extension of colonial structures into the post-independence period is reflected by urban unemployment in Nigeria between 1966 and 1967. It stood at 8% compared to 1% in the rural areas. Of the unemployed 21% were unemployed for six months to a year, 26% for one to two years, and 23% for over two years. (24) Even graduates of Nigerian universities will soon be unemployed. (25) During the colonial times the highest scarcity rating of education occurred as a result of the pervasive unemployment of the Depression years.

This characteristic nature of Nigeria's colonial education as a scarce commodity divorced from the local environment made it incapable of achieving the true purpose of education. As a process education prepares the individual to live effectively in his present environment and to transform it for his own good and that of society. It succeeds when it effectively relates the needs of the individual to values and resources in his local environment, and to the means

available in society for accomplishing them ; when it transmits, develops and improves the technology, patterns of social relations, norms and symbols of the society to which the individual belongs ; and when it reflects the present conditions of society while simultaneously operating to change those conditions for the greater welfare of the members. The vast majority of Nigerians were untouched by colonial education.

Education is of greater value to society than to the individual ; in fact it is an integral aspect of society. The latter sustain itself by educating its members into its ways and passing on this education from generation to generation. Without it a society will have no history and therefore no life. Therefore it is not a commodity which the society sells to its members but a crucial part of its organism. It can have no market value. It ought to be provided free up to a point commensurate with effective integration of the individual into society. Similarly, it should not be tied to employment opportunity. Through it an individual ought to harness local and other resources creatively to full employment in the society. It is such a contribution, and not the education underlying it, which the society should reward. By deviating from these ideals colonial education underlined the foreign nature of colonial society. The local population had to pay to joint it. More importantly it reflected the lack of concern by the colonialists for a Nigerian society which is truly organic in the relations of its members to one another and to its technology, local resources, and symbols. Emphasis was placed on market relations and the market value of individuals in society.

Unfortunately Nigerian leaders during the post-colonial period represent classes which have vested interests in maintaining the inherited colonial structures and therefore the nature and pattern of colonial education albeit with minor and sometimes major reforms. The members of both the civilian and military regimes owe their leadership and influence in society to their success in operating these structures. As a result they enjoy a privileged access to the national surplus. Thus inspite of some changes, the most essential features of the colonial system have persisted to the present. Even after the indigenization of businesses, the « commanding heights » of the economy are still in foreign hands, the gap between local resource use and domestic demand is widening and the organic link between technology, the local environment and the vast majority of the population has not been recreated. Growth in production cannot gather self-sustained momentum. Scarcity continues to prevail even in the midst of the new found oil wealth. Consequently education has remained and is still conceived by the leaders as scarce commodity, tied to the growth in employment, and to be sold to the population.

Nigerians governmental reports on education prepared by Nigerians such as the Dike Report of 1959, and the report of the Symosium on Education for National Mobilization of 1970 emphasize this

market value of education. They accuse the inherited education system of being dysfunctional to the country because of its incapacity to produce the highly skilled manpower necessary for successful industrial and agricultural development ; it only produces « penpushers » for clerical jobs. They observe that as such jobs have become more and more limited the school leavers have become more and more unemployed. Again they argue that the expansion of schools diverts funds away from industries capable of generating employment. Massive education expansion encroaches on funds for other vital development projects. Therefore, the country cannot afford free education at all levels. Education must continue to be a scarce commodity.

EDUCATION AND THE EMERGENCE OF ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION

Its scarce value makes it a factor for decisive competition in the society. If a societal resources is extremely limited then competition for it is very keen. And as Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris observe, the more vital or valuable the resource over which there is competition the more intense is the resultant conflict. (26) The net effect of this intense competition is individual insecurity regarding its outcome. Ethnic group affiliation and identity is a mechanism to overcome this pervasive insecurity in the colonial urban setting. (27) Thus education is a factor in the emergence of ethnic identification in Nigeria.

The years of the Depression and Second World War constituted the gestation period of ethnic identity and therefore the craddle of contemporary ethnic politics in Nigeria. Most of the communal unions may have been formed prior to 1928. But it was between 1928 and 1948 that ethnic group-wide identifications occurred. It was a period of great general scarcity and socio-economic insecurity. An expansion of the governmental sector of the economy was halted by the Depression. Customs revenus on which the Government largely depended fell from 6.8 million in 1929 to 4.2 million in 1931. (28) But while income thus diminished, the taxpayer continued to bear the same burden of taxation. (29)

By 1932 gross expenditures of the Central Government had fallen to 10 million from the 1928 figure of 78 million (30). The completion of the various public schemes had to be postponed. Severe retrenchment in both the government and private enterprises followed. Following the outbreak of the Second World War Nigerian cash crop producers, middlemen, importers and wage earners were confronted with wage ceilings and price controls. Between 1939 and 1942 the cost of living rose by 50% in the urban centers. The poor response of the government to the demands of the workers for a 50% increase in their cost of living allowance led to the general strike of 1945 (31).

The general scarcity in society affected the scarcity rating of education in two significant ways. First, as employment dropped, incomes diminished, taxes remained at the same level and the cost

of living soared fewer people could pay school fees for their children and wards. Second, retrenchment affected mostly those with little or no education. This fact increased its market value in the eyes of the population. As it became perceived more and more as a scarce vital commodity its impact on individual insecurity increased and its role in the emergence of ethnic identification also increased.

It thus contributed to the emergence of ethnic unions such as the Ibibio Welfare Union (later Ibibio State Union) founded in Ikot Ekpene in 1928, the Urhobo Brotherly Society (later Urhobo Progress Union) set up in Warri in 1931, the Ibo Union (later Federal Union and much later Ibo State Union) founded in Lagos in 1936, the Yoruba Language Society established in 1942, and the Pan-Yoruba Egbe Omo Oduduwa formed in 1948. Once these major Nigerian nationalities created their ethnic associations the smaller and previously inarticulate nationalities such as the Idoma, Tiv, Birom and Bakweri followed suit. The scope of ethnic identification was widened.

Although membership in these unions eventually included various individuals, from the illiterate peasant or laborer to the wealthy trader, titled native ruler or Lagos lawyer the impetus for and leadership of them came from the educated urban elements. For example, the men who took the lead in the formation of the Egbado Union were Dudley T. Cooker (a contractor), Isaac B. Joda (a Railway employee), J.F. Odunjo (headmaster), D.A. Fabunmi, (teacher) J.T. Adewale (teacher), Canon S.E.O. Soyemi (clergy), Chief B.F. Adesola (an employee of the Accountant General's Office), and E.A A. Fadayiro (a public relations officer) (32). They were instrumental in setting up branches of the Union in both cities and the rural areas.

The mutual aid purposes of these unions included the amelioration of the effects of education as a scarce commodity on their members. Several of them mounted drives to establish their own secondary schools. The Ibibio State College was founded at Ikot Ekpene in 1946, the Urhobo College was set up at Effurum in 1949, the Egbado College was established at Ilaro in 1950, and the Ibo State College was built at Aba in 1952. In each of these schools about two-thirds of the places were explicitly reserved for students from the sponsoring ethnic group. In fact, the first principals or heads of these secondary schools were recipients of scholarships offered by the ethnic unions.

POLITICS AND INTER-ETHNIC COMPETITION FOR EDUCATION

With the formation of the ethnic unions the significant level of competition for education in the country moved from the individual to the group. By 1950 the propaganda activities of the unions succeeded in spreading the ethnic sentiment and ideology to the point where the individual began to identify his destiny with that of the ethnic

group. He equated his educational aspirations with those of the ingroup. The differentials in education among the major ethnic groups of the country, the Haussa, Ibo and Yoruba became salient in national life.

Two major sets of factors account for these differentials. They are the time and pattern of contact with colonial activities, and the location of these activities. The timing is important because those who were the first to make contact with colonialism had an earlier start than others in acquiring colonial education and thereby jobs in the Civil Service, the firms, and as middlemen between the peasant producer and the foreign firms. Inevitably those ethnic groups which lived near the coast were first to make contact with colonial education. Colonial conquest and education spread from the seaports inland. The coastal ports such as Lagos, Brass, Bonny and Calabar received Western education earlier than towns in the interior of the country. By 1900, the eight secondary schools in Nigeria were located as follows : five in Lagos, one in Calabar, one in Oyo, and one in Ogbomosho. In 1930, out of the twenty-six secondary and teacher training institutions in the country, Lagos had seven, Calabar two, and the Onitsha-Asaba area three. In part, the South enjoyed educational advantages over the North because of its earlier contact with colonialism. Certainly, for that reason, the Yorubas had an earlier start in colonial education than the Ibos.

Another factor other than the timing of contact with colonialism explains the differential in education among Nigerian ethnic groups. It is related to the mode of subjugation of the various nationalities and to their precolonial political organisations. While in the South socio-economic activities preceded colonial governmental presence, in the North colonial activities came largely in the wake of the military conquest of the area. Consequently, Southerners began to acquire education relatively ungoverned by the political considerations of their precolonial rulers. In the North, the traditional rulers and the victorious colonial government achieved a certain degree of accord which permitted the old leadership to regulate the rate and manner of educating the Northerners.

Until 1898 all education in the country was under the direct control of the missionaries. In fact, as late as 1942 they controlled 99% of the schools and more than 97% of students in the country (33). Lord Lugard's official policy excluded Christian missionaries from the North. The Muslim rulers of the area were hostile to them. They were only permitted to work in the non-Muslim Middle Belt. But in 1903 they opened a school in Nupeland at the invitation of the Emir of Bida and in 1905 in Zaria at the request of the Emir of Zaria.

Thus the socio-economic gap between the North and the South was particularly noticeable at the level of education. In 1952 only 2% of the total population of the North over seven years of age were literate in Western script compared to 16% in the East and 18% in the West. Total secondary school enrollment in the North in 1947

constituted only 2.5% of the total for the country although the North contained 54% of the total population (34). By 1937 there was only one Northerner in the Yaba Higher College, and as late as 1951 the 16 million people of the North had produced only one person with full university degree.

Even then, the ability of the educated Northerner to compete for jobs with his Southern counterpart is hampered by the content of his education. During the period 1910 to 1929 a carefully controlled program of education was sponsored by the colonial government in the North. The model was not the system in the South but that in Sudan. Its aim was to ensure that schooling did not radically disrupt the traditional social order. The primary schools were constructed and maintained by the Emirs. Islamic religion and Arabic were their prominent subjects. They emphasized training in health, native arts and crafts, gardening, carpentry, indigenous metalwork and leatherwork, and motor repairing. Character training was supervised by the traditional teachers. In all matters of dress, behaviour and traditional forms of salutation including prostration, the students were required to conform to local customs (35).

Differential education among the major ethnic groups of Nigeria is also the result of variation in the degree of integration of their traditional societies. The Ibos were weakly integrated, the Yorubas moderately so and the Hausas strongly integrated. It was, therefore, more difficult for the Haussa peasant than for his Ibo or Yoruba counterpart to abandon his traditional activities for the new colonial ones. Comparatively fewer Hausas than Yorubas and comparatively fewer Yorubas than Ibos have migrated to the colonial urban araes.

Finally, the differential is related to the location of colonial activities. They were carried out in areas of gainful exploitation of raw materials of importance to the metropole. Employment opportunities, commerce, education, health and other services were concentrated there. Ethnic groups which lived in such areas tended to attain education earlier than others. Prior to 1954 palm produce from Iboland in the East was the poorest of the major of Nigerian cash crops in terms of monetary returns. Cocoa farmed in Yorubaland in the West was the most lucrative. Groundnuts and cotton were produced by Hausas in the North. Consequently, when the assets of the Commodity Marketing Boards were shared out to the regions on the basis of areas of origin of the products on which surpluses were earned the East came off poorest. It received only 22,928,200 out of a total of 174,026,000 while the West acquired 85,794,400 and the North obtained 65,303,600. (36) Therefore during the early colonial period the Ibos lagged behind the Yorubas and Hausas socio-economically.

However, whether or not this lag persisted depended on the ability of the Ibos and members of similarly disadvantaged groups to meet their socio-economic obligations in the new order by continuing their precolonial pattern of life. If they could produce enough surplus

food to sell to the urban centers then their low initial socio-economic level persisted. Otherwise they were forced to migrate in large numbers to the new urban centers in search of new opportunity. This forced migration was characterized by a strong socioeconomic motive and a significant break with the local area. It therefore, engendered high achievement motivation in new order. Eventually the Ibos caught up and surpassed groups which earlier had enjoyed an advantage.

Unlike the Yorubas and Hausas, the Ibos could not generate enough surplus from their homelands with which to pay taxes and buy colonial goods and services. Iboland is one of the most densely populated rural areas of the world. In some places the density is more than 1,000 persons to the square mile. Moreover, the soil is comparatively poor, particularly in the Owerri area where the population is most dense.

It is thus the time of contact of the Nigerian ethnic groups with colonialism, the location of colonial socioeconomic projects, and the ability of the members of the ethnic group to maintain a precolonial level of livelihood while meeting the financial obligations of the colonial situation which account for the emergence of and changes in their differentials in education. Prior to 1940 the Yoruba were educationally far ahead of the Ibos and Hausas. Of the 26 secondary or teacher training institutions in the country in 1930 17 were in Yorubaland, 6 in Iboland and one in Hausaland. The 1921 census recorded 14,000 Yorubas, only 4,900 Ibos and less than 1,000 Hausas in the « educated » category (37).

During this period, therefore, significant competion for the scarce educational commodity in terms of what gainful employment it could buy in the colonial enclaves raged between the Ibos and Hausas. The comparatively narrow educational gap between them meant that they competed for similar types of jobs. Consequently inter-ethnic conflicts between the two groups were the most serious at the time. As Leonard Plotnicov reports, a riot nearly occurred in Jos in 1932. As European miners were rumoured to be leaving the town at the height of the depression the Hausas were rumoured to be planning to drive out the non-northerners, predominantly Ibos, from the town in order to inherit the property which the Europeans were leaving behind. However the Europeans did not leave and the anticipated riot did not materialize (38).

Again in 1945 hostility between the Hausa and Ibo communities of Jos flared up. The end of the war failed to ameliorate the scarcity, inflation, and rationing of the war period. The resultant general strike of that year further adversely affected food supplies. Few Northerners joined the strike which they blamed on the nationalist leader, Nnamdi Azikiwe and members of his Ibo ethnic group. An incident in the market place in October sparked off a riot in which Hausas attacked Ibos for two days. Two people died and many were injured and a

considerable amount of property was destroyed or damaged before order was restored.

It was during this period that the image of the Ibos as the appropriate target of direct and indirect aggression arising from frustrations in the competition for scarce socioeconomic resources in the colonial enclaves was established among the Hausas. The victim of direct and indirect Hausa agression coincided in the Ibos (39). Thus even in 1953 when Chief Akintola, a leader of the Yoruba-dominated Action Group embarked on a political campaign in the North against the wishes of the Hausas, the rioting Hausa mob attacked the Ibos and not the Yorubas. The pogrom by Northerners against Ibos in 1966 was an example of direct aggression.

However, by 1950 the Ibos were the upcoming group educationally. The educational gap between them and the Yorubas was virtually closed. The number of Ibos in British Universities had equalled or even exceeded the number of Yorubas. In any case the number of Ibos with secondary school education, a prerequisite for university training had actually exceeded the number of Yorubas with the same qualification (40). By 1952 the number of Ibos enrolled at the University College Ibadan was nearly equal to the number of Yorubas (41). Whereas in the early 1920s there were eight Yoruba physician and no Ibo counterpart, in the early 1950s there were 76 Yoruba and 49 Ibo physicians. (42).

As the educational gap between the Ibos and Yorubas narrowed the competition between them for the rewards of education became more and more significant. The Ibos were no longer only competing with Hausas and Yorubas for the dominance of petty trading, or for menial jobs or jobs in the lower and middle segments of the Civil Service and private firms but also with Yorubas for posts in the top echelons of the public and private sectors, for big contracts, influence in the professions, and dominance of large-scale commerce. The scope of socioeconomic competition widened. Consequently the number of the socioeconomically insecure individual who needed the solace provided by ethnic group identity increased. With such an increase in the number of ethnics, the sizes of the groups enlarged and their competitive power became more formidable. Interethnic tension was exacerbated. Such tension in turn fed the embers of ethnic identification.

At the same time the Yorubas as a group reacted psychologically to this relative educational advance of the Ibos and its consequences for their previously unchallenged socioeconomic dominance. They were threatened by and hostile to the rising rate of Ibo social mobility which such an advance ensured. The result was an insecurity on the part of the Yoruba elite which reinforced the more pervasive individual insecurity arising from competition for education and its rewards. Thus the scope of interethnic hostility expanded from the antagonism between the Hausas and Ibos which dominated the period beforce

1950 to include that between the Yorubas and Ibos which significantly affected politics during the period 1950 to 1964.

Between 1960 and 1966 Yoruba hostility toward the Ibos was reflected in the strong ethnic appeal of Akintola's Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) Government in the West for the Yoruba elite. Their xenophobic hostility toward the Ibos was exemplified during the struggle in 1965 for the vice-chancellorship of Lagos University. This crisis was precipitated essentially by Yoruba dissatisfaction that Ibos headed the two federal universities in the country, the University of Ibadan and the University of Lagos both of which were situated in Yorubaland.

In the worsening atmosphere of interethnic competition and tension the major political parties became identified with the major ethnic groups and received the bulk of their support from them. As a result governmental power, particularly in the Regions was brought to bear on interethnic competition for education and its rewards. Demands were made for regional quotas in the award of federal scholarships by those regions which lagged behind educationally. Others advocated a national merit system for such awards. Within the regions a similar struggle was waged by the competing ethnic groups.

Interethnic friction intruded into the federal Public Service as a result of the differential in education among the ethnic groups. In order to ensure a certain degree of interethnic balance in the nation's public life which the leaders believed to be crucial to ethnic harmony in the country Hausas and other notherners with much less educational qualifications assumed higher positions than Yorubas and Ibos. The resultant dissatisfaction among the Southerners contributed to the persistence of ethnic sentiments and hostility. The Northernization policy of Northern Regional Government had a similar effect. It sought to prevent educated southerners from dominating the public life and therefore the destiny of the northerners. Educated southerners, mostly Ibos, faced with unemployment in the South grew increasingly bitter at being denied available jobs in the North.

Last but most importantly the wide differential in education between the North and South made Northern political leaders very determined to control the political destiny of the country. And this determination led to intense political conflicts with Southerners. The Northern political leadership dominated by the traditional aristocracy feared that without their restraining influence the educated southern elite would destroy the Northern sociopolitical order which is the basis of their local power and privilege. In the South more than in the North recruitment in the governmental bureaucracy was related to performance in European-oriented schools. Political control of the Federation by southerners would ensure that those educated in these schools would also control the Northern ruling bureaucracy. And they, particularly the Ibos, do not respect the traditional way of life in the North. Northern political leaders have, therefore, fiercely and stubborn-

ly held fast to federal political power. The extent of their commitment to this political monopoly was reflected in their reaction to the temporary seizure of federal power in January 1966 by a group of army officers from the South. They unleashed a pogrom and bloody countercoup which precipitated Biafran secession and the carnage of a civil war.

CONCLUSION.

It is clear from the forgone analysis that competition for education in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria has contributed significantly to the emergence, persistance and growth of ethnic identification, hostility and politics in the country. The central dynamics of this contribution is governed by individual insecurity associated with the extreme scarcity of education conceived as a market commodity, and its high market value. No solution to the problems of ethnic politics in Nigeria is likely to succeed unless it fully grapples with this insecurity. Intergroup variables are important but not central to the relationship. Therefore any policy for eliminating or ameliorating interethnic hostility which mechanically seeks to bridge the gaps in education among the various ethnic groups is bound to fail. In fact, it will yield the opposite effect of entrenching and exacerbating ethnic tension.

However, it is not hereby suggested that certain ethnic groups be permitted to advance educationally while other stagnate or lag behind. Rather it is contended that any program of interethnic balancing in the field of education must go hand in hand or even be preceded by a reorganisation of the society's inherited imperialist structures which by conceiving of education as a commodity and perpetuating its scarcity heightens individual insecurity which lies at the heart of ethnic identification in the country. The role of education in a social process is integrally related to its origin in the nature of socio-economic organisation of society, and therefore to its conception by and worth to the ruling class.

This role of education in interethnic hostility and its foundation in the nature of the colonial and post-colonial forms of socioeconomic and political organisation strongly suggest the possibility that an answer to the negative contributions of education to ethnic politics in the country may lie in an egalitarian form of socioeconomic organisation. In it the individual will have no cause to fear unemployment and dim prospects for enjoying an adequate livelihood because of his low educational achievements. In such a society there must be free and compulsory education for children of school age until the end of their secondary school training, and free university and other post-secondary types of education for all those willing and intellectually able to benefit from them. This reorganisation of education must take place within the context of a general transformation of society to significantly reduce scarcity and inequality (43).

FOOTNOTES

1. Frederick Harbison and Charles A. Myers, *Education, Manpower and Economic Growth : Strategies of Human Resource Development,* New York : Mc Graw-Hill, 1964, p. 181.
2. Gray Cowan *et al* (eds), *Education and Nation Building in Africa,* New York : Praeger, 1965, p.v.
3. J.S. Coleman (ed.), *Education and Political Development,* Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1965, p. 3.
4. Claude Welch defines modernization along these lines. See Claude Welch, *Political Modernization,* San Francisco : Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1965, p. 5.
5. Gray Cowan, *et al,* op. *cit.,* p. 16.
6. However in 1958 the program in the East was abandoned for financial reasons.
7. David B. Abernethy, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education : An African Case,* Stanford : Stanford Univesity Press, 1969, p. 196.
8. Cf. Federation of Nigeria, *Third National Development Plan,* 1975 *to* 1980, Lagos : Government Printer, 1975.
9. The word « ethnic » is used to refer to all groups which are set off from the rest of the population on the basis of real or putative kinship ties and which are not political entities by themselves. Examples include the Ibo, Yoruba, Hausa, Tiv, Ijaw and Efik of Nigeria. It is used in preference to the word « tribal » which creates the derogatory impression of a primitive and barbarous mystique peculiar to the African and which therefore simplifies and mystifies the phenomenon.
10. David Abernethy, *op. cit.*
11. E.A. Ayandele, *The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society,* Ibadan : Ibadan University Press, 1974.
12. Alan Peshkin, « Education and National Integration in Nigeria, » in : Robert Melsen and Howard Wolpe (eds), *Modernization and the politics of Communalism,* East Lansing, Michigan : Michigan State University Press, 1971.
13. Cf. A. Adaralegbe (ed), *A Philosophy for Nigerian Education,* Report of the National Curriculum Conference, 8-12 September, 1969, Ibadan : Heinemann, 1972 ; Nigeria, Federal, *Education for National Mobilization. The Report of the Study Committee on Education,* October 1970, Lagos : Government Printer, 1970 ;
Nigeria, Eastern, Report on the Review of the Educational System in Eastern Nigeria (Dike Report), Enugu : Govt. Printer, 1962, Official Document No. 19, 1962.
14. H.S. Scott, « The Development of the Education of the African in Relation to Western Contact, » in : *The Year Book of Education,* 1938, London : Evans Bros., 1938, p. 737.
15. G.K. Helleiner, *Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria,* Homewood, Illinois : Irwin Inc., 1966, p. 12.
16. *Nigeria, Ten Year Educational Plan,* Nigerian sessional paper No. 6/1944, p. 11.
17. Nigeria, *Annual Report, Department of Education* 1938, Lagos : Government printer, 1938, p. 8-10.
18. Ibid, p. 8.
19. J.S. Coleman, *Nigeria : Background to Nationalism,* Berkeley, California : University of California Press, 1965, p. 125.
20. Nigeria, *Annual Report Department of Education* 1938, op. cit., pp. 11-16.
21. These comparative figures have been calculated from Education and World Affairs, Nigeria Project Task Force, Committee on Education and Human Resource Development, *Nigerian Human Resource Development and Utilization,* New York : Education and World Affairs, Déc. 1967.
22. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa, Cmd.* 6655, London : HMSO, 1945.
23. For an adequate understanding of why colonial structures and inherited colonial structures are incapable of meeting the employment demands of the population see Akin Mabogunje, « Population Growth and their Consequences for Development in Africa », a paper presented at the Conference on Development Strategies in Africa in the 1970s held in Arusha, Tanzania, September 1973.
24. Ibid., p. 11.
25. J. O'Connell, « Some Social and Political Reflections on the Plan », in : The Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies, Vol. 4, No. 2, July 1962, p. 134.

26. Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris, *Minorities in the New World*, New York : Columbia University Press, 1958, pp. 263-264.
27. Okwudiba Nnoli, « Socioeconomic Insecurity and Ethnic Politics in Africa », in : The African Review, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1974, pp. 7-11.
28. S.H. Frankel, Capital Investment in Africa, London : Oxford University Press, 1938, p. 317.
29. Nigeria, *Administrative and Financial Procedures Under the New Constitution : Financial Relations between the Government of Nigeria and the Native Administration*, Lagos ; Government Printer.
30. S.H. Frankel, *op. cit, p.* 317.
31. J.S. Coleman, *op. cit., pp.* 256-258.
32. David Abernethy, *op. cit., p.* 109.
33. Nigeria, Ten Year Education Plan, *op. cit., p.* 13.
34. J.S. Coleman, *op. cit., p.* 132.
35. *Ibid., pp.* 137-138.
36. Sources : Annual Reports of the Marketing Boards ; G.K. Helleiner, *op. cit., p.* 283.
37. P. Amaury Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Frank Cass, 1926, p. 127.
38. Leonard Plotnicov, « An Early Nigeria Civil Disturbance : the 1945 Hausa-Ibo Riot in Jos », in : *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 9, N° 2, August 1971, p. 298.
39. For a good understanding of the dynamics of such aggression and the distinction between direct and indirect aggression see John Dollard, « Hostility and Fear in Social Life », Social Forces, Vol. 17, No. 1, October 1938, p. 16.
40. J.S. Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
41. Ibid., p. 333.
42. Department of Labour, Nigeria, *Annual Report*, 1951-1952, Lagos : Government Printer, 1953, pp. 37-39.
43. For a discussion of the impact of scarcity and inequality on ethnic politics refer to Okwudiba Nnoli, *op. cit.*