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| **[Power-sharing and hegemonic control in nigerian history, 1807-1960]** |

# Summary

This thesis explores the history of political power-sharing in Nigeria through three periods: the pre-colonial period, occurring from roughly 1800 to 1880, the transition to colonial rule from 1880 to 1914 and the colonial period, from 1914 to 1960. Since 1960, Nigeria has had a robust history of cooperation between elites of the three dominant ethnic elites: Igbo, Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba. Using the competing concepts of consociationalism and hegemonic control, the thesis examines whether prior histories of power-sharing within and between these ethnic groups contributed to a historical continuity of power-sharing. Using mostly secondary literature for the first two periods and primary sources examining the extent to which each group shared power under British rule for the third, the thesis finds that there’s little evidence that a history of cooperation or control leads to continued preference for either mode of interaction. The Igbo were cooperative before colonialism, but were the least amenable to power-sharing of the groups under British rule, while the Yoruba transitioned from a control mode to a more cooperative mode, and the Hausa-Fulani remained mostly cooperative throughout their history. More research is needed, but the evidence suggests that power-sharing can be implemented regardless of cultural inclinations, historical divisions and rivalries, as that is what has happened in Nigeria.

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# Introduction

The development of Nigeria’s political system has been a subject of research ever since its independence. Many books, articles and op-eds have been written about Nigerian governance, the structural deficiencies and advantages of its political system, and why violent conflict remains a factor in the country to this day. Nigeria has been a troubled country since its inception, going from Civil War to military coup throughout most of its history. Recently, Boko Haram’s terrorism has created world headlines, and Africa’s most populous country seems to be one of the most-frequently discussed countries in the world. This is hardly surprising, given that Nigeria is one of the most complicated nations on the continent. The state is, to a large extent, a British construction of colonial times, and yet it has held together to this day. The country features many different ethnic groups who would never have considered themselves to be one nation before colonial rule. Indeed, those very ethnic groups would not have existed as they exist now without British interference. And yet those identities now define Nigerian politics and society. The resulting conflict and violence culminated in the Nigeria-Biafra war, and Boko Haram’s recent actions having the potential to spark another civil conflict. Much of the published research on the modern Nigerian state focuses on the ways ethnic conflict, sometimes violent, has shaped the nation’s politics, but only a few take a historical slant to this question, preferring to focus on recent events without grounding them in an understanding of pre-independence ethnic relations.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The literature on the subject of Nigerian ethnic diversity in pre-independence times is relatively sparse. Macro-level studies on the economic effects of diversity tend to use countries as their units of comparison, which causes them to lose sight of the specifically Nigerian aspects of diversity within the nation, and leading to a somewhat obvious overall conclusion: diversity is, ceteris paribus, bad for the economic development of a country. The relative economic or political status of internal ethnic groups doesn’t come into play as a historic feature in those studies.[[2]](#footnote-2)

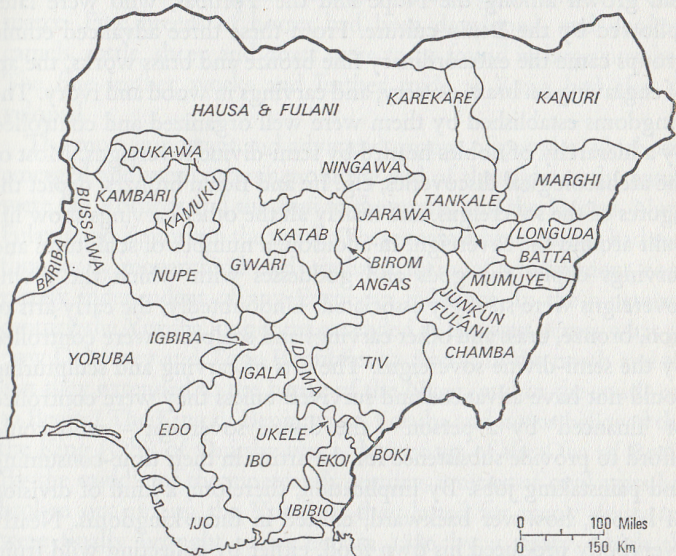
Other studies focus on the political aspects of Nigeria as a diverse country, and while those studies necessarily touch on economic developments, those developments are not the focus of the literature. Moreover, even the political analysis tends to treat the pre-colonial history as relatively monolithic and a given, rather than a contingent result of specific historical developments. In addition, those studies tend to be written by political theorists and they generally focus on the twentieth century exclusively, neglecting to look at the period preceding colonial rule. The ethnic groups are rarely analyzed as consistent units from the pre- to post-colonial period. Most economic histories focus on a single ethnic (sub)-group, but do not rise to the level of a comparative study. Those historical studies that do focus on comparison and interaction between ethnic groups, focus almost exclusively on the eighteenth- and nineteenth century slave trade, ending their narrative well before the process of British colonization, or they consist of a political analysis of post-independence Nigeria. The colonial period and the colonization process are relatively unaddressed as part of a continuous history of economic and political development of ethnic groups.

I hope to help address that gap in the historical literature, by examining the question of how Nigerian ethnic groups developed their modes of interaction within economic and political realms before the country’s independence, and to what extent these ethnic groups had a consistent history of implementing specific modes of interaction and development. To analyze the structural competition of each group in a comparative perspective, I will use the political framework of power-sharing, contrasted with the political framework of hegemonic control. I will apply this model to pre-colonial, transitional and colonial Nigeria to determine whether each group tended to engage in internal and external conflicts in terms of control or power-sharing, and how this changed over time under the influence of access to resources, trade and power, mediated by internal developments as well as well as the arrival of colonialism.

This thesis will focus on three ethnic groups as its units of comparison: the Igbo of south-eastern Nigeria, the Yoruba of western Nigeria and the Hausa-Fulani of northern Nigeria. These three ethnicities represent the three largest population groups in Nigeria of roughly equal size, but they are by no means the only ones in a country with over 250 different ethnic groups.[[3]](#footnote-3) The focus on the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba is justified by their status as the three largest ethnic groups, with relatively easily-identified histories. They’re the only groups with a significant presence in the literature, and the Igbo, Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba each have distinct histories, economic ties and historical access to different natural resources and differing levels of interaction with colonial powers, which has greatly influenced the economic development of these ethnic groups. Of course, focusing on those three groups necessarily means ignoring or abridging lot of lower-level detail – those groups are by no means the only ethnic groups in Nigeria, nor are those groups monolithic. To a large extent, their existence as coherent identities is the result of the way British Empire approached the construction of Nigeria as a state – most significantly, by the way they drew rigid boundaries across ethnic groups, where previously the treatment of ethnic ownership of territority was much more fluid.[[4]](#footnote-4) Such abridgements are an enduring factor of *longue durée* history, however, as one cannot provide detail and large-scale overviews at the same time.

This thesis will consist of five chapters. In the first, I will outline the theoretical framework used to analyze the history of the Nigerian peoples, outlining the specific theories of consociationalism and hegemonic control that will form the backbone of the thesis as a whole. Chapter two will focus on the pre-colonial period, covering most of the nineteenth century until the increasing imposition of British colonialism over the last decade of the century. The third chapter will focus on the process of colonialization, starting in the 1890s and running through roughly 1914, when the British officially established control over the Nigerian territories. In the fourth chapter, I will discuss the developments under British rule up until Nigeria reached independence in 1960. The fifth chapter, also the conclusion, will briefly touch on the post-colonial period as well.

**Map:** Major ethnic groups in Nigeria



**Source:** Afigbo,*Warrant Chiefs*, 7.

# Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

The task of analyzing the economic competition between the Igbo, Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba over the pre-independence period is a daunting one, and the adaptation of a theoretical framework to add a solid basis to this analysis is a necessity. The framework has to provide theoretical guidance, and a way to consistently evaluate from period to period what happened historically.

## Defining ethnicity

To be able to speak of ethnicity, the term itself must first be defined. I will follow the example of Daniel Egiegba Agbiboa, who sees ethnicity in Nigeria and in a larger sense Africa, as a function of competition. That is, while the many aspects which can make up ethnic identity can present a complex and fluid picture over time, it is primarily “an institutional marker that is used to mobilize and successfully appropriate power, resources, and political ascendancy”.[[5]](#footnote-5) In other words: ethnicity is defined by the ability to engage in conflicts over power and resources as a group, with other ethnic groups.

While Nigeria is home to many different ethnicities and ethnic groups, I will limit myself to the Yoruba in the southwest, the Igbo in the southeast and the Hausa-Fulani in the north, which together constitute two-thirds of the current Nigerian population.[[6]](#footnote-6) While these identities have not been static over time, the territorial roots of each group as well as the nature of conflict to define ethnicity, make it possible to extend this definition into pre-colonial times when the Hausa-Fulani were united under the Sokoto Caliphate, the Yoruba constituted the Oyo Empire, and the Igbo were united as a loose confederation of semi-independent tribes.

Limiting myself to these groups introduces one complication: oftentimes, it is not entirely clear where the boundaries of each ethnic group lie and we must make do with geographical or other abstractions. Each ethnic group is also not monolithic, consisting of many sub-groups and entities that are at odds at some times and joined for the same purpose at others. The resulting inaccuracies are regrettable, but given that I am writing in *longue durée*, these abstractions are ultimately inevitable. One cannot keep every detail while zooming out.

## Periodization

As noted in the introduction, I intend to analyze Nigerian history since the early nineteenth century through the colonial period, describing the emergence of structural economic and political differences between the three groups.

I will divide the analysis into three main periods: the pre-colonial period, running from roughly 1807, when the British started slowly repressing the international slave trade, through the late nineteenth century, when the Nigerian territories slowly became a part of the British Empire. The second period, of a transition to colonial rule, runs from the late nineteenth century through 1914, when the essential boundaries of Nigeria had been established and the colony was at least officially united as a single source. The final period runs from 1914 to 1960, when Nigeria was declared independent. Finally, I will briefly touch on post-independence research in the conclusion.

These dividing lines are not sharp, as in each case there was a transitional period, which muddies the proposed delineation and may necessitate some discussion within the framework of each period of events that actually takes place outside each period. In addition, these periods are not identical for each ethnic group as the transition to colonial rule took place at slightly different times for each region. As is usually the case in history, change was not abrupt and many events led up to each transition.

## Power-sharing model

Timothy Sisk defines power-sharing as “providing every significant identity group or segment in a society representation and decision-making abilities on common issues and a degree of autonomy over issues of importance to the group.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Crudely put: power-sharing occurs when every group gets a real say over what happens. Post-colonial Nigeria has been consistently defined by the struggle to find a natural order of power-sharing, with various degrees of success. Much has been written about power-sharing in independent Nigeria over the past decades, specifically using the consociational model. For instance, Nkwachukwi Orji has argued for power-sharing as the “element of continuity in Nigerian politics,” making a persuasive case that while not always successful, the drive of Nigeria has been toward peaceful prevention of conflicts through power-sharing.[[8]](#footnote-8) Raphael Chijioke Njoku has argued instead that fierce competition points to a lack of power-sharing in post-war Nigeria.[[9]](#footnote-9)

But this method isn’t just applicable to independent, post-colonial Nigeria, but also provides a relevant analytical model for both pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria. In colonial Nigeria, the British Empire instituted a central government that allowed increasing influence by Nigerian locals over time, and that government increasingly centralized decision-making processes while still granting autonomy to localities. While complicated by the presence of a dominant fourth power in the British Empire, that should not prevent the analysis of the power shared among the three relevant Nigerian ethnic groups.

In pre-colonial Nigeria, issues of common interest existed even when different ethnic groups were not united under one government. This allows for the application of the same model of power-sharing, as conflicts must be resolved. Such a transnational approach to power-sharing as an analytical model has been applied in recent years to the cases of Ireland, as well as Bosnia-Herzegovina, both focused on the past few decades.[[10]](#footnote-10)

However, the power-sharing model is primarily applicable to internal power-sharing structures within ethnic groups in pre-colonial and transitional Nigeria. Neither the Igbo, nor the Yoruba, nor the Hausa-Fulani constituted a singular, united ethnic group with no internal tensions and competition.

## Consociationalism

Arend Lijphart introduced one of the main models of power-sharing in consociationalism, which he based on the Dutch pillarized society and politics.[[11]](#footnote-11) While this model has been primarily used as a prescriptive tool to provide options for conflict management, specifically ethnic conflict, it is also useful as an analytical tool to describe the process through which conflict is managed in societies, some of which may have consciously adopted consociationalism, others which may have implemented it by accident.

Consociationalism is focused on cooperation between societal elites, a cooperation which crosses ethnic or other dividing lines. Analytically, he defines four key features of consociationalism: (1) executive power-sharing, which consists of different ethnic groups sharing their access to executive power under one government, (2) a proportionality principle in the assignment of revenues and public offices, (3) a certain degree of autonomy or self-government for every group and (4) the ability of every group to veto changes that would negatively impact their interests.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Although Lijphart defines this as an analysis of democratic systems, a close look at the above factors reveals that democracy is not a key feature of consociationalism: no popular vote need be involved, nor is it necessary for the political elite to be held accountable by the masses. It is a model focused on the form of governance, regardless of the method by which that governance is justified. Intriguingly, this allows us to apply the model even to non-democratic states – which Nigeria has frequently been in its history. This was observed as far back as 1974 by Hans Daalder, who typified the Dutch consociational system as an oligarchy instead of a democracy – although obviously that situation did include a popular vote.[[13]](#footnote-13)

A defining feature of a successful consociational government is the willingness of elite leaders to, as Lijpart puts it, “make deliberate efforts to counteract the immobilizing and unstabilizing effects of cultural fragmentation”, as opposed to a willingness to aggravate intra-societal conflict by engaging in “competitive behavior”.[[14]](#footnote-14) That defining feature is one of the key factors we will look for to identify whether we can speak of efforts to enact a form of power-sharing. In such a consociational situation, then, we would expect to see cultural elites make an effort to minimize inter-group tensions, to share power rather than engage in competition, to safeguard power-sharing through proportionality of distribution of public offices (if any), to grant a significant degree of autonomy to each ethnic group, and to allow other cultural elites a degree of veto power over decisions affecting their own groups.

## Extending consociationalism

However, this focuses the model very heavily on political power-sharing, and neglects the economic and territorial aspects of ethnic competition. Carolina Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie extended the model to include power-sharing of four elements: political, territorial, economic and military.[[15]](#footnote-15) Orji Nwachukwu applied this model to post-colonial Nigeria dubbing it the “tri-polar model” and leaving out the military aspect as irrelevant to the specific situation of post-colonial Nigeria.[[16]](#footnote-16) This extension allows for the analysis of non-political sharing among cultural elites, which then allows for the further application of the model not only to non-democratic nations, but also to nations that are dominated by a colonial power where political power may not be the most relevant area of competition or sharing for societies.

Specifically, in addition to the above-mentioned expectations in consociational situations, we would expect to see a sharing of economic and territorial resources rather than competition for them, a proportionality in the distribution of economic resources, and a degree of autonomy for ethnic groups not only in the field of politics, but also in terms of control over their own economic development and resources.

## Non-cooperative models

An alternative to the power-sharing model of governance is offered by Ian Lustick, who in 1979 challenged Lijphart’s consociational approach by introducing the concept of control. Lustick’s “control approach would focus on the emergence and maintenance of a relationship in which the superior power of one segment is mobilized to enforce stability by constraining the political actions and opportunities of another segment or segments”.[[17]](#footnote-17)

In Lustick’s model, the primary goal of elites is not to create a stable situation by sharing power among themselves, but to create stability through the “sustained manipulation of subordinate segment(s) by a superordinate segment”.[[18]](#footnote-18) Or, in the case of Nigeria, the dominance of one ethnic group over others. He analyzed the difference between consociationalism and control theories in terms of seven different aspects:

1. In control societies, the elites of the dominant group determine the allocation of resources.
2. Instead of bargaining between ethnic groups, there is imposition of conditions by the dominant group.
3. Any bargaining between dominant elites and subordinate elites signals the breakdown of the control system.
4. While the formal appearance of the governing regime may be the same, the substance is different: control regimes act to advance the interests of the elites of one specific group.
5. The control system will be publicly justified by an ideology specific to the dominant group.
6. The role of dominant elites is to be cost-effective in manipulating the subordinate elites. Meanwhile, subordinate elites must find ways to maximize their own groups interests, while still coping as well as possible with the control instituted by the dominant group.
7. Lustick sees a visual metaphor for control as one of a puppeteer manipulating a puppet.[[19]](#footnote-19)

To maintain the scope of this thesis, I will focus on four of these criteria instead of all seven. Specifically, I will not attempt to analyze the public ideology of each group justifying their control (5), nor the ways in which a dominant group attempts to manipulate subordinate elites (6) – at least in the context of inter-ethnic competition. The visual metaphor is not an analytically useful tool – it offers no vectors to analyze. Thus, instead of taking into account all seven factors, I will focus on the more tangible aspects: who decides the allocation of resources (1), the nature of bargaining between elites (2 and 3), and the interests advanced by the central government (4).

I will extend this control model to encompass not only political, but economic competition as well, in a similar way to Nwachukwu’s extension of consociationalism. That is: the competition for access to economic resources and to territories can be seen in light of a control model, just as those aspects can be seen in the framework of a consociational model.

## Applying this framework to Nigeria

To streamline the use of these models in analyzing the nature of power, both economic and political, limiting the analysis to specific factors would help. In this case, I propose to look at three specific dimensions in which we may discern either control, or power-sharing: the access to resources, access to trade, and access to (political) power. These were three key factors in Nigerian history over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as the different groups scrambled for resources both to drive their internal economies and to trade with colonial powers and North African empires. Resources alone were not enough: access to crucial ports or Saharan caravan routes determined whether those resources could be converted into tangible economic growth beyond local production. Finally, access to power was increasingly relevant as, under British influence, new centers of power and eventually a centralized Nigerian government formed.

In pre-colonial Nigeria, the resources are likely to focus on labor (in the form of slaves or otherwise) and land. The access to trade was largely the equivalent of access to colonial empires in the case of the Igbo and Yoruba on the Southern coast, and the trans-Saharan trade with Muslim states in the case of the Hausa-Fulani in the desert-facing North. Due to a lack of written sources, quantifying the way each ethnic group dealt with these situations is difficult, and the approach in at least the pre-colonial period will primarily be qualitative rather than quantitative. In the absence of quantifiable elements, one measure of qualitative power-sharing is the amount and intensity of violent conflict over resources, trade and power. That would be one measure of competition, and it will be the primary aspect I will examine for the first, pre-colonial period.

As Nigeria transitioned toward colonial rule, the importance of access to central, often colonial power, increased. British control increased, which meant access to British power-brokers was essential for elites to have access to power and economic resources. With this increased control, we also see increased use of written sources and hence quantifiable measures we can use for both the access to resources, and the access to trade, as well as the access to power. As the British gained more and more power, we can thus focus on the way each ethnic group interacted with the British and managed to capture British power for their own ends. In addition, the question of whether those interactions were competitive focused on interior advancement: whether the Nigerian state as a whole was the target of improvement. That approach would suggest a more co-operative, power-sharing aspect.

During the colonial period, the African Blue Books will be essential. These were the annual economic reports the colonial Nigerian government reported back to the British crown. They contain a wealth of economic information, but are sadly devoid of regional or ethnic splits. I will primarily use them as a specific measure of trade, because export data is recorded in terms of exported items on a national level, but the exported items come from specific regions. We will use these regions as proxies for ethnic groups.

To conclude, a presence of proportionality in the distribution of economic resources and trade, the ability to veto decisions that would negatively affect a group on each of those aspects, and significant autonomy of each ethnic group to decide within their own group on those aspects would signal the presence of power-sharing arrangements. In addition, the presence of inter-group bargaining between elites, and a plural nature of interests reflected by central policy (if any) could signal the presence of power-sharing.

By contrast, a control model would be primarily defined by the lack of those characteristics, and instead the presence of one dominant group deciding on the allocation of each of those aspects, the absence of inter-group bargaining between cultural elites, and a central policy that advances the economic interests of the elites of one ethnic group. In addition, we would expect to see reduced autonomy, a lack of veto ability and a lack of proportionality in distribution of relevant aspects.

While presented here as a binary choice, these two models as reflected here exist on a continuous scale and this thesis will endeavor to reflect that continuum in the way it analyzes the periodic change.

# Chapter 2: The pre-colonial period

The purpose of this chapter is to give a rough overview of the economic and political institutions of the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani before the transition toward British colonial rule, and to attempt to analyze those systems through the lens of consociationalism and hegemonic control: cooperative versus non-cooperative systems. In all three cases, this means the analysis has a vague, early nineteenth-century starting point, and ends at the point where the British start to establish their colonial rule towards the end of the nineteenth century, with a differing end date for each of the three ethnic groups. I will discuss the general economic structure first, before focusing on, in turn, the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani.

## Economic structure in general

The economy of the area that would later become unified as Nigeria before 1900 is disputed. Many histories have focused on the international links of trade, a consequence of the dominance of international trade in historical sources, which are mostly those of the colonial empires interacting with the local populace. That necessarily frames the debate in terms of international trade. For instance, K. Onwuka Dike discusses the economic development of West Africa in the three-and-a-half centuries before 1830 in the context of European trade, defined by the demands of European trade partners. In this rather euro-centric view, the West African trade went through stages of producing primarily gold and later slaves.[[20]](#footnote-20) David Northrup continues this focus, noting that palm oil would take over throughout the nineteenth century, and crude oil would follow in the twentieth century.[[21]](#footnote-21)

However, the local Nigerian economy prior to colonization was most likely agricultural, whether in the coastal trading centers, or the diversified regions further inland, or the Sahara-facing areas. Joseph Inikori notes that “subsistence agriculture was overwhelmingly dominant on the eve of European colonial rule,” with even commercial agriculture being relatively rare up to the middle of the nineteenth century.[[22]](#footnote-22) Indeed, John Iliffe concluded that there was no capitalist agricultural production in West Africa by the mid-nineteenth century, suggesting that the primary driver of the economy was subsistence agriculture.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The impact of the end of the Atlantic slave trade was profound, if we can believe A.G. Hopkins. His *Economic history of West Africa* represented one start to the investigation of the impact of slavery and the abolition of the slave trade during the nineteenth century on the West African economy as a whole. To him, that abolition of the slave trade led to a destabilization of the region, both politically and economically. This fundamentally changed the nature of the export sector of the West African economies, most notably away from slavery and toward the trade in commodities, especially products of the palm tree. This transition was far from instant and took most of the 19th century, however.[[24]](#footnote-24)

More recent voices disagree and have called into question the importance of the international slave trade for the area as a whole. Truthfully, the abolition (or limitation, initially) of the Atlantic slave trade could not have made a great direct impact on the Hausa and Fulani of the north, who continued to trade via the Saharan route and were barely exposed to the Atlantic aspect of the trade. For the Igbo and Yoruba, the importance of the slave trade as a driver of the economy may have been overstated as well. R. Olufemi Ekundare makes just that point in his comprehensive survey of Nigerian economic history, noting that agriculture rather than trade functioned as the foundation of the Nigerian economy. He writes that “the economic resources of Nigeria depended largely on agriculture” before 1860.[[25]](#footnote-25) Even in 1970, 70% of the Nigerian labor force was engaged in agriculture[[26]](#footnote-26), and agriculture, forestry and fishing produced 54.9% of gross domestic product, although oil production was expanding rapidly.[[27]](#footnote-27) This should be seen in light of the fact that oil’s unique value on the international market was starting to dominate the economy, a factor that would not have been present during the nineteenth century.

If even during colonial rule and the presence of oil, international trade was not the major factor in the Nigerian economy, how could it have determined the economic structure of the Nigerian peoples over the previous century? International trade may not have been a dominant factor for the economic prosperity of any of the Nigerian peoples before the second half of the nineteenth century, but trade did still impact the economic structure of the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani, and would have profound effects on the continuing development of each of these groups. Indeed, Inikori argues that the slave trade retarded internal economic development and the creation of consistent commercial agriculture, which did not happen until the middle of the nineteenth century. The removal of millions of people from an economy would logically have quite a large effect on the local economy and its structure.[[28]](#footnote-28) Another measure of that impact is the presence of slave raids between Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani. Fulani emirates raided the Igbo and Yoruba for slaves for their own uses and for trans-Saharan trade, while the Igbo and Yoruba themselves mainly sold their own people, but also sold Hausa slaves when they could find them.[[29]](#footnote-29) Banned by the British in 1807, substantial trans-Atlantic trade in slaves would not be stopped until the second half of the nineteenth century, and domestic slavery and trade in slaves continues to this day. One estimate suggests that between 670,000 and 740,000 slaves were present in Nigeria in 2013, the fourth-highest total for any country in the world.[[30]](#footnote-30) Thus slavery was and remains a prominent feature of the Nigerian economy, and the interaction between indigenous forms of slavery and the trans-Atlantic slave trade did impact the economy as a whole. However, the dominant factor in pre-colonial Nigerian economic development was agriculture, even where that agriculture was impacted by the forcible removal of populace through the Atlantic slave trade.

## The Igbo during the nineteenth century

The Igbo traded a variety of resources during the nineteenth century, with palm oil being one of the most prominent.[[31]](#footnote-31) In fact, in 1864 the palm oil export in the Niger Delta was worth a total of £800,000, compared with the export of ivory (£17,000) and dye-woods (£10,000-15,000) in 1842.[[32]](#footnote-32) But while there was a large list of movable goods and well-developed external and internal markets for trade, the goods were either slaves, or agricultural in nature.[[33]](#footnote-33) That suggests that three resources were of relevance above all others, as they were necessary for the production of everything else: land, labor and slaves. While the Atlantic slave trade was officially abolished by the British in 1807, it certainly continued through other countries and rogue traders for decades. That trade was slowly replaced by the palm oil trade throughout the nineteenth century.

Labor and land are always important resources for any ethnic group. Slavery was not just relevant as a source for external trade, as the importance of the internal slave market was such that there is some evidence that the Atlantic slave trade did not significantly impact the prices of slaves by itself – suggesting that the internal use of slave labor was important for the Igbo separate from slavery as a product for trade.[[34]](#footnote-34) Another such piece of evidence is the use of forced labor to operate the system of canoes on the Niger which allowed trade goods to reach the coastal trading enclaves.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Was there a measure of competition for slaves in Igboland? There were certainly Fulani slave raids executed on Igbo territory, but did the Igbo raid for slaves? And was there competition for the access to that labor? While wars were fought within and without Igboland during the nineteenth century, some contemporary testimony suggests that the collection of slaves as a result of those wars was primarily a side-effect. A.E. Afigbo cites three early nineteenth century Igbo chiefs who make claims to that effect.[[36]](#footnote-36) Wars over resources and access to land were frequent, such as when King Pepple of the coastal trade center of Bonny annexed neighboring Andoni in 1846. The purpose of that expedition was to secure the production of palm oil.[[37]](#footnote-37) Those conflicts which leave their presence in the literature focus primarily on the acquisition of resources for the purpose of trade: access to land for subsistence does not appear to have been a source of major conflict.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, despite having been a focus of the slave trade for decades, the Igbo had not become an urbanized people, instead remaining a highly dispersed people with a low population and settlement density. Only the coastal trading towns were urbanized. One consequence was that they were not ruled as one people, let alone one nation. Instead, they were dispersed into many, often independent, sparsely populated settlements.

Here, in sharp contrast to the urbanized Yoruba to the west of the Niger, compact settlements were a distinct rarity in the pre-colonial era. Even ‘villages’ were customarily only political and social units, not actual clusters of dwellings, and the family compounds of a village were normally scattered throughout its territory. Only the coastal ports, fishing villages cramped for dry land, and places fortified against attack were compact settlements.[[38]](#footnote-38)

In effect, this created a situation where the Igbo did not have any system of unified, political rule or decision making. Instead, there were decentralized, autonomous units which were politically equivalent. These units were not self-sufficient, and there were certainly ties in terms of trade and culture, but there was nothing remotely resembling a unified, political decision-making process. There were often councils of multiple villages, but they mainly concerned themselves with inter-Igbo strife, and did not rule the land as a whole. Not even among the more densely-populated slave-trading centers of the coastal regions could we speak of a major, centralized decision-making process of any kind.[[39]](#footnote-39)

Thus, we cannot genuinely speak of access to centers of power among the Igbo until the arrival of more centralized government, which would only occur under colonial interference and rule at the end of the nineteenth century. The lack of any kind of central governing powers and the not-infrequent strife among Igbo villages suggests that we can’t speak of a unified consociationalist or controlling approach. There was certainly cooperation and there is evidence to suggest some forms of resource-sharing, but that was not universal and aspects of competition remained a constant. Of course, that is to be expected –no system is going to be entirely uniform.

Nonetheless, we can say that the groundwork for the later development of consociational approaches had been laid among the Igbo’s internal political structure. The presence of autonomous villages whose elite groups conferred regularly suggests at least three of the four of aspects of consociationalism: executive power-sharing, proportionality in the assignment of public offices and autonomy and self-government for each group.[[40]](#footnote-40) While not applicable to the Igbo as a whole, certain village groups had effectively implemented a consociational model among themselves. And economically, we can see similar cooperative developments, or at least a live-and-let-live approach to land resources, where conflicts appear to have been infrequent. It is only in the area of trade that we truly see an adversarial, control-based approach among the Igbo – perhaps a natural consequence of the geographical fact that coastal towns become the center of oceanic trade.

## The Yoruba during the nineteenth century

Until the early nineteenth century, the Yoruba people divided themselves into many different kingdoms. The largest and later dominant of these kingdoms was the Oyo Empire in the savanna in the west of what would later become Nigeria. The Oyo Empire held a middleman position in the international slave trade, collecting slaves in the interior and trading them on the coast. Oyo was the predominant center of power for the first three decades of the nineteenth century, but collapsed as the slave trade declined and other kingdoms came to dominate within the Yoruba, most notably the Dahomey kingdom which would reclaim a role in coastal trade by the end of the nineteenth century.[[41]](#footnote-41) Other significant kingdoms include Ibadan, a de facto successor to the Oyo Empire, and the Ilesha kingdom of the Ijesha people who initially considered themselves enemies of the Oyo and Ibadan, but would later adopt the Yoruba identity in the twentieth century, underscoring both the fluidity of ethnic identities and the effect of British colonial rule on those identities.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Like the Igbo, the Yoruba were a primarily agricultural people who saw their economy supplemented by an external Atlantic trade, primarily in slaves, as well as a vibrant internal market economy. Their primary export product after the decline of the external slave trade by the mid-nineteenth century became a cash crop analogous in role to the Igbo palm oil: cocoa.

In his history of the Ijesha, J.D.Y. Peel gives pre-eminence to the role of trade in the constantly present warfare during the first half of the nineteenth century in Yorubaland during and after the collapse of the Oyo Empire. Not the competition for land and resources, but the access to trade routes, especially long-distance ones, was the predominant factor in producing conflict, and that conflict was largely won or lost as a result of competition for manpower.[[43]](#footnote-43)

Levies on trade were one of the main material pillars of power within any kingdom. Competition between kingdoms to control trade was a major source of inter-state conflict. [..] To outstrip rival communities in size was the efficient cause and the product of military success, and it was also the measure of success in rivalry between political communities.[[44]](#footnote-44)

As with the Igbo, where trade resources seemed to be the main reasons for competition, the presence of trade was an instigating factor for competition. There was one difference, however: slavery was a significant factor in violent conflict, and slaves were used both as indigenous labor and as trade resource. As another example, Ibadan proceeded to conquer Ilesha in the second half of the nineteenth century, apparently in search of dominance over trade routes, as well as a measure to increase its access to slaves.[[45]](#footnote-45)

This also explains the dominant presence of Yoruba in the Atlantic slave trade. They represented nearly half of all slaves exported out of the Bight of Benin. The Yoruba fought wars and traded for slaves that could nominally be considered to belong to the same ethnic group, primarily to be sold in the Atlantic slave trade.[[46]](#footnote-46) The presence of the Ilorin Emirate in northern Yorubaland, which acted as a middleman for slave trading between the Sokoto Empire and the Yoruba, reinforces this point. Ilorin raided slaves throughout the nineteenth century, with the move of slaves going mostly from north to south: from Sokoto to Yorubaland. And while Ilorin was ruled by Fulani and Hausa elites and a part of the Sokoto Empire, it was predominantly Yoruba in its population. Slaves traded included both those Yoruba, others captured in slave raids and those brought south from the Sokoto markets. Slaves were a commodity value, and the ethnicity of those slaves seems not to have been a factor. [[47]](#footnote-47)

The Yoruba appear to have been in a state of near-perpetual warfare for most of the first half of the nineteenth century. It wasn’t until the rise of the Ibadan Empire in the 1870s that a dominant state formed to replace the fallen Oyo Empire, which had slowly disintegrated in violent conflict during the first decades of the nineteenth century. The Ibadan Empire itself was formed through violent acquisitions, starting in the 1850s. And by 1877, its disintegration had started as a result of further internal violent conflict.[[48]](#footnote-48)

As with the Igbo, there was no overarching political structure among the Yoruba. While there was no sense of either consociationalism or control as a coherent mechanism, we can certainly say that there was not much evidence of a cooperative approach to politics or economy. Elements of hegemonic control can certainly be found, specifically as a result of the late nineteenth-century rise of the Ibadan Empire and its annexation of Ilesha. The export of Yoruba slaves acquired as a result of warfare implies a more confrontational system than was present anywhere in Igboland, and the Yoruba clearly did not have much experience with power-sharing or other cooperative systems.

## The Hausa-Fulani during the nineteenth century

Unlike the Igbo and Yoruba, the Hausa-Fulani can be well-defined as one coherent empire during pre-colonial times: that of the Sokoto Caliphate. An Islamic empire established at the start of the nineteenth century, its founding event was the Fulani Jihad which saw the largely rural and Muslim Fulani subjugate the largely urban Hausa. The Fulani would dominate what would later be northern Nigeria. Compared to the Yoruba and Igbo communities, the Sokoto economy seems to have been more developed by Western standards: while still largely agricultural, it also featured considerable proto-industrial domestic work, with Mahdi Adamu characterizing the Hausa region as the “workshop of West Africa in the textile and leather industries.”[[49]](#footnote-49)

While slavery was important for both the Igbo and the Yoruba, it was doubly so for the Sokoto Caliphate. One observation suggests that the number of slaves in Kano, one of the largest cities in the Caliphate, was equal to the number of free citizens in 1825.[[50]](#footnote-50) While possibly an exaggeration, it does exemplify the importance of slavery to the internal economy of the Sokoto Caliphate, even as they traded in slaves both to the south and the north. In fact, local agricultural settlements around Kano were most certainly majority slave by the end of the nineteenth century.[[51]](#footnote-51) This predominance of slaves in agriculture and its importance to the economy was of such a nature that Paul Lovejoy has explicitly compared them to the plantation system in the Americas.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Trade, both in slaves and other resources, was still important within the Sokoto Caliphate. However, geographical factors prevented access to the Atlantic markets in the south , further compounded by ideological objections to sale of Muslim slaves to Christians. Yet still, trade occurred over long distances both across the Sahara desert, and with neighboring peoples such as the Ashanti in the kola nut trade.[[53]](#footnote-53) Regional trade was, however, more important than trans-Saharan trade, and the economy as a whole was focused on local developments.[[54]](#footnote-54)

There was effectively no internal competition for slaves within the divisions of the Sokoto Caliphate. Economically, the Hausa and Fulani both prospered under the Caliphate and the divisions between the two groups diminished over time as subjugation turned into cooperation and intermarriage. [[55]](#footnote-55) Instead, the competition was with those outside the Caliphate, in the form of both trade and slave raids on other peoples as the Hausa-Fulani sought to expand their jihad, in part necessitated by the common practice of manumission which constantly depleted the number of slaves.[[56]](#footnote-56)

While economically and territorially, both groups seem to have been equal, politically this was not the case, particularly during the early Caliphate. Nominally, the jihad had not been a war against the Hausa but merely against non-Muslims, but it did have the practical result of installing Fulani as political rulers over a much larger Hausa population, which was also predominantly Muslim. However, this subjugation quickly turned to assimilation as the Fulani attempted to adopt Hausa customs, Hausa language and Hausa dress.[[57]](#footnote-57) The initially pastoral Fulani were urbanized, and effectively took on the Hausa culture as a whole.[[58]](#footnote-58)

In addition, the Caliphate was largely decentralized into two administrative units, one administered from Sokoto and one from Gwandu, both themselves administering a large number of largely autonomous emirates. Politically, the Fulani held most of the ruling posts, but this changed quickly as the Fulani became more culturally Hausa, and Hausa were necessarily let into political administration as a result of the ongoing integration of the two peoples. [[59]](#footnote-59)

Thus, the Sokoto Caliphate satisfies three of the criteria for consociationalism in a political sense, at least after a few decades of development: proportional representation, executive power-sharing, and a degree of autonomy and self-government. The only part truly lacking would be veto power. The elites became increasingly mixed over time and actively tried to minimize tensions between groups. Intriguingly, this is a case where the consociational system developed over time – and arguably disappeared over time, too, as integration and identification of Hausa with Fulani ensured that ethnic divisions diminished and a consociational approach was no longer useful. Separate emirates were established and given large degrees of autonomy, however, even in the case of Yoruba emirates like Ilorin. There’s no evidence of significant competition between the emirates, whether in terms of economy or politics.[[60]](#footnote-60) This certainly suggests that we can safely speak of a power-sharing arrangement within the Caliphate between emirates, even as ethnic divisions disappeared.

## Conclusion

During the period before colonization, neither the Yoruba nor the Igbo could have been said to be operating a system of consociationalism or hegemonic control, either within or without themselves. While the Igbo displayed elements of consociationalism in the cooperative modes of power-sharing among different villages, and the Yoruba displayed elements of hegemonic control, describing these as fully developed consociational models may be overreaching. We can instead speak of cooperative or adversarial systems at this point in time, as the Yoruba resolved conflicts over trade and resources through violence, while the Igbo tended to take more cooperative, live-and-let-live approaches.

The Fulani and Hausa, by contrast, present a relatively fully-developed case of consociationalism. Ethnically, a consociationalist model was certainly present during the early decades of the Sokoto Caliphate. As the two ethnic groups integrated, relatively autonomous emirates emerged within the empire, sharing power between them. Bargaining between elites and executive power-sharing were key factors among the emirates.

# Chapter 3: Transition to colonial rule

This chapter will discuss the period in which the British Empire was imposing colonial rule, but had not yet established the Nigerian state as a separate entity. As such, this analysis will run roughly from 1879, when the British established the United African Company to exploit Nigerian resources, through 1914, when the British established the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeriaas a separate state within the British Empire, abandoning all pretense of limited influence. This period was one of gradually increasing British control over domestic affairs in what would become Nigeria, with the British imposing their rule both violently and peacefully.

The period of colonial transition focused on the imposition of what the British would call indirect rule, the concept that the colonial power was merely there to guide the larger issues and take care of foreign policy while the indigenous people would be left to rule themselves. Instead, this system was consistently “marked by the imposition of the will of the colonial masters.”[[61]](#footnote-61) While indirect rule would suggest peaceful cooperation, the reality on the ground was one of consistent violent conflict. Throughout those wars, the Nigerian population was not a united front, but one split among many lines, including ethnic. The Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani all responded to British pressures in their own ways, and the British handled these three groups in distinct manners. The ways in which these groups attempted to reserve power for themselves as a group and how they handled the diversity of interests within their own ranks is the subject of this chapter. This chapter will discuss each of the three ethnic groups in turn. The main questions to be answered are: how did the three population groups respond to increasing colonial pressure on their affairs? And can we see an application of either power-sharing or hegemonic control within any of these three groups, and in the political machinations to gather power within the British system?

## The Igbo during the colonial transition

The history of the Igbo people under early British rule is well-known: starting in the 1880s, the British gradually attempted to establish a system of indirect rule, by giving local individuals significant power in a system modeled on their assumptions of local colonial rule. As has been shown repeatedly, most thoroughly in A.E. Afigbo’s 1972 study, this system of Warrant Chiefs and Native Courts actually served to destabilize the internal Igbo political system by imposing a form of direct rule with chiefs in a society that had incorporated no such functions in its past.[[62]](#footnote-62)

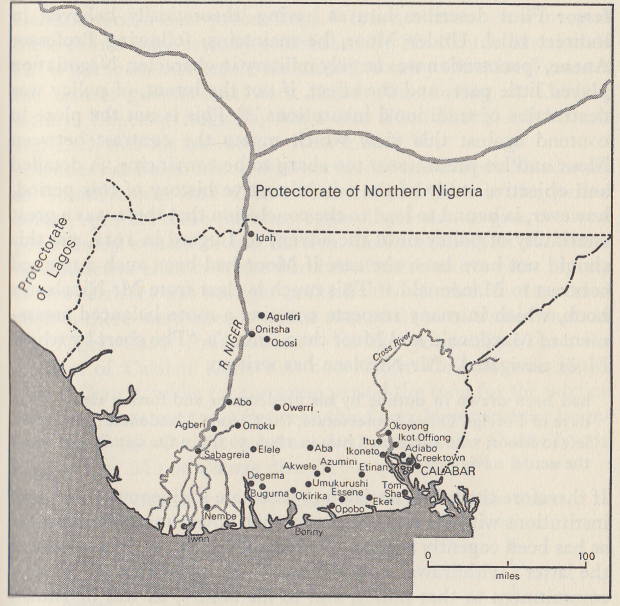
The British created a system of regional Native Courts headed by the Warrant Chiefs, and modeled on the Court of Equity that adjudicated mercantile disputes among the coastal traders, both European and African, in southeastern Nigeria. The Court of Equity was itself a consequence of European trade and not a widely-shared, indigenous principle, but the British, guided by their prejudices and European frame of reference, saw in this court of commercial dispute mediation a model for the entire Igbo society. Of course, the British felt they had to engage in some oversight while implementing this system and gave their consul the ability to interfere and counsel the Native Courts. In addition, as the British moved further into the interior, they frequently resorted to violence to impose their new system of warrant chiefs on unwilling subjects who had managed to get by with no outside imposition of political structure for centuries.[[63]](#footnote-63)

The British during this period officially viewed their control over the Igbo peoples and the Niger delta as a protectorate, where they handled the area’s foreign affairs and the locals were allowed to govern themselves. The reality on the ground involved more British interference than that formal definition implied, however, and a form of what they would call indirect rule was instead established, with the Warrant Chiefs the main exponents of that rule.[[64]](#footnote-64) These Warrant Chiefs were chosen for their pre-eminence in established Igbo society, but their pre-eminence was a result of “deference and respect, meaning they had a great deal of influence in kindred or town council, not in physical force, nor wealth, nor elite class status.”[[65]](#footnote-65) Thus, the British effectively turned communal advisors into local rulers.

One enduring factor of Igbo response to British encroachment in this period was resistance, often violent whether by indigenous instigation or because of British escalation. The violent resistance would continue in stages through 1919, when the British could finally claim to have subjugated the Igbo peoples within Nigeria. A key problem for the Igbo was a lack of united, organized resistance – rather than facing one united Igbo front of resistance, the British faced a series of separate conflicts at a smaller scale.[[66]](#footnote-66)

As was shown in the previous chapter, the indigenous Igbo approach to politics carried certain aspects of power-sharing. The new system forced on them by the British transformed this indigenous political system, and thus presents the possibility of a transition to another mode of operation. The increasing presence of British rule complicates this picture not only by modifying the power structure, but by providing a superstructure within which the various Igbo tribes had to compete for resources, trade and power with each other, while all three objects of competition were simultaneously usurped by their British rulers.

**Map:** Native courts in the Niger delta.

  
**Source:** Afigbo, *Warrant chiefs*, 57.

### Competition for resources, trade and power

In a period of violent upheaval, it can be difficult to separate the competition for resources, trade and power. The presence of that violent conflict and the fractured nature of the Igbo peoples in its response are in and of itself a proof for the lack of a cohesive unity and the lack of a form of power-sharing between those groups. Fortunately, a few specific studies also allow us to be a little more specific on the areas of trade, power and resources.

The competition for trade is perhaps most interesting because it specifically involves manipulating the superstructure imposed by the British, and rather than attempting to share its benefits with other Igbo groups, gaming the system to benefit the in-group. This is most obviously visible in the case of coastal trade cities New Calabar and Nembe-Brass.

New Calabar was at the end of the nineteenth the largest trading state in the Lower Niger region. Its dominance as a middleman state was fought by the Royal Niger Company, which sought to open up interior trade through the competing middleman state of Nembe-Brass. The merchants of New Calabar enlisted the African Association, a competitor of the Royal Niger Company, as well as the British Consular administration in the interest of maintaining its virtual monopoly on trade in the region. Effectively, New Calabar managed to set British institutions against each other in service of itself – manipulating the superstructure into enabling hegemonic control of Lower Niger trade by New Calabar. These movements were so effective that they eventually resulted in the demise of Nembe-Brass as a middleman state, and the maintenance of the New Calabar monopoly in the Lower Niger region, the local elites having twisted British institutions to at least partly serve New Calabar interests. [[67]](#footnote-67)

**Table: Trade from various Southern Nigerian ports in 1888 and estimated later trade**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ports** | **Palm oil** | **Kernels** | **Future kernel trade** |
| Lagos | 11,470 | 31,259 | - |
| Benin | 7,000 | 10,000 | 21,000 |
| Brass | 2,000 | 2,000 | 6,000 |
| New Calabar | 5,000 | 1,000 | 15,000 |
| Bonny | 4,000 | 1,500 | 12,000 |
| Opobo | 8,000 | 6,000 | 24,000 |
| Old Calabar | 7,000 | 10,000 | 21,000 |

**Source:** Wariboko, “New Calabar Middlemen”, 21.

In the case of New Calabar, competition for trade thus revolved around manipulating the British colonial power and specifically the Royal Niger Company into granting special privileges. An effort of one group to impose its dominance in trade, with no effort at bargaining between cultural elites of those groups, and the presence of a central policy that benefited the former slave traders of New Calabar over those at Nembe-Brass suggests an attempt at hegemonic control. It certainly did not represent a cooperative approach.

So it was for political power, too. One way we can measure competition for political power is the number of Native Courts in every area, as that was the main channel through which the Igbo could influence super-regional political policy. Intriguingly, the distribution of Native Councils and Minor Courts is fairly even in 1900, except for one location: Old Calabar, which had one Native Council, as did most areas, but 15 Minor Courts – five times as much as the next-biggest area.[[68]](#footnote-68) That distribution was a result of local chiefs endeavoring to retain pre-existing arrangements. The election of just a few previously-equal chiefs to a select office had led to a situation where those who were passed over saw they were falling behind – so the chiefs as a whole decided to share power instead – even though that made the system effectively powerless, obviously an internal example of power-sharing at work.[[69]](#footnote-69)

This would seem to imply a certain pre-eminence of Calabar among the courts, and one step in a certain inequity of power – although there are various different explanations to be had for this disparity, it at least means that the power-sharing quality of an equitable distribution of political offices was not present among the Igbo as a whole during that period in terms of political power. Although at the same time, it implies that within Calabar there was certainly an effort to strive for local power-sharing within the political system. The fact that Calabar managed to extract this concession from the British, where other regions did no such thing and instead implemented a system that presumably overhauled some local power-structures, suggests that this was not an area of power-sharing within the Igbo as a group, let alone by the Igbo with other ethnic groups.

Indeed Afigbo argues that the creation of these Native Courts themselves violated the power-sharing arrangements already in place in fundamental ways, frequently expanding the power of chiefs and elevating outsiders to positions of power in communities they were not familiar with.[[70]](#footnote-70)

It is similarly notable that the coastal middlemen tried to keep their position as the main face of Niger delta trade toward the colonial powers by thwarting, exploiting and manipulating the British efforts to establish their system of warrant chiefs in the interior. They spread misinformation as the British progressed into the interior to halt British conquest and prevent them from independently controlling the interior, while at other times they attempted to exploit the situation by first providing the British with accurate information in search of compensation, allowing the British to bring new chiefs to power, and then demanding compensation from these new chiefs for helping them reach a position of power.[[71]](#footnote-71) Indeed, they even manipulated the British into waging war on specific Igbo groups to secure them as a source of domestic slaves, which they did by accusing groups of “stopping trade, levying tolls [..], raiding for slaves, and offering human sacrifices.”[[72]](#footnote-72) This even extended to the point where groups would emulate British raids and impersonate British officials in an attempt to extort local groups.[[73]](#footnote-73) In effect, these groups leveraged the British discourse about primitive tribes in the Niger delta to entice British action for the benefit of these groups, to the detriment of others. Again, this hardly represents a cooperative mode.

**Table:** Palm oil production and exports estimates in Nigeria

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Palm oil production** | **Palm oil exports** | **Palm kernels exports** |
| 1865-9 | 10,552 | 5,288 | 11,871 |
| 1870-4 | 18,443 | 4,791 | 20,748 |
| 1875-9 | 25,270 | 7,502 | 28,430 |
| 1880-4 | 23,937 | 6,865 | 26,929 |
| 1885-9 | 31,580 | 8,718 | 35,528 |

**Source:** Ekundare, *Economic history of Nigeria*, 80.

As all of this competition was happening, those effects were exacerbated by the slow but steady movement from subsistence agriculture toward cash crops, a movement encouraged by the British and embraced specifically by the merchant-dominated coastal towns which sought to profit further from established trade routes. As can be seen quite clearly in the above table, palm production grew rapidly during the late nineteenth century, as the British established their control and expanded a capitalist mode of production. The estimates are based on colonial reports on exports, with assumptions about the proportion of kernels to oil production, and the assumption that almost all kernels were exported, as kernel demand internally was very low.[[74]](#footnote-74) Inikori explains this development by pointing to the end of the slave trade, which led to both steady population growth now that a significant group of people was no longer being taken from the region and a need to find an alternate export as a driver of trade.[[75]](#footnote-75)

### Igbo conclusion

The period of transition caused by the steady yet often violent imposition of British rule destroyed what power-sharing modes existed among the Igbo peoples. Instead, the Igbo were divided, a hierarchical structure was imposed and the elites proceeded to try to usurp what power and resources they could for themselves, with little regard for the collective experience of indigenous peoples under colonial rule. While the existence of British rule makes this a case of hegemonic control, as do all colonial efforts, the competition within that superstructure could have turned cooperative. Instead, any cooperation was enforced and imposed by the British, whose interests mainly extended to eliminating violent conflict, which hindered their attempts to extract wealth from the area. The local populace turned toward a competitive state, using the British presence to gain access to trade and resources at the expense of other groups.

As the British pushed further and further inland, those already under British rule tried to usurp what power and resources they could, while those not yet under British rule tended to resist, eliminating the option for power-sharing arrangements under the British superstructure until they’d been fully integrated. This was further exacerbated by the willingness of those operating under the British superstructure to manipulate their subjugators into using force to provide the already subjugated with profits from the acts of violence perpetrated by the colonial power.

The one element of power-sharing among the Igbo that does remain intact through the transitional period is the presence of a large degree of autonomy for local groups. While they did not have the ability to veto central policy, they were granted autonomy – as long as it fit in the British system of Warrant Chiefs, that is.

This minor concession shouldn’t change the overall story for the Igbo during the period of colonial transition, which was one of competition. The mode of power-sharing we observed in the period of legitimate trade was replaced by bold-faced manipulation and a search for hegemonic control as British rule increased its reach among the Igbo peoples.

## The Yoruba during the colonial transition

The Yoruba in Western Nigeria were, like the Igbo in Southeastern Nigeria, slowly incorporated into the British Empire over the final decades of the nineteenth century. That started with the annexation of the coastal port of Lagos in 1861 and was finalized throughout the 1890s as the British conquered most of what was Yorubaland. By 1894 the British controlled the main Yorubaland cities of Lagos, Ibadan, Oyo and Ilesha and had expanded its territory through a series of protective treaties, which effectively turned those cities into British colonies, and aggressive wars of conquest.[[76]](#footnote-76) That military conquest of Yorubaland was at least publicly motivated by a desire to stop the slave trade and end the supposed entrenched cultural practice of human sacrifice, although it should be no surprise that the violent takeover of a large tract of land was also economically profitable for the British, casting doubt on their true motives.[[77]](#footnote-77)

As they had in the case of the Igbo, the British Empire endeavored to establish a form of indirect rule, keeping internal power structures intact while maintaining a form of peaceful stability. The British frequently interfered in internal Yoruba power structures, although they did not impose a completely foreign hierarchy as they had in southeastern Nigeria. This naturally led to some resistance to British rule, though this did not take the form of organized rebellion among the Yoruba as a whole, and by and large the localities attempted to maneuver within the established British superstructure.[[78]](#footnote-78) However, the structure of indirect rule was less consistent than it was among the Igbo, as the colony of Lagos proper (that is, its metropolitan area) was administered directly by the British colonial authority and such direct involvement remained a fact of life in the Lagos hinterland as well. In fact, it was not until 1914 that the British widely established Native Courts in Yorubaland in an attempt at indirect rule, similar to the ones they had established in Southeastern Nigeria. [[79]](#footnote-79)

**Map: Niger delta in 1898**

  
**Source:** Boston Public Library, W. & A.K. Johnston, *Maps to illustrate the Niger and upper Nile questions* (1898).

Competition for resources, trade and power

Whereas the competition for resources in the form of slaves had dominated the pre-colonial Yoruba economy, the period of transition saw slavery largely eliminated and consequentially, significant changes to the internal agricultural labor structure of Yorubaland occurred. While slavery itself persisted in local structures, there was an outflow of slaves toward other territories where they would become free, while the British brought a forceful end to the constant internal Yoruba wars which were largely waged for the purpose of gathering slaves.[[80]](#footnote-80) As I discussed in the previous chapter, this source of conflict was a major factor in the emergence of a confrontational mode of governance in pre-colonial Yorubaland, with a resulting heavy emphasis on forms of hegemonic control. The elimination of that mode of competition necessarily led to opportunities for power-sharing modes.

When it comes to access to power, however, we do not see a pluralistic society intent on power-sharing. Under direct colonial rule, Muslim courts felt they were denied their equal rights to other groups. In directly-administered Lagos, for instance, an 1894 petition requested the official establishment of a civil court of adjudication for Muslims – a petition that was denied. [[81]](#footnote-81) Similar claims were made for Muslim legal treatment throughout Yorubaland with T.G.O. Gbadamosi saying the British dismissed “the issue of establishing Islamic law courts in Lagos colony” and that they “check-mated the politico-legal development of Islam in Yorubaland.”[[82]](#footnote-82) Muslim members of Yoruba society felt discriminated against, and felt that they were not equally represented in the distribution of offices.

This lack of equitable political representation was also seen at various levels of society. The Ijebu complained of local courts dominated by Christians and Muslims who were approved by British forces, while they saw their own traditionalist voices shut out. This led to one of the few instances of violent resistance, and swift but temporary appeasement on the part of the British –the colonizer kept a heavy hand in local politics throughout and once again excluded the traditionalists from the Native Courts in 1912.[[83]](#footnote-83) Similarly, the Ijesha were swiftly reduced to “dependents of the colonial state”, completely incorporated in the British system and having lost any political independence.[[84]](#footnote-84)

The Yoruba situation had turned into a more complicated story than that of the Igbo. The extent of direct rule by the British Empire and their subjugation of the Yoruba created a situation where the indigenous peoples were not in a position to coordinate, or even control each other. Instead, all control was exercised by the colonial empire operating out of Lagos. At the same time, the Yoruba did not really resist this situation: unlike the Igbo, who consistently tried to seek various forms of independence, the Yoruba seemed largely content to continue to live their lives as they had previously, with scant evidence of violent or other conflict in the literature.

**Table:** Cocoa production and exports estimates in Nigeria

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Volume (tons) | Volume (cwt(112 lbs)) | Year | Volume (tons) | Volume(cwt) |
| 1886 | 1 | 5 | 1893 | 8 | 1 |
| 1887 | 1 | 6 | 1894 | 17 | 10 |
| 1888 | 1 | 13 | 1895 | 21 | 10 |
| 1889 | 1 | 7 | 1896 | 12 | 10 |
| 1890 | 6 | 2 | 1897 | 45 | 3 |
| 1891 | 6 | 16 | 1898 | 34 | 6 |
| 1892 | 7 | 1 | 1899 | 70 | 8 |

**Source:** Ekundare, *Economic history of Nigeria*, 81.[[85]](#footnote-85)

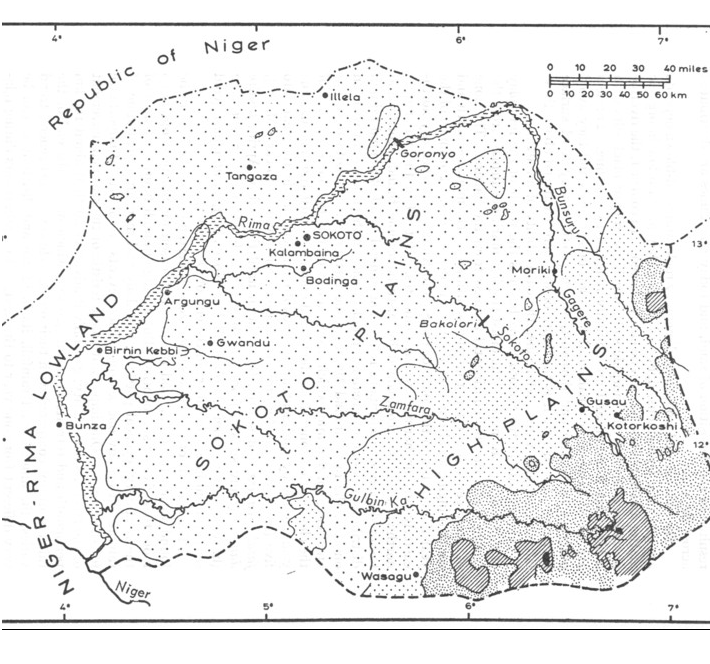
Economically, the Yoruba, like the Igbo, turned to commercial agriculture more than subsistence agriculture in the wake of the British takeover. Cocoa was their main cash crop, and as can be seen in the table above, production exploded when the British gained more and more influence in the region. Indeed, they encouraged it, as they did with the Igbo: cocoa seeds were distributed freely and the plant was initially introduced by Europeans, likely in the 1870s. The rubber trade expanded, too, again to serve European demand. There doesn’t appear to have been much internal competition for land to grow these crops among the Yoruba. Instead, the British had to actively entice locals to turn to cash crops instead of their previous subsistence agriculture. [[86]](#footnote-86)

### Yoruba conclusion

Taken as a whole, the Yoruba weren’t exactly engaging in power-sharing, but neither were they establishing hegemonic control, as they’d done under the Ibadan Empire. Instead, they seemed to acquiesce to being subordinate to the British Empire. They do not appear to have made much effort to gain access to power within British structures, but they also did not engage in competition amongst themselves, instead seemingly sharing power throughout. As such, it seems impossible to speak of a mode of power-sharing within Yoruba political representation. Unlike in Southeastern Nigeria, where at least the British superstructure allowed for local control and competition among the Igbo, the literature does not suggest that there was anything other than extremely limited self-governance for the Yoruba. In fact, the British dominance in Yorubaland had every hallmark of complete hegemonic control, leaving little room for Yoruba to maneuver and create their own political room within the British structure.

## The Hausa-Fulani during the colonial transition

**Map:** the Sokoto plains

**Source:** Swindell, “Population and agriculture”, 78.

When the British had largely subjugated the Igbo peoples of Southeastern Nigeria by 1902, they found themselves on the edge of the Sokoto Caliphate, inhabited primarily by the Hausa-Fulani. Not content with the area they already controlled and spurred on by anti-slavery sentiment, the Brits proceeded to conquer by force the Caliphate and make it a part of the British colonial empire. Kabiru Sulaiman Chafe argues that the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate was not just a consequence of British aggression, but also thoroughgoing breakdowns within the Caliphate itself. The individual emirates were starting to lose legitimacy, failing to establish the new, Islamic social order that was supposed to be the backbone of Caliphate. This led to separatist movements, including that of the Mahdist and of Jibrilla Gaini at the end of the nineteenth century. Similarly, strife between the emirates allowed the British to implement a divide-and-conquer strategy where the Sokoto Caliphate could not respond as one, coherent power.[[87]](#footnote-87) In effect, this was a breakdown of the previously established consociationalist form of government that had allowed the Sokoto Caliphate to function as a stable whole. Thus, the British conquest was in part enabled by the failure to maintain a mode of power-sharing.

Politically, British rule in Northern Nigeria is often seen as a model of indirect rule, leaving many of the internal structures intact.[[88]](#footnote-88) Economically, the British shifted the Hausa-Fulani economy toward one of cash-crop agriculture, as they did throughout Nigeria, dominated in this case by the production of cotton and groundnuts. The colonial system built up a chronic indebtedness among farmers which forced many of them to sell their farms, leading to a concentration of wealth among few larger-scale farmers, with a consequent rise in the frequency, supply of and demand for wage labor.[[89]](#footnote-89) In this way, the British Empire enabled the establishment of new elites, and entrenchment of existing ones.

### Competition for resources, trade and power

The rule of political elites under British rule relied on their ability to enforce tax collection. The various emirates of the former Sokoto Caliphate were maintained and ruled by appointed chiefs who already had a certain degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the local population. These rulers also controlled the native councils and were de facto independent rulers of their own states, with limited oversight by the British Empire.[[90]](#footnote-90)

With already-established systems of tax collection, the British had only to modify it to suit their preconceptions. Here they did encounter significant resistance, albeit in a covert form. An effort to change the delivery of tribute in kind to payment of taxation in coin largely failed throughout their rule of Nigeria.[[91]](#footnote-91) An effort to centralize tax collection turned into an incoherent mess, and income from taxation lagged far behind that in the Lagos province. Part of the problem was a consistent shortage of British personnel to manage the system of taxation, leading to local emirate officials continuing to enforce tax collection, further strengthening the independent functioning of the emirates.[[92]](#footnote-92) This, in turn, led much of the collected tax to remain within the emirates themselves.[[93]](#footnote-93)

This suggests that the emirates had, in an administrative sense, simply continued as they had, making the necessary administrative adjustments to British demands and making regular payments, but retaining independence for their own semi-state, a key feature of any power-sharing system. This is true in part, but the British Empire also placed demands on local officials, and over time eroded their power by limiting their access to local tax revenue, and implementing measures to reduce the habitual payment of percentages to officials at all stages of tax collection. These and other measures were implemented gradually, over time and had the effect of both increasing tax collection, increasing the level of (violent) oppression of the local populace, and limiting the independence of the Hausa-Fulani elite.[[94]](#footnote-94) As such, the independence of the emirates was reduced as the British colonial system aged. And yet this independence was sufficiently great for the colonial administration to call the emirates “legally states” and to note that “Indirect Rule means decentralization” as late as 1937.[[95]](#footnote-95)

This does not mean there was no resistance against colonial rule. Revolutionary Mahdism remained a powerful force and created a forceful uprising in 1905 and 1906. Mahdism had previously challenged the Sokoto Caliphate, and this had helped the British takeover significantly. The local emirates were happy to help the British defeat the Mahdists, and this was a key point in firmly establishing British rule in the former Sokoto Caliphate.[[96]](#footnote-96) The Sokoto aristocracy had no interest in revolutionary Mahdism, which divided society among class lines and aimed to overthrow them as well as the British colonizers. As such, a natural alliance was created between the aristocracy and the British, allowing the aristocracy to retain most of their political power. As such, the local elites worked together to eliminate a Mahdist threat instead of competing for power in the face of violent conflict. This can be seen as evidence that the Sokoto aristocrats were content to share their political power peacefully under the British umbrella. Indeed, there is precious little evidence of any violent conflict among political elites during the Northern Nigerian Protectorate, as there wasn’t prior to the arrival of the British.

One other form of competition within the Sokoto Caliphate was not ethnic, but rather occupational: the traditional Fulani pastoralists that based their livelihood on keeping livestock formed a distinct population from the Hausa-Fulani population in both urban and rural agricultural centers.[[97]](#footnote-97) These pastoralists had been taxed since pre-colonial times in the form of a cattle tax, or *jangali*, initially paid as tribute to local rulers in exchange for grazing rights.[[98]](#footnote-98) The advent of the transition toward British colonial rule fundamentally transformed the ways in which this tax was collected, and the pastoralists perceived this as an unnecessarily strict and potentially ruinous burden. As a result, this *jangali* was not very productive for the British as they fundamentally altered the ways in which tax was collected. Evasion was commonplace and the nomadic pastoralists frequently moved to avoid tax collection, putting themselves out of reach of the colonial and pre-colonial state.[[99]](#footnote-99) Thus the relationship between the Sokoto Caliphate and later the British colonizers and the Fulani pastoralists was definitely not cooperative, whereas it had been prior to the arrival of the British. However, this relationship represented an exception within the Hausa-Fulani in general, where the cooperative model between elites remained in place.

### Hausa-Fulani conclusion

There appears to have been a consistent willingness among Hausa-Fulani to share power, both in pre-colonial times and through the colonial transition, and both in economic and political terms. Access to power was moderated by the British Empire, but this colonial interference left a significant amount of independence for local emirates, and there was no case of hegemonic control in the Northern Nigerian Protectorate. Instead, the Hausa-Fulani elite played nice: they created a series of parallel states within which they attempted to game the system as much as they could to their own advantage, but the literature does not suggest that any emirate attempted to establish a form of control over resources or power under British rule.

Much of that view depends on how we treat the Mahdists, however: were they an external force, successfully subdued? Or were they an alternative group seeking power? Certainly they weren’t willing to operate within the established bounds of the Sokoto Caliphate, but if we view them as another group vying for power, the power-sharing approach of Northern Nigeria becomes slightly less pronounced. Even so, treating a violent insurgency based in part on an external power base as a viable partner for power-sharing seems a little over the top.

## Conclusion

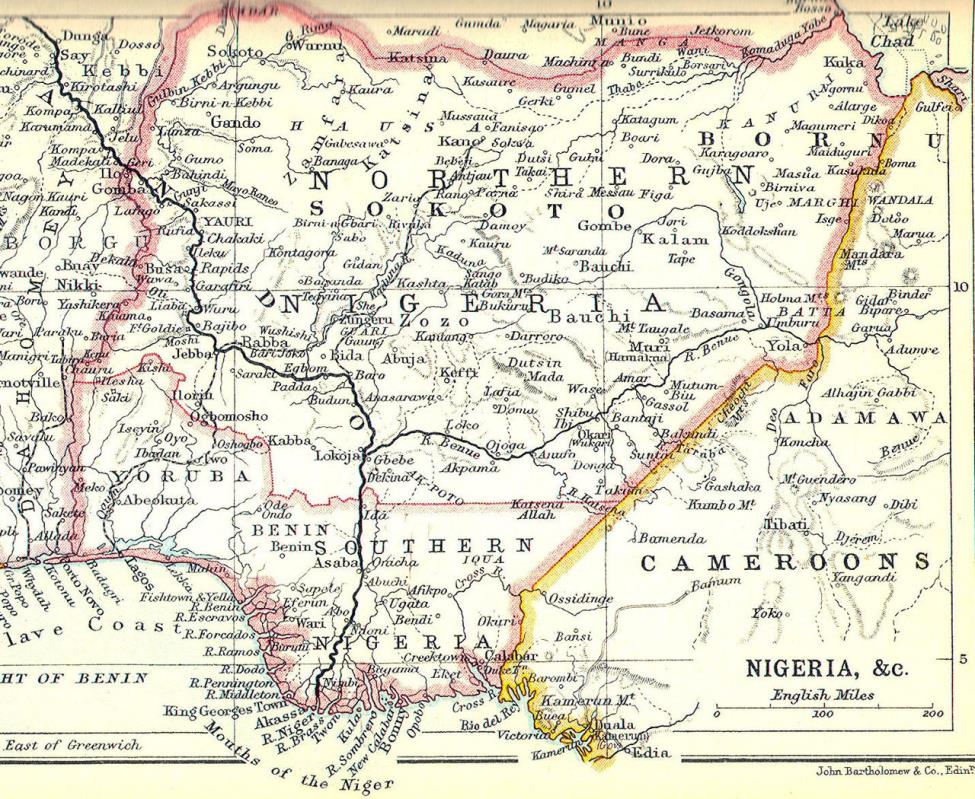
The advent of direct, colonial British intervention in the Niger delta and beyond created significant upheaval in Nigeria, and necessitated significant political and economic changes, not least because of their policing the Atlantic slave trade and pushing for more capitalist modes of production in agriculture. Using military force to establish their control, the British imposed new institutions within Nigeria in an attempt to homogenize the administration and governance of the Nigerian peoples, and moved the economy of all three groups toward similar goals: that of capitalist trade of cash crops, which the British then taxed and exported. Those actions had profound effects on the Nigerian economy and politics, as the local institutions adjusted to British rule, and the British imposed their own ideas of what functional governance must look like on unwilling populations. Those populations then exploited British force to grasp for power in some cases, while in others they acquiesced and attempted to share power.

The Igbo went from a largely cooperative group to a more fractured, competitive and confrontational situation, with the coastal towns especially trying to establish control over their region and the trade for which they acted as middlemen. While conflicts over land and resources were scarce, conflicts over trade were not. The Yoruba went the opposite route, going from a conflict-heavy situation with significant competition and hegemonic control established by the Ibadan Empire, to a more peaceful, seemingly more cooperative situation under British rule, albeit one subsumed under direct British rule with little room for cooperative modes. The Hausa-Fulani, meanwhile, remained a fundamentally consociationalist society as the British Empire came to dominate them politically and economically. The Hausa-Fulani largely managed to retain their internal political structures, however, even as their economic administration was slowly changed by British rule. Hausa-Fulani elites remained cooperative, in part spurred by the external threat of Mahdist revolution.

Overall, there is no consistent story of increasing or decreasing cooperative modes of governance among the three ethnic groups as British rule progressed. Instead, each ethnic group adapted to British rule in its own distinct way.

# Chapter 4: The Colonial Period

**Map:** Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914, map by John Bartholomew & Co.



**Source:** Wikipedia, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Southern_and_Northern_Nigeria_c._1914.jpg>

As noted in the previous chapter, the amount of actual decentralized, indirect rule was slight among the Igbo and Yoruba communities. The hand of the British colonizer heavily influenced the form of the institutions that were to rule, and their limited concepts of what local governance actually looked like before British intervention led to the adoption of structures that were different from and often at odds with actual indigenous forms of rule. There was a high degree of centralization, which was disruptive for indigenous forms of governance, but that centralization does give us the real ability to test the presence of consociationalism between the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani, rather than among those groups internally.

The rest of this chapter will be divided into two sections: a political and an economic analysis of the consociational practices in Nigeria during the colonial period. That period starts with the early formation of a unified Nigerian state within the British Empire in 1914, and ends with the creation of the at least nominally independent Nigerian state in 1960. Because of the superstructure of the British Empire, we can finally comment consistently on the consociational aspects between the three population groups, rather than speaking mostly to their own internal power distributions.

## British imposition of “indirect rule”

During the transition to a colonial form of governance, the British Empire had established a form of indirect rule. Or at least, that was its and Governor-General of Nigeria Frederick Lugard’s intention. Having worked as High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria in the first years of the twentieth century, he returned to the Niger delta in 1912 as Governor of both the Northern and Southern protectorates, and worked to create a single colonial state out of the two distinct groups – the basis of what would later become Nigeria.

Lugard is most-remembered for enforcing the concept of indirect rule in Nigeria, but his actual intentions are more murky. Olufemi Taiwo has convincingly argued that he took a decidedly paternalistic view of Africans, seeing them as savages to be educated, but who could not be lifted to the enlightened views of a true British subject – the African peoples were too savage for that to happen, and needed a strict, European guidance to ever come close to real civilization.[[100]](#footnote-100) The key concept driving Lugard’s enforcement of the Nigerian state was that of the dual mandate, the title of a 1922 book by his hand which neatly summarized his views on the British colonial enterprise in West Africa.[[101]](#footnote-101) The dual mandate was, of course, the same as Rudyard Kipling’s *white man’s burden*. The European must be trusted to develop the abundant African resources for mankind as a whole, conveniently embodied in the British Empire. The second part of the dual mandate was to bring the benevolence of (white, colonial) civilization to Africa. This dual mandate was to be implemented through the preservation of local customs of rule, with British oversight guaranteeing the gradual move toward Lugard’s idea of modernity. He saw cooperation between the “provincial staff and the native rulers” as “the key-note of success”.[[102]](#footnote-102)

Unfortunately, it appears that Lugard’s prejudice “trumped the declared aim of one-half of the dual mandate”[[103]](#footnote-103). While Taiwo makes that argument based primarily on the textual analysis of Lugard and his adherence to “sociocryonics”, we shall see that this holds true from the perspective of a consocationalist analysis of the distribution of power in Nigeria, too. As E.C. Ejiogu argues, “while the indirect rule was impemented to preserve and extend Hausa-Fulani autocratic authority patterns to all inhabitants, in the lower Niger, it was used to undermine the democratic authority patterns of the Igbo, Yoruba, and the rest.”[[104]](#footnote-104) The fact that Lugard saw tribes with clear hierarchies as more advanced than those that lacked them meant a consistent policy to develop those hierarchies in those societies that lacked them – regardless of the actual form of local governance.[[105]](#footnote-105) If an area did not have a chief, British policy would be to “encourage any village chief of influence and character control a group of villages, with a view to making him Chief of a district later if he shows ability for the charge.”[[106]](#footnote-106)

Making matters more complicated was a dual approach to the concept of a unified Nigerian state, with the British Empire effectively segregating the Northern and Southern colonies with different systems of law and only a minimal unified federal structure. That structure would expand throughout the colonial period, but the division between Southern and Northern Nigeria would remain.[[107]](#footnote-107)

The Northern Nigerian Protectorate may have been folded into the wider Nigerian state, it was still treated differently from the southern states. Lugard, led by his inability to see the less hierarchical forms of governance among Yoruba and Igbo as actual forms of governance, preferred the Hausa-Fulani hierarchy, and did not tamper much with the existing political environment in the North. This led E.C. Efigbo to conceptualize his analysis of the colonial period in terms of North vs. South. In his view, the British Nigerian Protectorate dominated the Southern states, but allied with the existing Sokoto Caliphate authorities in the northern states.[[108]](#footnote-108) This certainly fits with Taiwo’s observations on Lugard’s intentions, including one description of a Lugard memo as a virtual “blueprint for restoring the Fulani aristocracy in Northern Nigeria after the British military had vanquished them.”[[109]](#footnote-109)

## Population estimates

Given the increasingly powerful role of the British state in determining government policy, and the superstructure they provided for Nigeria as a whole, finding quantifiable measures of that state influence is crucial to determine how power was shared between the different population groups. The first step toward quantifying relations would be identifying the relative population of Northern and Southern provinces.

Unfortunately, population estimates for the whole of Nigerian history are rough and censuses are generally unreliable, especially so for pre-colonial periods. Thanks to various conflicts and political clashes, the concept of an accurate Nigerian census seems to be completely impossible.[[110]](#footnote-110) And the question of “how many are we in Nigeria” is asked even today.[[111]](#footnote-111) Thankfully, we don’t need an incredibly accurate measure, we only need a rough estimate of populations to say something about the relative size of various population groups as an analytical measure.

Writing in 1956, Prothero summarized several population estimates for the Northern provinces. The 1911 census returned a total of 8,115,981 with a subsequent correction for omissions to 9,274,981. The 1921 census arrived at a population of 9,998,314, while the 1931 census came to a count of 11,435,000 with an additional 343,000 added in for error correction, with no real basis for that number. Skipping a 1940s census thanks to World War 2, the 1952 census finally arrived at a population of 16,840,479, 20% above expectation.[[112]](#footnote-112) Meanwhile, the 1963 census, generally seen as significantly more accurate, provided a population estimate of 29,808,000 in Northern Nigeria, another significant jump unexplained by birth rates.[[113]](#footnote-113) Elsewhere, Paul Lovejoy provides a more modern estimate of twenty million people in the Sokoto Caliphate in 1900, which fits the 1963 census best.[[114]](#footnote-114) Given these disparate estimates, we cannot do much better than say that the 1930 population of Northern Nigeria is somewhere in the order of magnitude of 10-25 million people. That’s a rather ludicrous gap between minimum and maximum estimates, but it gives us at least a rough estimate.

As for Southern Nigeria, the census report of 1921 seems to have disappeared, but the conclusion that the total population of Southern Nigeria numbered around 9.3 million was at least retained for historians.[[115]](#footnote-115) The 1931 census seems to widely be regarded as inaccurate, due to its being based exclusively on tax returns, which people naturally tried to evade. However, Dmitri van den Bersselaar contends that it is no less accurate than the census of 1921, but that appears to be more of an indictment of the 1921 census than support for the 1931 version.[[116]](#footnote-116) The 1931 census estimated a population of 8,493,000 for the Southern provinces, which is probably a significant underestimate, caused in part by an economic depression and a poll tax.[[117]](#footnote-117) The 1953 and 1963 censuses estimated the Southern population at 13,568,00 and 25,864,000 respectively.[[118]](#footnote-118) A rough estimate of 10-25 million in 1930 can again be given, but is again not very useful. It does seem apparent that the Northern states are slightly more populous, given that the various censuses estimate the Northern population at roughly 110% of that of the Southern population, with some variation over time. I’ve visualized these estimates in the table below.

**Table:** Population estimates for Southern and Northern Nigeria

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Southern estimate | Northern estimate | Population ratio |
| 1911 |  | 9,274,981 |  |
| 1921 | 9,300,000 | 9,998,314 | 1:1.08 |
| 1931 | 8,493,000 | 11,778,000 | 1:1.39 |
| 1952(South)/3(North) | 13,568,000 | 16,840,479 | 1:1.24 |
| 1963 | 25,864,000 | 29,808,000 | 1:1.15 |

To an extent, the exact population of the various regions doesn’t matter overly much for our purposes: only their relative population, and the British perception of these populations as they influenced their policies. Given the above rough estimates, we can come to another rough proxy for the relative population of the North and South: 1.2 and 1.0, respectively – a ratio that appears to hold true even today.[[119]](#footnote-119)

### Sharing power

With rough population ratios established, we can proceed to quantify the extent of power-sharing in colonial Nigeria, starting with the distribution of power, for which we have various measures.

One measure would be the development of the size of the Provincial Administration in Nigeria, helpfully provided by A.H.M. Kirk-Greene. [[120]](#footnote-120) The total number of British officials seems to have hovered around one for every 54,000 Nigerians, which is shockingly low compared to other colonial administrations. Kirk-Greene mentions ratios of 1:27,000 for French West Africa and 1:35,000 in the Congo. This suggests a degree of political autonomy not seen in other colonial states, further reinforcing the commitment to at least the concept of indirect rule, or perhaps just institutional poverty on the side of the British. [[121]](#footnote-121)

**Table:** British expansion of administrative corps.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1920** | **1925** | **1930** | **1935** | **1940** | **1945** | **1950** |
| **Senior residents** | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 10 |
| **Residents** | 30 | 29 | 29 | 21 | 21 | 28 | 24 |
| **Senior Dos** |  |  |  |  | 18 | 25 | 53 |
| **DOs/ADOs** | 291 | 294 | 392 | 333 | 364 | 337 | 448 |

*Note: DO stands for District Officer, while ADO stands for Assistant District Officer***Source:** Kirk-Greene, “The thin white line”, 35.

Kirk-Greene also provides us with the number of District Officers and Assistant District Officers in both the Northern and Southern provinces in 1930, pinning those at 200 and 180 respectively.[[122]](#footnote-122) Those numbers alone don’t tell us much, but coupled with population estimates they do give us a solid basis for comparison. Intriguingly, the Southern States seem to have done a slightly better job of at least increasing the number of British officials in their region. The implications are slightly unclear, though: does this mean the British felt they simply needed more officials in the Southern states to control the populace given the extent of successful indirect rule in the North and more prevalent resistance in the South, or did the increase in officials genuinely afford the Southern states more access to state power? The answer is unclear from the literature.

Later data is more obvious in its interpretation. Kirk-Greene also provides us with 1955 and 1960 numbers for the non-overlapping Northern, Eastern and Western regions specifically.[[123]](#footnote-123) . The Southern regions was split up in 1954, and these three regions provide us with approximate measures for the Hausa-Fulani (North), Igbo (East) and Yoruba (West) ethnic groups respectively, with the three groups comprising 50.6%, 70.8% and 61% of the population in each of their respective territories, according to the 1953 census.[[124]](#footnote-124)

**Table:** British officials in Nigeria.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Northern Nigeria** | |
|  | **1955** | **1960** |
| Senior residents | 9 | 14 |
| Residents | 12 | 20 |
| Senior Dos | 28 | 37 |
| Dos/ADOs | 174 | 152 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Eastern Nigeria** | |
|  | **1955** | **1960** |
| Senior residents | - | - |
| Residents | 7 | 21 |
| Senior Dos | 14 | 22 |
| Dos/ADOs | 128 | 119 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Western Nigeria** | |
|  | **1955** | **1960** |
| Senior residents | 4 | 11 |
| Residents | 8 | 11 |
| Senior Dos | 19 | 33 |
| Dos/ADOs | 103 | 107 |

**Source:** Kirk-Greene, “The thin white line”, 34-36.

As regionalization was implemented, it’s clear that the two Eastern and Western states were suddenly much more well-endowed in terms of colonial officers than the Northern region. This stark difference suggests that the Southern states actually succeeded in gaining more access to British officials than the Northern states did, as resistance to colonial rule declined over time, despite the supposedly more friendly relations between the British and the former Sokoto Caliphate.

Yet another measure of access to power would be the percentage of indigenous employees in the regional civil service. Starting in 1948, the authorities attempted to increase the share of Nigerians in the civil service as they sought to develop the country into more of an independent state.[[125]](#footnote-125) This *Nigerianisation* was highly successful in the Southern states. The Western regional government progressed from 54% Nigerian employees in the “higher grade posts” of its civil service in 1955, to 79.1% in 1959 on the eve of independence.[[126]](#footnote-126)

A common explanation for Northern Nigeria’s lack of representation within its own administrative system is a lack of education, backed up by Ewout Frankema’s conclusion that Christian missionaries in the South provided more consistent education than did Islamic schools in the North, or at least the type of education more suited to rule fitting the now-established British institutions.[[127]](#footnote-127) Mustapha expands this explanation, noting that only 9% of primary school age children were enrolled in the North versus 80% in the south. This appears to be a powerful explanation of subsequent inequality of the Northern and Southern states.[[128]](#footnote-128)

**Table:** Secondary school output in Northern and Southern Nigeria, 1912-1965

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Northern Nigeria** | | **Southern Nigeria** | |
| **Year** | **No. of schools** | **No. of pupils** | **No. of schools** | **No. of pupils** |
| 1912 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 67 |
| 1926 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 518 |
| 1937 | 1 | 65 | 26 | 4,285 |
| 1947 | 3 | 251 | 43 | 9,657 |
| 1957 | 18 | 3,643 | 176 | 28,208 |
| 1965 | 77 | 15,276 | 1,305 | 180,907 |

**Source:** Mustapha, “Ethnic structure, inequality and governance”, 8.

A similar explanation can be given based on Northern Nigeria’s willingness to ally with the British state in exchange for consistent independence in domestic rule. This independence also included stark segregation from the Southern states. While that guaranteed independent rule and strong so-called Native Administrations, in contrast with the South, it also meant that paradoxically, much of the regional administration of the Northern states was left to the British.[[129]](#footnote-129)

This same impulse was reflected in government reforms in 1923, when the British allowed Calabar and Lagos in the Southern region some form of elected representation, and appointed representation elsewhere in the South for a comprehensive Legislative Council. And yet the former Sokoto Caliphate was not given any representation and was instead left to legislate itself via the Native Administrations. In fact, any efforts to introduce education more suited to British institutions in the Northern states were simultaneously stifled, given strong local preference for traditional Islamic education.[[130]](#footnote-130)

The above would suggest a Northern population strong in its ability to exercise power within its own borders, but hamstrung in its ability to accrue power on a national level. In some ways, this fits the Hausa-Fulani history of consociationalism, where power-sharing was a historical mode of governance for them, and they felt few problems sharing that power with the British. That seems to have left them ill-prepared for the ensuing power struggle as the British retracted from the Nigerian colony, however.

However, such a conclusion may be slightly too hasty. While it’s true that the Hausa-Fulani were underrepresented among their own administration, they did manage to wrangle fairly equitable representation in the eventual federal political system. The 1951 constitution saw the Northern states receiving 68 seats in the House of Representatives, while the Western and Eastern region received 34 each.[[131]](#footnote-131) A neat 50/25/25 split that still favored the Southern states in terms of proportional representation by population, but was not nearly as lopsided as the earlier distribution of colonial officers suggested, and it gave the Northern region the effective ability to veto any national policy it did not like.

Given the Northern acquiescence to British rule, it should be no surprise that the primary political and violent resistance to British rule came from the Southern region, and specifically Yoruba-dominated Lagos. There the National Council of Nigerian Citizens agitated for national self-control, a movement that had started under different names in the 1930s.[[132]](#footnote-132) While this political movement remained mostly non-violent, the same was not true for the Igbo in the East. While low-level resistance to British rule was common in Igboland, one incident is particularly well-remembered. The heft of direct taxation on the local populace had long been a complaint for the local populace, and when the palm oil market collapsed in 1929 in the wake of the Great Depression, the economic tensions led to a violent riot in the Igbo-dominated palm belt – one struck down with significant violence by British forces, who killed 53 locals in Calabar alone according to official tallies, so actual casualties may have been even higher. Intriguingly, the reaction to that suppression was typical of Igbo internal power-sharing arrangements: as news spread, each village voted on whether or not to participate in riots, leading to decentralized “Women’s Riots,” which primarily targeted Native Courts. This eventually led to the de facto end of the Native Courts system and decoupled local Igbo politics from the British state and, in effect, Nigeria as a whole.[[133]](#footnote-133) Clearly, the Igbo were not prepared to share their own power.

## Economic development

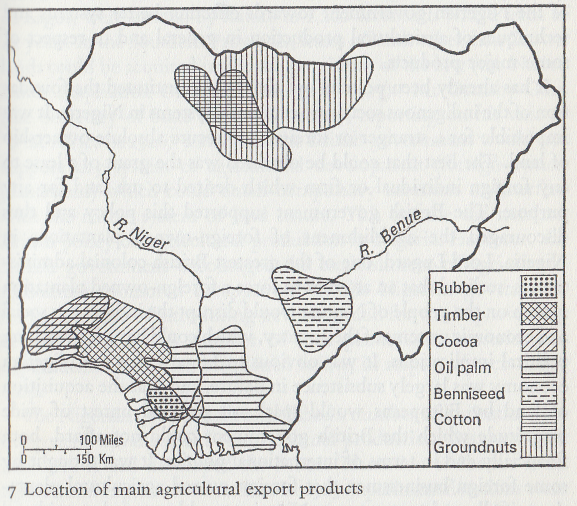
The story of economic development in Nigeria, at least until the discovery and monetization of crude oil, is agriculture. R. Olufemi Ekundare rightly notes that “the true significance of the economic history of Nigeria during the period between 1900 and 1945 lies in the growth of the cash economy which had its foundation in the development of agricultural export products.” As late as 1957, 58% of Nigerian gross domestic product consisted of agriculture.[[134]](#footnote-134)

The development of cash crops as well as the transition of food crops to cash crops complicates the comparative economic analysis due to a tendency of British domination in the Nigerian economy. Because British traders had an effective monopoly on export out of Nigeria, they could effectively set local prices for cash crops. J.G. Nkem-Onyekpe convincingly argues that the realities of this relationship were both theoretically and practically exploitative, leading to impoverishment, at least in the West Niger Igbo area, which was dominated by yam and later rubber production.[[135]](#footnote-135) While the British appear to have been consistent in attempting to extract as much of the local surplus as they could, they weren’t always successful. Attempts to introduce cotton in Western Nigeria were only successful to the extent that they could provide sufficient incentives for local farmers to produce cotton.[[136]](#footnote-136)

This development led to the increasing pre-eminence of trade as a driver of the Nigerian economy. That trade was administered by the British, as they meticulously recorded the volumes of key products taxed as they were exported out of Nigeria. This taxation gives us an approximate estimate of the economic status of each ethnic group, and over time can provide a picture of the economic development of each group under British rule. Of course, there are many influences on economic development and this analysis cannot be a comprehensive and detailed overview of the economic factor at work among each ethnic group – that would go beyond the scope of this thesis. But it should suffice for the purpose of examining to what extent the ethnic groups managed to co-opt the British superstructure for both their own and mutual economic development.

By enumerating these exports using the African Blue Books, the annual British economic reports for the Nigerian colonies, we can approximate the value of exports for the North and the South by looking at the value of the exports of specifically Northern and Southern products. Based on Ekundare’s work, we can say that cocoa, products from the palm tree, rubber and timber were largely Southern products, while cotton, ground nuts and tin were mostly Northern Products.[[137]](#footnote-137) Using the yearly exports between 1914 and 1938, the years for which the African Blue Books provide full data for those products, we can see that the South was a significantly stronger exporter overall than the North. The North managed to export just £85,856,141 to the South’s £186,848,521.[[138]](#footnote-138)

**Map:** Agricultural production in Nigeria



**Source:** Ekundare, *Economic history of Nigeria,*157*.*

Of course, by excluding certain products that do not neatly match up with the North/South distinction we may be excluding large parts of actual exports which could skew the data. However, the sum of these Northern exports never falls below 78% of total value of exports recorded by the British, and the average per-year proportion of the value of selected products of the total exports is 91%, thus giving us a very good representation of the economy as a whole.[[139]](#footnote-139) While this data should not be taken as a detailed examination of the state of the Nigerian economy across the recorded period, it is unlikely to present a completely skewed picture.

**Graphic:** Nigerian exports by region, 1914-1938

**Source:** African Blue Books. Cocoa, products from the palm tree, rubber and timber for the South. Cotton, ground nuts and tin for the North.

While the data does clearly show that the South was a far more productive exporter than the North, the gap closes over time and there’s an upward trend in the North’s exports as a percentage of the South’s. The large swings in value complicate the picture, but are largely a result of swings in the British pound rather than in actual changes in rate of production of physical goods – the post-war crisis of 1920 and the start of the Great Depression in 1929 are clearly visible, affecting the South’s exports especially harshly. There is no clear trend in these economic developments. Both the North and the South seem to benefit from the increased access to foreign markets, in the sense that their exports increased throughout the period. The difference between the two areas does decrease significantly toward the end of the period, but this is driven primarily by a decrease in exports on the Southern side. That, in turn, was largely driven by the Great Depression and a precipitous drop in prices for palm products: Nigeria went from exporting £8,179,970 worth of palm products in 1929 to exporting £3,685,349 in 1931. Meanwhile, volume exported barely changed. 251,477 tons of palm kernels in 1929 actually increased to 254,454 tons in 1931. Palm oil went from 131,845 tons to 118,179 tons – a very modest drop. Those prices wouldn’t recover for at least the rest of the decade.[[140]](#footnote-140)

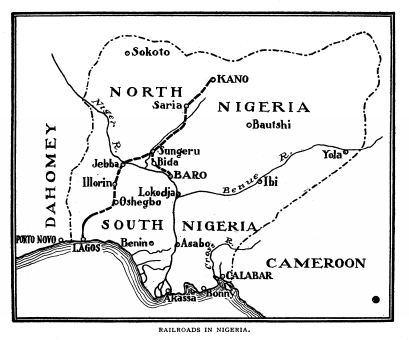
**Graphic: Exports in Nigeria, 1914-1938**

**Source:** African Blue Books

That the precipitous drop at the end of the 1930s is almost entirely linked to palm products is no coincidence: those products regularly consisted of 60% of total export value for the 1910s and early 1920s, but both their share and their absolute value started to slowly decline starting in 1924. Those palm products were almost exclusively produced in Igbo territory, and were furthermore one of the very few Igbo products that were consistently exported, along with coal, and coal’s value came nowhere near to making up for that drop in value. While the Igbo had dominated the trade balance in the early decades of the united Nigerian colony, they were losing ground swiftly toward the end of the 1930s, largely as a result of global market conditions.

Overall, there is no sense of proportionality to these trades among different ethnic groups. While they each had their own advantages in trade, and the difference narrowed as the Hausa-Fulani managed to unlock better access to crucial oceanic ports, the South dominated by geographical coincidence, and the Igbo dominated because of their presence in the lower Niger delta, where the palm trees were primarily cultivated. There was also no evidence of violent conflict over these resources to be found in either the sources or the literature. The ethnic groups did not all like their oppressors, nor their neighbors, but the British state did appear to limit ethnic violence over resources, in spite of their consistent encouragement of capitalism and the inherent competition of that mode of production. However, most of this economic development points to a decidedly consociationalist form of economic development: each region was administered relatively autonomously, with little conflict over resources, and cooperation with the British Empire in producing and exporting resources.

**Map:** The first planned Nigerian railroad, 1907.



**Source:** “A railroad through Nigeria” [[141]](#footnote-141)

One final aspect that may give us some insight into how the various Nigerian groups managed to co-opt British rule economically is to look at the British investment in infrastructure. Above, the image shows the first planned railroad in Nigeria, running from the beating heart of the Sokoto Caliphate’s economy at Kano, all the way to Lagos on the coast. The construction of the railroad would cost the Nigerian government a total of £23,492,890 through 1938, financed via British loans.[[142]](#footnote-142) While these railroads necessarily went through Southern territory, they were primarily intended to unlock Northern markets for trade via the Atlantic Ocean. In fact, two of the three inter-bellum railway constructions took place in the far north of the former Sokoto Caliphate, with the third being a short extension of a line to improve port access for Lagos.[[143]](#footnote-143) Similarly, while the construction of local roads was extensive in the South, those were financed nearly exclusively by local authorities, and thus do not represent a capture of British resources.[[144]](#footnote-144) That is not to say that the colonizers did not take an interest in local infrastructure. Indeed, the British tried to strongly support and enforce the building of local infrastructure, albeit not with actual capital. They simply used local institutions to do so. This encouragement was not consistent, and only occurred when it fit the British view and monopoly of transport, primarily over rail. When the road system and automobiles became widespread enough to present some competition for the railroads in Nigeria over short distances, the British crown acted to suppress the use of automobiles for inter-regional trade by raising duties wherever road transport was threatening to reduce railroad use or profits – all located in the South, incidentally. Despite the increase in fees in 1933 and once again in 1937, the expansion of road transport at the cost of the railway continued unabated.[[145]](#footnote-145) This development apparently baffled the general manager of the Nigerian railway, who noted that “there seems to be something amiss with the economics of the matter.” [[146]](#footnote-146) Economically, the local population had successfully resisted British efforts and assumed a degree of autonomy in this limited field, even though politically they had been unable to stop the increase of duties.

In fact, the development of infrastructure aimed at unlocking the Atlantic market for the Northern region may help explain that region’s increasing economic profitability over time, especially relative to the Southern region. That economic development would largely be due to the Northern region’s ability to co-opt the British state’s investment for its own economic development. This development fits more with a cooperative than a competitive model, however, and economically brought the two regions closer together rather than further apart. There’s no evidence that the Southern regions attempted to block this railway expansion in the North, and indeed they themselves bypassed railway development of their own choosing in emphasizing local road transport of products.

Unfortunately, this approach leaves us with relatively few ways to distinguish the Yoruba and Igbo from the Southern region in general. Intriguingly, the Yoruba region seems to have become significantly more urbanized than the Igbo region, with the 1952 census reporting 14% of the Eastern, primarily Igbo population as urban, while 47% of the Western, primarily Yoruba region was recorded as urban. Urban centers were defined by “a population of 5,000 or more in a compact group”. [[147]](#footnote-147) Whether or not the increased urbanization is actually coupled with different economic outcomes is hard to say, but it certainly suggests a difference in the economic structure of Yoruba and Igbo communities at the time, an aspect that warrants further research.

## Transforming labor structure

One long-standing British effort involved the elimination of slavery, or at least de jure slavery, in West Africa. As was the case in the political development of the Nigerian state, the Sokoto Caliphate was quick to partner with the British colonizer, in this case facilitating the switch from slave to wage labor. While this switch was far from immediate and involved a transition featuring compensation paid by former slaves to their former owners, this still represented a fundamental switch in the economic realities of the Northern Nigerian region.[[148]](#footnote-148) This development cannot be seen as separate from the colonial machinations of the British Empire. Frederick Lugard said in 1923 that one of his main aims was to establish a system of wage labor “for no country in the world can do without casual paid labour”.[[149]](#footnote-149)

This was naturally coupled with the death of slavery, albeit a slow death – not coincidentally the title of Paul Lovejoy and Jan Hogendorn’s seminal work on slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate. They estimate that in 1900, the Caliphate contained as many as 2.5 million slaves on a total population of around 10 million. And yet, only 102,750 of those slaves were recorded at the various courts to gain their freedom. While those records are incomplete, they are not likely to have missed over 95% of all manumissions. Instead, most simply abandoned their masters or obtained their freedom by going through missionaries.[[150]](#footnote-150) This does not mean that forced labor disappeared, nor that there was no economic inequality. In fact, moving away from slavery was designed to create a consistent supply of cheap labor, and led to repeated famines and loss of capital among the majority of the Northern population: small farmers.[[151]](#footnote-151) And yet, this served the purposes of both the local Hausa-Fulani elite, who benefited from the cheap labor and their access to capital, as well as the British, who managed to use the newly developed class of cheap wage laborers for Lugard’s objective of development of resources.[[152]](#footnote-152) This elite co-operation fits perfectly the established consociational model in Northern Nigeria: while these economic developments did not necessarily benefit Sokoto society as a whole, they certainly benefited the Northern elites, at least in the short term, elite cooperation being one of the key marks of a consociationalist approach to governance. It seems that, given the political developments as well, the Northern state was perfectly content sharing its power with the British and, at the federal level, with the Southern states, as long as it had a decent amount of autonomy in ruling its own people.

## Conclusion

Once the British Empire had imposed its political and economic control of the Nigerian territories, power-sharing quickly became the norm for the local populace. The ethnic groups largely ceased competing with each other and within each other, as conflict either violent or otherwise is largely absent from the literature and sources at hand. What competition remained consisted of attempting to gain access to power, trade and resources through British institutions, at times co-opting and subverting those institutions as with the Southern development of road transport. But these developments were seemingly not aimed at gaining control over other ethnic groups nor were groups intent on imposing their own domination. Instead, the inter-ethnic model was consociationalist: each ethnic group was largely autonomous and self-governing,

The creation of the Nigerian state and increase of real British influence seems to have had somewhat disparate effects in the South and the North. While the Northern elites were more than happy to share their power with the British and the other ethnic groups in a federal system with a significant autonomy, the Igbo and Yoruba found accommodation of their colonial situation less pleasing and attempted to resist rule a little more. This historical development fits what we’ve seen in previous chapters, where the consociational model was best-applied by the more hierarchical Sokoto Caliphate, whereas the Oyo Empire and other Yoruba states were constantly embroiled in violent conflict, never content to enter a cooperative system with the British Empire. The Igbo history of resistance to colonial power and their consistent striving for power and autonomy led to a more confrontational system. Even so, both the Yoruba and Igbo did not enter into inter-ethnic violence under British rule, aiming their confrontational modes at the colonizer. In that sense, we can view the system as a whole as a fully consociationalist one, imposed by the British state and facilitated by the British presence as a common antagonist, if not enemy.

# Chapter 5: Conclusion

At the start of this thesis, I asked whether there was a sense of continuity in the history of Nigerian ethnic economic and political development, as viewed through the lens of theories of consociationalism and hegemonic control. Could we speak of a consistent drive to dominate other ethnic groups within the area that would later be Nigeria, or was there a peaceful co-existence and co-rule? And can we speak of that continuity as a predictor of the Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani and Igbo tendencies towards accommodation of a cooperative or adversarial system? Now that we’ve come to the end, it seems that the answer is clear: we cannot speak of ethnicity-bound continuity in terms of implementation of power-sharing modes of governance, or economic competition.

In chapter two, I discussed the Yoruba and Igbo and the absence of either consociational or hegemonic structures in their approaches to governance. The lack of a coherent, unified government for each ethnic group made such arrangements more difficult, but even in the intra-ethnic institutions the groups used to govern relations, power-sharing was not a through-line. The Igbo came closest to creating cooperative institutions, while the Yoruba were more competitive, a fact expressed in frequent violent, intra- and inter-ethnic conflict. Contrast the Hausa and Fulani, who had developed a consociational approach to governance in the North, both prior to and during the Sokoto Caliphate. Their violence was largely inter-ethnic and limited to the slave trade on the borders of their empire, especially with the Yoruba. Of the three, the Hausa-Fulani were more willing to share power amongst themselves, and were better-equipped to apply these principles thanks to a governing super-structure prior to the imposition of British colonial rule.

Even when such a super-structure was starting to be imposed by the British, though, neither the Yoruba nor Igbo managed to develop consistent power-sharing relations. While the British attempted to co-opt existing institutions as they increased their presence and influence in Nigeria, these institutions in practice turned out to be little more than corruptions of local ones, based on misunderstandings and willful abuse. As shown in chapter three, the period of transition to colonial rule saw heavy resistance to these structures, and hegemonic co-optation of these British-imposed structures, especially among the Igbo. The Yoruba did develop a more cooperative state, as the British attempted to eliminate intra- and inter-ethnic (violent) conflict in the region, which would harm their economic interests. The Hausa-Fulani, meanwhile, were largely left to their own devices, perpetuating the existing power-sharing relations and imposing a new British super-structure, one which the Northern powers did not heavily resist. Indeed, the Hausa-Fulani would use that super-structure to enforce their own independence from the Yoruba and Igbo in later years.

As the British super-structure was consolidated, the Hausa-Fulani situation did not change, and we start to see evidence of the development of power-sharing relations among all three groups, though never entirely without conflict in the South. Chapter four showed that as colonial rule progressed, the Igbo and Yoruba and the South in general became more and more embedded in the British system, moving towards an ever-increasing degree of power-sharing on an economic and political level. The South increased its trade revenues as the North declined, with political offices increasingly co-opted by the South, though never to the exclusion of the increasingly insular North. On the other hand, the North still managed to reap direct benefits of British rule: investment in infrastructure occurred primarily in the North for most of the colonial period, and Southern transport systems actively resisted British structures.

Prior to independence, then, there is no strong evidence of a continuous application of power-sharing arrangements for each ethnic group. While the Igbo went from a relatively cooperative collective to a confrontational one and the Yoruba did the opposite under the influence of British rule, the Northern elites applied cooperative power-sharing and maintained their autonomy as much as possible throughout the three periods. As only one group remained consistent in its application of power-sharing strategies through three periods, experience with internal power-sharing arrangements seems not to have affected groups’ willingness to engage in cross-ethnic power-sharing prior to Nigerian independence in 1960. Instead, cooperative modes of governance seem to rely on the presence of a super-structure to impose peaceful co-existence, be it in the form of the Sokoto Caliphate, the Igbo pre-colonial village communities, or the post-independence Nigerian state. Rather than seeking a continuity in cultural practices, political institutions, whether imposed from within or without, seem to be the key factor.

Evidence for that thesis can be found in the literature. The existence of power-sharing as a continuous presence in post- independence of Nigeria is disputed, with Nkwachukwu Orji arguing convincingly that as an independent and coherent nation, Nigeria has consistently striven for and largely managed to create a cooperative system, even when it’s undermined by violent action and regime change. According to Orji, the “convergence of interests of the dominant elite groups in favor of power-sharing” and the “pacification of the marginal groups in the course [sic] elite struggle for power” created the necessary preconditions for a continuous, cooperative system of power in Nigeria. Path-dependence is the critical analytical concept in Orji’s thesis.[[153]](#footnote-153) Contrast that with Osadolor who suggests that Nigeria’s federalist state promotes a hegemonic politics, fueled by fear of domination by other groups. Rather than a consociational approach by Nigerian elites, Osadolor sees a competitive, “winner takes all” approach.[[154]](#footnote-154) Perhaps the historical record would point to Osadolor as the victor in this dispute, given the country’s history “which includes a three-year civil strife, the collapse of three republics and six successful military coups [..] coupled with frequent religious conflict and other forms of ethnic schism,” as Njoku writes.[[155]](#footnote-155) But while those violent events certainly point to discontinuity on a surface level, the structural balance of power and the administration of the country has not fundamentally changed since independence, only the governing names have. As I did for pre-independence Nigeria, Orji points to the distribution of territory, fiscal revenues and political office as continuous factors in Nigeria.[[156]](#footnote-156)

Aside from political institutions, there are other possible explanations for power-sharing turned as a consistent factor in Nigerian politics despite a mixed history prior to independence. Economic factors appear to be a possible factor. In many ways, the isolation of the Sokoto Caliphate and later Northern rulers hampered them significantly in terms of economic and social development when they became a part of Nigeria. Daniel Berger showed that the British acquiescence to local rule in the North and their alterations of local rule in the South produced different economic and governance outcomes in border regions – to the detriment of the North. Indeed, they suggest that the direct and relatively high taxation in the South actually led to the development of institutions better suited to independent rule.[[157]](#footnote-157) Perhaps the economic benefits enjoyed by the Southern groups explain why they, too, acquiesced to power-sharing arrangements despite having little history of consociationalism. Bolanle Awe’s research points in a similar direction, emphasizing the benefits enjoyed by political elites and the distance between those elites and the commons as a source of dysfunction.[[158]](#footnote-158) Addressing such claims would go beyond the scope of this thesis, but further research into the continuity of power-sharing between pre- and post-independence Nigeria would be productively focused on economic incentives for power-sharing arrangements as well as the forceful imposition of political superstructures.

Orji’s conclusion that power-sharing has been a continuous factor in Nigerian politics over the past half-century underscores my own in a peculiar way: that experience with power-sharing arrangements has very little influence on a given ethnic group’s inclination to engage in such arrangements at later dates. The Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani all objected to and participated in power-sharing arrangements at various points in their history, and yet all of them have been a part of a power-sharing arrangement since Nigerian independence. The evidence suggests that power-sharing can be implemented regardless of cultural inclinations, historical divisions and rivalries, as that is exactly what has happened in Nigeria.

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# Appendix I – Exports from Nigeria

These numbers come from the British documents known as the African Blue Books, specifically those regarding Nigeria from 1914 through 1938. These Blue Books were intended to give the British government an overview of the economic expenditures and production in their colonies.

Table 1 – Total exports of Southern Nigerian products

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **South** | 1914 | 1915 | 1916 | 1917 | 1918 | 1919 |
| Cocoa | £171,751 | £313,946 | £393,101 | £499,004 | £235,870 | £1,067,675 |
| Palm products | £4,114,530 | £3,160,343 | £3,145,956 | £4,468,297 | £5,936,510 | £9,333,133 |
| Rubber | £38,854 | £38,113 | £34,192 | £32,350 | £19,667 | £43,903 |
| Coal |  |  |  | £22 | £13,970 | £8,141 |
| Wood and timber | £86,522 | £54,559 | £49,812 | £21,475 | £186 | £206 |
| Total | £4,411,657 | £3,566,961 | £3,623,061 | £5,021,148 | £6,206,203 | £10,453,058 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1920 | 1921 | 1922 | 1923 | 1924 | 1925 |
| £1,237,538 | £435,860 | £870,528 | £922,298 | £980,403 | £1,483,764 |
| £10,598,967 | £4,508,007 | £5,490,923 | £6,725,135 | £8,409,330 | £9,105,790 |
| £57,044 | £10,284 | £14,377 | £21,221 | £52,437 | £108,234 |
| £11,715 | £104,452 | 1035 | £15,989 | £44,173 | £337,628 |
| £141,485 | £119,254 | £175,048 | £201,706 | £376,151 | £212,626 |
| £12,046,749 | £5,177,857 | £6,551,911 | £7,886,349 | £9,862,494 | £11,248,042 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1926 | 1927 | 1928 | 1929 | 1930 | 1931 |
| £1,363,916 | £1,998,679 | £2,420,685 | £2,305,836 | £1,756,400 | £1,093,254 |
| £8,067,687 | £7,822,335 | £8,179,970 | £8,039,075 | £6,941,874 | £3,685,349 |
| £203,143 | £256,020 | £255,771 | £183,684 | £150,326 | £71,319 |
| £25,567 | £4,609 | £48,116 | £44,829 | £49,103 | £25,999 |
| £218,960 | £300,910 | £335,442 | £295,269 | £195,330 | £128,175 |
| £9,879,273 | £10,382,553 | £11,239,984 | £10,868,693 | £9,093,033 | £5,004,096 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1932 | 1933 | 1934 | 1935 | 1936 | 1937 | 1938 |
| £1,461,451 | £1,143,627 | £1,280,436 | £1,583,827 | £1,997,418 | £3,657,367 | £1,566,684 |
| £4,483,584 | £4,085,833 | £2,483,038 | £3,907,001 | £5,721,568 | £6,026,401 | £3,157,586 |
| £31,362 | £33,089 | £44,488 | £61,572 | £90,137 | £126,055 | £135,797 |
| £25,551 | £25,144 | £40,323 | £33,192 | £42,678 | £44,982 | £45,849 |
| £106,715 | £103,140 | £183,132 | £157,044 | £133,744 | £199,167 | £106,417 |
| £6,108,663 | £5,390,833 | £4,031,417 | £5,742,636 | £7,985,545 | £10,053,972 | £5,012,333 |

Table 2 – Total exports of Northern Nigerian products

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **North** | 1914 | 1915 | 1916 | 1917 | 1918 | 1919 |
| Cotton | £163,709 | £61,364 | £246,475 | £273,138 | £112,811 | £484,749 |
| Ground nuts | £179,219 | £72,177 | £473,653 | £710,308 | £920,137 | £698,702 |
| Tin | £706,988 | £723,480 | £859,603 | £1,485,387 | £1,770,003 | £1,324,074 |
| Total | £1,049,916 | £857,021 | £1,579,731 | £2,468,833 | £2,802,951 | £2,507,525 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1920 | 1921 | 1922 | 1923 | 1924 | 1925 |
| £772,327 | £412,535 | £281,515 | £407,879 | £764,883 | £836,717 |
| £1,119,688 | £1,111,822 | £480,998 | £403,089 | £1,461,448 | £2,934,257 |
| £1,785,724 | £914,790 | £932,488 | £1,190,313 | £1,548,040 | £1,737,578 |
| £3,677,739 | £2,439,147 | £1,695,001 | £2,001,281 | £3,774,371 | £5,508,552 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1926 | 1927 | 1928 | 1929 | 1930 | 1931 |
| £1,244,792 | £362,225 | £367,073 | £668,737 | £832,369 | £170,256 |
| £2,342,739 | £1,629,542 | £1,848,514 | £2,465,713 | £2,195,756 | £1,510,691 |
| £2,217,046 | £2,287,327 | £2,209,545 | £2,298,745 | £1,373,406 | £906,165 |
| £5,804,577 | £4,279,094 | £4,425,132 | £5,433,195 | £4,401,531 | £2,587,112 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1932 | 1933 | 1934 | 1935 | 1936 | 1937 | 1938 |
| £53,068 | £223,728 | £312,411 | £635,672 | £644,468 | £535,216 | £271,713 |
| £1,873,831 | £2,064,369 | £1,860,267 | £2,092,590 | £2,847,414 | £4,057,893 | £1,305,828 |
| £579,504 | £658,598 | £1,243,722 | £1,456,752 | £1,783,056 | £2,628,175 | £1,435,157 |
| £2,506,403 | £2,946,695 | £3,416,400 | £4,185,014 | £5,274,938 | £7,221,284 | £3,012,698 |

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