MINORITY POLITICS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE OF THE TIV AND THE IDOMA, 1950 - 1965

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A T H E S I S

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PREFACE

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My thanks also go to the authorities of the Ahmadu Bello University for making available to me facilities and funds with which to conduct this research.

The conclusions reached in this work are entirely my own responsibility. However, if this attempt at offering systematic explanation of the behaviour of the two groups studied have any value at all then it is largely as a result of the inspiration and encouragement from my friend and teacher Dr. John D. Collins, Dr. Joram R. Barongo and my research adviser, Professor James O'Connell. Each of these men showed an interest in my work that went beyond the call of duty.

Samaru,
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Eineje E. Onobu.

INTRODUCTION

Beginning about 1951 with the introduction of modern politics in the form of elective representation in the newly established Federal and Regional Legislatures, individuals as well as groups began to organise themselves so that they would be able to cope with the new political situation. The development of what was later to be known as the "minority issue" started about this time but did not blossom until the middle and late 1950s and early 1960s. Before going on to a discussion of minority political behaviour in Northern Nigeria between 1950 and 1965, I would first of all very briefly like to place minority groups demands and agitations in their proper historical context in the transition from a unitary structured Nigeria into a federal structured country concretised in the shape of the three former Regions of the East, West and North. For years before Independence, especially in the twilight of British imperial rule in Nigeria, the creation of new regions to accommodate "minority peoples" who found themselves completely dominated numerically by one group in existing Regions was the main issue in domestic politics

affecting all the three Regions. In a very basic and fundamental sense, the agitation for new regions was about the right to ethnic self-determination in a country of several national groups of varying sizes who had been brought together in one political entity without 'safeguards'. Initially attention was hardly given to the minority issue. At that time the political and also human problems of adjustment resulting from the throwing together of several groups in one political unit was conceived only in terms of conciliating and mediating the major ethnic groups in the country. And this took added emphasis as the colonial umpire prepared to depart and turn over political and administrative powers to Nigerians. All constitutions beginning from Richard's in 1947 to the Independence Constitution in 1960 as well as all constitutional conferences from Ibadan in 1950, the first real get-together of Northern and Southern politicians, to the London Resumed Conference of 1958 were in fact no more than attempts to discover institutional and political arrangements that would give each of the major ethnic groups in the country

"safeguard" from one another. The process began with the formal creation of the new Regions in 1947, after which the Independence movement began to degenerate into ethnically and hence regionally based movements with the aim of securing political 'independence' for each ethnic group from the other. Thus, by the time national Independence was achieved, the major ethnic groups had worked out arrangements between themselves which guaranteed each one of them a secure regional power base. The country was split into three unequal Regions in which the Northern Region was bigger both in size and in population than the Eastern and Western Regions combined. These physical and especially numerical incongruities were to become crucial political factors as each of the major communal groups made a bid to control the centre. The study of the struggle to control the centre, much as I would like to treat it, is outside the scope of this inquiry. My concern here is to examine what a particular majority group did vis-a-vis minority groups in a region where it was in power.

As already pointed out, in each of the three Regions a particular ethnic group or related groups was numerically superior and hence politically dominant. In Northern Nigeria the relatively unified Hausa/Fulani/Kanuri groups constituted this dominant group. The political system of the Region was made up of two broad yet distinct cultural and geo-political groups. According to the Report of the Willink Minorities Commission published in 1958 (West Africa, September 13, 1958, p. 867) there was a "majority group which in the main supports one party, which has a tribal basis and which may be thought of in contrast to a number of minor ethnic groups". On the basis of the 1952 census figures, the Commission's Report noted that of the Region's 16 millions people, about 8 millions were Hausa and Fulani, 1,175,000 Kanuri and 350,000 Nupe. These four groups at different times ruled over wide areas and could be joined together as the ruling peoples. But the Report went on to say that in Northern Nigeria Islam had to some extent blurred the sharp edge of ethnic differences and that the Islamic way of life was a more important factor than ethnic affiliation. The Census of 1952 recorded 11,300,000 Muslims, 550,000 Christians and a further

4,250,000 categorised as "Animists" in Northern Nigeria.

Northerners who were neither Muslims nor members of the four "ruling" peoples belonged to a plethora of ethnic groups among whom the most numerically sizeable (1952 census) were the Tiv (750,000), the Birom (100,000), Angas (80,000) and the Idoma (200,000). These peoples occupied nearly 40% of Northern Nigeria, mostly in the hills of the Plateau and the region of the Benue-Niger trough - a zone loosely known as the "Middle Belt". Most of these groups had not been vanquished in the jihad crusade of the previous century and therefore they had remained only on the periphery of the Hausa-Fulani states and Hausa-Fulani influence.

Among the numerous ethnic groups in this area the Tiv and the Idoma appear to me for a variety of reasons as natural choices for comparison in the study of minority political behaviour in Northern Nigeria between 1950 and 1965. Tivland and Idomaland adjoin, forming one continuous territory. Its rainfall, temperature, quality of soil and its relative accessibility to transportation routes all help to give

this middle belt country a certain ecological unity. Other unifying features of the area are its small agricultural villages which are made up of endogamous patrilineal descent groups. The area is further set apart from the Hausa-Fulani cultural centre by its adherence to either the Christian faith or the traditional African religion or to both. In spite of the substantial common ecological and cultural characteristics shared by the Idoma and the Tiv, the two groups manifested divergent patterns of participation in the political system of Northern Nigeria. It is this divergence of political behaviour between groups which appear in several respects very much alike that stimulated his comparative investigation of the Tiv and the Idoma which is aimed at discovering the forces conditioning the relations of each of them with the politically dominant Hausa-Fulani ethnic group.

The period under study, 1950 to 1965, was a historical and political era which in Northern Nigeria witnessed the formation of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) as well as the opposing United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) and came to an inglorious end with the overthrow of the civilian regime in January

1966. It is possible and also useful to divide, for ease of analysis, this period into three phases in the development of political awareness, articulation and mobilization within these two minority groups and the majority Hausa-Fulani group. The first period may be seen to end about 1954. For the Idoma and the Tiv, ethnic improvement unions such as the Idoma Hope Rising Union (IHRU) and the Tiv Progressive Union (TPU) formed in the 1940s flowered to promote the social, cultural and political development of the respective groups. As it had been during most of the colonial period, there was only very little inter-group interaction, hence there was only minimal inter-group friction. Each group more or less related directly with the colonial authority. The second phase spanned roughly 1955-1959. The colonial umbrella was gradually removing itself from the scene in preparation for its eventual departure while the indigenous administration in Kaduna began to take over control everywhere from the British. By embarking on and supervising a complex and vast array of social change taking place in a modernising direction this indigenous administration became faced with

the question of evolving acceptable relationships between the centre and the periphery and between the various communal groups and one another. These new relationships had a tendency of generating, in varying measures, either cooperation or conflict. A manifestation of its conflict aspect was the formation of the UMBC and the agitation for a separate Region that would cater for the interests (especially economic and political) of the disadvantaged minorities of the Middle Belt. The third and final phase, 1960 to 1965, could be termed the Independence years. The attitudes of co-operation or the fears and suspicions of conflict that were engendered by the increased contacts between the dominant Hausa-Fulani group and the other ethnic groups in the Region in the last phase were now manifested by the minorities. The Tiv, in two sets of riots (1960 and 1964) expressed their rejection of the "Northern System", while the Idoma continued to accommodate themselves to that system.

While the Tiv recieved and continue to receive abundant scholarly attention their neighbours to the west, the Idoma, are apparently consigned to the

backwaters of scholarly exploration. It would appear as if there is a tacit yet unofficial moratorium on research on the group. Perhaps the "pragmatic" politics (in Nigerian political vocabulary this means that "if you cannot beat them, you join them") which they conducted up to 1965 is so uninspiring that students of politics and society generally do not find themselves attracted to research on the group. Much of what was written about the Tiv and the Idoma or for that matter any other group in this period was about participation or denial of participation in the decision-making arena in the light of political party competition in pre-1966 Northern Nigeria. To some extent the observation was valid. However, it must be realised that the problem was not just a crisis of participation (except for women there was universal adult franchise once the electoral college system was discarded) as it was a "crisis" of particular strategies of participation in the system. As such I have tried to investigate the role of communal leaders without and within their respective groups. Since relations between the various ethnic groups

were essentially more or less conducted as 'external' affairs, I came to the conclusion that one could only have a true understanding of the nature of the relations of each of these two groups with the NPC - controlled Northern political system if one saw such relations in terms of the actions (what they did or failed to do) of the recognised leaders of the groups. This perspective, of necessity, entailed the consideration of the cohesion or factionalism, division or dialectics within each group leadership. The attention given to the leadership variable as an explanatory factor for the type of ties each group exhibited with the dominant Hausa-Fulani political centre did not lead to the exclusion of a consideration of the historical and socio-cultural organisations of the Tiv and the Idoma. However, I avoided the strong temptation to engage in a sustained inquiry into them because I did not believe that they had a major influence on what happened and the way it happened. But wherever such socio-cultural factors appeared relevant to the questions posed, they were considered though mainly through the use of secondary analysis and the personal experience of the researcher.

I thought it useful and integral to the research to investigate the hypothesis that the Idoma voted for and continued to support the NPC because as a group they felt well remunerated by the Northern system which the party controlled. Staff Lists of the old Northern Regional Government provided statistics which were used to compare the staff representations of the Tiv and the Idoma in the Civil Service of the Region. I also had to employ other sources to illuminate the other aspects of the hypothesis such as the allocation and distribution of social welfare services and the representation at the decision-making level for the two areas. In terms of amenities, whichever yardstick one chose to quantify them, Idomaland did much better than Tivland in the period under examination. However, it must be said that Idoma support for NPC was something more complex than a simple case of politics of amenities just as Tiv rejection of the party was never merely because the group was denied amenities though it came to be a ground for rationalizing this rejection later on.

For gathering the data for this study, I have used simultaneously two techniques of data collection and fitted them together. These were the examination of records and interviewing. Examination of records served two purposes. First, the information gathered from it provided some kind of context in preparation for the interviewing procedure and, second, such information formed part of my primary analysis. In selecting the samples to be interviewed in each of the two groups, individuals considered to have been prime movers (ethnic leaders), as well as the middle-level party functionaries have featured prominently. As far as the interviewing process itself was concerned, I should state that in some matters of detail, it was possible that some of the interviews might have contained slight inaccuracies here and there. The fact, however, remained that a genuine attempt was made to conduct them in the best tradition of the method. Where it was possible to cross-check materials, this was done.

Finally, I would like to say a word or two about pre-colonial Idoma. It was never quite safe to make glib generalisations about the socio-political

organisation of the "clans" known today as Idoma (Otukpo) Division in the same way that one could about their more homogeneous neighbours to the east, the Tiv, as a distinctly singular group. Many local variations and indeed some real differences existed both in nomenclature and in the actual operation of institutions like the "Ojila" and "Oche" from one district to another in the 22 districts of Idomaland.[1] However, this is not to deny any common basis on which the Idoma districts could be viewed as constituting one cultural group. The advice is that one should do this with caution. Actually, one could generalise to a considerable extent about

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[1] Armstrong's ethnographic studies on the Idoma treated the districts one by one. In fact, he identified six non-Idoma-speaking groups. These were Utonkon, the three Igedde-speaking districts, Akpa and Ijigbam-Ishieke, see R. Armstrong, "The Idoma-speaking peoples", in Daryll Forde (ed.), Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence, Lowe & Brydone, London, 1955.
Also see Odumu Ocheibi, Idoma Chiefdom Part I unpublished work, Otukpo, p.3. Ocheibi divides the Division into two main groups, the Idoma-speaking and the Igedde-speaking, with the Ufia-speaking group of Utonkon as the third minor group.

the fundamental framework of the socio-political structures of the entire pre-colonial Idoma. Thus in this study I have talked of a common Idoma traditional experience on the basis of ethnographic materials drawn from the three districts of Otukpo, Akpa and Ugboju.[1]

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[1] For materials on the three districts, see the following:

Otukpo

Armstrong (1955) op.cit., Armstrong (1956) "The Idoma Court of Lineages in Law and Political Structure", in Selected Papers of the 5th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Philadelphia, U.P.P., 1960.; J.I. Elaigwu, Traditional Chieftaincy and Socio-Political Change in Idoma, 1971, undergraduate Research paper, Department of Government, ABU; A. Ochai, The Historical Evolution of Otukpo - Migration and Reunification up to 1930, undergraduate Research paper, 1972, Department of History, ABU, Zaria.

Ugboju

Armstrong (1955) and Armstrong (1956) op.cit.; O.G. Amanyi, Chieftaincy Institution in a Traditional Society, 1974, Undergraduate Research paper, Department of Government, ABU, Zaria.

Akpa

Capt. R.C. Abraham - "Akwiya District": Reorganisation Report 1935," Otudiv 286, N.A.K.; O. Ogbogo, Akpa Distridt: The Politics of Amenities, 1974, Undergraduate Research paper, Department of Government, ABU, Zaria.

CHAPTER ONE

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS OF INTER-GROUP RELATIONS IN PLURAL SOCIETIES

Most accounts on African studies see the achievement of independence by the new states of Africa as a watershed in the political development of the continent. On the one hand, such accounts hold a nostalgia for the cooperation they assume existed between ethnic (communal) groups culminating in the independence movements and on the other, they regret the opening of Pandora's box of communal antagonism and conflict after independence. This picture was not wholly accurate. In some colonial territories cooperation between ethnic groups, even though they were jointly waging the "nationalist" struggle, ceased long before independence came. For instance, in Nigeria with the promulgation of the Richard's Constitution in 1947 [13 years before actual independence] creating incipient regions, the struggle for freedom became more and more a search for ways to reconcile ethno-regional hostilities and distrust before the colonial umpire departed.

thus need to be "integrated." The second idea is that there exists a direct correlation between "malintegration" (national disunity) and social and economic change. This latter idea is significant if it is realised that Africa is a region where rapid socio-economic change is under way and therefore the continent is doomed to a long period of instability.[1] The accounts assume that "integration," in whatever form it is achieved, is a good and desirable thing

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[1] The critical differences among societies in the modernization experience is said to concern the extent to which they had to deal with these problems simultaneously or sequentially, and if the latter, the order in which these problems are dealt with. On the basis of comparative analysis, Rustow suggests that the identity-authority-equality sequence leads to the most successful and least traumatic modernization. In a somewhat similar spirit and parallel endeavour, the SSRC Committee in its analysis of the "development syndrome" identified six "crises" which societies would have to deal with in the process of Political Modernization: identity, legitimacy, penetration, participation, integration and distribution. S.P. Huntington, "The Change to Change", Comparative Politics, Vol.3, No.3 April 7, 1971. See also D.A.Rustow, A World of Nations: Problems of Political Modernization (Washington, Brooklings Institution, 1967) p.36, Lucian Pye, Aspects of Political Development, (Boston, Little, Brown Coy, 1966) p.45 and pp. 62-67, E.A.Nordlinger, "Political Development: Time Sequences and Rates of Change." World Politics, XX, April 1968, pp. 494-520, and Binder et al, (contributors), Crises and Sequences in Political Development, Princeton, N.Jersey, Princeton U.P., 1971.

which should be ardently pursued and cultivated by the new states. Having stated their unmistakable preference, they proceed to identify what they consider as the greatest bottleneck to national unity. Most, if not all, of the new states of Africa are conglomerations of social and culturally disparate peoples, each sharing a "corporate sentiment of oneness"[1] quite distinct from the others. This pluralistic nature of the new states is viewed as potential, ready-made fodder for inter-communal conflict, especially when this material is subjected to the forces of social change. This certainly contains a paradox. The attempt by a state to realise rapid economic and social development helps to pitch one social or ethnic group against the other as they compete for the scarce resources of power, wealth and jobs made available in the first

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[1] B.R. Ambedkar, Thoughts on Linguistics States, quoted in "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in new States", Clifford Geertz (ed.) Old Societies and New States, (Free Press, 1963).

instance by the development process itself and with this competition vitiating the state's goal of national integration. Unlike other areas of the "developing" world, the communal discord arising out of pluralism in Africa does not hinge on religious, racial[1] or linguistic differences but on a primordial feeling of oneness variously tagged "tribalism", "ethnicity", "parochialism" and "communalism".

The ethnic conflict theories are attempts at understanding African politics in the light of the processes of social and economic and hence political change taking place and the manner in which these changes affect communal identities and structures of the new states. These approaches commonly predicate the so-called "malintegration" of the emergent states on the

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[1] Furnivall's "Pluralistic Theory" actually refers to a Colonial Society in which different cultural groups are separated from each other mainly by colour (race) but also by clan and social status. In Africa today, Rhodesia and South Africa qualify as typical Furnivallian plural societies.

See J.S. Furnivall, "Some Problems of Tropical Economy," in Rita Hinden, (ed.) Fabian Colonial Essays. Also see, Furnivall, Colonial Policy and Practice.

denominator of tribalism or "competitive ethnic modernization." Some of them assert that the basis of conflict in the new states is purely and simply their cultural pluralism and that modernization is a positive rather than a destabilizing influence on African politics.[1] Other ethnic theories hold that the competition for the rewards of modernization in each of the new states will be along ethno-linguistic parameters and that along simultaneously with other factors this competition will progressively get so intense and so destructive to integration that instability will be unavoidable.[2] The spate of military coups in Africa beginning in the mid 1960s appear to vindicate this theory; prompting some writers to go as far as saying that African political life is an

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[1] For this view see D.G. Morrison and H.M. Stevenson, "Cultural Pluralism, Modernization and Conflict: An Empirical Analysis of Sources of Political Instability in African Nations" Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol.5, 1972, pp.82-103.

Also see "Pluralism is the principal political problem of most of the new states created in the 20th C. Most of them include people who differ from each other in language or tribe or religion or race; some of these groups live side by side in a long tradition of mutual hostility, restrained in the past only by a neutral imperial power." W.A. Lewis, Politics in West Africa (London, 1965), p.66.

[2] J.O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability", JMAS, Vol. 5, No.2, 1967.

"almost institutionless arena with conflict and disorder as its most prominent features."[1] Some writers have questioned the validity of the ethnic models of disorder in Africa and elsewhere. "Most people who have written about modernization and political development . . . have given the impression that there is a serious problem of political instability in transitional societies. The truth seems to be that this problem is more apparent than real. The problem appears to have been created by our conceptual confusion and prejudices." In fact, Ake argues that there are no plausible reasons to believe that the modernization process is destabilising and in any case, that it is wrong to talk of stable relations while talking about transition and change.[2] Writing on the issue of states creation in Nigeria, Oyovbaire noted

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[1] A.R. Zolberg, "The Structure of Political Conflict in the New States of Tropical Africa", American Political Review, Vol. LXII, No.1, 1968, p.70.

[2] C.Ake, "Modernization and Political Instability: A theoretical Exploration," World Politics, Vol.XXVI, No.4, July, 1974, pp. 577-591.

that the essential basis of agitations is the individual's and group's relationships, and in particular, the perception of these relationships to the benefits of the modernization process: employment, socio-economic welfare, security, status, power and distributive justice, and arguing that descent, language, culture and religion are categories which are frequently invoked as a cover-up.[1] As analytic tools for the explanation of the political and social life of the new states of Africa, the ethnic conflict models have obvious deficiencies. The most glaring is that they convey the highly erroneous impression that relations between different groups are one of tension and conflict for all times and for all issues. Secondly, they attribute an inconsequential role to the consensual and integfative forces operative in these new states. Owing to their inadequacy, Sandbrook qualifies the ethnic conflict models on two grounds.[2] He notes that

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[1] S.E.Oyovbaire, "Geo-Politics and Political behaviour: Some comments on the creation of states in Nigeria", The Zaria Geographer, Vol.3, May 1974, 5-6.

[2] R.Sandbrook, "Patrons, Clients and Factions: New Dimensions of Conflict analysis in Africa," Canadian Journal of Political Science, vol.5, 1972, pp.104-119.

their emphasis on cleavages between cultural-linguistic groupings tends to underrate the substantial degree of inter-ethnic cooperation in many new states of Africa without which a political community can hardly be expected to continue to exist in these states. As Rothchild argues some ethnic conflict models need to be revamped with a focus on the phenomenon of ethnic bargaining, some of which are worked out from the highest levels of government.[1] Secondly, the ethnic conflict models are unable to explain intra-ethnic conflict.

Sandbrook views political mobilization and participation in terms of "patrons, clients and factions." Factionalism is a form of conflict which, instead of uniting people of the same social category (class, syndicate, ethnic group, school, generation, etc.) in defence of their collective welfare, unites people of different social categories with the aim of advancing the interests of individual participants.[2]

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[1] D. Rothchild, "Ethnicity and Conflict Resolution", World Politics, Vol. XXII, No.4, 1970.

[2] This assertion by Sandbrook is open to argument to say the least. While my experience with the Idoma would seem to confirm the existence of factionalism in politics in Northern Nigeria, the Tiv case simply confounds this.

He asserts that factions and their patron - client networks are crucial to an understanding of most conflict situations in Africa because they are capable of explaining both inter-ethnic cooperation and intra-ethnic conflict - functions which are simply beyond the scope of the traditional ethnic conflict theories.[1] However, what Sandbrook does not show very well, that is if he shows it at all, is how the "patrons" who, more often than not, are communal leaders are able to receive continued support from their groups if they happen to be outside the constellation of power and thus do not command the resources to satisfy the material aspirations of their groups.

An aspect of the older theories of modernization suggests that higher political participation occurs as a result of the "freeing" of individuals from traditional ties, making them "available" for incorporation into new social and political groupings.[2] This concept of political and social mobilization is imbued with the myth of an expanding, powerful and

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[1] Sandbrook, op.cit., p.107.

[2] K.Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development", American Political Science Review, 55, 1961.

modernizing centre[1] - a model that sees the successful "penetration" of parochial localities by the values, organisation and controls associated with the modernising political centre. However, experiences have shown that this may not always be the case for two basic reasons. In the first place as it is the case in Ivory Coast, the centre may not wish to penetrate the periphery.[2] Secondly, where the national centre manifests the intention to do so, it is often too weak and therefore, cannot mobilize the required resources (skills, personnel, funds, communication) to effectively penetrate the periphery.[3] The resultant "vacuum" allows for the emergence of "brokers" (broker theory) to fill the gap in communication

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[1] See M. Staniland, "The Rhetoric of centre-periphery Relations", JMAS, Vol.8, No.4, 1970, pp.617-636.

[2] Concerning this point see M. Cohen, "The Myth of the Expanding Centre - Politics in the Ivory Coast," JMAS, Vol.11, No.2, 1973, pp. 227-246.

[3] J.S. Barker, "Local-central Relations: A perspective on the Politics of Development in Africa," Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol.4, 1970.

between the centre and the localities.[1] In this situation, the periphery is not incorporated into the nation. Each community relates to the centre via its broker or brokers known as "communal champions".[2] If A, B, C and D, are communal groups in state TX, then brokers from A, B, C and D jostle with one another to acquire resources available or deemed available at the centre of TX for their respective communal ends. The system also works in another way. If group A has complaints against the Medical Officer in charge of the Government Hospital in its divisional headquarters it will, in all likelihood, not lodge a

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[1] Weingrod postulates that Patron-Client ties (broker theory) arise in a society in which political organisation and state activities are rudimentary, resulting in a communication gap between the centre and the periphery. Brokers or patrons are then thrown up to bridge the gap. A. Weingrod, "Patrons, Patronage, and Political Parties," Comparative Studies in Soc. and History, Vol.10, 1968, pp. 377-85.

Also as Stryker notes, though there exists no institutionalized mechnisms upon which the centre can rely for information and policy coordination throughout its hinterland and upon which the individual can rely for exerting influence on central decision-making, communications channels are not entirely blocked because there exists a number of "political brokers" at the local level who provide a degree of linkage between centre and locality: the local party leaders, the deputies to the National Assembly, the local administrators, and some traditional chiefs. R.E.Stryker, "Political and Administrative Linkage in the Ivory Coast," in P.Foster, & A.Zolberg, (eds.) Ghana and the Ivory Coast Chicago, Chicago Univ. Press, 1971, p.100.

[2] J.O'Connell, "The Political Class & Economic Growth", NJESS, Vol.8, 1966.

formal report with the Minister of Health who is from group B, but instead will approach "one of its own", A2 who happens to be the Chairman of the Airways to effect the removal of the medical officer. This pattern of behaviour goes to show that communication between centre and locality in most African states is not completely institutionalized.[1]

Quite a number of researchers /R. Lane, 1959; L. Milbrath, 1965; H. McClosky, 1968/ on political participation have focused on individual decision-making. David Elkins, however, believes that context variables such as geography, party system and social structure, are extremely important in understanding political participation regardless of the personal characteristics of the individuals concerned."[2]

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[1] J.Collins, (in Niger) found that communication (or commands) from top down are institutionalized and can be at times quite effective. But he also found that communication from the bottom up can be very difficult mainly because of the lack of political resources available to the bottom. J.D.Collins, Government and Groundnut Marketing in Rural Hausa Niger; The 1930s to the 1970s in Magaria, John Hopkins University, Ph.D. Thesis, 1974.

[2] D.J.Elkins, "Regional Contexts of Political Participation: Some Illustrations from South India". Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol.5, 1972, p. 167.

Undoubtedly there are some individuals, especially in urban areas, who are "socially mobilized" in Deutsch's sense. Elkins shows that in South India, "the highest levels of voting turnout occur in the most 'traditional' regions where traditional means socially organised into hierarchic groups based on ritual ties and control of resources which enhance the dependence of some individuals on others."[1] In pre-1966 Tivland there was a high level of political mobilization and participation - the Jembgar parliamentary constituency consistently sent J.S. Tarka to the Nigerian House of Representatives with the highest votes[2] of any other candidates in the country and this is an area whose traditional organisation based on compound and kindred ties are still largely intact; the very socio-traditional ties Deutsch postulates are broken before participation occurs. These examples indicate that political mobilization and participation can take place within old ties or by building new ones and it leads to the

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[1] Ibid., p.183.

[2] I am fully aware that in some of the pre-independence and post-independence elections voting in the rural traditional areas was often related to direct and indirect coercion. Despite this, voting can still be a useful measure of political participation and social mobilization.

conclusion that there is no single linear path of political or social development to an area until careful analysis of its organisation has revealed the extent of actual change in traditional forms. To accept Deutsch's model of social mobilization and political participation is to accept that modernity and tradition are mutually exclusive, a thesis which many writers[1] reject as being false.

The issues of political mobilization and participation are tied up with the larger issue of national integration. National integration is an equation between centre-local power and authority relations and the processes of socio-economic change. In almost all the new states, independence invariably opens the way to a vast array of development schemes. While attempting to achieve rapid socio-economic development, Ken Post's "heirs to the colonial throne" were also seeking to extend the power and influence of the state down to the periphery at the same time. The concept of plural society as formulated by Furnivall

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[1] Whitaker, Bendix, Huntington and others.

and passed down to writers like M.G. Smith and Leo Kuper[1] is one in which communal groups live side by side but with each group holding rigidly to its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways and as individuals they meet but only in the market place. In Furnivall's analysis, economic forces are the major and only non-coincidental cleavages of the plural society. However, the integrated nation which the leaders of African states envisage and are attempting to build is one in which there is "total" interaction between the various disparate social and communal groups in the political system, who according to Furnivall had merely co-existed. This sets the stage for a direct clash between communal identity and political integrity in the new states, for each group rejects cultural assimilation or domination by another because it is not willing "to belong to any other group".[2] Thus

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[1] J.S.Furnivall, "Some problems of Tropical Economy," in Tite Hinden (ed.) Fabian Colonial Essays; Leo Kuper and M.G. Smith, ed. Pluralism in Africa (University of California Press, 1971).

[2] Ambedkar in Geertz, op.cit., p. 110.

every group is therefore keenly interested in which group or groups get power and how that power is used to tie it in authority relations to the centre and other groups. The clash between community identity and political integration may be ameliorated or escalated by the structure of the system. Such a clash appears to have been less severe in a unitary state like Ghana than in a federal system like Nigeria.[1] But if ethnicity is the consequence of socio-economic change in a plural state, then the structure of the system becomes almost irrelevant as to whether or not this clash takes place. As I see it, the problem of modernization is not just to substitute new (often anonymous) relationship for old (specific and visible) ties but to control and determine the shape of such new relations. "By generalising and extending tribal, racial, linguistic or other principles of primordial solidarity, such a system permits the maintenance of a profoundly rooted 'consciousness of kind' and relates that consciousness to the developing civil order."[2]

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[1] In Ghana state structures have been able to generate some sentiment behind them and develop functional loyalties, for example the growth of a Ghanian outlook and the primary role of the state.

[2] Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: primordial sentiments and civil politics in the new States", in C.Geertz ed.), Old Societies and New States (Free Press, 1963), p. 154.

This enables the individual to continue to acknowledge his existence in relations to the familiar symbols of his groups' uniqueness but also at the same time becoming integrated into a political society different in form and goal from his "natural" community. In the same vein, Melson and Wolpe use the Nigerian experience to conclude that communal particularism is not destined to be submerged by a "universalistic" tidal wave of modernity.[1] Geertz makes the same point by saying that "the integrative revolution does not do away with ethnocentrism; it merely modernizes it."[2]

The degree of acceptability or rejection of any political settlement (institutional arrangements designed to mediate groups) to a group depends not only on the objective reality but also to a very great extent on the group's perception of how its interests in relative comparison to other groups and their interests are being adequately promoted. Two groups, A and B, may share similar social, economic and cultural

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[1] Melson and H.Wolpe, "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective", in Melson & Wolpe (ed.) Nigeria: Modernisation & the Politics of Communalism. (Michigan State University Press, 1971, pp. 1-42.

[2] Geertz, op.cit., p.154.

organisation and these two groups may later find themselves in a minority position vis-a-vis a dominant ethnic group. However, the common social and political characteristics which they share do not always determine their individual perception of how much political influence A or B can manipulate towards allocation of resources in the political system. Therefore different patterns of political participation may emerge between the two groups in the political processes of the state. If group A considers that its communal interests, championed by its brokers are being fairly well met by the centre, it may react to the centre with support and maintain good relations with the group or groups that are presumed to control that centre. Likewise, the same logic in appraising relative deprivation is operative where group B in the same political system percieves that its interests are being neglected by the centre and therefore it may engage in confrontation politics with the centre and groups controlling the centre. Moreover, as Melson and Wolpe argue, if B should believe that the political institutions are identifiable with the interests of a particular group or combination of groups, such a

belief has the tendency of politicizing and exacerbating communal conflict.[1] After all, since it is through such secondary political institutions that groups that previously "met only in the market place" now relate with one another via the centre, it becomes imperative that the institutions possess "autonomy" and "institutional integrity", in the sense that they are not subordinated to the interests of particular social or communal groups.[2] If group B or any other group for that matter, perceives that political and social institutions that tie it in authority relations to the centre are effectively dominated and controlled by a particular group, the legitimacy of such institutions may become impaired in its eyes.[3] If the group in power is so politically dominant that it is absolutely unshakable, the minority ethnic group in the shadow and regulated by that power may feel itself "encapsulated" by the

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[1] Melson & Wolpe, op.cit., p.16.

[2] S.P.Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (Yale University Press, 1968), p.20.

[3] In the eyes of the Tiv, despite the claim that it was a party for all Northerners, the NPC was too closely identified with the Hausa-Fulani group to be anything more than the political expression of the interests of this particular group.

larger group. The intensity of the feeling depends on how much intereference the smaller group believes itself subjected to from the dominant ethnic and political group. By attempting to "go it alone", the minority becomes embroiled in confrontation politics with the centre, and to whip up support for this confrontation, ethnic leaders often take the easy but expedient route of political mobilisation in polyethnic societies by making direct appeal to ethnic constituencies, emotional appeals laced with abuses and innuendos intended to emphasize the differences between the competing groups.[1] Howard Wriggins shows how appeals to historic divisions by both Sinhalese and Tamil politicians helped to inflame inter-communal conflict in Ceylon after 1956. The political opposition found the language question an unusually handy and effective vehicle of

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[1] Among the Tiv, the UMBC harped on the people's notion of Tivness, i.e. of a separate ethnic identity, to mobilize them in opposition to the Hausa-Fulani. The general rallying cry was "ungu Tiv shin ungu uke?" - are you a Tiv or are you a foreigner? To support the NPC was equated to being a Hausa man, a foreigner, while if one supported the UMBC, one was a Tiv.

mobilising the rural middleclass in the Sinhalese majority community.[1] And in a political system which permits universal participation, appeals to communal identity can easily get translated into political opposition.

Inter-group relation is not a once and for all time static phenomenon. Relation between centre and the localities often occur in phases.[2] The notion of doing well or doing badly by a group in the sharing of the national pie changes over time and, consequently, relations between centre and periphery oscillate between hostility and alliance, each phase depending on how old bargains are maintained and new ones worked our. If group A discovers that owing to new bargains concluded at the centre it is no longer doing as well as it used to in competition with other groups for political and economic resources, it might attempt to review its relation with the centre in terms of support

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[1] Howard Wriggins, "Impediments to Unity in New Nations: The Case of Ceylon" in C.E. Welch, Jr., (ed.) Political Modernisation: A reader in Comparative Political Change (1967) pp. 188-202.

[2] For the notion of "phases" and "arenas", see M.Staniland, "Single-Party Regimes and Political Change, the PDCI and Ivory Coast Politics," in C. Leys (ed.) Politics & Change in Developing Countries (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 135-175. Also see F.G.Bailey, Strategems and Spoils (Basil Blackwell, 1969), pp.144-155.

or denial of support. In the same way, group B which all along has felt that it has been doing poorly vis-a-vis other groups, may suddenly find that new political resources may significantly alter its relation with the dentre and in such a case, there is a shift in the pattern of political participation to reflect the new equation in power relations between the various ethnic groups.[1] By 1965 the relations the Idoma and the Tiv each had with Kaduna had begun to alter. With the carpet-crossing by several Tiv M.Ps into the NPC, the Northern Regional Government had began to reassess its relations with Tivland. On the other hand, the Idoma were becoming dissatisfied because they now felt threatened by the arrival in good numbers into the Regional civil service of qualified Hausa-Fulani men.

Historically, states have tried varying ways of coping with the issues of national integration. Geertz has observed that public policy in the first

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[1] Often changes in the relationship are much more apt to be initiated by the centre. Actually, the ability to do this is in some ways what makes it the "centre".

instance is affected by the patterns of social organisation in the plural society.[1] One of such patterns includes a political system in which a single group or related groups combine to be dominant both in numbers and authority while there are one or more minority groups. Northern Nigeria between 1950 - 1965 was a classic example of this pattern. In this type of situation, there are two public policy strategies or approaches for the achievement of national integration. There is the assimilationist version which idealizes the French experience and assumes that primordial and civil ties are mutually exclusive. This strategy seeks the elimination of the distinctive cultural traits of minority communities into some form of "national" (or as in Northern Nigeria 'regional') culture, which more often than not, is that of the dominant cultural group. The second approach idealizes the American experience. It permits the emergence of national loyalties without eliminating subordinate cultures, leading to the policy of "unity in diversity" and politically characterized

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[1] Geertz, op. cit., p. 156.

by "ethnic arithmetic.[1]" In Northern Nigeria, the heart of the political leadership went for the former approach, but practical politics dictated official enunciation of the latter. However, as the regime became entrenched, it openly showed its inclination for the assimilationist version by policies such as the compulsory Hausa Language Test for civil servants and the revivalist and missionary excursions the Premier undertook into the non-muslim Middle Belt aimed at achieving mass conversion to Islam. These attempts at establishing Hausa cultural hegemony over minority groups in the North only helped to aggravate the rejection of the system by some of the groups, especially the Tiv, while the Idoma managed to acquiesce in the system but avoided going down under the Hausa-Fulani cultural barrage.

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[1] Myron Weiner, "Political Integration and Political Development, in C.E. Welch, Jr. (ed.) Political Modernization, (Wadsworth Publishing Coy. 1967), p. 155. Also see A. Zolberg, "Patterns of National Integration", Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.5, No.3, 1967, pp. 323-34.

CHAPTER TWO

PRE-COLONIAL STRUCTURES AND SOCIETAL ORDER

The Geographical and Historical Settings

Outside the "Far Northern" triumvirate of the Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri, the Tiv were the largest ethnic group in the old Northern Region of Nigeria. Among the plethora of minority ethnic groups of the Middle Belt of which they formed a part and which they at times led and scared the Tiv were unquestionably a 'majority' group. In this respect their neighbours to the west, the Idoma, were a very poor second. Between the two censuses of 1952 and 1963, Tiv population statistics jumped from 750,000 to 1,300,000, while those for the Idoma went up from 200,000 to about 500,000 in the same period.[1] In the Benue-Plateau State,[2] the Tiv and the Idoma taken together represent one out of every 2½ - persons in a State of five million peoples and of over 50 ethnic groups. The Tiv now live in three administrative Divisions, namely, Gboko, Makurdi and Katsina-Ala.

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[1] The 1973 population census figures were cancelled because they would "not command general acceptance throughout the country". July 30th speech by the Head of State, Brigadier M.R. Muhammed.

[2] The Benue-Plateau State, along with 5 others, was created by a Federal Military Government Decree out of the old Northern Region in May, 1967. On the whole, the decree created 12 States out of the former 4 Regions in the country.

Their monolithic cultural identity despite the split of the old Tiv Division is still very much intact and this is symbolised by the fact that the three Tiv Divisions still retain a common Tor Tiv, who largely because of the combined size and population of the Divisions over which he reigns, is the Chairman of the Benue-Plateau State Council of Chiefs. On the other hand, the Idoma live in a single administrative Division, the largest in the State.

Tivland starts stretching away northeastwards up the Benue River some 240 kilometres from the confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers. It extends from the foothills of the Sonkwala highlands in the south up to the undulating plains of the Benue River and its tributary, the Katsina-Ala. In the west, Idomaland also stretches up to the Benue river but unlike Tivland, does not cover both sides of the River. Tivland and Idomaland form a continuous territorial area which has a uniform physical geography. Within this country, the land rises gently from about 400 feet above sea level in the marches of the Benue and Katsina-Ala river basins to an

attitude of about 1,600 feet with some hills topping 4,000 feet in the Sonkwala highlands. Along the river valleys there is alluvial sandy soil but generally the country is lateritic soil just a few feet below the surface. The combined area lies in the Guinea Savannah belt and is well-wooded with deciduous trees, growing in tall elephant and sword grass. Of course, there is variation/looks much more like the Rain Forest typical of Iboland, while in the far north of Tivland the vegetation meshes indistinguishably into the Sudan Savannah. As it is to be expected, the rains are heavier and longer in the south - north a year. The temperatures are high all year round, hovering between 80° to 90° F. The major food crops of the area are yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, guinea corn, millet, maize and beans. Yam is the staple food crop and it is grown in the rainy season. In Tivland beniseed, cotton and soya beans are cultivated as cash crops. They are largely the results of the introduction of the tax system and the money economy with the arrival of the British and the subsequent colonial rule. Idomaland does not produce commercial crops of any significance. There is some

/to this general pattern. In the southern tip of Idomaland, the vegetation

cotton growing in the northern areas towards the Benue river, and in the south some bit of palm oil, which is however overshadowed by the amount produced in the adjoining Iboland.

The Tiv in their folklore trace their original ancestor to "Tiv", from whom they all construct agnatic descent. In time the name of this totemic ancestor came to stand for the group (his descendants) as a whole. The Tiv concede that they have not always lived in their present country but that they came fighting their way into this area from the south around Swem Hill.[1] In the course of their migration or, more correctly, wandering, they interacted first with the Fulani,[2] and later, with several other groups like the Iyon, Utange, Ukwese, Ndir, all whom the Tiv referred dollectively to as the "Bush tribes"

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[1]Controversy surrounds the actual starting point from which the Tiv later spread out. See Bohannan, L. & P. the Tiv of Central Nigeria International African Inst., London, 1969 (1953) p.12; Akiga, S., Akiga's Story, translated by Rupert East, London, O.U.P. 1965 (1939) pp.216-17; J.Makaa, A History of the Tiv People in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Manuscript of Ph.d. Thesis to be presented to ABU, 1975 pp.17-22 for versions of this mythical home.

[2]Akiga, op.cit., pp.21-24, recounted anecdotes of the happy and friendly relations that existed between the Tiv and the Fulani at this time. This contrasts sharply with the acrimonious relations between the two groups during 1950-65, when the Tiv derogatorily referred to them, along with the Hausa, as (Baja) slaves.

(atoatiev). After these early contacts the Tiv, still as one bloc moved northeastward near Ugenyi (Chamba) country, where they supposedly settled and tilled the land for millet, guinea corn and yam. They exchanged the surplus from their agricultural produce for salt and camwood from their Chamba neighbours. Two hypotheses have been put forward for the later break up of this community.[1] The first is that the Chamba, who then possessed iron weapons and a more sophisticated military organisation attacked the Tiv settlement in the early 19th century, and that the ensuring flight and dispersal account for the present physical pattern of Tiv lineages. The second and the more pervasive and persuasive of the hypotheses assert that population explosion among the Tiv led to the demand for more farmland, which was natural being that they were an agrarian community. Disputes internal to the Tiv arose, consequently leading to fission in a number of lineage units, and causing the movement of the two large Iharev and Masev groups down to the Katsina-Ala

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[1] For the 2 hypotheses see, Bohannan, op.cit., p.12; Makaa op. cit., pp.42-53; D.C. Dorward, Political and Social History of the Tiv, 1900 - 1939, University of London, Ph.d. Thesis, 1971, p.16.

river basin. It is now believed that this dispersion took place long before the Ugenyi invasion of the 19th century. This view is further buttressed by the fact that the Masev and Iharev have no accounts of conflict and of wars with the Ugenyi.[1]

As already declared in the introduction to this study, I shall be using three clans Otukpo, Ugboju and Akpa as being representative of the Idoma cultural experience and history. Unlike the Tiv, the Idoma do not lay claim to a common founding father (ancestor). However as O'kwu writes, "among the vast majority of the Idoma, their oral traditions are unanimous that they migrated to their present territories from Apa. Apa has been tentatively identified as a one - time capital of the legendary Jukun Empire of Kwararafa."[2] Both Armstrong and O'kwu, have shied away from stating categorically whether the Idoma and the Jukun once formed parts of the same kingdom, though they go on to say that the Jukun and Idoma do not share common

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[1] Makaa, op.cit., p.51.

[2] V.G.O'kwu, Early History of Idomaland, paper presented to the Postgraduate Seminar, Department of History, ABU, January, 1974, p.2.

characteristics to the extent that would encourage one to conclude that the two peoples were originally part of the same parent stock.[1] It is possible that both Armstrong and O'kwu might be right, but it is also important to note that the vast majority of Idoma trace their original home to Apa and it is irrelevant whether or not this Apa was the capital of the Jukun Empire in history. What happened was that this mythical Apa Kingdom disintegrated unleashing a wave of migrations. The reason generally given was the "horse war" (efu onya) during the jihad.[2] O'kwu gives another version of what happened. According to him the Jukun never formed part of the Apa Kingdom and that this State was actually broken up by their military aggression. The Jukun used horses which, according to him, had led some students of Idoma history to the

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[1] R. Armstrong, "The Idoma-speaking peoples" in Dary Forde (ed) Peoples of the Niger - Benue Confluence, Lowe & Brydone, London, 1955, pp. 96-97; O'kwu op.cit., p.2.

[2] J.I.Elaigwu, Traditional Chieftaincy and Socio-Political Change in Idoma, undergraduate research paper Dept. of Govt., ABU, 1971, p.3; A.Ochai, The Historical Evolution of Otukpo - Migration and Re-unification up to 1930, undergraduate research paper Dept. of History, ABU, 1972. Also see the series of articles in the N. Citizen, August-October, 1965 entitled "Who Are the Apas?" by Odumu Ocheibi.

false conclusion that the migrations were the result of Usman dan Fodio's jihads at the beginning of the 19th century. By his computation, O'kwu dates the sacking of Apa and the subsequent migrations before the 16th century.[1]

The Idoma moved out of Apa not as a body under a single column and leadership. The migrations were in waves under separate leaders. In the legends these leaders were referred to both, as the founders as well as the first chiefs (oche) of their various clans. Judging from their present populations, these clans must have been very small in size during the period of upheaval and migrations. In their several journeys, these clans came into contact with non-Idoma groups like the Tiv before finally settling in their present areas. Moving out of Apa, somewhere in the present Adamawa Province of the North Eastern State, the band of refugees that later became the Otukpo clan wandered through Wukari (Okali), Adumahina, Otia, Okwutachi, Ajecho, Ogbaya and finally ended on the banks of the Ewulo river.[2] Other Idoma clans in this vicinity

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[1] O'kwu, op.cit., p.7.

[2] Ochai, op.cit., pp.15-22.

include Ugboju, Akpa and Oglewu. The clans were autonomous and engaged in wars with one another as often as resources could afford aggression.[1]

Structures and Units of Social Relations

Like the Tiv, any study of the social organisation of traditional Idoma must begin with the compound (Ole). Usually the compound comprised of a man, his wife or wives, his brothers and their wives, and the man's and his brothers' children. At times, the compound is more "extended" than this, also being inhabited by sisters' children or sons of women (ai-onya) and others such as strangers and friends. "A man's family does not only include his conjugal family, but those of his brothers, and in some cases, cousins as well - an extended family. Where these live in a large compound, as is usually the case, the family becomes coterminous with the compound as a geo-political concept - (Ole) meaning literally 'home'."[2] If the patriarch of the compound has two

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[1] A.P.Anyebe, Otukpo, Makurdi, 1970, pp.1-2.

[2] J.I.Elaigwu, Self-Regulation in a Traditional Society: Integration and Order in Pre-colonial Otukpo of Nigeria, Stanford University, 1973, p.4.

or more wives, each of the wives and her child or children are regarded as a household (inu). The household constitutes the basis on which things are shared and issues are discussed at the compound level. As Elaigwu writes, "the household or inu is indicative of the polygynous nature of African family life."[1] From the functions performed by the household, it is evident that it is the lowest or smallest social unit among the Idoma and for both Armstrong and Majid to have stated that the smallest social unit is instead the family is patently misleading.[2] Their assertion displayed an amazing lack of understanding of the scope and scale of the family in Idoma social life.

A higher social unit to the family is the sub-lineage (ipu-ooma) or "people of one birth". It is a collection of compounds (ole) traced along agnatic lines back to about the 5th ancestor. Normally it is also a contigous geographical area but its essential

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[1] Ibid., p.4.

[2] Armstrong, op.cit., p.94, and A.Majid, "Political Traditionalism in Nigeria: A case study of secret societies and Dance Groups in Local Government," Africa, Vol. XLII, No.IV, October 1972.

feature is that it is a geneological phenomenon.

A still higher unit of social relations is the lineage (ipoopu) which refers to the people of one council ground. The lineage embraces all the sub-lineages tracing their agnatic descent to the 6th of 7th ancestor. Originally "opu" referred only to the council ground where deliberations of the mass meeting of adult males (ojila), games and ceremonies where held but it gradually came to be used in reference to the group of sub-lineages that used it.

Finally, there is the clan.[1] This is the highest and largest social unit. Each of the three clans, Otukpo, Ugboju, and Akpa which I am using as prototypes of Idoma social organisation, is made up of three lineages.[2]

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[1] Armstrong has consistently (see Armstrong 1955; Armstrong 1958; Armstrong 1974) kept to the term "land" (Aje), arguing that "clan" is colonial nomenclature.

[2] The three lineages of Otukpo clan (aje) are AiOgwuche, AiAgboko and AiOdaji, see Elaigwu, op.cit., p.3; Ugboju clan lineages are AiOko, AiAgbaja and AiOgwu, see Amanyi, op. cit., p.7 and the Akpa lineages are, Ifu-Akpa, Mbo and Ekpari, see Ogbogo, op. cit., p.4.

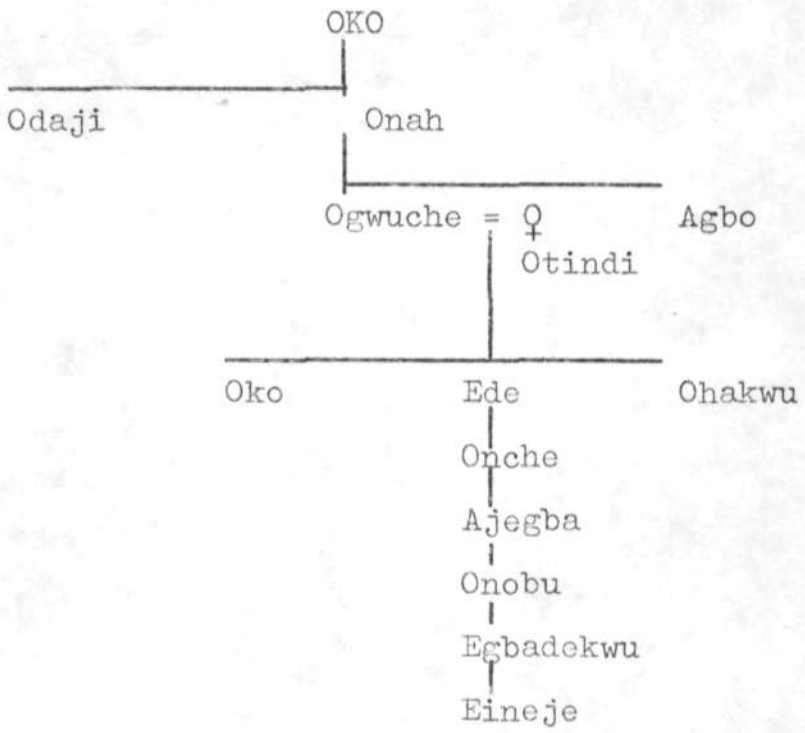


Fig. 1
Geneological Diagram

The diagram above illustrates geneologically the structure of the Otukpo clan on the basis of my compound, sub-lineage and lineage. The totemic ancestor of the Otukpo clan is Oko who had two sons, Onah and Odaji. Onah, in turn, had several sons including Agbo, Ogwuche, Okopi, Ode, Oono. Out of the fusion between the sons of Onah, two lineages, AiOgwuche and AiAgboko emerged and these two, along with the descendants of Odaji, later formed the three

lineages of the Otukpo clan. Ogwuche, the founder of the AiOgwuche lineage, had several wives and each of these wives with their children initially formed the various households (inu) of his compound. However, as time went and his sons married and had their own sons, the original inu developed into the sub-lineages of the AiOgwuche lineage. One of Ogwuche's wives was Otindi, who with her three sons Ohakwu, Oko and Ede became the sub-lineage of Aianyatindi (children of Otindi). Where a marriage produced two or more children, as in this case, the sub-lineage took the name of the mother. But if the marriage resulted in only one son, then the subsequent sub-lineage was named after the son. Later on, each of Otindi's sons, Ohakwu, Oko and Ede established a compound (ole) in their own right, for instance one could talk of Ede's compound (Ol'Ede). Ede's children and their children continue to be called people of Ede's compound (ache ol'Ede). Daughters and women as a rule never established compounds. Normally they were part of their husband's compound, or if there was misunderstanding a woman would go back to

her father's compound. If, for some reason or the other, she took along her children with her, then such sons would set up in the compound as women's children (aionya).[1]

The clan is generally endogamous,[2] but there are limits to the kinship level at which marriage is permissible. The limit is at the level of second cousins but since the Idoma are a patrilineal descent group, marriage at such close range hardly ever takes place on the father's side. As a matter of fact, marriage of second cousins is very rare because it is considered socially unwise.[3]

Political Organisation

The political organisation of the three Idoma clans being studied follow closely their social structures. The lowest political unit is the compound (ole). The founder of the compound is its head and that is why the compound is said to be so and

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[1]Interview with Egbadekwu Onobu.

[2]If, as Armstrong insisted, the concept of endogamy in anthropology means an obligation to marry within the land (aje), then these three clans Otukpo, Akpa and Ugboju are not strictly endogamous. If that be the case, they practice both endogamy and exogamy. interview with Armstrong, Upu, Otukpo, 28th December, 1974.

[3]Onobu, op. cit.

so's compound. For instance, "Ol'Ede" means Ede's compound both in name and in effect. Even after his death and there is a new head the compound is still referred to as "Ol'Ede". As a unit of inter-group relations, the compound is autonomous. It settles all or most disputes and conflicts between its members. The compound head is responsible for all "external" relations between it and other compounds. The authority and influence of the compound head over the inhabitants of his compound rests on his age and wisdom and on the fact that he is usually the father or grandfather, or at least, uncle to every man living in the compound.

Outside the compound, authority becomes diffuse within the society showing many loci of existence. One of these loci of authority is the Ojila, an ad hoc meeting of adult males. Women were invited or took part in its deliberations if such women were deemed as useful witnesses in witchcraft accusations. Thus in the real sense, the Ojila

was not exclusive to men[1] though essentially it was their forum. The Ojila was the supreme council of the people. It made all laws (ine) for the society and served as a forum in which public opinion was articulated.[2]

Another locus of influence in traditional Idoma was the institution of kingship (oche). There was a great ambivalence towards this institution among the three clans I am using as case studies. On the one hand, kingship had a venerable tradition for these peoples as shown by their folklores. On the other, the institution was on the decline in each of these three areas when the British arrived in Idomaland at the turn of the century. Whatever the situation, kingship could still be regarded as a central institution of these peoples, though the institution was not as well-developed as among their neighbours like the Igala and the Jukun.

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[1] See Armstrong's assertion that women were excluded from the meeting of the ojila, Armstrong op. cit. p.99.

[2] For a useful discussion of the numerous functions of the Ojila, see Elaigwu, op. cit. p.5.

All laws (ine) made in the land were his laws, though it was the ojila who actually made them and such dance guilds (ai'je) like the 'Onyonkpo' and the "aiuta" constabulary who enforced them. The king was selected on the principle of rotation among the various lineages constituting the clan (aje). The Idoma abhor the idea of a dynasty or ruling house.

The eldest man in the clan was the "father" of the dead (alekwu) and thus, he was called "adalekwu" or father's brother (omapada). The eldest man may not necessarily be the eldest man chronologically. He was the eldest man with the least or shortest number of fathers to the common ancestor of the lineage or the clan as the case might be. The Idoma, especially the Otukpo, believed that one could not be "older" than his uncle. Thus, however old a man was, if he happened to be the "son of a son" (Oiooi), he could never be the father of the dead and the guardian of the rites performed for them.

Tivland and Its Social Patterns

An examination of indigenous Tiv geneological and social pattern like that of their neighbours the Idoma, can only usefully begin at the level of the compound (ya). This is basically for the simple reason that it is the most concrete identifying plane for any Tiv socially and politically. As in Idoma, the compound is a collection of immediate and extended agnates, presided over by an old man, the compound patriarch. It tended to be small in size, usually comprising of 8 to 12 huts and averaging 16 to 18 persons in the middle 1950s as estimated by Bohannan.[1] However, there is considerable variation in the compound size, both in the number of huts and persons living in it. The compound generally takes its name from that of the head, so and so's compound. There is no other name. Though the Tiv distinguish between kinship and compound ties, however where the two coincide, the compound according to Bohannan, trully becomes one of the

[1] P.Bohannan, Tiv Farm and Settlement, London 1954 pp. 4-5.

strongest emotional centres of Tiv life, and the phrase "one compound" (ya mon) is a strong conotative sentiment of unity.[1]

Compunds group and combine into larger social and territorial units but this grouping takes a geneological dimension.

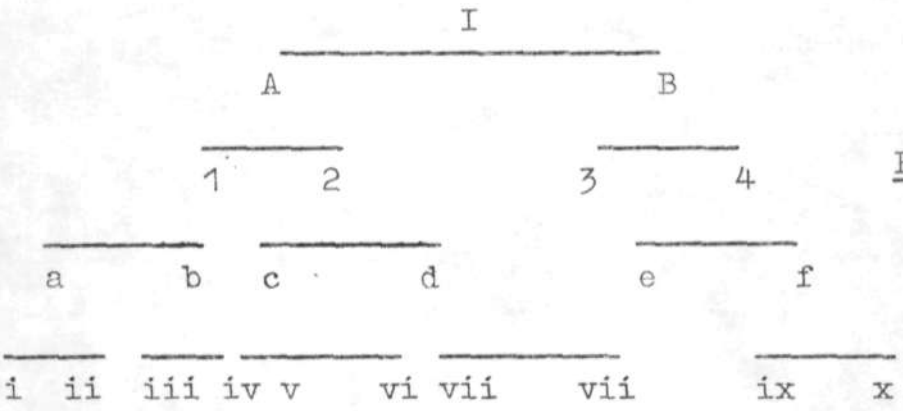


Fig.2

In the above diagram, i - x are all existing compounds presided over by their respective patriarchs. Starting with the compound i, one discovers that the head of compound ii is related to him on a geneological basis as the descendants of a. All the members of compound i are referred to as those of i (mba - i) who is their nearest common ancestor. While those of i refers to all

[1] L.& P. Bohannan, (1953), op.cit. p.19.

those living in the compound i, those of a and of more inclusive ancestors, refer to geneologically rather than residentially defined groups of people. This process extends, including more and more living people as the eponymous ancestor is at a greater distance until all Tiv are included as the descendants of "Tiv".[1]

The compounds i and ii tend to be near one another but they may not always be contigous territorially. However, at some geneological level all the agnatic descendants of a single ancestor like 1 or 2 in the above diagram form a discrete territorial bloc known as the 'tar' (pl. utar). Conjugous with the tar, those compounds which share a common paternal ancestor of the third or fourth generation removed from the elders form a segment or ipaven (Bohannan, 1953) or kindred (Dorward, 1971). Relative position in space is spoken of in terms of "utar" while social distance between the utar is determined by the geneologically defined order of segments (uipaven). In short, tar and segment are terms of one conceptual scheme. The

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[1] Ibid., p.19.

word ityo serves to place an individual in social terms with emphasis on his or her descent and since the Tiv like the Idoma are patrilineal, ityo refers to the individual's position and rights in his or her father's tar. It is complementary to one's rights in the mother's agnatic lineage (igba).

As the Bohannans note, "one cannot speak of anti-social actions among the Tiv without specifying the relationship of the persons concerned. Moral values tend to attach rather to relations between persons than to actions in themselves."[1] Preferred enmity is stated in geneological terms. The greater the distance geneologically between two segments, the more likely they are to think of each other as potential enemies even though they may be living in adjoining utar.

Tiv Political Engineering

Tiv political and social relations may be conveniently conceptualised within the framework of domestic and external relations. These relations are however modified by Tiv notions of leadership,

[1] Ibid., p.26.

prestige and influence. The compound (ya) makes a compact geneological and territorial structure ideal for the conduct of internal affairs. The oldest member was the head of the compound. When he becomes very old actual leadership of the compound passes down to somebody else though it is still his compound and he remains its guiding light. He is responsible for the well-being of all members of the compound and also accountable for their actions within and without it. His age aside, the basis of his authority is the personal bond of kinship between him and every member (except strangers) of the compound. As an elder (or vesen) he possesses or is assumed to possess magical powers (tsav). In inter-compound relations at the level of the segment (kindred) he is his compound's spokesman. He does not participate in activities or uphold decisions which he cannot defend or are not acceptable to his compound. This is so because his position in the compound, however venerable, is not that of an autocrat. It rests more or less on his personality, ability and powers of persuasion. Autocratic exercise of authority runs counter

to the celebrated Tiv egalitarianism. If a member of the compound feels the partiarch is unjust in his dealings with him, he can escape to the compound of his maternal kinsmen, his (igba) where he establishes himself as a "sister's son". In an extreme case of disagreement between the partiarch and a number of persons in the compound, the compound may break up with the dissatisfied members going away to build their own compound and leaving the offending patriarch to "sit it alone". By such counteraction, the compound is able to impose limitations and checks on the way a head wields his authority.[1]

Beyond the compound lies the politics of the kindred and further afield that of the lineages. Within the kindred, the moot court (jir) is the most important institution for resolving conflict between compounds. It functions very much like the Ojila in Idoma society. The "man of the moot court" (or jir, pl. mbajiliv) is an elder highly

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[1] Bohannan, (1953) op. cit., pp.15-19.

knowledgable in the geneological histories of the segment and the members and is of fine oratory with great ppwers of persuasion and patience. He also supplements his knowledge of the group constitutionalism with possession of tsav. The jir reaches its decisions on a consensual basis. This is the only way out in a group that is fiercely egalitarian and which possesses no organised coercive apparatus for ensuring compliance with a verdict. Compliance here results from the sense of the justness of a decision, hence consensus is of paramount importance.[1] Tseayo disagrees with Downes (1953), Abrahams (1933) and Dewar that the patriarchal authority, (authority of elders) is the only form of authority habitually recognised by the Tiv. He argues that the ultimate executive and coercive authority is in the hands of the group as a whole as represented by the massed

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[1] Tseayo attributes this to the sovereignty of the (ityo), the corporate agnate, hence the deliberations and conclusions of the jir are normally accepted as binding on all. See J.I. Tseayo, Aspects of National Integration in Nigeria: The Tiv Case, Ph.d. Thesis, University of Sussex, 1973, p. 58.

meeting of the group (jir).[1] I can only point out that though the jir is a general assembly (parliament) of the group, it is the elders that play the dominant role in it. They set the pace and the tone of its deliberations.

The old men who sit in the jir in the daytime as 'or - u - soron - tar' (wise counsellors, Tseayo) or (repairers of the land, Dorward and Bohannan) are also thought to perform as witches (mbatsav) in the night. In Tiv magico-religious world view tsav, when possessed by good and community - spirited elders is used to the benefit of the society by its ability to neutralise the power of 'akombo' (disease, ill-luck) and the evil designs of wicked mbatsav. This naturally leads the Tiv to want to live under the umbrella of a venerable elder reputed to possess strong tsav and who is capable of giving protection. At the same time it is believed that an ambitious or evil elder sacrifices lives to acquire influence and these other lives have to come from his immediate agnates

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[1] Ibid., pp. 57-59.

(those of his compound) since it is also believed that the ability of tsav to harm or kill is not efficacious across agnatic lines. In other words, an mbatsav from one compound cannot kill in another unless he goes through a colleague in the second compound. This individual dilemma of seeking protection from a prominent man while at the same time fearing that his protector may act against him is a strand running through traditional Tiv patron-client relations. Every death, whatever the circumstances, is attributable to nefarious mbatsav designs.[1]

There are two major pressure groups in Tiv social relations. These are the age-set (kwagh) and the "igba" (maternal kinsmen). If a man has unending illness or ill-luck, his age mates and/or his maternal kinsmen will intervene by asking the man's ityo to institute an inquiry to discover the mbatsav tormenting the man. Before the crowded jir, the suspected mbatsav is forced by the community to

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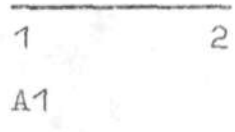
[1] See Price - D.R. Williams, "A case-study in ideas concerning disease among the Tiv," Africa, XXXII, No.2, April 1962, pp. 129-131.

submit to an anti-witchcraft ordeal by drinking a portion brewed from sasswood. The theory is that if a man vomited the sasswood he is innocent while death from it proves the guilt and the punishment for the mbatsav who died. According to the belief, sasswood gives immediate and irrevocable justice. In Idoma practice, both the accused and the accuser have to drink from the sasswood bowl. It is also acceptable for anyone of them to present a son or daughter to drink the sasswood on his behalf.

There is a social dilemma involved in any consideration of Tiv leadership and political engineering.



Fig. 3



In the diagram above, A and B are segments. When it is external relations between the two segments A1 is the overall leader of A. On the other hand, if it is an internal matter within A,

then A1 can only be the leader or spokesman for compound 1. The amount of influence A1 has in compund 2 depends on his personality and how often he has represented A. A1 is never expected to side 2 at 1's expense. It does appear that every Tiv leader or man of influence is a tight-rope walker. He has to maintain a delicate balance between the opposing demands of his compound and those of other compounds in his segment. The Bohannans see these two aspects of Tiv leadership as "against" and "within" or "foreign" and "domestic" affairs. They observe that unity within a segment is strongest when "foreign" affairs are concerned, while in "internal" affairs emergence of latent cleavages is most pronounced. It all means that a leader wields his greatest influence "within" when he is a leader "against."[1]

In the 19th century affluent Tiv, with the consent and help of their segments, began to journey to Jukunland to purchase titles patterned on those of the Jukuns. One of such titles is the

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[1]Bohannan (1953) op.cit., p. 32.

drum chief (tor u agbande).[1] However, the introduction of foreign-derived titles did not alter the fundamental structure of Tiv political institutions and social behaviour.

This rather general and brief discussion of the traditional socio-political organisations of the Idoma and the Tiv demonstrate the parallel nature of the web of social relations and institutions that maintained order and stability among the two peoples. There is no gradation and hierarchy in the social and political life of the Idoma and the Tiv. This contrasts sharply with the highly stratified system of the Northern emirates. When the British came they sought to eliminate the dispersed loci of power within these two groups and substitute them with centralised power and authority structure as in the emirate fashion. What now remains to be seen is how the Tiv and the Idoma each reacted to the British efforts and if they did, in what ways.

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[1] The institution of drum-chief (tor u agbande) has been attributed to the natural inclination of the Tiv to emmulate. The idea came from their association with the Jukun, a people with a well-developed kingly institution. See S.Akiga, op.cit., p. 365 and Makaa, op. cit., 149-150.

CHAPTER THREE

COLONIAL ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Idoma: the search for an administration

The British came as a conquering and subjugating imperial force. The area was "annexed" by force, either in actual fighting or by the display of force. Unlike in some of the Kingdoms and City-states in the south of Nigeria, no treaties of "friendship" and tradd were signed with the Idoma clans. It was only a question of direct military overrun of the various Idoma clans who fell like dominoes to the advancing British-led troops. The occupation of the area began about 1908, when two military forces moved from the south towards it. The Niger-Cross Expedition pushed into the southern marches of Idoma, while the Ankpa Expedition crossed into northern Idoma. There was little or no serious resistance from the local inhabitants of these areas. After being subjugated, southern Idoma was incorporated into southern Nigeria as part of the old Onitsha Province. Northern Idoma however, was declared part of the Muri Province of Northern Nigeria. A third military Expedition, the Igedde

Escort under Captain Maloney carried out military activities and was responsible for demarcating the southeastern boundary with Southern Nigeria by 1922.[1] However, military operations in Igedde did not come to an end until 1928 when the local resistance hero, Ogbuloko, fell. Northern and southern Idoma were combined to form Okpoga Division administered from Nsukka.[2] Later, it was transferred to Northern Nigeria as an administrative sub-division of the old Muri Province and, later of the new Benue Province. The administrative headquarters of the new division was brought down from Okpoga to Otukpo in 1924. The Division was split into 20 districts. Ichama became the 21st district when it was carved out of Okpoga in 1935 and when Uworku became a district in 1953, it brought the total number of districts to 22.

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[1] Ocheibi, op.cit., pp. 10-15.
[2] A.P.Anyebe, op. cit., p.3.

The British Administration set about imposing its rule on the new Division. Handicapped by a short supply of British officers the administration naturally had to rely on local personnel to help in establishing their hegemony over the people. One of the first actions the British took was to search and discover local people with whom they could work.[1] In all the three districts, Ugboju, Otukpo and Akpa which I am using as case studies of the Idoma situation, the institution of chieftaincy was in acute decline when the British arrived. For instance Otukpo, made up of three lineages, AiOgwuche, AiAgboko and AiOdaji previously had a single chief for the whole clan. However, because of rivalry, the institution in the latter half of the 19th century, had degenerated into separate chiefs for each of the lineages. The political situation was the same in Ugboju,

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[1] Heussler argues that the term "Anglo-African Government" is a much more apt description of the administration in Northern Nigeria than such phrases as "Indirect Rule" or "Colonial Government". I suppose Heussler's term stems from a belief that it was an administration based on cooperation and admiration between white and black. In some areas, this was not the case. See R.Heussler, The British in Northern Nigeria, London, O.U.P., 1968, p.XII.

where the three lineages of AiOko, AiOgwu and AiAgbaja each had its own chief and in Akpa with a lineage chief each for the Ifu-Akpa, Mbo and the Ekpari. In all these three districts, the British proceeded to centralise the chieftaincy but unfortunately for the indigenous institution, they made chiefs out of individuals who would not have been chiefs in traditional society. In Otukpo Ogbole, who was considered too young to be a chief, was preferred over other candidates like Oko Adeka and Ikwue, both of the AiAgboko lineage, Acha Echekwu and Idu Ogbaji, both from AiOgwuche lineage.[1] Perhaps the crucial element in favour of Ogbole was the fact that his half-brother was a messenger in the newly established native court. Well aware of his lack of traditional claim to the chieftaincy of the clan, Ogbole exploited the British military and administrative presence (the court, the native police (idangeli) and messengers) to suppress the opposition of the elders to him. Like all such novel chiefs everywhere, Ogbole was derogatorilly referred to by

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[1] Interview with E. Onobu, op.cit.

the people as the whiteman's chief (Och'umbeke). He carried out such new functions and duties like collecting taxes for the occupying power and recruiting labour for the construction of the Eastern Railway with the help of the police (idangeli). During this "interregnum", senior elders within the three lineages continued to perform certain traditional functions of ritual sacrifices and ceremonies and the settling of inter-kindred disputes. In Idoma some 'Och'umbeke' were able to legitimatize their rule with their people. In Ugboju, Amanyi's personality and tact won over the people and he was finally installed in the traditional way in 1912.[1] In Otukpo, Ogbole also became the 'land chief' (Och'aje) when he was given the traditional kingly bracelet (Oka) but it was with a good deal of administrative pressure. The major significance of the new power equation created by the British was that in any of the 22 districts in the land, power and authority had shifted from the Ojila and traditional elders to the handpicked Och'umbeke and finally to the colonial administration. Backed

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[1] See Amanyi, op.cit., p.10.

by British imperial might these new chiefs could afford to set aside with impunity the will of their respective communities. The development marked the end or destruction of the effectiveness of such an indigenous social and political institution like the Ojila. A clan head became more or less a British satrap in his district. In effect he was the chief executive, chief justice and chief legislator for his district. The British in their zeal to establish an "Anglo-African Government" ended up installing in offices men that lacked traditional eligibility for such offices. Their only qualification was that they were good collaborators with the British. Crowder and Ikime have argued that in a very real sense none of the chiefs who ruled under the British was legitimate since they derived their right or authority to rule from the British and not from the people over whom they were ruling.[1]

Three years after the headquarters of the new Idoma Division was brought down to Otukpo, the British administration established the Idoma Central

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[1] M.Crowder, & O.Ikime, (eds.), West African Chiefs: Their changing status under Colonial Rule and Independence, U.I.P., 1970.

Ojila. It was an endeavour aimed at centralising the divisional administration because up till then the districts had been governed separately. Essentially this central Ojila was to be a forum for the various district and clan heads. Some of the districts were fedefations of various clans. For instance, Onyagedde district was made up of four clans Awume, Agadagba, Okpiko and Onyagede; Ochekwu district comprised Iga, Oiji, Idada and Bopo. In a federated district only political and judicial affairs fell within the jurisdiction of the district head. All other matters as they related to traditional affairs were the responsibility of the Ojila of the respective clans that made up the federated district. However, most districts in the Division were single clan districts such as Otukpo, Akpa, Ugboju, Igwumale.

Established in 1927, the Central Council (Ojila) was intended to meet quarterly. It was gazetted as a superior Native Authority and also was to be the Appeal Court for the whole Division. For a number of reasons the experiment of creating

the Central Ojila was not a satisfactory one. Instead of convening quarterly as was intended, it met rather infrequently and this naturally affected its position as a superior Native Authority as well as its appellate judicial function. Secondly, there was perenial wrangling between the clan heads that constituted it. The original aim of establishing the Council was that it would be a stepping stone to an eventual paramount chieftaincy in the fashion and manner of the strong northern emirates. Thirdly, the leadership of the Council suffered one reverse after the other. In 1930 its first President, Enyi of Igwumale, was convicted of a criminal offence. Later, Elaigwu, the District Head of Ochekwu who assumed the presidency of the Council after him was assassinated in mysterious circumstances in 1933. Beset with all these problems, the British Administration lost faith in the experiment. First, the Council was divested of its judicial functions. This was followed by the creation in 1935 of Intermediate Area Courts of Grade 'C' status and these were given appellate jurisdiction in the same year.

This in effect reduced the Central Council to merely an advisory body. In 1940 the progressive decline of the Central Council reached its nadir when it was disbanded. Later, each district was reconstituted as a subordinate Native Authority.[1]

The internal organisation of the district varied from district to district and this was more so as some districts were federated while others were single-clan districts. The district head was the president of the Grade 'D' court in his district. From this court appeals went to the Intermediate Grade 'C' court. He was also the tax collecting authority as well as the head of the district administration which often amounted to no more than the court scribe, messengers and a small detachment of the local police force. The village head (Oteyi) played the various roles of a tax collector for his village, village councillor (Ochalia) and district court member. He frequently settled such civil cases as divorce suites between couples in his village out of court. This sort of

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[1] Interview with Odumu Ocheibi, Idoma N.A. Chief Scribe, 1946-50.

duties certainly reduced the workload of the district courts. The above described system of administration was what was to be found all over the Division and which was operative until 1947 when the various district and clan heads unanimously agreed to establish the office of a Paramount Chief of Idoma who was to function as the Sole Native Authority. Of course, this was a step in the direction of what the Administration had begun in 1927 but which had failed due to lack of understanding and cooperation between the Central Council members. What then accounted for this about turn?

Certainly since the first experiment in 1927, the political climate of the country had altered considerably by the 1940s. The new Richard's Constitution provided for a House of Chiefs in Kaduna for chiefs of the Northern Region. Also in this year (1947) the Attah of Igbirra, Alhaji Ibrahim, and the Attah of Igala, Ameh Obonyi, passed through Idoma for the first time. The Idoma Hope Rising Union (IHRU), a cultural association

of educated Idoma youths, took up the task of mobilizing the district heads on the necessity of the Division having its own paramount ruler in the House of Chiefs in Kaduna so as to enhance the respect and status of the Idoma people. The agitation appeared so logical in that their Tiv neighbours to the east had earlier on taken such a step by appointing Makeri Dzakpe as the first Tor Tiv. Thereafter, after consultations among themselves, the district heads put forward Ogiri Oko, the District Head of Adoka, to be the first Och'Idoma (chief of the Idoma) for life. The Colonial Administration accepted the selection and in 1949 he was given the staff of office as 2nd Class Chief. He was also made a member of the Northern House of Chiefs. The district heads of the then two Igedde districts of Oju and Ito protested on the ground that they were not Idoma and as such wanted their own separate Native Administration, with a chief equal in status to

the Och'Idoma.[1] However, they withdrew their letter of protest on the understanding that it would be written into the regulations for the appointment of the Paramount Ruler of the Division that the chieftaincy would rotate among the four Intermediate Areas of the Division.[2]

Response to Institutions created by the Colonial Administration

As noted earlier there was hardly any resistance, except the brief one by Ogbuloko in Igedde, to the establishment and imposition of British imperial hegemony on the Idoma clans. This was in spite of the fact that the British upturned some of the traditional social and political institutions of the people like the Ojila. Previously in traditional Idoma, political and social order revolved round an intricate web of

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[1]This was the second instance when the Igedde had demanded for separation. In 1944, when Governor Bourdillon was about to visit Otukpo, Obaike Ode wrote a petition requesting the separation of Igedde areas from the Idoma Division. For his pains, he lost his job as an N.A. Forest Guard. Interview with Obaike Ode.

[2]The 2nd and present Och'Idoma, His Highness A.A.Ukpabi, was the former District Head of Ito, one of the three Igedde districts in Idoma Division.

kinship ties, ancestral worship, respect for elders and the decision of the Ojila.[1] However, the British disregarded this set up and went on to institute their own form of political order based on formal courts and chiefs with warrant. In this new system the British handpicked - chief was the fulcrum of power and order. Initially it did polarise relations between the elders and these British agents but some of the agents like Ogbole in Otukpo and Amanyi in Ugboju were able to win over the people. An aspect of British colonial administration that helped to conciliate the Idoma was that the administration abandoned its policy of using "stranger" chiefs (often erstwhile Hausa messengers) early in Idoma. By the end of the first World War, the process of "Idomaization" had been accelerated.[2] This contrasted sharply with Tivland where for instance Audu dan Afoda, a Yoruba moslem, was ensconsed as the Chief of Makurdi for decades. Secondly, even though the chiefs appointed by the British were not truly traditional, the fact that

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[1] Elaigwu, (1973) op.cit.

[2] Majid, op.cit., p.66.

the insitution of chieftaincy itself was not otherwise desecrated helped to make the people reconcile themselves to it sooner than would have been the case.

However, a new kind of opposition to British sponsored institutions emerged after the election of the Och'Idoma in 1947. This opposition came basically from the Idoma Hope Rising Union. Beginning from about 1937. at the instigation and prodding from the British administration, the Idoma N.A. embarked upon a policy of sending bright young Idoma boys to the Methodist Teachers' College at Uzuakoli in Eastern Nigeria. It was a policy intended to produce educated Idoma men who would take over from the British and southern Nigerians the administration of the Idoma N.A. Among the very first to go to Uzuakoli were Odumu Ocheibi and Eineje Ameh. The two graduated in 1941 and entered the services of the N.A. immediately. Ocheibi was made the first indigenous Administrative Secretary (then called Chief Scribe), while Ameh became the Treasurer of the N.A. Other Idoma young men sponsored to Uzuakoli after them returned but did not enter the services of the N.A.. Some of these were Wilson Onazi, Edwin Ogbu, Adakole Ameh (Eineje Ameh's brother) and Wilson Oblu. Most of them sought employment with the Missions as school teachers. In the end this

Uzuakoli elite became the keenest and loudest critics of the N.A. and the Och'Idoma's administration. The strength of opposition increased when the Uzuakoli elite was joined by graduates of the Central Primary School, Otukpo. Prominent among this second group were Adeyi Ameh (Eineje Ameh's brother), Ogwiji Ikongbe, Audu Echono, Agbeje Omoha, Ellah Abogonye and others. The two groups combined to form the Idoma Hope Rising Union. The aim of the IHRU, apparent from its motto: "It Depends On Us", was to promote the educational, social and economic progress of the Division through mobilizing the Idoma people. It was towards this end that the Union spearheaded the movement for the creation of a paramount chief for Idoma in 1947. But within a year, the Union and the Och'Idoma had fallen out with one another. When the Och'Idoma was to be officially installed in 1949, four Hope Rising Unionists were remanded in custody to forestall any civil disturbances during the period of the installation ceremonies. One might ask-why and how did hostile relations develop between the Unionists and Ogiri Oko?

One of the areas of disagreement between the men in the IHRU and the Och'Idoma was the nature of the administration he headed. In 1948, a Central Council of four was elected to assist the Och'Idoma in the administration of the Division. Each councillor represented one of the four Intermediate Areas of the Division. The Chief and his Council were gazetted as a Central Grade 'B' Court empowered to hear appeal emanating from the native grade 'D' courts in the districts via the grade 'C' courts of the Intermediate areas. The four members elected to the Och'Idoma's Council and Court in 1948 were:

1. Adobunu Etuka - District Head of Agatu - North Intermediate Area
2. Obekpa Ejema - District Head of Otukpa - West Intermediate Area
3. Ebonyi - District Head of Agila - Southern Intermediate Area
4. Adikorobia Ugbem - Eastern Int. Area
5. Ocheibi Odumu - coopted member - Chief Scribe to Native Authority.

What was particularly galling and offensive to the IHRU members was the fact that apart from the coopted N.A. Chief Scribe, all the other members of the Council including the Och'Idoma himself were scions of the old elite - the district heads. Also these district heads were illiterate. They represented the entrenched conservative element of a society which the IHRU, through a vigorous action program , hoped to launch into rapid socio-economic development. The Union saw itself as a progressive instrument of social change and alleged that British administrative collusion with the old elite had kept its members out of participation in the Council.

This source of grudge was not removed when the term of service of the Council expired and four new members were appointed in 1952 as addition to the first set for a period of three years:

1. Amodu Ogwu - District Head of Ugboju - Northern Intermediate Area
2. Omakwu Ogwiji - District Head of Akpa - Southern Intermediate Area

3. Ekoja Ogaje - Court Member, Edumoga - Western Intermediate Area

4. Obaike Ode - Odiapa, Ito district - Eastern Intermediate Area

In 1954, the Idoma N.A. constitution was amended to provide for four Resident Councillors with each district electing one member to serve as a representative on the full N.A. Central Council. Corresponding to each of the four Intermediate Areas, the following were elected the four Resident Councillors:

1. Aba Akor - District Head of Orokam - Western Intermediate Area

2. Ajene Ukpabi - District Head - Ito - Eastern Intermediate Area

3. Omakwu Ogwiji - District Head - Akpa - Southern Intermediate Area

4. Audu Sule - M.H.R. - Northern Intermediate Area

Omakwu Ogwiji died early 1956. In the bye-election, Odang Ogenyi, from Agila district was elected as Resident Councillor in Otukpo for Idoma South. Odang Ogenyi triumphed over Edwin Ogbu, then just returned from Stanford University but who was staying in his district of Utonkon while waiting to enter

the Northern Regional Civil Service.

Unable to win postitions of power and influence in the Native Administration for its members from which they could translate the Union's progfessive program into concrete public action, the IHRU simply became the forum from which bitter criticisms of the Och'Idoma and his administration could be made. In petition after petition, as well as in the resolutions of its annual conferences, the Idoma Hope Rising Union called for the removal of the Ochi'Idoma and the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry to probe the conduct of his administration. For instance at the 7th annual conference of the IHRU held in Otukpo in 1957, a unanimous decision was taken calling on the Regional Government to institute, as a matter of urgency, a Commission of Inquiry into the affairs of the Idoma N.A. and in particular, the conduct of the Och'Idoma, Ogiri Oko. The conference viewed with gravity the attitude of the Regional Government over this question of inquiry which the Union had been pressing for a

long time.[1] For most of this period, the IHRU preoccupied itself with two things. It was waging a war against prostitution among Idoma girls found in the big Nigerian towns and secondly, it was engaged at home in a battle against corruption and venality in the Idoma Native Authority. In both fronts, it was a losing fight for the IHRU.

In an adroit move aimed at diffusing and diluting the IHRU opposition to him, the Och'Idoma masterminded the creation of a rival Idoma Union. This was the Idoma State Union (ISU). It was headed by the Och'Idoma's long-time friend and confidant, Omakwu Ogwiji, the district head of Akpa and also the Resident Councillor for the Southern Intermediate Area in Otukpo. Others prominent in the ISU were Adanu Omoha, the Administrative Secretary, Idoma N.A. and Audu Echono, the Secretary to the Och'Idoma's Council. These last two were related by blood to the Och'Idoma. Essentially, the ISU was an organisation of conservative elements in the Division--an association of chiefs, N.A. workers and others variously indebted to the

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[1] Nigerian Citizen, January 9, 1957, p.5.

Och'Idoma. The raison d'etre of the emergence of the Idoma State Union was to protect the person and the institution of the Och'Idoma from attacks at the hands of the Idoma Hope Rising Union. In its limited aim, the ISU was very successful. Though the attacks from the IHRU did not cease altogether, the existence of a rival organisation meant that persons dissatisfied with the IHRU could join the ISU, especially those seeking patronage from the N.A. or the Och'Idoma. The formation of the Idoma State Union in conjunction with its internal leadership crisis helped to accelerate the progressive decline of the IHRU in the years after 1955. Another factor that contributed to weaken IHRU's effectiveness was that by the middle 1950s a number of the IHRU men began to leave Otukpo for other towns like Kaduna, Zaria, Kano and Lagos in search of jobs. Though they set up branches in all these places, the dispersion aggravated by the lack of good communication meant that the end of the IHRU as an effective opposition group in local politics was in sight.

Thus, we can see that the shrewd and conservative Ogiri Oko was able to do two things at the same time. First, he outmaneuvered his foes in the IHRU by promoting a rival organisation that sought to bolster his rule. Secondly, he improved and strengthened his position vis-a-vis the clan and district heads. When these same clan heads had selected him as the Och'Idoma in 1947, they had assumed that he would just be a first among equals - a mere spokesman for the group. They were wrong It was probable that their wishful thinking arose out of the fact that the Idoma had had no previous experience of centralised administration. Hitherto each clan had been autonomous in pre-colonial Idoma and during much of the colonial period. However, through the sheer force of his personality as well as the power the British invested in him, Ogiri Oko became the effective head of the whole of Idoma, of both the IHRU radicals and the conservative clan heads.

Tivland: The British Coming

Unlike in Idoma, the first contacts of the Tiv with the British and other Europeans were commercial. These early contacts began in the second half of the 19th century. The Europeans came to Tiv country with the aim of exchanging their beads, iron bars, gun powder, mirrors, matchets and cotton cloth for Tiv commodities such as ivory, ginger, sheanuts, cotton and beniseed. Willie Wallace, of the Royal Niger Company (RNC) began setting up a number of trading stations along the Benue and Katsina-Ala rivers. Such Company trading posts included Abinsi, Agasha, Ibi and Palaver (which later became Katsina-Ala). The contacts did not prove very fruitful. Makaa maintains that the struggle between the RNC and the Tiv in this period, unlike the struggle between the Niger Delta States and the British, had nothing nothing to do with the terms of trade but that it was more or less a question of ignorance on the part of both the Tiv and the British in that neither group understood the motives of each other.[1] In the

[1] Makaa, op.cit., p.262.

year 1885, two of the Company's trading agents, Hoyland and Griffiths were killed at Agasha and Katsina-Ala respectively. The death of Hoyland and Griffiths seemed to confirm rightly or wrongly the impression first advanced by the people of Ojogo, followed by Baikie (1854), then by MacDonald (1891) and MocKler - Ferryman (1892) that "the ways of the 'Mitshis' are treacherous and bear malice towards the whiteman. . . . always notorious for their lawlessness and their treachery."[1] The Royal Niger Company felt itself obliged to summon its constabulary detachments up to the Benue river to deal with the "intractable" Tiv. This meant taking military reprisals against the Tiv for the two killings and other hostile incidents that threatened peaceful and commercial relations between the Tiv and the RNC. In 1886 the Company sent forces to avenge the deaths of Hoyland and Griffiths. The forces attacked and destroyed several riverrain settlements along the Katsina-Ala, the region in which they believed the Company's officials

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[1] Ibid., p.264.

had been slain. In 1890 the RNC decided to station a garrison of its constabulary in the area as a kind of deterrence against the 'stubborn' Tiv. And it is no wonder that between 1895 and 1899, that the Tiv featured very prominently in the Company's military campaigns.

By the time Lugard raised the Union Jack at Lokoja in 1900, consequent upon the revocation of the Company's Charter the year before, proclaiming the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, opinion was already divided on how the Tiv country was to be "penetrated and pacified". The most senior British administrators then, including Lugard himself, favoured the "penetration" of Tivland by force - "to march troops through the Tiv country and open the area for trade and commerce".[1] This group was obviously reacting to the reputation of lawlessness

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[1] Ibid., p. 272. Others like Lord Scarbrough pressed for a policy of commercial penetration under government protection, with pacification through the influence of 'legitimate trade'. See Dorward, op. cit., p. 141.

and unfriendliness towards foreigners picked up by the Tiv from their earlier dealings with the Royal Niger Company.[1] However the Home Government, ever mindful of the costs involved, recommended a more cautious and peaceful approach to the Tiv question.

The "penetration" and "annexation" of Tivland by British forces could be seen as falling into phases. The first phase lasted between 1906 to 1911. This covered all the regions in the southern and eastern marches of the Benue and Katsina-Ala Rivers. The other two phases commenced about 1910 and ended in 1914. Within this period the districts of Central Tivland and the areas north of the Benue were "penetrated". By 1914, almost every district in the area was experiencing some form, however nominal, of British control.

One of the notable incidents while the British were attempting to establish their hegemony over the

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[1] "Particularly useful were the Niger Company men who stayed on with Lugard - Wallace, Burdon, Hewby, Cargill, Festing and Ruxton - thus providing continuity of experience and attitude." See Heussler, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

Tiv was the Abinsi Raid of 1906. Abinsi had been one of the several trading and collecting stations established by the RNC in the late 19th century. As time went on, the Hausa traders gained dominance over the depot from the original Jukun inhabitants. Friction arose between the two and in 1906 the Jukun solicited the Tiv for military aid against the Hausa. The Tiv, probably habouring anti-Hausa sentiments because of the virtual monopoly of Abinsi commercial life by the latter, responded enthusiastically to the Jukun call. In the fighting that took place 76 Hausa perished and about 113 were taken captive. The Tiv went beyond their original assignment to attack and loot the Niger Company's store in the town. The British were incensed and they decided to teach the "lawless Tiv" a lesson once and for all. This decision meant that they had to commit a larger force in Tiv territory than they had done before. A force of 38 officers, 13 British NCOs, about 600 soldiers supported by artillery and maxim gun units, 1,000 carriers was put together under Lt. Col. Hasler to carry out the Tiv campaign.[1]

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[1]Makaa, p.284.

The British by the sheer strength of the Hasler task force were determined to punish severely continued Tiv defiance of authority. The Hasler punitive expedition succeeded in driving the Tiv out of Abinsi and pushing in about 30 miles south of Abinsi. But that was about all it had to show for its pains. First, the Satiru rising near Sokoto meant that the forces in Tivland had to be redeployed to the far North. Secondly and worse, the Tiv had the exasperating military tactic of not engaging the British forces the Tiv warriors would just melt into the bush, drawing the British further and further into the unknown interior. As far as the British were concerned, the Tiv had the frustrating strategy of not coming forward to fight or coming forward to make peace with them. Tiv defiance of British military power succeeded in only hindering and delaying the eventual British occupation of their territory. It was inevitable that their independence which they cherished so much would come to an end sooner or later. By 1914 this had come true.

led troops in open and direct battles. At the approach of British

Two British officers were largely responsible for the establishment of British influence in Tivland. About this time, the Tiv area was placed in the administrative sphere of Muri Province, with Captain Ruxton as the Resident and Capt. Gordon as his assistant in Tivland. The two men learnt of some influential people that lived in Tivland and tried to cultivate their friendship before attempting to go into the interior of Tiv country. In short, they were advocating the gradual and peaceful penetration of the Tiv area by using friendly Tiv as intermediaries with their matrilineal kinsmen, their "igba". These "sisters' sons" were to allay the fears of the compounds and help to persuade the patriarchs to consult with Gordon.[1] With this method, Gordon was able to spread British influence in Tivland faster and more amicably than would have been the case.

After this Gordon was faced with the problem of establishing an administration in this vast territory. As he traversed Tivland Gordon, wherever he went, appointed headmen to oversee British interests in the area. Ruxton and Gordon intended to

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[1] Dorward, op.cit., p.143.

lay the foundation of a native administration based on the kindred council (jir) - the traditional institution through which the Tiv habitually ordered their society. However because of strong pressure from Temple, then acting Governor, to introduce taxes the district officers were forced to disregard the kindred councils which had a time-consuming approach to making and executing decisions and increasingly came to rely on the headmen who initially were no more than spokesmen of the kindred councils.[1] At this time effective administration was gauged from the tax returns. The first taxes to be collected in cash affected only the Hausa traders at Katsina-Ala in 1909. The sum of £30 was collected that year. Tiv people did not start the payment of taxes until 1910 and it began in the district of Ukum, owing to its closeness to Wukari, and secondly, a section of Ukum, Rumbur was already being governed as part of Wukari and had being paying taxes since 1906.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 150.
[2] Makaa, p. 371.

Ruxton did not stay long to see his policies through in Tivland. He left his post as Resident of Muri Province in 1914. The arrival of Freemantle as Resident, coupled with Palmer as Lieut. Governor, represented the dark ages of colonial administration for the Tiv. Palmer did not attempt to conceal the fact that he revered the royalty of the centralised northern emirates. Thus, he urged that the Tiv be divided and one half placed under the Jukun, a group who had enjoyed a great imperial past and who possessed a well-developed kingly institution. There was no doubt in Palmer's mind that the Jukun were a superior race to their Tiv neighbours. Freemantle proceeded to create a new system of administration in which he appointed district heads who were bestowed with all the power at the disposal of the British. Ruxton's system of administering the Tiv through their own kindred councils now stood abandoned. In 1926, after effecting this reorganisation, the old Katsina-Ala division was put together with Ibi division and the Jukun territory under the Aku of Wukari as Wukari Division. The rest of Tivland remained as Abinsi Division.

Palmer's policy of placing the Tiv under the Jukun was singularly unsuccessful. "The Jukun were simply unable to govern the Tiv in their territory and on their own part, the Tiv disregarded what little authority the Aku Uka tried to impose."[1] Actually Gordon had earlier on counselled the Administration against reliance on the Jukun to help them govern the Tiv - "it appears that there is little chance of the Jukun kingdom of being much use in the administration of the country. . . . it might be possible if the Sarkin Wukari were supported by force to persuade the Munshi to obey him, but it would be a very long work and would have many setbacks."[2] Palmer and Freemantle simply ignored this well-founded advice.

The chiefs and district heads[3] appointed by Freemantle and recognised by the British administration turned out (as was to be expected) to be men

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[1] Dorward, op.cit., p.206.

[2] Gordon cited in Makaa, p.377.

[3] "The institution known as Tor u agbande (drum chief) was discovered and these being erroneously believed to be the nearest equivalent to chiefs were made District Heads and in some cases given staff of office of 5th class chiefs." See White Paper on the Government Policy for the Rehabilitation of the Tiv N.A., Kaduna, 1965, p.2

who had no qualification for traditional Tiv roles of influence and authority. This was a general problem of the early British administration wherever (especially among people of lineage segmentation) it sought to use indigenous personnel.[1] The closest institution the Tiv had to chiefs was the tor agbande (drum chief), an institution which according to Bohannan and Dorward was declining irretrievably when the British came. Makaa disputed this assertion and argued that the 'utor agbande' were still influential but had remained in the background when the British finally arrived because they had masterminded the resistance to British penetration of Tivland, and therefore were unwilling to reveal their identity when the British began looking for indigenous people to help them govern the area. Though they remained in the background, Makaa added that in the first few years of British rule, it was the 'utor agbande' or the elders who continued to exercise real influence in the land and not the new district heads - "they had tight

[1] For a similar view see A.E. Afigbo, The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria, 1891-1929, London, Longmans Group Ltd., 1972.

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control of the young men appointed as the British agents and it apparently made the early administration weak because of the dual authority that existed in the land."[1]

As earlier said, Freemantle gave substantial power to the district heads he appointed for the execution of such functions as tax collection, arbitration in disputes without recourse to the traditional moot court (jir) and the authorization of safe conduct to people in transit through their areas. The emergence of these chiefs without the restraining influence of community will inevitably led to the abuse and the autocratic use of power which was foreign to the Tiv. The introduction of taxation helped to fuel the alienation between the people and the district heads, more especially as chiefs were directly responsible for tax collection for the alien colonial administration. The process of tax gathering entailed extreme hardship and suffering for defaulters and those unable to pay. These developments resulted in stress and tension among the people, a tension which was frequently manifested in

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[1]Makaa, pp. 331-332.

witchcraft charges and countercharges and in the cult movements that adorn Tiv intra- social and political relations between 1926 to 1943. According to one source, a reason for the apparent growth of the despotic powers of the District heads was the establishment by Rowe in 1918 of Native Courts under warrant which completely deprived the elders of the opportunity of participating in the judicial processes of their districts. The rule of some of the district chiefs was so notorious that even the British who were propping them up felt compelled to take drastic action against them. Four notorious autocrats, Abuul Benga of Ukum, Ugba of Ugondo, Moji of Mbara and Abagi of Shangev-Tiev were all relieved of their duties.[1] This corrective measure helped to improve the image and the quality of the British administration in the eyes of the Tiv people. It appeared that the British had begun to take stock of their policies and administration in Tivland because in 1927, they proceeded to establish a Central Council for all the district heads in Abinsi Division under the presidency of Audu Dan Afoda, the Sarkin Makurdi. Because

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[1] Ibid., pp. 385-91.

the experiment appeared to work, a similar Central Council was established for Katsina-Ala Division under the chairmanship of Jato Aka, chief of Turan district. These central councils were also judicial bodies with the status of Grade 'B' native courts and were given the powers to hear appeals from the district courts.

When Downes took over as the officer in charge of Tivland, he began by undertaking a drastic administrative reorganisation program. He aspired to construct an administrative structure that would be as near as possible to indigenous Tiv social and political institutions. A new three-tiered Council system was laid out for Tivland. The first tier was the Kindred Council, with a spokesman for the elders of the kindred. Then there was a Clan Council, comprising of spokesmen drawn from the various kindred councils in the clan area. The clan councils were Grade 'D' courts. The third and final tier was the Tiv Tribal Council, made up of representatives from all the clan councils in Tivland. In 1933, Katsina-Ala and Abinsi divisions were brought together to form the new Tiv Division.

Gboko was constructed in 1934 as the headquarters for the Tiv Division. The Tiv Tribal Council met here annually.

According to Dorward this councilliar system soon grew moribund for a variety of reasons.[1] First, there was a proliferation of clans from 34 (1933) to 57 (1936). Secondly, there was rivalry and division over local issues between members of the clan councils. Most important of all, the councils at each level began to lose their authority and power to the spokesmen. The "Nyambuan" cult movement which engulfed Tivland in 1939, was interpreted to mean the failure of the Downes' scheme in the districts. With a view to the reorganisation of the administration as well as reducing their ignorance concerning the tradition they were dealing with the British ordered MacBride to conduct investigations into the traditional

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[1] See Makaa, op.cit., pp. 444-456 for a rejection of Dorward on this point. The White Paper on the Coomassie Commission supported Dorward's view: "an attempt was made to build up a concilliar system using the elders with the kindred spokesmen as delegates from, or servants of, the elders. This did not work for the prestige of the spokesmen gained from their executive authority and their close contacts with the administration placed them in a position of superiority and they increasingly ignored the elders in carrying out their duties." p.3.

organisation of the Tiv people. According to MacBride's findings, the true rulers of the Tiv were the patriarchs or lineage "fathers". In 1942, he proceeded to "abolish" the Downes' scheme based on the kindred councils and "replace" it with his own based on the system of lineage "fathers". Makaa had this to say on this seeming reorganisation. "He was ironically, however, restating the same thing as Downes. His idea of having "patriarchs" in the Clans whether at the highest level, the tar council, or at the intermediate level of the kindred council, was still centred on elders who were to be chosen to serve in these positions as had been the case with the Downes' scheme. The words "fathers", "patriarchs", "spokesmen" etc. mean the same. They all refer to people, and the people who have power in the society to determine who is a "father" or "patriarch" were the elders themselves. And that was what the Downes' plan provided for the people."[1] Every clan or district had a tor (chief) and every kindred had an 'ortaregh'. The only innovation of MacBride that

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[1]Makaa, p. 472.

was not Downes was the creation of the Intermediate Councils for Tivland.[1] They were five, each comprising a number of Clans having a remote common ancestor. The Council had the power of a Native grade 'C' court, serving as an appeal court for all the clans in the Intermediate area. The Council was made up of all the chiefs (utor) from all the clans and these utor in turn elected a senior leader among them who took the superficial title of "Ter". The five Intermediate Councils were:

Jecira	with headquarters	at	Vandeikya
Jemgbar	"	"	" Ambor
Kwande	"	"	" Manor
Iharev-Masev-Nongov	"		" Abinsi
Ukum-Shitire-Tongov	"		" Sankara

and the following people were elected as the 'Ter' for the five Intermediate areas:

Jemgbar	Mkovul Jegera
Jecira	Feese Akpeye
Kwande	Ge Akpa

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[1] MacBrides' reorganisation assumed that there was a larger indigenous Tiv administrative unit than the clan. Thus the Septs (ten of them) were created in 1942. In 1952 they were however converted into the five Intermediate Councils. White Paper, op.cit., p.8.

Iharev-Masev-Nongov Agaigbe

Ukum-Shitire-Tongov Kukwa.

One of the beneficial dividends from creating the Intermediate Councils was that they had the capacity to deal with some of the matters that previously left the district level straight to the Central Council in Gboko. Released from some of the mundane district issues, the Tiv Central Council (Jirtamen) in its annual meetings began to apply itself to other matters affecting Tivland. One of such issues was the vexing question of a Tor Tiv that began to gain momentum especially so after the Second World War. Later, the Tiv Progressive Union took up the agitation for the desirability of having a great 'Tor' for the whole of Tivland.[1] With all the pressure from below, the British administration which was not really opposed to the idea gave in and in 1946, the Jirtamen made the selection. It picked Makeri Dzakpe, an ex-Sergeant Major in the WAFF and then the Tiv N.A.

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[1] The T.P.U. wrote a petition in 1945 calling for the creation of the Tor Tiv. Because of this petition the Secretary General of the T.P.U., Deem Kpum was transferred out of Tivland by the S.D.O., MacBride. Interview with Deem Kpum.

Police Chief in preference to Gondo Aluor, the Chief Scribe, Tiv N.A.. Aluor was made the Deputy Tor Tiv. This arrangement was considered wise because while Dzakpe hailed from the Ipusu section of the Tiv geneological tree, Aluor came from the other half, Chongo. In 1947, Dzakpe was formally installed as the first Tor Tiv and was gazetted as a member of the Northern House of Chiefs of 1st Class Status.

Tiv Reaction to Colonial Administration: the upheavals - 1939, 1942, 1948

British presence in Tivland right from the start was marked with a series of schizophrenic approaches as to how the people would be administered. This, in turn produced from the Tiv people hostile responses at times, unfortunately earning them such epitaphs as "ungovernable," "stubborn", "turbulent" - a reputation that they have not been able to live down. Early British officers like Ruxton and his assistant Gordon meant well for the people. They sought to establish an administration that came nearest to what the people understood in their traditional system. The two men, however, did not receive the required free hand and latitude from their

superiors to pursue their goals. Freemantle, who took over from Ruxton, in conjunction with Palmer, then Lt. Governor, pursued policies that were bound to antagonise the Tiv and deny the administration the people's cooperation. The group of people appointed to work with the British as district heads were unacceptable to the people because they lacked the traditional standing for wielding influence and authority. The British had no alternative but to back them to enable them carry out the duties given to them. Rowe, the District Officer had this comment about the headman of Mbatierev District: "the present headman is Bayama but his authority is nominal, but he could be made to have more authority with British support."[1] It was no wonder that such appointees earned the scorn of their people and were referred to without affection as the whiteman's chief (tor butel). In addition, other measures carried out by Freemantle and Rowe were bound to affect Tiv attitude to the administration and perhaps leave a lasting scar. First, Rowe ordered all Tiv living in Wukari division to return to Tivland by 1918. With Tiv

[1] District Officer Rowe cited in Makaa, p. 341.

migratory and farming habits, this was plainly a futile measure and it was no surprise that the order was later rescinded. Another administrative muddle from the point of view of the Tiv people was the status of Makurdi. Though like Abinsi, Makurdi was situated in the heart of Tivland, it was right from the beginning a strangers' settlement. These strangers were mainly Hausa. Perhaps on the basis of this, the British appointed Audu Dan Afoda, a moslem who had been headman during the construction of the Bridge, as Sarkin Makurdi and later, also made him the ruler of the Masev and Iharev areas surrounding the town. When the British administration created the Abinsi Divisional Central Council which was made up of all the district heads in the Division in 1927, Afoda was made its president to the annoyance but acquiescence of its Tiv 'utor' members. But after Afoda died in 1946 and his son asked to be made the new Sarkin Makurdi Tiv patience, never known to be excessive was finally exhausted and it led to the Makurdi Riots of 1947. The Tiv, in effect, were protesting the dominant Hausa influence in the town. The situation was never satisfactorily resolved.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Makurdi as a sub-N.A. dominated by the Hausa elements in the town, continued to wage an unending feud with the Tiv N.A. in Gboko.

The "Namaaka" or "hand over" movement of 1929, initiated and organised by ignorant but overzealous British administrative officers brought out clearly the lack of understanding of Tiv institutions and religion which had afflicted the administration right from its inception. Taking at face value the lurid tales told the district officers about Tiv magico-religious powers (tsav) and its practitioners (mbatsav), they launched a hopeless and ludicrous crusade aimed at stamping out what they perceived as cannibalism and fetishism among the people. The elders suspected of being the repository of tsav activities suffered enormous hardship and humiliation at the hands of the British-directed "dogari". By the time the administration realised its folly, considerable damage had been inflicted on the Tiv people. The elders lost a lot of their respect before the younger Tiv and in a culture built around respect for elders, this was disastrous for the

stability of social relations.

Two years prior to the "Namaaka" movement, the British took one of their most far-reaching decisions in Tivland. They abolished the traditional exchange marriage (kwase yamen sha ingor). In 1927 the district heads of Abinsi Division, under administrative pressure and direction, rubberstamped the decision to abolish exchange marriage. Both Dorward and Makaa hold the D.R.C.M. (Dutch Reformed Church Mission) directly responsible for this action - "under mounting pressure from the missionaries and the younger Tiv, Palmer resolved to introduce a system of bridewealth marriage" and "the abolition of the traditional system of marriages was the work of the missionaries: the Dutch Reformed Church Mission."[1] The development was significant in several respects. It meant that the authority and influence of elders stood greatly undermined. The alliance of youth and the missionaries had won. The new money economy encouraged the growth of such crops as beniseed and soya beans and gave young Tiv the opportunity to make money independent of the elders.

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[1] See Dorward, op.cit., and Makaa, op.cit., p. 396.

This was more so during the construction of the Eastern Railway and the building of the Makurdi Bridge. Unfortunately but inevitably emphasis began to shift to material considerations among the Tiv at the expense of human relations. Previously the exchange marriage with its web of mutual social obligations, for example, son-in-law duties to his father-in-law and his relations and vice versa, helped to keep individuals from indulging in practices that might break up or bring dishonour to their families.[1]

There are as many interpretations of the cult movements that interspersed the British administration in Tivland as there are scholars and administrative officials who have worked in Tiv Division. The most serious of these movements, "nyambuan" or "beef cult" began in 1939. Ostensibly the movement was supposed to prevent 'mbatsav' from the misuse of their power by protecting innocent people lacking in tsav power. It was also to render corpses unfit so that the mbatsav would be unable

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[1] Probably inevitable and though not limited to Tivland, this development destabilized Tiv society on a scale not known before: "the elders who were entitled and obliged to use tsav for the protection of the tar were on the one hand blamed by young men for not successfully doing their duty and on the other hand were resisted by young men who used the newly available opportunities (in marriage, for instance) to evade traditional obligations and sanctions and to move society in directions that the elders inevitably resisted." J.O'Connell, review of Tiv Religion by Capt.R.M.Downes, in Savanna, Vol.I., June, 1972, p. 127.

to "eat" them.

The British saw the whirlwind nature in which the movement spread in Tivland in terms of their administration. It was understood by them to signal the failure of the administration in the rural areas: the collapse of the Downes' scheme. This official view resulted in MacBride's investigation of Tiv traditional organisation and later, his much trumpeted "reorganisation" of the Tiv administration. Dorward was unequivocal in his contention that 'Nyambuan' was essentially an anti-authority movement directed against those Tiv who were functioning as the spokesmen in the Downes' scheme. In Dorward's own words, "the movement was directed against the clan spokesmen and "executive officials", the respresentatives of the colonial government. Though there were no physical attacks ..., during nyambuan the Tiv not only attempted to overthrow the representatives of colonial authority, but they tried to establish an alternative

organisation of their own".[1] The cult members established their own "native courts" and appointed their own tax collectors.

Dorward's view of the motives of the 'Nyambuan' movement was very akin to the official attitude, an interpretation which Makaa did not hesitate to challenge. According to him, "the Nyambuan movement of 1939 should be considered basically as a religious movement - as an anti-mbatsav in Tiv society and a partial demonstration against the increasing missionary (DRCM) interference in the vital aspects of life of the people".[2] He argued that Nyambuan, like 'hoyo,' 'ijov' and 'kena' before it and 'ivase,' 'kumendur' after it, was one in a series of nativistic movements centred on the containment of mbatsav activities and therefore saw no reason to view nyambuan separately from the others.

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[1] D.C.Dorward, "The Development of the British Colonial Administration Among the Tiv" African Affairs Vol.68, No.273, 1968, pp.375-376. See other views similar to Dorward's: 'Nyambuan' was attributed to the "greed and dishonesty of the spokesmen", - "for practical purposes all administration came to a halt ....the cult started appointing its own officers and holding its own trials." White Paper, op.cit., p.3 and, "the cult was at its heart an attempt to reject the colonial arrangements: they did this in the activities of the nyambuan by setting up rival and parallel institutions", Tseayo, op.cit., p.71.

[2] Makaa, op.cit., pp. 463-466.

Even at the risk of being accused of flogging a dead horse, it must be stated again that the tension that arose during the colonial period as a direct result of the introduction of new forms of organisational and technological change seriously dislocated social relations within Tiv society. The uncertainty of the new relations (still inchoate) led the people to place a corresponding emphasis on the evil aspect of tsav and this consequently giving rise to a series of witch-hunting in the land. Tiv notions of leadership, power and influence are heavily impregnated with magico-religious beliefs and as such, it is difficult to see nyambuan only as a religious outburst and no more. The Bohannans noted that "political troubles among the Tiv take the shape of witchhunts",[1] and therefore concluded that 'nyambuan' was a revolt against the established Native Authority.

The Idoma and the Tiv under Colonial Rule

There is no doubt that Tivland experienced a chequered colonial administration. British administrative officers in Tiv could not agree among themselves on a common policy to be adopted in governing

[1] Bohannan, op.cit., pp. 38-39.

the people. At the beginning it was the policy of Ruxton and Gordon versus that of Palmer, Freemantle and Rowe. Later, it was the Downes' scheme versus the MacBride reorganisation. There is no argument that compared to Idoma, the British failed in Tiv. The series of nativistic uprisings that spanned several decades testify to the breakdown of British policies in Tivland. Did this failure leave a lasting injury on administrative and political structures in the Division? To what extent can it be said that Tiv political behaviour in the period under study was influenced and shaped by this failure? Can the Tiv civil disturbances of 1960 and 1964 be legitimately seen as extensions of the old struggles in the 1920s, 30s and 40s - that is, is it possible to seek a linkage between British colonial policy and modern Tiv political turbulence? These are some of the pertinent questions that must be answered to gain a proper perspective of Tiv politics in the period under consideration.

However similar culturally, societies differ in the way they try to cope with problems ensuing from human interaction. The intensity with which a

group rejected or acquiesced in the new situation did not merely depend on its precolonial socio-political setting but also on how the new rulers (both the British and their Nigerian agents) conducted themselves. The British colonial administration did not and perhaps could not understand the social relations within the society but had to govern it. The fact that tension did not spill out in the physical terms of riots or religious upheavals, though not a conclusive argument that Idomaland had an excellent colonial administration, nonetheless meant that compared to the Tiv, it had better colonial rule. "The main contrast with the Tivs on this subject has been that with the policy of Indirect Rule of the British, the attempt to create a chief has been more readily acceptable to the Idomas than to the Tivs, the possible explanation being the existence of an ideology of chieftaincy amongst the Idomas but not the Tivs."[1] It is significant to remember that when the Och'Idoma was

[1] B.J. Dudley, Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria, London, Frank Cass, 1968, p.61.

to be selected in 1947, the Central Ojila made up of clan and district heads simply picked one of their colleagues, Ogiri Oko as the first Och'Idoma. But in Tivland, none of the two contenders for the Tor Tiv in 1946 was a clan or district head. What took place in Idomaland in the 1950s was that the coalition of elders (the Och'Idoma and the chiefs) and the administration won over the youths who organised themselves in the Idoma Hope Rising Union. In Tivland, it was a compromise between the educated people in the Tiv Progressive Union and the elders, symbolised by the selection of a T.P.U. man as Deputy Tor Tiv.

CHAPTER FOUR

NATIONALISM, REGIONALISM AND THE MIDDLE BELT

The Nationalist Fervour and the Approach of Independence

A worthwhile discussion of minority politics and agitations in the Middle Belt or in any other minority area must be prefaced by a discussion, however brief, of two things. First, one has to consider the movement and the constitutional debates that led to the gaining of independence in 1960 and secondly, one has to engage in a consideration of the regional context of the minority issue.

In Nigeria, the 1940s marked the beginnings of a determined and coherent nationalist ferment with the sole aim of overthrowing British imperial rule of the country. As was to be expected, this social and political awakening began in the south among a stratum of Nigerians that had acquired some form of Western education locally or who had returned from Europe and America with the so-called "golden fleece". It is certain that the polyethnic contour of the country determined the shape and structure of this political ferment. It led to the formation of exclusive ethnic cultural and social organisations and

later, some of these organisations metamorphosed into political parties. One of the first[1] of these ethnic cultural movements was the Ibo Federal Union (later Ibo State Union, 1948) which was formed about 1944. In Kalu Ezera's words, this union sought the "solidarity and educational development of the Ibos", so that the Ibo nation would catch up with and if possible, surpass the Yoruba who at this time had the lead in educational and social development.[2] Later other ethnic unions, in part as a reaction to the formal declaration of collective Ibo intent and identity in the Ibo Federal Union, emerged. Some of such unions were the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (Congress of Oduduwa Descendants), spear-headed by Awolowo and other Yoruba students in London in 1945, the Edo National Union, Itsekiri National Union and others. It is reasonable to see the emergence of the Tiv Progressive Union, the Idoma Hope Rising Union, the Birom Progressive Union and others of such movements

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[1] I think the distinction of being the first of these ethnic unions actually belong to the Ibibio State Union, which emerged in the late 1930s.

[2] Kalu Ezera, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria, Cambridge, C.U.P. 1964 (1964) p.91.

in the Middle Belt area about this time as part of the general political awareness that was then gathering momentum in the country. With the formation of the Jamiyyar Mutanen Arewa (Society of Northern Peoples) in 1948, it could be said that the process of political awakening had reached every corner of the country.

A series of Constitutions (1947, 1951, 1954) and Constitutional Conferences (1950, 1953, 1954 and 1958) dot the polittcal landscape of the era immediately before Independence in 1960. The legalistic and formal aspects of these documents and events have been adequately covered by other more competent writers[1] and as such, I will do no more than treat them as they related to the minorities and especially, the Middle Belt State issue.

Following a string of unpleasant events that had culminated in the General Strike of 1945, the Richard's Constitution was promulgated in 1947. Even though officially it was expected to stay in force

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[1] See Kalu Ezera, op.cit., O.I. Odumosu, The Nigerian Constitution: History and Development, London Sweet & Maxwell, 1963; and O.Ohonbamu, The Nigerian Constitution and its Review: A Guide, Onitsha 1963.

for at least nine years, this constitution was not destined to live long. For a number of reasons,[1] it was universally opposed by all shades of Nigerian nationalist opinion. When Macpherson arrived in the country as Governor-General in 1948, he realised that he had to apply himself quickly to the political problems that had been created or magnified by the Richard's Constitution. Consultations at all levels were instituted in 1949 as part of the revision process, which eventually led to the Ibadan Constitutional Conference of 1950. The deliberations at Ibadan formed the basis of the new constitution that came into force in 1951. The Macpherson Constitution provided for representative legislatures both at the centre and in the regions. These new legislatures were to be entirely composed of elected Nigerians. The method of election was to vary in

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[1] Apart from its substantive defects, nationalist objections to the constitution centred around the fact that it was brought into being without consultation and this objection was later linked with denunciation of the so-called "4 obnoxious ordinances". See, S.Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, Berkeley, U.C.P., 1963 (1958), pp. 275-81 and J.Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics, London, Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1966, pp. 22-26.

the different Regions but the basic principle was to be election through electoral colleges beginning at the primary level of the district to the final college at the provincial level which elected members to the Regional Houses of Assembly. The Regional Houses in turn, selected some of their members to the Central Legislature in Lagos. All adult taxpayers were eligible to vote "if they were British subjects or British protected persons".[1]

"At first, it appeared that the new Constitution would work, though some felt that it could not long survive and said so. Even at the beginning it was the end."[2] In 1953, a crisis arose over the issue of self-government. The Council of Ministers which was the executive of the Central Government was divided against itself. Four Action Group Ministers resigned and soon it was necessary and urgent for a new and perhaps lasting solution to be found for Nigeria's political problems. This led to the London Constitutional Conference of 1953, which was intended to find a temporary solution and

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[1] Colonial Office Report on Nigeria, for the year 1950, p. 3.

[2] Abiodun Aloba, The Nigerian Year Book, 1957, p.7.

to remove such provisions of the Macpherson Constitution as had made it impossible to work. The Conference and later, the constitution that sprang from it did this and much more: it "strengthened the Regional Governments and raised doubts in the minds of a large body of the Nigerian public as to whether the strength of the Region was not increased at the expense of the Federation."[1] The Civil Service was regionalised and so was the Judiciary. Specific subjects were assigned to the Federal Government, while residual powers passed to the Regions.

Regional autonomy as described above and pursued relentlessly by the major ethnic groups was regarded by the minority groups to be "the removal of safeguards against majority group domination - a security they had come to rely upon during the colonial period".[2] This fear was especially pronounced with the approach of independence. Their fears were the other side of those which the majority groups had of one another and which had led them to

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[1] Ibid., p.7.

[2] Sister Ann-Marie Nelson, Constitutionalism and Nigerian Nationhood: A factor in the Process of Nation-building, Fordham University, 1969, Ph.d. Thesis, p. 135.

seek security in a federation with a weak centre.

Just before the 1957 London Constitutional Conference, which had been delayed for a year because of the Foster-Sutton Inquiry into the affairs of the African Continental Bank, the three Regional Premiers, who also were the leaders of their respective political parties, met to discuss the agenda for the conference and the issue of minority agitation for the creation of more states. The joint memoranda which they drafted on the latter point and circulated to minority group representatives constituting 1/3 of the conference delegates indicated an approval of the creation of new political units out of existing Regions "provided these were in accord with the principles pf self-determination, cultural affinity, geographical adjacency and economic viability".[1] Unfortunately the memoranda never reached the conference table. Earlier on, it had been agreed that the first order of business was to be the precise date for national independence. Lennox-Boyd, the Colonial Secretary who chairmaned the Conference, had told the delegates that the British Government could

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[1] Ibid., p. 136.

consider the granting of Independence to Nigeria in 1960 only if pressure in the territory had not resulted in the creation of new states and in addition, if the country conducted itself properly and with decorum in the General Elections scheduled for 1959.[1] The memoranda on the creation of states was then withheld so that the issue of Independence, which was the prime concern of the nationalists would not be further jeopardised. This framework and time-table suited the NPC well. It was irrevocably opposed to the creation of new states in the Northern Region but was not interested in what happened in the other two Regions. On its part, the NCNC wanted about eight states but thought these could come after Independence. It was only the A.G. that supported immediate state creation for minorities but the party was well aware that an unyielding stand on the issue would delay independence.

Though Lennox-Boyd had placed a moratorium on the discussion of the creation of new states, his pre-emptive strike was not totally successful because

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[1] L.J.Cantori, Political Implications of Islam in the Middle Belt of Northern Nigeria, University of Chicago, 1962, M.A. Thesis, p. 59.

minority fears and allegations of majority domination in the three established Regions were represented. To placate and mollify them, a Commission of Inquiry "to ascertain the facts about the fears of minorities in any part of Nigeria and to propose means of allaying those fears whether well or ill founded" [1] was appointed. It was to tour the country canvassing individuals and groups in an attempt to ascertain the significance of the allegations.

The investigation by the Willink Commission was carried out during the latter part of 1957 and early 1958. Months of touring, hundreds of interviews and hearings and a plethora of memoranda formed the basis of the Commission's Report issued in 1958. The Commission was of the opinion that the creation of new states at that time would not be a remedy of minority fears but that on the contrary "new minority problems might well flow from the creation of new states." [2] The five investigators instead

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[1] R.L.Sklar, Nigerian Political Parties, Princeton U.P., 1963, p. 138.

[2] Ibid., p. 139.

recommeded that the Constitution give specific statutory recognition and protection to minority rights. The reaction of the leaders of the major political parties to the publication of the Minority Commission's Report in 1958, which endorsed the Regional status quo, was varied. Awolowo called it a 'bad and astonishing document', while the Sardauna and Azikiwe praised it, with the latter saying that it was a "studied effort to preserve the corporate existence of Nigeria as a great African nation."[1] The Action Group position on the issue was curious. "The Western Regional Government claimed to approve in principle the creation of a Mid-West State in an area where in three consecutive elections (1951, 1954 and 1956) it had been beaten, but it then suggested a town to town, and village to village plebiscite to determine who desired to go away with the new state, no doubt with its eyes on the 25,000 odd Itsekiri who have voted Action Group consistently".[2]

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[1] Cantori, op.cit., p.58.

[2] Aloba, op.cit., p.7.

The point to remember is that, given the regional bias of Nigerian political parties, no Regional Government was willing to emasculate its power, in terms of power calculations at the centre, by allowing its region to be split into more natural administrative and linguistic groups than the 1947 constitution had created it. Also given the ability of the major parties to beat down opposition in their respective regions of strength, state creation to them must have appeared a very foolish move.

At the London Resumed Constitutional Conference of 1958, Lennox-Boyd again found it necessary to warn the delegates against state creation before Independence adding that the British Government would find itself forced to abandon the date set for Independence if a party should win the scheduled General Elections of 1959 on the platform of more states before Independence.[1] This hardly veiled threat was sufficient to induce the delegates to accept the findings of the Willink Commission

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[1] Cantori, p.60.

but the vote was not unanimous. As a reassurance to minority groups, the conference put together a long list of fundamental human rights for inclusion in the Constitution. Methods of amending the constitution and of altering Regional boundaries were also inserted. The British Government merely deferred the real business of the creation of more regions as a post-independence exercise, though by inserting the above provisions into the Indpendence Constitution it could be said to have acknowledged and conceded the right of minorities to self-determination.

The Middle Belt: Tying the Loin-Cloth

The origins of the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) were Northern and the issues that sustained it were taken from a Northern context. Though it is true that certain of these issues, particularly that of the minorities and the creation of new states were national in character, this investigation is however conditioned by the definition of its objectives to emphasise the northern aspects of the minority problem.

The gradual but steady devolution of constitutional powers to the Regional Governments was accompanied by Northern politicians stressing the need to unite so that the Northern peoples could determine their future without Southern interference.[1] Later, Emirate (Hausa-Fulani) domination of the NPC caused the minorities in the "Middle Belt" to desire for themselves a similar degree of autonomy and security from "outside" (far Northern) interference.

Though the Northern People Congress (NPC) put out the slogan of "one North, One People", in reality there were more than one people and one faith in the Region. As already stated, each of the three Regions in the Federation had a "dual ethno-geographical make-up - 'a regional nucleus' inhabited by the cultural and political majority and a 'peripheral zone of ethnic minorities".[2] In Northern Nigeria the 'regional nuceus' was the Hausa-Fulani group which, along with the Kanuri, formed a solid political power bloc. The 'peripheral' zone was made up of a diverse scattering of ethnic groups of which the Tiv, Birom,

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[1] Nelson, p. 132.
[2] Sklar, p.136.

Angas, Igala and the Idoma easily come to mind. Language and religion (faith) separated this group from the former. The 1952 Census showed over ½ a million non-Muslim households in the North against 1.3 million Muslim ones, while non-Muslims were in a majority in four of the Provinces claimed by the supporters of the Middle Belt State.

The origin of the term "Middle Belt" is uncertain but it is believed that it gained currency in the post World War Two period of political awakening in the Northern Region.[1] In official circles the Middle Belt was commonly denoted as the "riverain areas". Essentially the term Middle Belt was a political rather than an accurate and precise geographical definition.[2]

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[1] Cantori, p.12.

[2] "The area involved in a Middle Belt State has never been clearly defined by its protagonists. Article 3 of the UMBC "constitution and Bye-Laws" gives it as "Kabba, Ilorin, Niger, Benue, Plateau, Adamawa, Southern Zaria and Southern Bauchi Provinces". The UMBC Lafia Conference 15th - 17th January, 1957 gave the same area, 23rd January 1957, Nigerian Citizen. Slightly different "definitions" were given by Biturs Rwang Pam and Ibrahim Imam respectively; see Debates of the Northern House of Assembly, 26th February 1957, p.250, and 6th March 1956, p. 179", Dudley, op. cit., pp. 112-113.

As it turned out, the reality that the North was not one faith was the latent incendiary for separatist agitation by minorities in the Region. It began in 1949 with a motion in the Northern House of Assembly. The Northern Nigeria Non-Muslim League (NNNML) was formed by Pastor David Lot, Jonah Assadugu, S.O.James and Moses Rwang, a group of Christian members of the House from the minority areas in reaction to what some of the Muslim members of the House said in connection with Christian Missionary interference in the affairs of the Native Administration in the Region.[1] Later in 1950, the NNNML was rechristened the Middle Zone League (MZL) "in order to emphasize the separatist predilection of its membership".[2] One of the most active ethnic organisations about this time was the Birom Progressive Union - an association put together by Patrick Dokotri, espousing Birom unity and demanding fair compensation for the use of Birom land from the tin-mining companies on the Plateau. The Tiv Progressive

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[1] For a critical review of the distortion given to the circumstances leading to the emergence of the NNNML by Sklar, see Makaa op.cit. pp. 593-4.

[2] Sklar, p. 346.

Late in 1955, the Lot wing, including such people as Dokotri, Akiga and Lot himself went back to the NPC. Lot became a Minister without Portfolio in the Northern Regional Government, while Dokotri became a Parliamentary Secretary in Lagos. It is interesting to note here that it was Akiga who introduced NPC into Tivland in 1955. The Moses Rwang - Ardo Ibrahim faction, comprising such uncompromising Middle Belters like Bello Ijumu (Kabba Yoruba), Henry Abaagu, MHR (TIV) Jonah Assadugu, MHR, (Bachama), Ardo Ibrahim (Igbirra), Moses Rwang, MHA (Birom) and E.G. Gundu, MHR, (Tiv) rejected cooperation with the NPC. Just before the 1956 Northern Regional Elections, both Lot and Dokotri left their Government positions and also left the NPC saying that "contrary to their expectations, the alliance with the NPC had not been helpful to the cause of the Middle Belt movement".[1]

In the 1956 Regional House of Assembly Elections, the Lot wing of the UMBC collected four seats, while the Rwang wing won all the five seats

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[1] Sklar, p. 347.

in Tiv Division, plus three elsewhere including Edmund Mamiso from Adamawa. Bello Ijumu lost the election in Kabba, so did Moses Rwang in Jos. Rwang was beaten by Bitrus Rwang Pan, the son of the chief of Jos, (Pam 87 electoral votes, Isa Haruna 40, Rwang 6).[1] In all, 11 candidates belonging to various "wings" of the UMBC were elected, and since they were going to present an opposition in the House, there were talks and behind-the-scene maneuvers for effective reunion. "A unity meeting was convened which chose H.O. Abaagu, MHR (Tiv) as President of the reconstituted Congress and Patrick Dokotri, MHR (Jos) as protem Secretary."[2] It became necessary to hold a general Party Congress to ratify these peace efforts and this was the raison d'etre for the Lafia Convention of 1957.

Lafia 1957

Delegates came from all the six Provinces of the Middle Belt. Secondly, the various major parties in the country sent observers to this Convention in the hope that they might be able to

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[1] Nigerian Citizen, November 24, 1956.

[2] Sklar p. 347.

arrange an alliance with the UMBC. The Convention's proceedings itself "was characterized with chaos, countless walk-outs and expulsions".[1] Bello Ijumu and Moses Rwang were expelled from the party with ignominy for conducting unauthorised negotiations with the Action Group and NCNC respectively. E.G. Gundu; R.A. Dowgo and Owoicho Omakwu were suspended for similar activities - "activities likely to drag the UMBC into alliance with a Southern political party contrary to the party's policy".[2] On the last day of the Convention, Achirga Abuul, a former Provincial President of the party, Gboko, was elected President General by secret ballot.[3] Dokotri,

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[1] Nigerian Citizen, January 23, 1957, p.1

[2] A delegate to this Convention, Patrick Kughul gave two reasons for the victory of the illiterate Abuul. As the President of the TPU, he naturally had a big following among the Tiv delegates, who were well represented at the Convention. Also Kughul claimed that Abuul's election was helped by the dissatisfaction of most of the delegates with the manner in which some of the men who were already honourable members in Lagos or Kaduna were jockeying for the leadership of the party so that they would have the privilege of attending the London Constitutional Conference that was to be held sometime later that year. Kughul cited Tarka, while Gundu named Abaagu as one of the ambitious men around. Because of this dissatisfaction, Abuul was able to beat three M.Ps. in the race for President:

Achirga Abuul - 52 delegate votes
MHR Jonah Assadugu - 34 delegate votes
MHR Sarwuan Tarka - 31 delegate votes
MHR Henry Abaagu - 30 delegate votes

Interview with Patrick Kughul, 1st MHR, Jecira (Tiv) 1954.

who was already elected General-Secretary staged a walkout in protest against Abuul's election. Dokotri insisted that "he would not be a secretary to an illiterate President. The Convention broke up in chaos, with its tribal and sectional parties disagreeing as Achirga Abuul who won the Presidency with 52 votes was asked to vacate seat".[1] Dokotri returned to the Convention Hall after Tarka, who gained 31 votes during the election of the President, was advocated by the Tiv bloc as a substitute for Abuul. After some order was restored to the Convention mainly through Assadugu's efforts, the following took office as the new officers of the Congress:

J.S. Tarka, M.H.R., - President-General
J. Assadugu, M.H.R., - Vice President-General
P. Dokotri, M.H.R., - Secretary-General
H. Abaagu, M.H.R., - Party Manager
I. Kpum, - Financial Secretary
Mallam Maude Ahmed - Organising Secretary

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[1] Nigerian Citizen, op.cit., p.6

Apart from conducting elections to the party offices, the Convention was able to reach the following decisions:

1. The party resolved that it would oppose self-government for the North in 1959, unless the Congress' demand for a separate Middle Belt Region was granted.

2. It recommended that the proposed Middle Belt Region should consist of Adamawa Benue, Ilorin, Kabba, Niger, Plateau, Southern Zaria, and Southern Bauchi Provinces.

The walk-outs and expulsions showed that at this time, the Congress was far from being a "united" party. After his debacle, Abuul and his followers joined forces with Bello Ijumu and others to form Abuul's "UMBC Independents" and this wing of the Congress proposed to hold its own convention later in Gboko.[1] Moses Rwang gravitated back into Tarka's UMBC in 1958 but went out again along with Bitrus Rwang Pam to the NPC in 1959. Henry Abaagu stayed

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[1] Bello Ijumu later described the Lafia Convention as "nothing other than an earlier plot planned by the Lot's wing to side-step and shatter the interests of the progressive elements of Rwang's wing. We shall never endorse any alliance with the NPC, a party which is bitterly opposed to our demand of a separate Middle Belt Region. We prefer an alliance with any southern political party that supports our demand." Nigerian Citizen, January 30, 1957, p.7. Bello Ijumu thereafter became A.G. Organising Secretary for Kabba Province.

in the UMBC until 1958 when the party formally concluded an alliance with the Action Group. Abaagu thereafter left the Congress and later formed the Benue Freedom Crusade, which was allied to the NCNC. In 1959, Abaagu switched to the NPC, lost re-election to the Federal Legislature but was subsequently appointed a Senator representing the Northern Region by the NPC in 1960.

Taking over the UMBC in 1957 Tarka was faced with the task of bringing order and discipline out of the chaos that had befallen the Congress for most of the 1950s. He succeeded in doing this but unfortunately the nature of his success meant that the UMBC would become largely a Tiv political movement. Out of the three major political parties attending the London Constitutional Conference of 1957, it was only the A.G. that promised to support minority group demands and struggles for the creation of new states. While still in London Tarka took the decision to ally the UMBC to the

Action Group.[1] The alliance was formally ratified by the Congress at its Minna Conference in 1958.

The presidency of Tarka marked the end of the lean years of the UMBC as a political party in terms of organisation and direction but as earlier said, it essentially reduced the Congress to a Tiv ethnic protest movement. This was perhaps inevitable as out of the numerous ethnic groups in the Middle Belt area, it had been only the Birom and the Tiv who had consistently stood behind the UMBC in its oppositional and separatist politics in the Northern Region. After 1961, the Birom withdrew or were no longer able to continue to give this support. Except in Tivland, in that

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[1] E.G. Gundu saw this as a rather paradoxical development. He claimed that he had been suspended by the party at the Lafia Conference because he had gone to meet Awolowo in Ibadan and this was interpreted to mean that he intended to drag the UMBC into alliance with the A.G. However, one of the first actions of Tarka as UMBC President was to arrange an alliance of the UMBC and the Action Group, "without consulting anybody". Ironically, Gundu mused, Tarka's action was hailed as a political master stroke. Interview with Gundu, E.G., op. cit.

year the NPC won a massive electoral and political victory in the Northern Region and to all intents and purposes it marked the collapse of the Middle Belt resistance.

The Electoral College System and the Early Elections, 1951-1956

In chapter three, I sketched the early beginnings of the Idoma Hope Rising Union in Idoma and the Tiv Progressive Union in Tivland and came to the conclusion that the origins of the two ethnic organisations were directly traceable to the emergence of political awareness in the country, an awareness that had begun in the South and later spread to the North. I also pointed out that in Idomaland, the IHRU was beaten and defeated in its struggles with the conservative forces headed and led by the Och'Idoma. It meant the triumph of the chieftaincy institution in Idoma and also led to the subsequent but inevitable decline of the IHRU as an effective forum of opposition to the Och'Idoma and other conservative elements in the Division in the 1950s. On the other hand, I showed how the truce was arranged between the TPU and the Tor Tiv before any serious battles could be

fought between the two. In so far as it is possible to do so, this situation could be attributed to two factors. The political shrewdness of the first Tor Tiv, Makeri Dzakpe, kept him just short of driving the TPU to the wall. Secondly, though the TPU was dominated by them, it was not just an organisation of only the edudcated and the young Tiv. It included in its ranks in large numbers the illiterate Tiv veterans of the Second World War. Its composition must be seen as a crucial element enabling the TPU to maintain a working compromise with the N.A. and this was helped by the fact that one of its men, Aluor Gondo became the Deputy Tor Tiv. Even at the risk of repetition, it is pertinent to state here that whichever side won in these early bruising confrontations between the N.A. and the young educated elements, that winning side always invariably became the dominant political group in the area when organised party politics was introduced. For instance in Idoma, where a relatively strong chieftaincy symbolised by the Och'Idoma triumphed, the NPC which organised around this triumphant chieftaincy institution also

triumphed in all elections in the Division thereafter. On the other hand in Igbirra, where the tribal organisation (ITU) of progressive forces was able to take on the Attah and beat him, two things happened. It captured the control of the Igbirra N.A. in 1953 and the following year drove the Attah into exile. Secondly and more relevant to my theory, the ITU consistently defeated the NPC party that had been organised around the rump of the followers of the humiliated Attah Ibrahim. When one of its founders George Ohikere, then the Northern Regional Minister of Works, left the ITU for the NPC he was soundly beaten by the ITU candidate in the 1961 Regional elections.[1] In Tivland, which is more our concern than Igbirra, there was not a fight as such but the TPU, the oldest of the ethnic unions in

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[1] For a good account of the struggles between the Attah and the ITU, see Y.A. Ibrahim, The Search for Leadership in a Nigerian Community: The Igbirra Tao, Circa 1865 - 1954, ABU, M.A. Thesis, 1968.

for Idoma at the Makurdi Provincial level of the constitutional discussion preceding the Ibadan Conference of 1950.[1] Those attending on behalf of the Tiv were the Tor Tiv, Akaa Ude, Ukende, Makondo, Gondo Aluor, Chia Aka, Orban Lan and Ayilla Yogh.[2] At the Makurdi Conference, which was made up of representatives from all the Divisions in the Benue Province, Gondo Aluor (Tiv) and Ahmadu Denya (Wukari) were chosen to represent the Benue Province in Kaduna.

The 1951 constitution provided for joint elections to the new Federal and Regional Legislatures. These elections were to be conducted by using the electoral college system, beginning from a primary to a final college. In the Northern Region, a three to four stage electoral college system was devised. Using this method voters at the primary level (village and district) normally balloted by a show of hands. At the Divisional and Provincial levels voting, however, was by secret ballot. The rules permitted the N.As. to nominate a number of persons

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[1]The names of the two Idoma representatives at the Makurdi Constitutional Conference were got from Odumu Ocheibi, son to one of the two representatives.

[2]See Makaa, pp. 584-5.

equal to 10% of the final electoral college who were then injected into the college. The system was open to gross abuse and in the 'far North' such nominees were merely the choices of the emirs. "Thus in Kano Emirate not one of the 20 persons elected to the House of Assembly by the final college had been elected by the voters at a lower stage; in fact ten of them had been defeated in the earlier balloting. On the other hand, four candidates of the radical NEPU who had been successful at the intermediate stage were defeated in the final college by previously defeated nominees who were injected into the college by the N.A. under the 10% rule".[1] Critics of the electoral college system said that the 10% rule was a special tactic devised to weight the vote in favour of traditional and conservative elements in the early elections.

There were no recorded cases of the application of this weighting technique in the electoral colleges of Tiv and Idoma in the 1951-2 elections

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[1] Sklar, p.30.

nor in those of 1954 and 1956. Eight seats out of the total number of seats in the Northern House of Assembly were allocated to Benue Province in the 1952 elections. The Provincial headquarters Makurdi was to be the final electoral college for previously elected candidates from the various Divisions in the Province. It is important to stress that this election was not fought on the platform of organised political parties, though those who won at Makurdi later declared for or allied themselves with existing political parties. The Tiv candidates at Makurdi came either as Independents or on the platform of the TPU; Idoma candidates were Independents, ISU or IHRU, while those from Nasarawa, Wukari, Lafia and Keffi came as Independents or simply as N.A. sponsored candidates. Above all, what really mattered at Makurdi in 1952 was the ethnic affiliation of the respective candidates. As it turned out, the Tiv delegates each time voted as a bloc when one of them stood for election against a candidate from the other Divisions. With this tactic, they effectively used their number to capture all the

eight seats alloted to the Province.[1] It was only once that the Tiv seemed in danger of losing a seat. This was when Benjamin Akiga tied with Jacob Obande (Idoma) but the Tiv rallied round Akiga to give him a massive victory in the second round of voting. Later, Obande became the 9th member in the Northern House of Assembly from the Benue Province when the Lieut. Governor, Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith, under his reserved powers appointed him as a special member representing Idoma, Lafia, Wukari, Keffi and Nasarawa, the areas of the Province that had been denied representation at the Makurdi balloting.[2] The following were the Tiv men elected:

Chia Aka

Akiga Sai

Yogh Agera

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[1] E.G.Gundu, one of the eight Tiv elected in Makurdi insisted that the Tiv delegates had not gone there with the aim of taking all the seats, but that on the morning of the election day, the D.O. for Tiv Division, Taylor, had urged them to fight for all the eight seats. This story was corroborated in a joint interview with Patrick Kughul and Sebastin Adugu, two unsuccessful Tiv candidates in Makurdi.

[2] The Lt. Governor also appointed these others as special representatives, Dauda Kwei - Southern Zaria Samuel James (Yoruba) - Plateau. Interview with Obande, Jos, 2nd May, 1975.

E.G. Gundu

Ayilla Yogh

Wuam Gambe

Pagher Mue

Makondo Igbon

When they went to the House of Assembly in Kaduna, three of them, Ayilla Yogh, Wuam Gambe and E.G. Gundu, along with the special member, Jacob Obande were nominated to go to Lagos as members of the Federal Legislature. Due to illness, one of the elected Tiv honourable members, Makondo Igbon became unfit for duties as a legislator and his seat was declared vacant. In the subsequent bye-election, Abutu Obekpa, one of the losing Idoma candidates in Makurdi won and promptly declared for the NPC party. Earlier on, two of the Tiv elected members, Ayilla Yogh and E.G. Gundu had declared for the NCNC, while Wuam Gambe, Benjamin Akiga Sai and one or two others had joined the NPC. Obande joined the NPC in 1953.[1]

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[1] Ibid., Obande maintained that it was inevitable that "Northerners would come together after their shabby treatment in Lagos" as a result of the Northern stand over Enahoro's 1953 Independence-in-1956 motion in the Federal Legislature.

The 1954 Constitution stipulated separate elections to the Regional and Federal Legislatures. It however, sensibly or not, left the determination of electoral procedures and the qualification of electors and candidates to the Regional Governments. In both the Eastern and Western Regions, voting was done by direct secret ballot. However the Northern Region which is our concern opted to retain the old method of voting through electoral colleges. This was not really surprising because the method had served the powers that be very well in the 1951-2 elections. There were slight modifications in the system this time however. The provincial level was abandoned as a final college. Elections began from the village to the district and then ended at the divisional level. Abolishing the provincial college perhaps denied the Tiv a second chance of pulling off another political blitzkrieg on the other Divisions in the province. The Tiv were divided into four electoral districts while Idoma Division was split into two, Idoma Northwest and Idoma Southeast. The Idoma State Union (ISU) nominated two candidates.

In Idoma Southeast ISU put forward J.C.Obande, who was challenged by Wilson Onazi (IHRU). In Idoma Northwest, ISU put forward Audu Echono, the secretary to the Och'Idoma's Council and cousin of the Och'Idoma. Also running in this constituency were Malam Audu Sule, N.A. portfolio Councillor and opponent of the Och'Idoma, as an ISU Independent, and Owuna Ochagwu (A.G.), who earlier in the year had brought the party to Idomaland. In Idoma Southeast, by beating Onazi, Obande won re-election to the Federal House. But in Idoma Northwest there was a deadlock in the first round of voting:

Audu Echono (ISU) - 14 electoral votes
Audu Sule (ISU Inde.) -14 " "
Owuna Ochagwu (A.G.) -13 " "

The electoral officer, A.C.E. Longs, who was also the S.D.O. for Idoma, ordered a second round of voting with only Ochagwu voting this time.

Audu Sule won 15-14 and promptly declared for the NPC.[1] In Tiv Division, the following were elected from its four constituencies:

Jecira - Deem Kpum (TPU) later NPC
Jemgbar - Sarwuan Tarka (MBPP) allied to NCNC
Ukum-Shitire-Gondo Aluor (TPU) later NPC
Iharev- Nongov - Henry Abaagu (MBPP) allied to NCNC.

The election in Jecira constituency was memorable because Deem Kpum (TPU) ran aganst his son Isaac Kpum (AG), who earlier that year in Ibadan had been commissioned by the A.G. Party Manager, Agunbiade Bamishe to introduce the party in the whole of Benue Province. The third candidate in this constituency was Patrick Kughul running on the ticket of the MBPP. Some accounts have it that Isaac won the Jecira seat at the final electoral college in

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[1] Owuna Ochagwu said he voted for Sule against Echono because he was opposed to the manner the Och'Idoma handpicked his cousin Echono to run in the election and secondly, that he felt it was wrong for the Och'Idoma to meddle in politics. Interview with Ochagwu, Otukpo, 3-4-75.

Ocheibi insisted that Audu Sule was able to beat Audu Echono because he was already a Portfolio Councillor and knew more people than Echono, even though the latter was backed by the Och'Idoma. Interview with Odumu Ocheibi.

Gboko but that the Tor Tiv, Makeri Dzakpe who was present was so incensed by Isaac's disgrace of his father that he had the vote annulled.[1] Deem's own account of what happened was that Isaac's candidacy split his natural votes and that this enabled the third candidate, Kughul of the MBPP to collect 63 votes to take the seat. Just a little while after his victory, Kughul became very sick and his Jecira seat was declared vacant. In the bye-election "Isaac was nowhere to be found" and Deem easily beat Kpambera Adura to become M.H.R. for Jecira constituency. Another change occurred when Gondo Aluor, M.H.R. for Ukum-Shitire became the Tor Tiv in 1956. Toryilla Kpagh took his seat.

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[1] The Tor Tiv was supposed to have accosted Isaac in these words: "You and your father, who will be wiser to go there," Interview with Datsu Awav. Deem Kpum himself maintained that what the Tor Tiv actually said to Isaac was, "Now, who is the father among you"? Interview with Deem Kpum. The two accounts mean pretty much the same thing - a horror over disrespect for age and authority.

See Makaa, op.cit., p.597 - "Isaac Kpum contested against his father Deem Kpum and defeated the latter. But the traditional pressure of the elders prevailed upon him to withdraw. Isaac thus backed down for his father. The elders regarded Isaac's confrontation with his father as "tsav" and objected to it".

For the 1956 Northern Regional Elections, new electoral regulations came into force. These regulations were based on the recommendations of a committee appointed in 1953 by the Northern Regional Government to report on electoral procedure in the light of the experiences and criticisms of the 1951 regulations for elections to the House of Assembly. The recommendations as approved by the House of Assembly, embodied four principles:

a) electors must be adult male taxpayers;

b) all constituencies were to be single-member constituencies;

c) there were to be direct election to the House of Assembly by secret ballot for 19 specified urban seats;

d) elections in electoral districts designated as rural were still to be through electoral colleges, though in most of such districts there would be only two stages. In registration areas and final electoral colleges, voting would be by secret ballot.

The new regulations were said to contain experience gained since 1951 when elections were conducted by provincial final electoral colleges electing as few as eight members in Benue or as high as 20 in Kano, with numerous intermediate stages. "The new

regulations, while giving urban constituencies the type of election most suited for them, have kept for rural areas the type of election most popular with the mass of the people."[1] This would be by indirect, two-tier elections though provision was made for an intermediate stage, where for geographical reasons, this could not be avoided. At the primary level election would be by acclamation. Even only on a cursory examination, two things stand out about these new regulations. Women were denied the franchise and secondly, universal direct election was still to be incorporated in the electoral system of the Northern Region. This was to come three years later during the 1959 Federal Elections.

For the 1956 Regional House of Assembly Elections, all the constituencies in the Benue Province were declared rural electoral districts, therefore they had to employ the electoral college system to elect their representatives.

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[1] Supplement to the Northern Regional Gazette - Extraordinary of 30th August, 1956, ELE/5, NAK, pp. 5-6.

Tiv constituencies increased by one to five, while Idoma retained its two constituencies as in 1954. In Idoma Northwest rural constituency, the results at the primary (district) college were as follows:[1]

Independents	-	30
NPC	-	16
Idoma State Union (ISU)	-	9
Idoma Hope Rising Union (IHRU)	-	2
		57

The 57 delegates were to constitute the final college which was to meet later in Otukpo and by secret ballot elect the candidate to represent the constituency in the Regional House of Assembly in Kaduna.

Idoma Southeast Rural Primary

Independents	-	35
Action Group	-	14
Idoma State Union	-	2
Idoma Hope Rising Union	-	2
		53

These 53 men were now the final college which was to convene later in Otukpo to elect the honourable

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[1] ELE/5, NAK, pp. 142-160.

member from the constituency.

At the final electoral college supervised by V.M. Ashwell, the S.D.O., the following candidates were nominated for election as the member of the Northern House of Assembly for the Idoma Northwest rural electoral district:

Candidate	Nominated	Seconded
Abutu Obekpa ...	Stephen Ajunwa	Umolo Agbamu
Adanu Omoha ...	John Ede	Aje Oga
Agbeje Omoha ...	Ameh Odo	Itodo Ameh
Emmanuel Audu ..	Augustine Ada	Daniel Agada
Audu Echono ...	Idu Ohene	Edo Ikwulono
Amodu Ogwu ...	Musa Agwu	Abel Adikwu
Aba Akor ...	Idoko Adipi	Jacob Obeya
Simon Ogbe ...	Johnson Ameh	Clement Okwori

In the subsequent balloting, Abutu Obekpa who was an NPC member of the dissolved House was re-elected, collecting 21 out of the 57 electoral votes. In Idoma Southeast rural electoral districts, the following contested the election:

Candidate	Nominated	Seconded
Ogwiji Ikongbe ..	Adakole Adama	Ogilegwu Abena
Wilson Onazi ...	Dominic Urrah	Otokpa Uja
Ajene Ukpabi ...	Ode Ijo	Iji Okpiri
Obaike Ode ...	Oga Eba	Ogbu Oche
Oga Okwoche ...	Peter Agwu	Oga Oko
Peter Ode Aebeh ..	Idoko Egirima	Albert Ogiri

In the first round of voting, Ajene Ukpabi tied with Ogwiji Ikongbe (A.G.), each scoring 15 votes. Ukpabi won at the second round when he collected 27 votes to Ikongbe's 26.[1] Later, Ukpabi declared for the NPC.

The 1954 and 1956 elections taken together, it now meant that the division had two legislators in Kaduna and two in Lagos. One, Ajene Ukpabi was a district head, while Obande and Obekpa were the sons of district and clan heads. The fourth, Audu Sule, was the son of a Hausa messenger who had arrived in Idoma with the whitemen.

Thus, along with the Tiv members, the following were elected to represent the rural electoral districts of Benue Province in the Regional House of Assembly in Kaduna:

Lafia rural electoral district ... Shehu Usman (NPC)

Wukari rural electoral district .. Tanko Yusufu (NPC)

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[1] Ikongbe explained that he lost the election not so much because of his party platform as because of the personal dislike some of the delegates from his own district had for him. Interview with Ikongbe, Otukpo, 26th March, 1975.

Nasarawa rural electoral district .. Jibirin Mairiga (NPC)

Idoma Northwest rural electoral district .. Abutu Obekpa (NPC)

Idoma Southeast rural electoral district .. Ajene Ukpabi (NPC)

Jemgbar rural electoral district ... Akaaka Indyorhwer (UMBC)

Jecira rural electoral district ... Dzungwenen Iyorka (UMBC)

Iharev-Nongov rural electoral district ... Vincent Orjime (UMBC)

Ukum-Shitire rural electoral district ... Dzaan Alam (UMBC)

Kwande rural electoral district ... Ako Dzungwe (UMBC).

All the five elected Tiv honourable members belonged to the Moses Rwang wing of the UMBC.[1]

N.H.A. Debates: The 1957 motion for a Central (Middle Belt) Region

The UMBC came into being principally to promote the cause of some of the peoples of the southern one third of Northern Nigeria who did not share a a feeling of belonging and sense of security within this political system. These small ethnic groups had felt threatened by the sheer numerical superiority of the Hausa-Fulani - Kanuri group - a

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[1] Nigerian Citizen, November 24, 1956, p.6.

superiority which this group had easily and successfully converted into political dominance at the introduction of elections and competitive politics. The minority groups felt suffocated and encapsulated by remaining in the same political unit with this dominant group. The UMBC was intended to be their vehicle for articulating their demand for a separate Region or State in which they would have the opportunity to realise their social and political fulfilment. The mere existence of the UMBC as well as the activities and speeches of its leaders inside and outside the Northern Regional House of Assembly helped to keep the Middle Belt issue alive.

After the late 1956 Northern Regional House of Assembly Elections, one of the first motions tabled before the new House when it convened early the following year was a bill calling for the creation of the Middle Belt State. Just before the old House had been dissolved in 1956, a similar motion had been tabled by Ibrahim Imam but was defeated. In March 1957, Bitrus Rwang Pam, M.H.A. (UMBC Jos) moved a private member's motion for the creation of

a Central Region or State or Nigeria. The motion read :

> "That a humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor praying him to pray Her Majesty the Queen to order for the creation of a Central Region or State of Nigeria which will include Benue, Kabba, Plateau, Southern Zaria Province, Southern Bauchi Province and such parts of Adamawa, Niger and Ilorin Provinces as Her Majesty may consider should form part of the said Central Region or State".[1]

Explaining the motion, Bitrus Pam said that the creation of this State or Region would bring better administration and understanding within Nigeria. According to him unless the creation of the state was effected, there could be no true federation in Nigeria. He put the economic viability of the proposed state at £5,000,000 and spoke of the mineral potentialities of the state. He also said that the UMBC wanted a Middle Belt State to promote and protect the religious status of the

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[1] See Debates of the N.H.A., 26th March, 1957, p. 250.

people.[1] Bitrus Pam concluded by saying that when Lugard divided Nigeria in 1900, he had the idea of more states in mind.

Pam's motion was seconded by Alhaji Maito (ITP/AG, Ilorin). Supporters of the motion included Pastor David Lot who, as a Government Minister had opposed as "untimely" a similar motion by Ibrahim Imam in 1956, Edmund Mamiso and Ibrahim Imam. These supporters of the motion argued that the "North was too big for the autocratic NPC to manage" and that if the motion was defeated, they would resort to a plebscite to demonstrate that the creation of the Middle Belt State was the wish of the people.

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[1] The question of religion was always a strong undercurrent of the Middle Belt Movement for the creation of a separate state out of the Northern Region. Abba Habib, NPC General Secretary, 1954-59, reduced the UMBC to "only an ideology infused by the Christian Missionaries against the expansion of the Muslims in Northern Nigeria". Abba Habib, cited in Dudley, op.cit., p.91.

Pastor Lot denied allegations that the UMBC were being instigated by the Missionaries. The creation of a Middle Belt State, he stated, did not concern the Missionaries. See, N.H.A. debates, 26th March, 1957.

"It is interesting to note how many of the past and present leaders of the UMBC are Christian. Pastor Lot (SUM), Jonah Assadugu (SUM), Dokotri (Catholic), Tarka (Catholic), Achirga Abuul (CMS), Moses Rwang (CMS) and H.O. Abaagu (Catholic) Dudley, op. cit., p. 195.

Opposing the motion on behalf of the government and the NPC were Alhaji Aliyu, Makama Bida and two other Government Ministers of Middle Belt origin, George Ohikere and Abutu Obekpa. Makama Bida declared that "the opinion held by Lugard in 1900 to create more states was dead as Lord Lugard himself". He denounced the motion as unrealistic and selfish and no more than political propaganda designed to win attention and publicity for the UMBC. Pastor Lot was condemned for his "chameleonic" politics.[1]

In the voting that followed the debates, the motion was defeated by 98-20 votes, with three abstentions.[2] The defeat of the bill confirmed the determination of the NPC and the Northern Regional Government not to tolerate any break-away tendency in the Region. In two consecutive attempts, (1956 and 1957) the UMBC had failed to carry through

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[1] Contribution to the debates from the honourable Abutu Obekpa, the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Cooperatives and Surveys. See, Nigerian Citizen, 26th March 1957.

[2] Debates of the N.H.A., March 1957.

its goal of the creation of the Middle Belt State through an act of Parliament. Whether these failures turned to absence of hope and led to despair among the truly committed exponents (both individuals and groups) of the Middle Belt State in the political institutions of the Northern Region will be seen in the next chapter as I discuss the establishment of political parties and the strategies of mobilization among the Idoma and Tiv in the period after 1957. Up to 1957, what had happened had been no more than the taking of postures and stances - in short, preparing and getting ready for the confrontation or the dialogue that was to come.

CHAPTER FIVE

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL MOBILIZATION

A real and substantive difference exists between the scope of politics and the style of political activities which were conducted in traditional Tiv and Idoma on the one hand and the later transformation of these communities in the colonial and independence eras on the other hand. In traditional Idoma and Tiv, as was clearly shown in chapter two, there was no such idea as politics of "for and against". There was nothing like a permanently constituted opposition group or, for that matter, a permanent government group in the society. A writer once noted that "the stability of the Ibo political system lay in 'ad hoc', ever-shifting alignments at different levels of the society rather than in hierarchical, continuously functioning structures and institutions".[1] So was it in pre-colonial Idoma and Tiv. Political decisions as they affected the

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[1] J.S.Coleman, "The Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa," in Almond, & Coleman, (eds.), The Politics of Developing Areas, Princeton, P.U.P., 1960, p.256.

community were reached and executed only when a sizeable level of consensus had been reached by the citizens in the 'ojila' or 'jir' council.

However the colonial experience, coupled with the introduction of the western system of competitive parliamentary politics radically altered the traditional patterns of political organisation. Formalised competition for political power meant that political groups or parties organised around ideas of how society should be managed (in Nigeria, the parties were more communal than ideological) emerged. In this section I will attempt a discussion of how individuals and groups organised themselves in certain political parties and how such parties won or lost support in multi-ethnic societies. In short, it is a discussion of how the Idoma and the Tiv were drawn into modern participatory politics in the period under study.

Idomaland, 1950-57

The political awakening of the 1940s led to the formation of the Idoma Hope Rising Union. Initially, it did not view its concern as 'political'

nor that such concern went beyond the boundaries of Idomaland. Then its concern was the expansion of educational and social facilities in the division, if necessary, through self-help projects undertaken by the various Idoma communities, an end to prostitution by young Idoma women, a stop to corruption and nepotism in the Native Administration, and finally the democratization of this same N.A. The IHRU conceived of these demands in a social reformist perspective and not as political agitation as such. Later, because of the great interest generated in politics after the promulgation of the Richards' Constitution, the IHRU found the pull to participation in a politics wider than that of confrontation with the Och'Idoma and the N.A. rather irresistable. The Union promptly allied itself with the NCNC as an original - member union in about 1948.[1] Several

[1] Old IHRU - NCNC stalwarts regale with pride how after delivering a stinging lecture criticising the colonial government the NCNC delegation on the famous nation-wide tour of 1948 later walked through the G.R.A. in Otukpo, hitherto prohibited to Africans. At that time their action was considered a very brave one indeed, probably surpassed only by that of Adeyi Ameh who slapped a white District Officer, Capt. Taylor at Utonkon in 1947.

factors were responsible for IHRU's decision to ally with this Southern, Ibo-oriented party. For one, the NCNC was about the only nationalist party in the country at this time. But more decisively was the presence of a large Ibo stranger but tenaciously exploitative community all over Idomaland. Ibo exploitation of the Idoma was much more thorough-going than British colonial hegemony over the people and it had been in process for decades before the British left. This economic and cultural domination of the Idoma was made possible because the Ibo had a head start over them in acquiring western education and skills. Ibo achievement in these spheres later became a model for the Idoma. The Ibo set the pace in social life and completely dominated the two professions of commerce and teaching. A good number of IHRU members either had their education in the Methodist Central School Otukpo and thus passed through the hands of F.N. Ukwu, the Ibo headmaster, who presided over a host of other Ibo teachers of the school, or they had gone far afield to the Uzuakoli Methodist

Teacher's College.[1] Some IHRU members however objected to the association with the NCNC and therefore left the union. Such individuals later gravitated into the Idoma State Union. The association with the NCNC was severed in 1955 when, according to one of the prominent figures in the IHRU "it became obvious that the NCNC did not intend to do anything tangible about the issue of the Middle Belt Region".[2] It is relevant to point out that the affiliation of the IHRU to the NCNC did not establish the latter as a political party in Idoma. The union was concluded primarily because the Idoma Hope Rising Union wanted to associate itself with the dominant force in Nigerian nationalism at this time.

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[1] Odumu Ocheibi, one of the very first Idoma students at Uzuakoli (1938-41) said that Mike Okpara who later became Premier of Eastern Nigeria as well as leader of the NCNC, had been a close colleague in the College. He stated that he would have been happy in Okpara's party (NCNC), but that out of consideration for the position of his old father who was the Otukpo clan head he had to stay in the NPC party.

[2] Interview with Ogwiji Ikongbe, one-time IHRU Secretary-General.

Apart from the NCNC, the AG and the NPC after shedding their cultural cocoons made strenuous efforts to spread into Idomaland. They both came in 1954. The NPC had been inaugurated in 1951 when the aristocratic ruling class in Northern Nigeria felt compelled to organise itself politically against the threat from the south of the country - "my own party up to that date (1951) was purely a cultural party; but after the Ibadan Conference in 1950 it was clear that this cultural body of people in the Northern Region must also declare its political views. So, the Northern Peoples' Congress came into being in 1951 as a political party".[1] The rigorous extension of the party began in 1952 when Ibrahim Imam, its first Secretary General and Isa Kaita, the Financial Secretary toured the North for three months, beginning towards the end of August.[2] This tour however

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[1] Sir Ahmadu Bello, Press Conference, Kaduna, 1st September, 1956, ELE/5, NAK, pp. 22-23.

[2] Dudley, op.cit., p. 82.

did not take the two NPC officials to Idoma. It was not until 1954, when Inuwa Wada became the Secretary-General that he came down to Idoma on a membership drive. Here is a vivid eye-witness account of the lecture given by Inuwa Wada in the first NPC rally in Otukpo:

> "Inuwa Wada came from Kaduna to campaign for his party, the NPC. In my capacity as Chief Adult Education Organiser of the N.A., I helped to arrange the permit required for the public lecture he gave behind the old motor garage. At the lecture, which was well-attended, Wada talked at length why Northerners should come together in one political party. After his speech he was bombarded with several questions. The first man to ask a question was Onazi Egwurube. He demanded to know from Inuwa Wada if as he said the peoples of the North were one, why would the Hausa not eat together with non-Muslims or marry people from the Middle Belt area. Wada replied by saying that eating with people was a personal matter. As for Hausa/non-Hausa marriage, he cited the case of Jacob Obande who was married to the daughter of the Hausa emir of Lafia. Another man, Adanu Omoha, plainly told Inuwa Wada to go home with his NPC, that since the Idoma and the Hausa had nothing in common, they would never support NPC,

but would rather join the NCNC because the Ibo were similar to them."[1]

It was self-evident to Inuwa Wada that the people were not impressed by his exhortation that all the peoples of the North should come together in the NPC so as to pre-empt the threat of domination from the Southerners, who were already organised politically in either the A.G. or the NCNC. Thus before he left Otukpo, he went to confer with the Och'Idoma, Ogiri Oko. What transpired between the two men is not public knowledge but it is said that after he had gone, the Och'Idoma called a meeting of all N.A. Councillors and other N.A. staff and requested them to accept the NPC as he had done personally.[2] Later Mohammadu Ribadu on his way to Yola from Lagos made a brief stop in Otukpo to talk to the N.A. Heads of Department and Councillors, once again asking them

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[1] Interview with Ebenezer Ameh Odo, M.H.R. (Idoma West) 1959-1966. Odo admitted that he was no more than a mere observer at this rally, dragged there solely by his curiosity. At this time, he had not considered entering politics. In his view the majority of the people at the rally were pro-NCNC because they were pro-Ibo.

[2] Ibid.

to join the NPC. Most of them finally joined the NPC late 1954 after the return of the Och'Idoma from Kaduna where he had gone to meet the Sardauna.[1]

At the beginning. NPC organisation was very informal. Those who embraced the party held their meetings in Malam Audu Sule's house, who acted as their chairman. At this time Audu Sule was an N.A. Portfolio Councillor and was soon to become an honourable member of the Federal Legislature, Lagos. Others prominent in the formative years of the NPC in Idoma were Abutu Obekpa, (M.H.A.), Jacob Obande, (M.H.R.) and Malam Ali who acted as the secretary when they met. The party was then largely restricted to Otukpo and was made up of friends and relatives of the Och'Idoma, members of the N.A. Council, District heads and other

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[1] Ibid., Ameh Odo confessed that at this time he was wavering between joining the NCNC and the NPC but that the Och'Idoma had privately advised him to join the NPC instead of the NCNC. When he asked the Och'Idoma about the other Northern political party, the NEPU, he was answered point blank that it was the organisation of hooligans.

N.A. staff. The Idoma State Union was allied to the party and it was not until many years later that the NPC finally swallowed it.[1] The ordinary man was scarcely involved with the party or for that matter with politics in this period. Politics was just something that happened around him and passed him by. The era of mass mobilization had not yet arrived and until the electoral college system was discarded as an instrument of election many did not see the need for mass involvement in politics.

As a political party the Action Group (A.G.) had in 1951, emerged out of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a Yoruba cultural union formed six years earlier in London by such people as Awolowo, Alakija, Maja, Thomas and others. Though it was rooted in

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[1] The NPC was ambivalent towards ethnic unions. Although it was alright that such unions allied with the NPC, it was resented that in some areas they competed against the party even though they were allied. There was general consternation in the party when two Government Ministers were defeated by ethnic unions in 1961. The ITU defeated George Ohikere, Minister for Works, in Igbirra and in Igala, the IDU defeated Daniel Ogbadu, Minister of State without Portfolio. After these set-backs, the Sardauna tried in subtle ways to diffuse the political significance of these unions, publicly arguing that since the NPC maintained both the party and the union in an area, the two should merge as the party so as to defray the financial costs of running them separately.

the Western Region among the Yoruba nation, it was the only major party that went out of its way to canvass for support outside its Region of influence, particularly among minority groups in the other two Regions. It was because of this policy that the party most heartedly welcomed two men who went to Ibadan in 1954 asking for permission and finance to spread the party in the Benue Province. Agunbiade Bamishe, the A.G. Party Manager accepted them and gave them offices. One of the men, Isaac Kpum, a Tiv was made the Organising Secretary for the whole of Benue Province, while the other, Owuna Ochagwu was made the A.G. Field Secretary for Idoma Division and given the authority to act in that capacity for Lafia and Nasarawa Divisions. As Field Secretary, Ochagwu was placed on £50 monthly and also given a motor cycle.[1]

When Owuna Ochagwu brought the A.G. to Idoma in 1954, he promptly established an office for the party in Otukpo and for the next two years the activities of the Action Group was centred

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[1] Interview with Owuna Ochagwu.

around the town, though they were heard of in the districts.[1] By individual contacts, Ochagwu tried to persuade some of the leading members of the IHRU to join his party. Though the IHRU was allied to the NCNC as a member-union, the ties were so tenuous and weak that some of the members of the IHRU - NCNC talked openly of joining other political parties on individual basis so that they would be able to express their political opinion under the good patronage which these political parties seemed to offer.[2] However try as hard as he might, Ochagwu was not able to entice these men to his party until 1955, when a chance occurence paved the way for him. In this year, there was to be the election of a councillor that would represent Otukpo district in the Idoma N.A. Council. The election was to take place at Upu-Otukpo and was to be followed immediately with tax receipts being handed over to tax

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[1] A.E. Abogonye, Electoral Politics: The 1959 Federal Election in Idoma South-east Constituency, undergraduate Research paper, Dept. of Government, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1974, p.19.

[2] Ibid., p. 19.

collectors from the respective Otukpo villages. The Och'Idoma presided over the affair. IHRU men felt that the election had been weighted to favour the N.A. candidate, Peter Ode Aebeh against their candidate, Adakole Adama. Disorder and chaos ensured and in the confusion the tax receipts were reputedly collected and burnt by IHRU supporters, who it was said showed "enormous disrespect for the person and office of the Och'Idoma". For their defiance of constituted authority, several IHRU men of Otukpo origin notably Ogwiji Ikongbe, Adakole Adama, Adama Ajonye, Una Adeka were later arrested and remanded in custody. At the initial stages of the trial, the defendants hired a lawyer from Enugu to defend them.[1] When the A.G. heard of the case the party flew one of its lawyers, Prince Adeleke Adedoyin down to defend the accused:

> "They won the case. People were so impressed by the action of the Action Group in sending a lawyer all the way from Ibadan to defend the men in

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[1] Ikongbe, op.cit., The name of the Enugu lawyer was Barrister Luke Emejulu, who later became Chief Justice in Zambia.

> Makurdi. The A.G. was therefore seen by many as a party that could defend the interest of their supporters."[1]

By the above reasoning, though negatively, all the men who were involved in the case left the IHRU-NCNC en bloc because they felt badly let down by the NCNC which did not come to their aid when they were in trouble.[2]

At this time, the AG was noted for its bold and active criticisms of the Native Authority. It appeared that the IHRU group that got into the party carried with it the anti-N.A. tendencies of the old IHRU days. In a petition dated 28th January, 1956, and signed by the Action Group's Divisional Secretary, Ogwiji Ikongbe, the party called on the Regional Premier and the Minister for Local Government to institute as a matter of urgency an independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations of bribery and corruption in the Idoma Native Administration.[3] In the petition,

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[1] Abogonye, op. cit., p.22.

[2] Ikongbe, op.cit.

[3] Nigerian Political Parties - Activities in Benue Province, MAKPROF, PLT/5 Vol.1 NAK, p. 11.

it was alleged that people employed by the N.A. must "grease the palm" of the high-ranking N.A. officials. It was said that in the choice of district or clan heads, and court members, the Och'Idoma routinely "demanded and accepted from the contestants".[1] Later, the Secretary to the N.A Council, Audu Echono, in a defence rejoinderto the petition addressed to the S.D.O. refuted Ikongbe's allegations of corruption in the N.A. He went on to say that both the A.G. and the IHRU did not exist in Idoma.[2]

It was evident from the reaction to the petition which was given wide publicity in the division, that the A.G. was beginning to take some definite shape in the land. In April, 1956, the party held its first Divisional Conference in Idoma. Some of the resolutions passed at this Otukpo Conference were those calling for:[3]

a) a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the conduct of the Idoma N.A.

b) an appeal to the Northern Regional Government to declare for self-

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[1] Nigerian Citizen, March 22, 1956.
[2] MAKPROF, PLT/5 op.cit., p.14.
[3] Ibid., pp. 20-21.

government during the London Constitutional Conference scheduled for September 1956;

c) the substitution of the present outmoded electoral college system with a popular system of direct election based on universal adult suffrage;

d) urged the Northern Regional Government to allocate the Action Group Party in the North representation at the coming London Constitutional talks;

e) and finally, the conference passed a vote of confidence in the administration of Mr. R.O. Mant, the SDO, Idoma Division.

From the aforegoing one could see that when the A.G. came to Idoma, it organised itself around a hard core of old IHRU insurgents. Actually, when Owuna Ochagwu arrived in 1954, one of his first actions was to challenge the Och'Idoma's authority openly. At Adoka, the Och'Idoma's own district, he stopped men that the Och'Idoma had press-ganged to work on the stretch of road between Iga and Adoka.[1] Later, Ochagwu left the party and

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[1] Ochagwu, op.cit.

joined the NPC.[1] Just about the same time, Audu Echono, the N.A. Council Secretary left N.A. services to join the Action Group. With Adakole Adama as the patron, and Ogwiji Ikongbe as the President, the old IHRU radicals had finally taken over the A.G. in Idoma. This was in 1956.

Tivland, 1950-1957

The development of political parties in Tivland followed much the same pattern as in Idomaland. The Tiv Progressive Union (TPU) began by tenuously affiliating itself to the NCNC as an original - union member in 1944. It must be remembered that until 1951 the NCNC was not a party of individual members as such but rather it was essentially an association of numerous ethnic

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[1] Ibid., Ochagwu stated that he left the A.G. which he had founded in Idoma because the Western Regional Government denied him a loan he wanted to use to purchase a palm-kernel breaking machine. When he went to Ibadan for the loan, he was advised to go to his own Regional Government for such a loan. In Kaduna, the NPC General Secretary, Abba Habib told him that he had to declare for the NPC first before he could be given the loan. He did this and was made the Organising Secretary for the party in charge of both the Benue and Plateau Provinces. He never got the loan, and in 1959 he left the NPC for journalism.

and occupational unions.[1] It flowed from the nature of its composition that tight discipline could not be enforced in the party. In the same year (1955) that the IHRU severed its links with the NCNC for failing to give practical support to the agitation for the creation of a Middle Belt State, the TPU for similar reasons also cut its ties with the party.

Right from the start the TPU, along with the Birom Progressive Union, had borne in a large measure the burden of the agitation for the creation of the Middle Belt State and the subsequent formation of the Middle Belt People's Party (MBPP). At this time, the Middle Belt opposition parties were plagued with differences over the method by which their goal of a separate Middle Belt Region could be achieved. Even well after the merger of

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[1]For a list of the affiliated bodies see, J.S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, Berkeley, U.C.P., 1963 (1958) pp. 264-5; T.Hodgkin, Natinalism in Colonial Africa, London: Federick Muller, 1956, p. 147 and also see K.Post, The Nigerian Federal Election of 1959, London O.U.P. 1963, p. 29 - "Until May 1951 it (the NCNC) had no individual members, its rank and file being made up of members affiliated through various town, clan, village or tribal improvement unions, trade unions, ex-servicemen's association and the like."

the MBPP and the MZL in 1955 to form the UMBC as a front to press for the creation of the state, differences still continued among the leading men of the movement. One faction under Pastor Lot advocated cooperation with the NPC, while another under Moses Rwang rejected this strategy and declared that it would seek alliance with any southern political party that was willing to support the UMBC in its demand for a separate state in Northern Nigeria.

It was about this time that the Tiv became the most dominant ethnic group in the Congress. This was clearly manifested by the large TPU contigent at the Lafia Convention of early 1957 and of the fact that out of the four candidates nominated for election for the presidency of the party, three were Tiv.[1] Eventually a Tiv man, Sarwuan Tarka became the leader of the UMBC. It could be said that Lafia marked the real and effective Tiv takeover of the UMBC. There was no

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[1]The three Tiv candidates were Achirga Abuul, Sarwuan Tarka, and Henry Abaagu, while the fourth candidate was Jonah Assadugu, a Bachama.

looking back for the Tiv after this. In this same year, Ugoo Iwoo, the president of the TPU formally allied his union to the Congress. Later that year, after the London Constitutional Conference, the UMBC itself was allied to the A.G., a Southern political party that espoused the cause of the Middle Belt State.

The other major political party in Tivland, the NPC was introduced into the division in 1955 by Akiga Sai (MHA), one of the eight Tiv men that swept the polls at Makurdi in 1952. The following year the NPC Principal Organising Secretary, Malam Muhammadu King was dispatched from Kaduna on a membership drive to Gboko.[1] Akiga was already an old man, thus he lacked the energy to conduct and undertake strenuous campaign drives among the Tiv people. Consequently he relied on the acceptance of the NPC by the N.A. Councillors and other N.A. Staff as substitute for political work among the people.[2] By the end of 1957, Akiga was

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[1] The NPC Party, PP/4, Gbodiv.

[2] Interview with Iorfer Kumba, President NPC Tiv Division, 1960-62.

persuaded to step down from the leadership of the party. L.K. Anja, the N.A. Councillor for Finance became NPC President in Tiv Division, with Danladi Usman and Shehu Madaki as the party's Secretary and Treasurer respectively. At the Benue Provincial level, Atim Atedze, the Administrative Secretary to the Tiv N.A. was elected the Party's Provincial Secretary while Alhaji Ari, Chairman Makurdi Sub-N.A. became the Provincial President.[1]

Activities of Political Parties: The Mobilization Phase

Following the above discussion of the introduction of the various political parties to both the Tiv and Idoma Divisions, it is appropriate here to engage in a consideration of the methods and ways these parties employed to reach out to the people and consolidate their strength. The Regional House of Assembly Elections held in 1956 were the last to be conducted in Northern Nigeria

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[1] Interview with Atedze who said that he was elected Provincial Secretary because before becoming the A.S. Tiv N.A., he had worked as a clerk in each of the Divisional offices in the Province, and as such he was well-known to most of the non-Tiv delegates to the Makurdi Conference of the NPC.

through the old electoral college system, a system blatantly susceptible to political abuse and gerrymandering especially in the strong Emirates. Beginning from the Federal Elections of 1959 down to the last Federal Elections of 1964, including the Regional Elections of 1961 in between, the new system of universal adult (in the North adult male) suffrage was the principle of election in use all over the country. This new electoral system meant that political parties were henceforth required, whether they liked it or not, to extend their activities supported by good organisation, to embrace a greater proportion of this potential electorate than hitherto. Previously it had been possible for a few influential and powerful individuals (e.g. chiefs, Portfolio Councillors) aided and abetted by the malleability of the discarded electoral college system to ensure that their handpicked nominees got elected. With the new system of election agreed upon at the London Constitutional Conference in 1958, the chances of a small group of individuals bending the electoral processes their

way were substantially reduced. It was now demanded of the people as a whole to come forward and elect their own representatives. In some places the electorate seized the opportunity to elect their own true representatives, while in other areas, the people continued more or less in their old habit by merely rubber-stamping in the polls the decisions of the chiefs and other vested and powerful interests. I will now examine the strategies of mobilization pursued by the various political parties in both Idoma and the Tiv as an effort to explain how they won or lost supporters in the process.

Idomaland, 1958-65

Already by 1956, all the four honourable members (two in Lagos and two in Kaduna) representing Idoma Division belonged to the NPC. As pointed out earlier, one of them was a district head, two were sons of district heads and the fourth was the son of a retired colonial messenger. The party was organised around these legislators along with the N.A. Councillors and other N.A. staff, Hausa stranger elements in Otukpo and others who had

reasons to support the N.A. or simply those who were not prepared to confront it. Thus, right from the beginning, the NPC was the party of the N.A.

However, after 1957, in order not to be totally outshone by the vigorous activities of such parties as the A.G. and the NCNC, the NPC abandoned its regal approach to politics and embarked on what was for it an aggresive mobilization policy. It started this phase by attempting to build up its previously non-existent organisation. The Divisional level was reconstituted. Initially, it had met as an informal discussion group in Audu Sule's house in Otukpo. As part of these re-organisations, elections were held to elect the party's officers. Ocheje Oko, the Och'Idoma's brother, became the Divisional Chairman and Odumu Ocheibi became Secretary while Jacob Obande was made the party patron. This Divisional leadership was responsible to the Provincial NPC organisation in Makurdi.

At a lower level stood the NPC district organisation, with its president, secretary, treasurer

and all such other officials. In reality NPC district organisation was indistinguishable from N.A. district administrative structures. Often, the District head overtly or covertly was the party patron, while the district Councillor to the N.A. Council in Otukpo acted as his district's NPC party chairman. Each member of the district council was the NPC leader in his village and the district council was more or less an NPC district committee.[1] It spent its time discussing tactics of winning supporters for the NPC instead of concentrating its energies on the discussion of how best to effect the civic duties for which it had been elected and constituted in the first place. Its decisions in most instances were no more than punitive measures against areas marked down as supporters of opposition parties. One of such vindictive decisions cited by Abogonye was when the Ito District Council voted to remove the "Ihiokwu Market", an important traditional market from Okutungbe - Itogo area to Ito barracks. Though the District Council gave such reasons as

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[1] Abogonye op. cit., p.33.

easy accessibility and the centrality of the new site, it was generally known that the Okutungbe - Itogo area was being punished because of its declared support for the A.G.[1]

Besides this formal organisational structure originating from the divisional level through the district down to the village level, effective power and influence as far as the NPC in Idomaland went lay in the hands of the parliamentarians and the N.A. Portfolio Councillors. It was this select group that made all the important decisions affecting the party in the division.[2] Later, the party was organised into four intermediate areas. Idoma South-east electoral constituency comprised of two intermediate areas, while both Idoma North and Idoma West constituencies each was an intermediate area. As it turned out the intermediate areas became the political fiefs of the M.Ps from the respective constituencies. For instance,

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[1] Ibid., p.52.

[2] Interview with Obaike Ode. This information was corroborated by Odumu Ocheibi who noted that during his four years tenure (1954-57) as Divisional NPC Secretary, Idoma NPC MPs consistently bypassed the official Divisional NPC hierarchy when they handled party matters. Interview with Ocheibi, op.cit.

the two honourable members, Ameh Odo (M.H.R.) and Abutu Obekpa (M.H.A.) were the unquestioned leaders of the NPC in Idoma West. The two had to consult and be consulted before any party issue as it affected Idoma West could be discussed and any decision taken had to be acceptable to them. For the system to work well, it required harmonious and cordial relationship between the two M.Ps. from each constituency and between all the M.Ps. in the Division, a comradeship that was frequently lacking. For instance, in 1964, John Ede (M.H.R.) advised Abutu Obekpa (M.H.A. Idoma West), the Minister for Kaduna Affairs, in his interest not to visit his constituency of Idoma North because he alleged that Obekpa had worked against him in favour of Amodu Ogwu, the District head of Ugboju during the NPC party nominations for the 1964 Federal Elections.[1]

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[1] John Ede organised the Sarduanist Youth Brigade during the 1964 Federal Elections. Even though the activities of the Brigade was a source of considerable embarrasment to the Divisional NPC headquarters in Otukpo, nothing could be done about it.

NPC Campaign Techniques

The NPC party in Idoma used chiefs in its efforts to reach the people. In an election period, the NPC candidate for election or re-election would tour all the districts in his constituency and in each district he would meet the district council and other village notables assembled by the district head before his arrival. The M.P. would deliver to the assemblage a pep talk and engaged in a general discussion of tactics to win the election. In the process, he would also subtly remind them of the consequences that would befall any one of them who did not proselytise NPC with vigour and zeal. He would give a repeat performance at each stop-over.[1] Often, under the cover of tax assessment drives or district familiarization tours, the Och'Idoma personally undertook political campaigns in the districts on behalf of the N.P.C. As the 1961 Regional House of Assembly Elections approached, the A.G. Party lawyer for Idoma Division, Lapade Obisesan wrote a petition asking the S.D.O. to restrain the

[1] Obaike Ode, op.cit.

Och'Idoma from campaigning for the NPC in the elections. Earlier, at its executive meeting in Otukpo, the NPC had decided that the Och'Idoma should lead the campaign tour of the whole of Idoma Division on its behalf.[1] Writing about the 1959 Federal Elections in the Idoma South-East Constituency Abogonye noted this observation:

> "Early October, the NPC campaign was opened by the Och'Idoma. He started a tour of all the districts, with some of his councillors in his official car and some N.A. vehicles. In every district he appealed to the people not to listen or vote for the traitors - A.G. and the NCNC, which he described as Yoruba and Ibo parties respectively. He said that NPC was the party of the North and also the party of our forefathers'. He made it clear that if the people voted for NPC, the N.A. would be more willing to continue helping them. The Och'Idoma was followed up by the NPC candidate in the constituency, Mr.J.C.Obande who gave a lecture in every district just after the Chief had departed, urging the people to vote for NPC."[2]

As can be seen from the above, it was evident that the NPC was the party of the elements that ruled the land. It was the party of the Och'Idoma, which

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[1] MAKPROF PLT/5 Vol.1 N.A.K., p. 86.

[2] Abogonye, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

in practical terms meant that it was also the party of the district heads and the village notables. Anybody who rejected the NPC was seen as also rejecting the leadership and the authority of the Och'Idoma and his chiefs. Owuna Ochagwu, the man who introduced the AG into Idoma, put it this way:

> "If a man was giving "trouble" as a tough opposition party agent or supporter, the Och'Idoma on receiving such reports would first call the man's district head and require him to explain why he was harbouring the "Och'Idoma's enemy". Ogiri Oko frequently argued that any man who was opposed to the NPC was also opposed to his being the Och'Idoma and therefore was his enemy. Such an 'enemy' was often jailed for the slightest offence he committed. Humiliated after he had served his term, he was later brought before the Och'Idoma, who in a concerned paternal manner would persuade the man to mend his ways. Such a man usually went away sufficiently impressed with the Och'Idoma's power."[1]

The influence of the NPC party in Idomaland was built up and sustained in large measure by the prestige and power of the first Och'Idoma, Ogiri Oko. He made no bones about the fact that he was an NPC loyalist and flagbearer and that he was the

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[1]Owuna Ochagwu, op.cit., Interview.

NPC in Idomaland. His earlier triumph over the radical educated elements organised in the Idoma Hope Rising Union in the early 1950s meant that the NPC would be the dominant political party in Idoma once it had the good sense to organise around the victorious forces in Idoma politics.

The A.G. and the NCNC - Minority Parties in Idoma 1958-1965

The A.G. and the NCNC were the opposition parties in Idoma Division, both of which were entrenched in Otukpo town and Otukpo district. Of the two, the NCNC was the first to attempt to spread into Idoma Division. By 1948 it had, through the affiliation of the IHRU to it as an original - union member, reached Idomaland. Unfortunately the IHRU - NCNC merger was not then intended as an election fighting machine. It was more or less the union of identical nationalist sentiments with the sole purpose of overthrowing the colonial regime and no more. By 1955 it was already a jaded and spent union and in this year, they went their separate ways when the IHRU charged that the NCNC was not prepared to

support it in its demand, along with the UMBC, for the creation of a Middle Belt State out of the Northern Region. The NCNC remained in this moribund state until about 1958 when the heightened activities of the other parties and also when it became clear that there would be a Federal House of Representatives Elections the following year that the Idoma NCNC was roused from its stupor. It prompted some primary school teachers in Otukpo in conjunction with the large Ibo community in the town to resuscitate and prepare the NCNC as a political party ready to fight the approaching 1959 Federal Elections. Initially the leadership of the party was given to Mr. Orji, an Aro-Ibo businessman in the town, who was said to have connections with the late Mbonu Ojike.[1] Later, the headmaster of St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School Otukpo, Ode Attah, assumed the presidency of the party. Others prominent in the party were

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[1] Interview with John Alechenu - Idoma NCNC Organising Secretary, 1961-65.

Amedu Ode, John Alechenu. Later still, others like Wilson Oblu[1] and George Achelegba found their way in.

For most of this period, the leadership and the followership of the NCNC party lay in Otukpo town and among the Otukpo people. Though the leaders of the party attempted a divisional-wide mass mobilisation, they did not make much headway in this respect. A political party closely identified with the Ibo people and Eastern Nigeria was not likely to appeal much to the average Idoma man because Ibo cultural domination and economic exploitation were such that they rubbed people hard at sore points. Ibo traders, businessmen, teachers were too apt to make tartly and uncomradely remarks about the Idoma among whom they lived. Despite this, the party tried to set up an organisation beginning at the level of the village, then the district level and finally the divisional level, with a caucus formed by the Divisional party

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[1] Wilson Oblu was one of the last sets of Idoma students to graduate from Uzuakoli. Later, he abandoned the Methodist Mission and worked as the first trained Idoma teacher the Catholic Mission had in Idoma . In the 1950s, he was in the IHRU and later became the Councillor for Otukpo District in the Idoma N.A. Council but was subsequently removed from office for misappropriating tax money.

officials and the candidates running for elections if they happened not to be one of the office-holders in the party.

The other minority party, the Action Group, came to Idoma Division (Otukpo town specifically) in 1954 and it came with vigour. The leader of the party at this time, Owuna Ochagwu was given the assignment by the A.G. National Headquarters in Ibadan to "establish a vigorous and viable A.G. in Idoma division as soon as was possible".[1] In that same year, Ochagwu contested the first Federal elections as the A.G. candidate in Idoma Northwest constituency but lost narrowly. Two years later, the Secretary of the Idoma A.G., Ogwiji Ikongbe, contested the Regional House of Assembly elections and lost even more narrowly. He was beaten 28 to 27 electoral votes at the second round of voting after he had tied 15-15 at the first round with the present Och'Idoma, Ajene Ukpabi. In this election, the run down of the 53

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[1] Ochagwu, op.cit.

delegates to the final electoral college in the Idoma South-east constituency was as follows:[1]

Independents	- 35
Action Group	- 14
Idoma State Union	- 2
Idoma Hope Rising Union	- 2
	53

However, after much pressurising from the N.A., most of the Indpendents switched to the NPC. How did the AG establish itself that it came close two times to winning major elections within the space of two years of its introduction? The Action Group was a party that emphasised the virtues of sound organisation. When the party was introduced into the division, it immediately proceeded with this tradition.[2] It tried to set up an organisation based on the social structure of the people. The basic unit of Action Group

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[1] MAKPROF, ELE/5, op. cit.

[2] Interview with Johnson E.Abogonye, Idoma AG Organising Secretary, 1961-65, A.G. candidate, Idoma South-East, 1959 and 1961 Federal and Regional Elections respectively.

organisation was the "ipoopu" or the lineage. Where the "ipoopu" was coterminous with the village, this unit became known as the Action Group Village Branch Committee. Above the village organisation was the District Committee, based on the clan, "aje". If it was a federated district then each clan (aje) had its own separate committee. The next level in the organisational hierarchy was the Constituency Committee, which was made up of all the districts in the constituency. For instance, each of the nine districts in the Idoma South-East constituency, Ito, Cju, Uworkwu, Akpa, Utonkon Igwumale, Agilla, Ulayi and Ijigban sent representatives to the constituency committee. Final authority over party administration in the division lay with the party leaders in Otukpo town. These men were the President, Ogwiji Ikongbe (who took over after the founder Ochagwu left the party in 1956), Audu Echono,[1] organising secretary

[1]Interview with Audu Echono. Respondent said he left the A.G. in 1960, after the death of his cousin and political godfather, Ogiri Oko, the 1st Och'Idoma. Even though he was in opposition, while the chief lived nobody could harass and victimise him. He even used to park his official A.G. car in the Och'Idoma's garage. This, according to him meant that "blood is thicker than water."

1956-60, Ella Abogonye, Organising Secretary 1961-65 and Adakole Adama, Patron.

In its essentialities this was the Action Group organisational structure in Idoma. It was an organisation that was populist in design and in intention. As a party that sought to thrive on opposition to the chiefs and the N.A., it could expect to place its members in parliament only by a rigorous mass mobilization ideology.

Mobilization techniques of the two Minority Parties

Both the A.G. and the NCNC were organised around factions of the defeated old Idoma Hope Rising Union. The radicals were unable to discard the agitational and confrontation politics of the old IHRU days and subsequently carried these tactics over into their respective new parties, the A.G. and the NCNC. Their rejection of the N.A. Administration both in Otukpo and in the districts, as well as their constant and severe criticisms of N.A. policies meant that they were forever consigned to seeking support from the ordinary man who sought and had no post. More importantly, it therefore

meant that the size of their following would depend on how much influence and control the traditional and conservative forces in the society could and did exert on the people in the period under investigation.

The two parties seized on local issues such as the construction of roads, building of bridges, dispensaries and maternities, reconstruction of markets and fallen school buildings, chieftaincy disputes and government assistance for community self-help programs to illustrate to the people (the electorate) the incompetence and negligence of the authorities. The A.G. and NCNC officials and their paid campaigners on the other hand promised the people earthly paradise if they abandoned the NPC and the A.G. or the NPC and NCNC as applicable and supported their own party. This earthly paradise would be in the form of free and better hospitals and schools, good roads and bridges and freedom from the harassment of N.A. officials who did nothing for the people. Above all else, the A.G. promised to create the Middle Belt Region so as to release the Idoma from Hausa-Fulani and Muslim domination.

This was the general pattern and direction of political work adopted by the AG and the NCNC in Idoma. It was anti-N.A., anti-Hausa/Fulani and egalitarian in content. As we shall see later, this mobilization strategy was unable to work among the Idoma - a people who still had a sufficient reservoir of goodwill and respect for traditional institutions and authority. The people therefore rejected the political message of both the A.G. and the NCNC, a message that did not seek or was unable to win the support of the traditional elite.

Political Parties in Tivland, 1958-1965

My discussion of the activities of political parties in Tivland will focus only on those of the NPC and the UMBC/AG. For the most part, I intend to ignore the NCNC, the MBSP, the Benue Freedom Crusade and other splinter groups because of the well-founded belief that these lot were rather peripheral to what happened in Tivland between 1958 and 1965.

As was shown in chapter three, the British misunderstood the Tiv and proceeded to order their

administration in Tivland on institutions and structures that were almost alien to the people. Between the late 1920s and the 1940s, numerous ostensibly religious upheavals implied the rejection of these institutions by the Tiv people. Chieftaincy, conceived in the authoritarian emirate model was absolutely unacceptable and unworkable with the highly egalitarian and individualistic Tiv, who as one casual observer noted, "among the Tiv an individual is an authority by himself".[1] What the Tiv as a people understood was a decision or policy freely reached by consensus. Such a decision was carried out to the best of their ability with unflinching zeal.

An important element of traditional Tiv society had been substantially destroyed by a combination of missionary and colonial adminstrative activities. This was the vital role elders played to keep the society stable. Through missionary collusion, the British administration had abolished exchange marriage in 1927. In itself the action

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[1]Echono, op. cit., interview.

was not significant. What was significant however was that this ordinance destroyed the traditional role of elders in the organisation of Tiv society. Marriage by exchange with its intricate web of social obligations had previously been effectively used by the elders to keep young people in control.[1]

Thus by the 1950s one can say that Tivland had lost its cohesiveness and momentum, a process beginning as far back as in the 1930s or earlier still as a result of the unexpected and disorientating developments arising out of the colonial experience which while creating institutions that the people held in utter contempt at the same time seriously undermined the credibility of the elders who previously acted as the fulcrum of the society. Political parties were formally introduced into Tivland in the middle 1950s and the resultant struggles between them

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[1]Elderly Tiv viewed the introduction of colonial rule with its concomitant English-oriented law and order as the final destruction of their society. The elders bemoaned this loss by saying that "the white man had spoiled the land" (ubuter vihi tar yo). Downes discovered that by this cry "they meant that the abolition of exchange-marriage, which had taken place two years before, was considered by many to be an irreparable break up of Tiv family life and struck at the very foundations of the Tiv social and religious life". R.M. Downes, Tiv Religion, Ibadan University Press, 1971, p.13.

later escalated the tension, contradictions and cleavages in the institutional arrangments worked out in the colonial period and finally leading to the general risings in 1960 and 1964.

The NPC in Tivland

By and large the NPC party pursued a course in Tivland parallel to that in Idoma Division and, as was its habit everywhere it was introduced, it sought to reach the people through "recognised" leaders such as the chiefs. In Tivland this approach, more than anything else, sealed the fate of the party. Instead of attempting to develop a sound and independent organisational structure of its own, the party relied on the meagre N.A structure of Councillors, court scribes, tax collectors, district and clan heads and other N.A. staff as a substitute. "From the start, the organisational ability of NPC leaders here left much to be desired. They had no previous experience on political matters nor did they have sufficient political tactic to get on with the job."[1] The NPC

[1] Interview with Deem Kpum, op. cit.

party in Tiv Division was seen as the party of the N.A. and the big people - "NPC power, NPC chief, NPC contractor".[1] By 1958 Iorfer Kumba and others were worried about this image and wanted to take the party away from the councillors and contractors and return it to the people, but the ordinary Tiv man was unwilling to listen.[2] In 1960 Kumba wrested the presidency of the party from L.K. Anja, but this was only briefly because in 1962 Anja stormed back with his supporters to win the presidency again and held on to it until 1965.

Thus, from the aforegoing, one can reach a definite conclusion about the fate of the NPC in Tivland between 1958 to 1965. The NPC was unacceptable to the Tiv as a vehicle of social and political socialization and mobilization not so much as a result of any intrinsic characteristics of the party as such. It did appear that Tiv rejection of the NPC was a result of the experience

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[1] Interview with Iorfer Kumba. Kumba was in the UMBC before he declared for the NPC in 1958. Between 1960-1962 he was the NPC leader in Tiv Div.

[2] Ibid.

that the party was introduced to the people through institutions that neither commanded their affection nor respect. In the indigenous Tiv context there was no place for a chief with authority[1] and in spite of British efforts to build up the powers and influence of the various categories of chiefs in the Division, the institution was unable to win the heart or for that matter the head, of the people. In comparison this was a completely different situation to Idomaland where a relatively strong and influencial chieftaincy helped to mold the political and social views of the people and once this chieftaincy accepted NPC, the people also accepted it. However in Tivland when the chiefs, at the instigation of the Native Authority, attempted coercion to elicit support for NPC it was no surprise that there was prolonged general insurrection in the land.

The UMBC in Tivland, 1958-1965

I have already treated the development of the UMBC from its early beginnings in the Middle Zone

[1]This reality of Tiv social relations was accepted by the Coomassie Commission: "there were no chiefs and .....authority was vested, if anywhere, with the elders". White Paper, op. cit., p.3.

League through the MBPP. As a result of policy and strategy differences among its leaders, it had a rather chequered history in this period. The development of the UMBC as a compact and coherent political fighting machine effectively began after two things happened. First, the Tiv who had always been the most dominant and committed ethnic group in the Congress literally took over the party especially after the election of a Tiv, Sarwuan Tarka, as party leader at the Lafia Convention of 1957. In this same year, the Tiv Progressive Union was allied to the UMBC. The second significant development was the alliance of the party with the A.G., one of the three major political parties on the Nigerian political scene. With the financial support and expert political advice from the A.G., the UMBC as from 1958 stood poised to make its big entry if not in the politics of the whole of the Middle Belt area and Nigeria as it aimed to, at least so in that of Tivland. We should not because of the fact that the UMBC was largely confined to only the Tiv Division attempt to underrate the influence of the party in

Nigerian politics. The 1963 census gave the population of the Tiv as one and a half millions, which was several times bigger than several administrative divisions in Northern Region. In 1959 its population entitled it to seven parliamentary seats, which was just one short of the eight the whole Benue Province had at the first elections in 1952. It followed therefore that Tivland was a crucial Division in terms of the calculations of the major political parties in their bid to win enough seats to gain the control of the national centre.

Organisation

As a party that was opposed to the establishment it was out of the question that the UMBC could ever work through the chiefs in the way the NPC did. Such resources like the courts and tax collectors which the NPC converted into political instruments were not available to the UMBC. The party therefore had to develop its own structures, parallel but clearly distinguishable from those of the local administration. There were several tiers in the UMBC organisation. At the grass-roots was the village or sub-kindred organisation.

At this level the organisation was very informal. Usually it revolved round an elderly but prominent man and frequently it featured group beer drinking and other acts of community togetherness. Above the sub-kindred level there was the kindred, and still higher up, the clan organisation. The Divisional level was made up of representatives of the clans and districts in the Division. This level had a secretariat in Gboko. In the big towns like Adikpo, Zaki-Biam, Gboko, and Makurdi, there also existed a separate UMBC town organisation. All the above mentioned levels had their women's wing concurrently operating alongside those of the men. The party paid the greatest attention to the sub-kindred or village organisation because it realised that its strength lay with the whole people.[1] The Tiv Divisional President of the UMBC between 1959-1962 was Labe Ingbian. He was removed from office in 1962 for mishandling party finances. Yina Kogi became President but at the Ogoja party conference of 1964 he was removed from office as well.[2] Yina Kogi was a Kunav and to demonstrate that the party was not putting down the Kunav people another Kunav, Ugba Uyeh, (M.H.A.) was elected

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[1] Interview with Isaac Shaahu, (MHA) Gaav-Shangev-Tiev 1961-66.

[2] Ibid.

the Divisional party leader.[1] In 1965, UMBC leadership in Tiv Division was made up of the following:

Divisional President	- J.Ugba Uyeh (MHA)
Vice Divisional President	- Andza Tor Donga
Divisional Secretary	- S.K. Tarkighir
Financial Secretary	- J. Ahura Sen (MHR)
Treasurer	- J. A. Bashi

In the Division final powers in the party were in the hands of a Central Working Committee. The Committee was made up of five members each from the five Intermediate Areas of Tivland:

Abinsi
Jemgbar
Sankara
Kwande
Jecira

Among other things, the Working Committee handled the nomination of candidates in all elections. When an election period approached, this Committee would tour all the seven constituencies one after the other.

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[1] Interview Kundu Swem, (MHR), Kwande, 1959-66. Kundu insisted that Kogi was removed from office because of his persistent misunderstanding with the National President, Sarwuan Tarka, but Shaahu reported that Kogi, like Ingbian two years earlier, was removed because he mishandled party funds. Kogi later founded his own party - "Ikarev" (snake party) which he allied to the NPC.

The local party leaders in each constituency, made up of district and kindred representatives constituted the nomination committee which met and selected the candidate to run in their constituency. This candidate was formally presented to the Working Committee for approval when it came to the constituency. For instance, in Kwande constituency there were nine districts. Each district sent three representatives to the Kwande UMBC nomination committee. Any UMBC member from Kwande who desired to run would place his name before this committee. Since there were 27 men in this committee, any nomination seeker that collected 15 or more of the votes won the nomination to stand as the UMBC candidate for the constituency and this was the man presented to the touring Central Working Committee for approval. Approval was never denied except where the nominated candidate had severe disqualifications previously unknown to the selectors.[1] Frequently there were charges that the power of the Working Committee in the selection of candidates was bypassed by an inner circle of the

[1] Ibid.

party leadership headed by Tarka.[1] Kundu Swem denied the validity of the allegation and cited the case of Orodi versus Womboh in 1959. Both these men sought the party nomination for Ukum - Shitire constituency for the Federal Elections of that year. After two ballotings by the Ukum - Shitire constituency nomination Committee, each of the two men kept on scoring the same number of votes. The matter so troubled the party that it was to be referred to Awolowo for arbitration. However, the A.G. party lawyer for Benue and Plateau Provinces, S.O. Morohundiya, intervened and unilaterally declared Orodi the official candidate because in his opinion Orodi was a better qualified man to go to the Legislature since he was much more educated than Womboh who had only primary four schooling. Tarka, Kundu Swem pointed out, preferred Womboh, even though Orodi was his brother-in-law but had no effective say in the matter because the A.G. was financing his party.[2] When Orodi won

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[1] Dudley, op.cit., p. 184.

[2] Ibid., see Post, op.cit., p.235, "Although the allies of Action Group were left to choose their own candidates, this freedom had narrow limits ... Only if they had money could the allies and their candidates show independence of outlook."

the election on UMBC platform and immediately crossed over into the NPC, even before the House convened in Lagos, there was a general sigh of anguish throughout the party. He was the first in the series of UMBC M.Ps. declaring for the NPC.

Apart from the Tiv UMBC organisation, there was the Benue Provincial Organisation:

Provincial Chairman - Masaweje Yakubu (Lafia)

Deputy Prov. Chairman - Ogwiji Ikongbe (leacer of Idoma AG)

Organising Secretary - Peter A'cka up to 1961. Ella Abogonye after 1961.

There were leaders for other Provinces or Zones:

Zonal leader, Benue Province - Dzungwenen Iyorkar

" " Kabba " - Opaluwa

" " Plateau " - Chodi

" " Southern Zaria " - Shaahu

" " Adamawa " - Maniso

Then as a nation-wide political party, the UMBC had a national leadership, which was above the zonal or provincial level:

President General - Sarwuan Tarka (MHR)

Vice President Gen. - Jonah Assadugu (MHR)

Secretary General	-	Patrick Dokotri
Principal Org. Sec.	-	Nath. Mayaki
Financial Secretary	-	Isaac Shaahu (MHA)
Treasurer	-	Bulus (Tangale-Waja) MHA

UMBC Style of Mobilization

Tarka and the other leaders of the UMBC began the drive to win mass support for their party among the Tiv in early 1958. At the outset they were careful enough not to antagonise the powers in the land that probably could have destroyed the party at this time.

> "At the various meetings of the Tiv Central Council (Jirtamen), it was the Tor Tiv, Makeri Dzakpe, and his councillors who granted J.S. Tarka's request to come and address the Jirtamen, that is the elders, on the central issue of the Party's campaign: the creation of a Middle Belt State."[1]

Speaking to the Jirtamen was a great opportunity of spreading the party throughout the land and Tarka avidly seized the chance when it presented itself. Tarka's humble and respectful mien when he addressed the elders in the Jirtamen won them over and they carried the message into the district and

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[1] Tseayo, op.cit., p.191. Tarka first addressed the Jirtamen in 1957 while it was sitting at Abinsi.

countryside. Secondly, Tarka was able to arrange an alliance between his party and the Tiv Progressive Union. In this phase, the UMBC depended enormously on TPU contacts and organisation to carry out its activities, as it then lacked a good organisation of its own.

After effecting these two important and astute political moves, the UMBC stepped in to get the ordinary Tiv man. It employed hundreds of party agents and foot campaigners all over Tivland to spread only one message - that the UMBC was the party for the Tiv and that the Middle Belt State was needed to escape domination from the Hausa-Fulani of the 'Far North'. Within a short time UMBC agents had touched even the remotest corners of Tivland, exhorting the people in the bush to embrace the new party. The pace of political work between 1958 and 1959 was especially frenzied and hectic and it was within this space of one year that the UMBC really established itself permanently with the Tiv. The true testament of the work accomplished within this one year was the fact that the Tiv never

forsook the party even in the trying times of the 1960s. The party used several techniques to achieve this massive support it got from the Tiv people.

UMBC political workers used ethnic sentiments, as well as religious differences as a medium of mass mobilization of the Tiv. The NPC party was portrayed as an organisation for only muslims and the Hausa while the UMBC was the party for the Tiv people. A man who supported NPC was looked at as a Hausa - "in UMBC eyes, those who had joined the NPC had by this act become Hausa, and thus forfeited their position in the Tiv common heritage."[1] Such a man was no longer a Tiv. The UMBC also employed outright deceit of the people. It promised it would reduce drastically and if possible abolish taxes when the Middle Belt State was created. Its propagandists also promised to extend Tiv land area by annexing areas of Tiv settlement in Udam, Lafia and Wukari. Rural UMBC supporters that barely had any education were

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[1] Ibid., p.170

promised big posts when the State was created and this gave such men extra zeal to work for the cause. It also added to their importance in the rural areas because the chiefs were tarnished by their association with the N.A. and the NPC.[1] During the registration of people as electors for the 1959 Federal Elections each registration officer was accompanied by a UMBC agent. While the registration was going on, the UMBC agent at the same time would be campaigning for his party. Other agents would move ahead of the registration team, campaigning for the party all the way before the registration officers arrived at the next stop-over. There were no NPC agents to counteract their campaign. It was no surprise that the Tiv people came away with the impression that there was only one party in the land, and this was "Tarka's party".[2]

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[1] Interview with James Garba - Gboko N.A. Councillor for Finance.

[2] Interview with Datsu Awav - Local Government Officer, Gboko, L.A.

Though the UMBC embraced the whole of the Middle Belt the Tiv took it to mean their own in the same spirit that the Ibo took the NCNC, which was not only supposed to be a council of all Nigerians but also of Cameroonians.

The NPC leadership wittingly or unwittingly helped to establish the UMBC more firmly with the Tiv because they hardly took their job of winning Tivland to NPC to heart. Such NPC leaders as there were joined the party because of the patronage they could get out of it and not because they had faith in what they were doing.[1] Later, when the N.A. applied harassment of UMBC supporters to gain a following for the NPC, the Tiv who by nature hate the use of force as a substitute for consent and free will preferred to die (yange ve hembasoon ukpen).

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[1] Garba, op.cit.

CHAPTER SIX

BALLOTING, LEADERSHIP AND CUTLASSES

Anatomy of Electoral Results and Voting Patterns, 1959-64

All previous elections in Northern Nigeria up to 1956 were conducted under the old electoral college system. The Regional House of Assembly Elections of 1956 were the last to use this principle of election. Two years earlier the other two Regions in the Federation, the Western and the Eastern had already adopted the direct universal adult electoral system. The three elections to be considered here 1959, 1961 and 1964 were all conducted on the basis of universal franchise for adult males in Northern Nigeria. With the adoption of the new principle of balloting, political parties for the first time were given the opportunity to demonstrate the level of their effective support from the people. This is the reason why these three elections are being analysed.

In 1955 Azikiwe had expressed the view that the absence of a uniform electoral system in the country seriously hampered the development of national parties based on pragmatic principles

rather than on communal interests.[1] This was one of the issues discussed at the London Constitutional Conference of 1957. A special committee of this conference was appointed to consider an electoral system that was suitable for the federation. This special committee recommended to the Governor-General that an ad hoc Delimitation Commission be appointed for the purpose of dividing the Federation into 320 single-member electoral districts. A 3-man, all British Delimitation Commission headed by Lord Merthyr began work in October, 1957.[2] The Merthyr Commission based its work on the decision reached in London among the various Regional and Party leaders that future representation in the Federal Legislature was to derive from population statistics rather than the previous system adopted in Ibadan in 1950 which gave equal representation between the North and the South.

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[1] Gwendolen M. Carter, National Unity and Regionalism in 8 African States, Cornell U.P., 1960

[2] Lord Merthyr already had experience in this kind of job. In 1954 he had been Chairman of the Malayan Constituency Delineation Commission, See Post, op.cit. p.158.

This agreement, as it turned out, was to tip the balance of representation in favour of the Northern Region. On the basis of the estimates of their population in Mid-1953, out of the 320 seats 174 were allocated to the North, 73 to the East, 62 to the West and 3 to Lagos.[1]

After the decision to allocate constituencies to the Regions on the basis of the estimates of their population in Mid-1953, the Delimitation Commission was then faced with the problem of deciding the basis upon which it would distribute them within the Regions. Finally, the allocation between divisions was carried out on the basis of the total population shown in the 1952 Census. After this constituency boundaries were then drawn within divisions. By this method Idoma Division was divided into three constituencies for the 1959 elections, Idoma Southeast, Idoma North and Idoma West. Similarly the Tiv Division was delimited into seven constituencies, Jemgbar, Kunav, Ukum-Shitire, Iharev-Nongov, Iharev-Masev, Gaav-Shangev-Tiev, and Kwande, resulting in a gain of two seats over those

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[1] Ibid., pp.159-61.

of 1956. Both in Idoma and Tiv Divisions, the constituencies as so delimited above remained in use until the end of electoral politics in early 1966.

After the assignment of the Delimitation Commission, a Federal Electoral Commission was constituted in preparation for the then approaching 1959 Federal Elections. The Commission was headed by R.E. Wraith. Each Region had its Chief Electoral Officer who was directly responsible to the chairman of the Commission for the conduct of the elections in his Region. The Commission was charged with the administration of the new regulations for elections to the Federal House of Representatives.

The Registration of potential electors in all the three Idoma constituencies was supervised by the SDO, P.J. Cator, who was assisted by the ADO, Malam Mohammed Sabo. In the Tiv constituencies, registration of voters was effected on the supervision of the SDO, M. Dent. Both Cator in Idoma and Dent in Tivland, as Registration Officers for their respective areas, were responsible to the Chief Electoral Officer for the Northern Region,

D.J.M. Muffet, and they were to ensure that registration regulations were scrupulously complied with. For instance, electoral Regulation four stated that,

> ".....every person shall be entitled to register as an elector and if so registered to vote at an election who on the qualifying date is ordinarily resident in Nigeria and is a British subject or British protected person of the age of 21 years or upwards, and if ordinarily resident in the Northern Region is a male."[1]

Though Idomaland and Tivland had insignificant muslim populations, the Northern leaders' interpretation of Islam did not allow the women in these two Divisions to vote in 1959 nor in the two subsequent elections like their counterparts in the Southern Regions.

The 1959 Federal Elections

As noted above, the Delimitation Commission of 1957 allocated 174 constituencies out of the 320 for the whole of the federation to the Northern Region. 66 of the 174 constituencies were in the Middle Belt zone. In the 1959 Federal Elections, 583 candidates contested the 174 Northern constituencies.

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[1] Ibid., p.169.

A.G.	174
N.P.C.	170
N.E.P.U.	160
N.C.N.C.	5
U.M.B.C.	6
N.P.C./I.U.	4
N.P.C./I.D.U.	4
M.B.S.P.	2
I.T.U.	1
N.P.C./Youth Assoc.	1
Independent	58
	585*

The UMBC contested these elections on the platform of the palm tree (the A.G. symbol) and therefore its candidates were counted as A.G. candidates. UMBC with six candidates above referred to the "rump of the old UMBC in Southern Zaria, those who refused to recognise the alliance with the Action Group which had swallowed their party. This group contested Jema'a, Zangon Katab, and Zaria South-west under the symbol of a Nerzit hunter - the Nerzit Union had been an affiliated member of the UMBC in the old days."[1] NPC/IDU and NPC/IU were

*Daily Times, December 11, 1959, pp. 12-13.

[1]Post, op.cit., p.274.

cultural unions in Igala Division which were separately allied to the NPC. NPC/IU was organised around Daniel Ogbadu, Minister of State in Kaduna, while NPC/IDU was the union of his rival, Adaji (M.H.R.). The Middle Belt State Party (M.B.S.P.) was a splinter group from the main UMBC and it fielded candidates in two Tiv constituencies, Kunav and Gaav-Shangev-Tiev. ITU (Igbirra Tribal Union) was the dominant political force in Igbirra. Finally, NPC/Youth Association was the brain-wave of Audu Sule in Idoma. Though he was the NPC incumbent in the old House, he had been denied the nomination because of his quarrel with the Och'Idoma. He thus ran in the Idoma North constituency on this new platform.

Results of the 1959 Elections in Idoma[1]

Idoma North Constituency

John O. Ede (NPC)	6,497
Audu Sule (NPC/Youth Association)	4,352
Ogwiji Ikongbe (AG)	3,315
Benedict O.Atta (NCNC)	3,228
NPC majority	2,145

[1] Nigerian Citizen, December 19, 1959, p.8.

Idoma South-East

J.C. Obande (NPC)	12,766
Ella Abogonye (AG)	9,932
Oga Idikwu (NCNC)	4,917
NPC majority	2,834

Idoma West

Ebenezer Ameh Odo (NPC)	10,862
Chris Ogbonna (NCNC)	2,399
Alfred Aba (IND)	1,950
Samuel Ameh (IND)	1,494
Godfrey Omola (AG)	1,207
NPC majority	8,463

NPC candidates won in each of the three constituencies. Of the 62,899 votes cast, 32,125 votes or 51.5% went to the NPC, 14,454 to the A.G., 10,544 to the NCNC, and 3,444 to Independents. In Idoma South-East, J.C. Obande (NPC), then Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister took less than half (46.2%) of the votes, while the A.G. candidates, Abogonye collected 36% of the constituency votes. In Idoma North John Ede the official NPC candidate was in a hot race. This was his first try at an elective post. He had been taken from his teaching job at the N.A. Primary School Otobi by his cousin

Ogiri Oko, the Och'Idoma, to run against his foe Audu Sule, the NPC member of the dissolved House. At the first election to the Federal House in 1954, the Och'Idoma had put up another cousin, Audu Echono as the official ISU (Idoma State Union) candidate in the same constituency. In that election Audu Sule, inspite of the Och'Idoma, ran as an Indppendent ISU and won. Once again he was running against the nominee of the Och'Idoma, this time as the NPC/Youth Association candidate. He lost. The other two candidates in this constituency were the leaders of their respective parties. Ikongbe was the A.G. leader, while Attah was leader of the NCNC. Perhaps as a result of the stiff opposition, John Ede, the winning NPC candidate could gather only 37.4% of the votes cast.

In Idoma West Constituency the NPC candidate, Ameh Odo had a good victory over the four political nonentities that ran against him. As a matter of fact, Ameh Odo who was then an N.A. Portfolio Councillor had lost the NPC nomination to stand as candidate in this constituency to another N.A. Portfolio Councillor, Odumu Ebegonye at the first

balloting:[1]

Odumu Ebegonye	- 9	nomination	votes
Ameh Odo	- 5	"	"
Alfred Aba	- 2	"	"
Ochigbo 'Authority'	- 1	"	vote

Later, in a petition to the NPC Headquarters in Kaduna, Ameh Odo charged that Abutu Obekpa, then a Junior Minister in Kaduna and also from Idoma West constituency, had bought the nomination for Odumu Ebegonye who was his brother-in-law. In the petition he threatened to run as an Independent candidate if NPC party headquarters did not intervene in the nomination dispute. Muhammadu Ribadu, the NPC second Vice-President came down to Otukpo to preside over a new nomination for Idoma West Constituency. Ameh Odo easily won this nomination balloting by 200 votes to Ebegonye's 5.[2] He later went on to win the election as NPC candidate for Idoma West.

A similar situation nearly developed in Idoma Southeast Constituency during these 1959 Federal

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[1] Ameh Odo, op.cit. Interview.

[2] Ibid.

Elections. Obaike Ode stated,

> "I was sufficiently confident of my popularity in Idoma South-East to threaten to stand as an Independent against the official NPC candidate, J.C.Obande. I was sure I could beat him easily and I was prepared to lose my job as the N.A Development Secretary by standing against the official NPC candidate. They were aware of the danger, so they contacted Kaduna and Lagos. Three weeks to the election day, a telegram came from Lagos informing me of my appointment as a Director of the Airways and that I was to proceed to Lagos immediately. As soon as I landed in Lagos, I was ordered to go to London to attend to urgent Airways business. I just smiled to myself because I knew what had happened."[1]

The 1961 Regional House of Assembly Elections

The NPC and the AG fielded candidates in all the three Idoma electoral constituencies. The NCNC put up candidates in two of them and backed an Independent candidate in the third.

Idoma South-East

Oga Idikwu	(NPC)	7,890
Amedu Ode	(NCNC)	1,255
Ella Abogonye	(AG)	1,723
	NPC majority	6,167

[1] Interview with Obaike Ode, op.cit. Obande, however, denied that this was what happened and stated that Obaike Ode could never have been a serious political threat to him. However, he did not discuss the circumstances in which Obaike Ode was made a Director of Airways. Obande, op.cit., interview.

Idoma West

Abutu Obekpa	(NPC)	7,029
Augustine Ada	(Ind.)	4,008
David Owuna	(AG)	479
	NPC majority	3,021

Idoma North

Suleman Adobunu	(NPC)	4,168
Ode Atta	(NCNC)	3,209
Ogwiji Ikongbe	(AG)	2,800
	NPC majority	957*

In Idoma South-east Constituency the young pharmacist Oga Idikwu, won as the NPC candidate. He collected 71.7% of the total votes cast in the constituency. In the Federal Elections of 1959 he had ran in the same constituency as an NCNC candidate and came last with 17.8% of the votes. After 1959 he switched to the NPC and won the party's nomination to run in the 1961 Regional Elections in the Idoma South-east Constituency. Unfortunately, he died less than a year after

*Nigerian Citizen, May 10, 1961.

winning this election.[1] In the bye-election conducted to his vacant seat in March 1962, Obaike Ode the NPC absentee candidate (he was then in the U.S.A. on Airways business during most of the campaign period) was elected against Ellah Abogonye AG) and Amedu Ode (NCNC). After his election, Obaike Ode had to relinquish his Directorship of the Nigerian Airways. He was succeeded by Moses Idajo, another Idoma.[2]

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[1] Idikwu's election demonstrated beyond doubts that voting in the elections of this period was first and foremost for the party and then secondly for the candidate. This was why it was possible for Idikwu to lose in 1959; but win in 1961 in the same constituency after he had changed parties. This also accounted for the victory of Obaike Ode in 1962, even though he was not around to campaign. The important thing was that he belonged to the "right" party. And in Tivland, how else could one interpret Ibrahim Imam's victory in the 1961 elections in the Jemgbar constituency except for the fact that he belonged to "Tarka's" party, the one acceptable to the Tiv.

[2] Obaike said that he personally nominated Idajo to succeed him on the Airways. Obande disputed this, arguing that it was only Ministers that could do this and that it was actually him who got Idajo into the Airways. See separate interviews with the two men, op.cit.

In Idoma North the NPC had a real scare. The NPC candidate, Suleman Adobunu who was the District Head of Agatu, managed to pass the winning post in front of the NCNC candidate, Ode Atta with a mere 957 votes. If it had been a straight race between him and either the NCNC or AG candidate (both of whom came from Otukpo district), he could well have lost the election because the AG and the NCNC candidates between them collected roughly 60% of the votes cast. As a matter of fact, many people had opposed Adobunu's nomination.[1]

The 1964 Federal Elections

These were the last elections of any sort held in Northern Nigeria before the military coup of early 1966. Just before these polls, Nigerian political activities had crystallised in

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[1] Odumu Ocheibi stated that he had earlier been declared the NPC candidate to run in Idoma North and his name forwarded to Kaduna by the NPC Divisional Chairman, Ocheje Oko. However, he said that Abutu Obekpa was against his nomination and with Obande's collusion, the nomination was taken away from him and given to Suleman Etuka Adobunu. Ocheje Oko was removed as Divisional NPC chairman, his place taken by Malam Deti and later by Ameh Odindi. Ocheibi, op. cit.

the formation of two massive alliances. The NCNC, AG (what remained of it), NEPU and the UMBC formed the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). This alliance system was opposed by the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) made up of the NPC, the NNDP and a host of other small political groupings. In 1962 the UMBC had severed its ties with the AG and in this same year, had entered into an understanding with the NEPU in which the two promised to present a common front to the NPC in Northern Nigeria. This new merger was called the Nothern Progressive Front (NPF). In the North this name, NPF, was used in the 1964 Federal elections even though they were in the Grand Alliance. Considerable bad political blood was generated in the period immediately preceding the elections and this led to a call of boycott of the elections by UPGA leaders. In the North and the West, where NNA governments were in power, the talks of boycott were simply ignored and the elections went ahead according to schedule. It is not easy to determine the degree to which the charged political atmosphere affected the outcome of the 1964 elections in Nigeria, and particularly

in Northern Nigeria. It is probable that the UPGA boycott might have affected the electoral outcome in Tivland but this could not be said of the Idoma Division.

As it had consistently done the NPC (NNA) won in all the three Idoma constituencies, with NPF candidates losing their deposits in each of the three constituencies. The sizes of the NPC victories were bigger than before and this might suggest that the long NPC dominance had snuffed out the fire from the opposition parties - a process that had begun with the 1961 Regional Elections.

Idoma West

Ebenezer Ameh Odo	(NPC)	19,174
Augustine Ada	(NPF)	1,743
	NPC majority	17,431

Idoma South-East

J.C.Obande	(NPC)	Figures not available but NPC won an easy victory.
Ochi Okem	(NPF)	
James Oche	(Ind.)	

Idoma North

John Ede	(NPC)	14,948
Atayi Ikpe	(Ind)	3,459
Ogwiji Ikongbe	(NPF)	677
	NPC majority	11,489*

For the first time, there was an element of thuggery in politics in Idoma. A movement called the Sarduanist Youth Brigade was formed to spearhead John Ede's campaigns in Idoma North constituency. He said he organised the 'Brigade' to protect his interests against those who did not want to see him get elected.[1] Whatever its aims, its activities resulted in the loss of several lives and considerable damage to property. People became very disenchanted with the turn politics was taking not just in the country as a whole but where they understood it most, right in their villages.

With the persistent re-election of people like Ameh Odo, J.C. Obande, John Ede, Abutu Obekpa to the various Legislatures, it was evident that Idoma did not follow the Tiv practice which, until

*Daily Times, January 2, 1965, p.8.

[1]John Ede, op.cit., Interview.

Tarka was elected a second time in 1959, permitted an individual to serve only one term. The need for effective development of party organisation in Tiv and in Idoma, especially after 1958, which called for political expertise meant that the old principle of "eat and give your brother", (ya na angbian) whereby legislators were given only one opportunity was out of date and, as we shall see later, even the Tiv abandoned it. In the early days of weak party organisation, where a party like the UMBC was no more than a coalition of various and often conflicting interests, it was perhaps tactical to operate the principle.

Tivland and the UMBC Years: 1959-64

Between 1958 and 1959, the UMBC sent out an army of party workers into every corner of Tivland in a determined and systematic effort to get the Tiv people. Within this space of one year they covered a lot of ground in the political education of the ordinary Tiv man and woman. The first opportunity to test the results of their work came with the 1959 elections to the Federal House of Representatives. The party contested these elections

on the Action Group platform.

The 1959 Elections

Jemgbar

Sarwuan Tarka	(AG)	34,243
J.I. Ukume	(NPC)	1,191
S.C. Surma	(NCNC)	703
	AG majority	33,052

Kwande

Swen Kundu	(AG)	23,792
Henry Abaagu	(NPC)	1,337
Achirga Abuul	(IND)	800
J.I.Adzakpe	(NCNC)	775
	AG majority	22,455

Kunav

Dzungwenen Iyorkar	(AG)	16,349
C.A. Suwe	(NPC)	982
Akase R.Dowgo	(MBSP)	316
	AG majority	15,367

Gaav-Shangev-Tiev

Sule T. Daka	(AG)	13,921
V.A. Kpah	(NPC)	642
A.T. Korinya	(NCNC)	618
Patrick Kughul	(MBSP)	425
	AG majority	13,279

Ukum-Shitire

Tashaku Orodi	(AG)	21,798
Atim G.Atedze	(NPC)	2,399
A.T. Nor	(IND)	900
Iyorliam Kuan	(NCNC)	704
	AG majority	19,399

Iharev-Masev

Vincent T. Shirsha	(AG)	14,464
P.T. Kpah	(NPC)	5,434
S.C. Yogh	(IND)	916
	AG majority	9,030

Iharev-Nongov

Peter Tarkende	(AG)	9,217
Ayem U. Bem	(NPC)	3,292
M.K. Upaa	(NEPU)	2,345
	AG majority	3,925*

Apart from the fact that the UMBC took all the seven Tiv seats, the other fact which was not less significant was the massive voter turn-out at the polls. This could logically be seen as a direct outcome of the high political mobilization of the people by the UMBC. For instance in Jemgbar constituency the National President of the UMBC, Sarwuan Tarka gathered 34,243 votes; the highest

*Nigerian Citizen, December 19, 1959, pp. 8-9.

in the whole country in these elections. In Kwande constituency, Henry Abaagu leader of the Benue Freedom Crusade and member of the old House in Lagos, but now running on the platform of the NPC lost his deposit by polling only 4.8% of the votes cast. Also running in this constituency as an Independent was Achirga Abuul whose election as the UMBC President caused such a row at the Lafia convention in 1957. He managed only 2.9% of the votes. He had left the UMBC after Lafia and along with his supporters had formed the Middle Belt State Party but he was later sacked from the MBSP for allegedly attempting to build an alliance with the NCNC. In Ukum-Shitire, Tashaku Orodi defeated Atim Atedze the NPC candidate who polled only 9.3% of the votes. Atedze was both the Administrative Secretary to the Tiv N.A. and the NPC Benue Provincial Secretary. His candidature illustrated the way the NPC as a party was thoroughly mixed up with the local administration. Thus it was no surprise that when the people turned against the NPC party, it also meant that they had turned against the N.A.. Later, Atedze gained notoriety for mass

dismissal of Tiv N.A. staff suspected of UMBC sympathies.[1] Orodi, after his victory declared for the NPC party and before the life of the Parliament expired, three other Tiv UMBC M.Ps. had crossed into the NPC as well. These were Sue Daka (Gaav-Shangev-Tiev), Vincent Shirsha (Iharev-Masev) and Peter Tarkende (Iharev-Nongov). Shirsha and Tarkende came from Iharev constituencies of the present Makurdi Division - the least enthusiastic area in Tivland in its support of the UMBC. In these elections, the NPC made some show of nascent strength in this area which was Chongo. Tivland was made up of two geneological divisions, Ipusu and Chongo. In the words of Tseayo "the Chongo appear to have been the favourite of the NPC. The leading personalities of the NPC in Tivland were mainly from the Chongo. These included the Tor Tiv,

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[1] See the following for accounts of the oppressive administration of Atim Atedze, M.J. Dent, "A Minority Party - the UMBC", in J. Mackintosh, (ed.) Nigerian Government and Politics, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1966; Tseayo, op.cit., Z.V. Ukoh, The UMBC as a vehicle of Social Mobilization in Tivland, Dept. of Government, ABU, Zaria, 1972.

Aluor Gondo, the N.A. Councillor for Finance, L.K. Anja and the N.A. Administrative Secretary, Atim Atedze. Others who were originally in the UMBC but later crossed the floor to the NPC included former Ministers Tashaku Orodi, and Vincent Orjime. All these people including former members of Parliament, Tarkende and Shirsha are from the Chongo group."[1] Though between 1959 and 1961 UMBC party propagandists and political missionaries were able to contain this internal division of the Tiv society, by 1964 NPC's incessant harping on this division was rewarded when it won two seats in the Chongo area[2] and one other elsewhere.

1961 - the Regional Elections

Apart from Tivland, these elections confirmed and established the supremacy of the NPC party all over the North. To the irritation of the Northern Regional Government the Tiv continued to show a

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[1] Tseayo, op.cit., p. 169.

[2] During the "Atem itiough" (head breaking) revolts in 1964, "the worst happenings were experienced in Makurdi area where Peter Waro and Ari were said to have established an inquisitional court for the trial of the Kparev people generally", Makaa, op.cit., p. 666.
This evidently was to be some sort of punishment for the peoples' fledgling sympathy for the NPC.

stubborn resistance to the NPC tactics that had worked elsewhere. As in 1959, the UMBC won in all the seven Tiv constituencies.

Jemgbar

Ibrahim Imam	(AG)	29,620
Teryima Orkpe	(NPC)	1,215
	AG majority	28,405

Kwande

Sam Atum	(AG)	19,821
Ako Dzungwe	(NPC)	3,180
James Adzakpe	(NCNC)	270
	AG majority	16,641

Kunav

Ugba Uyeh	(AG)	12,671
S.N. Agbo	(IND)	973
Jime Akaakar	(NPC)	760
	AG majority	11,698

Gaav-Shangev-Tiev

Isaac Shaahu	(AG)	12,580
A.T.Korinya	(NCNC)	495
Denis Tondo	(NPC)	402
Patrick Kughul	(MBSP)	320
	AG majority	12,085

Ukum-Shitire

J.A. Amachigh	(AG)	19,831
Dominic Tyungu	(NPC)	1,762
Iyorlian Kuan	(NCNC)	538
Peter Acka	(IND)	133
	AG majority	18,069

Iharev-Masev		
Julius Ahura	(AG)	10,757
L.K. Anja	(NPC)	6,503
	AG majority	4,254
Iharev-Nongov		
Vincent Orjime	(AG)	6,737
Thomas Aji	(NPC)	2,854
	AG majority	3,883
Lafia		
Shehu Usman	(NPC)	17,517
Yahaya Sabo	(NEPU)	3,044
Ayilla Yogh	(AG)	2,465
	NPC majority	14,473*

The highlight of these elections was the victory of Ibrahim Imam in Jemgbar. Imam's victory demonstrated two things. One was the unflinching loyalty of the Tiv people to the cause of the UMBC and the other, the personal ascendancy of Tarka in UMBC leadership. Imam, the first Secretary-General of the NPC, had run into political trouble after leaving the party in 1954. Thereafter, he had formed the Bornu Youth Movement (BYM) and as leader of the Opposition, Imam was the first honourable member to introduce a motion in the Northern House of Assembly in 1956 calling for the

*Nigerian Citizen, May 10, 1961, pp. 6-7.

creation of the Middle Belt State. Though the motion like the subsequent one of 1957 was defeated, Imam thereafter had established himself with the leaders of the UMBC. Thus when in 1961 his old Bornu constituency became most unsafe for him, Tarka brought him down to Tivland to contest the elections in his own constituency of Jemgbar, where Imam collected 92.3% of the votes. Imam's nomination to stand the election in the Tiv constituency sparked off a lot of resentment from the members of the UMBC in Tiv Division, especially from people like Mbaakar Indyorhwer, who had been a member of the dissolved House and also the Schools Manager of the DRCM, Ugor Iwoo, the old TPU chieftain-turned patron of the UMBC, who had earlier on defeated Indyorhwer for the nomination was also not happy and threatened to run on the platform of the TPU against Imam. Ayilla Yogh, the UMBC Party Manager, also sought the nomination in this constituency but was cajoled and taken to Lafia to contest the election and where he eventually lost. It was reported that the opposition to Imam was softened by the respect the people had for Tarka's

wish and secondly because of a promise to make both Iwoo and Indyorhwer members of two public Boards in the Western Region on salaries of about £1,000.[1]

In Kwande Constituency, Sam Atum (UMBC) soundly thrashed Ako Dzungwe by polling 86.9% of the votes. Dzungwe had been elected in 1956 as the UMBC member of the dissolved Northern House but he later crossed over into the NPC party. In 1960 he succeeded the dreaded Atedze as the Administrative Secretary to the Tiv N.A.. In Ukum-Shitire, Peter A'cka who had been the UMBC Benue Provincial Organising Secretary up to 1961, felt compelled to run as an Independent against the official UMBC candidate and ended up gathering only a handful of 133 votes out of a total of 23,000. Tarka had vetoed Peter A'cka's nomination to make room for Amachigh, even though the former's was one of the first nominations to be announced for the election.[2] Ayilla Yogh's bid for election in Lafia ended dismally. The UMBC had presumably counted on the sizeable Tiv settlement in Lafia Division to

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[1] Nigerian Citizen, April 22, 1961, p.5.
[2] Dudley, op.cit., p.184.

bolster his election, in the same way that Tiv settlement in Wukari Division had elected a Tiv UMBC candidate in 1959.

1964 - the Last Federal Elections

These elections were expected to prove one or two things about the way Tiv politics had developed since 1959. When after having been elected on the UMBC platform four Tiv members of the dissolved House of Representatives one after the other declared for the NPC party, UMBC party leaders confidently and publicly stated that the men crossed over alone and that the electorate was still UMBC.[1] Hopefully and patiently, the party was waiting for the 1964 elections at which it expected to settle scores with the renegades. The hopes did not materialize and for the first time ever three persons were elected outright on NPC tickets in Tivland.

Jemgbar

Sarwuan Tarka	(NPF)	39,256
Nyitar Manyam	(NPC)	1,173
	NPF majority	38,083

[1] Shaahu, op.cit., Interview.

Kwande		
Kundu Swem	(NPF)	16,553
Ako Dzungwe	(NPC)	12,177
	NPF majority	4,376
Kunav		
Dzungwenen Iyorkar	(NPF)	17,026
Iyorka Abellega	(NPF)	3,317
	NPF majority	13,709
Gaav-Shangev-Tiev		
Ahura Sen	(NPF)	17,121
Sue Daka	(NPC)	2,245
Patrick Kughul	(IND. NPF)	496
	NPF majority	14,480
Ukum-Shitire		
Tashaku Orodi	(NPC)	17,297
Tornajime Akaa	(NPF)	11,611
	NPC majority	5,686
Iharev-Nongov		
Peter Tarkende	(NPC)	16,558
Emmanuel Mbachian Tim	(NPF)	4,358
	NPC majority	12,190
Iharev-Masev		
Vincent Shirsha	(NPC)	32,543
Gbenge Pine	(NPF)	7,049
	NPC majority	25,494*

*Daily Times, January 2, 1965.

It was only in Gaav-Shangev-Tiev constituency that the UMBC was able to beat one of the four honourable members who had deserted the party for the NPC after 1959. In this constituency, Ahura Sen took 82% of the votes to beat Sue Daka to regain the seat for the UMBC. However, in the two Iharev constituencies, Shirsha and Tarkende, as well as Orodi in Ukum-Shitire held on to their NPC seats. In all, the UMBC took only four of the seven Tiv seats, with the NPC taking the remaining three. As far as the NPC was concerned, this was very good showing indeed, because Tivland had been the last pocket of resistance to the party in Northern Nigeria. UMBC party leaders gave such extenuating circumstances as the UPGA boycott and plain rigging of the elections by the Government for the loss of the three seats.[1] It is hard to accurately assess the significance of the results of these elections. Could one reasonably see 1964 as the beginning of the end for the UMBC in Tivland as elsewhere in the Middle Belt or could it be seen as a temporary political setback? Had the electorate (at least a

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[1] Shaahu, op.cit.
Swem Kundu, op.cit., Interviews.

section of the Tiv people) now also crossed over into the NPC party? These are difficult questions. Perhaps, if the scheduled 1966 elections to the Northern Regional House of Assembly had taken place, one might have been able to answer these questions conclusively. But as it is, one can only hopefully speculate. However, one thing was apparent. By 1964, with two sets of violent riots behind them, the Tiv as a people had began to show signs of the weariness that came with long and hard oppositional politics.

Victimization as an aspect of electoral politics 1959-65

A detailed, nation-wide discussion of victimization as an aspect of competitive political struggles is obviously beyond the scope of this study. I intend to and I can only, treat the phenomenon in the context of Northern Nigeria, especially so in the context of minority political parties as they operated in the Middle Belt area vis-a-vis the NPC Government in Kaduna and the various N.As.

With the effective regionalization of politics in the 1950s, minority and opposition parties in each of the three Regions began to discover that they were gradually but inexorably being denied a liberal atmosphere in which to operate. The government party in each Region sought to create a monolithic one-party system in its Region of power and authority. The leaders and other functionaries of the major parties frequently paid lip service to the democratic ideals of representative government, while at the same time demonstrating enormous willingness and capacity to abandon the rules of the game in their dealings with rival parties in their respective Regions of jurisdiction. Of course, this meant that the ideals of participatory majoritarian government would remain at best a mirage. By denying the development of the necessary conditions for such a free society, the rhetoric of government and party leaders was nothing more than political verbiage and propaganda. As one scholar on the subject noted, the operation of any given system of rules must not be at the expense of the opposition and to fail to accept this as an

operational principle would not only question the basis of constitutionalism, but would also eventually threaten the continued existence of the opposition. This seemed to have been the plight of the opposition parties in the North and which had led the North becoming virtually a one-party 'State'[1]. The 1961 elections to the Northern Regional House of Assembly demonstrated beyond all doubts the final ascendancy of the NPC party over other political parties in Northern Nigeria. Here I will attempt a discussion of the tactics and methods employed by the NPC party to beat up effective political competition from rival political parties in the Middle Belt area.

To really comprehend the issue, one has to understand the basics of political life in the Region. In effect this means that one has to examine the central role the N.As. played in politics in this period. The Native Authority Law of 1954 invested in N.As. the power to make rules and issue orders for the purpose of the day

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[1] Dudley, op. cit., p. 186.

to day maintenance of law and order. The N.As frequently interpreted these powers to the detriment of opposition parties and their supporters. For instance, Section 37, Sub-Section 44 of the 1954 Act, provides that N.As. may make orders "prohibiting any act or conduct which in the opinion of the Native Authority might cause a riot or a disturbance or a breach of the peace".[1] Under this rule, N.As. were responsible for issuing permits before processions, meetings or political rallies could be held in their areas of authority. Often opposition parties were refused permits to hold meetings for one reason or the other, such as not giving the authorities sufficient notice for permits to be prepared and/or other arrangements made to ensure order and peace at such a meeting.

However, the real source of N.A. influence in politics was its control of the Native Courts, the Native Police, the District Heads and other N.A staff - in short its control over the local administrative paraphernalia. Given the situation in which the N.A. personnel and administrative

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[1] Ibid., p.186.

structures were interwoven with and indistinguishable from those of the NPC party, such resources like the local police, the courts, chiefs and tax agents, were placed at the disposal of the party which it, in turn, converted into political resources for furthering its interests. The manipulation of the N.As. for the services of the NPC was fairly easy given the fact that the top men of the party in a division invariably were the top men in the N.As. as well. These were the District Heads, the Portfolio Councillors and others. Out of the nine men that represented the Idoma Division between 1959 and 1964 in either the Federal Legislature or the Regional House only one, the young Pharmacist, Oga Idikwu, was neither a Portfolio Councillor nor a District Head before his election. The others, Ajene Ukpabi, Adobunu Etuka, Audu Sule, John Ede, Ameh Odo, Obaike Ode, Obande, and Abutu Obekpa were at the time of their election either N.A. Portfolio Councillors or District Heads or the sons of District Heads.

A similar pattern was discernible in the Tiv Division, where as was to be expected, local leaders

of the NPC party occupied strategic positions in the N.A.. L.K.Anja was the N.A. Finance Councillor as well as the NPC Chairman, Atedze was Administrative Secretary to the Tiv N.A. and Benue Provincial NPC Secretary, Orodi was the son of a chief in Ugba, while the NPC patrons, Gondo Aluor and Bendega Ukpada were the Tor Tiv and Deputy Tor Tiv respectively. On the other hand, leaders of the opposition parties never had this kind of connection with the local administration except in the rare case of Tarka, whose father was a District Head. Later, because of the politics of his son, Tarka Nachi was subsequently removed from office and another person, Mbakunguran, made District Head of Mbakor.

Now it will serve us well if we examine the course of the victimization and the suppression of opposition parties in both Tiv and Idoma Divisions and the responses it elicited in the two areas.

Idoma, 1959-65

The issue of victimization in politics in Idoma division was clear cut. The NPC was the dominant political party and also the government party. As well

as being in power in Kaduna, it was in power in Otukpo because it controlled the N.A.. Politics in this period was conceptualised narrowly as a simple equation of 'for' and 'against'. If one supported the NPC party, it meant that he supported the N.A., chiefly power personified in the Och'Idoma and respect for elders and therefore was free from political harassment. On the other hand, if one supported any of the two opposition parties, he was in for a hard time because it was assumed that he was a trouble-maker and treated accordingly. "It was the general view of NPC supporters to torture and harass their opponents, but we tried to control this and not let it get out of hand except for the activities of the Sardaunist Youth Brigade in Idoma North in 1964."[1] Victimization usually followed two stages. There was an early stage in which cajoling and persuasion were employed to win over supporters of the opposition parties. Where this approach failed to have the desired effect, then actual repressive measures were resorted to in dealing with the opposition. Such measures varied from a sudden

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[1] Obaike Ode, op.cit. Interview.

increase in tax assessment, dismissal of workers of opposition party sympathies at the slightest excuse or the withholding of lecture permits to opposition party campaigners. Abogonye vividly portrayed the vindictive activities of the N.A. in divisional politics in his description of what happened in Idoma South-east constituency in the 1959 elections to the Federal House of Representatives:

> "in November the N.A. came out plainly to give full support to NPC. It imposed higher taxation randomly on some non-NPC supporting areas and the N.A. police was used to arrest all those who could not pay the extra tax. Many supporters of the A.G. in Ito and Oju were arrested on the grounds of non-payment of tax and for holding illegal gathering. Most of the men arrested for illegal gathering were so arrested while pricing goods in the market or while drinking beer with their friends. Others were arrested for not producing bicycle licences.....they were released only after they had been forced to shout 'Salana' and had declared for the NPC party."[1]

The first Och'Idoma, Ogiri Oko, was a shrewd individual. He understood early where power lay in the North and he had no illusions about the use to which that power could be put - thus he wanted his people to

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[1] Abogonye, op.cit., pp. 86-87.

be on the right side of that power. Unfortunately not every group in the division agreed with his definition of the political reality and they said and acted so by joining the Action Group or the NCNC or by opposing the Och'Idoma's own nominees at elections. The N.A. unleashed its repressive forces on such dissidents and their agents. For the second time in 1959, the Och'Idoma was putting up a cousin as the official NPC candidate in Idoma North against his foe, Audu Sule. In Ugboju district during this election there was a man named Alika who was doing a real job of campaigning for Audu Sule against the Och'Idoma's candidate, John Ede. About three months to voting day, Alika was arrested for delivering a "wrong lecture" and sentenced to two months imprisonment with no option of fine by the Otukpo Grade 'C' court. On the day of Alika's release from prison, the Och'Idoma instructed John Alechenu to present him with a bicycle, £5 and a botttle of whisky if he agreed to switch to Ede's campaign bandwaggon. The following day Alika was out

in front leading John Ede's campaign in Ugboju.[1]

The obstructive tactics pursued by district heads and NPC party men who constituted themselves into self-appointed judges and policemen severely hampered the activities of the opposition parties. During the 1959 elections, Ameh Odo, the NPC candidate for Idoma West and who also was an N.A Portfolio Councillor, on his own initiative arrested Ameh of Edumoga, the A.G. party agent in the area for non-possession of a bicycle licence and remanded him in custody at Ugboklo. Ameh was later released when his party leaders in Otukpo heard of his detention and came down to Ugboklo to demand his immediate release.

It is not my intention to give a full chronicle of all the known incidents of victimization suffered by opposition party leaders and their supporters. Belonging to or supporting

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[1] Interview with John Alechenu. Between 1954-1959, Alechenu had been in the NCNC. In 1959, he was hired by the Och'Idoma to help in John Ede's campaign in Idoma North. His subsidy dried up when the Och'Idoma died in 1960. He later went back to the NCNC and became its Organising Secretary for the Division, 1961-65.

a "wrong party" was a risk people understood and took. My interest lies in the effect the strategy had on the course of politics in the division and the response of the people to it - that is, to what extent did the activities of the N.A. vitiate the development of a virile opposition in Idoma Division? In the division resentment against victimization by the N.A. and the NPC did not produce any large scale violent reactions from the people. Somehow the authorities always stopped just short of pushing the people over the brink. The people did not despair and therefore, did not have to act desparately. More pertinent was the fact that the majority of the people in the division were never turned off the NPC party or, where some individuals were, it was never with the ferocious intensity characteristic of the Tiv. Perhaps this accounted in a large measure for the fact that the Idoma N.A. did not have to unleash much coercion on the people. It got by with a judicious sprinkling of it here and there.

Tivland, 1959-65, the Simmering of Discontent

The results of the 1959 Federal elections showed Tivland as over 94% UMBC. In other words, this meant that the NPC was a tiny minority in the division. However, this minority controlled the instrument of power and authority in the land and when it abandoned the customary Tiv avenue of persuasion for a coercive approach in its determination to get the Tiv people over into the NPC, the stage was set for a confrontation which neither side seemed willing or able to avoid. The White Paper on the Coomassie Commission stated as much: "At this time neither the NPC - controlled Executive Committee nor the UMBC were prepared to change their course and a collision was inevitable".[1]

The records show that Tivland was far from being a stable and happy area in this period. There were numerous petitions from the people against the activities of their chiefs. In 1960, the elders of Mbayongu sent a petition to the S.D.O. Gboko, against their Clan Head, Binda, accusing him of oppressive rule. One of the 37 elders who signed the

[1] White Paper, op.cit., p.6.

land was not "merely expected but had to suport the government and it was my duty to see that this was done".[1] As Tseayo writes, "meanwhile, the Tor Tiv, Gondo Aluor, engaged in a massive witch-hunt to purge the N.A. employees and traditional chiefs of their UMBC sympathies. Those who did not appear to change their political allegiance were quickely removed from office."[2]

After the massive UMBC victory, the Tiv N.A. felt it had let down the Government and vowed it would not preside over such an electoral fiasco again. To make its words stick, the N.A. launched a massive victimization program against UMBC supporters. This policy boomeranged and in 1960 and again in 1964, the Tiv UMBC undertook violent retaliatory steps against the institutions and the party that was oppressing them. The Tiv by nature hate oppression and the use of force to settle an issue. When the

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[1]Interview with Gondo Aluor, the Tor Tiv. Before his election as the Tor Tiv in 1956, he had been the Tiv N.A. Chief Scribe (Administrative Secretary), M.H.R. for UKUM-SHITIRE, 1954-56. He had been prominent in the TPU in the 1940s but lost the contest to the Tor Tivship to Makeri in 1946. He later became Makeri's Deputy.

[2]Tseayo, op.cit., p.203.

NPC party through the N.A. applied intimidation and harassment of the people to get them to support the party, the Tiv people openly declared that they preferred to die. NPC tactics simply turned them off. It confirmed their long-held belief that the NPC had to be a thoroughly bad organisation to need force to get people to support it. In 1960 Tarka had petitioned the Premier of Northern Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello, urging him to intervene and put an end to the harassment of the UMBC and its supporters in Tivland. In a reply dated 19th August, 1960 the Premier refuted Tarka's charges of victimization of UMBC/AG Alliance supporters in Tivland--the Premier after a "very thorough investigation was satisfied that no illegality was committed".[1] A month later, the Tiv Riots of 1960 erupted.

One of the results of the victimization policy was that "N.A. employees who were arbitrarily sacked from their jobs went into the rural areas and helped to build strong UMBC grass-root support and resistance against the N.A."[2] Yina Kogi, a dismissed N.A

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[1] MakProf, PLT/5, Vol.1., NAK, p.11.
[2] Tseayo, op.cit., p. 203.

policeman, later rose in UMBC leadership echelon to became the party's Divisional President between 1962-1964. Other dismissed N.A. policemen who often were veterans of World War Two and had seen action in Burma and Abyssinia went into the bush from where they later organised and led the rioters.[1] According to Makaa, the 1940s and the 1950s had produced a class of the "dispossessed" in Tivland. The dispossessed were to be found among the elders, middle-aged people and the youth. They were penniless adventurers (iyor mba ve gbe kwagh ga) who had nothing to lose. They were the people who had not been properly absorbed in the society because they 'are empty' (mba akile ga). They lacked the substance or quality of a natural Tiv who had been brought up properly and who had been taught to respect his people.[2] This group carried out most of the activities of the riots in 1960 and 1964. They were the looters, the arsonists and the

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[1] Garba, op.cit., interview.

[2] For a detailed analysis of the conditions that gave rise to the emergence of this class of people in the Tiv society, see Makaa, op. cit., pp.648-654.

head bashers. They did not plan the riots but were merely instruments for their execution.

The traditional interpretation of the two Tiv Riots was that they were spontaneous reactions by the people to oppression - that they "came like breeze". That interpretation is not an adequate explanation of what happened. It is true that the riots were responses to oppression but they neither came like breeze nor were they spontaneous. The riots could be seen as preemptive and calculated moves by the UMBC to instil fear in the Tiv masses so that they would not desert it for the NPC party that was beginning to win adherents with its application of force. The riots were aimed at holding the people down in the UMBC. As Tseayo notes,

> "in their own struggle not to lose control and influence with the people, who otherwise might have capitulated under the autocratic rule of the NPC, the UMBC middlemen countered the oppressive messures by instigating the general revolt through Tivland. In doing this, they

demonstrated widespread control the entire country-side."[1]

However, UMBC leaders denied responsibility for the riots and insisted that the rioters were "fighting against other Tiv men who were being used as agents of the NPC to give unnecessary hardship to the Tiv people."[2]

For the 1960 Riots, Sarwuan Tarka and five other leaders of the UMBC, Dzungwenen Iyorkar, Ugoo Iwoo, Labe Ingbian, Ayilla Yogh and Emmanuel Iyortyon were arrested in 1961 just before the Regional elections of that year on charges of "instigating and managing" the upheaval of 1960. They were defended by Chief Rotimi Williams, leading a tean of five other AG lawyers, Chief A.M.Akinloye, Agbaje William, S.O.Morohundiya, Bola Ige and O. Rewane. The accused were discharged and acquitted of charges of

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[1] Tseayo, op.cit. Ph.D. Thesis, p.208. It is possible that the organisers of the insurrections believed that they would serve as a deterrent to their opponents (the N.A. and the chiefs) to refrain from oppression and at the same time deter their supporters from abandoning the UMBC.

[2] Ayilla Yogh, interview, 8th March, 1975. This contrasts with the view of the White Paper: "In the evidence submitted before the Commission, the UMBC were frequently charged with planning the 1960 and 1964 riots, and as frequently they denied this charge. The Commission are convinced, however, that in spite of the UMBC denials the disturbances were not sparked off accidentally" p 7.

incitement to cause disorder and a breach of the public peace by the High Court of Northern Nigeria.

The ordinary Tiv man was less fortunate. Following the 1960 Riots five thousand Tivmen were tried and convicted and given prison sentences ranging from one month to two years. Also all adult males in Tivland (except those who sustained losses) were asked to pay an extra tax of £2.15.0d each to help pay for the damages that had been caused by the disturbances.[1] Later, the N.A. was dissolved and the SDO, Martin Dent, was made the Sole Administrator. The N.A. was dissolved because "those in authority did not behave with tact and party politics was brought into the sphere of administration".[2] Given top priority as the duties of the Sole Administrator were the restoration of law and order, the reconciliation of the warring party men (NPC and UMBC) and assistance to the Tor Tiv in regaining his authority and the confidence of his subjects.[3] As part of the

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[1] Makaa, op.cit., pp. 636-637.
[2] White Paper, op.cit., p.8.
[3] Ibid., p.9.

reorganisation, 14 district heads were suspended. After the 1964 Rising the Northern Regional Government appointed the Commassie Commission of Inquiry into the affairs of Tiv Division. The Commission's findings and recommendations, later embodied in a Government White Paper stating its policy for the rehabilitation of the Tiv N.A. which was released in 1965, were preempted by the coup of early January, 1966.

Some writers seem to believe that the political animosities and the civil disturbances of the 1960s have left a permanent scar on stability and unity among the Tiv; "the question of political stability is still the basic problem haunting the Tiv people today. Although on the surface there are signs of tranquility and stability in the land it is far from the truth."[1] This melancholy as well as disturbing assessment of Tivland is perhaps an enduring legacy of the decade of turmoil.

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[1] Makaa, op. cit., p. 681.

The Leadership Element: Dissent and Cleavages

Most of the data already treated have been approached from the perspective of the relationship of the ethnic leaders with their various groups under the background of the respective political party affiliations of such group leaders. Throughout, I have tried to emphasize that the behaviour of these leaders was structured by the dynamics of this relationship. Now I should like to turn my efforts to a consideration of the nature of the political leadership itself within the two groups. What was this leadership like? Was each a coordinated and coherent group? If there were intra-leadership conflicts, were they the result of strategy differences or personality clashes? Who lost out in these struggles and why? These are some of the questions that need to be asked and answered in a discussion of group leadership within the two groups. As case studies of this phenomenon I will examine the NPC leadership in Idoma and the UMBC leadership in Tiv.

NPC leadership in Idoma: The factions

The NPC party in Idoma provided the image of a well-organised and well-knit, articulate and

disciplined leadership. This was the picture of the party and its leadership that was dished out by its propagandists for public consumption. It was far from the truth of what actually transpired. No doubt, this highly mystifying image emerged from and was sustained by the fact the NPC was the dominant party and consistently won every election in the division. In reality, the NPC in Idoma was neither well-organised nor its leadership tightly knit. The party was no more than an amalgamation of various factions organised around individuals and interests. The only thing that held them together was the common desire to see the party triumphant at the polls.

Between 1954 and 1959, the true maverick of NPC party leadership in Idoma was Malam Audu Sule. In 1954 he did two things simultaneously. He defied the Och'Idoma, and he broke with the NPC party that was just then being formed in the division. When the party had been introduced earlier that year, Audu Sule who was already an N.A. Portfolio Councillor, acted as its protem Chairman because the organisers held meetings in his house. Others

prominent in the group at this time were Abutu Obekpa, already an honourable member in the Northern House of Assembly in Kaduna and Malam Ali who acted as Secretary when they met. Audu Sule fell out with Abutu Obekpa and the former convened an emergency meeting of the party at which he demanded a vote of no confidence in Obekpa. The misunderstanding between Obekpa and Sule had nothing whatsoever to do with arguments about the direction each wanted the party to take. It was strictly personal. Audu Sule was denied the vote that he sought and instead a vote of no confidence was passed on him.[1] A new chairman of the group was elected. He was Ocheje Oko, the brother of the Och'Idoma. Audu Sule left the group to organise the Idoma NPC Youth Association, with Augustine Alechenu as his secretary and they began to claim that this was the dominant N. P. C. in Idoma. As a result of the claims and the counter claims by the two factions NPC headquarters in Kaduna were forced to send Maikano Dutse to settle the rift in the Idoma NPC. The Dutse peace mission bestowed recognition on the

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[1] Ameh Odo, op.cit., interview.

Ocheje Oko faction as the official NPC in Idoma. The leaders of this group were:

Ocheje Oko - Chairman
Odumu Ocheibi - Secretary General
J.C.Obande - Patron.

As resourceful as he was, Audu Sule had the singular inability to work harmoniously with other men. He fell out with almost every prominent man around Obande, Obekpa, Ameh Odo and most important of all, the Och'Idoma. One after the other, he was stripped of his posts in the N.A. hierarchy. First to go was the divisional chairmanship of the NPC party. Later, he was removed as N.A. Portfolio Councillor and replaced by the Och'Idoma's cousin, John Ede. And in 1959, he lost his membership of the Federal House of Representatives.[1]

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[1] It would appear that Idoma NPC leaders resented Audu Sule for his arrogance and secondly for the fact that he was not an Idoma. By 1961, he was a beaten and defeated man. In this year, the post of Personnel Manager to the National Press, Lagos was vacant and NPC headquarters Kaduna asked Idoma NPC to nominate a man for the job. Even though Odang Ogenyi had been tipped for the £100 a month job, it later went to Audu Sule because Idoma NPC leaders saw this as a unique opportunity to get rid of Audu Sule, who had enormous nuisance potential, from the division. Ogenyi was placated by being made the Mayor of Otukpo. Obaike Ode, op.cit., interview.

The victorious faction soon set upon itself, thereby giving rise to several factions within the party. The only difference between what was happening and what happened in the Audu Sule era was that the rival factions did not split, but somehow all of them found room to coexist under the umbrella of the party. The divisions within the party ran deep but the coercive instruments, in addition to other resources available to the party, enabled it to cover up these cleavages and go on to win all the elections in Idomaland. Indeed, the spectacular thing about the party was that despite the rivalry within it, the various groups had the ability to come together when it mattered most - during elections. Perhaps this was mere survival instinct, but it was displayed several times over.

One respondent expressed the view that there were three major factions within the party. There was the Obande faction, which was organised around J.C.Obande, a Federal Minister in Lagos. A second faction belonged to Abutu Obekpa, a Minister in Kaduna. The third faction was the one generally referred to as 'N.A. NPC.' This was made up of the

Och'Idoma, Portfolio Councillors and other senior N.A. staf.[1] The difference between this and the other two was that its leadership was based in Otukpo while the leaders of the first two were either in Kaduna or in Lagos. When it was strictly issues relating to the function of the party in the division, this was the strongest faction. However, when it was about general policy matters emanating from NPC headquarters the Ministers, who were nearer the seat of power, had the upper hand. It was said that the main source of rivalry between Abutu Obekpa and J.C. Obande resulted from the attempts of each of the two men to create the reputation in NPC circles in Otukpo that he had the ear of the Premier and NPC leadership in Kaduna. The Obande/Obekpa rivalry reached its climax in 1960 when Obande supported Ajene Ukpabi against the more influential Obekpa when the new Och'Idoma was to be selected following the death of

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[1] Ocheibi, op.cit., interview.

Ogiri Oko.[1] Ukpabi defeated Obekpa to become the second Och'Idoma.

Another factor that contributed to the existence of rival groups within the Idoma NPC was the nature of the party's organisation in the division. The party was organised along the four Intermediate areas of the division, with the respective M.Ps. as the political bosses of such areas. This more or less reduced the Divisional NPC headquarters to a passive role with all the glamour and aura but with no powers with which to supervise the affairs of the party in the districts. This contrasted sharply with what obtained in the set up of the other two opposition parties. The M.Ps. who were the de facto leaders of the NPC in their various Intermediate areas allowed their jealousy and rivalry to effectively discourage the emergence of a powerful neutral party centre in Otukpo with

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[1] Obande admitted that he supported the candidacy of Ukpabi but denied that it had anything to do with an existing rivalry with Obekpa. He stated that his main consideration at that time was in terms of the power equation in Kaduna, arguing that if Obekpa who was then a Minister in Kaduna became the Och'Idoma, it meant that his post as a Government Minister would go to a non-Idoma, thus weakening Idoma influence in government circles. This was what he sought to prevent by backing Ukpabi for Och'Idoma. Obande op. cit., interview.

sufficient authority to oversee party activities in the division. Essentially the incidence of factions in the NPC had nothing to do with differences over what goals the party should pursue. Also, it had nothing to do with the choice of methods to realise such goals if any really existed outside the self-interests of the party leaders.

Dissent in the UMBC

Unlike the NPC in Idoma, dissent within the UMBC leadership had an ideological bent. It was over whether alliances should be concluded with southern parties or not. Those opposed to such alliances left the party and some formed their own parties or joined other parties to propagate their own ideals. Secondly, dissent was over the issue of suitable tactics of goal achievement. Some abandoned oppositional strategy to seek cooperation with the NPC by joining the party to work from within for the creation of the Middle Belt State. This included the group of UMBC parliamentarians that crossed the carpet to the NPC.

In the discussion of cleavages within the UMBC, I shall not consider the numerous "wings" that

featured prominently in the party in the years before 1957. Up to this year, the UMBC was not a party as such. It was merely a federation of various Middle Belt groups that wanted to do something about their status in Northern Nigeria. After 1957, especially so after the party's Lafia Convention, the UMBC became organised and streamlined with a definite leadership. It concluded an alliance with the Action Group in 1958 and this resulted in two waves of desertion from the party. One was ephemeral and the other, though limited to only a few individuals, continued until 1962 to embrass the UMBC by its determination. When the UMBC and the AG allied in 1958, Henry Abaagu, (M.H.R.) left the party to form the Benue Freedom Crusade. Abaagu was only opposed to an alliance with the AG and not to alliances in general. He went on to ally the Crusade to the NCNC. Later, the movement evaporated, and Abaagu crossed into the NPC and contested the 1959 elections under its platform.

The most important of the groups that walked out on the UMBC after 1957 was that organised by the supporters of Achirga Abuul - men like Patrick Kughul,

Akase Dowgo, Sebastin Adugu and Zanege Jime. The group was opposed to any kind of alliance with any major political party. They wanted to maintain the pristine purity of their political ideals and they felt that an alliance with a major party would only result in the adulteration of their goals. They did not want to be used as tools for the interests of any major party.[1]

This faction was one of the groups and interests invited to appear before the Willink Minorities Commission sitting at Makurdi in 1958. It was represented by Kughul, Dowgo and Abuul himself. Instead of seizing the opportunity to press for the creation of the Middle Belt State which was their main goal, they opposed its creation before Willink. They did this because they now believed that the idea of a Middle Belt State stood "butchered before creation", as each major party was trying to take some segment of the proposed state to merge with some existing Region. For instance, Tarka's UMBC, in alliance with the A.G. was prepared to forfeit Ilorin and Kabba to the West, while Abagu's Freedom Crusade

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[1]Patrick Kughul, op.cit., interview.

"threw away" the Niger Province and parts of Adamawa and Bauchi to the "Far North". The group felt that this dismemberment did not do justice to the original idea of the Middle Belt Region and therefore it opposed its creation in 1958.[1]

Soon after Makurdi Abuul, the nominal leader of the group, was expelled for attempting to ally the group with the NCNC. This was the end of "Abuul's UMBC Independents". The group thereafter converted itself into the Middle Belt State Party (MBSP), with the stated goal of the creation of a Middle Belt Region out of Northern Nigeria without the benefit of an alliance with a major party. Its leaders were:

President	- Zanege L.Jime
Secretary	- Akase R.Dowgo
Party Manager	- Patrick Kughul
Provincial Secretary	- Sebastin Adugu

On the platform of the MBSP, both Dowgo and Kughul contested the 1959 Federal Elections. Dowgo ran in Kunav Constituency, where he polled only 316 votes or 1.8% of the total 17,805 votes cast in the

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[1] Ibid.

constituency. In Gaav-Shangev-Tiev, Kughul lost his deposit when he took only 2.7% of the votes. Their former leader Abuul ran in Kwande and managed to take only 2.9% of the votes cast.[1] In the 1961 Regional Elections, Kughul ran in the same constituency again and once more lost his deposit.

Their poor showing at the polls did not discourage the MBSP. They stuck to their guns and their principles. Though the MBSP offered no serious political threat to the entrenched UMBC leaders to approach the MBSP for reconciliation in 1962. While the move was on, Tarka in company with Awolowo and others in the A.G. was arrested on charges of treasonable felony. In this troubled time for the UMBC/AG, a conference of the alliance was called in Makurdi presided over by Tarka's deputy, Jonah Assadugu, M.H.R. The MBSP attended this conference because of the moves of reconciliation initiated by Tarka befoe his detention. The party was represented by Kughul, Dowgo and Ajikwa. On the promise by the UMBC that it would sever its alliance with the AG and avoid alliances with major parties in the future,

/in Tivland, their nuisance value prompted Tarka and other UMBC

[1] Nigerian Citizen, December 19, 1959, p.8.

the MBSP agreed to merge with it.[1] In the elections conducted, the following were put up as officers of the party:[2]

National President	- J.S.Tarka (in detention)
Deputy N.President	- Jonah Assadugu
General Secretary	- Abba Jimeta
Admin. Secretary	- Azi Nyako
Financial Secretary	- Isaac Shaahu
Publicity Secretary	- Akase Dowgo (former MBSP)
Prin. Org. Secretary	- Nath. Mayaki
Treasurer	- Bulus Billyong
Auditor	- Patrick Kughul (former MBSP)
Party Manager	- Ayilla Yogh

In October that same year (1962) the UMBC broke its alliance with the AG. The puritanical ideals of the men in the MBSP did not sit well with the electorate Whenever and wherever its candidate contested an election, the party always lost the deposit. Its denunciation of alliance with a major party meant that it denied itself the opportunity of financial support,

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[1] Kughul, op. cit., interview.

[2] Nigerian Year Book, 1963.

which for instance the A.G. provided the UMBC. Without this financial support, the MBSP was unable to undertake effective political campaigns except among a few individuals. The men wanted to be true to themselves by remaining faithful to the ideals they started out with.

CONCLUSIONS

I will endeavour in this concluding chapter to the investigation of minority politics in Northern Nigeria to tie up the loose ends to the central question posed: what factors conditioned the divergent political behaviour of the Tiv and the Idoma in the Northern Region between 1950 and 1965? I wish to submit that among other factors the behaviour of the two groups to a large extent hinged on the role, acceptability and interests of two types of elites within the groups.

The first set of elites was basically traditional, deriving its inspiration, legitimacy and influence from the pre-colonial period. Colonial rule however wrought significant changes in the influence, authority and orientation of this elite. In Idoma as both Ochai and Elaigwu have amply showed the chief (oche) functioned in society essentially as an arbiter.[1] The colonial era opened up a new phase and added a new dimension (executive authority) to the traditional function (arbitration) of this elite. Reluctantly the Idoma came to terms with the colonial administration, largely because there existed a general acceptance of and considerable goodwill towards the institution

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[1] Ochai, op.cit., Elaigwu, op.cit.

before and after colonial times. Despite the substantial similarity between the Idoma and the Tiv in their traditional socio-political structures, a fundamental and also a remarkable difference between the two groups lay in the fact that different sets of people made up this traditional elite within the two groups. While in Idoma the chief, assisted by the elders especially those called aiigabo , comprised this elite, in Tivland there were no chiefs and thus authority and influence in the society lay with the elders only. The British colonial administration was unaware of or simply ignored this reality of Tiv social and political organisation and proceeded to create chiefs who were not merely arbiters but who were also bestowed with executive authority.

This fact was later to prove decisive for the nature of the relations which each of the two minority groups studied manifested with the dominant Hausa-Fulani groups (the NPC party). As was customary with this political party wherever it was introduced it sought to win over people through the influence and cooperation of chiefs. This strategy of political mobilization worked with the Idoma because among this group there existed an entrenched, coherent and

acceptable chieftaincy institution which had even grown in influence and authority in the colonial period. It was this elite, along with anothernew line of elite, that eventually led the people into an amicable association with the dominant Hausa-Fulani elite in Northern Nigeria. The absence or near absence of this framework in Tivland (where the British - created chiefs were openly ridiculed and the elders unfortunately were in disarray because their traditional function in the land had been undermined by a combination of a series of colonial ordinances and the erosive influence of the new money economy) was one of the factors responsible for the rejection of the NPC and the Northern system. The Tiv extended the rejection of the chieftaincy institution to a corresponding rejection of external control which both the N.A. and the NPC symbolised to them.

The other category of elite was brought into being as a direct result of the introduction of new organisational and technological techniques accompanying colonial rule and the modernisation process. The distinguishing marks of this elite were its relative youthful age and its possession, however slight, of western educational knowledge and skills. Western education

spread from Iboland into Idomaland from where it later spread into Tivland.[1] This enabled the Idoma to have a head start in formal education over the Tiv and though Tiv Division came to have a higher absolute number of educated people, in terms of the ratio of educated people to total population, Idoma Division continued to lead Tivland.[2] The Idoma lead in education over the Tiv is seen in empirical terms in the relatively higher number of Idoma as compared to the Tiv that have stood out later on in Nigeria

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[1] I am aware that the DRCM came to Tivland in 1911 from the east. However the Roman Catholic Mission which arrived in 1930 soon overtook the DRCM in the establishment of schools in Tivland. The Roman Catholic pioneers led by Father (later Bishop) Heerey came to Makurdi from Onitsha and the Catholic Mission in Tivland was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Bishop Shanahann at Onitsha.

See P.I.Or, Education as a Weapon for Social Change and Political Awareness: The Case of the Tiv 1911-1966, Undergraduate Research Paper, Department of Government, ABU, Zaria, 1974, p.9 and p. 22.

[2] In 1968 there were 40,907 pupils in 163 primary schools in Tivland as compared to 25,498 in 133 schools in Idoma Division. Certificates issued to persons who completed Adult Literacy Classes for 1967-68 were 2,985 for Tiv and 2,461 for Idoma. See Statistical Yearbook, Benue-Plateau State, Jos 1968, pp. 63, 70, and 72. The Idoma proportions are higher.

Comparative figures for the Idoma and the Tiv for the late 1950s and early 1960s which would have been more appropriate to the inquiry were not available. Nevertheless the above figures give a useful insight into the problem.

public life. We could verify this by examining Tiv and Idoma staffing strengths in the civil service of Northern Nigeria for the period 1958 to 1965. This time span has been chosen for convenience and in any case, it represented the high-water period in the relations which the two groups exhibited with the Hausa-Fulani.

Staff Lists of the Northern Region of Nigeria

Year	Tiv	Idoma
April, 1958	3	7
Dec., 1961	6	28
Feb., 1963	18	38
Jan., 1966	28	70

Of the three Tiv civil servants in the employ of the Northern Region in 1958 none was in the so-called Senior Service. Four out of the seven Idoma were this segment of the service with two of them, Andrew Obeya and Edwin Ogbu already Administrative Officer Class III in the company of such other civil servants as Ali Akilu, M.D. Yusufu, Ibrahim Dasuki and Yusufu Gobir. In 1961 there were three Tiv senior civil servants as compared to twelve Idoma in the same category. By 1963 the figure for the Tiv in this category had crawled to six while that for the Idoma had jumped to eighteen. By this time both Ogbu and Obeya had transferred to the Federal Service. In July

1963 Ogbu became one of the three Nigerian Permanent Secretaries, the other two were P.N.Nwokedi and S.O. Awokoya.[1] These three were Group Three Officers while these others came behind them in this order:

M.O. Ani, Abdul Attah } Group Four

A. Obeya, A. Ayida, P. Asiodu } Group Seven

In January 1966 of the seventy Idoma on the Northern Regional staff twenty seven were in the senior service. At this time there were fourteen Tiv senior service officers.

For the figures given for 1958, 1961, 1963 and 1966 Idoma staff establishment position doubled the Tiv position both in number and in status. This was in spite of the fact that the Idoma were only a little bit over one third of the Tiv population.[2] It is fairly safe then to come to the conclusion that the Idoma elite that benefited so much from this Northern system, especially so as far as job opportunities were concerned, would seek to maintain cordial relations with the group that controlled that system. This no doubt must be seen as a rationale

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[1]Staff list, January 1964, Federal Republic of Nigeria.
[2]Census, 1952, Bulletin No.2, Benue Prov. Table A, p.1.

for supporting the NPC. Relative to their size the Idoma as a group were well represented in government. This participation also extended to the decision-making arena where there were Idoma Ministers in both Lagos and Kaduna.[1]

Year	Tiv	Idoma
1958	-	Two Parliamentary Secretaries
1961	-	Two Ministers of State
1964	One Parliamentary Secretary	Two full Ministers with Portfolios.

The Idoma stake in the Northern system was further enhanced by the generous establishment of public utilities (social welfare facilities) which the Division compared to Tivland received from the NPC government in Kaduna:

Year	Tiv	Idoma
1958	-	-
1962	-	General Hospital, Otukpo.
1964	-	Electrification of Otukpo town.
1965	-	1. Rural Health Centre, Otukpa. 2. Water Project undertaken for Otukpo.

The above three sets of statistics have shown that unlike their Idoma counterparts the Tiv elite did not

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[1] Obande, interview, op.cit.

fare very well in the Northern political system and consequently it tried to pull down the system.

Finally it is pertinent to acknowledge the limit to which political behaviour is predictable or can be usefully rationalised. So far, I have argued that the Idoma accomodationist attitude towards the Northern political system and Tiv hostility to it resulted on the one hand because the Idoma had accepted institutions of authority in their society and at the same time their elite enjoyed a sizeable slice of the available patronage the system had to offer and on the other hand the Tiv had found unacceptable institutions that tied them in authority relations to the centre in addition to a severely limited scope of participation for their elite. The question then may be justifiably asked whether if a group found itself in the position which either the Tiv or the Idoma found themselves it would always react the same way the two groups did? The answer, of course, is no. This sort of prediction is not possible or even necessary in the social sciences for the simple reason that human (and also group) behaviour is the outcome of several motives -

some rational others not. But at least this study suggests reasons of traditional structure and modern economic and other interest to explain why two relatively similar groups reacted so differently to a Regional government.

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John O. Ede
Wilson Oblu
Sgt.-Major Agbo "Okatakpo"

GBOKO

Deem Kpum
Kundu Swem
Atim Atɔdze
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