SOCIAL CHANGE AT AGEGE TRIBE STATUS AND CLASS IN A NIGERIAN TOWNSHIP

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

In 1959 Max Gluckman wrote, "The tradition of anthropology is still [1]tribalistic,* and with it goes a tendency to make the tribe and the tribesman the starting-point ox analysis....it seems to me apparent that the moment an African crosses his tribal boundary to go to the town, he is *detribalized' out of the political control of the tribe.[1]* Subsequently most social anthropologists working in urban Africa have accepted this as a maxim and followed J.Clyde Mitchell who, in developing Gluckman's thesis, argued that the urban system of relations in its own right should be taken as the starting

[2]

point for anthropological research. Subseque2it studies have shown in considerable detail how ethnic relationships and tribal sentiment have been mobilized where specifically urban resources, economic and political in character, are being competed for by rival sets of

[3]

migrant tribesmen. Urban tribesmen have replaced rural ones as the focus of analysis.

The source of the lengthy and complex debate over appropriate perspectives for analysing urban Africans is of course to be found in A.L. Epstein's classic study Politics in an Urban African Community published in 195S- The final comments of Spstcin’s Luanshya study are worth quoting in full since they clearly indicate the juxtaposition of the three bases of social relationships - tribe, status and class - with which the present study is primarily concerned:

> ...tribalism is not the only category of interaction operating within the African field. Mitchell's study of the Kalela dance brings cut clearly the increasing significance *01* prestige or 'class' as a further category of social interaction in African urban life. Here the 'civilized way of life' provides a scale along which the prestige of Africans in the towns may be measured; ona's position in the prestige continuum, or ’class’ affiliations, increasingly determines one's behaviour and attitudes in a wide variety of situations. Similarly, the formation of the African Mines Salaried Staff Association, although interpreted by seme Africans as an expression of tribal antagonism, points to the growing divisions within the urban communities along the lines of 'economic class.' V/e may speak of 'tribalism' and ’class' as pervasive concepts in the sense that they pervade and operate within all the various sets of relations which make up the urban system. Their complex interplay in different situations pose important problems for further research in the field of African urbanism*[r]

The manner in which I intend here to examine this ’complex interplay* in Agege township and the Ikeja Industrial Estate can best be introduced by briefly looking at the definition of the

concepts ’tribe’ and ’class.’ The first is furnished by Epstein himself. With certain modifications, his outline has been followed by subsequent researchers and in this analysis I will do likewise:

> The concept of ’tribalism' lias two distinct points of reference- On the one hand, its application is intertribal and refers to the persistence of, or continued attachment to, tribal custom* On the other, it refers to the persistence of loyalties and values, which stem from a particular form of social organization, and which operates today within a social system much wider than that of the tribe...It is in the second sense that I speak of ’tribalism’ on the Copperbelt.5

But as the first quotation from Epstein shows, the term ‘class’ can be employed in two different ways, the first (’class’ alone) to refer to prestige and style of life in the urban context, the second (’economic class’) to refer to a particular relationship to the means of industrial production. The utility of this distinction has not been fully developed in research in the African urban-industrial context, yet it would appear to be a most necessary one in the light of ongoing developments there, especially the growing strength of trade unionism and the increasing frequency of collective ’economic class’ action. Social anthropologists have tended to use the unqualified term ’class' in my view somewhat loosely. In order to avoid confusion in this study I shall use the term 'class’ to refer only to those relationships based on the industrial mode of production in the Ikeja Estate: (for reasons described later I do not consider Agege township to be divided 021 class lines). For the rest (i.e. those relationships to which Epstein applies ’class’ alone) I will use simply the terms prestige- or status. Thereare several reasons for making this distinction clear at the outset of this analysis, the most important being that without such specification of class relationships to the industrial system of the Ikeja Estate I cannot clearly contrast economic and socio-political processes within that system with the socio-economic relationships which dominate Agege township, - a contrast which is central to thewhole analysis presented below. The occupational structures of theIkeja Estate

and Agege community are of an entirely different qualitative order. In the first there is a clear division between those who own the means of production (or act as their representatives) and those who do not and the division is unchangeable; among the *lower reaches of the* labour force, such a structure *cncourages* a conflict model perception. In the second, the structure of occupational enterprise is such as to generate a hierarchical picture in which there are no clear divisions between those above and those below: it is, rather, a ladder structure up and down which individuals frequently move. In 0ssowski's terms, the first is a dichotomic conception, the second a scheme of gradation.

In that wage-earners live in Agege community and work on the Industrial Estate, one could draw certain comparisons with Epstein's division of the Luanshya settlement into Mine and Compound. But to do so would be to *ignore* a major contrast between the West African urban settlement and the Copperbelt one, namely that whilst the second is virtually mono-occupational as far as Africans are concerned, townships such as Agege or the suburbs of the major metropolitan areas allow of an immense range of economic activity, an astonishing variety of occupational enterprise which is not easily summarized briefly. The contrast between such occupational structures of the community and the industrial system is all-pervasive: it becomes inescapablefor subject and observer.

The thesis to be expanded upon here *can* be briefly stated in static terms by describing the cognitive map of the industrial worker living at Agege and certain of his resources. The *attraction of* wage-employment begins a selective process v/hich creams off the young and educated population of Yorubaland (and beyond) and brings them to Lagos suberbs or centres such as Agege. Industrial plants generally recruit workers in their late teens or early twenties with primary or secondary school education though many tasks could easily be done by illiterates. By the act of mobility, the worker is indicating that he regards his education as complete: though his level of literacy and command of English is limited, substantial family resources have been committed to his education and these he is eager to repay. But individual opportunities for economic and social mobility within the factory are exceptionally limited.

Certain posts requiring a high skill level are well-rewarded, but these are few in number and frequently filled by young men who have acquired their skills before entering the factory. Clerical employment too is

quite beyond the reach of most migrants.

Economic improvement can come only through successful negotiations by house unions where these are allowed by expatriate managements: however, though led by shopfloor workers and in certain cases strongly supported by their peers, the best they can do is keep wages abreast of urban inflation. The only other individual course for advancement is to move from one factory to another, but wage gains thus made are likely to be slight, and so here too the worker needs rely on the activities of his house union. So whilst industrial employment provides a measure of security and a regular income from v/hich some savings can be made, essentially it is a closed system allowing limited economic rewards and bringing low status to the individual.

In strong contrast, the occupational structure of Agege township may be characterized as an open mobility system in v/hich opportunities exist for some to achieve substantial material rewards and high prestige. This is the realm of the entrepreneur where the dominant ethic is that of competitive individualism. Wealth and social standing accrue to the independent man who has made his way by self-help, opportunism, patronage or sheer good fortune. The trader, transporter, contractor or craftsman is frequently the leading figure in the neighbourhood today though in their youth they had the limited resources of the wage-owner newly arrived in town. But the economic climate of entrepreneurship has changed over the past few years and an important determinant of success is the working capital with which an entrepreneur establishes his business in the first instance. The greater the initial sum, the more the possibility of trading success in the future. It is this initial capital v/hich workers hope to gain frcm industrial employment, slight though their regular savings may be: the factory becomes the means to the end of entrepreneurship. Since inflation is rampant this is likely to be an extended process and requires appropriate adaptive strategies *towards others*. However, some do make the transition thus illustrating that it can be done; and the wage- earner lives alongside such highly successful independent men - not the industrial manager or civil servant - and establishes interpersonal relationships v/ith them, albeit of a highly variable nature.

The wealth, prestige and local influence of such men is constantly on display. These men are constant reference points v/ith whom the worker can most clearly identify and whose style of life he aspires to gain.

Such a generalized overview (one might almost term it a caricature) of the wage-earner's cognitive map is not a technique much employed by

social anthropologists, especially those raised in the British structuralist tradition. Be that as it may, such an overview does have considerable heuristic value in providing a convenient framework within v/hich a diversity of predominantly ego-centred structural analyses can be located.

During the course of my residence at Agege I became involved in a number of varied and randomly distributed areas of social activity *some* of v/hich *are included in the analysis* below. Clearly most of my early impressions were developed in the particular neighbourhood in v/hich I resided, and in the course of developing friendships v/ith workers and others living nearby. After several months in v/hich J. explored any avenue which seemed even vaguely promising, X found, in fact, that the most interesting areas for detailed investigation emerged naturally from the course of detailed conversations and participation in various networks containing workers throughout the town. The outline of this thesis itself reflects the gradual expansion of my field interests over time - from neighbourhood to the ethnic brotherhood in the wider community, and then, beginning v/ith the detailed investigation of individual workers in relation to their trade unions, to the detailed analysis of the trade unions *and* the nature of collective action on a mass basis* Naturally this is not a strict chronological account: as with any ongoing

anthropological analysis, as detail on later subjects revealed new directions on ones examined previously, then I realized the inadequacies of ray first attempts and returned to refine them.
In certain cases such development of interest was subject to particular expedients, For example, in that I was particularly interested in trade unions, my immediate reaction was to talk to union leaders at the first possible opportunity: before arriving in the field, this is what I anticipated doing. But after only two weeks of permanent residence I realised that to do so would be folly. The history of trade unions and their current activities are frankly murky affairs in many instances; such was quickly revealed in my first conversations v/ith local companions and served as a salutory warning. V/ere I to approach union leaders immediately the chances of my asking the wrong question and upsetting a potentially valuable respondent were exceptionally high! In fact my first contact with a union leader came some two and a half months after living at Agege: but by that time, on the basis of numerous interviews v/ith ordinary workers in his union, I v/as quite clear as to what topics I could immediately discuss and others which I had to regard as taboo even if he himself moved in that direction. As it happened, this paid considerable dividends since this particular leader was crucially involved in the events surrounding the Adebo affair, and proved a central source of 'inside* information throughout the course of the action described in Chapter 8. (The Adebo affair is in fact the one series of events presented out of chronological order: though I present it at the end of the thesis it occurred roughly in the middle of my fieldwork period, though the denouement to Adebo coincided with my tying up the most outstanding loose ends.)

In each of the various topics I examined, the material which I collected usually took the form of extended case-studies involving particular individuals. Some of these are spelt out in detail in the course of analysis and, as can be seen, take the form of ego- centred network studies for the most part of variable quality.
Like most fieldworkers, I found that the progressive accumulation of such case-studics varied enormously. 3ti certain cases, events moved so quickly I could scarce keep track, in others I gave up hope of ever collecting anything worthwhile: under certain circumstances I found myself sticking to my acquaintance like a limpet for several days, weeks even, whilst again I found it sufficient to visit another but occasionally, adding little by little to his personal file. V.'here wider social movements such as strike action

were underway on some details the account of two or three respondents proved sufficient, whilst others demanded crosschecking against a dozen or score.

Gradually 1 became aware of the way in v/hich tribe and class operate as categories of relationships in which wage-earners were involved at different moments in time and at different levelsof activity; sometimes on an individual basis one could seetribe or class at work, whilst in other instances class seemed to be the determining factor in large-scale group movements, as in the case of strike activity for example. But in my view, the issue of the manner in which tribal relationships and class relationships structure the day-to-day activity of workers is inseparable from the overall contrast between the open system of the community and the closed system of the industrial estate: the perceptions v/hich workers have of these two economic systems in general termsaffects to a consider-able degree the various sj)ecific relationshipsv/hichthey develop in each of these systems. Such perceptions represent a considerable part of the worker[1] s world view in accordance v/ith which he makes choices between different courses of action in more narrowly defined arenas of social activity; such choices on an individual basis in their turn structure the nature of group activity.

Accordingly my approach is to examine tribe and class as types of social relationships but at different levels; in the case of class relationships for example I examine the class content of ego-centred network activity involving but a handful of close acquaintances and the nature of strike activity involving several thousand workers at roughly the same time. By presenting the material in this way, I

hope to avoid the major pitfall of micro-level analysis now current in urban African studies - namely that one easily loses sight of the wider society of v/hich interpersonal relationships arc a part:
I also hope to avoid the macro-catalogue approach of urban affairs in general v/hich frequently fails to show, not only that social structures are composed of individuals and groups engaged in a perpetual dialectical relationship with one another, but that social structures are continually changing as a result of such individuals and groups redefining their relationships in accordance with newly formed interests and interpretations.

Finally, let me try and summarize the *core of* this thesis, and draw attention to the all-pervasive influence of the open-closed mobility system comparison, by means of a short anecdote.

Quite early in my stay at Agege, I accompanied a new acquaintance to a meeting of his trade union. It was the first time I had attended a union meeting and the President proved an exceptionally fluent and eiitertaining speaker, a true orator v/ith a dash *of* charisma. He spok for over half an hour without notes but v/ith an impressive organisation of ideas and convincing logic. His language was the language of class. "Fighting" the ’’exploitative" management, demanding worker "unity", organizing for the protection of "rights", standing together for social "justice" for "all we poor people:" "while the big guns make money and enjoy the good things in life, we the workers are all suffering too much." His class ideology was explicit throughout: workers would have to "join hands together" in the forthcoming wage- negotiations *or* they would remain "as pour as your fathers have always been." The President was addressing his section of the Nigerian proletariat and when he had finished my acquaintance and his co-workers stood together, clapping and cheering their leader. Claes consciousness was in the air: only by "standing together" could workers realize their collective economic interests.

A few days later, I visited my acquaintance in his room at Ajegunle, a neighbourhood of Agege township. For some time with his two siblings and three co-tenants, all from the same home town, we sat chatting and drinking beer, until one member rivetted our attention v/ith the experiences of an old friend he had encountered the previous day in a Lagos suburb. The two men had left primary school at roughly the same time, the narrator becoming a factory worker, his school-mate an apprentice mechanic. The latter haddone well, and v/ith the help of a loan from his master, had bought an old car which he had converted into a taxi. Nov; the same man owned

several cars and a kia-kia bus: he was well on his way to becoming "a thousandaire[5]' (a lesser variant of a millionaire.) This illustration of the rapid rise to material wealth and high prestige was not allowed to stand alone, and fellow drinkers proceeded to give similar accounts of others' sudden economic and social advancement drawn from their own experiences. Whilst some exaggeration certainly crept in, all had an element of truth. The implications v/ere clear and my friend commented: "This Nigeria is such a wealthy country. Each and everyone of us can do v/ell if he works hard and minds his business well. There is much luck involved but hard work can conquer all obstacles. V/e must continue to labour and pray for success. V/hich of us, I wonder, will be v/ealthy men in a few years time? Perhaps my transporting business will be v/ell established by then. I pray to God that it will be so."

On one day then my friend had. heard the language of class and responded appropriately. On another, competitive individualism had been his theme. At the union meeting he indicated his readiness to join hands with hisco-workers. But oncehe became a transporter, those who followed suit v/ould become his rivals, even his enemies, for transporting *at Agege* is a cut-throat affair: *material* wealth, high prestige and political power are concentrated in the role of transporter so that the competition is such that only the fittest and most astute survive.

At first sight, the two belief systems of class consciousness and competitive individualism when v/idely expressed by the same wage-earners living at Agege are highly contradictory. They are much less so when related to the social context in which they v/ere expressed. When my acquaintance applauded his union leader, he was in a hotel at Ikeja but a few hundred yards from the industrial estate where the minimum wage was 7/6d. per day- When ho admired the initiative of the taxi-owner he was at home in *Agege whore* transporters, traders and contractors, men with less education than my companion and some indeed illiterate, can earn more in one- month than a university-educated industrial manager may officially receive in a year.

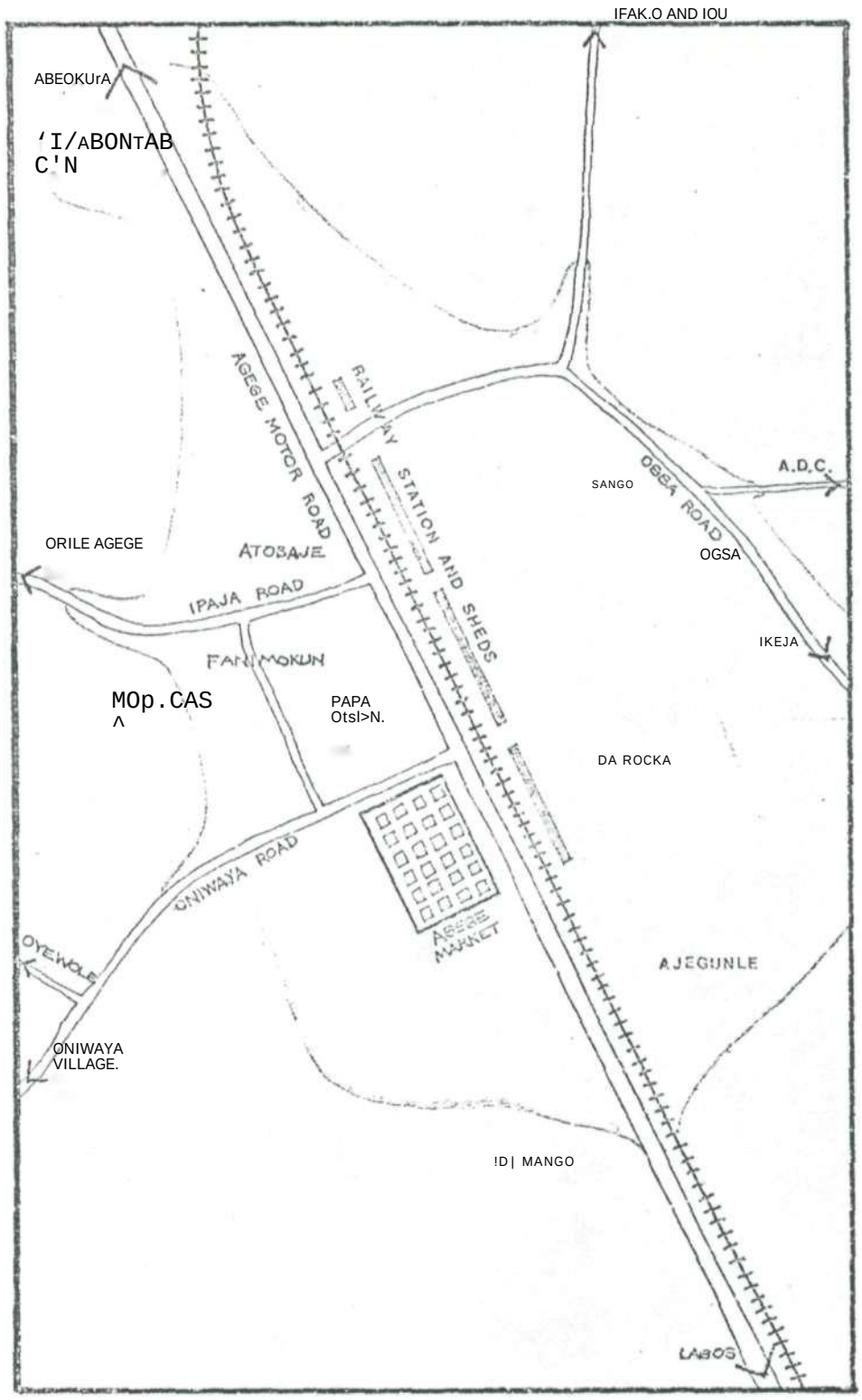
Here are only two snapshots of the expressed sentiments of one industrial worker* Belov; I outline the economic and social landscape of Agege and Ikeja and then the major sets of relationships in which workers are involved. *Wherever* possible I include analyses of relationships based on class and tribe and illustrations of class

consciousness and competitive individualism as demonstrated by social action in crisis situations: as F.G. Bailey expresses it, “crisis calls for action and action is a surer basis than talk on which to found a social analysis.”^ Nevertheless, the general cognitive map of the worker heavily influences his involvement in the relationships of ethnic groups, status groups and economic classes. It is his performance in these with v/hich I am primarily concerned.

THE SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

Agege lies some twelve *miles north of Lagos* Island, the commercial and administrative centre of the Federal capital of Nigeria. Until quite recently the township *was* geographically distinct from the major metropolitan area and socia3.1y it was viewed as a community independent of Lagos proper. Today land on either side of the Agege Motor Hoad connecting the township to the Island is almost completely built-up: only between Oshodi and Agege’s southern boundary does the land remain in the hands of farmers or stands as uncultivated bush as the owners negotiate with those wishing to build on it.

The next decade, however, bids fair to see the end of Agege's separation from the major Lagos suburbs. Already Agege dwellers speak of ‘'Lagos life[11] v/hen discussing their circumstances in the town; they do so not for status reasons alone but because they recognize that economically, socially and politically, Agege is wholly dependent on the authorities in the capital. Under the tv/elve States reorganization, Agege moved from under the orbit of Ibadan, the capital of the Western Region, to that of Lagos, for it



AGEGE TOWNSHIP?

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cam e well within the boundaries of the new Lagos State.

The Agege Motor Road is one of two major motor routes connecting the capital with the rest of the country going directly north to Abeokuta and then via Ibadan to the north; it thus handles a considerable proportion of the country's road-borne transport. The railway to the north, again via Ibadan, parallels the road as far as Agege, though carrying the heavier goods and less frequented by passengers who, for cheapness and convenience, prefer travelling by bus. Despite its importance, however, the Motor Road is quite inadequate for the volume of traffic v/hich it carries. Between Oshodi and Agege the road is relatively open, but on entering Agege township it narrows to a width of only eight or ten yards in places, quite inadequate to cope with petrol tankers, kola and cattle trucks of great width and length. On either side, the road crumbles into ditches, and though drivers exhibit great skill, more often than not, accidents are a common occurrence. Even at first sight Agege is a trading centre. The market v/hich takes place every five days from early morning to late afternoon, is the hub of Agege[1]s internal economy and few families of any size do not have some connection v/ith it. On market day, people from throughout v/estern Yorubaland and Lagos come to trade. Because of its location , Agege is a useful centre for traders in all kinds of commodities from Abeokuta, Ijebu- Ode, Ilaro, Shagamu and the rural areas *of* Yorubaland, but especially in foodstuffs, to sell their goods for the higher prices current in Lagos without having to enter the capital itself. But entrepreneurship in a multiplicity of forms is of the essence of everyday life at Agege:

> trading is only one, though probably the most important, illustration of it.

On each side of the Motor Road and around the market are the earliest buildings of the township, built at the turn of the century. The present road keeps the same course as the original rough path along which people walked to Lagos. The second focus after the market is the station a few hundred yards further into the town from the market and the original focus of settlement when the railway was pushed through from Lagos to Abeokuta in 1900. Here the ground floors of the old buildings are given over entirely to craftsmen

not built-up, a process held in abeyance by the swampy ground on this side of the town. The industrial firms alone had been able to afford the expensive reclamation involved in clearing such swamp, though on more stable ground certain developments have taken place adjacent to the Agege District Council buildings and the Native Court beyond which there is only uncultivated bush and scattered farming plots of little economic value.

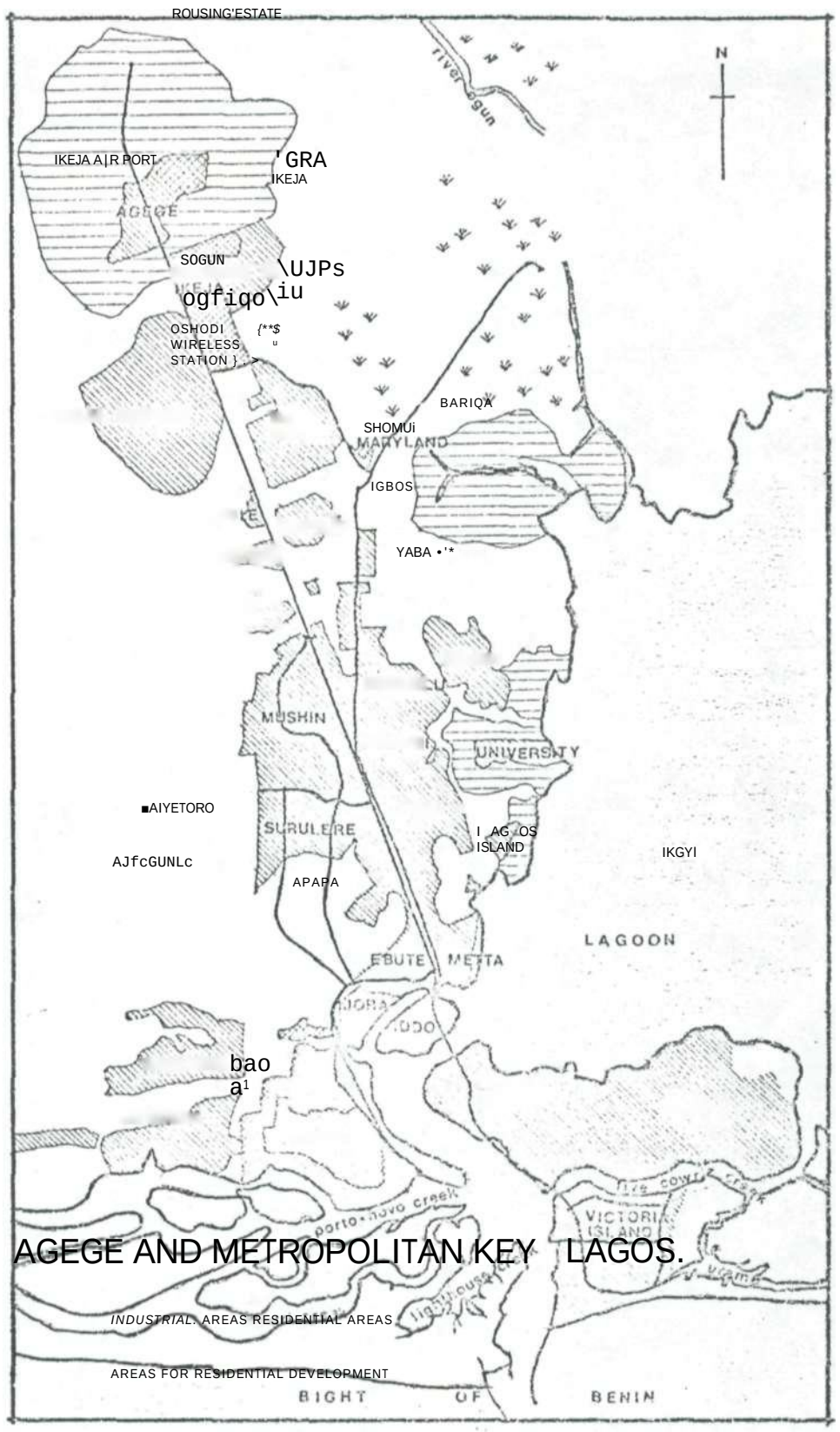
District council resources have proved quite inadequate in coping v/ith the *most* recent *expansion in* Agege's population. Only a. snail minority of dwellings share basic urban amenities like running water, sanitation facilities and electricity in the new built-up areas. Overcrowding in tenement buildings occurs on a large scale, most household units *renting one room* in buildings containing between eight and twenty rooms. The majority are one-storey buildings with a central passage through the house into a small open compound at the rear containing a cooking area, store rooms and pit-latrine. Booms usually have bare cemented walls and small windows; during the dry season these rooms become intolerably hot and people frequently sleep outside, but throughout the year they spend most leisure time out of doors, sitting and chatting with neighbours, playing with children or discussing the football pools.

Women v/ith children of course spend virtually the entire day outside their residences, minding small petty-trade stalls, cooking or gossiping; but the threat of thieves keeps them well within sight of their rooms.

Within the township there are no status divisions between the various neighbourhoods for everyone is equally beset by appallingly bad conditions. Though all work *vigorously* to keep individual dwelling areas as clean as possible, absentee landlords rarely invest any more than is absolutely necessary for the upkeep of the houses- Drainage channels are continually full of refuse; scattered throughout the town, immediately adjacent to overcrowded buildings are large rubbish dumps and cesspools, breeding grounds for every type of disease and doubtless contributing substantially to the high inf ant mortality rate. These are, of course, also breeding grounds of deep discontent for Agege people, most of v/hich is directed at the

Government in general and the District Council in particular. Though it is sometimes accepted that such conditions are inevitable where urbanization proceeds at a rapid pace, the absence of virtually any concerted effort on the part of the authorities to improve conditions is invariably interpreted in terms of corruption and inefficiency at higher levels beyond their control. From their accounts, the occasional times when any improvements v/ere attempted, coincided v/ith the advent of party political elections; with the elections over, conditions resumed to normal. Today, none disputes that corruption at all levels contributes enormously to the inadequacy of urban services: at all stages of the Government bureaucracy officials take a rake-off from available finances. The process is well-documented in official reports. But at the same time the machinery is utterly inadequate to the demands imposed on it. The Planning Officer for the Ikeja division of Lagos State of v/hich Agege is a part once described to me how the sheer pressure of administration prevented him from drawing up concrete plans v/hich could be recommended for consideration by the Ministry of Works in Lagos: his working day was taken up by examining cases where people had built dwellings on land to which they had no legal title. Instead of drawing plans for new housing estate s (for v/hich his tv/o university degrees well-qualified him) he had to sign for the destruction of those already built in an area of great accommodation shortage I

The southern boundary of the township is also the northern one of the industrial estate. Following the narrow Ogba road through Ajegunle suburb, one suddenly emerges out into Oba Akran Avenue, the bread metalled road which forms the centre of the estate and on which are the major manufacturing companies, many subsidiaries of the multi-national corporations of Western Europe. Even to the casual observer, the expatriate influence is much in evidence through the signs of well-known British *firms*. By *contrast* v/ith the confined nature *of* Agege township, the estate is a spacious



AGEGE AND METROPOLITAN KEY LAGOS.

INDUSTRIAL AREAS RESIDENTIAL AREAS

AREAS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

location for even the earliest companies acquired large tracts of land in anticipation of extensive subsequent expansion. By 19?0 with the end of the civil war such expansion v/as taking place in addition to the establishment of quite new firms of more diverse origin than previously. These factories are modern buildings producing a wide range of commodities: tyres, foam mattresses and cushions, beer, corrugated sheeting, household utensils, asbestos, footwear, textiles, pharmaceuticals, furniture, in addition to cocoa processing and food processing plants - these are some of the most important - providing wage-employment for some 20,000 workers* The incomplete list, however, indicates such companies' orientation to the Nigerian consumer market, an attraction which initially developed at the beginning of the last decade through the relative prosperity of the old Western Region of the Yoruba, and compounded by many other considerations, especially the low wage-rates of Nigerian labour. When the estate first opened the daily rate for general labour in Government employment was 5s 10d per di era (£96. per year) rising to 8s 5d for grade 1 labour (per year).

In addition plots of land were offered on 99-year leases on the *kOO* acre estate for only *ZkCO to £y00 per annum* depending *on* the type of site: water, electricity, railway, telephone and *sewage* facilities were laid on, sometimes at reduced prices; highly favourable conditions for the import of raw materials and the export of profits were also drawn up. Tax-free periods, duty relief on certain major imports and tariff protection were some of the incentives variously applied.

The *economic* advantages of the estate's location are reasonably obvious; it is only fourteen miles away from Apapa port so raw materials can be imported cheaply and goods produced are either distributed into Lagos or the interior markets throughout the country. R.A. Akinola, a geographer, however, has suggested that the estate was given its site "purely cn political grounds," namely that in 195$ it *was widely* rumoured that the Federal Government was

to extend its northern boundary into the Western Region. In order to forestall this, he suggests the Ibadan Government established the estate as near to Lagos as was then convenient, thus making any

such encroachment difficult, if not impossible- Whatever the political motivations, the economic advantages of the site appear to have been well-proven; certainly today this is borne out by the high rate of capital investment being undertaken in many of the fifty-odd companies currently operating on the estate, some of this involving several million pound extensions to existing plant.

At the time of origin, the Western Region Government was for the most part content to directly derive only profit-taxation revenue from the Ikeja companies; the major exception was the Champion textile company in which the Western Nigeria Development Coloration invested with a subsidiary of the Chase Manhattan Bank and an association of Swiss and Italian interests; a Swiss-Italian company provided technical advice and supervisory personnel from Europe. For the most part, however, whether under the Western Region Government at Ibadan or, after 1966, under the Lagos State Government, expatriate companies have been able to pursue their interests with only slight direct involvement from outside pressures.

In addition to land made available for industrial development proper, a further 350 acres v/ere set aside for the residential housing required by both expatriate and Nigerian managers at the southern end of the estate. This was by no means an unimportant consideration for'it has meant that the division between workers and managers in industry is clearly reflected in the different residence patterns of the two groups. Industrial managers have either resided in rented accommodation on the housing estate or on the Ikeja Government Residential Estate (G.R.A.) further south still but adjacent to the industrial estate itself. The quality of life here where expatriate and indigenous managers reside, is of a different order entirely to that of Agege. The G.R.A. is spaciously laid out in'concentric *circlcs of* large mansion-size buildings or blocks of superior *flats* each with their own gardens and every modern convenience. Buildings here may cost anywhere in the region of £20,000 or more; the only dwellings similar to those in Agege or Ikeja townships are servant quarters carefully hidden by groves of bushes. Petty traders are not

alt.owod to operate on the estate and near the centre is the Kingsway stoves where one may buy from a wide range of imported predominantly Wentorn European food. Nearby are the golf-course, the rugby foot-ball. field and expensive clubs providing modern entertainment not only

Ikeja managers, but for civil servants, lawyers, doctors, senior administrators, professional politicians and leading businessmen.

geographical layout of Agege community on the one side, the O.K.A. on the other, and the industrial estate in between could ac.*u'cely be more charged with symbolism, a feature of v/hich Ikeja workers are much aware. In their general terms, Agege is the home of the poverty-stricken masses, Ikeja the hone of the elite, and in thv> middle the source of exploitation v/hich irrevocably divides them. "Ww in Agege are the ruled, down in Ikeja you meet the rulers," as on<> worker graphically expressed it. Alternatively. "If you wish to

those who benefit from the industry, gc look at the houses in Ikojrv, do not stay here at A g e g e " t h e profits go in fine houses, Mercedes cars, large parties, all for the big men: if I went to Ikeja G-K.A. then the police would arrest me as a thief." Such are the contrasts often drawn, and they could hardly be more telling of the vaj:fc socio-economic differentials between elite and mass in Nigeria today. -

But in a number of ways, this contrast between rich and poor, the one on the G.R.A., the other in Agege township, could scarcely be more loading, for there arc in the township nen of considerable wealth £uu\ power, members of a local entrepreneurial elite whose annual 'iucomes* are considerably in excess of most Nigerian managers and possibly in excess of leading expatriate managers too, ('possibly[1] because the incomes of both are difficult to judge.) Unlike the latter who are members of the national elites comprising Nigeria's ruling class the wealthy men living in Agege arc not even seen as a grov.y' and certainly not a self-perpetuating class or self-contained C£U*--;e. The background and influence of such zen are best described by vof erence to the historical development and current economic or^-ization of Agege township.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1.

1* M. Gluckman, "Anthropological Problems arising from the African Industrial devolution", in A.I/. Southall, (19<~>1), Social Change in Modern Africa, p. 69

2. J.G. Mitchell, "Theoretical Orientations in Urban African Studies, in M • Ban ton, (19 0 6), The Social Anthropology of Gorrolex Societies.

3. Especially and most recently in the work of Valdo Pons, (1969), Stanleyville, Abner Cohen, (1969)» Custom and Politico in Urban Africa, David Parkin, (19&9)* Keifthbours and l.ationals in an African City Ward.

h. A.L. Epstein, (195^)> P• 2^0.

5. A.L. Epstein, (1958), P• 23^ ■

6. F.jS.Bailey, (1970), Politics and Social Change, p.viii.

7. K'.A. Akinola, (1965) 1"Factors affectir.5 theLocation of a Textile Industry - the Example of Ikeja Textile Mill," in The i.if;erian Journr 1 of lieonomic ■?nd Social Studies , vol. 7, no .3-

ELEMENTS OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

THE RISE OF AN OPEN COMMUNITY

The Origins of Agege Township

Unlike most other towns in Yorubaland which have extensive pre-colonial histories, Agege township is the creation of colonial rule. The history of Agege begins in 1900 when the railv/ay line from Lagos was pushed through to Abeokuta and subsequently extended to Ibadan and the Northern region. Prior to this there was no distinct settlement on the station’s site though land round it had been cultivated by Awori farmers who originally settled the area. The nearest settlement of Awori Yoruba was a small village named Orile Agege and for many years the new community was named Agege Station to distinguish the two. But the station was established in recognition of the increasing cultivation of cocoa and kola nut in the area prior to the turn of the century. Agege was the first centre for cocoa production in West Africa on any scale, and from here it spread throughout Yorubaland,

making the Yoruba one of the most prosperous tribes on the sub-Continent during the colonial period.[2]

The introduction of cocoa v/as made by educated Africans, mainly men from Abeokuta, one of the first towns to receive Christian missions from the coast, who expressed their extreme dissatisfaction with the role accordcd to them by missionaries and the administration by forming the African Church and founding plantations to the north of Lagos.^ Particularly since the missionaries refused to allow Africans to proceed into the highest reaches of the church hierarchy, Egba Saro determined to present to their people an alternative course of economic, social and religious development- Having acquired land from the indigenous Awori, they established plantations in the area and offered to their labourers, again drawn mainly from Abeokuta, employment and education in the plantation schools in the hope that they would then return home to spread the African Church, cocoa cultivation and elements of western civilization among their own people. The plantations varied in size from small country houses built more for prestige reasons than economic return, to large

plantations of several thousand acres and several hundred labourers; and it was on the latter that cocoa was first grown in substantial quantities.

In several ways, the activities of the early Agege planters constituted a rebellion against colonial rule, but one clearly tolerated by the administration as the possibilities offered by cocoa production were increasingly recognized. Hapidly the alternative to colonial rule was transformed into the very basis of economic colonialism and despite brave efforts by the Agege planters to resist incorporation into the system, even to the extent of purchasing their own ship for transporting cocoa overseas, the trading companies in Lagos developed a hold on collection and distribution which could not be countered. Initially the cocoa was carried to Lagos by the planters themselves. V/ith the arrival of the railway station, the handling of the crop was centralized for transporting to Apapa port, and the basis of Agege township was laid. Once produce- buying houses were established, buyers, sorters and carriers were recruited, many of these coming initially from the plantation populations.

This settled population further increased as the area was developed for kola nut cultivation. Hausa merchants had earlier in the nineteenth century established links with Awori farmers though on a limited scale. V/ith the arrival of the railway, kola nut production forged ahead for fresh nuts could now be transported quickly and cheaply to the northern cities. The major planters as well as the indigenous farmers cultivated kola alongside the coc oa crop, z or though the former was a less profitable crop, its price was consistently more stable by comparison with cocoa and required little attention. As at Ibadan, the handling of kola is, after collection from.the farms, exclusively in Hausa hands; up to quite recently, the Hausa population of Agege was roughly equivalent to its Yoruba

ly

one. In the first instance, like the Yoruba population, it comprised primarily illiterate labourers.

The third and smallest form of agricultural production carried on in the area was that of foodstuffs for the growing population of Lagos.

Even by the time of the annexation of Lagos in 1861, the pressure of land on Lagos Island had forced farmers onto the mainland to produce food for the existing population. 3y 1900, the population was increasing rapidly and placed considerable demand on nearby communities and local markets such as that at Orile Agege.

The railway station was thus from the very beginning the hub of Agege's community and the first migrants built rough shelters and stores adjacent to it. Expansion in all these types of economic production during the first three decades added considerably to its permanent population. The majority of Yoruba labourers came primarily from the nearest towns to the north, Abeokuta and Ijebu Ode, though with the gradual decline of the cocoa plantations, many also found alternative work in the township. Moreover, because of the ease of transport to Lagos, those who wished to avoid living alongside their workplaces there, resided at Agege if they could afford to do so.

By 1935, the population was estimated at 6,000 of whom 1,539 were adult males, and Agege was by far the largest settlement in the Ikeja Division of the Colony, dominating it economically and politically. Though over half the labouring population continued to be involved in the collection and sorting of agricultural produce, considerable occupational specialization in the permanent population had developed, providing various urban services for the majority. Furthermore, various patterns of social differentiation within the Yoruba population were well established. Though there are no useful written accounts of Agege society available, nevertheless it is possible to make certain points regarding the early internal structure and organization despite the marked absence of extensive group organization in an almost completely migrant community.

To take first the organization of the trade in agricultural produce, the key figure here was the produce buyer, the intermediary between the trading companies and the farming population. The first and most distinguishing characteristic of the buyer was his education gained in the mission school, an essential qualification for his brokerage role. Because of the high degree of competition between rival trading firms for the cocoa produce (and otrier village-produced commodities), the experienced buyer was a valuable ally of the expatriate firm and was rewarded accordingly. Working from his base at Agege, his task was to capture the market before the *cocoa* was gathered, and accordingly he received advances from the company v/hich ho distributed to village

headmen (bales) and leading farmers in order that they could extend their area of cultivation, buy new implements and so on. Such advances were made on the understanding that he would pay a fixed price, based on, though usually below, the prevailing world market price for the crop when gathered, i'or any quantity, the buyer received a varying commission from the company.

He might also speculate on his own account, using money of his own v/hich he would advance on the same basis to farmers. The company for whom he worked thus had an estimable proportion of the market and the buyer to a considerable degi’ee developed established contacts with the farmers on v/hich he could rely for a reasonable return.

But though this allowed the farmer limited benefits in that he could use such advances, where the crop failed, this left him heavily in debt, and many small-scale Awori farmers in the Agege area were caught up in a vicious circle in consequence. Having received the loan from the buyer they could only repay by either committing themselves to a further loan or, in many cases, working as a labourer for the planters in order to pay off their debts. A number of leading buyers at Agege became substantial landowners too as a result of such arrangements v/ith farmers forced into alienating their land in lieu of excessive debts v/hich they could not possibly repay.

Buyers also become wealthy and influential figures by building up extensive networks of junior produce buyers and pan buyers- Because cocoa spread from Agege, trading companies used those initially in their employment at Agege to extend their activities to the nor:k: but since they were necessarily limited in the geographical area they covered, these buyers in their turn acted as .patrons to unestablished ones, advancing to them similar loans v/ith which they could carve out a sphere of influence. If the crop failed and the buyer had over-committed himself, he might be ruined and this occasionally happened. But if the crop was good and the market price higher than anticipated, then on the basis of one crop a moderately successful buyer could become a wealthy man, literally

overnight in some cases: accordingly he could further extend his sphere of influence by assuming more junior clients. The most renovmed buyers at Agege are said to have over a dozen juniors working for them. As their patronage was also a means of helping others in a work which allowed individual prosperity, their aid v/as widely competed for; those successful in receiving the buyer's patronage were not only duty bound to him, they added Considerably to his overall social standing, for the role of patron (oluranlov/o [or] alafehinti) is one accorded substantial deference in Yoruba society. The buyer might also have a number of labourers and carriers more or less constantly in his employment. On occasion, buyers also housed those working for them, for they frequently invested their earnings in buildings in the township. Belov/ the produce buyer proper, however, v/as also a much larger number of panbuyers who worked with limited amounts of capital and circulated between a handful of villages; they aspired ultimately to the role of senior buyer for a trading company, working their way up an essentially hierarchial system. Senior buyers are reputed in certain cases, even in the 1920's and *'\9J>0's* to have earned several hundred pounds per annum whilst most small-scale farmers v/ere fortunate to earn £20: these men v/ere wealthy and influential men

who, by virtue of their education and subsequent application wore at the apex of the *produce* system in the town, but v/ith a considerably v/ider sphere of influence.

The second source of capital accumulation revolved around the market for, because of its location vis-a-vis Lagos on the rail and road route to the north, it developed an important "middle-man" function between the capital and the towns ana villages of the Egbaland, Egbadoland and Ijebuland. From these areas, and especially the townships of Abeokuta, Ijebu Ode and Ilaro, supplies of foodstuffs were brought to Agege market for sale to Lagos-based traders- The great majority of women involved in this v/ere petty traders dealing in small quantities and relying on rapid turnover in order to make a slight profit* But mobility within Lagos has long been slow, Lagos market v/oraen have always been highly organized, and there were added

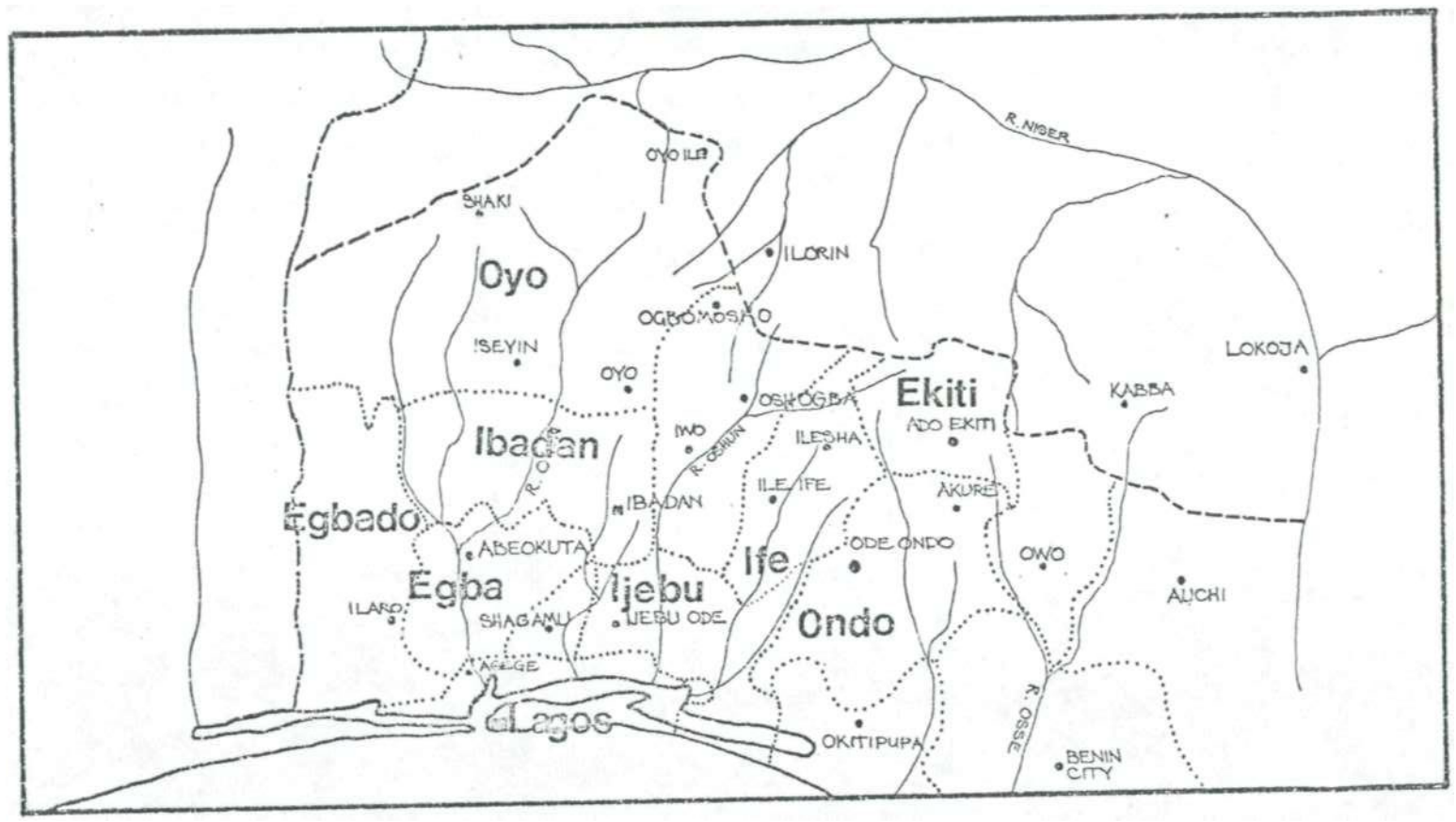

R. NIGER
OYO ILE
SHAKI
ILORIN
Oyo
OGBOMOSHO
ISEYIN
OYO
OSHOGBO
Ekiti
ADO EKITI
KABBA
LOKOJA
Ibadan
IWO
R. OSUN
R. OGUN
ILESHA
ILE IFE
AKURE
IBADAN
Egbado
ABEOKUTA
ODE ONDO
OWO
Ife
Egba
Ijebu
ALICHI
ILARO
SHAGAMU
IJEBU ODE
Ondo
AGEGE
Lagos
OKITIPUPA
R. OSSE
BENIN CITY

Figure 8.3 ^^ ^^ ^^

hazards from officials and thieves.^ Accordingly many petty traders preferred to sell at Agege at prices slightly lower than those in Lagos. In turn, traders in imported consumption goods sot up stalls at Agege’s five-day market and sold to traders from the inland towns, the emphasis again being on quick turnover and relative ease of movement.

Much of this was petty trade with cost women operating with only a few pounds working capital. At the same time a small number, even in the first half of the century, were extremely wealthy, having cornered the market in some particular commodity such as palm oil, rush matting, herbs and the like. As with the produce buyer, these traders too had extensive network supply systems with petty traders in their home towns from whom they collected large quantities which were carried in bulk to Agege. Alternatively, men and women with substantial credit from expatriate trading firms in Lagos, especially Indian and Lebanese merchants distributed large quantities of consumer goods to a regular clientele in the Agege market. Accounts of the wealth of certain women traders since the early days are legion, several also being substantial house owners in Agege besides owning property in their home towns. This trading function is especially important since it was in this that men and women, educated and illiterate, competed on equal terms. One suspects too that traders moving between Agege and such towns as Abeokuta, Ijebu, Ilaro and Shagamu v/ere of critical significance in communicating information to others conccrning Agege's rapid economic development. Several older residents told me they had first migrated to Agege because traders who visited the market gave them the impression that it was something of a boom town and "a good place to trade.'[1] Geographical mobility of traders between urban settlements, especially traders, was an established process in pre-colonial Yoruba society, and with the establishment of colonial order, individuals easily moved to towns where the possibility of economic advance seemed reasonably good.

By comparison, educated men in government employment were directed to Agege rather than making a private decision to settle there-. This was especially true of educated men who came to work in the station, the market, in local administration at Ikeja, or subsequently in the schools. Their mission school education apart, this small group was distinctive in several ways. First, they were drawn from a wider ethnic background than most. Whereas the majority of traders, craftsmen, labourers etc. were from the immediate political kingdoms to the north (especially Egba and Ijebu), educated members were directed to Agege by the administration, and so geographical proximity of Agege to their home

towns was of no consequence. Second, since being a railway employee for example, frequently involved continual transfer from one place to another, the educated Africans had a more intimate knowledge of conditions throughout Yorubaland and beyond; they were au fait with the nature of colonial administration. Their experience distinguished them from the majority of Agege townspeople. Third, their economic and social standing v/as generally high. A mission school graduate with wide experience as a railway official or government clerk could earn over £100 and as much as £200 per annum against an income of perhaps only £10 to £20 for most illiterate farmers, traders, labourers in the township. Further, because of their education and expertise, they could enjoy considerable occupational mobility between government and expatriate company employment, always at a relatively high income level. By exploiting to the full their favourable market situation, such educated men were able to build houses at Agege and enjoy a life-style considerably better than most.

Finally, the most substantial general occupational category (after the labourers) were the independent men providing urban services for the rest. This v/as much the most diverse class of migrants and remains so today. Again these were mainly Egba, Egbado and Ijebu migrants but their occupational specialisms, as in any Yoruba- township, defies brief summary. Here were butchers, builders, carpenters, tailors, traditional and modern craftsmen, mechanics, bicycle repairers, - the list could be extended indefinitely. Though it is unsatisfactory in many respects, I refer to these simply as self-employed entrepreneurs despite the fact that this necessarily ignores their immense diversity and variation. The majority of these were i

illiterates of limited skills, limited capital and slight experience who migrated from their home towns and villages on an individual basis and for a multitude of reasons which can only be misleadingly reduced to a set of "push-pull" factors.[7]

Disputes with kinsmen, the promise of patronage, proferred support from a sibling or friend, dissatisfaction with lack of improvement, a need to escape the pressures of the lineage, or singly a desire to broaden one's experience, - these are some of the reasons why the decision to migrate was taken. Frequently individuals saw the move to Agege as an experiment*, if they failed then they would return home or move on to Lagos, and in the early years Agege appears to have had a very considerable floating population of traders and self- employed men moving between the traditional urban and the modern urban contexts for in both they could practice their respective skills.

Migration to the township was then, from the beginning, random, unstructured and unorganized; unlike for example the mining communities of southern Africa there was no overarching system *of* control and location of migrants into workplaces or accommodation.

Both were ad hoc processes giving rise to a typically West African laissez-faire urbanization pattern. Buildings containing rooms for rent were first constructed around the station, subsequently spreading along the Agege Motor *Road* or into the bush, but all were in private hands as wealthier men bought plots of land from the Awori landowners* What is singularly important about the early population is the marked absence of substantial group organizations to emerge among the migrant population, a feature accounted for by the substantial ethnic and occupational divisions within the majority population and the relationships between these divisions.

Ethnic divisions did not get built into the economic structure of Agege society (with one notable exception); on the contrary migrants from the tribal kingdoms to the north were spread throughout the wide range of buying, trading, and other entrepreneurial activity.

Rather than having an overlapping pattern of tribe and occupation, this v/as a cross-cutting set of ties v/hich accordingly made difficult organization on either basis. Though members of certain Yoruba ethnic groups are renowned for particular economic activity, each traditional urban centre supported a diverse range of occupational skills and specialisms, members of each usually being recruited from a number of major lineages in the town. So within any one particular occupation in the town there were

workers drawn from different tribes and different lineages within the ethnic *group;*

Egba craftsmen, traders, builders and so on competed not only with Ijebu but also other Egba migrants. This made organisation, on occupational lines difficult; where guilds and associations of members in the same economic sphere were attempted, invariably ethnic rivalries and mutual recriminations of sectionalism led to the atrophy of the body itself.

Vice-versa, organization between members of the same Yoruba ethnic group has throughout been absent at Agege. First, the pattern of occupational specialization divided the interests of those from the same tribal kingdom. Second, even those migrants who considered themselves "permanent" residents at Agege did so primarily for work purposes: since migrants to the township wore but a short distance from their towns and villages of origin, many divided their time between these and Agege. Illiterate workers at the bottom of the socio-economic scale frequently retained their links with the land belonging to their lineage and kept up substantial interests in the political affairs of their home towns. Third, members of the same tribal group did not develop ethnic colonies: the residential separation of tribesmen described elsewhere for urban Africa v/as not paralleled at Agege, again with the exception of the Hausa, Despite the fact that the shared identity of being an Egba, an Ijebu, an Ibadan or an Oyo man v/as of far greater importance as a source of social *identity than* that of being a loruba, nevertheless *this* ethnic identification on the basis of tribal kingdom of origin did not lead

to residential segregation. Though migrants initially lodged with either fellow kinsmen or fellow traditional townsmen, such separate-ness rarely extended beyond the domestic or household unit, and multi-ethnic dwellings v/ere common from the outset. Since by comparison with, say, Monrovia, occupational groupings did not correspond v/ith tribal ones, residential separateness would have served little

purpose. And at the same time Agege has always suffered from accommodation shortage and rooms for rent have long been an important source of income. In consequence, migrants took accommodation wherever available and it was offered according to whether they could pay the rent, not on the basis of ethnic background.

‘i'his is not to suggest that ethnic background was unimportant, only that its potential as a source of group organization was limited. Migrants rarely came to Agege without fellow townsmen whom they could first reside With, and the cultural differences between the tribal kingdoms were considerable. Language and differences of custom between *men from different towns were sufficiently diverse to militate* in the first instance against social intercourse v/ith non-townsmen, and stereotypes of members of each political kingdom today remain strongly held.

Using the term ethnicity here to denote then relationships based on common origin and shared culture, the most salient identity for Agege migrants v/as based on political kingdom membership; only v/ith the rise of the Nationalist movement and the emergence of political parties did the alternative super-ethnic identity of being a Yoruba become truly effective. But though ethnicity among the Yoruba. on this basis strongly affected choice of personal friends and acquaintances, especially I suspect among the illiterate majority, its potency as a source of group organization v/as limited to the Hausa population living in the Sango neighbourhood of the community and constituting a separate enclave. *1-ly knowledge of* the Hausa is exceedingly narrow, but for the purposes of the present thesis, detailed discussion of this ethnic group is unnecessary. Firstly, as v/ith the Hausa of Ibadan, they constitute an independent community in their own right and since they are almost exclusively concerned with the kola
trade, they are not in competition v/ith Yoruba over the saine *economic*
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territory. Only in vary rare circumstances have Yoruba traders and farmers attempted to impinge on the kola trade and v/ith a marked lack of success; they simply do not have the extensive trading networks necessary to compete with the Hausa. Secondly, v/here Yoruba and Hausa are involved in the same occupation, then they serve the needs of their own populations; the areas of overlap are slight. Furthermore,

Hau.sa do not engage in wage-earning on the Ikeja Estate and since here I am concerned mainly v/ith the wage-earning population, discussion of the Hausa would involve a considerable deviation from *xy* major theme*

Occupation and Status: the Early Educated Elite

Because of the ethnic and occupational heterogeneity of the township any comment on the early status system must necessarily be expressed tentatively*' The.importance of the pre-colonial urbanization pattern of the Yoruba is considerable; it meant that migrants carried with them to the modern urban arena a cultural baggage easily adaptable to new circumstances. Although there were different emphases between members of different kingdoms on which particular roles were to be accorded high prestige, on certain features there v/as considerable consensus. First, self-employment was greatly valued over other types of work. Even though in strictly economic terms, the wagc- earner might earn more than the migrant working for himself, there v/ere other advantages accruing to the independent man; in particular he was able to more actively participate in his lineage and home town affairs and socialize in Agege or Lagos, Secondly, and associated v/ith this, occupational roles were judged by the extent to v/hich they permitted the incumbent to exercise patronage to the benefit of kinsmen and non-kinsmen; again self-employment ranked high for most independent men required apprentices, youths from their home towns or the sons of acquaintances at Agege. Both of these facets were established elements in Yoruba culture. Third, particular occupations v/ere also judged on their potential for mobility up the socioeconomic scale and here, clearly, modern occupational roles were valued more highly than traditional ones, even if in the first instance it was necessary to work for another. As the brief account above suggests, being in the temporary pay of a produce buyer allowed considerable opportunities for subsequent economic- advancement and wide influence; the independent drummer, to take an extreme example, v/as unlikely to flourish at Agege while at Ibadan he might.

Occupation then was certainly a major indicator of one’s social standing. But in that the majority of migrants were from Egba, Egbado and Ijebu towns and villages, initially at least migrants v/ere also placed by the standing of their home town, lineages, Yoruba lineages in urban centres nay compose several hundred members and, through the system of urban-rural migration and the extent of political centralization of the kingdom in the urban centre, information on the reputation of lineages and their leading members was widely diffused. That an individual's initial identity is determined by

his family one in an African society is well-known, but among the urbanized Yoruba, it is singularly important. As a result, this was frequently carried over into the new urban situation; several older men, when I asked them whom they respected in the early years, frequently mentioned X or Y ‘''because he was a brother/son/ kinsman of my town's oba." This depended however not only on the distinction of membership of a ruling lineage but also those reputed for producing eminent warriors, traders, craftsmen or political figures, or simply men generally considered to be honourable and of good character. Yoruba culture places great emphasis on good character and association v/ith a lineage elder so regarded might initially allow his kinsman greater standing than membership of a chief's family.

Having made these points, however, it does appear that there was a good deal of conflict and confusion over the allocation of status in the new urban arena. In part this is a consequence of the different bases on v/hich prestige was allocated in traditional Yoruba society

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for this could not be reduced to one single variable. Bub it was also a reflection of the concentration of some wealth and prestige in completely novel occupations brought into being by the colonial situation. What is clear is that a fundamental point of social differentiation v/as drawn between an educated elite and the illiterate majority in the township, using the term elite here to indicate that they became, in Peter Morton-v/illiams[7] terms, "persons who are ’sujjerior’ in respect to control of, as well as access to, certain scarce means of social action. In recognition of this superiority, culturally significant marks of prestige are granted to them."[12] I prefer this definition of a local elite to others available because it includes the element of social action, including political leadership.

Educated migrants to Agoge were concentrated in a limited range of occupations - produce buyers, railway officials, clerks to the administration of trading companies, and schoolteachers. Though not all worked at Agege, they shared a life style markedly better than most residents* By the standards of the time they had a measure of affluence which separated them from the mass.

I have already indicated the lucrative nature of produce buying, and though railway, officials or established clerical workers were unlikely to earn as much, their annual incomes were several times greater than the average, an experienced railway official could earn over £150 per annum for example* On the basis of these incomes, educated men at Agege were able to build houses, send their children to schools in Lagos, and acquire available consumption goods.

Elements of their life-style partly copied those of the *Lagos'ian* African elite; photographs of these men - they are, if still alive, now the elder statesmen of the town - taken in the first half of the century show them in formal European-style suits, stiff white collar and tie, the customary indicators of 'civilized* status. In a yjord, the educated members of Agege society enjoyed those scarce resources made available by colonial rule but still quite beyond the reach of the illiterate majority. As such, collectively they may be termed the first privileged elite numbering probably less than one hundred in a population of over 2,000 by 19^0.

In other respects besides a degree of affluence and broader ethnic background, the early educated elite were distinctive. They founded and led the African and Anglican churches in the town in a predominantly Moslem environment and their common educational and Christian backgrounds allowed them to traverse their ethnic differences easily; their friendship networks appear not to have been closed within their limited occupational boundaries. But, such distinctiveness can too easily be overstated into the suggestion that they constituted a privileged local class or caste; this was not the case, for a number of considerations imposed limits on their personal expenditure, and the educated elite shared many of the interests and values common to the majority of migrants.

First, educated migrants v/ere especially subject to the demands of other lineage members; where they had been educated at their expense, then they v/ere expected to do likewise for junior siblings and the sons of elder ones at a time when the cost of schooling was rising. The pattern is well-known. Second, and in some ways more important, educated men v/ere heavily beleaguered for financial contributions to lineage affairs - the death of an elder, the repair of the compound, legal fees for land disputes and efforts of others to gain a chieftancy title - these v/ere often items of considerable outlay and made substantial inroads into their private funds.

Though educated men enjoyed more occupational security than most, even they frequently lost their positions, and under these circumstances they too retired to their home towns to marshall their *resources*. Regular contributions to lineage *fmids constituted one* way of maintaining an established foothold in their places of origin. Though no doubt some exaggeration occurs, one has the impression that generally educated men contributed substantially when called upon to do so, and this obviously limited the finances available for personal consumption.

Equally important is how people interpreted the source of the socio-economic differentials between educated and illiterate. On the v/hole, the emphasis appears to have been placed on the influence of fate and good fortune in the pattern v/hich led to some gaining education whilst others did not, and the "suffering" v/hich educated men had passed through when in school. .Both of these views meant that, whatever standing they enjoyed, then they v/ere deserving of it.

Though the outside observer may outline marked patterns in the spread

of Christianity and thus western education,' on the ground the availability of mission schools must have appeared random indeed, and equally random was the selection of youths for entry into the schools for interpretations of their purposes varied widely. Farmers placed their sons in school for a variety of reasons - because the oba or an acquaintance had done so, because they favoured Christianity so that education v/as a by-product, or because of genuine foresight. Equally v/idely, putting one's child in mission school in the 19th century was viewed as akin to putting him in slavery. V-'hcre such a variety of influences were at work, those who gained an education were reasonably seen as having been particularly fortunate; and by logical extension, the same interpretation v/as placed on their subsequent rise to relatively well-paid and prestigious posts.

Essentially the pattern of socio-economic mobility of both literate and illiterate in Agege community was interpreted as being subject to the

same principles as those stressed in traditional Yoruba culture. The Yoruba belief is that the individual is born with a predetermined fate and that by effort and constancy, taking full advantage of his own abilities, he must struggle to realise that fate. Men are born unequal and their chances of success are moreover radically different; but since none can tell what his fate can be, he can but v/ork hard and act on the assumption that his efforts will not be in vain. In pre- colonial Yoruba society there v/ere considerable opportunities, especially in trade, for individuals to move upwards on this basis in the absence of a class system. The very nature of colonialism led to a considerable expansion of such opportunities, and the same interpretation was placed on upward mobility in Agege society, whether by literate or illiterate.

For educated members of the community the centre of social activity was the church, the African and Anglican churches being the largest and most active. The African Church throughout has been the most prestigious institution in the township v/ith the male membership dominated by the educated elite, the female membership including a number of the leading traders, frequently *wives* of the educated men. By contrast v/ith the other Christian churches, the African Church alv/ays enjoyed a higher proportion of educated and prosperous cocoa buyers, railway workers, civil servants and schoolteachers who placed emphasis on their respectability. Notwithstanding its name, the church in its beliefs, doctrines, and organisation, was far closer to the Cliristian missions from which it emerged, than the highly syncret- ist and innovative Aladura churches for example. At Agege as elsewhere it attracted those who owed most to colonialism and the missions for their v/ealth and prestige. However the majority of Agege residents have alv/ays been Moslems, so leadership of the African Church indicated the sv/ay of the educated elite over but a. limited segment of

the population; a rather more important and definitive indicator of the standing of the educated men and their relationship to the mass consists of their early political leadership.

Early Political Development

Until the 1950's when the township fell within the political orbit of the Western Region Government at Ibadan, Agege formed part of the Ikeja Division of the Colony area, the seat of the District Officer

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being located in the smaller township of Ikeja. The division included several hundred small villages and a handful of small townships such as Ikorodu and Ikeja v/ith extended pre-colonial histories and established socio-political systems both within the towns and between them and the surrounding areas. By contrast Agege township had neither of these but was also by far the largest and most prosperous centre of all; as such it presented considerable problems for the prevailing colonial strategy .of Indirect Rule. Having come into being in colonial times, the township had neither an oba nor a bale, nor even a leading landowner v/ho could be elevated into the status of leading spokesman for the townspeople and co-opted by the administration into the Ikeja Divisional Council. In consequence, members of the educated elite did not have to co-operate (or compete) v/ith the traditional leaders of the people, as happened elsewhere in Yorubaland. On the contrary they had virtually carte blanche to dominate the political strategies to be adopted on behalf of the townspeople tov/ards the administration, and the latter, much to its chagrin, had to accept them, albeit begrudgingly, as the elected popular representatives. Before the electoral ballot system of the 1950's v/as introduced, the town v/as divided arbitrarily into four wards, in each of v/hich lived a number of educated men established as local opinion leaders. The District Officer at election times simply rotated between the wards and invited those who wished to be considered for election to come forward. Nominees *were* placed *before the ward population and* in the case of a *contest,* it *was* put to the vote.

Though there are no records now available (if indeed any v/ere kept) there is .no doubt that educated men usually emerged as the best-supported ward members, and it v/as these who represented Agege at the Divisional Council v/ith a substantial number of illiterates, often it seems traders and businessmen v/ith local influence. However, it is well-known that colonial officials generally preferred dealing v/ith traditional leaders rather than educated men, and Agege v/as no exception. The official records show that Ikeja District Officers continually and persistently attempted to encourage greater particip-

ation by village bales and influential leading farmers in the rural areas of the Division in order to counter the overwhelming influence of the Agege educated elite, but alv/ays to little avail. Furthermore, precisely because of Agegefs rapid social and economic development as a trading centre by comparison v/ith other towns and villages in the division (often in decline as young men migrated to Lagcs in search of wage employment), the demands of Agege's educated elite for a greater share of the available resources v/as undeniable. Though the early leaders of the town frequently complained publicly that Agege was being deprived of its fair share of investment in urban services, in fact it seems to have done well - thereby adding to the prevailing impression that they v/ere indeed the most suitable representatives of this highly hetercgaieous migrant community. Again, the official records show that this proved a galling experience for the local administrators, for in effect they realized that they were unavoidably buttressing the prestige and political standing of educated men for whom they had little regard. On one occasion in 19^7 notwithstanding thenfact that Agege v/as designated as a third class township, that it had its ov/n Town Council, and that considerable sums had been allocated for the development of the market, the water supply and the roads of the town, the retiring District Officer in his "handing-over notes" commented, "The Ikeja Native Authority comprises fifteen villages. One of these - and it is no more - is the so-called Agege Town Council. Agege is an important village (sic) but not so important as it thinks it is I" (his emphasis).

Notwithstanding its local prominence because of its size, Agege v/as essentially unaffected by political developments in Lagos itself. The influence of the earliest movements, especially Macaulay's H.Ii.D.P. v/as negligible. Apart from the personal interest taken by individual members of the educated elite, as with most towns of its size, it stood aside from the mainstream of political affairs until

the rise of the Nationalist movement in the hands of the Action Group (A.G.) and the Nigerian Council for Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.) in the late 19^0's. Not surprisingly the local party executives of each were, from the start, entirely dominated by the educated elite. These v/ere precisely the men best suited to recruitment into parties limited in their resources of mobilization- First, they had the earlier precedent of local leadership and influence. Second, several of the educated men had personal friendships v/ith those in the national executives and so v/ere easily recruited as staunch members. Third, they had a range of multiplex ties linking them v/ith wide segments of the townpeople at large; marriage relationships, patron-client linkages, business associations, and more expressive bonds based on neighbourhood, home town and political kingdom association; all these could be brought into play for drawing up a substantial vote bank. Fourth, the moral character of these men v/as well-known and widely judged, including here their church leadership but more generally their conduct on the local council v/hich had, by this time, not been especially determined by material self-interest. And finally, the educated elite v/ere in general more committed to the development of Agege rather than their home towns* By contrast, the itinerant big man trader for example often had divided allegiances where his business v/as divided between Agege and his town of origin; if politically inclined, such men often committed themselves to political activity in their place of origin where the party most likely to succeed was relatively clear.

At Agege in contrast, the parties were roughly balanced. Generally speaking, many members of Agege society v/ere essentially uninterested in the town’s affairs by comparison v/ith the developments in their own. I have mentioned already the ease v/ith v/hich people can move in an hour or two to their town or village of origin; ''I live at Agege to work but when I wish to enjoy my leisure I return home” is a most frequent comment. The same principle often applied to politics: though living at Agege, people frequently placed them
selves on the electoral rolls of their home town in order that they could vote and organize there and so, hopefully, bring benefits to the ward in which their lineage compound was situated. (This also applied, though I think to a lesser degree, to educated men too). In consequence, voting in all elections, whether for the local council or regional and federal bodies, v/as consistently lower than elsewhere, making the task of gaining a substantial and sufficient following somewhat easier.

The pattern of recruitment into either the A«G. or N.C.N.G*

essentially followed the lines of a conflict which by 1950 had dominated Agege's x^j°!Litical development even before the parties emerged on the scene; this was the dispute over a bale for the town. A brief summary of this exceptionally complicated dispute is here impossible, but some outline is appropriate since it does illustrate the parochial nature of Agege politics in the 19^0*s and the 1950's and the concerns and tactics of the educated elite under colonial rule.

In roughly the first three decades of Agege's history, both educated and illiterate migrants with sufficient finances acquired land on which to build their own houses. The land around the station was owned by four Awori families who had alienated it to newcomers in a variety of ways, in some cases in a manner little short of gay abandon for a bottle of gin and a handful of kola nut, in others according to the traditional ishakoIe system under which tenants paid an annual rent and agreed that the land might eventually return to its original ov/ners. Very rarely had such agreements been v/ritten down, but in the early years the land was of little value ajid Awori landowners, themselves often uncertain as to where the boundaries of their land could be drawn, had frequently used this as a means of gaining prestige. As the population grev; and the value of land rose accordingly, disputes had frequently broken out over first, who had title to land originally, second, under what arrangements alienation had been carried out. Landowner disputed with landowner, landowner with tenant. But whatever the contestants' status, the usual beneficiary was the ubiquitous Lagos lawyer, for the costs of extended litigation v/ere such as to leave both sides penniless; whoever succeeded, frequently could only offer the land in question as payment. The solution which came to be widely accepted v/as the possible election of a bale for the town. Publicly the solution v/as offered on

the grounds that a bale would be either able to adjudicate between contestants or present to the courts (which everyone considered to make arbitrary judgements) his version based on experience of who had owned which parcels of land- In fact, however, it was widely acknowledged that once one man was elected bale his rights in land would be scarcely disputable. In consequence Awori landowners and migrants who owned land on a large scale put themselves forward as contenders for the title, often supported by educated men who were their tenants and had constructed houses in their land. Over the space of a decade, several contenders, indigenes and migrants, for the title had emerged; new ones cane forth as their land became siibject to dispute, others faded away as they v/ere ruined by litigation or the cost of maintaining a following. Throughout, the colonial administration, to which all contestants looked since the District Officer's approval would be necessary if an election occurred,, had remained aloof and adamant that a bale v/as unnecessary. (This was their public position; again however it is clear from the *records* that they opposed such an election because they felt it v/as the educated elite and others stirring up trouble.) However, by the time the A.G. and N.C.N.C. entered the local arena, the town v/as polarized between tv/o rival contestants and their respective cadres of educated (and illiterate) followers, and it was this division which structured recruitment into the tv/o rival parties in general terms. Not only were both political parties anxious to recruit existing local-level opinion leaders into their organizations, they also promised at the cutset to resolve local disputes in favour of their supporters when they were returned to power. In consequence, since both major contestants for the title of bale relied heavily on a handful of educated men for promoting their claims to the administration and the people at large, the advent of the A.G. and N.G.N.C. effectively led to the formalization of the educated elite's standing at the head of the town's authority system. Organized political pov/er was therefore added to their material standing and high prestige.

The baleship issue seems to me illuminating because it bridged the period of colonial rule and the move to political Independence, and the manner in which it v/as conducted and finally resolved points to on the one hand the strengths ox the educated elite as leaders and also their major weaknesses.

First of all, though as I indicated, landowners and tenants disputed the title of bale in the hope that they could thus protect their own rights

in land, at the same time, the possibility of having a bale for the town did appeal to a much larger section of the population. According to Yoruba belief, a town without a head cannot prosper for its senior chief is alv/ays the embodiment of the people in his domain. It is felt that the fortunes of the population must be constantly insecure and unpredictable- Because of the haphazard fashion of Agege*s development and its high proportion of temporary residents, there v/ere constant indications of social dislocation.

A District Officer writing in 1935 commented ''Agege probably contains more criminals, past, present and potential, than any town of its size in the world," whilst another administrator in 1952 reiterated this:

"Conditions are not conducive to the development of a stable community. Indigenous cultures exist in vestigial form and although a new culture is evolving, the District Officer reports that 'its main sign at the moment are the quantity of licensed premises, the degree of prostitution, and the incidence of robbery and burglary* *'i These observations v/ere shared by the people themselves, but especially among the illiterate majority a part explanation widely shared v/as that such developments were inevitable in a town without a head. Though the instrumental element in various candidates' efforts to become bale were recognized, nevertheless educated men v/ho advanced their claims v/ere at the same time articulating a very real need felt by the v/ider population. Moreover, the leading members of the Ikeja Divisional Council and the Agege Town Council combined these features v/ith their view that because Agege had no bale or oba, so the colonial administration was less prepared to acknowledge the requirements of the township and 'favoured' those settlements v/ith traditional leaders in the aivision. This too seems to have been accepted as a widespread belief among the people at large: since in their home towns, District Officers eo clearly relied on the oba or bale for advice and

tile implementation of policy improvements, this must have proved a telling argument for electing a chief, even if by Yoruba standards the role would be an artifact.

But' this points to the essential characteristic of the educated elite's early leadership, that they had a particular expertise for the organizing and articulation of popular grievances which no other grouping at Agege, whether ethnic or occupational, could offer. Only they had the particular qualification of education and the generalized prestige which could cross the divisions of the heterogeneous community* In particular, and in part a reflection of their church leadership, they were generally looked upon as respectable and honourable men who could be trusted, and these v/ere qualities most emphasized in traditional Yoruba culture. It is clearly possible to over-state such characteristics and no doubt people did so in retrospect when I discussed this period v/ith them. As the above account suggests, the educated elite also ruled with a considerable degree of guile and intrigue; the supporters of candidates for the title devised a wide range of subtle maneouvres in order to outwit their opponents and press the administration into recognising their man. They continually organized petitions which they presented to the administration; they brought in on occasion members of the Legislative Assembly in the hope that they would make some impact in the corridors of power in Lagos; they publicly denigrated their opponents at frequent meetings in the market in an attempt to gain a wider following than one limited to their own neighbourhoods. They thus manoeuvred to the full within the parameters established by a generally benevolent colonial system. Essentially, the baleship issue v/as a battle of wits, and, as v/ith other issues v/hich concerned them, it v/as conducted within the local arena; the articulation and mobilization of highly parochial issues v/as their forte and they made the best of the opportunities made available, whilst also retaining the image of respectability which they themselves valued especially highly. Whilst their own private interests were at stake, they could be, and v/ere, reasonably linked with those of the populous at large. Within the local arena and with their particular forms of expertise, the educated elite during the major period of colonialism v/ere seen to be the most acceptable leaders available.

But with the rise of the Nationalist movement and the move to political Independence, the conducting of parochial affairs became inseparable from developments in the wider political arena. V/ith the first elections to the local council and subsequently the Regional legislature at Ibadan, the intrusion *of external interests* and forces was quickly made evident. The

initial impact of political change was accomodated by the early educated elite but as such externally-based developments continued, coupled with new economic expansion at Agege, there occurred changes not only in the political leadership *of the town* but also the redistribution of wealth and prestige; here began the rise of the new entrepreneurial elite best suited to the subsequent imbroglio of Western Region politics.

One might say that the settlement of the baleissue in 195^ best heralded the later course of events, including the demise of the first educated elite» The first local council and Regional government elections created a situation of some irritation to both local and regional Action Groupers, for though an A.G. candidate was returned to Ibadan for the Ikeja Division, the N.C.K.C. had gained a slight advantage over the A.G. in the town council. Under the Local Government Lav/ of 1952, however, the standard ratio of all councils v/as three elected councillors to one traditional member. So in order to reverse the A.G. - "U.C.I.'.C. balance, the Regional government elevated the A.G. candidate for the baleship directly to the position of oba of the town and furthermore recognized his leading supporters from the town's wards as the oba[1]s supporting chiefs, Balogun, Otun, Osi and Asiwaju respectively. These men could henceforth sit in the House of Chiefs at Ibadan; more importantly, they gave the A.G. almost a decade ox control of the town council, despite protestations from the N.C.II.C. representatives. So in one brief blow, action by the Regional government settled the issue v/hich had in effect dominated internal Agege politics for several years. Thereafter local-level, politics was to be dominated by the balance of power at the regional level, and the role of broker between the tv/o required different resources to those of the first educated elite, in particular substantial material wealth* Of this, those involved in party politics became increasingly aware, and the changeover was outlined for me as follows by the second A.G. parliamentarian for the division: a railway worker and African Church leader, he took considerable pride in his reputation as a respectable and trustworthy man. His comment is doubtless something of an overstatement, but his rationale for progressively disinvolving himself from political affairs in the late 1950's does seem to have considerable pertinence. He commented, "Of course it was fine to lead the town just for itself. But in those times (i.e. the late 1950's) if you wanted to lead then you had to be rich and you had to be ruthless, there was no way out. It depended on who you knew at Ibadan and the size of your purse whether you were

elected* I was not a wealthy man but I knew people at Ibadan and could have stayed (as a parliamentarian) if I had wished it. But you have seen me in the (African) Church. I am respected there.and people respected us when they elected us to Lagos and Ibadan (legislatures). When Independence came near, politics was not like that. You could not play politics and be respected....it wasn't possible. I could not lead the party and the Church at the same time. Only before could you manage both.

So I decided to leave the party to my successor and lead the Church. We were not angels when we led the town but when Independence approached, the political life was too tough for the likes of me."

Economic Expansion in the 19.50* s

If in the 1950's Agege's political development became increasingly subject to the fortunes of the A.G. Regional government at Ibadan, the economic expansion of Agege was equally tied to developments in Lagos. Mabogunje has summarized the Lagos experience as follows:

> The rapid industrial development which took place in Lagos after 1950 resulted not only in an unprecedented rate of growth but also in the spectacular spatial expansion of the continuous built-up areas beyond the legal confines of the municipality. Within tne municipal boundary itself the population rose from 230,256 in 1950 to over 650,000 in 19&3- This gave an enormous rate of annual growth to over 9 per cent per annum (compound interest).
> This remarkable growth in the population of Lagos was the combined result of an increased rate both of natural increase and of immigration^[1]1... (But this)... gives no indication of the fact that a large proportion, especially of the unskilled labour force on which Lagos depends, now lives outside of the"municipality in

> what v/ere formerly distinct and separate communities v/hich have undergone within 11 years (19.52-1963) a staggering rate of growth. Their combined population had increased from about 60,000 in 1932 to nearly half a million in 1963- Added to the figure for Lagos, this brings the total population to well over a million. In short by 1963 Lagos had burst through the confines of its municipal boundaries, and, like rapidly industrializing cities everywhere in the world, was engulfing small communities in a dramatic 'metropolitan explosion.' ^'•'[1]

Unlike such incorporated communities as Mushin, Bariga, Somolu and Bajulaiye to the south with annual growth rates of over 20 per cent per annum, Agege remained autonomous from the metropolitan area.
It did, however, experience a similar rapid rise in its own population from 12,8^4 in 1932 to 4-5*968 in 19^3, an annual increase of roughly 12 per cent. As earlier, the migrant population came primarily from Egba, Egbado and Ijebu territories to the north, though my own population data suggests that there was also a sizeable increase in population due to Lagos dwellers moving out to Agege, especially in the early 1960's to escape the rapidly v/orsening living conditions and enjoy somewhat lower rents. The period saw the migration into Agege of people notably from all parts of Yorubaland but also the Eastern Region, so adding to its ethnic heterogeneity. Occupationally, the greatest increase took place within the wage-earning population; in the 1950’s wage-earners primarily v/ere employed in public and private employment in the metropolitan area whilst 1960 saw the large influx of wage-earners employed on the Ikeja estate as well.

In consequence of the urban population explosion, the economic character of Agege society underwent a substantial transformation; by roughly 1950? Agege's influence was at an end as a centre for cocoa production. Entrepreneurship in all services and comrnodites for an urban population replaced agricultural production, though kola nut continued to be an important crop. In particular transporting, contracting and trading in general became the new sources of wealth and prestige in the town. These had been of some importance previous ly; now these and other 'service' activities entered a boom period as the permanent wage-earning population grew. On this basis emerged th new entrepreneurial elite and the growth of the township as an open economic community.

By its very nature the structure of entrepreneurship is difficult to characterise briefly, but one can begin by outlining the most important features of the new entrepreneurial elite and contrasting them v/ith those whom they displaced, the educated men. First, and similar to the educated men, they were of humble origins and diverse in their place of origin, though they v/ere primarily Egba and Ijebu migrants who came to

Agege in the 19^+0's and 1950's. But unlike those with education, for the most part the men who became successful entrepreneurs were at first rarely differentiated in any way from the mass *of* the population. On the contrary, their *skills* and expertise, if indeed they held any at all, v/ere generally shared by the majority of those already involved in self-employment as tailors, bicycle repairers, builders, mechanics, petty traders and the like. Often those who were subsequently to become leading entrepreneurs migrated initially to Agege as young apprentices to relatives or even nonkinsmen, that is, they began life at Agege at the foot of the entrepreneurial ladder, sharing the prospects of the majority of the urban poor. It is this central feature, the manner in which they have emerged as successful businessmen from a background quite undistinctive in objective terms from the mass, v/hich makes the leading entrepreneur a crucial reference point for others today.

The *Rice of* the Entrepreneurial Elite

V/ith its rapidly expanding internal population and the general increase in relative prosperity throughout Yorubaland v/hich further developed Agege's "middle-man" function, the 1950[f]s saw the beginnings of a further boom in the town's economic organization* The demand for most forms of urban population requirements provided an exceptionally favourable climate for ambitious entrepreneurs to prosper. As I indicate more fully below, entrepreneurship is a highly individualistic enterprise and this, along with the diversity, makes it difficult to reduce to manageable proportions the reasons why particular individuals rather than others emerged most successfully during this period, here I can only mention one or tv/o of the most
important influences.

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First, the patronage of an already successful businessman often played an important part. Since all entrepreneurs require in the first instance working capital, this major obstacle to establishing business v/as often overcome by finding a patron. In certain cases, this was the apprentice's master who advanced him a loan, supplied him with tools or put work in his direction when he himself was fully occupied. Since Agege was a migrant community, the manner in which established traders also shared their supply contacts v/ith younger men setting up on their own account was especially important. Hen and women traders frequently relied heavily on Indian and Lebanese importers in Lagos for regular supplies of consumer goods on *credit: where* they were prepared to stand surety for new

arrivals in trade, this constituted an important form of patronage and added considerably to the reputation of the successful trader. However, patronage was not given only to those in the same trading or business line. I have the impression that more often where ffinancial support was offered then it was given across occupational lines in order to avoid the prospect of a sponsored junior becoming one's own rival. Patronage also occurred when older businessmen retired to their home towns and left a proportion of their resources in the hands of a young protege. *For* example one of the *most successful* garage-ewners of the present *time* ’inherited* the manually-operated petrol drums of a friend of his father for whom he had worked for several years. At this time there were no real garages at Agege but when the petrol companies began to construct established stations, he had the contacts and the experience to ensure that he gained control of one.

Second, financial support from wealthy and influential kinsmen played an important part in helping entrepreneurs to move up the scale. Several sons of wealthy cocoa farmers in Egba and Ijebu areas are reputed to have bocome entrepreneurs in this manner.
One of the most successful general traders of today received a combined loan from his father and elder siblings living at Ife in return for housing and feeding a succession of their own sons who *were educated in* a Lagos school. The terms of such loans were highly varied ranging fi'om an outright gift to fairly precisely

stated contracts between creditor and debtor, For example, tv/o brothers who became leading transporters in the town were made a joint loan by an elder sister, an exceptionally successful cloth trader in Lagos; the .terms of the loan were made quite clear at the outset and the debt was paid back on time despite the fact that it was inconvenient to do so. The tv/o men recognized, however, that they had been privileged to receive the loan in the first place and might require a further advance in the future; if they had defaulted, the latter prospect would have been quite out of the question.

Generally speaking, substantial financial loans between kinsmen are limited in number and application because of their obvious disruptive consequences if something goes amiss, and so are all the more highly valued where they do occur. They appear most likely to be granted readily in cases of emergency. This occurred in the case of a man who currently owns a fairly successful bus and car repair shop, for in 1959? he said, he borrowed 'capital from a money lender in the town to purchase an old bus which he hoped to repair, offering his one- storey building and its contents as surety. The vehicle turned out to be useless and the money lender refused to change the conditions of the loan. His whole business v/as only rescued when his tv/o elder brothers, both farmers of some standing, loaned him the money to pay off the debt, despite the fact that they had previously refused the same loan to him. .from this point onwards, he had been mere cautious in his dealings and prospered during the next decade.

Third, and more infrequently, entrepreneurs used their inheritances to establish themselves in business. This most commonly has happened when the father or mother v/as also an entrepreneur with only one or two children between whom the inheritance v/as easily divisible. I know of only one clear case where this was the background to subsequent success, though I v/as told there v/ere others. The most prosperous of all present Agege contractors, a man of quite exceptional wealth, was the only son of his divorced mother. She owned several buildings in the town constructed on the profits gained from her trade in herbs between Abeokuta, Agege and Lagos in the 19^0's and 1950’s, and when she died he inherited everything.

Fourth, there are also a number of entrepreneurs who, during the 1950's

and early 1960's found themselves by chance, *or* naneouvred themselves into positions ..where, their particular spheres of operation or the commodities they handled proved especially popular and they cornered the local market. Most spheres of entrepreneurship are exceptionally competitive, as I describe below, but by good judgement several entrepreneurs gained a march on potential competitors by investing in relatively untried goods. One trader, for example, somehow managed to establish considerable control over the sale of suitcases and bags whilst another began an early trade in electric fans; the latter had little success at first but with the subsequent relative prosperity generated by the opening of the industrial estate, his foresight proved very lucrative indeed. Similar to the experience of such men v/ere those who established themselves as local distributors for expatriate firms either in Lagos or Ibadan in the 1950's , and the Ikeja companies in the 1960's. In such commodities as cigarettes, textiles, beer, enamelware and similar consumer items, by diverse means, certain men and women became established as early distribution agents. The value of such roles as the population expanded scarcely requires emphasis, especially since what I have referred to earlier as Agege's 'middle-man function* between Lagos and urban centres and rural areas to the north expanded further, so that traders had both Agege's internal market and external ones to supply. A number of the major traders in textiles and enamelware products from Ikeja companies, usually the first to deal on a large-scale v/ith them, not only have several stalls at Agege, but extensive networks of smaller operators from Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ijebu and Shagamu.

One or more of these considerations seem to have played a part in accounting for the relative success of some of the leading entrepreneurs to emerge at Agege during the past decade or so. But one other route must be added to these, that based on the straightforward expedient of hard work and effort by the individual. By contrast with men who have followed the routes listed above and v/ith whom it is often possible to point to a specific development (or perhaps several) in their life-histories which allowed them a better chance of success than most, according to this final pattern the individual has advanced by accumulating small profits over an extended period of time but constantly reinvested these in snail improvements in his trading . stock or marginal expansion in his particular business enterprise. This is perhaps best summarily described as the route of single- minded ambition in v/hich all other concerns (such as accumulating prestige, achieving a reputation as a generous man or patron and so on) have all been set aside in favour of complete concentration on the one end of economic improvement; year by year the entrepreneur has made barely perceptible

advances but taken as a whole he has clearly moved from the socio-economic status shared by the vast majority to one of elite membership. This particular route, whilst less striking and impressive than those described above, is nevertheless widely recognized in Agege society, and the individuals known to have advanced in this way are most highly regarded for their self-help and devotion to the task of personal improvement.

This particularly emerged when at one time I asked a number of people whether they considered it better to have a helper or patron on whom they could rely for support or whether it was better that they should make their own way in life. The majority immediately opted for the first possibility for then success would be achieved far more quickly. But many also pointed to the very considerable advantage of the second; following this course meant that the successful man was beholden to none, had complete control of his possessions and complete satisfaction in having made his own way in the world. As one man expressed it: "To have a patron helps you a let, but once you reccive help then you must also give help* So you are not your own master. The man who makes his own way is truly a free man, his own master in every sense of the word." Sc whilst people understandably opted for a patron’s support they unreservedly deferred to the man who had followed the most difficult path. This v/as also illustrated in a rather different way in a conversation which I once had with a middle-aged carpenter. He had mentioned in passing that a wealthy transporter was one man whom "everyone" in the town admired. For himself, he said, he did not respect the transporter because he (the transporter) had always had the financial backing of a relative "who made things easy for him." My informant proceeded then to name a less wealthy but nevertheless quite prosperous general trader as one

more deserving of admiration for he had arrived, like himself, in the town v/ith no special advantages, "lie made his own way, little by-little, suffering all the time until conditions improved. Wow he I respect because I too must advance in the same way-[11] In any locality in Agege, particular men can be singled out by established residents as having progressed in this fashion. Their hard v/ork and abstinence from the pattern of lavish expenditure common among more successful urban Yoruba are seen to have realized their own rewards, and this pattern of devotion to constant effort has become increasingly the only way in which most entrepreneurs can advance today. For example, though it is difficult to judge the extent of patronage in the past, at the present time it is rare indeed for even the moderately successful urban dweller is faced with the substantial costs of educating all his children through secondary school. Similarly, loans from kinsmen are on the decline, or so it is generally held, and there are fewer new areas of entrepreneurship emerging. Some of the issues raised here 1 return to below- For the moment, in order to preserve some continuity in the account of social change, I v/ill concentrate 011 the progress of the new elite.

The central point then is that with the approach of political Independence, the expansion of population in Agege itself and in the Lagos area opened up new opportunities for entrepreneurship and expanded old ones. Moreover, the opening of the Ikeja estate in i960 added substantially to the demand for a variety of urban services by an enlarged wage-earning population. Against this background emerged many of the *Big Men of present Agege* society, *many of* whom *were* illiterate or semi-literate but nevertheless superseded the prestige and authority of the educated elite. Those men who did emerge as the most successful of their period were far wealthier than their predecessors. Whereas, as noted previously, an educated man in the 1930's or 1940's was considered well off by virtue of an annual income of perhaps £200 to £300, the return from transporting and trading for example was often in excess of £1000, perhaps five or six times that figure in certain cases. Even on a somewhat conservative estimate, the leading contractors and traders to emerge at this time have now progressed to incomes of over £10,000. So by comparison with \ earlier precedents and in relation to the majority of the population, the now entrepreneurial elite were men of exceptional financial means which they quickly used to acquire the symbols of wealth and prestige - in particular, modern houses and cars plus the assorted trappings of modern consumer durables. Though the style of life of members of the educated elite was somewhat better than that of most, often it v/as not especially noteworthy; in contrast the wealth of the

new entrepreneurs allowed them throughout the 1960's to enjoy one closer to that of the national elite living at Lagos or Ibadan so that the qualitative difference with that of most Agege residents became

very considerable indeed. ' At the same time generally speaking, these men had moved up the highly competitive entrepreneurial hierarchy (described below) and so v/ere considered deserving of the economic advantages they enjoyed.

Obviously not all forms of urban entrepreneurship were equally subject to the influences described above, but three areas v/erc (and remain) especially lucrative, transporting, contracting and trading. Moreover, it v/as virtually inevitable in all of these that their leading members became involved in party politics and local government.

For example, with the continuous population build up along the Agege Motor Road, Agege became the most northern terminus for major metropolitan routes (with the Lagos Island markets being the most southern), in addition to lying on the major route between Lagos and Abeokuta. Even in pre-v/ar days, buses had already plied these routes but with the great increase in demand, its value as a transporting base v/as substantial. At the sane time, other considerations of prestige and the like apart, in order to protect their businesses the leading Agege transporters v/ere obliged to become invoJ.ved in political affairs, Their central problem revolved around control of the motor parks in the heart of the town and these v/ere in the hands of ti.ie town council; access to the parks thus depended on whichever party v/as in power. The parks v/ere 'rented' to transporters who aligned themselves with the majority party, those who followed the minority party being forced to use the forecourts of garage-owners who were also political allies, or establish their own parks outside the town and thus lose custom. In the parallel cases of major contractors and traders, winning influence in either the A.G. or N.C.N.G. became essential to receiving local government building contracts and being allocated stalls and trading licenses respect-ively. This is to reduce a number of extremely complicated processes which underlay a series of highly contentious disputes within the town council to its most elementary proportions. The essential point however, is that involvement in party politics and local government affairs became virtually mandatory for the leading entrepreneurs of the town if they were to protect and advance their own economic interests at the expense of their rivals in a highly competitive climate.

It is not possible here to trace in detail the gradual changeover within

the A.G. and N.C.N.G. parties at Agege from the earlier educated elite leadership to their organizations (and policies) becoming dominated by the new-entrepreneurial elite. This is, admittedly, an over-simplification albeit one roughly in tune with the interpretations of certain individuals involved in both parties over roughly a decade and a half. Possibly the most striking illustration is contained in the changing incumbents of the role of party chairman. In the case of the Action Group the railway official and African Church leader quoted above, stood down in favour of a wealthy garage-owner who, in fact, described himself as a “professional politician and businessman[11], whilst in the N.C.N.G. after an extremely vitriolic struggle, the founder of the N.C.N.G. at Agege. a letter-writer well-known for his limited financial means, was forced- out of office by an influential transporter, probably the most prosperous man in the town. In each case, the new party leader counted several other leading businessmen as being their most important supporters, though each added young schoolteachers and illiterate entrepreneurs of lesser influence in their wider cadre of valuable followers. These v/ere but tv/o of a series of intra-party disputes which occurred during the period immediately preceding political Independence, and though a number of these were based on interpersonal competition and rivalry, the overall result was clear; henceforth the nature of local-level party politics was essentially determined by the fairly specific economic interests of the town’s

leading businessmen. So they added political authority to their possession of wealth and prestige.

Such localized developments however, are inseparable from those taking place in the wider political arena, in particular the struggle for control of the Regional government at Ibadan. Since Agege and the Ikeja Division as a whole had little influence - if any - on the major coalitions and conflicts which developed in Ibadan, personal contacts with leading figures in such coalitions and the judicious deployment of contributions to party funds determined local survival. Throughout, however, local developments were determined by regional ones so that local leaders responded rapidly and opportunistically to prevailing circumstances over v/hich they themselves had little control. A good illustration of this occurred following the 1962 Emergency and Treason Trial at Ibadan which saw the imprisonment of the old guard of the A.G. (Awolowo, Enahoro, etc.) and the rise to power of the United People's Party - an alliance of Chief Akintola and his supporters with the Western Region parliamentarians of the K.C.K.C.

By this time the Agege N.C.N.G. group v/as led by transporters and businessmen on especially close personal terms with the Deputy Premier and Minister of Local Government of the U.P.P. and these v/ere immediately placed at the head of the new Caretaker Council. It will be remembered that the A.G. dominated council had 'rented' the town's important motor parks to their own supporters. Now for the first time control of the parks came into the hands of the K.C.II.C*, and since the chairman of the council and other members v/ere transporters who had previously been "persecuted", their first task was to reverse all previous agreements ana assume control over the parks to their own advantage! Similarly market stalls, driving licenses, building contracts and trading licenses were liberally distributed among the li.P.P. supporters in recognition, as one U.P.P. councillor expressed it, “that they had suffered before and now it was their turn to enjoy the fruits of office![1]' - a comment v/hich neatly shows how public resources v/ere distributed as if it v/ere the personal largesse of party leaders.

On the whole, access to the local council and Regional and Federal government office became increasingly dependent on the financial resources of those v/ho aspired to power, and at Agege, this fell to the local businessman in the town. This was not a pattern particular to Agege, but was one common to many similar townships in both the Western and Eastern Regions. But, as v/ith the early educated elite, the rise of the entrepreneurial elite was perhaps especially marked because of

the town's rapid emergence and lack of a pre-colonial socio-political structure. Again there was no countervailing power *to* the dominance of the leading entrepreneurs especially since (as the quotation of the second A.G. parliamentarian suggests) their predecessors were either loathe or incapable of presenting concerted opposition to their increasing influence. A schoolteacher v/ho acted as secretary to the A.G. both during the colonial period and Independence, summarised the later developments v/ell when he commented "the time of politics v/as the time of the big businessmen at Agege. There was no ideology, no debate, no tactics. All that v/as needed to play politics was money and in this town only the transporters, the traders and the other businessmen had the amounts of money required* Business and politics, it was all the same."

In sum then between say, 19^5 and the end of civilian government in 1966, the pattern of social differentiation at Agege had changed very considerably. The e3.ite of the early years led the town not by virtue of their material affluence which was slight anywa:y, but because possession of a western education afforded them prestige and gave them the essential tool with which to mobilize *zhe* population within the context of colonial rule. Against a background of occupational and ethnic heterogeneity and in the absence of a traditional socio-po3-itical system, these men were best suited to articulate the interests and sentiments of the majority of the population. But in the light of rapid economic developments and population expansion in the township, they v/ere subsequently overhauled by the prosperous and powerful new entrepreneurs with the necessary resources to survive in the later imbroglio of Western Region politics before and after i960. In a sense, the background of these men before they entered Agege and their experiences as entrepreneurs effectively detracted from the value of education per se as a means of achieving wealth and prestige; many of these men had

little or no education *and where they were educated* it did little *to* help them in their particular occupational roles. In this light, the attraction of entrepreneurship at Agege is fairly obvious; in historical perspective, the scarce resources of the community have progressively become concentrated in the hands of self-employed men and continue to be so- In consequence, not only those at the bottom of the entrepreneurial scale but those quite beyond the sphere of entrepreneurship, especially the ycung factory workers, aspire to emulate their rise to the leading positions of wealth and power, I am not, of course, suggesting that young workers are aware of developments as I have presented them here; but sincethe background of theleading *entrepreneurs of today*, especiallytheir rise fromconditions of penury, is widely disseminated through the gossip and scandal networks of locality, and community, so the particularly advantageous features of Agege as a location for entrepreneurship are widely recognized. More important, however, for the present, is the structure of entrepreneurship at Agege and the perception which those both within and outside have of it, for it is on these grounds that industrial workers see the community as an open economic system and .the Ikeja estate as a closed one.

The Structure of Kntrerireneurshl'o

Some of the distinguishing features of entrepreneurship have been mentioned in passing; here I will try to develop and underscore some of the most important.

The crucial feature is its hierarchical nature. *Each* area of entrepreneurship is best conceived of as a subtly-ordered pyramidal system with often barely detectable gradations separating those at each level of the hierarchy. This being the case it becomes neither meaningful nor apposite to divide entrepreneurs into mutually exclusive categories such as the Marxist categories of owners and non-owners of the means of production, for in a sense, each entrepreneur owns the productive resources whereby he can provide for himself and his dependents. In consequence, entrepreneurs use only the loosest and imprecise categorisations to describe differences (rather than divisions) between entrepreneurs at various points of the hierarchy,
for example *Big lien as* opposed to *Small or simply* ⁿrichⁿas opposed to
f

"poor.[11] To put it another way, the entrepreneurial system is one based on social differentiation rather than social stratification if by the former one implies only differential ranking of individuals and in the latter one suggests structured opposition between groups.

This points to the second critical feature of entrepreneurship in the town, that it is rooted in competitive individualism. Only under quite exceptional conditions do individual entrepreneurs co-operate for any length of time, and this for various reasons. In particular, entrepreneurship requires flexibility, risk-taking and opportunism in its performance; it is on the basis of the well-taken opportunity v/hich suddenly emerged and the snap decision to commit oneself to a novel line of trading for example, which for many successful men has been a turning-point in their careers. Individuals naturally cooperate between themselves: traders in particular have networks which endure fairly constantly' over many years* But this is quite different from joint possession of the resources of entrepreneurship whether this comprises a bus or the tools of the craftsman. Kinsmen are generally not considered suitable partners since family ties are inimical to sound business: the junior partner might demand special considerations, disputes between kinsmen have v/ider repercussions and others would demand inclusion. Business partnerships between non-kinsmen are more common but the lack of trust between partners is a substantial obstacle to successful entrepreneurship, and tales of these falling into mutual recriminations of cheating are legion.

In business affairs, suspicion of both kinsmen and non-kinsmen is then wide-spread and widely displayed in the Yoruba saying ore ko si, ono ko si, no money, no friend, painted on the sides of buses.

The third characteristic of constant individual upward and downward mobility in the hierarchical scale reflects such competitive individualism: just as entrepreneurship can bring possession of the scarce resources in the community, so too it is notoriously unstable- A sudden fall from the topmost reaches of the occupational hierarchy is in effect viewed as an occupational hasard. Simply because a fall from grace is especially striking and salutory, particular cases of certain Big Men being ruined in a short period, of time (a& a result of for example transporters' vehic3.es involved in accidents or a series of bad debts accumulated by *the* trader) are well known.

More common are the marginal shifts in the individual's ranking as in the case of the.trader who opens a second shop or the tailor who acquires a new apprentice, and on the other side a bad debt or- the unsuccessful speculation in a commodity v/hich will not sell.

Taken individually these appear somewhat minor items for consideration but collectively they point to *the* absence of rigidity in entrepreneurship, a feature again reflected in the Yoruba phrase eniti koba subu kole dide, no condition is permanent. Within the neighbourhood or the market such marginal shifts arc widely noted and comparisons made. Reputation is of great importance, especially to the entrepreneur lower down the scale where profit margins are small; where a tailor or mechanic is rumoured to be “going up in the world" then, it is said, people will transfer their custom to him in order to encourage him further, though 1 v/as also told of tradez's v/ho have been ruined by rumours of accumulating bad debts which turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy. In the life- histories of entrepreneurs v/hich I collected, only occasionally did respondents not specifically include accounts of major setbacks as veil as, major advances for both are equally regarded as the essence of being an independent man. In fact, I initially expected people to play down the failures which they had endured, and was surprised to find’ that mistakes of judgement v/ere not only freely admitted but often dv/elt upon; but describing one's failures is, of course, an excelle2it way of making more striking one's successes. On one occasion I was sitting in the compound cf a successful contractor v/ith several young men when one of these described how a local driver had been sold a car which turned out on closer inspection to have a cracked axle; the seller had not mentioned this and it v/as assumed that he had cheated the driver. The contractor dismissed this as a minor difficulty v/ith which any man v/ho wished to be independent had to cope, and proceeded to describe a series of occasions on which his business had floundered due to his own bad judgement. In the light of these his eventual achievements appeared quite miraculous and all listening v/ere clearly duly impressed, as lie concluded sagely v/ith the comment ko si ipo ti kole yinada, without failure there can be

no success. The extent of individual mobility relates to the degree of competition in certain trades. Tailoring for example is exceptionally popular because of the limited skills involved, and the small resources needed to commence operation: where such overcrowding occurs, the chance of improvement is slight and those involved are more prepared to take risks. Similarly because insecurity is endemic for the majority, the chance to make a sudden profit which could be used to gain increased stability is quickly seized.

Fourth, entrepreneurship at Agege, as elsewhere in West Africa, is characterized by its exceptional variety, (which in itself makes generalization difficult). Some indication of the range of entrepreneurship in one neighbourhood is contained in the next chapter. The point to be emphasized here is that such variety also allows individuals to move between different spheres of entrepreneurship; being self-employed allows both vertical and lateral mobility. In traditional urban areas in the past, access to most spheres of independent economic activity were controlled to some degree; apprenticeships had to be served and trade guilds and associations enforced certain regulations on recruitment. In the modern urban environment, no such controls apply, and especially among younger men, there appears to be considerable sounding cut of different kinds of work before the individual settles for any one of them.

It is possible to ovcrconcentrate on the purely economic opportunities which entrepreneurship can realize, for the prestige of being ah independent man is exceptional. The status attached to self-employ- ment v/as similarly high in traditional Yoruba society and in the new urban context the social aspects of entrepreneurship are highly regarded. In order to gain a reputation, entrepreneurs must make themselves known especially in the neighbourhood where they work; traders in particular have networks extending throughout the community so they can make valuable introductions during the course of their v/ork. Leisure and work patterns depend or, the inclination of the individual and so he is free to take full part in asscciational, church and local political affairs. These additional possibilities apart, it is the prestige of self-employment per se which is fundamental to the central contrast with wage-earning employment; being one's ov/n master even in an area which is, on the basis of past precedent, unlikely to allow one to become wealthy is seen as sufficient in itself, Employment by another is only considered attractive where it is clearly necessary to gain particular skills via an extended period of apprenticeship or where the possibilities of rapid advancement appear especially good, for example,

where patronage is likely to be forthcoming. Older men working for another, even if their economic return is relatively high, are likely to be accorded lev/ social standing- Self-employed men often comment of older employees that they arc not worthy of respect because "if you are working for another you have no influence" and "when you v/ork for another man you look to him for instructions but you cannot give them."

Some of these issues will recur subsequently; here, I will try to illustrate briefly some of these general features by reference to transporting. Naturally, no one occupation can satisfactorily demonstrate all the considerations mentioned above, but transporting contains most of the key features, and it is the most sought-after occupation at Agege today.

5?he most common role is that of the owner-driver in possession of a mo'Lue bus or Volkswagen van. This is a key role for the individual who works for himself; he enjoys a flexible time-table and is able to enjoy a full socia3. life either at Agege or in his home town by organizing his work accordingly. The bus owner is often the best available broker between urban and rural-based family members and plays an important role in literally drawing together the links of a dispersed lineage for key events* Almost synonymous with the role of bus owner is the title of gbajumo (a popular man) for his work allows him a considerable degree of sociability. As his own driver he needs only a conductor and young helper, but both of these-are desirable roles since these are often seen as the first steps to b*ecoruing* a driver; as competition for these posts is considerable, the owner can manipulate these to put others in his debt and exercise his influence. Furthermore, even the owner of cne vehicle can be a man of some prosperity, most owner-drivers at Agege known to me being able to command a regular income of aboutto £20 perweek.Mostowner-drivers, however, experience considerable difficulty in their early years of operation because of the quality of their vehicles v/hich are usually second-hand acquisitions or the cheapest vehicles available- Very few owner-drivers go through a complete working year without substantial lay-offs due to vehicle breakdown. The owner also has other hazards, especially accidents and bribes demanded by police officers. Accidents are common and so the owner- drivcr falls back into the category of driver from v/hich he has most likely emerged.

Because Agege is an important transporting centre, drivers in search of v/ork are numerous and in competition with one another for the support of the transporter with vehicles for hire. However, the relationship between the transporter and his drivers is rarely a permanent one. Bus

driving is arduous work and few drivers can operate for more than three oi'- four days in any week; so they rotate between owners v/ho have vehicles for hire. At the same time, since it is said that no one can trust a driver and his conductor to state his real takings for the day, the transporter prefers to rent out his buses for between *if]* and £10 per day (depending on the quality of the vehicle) and so receives a constant return regardless of the driver's takings. Thus the system suits both sides and allows the driver the possibility of saving sufficiently to buy his own vehicles. Drivers usually only become the constant employee of a transporter if the latter agrees to sell him an old bus or advance him money to buy his own after a lengthy, period of emp3.oyraent; so here a combination of patronage and self-help are in operation to help the driver become an independent operator. But the work is arduous and dangerous with only a minority enjoying the important step of upward mobility; many drivers abandon their aspiration to become owners and remain satisfied with making sufficient to satisfy their regular needs.

Similarly, many owner-drivers maintain that they have no further ambitions beyond acquiring the one vehicle because of the organisational difficulties of having two. Once he acquires a second bus. then he is subject to kinsmens' pressures to allow them to drive for him; but then (so it is said) the kinsman begins to press for favoured treatment, especially a loan to acquire his own vehicle.

So the owner prefers the hiring system, though this, by its very

nature, leads to reckless driving by the hirer; the faster he goes, the higher his earnings, but the greater the v/ear-and-tear on his bus and the chance of an accident. When involved in an accident, the driver's main intention is to escape court action and save his license; he runs away, so that even if the vehicle is insured, the owner cannot claim. These are elementary but nevertheless practical and determining influences often leading to the complete 3?uin of a successful transporter. One driver I knew, for example, worked for six years as a driver of a Lagos petrol company during v/hich time he saved about £200. He then spent a further four years as a freelance driver, at the end of which he acquired a second-hand vehicle. In three further years he acquired two more buses, one of which he drove himself. Then his good fortune ended, *lie* himself was involved in an accident which ruined his best bus; two months later, his second vehicle was driven into a river, and three months after that his one remaining vehicle (his first acquisition) proved unrepairable when the engine finally gave out. Within a space of six months he had lost everything, and when I met him three years later he was once again a freelance driver. In a similar case, a man of lesser success but nevertheless in possession of tv/o vehicles at one point, finally ended up as a driver for the Agege D.C. on *o.* wage of per month.

These are not particularly extreme illustrations and all transporters record substantial setbacks quite as frequently as long drawn-out advances up the hierarchy. Despite their relative affluence then even the owner-driver experiences considerable insecurity; a number settle for the quieter less dangerous routes between Agege and the surrounding villages which are also less lucrative than the congested and highly competitive urban routes to Lagos. On one occasion I asked such an owner-driver why he had decided to ply the route between Agege and Iba, a small village to the west of Agege well out in the bush.

He replied that though he had tried to compete in Lagos, it had proved too troublesome and his experience was fraught with minor accidents and vehicle breakdown. So he had retired to a backv/ater route where "I can have peace of mind that tomorrow I will still be alive I” a comment perhaps only fully appreciable by those v/ho have driven on Nigerian roads.

With substantial luck the owner-driver can move up the scale and have

command of several vehicles but, of course, as he does so his organizational problems multiply. Moreover it brings further complications, especially as suggested earlier, political activity *becomes mandatory ai2d leading police officials expect large regular* bribes. If a driver hires a vehicle bearing the name or emblem of a major transporter, then he is left free from police interference; if not, he will be constantly stopped for overloading, speeding, lack of documents etc., an immediate bribe is given to resolve this and most drivers allow for several pounds to be thus disposed of each month.

But the accumulation and multiplication of all these hazards keeps the owner of several buses constantly involved in the [1] administration * of his business. There are many attractions to this form of empire-building. The rewards arc exceptionally high, an owner with three or four buses in *a* trouble-free year can earn several thousand pounds. Similarly his influence in neighbourhood and community is extensive (as indicated in the next chapter) and his reputation vast indeed.

A handful of Agege and Lagos transporters arc known throughout urban Yorubaland. The crucial point here however v/ith reference to the open quality of the transporting hierarchy is that its leading members do not continue to develop their empires despite the increasing demand for their services; rather, having gained a position of relative security, the tendency is increasingly to diversify into other spheres which can be more easily managed. One transporter in the two years previous to my meeting him had been gradually dismantling his business which at one time comprised over a dozen buses; his profits and the money realized by the sale of his vehicles were being reinvested in the construction of several large buildings for rent.

He explained, "For many years now I have always had to spend my day rushing between Lagos, Ibadan, Ijebu and Abeokuta, because of breakdowns and other troubles. Always there is much money, but alv/ays there is trouble with drivers, the politicians and the military. How I have to change to an easier life. From now I sit at home and let my tenants bring the rent. The money is sufficient for the education of my children and a good life, and that is sufficient.” Admittedly this man was retiring from the scene having made a considerable amount of money. However, most successful entrepreneurs, transporters and others, attempt to complement their major interests with the security and relative ease of some other form of investment. *Such*
diversification across entrepreneurial spheres in general keeps open the hierarchical structure of any one of them. Moreover the same need to diversify means that even the more successful transporters with several vehicles arc continuing to compete with men of lesser stature.

As so many factors affect one's mobility up the transporting hierarchy, it is not surprising that those involved lay heavy stress on the importance of good fortune and fate; a man who docs consistently move

up the scale over several years must have considerable luck in order to avoid the multiplicity of obstacles inherent within the structure of the enterprise. Similarly, in the case of the trader, successful expansion must involve a considerable degree of risk-taking involving a number of incalculable influences which can lead to failure: a sudden government decision to allow the import of cheap commodities previously in short supply can reduce the trader’s valuable stock considerably. Though the particular organization of each sphere of entrepreneurship is clearly dissimilar to others, nevertheless there are a number of principles common to most. Above all, for present purposes, it is the hierarchical structure and the constant mobility v/hich is of prime importance for it is these collectively which point to the possibilities allowed by independent entrepreneurial activity.

.Entrepreneurship and l/age-Sarners

Against this background, I can now turn to the relative socio-economic comparisons of entrepreneurs and wage-earners in one particular neighbourhood. Here I have tried only to set the development of the township as a centre for entrepreneurial activity in some historical perspective. The presence and performance of wealthy and powerful entrepreneurs in neighbourhood and locality seems to me integral to explaining why young factory workers aspire to self-employment in the longer run; some indication however, of the background and context in v/hich such men have emerged is also important. In particular, though here I have stressed the very limited initial resources of the leading entrepreneurs of the present day., the increasing competitiveness of all spheres means that access into each hierarchy at a point which would allow initial security and thus the possibility of future advancement is more difficult than in the past. Increasingly, the

prospective entrepreneur requires a considerable if variable capital sum in order to become established. I have indicated that in the past patronage by a wealthy patron or the financial support of a kins man frequently allowed the new entrepreneur to set himself up as* a trader, tailor, barber, or whatever. Today, the prospects of such sponsorship are slight; that “every man has his own obligations’[5] is a common phrase pointing to the necessity of each man with financial surplus keeping these to himself in *order* to advance the *interests of* his immediate dependents alone, especially the expensive education of his own children. Most entrepreneurs are polygamous, viewing this as an important complement to their other sources cf prestige; they have or anticipate having substantial expenditures on school fees and subsequently giving large capital sums to their children if they too enter into entrepreneurship, llany hope their *children will* go to university. If successful businessmen do sponsor others, then such sponsorship is confined to close kinsmen, especially junior brothers or the children of their siblingsc As a result, most aspirant entrepreneurs increasingly recognize the necessity for extended periods of wage-empioyment in order to accumulate their own capital sums.

W*age-employment on the* industrial estate at Ikeja is thus viewed as a necessary expedient to gaining entry to the economic community of the township* however, such employment is of a quite different order to *employment* under a *successful* entrepreneur; in this more recent pattern of capital accumulation, the individual cannot continually gain experience and develop the social contacts v/hich are of value to his enterprise. Unlike the apprentice to the trader or mechanic who is constantly in touch with his own. master and his business associates and friends, the industrial employee is quite removed from the entrepreneurial realm. He is unable to build up a network *of* personal interrelationships and develop the reputation in neighbourhood and community on v/hich self-employment in a competitive climate essentially rests. Apprentices to leading entrep2’eneurs can frequently combine working for their own master v/ith assuming an independent work load, building up both financial and social capital *before* making the final break. Again, apprentices or junior
employees of businessmen may rely heavily on those for whom they have previously worked; they receive the master's extra v/ork and fall back on him in times of trouble, rely on his advice and look to him for information concerning developments in the town which might affect him. One mechanic living near to my own residence who had recently established his own workshop, made a point of spending an hour or so v/ith his old master each day if possible, because he said,

“Transporters frequently visit there to give him business and so they get to know me. My master has much v/ork, he gives *o* little to me from time to time. He is now a*r,* old man, when he retires to Abeokuta then I will inherit his trade. A master is like a father, everything passes on to his son. When he goes home, he will tell his customers, ’ Olu is my apprentice. Give him your custom for I have trained him well'

By contrast, the aspirant entrepreneur in industrial employment is quite removed from the social elements of economic independence. The support systems of those v/ho have made this gradual transition are lacking. In consequence, more emphasis has to be placed on having sufficient working capital to ensure from the beginning a substantial turnover of productivity- This cannot be assured but If the new entrepreneur has, let us say, several *sewing machines and apprentices* or £200 worth of trading commodities, then he has some latitude within v/hich he’ can manoeuvre.

More generally, however, the central contrast draw:} between self-employment and wage-earning is that, to put it crudely, at least the possibility of some noteworthy improvement is present in the former, whilst, as I will illustrate later, the latter is a particularly rigid system based on a quite clear-cut *economic* class division between those who own or manage the means of industrial production, and those who simply contribute their labour power. The vast majority of entrepreneurs at Agege are men and women working with very limited amounts of capital and making but slight profits. As the passing illustration of small-scale transporters suggests, even many ownsr-drivers have little chance of substantial economic improvement and acknowledge this to be the case; they concentrate instead on accumulating prestige in their locality or in their heme towns. And there is at least the possibility of *some degree of improvement in the* longer term if their luck holds. One factory worker in a fit of exasperation perhaps best summarised the contrast as follows: “I've never heard of a worker becoming a manager, but I know of many poor apprentices who have become Big Men. And even if every apprentice doesn't become a Big Man, at least he can do somethingI“ As I will try to show the industrial worker can, in fact, adopt a number of strategies to improve his chances of becoming an entrepreneur, ranging from interpersonal adaptive strategies within his ethnic grouping to engaging in collective action through his trade union. First, however, it is necessary to locate the wage-earnor with reference to other urban strata; I do so by examining the social composition of a particular neighbourhood.

NOTL'S TO CHAPTER 2,

1. The most precise account of Xoruba urbanization is to be found in P.O. Lloyd, (1962), Yoruba Land Lav/, ch. 3> "Yoruba Towns'[1]. For an exceptionally thorough and more general account of Nigerian urbanization, A.L. Kabogunje, (196**3), brbanimation in Nigeria.

2. The expansion and organization of cocoa-production in Yorubaland as a whole ic contained in R. Galletti, K. Baldwin, and 1. 0. Dina, (1956), The Yoruba Cocoa Farmer.

3. J.B. Webster, (196*0, The African Churches anion# the Yoruba, covers the movement as a whole. A *more precise* account of the African Church leaders at Agege is found in his article, 'JAgege: Plantations and the African Church, 1901 - 20", pp. 12-t—130, 'Proceedings of the Kifrerian Institute of Social and Leonorac Research, March 19 62.

k. In fact it was probably only after 1950 that a quite clear Yoruba majority emerged in the town*

5* l/omen traders today themselves say these two are much the same, and though this may at first sight seem a minor element, these are-very real deterrents for many women with limited urban experience.

6. Comparative material on contemporary Ghana is systematically outlined in Keith .-'art, "Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana,[11] The Journal of Modern African Studies. 11, 1, (1973).

7* This is not to ignore the important attempts to systematize the reasons for migration but only to point to the great diversity of reasons in the Yoruba Context. A standard analysis of the problem is J .C. Mitchell, (1961; "The Causes of Labour Migration in Migrant Labour in Africa South- of the Sahara, publication i.'o. 79, Abidjan; Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara.

8. Cf. I-i.P. Banton, (1957) j */ost African City and K*M* Praenkel, (196*0, I'ribc and Class in Monrovia.

9* *hy* comparison, see i'raenkel's (196*0 analysis of the Vai oc ICru in Monrovia and P. Mayer's (1961) Tovns-nen or Tribesmen on the i:ed and School Xhosa o ₇--.as t London.

10. A. Cohen, (1969)*

11. A detailed account of the general status systems of pre-colonial and colonial *Yoruba society is* contained in P.C. Lloyd, (n.d.) Power and Independence : u r b anf r i c an s' Vi ov; s ox Social Inooualit

12. P. Morton-Uilliams, (195*0 » ¦'ADiscussion of the Theory of Elites
in a West Africa (Yoruba) Context", Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conference of the West African Institute for Social and Econorni c A eoearch.

13- For example, J.B.Y. Peel, "Pveligious Change in Yorubaland", in Africa, vol. xxxvii.

1*K *The* general pattern of early colonial administration is discusscd in T-H. Tamuno , (19?2), The Involution of the lli.^erian State: the Southern Phase, 189>6-191^<•

15* Early political developments in Lages are described in U.S. Colon (19 5 &), Aigcria: rrouncl to Aaticnalism and P.. L * Slzlar, (196j?)
Nigerian Political Parties.

16. In respect of the patterns of recruitment and early leadership of the parties, Agege v/as little different to elsewhere in Yorubaland, See P.C. Lloyd. {1955 (b)), "The Development of Political Parties in Western Algeria," in American Political ■Science Seview, vol, xliv, no. 3> September 1955-

17* AJ;. Kabogunje, (i960), p. 267*

16. A. L. liabogunje, (i960),p. 2?0.

19- On the national elite of Lagos there is surprisingly little: U.K. and M.M. *Suyt*he, (1960), The i.'cw i.-ifferian jvlite, contains useful but outdated material. For Ibadan, P.O. Lloyd, (1967 (a) "The Elite[11], in Lloyd, P.O., Mabogunje A.L. and Awe, B., The Ci of Ibadan. *See* also the Introduction by P.O. Lloyd to The Lev/ Elites of Tropical Africa, (1966).

20. O.P. Mackintosh, (1966) "The Action Group, The Crisis of 1962. and its Aftermath," in Liberian Government and Politics^ briefly describes some of these developments.

CHAPTER 3

KSIGHbOI)RH001) STATUS AKD

OCCliPATIG.T

The neighbourhood at Agege is, as Pone observes of Avenue *21*, "an area of concentrated interpersonal contacts." ^ In the neighbourhood each new arrival is "quickly spotted, observed, catalogued, located with reference to his tribe, the village he came from, the relations who v/ere putting him up, etc." Neighbourhood-based relationships and those circumvented by the ideology of the ethnic brotherhood constitute the tv/o major primary sets of relationships in v/hich urban residents are involved in the community as a whole.

In that young wage-earners spend most of their leisure hours in the neighbourhood, this location becomes a major source of experiences which influence their aspirations for future personal mobility: the background of successful individuals, the general consensus on prestige distribution, on-going illustrations of economic and socie.1 mobility, and so on, within neighbourhood and locality, greatly structure the attitudes v/ith v/hich wage-earners approach employment on the industrial estate. Young migrants obviously approach the urban-industrial arena v/ith particular aspirations in mind, but these are likely to be based on *hear-say* and rumour rather than personal *experience.* Attitudes to different occupations frequently change *course when* faced v/ith the reality *of* urban life and *personal*

aspirations are restructured on that basis. *For* example, young migrants frequently over-estimate *the* value of wages which *they* expect to receive, and do receive, from industrial employment. Similarly many hope to receive skilled training from such employment only to find that chances of in-factory apprecenticeships are extremely slight. Accordingly, notions of individual mobility undergo often very radical reorientation: the distribution of wealth, prestige and authority within the neighbourhood is central to such reorientat5.ons. Local Big Men (the term commonly employed in daily conversation), their life-styles and social performance, play a key part in this process; their affluencc and prestige is a continual subject of conversation. They dominate the urban scene and their experiences testify to the value of entrepreneurship in the town. Tii e present chapter is concerned v/ith the pattern of social and economic differentiation within the neighbourhood and in particular the contrasting positions of entrepreneurs and wage-earners. I suggest various reasons why entrepreneurship is so highly valued and why workers come to see industrial employment as a means to achieving the end of self-employment.

Mor e ass K' el ghbourhoo d

The pattern of urbanisation at Agege - in its simplest form how and where people are located - is of a quite different order to new urban centres in southern and East Africa, mainly because of the absence of an overall co-ordinating authority: the housing estate •system for those in the lower income groups, is relatively unknown in southern Nigeria.^ Agege epitomises the pattern of laissez- faire urbanization and as such, personal choice of residence is at a premium. Within the limits set by conditions of supply and demand, people can live where they wish in privately-owned houses: if they have the necessary capital they can build too, thus indicating a major source of social *differentiation,* that *between* landlord and tenant. V/ith a rapidly growing population and rent inflation particularly rife, investing in houses is a major source of wealth and prestige. From the central core of the township around the Kotor Road and the market, Agege has gradually sprawled outwards on all sides as plots of land are cleared from bush and scrub in a most haphazard fashion. This spread has initially occurred around roads

connecting Agege to villages several miles away, the intermediary areas being filled up by one and two-storey tenement buildings. Apart from the Motor Boad, Ipaja, Oniwaiya and Ogba reads v/hich arc all tarmac surfaces in poor repair, rough paths created by habitual usage of people going to market or work rather than official directive, are the only routes connecting one part of the town to another. Morcass is one such neighbourhood, brought into being in haphazard fashion and situated on the western limits of the town’s built-up area.

As Epstein has remarked, neighbourhood boundaries are, by their very

nature arbitrary and indeterminate. The fifty-one dwellings on v/hich *my* material is based *were* designated simply on grounds *of* expediency. Though 1.suspect that if a stranger arrived in a motor park and asked for Morcass he would be directed in the general direction of the area, *people do not 'identify' with* it in any but the vaguest sense. But to ask if Morcass is a neighbourhood is as unnecessary as asking whether Agege is a community, the answer must be inconclusive. It is the web of social, relationships which counts. ftor is its ’typicality' much important for the relationships I will describe are fairly representative of those general to the community as a whole, even if certain specifics are net. The material given below refers to the ^02households contained within the fifty-one residences in the neighbourhood. Two of the houses were owned by women and another thirty-nine of the households have- female heads: I discuss them' all as if they v/ere entirely male-
dominated for reasons of economy alone. Where useful, statistics concerning women are included in the tables.

The Social Characteristics of Morcass Neighbourhood

The previous chapter described parts of the changing pattern of migration to Agege from the various political kingdoms. As Table 1 shows, most tribal categories of the western region are represent ed in Morcass area though, as in the community as a whole, Egba, Egbado and Ijebu kingdoms have a greater *representation* than most. The information contained further illustrates how, with an increasing youthful population arriving (in search of predominantly wage-earning activities), the range of ethnic backgrounds increases over time, as for example in the case of Oyo, Oshun, Jlesha-Ife and Kid-West Yoruba whose numbers are dominated by recently arrived migrants. Nevertheless the prominence of those from the nearest *kingdoms continues to* hold good and has indeed increased *proportion* ately with the arrival, of young migrant wage-earners alongside increasing multi-ethnicity. (A marked feature is the absence of Hausa from the dwellings covered despite the fact th at after th.e Yoruba, the Hausa are the major super-ethnic category in the town.

Table. 1» Ethr.ic Group and Ar? G-rour> Distribution

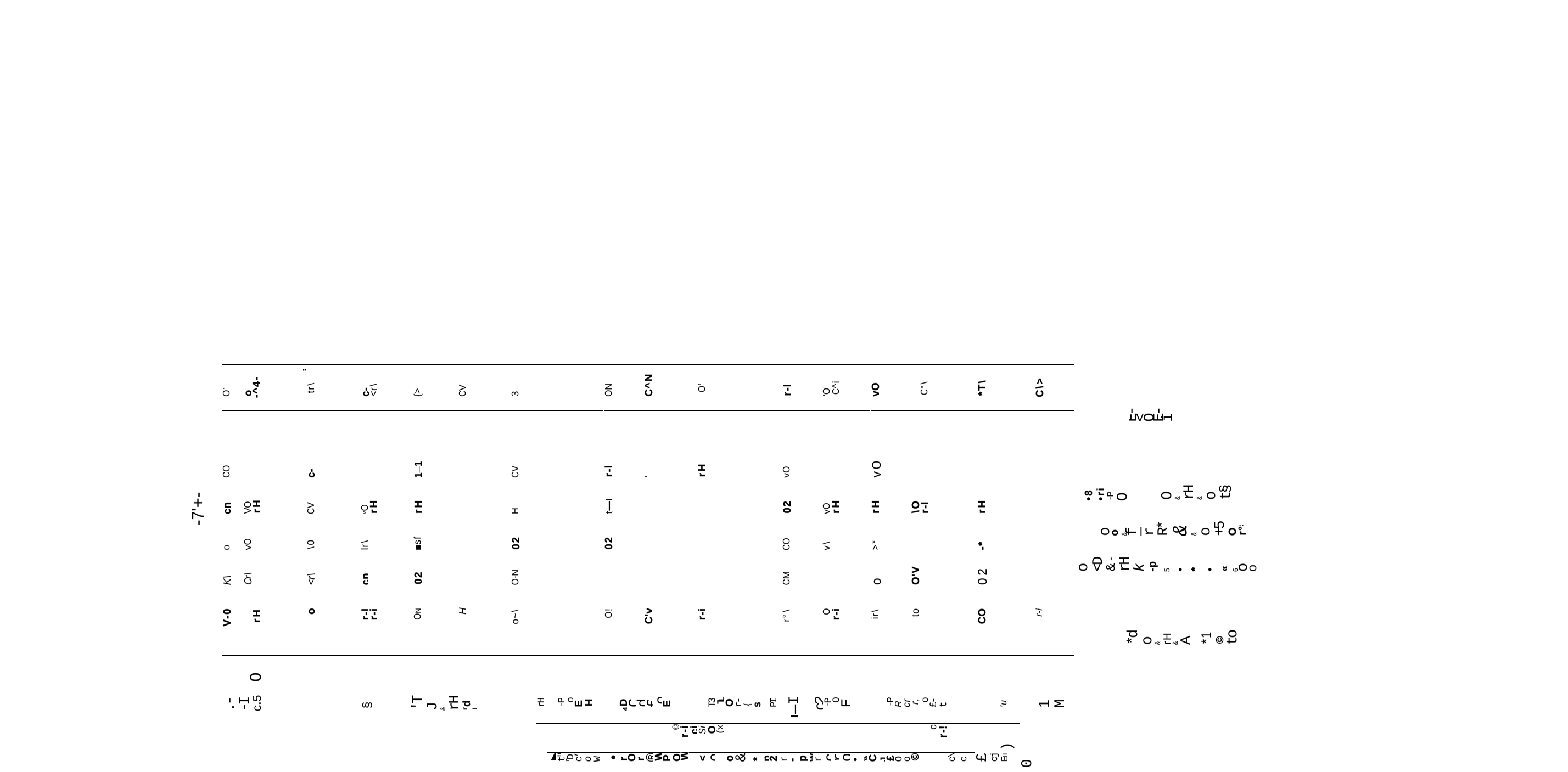
| | | |

Hausa however very rarely share the same residence as Yoruba, and live together in buildings *owned by* Hausa landlords. There were, in fact, four buildings just outside my neighbourhood entirely composed of Hausa residents).

Tables *2.* and 3 point to the occupational structure of the neighbourhood according to the distinction between landlords and tenants and according to age. V/ith reference to the first, the most marked feature is the proportion of landlords in self-employment, almost three-quarters of the total, whilst almost one half of tenant household heads are in factory employment as against one quarter in the s«lf-eraploymont category. The distribution in favour of wage earners (employed by private companies, industrial firms and in Government employment) of some form or other is clear-cut (?3/^ of all tenants) though the remaining quarter of tenants is clearly significant and are considered below. The table setting occupational standing against age, illustrates the increasing occupational diversity of the neighbourhood as a result of younger people migrating into the town. This has further added to the diversified location of employees outside Agege itself. Whereas most self-employed men operate'from a base within Agege, factory workers are, for the most part, engaged at Ikeja or Ilupeju Industrial Estates whilst those in *Government or* private employment (such as drivers for Lebanese and Syrian transporting companies) commute to Lagos each day.

With the development of these nearby industrial estates ana the growing status of Agege as a dormitory town for Lagos-employed •workers, the earlier tendency for most people to live and work in Agege township is gradually being diminished. Nevertheless, as discussed below, most independently employed members of the neighbourhood continue to *work* from their own homos or rented rooms in the locality with considerable implications for status entitlement. (Table *b).*

Increasing occupational opportunities in both factory and Government employment have by their very nature further raised the overall educational standard of the neighbourhood and the community. But,



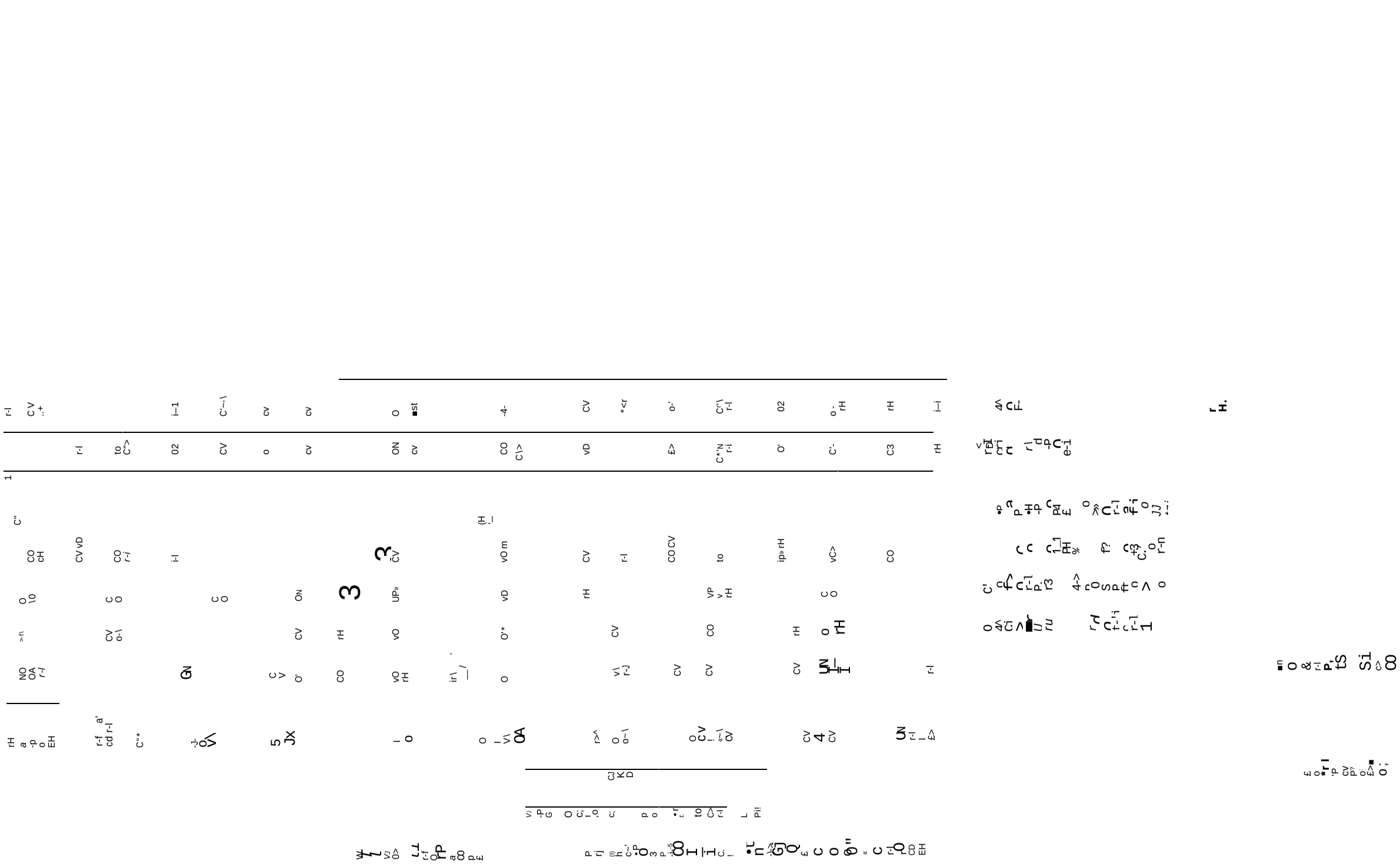


Table /, . Plg.cn o.f Residence and Work Plaee,

and this is an important caveat, despite the obvious feature that the educational pattern is high by comparison v/ith say a traditional urban area or rural village, nevertheless the number of neighbourhood members of particularly noteworthy educational achievement (say more than secondary schooling) is slight indeed. (Tables 5 and 6.) The vast majority of household heads have only completed primary school education or between three and four years secondary schooling, and only *6% of the* population possess the significant paper qualifications (V.'est African School Certificate or G.C.E.) which enable one to enter salary-earning positions in Government or private employment. The neighbourhood, as with Agege as a whole, is markedly lacking in members in white-collar semi- professional middle-class occupations, the majority *of* whom are currently resident in the higher-status suburbs of metropolitan Lagos. (This has considerable significance for the nature of overarching voluntary associational activity in the township*)

In sum then, the neighbourhood is multi-ethnic and multi-occupatiozial in composition and almost entirely dominated by members of the lower strata of Nigerian society. The following tables, v/hich indicate the relationship between occupation and income and education and income respectively, hopefully counter the commonly held but quite mistaken thesis that Western education and its corollary, wage-earning employment, together create a privileged labour aristocracy in the new urban context. This is emphatically not the case and is of crucial importance for the present thesis.

As can be seen from Table whatever their occupational classification, the majority of neighbourhood inhabitants earn per month less than *£2*5. *Of the 356* male heads of household, 3*Ok* fall in the lower reaches of the income scale. At first sight even, there is but limited economic differentiation between wage-earners in factory employment and others. More detailed breakdown emphasizes this rough-and-ready equivalence in general terras but on certain specific criteria illustrates the overall lower economic return of wage- earning vis-a-vis the self-employed category in particular. Taking the row total distribution in Table 7» *3%* of factory employees earn

Table.5. .Aff<5 ft Educational level

Age
7 - 19

| | (i) | | |

Ta.bl»6 Age Educational Lev si (Mai on Only)

Self-Employed
Employed by Private Company
Government E
Factory Empl
Unemployed/R

less than £15 P*' month while only of self-employed men do go. Furthermore whilst almost *20%* of self-employed men earn at least *tu*25 per month and thus fall quite clearly in the upper income reaches, only *Jt%* of wage earners do so. On the basis of statistical evidence alone members of the self-employed category are in certain ways rather better off than the wage-earning force. Here, however, a point concerning the income figures is important.

With factory employees, the figure stated represents for the great majority their constant monthly income and so is quite clear-cut; overtime payments may increase sucli income but only temporarily and relatively insignificantly affecting the cver-all distribution. But in the case of self-employed members of the population, becavi.se of the nature of their employment, their returns are subject to often very considerable degrees of variability, perhaps three or four times more than their minimum economic return. Self-employed people were asked to give their minimum income per month and frequently mentioned that their effective incomes in certain months were often far in excess of their stated figure. Consequently the income distribution of this category is constantly undervalued and the statistics do not bring out the overall higher economic standing of self-employed men over both population members in private and factory employment.

Equally important is the spread of income across the scale in each occupational category. In the case of factory workers the income distribution scale effectively ends at the £25-£29 class. (0.6% being the equivalent of only one respondent) whereas there is a gradual tailing-off of the distribution for self-employed workers from the modal class of £10-1^ per month into the highest reaches of the income scale. In the £40-£100+ region, whilst only one factory employee falls in this category (the sole senior staff factory employee in the neighbourhood), almost one-fifth of self-employed members are spread throughout the same high income classes* So v/hilst factory workers are essentially concentrated at the lower end of the income scales, self-employed people are distributed throughout its limits. This pattern is reflected in the workers' view that

industrial employment condemns one to a constant condition of very limited economic return compared with self-employment which offers the possibility of a gradual rise to the peak of affluence and wealth, (over £75 per month) where six men on the basis of stated income alone now stand* The features of industrial employment are generally applicable to private employment too whilst Government work offers a middle ground in economic terms between industrial v/ork on the one hand and self-employment on the other.

Finally, Table 8 setting education against income level shows but a limited relationship between the tv/o: income is only to a limited degree, and primarily at the lower end of the scale, a function of level of schooling. Hot surprisingly within the limits of educational achievement reached by members of Agege community in general, people rarely expect distinctions in material reward to follow specific levels of *primary* and *secondary* schooling.

In that over three-quarters of the neighbourhood population have less than four years secondary schooling and a similar proportion earn less than £25 per month, the inhabitants themselves do not explain any significant socio-economic differentiation in terms of educational achievement. This is not to suggest that individuals, even in full time employment, do not v/ork, or hope to v/ork, for higher qualifications, (though these are usually members already possessing above average qualifications, especially school-teachers and Government employees for whom higher qualifications automatically lead to promotion and better incomes.) But in general terms, the influence of level of schooling on economic standing is not striking: certainly there can be no suggestion that a combination of primary or secondary schooling and wage-earning leads to the creation of a ’labour aristocracy’ of workers in relation to other urban strata.

The most striking feature remains that there are exceptionally wide income variations within the neighbourhood, the wealthiest members receiving at least ten (and sometimes over thirty) times *more* than the poorest household heads. In few African urban areas within a

Tn-ble.S Litor°.^v and Incono (,€N) (MaiosVOnly)

(Percentages of Group Total are given in brackets)

single small neighbourhood area can such extremes of great affluence and intense poverty be matched. Factory workers share with others the generally low level of economic return: v/hilst they do not constitute a privileged group nor are they, relative to others in the neighbourhood,a notably underprivileged one either. The position is quite different, however, with reference to status and potential for individual economic and social mobility within the *community*.

Having outlined the major lines of social differentiations within the neighbourhood, we can now put flesh *on the* bare bones by considering those roles to which status accrues and the reasons for it doing so. Notwithstanding the ethnic, educational, generational and occupational diversity, there are certain roles, those of landlord, entrepreneur and Big Man which are universally acknowledged as being worthy of prestige: the value of these roles transcends
those different emphases on important occupations v/hich occur in the cultures of the various Yoruba political kingdoms. Such roles are highly regarded as a consequence of merits intrinsic to each; but common to all is the shared quality of economic independence.

One qualification, however, is essential. In that these prestigious roles allow incumbents to exercise authority over others, so they can be abused. *Whether* an individual fulfills those expectations inherent in the role satisfactorily or not, is interpreted .in terms of the individual's character. The Yoruba set great store by the nature of the individual's character, though what constitutes ’good* character is difficult to specify: briefly, it lays emphasis on doing what is correct and may be reasonably expected by others in an urban context where there is inevitably considerable latitude in the interpretation of what is proper and improper. It involves having a sense of proportion and an appreciation of others' predicaments and obligations rather than being entirely preoccupied v/ith one's own. This is perhaps a distinctly urban form of judgement. In the urban context, the many roles which the individual fills allow his interests and identity to be easily separable *from those* collect-ivities to v/hich he belongs; where It is accepted that the individual is nevertheless judged on the basis of his understanding

and appreciation of the problems of others, such a consensus of opinion operates as a valuable sanction on activities v/hich could otherwise become highly personalized.

Landlords and Tenants

In any urban arena v/here housing is entirely in private hands, one expects prestige to accompany house-ownership* Such is the case at Agege: a fundamental status division within the neighbourhood is between landlord and tenant - a division which colours much of the content of day-to-day activity.

Prestige accrues to landlords for several reasons. First ox all it is a function of wealth. Though in the early 19^0's a substantial dwelling could be erected for several hundred pounds, today the cost of land, materials and labour is such as to require at least .21,500 for a rudimentary ten-room one-storey building. V/here such sums are involved, building a house may extend over several years; in the case of a house completed next to my own residence, the owner had initially acquired the plot of land eleven years previously and this is by no means exceptional. Houses are constructed in bits and pieces according to the nature of other obligations facing the prospective landlord, but he must obviously have some financial surplus on a fairly regular basis. Related to this is the fact that by becoming a landlord the individuaD. demonstrates his degree of adaption to the new urban environment; he has learned how to handle himself in a number of ways towards cheating landowners, local government officials, rival claimants and those to whom he has other obligations. Eis success is a reflection of urban expertise.

Third, the role of landlord itself allows one to act in various capacities towards others in such a way as to gain prestige. Increasingly absentee landlords demand several months advance rent and leave its collection (if they are not themselves resident in the building) to re/it-collectors. This allows resident landlords to act generously and with understanding towards prospective and actual tenants: a landlord v/ho delays (or even forgoes) rent because tenants are in temporary financial difficulties is regarded as 'a man with a kind manner' or 'one v/ho understands the problems of others-' Such information is rapidly disseminated in the neighbourhood (though

action of the opposite character probably travels much faster.)

But above all, being a landlord is highly ranked since it affords economic independence. Few buildings have less than eight rooms and the monthly return from these adds perhaps £20 to the landlord's income from his other involvements, whether entreprensurship or wage-employment. As Table 2 shows, by no means all landlords are self-employed though this is mainly the case in Morcass, an association v/hich is significant; but being a landlord means that even the wage-earner is not at the mercy of his employer. Further, becoming a landlord is frequently viewed- as an initial step to making the transition from wage v/ork to entrepreneurship if he is not an entrepreneur already: the steady return from rents allows the landlord in transition a greater degree of economic security (than can be afforded to most) at such a crucial time. In the highly personalized relationships v/hich an entrepreneur in the early stages of activity is involved, the economic security and social standing of the landlord is valuable from the point of view of establishing credit v/ith suppliers*

To the status of landlord then are attached fairly precise expect-ations; but it is the degree to which the landlord lives up to this ideal which is significant. The crucial agents in establishing this are his tenants, the information brokers between his house and the neighbourhood - and ultimately the wider community, V/here tenants are genuinely offended by a landlord's behaviour or simply malevolent for some reason, then the repercussions of their commentaries can reflect not only on his standing as landlord, but also those other roles v/hich he plays - especially if he is a local entrepreneur. Though the wealthiest landlords in *Morcass* also invariably have comparatively large families and thus occupy several rooms, most will limit themselves to one or two rooms; and since 'packing* a room is accepted as part of urban life, conditions in tenement buildings are invariably cramped. In *these conditions* private experiences quickly become public knowledge, especially via the gossip circles of married women v/ith children v/ho are more or less perpetually in residence in the neighbourhood- The successes and failures of landlords, precisely because of their high social standing, are in many ways more

interesting and subject to discussion than those of tenants, so information about them is rapidly diffused.

For such reasons, though in different ways, landlords are dependent on tenants *as* they are on him, arid relationships between them are generally cordial. A common residence structure is led by the older landlord, his wife (or wives) and young children, v/ith several unmarried wage-earners and young self-employed men renting the other *rooms. Close* relationships between the landlord *and youths in such* circumstances are common; the landlord becomes a counsellor to young men as his own wives become advisors to theirs. Sorrowing of household utensils, dividing household duties and market visits are frequent between women. *The* landlord is frequently addressed as [1]Baba' by junior male and female inhabitants in recognition of increasingly diffuse obligations to him; and relationships can becom so close as to constitute virtually a fictitious kinship structure within the same building.

The social standing of the landlord allows him authority over others and whether he acknowledges and builds on that authority depends on personal choice. It allows him economic iiidejjendence and relative freedom to switch into other areas of activity. More than this, the increasingly high economic *return from* renting *rooms allows* him a sound source of further capital accumulation requiring little, if any, additional investment: having built one house, the landlord begins to consider the possibilities of owning tv/o. In this sense, the landlord is an entrepreneur of a sort and is frequently recognised as such. On several occasions in interviews v/ith factory workers,' they told me they wished to become 'independent men.[1] When I asked them to specify their choice of field, they replied v/ith simply ''Landlord.'[1]

The neighbourhood is a hive of entrepreneurial activity, activity not confined to male and female household heads operating fulltime as self-employed operators, but shared too by the wives of household heads, dependents of various types and occasional 'moonlighters,[f] particularly factory workers and those in private employment who engage in extra-wage-earning activity in order to boost their incomes and gradually v/ork themselves into full time entrepreneurship. Tables *10* to 14 below give a raore detailed breakdown of these categories.

The nature of many entrepreneurial activities clearly involves the expansion of economic and social relationships far beyond the limits of the neighbourhood and, indeed, outside the confines of the township as a whole. Major traders, transporters, contractors and the like speiid a great deal of time in Lagos, Ibadan, and other townships where they have vested entrepreneurial interests. But many self-employed people operating within the Morcass area are engaged in 'service industries' for the local population; and performance in the neighbourhood is important to their economic advancement. In the highly competitive atmosphere of the township, a great deal depends on the expansion of social relationships valuable to entrepreneurial activity, and the development *of* a wider reputation in one's chosen trade: the neighbourhood is a starting point, particularly for those newly involved in entrepreneurship.

An important feature is the very visibility of entrepreneurship: most buildings, whether one or two-storey, are now constructed with shop-fronts on the ground floor overlooking the road or path.
Rentals of such shops vary according to their public prominence: in Morcass for example, shops open to view from Ipaja road are consistently rented at 10/- to £1 per month more than those located on back-streets. The entrepreneur himself then is very much a public figure in the neighbourhood and a substantial amount of his regular custom is to be' found in that arena. In that those listed above are concentrated in an area considerably, less than one-quarter of a mile square, certain occupations are clearly especially -competitive within

TABLE 10
Occupational Breakdovm of Self-Employed Household heads (Malt

	No.	Total
Driver, Bricklayer	11	22
Trader, Tailor '	10	20
Carpenter	6	B
Contractor	?	?
Vehicle Mechanic	6	6
Blacksmith, Farmer, Barber, Transporter	k	16
Goldsmith, Butcher, Herbalist, Bicycle Kepairor, Kadio Mechanic, Conductor, Beershop Owner, Watch Repairer	2	16
Petrol Station Owner, Plumber, Draughtsman, Electrician, Doctor, Ironmonger, Photographer, Money Lender	1	8
Total		105

TABLE 11
Occunational Breale down of Self-Employed Household eads (Fe~

		No.	Total
Foodstuffs Trader		15	"'5
Trader		10	10
Seamstress		5	5
Cloth Trader, Kolanut	Trader	2	4
Hairdresser		1	1
Total			35

TABLE 12

Hale Household. Heads [1] Moonlighting[1] .

	Ho.	Total
Painter	4	4
Carpenter, Tailor •	3	6
Electrician, Vehicle Mechanic	2	4
Printer, Signvjriter, Plumber, Radio Mechanic, Photographer,Draughtsman	1	6
Total		20

TABLE 15

Wives of Household Heads in Entrepreneur .-ship

	No •	Total
Petty Traders	79	79
Seamstress	13	13
Foodstuffs Trader	14	14
Breadseller	4	4
Cloth Trader Hairdresser	5	6
Kolanut Trader	?	2
Owner, M'at Seller, Plate Seller, firewood Seller, Pepper Seller, Ihotographer	1	7
Total . 12?		

TABLE 14

De'oendents of Household Heads in Sntreprer.eurship

	Ho. -	Total
Tailor	7	7
Trader	3	5
Radio Mechanic,Vehicle Mechanic	2	4
Seamstress, IsicycleRepairer,Photographer	1	3
Total		19

tlie neighbourhood itself - for example, tailoring and vehicle mechanic: (the largest category of all, petty trading in such commodities as cigarettes, matches, tins of sardines, candles, kola ■ nut and so on can scarcely said to be competitive, since every dwelling has such a stall outside, convenience for the buyer is virtually all that matters and the profit on such commodities is very slight.)

Developing social contacts within the neighbourhood is not, however, simply a question of developing steady custom: it is also essential from the point of view of taking advantage of those sudden opportunities on v/hich entrepreneurship is built. Since commodity prices fluctuate considerably in the major import centre, and since too there is a high constant supply of smuggled goods from Dahomey and Togo, a supply of information from many sides is crucial to hearing of opportunities for buying cheap materials. Furthermore, from neighbourhood contacts, links may be established through a variety of channels to those in command of goods in scarce supply. For example, during my period of fieldwork, due to bottle shortages, beer companies were unable to meet prevailing demand and for some time the town was virtually 'dry.* One beer-stall owner knew through one of his tenants of a clerk living in the neighbourhood who was a close kinsman to the distribution manager of an Apapa brewery. Having established the connection he received a limited but regular supply for some weeks after his local competitors had closed, shop. His supply, sold at an exhorbitant rate, was sufficient for him to purchase a new record-player and the latest records, which helped maintain his considerably increased custom long after the bottle crisis had passed.

Such, contacts do not only encourage trade, they ensure that the entrepreneur becomes a figure of considerable social standing in his own right in the neighbourhood. He becomes the focus of several networks of relationships and the point-source of these through v/hich information can be disseminated. For local entrepreneurs, there is little clear division between v/ork and leisure: a considerable part of the day is spent conversing in his shop' with neighbours

and casual acquaintances passing through and handing on information v/ith a diversity of content and utility. Time spent in the workplace depends to a considerable degree on personal choice: if not particularly pressing work can then be passed on to apprentices.- He is, in a very real sense, [1] a free man' and 'his own master * responsible to no-one but himself. In a setting of 'strangers* the value attached to sociability per se is high indeed, and information brokerage *is* valued in its own right. Sven v/here economic *resources* do not allow the individual the automatic acquisition of the esteemed title of gbajumo - the outgoing man liberal in distributing advice and money and doing favours for *others* - nevertheless the local small-scale entrepreneur can begin to move in that direction until such a time as the status is more clearly granted. By establishing contacts between others previously unknown to each other, the individual is plugged in to a relationship which ultimately may rebound in his own interests. His personal advancement is thus inextricably connected with his association with others. Being a social benefactor can also encourage his own economic advancement and, at the very least, it lessens the chances of his acquiring an unfavourable reputation, for example that of a miser (ahun) v/hich can be a very substantial impediment to social and economic mobility.

Here the contrast with the role of the wage-earner is strong indeed. Though many lasting friendships are developed in the factory environment, it is primarily an economic, and not a social, role. Apart from the nature of factory work itself,which stands as an obstacle to social intercourse, certain managements actively discourage overtly social action between their workers. Such accounts of oppressive management strategies may well be overstated, but the point v/as nevertheless *v/ell* made by one factory worker: ''Throughout my day, the work is hard and dirty. The foreman and the Chinese'manager are at my shoulder pressing me on to makeme work harder for them. *For ?/6d* per day they treat me like a dog. Nov/, ifI had money to trade, I could v/ork when I wish, play v/ith my friends, go to pray and teach my child to read. I would be my own master. How can one compare the two? I would prefer to trade for 5/- per day rather than be as a slave from morning to night for *y/od."*

This is a relatively static judgement. Equally tc be taken into account are the prospects of entrepreneurship, especially since these, being far more promising than others, again heighten the value attached to self-employment. I have already discussed the hierarchical open

structure of entrepreneurship in the town as a whole; the neighbourhood exhibits for certain occupations a micro- cosmic view of such openness. The experience of those involved in economic and social mobility is a topic of constant conversation: as a subject in the public eye, the success (or failure) of those beginning at the lower reaches of the entrepreneurial scale is important in framing the aspirations of others who are not their own masters.

This is not a uniformly successful strategy and continual setbacks are viewed as an essential part of becoming established in the *longer* run: but v/here success is experienced then the reputation of those involved is particularly noted and its social significance is all the greater for being so. To illustrate the variety of experiences of young entrepreneurs, I have selected several younger men in the neighbourhood whose performances cover the extremes, at the one end of the spectrum a barber unable to make ends meet, at the other a photographer, once described pertinently to me as ′¹a rising star" seemingly assured of greater success in the long run.

The precise interpretation of the success or otherwise of each entrepreneur is of rather less importance than the composite picture v/hich they present to others, especially young factory workers; even v/ithin the limited boundaries of the neighbourhood, the possibilities allowed by entrepreneurship emerge quite clearly.

1. Michael

When a teenager Michael v/as a dancer in Lagos, learning new dances and performing on the streets and in bars for the entertainment of Big Men. His father, having heard of his disreputable activities, came to Lagos and convinced him of the error of his v/ays. Michael decided to leave dancing and drink behind him and begged his brother- in-law, a personnel manager, to employ him. The latter at first refused for since he was a staunch Christian felt his relative had disgraced his family. Michael's father intervened and he v/as taken on as an operator. He subsequently met Olu, Cease study 2) who introduced him to the Aladura church v/here he met his wife, then an apprentice seamstress. After five years work, during which he trained under another church member who v/as a barber, Michael had sufficient to rent a shop and buy scissors, combs, a mirror and an old swivel-chair from his master. After tv/o months during v/hich he 'moonlighted,' he resigned from the factory and set up shop on a permanent basis- From the beginning his trade went badly, and his wife now working as a seamstress, had to buy their food v/hilst Michael paid their rent for the shop and their room (£5*10 in all). Apart from occasional brief periods of making ends meet, ''times .were always hard," and they gave up their room and moved to sleep on the floor of the shop. Then at the time when his wife was heavy with pregnancy and not working, Michael was fined £-5* by the Barbers' Association (of which his master was vice-chairman) for undercutting- stipulated prices. This proved the final straw and he again begged his brother-in-law to give him work, which he did. Michael

was loathe to give up his shop and so he sent for his father's sister's son then employed at home. On arrival, he began to train him in bartering in the evenings. During the interim he lost his local trade to a newly arrived competitor. His 'brother' was slow to learn and could not be relied upon, so Michael found him work in the factory too. They managed to find places on alternative shifts but only Michael was able to serve customers properly. His brother opened the shop when his shift was over, but could, do no more than tell the meagre trickle of clients at what time Michael would be available to do business.

2. Olu

On arrival from Efon Alaye, Olu was employed in an Ikeja textile company and after four years experience there prepared to set up as a tailor: though he had not completed his apprecenticeship in Efon he felt his experience was sufficient. His main reason for resigning was the limitations factory v/ork placed on his involvement in the Aladura church then numbering ten members. “There was no chance to pray at all times as God wishes us to do.” Olu became the chief steward to the church prophet and spent much time converting friends: over three years of intense activity the church had grown to over sixty steady members. Olu’s tailoring v/as not co successful but he began to specialize in European-style shirts and built up a complement of four apprentices. Though members of the church had to give one- third of their earnings to the construction of a new brick church, Olu managed to continue without recourse to other work* His ambition was to build up a train of tailoring shops in the hands of his apprentices whereupon he could devote himself entirely to praying.

3- Timothy

On arrival at Agege in 1964, Timothy had completed a four-year apprenticeship as an electrician at Abeokuta; ho v/as employed without difficulty in an Ikeja enamelware company v/here he v/as earning over £25 per month within tv/o years. During this time he rented a room from a builder of Yoruba-Kausa parentage, an influential man v/ho constructed houses for leading Hausa landlords in the town. The latter invited Timothy to join him on a permanent basis when the young electrician had *sho\m* his expertise in wiring the contractoi’'s own house. For three years Timothy worked hand-in-glove v/ith the contractor until he returned to the north on a semi-permanent basis as a transporter. By this time Timothy was well-integrated Into the contractor’s network and himself spoke quite fluent Hausa. At the age of 30, he had only three apprentices working for him mainly because "other people working for me take too much time and. cause too much trouble." He always had more *offers for* work than lie could handle and was negotiating to buy land near Orile Agege and begin construction on his own house. His reputation as an electrician was wide-spread for, as he put it, "Hausa are unlike • Yoruba because they attach so much importance to the finishing of their houses. Everything must be well done, it has to be perfect. Because I work for Hausa everyone knows 1 am a good craftsman," and in this there was a considerable element of truth-

k. Peter ■

After primary school at Ijebu-Ode, Peter v/as apprenticed to his father's junior brother at Agege. His patron v/as rarely called anything but 'Photographer' and had a reputation which, extended throughout the township. If you asked for 'Photographer[1] anywhere at Agege everyone would know v/ho you meant and where he lived, partly because he had several photography salons in the town *run* by apprentices, partly

because he v/as employed by virtually all members of the local elite to photograph their various ceremonies, in addition to church events, business men’s calendars and political party rallies. 'Photographer'' himself became sufficiently wealthy and influential to establish a transporting business in Lagos and also took up residence there, leaving his shops in the hands of employees such as Peter. When people sent for 'Photographer' to record their *ceremonies* and Peter attended instead, he *had no* qualms in explaining the reasons for his master not attending personally.
When his own v/ork matched previous results, his‘personal clientele developed quickly. Within tv/o years he v/as in possession of his own cameras and developing equipment and set up shop on his own account. He also had developed a reputation for style - modern clothes, attractive female helpers, ’pop’ music, all of which appealed greatly to young wage-earners and others. My assistant told me that Peter was a 'rising star' but Peter himself summarized his position neatly: "When I walk along the street, everyone today calls to me 'PhotographerI 'i’hey have forgotten that once that was my master.
Now, the photographer at Agege - that is me I"

On the one hand then we have a man struggling desperately to retain his foothold in a long-established occupation, on the other a younger entrepreneur who, in the course of tv/o or three ceremonials in one weekend can receive the minimum monthly income of a factory worker several times over from a singularly modern occupational role. The case of the latter is particularly pertinent since wage-earners regard a visit to the photographer with quite as much anticipation as an evening in a bar or at the- cinema. Peter's regular clientele, ceremonials and the like apart, consisted of many young factory workers who may visit him more than a dozen times during the year.

The case-studies taken together illustrate the varied factors v/hich contribute to success or failure; not simply the prevailing demand for services, but the nature of patronage, chance contacts, the influence of non-economic ro3.es, other sources of support in times of hardship, the value of associational and personal network ties, the need for opportunism (in these cases exceptionally mild), and the advantages of a growing reputation - these are some of the themes v/hich could be expanded but are sufficient to point to the essential nature of entrepreneurship in the lower reaches, i.e. its highly changeable and flexible quality by comparison with the rigidity of v/age-employment. It is this sense of *personal control* over one's own fortune which affords the entrepreneur such satisfaction, a feature well illustrated in the instance of Olu the tailor who had just resigned from the textile company when I first met him; his wage had been around ;022 yet over some sixteen months of our acquaintance I doubt if his average income exceeded £'l6. He, like Michael, gave up his tenement room and slept on the floor of his shop in order to cut his expenses, and at times he had to borrow *money not only for cloth hut also for* food. But he pointed out, probably rightly, that v/ere he to spend less time and money in the church, he could perhaps double his income, for though his church membership provided him with work, spending more time with, say, cloth traders v/ho could provide him with greater credit, may have served his strictly economic advancement better. That he ha.d the ability however to change his balance of interests was demonstrated when his father, without any prior warning, arrived from Efon Alaye with a young girl whoa he [1] *presented*[1] to Olu as his wife. After a week of intense turmoil, Olu accepted the girl (fortunately she was a member of the Aladura church in Sfon).

This.placed severe strain on his resources, and he immediately reactivated tv/o relationships with-cloth traders in Lagos which he had allowed to atrophy. Both men allowed him material on credit v/hich Olu used to make a new range of Buropean-style shirts: subsequently he spent more time in his shop and delegated part of his role as chief stev/ard in the church to others. The change of emphasis had, in this instance, been forced upon him, but as an independent man he accomodated new pressures relatively easily.

Big Hen and Small Men

V/hilst comparisons are often drawn between lower-ordcr entrepreneurs and factory workers, a common contrast to Big Men is made with factory

managers. In brief, Big Men in the neighbourhood and community are also 'our men'; industrial managers living in high- class residential estates are, as in the factory, 'them[1] as against * us'. To express it another way, locally-based successful entrepreneurs are *more often* than not positive *reference points for* others in the community; they are people to whom deference is awarded voluntarily and v/ith achievements to be imitated.

Industrial managers are a negative reference group for they are a class apart *from* the mass of Agege inhabitants. Thus outlined, the contrast is admittedly a crude one; but the distinction is nevertheless sharply drawn by lower strata Agege dwellers themselves, notwithstanding the fact that members of both are, by normal standards, very wealthy. Indeed, a successful transporter or *trader* at Agege may earn several times more than the official income of an African manager on the Industrial Estate, yet the former's income is consistently accorded more legitimacy than that of the latter.

For present purposes, the crucial relationships are those between Big Men in the community and others. The three brief histories of Big Men in Morcass given below are intended to complement those of recent young entrepreneurs described earlier. Following these, *I* examine the ways in which one such successful entrepreneur is integrated into the day-to-day life of the neighbourhood and the nature of his relationships v/ith those living around him.

1. Kayode

Currently aged 38, Kayode initially migrated from Abeokuta in 1951 having reached Standard 6 through the sponsorship of his father, a reasonably wealthy but illiterate cocoa-farmer. He arranged for his son to be 'apprenticed' as a clerk to a fellow Egba then living at Agege and making a living from the sale of petrol from a small station adjacent to the Motor Hoad. Kayode kept his accounts and helped manage the small mechanics shop owned by his patron. This was generally regarded as an important period for those involved in transport in any way, since road transport in the 1950's in Westers Nigeria v/as pushing ahead rapidly. Though Olusegun v/as not a wealthy man he was 'a man of sound means' and in the late 1950's he retired, to his home town. By this time Kayode knew v/ell expatriates and Nigerians involved in petroleum distribution in Lagos headquarters of
the major firms: when modern petrol stations were constructed at Agege he determined to manage his own. Several hundred pounds were required by the companies as surety from local managers. Kayode gathered this firstly from his patron, second his father and third he received a loan via local Standard Bank in the town. This was especially important since not only did this loan constitute the greater part of his surety, it was a quite exceptionally unusual source, for few minor entrepreneurs receive such loans. Kayode explained this on two counts; first he was, unlike most garage owners,

reasonably well educated, and this impressed the bank manager. Sccond, though petrol stations were clearly excellent investments, owners (being wealthy and influential) were also invariably politicians whose persons and properties were prone to a multitude of misfortunes, Kayode, however, had refused to acknowledge membership of any political party, (to my knowledge the only garage owner to do so in the town), and once again this had impressed the bank manager. The enterprise proved a great success and within three years Kayode had paid off his debts - only to assume new ones when he arranged a further (though smaller) loan to stock the petrol station with vehicle components. Again the loan was paid off in a short time. Turnover in the latter trade encouraged him to open, in the mid 60's,'a fully equipped components shop elsewhere in Agege and shortly before I knew him he opened yet another at Otta. Putting aside the initially slight returns from the last enterprise, his monthly minimum income was £300 per month. His seven- room two-storey building v/as inhabited only by- his own family v/hilst two of his three wives traded from shops on the ground floor. Over a period of twenty years, commencing v/ith aid from his patron, he had become a man ox considerable wealth and high social standing - and a patron in his own right. Though he minded the petrol station himself, his mother's brother's son acted as his personal clerk there, v/hilst two of his senior brother's sons minded his vehicle stores at Agege and Otta. He also gave considerable financial aid to his three wives all of whom v/ere of some note in their particular spheres - a trader in c3„oth, a trader in furniture and a sewing mistress, and a3.1 working in the<neighbourhood.

2. Balogun

Though Balogun, like PCayode, had an educated father, he himself did not attend school. His father, a Lagos man, was initially a civil servant but on retirement built a small house at Agege and invoJ.ved himself in trading. Though he wished his son to attend school, Belogun spent much of his early youth in Lagos 'in bad company' until his father placed him as foreman to labourers at Iju Water Works in 19.58. Luring the four years he was employed there he began to act as a money lender to those working under him and others in the town, in order, he maintained, to supplement his meagre salary. But on his father's death, he inherited a substantial sum of money (it v/as locally rumoured that the inheritance was around £500.} Balogun left the Water Works and established himself as a full-time money-lender in the bown at a time when the population v/as growing rapidly and 3.ocal traders in particular were prepared to pay increasongly high interest rates. As he developed a wider range of contacts, so too Jelogun entered into various types of trade *on* his own account: "When people

came for loans, they had to inform me of market conditions in their own trade. Wherever the prospects seemed good then I entered into that trade myself" - hence his self-selected title of General Trader. Both fields proved highly profitable and by 196^ he was able to build his present house in Morcass, a vast tv/on by room building v/hich alone gave him a monthly income of *£>50, Because 01* the nature of his trading interests, his total monthly income v/as highly variable but he regularly made three or four times that sum. His combined assets, however, he was not prepared to reveal. His interest rates v/ere high, often over 10% per month on loans more than £100, and since he had foreclosed on loans made to several landlords in the town who had offered their own buildings as surety for large sums, his interests in the neighbourhood were but a part of a wider range of activities. Belogun's main claim to high status was his lavish expenditure conducted in the true manner of a Yoruba Big Man. During the course of my fieldwork, he threw a naming ceremony for the first son of his second wife. Several cows and a dozen goats were slaughtered, numerous hens, and beer was available in abundance. The guests included notable politicians, military men, and leading Ijagos businessmen; entertainment was provided by a leading Yoruba praise singer and his band, to all of whom Balogun gave generously, 'i'he cost of the ceremony was certainly no less than £800 and probably very much more.

%. Ladipo

Ladipo v/as arguably not only the most eminent member of the neighbourhood but of Agege township as a whole: few people living at Agege for any length of time and v/ith an interest in local affairs did not know his name. He was a person frequently cited in all quarters as a man with humble origins who had made good. At the age of 2^, having completed his education to Standard 5 level, he moved to Agege in 19^5 from his small village outside Ijebu-Gde. though relatively v/ell educated, he was apprenticed by his senior brother, already living at Agege, as a bicycle repairer. His view was that at that time learning a trade involving mechanical skills, was preferable to entering clerical employment, and for the following three years he lived poorly with his master in the hope of ultimately becoming an independent man.

He realized that motor transport had already become a source of wealth and authority, and v/ith his father's brother's son, then living at Somolu v/here he had acquired some knowledge of transporting, Ladipo decided to become a transporter. At this time both the colonial government and expatriate trading companies sold old vehicles relatively cheaply in Lagos. The brothers' major breakthrough came when the senior sister to Ladipo a prosperous cloth trader in Lagos, loaned them £250 to buy such a vehicle. With their small savings and aid from other kinsmen they converted the vehicle into a bus and Ladipo plied routes both within Lagos proper and between Lagos and the Dahomey border, carrying passengers, consumer goods and foodstuffs. The enterprise in the early stages v/as insecure: breakdowns, accidents, disputes between the brothers and with the authorities - such v/ere the obstacles which ho.d to be overcome. Within three years, the debt to the sister was repaid and a second vehicle on the road. The subsequent history of the transporting company thus formed is impossible to summarize: other kinsmen joined the tv/o founders and by combining their various resources and skills have built up a formidable and well-known company v/hich continues to be led by Ladipo and his kinsman-partrier. Their experience is particularly . striking since the organization has reached an unusually high and complex level of sophistication and division of labour between the various partners.

Ladipo himself today owns almost twenty vehicles and runs an insurance company from his home. His bungalow is the smartest dwelling in Morcass neighbourhood and he runs tv/o cars, a Mercedes and the latest Peugeot model- His visitors during my period there included senior civil servants, ex-politicians and military notables. Though difficult to estimate, his annual income v/as certainly four or five times more than that of IJigerian factory managers on the industrial estate. His behaviour, described in more detail below, made him the epitome for most of the 'Big Man* in the urban context.

Various points can be made here to reinforce those made in the previous chapter. Firstly, in their family backgrounds there is little to separate the Big Men from the majority of Agege townspeople: family *resources* have ii?ade little impact *021* their subsequent careers, and this is true even as far as their education goes for despite three of the four being educated, only Kayode could be said to have benefited in any notable fashion from schooling, Ladipo’*s* case, v/here a choice is made to develop skills in a manual occupation v/hich could be equally acquired without any formal schooling, is perhaps surprisingly common.

Second, -during the course of their early experience, the importance of a patron does emerge, particularly in the case of Ladipo and Kayode talcing the form of financial aid. In each instance, patron’s donations allowed them to make the crucial breakthrough into the realm of the entrepreneur. However, there is a danger of assuming that v/here patronage occurs, then it must be based on an extended and overtly reciprocal relationship between members of the dyad, and that it is of a completely different order from an economic contract. In the urban context this is not necessarily so; in a number of instances v/here clear cases of patronage has occurred, it has taken the form of crucial contacts in which the patron has briefly but very significantly impinged on the individual client's experience and entirely changed the course of his career. And as noted previously, even in situations v/here'strong moral bonds bind patron and client (as in the ease of Ladipo*s sister) nevertheless the contract between them is drawn up on business-like.lines; the length of repayment time may be indeterminate but it is repaid in cash cind not in kind (such as faction support, continued deference in public, and so on, as commentators on patronage often describe.) Moral sentiments may influence the form of the patron-client relationship but they do not eradicate its material basis. The importance of financial loans is too important for that* An illustration of this point is found in the experience of Kayode.

In discussing v/ith me the sources of financial aid, he himself saw his relationship with his petrol trading patron and the bank manager in much the same terms: the personal relationships between them were admittedly different, but the financial basis was on a par• The same principles operated in the past where wealthy- political leaders extended their patronage to local opinion leaders in order to draw them and their followers into a political faction: political support was over and above the debt-relationship between patron and client. Mobilizing voters for one's patron was a necessary condition for receiving a loan, only the ability to repay it v/as a sufficient condition for the loan to be forthcoming.

Third, the rapidity of socio-economic mobility in the growing township of the 1950's and 1960*s is reflected in the experience of these men. All three men emerged within a decade from the poverty of the majority to considerable socio-economic stature, and did so on an almost entirely individual basis. Their rise to power and prestige was neither inevitable nor invariable. I have omitted details concerning setbacks v/hich all encountered in varying degrees. One point, however, even if impressionistic, is worthy of note: since Kayode, Ladipo and Balogun did enjoy considerable financial support at some time or other, their experiences do .appear less subject to overwhelming setbacks than others. None for example lost their businesses entirely, and none were forced back into working for others, a pattern much more common among entrepreneurs beginning with very limited amounts of working capital. As a general rule, the higher the rung of entry into the entrepreneurial hierarchy, the more secure one is in both the long and short run." Further, the

greater one's initial resources [5] the more possibility of committing a percentage of such funds to sudden opportunities v/hich may lead to either a substantial 'killing* or outright loss. Such opportunities are best taken by the individual entrepreneur rather than members of joint enterprise; in making a success of such opportunities, speed of judgement and action plus personal resolve are valuable assets.

Finally, to emphasize a point crucial to the very notion of Big Man, the most striking feature is the way in v/hich prestige-bearing roles and other attributes v/hich attract high status are combined together: roles and assets are separated out by the outside observer as an analytical device. For members of the neighbourhood population all are indissolubly linked and the particular sources of prestige and authority are of less importance than the purposes to which these combined resources are put. Each of the Big Men described combines the roles of houseov/ner-landlord and entrepreneur, and exhibits wealth, prestige and authority. The truly Big Man utilizes these to his own and others benefit beyond the boundaries of the neighbourhood and indeed the community itself: it is the exercise of the resources v/hich is striking and on this basis ultimate prestige is accorded.

This issue, playing out the role of Big Kan, is the final theme of the chapter. As noted above, the very presence of Big Men in neighbourhood and community is itself worthy of comment, especially when set against the absence of industrial managers, senior civil servants, educated professional and businessmen v/ho prefer the middle-class suburbs of Lagos. But of course, geographical proximity per se does not necessarily invite favourable judgements of outstandingly v/ealthy community members, nor attempts by lower strata members to use them as imitable models: the obvious illustration of great social distance in a limited geograj3hical area is the multi-caste, highly stratified Indian village. Physical location is not the only prerequisite to social integration; this must come from other types of interests and investments in locally-based economic and social relationships, for these determine how the Big Man performs in his 3-Ocality.

A note is ax)propriate here on the role of the Big Man in earlier periods of Yoruba history, pre-colonial and colonial. That the successful farmer, trader, craftsman or whatever of Yoruba society should help other lineage members bo improve themselves was an accepted part of Yoruba. culture; by doing so he contributed to the overall standing of the lineage and thus its competitive edge in inter-lineage

rivalries for political titles in the Yoruba kingdom. But the lineage system was not the only major associational structure in pre-colonial Yoruba society; age-sets and guilds, associations for craftsmen and traders, were alternative quasi- political groupings in which the individual's identity was to a degree separate from the interests of his lineage. Though certain lineages did have certain occupational specialisms, not all youths followed these and urban craftsmen looked outside their compounds for apprentices. There were .then possibilities for notables to build further on their social standing. Similarly during the colonial period certain occupations, such as produce buying and trading, required those in such roles to recruit assistance from beyond the lineage; skill and personal contacts were transmitted to such assistants and thus constituted a form of help to others.

The nature of such pati-onage occurs in the life-histories outlined above. Now however, certain pressures, above all for the education of one's own children, have led to a redefinition of what aid influential men can be expected to give to non-kinsmen; patronage generally is in severe decline for, as it is commonly expressed "Everyone today has his own responsibilities." The successful man i_s however expected to acknowledge his responsibilities to other kinsmen: these remain undeniable and one who tries to avoid them is condemned outright.

In order to illustrate the Big Kan’s performance,. I present an extended case-study of Ladipo and his kinsmen during a crisis situation, the death of a family member. As noted above, however, the distinctive feature of high social standing is the diverse and multiplex relationships v/hich the individual has with those around him. To preface the case-study I present a straightforward list of the types of relationships Ladipo had with those in the neighbour-

hood: for almost all, I ant able to present case-studies of his involvement in different networks with those around him during crisis situations or similar. To do so would be tedious« I select- a crisis situation involving his kinsmen since it is the links with kinsmen v/hich are most common in tying Ladipo in to day-to-day interaction shared and observed by others. Finally, I choose Ladipo himself since he was, in effect, *the* Big Man at Agege whilst also having a diversity of contacts in Nigerian elite circles; his interests spanned the richest and poorest circles in Yoruba society and he moved freely in both. As such he serves not only as the epitome of the local Big Man, he serves as a continuous reference point to younger men, entrepreneurs arid wage-earners alike, illustrating with clarity the social standing which they hope ultimately to achieve.

First to outline his regular relationships in the locality:

i. Occupational

As a leading transporter at Agege, he hired his vehicles to at least ten drivers living in the immediate neighbourhood. Each day, early in the morning he met each driver, received the fee for renting the vehicle and discussed their affairs with them. He knew intimately some of these men and most discussed their problems with him quite regularly. He also knew the conductors and ijekas who assembled at his house each morning, for some of these would ultimately wish to *hire* his. *vehicles:* knowing *how they behaved was* an essential part of looking after his interests. Secondly, he ran the insurance business from his house; though this was managed by his junior brother it linked closely v/ith bis transporting business, most of his customers being these same drivers and others owning their own vehicles.

ii. Associational

His major associational role was as vice-president to the Agege branch of the Uigerian Motor Transport Owners union (NMTOU). Ladipo’s brother *v/as* president but for various reasons, Ladipo conducted most of the branch's daily business from his home. Membership of the association v/as shared by almost all bus-owners at Agege. Whenever these had difficulties with the authorities (such as renewing their licenses or buying one for apprentices, or disputes v/ith the police), they came to Ladipo for assistance. Second, he was a leader of the local Baptist church and its major patron. The church v/as a small one but in order to attract more members a large new building v/as being put up v/ith a sizeable amount of capital coming from Ladipo’s own pocket. Third, Ladipo had been chairman of the liCNC branch since around i960 and subsequently leader of U PGA too, until military rule ended party politics. He was, in 1970, however, continuing to act as an informal advisor to the Administrator at Ikeja. Fourth he v/as patron to at least four young men's football clubs in the town - buying equipment and donating gifts at their annual meetings. Finally he v/as vice-president too ox the Progressive Union of his Ijebu village; since the village v/as small this v/as effectively also the kinsmen’s union.

iii. Casual relationships

As an "influential somebody" Ladipo v/as also subject to a. continuous stream of callers concerning minor affairs usually of a personal nature inaccessible to others. As an illustration : Olu the tailor had in his congregation a young man v/ho wished to acquire a driving licence. Though he had the necessary ‘fee[1] he was unable to gain access to the Ikeja police officer in charge of new licences- After several futile attempts, Clu called on Ladipo and begged his help. Ladipo phoned the officer from his house and when the youth presented Ladipo’s calling card the following day, he received his li cence immediately.

iv. Relationships v/ith Kinsmen

Ladipo had a substantial number of kinsmen living at Agege though, v/ith the exception of kinsmen-business associates, his major contacts v/ere with those in the immediate neighbourhood, especially Aluko, his junior brother, a trader living just across the street.
In Aluko' s house also lived Duro, Ladipo's second wife's junior brother and Ado, *son of his* senior sister and also tlae day-to-day supervisor of Ladipo's buses. The latter v/as in fact near the status of transporter too, since having worked for Ladipo for some five years, he v/as to receive a loan to buy his own bus and hire his own employees. In this he v/as following an established pattern whereby Ladipo trained junior kinsmen in the techniques and skills of transporting and then subsequently aided them to become independent. A further kinsman living in the neighbourhood, John, had already followed this course. John v/as the brother of Ladipo's first wife. After several years as a newspaper distributor (among other things) he had acted as an aide to Ladipo in his business. After learning (as he put it) "the tricks of the trade" he had become independent and owned two buses of his own. Finally Ladipo had a further kinsman-business associate in the neighbourhood, Tunde the son of Ladipo[1] s father's brother. This then v/as an effective kinship network within the neighbourhood arena and through these in particular other residents received detailed information on Ladipo's activities- Aluko especially, the closest kinsman of all in terms of regular association with his brother v/as a major source of information between the Ladipo household and outsiders, a fact which added considerably to his own social standing.

Such were the major sets of relationships which bound Ladipo to others in the neighbourhood.' By far the most important in terms of

de'oth and continuity v/ere those v/ith his fellow kinsmen, for these v/ere the relationships which involved him in locally-based situations whereby his standing could be judged and, at times, his influence demonstrated. These were the relationships which most clearly demonstrated that he v/as a member of the neighbourhood and the wider community and that he shared much the same attachments and sentiments as the population at large. Despite his wealth and wide influence, it was generally maintained he remained true to his roots, especially in his family connections and, on this basis his character was favourably judged.

Re1ationships with Kinsmen: the death of a Big Man's Relative

Ladipo had originally accommodated Duro in his house when his wife's brother arrived from Badagry v/here he had been a primary school teacher. The same year 1962, Ladipo had used his influence twice on Duro's behalf, first to *gain* his employment at Apapa as a clerk, and second, (when the first post proved unsatisfactory) as an administrates: at Ikeja Airport v/here he had subsequently settled down and gained promotion. When Duro married in the following year, he moved across the road to Aluko.’s hou.se where *he* rented a room. *From this point* onwards, he had developed a close relationship with Aluko and following the death of his own father, looked to Aluko for all his needs and advice. His 'father' (for such he called Aluko) had especially helped him in 1969 when his wife had left him for another man then living at Apapa: Aluko had arranged for Duro to be married to another Ijebu girl and provided him with the necessary finances too.

Kelations between them had become strained when Duro began to move v/ith Eweje, an army officer with substantial means of dubious origin, a fact of v/hich Eweje himself v/as quite open. Aluko objected to the association, and shortly after I met him he commented "I have treated Duro as my very own son; it is as if I have been a father to him for so many years. But when I tell him this life (i.e. his relationship v/ith Eweje) is not good for his health or his interests, he ignores my pleas and associates with these wasteful people (Eweje and his brother). He is only a young boy and should be saving for his sons, not looking for night-time entertainment and getting drunk in Lagos.* In fact the friendship developed further, and as a sign of their being urban 'brothers', Eweje bought cloths and had them made up into matching suits when Duro accompanied him to parties in Lagos. He also encouraged Duro's attempted reconciliation v/ith his first wife whom he v/as trying to persuade to return to Agege. Again Aluko objected strongly to this suggestion which he considered to be inspired by Eweje.

One evening, accompanied by Kunle, a local musician, Duro tried to persuade Eweje to spend the evening in a popular Lagos night-club. £weje had first refused since he had been dreaming that his enemies

were trying to kill him by poison; for tv/o v/eeks only his first v/ife had boon preparing his food and he had scarcely left his house. He finally capitulated and the evening v/as spent drinking around Lagos. Whilst driving home in the early morning, their vehicle crashed into a truck: Eweje*s brother died immediately, his wife v/as badly cut, and Duro, though at first thought only to be knocked unconscious, died three days later of brain damage.

The morning following the accident, the nev/s spread quickly throughout the neighbourhood, and Aluko*s compound v/as filled with visitors. On hearing the news, he travelled to Lagos but returned soon afterwards on being told that Duro v/as only concussed: during the next three days he regularly rode to the hospital and cared for Duro's v/ife and child* It v/as accepted by all concerned that such responsibility lay v/ith Aluko as Duro's 'father', but on hearing of his death the distribution of authority changed quickly-

When Aluko arrived on the third morning to find his son dead, he asked that he should be allowed to carry the body home to Agege: despite several hours attempting to move up the bureaucratic hierarchy he had no success. The police claimed they had not established who was driving the vehicle and told him to return about three days later. When he returned to Agege and informed his brother of the circumstances, Ladipo assumed complete responsibility and, since as a transporter his relationship v/ith leading police officials in Lagos were close, within a few hours Duro's body v/as carried back to Agege. The next stage, informing other kinsmen and making preparation for the funeral, v/ere equally in Ladipo's control. The following day, his car v/as sent to Duro's village and his mother v/as carried to Agege v/here she took up residence in Ladipo's house. It v/as decided that the burial would take place the next day without any of the extended ceremony v/hich customarily follows the death of an older man: Ladipo's buses v/ere sent to the village in order to
carry the relatives to Agege in time. The funeral procession comprised some eighty or so relatives v/ho walked from Ladipo's house to the nearby burial ground. News of its timing had been circulated but, v/ith the exception of a handful of young men from the neighbourhood, most acquaintances watched as the procession moved past their doors. The ceremony v/as short and terse with none of the ritual and extended speechmaking common to the funeral ceremonies of older men. Though relatives were provided v/ith food in Ladipo* a house, v/ith the exception of the mother, they returned home the same day.

This concluded the most striking events surrounding the young man's death, and immediately Aluko resumed control of subsequent proceedings, especially concerning Duro's wife and child and his possessions. With Aluko's encouragement she determined to move to the house of her senior sister, a petty trader living on the other side of the town. Duro's possessions, hov/ever, remained for the time being v/ith Aluko.

The sequel to the crisis, hov/ever, was also v/orthy of note. The events described above attracted much interest in the neighbourhood and the part played by Duro's relatives was widely discussed.
On the second evening' after the funeral *I recorded the following* in Aluko*s compound. A contractor from a neighbouring house arrived saying that he had just arrived from a week-long business trip in Abeokuta and on hearing of Duro's death wished to offer his condolences, he offered the suitable prayers for the dead man to which those assembled added "Araens[11], before conversing generally on the hazards of Lagos life. Aluko then sent for Duro's wife and the contractor gave her ten

shillings for which Aluko thanked him before describing in some detail the events of the previous few days.
On hearing of the arrangements made by Ladipo for the burial, the contractor commented "Yes, in times of trouble like this, it is always important to have a Big Man in one's family in order to ease the trouble. Where one is without power then nothing can be done, but you and your kinsmen are fortunate. Ladipo is a man v/ho accepts his obligations to his people and does not put them aside as so many Big Men do nowadays.”

Adeleke, a young factory worker living in Aluko's house interjected: "Indeed, you have spoken the truth, for what could anyone have done v/ithout the influence of Ladipo under these circumstances? Our father (indicating to Aluko) treated Duro well when he was alive.
It is good to have relatives in a place like Lagos, who do not ignore the needs of their people. Thanks be to God for Ladipo[1]s help in these matters." After discoursing a little longer in the same vein, the contractor excused himself and the small group of tenants listening to the conversation retired to bed.

As this abbreviated account shows, events surrounding the death of Duro were primarily contained within the circle of close kinship; the involvement of non-kinsmen v/as negligible being limited to small donations from local well-wishers acquainted with Duro, his wife or Aluko. A few migrants are abroad in Lagos without a circle of kinsmen on whom they or their dependents can count in circumstances of need, the contribution which is made to other relatives' welfare and needs becomes an all important source whereby outsiders can judge the character of participants. Big Men and small. A successful man’s character is in the first instance determined by the extent to v/hich he is seen to concern himself about kinsmens' requirements, particularly when, as comments in the above account show, it is assumed that success and influence often lead to withdrawal from such relationships, notably in the case of members of the national elite concentrated in the prestigious suburbs of Lagos or Ibadan.

But with locally-based Big Men as much as with anyone else, acknowledging family and lineage obligations is subject to certain

expedients: if a man is temporarily insecure then that has to be taken into account» That Ladipo did not house kinsmen I imagined at first would be frowned upon, for I had heard several diatribes directed against certain individuals for doing likewise on the grounds that they were "getting above their station." Yet most people, kinsmen and non~kinsmen alike, defended this action on the grounds that Ladipo could not otherwise entertain correctly and with dignity his influential guests; a host of curious young dependents staring at national dignatories would be intolerable. And anyway, neighbours argued, Aluko and his brother the transporter, also living in the neighbourhood and of roughly Aluko*s standing, were as capable as Ladipo of accommodating kinsmen common to all three« Being involved 111 major crisis situations in which the influence of a Big Man v/as most clearly required was a far more important consideration and, as the account shows, an event to which Ladipo responded v/ith alacrity and efficacy.

This acknowledgment plus the manner in which Ladipo assumed control over affairs following Aluko's inability to control events illustrates . the key factor defining the truly Rig Kan, namely his ability to move freely in a diverse range of social spheres from which the average Agege dweller is automatically debarred* In effect the Big Man is capable of moving and wielding influence in the highest as v/ell as the most humble environments, a feature perhaps best illustrated symbolically by his being in possession of the only telephone in the neighbourhood, one of only a handful in the whole town.

Wealth alone is certainly a necessary prerequisite for gaining access to those in positions of higher influence: the use of bribery is often the only way of entering the corridors of power. But it remains a slow and arduous, and not necessarily successful, procedure. Wealth plus personal contacts is of a different order: having established a personalized relationship at the head of one bureaucratic order immeasurably eases lateral contacts v/ith others since the netv/ork is tight and intimate. Such was the position v/hich I. adipo had achieved, and one presumes that he mobilized• such contacts at this time. Of the precise manner in which he manipulated

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thern I v/as unaware in this particular circumstance - but nor v/as anyone else, including Aluko his brother. Nevertheless, the contacts v/ere made and v/ere seen to prove effective v/hich is what counts; in

cutting through the bureaucratic machine he had reinforced his high standing in a most striking fashion. Though a member of a neighbourhood comprising for the most part men lacking in wealth, standing and influence, he could v/ith ease reach the 'Lagos Big Guns' for he was their equal too.

Of course the key illustration of this connecting function of the Big Man between locality or community and the wider society lies in the realms of party political activity. One can only admit here that the critical dimension to the analysis is missing since I v/as in the field at the time of military rule: politics, but not party politics, v/as of course continuing though it v/as an inaccessible area of activity. Only official information v/as forthcoming and there was no 'opposition* dimension, invariably a major source of important information for the field anthropologist. I can but add that Ladipo *had* been incorporated as a representative of Agege township by the sole administrator at Ikeja, and as such can be assumed to have continued to represent the interests of the community towards those in power.

I have concentrated somewhat excessively on the status of the Big Man in Agege township. But his contribution is crucial and his influence all-pervasive in such a way that to do it justice would require more space than can be given here. One final point requires developing. As noted above, the successful and wealthy man is acknowledged to have pressing commitments on his resources like any other urban dweller; and though he is expected to help others in moving upwards to his own high standing, the circle of people with reasonable expectations of receiving such help is increasingly diminishing. Today the circle is exclusive of non-kinsmen both in reality and in terms of others* expectations. The various reasons v/hy this should be so have been outlined in the previous chapter. Again Ladipo is a convenient illustration of this narrowing circle of dependents to whom patronage is accorded. With a large family
of his own, hie expenditure on secondary school fees v/as considerable, and he anticipated educating both his sons and daughters to as high a level as possible - preferably university for his sons in particular - and secretarial or nursing qualifications for his daughters- (He also contributed to a general fund for the education of fellow-villagers[1] children in secondary school and one youth currently at university.) Furthermore, following the completion 01 his senior sister's son's training as supervisor in his transport business, he was expected to

aid him financially in the purchase of his own vehicles$_u$ Since these commitments v/ere known in the neighbourhood, most acquaintances considered that Ladipo v/as in effect fulfilling his obligations quite handsomely, and a persistent comment was made on the lines: “Even the Big Man today must look after his own
people (i.e. his kinsmen) alone for costs of all things are too high."

Finally, to summarize the implications of these considerations for the factory worker. First, the economic standing of most wage-earners is low generally speaking and they are little differentiated from the majority of the urban poor: despite the fact that many young migrants have high hopes of advancement from factory v/ork these are quickly dissipated by the realities of urban life. Secondly, the status of the wage-earning role is also low and allows none of the attributes v/hich the Yoruba perceive as worthy in other urban occupations: factory employment lacks intrinsic interest, prohibits social intercourse, stultifies any notion of individuality and is frequently highly authoritarian. Third, (as described in chapter 7)1 the potential for individual mobility is slight indeed and whatever skills are acquired are generally not transferable beyond the factory floor. And fourthly, though unions do win wage awards through collective bargaining and collective action, such increments do not raise real wage levels by any truly appreciable amount: essentially it is a static condition.

An entire career of wage-earning would thus disqualify the individual from the top-most reaches of wealth and prestige, and indeed, most of the middle ranges too. Under such circumstances, the predominantly instrumental view which young migrants have towards v/age-employment

is understandable. The attractions of entrepreneurship, even at the lower reaches of the hierarchy are considerable indeed, ond so workers see the factory as a source of capital accumulation for the ultimate ambition of self-employment.,

As outlined above, alternatives to such a strategy involving several years in wage-employment, are slight indeed. Unless the worker has access to a wealthy and benevolent kinsman, he is unlikely to receive substantial or sufficient .financial support: unless he is prepared to risk the possibility of early failure in entrepreneurship, he must adapt a style of life and acquire a network of social relationships which are most suitable to saving. This becomes all the more [an] extended strategy in view of low minimum wage rates and rapid inflation in urban costs of living* Such strategies are the subject of the next chapter which concerns the second field of social relationships in which the wage-earner is involved, namely the urban brotherhood*

KPUCKS TO CHAPTER 3

1. valdo Pons, (1969)i op. cit., p. 132.

2. P. Clement, (1956), "Social Patterns of Urban Life, in j). Porde, (ed.), Social Implications of Industrialization and Ur ban la a ti on in Africa South of the Sahara. Quo t e cl b y Pons, (1969) p.131*

j>„ An exception is the Surulore estate in Lagos analyzed by Peter i-iarris, (1961), *Family* and Social Change in ah African City, ch.o.

Ac L* Epstein, (1961), "The hetv/ork and Urban Social Organisation," £hodes-Llvin;';stone Journal, no .29

5. This is suggested by Giovanni Arrighi and John Saul, 196?, "Socialism and Economic Development in Tropical Africa," Journal of Modern African Studies, vol. o., no. 2,

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CKAPTKK *k*
ETHNIC ORGANIZATION AND UR3AN ADAPTATION

Membership of the ethnic brotherhood, those relations based on membership of the same Yoruba political kingdom, is, for most workers, the major field of continuous on-going primary relationships. The ethnic brotherhood is spread throughout the township and is one of the ways in which neighbourhood merges into the *wider* locality.

This is why in the previous chapter I did not discuss the neighbourhood relationship of factory workers: they are more appropriately considered in the context of the community-wide urban brotherhood since this constitutes a major unit of urban social organization v/hich is of prime significance for the young migrant. I have suggested how, in the neighbourhood, the prestige system of the township is illustrated: social differentiation there structures the worker*s perceptions of what courses h'e must follow if he is to attain the top-most reaches of wealth and status. His membership of the urban brotherhood is to be seen in this light, he has to adapt his membership of the urban brotherhood to his overall strategy of capital accumulation v/ithin the factory.

Though wage-earners face much the same problems of adaptation to the obligations they have to others, the precise structure of ties at Agege between members of the same area of crigin varies considerably. It depends on a number of diverse influences, the size of the migrant population, its time of arrival (whether over several decades or a more recent development), the span of its origin (whether drawn from urban settlements or village ones), and its composition in terms of current resources (whether it contains influential men or virtually all young migrants, *whether* it includes independent men or only wage- earners, v/hether some members have particular skills or are relatively undifferentiated among themselves.)

In the most general terms, many such variations can be included along a continuum. At the one extreme are those ethnic units based essentially on kinship ties and inclusive of only a small number of non-kinsmen. V/here inclusion is kinship dominated, this tends to occur v/here recruitment occurs from a limited geographical area, the pattern of identification between members is clear, and v/ithin the

group are contained considerable resources v/hich cater for the principle demands of its members. It becomes a tight-knit exclusive group and can well accommodate new arrivals. An illustration of such a unit is the Ijebu village group described in the previous chapter. All members traced their descent to a common ancestor and lineage connections between members were short.
It contained several- influential men who v/ere able to employ or find employment for new arrivals whose migration it controlled by virtue of close involvement v/ith those wielding influence in their place of origin.

Towards the middle of the continuum is the most common loosely co-ordinated and organized urban ethnic unit. Members are recruited from a particular political kingdom and may 'enter the modern urban arena through a range of interpersonal connections in a fairly uncontrolled fashion: for ex&mple Egba Yoruba may enter Agege through innumerable routes whilst in the case of Ondo and Oyo migrants there are only one or tv/o such avenues. There is no coordinated pattern of recruitment and existing members can only aid new arrivals in limited ways, particularly by providing them v/ith accommodation: for other vital requirements such as finding work,
the individual has often to look outside his ethnic unit. V/ithin such units there are a number of kinship links but these shade gradually into intimate ties based on urban brotherhood. Interpersonal relations here fluctuate considerably over time and the ideology of brotherhood rather than clearly defined kinship relations is used to order interaction between members. Since this, or a variation on it, is the most common ethnic unit structure, I deal v/ith this in detail below by way of a case-study.

At the other extreme of the spectrum are those relationships based on supertribal identification betv/een members. This is the instance of particularly non-Yoruba migrants living at Agege. These are the out-groups in a predominantly Yoruba urban environment and this feature applies to tribesmen from especially the old Eastern Region, Ibo, Ibibio, Igbirra, Like the Yoruba, these too are deeply divided in cultural terms in their area of origin and the overarching unity ascribed to them is a conseouence of colonial rule. In the modern urban situation, where they are emphatically 'strangers', their exceedingly limited urban resources require identification and association on supertribal lines, regardless of division or area of origin* At this extreme, migration to Agege has been highly individualistic as has their adaptation to latter day urban conditions. Kinship relations here play

little part. Personal relationships have been established in an exceedingly ad hoc fashion by comparison v/ith the more structured integration of Yoruba migrants. Individuals have initially found employment and accommodation *by- reference* to only one or tv/o others, occasionally quite alone, and then established personal networks of limited range through chance contacts or perhaps in the workplace. The nature of such supertribal interpersonal relationships are further discussed v/ith reference to the Ibo network in the next chapter.

Since most Agege wage-earners are drawn from the major Yoruba political kingdoms and do not have influential kinsmen on whom they can roly for the vast majority of their urban requirements, the urban brotherhoods to which they belong fall somewhere between the tv/o extremes. Through such brotherhoods newcomers are integrated into the urban community, a process which has been oft-noted elsewhere and is commonly referred to as 'incapsulation,[1] The most extreme form of incapsulation in other urban areas takes the form of full integration into ethnic colonies where members of the same area of origin comprise their own distinct community v/ithin the urban location as in the case of the Red Xhosa of East London, the Lokele of Stanleyville^ or the Hausa of Ibadan. But, despite the fact that migrant wage-earners at Agege identify closely with others from the same political kingdom and move v/ith them regularly, they do not reside on this basis in ethnic colonies or ethnic communities. On the contrary, despite the fact that the primary networks of individual migrants customarily include friends from their own political kingdoms more than any other, migrant members of such kingdoms reside in a highly dispersed fashion throughout the town. Kor can the members of an ethnic brotherhood be described as a classificatory quasi-group if by that one means an entity without a "recognisable structure, but whose members have certain interests or modes of behaviour in common which may at any

time lead them to form themselves into definite groups.[vJ] This last requirement is not met: for reasons outlined below the members of the same kingdom do not come together in substantial numbers into "definite groups." This being the case I use the neutral-sounding term ethnic unit to describe those members drawn from the same political kingdom. This still leaves the problem however as to why this dispersed settlement pattern occurs when association with members of one's ethnic unit is crucial to urban survival. Theoretically it is possible for members to congregate together: the Hausa at Agege do so, though not I *suspect* to the *same* degree *e.s* those at Ibadan. Again, it seems to me that this can be reasonably explained in terms of wage-earners[1] overall strategy of urban adaptation and the ultimate ambition of becoming an entrepreneur. The more extreme forms of incapsulation would be inimical to such long term intentions. I will try to illustrate this by first providing an ideal-typical outline of the individual's integration into the ethnic unit and the issues which this raises, and then present a detailed account of the members of one such unit to show how these issues are being resolved.

Hosts and Guests

Few migrants arrive at Agege unannounced or uninvited. Most travel with an urban migrant returning after a visit home or have been sent for by post or word of mouth. Apart from this interpersonal contact, migrants are likely to know other Agege residents either personally or by reputation. So even migrants have a range of relationships already in existence:

from these they must select their first supporters and their choices become increasingly selective over time, tempered by experience.

The new arrival has certain legitimate expectations of his host and the latter's close acquaintances. If the host is a sibling or close kinsman, these are relatively clear-cut: if not they have to be established over time. Carrying a letter or bearing a sum of money from a senior kinsman is a common occurrence. Frequently such letters read

similarly to job applications and could be taken to be so if they

v/ere not also illed v/ith exhortations to behave in a brotherly

fashion to the migrant. The parallel is nevertheless an apt one, for migrant and host are entering into a contractual relationship of a type; the relationship is not, and cannot, be governed by solely ascriptive ties, and the more the relationship is extended, the more is emphasis placed on the achievements of both members of the dyadic relationship.

Hosts are expected to put their guests in contact with potential employers, inform them of the ways of tiie town, widen their field of acquaintances in addition to satisfying their everyday needs. On the other side,, once he has found his feet, the new arrival is expected to make notable efforts to secure employment on his own account by visiting the local labour exchange, waiting outside the factory gates where casual daily labourers are taken on, or simply following up the remotest possibility of v/ork heard of casually.

This invariably occurs even though an experienced urban host knows well that such measures are ineffectual in the extreme by comparison v/ith the customary route of using contacts inside the factory and bribing personnel managers to employ an acquaintance. In effect, such performance by the new migrant is a rite de -passage into the urban brotherhood, a sequence of acts whereby he legitimates his social standing towards a widening network of urban peers rather tha involvement in truly effective strategies of gaining employment.

Only after he has passed through such a rite is he likely to encount er the more realistic and expensive strategy of his fellows approach ing influential members of their own factories to employ him as a permanent member of the labour force.

This then is a 'vetting' process of considerable importance to ensure that scarce resources possessed by the urban brotherhood are not squandered unnecessarily. The peak of incorporation into the brotherhood is reached at the point of gaining employment. By then the host and his closest friends have committed the maximum resources necessary to ensure the security of the new member. But at this point the nature of his involvement switches against him, so to speak. He is now expected to perform likewise for subsequent arrivals. His debt is financial, social, moral and' inescapable for

he is likely to still be living with those to whom he owes most.

He has been offered the resources of the ethnic brotherhood and acknowledged its ideological unity in encouraging it by his own contribution, even as debtor.

From this point onwards, the individual is faced with a series of

essentially irreconcilable demands on his resources, and finding a balance between these becomes an absolute priority. They are diverse: repayment of the outlay on his securing a post, ’gifts’ in acknowledgment of previous expenditures on accommodation, food and clothing, and subsequently increasing expectations, not only that he will aid newcomers in like fashion in the urban arena, but will also acknowledge those expectations arising in the home town. Horne-based kinsmen temporarily suspend expectations of some material return on their investments in the education (either at school or in an apprenticeship) of a favoured son newly migrated to the urban arena; once the son has achieved the status of industrial worker, such expectations begin to materialize in the form of ’demands’ for contributions to the craft apprenticeship of a sibling v/ho has been passed over in favour of the migrant entering secondary school or one whose time for education has new come. Urban and rural pressures run together irreconcilably. In addition, the relative security of fulltime industrial employment allows the individual to consider marriage (v/hich in itself may satiate certain pressures emanating from the rural area.) More critically, however, and in direct opposition to all of these, the worker ostensibly now has the opportunity to save in 02'der to further his ultimate aim of private entrepreneurship.

But in order to do so, he must devise his personal response to the multiplicity of demands on already scarce resources.

This then is a brief ideal-typical outline of the progress of a worker during the course of his urban experience. Clearly no tv/o individuals are subject to the same demands nor face the same conflicts of interest. Nor do they devise the same adaptive strategies in response to such demands. For precisely these reasons, v/hilst there are certain generally accepted norms of urban behaviour tov/ards fellow members of the ethnic unit, there is also considerable latitude of in ter pre tat ion v/hich members need explore and exploit. It is such latitude and built-in flexibility v/hich keeps the experience of ethnic unit membership and its loose underlying ideology relevant to its members. An over-rigid definition of the expectations directed towards the individual and the fuller development of appropriate mechanisms of social control would quickly herald the end of ethnic identification on present lines. In the face of the diversity of their resources and private ambitions, members would look elsewhere for satisfaction of their essential requirements.

The very looseness of the ethnic unit allows it best to meet the demands made upon it by its component members. This is not to imply that the

structure of the unit and the form which its ideology takes is stable; on the contrary, as illustrated below, particular individuals by their own adaptive strategies are not only shaping their own destinies but engaging in novel responses to ethnic unit membership v/hich, one surmises, may be substantially followed by others; and since similar adaptations are being undertaken by members of other ethnic units, this ongoing process has considerable implications for the structure of Agege community as a whole.

Emphasis must, then, be laid on the coiidition of flux of the ethnic unit as a result of individuals redefining their relationships with other members. Structural change is taking place through the actions of individuals attempting to maximise their personal gain at the expense of others and thus conserve their own resources for their longer term strategies of economic and social mobility. But in doing so such individuals are also developing new urban roles and urban statuses v/hich can equally suit the demands of others in the future. The deviant of today becomes the norm of tomorrow. Such changes as are occurring need to be set in historical perspective, and this I do by reference to the structure of Agege dwellers drawn from the political kingdom of Ondo. This is a relatively small ethnic unit and so it is easier to see how changes in the unit have occurred over time. Such a view would be more difficult and complex if Abeokuta or Ilaro migrants v/ere selected, but similar regularities of change within the unit would, I suspect, be discernible. The case-study does, hov/ever illustrate the major issues of control, consensus and conflict facing all such ethnic groupings.

Ondo People

Ondo is the most south-eastern of all Yoruba political kingdoms, and is centred on the capital Ode Ondo v/hich in the early 19o0‘s had a sociological population of about ?5,0Q0.^ The myths of origin important to all Yoruba arc of particular moment in the case of Ondo since it links them exceptionally closely to the original home of all Yoruba people, lie Ife, only 40 miles distant from Ode Ondo. The Ondo myths relate that Oduduv/a, the progenitor of all men, fathered twins who fled from lie Ife v/ith their mother. Though one died at nearby Spe, the other reached Ode Ondo and became its first raler.

The present Qsemawe, the Oba of Ondo, thus is a sacred ruler able to trace his origin through Airo, the first ruler, to Oduduv/a himself. Subsequent developments have added to the sense of pride and distinct-iveness, especially their high attachment to Christianity and Western

education, the wealth based on cocoa cultivation and the emergence of influential political figures at the time of Independence.

Though Ondo people almost certainly resided at Agege in earlier times, the effective growth of the ethnic unit can be traced to the influence of one Sanu (now dead) v/ho, having resided at Agege for several years as a secondary school headmaster, determined to build a new house in the town in the late 195^'ˢ* ^ popular man with high prestige, his decision to employ Ondo men for this task v/as viewed as a piece of generous patronage; for two months he employed six Ondo men recruited at his home tov/n, and provided them with food and *lodging throughout*. When the job was completed he paid them .-.ISO v/hich they divided between themselves according to skill and age. Four of these, Obi, Jose, Ake and Ilaka determined to stay on at Agege using their share of Sanuᵀs payment to establish themselves as builders, working either independently or on joint contracts.

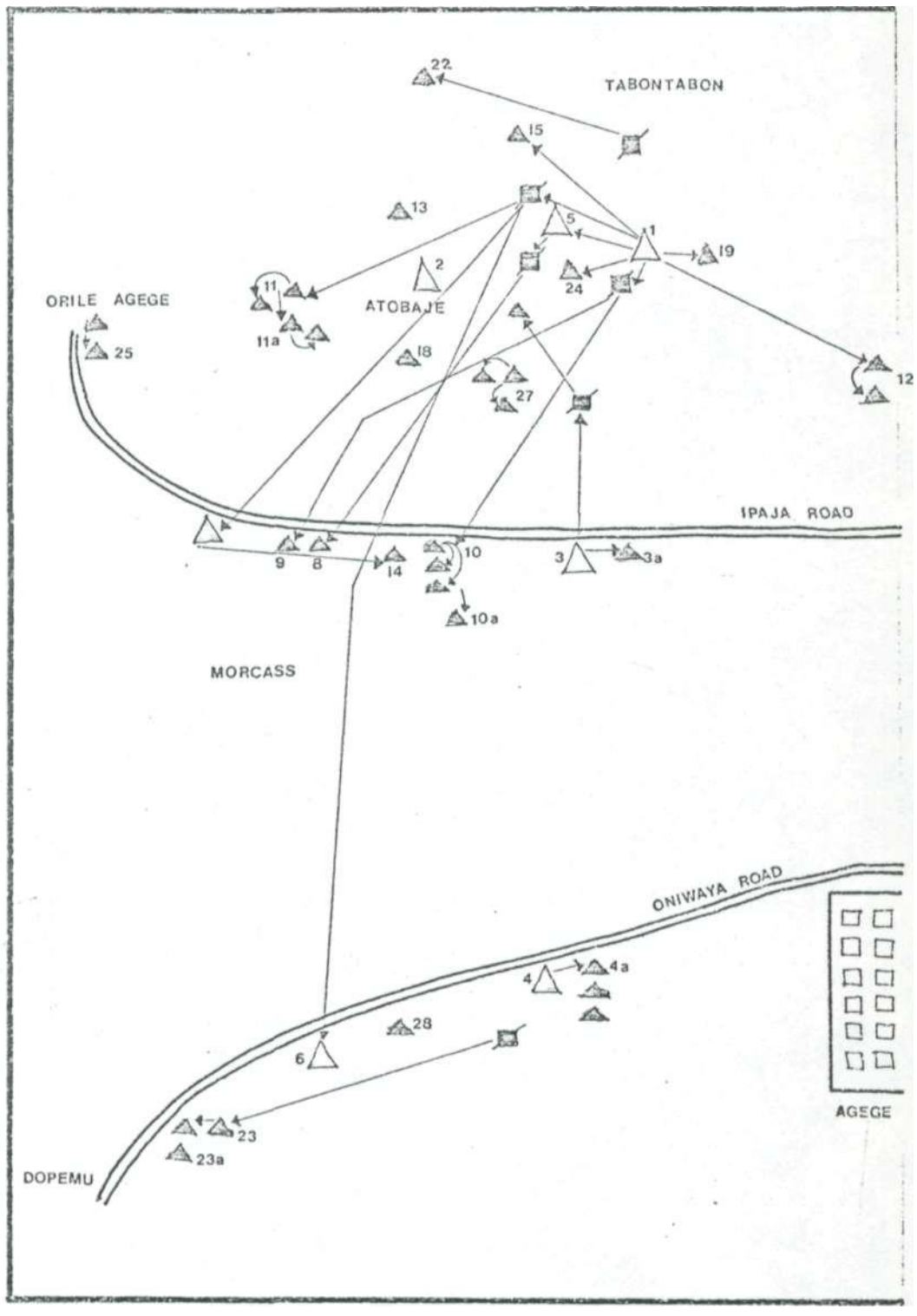
These men are currently Elders of the Ondo people at Agege- The back-ground of these men is important - all were the sons of illiterate farmers and were themselves illiterate. All had farmed briefly before undergoing apprenticeships in their respective trades, but none had been successful at Ondo. All were from polygamous families v/ith no literate members, the majority of their siblings being farmers on lineage land. The experiences of Obi a bricklayer recruited by Sanu and currently acknowledged as the leading Elder, is fairly typical. The fourth child of his father’s first wife, he had worked on his father's land for eleven years before becoming an apprentice bricklayer in Ode Ondo. But during some seventeen years, Obi had had little success. When in his late 30’s he came to Agege and received his share from Sanu's payment, his capital on hand was greater than ever before. He saw his arrival at Agege in retrospect as a combination of 'fate' and a 'generous master' (i.e. Sanu) for he nov; has a building in his lineage quarter at Ode Ondo and is educating his two sons in secondary school. Obi prospered at Agege in such a way as would have appeared unlikely had he remained at Ondo: the same seems true of Jose, Ake and Ilaka who arrived with him. Tv/o other men, currently ranked as Elders, Jadono and Ariyo entered Agege by different routes and have roughly the same socio-economic status as the others.

Sanu's house was constructed not in Agege township proper but in the area known as Tabontabon which was in the late 195°'s a small village slightly apart from the town, though today it is a neighbourhood of

Agege. As can be seen from diagram 1 v/hich plots the various residences of Ondo men in Agege, Tabontabon remains a fairly dense concentration of Ondo people today, but it has had an even denser concentration in the past for as young Ondo men arrived in the town throughout the 1960's, they initially resided here due to the presence of Obi, Ake and Jose, the senior men of the unit.

Over the past three or four years, such young men have moved away from Tabontabon and established themselves in independent households. The role of the Tabontabon settlement has then been as a filter into the wider township. For example, as the diagram rather crudely illustrates, Obi's household (1) has spawned households 151 24, 19? 10, 9 and 12 either directly or indirectly, whilst Jose’s household (29 - v/hich v/as until very recently in Tabontabon and not the present location) has spawned households 6, 12, 11, 11a and V+. (Where Na is indicated this means a separate household but in the same building).

A further point requires note: the diagram is incomplete since certain



ONDO PEOPLE AT AGEGE.

1 - MOBILITY WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP.

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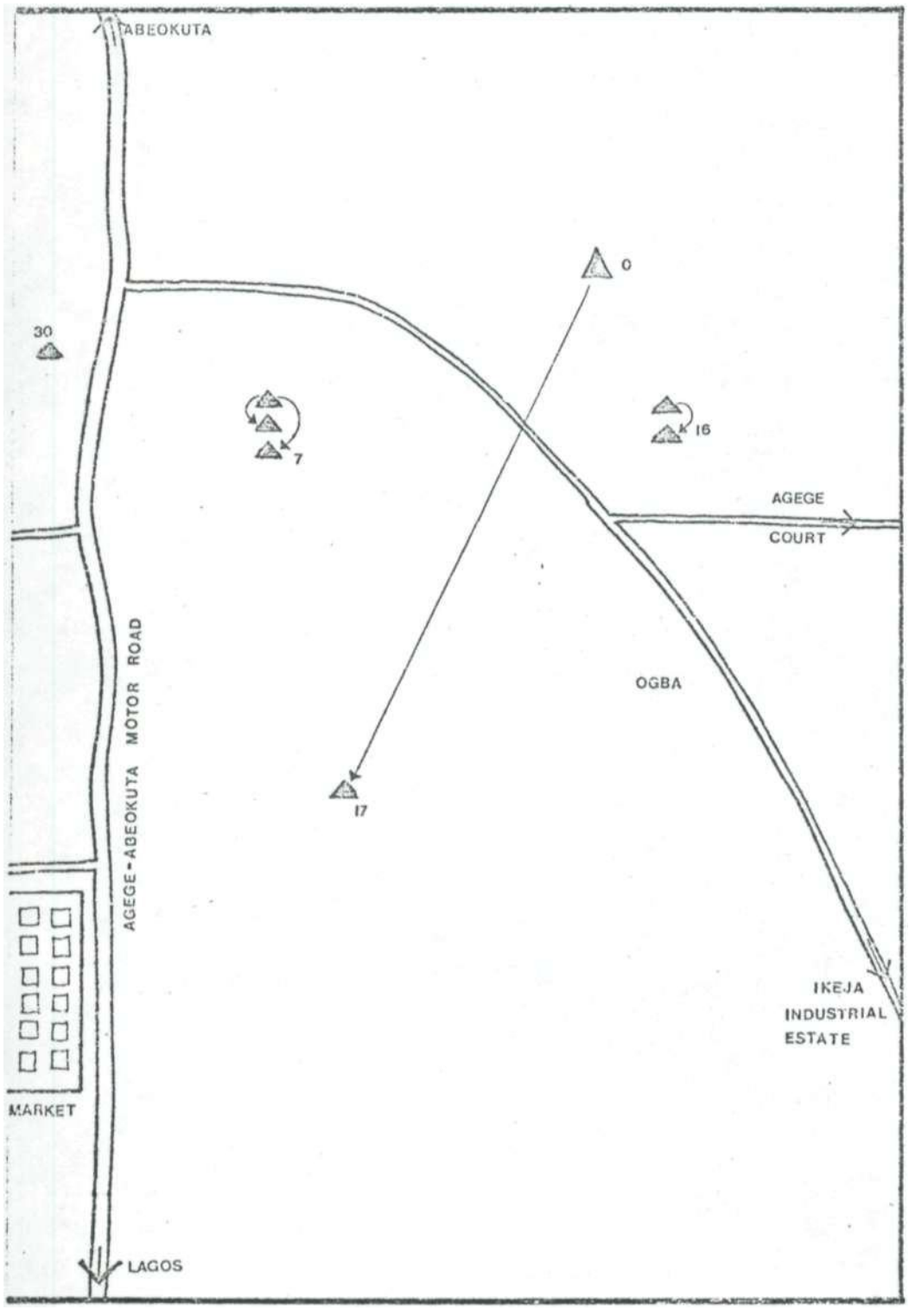

KEY

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A YOUTH.

DEFUNCT HOUSEHOLDS.

___ s. MOVEMENT BETWEEN HOUSEHOLDS.

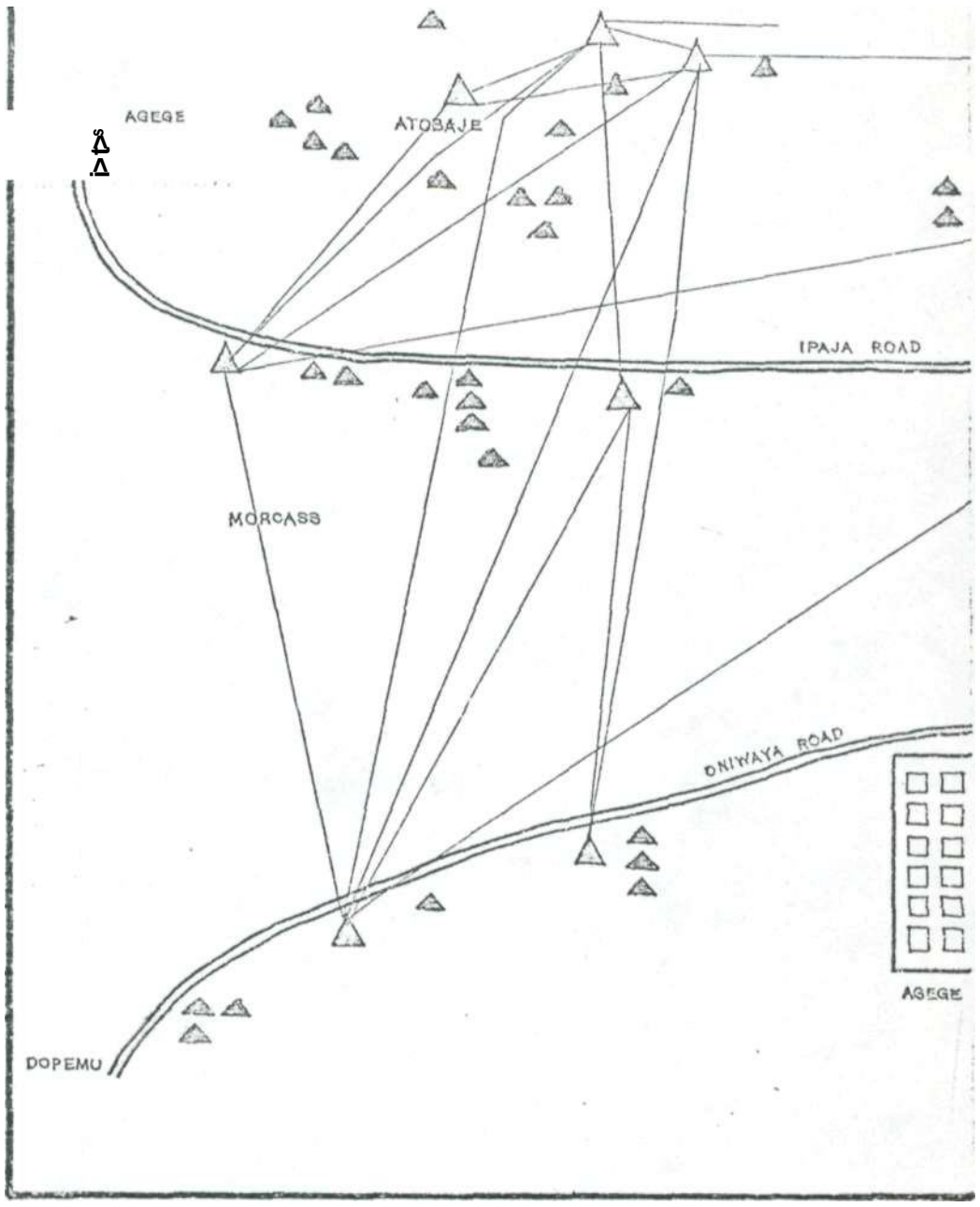
fission residences from those of the Elders are now defunct as a result of their heads moving on to Ikeja, a Lagos suburb, or in

several instances back to Ondo. I was unable to trace such movements properly and so have omitted them; this means that the influence of certain Elders is heavily understated. In the case of the Jadono and Ariyo residences one sees now only 3a and *ha* having developed whilst in fact another six could be added. The diagram is, of course, only illustrative but it does point to the influence of the Elders as an initial centre for migrating youths; to repeat, the process of household fission by young men is a recent phenomenon of considerable significance.

Diagrams 2 and 3 simply outline the primary network relationships of Elders and young men respectively. The strength of the relationships are based primarily on each individual’s reciprocated choice of personal friends supplemented by more detailed qualitative material on ego-centred social networks and changing friendship *patterns over* time. The most obvious feature to merge is the high degree of association between Ondo people as a whole despite their highly dispersed nature; notwithstanding the wide range cf opportunities for making new acquaintances in the neighbourhood or the factory, Ondo people voluntarily opt for close ongoing association with their own people. Only three young men stand apart from the high degree of integration which this indicates (I3i 2o and 17)'* two have less than six months residence in the town and retained close contact v/ith Ondo people in Lagos, from whence they migrated,and the third, a wage-earner of two years standing, preferred the company of several Ondo workers at Ikeja.

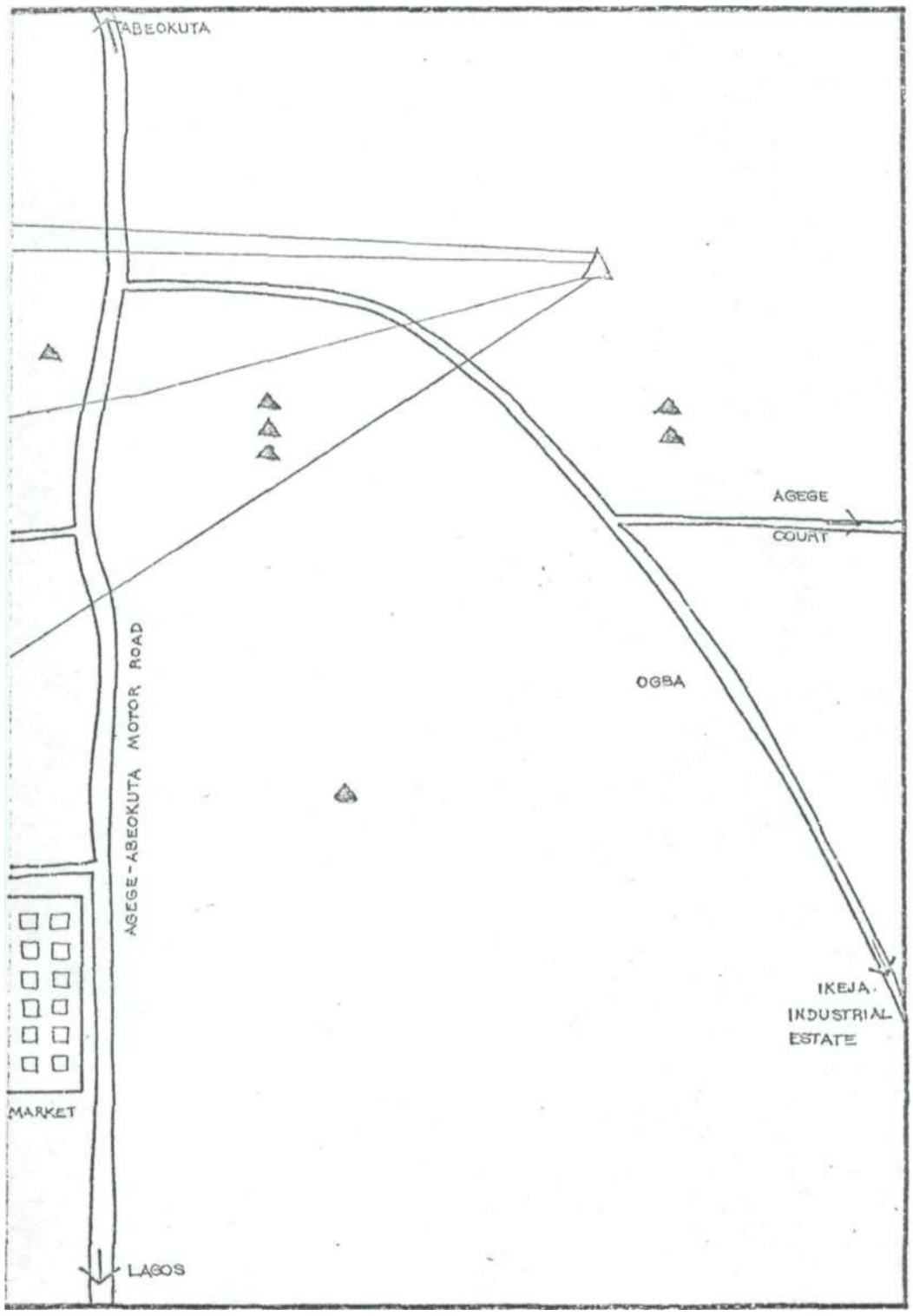
Secondly, there is a striking contrast between the Elders' primary relationships and those of younger men v/hich reflects the geronto-cratic structure of the ethnic unit. Only on the rare occasion do the two overlap. For the most part Elders associate v/ith Elders and young men with their ov/n peers.

Third, one can also note what appear as ’independent outposts’ (for example locations 23/23a, ^a and 7) and so they arc actually viewed by the individuals themselves. These households are based on siblings



ONDO PEOPLE AT AGEGE.

2 - PRIMARY NETWORKS OF ELDERS.



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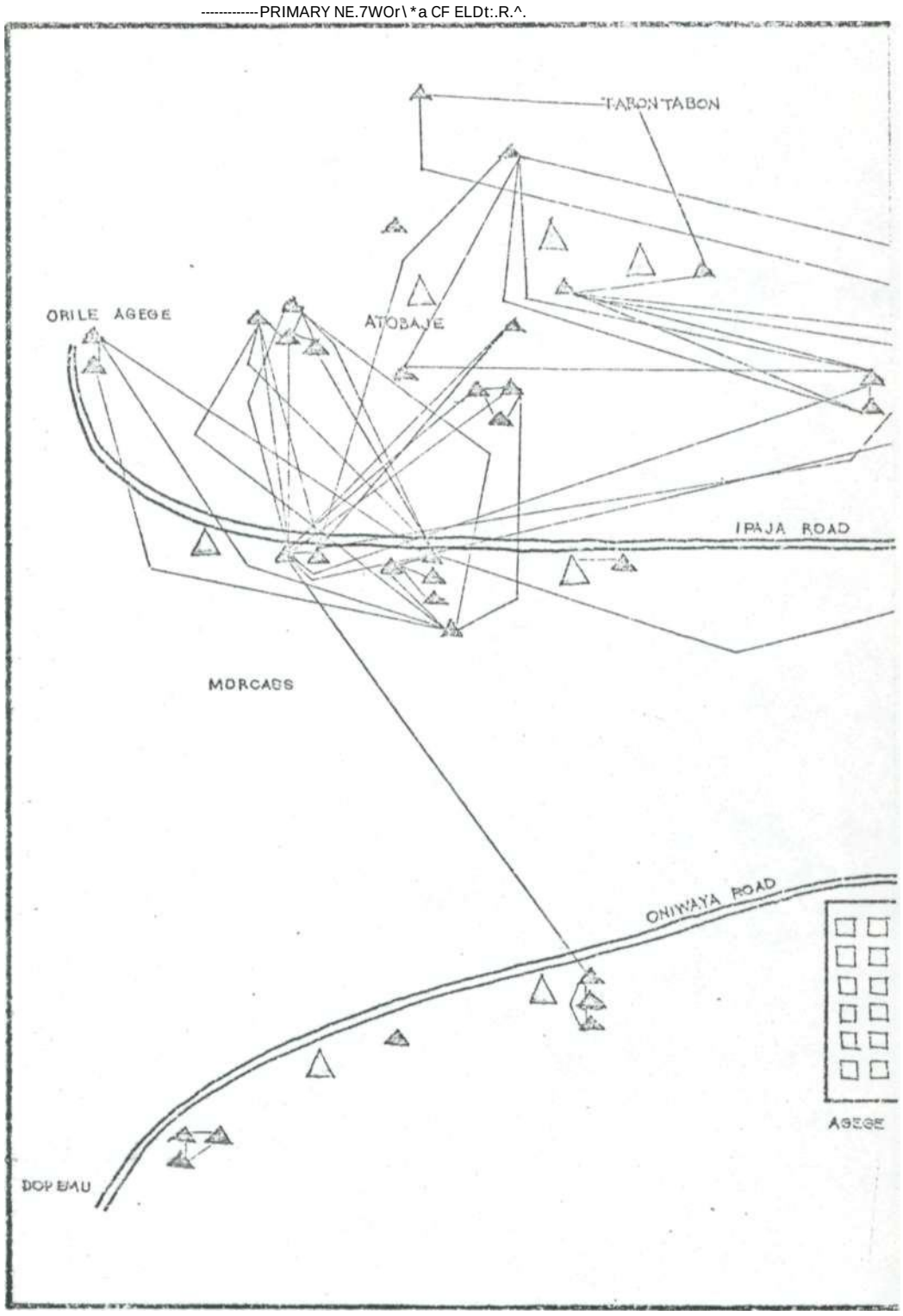
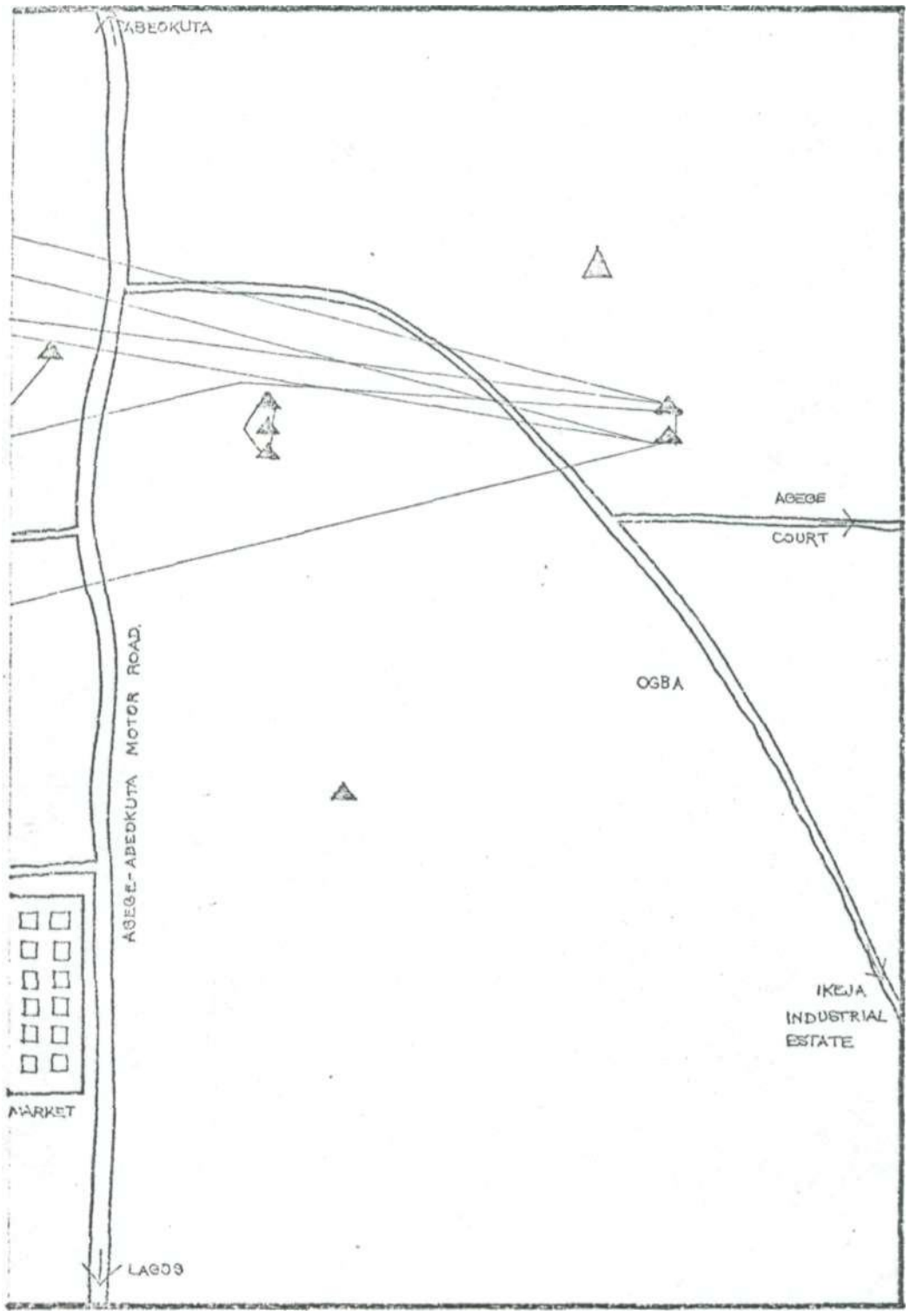


ONDO PEOPLE AT AQEGE.

3- PRIMARY NETWORKS OF YOUNG MEN.



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and have limited involvement with others. In fact, such smaller units constitute a variant on the process of individualization described subsequently; but at the same time reciprocal relationships between siblings can be most clearly and explicitly established thus avoiding other tensions between urban brothers.

I cannot here discuss the relative backgrounds and merits of each Ondo Elder, but Tables 1 and 2 give the most important details.

TABLE 1 EFFECTIVE CiiDO ELDERS

Name	Age	Years at Agege	Occupation	Marital Status	Education	Dependents	Locatio i
Obi	53	13	Builder	2 wives 2 children	None	4- males	1
Ariyo	51	11	*F.* V/ork er	1 wife 3 children	Class *k*	3 males *h* females	3
Jadono	50	15	Technician	1 v/ife 3 children	Standard 6	3 males	*k*
Ake	^8	13	Carpenter	1 wife	None	None	5
Jose	52	13	Carpenter	1 wife	None	Hone	29

Acknowledgement of being an effective Elder does not rest entirely on age (the average is 51 years), but on urban experience (ail average of 13 years) and on an expertise which has several components - a range of connections for finding work for others, knowing the important channels in v/hich influence can be wielded, the facility for exercising social control, or in more general terms, "knowing the ways of the town," For present purposes, Obi can be taken'to exemplify what is (ideally) expected of an Elder. As a first arrival in the town, many young men had either passed through his household or associated v/ith him frequently over time at Tabontabon; he'had, as people often remarked, "been the father to *us* all," at some time or other. Premium was placed on his integrative rcle, (as illustrated below), and on arrival in the town many new migrants were taken, to see him

TABLE 2

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ONDO POPULATION

	(I! in xjrac.iets) •Elders	Factory V. A. through I	Jorkors .b. lot through h	Non-! i.-'a c 10 r y V,' 0 r k e r s
	(8)	A";cr:e	Averse (6)	(12)
Age				
15-19	25	46.9	16.7	16.7 .
20-24	75	52.1	16.?	24.9
25-29			66.6	53.3
30-34				
35-39				
40+				
Total	100	100	100	100
Education				
Mono	62.5	41.7	33-3	50.0
Primary 3-6 Modern 1-3	37-5	46.8	33.3	25.0
Modern 4-6 Teacher Training		5.2	16.6	16.6
G.C.E./V/.A.S.C.		5.2	16.6	8.3
Total	100	100	100	100
Appr enticeshin, etc.	100.0	73.0	66.6	8.3
None		26.0	33-3	8.3 83.3
Continuing				
Complete				
Total	100	100	100	100
Urban Experience (other than Ondo)				
None	62.5		100.0	66.5 25.0
Lagos	25.0	So. 6		8.3
Other	12.5	10.4		
Total	100	100	100	100
Fu 11 Em 'o 1 o *y* m e n t Experience Prior to Ar;e,=;e (including Ondo) None 1 2 3 4	50.0 25.0 12.5 12.5	57«3 36.5 5.2	/ % 83.3 16.7	28.0 61.0 11.0
Total	100 ■	ICO	100	100

* This Group comprises five bricklayers, two mechanics, a salesmani a clcrk, a poultry attendant, a labourer and a tailor.

For convenience all figures are rounded to 1*00%.*

as a matter of course. And as a builder working independently in the township, Obi's range of acquaintances v/as considerable, a factor which

operated to the benefit of others. During the space of five years he personally arranged employment for ten Ondo youths which, in the light of his resources, was acknowledged to be impressive.

This was achieved through the judicious use of several valuable contacts - an Egba security officer also living in Tabontabon, a senior Ijesha clerk working for the Ministry of Agriculture, an Ondo personnel manager at Ikeja. The important feature is that youths arriving from Ondo are unlikely to be able to reach or influence such men on their be-half; that they had to go through Obi was seen as an illustration of the influence of a man "v/ho knew the ways of the town."

To a varying degree other effective Elders displayed the same abilities as Obi; generally they did so to a lesser degree, hence Obi’s unofficial leadership capacity over all. But the feature common to all was that their activities as Elders did not detract from their other more personalized interests and ambitions v/hich were directed outside the limits of Agege. On the contrary, their Elder role at Agege complemented their ongoing relationships v/ith kinsmen and acquaintances in Ode Ondo itself. All these men visited Ondo very regularly and had substantial investments there, for each anticipated retirement in the relatively near future to their own lineage compounds. Such investments ranged from houses already constructed in their home compounds to contributions to siblings' childrens’ education. Their prestige as men who are thus seen to have had a modicum of success in the modern urban environment is similarly high. It is one substantially added to by their reputation as men v/ho have taken care of younger migrants to Agege drawn from a v/ide range of local lineages in Ondo. Thus whatever investment Elders make to the advantage of migrants to Agege is rewarded by the prestige which accrues to them at home. So, though there is no real obligation on older men to exert social control or give aid to young men, there are considerable advantages in doing so in the light of their personal status and ambitions. Being seen to maintain control over others at Agege is one such; they have an in

built interest in maintaining a close-knit structure of Ondo migrants. In certain instances this may accord too with the interests of younger men; in others it may not, and conflict is the result. Briefly the source of such conflict lies in the different orientations of Elders and youths, for such a concern with home-town ties and statuses is not one to which wage-earners currently attach great importance; they arc more concerned v/ith the 'here-and-now' of Agege and Ikeja. So whereas Elders try to maintain the ethnic unit as close-knit as possible, in order to exert maximum control over their personal resources, young men prefer a much looser and more adaptable relationship. The significance of the move away from the households of Elders can certainly be overstated, but it nevertheless can be seen, and is so viewed by workers themselves, as the first step to a more personal and individualized form of existence. However, this process of privatization can only go so far; urban life is too insecure for most to ignore the value of brotherhood association entirely. There remains then the problem of finding a balance between competing interests and it is this *proccss* v/ith which I am concerned here.

In Table 2 I have divided the young men into three groups. For present purposes the self-employed are of limited interest: as can be seen all of these bar one have been apprenticed at Ondo, have entered into their present occupations immediately, and so have skipped the stage of capital accumulation which wage-earners are attempting. The main point of interest is that of the tv/elve, five are recently arrived bricklayers who have been brought to Agege by Jose to help him in his business - thus illustrating the advantages deriving from association with an independent Elder.

The wage-earning group divides into tv/o, those v/ho have followed the ideal-typical course of integration into the ethnic brotherhood described above at Agege (A), and secondly these v/ho initially moved from Ondo to Lagos and then finally to Agege, (3). In terms of social characteristics the latter are similar to the former, and though I will not examine them separately here, their course of action is the same as those v/ho moved into Agege direct. Their move
from Lagos to Agege is similar to the movement from Tabontabon to other Agege neighbourhoods; it is a response to the pressures of over-involvement in other ethnic units and an attempt, as one youth express ed, "to look more closely to my own interests and ignore the demands o others." The points v/hich 1 wish to make then are equally applicable to all Ondo wage-earners albeit in slightly different ways.

First, to illustrate the benefits of incorporation in the ethnic brotherhood, particularly v/ith the Elders, the following case-study

points to the nature of social control:

The Case of the- Market Disputant

Unlike most Ondo youths entering Agege, Jimoh (9) had visited several urban centres before settling at Agege. Of a poor and predominantly illiterate family, he had accompanied his elder brother to towns in northern Nigeria in the latter[1]s capacity as a driver for a major contracting firm. After a sporadic primary education, he completed three years in secondary schools in Zaria and Onitsha where his brother lost his job on the outbreak of the civil war. After a brief spell at home, Jimoh was sent to live with his senior sister at Agege, Dupe, who was also the first wife of Obi.

Initially, Obi made little attempt to aid his brother-in-law who, fcr almost a month, made the daily visit to the Western Nigeria Development Corporation employment office on the Ikeja Estate. Quite by chance, when a *foreman came* to the office for the hasty employment of casual labourers, Jimoh was present: he was taken on at 6/3d per day. Feeling somewhat slighted at Obi's lack of interest in his affairs, he quickly moved into an adjacent house at Tabontabon with tv/o other Cndo youths from whom he borrowed money to buy a mattress and other household equipment. He also received a small, loan from his sister, though he rarely visited her and concentrated on developing new friendships.

Three months later, on a visit to Agege market, he quarrelled with a young girl selling rice. He knew the girl slightly, but when she short-changed him, he forced the change from her hand. During the scuffle, however, she fell and cut open her arm. In the outcry which followed in the crowded street, Jimoh ran away back to his room at Tabontabon, saying nothing to his co-residents whom he accompanied that evening to the local picture house.

Shortly after he left, the father of the girl, knowing Obi’s reputatici as an Ondo Elder, arrived with a policeman. Though Obi conducted them to Jimoh's new room he was unable to find where Jimoh had gone, but he agreed "to bring him to justice." After taking the girl's father's address, he sent round word to all Ondo residents that Jimoh should come to him as soon as possible. But when three of them met Jimoh on the street as he left the cinema, against the advice of his friends Jimoh spent the night at a co-worker's house at Ikeja: "I v/as too frightened and upset to go to Cbi for I knew he would be angry with me - or worse, perhaps he would even send me home*” But the following morning he decided to give himself up and went to beg Obi's forgiveness and ask him to accompany him to the police station.
When they did so, the officer in charge demanded £2 as 'kola* and assured them that the case would be dropped. This Obi paid from his own pocket, ‘i'he case appeared to have been settled until the girl’s father, a man of considerable local influence, insisted that the case should go to court.

When the case came up in the local Native Court, Obi spoke on behalf of Jimoh*s good character, explaining away his action on the basis of his inexperience and lack of self-control. Since Obi was well- known to the Native Court judges, Jimoh got off lightly with a fins of £10 for disturbing the peace. This also Obi paid. But he also insisted that Jimoh visit the girl’s father in his own home, make a personal apology to him, cind further pay him *£2* from his own pocket: with all of this Jimoh complied. The last £5 took all Jimoh’s savings from his three month’s employment. The remaining £12 owing to Obi h$ paid off over the next eight months. Since he still owed money from the purchase of his mattress and cooking utensils, after his first year of full employment, Jimoh was still in debt to the tune of *Zk.*

This particular case-study illustrates well the status of an Elder as

intermediary between members of his own ethnic unit and the world beyond, in this case non-Ondo people and the official authorities. In being concerned to protect his own ward, Obi is also looking to the reputation of his fellows generally and his personal reputation as one of their leading representatives. Younger men such as Jimoh are not especially concerned about such matters; but the-latter did acknowledge that Obi's defence before the Court contributed substantially to his light sentence. In some ways he v/as unfortunate that the wider official powers had been invoked, but when the situation arose, it allowed Obi considerable opportunity to demonstrate the strengths of his influence. Events such as these, of course, are widely discussed and analyzed. The fact that Obi became involved with considerable advantage to Jimoh, was quite clear, and added to his stature as a result. So,in this particular instance, both the interests of the Elder and the youth had been well-served by their *association.*

But as siiggested earlier, because of the different orientations of Elders and youths, the potential for conflict is ever-*present•* Young men are perpetually maneeuvering to maximize their personal advancement regardless' of the pressures brought on' them by others-

i

In precisely the type of situation described above, the individual incurs obligations v/hich he cannot resist outright, but in responding (or paying them off) can attempt to limit his outlay as much as possible: this, of course, equally applies in relationships with peers as much as to the Elders, but since the latter have rather different orientations, conflict is likely to be more striking. Between fellow workers, they are playing according to the rules of the same game and v/ith the same end in mind.

It is important to remember that most migrants have only been in the urban-industrial field for a short length of time: some time elapses betv/een conditions being clearly perceived and adaptive strategies to the circumstances being put into action. And since each individual's interests differ from those of his fellows, the redefinition of the balance to be maintained betv/een competing obligations and aspirations is equally an extended process. In consequence the general norm of what is generally considered to be "acceptable" behaviour for all involved is surrounded by considerable areas of latitude. Some members operate v/ell within such parameters whilst others move to the extremes of these limits to such an extent that they change them. Such behaviour is particularly important because v/here carried, off successfully, then the way has been clearer for others to follow suit. The case outlined at length below is a somewhat

extreme reaction against the prevailing distribution of authority within the Ondo community and so has considerable repercussions for others who, like the subject Abraham, find the pressure of ethnic ties-and the definition of what constitutes an appropriate 2'esponse to such ties-increasingly incompatible v/ith their own interests. So by taking his own stand against these, Abraham's actions suggest to others the manner of doing likewise should they feel it appropriate. I only observed the later stages of this process of redefinition but judge these to be inseparable from what had gone before. The following is, I think, a reasonably balanced picture of the series of crisis situations gone through by the subject.

The Case of the Rebellious Worker

On arriving at Agege at the age of 25, Abraham had considerably ′!raore experience of the v;ay of the world" (as he expressed it) than most Ondo migrants. After three years secondary schooling at his father's expense, he had worked as a shop assistant for his fatherᶠs junior brother, a trader, in foodstuffs at Ibadan, until trade had deteriorated so badly that his uncle was unable to pay him any wage at all. During the following two years he worked as a primary school teacher in Ode Ondo, until changes in the formal requirements for such teachers led to his retrenchment, whereupon his father arranged for him to work again as a shop assistant to a successful trader in mens’ clothing at Ibadan.

For Abraham this was the most important period of his life. The trader v/as renowned for his entrepreneurial expertise and because of his close friendship with Abraham's father, treated him v/ell.
As the senior assistant of several employed to manage the trader's three clothing shops, Abraham regularly visited the stores of Lebanese importers in Ibadan and Lagos. In the trader's company he established relationships with several Lebanese wholesale merchants, relationships of great value' to him when after almost three years in the trader's employment, he set out on his own. With loans from his father*, an uncle and the trader, he acquired *clothing worth* about £100 from his contacts and rented a small shop in an Ibadan market. After only nine months however, his promising start v/as at an end v/hen heavy rains flooded the gully in which his shop v/as located.
His stock was ruined, and with the few pounds salvaged from the debris of goods, he returned to his father's compound. After a layoff of two years doing virtually nothing at all, his father sent him to Agege to live v/ith Ake, husband to his mother's junior sister.

i. Incorporation

Against a background of trading experience and a privileged status in his father's house, Abraham quickly came to *resent treatment* meted out to him at Agege, but knowing only his kinsman Ake who could help him, he accepted his low standing as a matter of course. While living at Tabontabon, he rade several acquaintances, notably Jossy, a mechanic working on the nearby Government Agricultural farm, Patrick a factory worker, and his co-resident Fatai, who v/as then unemployed. In enjoying the company of these men, his primary network at Tabontabon, he was gradually incorporated into the Ondo community, though he was, apparently, quickly marked out for his aloofness, an indication of his satisfaction in having been an entrepreneur previously. When he found employment in a Chinese metalware factory at Ikeja through the services of Aliu, an Egba *'worker* living in the same house as Patrick and Fatai, he continued to live v/ith Ake for “though he took no interest in my affairs, my brothers we re close on hand.[t!]

During the ensuing period Abraham was being clearly incapsulated in the Ondo community and accepted the existing status quo, especially acknowledging the role of the Elders, and the lowly status of the young migrant, i'he mother of Patrick and Fatai v/as Obi's elder sister and they had been brought to Agege by him. In consequence Abraham took his minor problems to Cbi either directly or indirectly through Fatai and Patrick, rather than approaching his ov/n kinsman,
Ake. In part at least this v/as also due to Abraham's dissatisfaction v/ith his status as a casual worker and a growing feeling that, if he should lose his post, then Obi was most likely to help him find other permanent v/ork. But according to his ov/n account, such a close relationship with these three kinsmen had in-built difficulties:
Fatai subsequently found casual employment of a highly precarious and badly-paid nature and relied on Abraham for small loans, and he also found himself under pressure to contribute to the welfare of other new arrivals at the Obi household. With some misgivings he accepted these though not for long.

ii Questioning

One day on returning from the factory, Abraham found that Ake*s brother, a man slightly older than himself, had arrived from Ondo. When Ake instructed him to give up his bed for the new arrival and sleep on the floor, the tensions betv/een them emerged. Abraham accused him of unreasonable favouritism to his ov/n blood. His dignity grossly offended, he moved out immediately and lived temporarily v/ith a co-worker until he rented a cheap room nearby. Though still living in Tabontabon, he cut off all ties v/ith Ake, who interpreted this as an indication of the young man's insolence and lack of respect for the authority of an Elder.

Abraham's rejection of an Elder's authority could not but affect his relationship v/ith Patrick and Fatai, particularly as Abraham had accepted obligations from Obi through them. And subsequently he found more congenial company with Williams, Emanuel and Jimoh. The latter, too, had-by now experienced somewhat strained relationships with Obi and shared a room with Williams and Emanuel, v/ho v/ere siblings but with no other kinsmen at Agege. Williams v/as a schcolfriend to Jimoh, had joined him at Agege and been quickly followed by Emanuel. These men became the central elements of Abraham's new primary network, and when Abraham heard of a room for rent well away from Tabontabon (his present location) he moved there on the explicit understanding that they would join him, as indeed they did. According to the accounts of all involved in this movement, it v/as quite clearly a move designed to 'go their own way', establishing their independence from somewhat oppressive ethnic-based relationships and create more acceptable ones. All involved v/ere by this time fully employed and the value of the move v/as well summarized by Abraham: "Only from this time did I begin to save." His subsequent performance illustrates his determination not to allow this process to be deviated.

iii Rebellion

Some six months after taking up his new residence, Abraham received a visit from Patrick accompanied by his junior brother, Joshua, recently

arrived from Ondo for a short vacation. Joshua was aged about 18 and worked as an apprentice mechanic in Ode Ondo: he was unknown to Abraham before this visit, Patrick helped Abraham carry water from the nearby well whilst Joshua remained in Abraham’s room v/here he talked with Jimoh for a short time before the latter left for work. When the two men finished the task, Patrick and Joshua returned to Tabontabon. Shortly afterwards Abraham discovered that a pound note v/hich he had placed on his dresser had disappeared. Assuming that the thief must be Joshua he hurried to Tabontabon v/here he found him alone in Patrick's room, and holding him v/ith one hand, searched his pockets with the other, until Joshua’s cries brought Obi’s v/ife and tv/o other Ondo boys from the front of the neighbouring dwelling,
Obi's ov/n house. They separated the tv/o disputants v/hilst Obi himself, having heard the alarm, also entered the room. When Abraham explained quickly what had occurred, Obi attacked him roundly: whatever Joshua had done or not done, Abraham should have approached Patrick first, and also himself as the Elder in the neighbourhood. Joshua v/as a visitor from their home town and as such had to be well- treated. Abraham's behaviour v/as akin to that of "a. Lagos thug," not a fellow townsman. Abraham replied heatedly that he too knew the ways of the town and knew how, to deal with a petty thief. V/ho could one trust if not someone from one’s home town? The boy must be the culprit, but if Obi wished to defend him in this way Abraham would leave him alone provided that anyone present would give him his money. By now a sizeable crowd had gathered around the house and Obi in order to end the affair quickly, paid Abraham £1 from his *own* pocket.

Cn Abraham’s departure, Obi ordered Joshua to empty his pockets v/here they found a pound note for which the boy could not account. After a discussion v/ith Patrick, the culprit v/as sent back to Ondo in disgrace. The dispute had, however, led to an embarrassing public display in the neighbourhood and v/hilst Abraham's judgement had proved correct, Obi objected strongly to his conduct v/hich v/as "a disgrace to us all. Until he formally apologized he would receive no help from Obi "even though I have been as a father to him." Abraham on his side v/as equally adamant as to the correctness of his actions, and despite pressure from Patrick and Fatai to end the dispute, he refused to do so and subsequently cut off all contact v/ith Tabontabon, spending all his leisure hours v/ith those in locations 10, 9 and 3-

iv Reinforcement of Independence

Abraham's experience throughout had been one of growing independence o.nd increasing selectivity in his choice of intimate friends* Having exiled himself from Tabontabon, he moved primarily with Jimoh, Emanuel and Williams, like himself, living alone, and subsequently "joined hands" v/ith Michael. All of these had. ostensibly supported Abraham during the dispute, even if privately they doubted the wisdom of rejecting outright Obi's authority. Far from being recalcitrant however, Abraham began to reinforce his independence.

Throughout the events described above, though having little contact with Ake, Abraham had retained his attachment to Ake's wife, Abraham's mother's *sis*ter- Unlike her husband she had "always helped me in time of trouble,[11] (notably giving him food 011 credit when initially a casual worker), and Abraham frequently visited her in the market where she sold foodstuffs. When she asked him to take care of her junior brother recently arrived from Ondo, he reluctantly agreed, suspecting a rather subtle attempt to reinvolve him in the Ondo unit (which it may possibly have been.) His treatment of Felix, however, quickly *scotched* any such design.

Whilst new arrivals are certainly expected to assume the daily chores of established members, Abraham's treatment of Felix was, by most standards, reprehensible. In his early twenties, this v/as Felix' first modern urban experience and he was clearly at a loss as to how he should conduct

himself. Instead of giving him directions,
Abraham left him up to his own devices to handle all the domestic chores - cleaning the room, carrying water and visiting the market. He made but minimal efforts to find Felix employment. After one month, more due to others' efforts than his own, Abraham presented him v/ith the opportunity of manual labouring on. a casual basis at the local waterworks - scarcely a reasonable proposition since Felix v/as small and weakly built, his main interest v/as watch-repairing in v/hich he had some slight training; when he suggested to Abraham the possibility of finding a master under whom he could properly train, he had received no encouragement. To show his willingness to exercise even his limited talents, (and also to earn a little money since Abraham refused to *give* him any), Felix repaired the watches of fellow Ondo men and neighbours. But as it became increasingly obvious that Abraham v/as unimpressed and increasingly loathe to find Felix employment, the boy quietly returned some five weeks later to his sister's house at Tabontabon. Abraham made no attempt to persuade him to return and indeed followed Felix's subsequent career only through the gossip channels of the Ondo brotherhood.

In the closing stages of this account it is clear that Felix's experience was a most unfortunate one through no fault of his own. He v/as a pawn in a wider game, the search for independence, with issues at stake of which he v/as unaware and over which he had no control.

As noted earlier, the ideology of Ondo brotherhood is a diffuse framework of norms and social sanctions and so, appropriately, those relationships v/hich the ideology underpins are malleable and eclectic. The precise fashion in v/hich each individual manipulates the possibilities is thus wide and depends considerably on past and present experiences and anticipated courses of action in the future. For this reason, Abraham's background is important; he had experience of entrepreneurship and those relationships which would prove useful to him when he returned to this occupation. His expectations of

leaving factory work were thus relatively high. By the time Felix arrived, Abraham v/as earning about *Z2.7* per month as a senior operator and so was able to put by several pounds. He also felt relatively secure in his work and had good relations with his factory superiors. Furthermore, beyond the Agege context there were other factors encouraging his strikingly individual behaviour, in particular his father allowed him very much to follow his ov/n inclinations despite his being the first-born of his family.

Pressures from home then v/ere slight. The fact that in over four years at Agege Abraham had not once returned to Ondo, but made several visits to Ibadan to visit his earlier patron, gives some indication of his central orientations.

But at the same time, however ego-centred the individual may be, there nevertheless remains for any urban dweller the necessity of acquiring from others a legitimate status for his activity, particularly where he knows that many consider his performance to be morally reprehensible. This emerges quite well in the above study since it i possible to trace Abraham's changing network membership over time.

As the account shows, by the time of his most rebellious performance, he was most intimate with Emanuel, Williams and Jimoh, and had been so for some time. Patrick and Fatai with whom he had associated closely earlier on were now only passing acquaintances. To illustrate this fully would require further extension of the case material, but Emanuel, Williams and Jimoh had been, or were following a similar course of progressive dissocation from close involvement in relationships with Obi and others at Tabontabon. When Abraham’s final break with these came, his intimate friends therefore v/ere able to support him in his insistence that his behaviour was justified without such support going against their ov/n current behaviour. So when Abraham looked for legitimacy in his actions he found it expressed by those to whom he was then closest; even if privately they felt he had been over-hasty, essentially they were most sympathetic and so appeared in face-to-face situations with their brother. The point is then that these were willing accomplices of a sort in Abraham's rebellion since they too had disagreements with the prevailing norms concerning

obligations which had to be acknowledged towards others. In this way Abraham was able to pursue a new course of action which could be taken up by other Ondo wage-earners if they too felt such a position to be appropriate to their interests. The actions of one individial thus had considerable implications for the structure of the ethnic brotherhood as a whole.

Such considerations when made general to the wage-earning population

of Agege raise a point of comparative significance concerning wider more formalized associational activity often commented on in other urban African towns, especially the presence of tribal or ethnic associations. In fact these are absent at Agege and it is appropriate to consider here why this should be so, There are a number of possible explanations.[n]'

First, where tribal associations exist elsewhere they permit those involved to safeguard their interests in the rural area.. The most important interest is usually land. But this is not a particularly pressing problem for Agege people away from home. Land is plentiful in Western Nigeria and rights in it are inalienable, so those away from home do not have important problems concerning its protection from rival claimants. And where young men aspire to becoming entrepreneurs rather than farmers in the longer run, there really is no problem.

Second, tribal associations are elsewhere especially valuable during crisis situations facing the urban dwellers, but as the above analysis suggests, such crises can be equally contained by the more looseknit social networks in v/hich all are involved. Third, those types of urban dwellers in other contexts who do instigate and dominate such associations, namely what one may term the African middle-class, the better educated white collar and professional salaried employees to whom the status of voluntary association leadership has much appeal - these do not reside in Agege.[c]

But fourthly, and in my view most important, the actual interests of young men at Agege cannot be suitably accommodated by such formal organizations. Membership would be most inimical to their essential interests. I have slightly over-stated the case for the sake of emphasis since, in fact, an attempt was made to form an Ondo tribal association in 1967- in the light of the argument advanced above, it is not surprising that first the Elders were at the forefront of such a move, and second that their efforts quickly faded into oblivion. The driving force behind the attempt to form the Ondo Progressive Union was a young secondary school teacher then resident at Agege. He counselled support from the Elders and with their wholehearted encouragement an inaugural meeting v/as announced. Yet, though news of the meeting was widely circulated in advance, only about fifteen people turned up - mostly Elders and their kinsmen. Despite this, the teacher was elected chairman, an educated clerk working in the nearby Government Agricultural Farm made secretary, and three Elders elected to the executive. A further two poorly-attended meetings were held until both, the chairman and secretary v/ere transferred away from Agege at almost

the same time; (v/ith the latter departed the records). Though the Elders struggled manfully to keep the embryonic organisation alive, after one further meeting its demise had to be acknowledged. As one Elder complained bitterly on reflection, "There v/as no support from our young men, they had no interest..

It did not go *well* because the only ones *who* came *were the* 'applicants' and all they v/anted to do was talk about jobs when we Elders wanted to discuss-what v/e could do for Ondo." ^

In sum, the major point is that the loose and informally organized brotherhood serves its members needs well. A formal regularly constituted organization by contrast demands a public commitment on the part of all members to a fairly precise set of obligations and an equally precise type of investment; this would be incompatible with the fluctuating resources and demands of wage-earners at Agege. The conditions surrounding urban survival and the wi'de range of resources v/hich workers ha.ve in the community are too varied and variable to be satisfied by any other means than the flexible ego-centred networks of those concerned. But behind all such consider-ations for young men is the nature of their employment at Ikeja, the low economic return which most experience, and the insecurity endemic

to employment in many of the factories. This is the root of the problem: the shared economic class experience to a considerable degree determines the structure and content of the ethnic brotherhood. Members of the ethnic unit explain away what others may construe as unacceptable behaviour to brothers by reference to the hazards of such employment: this becomes a major sourcc of legitimacy for refusing to acknowledge the present interpretations of what obligations one must face and redefining them in accordance with one' ov/n interests. And since the nature of wage-employment is widely recognized, this becomes an unchallengeable source for such legitimac others are using or intend to use it likewise. The limits of the various choices individuals have with respect to interrelationships v/ith their peers in the town, are set by the conditions of their employment at Ikeja, and this is widely accepted. V/here it is not. then explanations of such non-acceptance are often made on the basis that the conditions of wage labour are not understood. Several Ondo youths, for example, who were engaged in disputes v/ith their Elders at some time past or present, went against the wishes of the latter on the grounds that "they have never been factory workers and do not know v/hat conditions are like.” In other instances which I recorded, disputes between factory workers and others such as parents, patrons and independently employed friends, were explained in much the same way; factory workers, it was argued, v/ere 'a class apart' beset by their ov/n distinctive problems demanding equally distinctive responses v/hich could not be properly appreciated by anyone not similarly engaged. In such circumstances, not only do workers establish suitable adaptive strategies in the community, they must do so in the factory environment too; v/hilst in the former such strategies must be devised within the framework of tribalism, in the latter they are developed in the framework of class.. Each in its v/ay is entirely rational and understandable within the particular situational contexts v/here such strategies are being worked out.

1. 'Incapsulation' was initially examined in detail by P. Mayer, (19^1), Towns:non or'i'rib^smcn , Part 2.

2. P. Mayer, (1961), chapters 5i& and 7-

3- Valdo Pons, (1969), pp. 114-11S, in particular, though Pons describes a wider range of forms of incapsulation than among the Lokele alone.

k. A. Cohen, (1969)1 especially ch. 1.

5. M. Ginsberg, (193^), p. 40. i^or reasons of space I have not entered here into the debate over nquasi-groupsH and similar phenomena though it lias considerable relevance. The debate was effectively

NOTKS TO CHAFTLII *k*.

opened by A.C. Mayer, (i960), [i;]The Significance of Quasi-Groups in the study of Complex Societies,'[1] in MoP. Banton, (ed.), The Social Anthropology of Coir.-olex Societies..

6. Ondo society is discussed in detail in P.O.Lloyd, (1962), Yoruba Land Law, ch. 5«

7- IwLittle, (1966), '.Vest African Urbanization$_t$ develops these points. M. Peil, (1972), The Ghanaian Jactorv V.'orker, (p. 175), also notes a relative lack of interests in ethnic assocations among her sample.

8. Comparable material for especially the Luo of Kampala is provided in D. Parkin, (19^9)? Neighbours and Nationals in an African City Ward, especially ch. 8 The ideological element of ethnicity is discussed by Parkin in ch.6* in particular.

9- There was however an influential and substantial Ondo Progressive Union in Lagos. As far as I could judge this had a considerable elite and middle-class content. One Ondo youth now living at Agege but who had some passing acquaintance with this association during an extended period in Lagos commented of it: "The Association v/as only for the Lig Men. Anybody could join but only the Big Men gained benefit. Tney would take ycur money but when you asked them to help you. in getting work, they would send you av/ay. Only the old politicians had ar. interest in the Association, and I wanted nothing to do with them.'[1]

CIIAPTER 5.
WORKERS NETv/OhKS AllD UNIONS

Having discussed the position of the wage-earner in the context of the neighbourhood and the ethnic brotherhood, I now turn to the analysis of his position in the third arena of social activity, that of the Ikeja industrial estate where the dominant shared relationship is that of economic class* The nature of group relationships in the factory environment, particularly status groups and trade unions, are outlined in subsequent chapters.

Here I am concerned with the interpersonal relationships of individuals who move betv/een Agege community' and the industrial estate: it is of course, at the level of the individual that the community and the estate become interrelated, v/hich in part explains why this chapter is primarily taken up with The Case of the Dismissed Ibo Worker and The Case of the local Hero, both of which are concerned with individuals in betv/een the tv/o locations.

As outlined in the previous chapter, tribalism is strong in Agege community between young wage-earners and I suggested varioi is reasons why, especially in the light of the worker*s overall strategy of capital accumulation and the necessity to limit his in-town obligations to others, the nature of tribalism assumed the particular form that it does. In this chapter (and subsequent ones) I wish to argue that attachments to class relationships are similarly strong and that class consciousness among Ikeja workers is also v/ell developed. However it is still commonly assumed in much cf the literature on African workers that where tribal attachments are all- pervasive and powerful motivations to social action, then interest in economic class institutions and class based activity must necessarily be weak. This view seems to me to rest on a number of mistaken assumptions, and since its obverse is central to the overall thesis I have selected a detailed and rather long case-study to explain the points at stake. Briefly, the notion that v/here tribal attachments are high then class attachments must be low (or vice- versa) assumes that workers have the same expectations of both types of relationships and make the same type of investments in each - and so choose one or the other. At least in the Agege-Ikeja envix’onment this is not GO; workers have different expectations of tribal and class relationships and appropriately make different investments in each, as can be shown by adopting the methodology of situational selection. This being the case the individual can be attached to both tribal-based and class-based relationships and regard both of these highly*

However, in the same way in which I suggested tribalism must be adapted to the interests of those concerned, so too in order to appreciate the significance of a successful class-based act, one must specify the

interests of all concerned, not simply the worker but also the individual trade unionist involved. Trade unions, as much as any other institution, operate successfully (or unsuccessfully) according to the degree to v/hich they allow their component parts to realize their own interests. Though this requires anticipation of material on the development and organization of unions in the next chapter, we can here indicate who has an interest in making a union v/ork and why.

Finally the relationship of individuals vis-a-vis their unions has critical implications at a broader level* The manner in which union officials deal successfully with the minutiae of day-to-day issues is fundamental to organizing the labour force for action on a collective basis. ' "Particularly in the already insecure environment of Lagos, unless on a regular basis union leaders prove their worth in limited affairs, workers are unlikely to be forthcoming in their support on major issues. So whilst I present the micro-affairs of the present chapter and the macro-issues of Adebo separately, these are clearly interrelated issues. ?'

I have selected the first case-study for several reasons in addition to those outlined above. First it considers an Ibo network and so I can here develop certain points briefly concerning the nature of [1] supertribalism[1] made in the previous chapter. Second it is centred on the question of dismissal and this is for all workers (the question of wages apart) the critical issue on which the activities of unionists can be judged; the insecurity of wage-employment is generally such as to affect most workers continually so whether a. union successfully defends a dismissed worker and has him reinstated is closely followed by all* I have heard of one entire union executive being thrown out of office because they allowed a questionable dismissal to pass without opposition. Third, the study illustrates v/ell the manner in v/hich the union official operates in the factory environment and tries to consolidate his position, and fourth, connected with this, it shows why, in an established factory, the tribal background of a v/orker is not important by comparison with the fact that he is simply a worker.?

The second case-study is also selected for some of these reasons: it concerns a dismissal and it shows the unionist’s strategy.
I use it therefore to reinforce some of the points made in the first. But it also, in the sequel to this dismissal, illustrates certain points about class consciousness in interpersonal relationships and this, as I have already suggested, is an important consideration in relation to collective class activity and the expression of class consciousness on a much broader level.

The Case of the Dismissed Ibo Worker.

Andrew v/as very much the epitome of the Ibo worker as members of that tribe are generally viewed by members of other ethnic groups. Hardworking and exceptionally diligent, at one time during our acquaintance he worked for over five months without a single day off and gladly accepted all overtime available to him. Though his basic wage was only £22. per month, in certain periods with overtime and bonus pay he received over £<30. Living alone in one room rented at £2.5-j he usually spent about £15 in all and so had a comparatively high rate of saving with the end in view of becoming a photographer and trader in Nsukka, his home town. He regularly remitted most of his savings to his senior brother in Nsukka;
David handed the majority of Andrew's home town affairs, including payment of the bridewealth for Andrew's wife and her training. The marriage was hov/ever unstable, for the eleven year old girl had run away three times from David’s house where she was apprenticed to his wife as a seamstress. Though David had brought her back to his house each time, he had considerable doubt about her suitability for his brother. The bridewealth was high, £120. for the girl v/as also continuing her education paid for by her parents. On a recent visit home, Andrew had managed to bring the *amount* paid to £75-

Mainly because of his high work-rate, Andrew's effective network v/as *small and* limited almost exclusively to *fellow* Ibos. Though he was a member of the Roman Catholic Church at *Agege,* Sunday overtime usually prohibited his attendance, and his main interest was the house union of Fine Paints where he worked. In this house union (as v/ith several others at Ikeja) early leadership had been the preserve of skilled or white-collar workers. The company v/as small, by 1970 about 250 employees, and clerical workers had played an important and extended part in the development of the union.

Hov/ever, promotion of these early leaders (again a common occurrence) left the union without a clearly defined heirarchy and after four years the leading executive posts were filled by a group of semiskilled and unskilled workers v/ho had canvassed support on the shop- floor* But three of these had been from the Eastern Region and with the call to return home, the executive had been weakened yet again.
In 1969 hov/ever five workers, including Andrew, had staged a coup against the incumbent executive members v/ho had proved ineffectual. The new executive comprised seven semi-skilled or unskilled workers and two clerks. The leading four posts were filled by semi-skilled workers, and Andrew, the only non-Yoruba, had been elected to the post of Legal Advisor.

During their first year in office, this executive had done v/ell. After gaining a considerable wage increase for all workers, they had been returned almost intact for a second year of office. Andrew's ov/n attitude to his union activity v/as slightly ambivalent. As the only non-Yoruba executive member and one of only eight Ibos in the labour force, he v/as conscious of his minority group status. On the one hand, he saw his low salary and marginal promotion as an

inevitable consequence of factory employment per so. On the other, he claimed the personnel manager, Oyewole, v/as a [1] tribalist'. He did not like Ibos claimed Andrew, and since his arrival two years previously, had constantly employed v/here possible, workers from his home town of Ibadan. This view was also shared by Yoruba workers and executive members. Yet Andrew's contribution to the union was a substantial one: other executive members acknowledged him as one of the union's strongest assets and a keen committee man.

Since the company began, none of the disputes v/ithin the factory nor the union had involved the small group of Ibo workers. This v/as, said Andrew, because "V/e keep our heads down and mind our ov/n business because this is not our own country." Generally conditions in the factory were satisfactory and where the reputedly autocratic Oyewole had sacked workers on dubious grounds, elected union officials or Ganiyu, the General Secretary, went straight to the British General Manager who had overruled his subordinate's judgement in several instances.

Virtually the total labour force paid union dues through the checkoff system, and the union employed Ganiyu to deal with much of its routine administration, collection of data in preparation for annual wage negotiations and the like. Ganiyu, an imposing and garrulous Yoruba in his early 30[f]s was the most successful General Secretary at Ikeja and was engaged in running a dozen house unions. Initially he had emerged as President of the Tyre Company but following a course at Kampala Labour College, returned to Ikeja and established himself as a General Secretary: as his reputation as a 'professional' unionist grew, several smaller unions v/ith limited financial resources and also limited expertise adopted him as their Secretary.

On a Monday morning in early October, Andrew and Charles, a young Igbirra worker from the same section, were told by the timekeeper to report- to the personnel manager. Ke informed them that he was terminating them for failing to arrive for Sunday overtime as instructed on the previous Friday. Both men objected strongly: they had not received such instructions. Andrew pointed out that whenever overtime had been required previously he had alv/ays welcomed the opportunity, but Oyewole had given them short shrift and told them to report the following day to collect their final paypackets.

Andrew went with Charles to collect their belongings and the former told Peter, the union president of the circumstances surrounding their dismissal before finally leaving the factory and returning to his compound at Agege. Peter immediately called an executive meeting whilst in the section where Andrew worked a go-slow began as v/orkers heard of the manner and grounds for their colleagues' dismissal- The executive's decision after a brief meeting was to approach the British General Manager, but when informed that he v/as on business in Lagos, Petei' announced to the section workers that until the Manager returned, they would take no further action. Normal production was resumed.
That evening, Simon, Andrew's closest friend, came to visit him. Simon v/as also a Nsukka Ibo. The two had met in the factory in early 1964 when Andrew was first employed and they had subsequently struck up a close friendship. A quiet and reserved character, after seven years employment Simon earned only £19 per month and had received no

promotion during the entire period, mainly because of his poor education. Simon told. Andrew of the day's developments.
The British Manager had not returned to the factory that day and the situation remained in limbo. To his surprise, Andrew's response was one of apparent disinterest and resignation and he commented "Although I have done a lot for the union as the Legal Advisor, I am still an Ibo to the workers, but we will see what comes of their efforts."
That he was apparently pessimistic of the union's possible efforts was indicated by his turning immediately to the prospects for employment elsewhere. He had, he explained to Simon, every intention of trying to find other work in view of his lack of promotion in the company. Both of them had been foolish to spend so many years there when, as Ibos, there v/as little chance of promotion under the •tribalist' Oyewole-
"This is quite clear to me that he is terminating us because he had Ibadan people who need work. Seven years in the factory, yet we can be dismissed so easily. Seven years as a check-weigher and still such a meagre salary. All this is too much to bear, so I will get a job in another place as soon as possible."

The following day he returned to the Ikeja office of the union's Secretary, Ganiyu. The two men were slightly acquainted and after Andrew's explanation, Ganiyu drafted a letter giving the company seven days notice in which to reconsider their position or the union would consider court action on the grounds of illegal dismissal.

Declaring himself satisfied with this, Andrew departed in the direction of a second paints company, Merchant Paints, on the Ikeja Estate. Two weeks previously he had accompanied his landlady to buy paint wholesale from the company and by chance, Andrew had met there the Ibo chemist in the factory. Andrew's light tribal marks had identified him to Abraham, and in the course of conversation had discovered themselves to be distantly related. Andrew now intended to follow up this chance contact for Abraham had told him that the personnel manager of his company had employed a number of Ibo *vio*rkers and was not a man to demand a bribe before employing new workers. But when Andrew v/as introduced to the personnel manager by Abraham, the only posts available at that time v/ere in the lowest paid unskilled grades, only £10 per month*. If other vacancies came up. then through Abraham, Andrew would be immediately informed.
Having expressed thanks to Abraham for his help, Andrew walked back to Agege. He called at the house of tv/o Ibo friends, James and George, but finding neither at home he returned to his room to rest.
He had walked for three of four miles in all and, disappointed v/ith his lack of success, slept for the rest of the afternoon.

When he woke up, he walked round to Simon’s house only a few hundred yards away to meet his brother as he returned to v/ork and also to meet Simonʳs visitor from the East, Mary. Mary whom he had not rnet before opened the door and when Andrew introduced himself, she invited him inside. Simon had not yet returned from work, and so the two began to talk of conditions at Nsukka. Mary had been at Agege for four days and was Simon's junior sister. V/ith financial help from Simon, their parent's first son, and Friday the second con, Mary had passed ¡0¡ level G.C.E. and gained clerical employment in a Port Harcourt Bank. Now she had come to Agege in search of work until such time as the bank reopened. "I must find secretarial work as soon as possible for that is

the only v/ork that I really like[11] Mary said. No sooner had she explained her situation than Simon and Elisabeth entered the room on return from the market v Elizabeth was Friday's wife but since the end of the v/ar
had lived at Agege with Simon. Her husband v/as an oil technician in the East and wivesv/ere not allowed to accompany their husbands on the oilfield. She had brought her four children to Agege and lived v/ith Simon for nine months.

After greeting each other, Simon said to Andrew, "This man Ganiyu is trying hard for your welfare*. He came to the factory at lunchtime, called a meeting of all the workers and asked for a contribution of 5/- per man to hire a lawyer to represent you in the court if it proves necessary. He knows how to handle these matters very well it appears. There was much discussion among the workers about this and when William (the internal secretary) said that he felt 10/- was better, all the workers agreed to start to pay from tomorrow."
Andrew expressed some surprise at this: "So perhaps the workers are going to support me and recognise my efforts for the union after all. This is. a very splendid beginning in the fight for my rights.
Perhaps if the management see that they have a real fight on their hands they will change their minds...but I have knowledge of these things. The court takes a long time to work and their judgement cannot alv/ays be good v/here magistrates take bribes. I will keep looking for v/ork elsewhere whatever happens." "I must find work too as soon as possible" added Mary, as she brought in food for the two men. "You are both men of long experience in Lagos. What should I do to find v/ork here?" After some discussion it v/as agreed that Andrew should visit Monica, the Ibo wife of a Yoruba security officer in her early 40's.
Simon was a distant relative of Monica, also from the Nsukka area, and had first stayed with her on coming to Agege.
He had later introduced her to Andrew v/ho v/as now closer to Monica than Simon himself. He was a rather lonely person, known among other Ibos to keep himself to himself, for he v/as 'a man with many problems.'

The following day Andrew called at the factory to pick up his final pay and references. He did not linger any more than necessary and loft accompanied by Charles, the Igbirra. The latter asked him v/here he was going and when Andrew replied "the Airport Hotel",
Charles said he would accompany him., He lived near the hotel and they took a bus together to Ikeja township.

Monica’s stall at Ikeja was a wooden shed from which she sold fruit and vegetables to the wives of expatriate managers living in the area. Through such contacts she had in the past supplied expatriates with housegirls, cooks and gardeners; at times she had also asked such managers to employ Ibo youths of friends at Agege and held considerable *success in* this. It was this consideration rather than the concern to aid Mary which brought Andrew to see Monica so quickly. Monica was a genial and endearing character so perhaps she could introduce him to an expatriate manager quite soon.

Monica greeted Andrew warmly for he had not visited her for some time* He asked after her family and introduced Charles before settling to explain his problems at some length. When lie finished she exclaimed “What a pity it is that you did not come to see me yesterday as soon as you left the factory. Only yesterday morning a relative of mine who is headman in the hotel asked me to find tv/o stewards, and the wages v/ere good indeed. I sent to Benjamin (a mutual Ibo acquaintance at Agege) immediately for I knew he had tv.ro junior brothers living with him and without work. They began this very morning- It would have been a suitable post for you to hold until you could get into a new factory. I have heard of this Ibo man, Abraham, of whom you speak and he is a good man who gives help to others when there is a chance." The Igbirra attempted to explain that he too was in the same position as Andrew having been thus impressed by Monica's ability to find employment for others.
She cut him off and commented that she had to visit the houses of two expatriate managers the same evening and would ask one approachable Indian manager if he could find work for Andrew.
She continued - "I do not find work for anyone at all. Only last week one of my sister's sons came asking me for help but I sent him packing. Do you know that he walked past my house only tv/o weeks ago and did not call in my house to see me? I was looking from my window and saw him going straight past without even looking to see if I was at home!" (This v/as a scarcely veiled admonishment to Andrew too for not having called on her for such a long time.)
At this point, Stella, a girl of about eighteen years and the daughter to Monica's junior sister also living at Agege, entered the shop. She kneeled in respect to Andrew v/hile Monica explained that they v/ere looking for a stall from which Stella could sell her mother's provisions. Perhaps Andrew could see if there were any stalls on Ipaja Road where he lived?

Shortly Andrew excused himself 011 the grounds of wanting to visit more friends who might help him to find v/ork. Monica decided to accompany him back to Agege, talking all the time about the problems v/hich her family were giving her. As they moved away, Charles departed in the direction of his house nearby without any further exchange betv/een himself and Andrew or Grace.

As they returned by bus to Agege, Andrew remembered his promise to Mary and asked Monica of the chances for her employment too. Simon should bring her to the house first thing tomorrow morning said Monica, for her own daughter v/as to be interviewed at a new factory by an Indian manager whom she knew. Mary could accompany her and perhaps they would be employed together. With this they went their separate ways*

Andrew failed to find either of his friends at home again as on the previous day, but as he returned along Ipaja Road, he called to see Bola, a Yoruba girl in her teens who managed a photography salon on the main road. The shop was not her own but after an apprenticeship, her master had placed her in charge of it and given to it her own name. To become a photographer was, after trading, Andrew's greatest ambition, and in an irregular fashion, Bola had given him instruction over the two years since they first met in the salon» Since she was permanently on the street, she knew most of the daily occurrences in the neighbourhood and Andrew enquired if she knew of any shops to lot in the area. She replied in the negative and asked him why he had "time to play" on a weekday* Ho proceeded to explain how he had lost his job until tv/o customers arrived. He then assisted her for a couple of hours before returning home.

In the evening, Simon called on him in his room. The fund for hiring a lawyer was now underway in the factory and a total of almost -£20« had been collected from the workers by William. Ganiyu had visited the personnel manager during the afternoon to discuss the ultimatum he had made by letter. He had refused to comment until the General Manager had been consulted. There appeared little else to be done immediately. Andrew told him of his day's experiences and the opportunity of possible employment for Mary. Simon promised to accompany her to Monica's house the following *morning* as arranged.

Andrew spent most of the following morning in his compound doing housework until he received a visit from James, an Onitsha Ibo, aged about 28 and a friend of several years standing. Though relations between them had been strained owing to James refusal tc settle the bridewealth now owing for four years despite having two children by his wife, Andrew was plea.sed to see him.

James explained that *he had* met Monica on his way home from *the* previous afternoon shift* She had told him of Andrew's dismissal. Now he was going to work again but had determined to call on Andrew first. The foreman of his section had told him that day of vacancies in the company though 'dash' to the recruiting officer was at least £10. Whilst thanking his friend for his concern, such a s um was not available to him Andrew commented, and in addition, the recruiting officer of James' company v/as reputed to accept bribes from 'applicants' but not honour the obligation subsequently. Such a move required considerable caution. James had to rush off to v/ork but gave Andrew a lift on the crossbar of his bicycle to near Monica's house.

There he met only Monica's daughter, Monica herself having travelled to Lagos to buy provisions. Ann immediately *started* telling Andrew her news. "It is good that you have come for my mother is angry v/ith you and your brother on account of your sister's (i.e. Mary's.'actions. Your *sister* has offended my mother *so* much that I doubt if you will be able to please her for some time now," and she proceeded to tell Andrew of her visit in Mary’s company to the factory where Monica had arranged for them to be interviewed* Both girls had been offered posts as machine operators earning roughly per month, but. Mary had asked if there was a vacancy for a secretary instead since her education qualified her for such a post. VJlien the Indian manager replied no, Mary said she would take the post offered provided that when a secretarial post came vacant

she would be immediately promoted. When the Indian refused to agree and expressed his annoyance at such an attitude, she had refused the position of operator tool Arm had communicated these developments to Monica on her return, the latter’s reaction being one of amazement and anger. This could mean that her relationship v/ith the Indian wasbroken beyond repair and it was one which she had cultivated for some time through his wife.

Andrew too could scarcely believe this tale, but commented to Ann that from the first time of seeing Mary he had considered her something of a liability; "Do not mind the foolish girl, she thinks too highly of herself because .she has more education than most men of her age® Beg your mother not to be too angry with us for I am truly sorry at what has happened. I will see Simon today for he will be as angry as I am,” and with this he returned homewards, calling once again to help Bola in her photography salon.

After eating at home, Andrew set out for George’s house, George being one of the few middle-aged Ibos living at Agege, and the only one with whom Andrew himself was well acquainted. George was from a village in Anambra Division and they had first met when James arranged for him to rent the substantial flat in Andrew's compound the previous year. By profession a schooltcacher, George now worked as an accountant in an Ikeja enamelware factory under Chinese management in order to finance *the* private education of his large family.

Again, however, George was not at home and Andrew was greeted by his *senior* wife, Margaret, *who* introduced him to Michael the *young* son of George's junior brother. His father had sent him to find factory v/ork. "So you are in the same position as myself" commented .Andrew. "How long have you been at Agege?" "Coday is the sixth day" replied Michael, "but there is still no prospect cf v/ork as yet.
I imagined that since George is a manager it would be easy, but it is not so." "Life is difficult for all Ibos here in Lagos for we are all strangers here. We have to look after one another closely and so you must be patient." Andrew then began to ask Michael of conditions in his home area.

With darkness falling, Andrew returned homewards calling first at Simon's house. He had only just returned from working overtime but he v/as enthusiastic about developments v/ithin the factory. William had now collected over from the workers. Ganiyu had approached the expatriate General Manager who agreed to see him the following day after discussing the issue with his Nigerian subordinate.
Andrew, however, quickly turned to the problems posed by Mary’s behaviour and gave Simon Ann’s account of what happened that morning. Without comment Simon called Mary from the back room where she was cooking with Elizabeth, and when he asked her for her own account it substantially accorded with that of Ann*

Andrew was surprised to hear Simon’s quiet and uncritical response to Mary’s admission of guilt. He said only that she should have accepted any post, for v/ork was difficult for all Ibos to find in Lagos, especially women, before he dismissed her from the room.
"My brother, I do not understand your attitude at all in this grave matter," Andrew said immediately. "This young girl thinks too highly of

herself because she has a good education. She can make life difficult for us all. Life is too hard here for us to have trouble from our own people. You are our elder brother and should send her home straight to your family in Nsukka. Your responsibilities and expenses are too high for you to support this girl and satisfy her whims," the latter being in recognition of Mary’s insistence on continuing her lessons at a local typing school.

"It is all very v/ell to express *your* feelings In such a way” replied Simon, "but this is not easy. If she returns home in anger, then my father will hear of ray difficulties last year. If they hear of that and know I have sent my sister from Lagos to my home town v/here there is no work at all, what will my father think of me then?" The reference was.to Simon’s relationship v/ith a Yoruba woman v/ith whom he had lived for almost tv/o years and v/ho had borne him a child. According to Simon’s acquaintances, the association had been a happy one. One. evening, however, on returning from work, Simon's wife had disappeared with the child sjid her possessions. She left a note saying that her father had demanded that she should leave Simon and instructed her to return to their village in Ekiti• Simon was greatly moved for he had hoped to take her home nov/ that the civil war v/as over. He had decided not to communicate nev/s of his marriage at all for his father would believe that he had entered into a "Lagos marriage,” (a temporary union which neither party considers a permanent relationship), v/hich is severely disapproved of by most Ibos.

Realizing the implications more fully, Andrew decided not to pursue the issue any further and turned to other matters as Elizabeth served them food. Despite the fact that he had failed to persuade Simon to send Mary home, Andrew decided once again to visit Monica at home that evening, but once again he found her absent.

Early the following morning, hov/ever, he visited Monica's stall at Ikeja intending to justify Mary’s behavious by her lack of ’Lagos' experience’, being behind her unrealistic expectations. But he had scarcely begun to do so when Monica called a halt. The girl had

behaved badly and if she v/as too proud to do the same work as her own daughter, then Mary should be sent home immediately, notwithstanding Simon’s difficulties of which she was v/ell aware.
Certainly there would be no more help forthcoming from Monica's quarter.

She then turned to Andrew's own position. The previous evening she had visited the home of an Indian manager whose wife she supplied with vegetables. He had agreed to interview Andrew the following *Sunday* when she returned with fresh fruit. Monica’s husband told her that conditions v/ithin the *factory* were bad, but no matter; *he* could perhaps *move* to Merchant Faints later v/ith the help of Abraham when the time was right* Though Andrew realized that the work would be ill-paid and that help from Abraham might not emerge for some time, nevertheless this v/as better than no v/ork at all, and he thanked Monica profusely for her efforts on his behalf.

Shortly afterwards Paul, Monica's eldest son, entered the shop, "My brother, it is a long time since we last met" Paul greeted him. in Yoruba and Andrew replied likewise. "Your mother is good to me this day for she helps her brothers and friends more than any woman I know at Agege." "Yes', indeed,[11] replied Paul, "my mother has influence indeed as does anyone v/ho moves with the oyinbo.
So you have not found v/ork as yet. for I have heard of all your difficulties from many people?" "No, I think it is time to move elsev/here and hope for better fortune in the future. Perhaps I will go to work for the Chinese for some time and then again I have a brother in Merchant Paints who work for v/ill find me later. better
That is the v/ork I know best of all so perhaps I can *improve* myself there."

"Have you managed to find any shop for my sister on your side of the town yet?" asked Monica. "Ho, but I have tried a lot on your behalf and I have a Yoruba sisterto help me in this. She will do well I’m sure for she knows many people in the neighbourhood v/here she works, and v/ith this he and Paul turned to a discussion of work in the latter's company and the condition of his family.

But when he returned to his compound, Andrew found that Ganiyu had come to see him earlier. In a note the latter explained that the management had changed their stance. In view of Andrew's long service to the company (and the General Manager's dissatisfaction with his subordinate's ruling) he would be reinstated in one week's time*. The one week v/as a period of 'suspension* and Andrew would forfeit two weeks salary in all.

When he visited Simon that evening, his brother expressed his delight at the nev/s, for Ganiyu had not yet communicated the management's decision to the workers. "This is good *news* indeed, my brother, for now you *can* rest easy again. Even though you lose your wage, I am told that the orders are high for the rest of the month (i.e. there would be considerable ovei'time to keep up production.) Thanks be to God that justice has been done."
"This is good news and the union men have tried a lot. And yet, though I am not ungrateful, X will not go back but will try to find new work

elsewhere in a place v/here there is chance of promotion." Simon returned that he should be satisfied with his achievements to date and handed over a letter which had been delivered at the factory.

The letter was from David in Nsukka, and as Andrew read it he gave a cry of dismay- His young wife had yet again run away from David's home: her parents had presented David v/ith the choice of sending her to join Andrew in Agege or the marriage would be dissolved, and as Andrew's senior brother doubted if she would stay v/ith Andrew even if he allowed her to come (which he was very much against anyway,) David had determined to try and recoup as much of the bridewealth as possible. He was already looking for a second more suitable marriage partner for his brother. Andrew commented, "My misfortune is too great this week of trial» My brother is quite right for the girl is ill-behaved. She cannot become a good wife for me if she fails to respect my brother. I doubt if he will be able to gain back all the bridewealth and much of the money already spent will be lost to us, I fear. And my brother is about to choose another wife for me. I shall have to get back to v/ork as soon as possible. I have not time now to wait around whilst my wage is low. My obligations are too great."

In the following week, though Andrew visited much the same parties as before, no concrete offers v/ere forthcoming. In particular there v/as no offer from Merchant Paints. So, on the following Monday, two weeks after his termination, v/ith mixed feelings of disappointment and relief, he returned to his old post. Though the union president and Ganiyu appealed to the British manager to pay him his full salary, the latter remained obdurate. On the whole, however, they felt they had done v/ell. The fund for hiring a lawyer was redistributed to the workers whilst Andrew stood by, thanking the contributors for their support and being welcomed back to the factory in return.

Now the first point which can be made from all this is the clear separation which emerges betv/een on the one hand the superethnic social network of the individual worker and on the other those class-based relationships which link him to his house union. Though each is oriented to the question of **security** to the individual, the effective social network of the individual aims at this by facilitating his transition from one factory to another as quickly as resources allow whilst the union is concerned to provide security v/ithin the domain of the single factory- 'i'he difference is an obvious one when presented in this form and provides a suitable distinction for examining the nature of these tv/o mutually exclusive sets of relationships. Significantly, only one person, Simon, could be said to have a foot in both camps but even his influence v/ithin the factory was negligible: his role was limited to that of information broker between the factory and the wider urban system. But associated with this is a more important and less

immediately evident point - that even without the presence or pressure of the individual at the centre of the dispute, the union nevertheless successfully solved the issue: that the bouse union is able to protect its members in times of crisis without the worker involved being called upon to commit further resources than hitherto to the institution has important pragmatic consequences for the attraction of the labour movement at Ikeja. So one needs to consider the nature of individuals' interests v/ithin the house union itself.

The course of events illustrates how, within the social network, relationships are characterized by their flexibility and their sensitive quality, the more so that the super-ethnic group's members share a common cultural identity and, more importantly, consider their status threatened by alternative superethnic groups with whom they are in competition over scarce resources. So in this instance, v/here Ibos as a minority group are involved and in a context in which virtually all resources and assets are in the hands of the Yoruba, divisions which in another context (say that of Onitsha or Port Harcourt) would be of considerable importance, are regarded as being of negligible consequence - "We are all Ibos here together and are all strangers in a country v/hich is not our own" as Andrew once expressed it. Individual members, acknowledging the reciprocity involved in such interrelationships, take cognisance of shared pressures which can lead to radical changes in the balance between *effective and extended networks* In periods of social calm when relationships are conducted under 'normal' circumstances, such radical changes would be tolerated though subject to disapproval and sanctions being brought to bear. But where, for example, the point-source of the network is affected by personal crisis, then exceptions can be made and the blame pinned on (as in this instance) the urban condition in general and minority group status in particular.

To substantiate this fully would require a *more extended case-study* than can be presented here but *some* indication is possible. Previous to this crisis period, Andrew's closest relationships, i.e. those falling quite emphatically within his effective network, were those with Simon and George. The former continued throughout this period for obvious reasons as an intimate friendship, but the second became quite clearly a considerable step removed from this. After one visit to George's house during v/hich he did not even meet George, Andrew did not attempt to contact him again. At first sight this is

all the more striking in view of George's outstanding occupational standing in comparison with the other members of Andrew’s set of relationships as a whole, — that is, as a member of the senior staff of his particular company. George's position v/as not, hov/ever, as secure or influential as might appear. He did not have the usual formal qualifications for his v/ork as an accountant and had been manoeuvred into the company by the husband of his oldest daughter, a senior civil servant and director of the firm. Though George had found employment for relatives and friends previously, he did this cautiously. V/hilst he doubtless performed his role as accountant competently, a combination of his lack of formal qualifications and minority group status forced him to avoid acting in such a manner as to ’’give my enemies in the company a chance to victimize me,’’ as he once told me. So when Andrew found Michael waiting for the opportunity of employment through George, the possibilities for Andrew himself had to be discounted. Having realized this, Andrew did not approach George again until the crisis period v/as passed, whereupon he resumed his regular weekend visits to George's house, for as he told me many times, "Since I have no kinsmen here at Agege, George, his wives and daughters all look upon me as their true brother.”

At the time then, the onus of Andrew finding employment elsewhere quickly fell emphatically on his relationship with Monica. Though the two saw each other fairly regularly, Monica could in no sense be initially considered part of Andrew's effective network. From the account one can see that Andrew himself recognized a considerable 'element of fragility in the relationship, especially in his acknowledgment of the potentially disruptive consequences of the entry of Mary into the relationship and his attempts to minimize such disruption once it occurred.

But within the context of Agege as such, appeals to a common super-ethnic and cultural identity alone in order that a charing of scarce resources takes place, can only be successful if, either explicitly or implicitly, it is recognized that such resources are to be replaced and extended for others to share. And this is most particularly true in the case of the most *pressing scarce resource*, that of employment. An individual is only likely to receive aid from those v/ith whom he has a shared cultural identity if others consider that he will acknowledge the reciprocal nature of the system of relationships

v/hich he enters. One illustration of this v/hich emerged quite clearly at one point was the manner in which Charles the Igbirra terminated v/ith Andrew v/as quite clearly excluded from the network of relationships v/hich he saw in action and tried to become involved in. Though he made an appeal to Monica on the basis of shared minority group status of Ibo and Igbirra alike, had he been aided into factory employment, he would doubtless have been lost to the network which helped him and would thus have constituted a waste of tliose resources v/hich network members control among themselves.

(Gharles did in fact subsequently resign from the factory and with the help of another Igbirra living in the same house as hiinself, found a better-paid post.)

But the *more* substantial indication of this element of reciprocity v/ithin the social network v/as, of course, that between Andre;/ and Monica* By approaching Monica immediately for aid, Andrew placed his relationship on a quite different level than hitherto and one which on the basis of their shared superethnic status and previous friendship, she immediately accepted, notwithstanding the radical switch of emphasis which this required.

In placing the relationship on this level, Andrew v/as quite evidently the debtor and he took certain steps *to* adjust the balance immediately by attempting to find a new stall in his part of Agege (which brought him into contact with Bola the only Yoruba member of his network.) Andrew's immediate and sustained response to the apparently disastrous behaviour of Mary remains, however, the clearest indication of the extent to v/hich he recognized his obligations to Monica, for as the account shows, he acted with great speed to pacify her as she learned of the manner in v/hich she may have lost her contact v/ith the factory manager. One has to bear in mind that such contacts are rare indeed in the Uigerian context, especially with non-European expatriates. Despite both instrumental and expressive elements, they can be broken off suddenly and irrevocably despite extensive and sometimes expensive cultivation.

To repeat then, interpersonal relationships based on supertribal association v/ithin the social network can be subject to I’adical reorientation, manipulated v/ithin exceedingly wide limits, even ostensibly exploited against the backdrop of other pressures from a diversity of sources. All such processes take place, on the basis of minority group status and ensure the continued concentration of slight resources v/ithin the hands ox network members: such processes are an integral part of their overall strategies of urban survival. In contrast to this multiplicity and complexity of ties is the single-strand relationship which the individual has v/ith the house union. This appears in the case study as a simplesrtie and

significantly so for it illustrates the union, as a body, dealing v/ith its members in precisely that capacity - as workers whose interests it is established to represent. Obviously, however, the union cannot be considered in such reified and abstract terras: v/e need to look at the interests of union officials v/hich if not the same are at least complementary to the member's own.

So far I have considered the developments from the point of view of Andrew himself, though it is clear from this somewhat one-sided account that Ganiyu was the driving force behind *Andrew's* reinstatement. In other cases v/hich I followed through of a similar nature, it v/as in the interests of elected executive officials to challenge dubious practices on management's part in order that they could consolidate their hold on their offices. A crucial reason for this, as I will outline later, is to deny prospective candidates for leadership from below the opportunity to challenge their constituted authority- The present case-study illustrates simply a variant of this generalized strategy besides indicating the modus operand! of the professional unionist at Ikeja.

Briefly, the General Secretary is employed by the house union executive to assume most of the administrative work, collecting details on prices, comparable material on wage rates and conditions of service, information for forthcoming negotiations and legal matters. Each Secretary operates in this capacity for several smaller house unions whose resources are insufficient to employ a full-time official at a reasonable wage. Ganiyu for example, probably the best-trained Secretary at Ikeja, had around a dozen unions in his sphere of influence and from these had a combined income of about £30. That the number itself is indetei'minate is itself an indication of the variable relationship which Secretaries have with the house union leaders. Each can be replaced by another if the executive so decides and so has vested interests in mailing a conspicuous success of the tactics which he employs and showing off v/here possible the expertise for which he is initially hired. For this reason, v/here individual workers approach him v/ith their particular problems it becomes central to his own welfare to carry

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through the dispute successfully and be seen to do so. Obviously this is also true of elected house union officials and the actions of the Secretary are a variant of their ov/n.

At this particular moinent 222 time, Peter, the Yoruba President of the union v/as, for a number of personal reasons, proving somewhat ineffectual in hie leadership. This provided Ganiyu with an opportunity to make considerable capital of the situation. The first manifestation of this came v/hen he instigated the fund for the legal defence of Andrew's case should it prove necessary. In itself this appeared to be a precipitate action since he had not by then even engaged in discussion with the company management I But this did place him in the forefront of the dispute and was also a strategy v/hich directly involved the workers - with Ganiyu at their head.

Ganiyu then followed the normal procedure of a somewhat ad hoc nature, taking his cues from the management but acting throughout in an essentially conciliatory and accomodative fashion. As he considered the personnel manager the source of the dispute, he approached the General Manager direct and appealed to him "in the hope that justice would be done," and in his one public speech to the workers he had pointed to the virtues of reason and goodwill from both sides if justice v/as ultimately to prevail.. Until the time of Andrew’s reinstatement, Ganiyu*s handling of the affair v/as impeccably orthodox and he received full co-operation from the rest of the executive. This v/as hardly surprising. By suggesting the possible need for a lawyer and so indicating the particular expertise which such a development would require if the management had ultimately been taken to court in Lagos, he had taken over the field of action by defining it in such a manner as to demand that he himself was the focal point. If an executive member had opposed this, it would appear as if he v/ere also standing in the way of justice.

Owing to a misunderstanding I was unable to examine the list of Contributors to the fund, but one or two features can be cited. First, the total sum collected was £6l. 10-, which at 10/- per head meant that rather less than half the total labour force had made the standard contribution within tv/o weeks. With 10/- representing for eligible workers a considerable part of one day’s pay, for some an. entire day's pay, this was by most standards an impressive opening. The tribal factor was of little significance since the number of Ibos within the labour force was negligible. And as far as I could gather from subsequent interviews with reliable informants, contributors were fairly randomly drawn from

the eligible labour force though there was a possible over-representation from Andrew's ov/n section; but on this ny data is incomplete.

The point is that Ganiyu successfully mobilised the workers and drew them into the conflict situation in an appropriate fashion. At no time did he suggest to the workers the possibility of more striking action though the workers had engaged in a spontaneous protest on first hearing of the dispute. This would have proved counterproductive in these *circumstances since unionists generally* rely on accommodative strategies and an exchange of good will. As in this instance, it frequently proves successful so that an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual understanding free from invective and overt hostility is encouraged by both sides.

But once Andrew had resumedv/ork, Ganiyu issued the following circular to all workers; (I retain the original phraseology but have removed references to quite separate affairs).

"Dear Rank and File Members,

INDUSTRIAL *IRONY*

You deserve to be praised for your spirit of solidarity morally and financially. May Godbe *ever* at our back and may the almighty continue to bless your pockets, amen.

imiS III BRIEF

Your efforts have not been in vain, the management of Fine Paints had submitted to logical reasoning. Wrongful termination of Messrs (Andrew and Charles) had been substituted v/ith v/rongful suspension of two (2) v/eeks which ends on Monday 26th October 1970. The Director Mr. Smith v/ho supposed to be a neutral judge in his capacity as the father of all and supposed to be neutral middleman on Industrial Relations had refused to see our reason except that he commuted the termination to suspension out of clemency.

It is act of wickedness when a man in a supervisory position result to use of force and victimising v/ith sack instead of persuasive leadership that can serve as elastic incentive which keeps employees co-operating with production all the time and they feel a sense cf belonging. Hov/ever every employer is strongly advised to face his/her work, lateness should not be a habit nor 1ow efficiency.

V/hen you are called for Sunday Overtime or any overtime tell the concerned authority if you will have no time for it in future. This is the thing. Do not allow yourself to be made ’’scapegoats" by management, big and small chiefs. Even though Labour gave birth to capital and still nursing the growth of capital it is industrial irony that Labour is subjected to disdainful treatment no matter your previous year's performance. When Nigerianization becomes a disappointment is the time the small ones are not thought of being promoted but being victimized.

Once more we thank those who have contributed generally* The

Financial Secretary had been advised to get the list of those who have paid enthusiastically and the handful of people who have not paid. Of course it was learnt that some people v/ere going to pay by month end. But be advised if you are the one v/ho has not paid that a friend in need is a friend in deed. Life is governed by the lav/ of natural variations.

Long live Labour Solidarity,
S.M. Ganiyu,
General Secretary. [11]

Quite clearly Ganiyu is here taking advantage of the dispute being successfully wound up to make political capital from it in his capacity as a professional unionist. Though praising the contribution made by the workers as a whole, equally he publicises his ov/n and illustrates his particular skills. The union leader is, of course, an opinion leader too, so he spells out the broader implications with -which the issue has been concerned. Some of these are less relevant than others as Ganiyu borrows from the v/ider political framework: Nigerianization in the expatriate-dominated industrial sector especially v/as a common topic at this time for members of the political class, hence Ganiyu[1]s difficulties in making it relevant. But he does broaden certain specific issues into particularly pertinent generalizations which all workers consider relevant to themselves especially those surrounding conditions of service and victimization by those above them.

(Andrew complained privately that he did not raise the issue of •tribalism’ but Ganiyu v/as a Yoruba appealing to a predominantly Yoruba audience and trying to heighten certain common interests, not those on v/hich they could be divided.) Since so many Ikeja managements openly exploit the absence of trade unions or the weaknesses of those v/hich exist, the experiences of scapegoating and

victimisation by ''‘big and small chiefs" are widespread, much feared and resented. Workers themselves cannot articulate such hostility by virtue of the obvious constraints operating on them and so they look to the professional unionist to do so on their behalf. Ganiyu was then playing out his role in much the way workers expect him to behave v/ith a more forceful and rhetorical performance than the situation perhaps demanded: several workers pointed out that the tv/o men had been reinstated at least in part because the General Manager was ′:a man concerned to see justice done" *and* yet at the same time considered Ganiyu*s direct attack on him as entirely justified because, in the last analysis, he was indeed the leading member ox the opposition.

The central point is then that whatever the tribal background, occupational standing or various ascribed statuses v/hich a worker has, when involved in a dispute he crcates opportunities for union leaders to reinforce the impression among others that they are realizing the expectations derived from their roles. I return to this subsequently.

Finally at the interpersonal level what are the implications of this case study for tribe and class as categories of. interaction? I think this shows that as categories of <u>action</u> the two are independent of one another. In his network as a member of a particular tribal group the subject employed the notion of a shared cultural identity frequently, and in this case quite successfully, to achieve the ends he set for himself. *Or. the* other hand the rudimentary relationship v/ith the union and the workers was based solely on his role as a worker into which particularistic considerations have little importance. The spirit of solidarity invoked here,, as well demonstrated in a variety of ways from the collection among the workers to the tone of Ganiyu[T]s circular, was clearly on class lines and in acknowledgment of the fundamental division within the industrial sub-system. For the reasons outlined above Andrew did not have to make any further investments in the class system of action and, though his conviction in the value of the union may have been weakened by the immediate circumstances facing him, that he on the whole retained his attachment to hie class-based association v/as demonstrated by subsequent developments. On returning to work he

reassumed his union executive post and threw himself into even greater involvement in its affairs; as I left the field he was re elected for a third term of office. If anything, one might say that not only v/ere Andrew's attachments to tribal and class relation ships both high during the course of events described here, but by the time the crisis had passed, his involvement in both had been further heightened.

I have selected the second illustration of social drama in inter-personal relationships in order to reinforce the argument outlined above, in particular concerning the pressures on union leaders for them to deal satisfactorily with the day-to-day demands made of them Obviously no two case-studies can be entirely complementary though this one serves ray particular purpose; certain obvious parallels emerge and I deal with these briefly, only spelling out in detail the most important. But I also introduce this case-study because, during the course of subsequent events (those following the period of crisis,) I v/as struck not so much by the structure of relationships as the content of the interpretations which those involved placed on what had already passed, especially the class content as an essential element in workers' belief systems. This content at the interpersonal level seems to me to have considerable importance for the nature of class relationships and class consciousness at the broader group level.

Ramoni, aged 26, had worked for some six years in the weaving shed of International Textile after four years in secondary school at Abeokuta. An intelligent and lively young man, his ambition was to become a transporter at Agege. He hoped to save around £500 to buy a second-hand Kolue from an older friend, an Egba customs officer at Apapa v/ho had promised to help him. Ramoni's saving v/as not going v/ell for he liked the 'high life' and spent his money freely. In the year before I met him he had won £200 on the football pools and spent it all inside six weeks. Now, hov/ever, he v/as married v/ith a child and set himself reasonably intently on saving as quickly as possible.

He viewed his advancement to a three-month training course as a step in the right direction- Its major drawback v/as the company's insistence on newly promoted loom overlookers, the post for which the training qualified them, working for three months without any wage increment. V/ith only two weeks to go before the course ended, Hamoni had approached Sunmonu for help. Sunmonu was the senior Security Officer of International and husband to Ramoni's step-father's junior sister. Sunmonu agreed to help for he was in the pay of the perscnne manager of a new textile company (Europa) on the nearby Ilupeju industrial estate. In order to save the expense of training skilled workers, Europa 'hired' those in such positions as Sunmonu*s to direct dissatisfied workers in established companies to them. The following day Sunmonu visited Ramoni in his section, Ke had

telephoned Europa's personnel manager and placed Ramoni on the list of loom overlookers who were to be tested for employment the very next day.

The next morning Ramoni missed his training session in International, and after being tested at Europa with other workers including a handful from International, v/as offered a post in the new company on a basic rate of £45, almost £10 more than at International and with the possibility of considerable overtime. V/ithin tv/o days he had received a letter of appointment from Europa to start tv/o weeks later. Ramoni decided to resign immediately from International, even before his training course was complete, and take a short holiday before starting his new work.

Having written his letter of resignation at home, he passed it to a clerk in the weaving department v/ho then took it to the v/eaving manager and his assistant. Through the office's glass window he could see them discussing his note and eventually writing on it.
Vfhen Joseph the clerk emerged, he showed Ramoni that the weaving manager had written "Dismiss this boy with immediate effect" on the resignation letter, and redirected it to the personnel officer.
Joseph at .this time v/as courting Ramoni' s sister and on this basis explained that the tv/o managers had decided to make an example of Ramoni's precipitate action. By trying to dismiss him rather than accepting the resignation, Ramoni would lose the gratuity to v/hich he was due after six years unbroken employment, and so warn off other trainees or established skilled workers who may be considering following suit.

Feeling that he would do better to continue in the factory under such circumstances but also hoping that nothing would come of

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this, Ramoni continued to attend his training sessions in International- But three days later he found a dismissal note attached to his clock card. He immediately sought out Gbadamosi, the full-time union secretary and the union machine came into play. The position here was complicated but Gbadamosi handled it skillfully. When he approached the weaving manager, the latter claimed that Ramoni had been terminated because he had displayed a lack of interest in his training course and had failed *the* examinations Ramoni had taken since handing in his resignation. (For various reasons this was acceptable to the union for such examinations were a recent development and had not by then been discussed by the union.) It v/as fairly obvious that the management had taken advantage of the interim period to use the examination results as a suitable pretext on which to fire Ramoni.

On realizing this, Gbadamosi approached the British training officer in a quite separate building in the factory compound and asked him if he could see the results of these examinations. He agreed, and the result showed that Ramoni had passed the examinations quite easilyI Gbadamosi presented these to the weaving manager within the hour, much to the latter[1]s annoyance, but after a good deal of argument v/ith Gbadamosi threatening- union action on the grounds of illegal dismissal, the manager had stepped down. He sent a letter to the personnel officer instructing that Ramoni should receive his full gratuity.

Now, as in the case of Ganiyu, even in this brief account, one can see the authority v/hich union secretaries have, and the manner in which they employ their expertise. Whereas Ganiyu was general secretary to several unions, Gbadamosi v/as the full-time secretary to International alone, this being the largest company on the estate with over three thousand workers. Gbadamosi v/as therefore intimately acquainted with all aspects of International life and the bureaucratic divisions within the company. He v/as obviously acquainted too v/ith the lack of co-ordination between the departments! By moving quickly and freely he was able to take advantage of the management blunder and had little difficulty in turning the cards on the weaving manager. The dispute was settled quickly and efficiently and to Ramoni's substantial advantage. Ramoni would not, of course, have been able to do likewise, but as the union representative, Gbadamosi had gained access to the examination records and so destroyed the management's case. Furthermore, the action had taken place within the factory confines, albeit affected (as in the previous case) by the proposal of taking the company to the industrial court in Lagos. Because of the expense and inconvenience v/hich this involves, especially where the issue is of minor importance and one side's case is obviously weak, the threat v/as employed effectively,,

There were, however, other issues in operation here which, I suspect, affected somewhat Gbadamosi?s rapid response* First, workers in International who, after similar training and the subsequent promotion, had had to endure a further three months without increment, had complained to union officials repeatedly. The union was pressing the management on this question and their case would clearly be strengthened by the actions described here. Second, International had acquired the nickname of ’The Ikeja Training Centre' because of the manner in v/hich, having trained workers at considerable expense, they couD.d only stand by as such trainees departed subsequently for other textile companies offering higher wages than International itself. (International had the largest textile operatives population in the Lagos area, so higher v/ages would have added considerably to overall costs. Further, trainees from subsidiaries-of the parent company elsewhere in Nigeria v/ere trained at Ikeja, so the

repercussions of immediate wage increments would have been wider than the company alone.) This unfortunate reputation rankled with the International union leaders and I had earlier been present at an informal gathering of Ikeja unionists when those from other factories had ribbed Gbadamosi and his president on this very issue: the implication was that the union was failing in its duties. Once again, then, the complementarity of the interests of the individual worker, Ramoni, and those of the union 3.eaders emerges quite clearly* In this particular instance, Gbadamosi did not attempt to make substantial political capital of his success as Ganiyu did in case one; but he was the secretary to this union alone and the executive as a whole were in a strong position in relation to both workers and management. Again I will refer to some of these considerations in the next chapter. For the moment I will describe the subsequent course of events surrounding Ramoni.

Assured of his month's wage and gratuity Ramoni began his holiday. On the first morning he was standing with his chewing stick outside his house when Segun, an Abeokuta youth whom Ramoni had met three years previously in International, passed by. He started in joke accusation against Ramoni, "Because we are such good friends, I didn't expect you to resign without telling me first. The whole section is talking of your cheek and I must be the last to know.[1]' Ramoni ignored this and asked, "V/liat have you been doing until this time? Your shift ended at six and it's now eight o'clock." Segun explained that as maintenance man he had been ordered to repair a broken fan in the weaving shed before he could leave the factory. "Trouble today and no doubt trouble tomorrow. That is factory life!" and he asked Ramoni to explain how he had organised his change of workplace, which his friend did at some length.

When he concluded, Segun commented, "I am fed up v/ith International v/ork. They do not pay well at all. Introduce me to your brother Sunmonu for I don't know him well at all." Rarnoni agreed and they turned to a discussion of how Segun should conduct him to his new rooms at Ajegunle the following Sunday as they walked in the direction of the Agege Motor Road where Ramoni stopped in the house of his father's junior brother, Oyedeji, who had a tailoring shop attached to his house. For some time Ramoni had promised to rev/ire parts of Oyedeji's house and so he spent the rest of the morning there or drinking with his uncle in a nearby bar discussing home-town affirs.

As he walked home in the early afternoon, Kolav/ole, a foreman at International, caught him up. An Ijebu man in his late 20's, he had been in the factory for five years and lived near to Ramoni with his family. After exchanging greetings Kola commented, "I hear that you are resting before you start your new work, brother. You have done well to beat the management in this way. If they fail to improve the

v/ages of supervisors in this way for much longer they will lose them allI" He had heard of Ramoni*s action from gossip on the shopfloor. After discussing this source he added that he had also heard of a staff member earning £90 per month being dismissed three days previously. Ramoni took interest in this and asked the man's name and reason for dismissal. "It is Lav/al in charge of the dyeing section, but as to the cause, that is best known to the management themselves." "Lav/al is it? I know the man. Whatever the reason I know that the man deserves such treatment. You know he used to say to the men whom he recommended for promotion, ‘I can make a rich man to be poor and a poor man to be rich*, so that they knew they depended on him. It is right that he is receiving the treatment he used to give to others. And it serves him right for demanding dash from those he promoted."

Ramoni gloated for some time over this news before they walked to Kolav/ole's house to listen to his records. Then after eating v/ith his wife, he spent the rest of the evening playing table tennis with his close friend Idowu whose alias was 'Manager,* a title he was accorded by virtue of his running a pools agency in Ajegunle. As Manager v/as an unmarried man and fend of girls, their conversation that evening revolved around that subject.

The following day, Ramoni spent the early morning v/ith tv/o co-tenants, David and Suara Solotan in the latter's tailoring shop next door to their house. Suara, the junior brother was self- employed whilst David worked in International. David talked of the interest which Ramoni*s resignation had caused, and after hearing of it Suara said, "I admire your actions, brother, but you see the advantage of being employed by yourself as I an- *There* is no *clock* to *watch or* manager to order me about at all hours of the day.
There is nothing to fear if you work hard at your business and avoid big trouble," but when David pointed out that Suara had made pregnant his girl friend which was another way of making 'big trouble', the conversation quickly changed course as the brothers began to quarrel.

After putting on his best clothes, Ramoni set off for Kiyi's house, Niyi being a thirty-year old Ijebu whose mother used to sell gin and palm wine near to Ramoni*s mother's stall. Ramoni knew that he was now working for Europa textiles. As he approached the house, he saw a crowd outside Niyi*s residence and in the middle his acquaintance and a stranger hurling insults at one another. From onlookers,
Ramoni gathered that Niyi had' returned home unexpectedly to find the stranger making advances to his wife. The house was adjacent to the police station and soon afterwards a constable arrived. After a good deal of further dispute, the matter v/as resolved v/ith the crowd and the supposed seducer moving away. Niyi recognized Ramoni and called him over. He talked for some time in his room on how he might divorce his wife until'he exhausted the topic, giving Ramoni the chance to discuss his own affairs. He told him of the manner in which he had left International for Europa and requested the machine manual used in the new company. "1 do not know if you will be better off with us. It is a new company and the organization is so bad that we waste much time. The overlookers do not suffer too badly from machine breakdown but the"workers on piece-rate do, and so get angry when it is not the supervisor's fault. Because of breakdown there is compulsory overtime almost every day." ''That is alright to me," replied Ramoni, "1 am after the money that is all. If the pay is good then I don't mind long hours. Factory work is no good whichever way it is organized. Money is all that counts."

V/ith this he took his leave of Niyi to collect his pay from the factory. When he arrived, the head clerk had not yet returned from break, and so he v/aited outside his previous section where several of the younger workers on s. different shift approached him. They asked whether he had as yet started v/ork in Europa and when he replied in the negative, a.sked that when he v/as 'established' there he would help them too to find v/ork on the shopfloor* When he pointed out that the lower workers received the same rate, they complained that only the same day the monthly increments granted by management to high-productivity workers had only been granted to 'brothers' of the departmental head; under these circumstances there could be no improvement for them.

After collecting his final pay of £22 and a gratuity of £25-10-» he waited until Sunmonu, his kinsman and helper, clocked out.
As they walked from the factory they exchanged greetings and Ramoni began to thank him for his help. "Thanks to your help,

I am indeed happy now. This move (to Europa) will serve me well and hasten my departure from factory life entirely. I am too grateful. Within four or five years, then you will see me starting as a transporter. I will get to be as big as V/ere in no time," he joked, referring to a large transporting company based in Lagos. Despite mild protestations Sunmonu pocketted the five pounds v/hich Ramoni gave him from his wage-packet. "May God be with you in your nev; work. Remember not to tell a soul of how I helped you. The management will surely sack me if they find out...-Unless it is a true brother who knows how to keep his peace wellI" he added finally*

On his way home again Ramoni saw Ade, an Ife man sitting on a bench with his wife and child outside the house which he himself owned on Ogba Road. Ade's experiences were similar to Ramoni[f]s own. Four years previously, Ade had been sent to the Kaduna School of Technology on a lengthy course at the expense of International for whom he then worked. But once fully trained as a technician, he had worked for only six months with International before moving to another company at a higher salary. Before Ramoni could say anything, Ade joked, "So you follow my own footsteps; perhaps you do better than I for not even one day do you give the company the benefit of your training![11] "I don't want tc work without money and I want money without work like everyone else," retorted Ramoni. "But hov; did you come to hear of my resignation from International?" "It v/as from Jossy, my junior brother in the company. lie is a small boy so I doubt if you will know him for you can only know a handful in such a place. But with your action you are a big man indeed for you have a reputation. Just as I was before, you are now indeed a hero."

For the rest of the day, Ramoni shopped in Lagos with the money he had received. His wife was ill and so he bought clothes and shoes for her and his son. That evening he was visited by Ola, an Abeokuta man of Ramoni's age and also a loom overlooker in International, though he had been trained several months previously.
On hearing that Ola v/as coming from the market, Ramoni commented, "So you have spent your increment already, have you?"

"There is no increment for me this time; only a few on my shift have been given it, all brothers to the head of department. 1 had been hoping, but when I saw there was nochange on my payslip I did nothing but play for the rest of my shift. From yesterday throughout today, I am to3.d the production hasbeen low. This increment is the lowest ever given by this mean management. I start looking for work elsewhere right now. There is no progress anywhere." "But why have'nt you moved to a new factory before now?" asked Ramoni. ‘You see how easy it is when you have been trained. Look at me."

"I v/as called for an interview in Nippon (a new textile company at Ikeja) only last month but I decided not to go, in the hope that this increment would be good. Instead it is nonsense. This management, they are rubbish people, you know. These boys of our[3] are not going to work now as before for they are badly disappointed. Then the management will get angry. But even if they sack the offenders, it does not

matter because everyone wishes to leave anyway-” The more they discussed the matter, the more depressed became Ola. He was only cheered when Ramoni agreed to introduce him to Sunmonu, and with this the two men turned to a discussion of the approaching English football season and their prospects for winning the pools.

Nov; in this case-study (as indeed the one v/hich preceded it) the generalized dissatisfaction v/ith wage-earning employment emerges with considerable clarity; v/hat struck me about the sequel to Ramoni's crisis situation was the particular form v/hich such dissatisfaction takes, namely the manner in which Ramoni becomes a •hero’ among his fellows, in the v/ords of one of the characters involved. Throughout the conversations included here, explicit and implicit comparisons are continually being made betv/een factory employment and independent entrepreneurship, consistently weighted as one might expect in favour of the latter. But the underlying theme directed against wage-earning at Ikeja is the rigidity and lack of control for individuals over the prevailing circumstances, especially on the question of v/ages: such rigidity is obviously

much resented by comparison with self-employment since it allows the worker so little control over his immediate condition. V/here the individual manipulates and clearly exploits the industrial system to his ov/n advantage, then he achieves the stature of a local figure and information concerning his strategy is rapidly disseminated.

As the account shows, nev/s of Ramoni's activities has circulated v/ithin four gossip networks comprising factory workers, independently of his immediate participation in them, and a more extended account would point to several more: for a wide range of v/orkers this was a consideration of some importance and one not confined to workers of Samoni’s particular company. The social significance of his action was one appreciated by avariety of wage-earners and received a common interpretation; for all it was a subject of amusement and appreciation since they shared a mutual antagonism to the nature of industrial employment. Host workers, of course, are unable to respond to their conditions with the apparent disdain which Ramoni’s performance exhibited very v/ell: constrained by low skill levels, low v/ages and lack of contacts v/ith v/hich to move betv/een factories, a similar course of action is beyond their

abilities. So where a locphole in the system is revealed and taken advantage of by one of their peers, then a considerable amount of satisfaction is generated by seeing him do so successfully.

Fur t her more, the developments are illuminating in the way in which a sense of unity is shared and generated by both participants and observers to Ramoni's performance. In a way the affair achieves the impression of 'a worker conspiracy[1] directed in Ramoni's favour and against .the interests of International's management. The train of events gets underway via the involvement of the senior security officer, the management's response is revealed by a clerk, other prospective candidates for exploring the same loopholes emerge, and the whole is afforded support and legitimacy by workers of widely differing occupational statuses, ranging from young unskilled employees through to older well-paid and influential technicians and supervisors. Seeing such expressions of unity of purpose being put into action seems a more suitable approach to relying on simply expressed attitudes (or responses to hypothetical situations) in order to illustrate the essential shared value-system with v/hich workers approach the industrial arena: in this case workers are responding to prevailing circumstances as workers alone and are doing so without reference to any ascriptive ties or sentiments.

But whilst one may, at least in part, explain such conspiracy by reference to the unfavourable judgments which workers make of the industrial environment per se, equally one must consider those in-factory conditions v/hich invite a reaction on the lines outlined above. The activities of the workers is inseparable from their perceptions of the actions of those in power above them. Here there is a similarity running through both the Case of the Dismissed Ibo Worker and the Case of the Local Hero, i.e. the manner in which those on top are held to manipulate their roles to their own advantage on the basis of relationships and sentiments which workers consider illegitimate, particularly in-factory demonstrations of 'tribalism.' In the second case-study this emerges in the discussion of the way in which departmental heads distribute bonus payments to their kinsmen or townsmen, *in the first the* manner *in v/hich* Andrew considered the personnel manager was dismissing him in order to maize way for an Ibadan relation. To what extent such favouritism
actually occurs on the factory floor is impossible to judge though

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acknowledgment of its existence is frequently made from top to bottom of the occupational structure. The point is that workers in the lower

reaches believe that this form of ’tribalism[1] does occur, and frequently so, and accordingly develop what is considered to be an appropriate response, the kind of unified opposition described here. So far I have employed the terra [1] tribalism[1] to describe those social relationships and sentiments viewed by the observer of on-going social processes in the urban context; this is obviously of a quite different quality to the use of the term 'tribalism* in its pejorative sense as employed by the subjects themselves to describe processes they considez' are talcing place v/ithin the industrial one. When 'tribalism[1] is used in this context it entails a description of the real and anticipated manipulation of power roles within the factory context on the basis of division betv/een those v/ho control the means of production and those v/ho do not. In the Weberian sense, this is economically-conditioned power and as such is a reflection of, and supplement to, the economic class division inherent within an industrial organization run on capitalist lines. In general terms, workers at Ikeja accept the overall structure of industrial enterprise and are concerned, especially through involvement in trade unions, to reach a measure of accommodation to that structure; they have not, as yet, developed an alternative view of how it could be organized. It is accepted overall as a legitimate system even if substantial elements of the prevailing distribution of rewards is strongly opposed. But on specific items, the manipulation of authority roles by the incumbents is branded as unacceptable in the extreme. Since those at the top engage in such improper action outside the formal framework, so at the bottom workers consider their own informal strategics to be justified too. But whatever the reasons for such actions, the *general effect is the same* - to heighten the already v/idely prevalent alienation from the conditions of industrial labour and attachment to those institutionalized groupings, formal and informal, which can at least ameliorate them*. In substantial measure, this takes the form of close interest in house union

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affairs, but at the highly interpersonal level it is reflected in the expressions of unity between those in different locations in the same factory and workers in different factories on the Ikeja estate and beyond. That “we are all workers v/lio must join hands together" is a commonly-expressed theme and one brought into play in certain circumstances.

In passing, I have pointed to the specific interests which Ganiyu ap.d Gbadamosi had in making a conspicuous display of the successes which each had in managing their respective disputes. Though a trade union consciousness may indeed be a natural reaction to v/age- employraent on the lines of Ikeja factories, nevertheless individuals within the union structures must have particular interests and ambitions to realize in order that such a consciousness may be properly mobilized to the workers’ own advantage, if at all. In this more wide ranging process, instances of the union successfully resolving minor disputes are of critical importance, particularly against the historical background of failure common to most such unions. Precise details of such disputes are disseminated rapidly throughout the workforce and v/here successful add considerably to the impression that gains can be made elsewhere. Nor do failures by union leaders necessarily detract from their standing'; that the combined efforts of leaders have been brought into action in order to challenge the management can similarly add to confidence, for few workers expect the union to be successful under all circumstances.

Nevertheless, the analysis of minor disputes clearly has considerable implications for other major ones which house unions face. Workers are scarcely likely to follow' calls for strike activity in the knowledge that the union cannot fulfil its everyday responsibilities or believe that unionists are pursuing private interests incompatible with their own.

For this reason, the diachronic analysis of specific actors in the context of on-going structural relationships based on a shared class experience is a prerequisite to the analysis of wider socio-political movements. The above case-studies hopefully give some impression of the quality of industrial employment, the imponderabilia of urban-industrial life, and the pervasive response of deep-rooted dissatisfaction workers share- Wage-earning is seen as a means to entering the entrepreneurial realm; but the very conditions of wage-employment also prove fundamental obstacles to actually following

through this course of action. Paradoxically then though workers share the ultimate ambition of entrepreneurship, collective action on the basis of a common class situation to improve conditions of service and raise wages is an integral part of these longer-term intentions. Though analytically one may examine separately workers’ and unionists' micro-level performances, these are in real terras inseparable from broader-based group activity. What follows is designed to provide an explanatory backdrop against v/hich one may interpret the structure and content ox such broader movements as illustrated by the Adebo affair.

1. Cf. P.C. Lloyd., (1971)? Classes, Crises and Cou-QS, ch. 6.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

2. In this chapter particularly I use the extended- case method as outlined by J. Van Velsen, (19^7) ,'!The Extended-Case Method and Situational Analysis", in A.L. Epstein, (ed.), The Craft of Social Anthropology, that is, "the diachronic treatment 01 the actions of specified actors in on-going structural relationships'* - (p. iMt*)

3. The influence of tribal considerations (or lack of them) in the East African Railways and harbours of Kampala is also discussed in R.D. Grillo, (1969)» "The Tribal Factor in an East African Trade Union", in P.E. Gulliver, (ed.), Tradition and Transition in East Africa.

Notwithstanding the generalized sense of dissatisfaction which the Case of the Local Hero illustrates, a dissatisfaction made manifest in the verbal communications and types of action in which the participants were involved, workers taking part were responding in a variety of ways to the limitations which wage labour imposed on them. Only in certain circumstances, however, are workers in search of economic improvement able to respond in a highly individualistic fashion to prevailing in-factory conditions. It is the skilled workers alone who share a more favourable wider market situation on the estate (or Lagos generally) than most and enjoy a number of alternative adaptations within wage employment, i'he majority of workers are faced v/ith one course of action to improve their material conditions: membership of the trade union. By such membership, the individual is able to pursue his immediate aspirations to enjoy the benefits of urban life and his long-term aspirations to trade by engaging in collective action on a group basis. His individual interests become synonymous with social action on the collective level, and his personal ambitions can only be realized in co-operation v/ith others, (A minority, those in non-unionized labour forces, can only accept prevailing wage rates and conditions of service as set by their respective managements.)

Because of the structure of entrepreneurship in Agege t ov/n ship, a member of the economic community there has a clear interpretation of those circumstances which encourage or prohibit his success. As I suggested, competitive individualism among entrepreneurs is a constant theme v/hich does reflect the essential quality of entrepreneurship: there are in the community no distinct economic strata betv/een v/hich class-structured opposition and conflict over scarce resources takes place. It is every man for himself, but he does know v/ho are his major competitors, his major allies and those who could become one or the other. Perhaps the only exceptions to this "knov/able bcdy!: of persons

in the field of entrepreneurship are those using witchcraft against him. External economic and political forces certainly structure the existential situation in v/hich the individual is involved, but the ongoing reality which he directly experiences provides sufficient data for him to understand those influences which shape his immediate circumstances.

By contrast, the industrial system is of a qualitatively different order for the economic forces which determine his daily existence fall outside the limits of his "knowable body" of people, his work life is subject to the decisions and interests of others who fall v/ell outside his cognitive map; the rigidity inherent in industrial life is compounded by ignorance of who precisely are his enemies, allies, exploiters and supporters, Accordingly the worker can only deal v/ith the representatives of those agencies v/hich determine his reality: because of the structure of the industrial system he must do so through available intermediaries and rely on partial information and intuition rather than a comprehensive understanding of that reality in order to decide on his appropriate response.

At all events, the worker's choice of courses of action is exceptionally limited: the structure O1 industrial enterprise and the prevailing system of *reward distribution is* basically unchallengeable* Workers in general have not yet developed an alternative vision O1 their society nor is there any organizational basis at present for inculcating such a vision. The only rational response is one of accommodation to the structure of power as it now stands and the only possibility for improvement comes through trade union membership. Within the prevailing system, the house unions on v/hich 1 now concentrate, constitute the most effective possible response to low wage rates set by Government directive in 196^, the poor conditions of service under v/hich many workers continue to labour, ar.d the overall economic and political power complex of v/hich the Ikeja system forms a part.[1]

Accordingly, having examined the relationship of the individual to his union, I now turn to the nature of group activity. In objective terms, as the worker enters the factory gate, then he is "proletarianized" beyond the influence -of those ethnic and status groups in the wider urban community. Ke shares with others the same subordinate relationship to the industrial mode of production and on this class basis he acts in opposition to members of other economic classes whose interests are diametrically opposed to his own. The individual as an individual

relates to his union especially on the question of security, but the individual as a member of a class relates to the union on the question of wages above all. This is not to suggest that class action finds expression only in collective movements over wages and salaries in particular. As suggested in the previous chapter, the class content of relatively minor issues is very high and can be taken as accurate an indication of class consciousness as any other, nut everyday class action is best seen as a continuous on-going backdrop against which occasional concerted action on wage rates is best understood. It is in the context of collective action in protection of wages that the subjective interpret ation v/hich workers themselves place on their structural position is most clearly articulated.

At the same time, whilst a proletarian consciousness may indeed be an automatic response to industrial capitalism, nevertheless the effective mobilization of lower class sentiments remains problematic for a labour movement on any scale, including Ikeja house unions. The interests of workers are inseparable from the interests of their leaders: but these are by no means necessarily identical or complementary. For this reason, whilst moving away from the individual worker, I place emphasis here on the position of the individual leader in relation to his followers and the subjective responses generated by this relationship.

Workers employed on the Ikeja estate frequently draw a crude distinction betv/een tv/o types of employers on the lines of moral stature. European managers, especially British ones, are often characterized as paternalistic overlords much concerned (v/ithin limits) to treat their workers justly, whilst non-European managers are usually reputed to be the reverse. Indian and Chinese managers in particular are said to be highly authoritarian, allowing no unnecessary considerations to interfere with the maximum exploit-aticn of cheap labour. I have often hoard, long-standing British managers described in genuinely admiring tones for the concern they have shown to individual workers; the relationship often seems, reminiscent of those between colonial officers and the subjects in their domain. Equally frequently, Indian and Chinese managers are described as aro oko (bushmen) because of their brusque and uncompromising manner and their lack of command of the English language. A Yoruba neighbour v/ho had worked for four years in a Chinese metalware company once complained, "V/e can have no master- respect for these illiterates. Why, even the boy in secondary school can speak better English, than the managing director of my factory. Hov/ can I be content working for a man with no more education than a Hausa water-carrier, yet for a day's v/ork he receives my monthly wage six

times over?" Such cultural stereotypes disappear quickly when crisis situations develop, but at least they indicate certain differences in managerial style v/hich, in their turn, point to variations in factory technology and structure.

For present purposes a broad two-fold distinction will suffice. On the one hand aro the largest companies requiring high capital investment and a sophisticated level of technology. The labour force of these companies, several hundred and in certain cases several thousand strong, generally requires considerable training with a small proportion of workers receiving very intensive education as they increasingly take over highly skilled, technical and supervisory roles formerly filled by Europeans. For the most part this is process production in companies which are the subsidiaries of Western European based multi-national corporations. Within iiigeria itself several of these parent companies have subsidiaries especially in the old Mid- West and Eastern Regions. On the other hand are the smaller companies in Chinese or Indian hands requiring considerably .less capital investment and operating at a more elementary technological level. Most such companies have labour forces of only a few hundred or less than a hundred engaged in line production and v/ith only slight variations in skill level. Host workers car. be trained in their tasks v/ithin a few hours or a few days, v/ith a mere handful of skilled employees;

training within the factory to a high skill level is virtually unknown and technicians are recruited from outside. Though such firms may have parent companies in the management's country of origin, these are not the off-shoots of the multi-national corporations. In certain instances these firms are ov/ned by wealthy expatriate importers and exporters owning trading firms in Lagos new attempting to diversify the base of their privately-owned companies, here I will confine my analysis to the first type of industrial firmsi these are the largest employers at Ikeja and economically and politic-' ally dominate the manufacturing-industrial scene not only on the estate but, with others, *the* Lagos area as a whole* *One should* add, however, that increasingly the division betv/een the two types of industrial enterprise is disappearing; now that the enormous profitability of manufacturing is well proven and Nigeria's endemic politica instability has been shown not to affect adversely the interests of expatriate firms, the range of international investment is continuing on a larger scale than ever before. Just as more West European multi-national corporations enter the Nigerian economy, so are the Chinese, Japanese, Syrian and Indian manufacturers realizing the enormous potential of the Nigerian market for a wider range of manufactured commodities.

The first major companies at Ikeja were established by the leading trading companies of the colonial era, for example, the United Africa Company and G.b. Ollivant, in recognition of the demand for consumption goods from the relatively prosperous population of the Western Region, the higher profitability of manufacturing commodities on the spot rather than enduring ever greater shipping costs, and the generous facilities offered for industrialists by the *We*stern Region Government.

Nevertheless the construction of factory shells, importing machinery and attracting experienced management and skilled workers from ilurope, obviously required the relocation of substantial capital investment from established areas of capital accumulation into these relatively new ones. Furthermore, with subsequent investment highly dependent on initial profitability, encouraging the growth of *a* stable .and quiescent labour force v/as essential from the outset: perpetual labour unrest, especially in the immediate post-Independence climate would scarcely have encouraged the injection of more capital into capital-intensive firms. For this reason, encouragement of collective bargaining procedures on the British model, once workers began to demand some form of representation, was not only a suitable but also a necessary strategy demanded by force of circumstances. In the early i96O's (as today) Government involvement in the setting up of industrial

relations procedures v/as slight; the impetus had to come from within.

The Origins of iiouse Unionism

On the workers' side the pattern of expectations v/as set by labour recruitment of skilled and unskilled labour. In the Lagos area a skilled and semi-skilled labour force already existed, for the most part concentrated in the public sector (such as the kailway Corporation and the Port's Authority) v/here they also had been trained in Government training centres. Though the most senior non-managerial posts for plant construction and machinery installation v/ere filled by contracted exjjatriates, once shells v/ere built, skilled posts were open to Africans. With prevailing wage-rates set above those levels obtaining in the public sector plus the opportunities of further promotion in the. relatively short-run as the factories expanded, so workers moved from public into private employment.

Besides their skills, they also brought experience of industrial relations, again on the British model, for it was in the public corporations that the colonial Government had encouraged wage and salary negotiation as elsewhere in African territories. Some indeed had been closely involved in union affairs for several years before moving to Ikeja. Not only were they acquainted with formal procedure but had also imbued the value-system which surrounded negotiating procedure, and so were particularly acceptable to expatriate managements as worker representatives.

As I describe below, the position has now changed: first, these skilled workers have moved into the most senior skilled posts, virtually quasi-management positions, and second, shopfloor workers have promoted their own leaders into -union executive positions. Initially however, workers in the serai-skilled and unskilled reaches played little active part in setting up their house unions. Many of these were recruited into the factory from those labour forces v/hich built them; the attraction of permanent stable employment was considerable for unskilled workers employed by building contracting firms on a short-term basis and usually minimum wages. Few of these had experience of trade unionism, many were initially employed on the understanding they might be terminated if they did not reach acceptable productivity levels, and few understood their rights. (There wer also extraneous political factors as described below.) Lower-level workers were, then, prepared to follow but not to lead; facing the immediate task of adapting to full-time wage employment in the strange industrial environment posed sufficient problems for many.. On the rare occasion when workers in the lowest reaches did attempt to form a house union (for example in one

company v/here several had previously been members of the Amalgamated Union of ll.A.C. African V/orkers) they were invariably outraaneouvred by more skilled workers aided by- management support. As one established British manager told me, "we knew the skilled v/orkers could be relied upon to be reasonable in their demands," (his emphasis) clearly implying that v/orkers in the lower reaches could not. Finally, as larger numbers of experienced v/orkers filled the first few factories, the need to retain their services further encouraged increasing formalization of relationships with house union leaders; where members of the established labour force felt the opportunities v/ere slight for pressure in the form of collective action, then the chances were they would move elsewhere - not an especially difficult task for experienced operatives when new companies were continually opening and experienced skilled v/orkers v/ere small in number.

There were then very sound economic reasons for the benevolent and guided sponsorship of house unions in capital-intensive companies, apart from European managers' concern to allow v/orkers to exercise their rights. Provided their demands were kept within tolerable limits, v/age-increments and conditions of employment could be gradually improved as the companies reached their early levels of maximum productivity and began to make further long term investment decisions on plant construction and worker recruitment. The strategy was eminently successful if measured in terms of extended industrial disputes. Apart from the notable exception of the 196^ General Strik collective industrial action by the earliest labour forces v/as alv/ays short-lived and, if the management involved considered it expedient, easily broken (in some cases by terminating the ringleaders v/hich v/as very rare, or simply suggesting that such actions v/ere inimical to th individual's career pattern v/hich was fairly common,) Cn the whole, however, the early companies had few significant disputes and quickly realized their potential from the production point of view.

As unions emerged in an ad hoc fashion according to the particular circumstances in each factory, so too a pattern of negotiation developed in response to circumstances as they arose. Throughout the focus has remained on negotiation between individual managements and house unions, a localized pattern little constrained by Government stipulations. From the beginning, wage and salary levels allowed annual increments for all (except casual) labour and managements accepted from the outset union demands for annual negotiations, linion leaders dealt v/ith problems over conditions of service as they emerged, though today these too have become part of the annual *review* in established factories. where internal

disputes occur they are taken directly to the personnel manager by a union official. In the great majority of cases, these are dealt with more or less immediately and without any record being kept. Theoretically, v/orkers' grievances are transmitted through shopstewards to internal or general secretaries to the management; in effect v/orkers raise their complaints directly v/ith union leaders who are quite accessible in companies only several hundred strong. For this reason, though shop-stewards are elected, they are usually ineffective and unnecessary, apart from in minor representations to departmental heads. V/ith the exception of annual *wage* and salary negotiations then, the internal industrial relations system is relatively informal, a procedure which well suits both sides since it is the most efficient. Management representatives and union leaders place great emphasis on goodwill and reciprocity in dealing with the other side; but at root, convenience is the most important determinant of the prevailing system.

So, for the most part, the system is determined by immediate circumstances v/ithin the boundaries of the factory. Only at two points do external considerations effectively come into play, the finalization of new wage and salary agreements and major industrial disputes. With regard to the former, by 1970 all new income changes required approval by the Ministry of Labour officials in Lagos, a measure taken to reduce wage and salary inflation. However, because of the very particular conditions in each company v/hich lead to wage increases, Ministry officials' can rarely challenge the basis on which managements have granted them. Records in several companies show tha increments are usually recommended on the basis of increases in the cost of living and on the grounds that others will lead to higher productivity: these are the major items surrounded by a wide range*
of minor ones. Full v/ritten accounts of ongoing negotiations between management and union are not kept, and consequently Ministry official have little basis on v/hich to challenge increments recommended by management. I encountered no instance where Ministry officials exercised their right of veto. Again then, the importance of manage- ment-union negotiation within the factory is reinforced.

Second, in the case of major industrial disputes on v/hich union and management cannot reach agreement, the Labour Officer at Ikeja may be called upon to arbitrate, and if he fails, then an official from the Ministry may be called in. Only v/here this procedure is exhausted, theoretically, can a dispute be formally declared and a strike or lock-out put into action. With the outbreak of the civil war, hov/ever, Decree 53 was passed v/hich banned all such actions or even incitement to

commence such action by trade unionists. Again, practice has alv/ays fallen well short of theory and strike action

continued to be declared on major issues before the procedure of arbitration was exhausted, primarily because the procedure is long, cumbersome and unpredictable. Unionists in particular are prepared to run the risk of imprisonment rather than follow the formal procedure v/hich entails generating distrust among the v/orkers, when industrial action gets underway, matters are quickly brought to a head mailing management responsive to an equally speedy settlement.

Even though the formal procedure overall does act in managements' interests, nor are they keen to follow the procedure through because the machinery is so unmanageable. On both sides, the internal settlement of disputes is far preferable to introducing an outside body. The result is to place heightened importance on the impact which workers can make both through formal and informal action on the shopfloor, and thus make relationships betv/een union leaders and their members central to their degree of success. In private, expatriate managers frequently admit a distinct preference for negotiation on all issues with house union leaders rather than arbitration by even sympathetic outside agents - in the words of one manager, "better the devil you know than the devil you don't."

On the one side then the very nature of capital intensive industrial enterprise requires that expatriate managements accommodate unions' demands for representation through collective bargaining. On tile other, union officials acknowledge that working within the parameters established by management is, at the present time, the most suitable framework in which to pursue both their own and their workers' interests. A considerable measure of restraint is necessary on the part of union leaders, however, in their demands for higher v/ages and better conditions of service. As suggested, since the companies are capital intensive, minimizing lengthy industrial disputes on the shcp- floor is a sine qua non for expatriate companies.. Yet it is nevertheless widely accepted that if they so wished managers could quickly disrupt their internal house unions, or'indeed smash them cuite literally- The experience of embryonic unions in non-European companies is salutory in this respect; prospective union leaders have been terminated or bought off and union sympathizers have been
sacked on nas.se.

In the smaller companies where the majority of workers are unskilled and subject to the vagaries of instability in the urban environment, this strategy can be successful. Those terminated can be easily replaced by applicants; those remaining prefer to endure minimum wage rates and poor work conditions rather than press for their rights and suffer dismissal. The larger European companies could do likewise but not only would this

act against their short-term economic interests, it would also adversely affect their relationship with the national political elite on whom rests their continued presence. V/hilst Indian and Chinese managers at Ikeja behave with rare disregard for the political climate, (their very size allows them to do so), European managers in particular are becoming increasingly sensitive towards it with tentative discussions afoot on the questions of iiigerianization and nationalization. Though the possibility of such action is slight indeed, nevertheless stabilization of relationships between the expatriate managerial class and the comprador bourgeoisie managing the interests of the multinational corporations becomes more and more necessary.

In the class system of industrial enterprise then there are inherent conflicts betv/een different types of management and betv/een industrial managements and the political class itself: I return to this question in the context of the Adebo affair and discuss some of these tensions more fully. The point I wish to make here in passing is that, for these *reasons*, the economic class system of the industrial estate, the division between workers and managers, cannot be considered fully v/ithout reference to the wider economic and political framework since these wider processes impinge in a number of ways on it, covertly and overtly.

For the present, it is sufficient to note that such differences in managerial style act against close co-operation betv/een managements in particular companies. For example, the Nigerian Employer’s Consultative Association (I,'EGA) branch at Ikeja is dominated by European managers who actively discourage membership by certain Indian and Chinese managements, and thus disassociate themselves from the latter's actions. Furthermore there is increasing rivalry developing between all managements, European ones included, as new factories begin to produce the same goods as those of established firms. This involves increasing price competition in the same commodities (textiles is the major example) and increasing competition for skilled labour especially by offering somewhat higher wage rates than those which already obtain. This form of competition has important repercussions at Ikeja; not only does it present a serious obstacle to intermanagement co-operation, it leads to a wage and salary spiral in the local context. Managements fear losing skilled workers, unionists come under pressure from the workers to preserve existing wage differentials between themselves and others in adjacent companies.

Available wage-rates do not indicate this factor since it is a most recent development, but it is one of which managers, unionists a.nd workers are acutely aware.

Two Unions

For these reasons, I concentrate henceforth on historical and contemporary developments v/ithin tv/o particular companies, the International Textile Company and the Champion Beer Company. Both are large expatriate-owned enterprises which opened in the early part of the last decade; as such, economically and politically, the unions and managements of both hold considerable sway on the estate as a whole. Particularly v/here important political issues arise, the general managers and leading unionists of both tend to be in the forefront. Each has a large and stable working population and powerful house unions supported by the majority of the workers, and exhibit a close relationship between leaders and followers. But the present strength of both unions cannot be explained simply in terms of the high degree of proletarian consciousness displayed by the v/orkers, it is inseparable from their historical development, for past experiences to a considerable degree determine the pattern at present.

An important element in the background to both unions which can be outlined first was the 1 cj6k General Strike. By then both unions v/ere in an early stage of formation and subject to certain internal problems. But the General Strike was as important to their development as it has been in the history of Nigeria's political development as a whole. And there are certain important parallels between developments then and tne Adebo affair of 1971* here a brief outline must suffice.[2]

In 1963 the Federal Government, no longer able to ignore the high rates of inflation in the major urban areas in particular, established a Commission on V/ages and Salaries in the Federation, the standard procedure for raising minimum wage rates inherited from the colonial administration. After several months deliberation, Justice Morgan and his colleagues submitted a report recommending relatively substantial increments at the lower levels for workers in botn public and private sectors. In May of 1964 it became widely known that the Morgan Report had been submitted but was being withheld by the Government partly because of the recommendations and partly because of critical commentaries included in the report directed against the highly inegalitarian reward system inherited from colonial rule and since exacerbated by post-Independence developments. Faced v/ith growing dissatisfaction from the grass-roots, the hastily drawn up Joint Action Committee (J.A.C.) of national union leaders had no alternative but to take action in the form of a General Strike for June 1st 1964. The response was widespread and the Government three days later issued a White Paper which offered Z^. 2s. for Lagos labourers against Morgan's £12. 10s. per month recommendation, and £7* 16s. in the Eastern and Western Regions against the £10. per month

recommended.
The J.A.C. considered this unacceptable, and the strike spread even further throughout the country, bringing virtually all public services and private industry to a complete halt. After tv/o weeks strike, the Government capitulated and agreed to renegotiate on the basis of Morgan, and with this tremendous boost behind them, the J.A.C. called off the strike and the country returned to work.

At Ikeja support for the General Strike was widespread and all factories closed. For many v/orkers then employed, the General Strike v/as their first experience of collective industrial action; as it was so successful, its impact on the labour force was considerable and certainly gave many workers the confidence they required to enter into house unions which many hitherto lacked. Phrases like "our eyes v/ere

properly opened" and “we knew from then we had to stand together" abound in discussions with workers of the 1 964 aftermath. But a multitude of organizational problems remained and some indication of these is included in the house unions described below.

a) The House Union at International

Prior to 1964, organized worker representation in International had been slight. Where disputes had emerged among the several hundred v/orkers employed, individuals tended to approach one Olatunji to discuss it v/ith him first. He would informally approach a senior management figure if he considered it important. Olatunji, a skilled worker, v/as an Ilesha man aged about 35 who had worked for several years previously on the railways and reputedly been an executive member of a branch of .the Kailway V/orkers[1] Union. Though several. other older men had been similarly employed, Olatunji v/as said “to fear no man" and so younger v/orkers relied on him heavily for advice on a wide range of topics.

That most young v/orkers v/ere loathe to follow Olatunji’s lead when he advocated a union was a consequence of their pattern of recruitment. International is exceptional in that initial capital investment had been made by the Western Region Government at Ibadan, though expatriate capital from Western Europe remained dominant. When the factory first recruited workers, Action Group politicians had used the carrot of industrial employment for young men in return for the political support of their older kinsmen and supporters. Thus many workers had been recruited directly from Oyo and Oshun towns where party members used this incentive to greatest effect. As recipients of such politically- motivated patronage rather than more universalistic criteria (such as education and command of English) workers from Oyo and Oshun shewed little interest in calls for a union for fear of being terminated as easily as they had been recruited. A second major group of the labour force suffered from similar constraints. They had been recruited direct from Ekiti and Ilesha areas, not only by politicians but by the first Nigerian managers of the company v/ho had oeen educated overseas on Ekiti local government scholarships and v/ere now expected to aid other members of their community,. This latter group in particular now maintain that though they were indeed eager to follow Olatunji's directives, those managers who recruited them threatened to return them to their home towns “if v/e made trouble" or at least inform their elder kinsmen that they were "biting the hand which fed us." Such arguments may today be s.omewhat overstated. What is accepted is that the pattern of recruitment meant that the majority of workers were for the first time abroad from their compounds or villages and had little experience of factory work or trade union organization. Several workers who started work there for the first time recounted the horror of their initial impressions of industrial life and there' seems little doubt that this was v/idely shared. This is difficult to capture but one worker told me that he could not understand v/hy v/orkers should form a union for higher wages when the management had already agreed that each

’ce suffe
’ect from

worker would automatically receive more in the coming year than he had in the lastl Nevertheless, in that the labour force uas primarily composed of members of tv/o quite distinct Yoruba ethnic groups, the seeds were already sown for conflict v/ithin the union when it did emerge.

Against this background, the General Strike proved a major breakthrough and a vindication of Olatunji's claims on the necessity of unionization. Worker response in the company to the J.A.C's call v/as whole-hearted and lasted the entire duration. Fears of termination, if present earlier, v/ere quickly dissipated; they could scarcely be sacked when the entire Nigerian labour force v/as involved. On the other side, the strident political consciousness displayed at Ikeja, as elsewhere, also appears to have confirmed to International managers and others that channelling worker demands into formal negotiating procedures v/as preferable to subsequent spontaneous outbursts. So when Olatunji again suggested the need for a union after the Strike, an executive v/as elected comprising both Oyo-Csaun and Ekiti-Ilesha elements v/ith Olatunji at the head, Like Olatunji, the leading elements of the first executive v/ere in the skilled *grades,* Eut the efforts of the first executive v/ere greatly inhibited by the ethnic division in the labour' force both at worker and managerial levels, primarily over the further recruitment of *new* workers. Managers and union leaders from each group attempted to have their own kinsmen and acquaintances recruited and again wider party political considerations entered into the workplace v/ith considerable vehene:ice. This today is described as :''the time of politics[11] in factory and union.

This period passed v/ith the slowing down of recruitment and thus the political capital to be made from it, and the growing demands of expatriate managers that the disruptions should cease. At about the same time, it was discovered chat the first president had accepted 'loans' from the management; his resignation (he moved to the secretaryship of a large union in Lagos after training overseas) opened the way for a new election on a quite different basis.

The second executive at first sight appeared mere promising than the first. In the light of previous developments, aspirant leaders fro::* the shopfloor pointed to the lack of wage improvement and attacked the previous incumbents for being exploited by the managers above them rather than looking to the workers' interests. Several of the aspirant leaders had, in fact, been recruited by the channels outlined above and according to general opinion, those then elected received support on the basis of their leadership qualities and not their town of origin. Certainly dissatisfaction with previous developments was widespread and one worker v/ho claimed to ha/e voted against his townsman in this election probably expressed a widely held view: [!:]''./e felt the time of politics should be finished because it served us badly. *Ue* v/ere worse off than before and so we looked for proper union men to lead.[11] In the same year, following* a. breakdown in wage negotiation, the executive called the workers out on strike: this proved successful and the result was an all-round wage increment and greater confidence among the workers for the new leadership.

In 1967 hov/ever, the union v/as hit by a crisis of a different kind when tv/o low-ranking executive members Bankole and Gbadamosi discovered that the president and his associate in power had embezzled union funds whilst the general secretary, in complicity v/ith the other tv/o, had used the same source to finance early attempts at a nation-wide union of textile workers. This was revealed to the workers at an emergency meeting at which Bankole and Gbadamosi presented documentation of the embezzlement. By this time (1968) Bankole had already gained a rejjutation as a hard worker in union matters and on this basis was elected president with Gbadamosi as the new general secretary. The 'tribal factor' had been removed as a result of increasing ethnic diversity of the labour force and also over-representation of skilled v/orkers similarly disappeared* Semiskilled workers, shopfloor workers with slight manual skills gained in the workplace *and* v/ith multi-ethnic backgrounds, came to dominate the union quite clearly at this time. Apart from minor changes due to members leaving the company and marginal reshuffles, the 1968 executive had remained intact until 1970 when they were re-elected for a third term of office, this time for two years. This made the executive the longest surviving one since the union's inception in 1964.

Throughout his period of office, Bankole had been closely supported by Gbadamosi and tv/o other semi-skilled workers from the shopfloor and had kept tight hold on the reigns of power. Since 1968 despite earlier precedents there had been little in the way of rivals for leadership emerging from below. 'The executive's major problems v/ere externally directed rather than internal. Bankole had reinforced his reputation as a hard-headed leader who could not be sv/ayed by the possible perquisites of office which had led to the fall of his predecessors. He v/as also scrupulous in his handling of. financial matters.

In 1969* in support of the annual wage negotiations he had called a strike within the company v/hich had received wholehearted response from the shopfloor. Within a fortnight the management had capitulated and raised their initial increment offers which affected all v/orkers in the lower reaches. A suggestion that the management had tried to buy him off during this period (a rumour spread by those previously in office, it was said) he turned to good advantage at a public meeting by admitting that this was indeed true, but he had rejected the offeri From this action the workers gained an all-round increment of ten per cent.

Whatever his own political strategies, Bankole unquestionably had risen to the position of most influential and *prestigious* leader at Ikeja, a reputation extending v/ell beyond the confines of International.

Despite his limited formal education his command of English, the language in v/hich union meetings are conducted, v/as excellent and he had considerable powers as an orator. Ke was further respected and trusted for his being a devout Moslem, and v:as one of the few men in factory employment to' prefix the form of address Alfa to his name. Fairly typical of the admiration he widely commanded was the comment of one worker: "Bankole has been the longest standing president we have known and he leads us to victory over the management on big and small issues. V/e know there is no more trustworthy man at Ikeja in union matters. All we v/orkers admire Bankole more than the bales of our ov/n villages, for our interests are his interests. We can have no complaint." Gut of a total factory population of almost 4,000 workers, roughly half v/ere on checkoff, making the union of. International the largest and wealthiest on the estate.

b) The House Union at Champion

As at International, although the Champion Beer Company opened in the early 1960's, not until after the General Strike did serious moves get underway to formally constitute a house union. In 1964 the labour force

was small and' informal deputations on wage structures and conditions of service sufficed: nevertheless workers here too had followed the general pattern of protest and once the impetus to form a union v/as made manifest it was sponsored by the benevolent management. Here too, the early recruitment of workers had many implications for its initial expansion.

The majority of unskilled and semi-skilled workers were Yoruba labourers v/ho had first worked for European contractors engaged in plant construction. The capital investment *cane from the British* parent company alone and so further recruitment was not subject to such factors as dominated International. Other workers v/ere recruited from the local labour office of the W.N.D.C. But two sections of the company, brewing and engineering, required a considerable complement of skilled workers: these *were* primarily of Mid-Western and Eastern Region origin, especially Benin and Ibo technical v/orkers who had earlier acquired their technical skills in the Ivailways or Ports or had recently completed training in the UAC schools of their respective regions.

It was this small cadre of skilled workers, especially those with experience of unionism in public employment v/ho took the first steps to starting a house union. These men v/ere, in the early years of the estate in a far more favourable market situation than most and so felt confident to press through the union for better conditions. Because of the technological complexity of the plant machines, management recognized this clearly and, following UAC policy, encouraged these first tentative sterns. I v/as told that certain ioruba members of the labour force attempted too to organize the lower-level workers but the management's sponsorship of the first group (by providing them with meeting places inside the factory for union meetings, for example) and the insecurity v/hich unskilled Yoruba workers shared, quickly put paid to any effective alternative. Furthermore, it is by no means certain that the majority of Yoruba opposed early leadership by minority group members; only on reflection does some objection seem to emerge.

In the aftermath of the General Strike and an increase in the size of the labour force, the first election was held early in 1965* Though the meeting v/as reported as well-attended v/ith a Yoruba majority, the first official executive consisted of five Eastern or Kid-Western born skilled workers with comparatively high educational backgrounds (Standards 4 and 5 with some technical training too,) and only one Yoruba, Adesina, wlio had previously been sponsored by the Western Region Government for a course in trade unionism. To this executive was added a general secretary from the I.'TUC, Gkigbo, from the same village and a personal friend of Kwosu, the first president►

On gaining immediate recognition from the management, the president and his Bini vice-president, Moses, began to organize courses on trade unionism v/ithin the factory, the latter writing a number of papers for circulation among the workers and for discussion in weekend seminars. This was one tactic developed to dispel the impression that the executive v/as a closed ethnic shop. Furthermore, the early demands formulated by the executive applied not only to their own skilled grades, but were made across the board. Indeed, 011 one occasion differentials in conditions of employment between skilled and semi-skilled workers made by the management, were made all- encompassing on the executive’s insistence. The leadership then v/as exceptionally sensitive to the tribal factor separating executive from workers and made a consistently conscientious attempt to play it down.

And in fact, the first major dispute came from v/ithin the executive when Adesina and Moses and tv/o other executive members accused the president and his general secretary of embezzling union funds and

borrowing money from the management. Promptly, the accused counter-charged the accusers of being the offending group, Each faction was supported in its turn by a number of Yoruba followers, and so the dispute widened its base throughout the labour force, as each side claimed to be representing the majority of the workers. The management refused to recognize either as the acrimonious dispute became increasingly complex.

As the union fell into disarray, several older workers drawn from all departments in Champion, formed a committee of elders v/ho acquired the title of the Peace Committee. 'Onion leaders and workers agreed that they could usefully arbitrate between the disputants, iione had been actively involved in union affairs and before they took action they declared that, *though* a re-election v/as clearly necessary whatever their findings, they themselves would not be candidates in that election. The elders' background is given below:

The Peace Committee, 1965-19^6

Ethnic Background	Age	Occucation	Education	Department
1 Yoruba (Ife)	35	Chargehand	Standard 6	Engineering
2 Ibo	40	Overseer	Standard 5	Brewing
3 Yoruba (Egba)	43	Carpenter	Nil	-
4 Yoruba (Egba)	38	Cleaner	Nil (?)	-
5 Yoruba (Lagos)	30	Timekeeper	Sec. 5	-
6 Calabari	30	Chargehand	Sec. 4	Engineering
7 Yoruba (Ijebu)	28	Semi-skilled	Sec. 3	.Engineerin
8 Bini	33	Foreman	Standard 4	Bottling*

At a meeting in a local schoolroom-, members of the 'committee cross-
exam ined those involved, and after a lengthy discussion and examination of the records, found in favour of Adesina, Moses and their followers* But the Committee declared that only the workers could be the true judge for the union was their own body; they must select their ov/n leaders. The extent to which the workers respected the impartial judgement of the elders, hov/ever, was reflected in the subsequent election when Adesina and Hoses v/ere overwhelmingly elected president and vice-president respectively, and other posts v/ere filled b5^ shopfloor workers who had previously supported their stance. This was the beginning of a gradual pattern of replacement of non- Yoruba skilled workers by Xoruba semi-skilled ones drawn from below, in effect the rise of an executive far more reflective of the majority of the workforce*

The first change came only a year later when Adesina, after he had attended several courses on industrial relations in the universities of Ibadan and Lagos, one abroad, was promoted to the position of assistant personnel manager in the company. A re-election placed Moses in the presidency and a farther semi-skilled worker v/as recruited to the executive. But during the following year, though the executive under Moses's leadership won an all-round wage increase on the basis of increases in the' cost of living and internal reorganization v/ithin the factory, there developed a groundswell of opposition to Moses himself. By 19&7 *ie ^iac^ been promoted to the position of senior tradesman, a fairly senior technical position with a wage of over £300. Under these circumstances, "the v/orkers grew tired of being led by one v/ho v/as not in the same position as themselves." Though for some time Moses hung on to his position, pointing to his past successes and his lengthy period of office, opposition to his continuing as leader forced him to resign. At the annual meeting which shortly followed, the present president, Akanle, v/as elected despite the fact that he had played little part in the union previously. This v/as an open election v/ith no clear candidate to emerge - before the day itself, but Akanle had made the most impressive speech

at the meeting of all the possible contestants, and on this basis had won a considerable majority.

In the first year of the new president, the union executive had once again negotiated new wage-rates which had placed Champion at the forefront of other Ikeja factories. By contrast v/ith Bankole, Akanle ruled with a certain guile which betrayed his earlier involvement in political affairs, but, primarily on the basis of the new ten per cent increment, his reputation too v/as considerable* In general meetings, as v/ell as backstage debate, he excelled in carefully calculated statements and his command of English v/as good. This led many v/orkers to believe he had a better education than his meagre one, a mistaken impression v/hich he did nothing to correct. From the beginning, the wage-rates in Cnanpion had been higher than most other companies on the estate and under Akanle*s leadership the differential had been preserved. In 19So the executive had gained allround increments between and v/ith the largest increments being made at the bottom of the scale and 3v;- going to the skilled v/orkers over *ZyOQ* per annum; this v/as to apply for two years. In 1970 nev/ increments on a sliding scale betv/een *6%* and *13%* had been won with the *Yj>%* again going to the lowest stratum, i

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Changes in Leadership

In the.se selective accounts of the unions' historical developments, the most striking feature to emerge is their apparently endenic instability and the high rate of turnover of officials in the highest reaches. If full data v/cre available on past executive composition then the turnover of leaders in the unions would be greater than is already apparent; (as it is7 rccords invariably disappear with departing members)# Yet by 1970? both these house unions had established a considerable measure of stability; obviously this is to some extent an impressionistic judgement but nevertheless there were certain indications that conditions were changing.

First, the presidents of the unions both entered their third term of office, Akanle for one year and Bankole for two years. After the 1971 elections Bankole was re-elected without opposition and Akanle had a clear victory over one opposing candidate. At the International election approximately *25%* of the v/ork force v/as present and at Champion around *k0%* of the workers were present. The respective turnouts in each, especially that of International, may give the impression that workers v/ere possibly apathetic to the election of their officials. However, in the case of International at the time of the meeting, one-third of the labour force was engaged on its shift. And, whilst executive members in each case admitted that this was a lower turnout than usual, (previously between two-thirds and three-quarters of the labour force had been present at elections caused by serious disputes which split the union), it v/as interpreted as an indication of a sense of satisfaction v/ith the way things were going. Bankole commented when I pointed out the low turnout, that if he had not been fulfilling his role then many more workers would have

attended; "If any of my rivals had been able to find just fault with my v/ork then the room would be bursting at the seams.-" F.andcn interviews v/ith workers who did not attend their annual meeting confirmed this view: "I knew that Bankole would be re-elected because we all trust him as our leader. Only where a president is looking after himself alone do we all go along and vote him out."

Secondly, apart from minor reshuffles, both existing executives v/ere re-elccted without serious competition again "because we workers know

frorn how they have behaved that they are the right men for the job." V/here changes did occur then they involved the occasional white- collar members of the union executives, not the semi-skilled ones. Third, during the period of fourteen months in which 1 followed the affairs of both these unions, (including a seven-week period interviewing in Champion), I heard of no serious opposition to the incumbent leadership, and from both systematic and random interviews with v/orkers in ea'ch *coiapa.ny,* it emerged that for the most part they were well-acquainted with the leadership and the strategies they were taking towards managements. There v/ere, of course, instances of individuals expressing dissatisfaction with particular officials or complaints on specific issues, but nothing v/hich approached the widely-based structured opposition of earlier times.

Finally, the series of events surrounding the Adebo affair most crucially indicated a sound working relationship between leaders and followers over a nine-month period of class action under difficult conditions. This seems to me to be the best indicator of the growing stability of the most established house unions and is described fully below. This increasing soundness in house union affairs, though by no means inevitable nor immutable in either case, can be best explained initially in terms of the changing social characteristics of *union* executives and the way in v/hich this reflects the growing influence of workers on the shopfloor.

In both companies the composition of the executive has changed from early domination by the more skilled and better educated member of the labour force to a pattern v/here semi-skilled workers drawn from the shopfloor are numerically predominant. Here I have to rely on oral and scattered written historical records v/hich present an incomplete picture. But interviews with early leaders indicated, clearly that the dominant elements were constantly the better qualified members of their respective executives. There may also have been, on occasion, a slight over-representation of white-collar v/orkers in the early days which also is a pattern confirmed by the experiences of other established factories. But as the breakdown of the two current executive memberships show, semi-skilled v/orkers are now prominent in the unions discussed here, i

	Ethnic Group	Education	Job Classification	Age	Wage	Length of Service
International Union Executive						
1	Yoruba	Sec. 2	Semi-skilled	>1	£22	6
2	Yoruba	Sec. 2	Semi-skilled	23	£19	6
3	Yoruba	G.G.1-..	Clerical	29	£31	4
4	Yoruba	Sec. 4	Semi-skilled	28	£25	3
5	Yoruba	Sec. 5	Clerical	29	£30	3
r	10 3.' . 1	Stundard5	Timekeeper	35	£26	6
7	i.ᵀcru	Sec. 3	Skilled	32	£32	5
8	Yoruba	Sec. 4	Semi-skilled	29	£22	4
Champion Union Executive						
1	Yoruba (Ijebu)	Primary	Semi-skilled	29	£16	6
2	Yoruba	G.C .E.	Clerical	30	£37	3
3	Yoruba (Ijebu)	Sec. 3	Semi-skilled	29-	£26	4
4	Yoruba (I>it i)	S	Timekeeper	35	£24	5
5	Ycruba	Sec. 3	Semi-skilled	23	£27	4
6	Yoruba (rJgba)	Sec. 5	Semi-skilled	25	£16	2

With the exception in each executive of the occasional whit e-collar worker acting as internal or financial secretary to the union, and the timekeepers v.'ho are 'father-figures' to the executive, executive members are drawn from the population at the bottom of the occupational scale. In relation to the majority of workers in the lower reaches, executive members have roughly the average educational level, and though wages are slightly above those for the working populat ions they represent, this arises less from promotion (scarcely at all) than frcr. "heir above average length of service. Those v/orkers elect- ed are fcr the most part slightly older and somewhat more experienced ir. factory employment but have not noticeably benefitted from such experience.

As for the union presidents, (number 1 in each case), it is particular- ly striking that v/hilst they are older and more experienced than their v/orkers and ether executive members they remain at the bottom of the income scale. Akanle and Bankole as with the other union leaders in long-standing companies, have gained only the usual annual increments through t:.eir six year careers and benefitted only from the bonus payments shared by all workers. By comparison the white-collar executive members are the best paid, executive members of all despite their relatively recent entry into their respective labour forces.

These hov/ever are generally engaged in the administrative v/ork of the union in co-operation v/ith the general secretaries. Both Akanle and Bankole relied almost exclusively on their fellow semi-skilled supporters for the formulation and implementation of union policy.

Though I do not have details on the breakdown of union meeting attendance by occupational level, the great majority of attenders are drawn from the shopfloor. I deal with status distinctions among workers in the subsequent chapter, but in present-day union meetings the fact that the house union is representative first and foremost of the workers rather than white-collar and skilled employees is a constantly reiterated theme. The important point is that the v/orkers are themselves aware that such changes have taken place and frequently relate v/ith considerable pride the manner in v/hich they have increas-ingly exerted control over the election of house union leaders and thus the formulation of union policy.' This sense of satisfaction that the union is ’’the voice of the workers,” an oft-stated claim, takes a variety of forms. For example, Akanle had previously explained to me that he did no more than tolerate the presence of the clerk on his executive in order that he could hand over the union's paper work to him but "as v/ith all the clerks, the workers do not like him too much." This v/as well displayed during the course of the union's annual general meeting when the clerk hoped for re-election. A busy and rather irritating young man, as the meeting opened he had spoken for a few minutes on the failure of ordinary workers to attend union meetings regularly and complained of the burden which this placed on executive members such as himself: "This is not how true v/orkers should behave towards their union," a complaint met by stoney silence. When his post of internal secretary (which is usually filled by a better-educated member) was open to nominations, a semi-skilled worker of average education v/as proposed against him, though the latter showed no interest in either the post or his election to it by an overwhelming majority. This was followed by hoots of derision directed against the clerk. When the next post of treasurer came up, he was again proposed, only to be defeated yet again by the older timekeeper whose protests at being elected to this "responsible" post were drowned by further laughter. At this point, Akanle intervened. He

was standing on the edge of the platform after his re-election and motioned to the workers that they should give the clerk some post on the executive. Only when the relatively unimportant post of financial secretary came up did the workers let the clerk off the hook and allow his nomination by Akanle to go unimpeded. The elections were not contentious for the executive was strong and popular.
The workers had taken the spontaneous initiative of showing the clerk who were the "true* workers" in his own terms.

Not only do workers maintain that the house union is their own organ of expression, but they also emphasize the manner in which they have had to constantly struggle for full recognition and exertion of their rights. Such themes as manipulation by management of union officials, embezzlement, leaders using their roles for only their personal interests, tr,ibal divisions exacerbated by management intervention, bribery of top officials - all these are very well-established elements of trade unionism not only at Ikeja but elsewhere. Yet the very fact that the union continues to survive and continues to represent their interests towards management, in workers' terms represents for them a measure of their determination to gain their rights in an environment where the structure of power militates against them being realized. That the unions have gone through such a series of traumas yet emerged with considerable success in itself encourages (i) greater support from the shop-floor and, in particular, (ii) close identification with those present unionists who appear to be doing well and not exploiting their posts to serve only their ov/n interests. To hear a worker admitting his respect for his union president on the grounds that “He does not chop our money" may appear to the outsider somewhat strange, but in the context of Ikeja trade unionism, as the two case-studies illustrate, this type of consideration is exceptionally pressing and one which cannot be over emphasized.

The sociological consequences of such union histories however, are somewhat deeper. In unions where abuse of power as a norm becomes a rival to the rule of proper performance, and is widely recognized as being so, then this becomes an exceptionally fertile ground for rival factions for leadership to emerge from below. Briefly, it requires only a whiff of a rumour of corruption v/ithin the incumbent leadership for pressure from below to build up into a demand for inspection of the incumbents dealings, or for a new election. It is for this reason that the manner in v/hich presidents and secretaries successfully handle relatively minor issues involving particular members' problems becomes supremely important in reinforcing one's

position at the top of the union hierarchy. Where the unionist lets slip such an opportunity of enhancing his own stature then he creates an even greater opportunity for rivals to bring him down; v/here he does so several times then the chances of his demise are considerable indeed. In substantial part, I suggest, this explains the alacrity with v/hich union leaders (such as Gbadamosi's performance in the Case of the Local Hero) tackle relatively minor issues and attempt to settle them as quickly as possible; cn the basis of earlier precedents they have to do so in order to survive.

So one roust place emphasis on the particular personalities involved ii? house union affairs and the interests which such personalities have invested in their roles, particularly by comparison with earlier precedents. Rather than relying only on the switch from skilled worker leadership to unskilled worker leadership as a generalization one can look at the implications of this switch from one skilled leader to an unskilled leader. Let me take, for example, the comparison between Moses and Akanle, the first the skilled worker who lasted only one term of office, the second the semi-skilled worker v/ho, as I left the field, v/as entering his third term of office, and (as the above account of the rough treatment of the pretentious clerk illustrates) v/as 2’0-elected in an atmosphere of confidence and good humour, I will describe briefly their backgrounds to the point at which they v/ere elected president.

Moses

Moses's involvement in union affairs initially developed by way of his father's position as an executive member of the Sapele branch of the Amalgamated Union of U.A.C. African '..orkers. Through his father's influence he v/as placed in the U.A.C. Technical School in Lagos after only three years secondary schooling in Benin. His ia t h er judged a technical education to be more promising than a full secondary schooling. From 1959 to 1964 Moses follov/ed a five year course in school and industry during v/hich time he gained the certificate of a UAC indentured apprentice, and a City and Guilds qualification in Engineering. The company in which he gained experience was taken over in 1962 by Champion Beers, so after his final tv/o years apprenticeship there, he moved to Champion at Ikeja as a fitter on .£191 per annum. During the following three years he attended evening school in Lagos and p;ained further qualifications whilst at the same time moving quickly up the scale in Champion. Simultaneously of course he was also gaining further influence in the union and when elected to the presidency in 1966 was earning in the region of £300, more than twice as much as most v/orkers 011 the shopfloor.

Akanle

The son of an illiterate cocoa farmer in Ijebu 'Remo, Akanle was able to complete only primary school before becoming a pupil-teacher at Ijebu from 1956 to 1961, earning around £11 per month. Dus to personal connections he became interested in party politics, and having worked as a local organizer for the AG Party, was rewarded by a clerical post in the Government Printing Press in Lagos in 1962. He claims to have been terminated after only a few months when his seiiior discovered his

political background, but again his party connections saved him. An AG leader at Agege found him employment in the Agege District Council *in* 1963, again as a clerk earning about £10 per month, in return for his acting as a ward secretary in the township. When the KriDP assumed control of the Western Region, however, he was fired and he spent the next six months as an 'applicant* supported by relatives and friends* By *chance he v/as employed as a casual* labourer in Champion in 1964 on the minimum wage rate, and though he v/as transferred to permanent v/ork in the *brewery section of the* factory, his poor educational qualifications automatically ruled him out as far as promotion prospects were concerned. *i/hen* first elected as president of the union in 1968, this v/as- his first executive post at a time when he v/as receiving only £14 per month.

One could scarcely have more contrasting career patterns for tv/o men holding the same union office the one after the other: in themselves these sketches illustrate the rapidity v/ith v/hich the union has changed in the space of five years with considerable implications for leader-follower relationships. Because of this narrow time perspective, the analysis must be speculative but certain possibilities can be suggested.

As can be seen, when Moses first entered Champion as a fitter he was immediately in a privileged position by comparison v/ith the majority of v/orkers in the factory. In the light of his technical training v/ith U.A.C., his rise to a better paid and prestigious position within the factory, especially as expatriate technicians on contract departed, was virtually assured. The longer he stayed in the company and continued his evening education, the more alternative courses of action were made open 'co him. Through his father's influence he could have found other employment in U.A.C* companies in the Mid- West or Lagos; equally ho could have entered into public employment, the Railways or the Ports, a possibility which he had in fact considered during his indentured apprenticeship because of the high salaries offered to skilled workers. Again, as further companies opened on the J.keja estate, had he wished to leave Champion then he could have done so with little trouble; on one occasion in fact he had been offered a post as foreman in a nearby company on a salary half as much as his prevailing one. Lnder the circumstances, especially Champion’s considerable reputation at Ikeja for promoting African workers as quickly as possible to senior positions, Moses determined to stay in the company and concentrate on climbing the internal hierarchy rather than looking outside, his progress shows that this proved a highly successful strategy* Throughout, the company had encouraged others of similar background to engage in further education and also gave increments to those completing prescribed courses; Moses was continuing to reinforce both his immediate circumstances and his longer term possibilities by talcing courses at

the Yaba College of Technology in Lagos.

Against this background, Moses's position as president of the union appears somewhat incongruous. But he had a strong interest in unionism inherited from his father, and at that time the composition of the Champion labour force was one v/hich encouraged those attracted by opportunities for leadership and with the necessary expertise, to enter into union affairs regardless of their future prospects. Whilst one cannot talk of a vacuum from the point *of view* of leadership, there were but a few v/orkers then possessing the expertise to make the union operate successfully from the outset. Nor at this time did union leadership properly conflict with Moses*s personal ambition.
He v/as still in the comparatively lower reaches of the income scale (earning £25 per month) and so benefited from wage increments affecting all workers; also he v/as only 25 when first elected as vice-president, and the prestige of leadership had considerable appeal to

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a young man. The more cynical of hie fellow workers today claim that union leadership, in fact, benefitted his personal advancement considerably, not merely by placing him in the public eye but, as he continued to prove effective, gave management greater incentive to promote him into a more senior position at v/hich union membership v/as denied him. Though one cannot judge whether there is any truth in this, it is clear that, though his early contribution to union affairs was initially valued, his subsequent promotions came increasingly to conflict with his union role, a conflict reflected in growing dissatisfaction from the body of the workforce which eventually forced his retirement in favour of Akanle. And it is worthwhile noting that the end of Moses's career as president v/as not the subject of violent confrontation as tends to commonly occur. By this time he appears quite readily to have stood down from the post- In general then, the early leadership of the likes,of Moses in the house unions, was a useful and necessary contribution to their development. But when workers below them considered their leadership inappropriate to their interests and threw up their own leaders, then these men had no alternative but to retire. In a way, assuming a union office v/as for them no *more* than an appendage for the authority and prestige already accruing to their existing occupational roles. Once other v/orkers emerged from the shop-floor. to take over, these leaders v/ere able to continue their private routes to increasingly better paid and prestigious posts. By 1971 Moses had been promoted to Assistant Foreman on a salary of £572; his ultimate ambition in Champion v/as that of Maintenance Engineer, a senior staff post, and he appeared to have every chance of realising this ambition.

By contrast, Akanle's pre-factory background was quite inauspicious; apart from the occasional though ineffectual contribution made by political patronage, his career pattern is indistinguishable from those of the workers whom he now leads. Before entering Champion his experiences v/ere clearly characterized by instability reaching a nadir v/ith six months unemployment. Only by chance did he find casual employment and because of his low educational level his chances of improvement within the factory v/ere, from the outset, slight indeed. In the company it was widely recognized that in both the bottling and *

brewing sections, those located there would only gain improvement if they managed an internal transfer, and this too depended to a very considerable extent on level of education.

So Akanle automatically shares the generalized perception of the industrial system as a closed system from the point of view of economic improvement: in the future there is no possibility of his union role conflicting v/ith his occupational position. Of this both Akanle and his followers are much aware. The prime attraction of union leadership then for such as Akanle is the immense prestige and considerable authority of leadership. As noted earlier, the urban community offers few opportunities for workers to assume leadership roles so for those v/ith a penchant for leadership, the trade union offers a suitable arena.

It is possible here to easily.over-state, as union leaders do themselves the case for their private opportunities for advancement.

Union leaders are, almost by definition, men of distinctive qualities which set them apart from the majority; it would be difficult to imagine that they would not find some avenue for self-improvement, a subjective judgement but nevertheless a reasonable one, iiut if anything, this adds further to their social standing within the company since it is accepted that v/here workers from the shopfloor become - executive members, then they, are abandoning these slight opportunities for the prestige of leadership.

As leaders of several hundred or several thousand v/orkers, the wider social standing of union leaders is certainly very considerable.
In a centre such as Agege v/here each neighbourhood contains many factory v/orkers, then the reputation of presidents spreads rapidly.
As they walk along the street, from all sides, they are assailed by shouts of "Presidol Presido!" in the manner with which the Yoruba generally hail an public an influential man. union leadership can also lead to more specific indications of respect beyond the factory gate. In their ov/n neighbourhoods, for example, Bankole and Akanle v/ere frequently called upon to arbitrate in local disputes not only betv/een neighbours but even neighbours and their wives. Union leaders have also become valued guests of honour at workers' marriages and naming ceremonies for their children, and are accorded pride of place at such affairs; at Agege they have replaced local politicians as community members with whom those in the lower reaches like to publicly display their association.

For leaders working on the shopfloor with low wages, the development of a wider social standing surrounding their roles can, of course, conflict with their private ambitions, for they too wish to become independent

businessmen. The expense of leadership can become burdensome. Furthermore, leadership of workers on a multi-ethnic basis can conflict with the expectations which kinsmen at home have of them. Bankole once pointed out that "my relatives cannot understand why I lead workers from all over Nigeria when they know that in Lagos everyone must look after his kinsr.en above all others." So, though the social standing may be high, the role of leadership creates considerable conflicts for the incumbent, especially one who shares the limited income of most workers. Again, the fact that the unionist is prepared to forgo other possibilities of economic and social advancement in order to lead, can add further to the respect in which he is held.

The central point to be made here is that just as the observer may outline in these terms the fact that a skilled leader has more alternative strategies than the semi-skilled worker, v/orkers also realize this to be the case, if net in precisely the same way. Lot only is it important to outline the contrasting courses of action v/hich such leaders have had or currently hold, one also has to take into account the perceptions which, union members themselves employ. Whilst it is accepted that presidents such as Akanle and Bankole do enjoy the prestige of their roles, in material terms they are fighting for v/age increments and improvements in *conditions of service* which they themselves will be sharing with the workers.

This point would scarcely be worth making at such length if it were not for the fact that, from the v/orkers[1] ooint *of view, the past* instability of the unions has resulted in considerable part from the division of interests between followers and leaders. In retrospect, workers in Champion and International claimed that "leaders from the skilled grades have manifestly exploited their leadership roles in order to realise particular personal ambitions quite remote from and in conflict with the interests of the majority of the labour force. Moses' experience for example was frequently recollected as if he had simply used the role of union leader as a stepping stone to his present high post, despite the fact that under his management the union had gained an all-round wage award for all levels of the worker hierarchy, and notwithstanding the fact too that in the light of his extended attendance in evening cla.sses and further technical qualifications, his promotion seemed most justified. At the very least, it was argued, the disruption within the union which weakened it temporarily in relation to management due to his forced resignation, had contravened those interests his role v/as established to protect. 'This int.erpretation was placed, usually in even more emphatic terms, on the

progress of the-first Yoruba president, Adesina, v/ho after gaining further experience in industrial relations which would have strengthened the union, promptly crossed the carpet into the management camp. Here v/as a classic case, workers suggested, in which a union leader had used the role as a vehicle whereby he could further his own interests. A similar line of argument v/as used by shopfloor workers on the basis of several years involvement in the International union. Olatunji, for example, as a skilled worker stood to the forefront of the union's development, but following attendance at courses on trade unionism, had subsequently abandoned his career in International in favour of the general secretaryship to a larger union in Lagos, At least tv/o other skilled workers of Olatunji's generation had also continued as members of the executive until their promotion to senior technical positions had become incompatible with union membership. By contrast, bankole had found employment there by virtue of his kinsman at Oyo being a close friend to the AG*official using employment at International to gain votes. He had by that time only a slight secondary school education and no prospects of advancement at home, iior did his arrival in the factory open for him any new avenues; with negligible advancement after six years employment and slight prospects for the future, his followers could perceive little opportunity whereby he could advance his own material interests at

their expense. Like Akanle, he was as his followers frequently pointed out, "a worker just as we are[11] and had "no other interests v/hich are different from our own."

These contrasting perceptions of past and present leaders by the workers does not, of course, necessarily add to the unions stability. But in the light of the fact that alternative routes to positions of influence and prestige in the factory are not available to shopfloor leaders, they do have greater vested interests in holding on to and reinforcing their leadership roles. For example, whereas such as Hoses or Olatunji, as far as one could gather, made little concerted attempt to resist the growing opposition to their leadership, bankole and Akanle were involved in regular strategies which allowed them to buttress their existing standing at the head of the work force. Again, since I was unable to observe the tactics of their predecessors and compare these with those of present incumbents, I have to rely on impressionistic evidence rather than, contrasting action forms. But one illustration of this occurred in the Champion union. As a larger union v/ith almost the entire eligible workforce on .check-off, Champion employed a general secretary to deal v/ith their regular administration and supply the elected executive with comparative wage-rates on other factories and information on policies being developed by the 'national' union organizations and, to a lesser extent, the Ministry of Labour. The general secretary, henry, had been trained in Moscow and was well-connected in the United Labour Congress movement in Lagos, v/hich, by virtue of patronage by I.C.F.T.U., provided local training for house union executives. For some tv/o years he had performed efficiently, but it became known that he aspired to developing a general union cf workers in foodstuffs and drinks in the Lagos area and ultimately broaden this to a national general union. It v/as further rumoured that Akanle had given his support to such a development, the implication being that Champion union funds would also be employed to set it up. On hearing of this suggestion, Akanle moved quickly to scotch it and instructed his executive to do likewise. Though all conformed it became clear that Kenry for his part v/as promoting the idea among the workers that a wider unity would strengthen the position of Champion v/orkers towards management. It was clear that a dangerous situation
was quickly developing for gossip ori the possible misuse of union funds spreads rapidly. The development coincided v/ith the advent of a general meeting and so by the judicious deployment of several sympathetic v/orkers on the floor of the meeting, Akanle and his

supporters managed to make clear that the notion of a general union v/as far from his mind. As Henry clearly had aspirations incompatible v/ith those of the v/orkers v/ho paid him he had to go. Accordingly Henry v/as fired by the executive. A possible challenge to Akanle's position had been averted but it also created substantial administrat-ive problems for him and he had to assume many of the duties Ilenry had previously carried out.

More generally, the fact that house union leaders in order to preserve their positions are required to constantly communicate information concerning thoir intentions and strategies to the labour force at large is v/ell indicated by the calling of general meetings. Though under certain circumstances, as in the deposition of Henry, considerable maneouvering may occur beforehand, equally leaders must encourage response and debate in an open atmosphere, otherwise dissatisfaction may quickly spread. Since formal meetings are alv/ays conducted in English, again leaders have something of an advantage in promoting their ov/n "policies; lesser educated v/orkers are loathe to publicly display their weak command of the language. Nevertheless, the continual insistence of leaders that the spirit of democracy should prevail is encouraged, siiice leaders recognize that it is in their own interests for it to be so. In both Champion and International, whenever major events concerning all v/orkers v/ere underway, a general meeting was invariably on the agenda.

Reference Groups

n sum, by 1970-1971 a combination of the particular interests of ore recent house union presidents and the historical development of he unions v/hich places a premium on the leaders to deal effectively ⌜ith the difficulties facing individual worker.^ encouraged a higher egree of internal stability than previously, both at Champion and nternational. Further, the fact that despite the various crises hich the unions had gone through, the house unions had been most successful in gaining higher v/ages for their workers, also added to the degree of satisfaction which workers articulated in various ways. Though newly recruited v/orkers still received in each factory the minimum wage rate of 10/- per day established in 1964 by the Morgan Commission, increments gained by both unions by 1969 had more or less kept in step v/ith the rise in the cost of living, the basis on which annual negotiations v/ere usually made for the majority of the labour force. Kather more important was the fact that both unions had kept ahead of other companies at Ikeja which is, for most v/orkers, the most salient comparison to be made. The wage-levels of other v/orkers in neighbouring

plants is the reference group most usually taken.

Though new companies offered higher wage-rates for skilled v/orkers in order to attract them away from International, Champion and other established firms, for semi-skilled and unskilled labour, managements took a lead from those already prevailing elsewhere.

So despite the generalized dissatisfaction shared by most workers v/ith the nature of industrial employment and especially the low v/age rates, in terms of the customary reference points which International and Champion v/orkers share, the fact that their unions have generally performed successfully in advancement of their wages and protection of their rights, has strengthened attachment to them. This *tendency* has been further reinforced by tv/o negative reference groups on the issue of trade unionism, firstly the Ikeja workers who did not have any means of formal representation at all, and secondly the national labour movement. Comparisons made v/ith the first indicate that International and Champion v/orkers are a privileged group in localized terms, and with the second that house unions remain their most valuable vehicle of collective advancement.

Favourable comparisons are made against unorganized workers, especially those in Chinese and Indian companies v/here managements actively oppose the unionization of their labour forces, either by their ov/n workers or at the intervention of outside agencies (such as general secretaries from the United Labour Congress or the Nigerian Trade Union Congress). Here the majority of v/orkers continue to v/ork on minimum wage rates established some six years previously and greatly eroded by high inflation in the urban area: conditions of service remain unwritten and termination for the slightest offence without recourse to any form of defense is always a distinct possibility. That workers' rights are so fragrantly ignored in these companies, makes unionized workers all the more ready to defend their ov/n through the established mechanisms available to them.

At the other extreme are the national union organizations v/hich, paradoxically, because of their organization and tactics reinforce Ikeja house union leaders and members determination to concentrate their resources in their local organizations. As with house unions, existing national organizations have experienced an endcmic instability: fission, corruption, inefficiency and political opportunism being constant themes. Unlike house unions however$_s$ the national organizations have failed to respond to the demands from below and survive through the continued financial support of rival international labour organizations than by financial support from the labour force proper. This is not a

subject to be discussed in detail here; but briefly Ikeja workers draw unfavourable comparisons between their own leaders and national figures whom they view as members of the national political elite, aloof and distant from the experiences of these they presume to represent and motivated solely by self-interest. (The activities of U.C.C.L.O. in 1970-1971 described in Chapter 8 did much to confirm prevailing interpretations.)^

The major objection to the national organizations is the great distance separating leaders from workers, an oligarchic system v/hich runs counter to the nature and values of house unionism. Whereas the individual worker can if he wishes exert some influence on his union executive, either by speaking publicly or seeking election to office, the national organizations are excessively remote. More often than not information on national leaders and organizational policy comes through the media rather than by the highly personalized routes through which v/orkers learn of their own men. Occasionally national leaders are invited as guests to annual general meetings - though I have the impression that house union leaders do so to reinforce their own stature rather than demonstrate that of their guests - if so, then they are often eminently successful. As noted earlier, Akanle's secretary Henry had close contacts v/ith the U.L.C. and at an annual general meeting prior to his sacking, at his suggestion a senior official of the Congress v/as invited as one guest among several. At this time the U.L.C. leaders v/ere hoping to construct a nev/ administrative and training centre at a cost of £25,000 in the Lagos area, and the official entered into an extended eulogy on the great benefits v/hich such a centre v/ould bring to the Migerian v/orkers. An artist's sketch was produced and the official commented how the building v/ould become a suitable base for the U.L.C. to rival those of advanced countries' labour movements whose centres too he had previously visited. He concluded v/ith a passionate appeal for donations from Champion v/orkers. In contrast with earlier speeches, (including that of the British general manager v/hich had all been received with enormous cheering and rounds of applause), the workers’ response was very cool, only a short polite round of hand-clapping. Akanle then rose and thanked the official for his attendance, briefly adding that "my workers" would be far more impressed by less emphasis *on pi'estige projects* "like the old politicians wanted[11]; it v/as a great pity, he remarked, that the only tnme he and his followers saw'the Lagos big Guns" of the labour movement v/as when they were "looking for money," but rarely were they around "in our hours of need."

He then quickly moved on to introduce the next guest but his comment v/as punctuated by cries of "Hear, hear" (sic) from the rear of the hall whilst many v/orkers nodded sagely at his words. 'Though the official had brought along many copies of a glossy handout concerning the nev/ centre (for sale at 5/-) no one was interested. As one worker put it in a bar-room conversation after the meeting, both Akanle and his v/orkers had shown the official that "he and his big schemes are nothing to us because he and the other Big Hen like him are no longer v/orkers."

V/ithin the limits set by the nature of technological production and managerial strategy, the form of house unionism has changed over time to accord with demands from its majority members. In terms of the most significant reference groups of wage-earners, their ov/n unions have had notable success; through these they can currently express the ideology of class in realistic terms and gain increments to their advantage. But of course v/hilst gains may be judged at certain times against the experience of other workers in the wider environment these are not the only possible comparisons made. The other contrast drawn is with the leading elites concentrated in Lagos society whose wealth and power is generally regarded as unacceptable in comparison with the relatively poor economic rewards and limited life styles of the workers themselves. As has often been remarked, the very nature of trade unionism requires at one and the same time an acceptance and a rejection of the prevailing order; whilst Ikeja v/orkers are, through trade union membership, accommodating to the prevailing order, implicitly and explicity their membership is presenting a challenge to the existing distribution cf wealth in the wider society. So tv/o quite contrasting meaning-systems can be employed to explain the same social phenomenon. Whilst it is true that Ikeja workers do not have an alternative vision of how the industrial system itself can be restructured, it is also accurate to say that they are beginning to reject the prevailing politico-economic order of the wider social system in which the industrial system is located. It is important here to note the interpretation which workers place on the presence of multi-national corporations in their midst; basically they argue that such firms are providing them with posts which v/ould otherwise net be available. Nor can they be faulted for their presence and the low wage-rates which they pay: their presence is controlled and sanctioned by the national political class. I’he argument is reinforced by workers', view that their current difficulties of urban survival are equally a consequence of the high cost of urban living, and for this the political class, not expatriate industrial managers, are held co be responsible.

As noted at several points above, hov/ever, the Government rarely impinges directly on the running of the industrial system, nor is the machinery available whereby workers can collectively protest against the ruling elites. V/hilst collective action is mounted in particular companies, this must of necessity be promoted in defense of sectional economic interests; protest against the wider social order clearly has generalized political overtones challenging the structure a.r.d value system of the society as a whole, not a particular segment of It. bndcr these circumstances, the general quiescence of the Ikeja labour force is quite comprehensible. Pursuing a course of accommodation v/hich can allow gradual wage increments to keep in tune with rises in the cost of living is the most suitable strategy available to them* Only *where* the Government becomes directly implicated in the affairs of industrial employment can the pursuit of economic class interests and political protest be fruitfully merged. This is what occurred during the Adebo affair of 1971*

Before moving finally to the nature of class conflict at Ikeja hov/ever, I need to outline somewhat more systematically the various status groups present in the industrial labour force. That conside able differentiation exists has emerged at various points in previous chapters. It was also demonstrated during the conflicts o 1971* In some ways the next chapter is an aside to the bulk of the analysis; it is also based on a rather different methodology, a sample survey of workers in the Champion Beer Company, but it has the advantage of allowing me to present the necessary material as briefly as possible.

MOTES TO CHAPTER 6.

1. The most concise view of this power complex is given by Gavin P. Williams, (1970), "The Social Stratification cf a Neo-Colonial Economy", in C. Allen and R.W. Johnson, (eds.), African Perspectives.

2. A fuller account is R. lielson, (1970), "Nigerian Politics and the General Strike of 1964", in R. Rotberg and A.A. Kazrui, (eds.), Protest and Power in Black Africa.

3. The national level of the labour movement is described in a forthcoming book by Robin Cohen.

In objective terms, all Ikeja workers are proletarian in that they share the common status of propertyless contractual labour in relation to the industrial mode of production. They share a common class situation in the industrial system of economic relationships, a class situation which is unchallengeable and unalterable. But such a common class situation does not necessarily lead to the same response to collective class action nor the same forms of expression of class consciousness. Status distinctions both within the work placc and in the African urban community at large can reinforce or detract from sentiments of class unity based on the common standing of the v/age earner. Social stratification by class is only one side of the coin; social differentiation by status is a necessary complement to it.[1]

The major social differentiations within the Ikeja labour force are three-fold; (i) skilled, technical and supervisory workers, (ii) white-collar clerical and administrative employees, (iii) the shop-floor wage labourers. For observer and subject these constitute the three most significant and salient status groups whatever the particular company on the estate. The first is easily the smallest of the three and constitutes in effect the aristocracy of the vjage labour force, and though the last is obviously the largest, clerical v/orkers in the biggest production plants are often considerable in number since under the same roof are marketing, administrative and research departments for both the Ikeja factories and their subsidiary companies elsewhere in r.igeria. So factories are highly centralized and heterogeneous in their constituent labour forces; whilst factories may be small, at the same time status differentiations in the labour force are thus made all the clearer by such concentration.

The material on v/hich this chaptc.r is based comes from a sample survey of 123 workers in Champion Beer Company. The number is small but I am concerned here only with a limited number of variables and processes v/hich can be indicated on the basis of the sample* The survey v/as conducted in Champion because I knew it to have relatively

large numbers of skilled and clerical workers in relation to the total population of employees. I'he major status differences in the Ikeja labour force in general v/ere thus particularly clearly exhibited in Champion. I v/ould emphasize that *the survey was* conducted in the last weeks of my fieldwork when I had a very clear idea of what the bases, forms and consequences of such differentiations were, Since I believe that survey data should be a tool rather than the master, the material presented here is solely to provide statistical support to the outline of status patterns of which I v/as already aware on the basis of observation and discussion. The argument developed below can be easily summarized as follows. Recruitment into the factory on the basis of educational and manual skill criteria places *workers* immediately into quite distinct status groups within the company; certain processes within the factory reinforcc these status differences during the time of employment; the result i.s to heighten the importance of status considerations among skilled and clerical v/orkers and, in varying degree, mollify the influence of class conscious sentiments on the one hand, v/hilst on the other, the result among shop-floor v/orkers is to heighten their feelings of class consciousness and make collective class action virtually the only response which they can reasonably take to the work experience if they are to gain material improvement. V/ith some variation, the rudimentary processes described below for Champion are typical of most large Ikeja companies.

Education as the basis of Social Differentiation

Virtually all workers are recruited to Champion on the basic of their level of education in school or training centre; this determines their occupational role and status within the company. As can be seen from Table 1, the majority of both skilled and shopfloor v/orkers have incomplete secondary education and so their skills of literacy are limited. Two or three years in secondary school especially in traditional urban and rural areas allows workers to gain skills in verbal expression of the English language, but the ability to write fluently in Yoruba and English is usually limited indeed. Second, *such workers'* retirement *from secondary school is* a *forced* rather than voluntary one. In polygamous families of poor Yoruba, the pattern v/hich has emerged is to spread secondary education .among a father’s

TABLS 1

PAST AND PRESENT EDUCATIONAL EXPEDIENCES

(i) Point at which Formal Schooling was completed

	Skilled	White-Collar	Shopfloor
Standard 3-6	8		14
Primary 6	1		12
Secondary School 1-3	13	4	48
Complete secondary			
i. W.A.S.C .	1	9	2
ii. G.C.E. •O′		6	
iii. G.C*E. [1]A ′		3	
Illiterate			2
Total	23	22	78

(ii) Reasons for Leaving School

Financial	17	3	69
Entrance to Technical Institute	6		1
Completion of Schooling		19	8
Total	23	22	78

(iii) Further Education before entering the Factory

Trade C.ertificate/City 2c Guilds	17		3
0.N.D./G.C.3. '	2	3	2
G.C.S. ′A' and equivalent		2	
Secretarial/Accounts/Book-keeping		6	2
Higher engineering qualification			2
Teacher Certificate Training	1	4	2
Total	20	15	11
No further Education	3	7	67

(iv) Education continuing

Engineering Diploma	4		
G.C.E.'O'		1	3
<3.G.E. 'A*	3		
Secretarial		2	
Accountancy		11	3
Public /Business Consult.		3 *	
Book-keeping		2	1
Total	7	19	7
Ko further education	16	3	71

TABLE 2 AGE DISTRIBUTION

Years		Skilled	White-Collar	Shopfloor
19 but less than	22		1	6
22	25		5	19
25	28	8	9	28
28	31	4	4	11
31	34	5	2	6
34	37	1	1	3
37+		5		5
Total		23	22	78

several sons, rather than concentratc the financial resources of the family on one alone. Tv/o or three years in secondary school after free primary schooling is now viewed as the most equitable way of distributing scarce resources among competing siblings if such resources can be mustered at all, and as can be seen from the experiences of slightly less than half of the present skilled workers and one-third of shopfloor workers with complete or incomplete primary education this is by no means the case. In virtually all instances these are the sons of the poorest Yoruba farmers.

‘J’he exceptions to the norm are slight but are shared by the experiences of Champion clerical workers. V/here the family is wealthy, v/here the father has only one son, or where the schoolchild is considered to be particularly bright, then the son has received a full secondary schooling; furthermore, they have gained the status of successful examination candidates, and on this basis have joined the Champion clerical labour force, either straight from school or from technical college, or via some other white-collar employment. The young clerical v/orkers then are the elite of the secondary school population in the Y/estern State.

But though skilled and shopfloor workers share incomplete secondary school careers due to their families’ meagre finances, the subsequent careers of members of both groups are radically different. In the case of the great majority of present shopfloor men, (69 out of 78), they have left school either to enter some form of employment or entered the factory system straight away, without gaining any other form of education in its broadest sense, especially that of the acquisition of manual skills. They enter wage-employment then without any form of post-secondary tutoring; very effectively and without any recourse, the shopfloor workers education is quite complete.

In comparison, before entering the factory, skilled workers have for

the greater part undergone further training which entitled them to technical qualifications, and on this basis have been employed in the highest manual grades. As the factory has expanded over the years and the need for skilled employees has grown, so they have recruited from such institutions as Government training schools, training centres run by the colonial trading firms (for example the U.A.C'. training centre in Lagos) or from the public corporations such as Ports and Railway Corporations. The company has not in the past promoted its ov/n trainees to senior well-paid skilled posts. Furthermore the majority of these technically competent men are only slightly older than the majority of v/orkers. There is another interesting feature which emerged from interviews v/ith skilled men. As can be seen only six of the skilled v/orkers, (Table 1 ii), left school because they had gained entrance to technical schools; the majority left school for financial reasons and entered into technical training as a second-best course of action. Almost without exception the majority stated that at the time they v/ould have preferred to stay in secondary school had they had the opportunity to do so. Yet today they constitute the best-paid section of the entire labour force, a consequence of in several cases quite f-ortuitous circumstances, for example the visit of a U.A.C. recruiting officer to their schools at a time when they knew their families would no longer be able to afford next year's fees. This feature, v/hich I had not anticipated to be so general, is best explained by the fact that most of these men left school in the late 1950's when a completed secondary education with qualifications v/as a greater rarity, and with a correspondingly higher status than it is today; furthermore at this time, most could not envisage the possibility of industrial manufacturing v/hich offered high wages and opportunities such men enjoy today. That they are only slightly older than most workers, hov/ever, and that they v/ere recruited from outside the company rather than trained inside, has important implications for in-factory mobility from the shopfloor: there cannot be very much.

Occupational Backgrounds

Whilst educational level is the primary consideration for occupational placement, work experiences before entering Champion are also important in connection with what workers do when they actually enter the factory.

As can be seen from Table pre-Champion experiences vary considerably in relation to present occupational standing. In the case of supervisory v/orkers only two out of 23 here experience their first full-time wage employment, in the case of clerical workers eight out of twenty two, whilst for shopfloor workers over half are wage-

TABLE 3

	Skilled	W hite-Collar	Shopfloor
Teaching	7	10	6
Railways/Ports	10		2
A r m y /1' o 1 i c c/K o s p i t a	4		7
*Government	3	i	17
**Large Scale Expatriate Go.	11	7	7
Small Expatriate and *Indigenous* Employers	7	5	29
* 1Private Employment on non-regular wage basis	*h*	4	
Farming and Self-employed	3		17

WORK EXPEDIENCES BEFORE JOINING CHAM PI 02

* P.W.D., Ministry of Works and Transport, Ministry of Agriculture, District Councils etc.
** U.A.C., A.T. Boardman, John Holt, G.B. Ollivant etc.
*** For example, clerks to traders and produce buyers, incomplete apprenticeships, casual daily-paid work etc.

TABLE *k* UNEMPLOYMENT

More than 1 month less than 6	30
“ 6 " 9	13
II 9 n 'I year	6
" 1 year	36

TABLE 5

CHAMPION AS FIRST FULL-TIME PERMANENT V/AGE-EMPLO YMZI:T

1Based on unbroken periods, i.e. a worker with five continuous years counts as one score in the "more than one year" category, a worker v/ith. two years unemployment with one months employment in bet ween counts as two in the same category*

earners for the first time. The important point is that for the members of the first tv/o status groups, factory employment represents the apex of their occupational mobility; after several posts previously they are voluntarily opting for factory employment since this is the best location for realizing their particular ambitions.
In the case of shopfloor v/orkers this is quite simply the only v/ork they can get in the urban situation.

Taking the supervisory v/orkers first, the movement from public corporations has already been explained in terms of higher v/ages; the same applies to school-teaching v/hich v/as usually taken as a stop-gap measure betv/een company employment. (It will be remembered that most of Champion's skilled' v/orkers v/ere from the Kid-West and Eastern Regions v/here factory employment is limited, so school-teaching was taken on before migrating to Lagos.) The most common previous employment was, however, in other large-scale expatriate companies such as U.A.C., A.T. Boardman, John Holt, G.B. Ollivant, and so on, mainly in their apprenticeship schools *from whence* v/orkers *moved* to Champion in search of higher v/ages. As can also ba seen, the amount of time spent in lowly paid occupations, working for an independent trader, for oneself or on the farm, is very slight and v/as in fact done by four skilled workers betv/een leaving school and entering into apprenticeships, i.e. before they gained their manual skills. Generally speaking, such skilled workers moved easily from previous v/ork into the Champion company, reflecting their very favourable wider market situation because of their skill levels. Their experiences of unemployment is quite negligible.

The most common pre-factory v/ork employment for clerical v/orkers is teaching. Despite the low pay for primary school teachers, the v/ork does afford considerable opportunity for further study. And since v/hite-collar posts at Champion require V/.A.S.C. or G.C.I3. qualifications, if such men completed their secondary school education without sufficient certificates, then school-teaching formed a useful bridge betv/een the two. While school-teaching, workers were improving their general market situation and on this basis gained entry to their present employment. As the table also shov/s$_r$ some tv/elve white-collar workers had been employed in other factories prior to entering Champion; as Champion paid higher rates for clerical workers and

offered sound conditions of employment, educated young men in other Ikeja firms were often trying to transfer to this factory. These were the fortunate ones$_s$ but once again, they had been able to change workplace without going through extended periods of unemployment. The periods of unemployment listed above were primarily due to secondary school leavers taking time between leaving school and finding work to study further for G.C.E. examinations.

V/ith shopfloor workers the position is very different indeed, i.'ot only is this for a majority their first experience of wage-employment, but their pre-factory careers are characterized by extreme variety and in many cases high instability. The most common post-school experience is (after unemployment) work with an independent businessman, usually the father or a kinsman in their home town, during v/hich time they received board and lodging and the occasional sum of money. Though from time to time this type of relationship may have the appearance of an apprenticeship*, more frequently, this v/ork consists of a short intermediary period betv/een completing school and migrating to the urban area; acting as a clerk in a kinsman's store, managing a market stall, assisting a produce buyer, attending a kinsman's petrol station, beginning an apprenticeship but failing to stay, on - these are randomly chosen examples - with lack of money the invariable reason for quitting, similarly v/ith farming for one's father on lineage land. And on migrating to Lagos, Agege or I.Keja, if they have experienced v/age-earning before finding work in Champion, this is at the lowest occupational levels, most *commonly* as labourers in the Public V/orks Department or the Ministry of Works, or alternatively in small-scale expatriate enterprise. If fortunate, some of these workers managed to find alternative v/ork in Champion whilst holding down other posts; several claimed to have retired voluntarily in order to search full-time for better paid more secure posts in the European companies on Ikeja or other industrial estates. Only eleven out of the total had no experience of several months unemployment and over half of shopfloor v/orkers had at least two extended periods cut of work sometime during their carcers. *-lany could be considered fairly

fortunate by comparison with one young man whose experience, one could scarcely call it a carccr, on completing three years in .secondary school was as follows; applicant at Imeko from 1960 to May 1962, at Abeokuta from June 1962 to January 1963, at Ibadan from February 1963 to November 1963, at Lagos from December 1964 to July 1963*
Forty four of all shopfloor respondents had also been first employed as casual workers on the minimum wage rate, compared with all skilled and virtually all clerical v/orkers who v/ere immediately engaged as permanent staff. Unfortunately no records were kept of casual daily-paid workers who failed to gain permanent employment, but the number must have been very considerable when, as during the time of interview-ing, around fifty to seventy men v/ere being employed day-by-day for casual labouring jobs in the factory compound.

Against this background we can look at the market, work and status situations of those in each occupational category in turn.

Skilled V/orkers

Even before entering Champion, the market situation of most skilled v/orkers was a sound one. The experience of Moses (described in Chapter 6) is a reasonably typical example and the range of possible employment opportunities increasingly available to such men on the estate has already been indicated in the experiences of kamoni, though he stands in the lower reaches of the skilled category for his particular company. Presently the major indication of their wider market situation are the prevailing v/ages paid in Champion. As can be seen from Table 6, v/ages paid to skilled v/orkers are generally v/ell in excess of those paid to clerical and other workers, the range overlapping only v/ith those of white-collar v/orkers in the case of the younger more recent recruits to this elite category. More important, the salaries of the top men, (senior electricians, overseer and maintenance engineer) are similar to salaries currently paid at Ikeja to university graduates newly employed into management positions. On past precedent, skilled employees earning around *&50-£>r/G* per month could hope to achieve similar returns in five or six years time, the more so since Champion, as v/ith many other factories in post-civil war days, was engaging on a rapid expansion of its plant.

TABLE 6

WAGE DISTRIBUTION £11

Monthly £N	17 ago	r * aAM	Skilled	White-Collar	Shopfloor
10 but	les than	15			4
15	ii	20			26
20	ii	25		5	23
25	n	30		5	10
30	tt	35		2	9
35	i:	40	1	3	3
40	it	45	3	4	1
45	v	50	4	1	2
50	ii	55	1	1	
55	ti	60	2	1	
60	II	65	6		
65	II	70	1		
70	II	75			
75	II	80	1		
80	' '	85			
85	it	90	' 1		
90	ti	95			
95	it	100			
100	fi	105	1		
105	ti	110	1		
110	Ii	115	1		
Total			23	22	7S

The number of skilled v/orkers currently attempting to further their ov/n education is small, seven in all attending evening classes in order to gain further engineering qualifications. But after gaining City and Guilds and trade certificates, these v/orkers argued, that in order to improve their market circumstances, their most profitable avenue was gaining further experience v/ithin the plant itself, for as one man expressed it, "Working with all this new equipment is for me an education in it-self. Everyday I am learning new skills from (the expatriate department head), so working hard on the job is the best way of getting on." But where workers wished to continue their education then they were given special leave allowances for study and, where possible, were relieved of shift v/ork.

Despite their Considerable opportunities to move elsewhere, the skilled labour force of Champion is stable as a result of their high salaries and the intrinsic satisfaction many experience from their v/ork situation. As most v/ere engineers or electricians their v/ork was varied and allowed of high status: those at the top enjoyed in effect a quasi-management stature. As most expatriate managers v/ere involved in administration and decision making, a considerable amount of authority in day-to-day work passed into the hands of their Nigerian subordinates; furthermore whilst senior electricians and overseers, for example, were able to select from the general labour force those young men they considered suitable to train further as apprentice engineers and electricians, the chargehands and foremen below them also had the power to recommend v/orkers being promoted from casual to permanent labour and then subsequently up the lower reaches of the shopfloor scale. In effect then, these men wielded considerable power which greatly affected the v/ork experiences and life-chances of those below them; contest and competition for their support and patronage was constantly going on among lower order workers, especially for the small number of apprenticeships available, for these are exceptionally scarce resources.

But the extent to v/hich .skilled v/orkers gain *the greatest benefits* from industrial employment is best seen in terms of the v/ay they view their prospective careers. Of the 23, only four anticipate resigning from the company before reaching retirement age; the rest foresee a completo v/orking career in wage-earning employment for it is here, assuming that the younger ones subsequently reach either the status of

engineer or senior.supervisor (Table 7) that they can enjoy the benefits of urban life, high economic reward and constant security. Only the most recent recruits to this labour elite do not currently share the benefits of high wages and bonus payments obtained by skilled v/orkers; more established members have already begun to acquire the indicators of high prestige in the wider urban context, most notably in the building of houses in Lagos and in their home towns and furnishing these in the modern style; the possession of radios, electric fans and refrigerators, carpets and suites of furniture is a common occurrence among these men. They had no difficulty in keeping older children in secondary school until their education v/as completed ; the majority however with children of pre-school age would have little difficulty in maintaining school fee payments throughout. Notwithstanding their own experiences, these men placed high premium on the complete education of their own sons and daughters, preferably to university level. Three of the older men indeed had children in Lagos kindergarten schools, paying a termly amount equivalent to the annual secondary school fees v/hich few older urban dwellers can afford to pay for more than a year or tv/o. One assistant foreman (described more fully below), on showing me the plans for his second house at Agege, explained how the monthly rent of the top floor of this, building v/ould pay the education fees of all his children "to as high a level as they can possibly go."

All these considerations have important implications for the structure of wage negotiation between these men and the management. Essentially, collective action in protection and advancement of wage rates has little appeal. Though I have considered skilled v/orkers as a group, their bargaining power is diverse in terms of educational qualific-ations, occupational background and expertise, current v/ork and attempts to gain further paper certificates, they are a varied group. (The three life-histories given below indicate this variety.) In consequence, they "bargain" with their departmental heads on a highly particularistic basis. Though I was unable to observe such 'personal bargaining' taking place, a measure of the confidence which such

TABLE 7

PROPOSED MOBILITY K

	Skilled	White-Collar	Shopfloor
(1) Life Tine C areer in Factory	6	1	no
i Supervisor	1		
ii Engineer		4	
iii Production Manager		10	
iv Administrative Manager		3	
v Commercial Manager		1	
vi Accountant			
vii Personnel Manager	18	19	
viii Private Secretary			
Total	4	3	10
(2) Entrepreneurship			4
i Trader/Entrepreneur(General)			4
ii Welder/Motor Mechanic			2
iii Transporter			9
iv Farmer			1
v Cloth Trader.			13
vi Pharmacist			13
vii Electrician/Radio Mechanic			1
viii Provisions/Foodstuffs Dealer			1
ix Stationer			2
x Pools House Owner			4
xi Tailor			1
xii Beerseller			3
xiii Petrol Station Owner			1
xiv Contractor			1
xv Draughtsman			
xvi Musician			
Total			
(5) Full-Time Further Education		4	3
Total		1	
	23	78	2
			2

v/orkers share in gaining higher wage rates emerged v/hen the Government, on the basis of the Adebo ’./age and Salary Commission recommendations, awarded an all-round increment to all v/orkers below the level of £>er annum.

Most skilled workers fell above this level, and yet they considered that the management v/ould give them a *corresponding* increment to preserve their substantial wage differentials against v/orkers on the lower grades. Further, they considered that the management v/ould do this without any collective representation from the v/orkers themselves. A senior technician commented: "Certainly there will be no pressure together from us because it is not necessary. You see that for our grade, the Government has left our increment to the management’s discretion. There can be no doubt about it. Champion is a considerable company and will pay us without any problem." An acting foreman was equally adament that collective action was unnecessary: "Now I am just promoted and so have had to leave the union. It is a good thing because 1 am so close to management now. As for (the) Adebo (award) I must v/ait for management reaction. If it is not favourable then perhaps we need some representation to the Managing Director. But I cannot see that it will be necessary." But an electrical maintenance man jokingly described a possible if unlikely strategy if a similar award v/as not forthcoming: "I'll go straight to my head of department because I'm directly responsible to him, so he should be most interested in my affairs. But they will have to put up our v/ages - otherwise we v/ill all leave."

To summarize then, skilled workers are the elite of the Ikeja labour force; if they wish they can move from one factory to another in search of higher wages without much difficulty. Their authority and status v/ithin the company is considerable and outside the company they enjoy a similarly high social standing. Accordingly they do not share the prevailing aspirations to entrepreneurship, (v/here they do then they frequently do so via wives or kinsmen whom they support or even direct in trading). And because of the high status v/hich they have achieved, the attraction of collective class action on the basis of the common class experience which they share betv/een themselves and with other workers is correspondingly slight. Consequently when class conflict does occur, not surprisingly they stand aside, and, as one electrician commented, ’’let those v/ho know this action to be necessary carry it out* For myself, it has no attraction at all.’:

Three Skilled Workers

Some of the characteristics described above are illustrated in the career patterns of three randomly selected skilled workers.

1. An Ife Yoruba, F.L. v/as born in 1924 and reached class 2 in the missionary school in his town before he was instructed to leave by his father and became a pupil-teacher in a primary school at Agege.
He could see little future in this, and at the age of 26 became an apprentice motor mechanic v/ith the engineering department of J. Allen in Lagos, starting on 13/6d per month- After seven years he received only £3.13- and so he resigned, liis father, an ex-railway clerk, arranged for him to enter the loco-workshop of higerian Railways at Ebute Ketta as a fitter-machinist, and after six years he was earning £27-10-. He then transferred at a slightly higher salary to the first Chinese owned company to open in 1961 at Ikeja. he did not care for the management and after a letter of application was employed in Champion. After four years he was promoted to chargehand on .042 per month, four years later to assistant foreman on £50, though today as the oldest skilled worker in the company earns betv/een £60 and £70. By 1968 he had built a two-storey building at Agege: by 1971 he was buying land for a second, the topfloor of which he intended to let for about £25 per month, whilst the bottom floor v/ould be used by his wife, a cloth trader of some standing in the town, and his own contracting business. lie v/as recently offered the post of foreman in Lagos v/hich v/ould have added a further £10 to his monthly salary, but the travelling did not appeal to him.

2. A.K. v/as an Ibibio of 32 years. He ended his schooling in class 4 when his father could no longer afford his education and that of his junior brother. Only a few days after his father had told his this, a representative of the U.A.C. came to the school and asked for youths who wished to enter training school. So for five years he was at the'U.A.C. Technical Training School at Burutu in the Mid West v/here he received a living allowance and passed examinations in machine-shop engineering, his first post, arranged by U.A.C., v/as in Palm Gil (Nigeria) at Sapele v/here he received £30 as a fitter. With encouragement from U.A.C. he entertained ideas of travelling to Britain to enter full-time education but his father died leaving the care of his nine other children to A.H. Feeling that he musu leave Sapele for better promotion, a transfer v/as arranged for him to Champion. Kis subsequent promotion was rapid indeed: 1964 to charge-hand on £301; 1966 assistant foreman on £640, in 197C to foreman earning £721, and finally in 1971 to technician on the basic salary of £1050, In 1971 he v/as taking a postal course in production management. He had hoped to follow a mechanical engineering course at Yaba but there v/as no replacement for him. His aim v/as the post of assistant.engineer, for the post of engineer v/ould be filled by a graduate -

3- One of the youngest supervisory sto.ff, S.M. left secondary school in Abeokuta after only three years through lack of family finances, and was forced to teach in an Ibadan primary schoolon a salary ox :o?' per month* He resigned on gaining entry to theGovernment trade centre at Oshogbo. After three years as a trainee electrician and his examinations completed, he worked for the Ministry of Works at Ikeja before being employed at the Ewekoro Cement Factory on over ^30 per month, lie found the v/ork unhealthy, returned to Ikeja and was immediately employed by Champion as an electrician on £-30

per month basic. Within a year he had received promotion and in 1970 gained the post of senior tradesman on ^532 per annum. In the short term he hopes for the position of supervisor, but, depending on company policy, hopes to go to university (as one young technician in Champion had recently done with company sponsorship,)but alternatively he has begun an evening course for a Higher National Certificate in engineering.

White-Collar Workers

As can be seen from prevailing wage-rates, (Table 6) the economic return of clerical workers in the factory is, apart from a couple of exceptions, little distinguishable from that of shopfloor v/orkers. The exceptions are in this instance important for those earning above *£h0* per month, as also those who, during the course of several years employment in Champion, have advanced their educational level and are continuing to do so. This is the reason why clerical employment is popular v/ith those who can find it; it allows suitable opportunity for socio-economic mobility through further educational achievements. In terms of age, white-collar v/orkers like shop-floor v/orkers are young:

'they plan several years further study v/hich will different iate them even further from the rest and hopefully allow them to enter more prestigious professional occupations, mainly inside, but sometimes outside, the industrial system. Work situation and prospects therefore, are the major influences on class experience and sentiments.

As emerges from Table 1 (iv), with few exceptions white-collar v/orkers are universally engaged in some form of further study, by far the most common being postal or evening courses in accountancy. The three exceptions not claiming to be so engaged v/ere all recently employed clerks and newly arrived in Lagos. By comparison with many other positions, clerical v/ork in the factories is especially suited to furthering one's education: there is no shift or weekend work, there is much spare time for study during the day, competition is provided

by one’s peers, and certain factories encourage their employees in a number of ways. Champion for example provided study leave at times of examinations and had established machinery for promoting workers on completion of certain courses. Clerks faced with large fees for course and examination registration could have these paid for by the company and repay it by regular monthly deductions from their pay packets. Furthermore since the courses taken, when successfully completed, v/ould qualify their holders for employment as senior staff in industry, the incentive to succeed is perhaps all the greater by seeing daily,qualified accountants, commercial and personnel managers enjoying the fruits of office. (Apart from obvious attractions, accountancy appeared a popular choice because here, it was felt, there v/ould be less competition from university graduates.) The experiences, especially of the first tv/o life-histories given below, v/ould also possibly illustrate that with diligence, the difficulties inherent in working and studying can be overcome. A.G. in particular was well on the way to crossing the divide betv/een white-collar worker and manager.

In terms of status then white-collar v/orkers place emphasis on future rather than present possibilities. One has the impression not only in Champion but generally in I.igeria that, by comparison v/ith skilled workers v/ho receivc considerable deference from chose around them, white-collar v/orkers have prestige only in their ov/n eyes. But there are factors which emphasize their di.stinctiveness in the labour force: they are physically separate from the v/orkers productive and administrative blocks being quite separate; the work is, of course, clean and orderly and clerks are expected to v/ear Ivuropean-style slacks and shirts for their daily duties. English is frequently the lingua franca of the office, not for crossing ethnic divisions but for demonstrating level of education and emphasising *zhe* divide betv/een clerk and worker. These considerations plus the non- pecuniary aspects of clerical employment do ensure that the white- collar force is seen, and sees itself, as a distinct status group.

But at the same time, whilst clerks themselves place great emphasis on such factors, the lack of accompanying economic superiority and an only slightly better market situation to most workers ensures that others do not grant thorn the higher status that so many overtly seek. In the modern urban situation, education without noteworthy material advancement frequently counts for little, perhaps the only

exception being the schoolteacher.

In a sense v/hite-collar v/orkers are caught betv/een tv/o stoolsin terms of existing economic and social standing they are differentiated, from v/orkers in somewhat marginal ways, but nevertheless they aspire to semi-professional and professional status in the long run. In the event, the former considerations have usually been in the ascendancy *on* the industrial estate. V/here strikes have been called in the past, in Champion, International and other firms with large labour forces, v/hite-collar employees have followed the majority; that is, their shared class interests v/ith the workers have taken priority over the status divisions common to everyday experience. Only on rare occasions to my knowledge, and usually in small authoritarian firms where white-collar employees are small in number and easily identifiable, have clerks broken strike ranks. Again, only after they have begun to move up the factory hierarchy have such employees abandoned trade union membership; for the most part they are only slightly less unionized as an occupational grcup than shopfloor workers. On the crucial indicators then clerical v/orkers respond to their class rather than their status and proposed status situations. On the basis of- the Champion labour force data, there appear to be several possible explanations for this. First, most of these are young men on the first steps of the ladder to gaining the qualifications and experience v/hich will qualify them for the more prestigious and rewarding positions. Second, a development of the first, their avenues are likely to be long and drawn out processes in v/hich failure at various stages is far more common than regular success. If they are successful then the conflict of interests will truly emerge only after several years. Third, joining the union in v/hich manual workers are dominant allows white-collar v/orkers the chance to share the economic return and improved conditions of service from collective action, without having to engage in union leadership. Ii they formed their ov/n interest group then they would have to provide their
ov/n leadership. Leaders would then face the incongruous position of

opposition to a managerial class v/hich they as individuals aspire to join in the longer run. Such prominence v/ould jeopardize their chances of promotion v/hen comparisons would be drawn v/ith politically docile colleagues exhibiting no attachment to the body of workers. Finally, one has to take these stated responses v/ith great caution- Several clerks whom I followed through acknowledged the excess of optimism in their first statements of aspirations; as one fellow, an 'aspirant' accountant at first sight, commented later, "Most of us v/ill fail but we can only hope against hope to succeed." For the moment in a young labour force v/ith only a few years of experience, hov/ever, the combination of the various factors described above continues to maintain the white-collar force at least as a distinct status group v/ithin the company.

Three V/hite-Collar V/orkers

1. The son of an illiterate farmer in Ondo, A.O. spent five years in grammar school and passed seven subjects in V/.A.S.C. examinations. In i960, then aged 21, he was employed by U.A.C. at Ibadan as an accounts clerk on £132 per annum, but after two years he v/as seconded to Champion as an administrative clerk on £276. From this point onwards he received promotion every two years and became the assistant staff supervisor in 1969 on a salary of £584. In the sane year he enrolled at the Yaba College of Technology for a three year course in office administration and management. For this he v/as sponsored by the company and allowed day release besides being sent on several short, training courses at the firm's expense. His aim was the post of personnel manager though not necessarily in Champion. but his salary and the security of his present post was sufficient to keep him in Champion for some time. If he attempted to move then his studies v/ould be disturbed.

2. A Benin man born in 1939? L.A. completed his secondary schooling with several G.C.E. passes, after v/hich he spent four years in a commercial institute supported by his father and other members of his farming family. I-Iis first employment v/as with John Holt in Jos in 1959 as a shorthand typist earning :.j10 per month, but he resigned after tv/o weeks when offered a higher wage at the nearby branch of U.A.C. Hero, after two years, he considered his progress to be too slow, and so he v/as transferred to Champion, then a nev/ factory in 1962. v/ith better opportunities. Over a period of eight years he has received regular promotion to his present post of personal assistant to the expatriate head of the engineering department, on a basic salary of *jf/20* per annum, nis postal course for qualifications from the Institute of .secretaries v/as in its second year, an essential step in his long term goal of "private secretary to the general manager of an industrial company." Champion v/as the'best place in Lagos

of which he knew, for the type of promotion he had so far experienced, and GO ho had little interest in moving elsewhere.

3- An ljesha man aged 27? K.S. left secondary school with seven passes in V/.A.S.C. and was immediately employed at the Ministry of Agriculture in Ilesha on a wage of £17^. But though he received on the job training, the post allowed him no opportunity to study in the evenings for the work was too arduous. After four months he became a teacher in a local secondary school and later at Gshogbo on a slightly higher salary. During the two years as a teacher he gained 'O' levels in five subjects. Supported by kinsmen living at Ibadan, he resigned in order to spend one year in full-time private study and gained one [1] A[1] level pass, with which he found employment in Champion as a purchasing clerk in 19o? on £225* Within three years he had doubled his salary and gained the position of control clerk. From 1969 he was engaged on the A.C.C.A. postal course in book-keeping and accounts and by 1971 had completed the intermediate stage. The cost of the course was his main burden but he had considerable time to study; . yet his feeling was that [;i]a man must struggle" when he aims as high as head of a company accounts department.

Shonfloor V/orkers

Two-thirds of shopfloor workers fall within the narrow wage range of £12 (the minimum post-Adebo wage rate) and -029 per month whilst only an eighth customarily earn more than £30, all of whom were the longest serving members (Table 6). The wages of the six best-paid workers at the time of interview were all due to extensive overtime in the previous month, but since all workers on the shopfloor are involved in a rotating eight hour shift system, the chances of overtime for the majority are slight - consisting of Sunday work or labour during public holidays. Though a small bonus payment was made for the night-shift, most v/orkers agree that this scarcely compensates for the disruption caused to social life; the important point of course is that v/orkers have no choice in the matter. Though some skilled workers, especially foreman and charge-hands, also are involved in shifts, these can be re-arranged if it happens to be inconvenient, but in the case of shopfloor workers everything has to be arranged around the shift organization. One of the major objections to shift work is that it makes attendance on evening courses in Lagos quite impossible; but this is only one factor among several which ensures that rising from the factory floor is an exceptionally difficult process.

As noted above the unemployment statistics of shopfloor workers is a rough guide to their highly unfavourable market situation and the increasing difficulty of finding any v/ork in the Lagos area is well-[2] documented. It must be remembered that Champion v/orkers are today the best paid v/orkers on the industrial estate hov/ever, and so in some

v/ays even those on the shopfloor are better off than many and that once they have been promoted to permanent staff they are more secure than most by virtue of union membership. At the same time, the data on educational background gives some slight indication of the rapidly worsening market situation of young men v/ho several years ago v/ould have had little difficulty in finding employment (including white-collar work). Though the greater part of the shopfloor labour force shares an incomplete secondary education, increasingly they are being joined by workers v/ith formal qualifications, for example twc with W.A.S.C. and G.C.E. and teacher training certificates, three with City and Guilds qualifications. Most of these have joined Champion in the past tv/o years yet have initially been employed as casual v/orkers and have little "chance of promotion into white-collar positions where others so qualified have been employed in the recent past. In the short-term their best chance of promotion in Champion lies in the extension of the factory; unlike previous educated youths v/ho were able to retire from one factory and move to another where promotion seemed more likely, inter-factcry mobility is now a very limited possibility. V/ork conditions, hov/ever, did vary betv/een the various departments in Champion, and I will deal v/ith each of these, the engineering department, the brewing section and the bottling hall in turn; the proportional distribution of v/orkers in these was 3*^5 respectively in a total population of almost 500 employees.

The Engineering Department

By common consent the engineering section was the most preferable of the three for here most v/orkers v/ere employing or newly acquiring manual skills, hov/ever limited these may be. Here were concentrated carpenters, greasers, fitters' mates, electricians, welders, motor mechanics and drivers engaged in a variety of different tasks. Emphasis here was placed on the constant change of v/ork on a day-to-day basis and the manner in which, as several workers volunteered, "I am learning something nev; every day-[11] Eight out of the 29 sample aembers had, before entering the factory, passed through either private apprenticeship or Government trade centres, and so saw their current employment as an extension of their previous training for they v/ere continually using modern equipment v/hich they had not previously encountered. Since Champion v/as extending its entire existing plant, those in the engineering department v/ere engaged on the construction of nev/ buildings and installing recently imported machinery, again v/ith

the most modern tools. In their various tasks workers operated in small groups with individual skilled men and so developed personalized relationships with these.

Most v/orkers here then were engaged in a form of on-going apprentice-ship. .but the most important feature for present purposes was that only from this section v/ere v/orkers sponsored on skilled training courses outside the company, especially to the U.A.C. school in Lagos. As noted above, these places lay in the gift of skilled workers first and foremost for they made recommendations to the expatriate head of department. However, only five or six workers v/ere sent on such courses over a. year, so competition for the patronage of individual skilled v/orkers was exceptionally strong and a diversity of strategies employed. One youth v/as so chosen by virtue of his mother, v/ho owned a foodstore outside the factory gate, cultivating her relationship v/ith a Champion chargehand v/ith exceptional diligence and at some expense! The point is that such formal training is acknowledged as the prerequisite to ultimately entering the ranks of the privileged elite of skilled employees, and v/ith them, viewing industrial employment as a life-time career pattern. Without such experience, even workers in the engineering section can expect only the gradual annual increments common to other v/orkers: in this sense only a few come to see v/ork in the engineering section as a means to noteworthy mobility v/ithin the factory. I-iost continue to view it as a valuable experience on the road to self-employment outside the industrial system. Hence, as Table 7 illustrates, workers from this section aspire to trades in the wider urban context where their present experiences can be best deployed, - welders, motor mechanics. electricians, and via the role of driver to that of transporter.

As it happened, none of the v/orkers v/ho had been or v/ere on such training courses were included in my random sample; hence the complete absence of shopfloor v/orkers. opting for a life-time factory career. But an illustration of the value of this training emerged in the experience of one young man v/ho had been so selected for this training. On returning from three months in the U.A.C. school, he had only spent four days on the night shift before he v/as involved in a fight v/ith a security guard v/ho lodged a complaint against him with the management. A full enquiry by both management and union officials was launched, and finally, with the union in agreement that the trainee was in the wrong, he v/as terminated- Within three days he was employed

in the adjacent tyre factory on a wage of *£33t £5* more than he had been receiving in Champion. But this is the exception rather than the rule; whilst employment in the engineering section does bring certain benefits in the form of experience, material advancement within the factory comes for most through annual increments and x^ressure of the union on management.

The Brewinp; Section

As the smallest department, the brewery is of little present significance. Though technologically the most complex section of the factory, most v/ork v/as done by members of the engineering section. Only eleven workers v/ere engaged here on each shift and for the most part they were engaged in routine tasks such as washing the vats and floors of the brewery, carrying ingredients or watching dials. The brewing section v/as generally viewed as being the easiest place in v/hich to work for most of the ti;ne v/as spent simply hanging about v/aiting for small tasks to emerge. (Akanle the union president was employed in this section and so had considerable opportunity to involve himself in union affairs.) The prospects for promotion from this section were nil; with the exception of the tv/o process officers who had been employed in the company from the very beginning and so had developed particular expertise, brewery workers relied only on annual grade increments for regular advancement.

The Bottling hall

By far the largest and most important department, the bottling hall

usually had around 130 v/orkers on each shift most of whom were involved in highly repetitious routine work such as carrying and feeding empty bottles, into the transmission belt, observing their progress during the mechanised filling process, dealing with minor mishaps, assembling cardboard boxes and placing bottles in them and finally stacking them in preparation for shipment out of the factory. Host work in the bottling hall required no more than a few hours instruction and consisted of quite mindless activity requiring as far as most workers were concerned, only an ability to adapt to tedium. By comparison with work in the engineering section in particular, there was no intrinsic satisfaction and no variety with the constant pace of work being set by the machines rather than the individual working on them. Again the hall v/as an exceptionally noisy place; in order to hold a conversation it was necessary to v/alk outside sc there v/ere severe limitations on any social intercourse between workers unless during rest periods. With the plant continuously working to full capacity, conditions were invariably crov/ded and, according to many workers, dangerous because of broken glass, concentrated machinery and spilt beer. Though the hall was open 011 all sides to allow the air to flow freely around the machines, during the dry season the heat was considerable and where involved in continuous movement, workers *were* quickly bathed in sweat after only a few minutes work. Though the rate of production could, be varied, it v/as generally running at full speed except at tines during the night shift when conditions were rather easier. Machine breakdown v/as a common occurrence often greeted with shouts of delight, for apart from the main meal break only two short stops v/ere allowed during the eight hour shift. Apart from these there v/as little respite from constant monotony and noise.

Not surprisingly, extreme dissatisfaction was widespread among bottling hall workers concerning working conditions, here v/ere concentratsd the lowest-paid v/orkers of all, wage differentials being primarily a reflection of length of service; self-improvement was for most out of the question. Transfer to other departments v/as rare and the nature of shift-v/ork militated against furthering one's

education; 1 knew of ten v/ork ere v/ho had attempted to follow postal c o u x o s a s g v o ii nng, c ou i £>Go w o x* 0 3. i ii 0 ible, but all had found this to be incompatible with the fatigue following a day[3] s work, and the seven continuing to do so were, on their own admission, finding it a difficult task. Essentially then these v/orkers of the shopfloor category were involved in a vicious circle and responded appropriately.

The bottling hall was a constant source of dispute v/hich took a variety of forms. Even from casual acquaintance there v/as an esprit de corps among established workers v/hich took a 'negative* form, mads particularly manifest by such action as sabotage and being to the forefront of collective action. As to the former, breaking bottles in the sensitive machinery was a common tactic and one which required extended attention fro:.'- chargehands end a3.1owe& the workers to take a 'breather'; there were other more subtle tactics v/hich afforded great amusement to cliques of workers living in Agege, evoking similar sentiments of admiration to those described in the Case of the Local Hero. With regard to collective action, this ranged from spontaneous and ephemeral go-slows in response to minor issues and complaints against authoritarian management tactics, through to bringing the entire productive process to a halt when in the past the union called on them to strike. ihe high concentration of operatives at the end of the production line afforded them a strategic position to disrupt the factory as a whole; once, they ceased v/ork then the stoppage was grtdually transmitted through the whole plant. The supposed 'fear' in v/hich the management held the militancy of those in the bottling hall v/as a source of considerable pride.

The i;o7s to Entrepreneurship

The important point which emerges from this is that whereas individual members of the skilled and white-collar labour forces have consider-able room for manoeuvre in response to their class situation, individual members of the shopfloor category have virtually none at all. The slight possibility of rising into the position of the skilled worker .is such as to reinforce, if anything, the prevailing impression of the industrial system being a closed mobility system for the majority involved in it at the lower levels. Their general market

situation remains virtually static, most work situations are equally rigid and, as noted earlier, the wider status situation is constantly low, becoming even less impressive as workers become older and more is expected of them. In consequence, whilst skilled, and white-collar workers see factory employment as an end in itself for the most part, almost without exception, those on the shopfloor view factory employment as a means of entry into the sphere of the urban self-employed entrepreneur. These different courses of action emerge with striking clarity in Table 7; even though (as suggested) statements on anticipated courses of action must be treated with extreme caution, clearly the contrast is important. In certain respectsit is more important that people interpret the factory arena in such contrasting ways than whether they will ultimately follow their proposed courses in the long run: it is in accordance with their present conceptions that their actions will be substantially framed.

In the light of the above account it is not surprising that, v/ith the exception of those in the engineering section, the choice of subsequent occupations is highly varied. Only the roles of electrician, welder, and possibly transporter bear any relationship to present-occupations; for most, ultimate choice is based on a variety of considerations, ranging from having prior experience before entering the factory, having suitable kinship connections v/hich would allow one to become established mere easily, or simply the prestige and possible wealth accruing to those currently involved in these roles.

At the same time, these proposed courses of action must be related to the amount of capital workers hope to acquire, and the length of time proposed for this acquisition. As Tables 3 and 9 show, the range is wide v/ith the majority hoping to save between about £200 and £750 in the space of roughly a decade. Again I would emphasize that these figures are only a very rough guide; most workers, I suspect, give little thought to either length of service or amount of capital required, though there is something of a consensus emerging. The only point which can be made is that, notwithstanding the shared *ambition of moving out of* the industrial system, the working population is a very stable one with important implications for their organization on class lines and emerging forms of class consciousness.

TABLE 8

ANTICIPATED PERIOD OF '>/AC E-EHPLOYMrJ?IT F03 ASPIRANT EN*I'd*KPi?El,EUi\&

Less tha 3 years	4
3 les than 6 years	8
6 " 9 "	13
9 " 12 "	26
12 " 15 "	14
15 " 18 "	1
d/k	12
Total	78

- TABLE 9

ANTICIPATED LEVEL OF SAVINGS FOR EiTi'REPriEi.EURSHIP

Less than £100	1
100 but less than 250	18
250 " 500	18
500 » 750	14
750 •- » 1,000	3
1,000+	14
d/k, not applicable	10

Total

Neithcr Champion, International nor the other companies I approached had details of labour turnover but it is by common consent very limited indeed at the present time; v/hether the position changes remains to be seen. For the moment it is the perceptual contrast betv/een the open mobility system of the urban community and the closed one of the estate v/hich is problematic, not the structural interchange of personnel between .them.

This brings us to 'the central paradox concerning the tv/o mobility systems, namely that collective action on the basis of shared class situation in the industrial arena becomes an essential strategy for the individual's longer term aspiration of mobility v/ithin the urban community. If the aspirant entrepreneur is to reach his goal then advancement of his economic interests via the trade union is, as 1 *have* tried to suggest, *the only realistic course of* action available to him, and as far as the unions in Champion and International are concerned, the present house union character a2id composition is a suitable vehicle whereby economic improvement can be fought for.

On the critical question as to what extent workers so far have been able to accumulate working capital, I have no systematic data..

Primarily because of the pressure of kinship and ethnic brotherhood ties, the level of the individual's savings is one of his most closely guarded secrets. However, several young unmarried men in my neighbour-hood at- Agege v/ere saving about one-fifth to one-sixth of wages between £20 and £30. On the basis of a small quite unrandom sample, I estimate that the minimum wage level at v/hich savings can commence is around £16 per month. This is arbitrary and it is for young bachelors without dependents, i’or young married men v/ith children it must be several pounds more. Cne cannot, however, over emphasize that this cannot be a gradual and consistent pattern of saving; the death of a relative, sudden unavoidable demands from kinsmen, bridewealth, a short spell of unemployment, these and other demands quickly erode entirely several years of measured saving. Migrants do develop adaptive strategies but all of these have their limitations and failings at some time or other, and young migrants are also highly susceptible to the few good things of modern urban life.

But, to echo the comments of the workers themselves, v/age rates are

inseparable from tlic cost of living in the urban area, v/hich brings me back to the question raised in the last chapter, the relationship of the class system of the industrial estate to the wider economic and political context of v/hich it is a part.

'i'he issues of v/age rabcs and price inflation emphasize above all the dependence of workers on the relationship betv/een expatriate industrial managers and the indigenous political class and the relationship v/hich the political class wishes to promote vis-a-vis the members of Nigerian society. More generally, the relationship betv/een the comprador bourgeoisie and the representatives of the new imperialism determines the general parameters within whichunions and workers can operate to successfully guard and expand their own interests. But these are not rigidly determined relationships; on the contrary, they are highly changeable dialectical ones subject to considerable tensions and conflicts inherent to any neo-co3.onial society. Against the background of the preceding chapters, we can look .at the position of workers and unions as elements in these relationships v/ithin the context of the Adebo affair, when what I take to be class consciousness among v/orkers v/as transmitted into unified class action in protection of specific economic interests. Throughout the dispute it was the shopfloor v/orkers v/ho instigated and supported strike action; it constituted, fcr workers, a suitable vindication of their view that the strength of the unions derives primarily from their being at most times "the voice of the workers'* and not the instrument of "those management men" for such indeed are the skilled and white-collar labour force from several points of view, including their ov/n.

This perspective and the subsequent distinctions between market, status and work situations follow, in part, D. Lockwood's analysis (1967), in the B1 ac 1:coated V/orkor.

The difficulties are described for example in P.C.W. Gutkind (1966), "The Energy of Despair[11], Civilizations, vol. 7*-

CHAPTER 8

THE NATURE OF GLASS CONFLICT AT IKF.JA : THE ADEBO AFFAIR

By 1970, the question of the cost of urban living in the Lagos area had quite overwhelmed that of prevailing wage-rates in particular Ikeja factories. Though by 1969 the efforts of union executives, drawing on collective action by the workers had kept wages in Champion and International only slightly below par with price inflation, late 1969 and 1970 saw unprecedented rises in the cost of living, above all in the price of foodstuffs and accommodation, the tv/o major items in v/orkers[1] budgets. Employees in these tv/o companies, hov/ever, were better off than most for in these the number working for the minimum wage-rates stipulated in 196*f, were small. In other factories at Ikeja and on similar estates in Lagos, and for many workers in Government employment, most v/ere much closer to the minimum rates established by the Morgan Commission. Over five years, inflation had ensured the gradual erosion of whatever slight benefit the Morgan recommendations had made, but by 1969 price increases of twenty-five per cent per annum in basic foodstuffs and certain types of accommodation had led to a good deal of hardship among the lower strata of Lagos society as a whole. V/ith the end of the civil war in January 1970, such economic changes clearly had substantial political repercussions especially against the background of debate on the future of military rule. At the micro-level, the implications for v/orkers[1] strategies of capital accumulation are obvious enough.

Throughout the history of collective bargaining in Ikeja firms, cost of living has always played a crucial role in v/age and salary re-negotiation. The high rate of profitability in the industrial sector has reinforced the emphasis on industrial peace, and increased production costs due to v/age increments are easily passed on to the consumer. But increments based on calculations of cost of living changes are not accepted in an unqualified fashion by managements; it is not incumbent on them to take them into account and the official statistics are in many *rczpects* inadequate and *open* to debate. In part consequence, the precise grounds on v/hich increments arc granted

becomes exceedingly complicated for managements aim for a quid nro quo arrangement. They will accept for example the union's demands based on the cost of living provided that the union accepts nev/ job classification systems or re-allocation of the labour force between departments. Alternatively, the union may accept managements' interpretation *of cost of* living data if they allow the basic rate for workers in the lowest grades to be improved. The range of possibilities is considerable and well-reflected in the written accounts of the debate, from exceedingly lengthy but quite incomprehensible reports to a few cryptic comments on what decisions v/ere made! But when applying to the Ministry of Labour for permission to' implement such increments, it suits both sides to base the argument on the cost of living and the increased productivity which will result, for on *neither of these* grounds can the increments be properly opposed.

This needs to be placed in tho wider setting of wage-employment, for the contrast betv/een private and public sector v/age and salary structures is important in itself and for the present thesis. Wage increments are granted by management to preserve industrial stability, but this in turn creates certain tensions betv/een the managerial elite and the political elite, for the Government in Nigeria is the largest employer of labour; roughly two-thirds of the v/age force are in public employment v/here their very size and structure militate against the type'of house union organization in the private sector. Like the national union organizations, the largest public sector unions are frequently oligarchic and highly susceptible to political pressure. Their bargaining power, despite their size, is thus limited and improvements in overall v/age structures come above all through the system of independent wage and salary commissions established during colonial rule."*

In *consequence*, as the minimum v/age *rates established by* such commissions continue to dominate the public sector with *few* changes occurring during interim periods, it is evident that when set against changes occurring in private sector firms, the majority in Government employment are in relative terms, both immediately and in terms of future prospects, worse off. In economic terms alone, the presence of expatriate industry in the major metropolitan areas is of considerable benefit to the political elite; it reduces the needs for imports, the necessity of investing in Government-run industries, and though.
substantial profits are repatriated on exceedingly favourable terms to the companies concerned, remaining profits do add to Government

resources. At the same time, these wage differentials between private and public employment may be politically embarrassing to those in power, particularly v/here (partly in consequence of the civil war) discussion of neo-imperialism at the national level is increasingly widespread. In 1970 the debate over the role to be played by expatriate enterprise concentrated on the question of 1'iigerianization, but more '.radical' members of the ex-political class were suggesting the possibilities of nationalization in the manufacturing and oil industries. At all events, increasing irritation that the industrial sector was virtually entirely in expatriate hands was being revealed

in official Government circles. The debate, however, was of greater interest to the elite and sub-elite of liigerian society rather than those in the lower strata involved in wage-earning proper, for here the advantages of employment by expatriates are several: higher wages, better conditions of service and a relative absence of nepotism, favouritism and corruption by comparison v/ith the public sphere. Conditions in the expatriate sector were, in consequence, something of an embarrassment, especially wage and salary improvements which, as noted above, could not be reasonably objected to by Ministry officials. Briefly expressed, reducing tensions on the shopfloor exacerbates latent tensions elsewhere, a development which expatriate managers v/ere much concerned about. At Ikeja it v/as a topic of constant discussion in private and in public, especially through the I.igerian L'mployers' Consultative Association (B'.S.C.A.) Hastening the progress of I.igerianization v/as one strategy clearly conceived to counter growing opposition, but it could obviously be successful only to a limited degree.

The Adebo Commission and the Roots of Conflict

These problems together with the question of prevailing v/age rates in various Ikeja companies v/ere subsumed by the inflationary situation, such that comparisons v/ere being drawn with the circumstances preceding the Morgan Commission of 19&3- Demands that the Government should act to prevent inflation and/or raise v/ages came from a variety of sources:

ex- politicians outside the ruling elite, the major newspapers, expatriate and indigenous employers, and the national labour movement leaders - all had something to say and the overall consensus v/as in favour of a Wage and Salaries Commission. As such Commissions in the past had demonstrated

their ability to act independently of the political forces v/hich gave rise to their being established, and since early attempts by the Government to combat inflation had failed resoundingly, the emerging consensus v/as one equally favoured by v/orkers themselves.

Accordingly in July 1970, a Salaries and V/ages he view Commission v/as set up by the under the distinguished chairmanship of Chief Simeon 0. Adebo, a United Kations official little known outside elite circles and particularly acceptable to the v/orkers in the light of his having no previous political connections. As with other commissions, the terms of reference v/ere primarily directed to the public sector but customarily increments recommended there had been followed by private enterprise; a noteworthy deviation from preceding terms of reference v/as the possibility of an interim reward, itself a reflection of the exceptional inflationary situation, and a prospect quickly seized upon by some newspapers and national union figures.

The Commission, hov/ever, allowed six months to pass before submitting their first report to the IT.M.G. in December 1970, during v/hich time they synthesized various data available and began a tour of the States to collect oral evidence.

At Ikeja, as elsewhere, enormous interest v/as generated in the Adebo Commission, and much informal discussion in factory and community centred on the parallels betv/een this period and 196^-. There v/as generally a feeling of optimism among v/orkers that Adebo would recommend considerable increases "provided that the Government does not interfere" and that "they listen to the people like us and not the big Guns," whilst union leaders adopted a 'wait-and-see' policy as in both International and Champion. Though individual workers wrote letters to the Commission, Ikeja leaders did not attempt to present their own recommendations "because our voices v/ould not be heard." In contrast, the national union figures, drawn from the United Labour .Congress, Nigerian Trade Union Congress, Labour Unity !

Front, and the Kigerian Federation of Labour, organized themselves into the United Committee of Central Labour Organizations (U.C.C.L.G.) in an obvious attempt to recapture the flavour of the Joint Action Committee of 196.3 and 196^.[+] The U.C.C.L.C. produced a lengthy memorandum based on exceptionally arbitrary data in which they claimed that the Minimum Living V/age of the average worker v/ith a wife and child in Lagos was £116. 5s.Sd; acknowledging this to be unreasonable, again quite arbitrarily., they cat this to an ''irreducible" . 10s.Od, that is from eleven times the existing minimum wage to almost five times morel"' For the majority of workers this was an attractive proposition but most dismissed it as preposterous and, interestingly, as a step which, if implemented, would lead either to the greatest rates of inflation ever experienced or the closure of the factories, or both. Generally, however, the impression was that the national figures were proving their inability to lead reasonably under any circumstances; as one worker put it, “These men are'no longer workers, and so cannot understand the problems of workers or managers. Adebo will ignore them.
He is right to do so for they speak for none but themselvesi[ft]

But the possibility of an interim award before Christmas had caught the popular imagination: the u.C.C.L.C. seized on this as did certain leading newspapers, and so in early December the Commission (as throughout) demonstrated their sensitivity to public opinion, cut short their tour of the twelve States and presented their first report to the Government in Lagos. The Commission anticipated at this time presenting a series of reports “so that the matters v/hich require priority of attention can be disposed of without unavoidable delay."[6]

The principal recommendation of the report was an interim award of 1s.?d per day for daily-paid workers and <^2 per month for wage and salary earners. This cost of living allowance (cola-) applied to all v/orkers earning less than per annum whilst those then earning betv/een «50G and would receive increments v/hich v/ould raise them to *Z52.k.* The av/ards were to be backdated to 1st April, nine months in all. They were to be paid throughout the country regardless of the earlier practice of zonal differentiation and the Commission recommended that private employers should make similar adjustments v/here appropriate.

As an interim award, the £-2 increment v/as well-received by the v/orkers for it v/as automatically assumed, and reasonably so from the Commissions own comments, that further improvements to their economic condition could be expected later. In more immediate terms, the attraction of nine months back-dated pay v/as considerable since this meant almost tv/o weeks wages for those v/ithin the maximum limit of the award and around *two months for those* on the lowest income levels. With the possible exception of the Moslem Id-el Fitr festival, Christmas is the time of considerable conspicuous consumption and one v/hich invariably leaves workers in debt; the back-dated award could be well used to pay off such debts, acquire sought-after items such as new clothes, radios or furniture, or added to private savings. (Annual bonus payments and back-dated pay awards do make an important contribution to savings.)

The cola award v/as given specifically in recognition of the prevailing inflationary situation. As the Commission expressed it in the report:

> In the circumstances, the award v/e feel able to recommend at this time is aimed only at relieving intolerable suffering at or near the bottom of the v/age and salary levels, (emphasis in the original; .”"7~

As such it would be taken into account when the more general award to be recommended later v/as established. The reference to 'intolerable suffering[1] was widely quoted in the press and on the radio, as v/as a more extended comment concerning the post-war economic situation, which also reveals the tone of the Commission as a whole:

> To the extent that the shortfall in the supply of consumption goods and services can be explained by reference to the large volume of resources that has been devoted to the task of national defence during the past few years, the increase in the cost of living is a reflection of the sacrifice that has to be made in the interest cf national security. Such sacrifice would be easier tc bear, hov/ever, if it v/as seen to fall equitably *on* all sections *of the population*, *such* that *the* least sacrifice was made by those in the lov/est income group.
> From the representations made to us, it is clear not only that there is intolerable suffering at the bottom of the income scale, because of the rise in the cost of living, but also that the suffering is made even more intolerable by manifestations of affluencc and wasteful expenditure which cannot be explained on the basis of visible and legi timate means of income. (emphasis in the original;.u

The liberal humanitarian tone of the report is clear in this quotation as indeed throughout both their volumes. Though obviously highly critical of the huge existing material differentials between elite and mass, Adebo and his colleagues were to make recommendations which would

ameliorate conditions within the existing structure rather than argue in favour of wider structural changes; their approach was one of accommodation within the framework of the present value system rather than adopting a critical perspective to those values per se. Little else could have been expected under the circumstances though Ikeja union leaders v/ho read the report considered chat Adebo might have pointed more directly at leading miscreants or coteries within the national elite.

As a beginning,.however, the cola award was a promising start for the Ikeja workers. But v/ithin five days, changing circumstances led to a radical revision of this favourable response. Following a meeting v/ith N.E.C.A. in Lagos, which included the representatives of the major industrial and manufacturing companies in expatriate hands, the Federal Commissioner for Labour, Chief Enahoro, announced a significant qualification to the quite universal recommendations made by the Commission. ft.E.C.A. had argued that some of their members had granted substantial wage increments to their employees since 196^ on the basis of the rising cost of living. Kow they v/ere expected, under the Adebo recommendations, to make the same increments as those companies v/hich had made no changes over six years. 'The implication v/as that they had accordingly been forced to cut back on their profits whilst those who had not paid these increments had gone on to expand theirs. In recognition of this ‘'injustice[11] Chief Znaharo announced that v/here companies in the private sector had made wage adjustments since 196^+ on the basis of the cost of living, which v/ere equal to, or in excess of the cola award, they did not have to pay the full Adebo allowance. V/here increases had been made but were less than the allowance, companies v/ould be expected to make up the balance; where no increases had been made, then obviously the full cola had to be paid.

Among v/orkers at Ikeja a general confusion prevailed over the implications of Enahoro's qualification, for the precise details .of the grounds on which increments had been given in the past were little known. A widespread sentiment was that management and Government officials had come to a private arrangement" and one worker, sitting v/ith friends in

an Agege bar, expressed a widely-held view as follows: [11] why is every one surprised at what has happened? This is the Government at work and you know what that means. Nothing goes for nothing; in I.igeriai-'

The consequence of the Enahoro qualification created something of a paradox at Ikeja by comparison with earlier times. The Chinese and Indian companies, well-known for their attachment to the minimum possible wage-rates, announced their intention to pay immediately, whilst in most of “the European companies, usually known for their benevolent and paternalistic style, it was announced that the matter required close attention. In several of these companies, go-slows began a:; workers heard managements' initial pronunciations on the question, though these lasted only a few hours. As suggested above, the part played by cost of living indices in wage bargaining is inextricably mixed with other factors: for both management and union the question required considerable attention. Managements in different factories turned to their records and had consultations v/ith N.E.C.A. and the Ministry of Labour, whilst house union leaders conferred informally on future strategy, especially in the light of Decree 55 which forbade strike action or incitement to strike. Hitherto, union leaders who considered it expedient to call for industrial action had done so without much regard for the decree and at least four at Ikeja had been imprisoned, but only for a few hours, before coming to an arrangement with local police officers! The wider significance of Adebo clearly created a quite different set of circumstances. For two weeks, little occurred as both sides considered their positions: in International and Champion, union leaders counselled patience among the v/orkers explaining the difficulties of making an immediate decision. Against this background, I now turn to a discussion of subsequent developments in the two factories*

Tv/o Case-Studies in Protest

a . Conflict in Internabional

Shortly after Chief Enahoro's statement, Bankole, the International union president, approached the factory's personnel manager v/ho simply told him that the management had not.yet made a firm decision on the payment of cola because of tiie complexity of the factors involved. Though Bankole informed him immediately that in the'union's opinion International should pay full cola, despite repeated efforts to force the company into a quick decision, no clearer response was forthcoming, so after some two and a half weeks, in accordance v/ith established policy, the union executive called a meeting at the local hotel. By this time the v/orkers on the shopfloor had taken no action but many informal

discussions with union officials had followed. Confusion v/as obviously widespread, and a dear statement by bankole v/ould help clarify the position.

Though only about fifteen per cent of the total number of possib?_e attenders turned up, (which as I suggested is a fair indication of workers' confidence in the leadership), a lively debate began, following Bankole's extended opening account. As far as he was concerned, he commented, the Adebo award had been made applicable to all workers earning less than £500, anu what Adebo had recommended. International workers v/ere determined to get. The Enahoro qualification should be ignored by all "responsible*” union leaders alert to their v/orkers[1] interests ana he made scarcely veiled suggestions that Government officials had been bought off by the expatriate managers. Management • at International had already begun to stall on the question but whatever arrangements they made with'the Lagos Big Guns', the union v/ould stick to the Adebo award and not move from it. Already, he claimed, the management had attempted "desparate tactics" for the General Manager had sent for him personally from his workplace to discuss the. issues involved, but he had refused to see him unless accompanied by his advisors and unless other management representatives v/ere present. This suggestion - that the management v/ere about to buy him off - was met with loud cheers and applause from the floor. Furthermore when the manager had suggested a time for an official meeting, bankole had insisted on a later date in order that he could talk to the workers first, as he v/as now doing: "The union is only the voice of the workers. I want to hear what you have to say to the management first." Full discussion in International was especially important because "we workers here are the strongest on the estate so v/hat we do will be followed by the rest. We have to take the 3.ead." He also added that from now 021 everything depended on "the workers themselves because all these union men (i.e. the national leaders) are all out in Lagos and Ibadan playing politics and stuffing their pockets."

He then proceeded to outline that as far as he was concerned it was best to wait and observe management tactics first and so accordingly he had not considered any further action. Various workers had suggested the possibility of more direct action, taking the initiative into their ov/n hands, but "this is to be as hotheads, when v/e pride ourselves (on being) a clear-thinking and responsible organization. Intelligent workers need to stop and look at the situation carefully." After half an hour or so, he turned to discussion of other matters including the hours of workers not on shift and the forthcoming union dance, before inviting comments from the floor with the reminder, “Remember always that we are your servants and that you are our masters."

The first speaker from the floor admitted some hesitation in asking his questions: he had previously worked in another company "v/here the leader v/as always taking bribes from the management so nothing gets done. but after only tv/o months he had found that International's union v/as quite different. Bankole, he said, was highly respected and so the speaker had doubts about offering criticism.- Yet could not the union and workers do more tc show the management they meant business:

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[11] the management is the barrel of the gun but we workers are the cartridge, the cap and the gunpowder. Without uc the management are useless.[11] If selected go-slows began in one or more sections, then the management v/ould know they had to pay cola or lose money. To this Bankole replied by taking off his shoe and moving it along the table, pointed out how production throughout the plan v/ould

certainly involve loss of production and may damage the management. “but what of your brothers on piece-rate? You hurt management's pocket that is so, but you hurt workers more." An involved debate followed until the questioner thanked Bankole for putting the go-slow possibility in perspective, but added that if this avenue should be considered-then the president could be assured of his full co-operat- ion. After this came considerable repetition as eight successive v/orkers rose to congratulate Bankole on his “reasoned" and “intelligent" approach in giving attention to a diversity of factors. All concentrated on the persistent reluctance of management to part v/ith their money but equally Bankole had alv/ays won wage awards for all workers and never had there been a hint of maladministration under his leadership. Each exhorted the rest to follow his course of action “because he looks to all our interests and not his own.” ilowever, as the meeting drew to a close, H.L. stood up, a man v/ho, despite his limited English, v/as well-known for speaking his mind at general meetings, i’or himself, he announced, more direct action was required “to push the management forward and give us cola." Some workers in his section wanted to strike, but there v/ere too many like himself v/ho respected Bankole highly. "Every worker in this company follows you alone, and even if you walk out of the compound and leave just the Big lien (i.e. the management) there, we will follow immediately. Government and management are out to cheat the workers every time so we must stand behind our leaders." V/ith shouts of approval the meeting closed.

It was clear from this general meeting and other scattered informal ones that the established negotiation procedure was generall.y favoured at the .time as the most suitable course of action. But though Bankole had received the mandate which he sought, the limitations on these negotiations v/ere becoming increasingly obvious over time. Bankole privately admitted that he had expected the issue of more direct action to come up but the possibility 01 Government informers (a legacy of colonial rule) at the meeting had limited his public pronunciations on the issue. But v/ith the meeting over he considered that the worker© were, in general, satisfied with his position, and during the next four days he made several representations to the management, including one formal one v/ith his executive in attendance; all these, however, met v/ith the same *response*. *Workers* v/ere becoming increasingly impatient though management claimed that they v/ere being held up by the sloth of the Ministry, in declaring whether or not, on the basis of previous negotiations, they were eligible to pay the full cola. Hov/ever, on the shopfloor the established framework continued to hold.

On the fourth day following the meeting .as the v/orkers on the morning shift arrived, they *saw* police 011 guard outside the sheetmetal factory opposite International. It quickly became common knowledge throughout the factory that there, on the previous evening, management had announced their refusal to pay cola. During the night shift there had been a complete sitdown strike until the police cleared the factory of workers. In International, v/ork had scarcely begun on the morning shift when the dye-house workers, who had long been designated as the most militant and eager workers of all, downed tools and walked round the factory encouraging others to do likewise. I'he *response* was fairly uniform and workers drifted into the open factory compound and stood around there in small groups.

At this point, the unpopular personnel manager in charge of cola negotiations, arrived. As he left his car he was abused and beaten up by a group of young workers. Several older employees and security guards intervened but as other managers entered the compound they too were subjected to threats and a decision v/as made to call the police. In the interim, Bankole had been called from his house at Agege and when he arrived he made a short speech exhorting the workers to return to their sections* "How the management know we mean business and will listen to the executive with, well-opened ears.[1]* Production began again as members of the executive counselled patience.

But as the afternoon shift crossed with the morning contingent, several hundred workers stood around discussing the morning’s events. At this point police entered the compound having again been summoned by the management. Bankole addressed the workers and allowed a senior manager to put forward the management's case for delay. Scarcely had the spokesman pointed out that they v/ere still engaged in discussion v/ith the ilinistry of Labour than a chant of ''‘No v/ork, pay us cola now" began from the workers. At this police armed with clubs and dogs bo&a to clear the compound. Several workers were beaten whilst the majorit

fled through the main gate or climbed over the compound perimeter. After discussions with police, the management declared a lockout for the day. As workers arrived at the factory the same evening and the following morning to hear of latest developments from union leaders, fighting broke out with police aj they tried to disperse the peaceful crowds'of several hundred worker: and onlookers.

The following morning, Bankole, with members of his ov/n executive and leaders from other companies in which similar protests v/ere now underway, were called to the office of the Commissioner of Police in Lagos. He read to them Decree 53 indicating under this that he could imprison them for inciting strike action. -he leaders protested; the disputes v/ere not of their creation and they had actively taken steps to prevent the disturbances taking place, but the workers would not listen, no pointed out nevertheless that unless they brought back the workers into the factories then they would be prosecuted under the decree.

In itself this threat had but slight impact: however when the union leaders returned to International they made a compromise with the management. Their respective cares v/ould be submitted to the Commissioner for Labour and management v/ould accept his decision as finals having studied earlier agreements, management anticipated they would have to pay. Like the union they had given little attentio to the wording of previous agreements, not having imagined that such a situation as the present one could arise. The management emphasized
that this should not be regarded as a guarantee. Only the Commissioner’s judgement would be accepted. Bankole accepted this and decided to bring the workers back to the factory the same evening. The following day was pay-day, so the v/orkers should be amenable to his directions. In addition, during the course of the meeting, management had suggested that the executive had lost the respect of their followers and allowed anarchy to prevail, a taunt v/hich thougn inaccurate, struck home. If this impression were to prevail, then the bargaining power of the union would be considerably weakened in the future.

As the night-shift assembled at the factory gates tc hear of the

union’s progress, Bankole v/as present to address them, he felt confident, he said, that the award would now be paid for "workers have shown their power to the management." It was only a question of time so the workers should enter the factory and resume production.
This was quietly received and there v/as a general compliance with the order. At this point, Bankole was called to one side by management representative. When he returned to the platform, he put the management’s request that•each worker should sign a guarantee against damaging company property when they resumed work. Immediately this was announced to the three hundred or so workers present, they began to shout "ilo work, all go home I" and many workers rushed away. A majority remained but when K.L. a popular worker, pointed out that such a demand insulted not only the v/orkers but the union too - ⁿIf the union says production should begin then that by itself should be enough for the managers" - everyone dispersed homewards.

Despite the fact that the following day v/as pay-day, only a handful of workers arrived and after receiving their pay were sent home.
The vast majority had evidently decided to stay at home over the week-end. Before the Friday night meeting dispersed, Bankole had intended to announce a general meeting for the Sunday, but it was poorly attended as a *result of the dispersal.* Only 60 v/orkers arrived at the hotel, most having heard of the meeting by word of mouth. Bankole pointed out that success v/as now in sight, for v/orkers and union leaders had co-operated v/ell throughout. And though the management were "now certain to pay us full cola, remember that they are like the fox and cunning when they are near being defeated.[1]’ The only way workers could avoid termination for going on strike v/as to follow the letter of the lav/ from now on.

Several v/orkers once again exhorted the rest to follow Bankole*s instructions. "We can only go forward' now and the managers are on the run. Everyone is on strike and so the Government are running too", commented one worker, whilst another suggested that Decree 53 had proved unenforceable bece.use it was an attack on v/orkers[1] rights.
Cnee again, however, K.L. brought the meeting to a close by pointing out that now, following the workers' major contribution, their protest had reached the point at which the expertise of the executive around the bargaining table had to be brought into play. *"We* are all on the point of success ....The Management will surely haveto pay .....us all cola for we have all done a good job."
The following Monday morning, no demand for v/orkers* signatures v/as forthcoming from the management and although the shift v/as incomplete, production resumed. V/ithin tv/o days, the full labour .complement had returned, and four days later, the management agreed to pay cola to all the v/orkers, albeit without approval from the Ministry of Labour.

This completes the account of events in International v/hich could, because of its timing, be examined in terms of the changing balance of power between the union, the management and the v/orkers. The sequence of events in Champion was rather different though there were certain similarities. The case of Champion more clearly illustrated the explicit involvement of external considerations in the changing pattern of

conflict.

b. Conflict in Champion

Whilst strikes were underway in International and several other adjacent companies, Akanle and his executive had encouraged the shopfloor workers to continue v/ork until management made its positioii clear on the award; but as with International, the complexity of the position and the inability of the Ministry to deal effectively with their enquiries had led to considerable delay. because of the smaller labour force, a general meeting v/as considered unnecessary and the workers had continued v/ork as normal, Significantly, hov/ever, during the morning on which the textile workers finally resumed production following their management's capitulation, Akanle had been sent for by the management v/ho complained of low production in the bottling section which, as suggested in the previous chapter, v/as traditionally the most militant and active group of v/orkers. The president and another executive member visited the section and rater discussions with the shop steward and the workers, reported back that machine breakdown beyond the control of their members was the cause of the slowdown in production. The management v/ere dissatisfied and considered that v/orkers and unionists v/ere in collusion. At all events, low production continued throughout the morning and afternoon shifts in the bottling hall, and this had repercussions throughout the entire plant. Overnight, production in the hall fell to ten per cent of normal production; by the time of arrival of the morning shift the shutdown was complete, and the changing shifts assembled in the factory compound. Initially bottling operatives dominated the picture until shopfloor workers from the brewing and engineering sections also joined them. Executive members then on duty stood around talking with the workers whilst Akanle and the ethers v/ere sent for at their houses in Agege. As clerical workers arrived on duty some hours later, after a brief period in their offices, they too, drifted out into the open compound though most stood apart from the rest of the workers. By contrast skilled supervisory workers continued with whatever work v/as possible, especially maintaining the brewery where the most expensive machinery v/as concentrated. At the same time members of the Peace Committee (v/ho it will be remembered v/ere older members of the labour

force who had advised the "anion in past times of crisis) patrolled the factory to ensure that no v/orkers damaged the machinery.

When Akanle arrived he. counselled patience: "V/e have shown our hand to the management, now they have to show us their own." Many workers now felt that, following the experience at International, the manage-ment v/ould have to give way if production v/as to be resumed. But when union and management met, the latter declared that the shutdown v/as illegal. Akanle had not declared any breakdown in the established negotiating procedure; he should press the workers back to their sections for the dispute could not be settled where one side was engaged in illegal action.

Akanle replied that whilst the union leaders acknowledged that management v/ere experiencing difficulties with the Ministry ox Labour in obtaining a firm ruling on the payment of cola, the workers were tired of such malingering and had initiated action on their own

account. The union had tried to avoid the issue taking this particular form, but the management had only themselves and the Government to blame. If they wished production to resume then they had the experience of International from which to take’ a lead. The debate proved inconclusive and management retired to -consider their position and try again to contact the Ministry in Lagos.

During the afternoon as the v/orkers became increasingly irritated by the lack of action, the Nigerian personnel manager asked them to leave the factory voluntarily. During the night, valuable machinery could be damaged by "hotheads” and the families of European technicians living inside the compound had to be protected. At this, hardly the most politic approach under the circumstances, he v/as shouted down as several workers declared that the management would subsequently interpret this as a walkout, and so invite their dismissal. Akanle then spoke briefly, asking for workers* views on v/hat course of action they felt most appropriate. The general consensus v/as that they should stay in the compound until the management changed their position.
One worker commented: *u';Je* have waited some days now for a management decision, despite v/hat other v/orkers have done on the estate. Look v/hat has happened in the textiles (i.e. International). The workers struck there, and they must have won for they are working again today. *How* v/e have made our strike we shall not give *way* at all.*’ The next added, "V/e have been patient for too long, perhaps even foolish. Management have to be forced into parting v/ith money. now we have started we have to keep goingo" In the next hour tempers v/ere running high and verbal attacks were made against notably unpopular managers. The police were called in and, again after some violence, the compound v/as cleared.

The following morning many shopfloor and clerical v/orkers v/ere annoyed to find that skilled workers and European technicians were continuing to service vital equipment, informal groups formed picket lines outside the factory gates, and turned away lorries as they arrived. Akanle and his fellow executives mildly attempted to persuade the workers to return to their homes and leave matters in their hands. But workers insisted that their presence v/as not interfering with the

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.nion's strategy and could be helped by it. 'i'he picket lines v/ere .ater broken by police action though workers Gtill continued to hang round at a respectable distance. A further management-union meeting 'ollov/cd but the management remained firm.

it this point it is necessary lo refer to other developments outside he purview of the v/orkers themselves. Since the dispute began, .keja managers had been in touch v/ith other members of i«*i:).C.A« not nly at Ikeja but also in Lagos, and via K.E.C.A. v/ith the Ministry f Labour. The official line had alv/ays been to follow the 'overnment[1]s directives as precisely as possible under the circumstance nd present a united front against v/hat v/as consideredtc be the first indications of a state of anarchy among the v/orkers. This had proved I if !i cult as a consequence of the desultory fashion v/ith v/hich the tinxstry had responded to management demands for direction, though a ■once of unity had been initially presented, splits had begun to ppoar among members of the managerial class as to precisely where heir interests lay.

I. E.C.A's core leadership accepted throughout that if one company •ave in to workers' demands and awarded cola, v/here, according to 'overnment policy it might be considered unnecessary, then the pressure n other companies to pay would, correspondingly be greater. As protest p?:ead at Ikeja and elsewhere this vie[1]./ hardened, for in it v/as seen u organized rebellion against the military regime- The reasoning clriiid this interpretation of events v/as somewhat unclear, but the :'.M.G. had recently announced their intention to rule for a further -■ix years. A conspiracy between disgruntled politicians, ambitious rade unionists and external bodies to discredit the regime v/as widely suspected* i'or M.L.C.A. industrialists to submit to v/orkers' demands /ciild indicate a lack of confidence in the Government itself, an ntolorable position if they were to contribute to the post-war economy

lore immediately pressing considerations, however, above all the possibility of violence, faced Ikeja managers, ultimately responsible ;o the owners of capital in V;estorn Europe. In one cocoa-processing 'actcry on the estate, on the Game morning as the strike in [nternational began, workers threatened to burn down the administration uilding with its managers inside unless they signed a document to the effect that cola v/ould be paid. After doing so, managers had been Hewed to leave though they v/ere abused and their cars had been toned. The police arrived much later when everyone had dispersed I 'his, and subsequent incidents, suggested that the managerial class ould not *rely* on the Government tc provide the necessary *show of* .orce they had expected to be forthcoming, and they considered their *jl&nts to* be in some danger. *i'he peak* to *this* dilemma came *when* the general manager of a shoe factory similarly affected by a complete trike, *was injured by workers* picketing *the factory* gates. Again,
10 police were present to protect him. -he same pattern occurred several times notwithstanding the concentration of police and army in "he Lagos area.

vt a heated meeting of I..I'.C.A. representatives soon after this last Incident, the manager concerned announced his intention to pay cola /ituout waitinr: for Government a-croroval:he could no longer risk his plant and ignore investors' interests for the small amount of profit involved in paying the award. Several other managers under the same pressure agreed v/ith this view and the earlier unity between manage-ments and Government collapsed.

Following this meeting, individual Ikeja managements could do little more than spread announcement of their change of policy to avoid the impression of a wholesale retreat. In the beer company where workers continued picketing for a further three days, production was quickly resumed when management finally announced their readiness to pay. The company's personnel manager summarized developments in the following way:

> Once one company at Ikeja had decided to pay, all the rest had to follow. If the workers in our plant, where v/e v/ere still holding out, had heard that others had got cola by their force and anarchy, (so) the violence inside our ov/n company was much more possible... Ive have over £4 million of equipment to protect here, but the cost of paying the (Adebo) award was only <030,000 each year, nothing besides our usual profits, nad the Government supported us with force, *then we* could have resisted all the v/orkers[1] demands, but

> when v/e saw we could not count on that support v/e had to give in and protect the interests of our shareholders first and foremost.

Only a couple of the smaller companies remained firm to their first pronouncements or only subsequently experienced strike action from the workforce. The *response* to the Enahoro qualification had not, of course, been confined only to Ikeja but, following the lead given by industrial wage-earners in the Lagos area it had escalated throughout the .country to virtually all the major concentrations of labour. Faced with this massive revolt and widespread confusion, the Government once again changed its stance, and in early February, some four weeks after the dispute had begun, Chief Snahoro announced that cola v/ould be paid to all workers regardless of increments granted on the basis of the cost of living since 1964, as v/ould the nine months back-dated pay. The commentaries, so far exceedingly diverse, now universally criticised .the Ministry for its ineptitude in handling the Adebo affair and pointed out that in the light of the Ministry's actions, worker protest could easily have been predicted and the loss of production avoided. As an editorial in the Lev/ i.igerian headed "Adebo: Price of poor communication" put it:

> As it is, many employers lost more money than might have been used in paying the interim awards in full, which, in any case, they must now do.
> Thus the Ministry of Labour comes out of the affair with a tarnished reputation and some employers with strained industrial relations. rhe workers may also now feel their c oats after their "victory" and be tempted to press their luck.'"'

The Structure of Class Relationships: Stability and Change

Perhaps the most important feature about the Adebo affair v/as the manner in which both the manifest and latent tensions inherent v/ithin the industrial sector of the neo-colonial economy of Nigeria emerged over time as a system of class relationships. In day-to-day experience the structure of such economic class relationships does not appear v/ith full force, but during a crisis situation what Weber

terms the "naked class situation" leads to the emergence of existing interest-groups v/ith greater clarity. Furthermore, as in this situation, crises occur over especially valuable scarce resources not only of immediate importance but of longer term significance. The manner in which crises develop and are resolved within the existing system leads to subsequent dialectical realignments between polarized forces with widespread repercussions, so to speak, in time and space; existing stable relationships in these circumstances may be increasingly stabilized or irrevocably changed. During the course of events the diametrically opposed interests of several classes impinged on and structured its eventual outcome; the workers, status groups in

the labour force, managers, the political class and ultimately European investors themselves, - all these in various ways are involved in the conflict described here.The central feature is that this is a system of class relationships in a perpetual state of change, the actions of members of each class having influence 021 the actions of other classes organized around the industrial mode of production. V/ithin the limits of a very narrow time-perspective it is difficult to describe the nature of this dialectical experience; of necessity the analysis must be suggestive rather than definitive but certain possibilities may be indicated with reference to the crisis period outlined here and the course of subsequent events.

First, the pattern of the strike. In each company, Champion and International, prior to the outbreak of strikes elsewhere, neither union executive had great difficulty in persuading workers to follow through the established bargaining procedure: the merits of the procedure was well-proven and the standing of the executives was high.

Bnt, as the general meeting of International showed, there was an extensive groundswell of opinion which could not be indefinitely ignored and this continued to gain momentum as workers in other locations began to act. Once collective action was taken in one factory then it was widely expected that this would act as a trigger to similar developments; and in fact this is what occurred- Following the first conflict in the metalware company, the situation escalated rapidly, the more so as managements came increasingly under pressure and acceeded to workers' demands. As the account of developments in Champion suggests, the fact that International workers appeared to have gained cola, added considerably to the view that parallel action was necessary by the beer factory workers. As International and Champion, especially the former, v/ere leading companies on the estate in terms of size and influence, their experiences were also frequently referred to in other factories: regardless of conditions in particular companies, the essential shared economic interests of all workers affected by the Enahoro qualification generated an appropriate response.

In both factories considered here, it is clear that action v/as

primarily taken by those work groups most directly affected by the Adebo award, namely the shopfloor workers themselves. More particularly action was instigated in both plants by those labouring under the worst conditions, bottling hall and dye-house operatives respectively.
I have discussed in the previous chapter the especially distinctive features of the bottling hall: the lov/est wage-rates, poor working
conditions, lack of satisfaction and opportunities for advancement; the textile company dye-house v/as in these terms the equivalent of the bottling hall, and like the latter, had a tradition of being to the forefront of formal and informal industrial action. Though the process of production could not be disrupted from the dye-house as it could from the bottling hall, nevertheless workers in both sections enjoyed the reputation of 'trouble-makers.' It is noteworthy that workers from other sections in times of social calm often expressed a low opinion of these “trouble-some[11] elements, especially those in the dye-house of International v/ho carried out v/ork of the most degrading kind. That these were men v/ho "do not know how to behave i

2Droperly" or “have no honour at all[11] v/as a general comment expressed privately. Yet, when the time came, shopfloor v/orkers in more “respectable[11] sections, such as the weaving section or the engineering section, nevertheless responded without hesitation when these workers broke ranks and began to agitate in their companies for wider support. The *same* pattern developed at a different level as white-collar v/orkers in each firm followed the lead given by those on the shopfloor. In Champion for example, the strike had already begun when clerical workers arrived at a later hour to start work. As they entered the administrative building, they could see the rest assembled in the factory compound. Some of these began their customary routine tasks, but gradually the majority moved from the building into the factory compound notwithstanding pressure from more senior administrators to continue their work, having joined the shopfloor v/orkers, however, it was particularly obvious that in the debate which followed as to the future courses of action, white-collar v/orkers made no public contributions and left the framing of policy up to the shopfloor workers alone; this is what one would expect from the analysis presented *in the* previous chapter, notwithstanding these features, the white-collar v/orkers v/ere responding to their essential class situation which they shared with the majority of the employees. Only the skilled v/orkers stood apart, continuing to work under the expatriate supervisors and technicians throughout the dispute.

Second, besides the pattern of the strike, the course of events at this broader level does illustrate the existing harmonious relationships between leaders and followers, the manner in which the openness of debate is preserved and the benefits v/hich accrue to the leaders as a result. As the general meeting at International illustrates, a number of different tactics are employed in order to buttress their existing standing; the suggestion of- devious *moves* by the management, the denigration of national labour figures, unfavourable references to the poverty of unionism in other companies, and above all, this recurrent phrase, “the union is only the voice of the workers.[11] During this period the distinct advantages of such openness v/ere particularly marked. It v/as quite possible that information on such meetings was carried to the Government: this had

occurred previously and led to the cautioning or imprisonment of leaders v/here they had incited v/orkers to industrial action, albeit on a very limited scale. The possibility of more concentrated observation v/as high during this time. As a result, public pronouncements made by leaders like Bankole v/ere characterized by their lack of polemic and their consistently measured tones. V/here references to Decree 53 were made then it v/as done in passing, sufficient to clarify the constraints under v/hich they v/ere operating and encourage those from the floor to outline the alternatives to the existing course and place these in perspective. Though privately Bankole could see no possibility of avoiding strike action nor expressed any wish to do so, the public forum of the International meeting allowed him to outline the problems of collective action (in the form of a go-slow) without openly condemning or supporting it. In effect then he was mediating betv/een those proposing alternative courses of action rather than promulgating his own, a strategy which admirably suited his interests at this time and circumvented the constraints on his role performance imposed from outside. V/here considerations unlikely to emerge from the mass required articulation, then this was achieved by the judicious positioning of trusted companions and ensuring these v/ere given the opportunity to speak at length.

These same factors also emerged during the course of collective action, 'for this v/as not, as many observers and managers considered, a manifestation of anarchy on the estate for union leaders continued to exert their powers of leadership virtually throughout. Only at the time of the first revolt on the shopfloor, a quite spontaneous action in these companies, v/ere leaders not properly in control of the situation. Following this brief spell, as the sequence of events suggests, union leaders increasingly came to the fore again; there was a rapid transition from a spontaneous outburst to a highly effective structured movement best suited to pursuing those scarce resources which were the subject of the dispute.

ihe shopfloor go-slow leading ultimately to complete shut-down had, as far as I am aware, no precedent in the history of industrial action in International and Champion. Slowing down production over

specific issues had frequently occurred but previously a complete labour withdrawal had only followed where the union had determined on full-scale action. . In itself this suggests that workers were here acknowledging the particular constraints on leadership at this time rather than, as might be supposed, indicating that the leadership was unacceptable to them. This was borne out by discussions with the v/orkers themselves, such as the comment of one textile worker on the afternoon of the first strike action, a dye-house operative v/ho had been instrumental in beginning the action in his section:

> What use for us if the executive were in gaol because they had called for a go-slow or even a strike to get our rights? Our leaders are good leaders. We know that because of our achievements. If they had not done well in the past v/e v/ould surely have removed them by now!..We, the workers, we have made the protest, and we can see that the general manager and his men are on the run. These managers, they are all so frightened at what v/e have done that they must give in soon. And yet our leaders remain quite free. When tKe manager comes to his bargaining table, they can be there to take over the whole business again.
> Then they can easily get the award written down, for they have experience of such things where people like myself have not.

I would not claim that all workers caw their relationship with quite the clarity expressed by this man. But the comment does indicate the more generalized acknowledgement that elected representatives had unavoidable restrictions on their performance due to Decree 53 and their expertise could thus be brought into play only subsequently when, as many v/orkers put it, "the management have been brought to their knees.[I!] Furthermore, in terms of the intentions and aspirations v/hich workers shared at this time - simply the exertion of pressure to force cola payment - it was fairly evident that the incumbent leadership had to quickly reassume their customary roles and be encouraged to do so by the workers* The point I wish to make is that, despite the fact that workers did reject the established negotiating procedure, the course of the strike and the interpretations workers put on it , indicated that this was a variant on the normal existing processes of accommodation to the industrial system. The industrial system per se was not being rejected outright for, as I have indicated throughout, wage earning employment does serve valuable functions, even if not to the extent v/hich workers would wish it to do. It-provides opportunitics v/hich v/ould not otherv/ise be present. At this time,

the workers’ objection was not over conditions of v/age labour as such but over their position .in the wider society.

As 1 understood the situation, Ikeja workers v/ere using the Adebo affair and the industrial location as a suitable (even if the only available) arena in v/hich to express their antagonism to the extreme differentials in wealth and privilege current in liigerian society as a whole, xhe Adeb'o affair, especially the manner in which members of the elite handled and manipulated it, had a high symbolic value; the categories of workers involved, (and those indeed observing from the sidelines), the qualifications placed on cola applicability and the manner in which these were announced, the limitations decreed on union leaders'and workers' activities, and the apparent refusal of the political leaders to step in and settle the dispute - these and other factors symbolized the national elite's lack of respect for the v/orkers as members of l.igerian society and an equal disdain for those rights which workers feel they should be able to exercise under all but the most exceptional circumstances. I return to this problem below; for the moment I concentrate .on the implications of this view for the on-going structure of relationships v/ithin the industrial system.

Despite the fears of managers, and despite too the opportunities for workers to express their dissatisfaction v/ith particular aspects of industrial employment, significantly there v/as no damage to industrial plant during the dispute. Nor were voices publicly raised when union leaders continued to negotiate v/ith their respective managements after they declared lockouts in the factory, i’he course of events indicated to all concerned that this was the only possible successful avenue through v/hich workers' interests could be realized. Accordingly once the managements' unified line had been destroyed,, they returned tc the negotiating table v/ith their opposite numbers. ihat their bargaining hand was then weak was neatly illustrated by the management of Champion failing even to gain an apology from their union for "going on unofficial strike:[11] according to the official records the union leaders replied that "they could not apologize for their action because the executive council ci the union tried to persuade the v/orkers to return to v/ork but to no avail, and besides the workers regarded the strike as a national issue!'.[1] Though several managements at Ikeja attempted to negotiate other items on the basis ox* cola payment, all proved

unsuccessful end executives drove home their success to the hilt.

More generally the couise of the Adebo affair had reinforced the importance of local-level action v/ith house union leaders and workers acting in concert for diverse reasons, some of v/hich workers v/ere aware of, others of which they were not.

On the one hand, throughout the dispute which involved several thousand workers, no national union figures had approached the estate to discuss strategies or advise house union leaders on developments in elite circles. Considering the proximity and concentration of such men in Lagos, by any standards this was a most extraordinary development, and one from which house union leaders quickly made capital to buttress their own standing: at a subsequent general meeting lor example, Bankole after commenting on this factor at some length, concluded with, ''i'he moral is clear: v/e have to look after ourselves for these Big Guns have no interest in us. They have their ov/n (interests) and they are different from ours.[15] All this was widely recognized.

On the other side, though v/orkers are involved in a system of class relationships the general structure of v/hich they are aware, the mere intricate details of class alliances and conflicts which axiect tneir experience lie outside their cognition. From my account, it is clear that the relationship between v/orkers and unions and the success v/hich they had is intimately related and partly explicable in terms of management-Government relationships. But v/orkers and their leaders v/ere not aware of the conflicting pressures facing the expatriate managers. As far as they v/ere concerned, managements had capitulated because of the loss of productivity and their increasing awareness of the resolve of the v/orkers to extend their strike for as long as they considered necessary. In fact, hov/ever, this v/as only partly true. As far as managers were concerned, rather more delicate issues v/ere at stake; either they *could* continue tc *stand by the Government and* accept the loss of production, or they could break v/ith Government policy and protect the interests of their shareholders. They could not in this situation do both. This *dilemma,* v/as closely related *to* the issue described previously concerning the relationship betv/een expatriate industrial enterprise and the Government as the major employer of wage-labour, a balance concerning v/hich the Government v/as increasingly

dissatisfied. For several managers, the absence of a suitable demonstration of force with v/hich to quell the emergence of "anarchy" among the v/orkers indicated that the Government had taken advantage of the crisis to demonstrate to expatriate leaders where power really lay in the society.

In the event, managements determined to pay the award and protect their interests. Since subsequently the Government capitulated and made the award payable to all* this v/ould have occurred anyway. However, this realignment between the elites constituted an unknown factor for tlie^ workers : from their point of view it v/as the strength of the workers and their obvious unity against the management-Government coalition v/hich had proved the decisive consideration. This again reinforced the .feeling that where v/orkers and union l.eaders co-operated closely then managements could be forced to grant increments v/ithin the existing framework of negotiation. Despite the fact that this conflict had developed in the top-most reaches of Nigerian society, it had considerable repercussions for the balance of power at the local level, and this is best illustrated by reference to the denouement to the Adebo affair - the second and final Commission report and the marginal award made to the workforce.

V/ith the first report submitted, Chief Adebo and his Commission resumed their tour of the tv/elve States, collected further data in Lagos, and submitted their second and final report, in August 197'[1]*- In the meantime, tv/o developments worth noting had occurred. The .first concerned the re-election of the union in International, the second v/ac the virtually complete moratorium on v/age and salary negotiations in both factories. The re-election of the union does not require an extended analysis, occurring as it did only two weeks after the settlement of the dispute. 'Jhe atmosphere could only be described as euphoric, but the central outcome was that the entire executive was re-elected unopposed by the 350 or so v/orkers present for a two-year term of office by contrast v/ith the earlier one-year term. The speeches revolved entirely around the Adebo successes and extended eulogies directed at Bankole and his executive. When the time for nominations came, it v/as immediately proposed that the executive should be re-elected en bloc, a suggestion greeted with cries of "'Unopposed, unopposed" from all sides. In fact there was some partial opposition,

though this v/as scattered and primarily directed against one member of the executive whom, it was felt, had failed in his duties as social secretary, i'he meeting fell into chaos as workers tried to leave or disputed the legality of such a procedure, but I have the general impression that most v/orkers v/ere satisfied that the election should stand. More important v/as the ■ attitude of leaders and workers in the interim between the first and second Adebo reports, for clearly expectations v/ere high on the basis of the cola award and it v/as felt that a more substantial increment v/ould be recommended. This is best analyzed in terms of subsequent developments.

In fact the final recommendations were disappointing indeed, and far from narrowing the gap betv/een rich and poor, the v/age and salary increases suggested to the F.K.G. appeared to widen it substantially for they were to apply across the board cn a. sliding scale. 'Jorkers earning less than J2GO per annum were to receive an increment of =-'-36 per annum, *Z2'ly* of v/hich they had already received as cola. For the lowest paid workers then this meant only a further per month increase. For the upper echelons, hov/ever, those v/ith salaries between .-2,000 and *Z2,*500 v/ere to receive increments of £2^-0, v/hilst those currently earning 22,500 plus v/ere awarded *ZJQO* per annum increase I This was an apparently incredible reversal of policy from a concern with "the intolerable sufferings at or near the bottom of the v/age and salary levels" to a cossetting of the true aristocracies of public and private employment.

If as I suggest more fully below the handling of the first award

provided a focal point around which crystallized many of the under-currents of resentment against the prevailing social structure, one might have anticipated that the final award v/ould provide yet another catalyst for collective action. In fact no such action v/as forth-coming, nor even realistically contemplated by v/orkers or union leaders. Why should this be so?

First of all, developments during the intervening period had done much to confirm the impression that rises in v/ages, v/hat ever the scale, could do little to improve the living standards and life-chances of workers either individually or collectively. Even before the first award, prices of foodstuffs especially had begun to rise even faster than previously, and betv/een January and August inflation in essential commodities severely eroded if not eradicated entirely the marginal benefits accruing from the cola award. Though a Price Control Board had been established to fix tne prices of these commodities, it had proved totally ineffective as middlemen in the distribution of foodstuffs anticipated further v/age increases and capitalized on existing ones. Agitation for higher wages would almost certainly exacerbate the situation further.

Second, in the light of the greatly enhanced stature of the unions, it was widely recognized that material improvements v/ould best be achieved by collective bargaining v/ithin individual factories thus avoiding the inflationary effect. Union leaders in particular considered that, taken as a whole, the strike had done much to strengthen their bargaining hands against management. For the companies considered here the Adebo affair had done much to reinforce the prevailing impression of their popularity; in other companies v/here the incumbent executives had not developed such stability, their reputations had been greatly enhanced by the action. It was felt that management would now be especially loathe to precipitate strike action by refusing to countenance union demands v/hich previously they v/ould have considered excessive; the union's room for maneouvre had been extended, it v/as felt, by the impressive display of unity, and close working relationship between leaders and followers. (Whether this was eo, of course, it is impossible to say, and I left .the field before thc next round of negotiations began in both companies.)

Third, it was certainly true that there was widespread dissatisfaction

with the final increment given to workers and even more hostility towards the sums given to the salaried elite. But it is difficult to imagine what purpose a second protest movement could have served. The predominant interpretations at this time were that the Government had either pressured Chief Adebo to severely curtail his recommend-ations or subsequently tampered with the report: “The Government top men have altered the report so they will get more money"; "our bosses have bribed the Government officials so that Adebo cannot give the workers more pay"; "even though Adebo helped us before, it is always the Big Guns v/ho win in the end." These were typical reactions at the time, and they v/ere compounded by the fact that though initially Adebo had planned a series of reports spread over an extended period of time, in effect the Commission wound up its public investigations after only eight months and v/ith only two reports submitted. This v/as then a quite different development to the manner in v/hich previously the Government had tried to "cheat" the workers out of v/hat they "knew" to be their due; this fell into the realm of the unknowable - a' blank element in the worker's cognitive map.

From this point of view the workers' pacific quiescence to the second award was an entirely appropriate response to prevailing circumstances in the same way that the hostile reaction against the first had been understandable. Based on a generalized judgement of the various alternative courses of action available to them, workers took the direction which seemed to offer them the best opportunities of material improvement, all things considered. The very fact that in neither International nor Champion v/as there pressure to call a meeting and discuss future strategy, in itself is a fair indication that v/orkers shared this view, however, there is a fourth consideration v/hich was of equal importance; the interpretations v/hich the workers themselves placed on earlier strike action, briefly expressed, what exactly v/ere workers objecting against? And from this, to v/hat extent can the strikes be termed a manifestation of lower class consciousness?

An Expression of Class Consciousness?

Considering the arbitrary fashion in v/hich the Government took away v/ith the one hand v/hat had been given to the Ikeja v/orkers, uith the other, some form of protest over the cola payment appeared fairly itevitable. Quite obviously, the main outcome of the events described

above v/as that v/orkers gained through their collective action the award v/hich. a combination of management and Government had attempted to deny then. Can'one legitimately term the action described here as an expression of class consciousness v/hich, as Peter Lloyd points out, implies ‘’consciousness of the special interests of the class and activity directed tov/ards preserving these interests?“ here is a considerable possibility of imputing motives to actors which were not present and overemphasizing others with which actors explained the motivations behind their behaviour. Cne can only hope to establish a reasonable balance between the tv/o. So far I have concentrated almost exclusively on the question of cola itself, bu.t in discussions with, workers it v/as fairly obvious that they themselves considered other more fundamental issues to be at stake. As the comments of workers included in the account above suggest, v/orkers saw the strike as a particular phenomenon v/ithin the context of a broader contest they felt themselves to be perpetually waging with the Government-management alliance. For the most part thc-ir continuous “struggle’[1] is v/ith management over specifically economic resources; but the direct intervention of the Government into local-level affairs introduced a wider dimension - that of the core general political relationships between indigenous elite and mass. Because of the structure of industrial enterprise - its being in expatriate hands, the concentrat-ion on individual management-house union relationships, the various internal factors which affect v/age rates, the failure of Government to continually involve themselves in industrial affairs, etcetera, - such generalised political considerations rarely impinge on the industrial system. But v/here the Government does become involved then the issues which arise assume a greater symbolic quality, for there is no alternative arena or forum in which resentment against the national elite ciin be expressed, especially in the absence of party political activity. In consequence, industrial action can become a suitable

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vehicle for the expression of sentiments directed, not against the structure of industrial enterprise, but the structure of the society at large. This ic. v/hat occurred during the Adebo affair.

To a considerable degree, Government action had the effect of indicating precisely "the special interests of the class''' and thus designating those v/orkers from whom "activity directed towards preserving those interests[11] should be most critically forthcoming. The pattern of the strikes confirms that those instigating and consolidating the dispute v/ere indeed those for whom cola payment was most crucial, i.e. those on the shopfloor. That it v/as necessary to move in protection of these interests, hov/ever. v/as quickly interpreted v/ith reference to other grievances v/hich had developed of late:

> This is our right, the £2 per month increase and v/e shall fight for it to the end. • V/hat does the Government think it
> can do to us the v/orkers and the other poor people? ... V/e have paid nev/ taxes, v/e have paid II.P.F. and in the war we paid extra taxes to fight the Biafrans. Then there are all the duties to the Government c-n imports so that the costs go up again. The war has ended, but *how would* v/e *know* when there has been no improvement for us? *3
> (A young unmarried worker from Ibadan, aged 2> and earning about £15 per month).

This particular worker then concentrated on the manner in which, the lower'strata had borne the brunt of the civil war, a feature recognized by Adebo himself. At the same time, the socio-economic conditions generated throughout the civil war v/ere for many only part and parcel of substantial economic inequalities and of the concentration of prestige and power v/hich had their root in the colonial era but had been reinforced by post-Independence developments. Tiiough certain of the on-going conditions, including rampant inflation, may have been made worse by the 'civil war, nevertheless these had "not fallen equitably on all sections of the population"; on the contrary, the gap betv/een rich and poor remained as stark as ever, v/ith the contrasting life-styles the more apparent as workers found it difficult to face up to their diverse obligations.

> All the prices are going up and *we* can do nothing...Let *us* say this man is a director, you are a manager, and I am a
> *!*
> worker. V/e all go to the same market cj.id our v.'ives buy side by side. But the manager and the director, they do not feel

> anything at all. They have free houses and cars and their children go to schools paid for by their companies * But. I, the worker, I have scarcely enough money to pay my bus fare* From my house on Lagos Island near Tinubu is 3/~ each day. A bottle of palm wine or tv/o is ?/- and chop from the petty trader here 2/-. Then there is the rent for my one room v/hich is £5-10s each nonth....And the manager and director have their big fine houses freel All we want is £2.
> (A junior supervisor earning £27 per month, aged 35 v/ith five children.)

Obviously this worker drew this comparison between management and worker in the light of the strike action: we were sitting in a palm-wine oar on the estate on the first afternoon of the textile lockout. His companion, hov/ever, took up his theme with a different emphasis, viewing the cola issue as an illustration on the manner in which members of the political class, the managerial class and other elites, conspired to retain their monopoly of material rewards in Nigerian society, coming to terms among themselves to further exploit the masses. Far from the present leaders being admired because of their humble origins and the manner in which they had risen to power, that they now abandoned the interests of the lower strata from which they had emerged, adds considerably to the resentment directed against them:

> These Big Guns in Lagos, they are not interested in what happens to us the labourers. • The European managers have refused tc give us the £2 owed to us, and men like Snahoro and Awolowo are there to help them in this matter... Snahoro used to be a poor man, a labourer as we are now. £ut now he is at the top, an (and) our conditions are the same as ever.. . .v/hat does this £2 mean to a top Government officer or an Ikeja manager? Some of them go out for the night with their wives and spend £50, £100 even £500 on a ceremony. V/e want only this £2. a miserable sum, and we the v/orkers have the pov/er and strength in our hands.
> (A newly-employed worker, aged 19> one wife and child v/ith a salary of £9.16s per month.)

The modern urban situation of course, is the location par excellence in v/hich members of the lower strata are able to observe the conspicuous consumption patterns of the ruling class; the workers quoted here draw freely on this. Members of the elites are Lagos-based for the most ^art and make little effort to disguise the source of their wealth or the use to which it is put. Though the contrast in life-styles and life-chances betv/een elite and, mass is appreciated by rural and traditional urban dwellers, only v/ith urbanites does the contrast become part of daily experience and probably all the more resented for being so. In consequence

there is a strong undercurrent of antagonism to the existing socio-economic differentials v/ithin iiigerian society end to the political strategies devised by the incumbents of national office to preserve and advance these differentials; at the same time there is a pervasive sense of powerlessness among members of the lower stratum as to what may be done to improve existing circumstances in their favour. When asked outright as to what can be done, then in individual terms the reply is frequently on the lines of creating more jobs, lowering prices, diversifying industry, cheaper foods, wider possibilities for secondary and university education, and so on.

But at the same time., it is recognized that such measures are most likely to reinforce rather than change the wider social structure.

There exists then the problem.' of expressing this lower stratum political consciousness of opposition to the existing structure without there being present the organisation and machinery for articulating such wider political tensions. Tribal organizations have, in other African communities, proved important outlets for the tensions generated by instability v/ithin urban areas; but the ideology of class crosses tribal boundaries at Ikeja. Tribe and class do not overlap but criss-cross one another, and as suggested earlier, the social composition of the labour force in the urban community does not provide appropriate leaders for the extensive mobilization of lower class consciousness. The second possibility is the political party but, as is well known, the major Nigerian parties have always relied on tribal sentiments as their basis of power and worked where- ever possible through traditional ethnic organisations. Particularly since the industrial wage-earning class has always been small and politically of slight significance, the capital to be gained from their mobilisation has been negligible. Third, there are the national trade union bodies, but as I hope to have made clear, these have little role to play as an organ for the expression of industrial workers sentiments. Because of the ?re-coup continuance of three major political parties, these have never been formally incorporated into the party political machine as has often been the course of events

el.sewhe.re; but they have become informally appendages to the national political elite, relying on the political patronage of individual national leaders and the financial patronage of the international labour movements of East and West in order to survive.

And finally, the workers here described have not as yet developed an alternative vision of how their society could be better organized in their own interests;, they remain wedded to the existing structure and conceive of their responses in terms of improvement via accommodation to the system despite their dissatisfaction with it.

With these avenues closed, the strike can be employed not only as a class-based act in protection of specific economic interests under •attack from representatives of other classes, but it may also serve as a vehicle through v/hich v/orkers can *express* deep-felt dissatisfaction with the structure of the wider society and the prevailing value- system of the power elites of,' the society. It may be then both an expression of economic class consciousness and the expression of a wider political consciousness, the first by its very nature reinforcing the existing structure, the second explicitly articulating opi-josition to that structure. For the *most part*, industrial action by Ikeja workers is of the first ordei'; as the unions grow in strength and close working relationships develop between leaders and followers, *and as too the* high profitability of industrial enterprise continues, then the material benefits to be gained from working v/ithin the framework of collective bargaining and negotiation continue to flow. As increments are gained, the strategy of accommodation to the prevailing distribution of power and wealth is reinforced v/ithin the limits of the industrial system. But in broader terms, the vast extremes of economic and social inequality in the society at large are increasingly the subject of great resentment and hostility among the lower strata of the modern urban society. But nor are there, in this secular context, suitable channels through which this broader political consciousness can find means *of* expression. 'Ihis then is a singularly latent consciousness for the most part, and one disguised by the veneer of *political stability and* apparent acquiescence to the reward *and* prestige distribution pattern in the lov/er reaches of liigerian society. Only under rare circumstances, and these promoted by the political class itself *more often than* not, *do these* tensions become *manifest.* And this political consciousness of opposition to the social order is only expressed by members of the lower strata where its

expression can be combined with the simultaneous defence of *economic* interests.

The industrial sphere is a particularly suitable location for the simultaneous *expression* of both types of consciousness- I'he distinction between ownership and non-ownership is clear as is the division of labour; the wages of v/orkers and the salaries *of* staff could not be more contrasting and nor could the life-styles and life- chances which result; the enterprises ore vastly profitable and increasingly so; and of course there is the high concentration of wage-earners in a limited geographical area which makes their politica mobilization considerably easier than for other low strata occupations groupings- Above all, however, the presence of such industrial enterprise in expatriate hands clearly rests on the implicit and explicit compliance of the indigenous political elite as do the wealth and prestige differentials emanating from tiie industrial order. Workers constantly argue that wages and conditions of service could be greatly improved if industrialists v/ere forced to do so by members of the political class; others *even* argue that management would improve v/age rates if it was allowed by political leaders.

But even if the location is accommodating to *such,* expression, to reiterate, only under very occasional circumstances can both the protection of economic class interests and the articulation of the political consciousness of resistance be carried out at the same time, i'his is the distinguishing feature of the Adebo affair in January *1971*

This is not to suggest, however, that this strike alone is to be seen as a class-based act. *On* the contrary, as I have tried to argue throughout, workers are consistently responding in entirely rational terms to their perpetually subordinate relationship to the industrial mode of production, as far as the distribution of power inside and outside the factory system allows them to do so* For present purposes the importance of the Adebo affair is to indicate that first the wage- earners are involved in a v/ider system of class relationships than

those contained by the industrial arena, and second that the success oi- lack of success of workers in pursuing their economic interests depends to a considerable decree on the relationships betv/een other social and economic cliisses beside themselves. - 'j-he nature of social change among v/orkers and their organizations is inextricably related to the on-going conflicts and contradictions ox interests faced by the comprador bourgeoisie of Nigerian society and the representatives of the nev/ economic imperialism which dominates the industrial order.

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'I o A summary of the- functions and strategies of v/age and Salary Commissions is offered by J.F. Weeks, (197'0, [2] V/age Policy ard the Colonial Legacy - A Comparative Study", in i'he Journal of l.odern African Studles, vol. 9? no. 3*

2. This resentment emerges in, for example, the Nigerian Second national Plan, (1970), over the fact that “the country’s manufactures.....-remain a perpetual appendage of foreign industrial complexes”. p. 1 f3-

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3. R. Kelson, (1970), "Nigerian Politics and the General Strike of 1'

*+. The continual schisms and conflicts of the national labour movement are summarized in Robin Cohen (1971)? "Nigeria's ooutral Trade Union Organize tion", in u:he Journal of Modern African ^ vol. 9, no. 5»

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2 In some respects, parallels can be drawn herev/ith industrial action on the Copperbelt described by A.L. Spsfcein, (195I-0; "By their behaviour on these occasions they shov/ed that they v/ere not protesting against the industrial system as such: they
v/ere complaining of the position accorded to them v/ithin that system", p. 133-

5. United Committee of Central Labour Organizations, (1970;, Equitable Lemand for Economic Grov/th and l.ational Prosper!*ty*.
12. P.C. Lloyd, (i960), "Introduction" to Vho New Elites of i'ro~pica 1 Africa, p. 57

I.'OTES TO CI-IAPThifl 6. jr

13- N.P.F. » National Provident Fund.

CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSIO N

The lack of studies of industrial action by social anthropologists working elsewhere in urban Africa precludes the possibility of drawing meaningful comparisons with the Adebo conflicts at Ikeja.

At the same time, perhaps, the dearth of similar analyses emphasizes my earlier critique of the excessive interest shown by urban Africanists in social classes in urban situations as opposed to the examination of those processes of change based on economic class relationships.

Hopefully, the present analysis has made some contribution to indicating the ve.lue of the distinction outlined at the beginning of this study.

i'or the present, the most salient contrast to be drawn is that betv/een the economic organization of Agege community and the economic structure of the industrial estate; it is this contrast which points to some of the distinctive features of contemporary urbanization and industrialization in Nigeria. xhe nature of concerted industrial activity by Ikeja industrial workers to protect shared economic class interests is an entirely comprehensible and rational response, considering the structural constraints on economic and social mobility. Industrial capitalism of the type obtaining at Ikeja by its very nature imposes limitations on its wage-earning population and allows only a limited range of responses from below; to this extent the form of collective strike action described here is not especially dissimilar from other industrializing areas. But, as far as I am aware, the manner in which Agege workers generally view wage earning as a means to establishing themselves as entrepreneurs in their own right is a particularly unusual response to industrial employment. It is this distinctive feature which seems to me to be of considerable sociological interest rather than the similarities v/hich could be drawn with v/orkers in other societies. And, as I have tried to show,

in terms of economic structure and the possibilities for personal socio-economic improvement, the ambition of working as an individual entrepreneur outride the industrial arena is quite as rational a response to the conditions of wage-employment as collective action is v/ithin it.

Against the general background of Agege's economic and sociopolitical development, I have described the relationships of factory v/orkers in three fields, the neighbourhood, the ethnic brotherhood and the industrial estate* In each field, I have tried to point to some of the forces and indications of social process currently taking place: in particular, I outlined the manner in which individual v/orkers develop adaptive strategies to the situational contexts in v/hich they are involved. At this level of social action, a form of social network analysis proves invaluable as a perspective and method-ology in view of the relative absence of formally structured group activity among workers living at Agege. In so much as network analysis concentrates on decision-making processes in interpersonal situations, with each network member attempting to manipulate a series of social exchange relationships v/ith others to his ov/n advantage, it is particularly suitable to the Agege location where a more orthodox structuralist emphasis v/ould encounter severe limitations.

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At the same time, since I have also attempted to see Agege wage-earners as members of an economic class with interests common to themselves but diametrically opposed to those of other classes, so too, the applicability of a perspective appropriate to interpersonal relationships is necessarily of limited value, i’he very essence of class analysis as I have presented it here, is the viev; that classes are to be seen as elements in a system of relationships based on a particular mode of economic production.^ Moreover, I have assumed that the ma$_v$ior tensions and conflicts leading to social change at Ikeja are those based on the differential relationship of economic classes to the means of industrial production. This is not to ignore the significance of competition and conflict between members of the same economic class: nor would 1 deny the considerable methodological difficulties of coping v/ith social movements on the scale of the one^described in the previous chapter. But it can nevertheless be reasonably maintained that, firstly, excessive concentration on social class in interpersonal relationships too easily

directs attention away from the dynamics of social change grounded in economic class conflict, and that, secondly, the rules and resources of interpersonal competition are themselves changed in the course and resolution of these broadly-based conflicts.

I do not claim to have resolved these issues here but they are singular weaknesses of network analysis v/hich mayrequire the perspective to be complemented by a more orthodox structuralist one.

I21 fact, the *rccent* development of concentrated explanations of interpersonal behaviour without corresponding advances in the study of wider categories of social action does perhaps run counter to the theoretical statements from which network analysis in urban African studies can be traced. Epstein and Mitchell, writing independently in the 1960's, clearly emphasized tv/o other orders of social relationships requiring complementary analysis to personal networks. Each pointed to at least the equal importance of the structural order in which urban Africans' enduring patterns of activity were determined by critical shared roles v/ith precise expectations, (for example, membership of a mine labour force, ethnic association, or political party), and the categorical order of relationships in relatively unstructured situations based on the stereotypes of class, tribe, race etc. The separation of the structural order, categorical order and personal relationships was explicitly presented as an heuristic device at an abstract level for dealing with the anthropologist’s wide range of data. Mitchell has recently reiterated his purpose as follows:

> These three orders of social relationships.... should not be looked upon as three different types of actual behavious, but rather as three different ways of making abstractions from the same..actual behaviour so as to achieve different tynes of understanding and explanation. By this argument, therefore, there can be no opposition of structural and personal links but only g different ways of subsuming the data into explanatory frameworks.

Here, v/ithin the general context of the ’open’ community - 'closed[1] industrial estate systems analysis, I have tried to analyse elements of the content of the structural, categorical and personal network orders of social action. Hov/ever, I have chosen not to concentrate on the same, actual behaviour since such a paradigm would, to a considerable degree, detract from indicating the particular qualities of urbanisation and industrialization in the relatively unchartered territory ox modern Nigeria. In order to achieve at least in part this latter aim, 1 have

attempted to outline a range of social processes currently operating at different levels of actual behaviour and relate these, somewhat loosely, one to another.' Since the general

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and politics! framework of urbanization in iiigeria is in many ways qualitatively different from that of southern African urban areas (research on which has very much dominated the field to date), a case can be made for pointing, in the first instance, to the most distinctive features of '.Vest African urbanisation, rather than drawing the most obvious parallels v/ith conditions elsewhere.

Moreover, precisely because there is such variety in the over-arching political frameworks within v/hich African urbanization and industrialization proceeds, at least an attempt to indicate the wider political structure and the forms of political culture generated at the lower reaches of society in rather parochial arenas seems to me a worthwhile proposition. Abner Cohen has recently pointed out that social anthropologists in general have "ignored the importance of the modern

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state in the study of the politics of small communities" and argued that henceforth "the anthropologist must deliberately formulate his problems in such a way as to make reference to the state a necessary part of his analysis." ' I think this to be an appropriate imperative despite the considerable issues raised by such a demand. In particular the social anthropologist must necessarily move beyond his established sphere of competence, i.e. social and political relationships within small-scale communities; ho must also avoid the possible dangers of reification of these external forces. The activities of the state are carried out by individuals and groups with real sectional interests v/hich can only be advanced at the expense of others: at least in iligeria it has become an integral part of the system of

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economic class relationships. Finally, analysis of the political structure needs complementing by an understanding of the political culture - the views the actors' themselves hold on economic and social

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differentiation v/ithin society and the distribution of power. Without some attempt to appreciate these shared cognitions, the observer's ov/n view is less complete than it necessarily appears.

i?OTES TO CHAPTER 9

1. Forthcoming v/ork by Paul Lubeck and Dorothy Remy on Kano and Zaria v/orkers respectively v/ill allow such comparisons to be made.

2. Social network analysis and social exchange theory are joined in Bruce Kapferer's recent book, (1972), Strategy and Transaction in an African Factory: African V/orkers and Indian Management in a Zambian Town.

3. M. Weber, (1964), The Theory of Economic and Social. Organization, ch. 1v, ''Social Stratification and Class Structure.'[1]

4. Further criticism of the network approach is to be found in P-C. Lloyd, (1973)i ''Social Anthropology in Third World Slums."

3. A.L- Epstein, (1967a), and J.C. Mitchell, (1966)

6. J.C. Mitchell, (1973)1."Networks, liorms and Institutions," in J« Boissevain, and J.C. Mitchell, (eds.), i-etwcrk Ana1ysis : Studies in Human Interaction, p.20.

7- Abner Cohen, (1969b), '''Political Anthropology: the Analysis of the Symbolism of Power Relations,in Man, (M.S.), vcl 4, p.217.

8. A. Cohen, (1969b), p. 231.

9- G.P. Williams, (1970) ■> "The Social otratification of a Neo-Colonial Economy: Westernl.igeria", in C. Allen and R.1J. Johnson, African Perspec tives -

10. A similar view is more systematically outlined in P.C. Lloyd, (n.d.), Power and Independence: Urban Africans[1] Perception of Social. Inequality. Chapter 6, "Yoruba Attitudes" contains comparative material gathered in Ibadan and Agege,

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