

Geographical location of Ikwuano/Umuhia
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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Umuahia in this work shall refer to the area formally known as Ikwuano/Umuahia Local Government Area. As the name denotes the area is made up of two components units, that is, Ikwuano and Umuahia. Though there is this dichotomy, the two areas have had similar administrative and political experiences. They were both (during the colonial era) parts of Bende Division of Owerri province of Eastern Nigeria. The two were always part of what was known as Umuahia province. The only time they parted administrative and political ways was briefly in 1976 when Ikwuano was carved out of Umuahia and was made a division of its own. It was also from that time that the term “Ikwuano Local Government,”¹ came into common and popular usage. Umuahia is the capital city of Abia State in Southeastern Nigeria². It is located along the railroad that lies between Port Harcourt to its South and Enugu city to its north. Umuahia has a population of 359, 230 according to the 2006 Nigeria census. The indigenous ethnic group are the Igbo, and the language is Igbo. The name Umuahia was derived from the Igbo word “Oma Ahia”, which means “market place or market centre” respectively.³ It is a city composed of five clans namely, Ibeku- Ubakala- Ohuhu- Umuopara-Olokoru, who each have their own origins of how they came to settle at the place later named Umuahia. However, the name Ama Ahia was not the town’s name, rather it was located in a place called Afor Ibeji near Olokoru town.⁴ In pre-colonial times, it served as one of the central market places in the region for commerce. Given its serenity and proximity to other towns, such as Ohafia, Abiriba, Arochuku, Obowo, Ngwa, Okigwe, Uzuakoli, Bende, Nnewi, Akwa Akpa (old Calabar), and Kalabari, merchants of produce, pottery, crafts, textile, traditional medicine, palm wine, and tools travelled from a far to trade at the busy market centre with track roads leading to it.

Before the advent of the British in the area, the people had evolved a fairly stable and workable political system, which, not only promoted and guaranteed a good measure of peace and stability, but also gave impetus to social and economic stability. The political set up was hierarchical, with the nuclear family at the base. Then rising the extended family, sub-lineage, village with village group at the apex.⁵

In the nuclear family, the head of the family is the eldest man in the compound and is popularly called Nna-nwe-ulo. He was the holder of the Ofor, which is a sacred symbol handed over to him by his ancestors⁶. It comprises a man, his wife/wives, children and slaves. He was the bread-winner of his house and he made sure that he lived up to the people's expectations. Every other member of the family accorded him the respect as the father of the house. In the time of trouble, he was the one that could make sacrifice to his dead ancestors for their protection. He poured libation and prayed for the progress and good health of members of his household. He was the judge that tried any case that came up in his family, in which he took a neutral stand. He called the people concerned to hear from both sides before he gives his judgment. Since they are his relations, he usually took whatever steps, which were necessary to ensure that peace reigned, these include, occasionally asking the offender to apologize or do other necessary things that could bring peace again in the family.⁷

Land was and is still very important in Igboland, and such was one of the problems that faced them most. Nna-nwe-ulo, never allowed people from other families to take hold of their land, without his fighting it out for his people. Any compound that had a father or a head that always fought for his right was very grateful to the gods, this is because, the Nna-nwe-ulo will go to any length to protect their interest.

The next stage of social relation was the extended family; this consisted of a number of nuclear families. Discussions and actions here were controlled by the head of the lower political units. However, effective leadership rested with the eldest man within the group. He had the right to coordinate the meetings⁸. People usually say that two heads are better than one; this axiom is even more true in the time of disputes. It was then left to the parties to agree or disagree. They then fixed a date for the second meeting, in most cases, the problem might be resolved at the second meeting, but when it was not possible, for them, they could then table or bring it to the notice of others who will be of immense help to them. This might be in lineage group level when different heads of families will converge and the case will be presented to them. It was in their power to say what could be accepted by the families' concerned. The sub-lineage unit comprised many households. The eldest in the group was accorded much respect because, he had charge over many sacred symbols that belonged to their

founding fathers. He was called upon to arbitrate in minor disputes between households.

Outside the lineage group is the village level. The highest unit of political authority in the pre-colonial period was in the village level. The most senior male was allowed to air his views over matters pending before the village council, the “Amala”. It is only after the general meeting that some people could be selected to look at the problems and solutions will be given by the people for a second time. When this is done, another meeting will then be convened and the verdict will be announced by a gifted Orator⁹ Another important aspect of socio-political organization in pre-colonial Umuahia, was the organization of adults especially males into age grades, and the roles these people played in the maintenance of political order.

Women in pre-colonial Umuahia were active participants in political and economic system. Many of them were farmers, traders, and craft makers. They traded with their neighboring communities; their wares were usually agricultural products, mostly the result of their own farming efforts. They produced such crops as Ede (Cocoyam), vegetables and Garri (cassava flour) was also produced in large quantities by them. There were also expert distillers and distributors of local gin (majorly from Ugbuebila people) and weavers. Women were also very active in making peace between warring communities and families.¹⁰ Any married woman had the right to come into her natal family to settle cases when necessary. These women were known as Umuada or Umuokpu; the Umuada are peacemakers, so they could always want peace in their families but if the worst happens, they must do their best to settle it amicably; they always have the respect for their families.

The political role and capability of Umuada women as amply demonstrated by their resolve and resolute action in the so called Aba women protest. It is interesting to note that the action which shook British administrators in Igboland to their roots, forcing it to make far reaching changes in the Umuahia area mainly as a protest against plans to make women pay tax. In the Umuahia area, this action led to the disposition of many warrant chiefs; prominent among them was Chief Okugo of Oloko, in whose domain the action actually started. It can be said with some measure of certainty that the foundation of present liberation movements among Igbo was laid in the Umuahia area¹¹.

The Osu caste system is of great antiquity in the Umuahia area. Osu was regarded and treated as outcasts.¹² The Osu are slaves but one distinct from an ordinary slave (Ohu or Oru) who in fact is the property of a deity and once devoted to a deity, he has no prospect of regaining freedom and he restricts his movement in the environment he belongs. An Osu was not allowed to move freely with the freeborn Amadi. In village meetings, they were shouted down by the Amadis, if they tried to challenge them. Some among the freeborn (Amadi) would usually ask Nwa Osu to sit down that an Amadi is talking¹³. In some parts of Umuahia, as in other parts of Igboland, where Osu is practiced, it is taboo for a freeborn to injure an Osu and spill his blood. Wherever this occurred, the Amadi must make sacrifices to appease the gods, otherwise the wrath of the gods will fall on him.

Inter marriage between the Osu and a freeborn was a taboo; despite their social handicap, many Osu through their own hard work in the face of daunting odds, achieved many great heights especially in the economic sphere. Many of them were prominent and powerful native doctors, herbalists (Ndi dibia). Some informants argue that this was the result of their singular privilege to have subordinate with divinity and the gods of the land. Some of them in view of their unique position, which in some places guaranteed them safe passage, became very successful traders. This success sometimes resulted from the more cordial relationship that existed between them and the Aro traders mainly because the Aro do not have Osu in their culture.

The Oru/Ohu (domestic slaves), enjoyed more privileges than the Osu. They could buy their freedom whenever they acquired the means to do so. Since they were free, they were free to marry into any family except of course that of Osu. In addition to the Osu and Ohu, there was the Umeh. These it was believed, were people who because of some serious crimes or mistakes committed by their forebears usually die young. They did not suffer any special deprivation but people were usually afraid of having marital relationships with them because of the tendency to die young. In Umuahia and other parts of Igboland, Osu system has become an anachronism, and as such, it has been abolished.

In the pre-colonial era, there was nothing like policemen or soldiers, rather the security of the communities were in the hands of the young men in the area. The *Ogboo* or Age grade existed originally for the purpose of village defense and the carrying out of communal labour. *Ogboo* still existed in all villages but their functions

are slightly different from what was obtainable in the past. In the larger villages, boys of approximately the same age grade formed an age company or group watching the villages. Their duties includes; interrogation of suspicious persons and alerting the community about the approaching enemies. Members of age grade usually met on specific days to discuss common issues and contributes money which could be used to develop the area. Ogboo funds usually formed parts of the village treasury. Thus for any reason the village had to undertake an expensive task, say to buy cow for a sacrifice, a meeting of the Amala would be called, and each age group will be told what to contribute. The money collected could equally be used to buy war equipment or used to build roads, market or bridges. Formally, membership of an Ogboo was obligatory but these days it is purely voluntary.¹⁴ The age grade or Ogboo was very important because they helped to implement projects agreed generally by the people. Those of the Ogboo who could not contribute money were required to do some manual work. It is because of the relevance of this Ogboo system, that it has survived till this day; members usually saw and solved each other's problem as if it concerned them personally,

These days, the age grade system have done so much in the development of their communities, some of them in Umuahia had embarked on certain projects like building of schools, hospitals, and rural electrification to their communities. In Umuahia area, most of the roads would not have been motorable if not for the efforts of some age grades who took it up as a challenge to tar their roads. During the inter village wrestling competitions, a certain age grade might decide to bring out someone that would represent their village. If that person won in the wrestling competition, members of his age grade shared in his joy and pride, if he lost, they also share in his loss and sorrow. In some parts of Umuahia, particularly Ikwuano, there is an annual festival known as Ekpe festival, in areas where they kill goats during the festival, certain age grade is expected to provide the goat and cutlass with which to kill the goat at a first knife cut. If the Ekpe could not do it, the age grade will buy another goat for the Amala.

In relation to the judicial system of Umuahia, secret societies such as Okonko and Ekpe were the two most effective and popular secret societies. These institutions had rules and regulations that guide them. Their laws were only known to their

members, it cost a lot of money and materials to initiate persons into these societies especially the upper echelons.

The Okonko was very popular in Umuahia, the society was organized on a village bases. After completing the Okonko celebration at the village level, the members will still carry on in their quarter level, but the quarter organization wherever it existed were only subdivision of the village Okonko club¹⁵. Membership was open to all freeborn men upon payment of fee which varied from village to village. On payment of the appropriate fee, the member will be taught the secrets especially the signs of the club.

The Okonko performed important political functions, the society worked as the collector of debts, it also settle land cases. For any particular crime, there was a punishment. The Okonko served as a political unit, the crimes under their powers and jurisdiction were murder, petty theft, rape, witchcraft, and invertebrate theft. People found guilty were either sold into slavery, or killed by relatives of their victims. In crimes like petty theft, the culprit could be paraded around the village adorned with rubbish.

Some societal ills greatly abhorred by the people included killing of a kinsman, suicide, stealing, prostitution and disrespect for elders. In cases of stealing, suspected culprits were usually called out to swear with ofor. Those who swore falsely were greatly punished by the gods. Witchcraft was not encouraged and those found guilty of such act were severely dealt with.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the growing literature on Igbo history and culture, the history of British conquest has not received adequate attention. This is particularly glaring in the case of Umuahia where at the moment there seem to be no comprehensive documentary study of the British conquest and colonization of the people. Besides, Umuahia, the capital city of Abia State is being transformed gradually into a modern society without documentary evidence of the peoples' past especially the aspect dealing with British conquest and colonization of the area and the changes they brought in the area. Scholars tend to concentrate on areas such as Nri, Awka, Aro, Nsukka and Bende, possibly because of the cultural prominence or having

pronounced deity like the Ibini Ukpabi of Arochukwu. Thus, the works of early historians of Igbo extraction such as A.E. Nwabara, *Iboland: A Century of Contact with Britain 1860 – 1960*, E. Isichei, *A History of the Igbo people*, and S. Ottenberg, *The Present State of IboStudies*, had a panoramic study of Igbo land. It was only Isichei that mentioned the area in passing. The little available works on Umuahia are mostly first degree projects which cannot be compared to other books on other Igbo societies. There are only two available books on the area, J.U.J. Asiegbu, *The Umuahia People and their Neighbours* and B.O.N. Eluwa's *Ado-na-Idu, History of Igbo Origin*. These books examined briefly, the origin and migration of the area without recourse to the British colonization and imposition of the area.

Arising from this is the curiosity that comes to mind and raises some mind-bugging questions on why the area has not attracted adequate attention from scholars. Such mind bugging questions includes; was Umuahia Static and Stagnant Changing only with the advent of the colonial rulers? Is it right to say that colonial conquest and imposition meant a total break with the people's past? This study will seek to give answers to these questions and to make the society's past live in present and future.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This work will address these questions: who are the Umuahia people? What forms of political and social organization, economic, commercial and other activities existed among them before the conquest.

To show that colonialism did not change the cultural essence of the people and that Umuahia people reacted and resisted imperialist conquest of their area.

To show that colonialism brought with it a kind of false consciousness among the people of Umuahia and destructive identities that are resulting in the sporadic violent and ethnic cleansing.

To show that prior to the British conquest and colonialization, the area did not exist in isolation. It lived and interacted with other component parts of Umuahia, like Ohuhu, Ubakala, Ibeku, Umuopara, Olokoru, and at one point in time had dealings with Igweocha, Arochukwu and Ukwa as long distant traders.

The work explored the avenue through which the people maintain law and order in their society and the means by which they interacted with their environment in providing their basic needs.

It will also consider the British conquest and imposition in Umuahia and the changes this development had on the Umuahia people.

It is hoped that the work would serve as a modest contribution to the reconstruction of Igbo historiography. In other words, it strives to close the gap in already existing literature in Igboland.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Achunike said that history is important for the whole nation and for all people because, “it moulds their ideologies”,¹⁶ History provides us with tools whereby the present could be understood from the past and the future planned well to avoid continues failure. This historical work is a research conducted among the Umuahia people of Igbo extraction. Firstly, it is significant as it tries to examine the British conquest and administration of the area.

Secondly, the study is significant especially as it gives an insight into the transitions and development during and after the colonial period. Thirdly, it will widen the knowledge of the people to know the history of their area, particularly the aspect dealing with colonial administration of Umuahia. Fourthly, theoretically, the study will add to the body of existing documents about British administration and the impacts it had on Umuahia people.

Finally, this research work will help other people, students and researchers alike who may want to carry out further investigations into this aspect of the history of Umuahia.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The first European ever to visit Umuahia did so in 1896. By 1900, a group passed through parts of Olokoro and Ibeku on a reconnaissance mission to Bende, before the British military expedition against Arochukwu in 1901 – 1902. Soon after the fall of Arochukwu to the British in 1902, the Umuahia communities, (Ubakala,

Ohuhu, Umuokpara) led by the Olokoro and Ibeku people, collectively resisted the British invaders in a military encounter which ended later in that same year, 1902, with the British conquest and occupation of the entire Umuahia area¹⁷.

The year 1960 was chosen as the terminal date because, it was when Nigeria won her freedom back from the colonial masters. This work covers the period of sixty years.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

Generally, information required is derived from both primary and secondary sources. The former included oral interview which is a basic source of historical information especially with non-literate of African society. The later involve references to books, bulletins, journals, magazines, newspapers, seminar papers, and government document (reports, abstracts, directories etc). The field work- a, primary sourcing, involve, among others, visits to the various towns and villages including local council secretariat.

Armed with the materials derived from both primary and secondary sources, we proceeded to the interpretation of the available information at hand, avoiding falsification and distortion. For instance, in my analysis, we discovered that the “Ibo” was constantly used instead of the correct term “Igbo”. In the field, we discovered that most of the people interviewed were irrevocably republican in their political outlook, as ethnic groups or individual villagers they value their freedom more than anything else and almost pathologically dreaded autocracy in any shape or form.

Also there was the problem of chronology. This somehow presented an obstacle to the research, because they give general overview, “it happened during the year that so.... So disease broke out in the community”. It has been a long time ago”. Some, on the other hand with – held vital information fearing that they would be used for political motives. Others owing to the self-seeking and contradictions and distortion of information.

Apart from the above, there was the problem of mobility, the research for this essay came at such a time to travel was a luxury, frequent scarcity of fuel which led to

increase in fares. We were nearly frustrated by this, but God being on our side, saw us through.

On the other hand, most of the consulted books, deal generally with the Igbo society. As such no proper mention or systematic study has been published on the Umuahia communities as section of the commercially important and productive Igbo hinter land. May be in the future there could be enough books on the area

Intelligence and annual reports by the colonial officials in the national Archives Enugu also serve as sources for this work. However, one has to be cautious using materials from the archives because of the controversies surrounding them, in term of reliability.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As a building cannot stand without the pillars, so also this work will revolve on mainly the following theoretical framework; recoil theory by G. Balandier and dependency theory by Vicent Ferraro. The proponents of recoil theory, believed that an inferior culture may recoil in the face of an intruding superior culture. African culture had been described as barbaric and animalistic, hence they believed that the moment African culture came in contact with an adjudged superior culture (European), they recoiled.

Another theory to be considered is the dependency theory. The theory was formulated by Vicent Ferraro. Dependency can be defined as an explanation of the economic development of a state in terms of the external influence: Political, economic, and cultural, on national development policies. It is a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subject.¹⁸

The dependency theory introduces an interpretation of relations in international economy characterized by dependency which makes economy of one country “conditioned by the development and expansion of another country to which the former is subjected to”.¹⁹ This leads to the idea that underdevelopment in a country is a direct consequence of expansion or development in other country on which the former depends on. Proponents of dependency theory see structures and processes of world economy as having inbuilt biases leading to relations of dependency which

directly cause the underdevelopment in the third world. The inequality can be explained in terms of dependency relations in trade, finance and technology. “This system is a dependent one because it reproduces a productive system whose development is limited by those world relations which necessarily lead to development of only certain economic sector’s to trade under unequal conditions with international capital under unequal condition to the imposition of super-exploitation of domestic labour force with a view to dividing economic surplus this generated between internal and external forces of domination”²⁰. Using Umuahia as a case study, it is our view in that the inequalities in terms of trade, finance and technology was as a result of dependency relations.

Dependency theory is defined as an explanation of the economic development of a political, economic and cultural on national development policies. It is the notion that resources flow from a “periphery” of poor and under developed states to a “core” of wealthy states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former. It is a central contention of dependency theory that poor states are impoverished and rich ones enriched by the way poor states are integrated into the “world system”.

The theory arose as a reaction to modernization theory, an earlier theory of development which held that all societies progress through similar stages of development, that today’s underdeveloped areas are thus in a similar situation to that of today’s developed areas at some time in the past, and that, therefore, the task of helping the under-developed areas out of poverty is to accelerate them along this supposed common path of development, by various means such as investment, technology transfers, and closer integration into the world market. Dependency theory rejected this view, arguing that underdeveloped countries are not merely primitive versions of developed countries, but have unique features and structures of their own and importantly, are in the situation of being the weaker members in a world market economy.

Dependency is a historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favours some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economics; a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy; to which their own is subjected.

There are three common features to these definitions which most dependency theorists share. First, dependency characterizes the international system as comprised of two sets of states, variously described as dominant/dependent, centre/periphery or metropolitan/statelite. The dominant states are the advanced industrial nations in the organization of economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The dependent states are Africa which have low per capita GNPs and which rely heavily on the export of a single commodity for foreign exchange earnings.

Second, both definitions have in common the assumption that external forces are of singular importance to the economic activities within the dependent states. These external forces include multi-national corporations, international commodity markets, foreign assistance, communication and any other means by which the advanced industrialized countries can represent their economic interests abroad.

Third, the definitions of dependency all indicate that the relations between dominant and dependent states are dynamic because the interactions between the two sets of states tend to not only reinforce but also intensify the unequal patterns. Moreover, dependency is a very deep-seated historical process, rooted in the internationalization of capitalism. Dependency is an ongoing process.

In short, dependency theory attempts to explain the present underdeveloped state of many nations in the world by examining the patterns of interactions among nationals and by arguing that inequality among nationals is an intrinsic parts of those interactions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the course of this work, a number of works dealing with colonialism in Igbo land and Africa in general were consulted. Owing to dearth of written materials on the area, the literature review would have nearly been impossible. Nonetheless, the availability of books and scholarly articles on colonialism in Africa and Igbo land in particular provides the basis for this literature review, although most of them express diverse views on colonialism in Africa and Igbo land. Thus, they still provide some information relevant to this work.

One of the major books dealing on the area of this work is the one written by J.U.J. Asiegbu, *The Umuahia People and their Neighbours*²¹. The book is a collection of the origins of the various clans that make up the area known as Umuahia. The book made good use of colonial records retrieved from the National Archives in Enugu dealing on the people's origins, migrations and settlement. Colonial administration and people's reaction to colonial rule were not extensively discussed; hence, this work seeks to carry out this research on Umuahia under colonial administration.

Similar to this was the work carried out by Elizabeth Isichei: *A History of the Igbo People*. In this work, she painted the picture that traditional Igbo society is egalitarian, there is the recognition of slaves. Slaves and wives are accumulated by prosperous men in the society, and the more prosperous the man, the more elaborate and splendid his funeral ceremonies. She also mentioned how Igbo resisted the imposition of colonial rule longer than any other Nigerian people. Although Umuahia was not mentioned but it is relevant to this study and as such hopes to adopt similar approach in study the colonial administration of Umuahia²².

Also, in another thesis work, *Umuopara under the British Colonial Administration, 1905 to 1960*, Odigbo Chukwudike C, x-rays colonial activities, innovation and administration in Umuopara community. The work argued that although colonialism brought about changes that transformed Igbo societies in many aspects, it did not destroy Igbo identity or cultural soul. Umuopara is one of the Igbo societies where these transformations wrought by colonial rule are believed to have been fast and swift. The work used historical methodology to demonstrate that the responses to colonial innovations were not as fast as had been posited by some scholars. The work is relevant to this study having Umuopara as one of the clans or communities within Umuahia hence this work seeks to address Umuahia at large²³. B.O.N. Eluwa in his *Ado-Na-Idu: History of Igbo origin*, discusses the migrations and settlement of Umuahia alongside its migrating groups. The book concludes that the group migrated from somewhere across the Imo river²⁴. The work did not consider colonial rule and its impact on the area. This work is an attempt to cover the gap.

T.N. Tamuno; *The Evolution of the Nigeria State*; this study x-rays the social and economic policy as well as political and administrative structures, illuminating the origins of many vital decisions taken during the formative period of colonial rule in Southern Nigeria. It is a survey of colonial policy over a wide front rather than a

close analysis of governmental institutions. Tamuno several times mentions the ‘warrant chiefs’ appointed by the British administration as the hinge on which their relations with their subjects in South-eastern Nigeria were to turn²⁵. These chiefs were legitimate leaders of their communities, capable of communicating the real attitudes and opinions of the people to the colonial masters. Hence Southern Nigeria remained divided into diverse communities whose leaders might see real opportunities to protect their interests within the framework provided by the new colonial state. The study was on South-eastern Nigeria thus Umuahia was not mentioned. This work on colonial administration of Umuahia will cover that gap.

Like Tamuno, A.E. Afigbo in *The Warrant Chiefs. Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria*; achieves some sympathetic understanding of the aims of those officials who, by the establishment of native courts and the issue of warrants to selected Africans, shaped the early colonial institutions of eastern Nigeria. Afigbo Judges Lugard’s reorganization disastrously doctrinaire and shows that it was undertaken against the advice of the best informed officials; the result was to ratify the arbitrary power of a new elite of petty truants created by the colonial administration, including not only the warrant holders themselves, but such parasites of the system as court messengers and court clerks. The study is relevant to the work at hand and will provide insight to the study of Umuahia²⁶.

Shokpeka and Odigwe in a study; *British Colonial Economic Policy in Nigeria, the Example of Benin Province 1914 – 1954*, said that the establishment of British colonial administration brought the introduction of cash crops economy to Nigeria – as elsewhere in Africa. In line with the British colonial policy of providing raw materials for the industries of the metropolitan power, Nigeria witnessed the downplay of the importance of the indigenous economic system which made each family self-sufficient in food and other socio-economic needs. The study went on to say that through a deliberate policy of discouraging food crop cultivation, most clans and communities were gradually rid of food supplies and thus introduced into acute hunger in favour of the cultivation of cash crops needed by British industries. In the scheme of things, what mattered was how the colonial economy could benefit the colonizer. Very little, if any regard, was paid to the colonized indigenous population. When the Nigerian population was taken into consideration, it was mostly employed

as a tool in achieving the main reason for colonization: the domination and exploitation of the local population by the colonizing power. The work is relevant to the work at hand; history of colonial administration of Umuahia and as such strives to narrow the study down to Umuahia, in a way to provide insight to the study of the area²⁷. In their own book, *Ibeku in Igbo History*, O.N. Njoku et al, takes a comprehensive study of man in Ibeku, whose descendants they claimed are vastly found in Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu, Cross River, Rivers, Imo and Anambra States and beyond²⁸. Although the book did not discuss Umuahia, it is relevant to the work. As Umuahia's close neighbours; it provides insight to the study of the area.

U.C. Anyanwu in his book, *Igbo Society in Transition: The Ezza Example 1905 – 1979*, discusses the changes colonialism brought on Igbo land particularly *Ezza* in Northern Igbo land. The work suggests that these changes differ in places, time and pace stating that it was slow in the *Ezza* area. This work hopes to adopt similar approach in studying Umuahia under British administration²⁹.

Simon Ottenberg in his article "Ibo Receptivity to Change" in *Continuity and Change in African Culture*, edited by R.B. Bascom and M.J. Heskovits, x-rays the changes that occurred in Igbo land during colonial period. According to him, the Ibo are probably most receptive to cultural change, and most willing to accept western ways than any other large group in Nigeria³⁰. His study did not cover the changes in Umuahia. Hence, the desire to carry out this study to ascertain such assertion on Igbo land.

Also Simon Ottenberg in another article *The Present State of Ibo Studies*, indicates clearly the sparseness of our general knowledge of the area and the people, particularly in comparison with certain other Nigerian and African groups of similar size and importance³¹. Although the post war literature on the Igbo seems voluminous there is inadequacy of knowledge in some directions. Some research and writing have been done here and some there, but sum total of the writings does not add to a very substantial body of knowledge. It was based on this backdrop that this work is being done in order to add to the existing knowledge about Umuahia people.

S.N. Nwabara's *Iboland: A Century of Contact with Britain 1860 – 1960*, x-rays colonial activities, innovations and administration in Igbo land. He pointed to some Igbo macro and micro communities such as Enugu, Onitsha, Owerri, Umuonneoha and so on. He talks of the impact of the changes on the Igbo judicial system using his home town Amachara in Umuahia Old Bende division³² as an instance. Although this work covers the period of this present study and mentions Amachara which is part of Umuahia, it paid more attention to colonial rule and its impact on the judicial system and proves relevant to the study colonial administration of Umuahia. The present work strives to fill the gap in this work by providing insight to the other aspects of the area under colonial rule.

In his book, *Southeastern Nigeria in the Nineteenth Century: An Introductory Analysis*, C.C. Ifemesia studied British penetration into the hinterland of southeastern Nigeria. He examined the political upheaval, economic conflict and the clash between western culture and traditional culture witnessed within the period of colonial rule³³. Though this work did not study Umuahia, it is however, relevant to the study of Umuahia under colonial administration, particularly the area dealing with the resistance of the people.

Elizabeth Isichei in *History of West Africa Since 1800* and G.T. Basden in *Among the Ibos of Nigeria* seem to share similar view on traditional Igbo society. They opine that Igbo society gave its members a great deal say in matters affecting their lives, more than the modern democratic states give their citizens³⁴. Their study of Igbo traditional society in relation to changes necessitated by colonial rule was panoramic. Umuahia, the area of this present study was not covered by these works but they provide relevant information for this study.

Ukwu I. Ukwu in his book, *The Development of Trade and Marketing in Iboland*, highlighted a series of expeditions sent inland from the Oil River bases by the British in 1901. The spirit and aims of the exercise are illustrated by the memorandum to the officers of the 'Aquetah-Opobo' expedition, which instructed that:

In moving about the country you should keep your eyes open to see if there are any rubber trees or you can discern any economic indigenous plants or products. The direction from

which trade comes should be noted and inquiry made if the trade routes are free.... It must be distinctly laid down (to the natives) that all roads and waterways of the country are free for trade and no tolls must be levied on those using them because they don't happen to belong to the country through which they pass³⁵.

The incursions were strenuously resisted by coastal interests but by the turn of the century the British had succeeded in concluding 'treaties' with numerous Ibo communities guaranteeing freedom of trade, guarantees which, however, were not always respected. The twentieth century saw a shift in British official interest from exploration to 'pacification'. This book deals on the issue at hand as it mentioned the trends of colonizing the major commercial towns of Igbo land of Eastern Nigeria, such areas like Owerri, Bende, Awka, Okigwe, Aba, Afikpo, Abakaliki to mention but a few. Although Umuahia was not mentioned but it is relevant to this study and it is hoped to fill the gap.

Chinua Achebe in his historical novel, *Things Fall Apart*, talks of colonial rule and its impact on Igbo land. He compares the pre-colonial with the colonial and post-colonial Igbo society to ascertain the impact of colonial rule especially in the value system, attitude and way of life of the people. Hence, he described the dying old generation as possessing loveliness of mind and deep sense of oneness as opposed to the new generation who do not know what it is to speak with one voice³⁶. This work is relevant to the present study as it exposes the impact of colonial rule in Igbo land.

A.E. Afigbo in his book, *Ropes of Sand* studies in Igbo history and culture, particularly the chapter dealing on "Igbo land under colonial rule" and his article, "The Eastern Province under Colonial Rule" in *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, edited by Obaro Ikime, studies colonialism and its impacts on Igbo land. He contends that though colonial rule transformed Igbo society in many aspects, it did not destroy Igbo identity or cultural soul. According to him, the Igbo people achieved this because they were astute enough to use in their own way, the new institutions and values introduced by colonialism thus, maintaining their ethnic essence³⁷. These works studied colonialism in Igbo land in general. The present work however will strive to narrow the study down to Umuahia.

In his own book, *Christianity and Igbo Culture: A Study in Igbo Culture*³⁸, Edmund Illogu, examined some aspects of the impacts of colonialism especially on Igbo culture. He adopted a sociological approach in the study of colonial rule in Igbo land. The study did not study colonial rule and its impacts on Umuahia as a group. This present work is an attempt to study Umuahia under colonial administration from a historical perspective.

Also in an article titled, “*Revolution and Reaction in Eastern Nigeria*”, A.E. Afigbo contributed immensely to the understanding of the Igbo pre-colonial and colonial history. He x-rays not only the processes of colonial policies, but their interaction with the complex societies of eastern Nigeria. It is thus not surprising that with a consummate disregard of the strains and stresses which must have existed in their traditional societies, as is the case in any other society, conservative Ibo and Ibibio elders today give the impression that until the coming of European rule the Igbo and the Ibibio lived in a world of perfect harmony which gave all and sundry the opportunity to attain the good life by following traditions and customs which embodied the accumulated wisdom and experience of the ancestors. In the light of this conviction these elders see the advent of British rule as making a sudden and regrettable break with a glorious past as a result of which the falcon cannot hear the falconer; Things Fall Apart; the centre cannot hold mere anarchy is loosed upon the world³⁹. This in the article, it was argued that European rule inaugurated a many sided revolution which was in no way congenial to the temperament of the conservatives among the Igbo and Ibibio peoples of Eastern Nigeria, and that the Women’s Riot of 1929 – 30 must be seen as one, if the most violent, of the people’s reaction to this revolution. The work is relevant to this study; colonial administration of Umuahia, the area that was not covered will be taken care of in this study.

Worthy of note is the work of Paul Uche Mbakwe, *The Impact of Colonial Rule on the Agricultural Economy of Mbaise, Imo State, 1500 – 1960*. In this work, he examined the impact of colonial rule on Mbaise agricultural economy and argues that alien influences did not do much to transform the traditional economy of Mbaise people of Igbo land, but rather concentrated on improving cash crops that aided the metropolitan economy and wellbeing. Though the work did not mention Umuahia but

this current study will fill this gap and adopt similar approach in studying Umuahia under British colonial rule⁴⁰.

A.U. Igwe, in his journal titled; “An Examination of the Nexus between Modern Transport Infrastructure and Socio-economic Growth in Colonial Eastern Nigeria” said, at the beginning of colonial administration, the British government envisaged her Nigerian territory to play a dual role; source of agricultural raw-materials and mineral resources for British industries; as well as an assured protected market for British manufacturers. Thus, the provision of modern transport infrastructure, rail, with the social system and contain further resistance, and as such could not provide welfare nor alleviate the problem of poverty. Though this work did not study Umuahia, it is however relevant to the study of colonial administration of Umuahia, particularly the area dealing with the resistance of the people⁴¹.

ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

This research work is organized into seven chapters. Chapter one deals with the study, statement of problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, methodology and sources, theoretical framework, literature review and organization of the study are equally contained therein. The chapter terminates with endnotes.

Chapter two examines Umuahia before colonial Administration, Geographical location, traditions of origin, migration and settlement of the constituent communities of the present day Umuahia people, Agriculture, trade, craft and industries and fishing and hunting. The chapter then ends with endnotes.

Chapter three looks at early contact and establishment of colonial rule; early contact, native resistance to British penetration, Establishment of colonial rule, the native council and native courts, introduction of direct taxation, it then ends with consolidation of British rule in Umuahia. Chapter Four begins with the creation of the warrant chief system, introduction of colonial Economy, the introduction of Christianity and western Education, Administration Reorganization: new provincial offices in Umuahia, Umuahia- Ibeku market scheme, the chapter ends with endnotes.

Chapter five reveals local reactions and problems in Umuahia, Aba women protest, Administrative reorganization in post Aba Women protest era, Native Authorities ordinance and ends with endnote.

Chapter six. Explores the impact of colonial administration in Umuahia; political impact, economics impact and socio-cultural impact. It then ends with endnotes.

The last chapter, which is seven summaries and concluded. Then ends with endnotes, Bibliography and Appendix.

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CHAPTER TWO

UMUAHIA BEFORE COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION 1900-1901

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Umuahia is an Igbo community in the South Eastern Nigeria. It is strategically located and well surrounded by Igbo and non-Igbo communities. Umuahia lie between $5^{\circ}.25$ and $5^{\circ}.43$ in the North latitudes, and between longitudes $7^{\circ}.20$ and $7^{\circ}.35$ of the East Meridian.¹ From the seacoast at Port Harcourt in the Rivers state, the direct distance to Umuahia is about 120 kilometers. Umuahia, therefore, lies within the 'Rain forest' climate zone, characterized by wooded, green vegetation, and the two well-known seasons – the rainy (May to October) and the dry (November to April) seasons. Between January and February, there is the dry and misty harmattan winds. The average annual rainfall in Umuahia ranges between “80 – 100” and the total land area occupied by the communities is about 406 square kilometers.² The population density in this area is reckoned to be among the largest compared with those of many other communities in Nigeria, it ranges between about 400 – 500 persons per square mile.³

Umuahia is a town located within Ibeku. It is made up of Ibeku Villages called Amuzukwu to the North, Afara Ukwu to the south, Nkata to the North east, Ohokobe Ndume to South east, then Osaahand Ugwunchara and Emede villages to the West⁴

TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN

An observation to the new trends in Igbo studies and theories of Igbo origin. The existing Niger-Benue confluence theory of Igbo origins is now coming under increasing attack. According to some critics, the reasons or evidences of ecology, of paleo-botany, of linguistic or of agriculture, favour the Niger-Benue confluence as much as they also do most other parts of Igboland.

More detailed archaeological work, or detailed linguistic studies in the future, may, however, come out with more concrete and conclusive proofs one way or the other concerning the early history and origins of the Igbo people generally. However, available evidence and data from various oral traditions here analysed, permit some logical conclusions to be made regarding the origin, early migrations and the settlement history of the Umuahia-Igbo communities which form the subject of this work.

The oral traditions also strongly suggest that, after this first wave of migrations from across the Imo River, another group of immigrants appear to have come in from the opposite directions of Ohaozara and Bende-Arochukwu in the North and the South-East of Umuahia respectively⁵; they appear to have come in also from Ngwaland and Ukwa-Ndoki areas to the South of Umuahia. These subsequent immigrations into the Umuahia area appear to have affected mainly, if not only, the Ibeku-Olokoro and Ubakala groups, and perhaps also the small community Umuabali in the Ezeleke village of Umuopara.

It is further suggested that the pattern of these subsequent immigrations into the Umuahia area which largely missed the Umuopara and Ohuhu groups, probably account for some of the noticeable socio-cultural differences, in dialect and partly in the social system for example between these Ohuhu-Umuopara clan groups on the one hand, and the Ibeku, Olokoro and Ubakala clan groups on the other. From all the different accounts of oral traditions here assembled and examined, it would appear that the earliest ancestors of the Ngwa group, were involved in the migration movements which originated in the Igbo heartland many centuries ago. After reaching and probably spending sometime in the Orlu-Owerri-Okigwe Etit zones, many of the migrants later continued until they crossed the Imo River; some then went to establish

in Ngwa land; others came into what became Umuahia territory. For the Ngwa group, Isiala-Ngwa was probably the first point of settlement, and the melting point from which further dispersals continued deeper into other parts of Ngwa land. For the present day Ohuhu clan, the Umuhu groups of villages nearest to the Imo River were probably the first settlement centre of the immigrants immediately after crossing the Imo River from the Obowo-Etiti side into Ohuhu-Umuahia. It is also possible that the Omaegwu territory in Umuopara and the adjacent areas to the Imo River served as a first settlement spot and, later a melting-point and dispersal centre for the founding ancestors of the different Umuopara village groups, and for those of their Ibeku-Olokoro-Ubakala neighbours.

The last or final migration movement into Umuahia, seems to have come from the North-East and the South-East in the opposite directions of the Imo River basin to the West of Umuahia. This later immigration into Umuahia probably post-dated the Ngwa-Ohuhu migratory-crossing of the Imo River from the Owerri-Okigwe-Etiti zone: Movements of peoples from the Arochukwu-Cross River basin may have taken place into those parts of Ngwa land located to the South-West; and into Ibeku, Olokoro and Ubakala in the North-West of the same Cross River basin. From Ngwa land proper, there were clearly movements into these same areas of Umuahia, Ubakala, Olokoro and Ibeku. Thus whereas the Ohuhu and Umuopara clans on the Imo River basin appeared to have received their populations and cultural influences, mainly from across the Imo River to the West of Umuahia, the other three Umuahia clans, Ibeku-Olokoro-Ubakala, in addition to the initial influences which they received from the same area of the Imo River, were later almost uniquely exposed to contacts and influences coming from at least two other directions: from Arochukwu in the South East, and from Ngwaland, South of Umuahia. Indeed, various evidences so far obtained from each of the three contiguously located clans (Ibeku, Olokoro and Ubakala) have consistently pointed to Arochukwu and Ngwaland as among the areas or directions from which these clans were additionally peopled by immigrants-settlers in the distant past.⁶

It is already well known that in Igboland names are generally meant to convey some kind of ideas or message, or to carry a meaning. Place-names as well as names given to individuals always carry a message or a meaning. Viewed in this way, it is

quite conceivable that the name Umuahia might have originated as a nickname given by the Olokoro villages to the only village in the clan whose comparatively much larger population easily conjured up the picture or image of large numbers or multitudes of insects or animals or birds, such as weaver birds. We will now know or find out, from these various evidences analysed here, the origin and meaning of 'Umuahia'. Elder Awazie Madika's evidence during an interview with him confirms this:

"We were told that many (in old Umuahia) migrated from Abam, Umuihi, Bende, Ngwa, Ohuhu, Ozu (Umuopara), etc"⁷

Other informants persist, however, in the erroneous theory that it was from the British that the name, Umuahia, first appeared as a corruption of the word, Oma-ahia. But some of the elders maintain on the other hand and no one has seriously denied or contested this claim, that the village of (old) Umuahia was already in existence as part of the Olokoro clan long before the arrival of the Whiteman⁸:

Elder Ogbonna Ogazi of Obizi in Amaka village also gave a corroborative evidence on the origin of the name 'Umuahia':

'Their name from time immemorial has been Umuahia. They collect their share at Ahiaukwu Olokoro whenever something is shared with the name Umuahia, long ago before the arrival of the Whiteman. The 'old' was attached to differentiate between Umuahia I and II which the whites were at that time labelling 'old' Umuahia and (Umuahia) township respectively'⁹...

Further corroborative evidence came from Elder Awazie Madika, himself from old Umuahia village:

'Right from the ancient days we have been Umuahia. The old was added to Umuahia when the Whiteman left Afor Ibeji market square where they resided for a long time with their soldiers to Umuahia township, i.e. Ibeku, after they (the Whiteman) had bought the place from one Otuonye Agunwa at a cost of one horse...'¹⁰

From these various evidences analysed here, that this Olokoro village, with its name Umuahia, was clearly in existence long before the arrival of the British. The name 'Umuahia' therefore could not have originated or coined by the Whiteman, as most of the oral traditions have erroneously suggested. Yet the name 'Umuahia', like that of its twin-sister 'Amakama', still taxes our imagination for its actual meaning. One of the elders who attempted an explanation of both the origin and meaning of the name stated that the word 'Umuahia' referred to the Aro trader – settlers in that village and meant something like ndi 'Ozuahia', trade 'addicts' or professional traders. This, in the Igbo language, would translate into something like 'Umu-Ozuahia' – a trading people.

Indeed old Umuahia village (ndi nwe ahia Afo Ibeji) was clearly one of the communities in the old Bende Division that attracted a sizeable population of Aro settlers and traders. In pre-colonial times, the Afor Ibeji market had ranked in popularity with those at Uzuakoli, Uturu-Okigwe, Ife (in Mbaise), Bende and Uburu, as slaves, and other commodity markets for the Aro dealers and their local agents, of which there were at that time an influential number at old Umuahia village.

It is therefore quite possible that such a name, 'Umuozuahia' or 'Umuahia', was applied in deference and admiration for those trader-settler elements and peoples at Afor Ibeji and the surrounding areas. The undoubted social and political power and influence enjoyed by these traders and their local agents are derived mainly from their commercial enterprises or acumen, which was felt by the entire community. There is however, as yet scanty corroboration of this evidence or new interpretation, and our acceptance of it must consequently remain rather tentative for now.

There is yet another possible interpretation of the origin and meaning of 'Umuahia'. It brings into focus the significance of, and the possible impressions created in the people's minds by the relative populations of the various village units at that time. With a population of some 504 adult males, the community of Ndi nwe Ahia Afor Ibeji, or old Umuahia, was the largest village in the clan, from the pre-colonial times up to the early decades of the colonial administration.

The Afor Ibeji market was one of the many attractions to immigrant Aro, Abiriba and Ubani (Bonny and Opobo) traders, and other settlers from different directions. As a very popular market, it created the picture of a giant business centre and commercial tree towering above others within the locality, and attracting numerous 'business birds of the air' which came regularly in their hundreds to perch or settle on the 'business-tree', Afor Ibeji or Old Umuahia market centre. The (old) Umuahia village or Ndi nwe Afor Ibeji market community were remarked for the numerical superiority of its commercially active population. This population appeared to be ever on the increase at that time, as fresh settlers from various areas constantly came in to settle¹¹. With its comparatively larger population of 504 adult males, the old Umuahia trading community would indeed have looked- (especially to the smaller Olokoru villages whose populations then had numbered a mere 88, for Umudere; 73 for Ama Ngwa; 74 for Umuobia, and 52 for Ajonkwo)¹² like a sea of humanity, a beehive of people, a swan of bees or locusts, or a chorus of weaver birds.

MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE CONSTITUENT COMMUNITIES OF THE PRESENT DAY UMUAHIA PEOPLES

Umuahia communities were grouped into five clan units. The local, names of Ibeku, Ohuhu, Olokoru, Ubakala and Umuopara. Each of these different clans comprised a number of villages or towns; each village was made up of a number of lineages, compounds or kindred; we may here represent these in local language as Onu-Ama or Okporo-Ama. These later comprised groups of extended families or Onu-Ezi, Ezi-na-Ulo; which themselves were made up of nuclear families, Onu-Usekwu or individual household units comprising the husband, wife/wives and children. For want of a better expression, we will here approximate the words clan and village, to what the Umuahia people generally refer to as 'Mba'.

A 'foreigner' or stranger is one who came more or less from outside one's own village or clan. He was onye-mbaozo, and lacked ethnic affinity within the village, or did not come under the rights and obligations of the village and its socio-political organizations, as ordained by the gods or dieties and practiced by the members of the

particular village community. To try to discover the identity of these clan communities, it is perhaps best for us to focus as much as possible on the constituent villages of each clan.

Ibeku Clan

The ability of a community to organize and stage its own egwu, a festival featuring cultural dances or masquerade shows, was a mark of its autonomy, and its independent existence as a culturally and politically homogeneous entity either as a village or as groups of villages within a clan. The Ibeku elders who a little over half a century ago had given the first ever recorded information on their history, had agreed that the Ibeku clan originally comprised seven Egwus or kindred groups of villages¹³. As these seven original (parent) villages of Ibeku grew in numbers, extended families began to split away from the parent villages, and to establish their own settlements adjacent to the parent ones. The growth and expansion of Ibeku clan from the seven (parent) original villages, may be represented thus:

The Parent/Original Villages	The Statelite Villages/Lineages
ISIEKE	Okwuta, Okwenyi, Okoma, Umuajiyi
NDUME	Umuana, Iodu, Ihie, Umuohu, Ohokobe, Ndume, Umuafia, Umuezeala, Ofeke, Umuaroko, Umuahunta
AFARANTA	Amuzukwu, Ugbanankata, Mbom, Ameke Isiadu
AFARA	Ohokobe, Agata, Isiama
OSSAH	Umuchime, Eziama, Mgbaja
EMEDE	Agbo, Ata, Emede, Mkporo, Umuagu, Umueze, Umuodudu, Udide
AMAOFORO	Avonkwu, Amuzuoruo, Iyienyi, Ajata, Okwuoturu. ¹²

Table 1: Ibeku clan from the seven parent villages

Source: Ogurube working documents (Eze S. I. Onuoha)

The picture which seems to emerge very clearly from the various oral interviews and the recordings, is that Isieke and Ndume are acknowledged by all the constituent village groups in Ibeku, as the two most senior, oldest, villages in the clan.

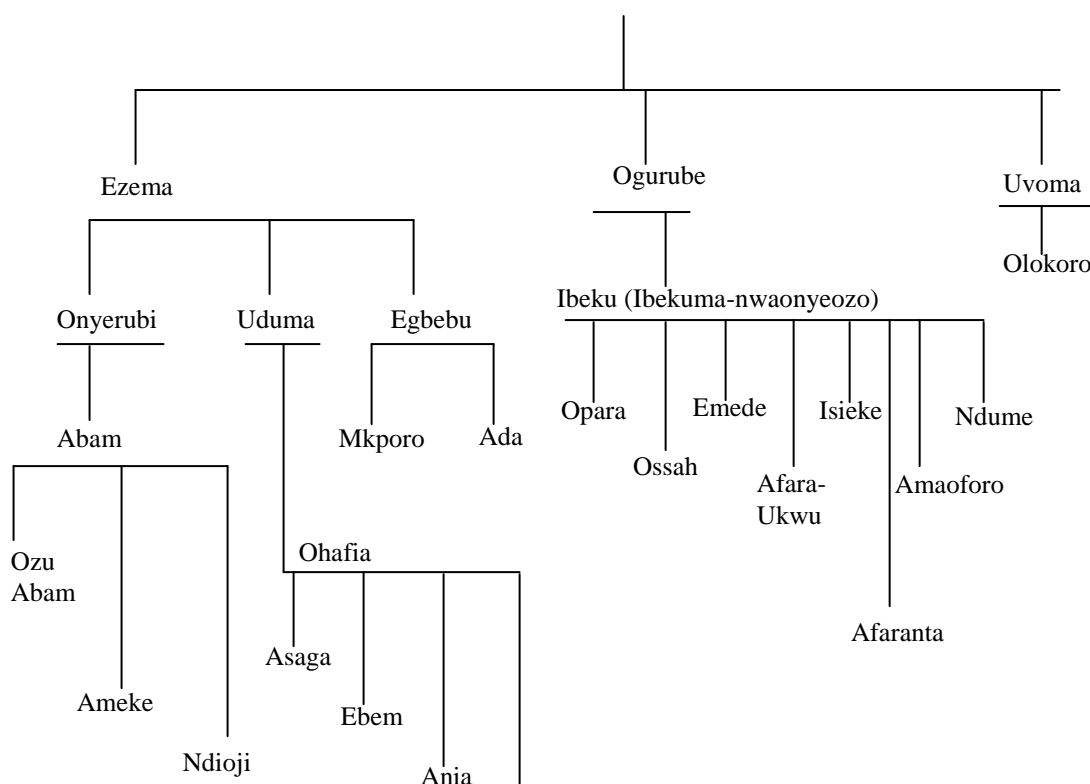
On the tradition of origin, migration and settlement history of the Ibeku people, Odoemenam states that all Ibeku people had originally settled and lived together at Ahiaeke (Ndume), before the entire Ibeku began dispersing in various directions after the Obegu War¹⁴. Let us now consider what may perhaps be regarded as the most popular version of Ibeku oral tradition of origin. This version was elaborated upon in great detail by the ‘Ogurube 1’ of Ibeku.

Ifeukwu or Iheukwu

(The supposed overall)

(Father and epical ancestor of)

(all the communities in the old)



Ogurube 1 of Ibeku
(Eze S. I. Onuoha)

Bende Division

Table 2

While the most popular version of Ibeku oral tradition seems to be vast in its purported knowledge of the origins of virtually every other community in the old Bende Division, it is not even sure on the vital points of its own origin. Also whilst almost every other constituent village of Ibeku seems to know the history of its origins and migrations from, or ethnic connections with other neighbouring communities, the Ibeku clan itself seems to know from the oral evidences before us, virtually nothing about how or where its founding ancestors originated.

Whatever may be the cause of this apparent or genuine uncertainty concerning this aspect of Ibeku traditional history, its effect obliges us to seek fresh angles of approach to the issue. Hence the attempt is made here to compare the internal evidence of oral traditions in Ibeku clan with those of their other immediate neighbours within Umuahia. First, is the fact that many of the Ibeku villages today trace their own origins to various places either outside Umuahia or outside the Ibeku clan:

We originated from Umuopara in Ozuitem, while some originated from Isiama Afara Ibeku...¹⁵.

list herewith are the various responses obtained from different respondents in the Ibeku clan on the question of Ibeku origin:

Agata (Ibeku) came from Elugwu in Nsukwe-Ubakala and some came from Ndume Ibeku. We don't marry from any part of Nsukwe-Ubakala' (Mazi Oribo Oji aged 97 years of Agata Okwulage Afaraukwu)¹⁶.

We people of Umuhute village came from Bende so many centuries ago; what attracted or made us to live here was that Ahiaeke Ndume is nearer to this place where we now live. We have common boundary with Bende...' (Mazi Eborgu Ihuwaeze aged 69 years from Umuohoko Umuhute Ndume Ibeku)¹⁷.

We have no real idea if we came from anywhere else to settle in Ibeku; but we were told that part of Ohafia and Abam migrated out of Ibeku to settle in those places... We have serious link with Olokoro, in particular with Umuezeala in Old Umuahia... with whom as with the Ohokobe village, we don't inter-marry because we are all brothers... (Mazi Godwin Ndudim aged 71 years, from Umueke Umuezeala Ndume Ibeku)¹⁸.

We have no real idea about the origin of the clan; but speculation is that we came from Aro according to our forefathers; we have links with Bende, Aro, Igbere, Ohafia; we marry from all parts of Ibeku and Olokoro; we do not marry from Amuzu Olokoro in the olden days... until after series of sacrifices called 'Odu'¹⁹;

We also do not marry from Ugba-na- nkata in the olden days, until it was approved after performing series of sacrifices called "Odu"... we hold our Egwu in our place at Mbaraukwu... Umuopara is not the first son of Ibeku and they did not even migrate out of Ibeku".

Despite the apparent unhelpfulness of this conflicting account, there lie in them clear pointers to same historical probabilities: in the situation in which virtually every kindred or constituent village in Ibeku is able to trace its original, ancestral home to some other place within or outside Umuahia, It is probable therefore that, like in the history of all its other sister-clans in Umuahia, the original ancestors of the

Ibeku people had come from different directions: some from the Owerri-Mbaise- Etit sources, which seem to have also produced the original ancestors of the Ngwa, the Umuopara, the Ubakala, Olokoru and the Ohuhu people. Consequently, once the initial settlements had been successfully established, the second stage inter-clan and intra-clan or inter-village migrations and settlements of people in these areas continued for a long time.

We may reasonably assume that such movements of peoples took place between Ibeku on the one hand, and the Uzuakoli, Ohafia, Nkwerre, Orlu, Bende and even the Aro groups of communities on the other hand. Inter-clan migrations and settlements within Umuahia as a whole, seem also quite clear from the oral evidences, including the available facts of exogamy as still practiced both within and between the clans and the village units.

Ohuhu Clan

The word 'Ohuhu' first appeared in print about 1906 in Major Leonard's *The Lower Niger and its Tribes*. Its origin would seem to date back to those earlier centuries of long distance trade in Igboland²⁰. In earlier times, the people of Ngwaland (from whom the word 'Ohuhu' is supposed to have originated) used it to designate all non-Ngwa, particularly all Umuahia peoples.

One version of the oral tradition traces the origin of the word 'Ohuhu' to the period (about the 15th century) of the mass migration movement of the peoples from Okigwe-Orlu-Owerri zone in the North-West, across the Imo River East of the area, into the present areas of Umuahia and Ngwaland. This version states that many centuries ago the ancestors of the Ngwa and Ohuhu (Ezinihitte) peoples were travelling together on a migration journey; they arrived at a temporary resting place on the banks of the Imo River. While at the Imo River bank, one section of the people (the Ome-ngwa-ngwa' or 'Ngwa' group) hurriedly boiled their food (yam, bread-

fruit) ate them and quickly crossed the Imo River. They then moved on until they finally settled in the area today known as Ngwaland. This version of the oral tradition thus states that it was from their ime-ngwa-ngwa, hurrying-traits, and their quick crossing of the Imo River, that the Ngwa people came to acquire what was apparently a nickname, first given to them by the other group which stayed behind to ‘roast’ their own food. According to the same oral tradition, this second group which delayed their crossing from the western bank of the Imo River until they had finished roasting their yams, were derisively called ‘Ohuhu’ (Umu-Ohuhu) by the ‘Ome-ngwa-ngwa’ or ‘Ngwa’ group which had earlier crossed the River. This episode according to the oral tradition marked the separation of the two groups (the ‘Ngwa’ and the ‘Ohuhu’) which had before moved together as one and the same kindred group of people.

An equally remarkable part of this oral tradition is the story which suggests that both the Ngwa people and the Ezinihitte and the Ohuhu communities were originally from one common group. This suggestion is given credence by existing migration legends among the Ngwa and the Ohuhu peoples, many of whom today trace their migration histories back to various centres in the Mbaise and Etiti divisions across the Imo River. The existence of many common place – names of villages and towns between the Ngwa, Mbaise and Etiti clans today seems also to point to something much more than mere accident or coincidence.

The present-day Ohuhu clan in Umuahia comprises the Umuhu and the OKAIUGA groups of village communities. The Umuhu group of villages is made up of Ubaha, Isingwu, Umuagu, Ude, Umuezike, Onhia, Umuda, Umuhu Etiti, Amaogwugwu, Umudiawa, Umuogba, Uhuokwu; while the OKAIUGA group comprises Umuosu, Mgboko, Umuagu-Ngolori, Umuegwu-Okpuala, Umuekwule, Umukabia, Umuawa, Umule, Umuokehi. It happens in the histories of local communities, there are many conflicting versions of oral traditions about the original home of these Ohuhu village groups. While some of the Ohuhu elders insist that their people or ancestors came from nowhere but have always lived in their present area, others have mentioned Orlu, Akokwa, Okigwe, Nekede, Awgu, Ahiara, Owerri, Isiukwuato, or Obowo, as the areas from which the Ohuhu ancestors had migrated many centuries ago to their present home²¹.

It may well be that most of the village communities in Ohuhu today were peopled, over the centuries, by immigrant family units coming in from different places outside Ohuhu. But of all the places already suggested in the oral traditions, the Obowo clan in Etiti Division is the most favoured. The common identity of many place and village names in both Obowo and Ohuhu, as well as the worship in both clans of a common deity, the Ajana, are all facts which strengthen this view of Obowo-Ohuhu ethnic relationship. Perhaps the most concrete evidence of this relationship is still the extent ruins of abandoned settlements at Okwu-Oji land; oral tradition has it that this was the last place of settlement in Obowo by the Ohuhu migrants, before they finally crossed the Imo River into the present day Ohuhu land in Umuahia. Even till today the two sister-villages of Uhuala and Umuka-nwoke are two Ohuhu villages which still live with their Obowo neighbours on the Obowo side of the Imo River.

Two settlements, Okpulo-Isingwu and Nkwoegwu have also been mentioned as the first arrival points of the Ohuhu migrants after leaving Obowo and crossing the Imo River into their present home-land. From these two temporary settlements the Ohuhu villages began gradually to separate and expand, always motivated by the need to secure more fertile agricultural land, adequate drinking water; and other basic needs such as that of corporate defences and security of the village groups. A suggestion has been made that the present Nkwoegwu market centre was originally inhabited by the Ubani-Ibeku, before Ohuhu people arrived there to forcibly push Ubani-Ibeku out. Oral tradition further state that the same Ohuhu people also further expanded their territory at the expense of the Emede-Ibeku²².

Olokoro Clan

According to the oral tradition, the name of the founder was called 'Olekorom' (what do I lack?) but was later corrupted to Olokoro. It is across the Imo River, in the areas of Mbaise and Owerri, that such names as Olekorom, or Olokoro, all representing either the names of individuals or of places. The founder had migrated from the direction of Owerri; either out of Obizi Mbaise or from Ekenobizi Umuopara, to establish and settle in Amakama. Olekorom later had three sons after series of prayers to Chukwu Uvoma (Beautiful Chukwu or Chukwu Oma), a powerful god at Arochukwu whom childless couples always look up to. Oloro, the wife was

later blessed with three sons, Umutowe, Epe, and Azuiyi. Each of these three sons is now represented by a group of descendant villages grouped under the names of the three founder-fathers or ancestors, which later made up the fourteen villages in Olokoro²³.

Village Group	Village Unit
UMUTOWE	Umuopara Ozara Itaja Agbo Ama Itu Avonkwu Okwu
EPE	Umudere Umuajata Amizi Ama Ngwu Umu Ntu
Azuiyi	Amakama Umuahia Umuobia

Table 3 Excerpts from the traditional Ruler of Ibeku

The oral traditions of all the other villages also point to the same trend of mixed migrations and settlement of the various Olokoro villages, by immigrants from areas either within or outside the larger Umuahia territory now inhabited by the five clans.

Ubakala Clan

In distant past, the different Umuahia communities, especially the Ibeku, Olokoro and the Ubakala, were located in close proximity to the famous Afor Ibeji market, had attracted groups of immigrant traders coming from different directions, including those from Arochukwu, to settle amongst them. But none of these clans could be said to have been founded or established originally by the Aro. The history of Aro settlements throughout and beyond Igboland in pre-colonial times has so far not high-lighted any instances of Aro colonization or settlement of virgin forests, or of uninhabited vacant lands outside Arochukwu.

According to the oral traditions existing among the people, there were no external immigration into Ubakala, rather some of these ancestors subsequently migrated out of Ekenobizi to Ogbodi in Umuopara, to Obizi Amakama in Olokoru, and to Obizi Amibo in Ubakala. In an interview at Eziamu Ubakala with one of the most remarkable elders Chief Mark Uchegbue.

‘We of Umueroko kindred in Eziamu Ubakala do not inter-marry with Laguru village in Ubakala; nor with the people of Ogbodi Umuanya in Umuopara; we also do not inter-marry with people from Ndume Ibeku, because we are all closely related’²⁴.

Ubakala comprises of thirteen villages; Amaigo, Umuogo, Nsukwe, Eziamu, Amuzu, Mgbarakuma, Laguru, Umuosu, Avodim, Ipupe, Abam, Nsirimo and Umuako.

Umuopara Clan

Umuopara is made up of seven village communities (Ama-Asaa). These include; Ezeleke, Umunwanwa, Ekenobizi, Ehuma, Umuihi, Ogbodiukwu and Ogbodinibe. Apart from Ezeleke, the undisputable senior village group, the rest do not seem to be arranged according to an order based on the age seniority of their ancestors and effort to find out more about this yielded no result as every village community claimed to be older than the other in terms of seniority while accepting that Ezeleke is the most senior. This claim of Ezeleke being the most senior appear to be true since the village group undisputedly produced the first traditional ruler of the then Umuopara autonomous community in the person of Eze S.I. Nwoke, with the title “Opara Ukwu 1”. Each of these seven villages (Ama-asaa) comprised of kindred units (Onu-Ama), and each kindred unit in turn was made up of a number of family units (Onu-obu). For instance, the village (Ama) of Ogbodiukwu, is made up of five kindred which are groups of families themselves.

Umuopara clan made up of seven village communities may be represented thus:

Village or Ama	Kindred Units (Onu-Ama)
Ezeleke	Umuojameze, Umubah, Umuabali, Umuekwule, Amachara, Amankwo
Ekenobizi	Azumiri, Dikeukwu, Dikenta, Umunneobiukwu, Umuzam

Ehume	Ngodo, Umannara, Umuoma, Umuoyima, Umuchoko, Umuoleoke, Umuofeke
Ogbodinibe	Ogbodiohu, Ogbodioche, Ibee, Umuodo
Ogbodiukwu	Umuchime, Umudimari, Ofeyi, Umuorilaoku, Umuanya
Umuihi	Umuihi
Umunwanwa	Ozu, Ngo, Umuawoli

Table 4 Excerpts from B. A. Thesis, Umuopara under colonial rule by C. Odigbo

The traditions of origin of the Umuopara people are like those of her sister clans or communities. These views usually seem contradictory and conflicting with regard to one epical father fathering the constituent units. These diverse views are further exacerbated by the absence of an established literacy tradition in pre-colonial Igbo society. This consequently led to the reliance on oral traditions for the reconstruction of origin of the people.

There have been conflicting views from different group of elders concerning the origin of the people. In an effort to delve into the traditions of origin of the people, we shall examine two main versions of their traditions of origin and a few others with slight difference. The first version of the traditions of origin is that which comes from some elders of Umuopara with the claim that the people of Umuopara and possibly some other groups that make up Umuahia are indigenous to the area called Omaegwu in Umuopara. In other words, they believe they could not have come from anywhere. The area called Omaegwu lies between the Umuopara secondary school and Ehume and is believed to be the ancestral home of the people. One of such elders that strongly share this view is Dick Egwu. He states that “our fathers told us that as Opara, we could not have come from anywhere. This means that we must have been here (in Umuopara) since the beginning of creation”...²⁵. S. Ehiogu, E. A. Ihuwa and J.N. Amechi, all subscribe to this claim that Umuopara people are indigenous to the area they occupy²⁶ J.N. Amaechi states thus; ‘our fathers were created by our own god where we are living now. Therefore, we have been here since the beginning of the ages’²⁷.

According to S. Ehiogu, one of the respondents from Ezeleke, the origin of the Umuopara people could be traced to a place called Omaegwu. He states that:

in one of the nights when we were small, our grandfather told us that the Umuopara people originated here at a place called Omaegwu. However, we moved out and spread to the various areas we are now as a result of increase in population. We were created here²⁸.

Ochiemu Nwosu of the Ogbodiukwu village states that “as Opara”, we did not come from the east or the west but we were created here (Umuopara) by the gods²⁹. No matter how good this version of the traditions of origin of the Umuopara is, it is our opinion that it should not be swallowed hook line and sinker. This is because this version lacks chronology. This group was not able to state at what point they began to exist in this area. Again, if one is to abide by this version of the oral tradition, it means the Igbo race to which Umuopara is part of is indigenous to the area they occupy today.

The second account of the origin of the Umuopara people comprises that of elders who hold the view that the origin of the people could be traced to one epical founder and that the people migrated from somewhere across the Imo River (Ofe-Imo), C.A. Odigbo, one of such elders states thus:

My grandfather (Nnanna Odigboegwu), told us that Umuopara like every other Igbo group did not fall down from heaven like manna did to the people of old Israel. He (my grandfather) told us that a man called opera who was the first son of Eku came across the Imo River (Ofe-Imo) and settled at a place presently accommodating Umuopara secondary school and part of Ehume. This area is called Omaegwu. He said this journey was not done by our ancestor alone, rather a number of people which today include the Ibeku, Ubakala, Ossah and Ngwa people were involved in the movement. The people lived together until the ridding of the area of the menace of gorillas leading to their dispersal and migration to different location³⁰.

Writing on the Umuopara traditions of origin, B.O.N. Eluwa stated that “the Umuopara and Ibeku had an ancestor called Eku...” ‘Eku had several sons prominent among who were Opara, Ibe, Ofia and Abam. Opera was the ancestor of Umuopara, Ibe was the progenitor of Ibeku (Ibe Eku); Ofia was the progenitor of Oha-Ofia; and

Abam begat Abama'³¹. Explaining further he stated that the four sons of Eku settled at Omaegwu, a settlement said to be in the neighbourhood of the Umuopara secondary school after crossing the Imo River in Aboh Mbaise area³². This version of the Umuopara traditions of origin appear to be in line with the report of the first group of British colonial officials who collected oral information in the 1930s on the traditional histories of the Ngwa, Ezinihitte and Ohuhu communities. According to the report... Obizi in Ezinihitte area is recognized as the original ancestors of the Ovoku (Ibeku) group in Bende division...³³.

Of all these versions of oral traditions existing in the various parts of Umuopara, the most consistent and reliable seem to be the second version which points to the West of Imo River as the direction from which the ancestors of the Umuopara in particular and some of the other Umuahia groups had originally migrated into the Umuahia area. This version also enjoys wide acceptability within Umuopara. However, one needs to apply caution with reference to the reliability of this version of traditions of origin even though the history of mankind has been said to be that of migration and settlement. This is because this view also does not matter with particular reference to when the migrating group left their initial settlement across the Imo River and at what point they dispersed to the various areas they now settle in.

Amidst all these versions of the origin of the people, one point appears common in all of them and this point centre on Omaegwu as the cradle of Umuopara. If this is accepted to be true, it would lead to some questions such as why did the people live the Omaegwu area to the various places they occupy today in Umuopara in particular and Umuahia in general? Of course, one might be quick to say it was as a result of population increase. This might be true but there is more to it. T.N.N. Onyekwere provides an answer to this question. It is his opinion that the Umungwu and Umulogho neighbours of Umuopara were very hostile and aggressive to Umuopara. Most times, they crossed the Imo River to loot the property and belongings of Opara. He says thus:

My father told us that the Obowo neighbours-Umungwa; Umulogho, and so on were troublesome (ndi Obom). They crossed the Imo Rivers to loot the property and belongings of Opara. At times they raped his wives and daughters³⁴.

This was said to have continued until some Opara's children came of age. At this stage, he decided to position his sons where they will stop this ugly menace. He stationed Ekenobizi where they are presently, to stop the Umungwa, Umulogho and Umuoke people; Ehume he gave a hot front to stop Avutu from taking that part of his land; to Ibe, he did the same too, and to Ozuna-Ngodo (Umunwanwa), he stationed them to check Udo-na-Obizi in Mbaise³⁵.

On why the Ibeku left the area, B.O.N. Eluwa, stated that the peaceful environment enjoyed by the migrating group after crossing the Imo River was just for a while. This was because Ibe was 'very bellicose and often quarreled with and fought against his brethren'³⁶. Repeatedly, he would organize ambushes whereby his relatives were kidnapped and sold into slavery. As a result of this, he was ostracized and expelled from the settlement. Being afraid that his life was in danger, he took refuge in the evil forest which was situated where the old section of Umuahia-Ibeku Township is located.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF UMUAHIA PEOPLE

The Umuahia people were predominant agriculturalist. However, they combined farming with trade and craft-works. It was through these ventures that they were able to meet their economics and social needs.

AGRICULTURE AND TRADE

Of all the economic activities practiced by the Umuahia people in the pre-colonial period, agriculture was the most universally practiced. As indicated by Enyidede, infertility of the land was not a hindrance to production of food³⁷. Varieties of food crops were produced such as yams, cocoyams, cassava, vegetable, banana and beans (Akidi). Wild food items were also processed to augment the above mentioned ones. Amongst these were breadfruit (ukwa) and oil-bean salad (ugba). The Umuahia people were so content with food production that they were able to meet their food needs and sold the surplus produce to the Obowo³⁸. The problem associated with intensive cultivation was solved with the Operation of rotational system of agriculture which allowed farmlands to be left fallow for seven years.

Of all the food crops produced by the Umuahia people, Yam was the most ritualized. Basden described it as the “most extravagant of all the agricultural product serving as the staple food of Igbo people”³⁹. It was the only food crop that required the performance of rituals and ceremonies before and after harvest. However, contrary to what Basden would make us believe, any offence against Njoku Ji, like defecating on farmland, fighting or stealing yam tubers was not punished by death but was allowed to be punished by Njoku itself. It was believed, Njoku would afflict the person with swollen stomach or diarrhea.⁴⁰

Yam was planted in mounds and the size of the seedlings determined the size of the mounds. The production of seedlings was very crucial for yam production. There are species of yam which produced two of its kinds, one for food and the other for planting, such as Ji Nvula (water yam). There is another method by which yam tuber was cut into two to produce more seed yam. Whichever method that was employed, people were generally willing to assist others in acquiring yam seedlings during the planting season. Those who borrow seedlings paid back when they harvested their crops or with their labour. This was one of the ways the wealthy farmers generated labour for their farm work. Another method was, in the family where the wife and children helped in the weeding of course, the man reciprocated by helping her in cultivating her cocoyam farm. However, this was not compulsory. The problem of labour shortage led to the marrying of many wives and also the use of slaves.⁴¹ people, particularly age grades, exchanged labour amongst themselves.

From all indications, there is evidence to show-that agriculture was a success in Umuahia, in the pre-colonial days. Firstly, the people were able to use their farm implements, like hoe and marchet to produce what they fed on and for local exchange. Furthermore agriculture was the chief source of capital accumulation since the mode of production permitted the taking of many wives, retaining many domestic hands (slaves), acquisition of many parcels of farmlands, forest of palm trees, and other cash crops. It was also the gains from agriculture that allowed for initiation into Ekpe/Okonko society, and the taking of superior and expensive titles. There were also cash accumulation and ownership of prestige items like sword. On the part of women, they had plenty of cocoyams and jewels. Successful women also married wives for their children⁴².

Unfortunately, this flourishing economics activity was badly affected by the Atlantic slave trade which created a period of insecurity, that people abandoned their farms in fear of slave raiders. It also led to the loss of capital and the destruction of farm lands⁴³. As indicated by Ogbonna, trade was the major way women supported their families when they were not engaged in farmwork⁴⁴. There are two major types of trade, long and short distance trade. It is important to note that the Igbo view of the market goes beyond a place for buying and selling. It represents an institution for social and economic transaction. The short distance trade was the kind of trade that took the traders and buyers to short distance while the long distance trades took them to far away markets, in which they may stay away for several days⁴⁵. The implication of this is that what seemed to be a long distance trade could prove to be short, to people in those areas the market was held.

The major markets the Umuahia people attended were those of Ife, Uzuakoli, Bende, Uburu and Ntigha.⁴⁶ These are markets which were held in towns which adjoined Umuahia. The Uburu market was the farthest, but the nature of goods obtainable from there, made it inevitable for people to trade with them. Ijioma indicated that the people bought cow (Ehi igbo) and salt from Uburu because this was lacking in the neighboring market. During the period of slave trade, the Uzuakoli slave market was a very important source of slaves. However, in addition to these markets, the Umuahia maintained their local markets at Ahia-Ukwu, Ahia Igwe-Ocha, Afor-Ibeji and Nkwo- Egwu. No village neglected its own market day. For instance, on an Afor-Ukwu day, people from Olokoru were barred from attending other markets except Ahia Ukwu. This is because people from other areas like Ohuhu, Ikwuano Oboro and Ibeku were expected to attend the Ahia-Ukwu at Olokoru.

The Umuahia people devised means of providing security for their traders, despite the absence of central political organizations. They performed rituals, Igbandu,⁴⁷. With their neighbours with whom they traded. It was this ritual that gave them confidence to travel to distant place at periods of relative insecurity. It created a feeling of brother hood amongst them and their neighbours. The traders themselves entered into marriage alliance with people along the trading routes. This is why the Umuahia people, as claimed by Asiegbu, are very sociable and married extensively in Igboland. The traders themselves developed the sense of collective responsibility

which made them take the plight of any member as a general problem. Certainly this was a product of shared experiences and the need for collective protection.

The most common method of transporting goods was through head portage. Animals were not used, perhaps because of the prevalence of trypanosomiasis this lack of alternative, encouraged the use of slaves who served the dual purpose of being self-transporting and goods carriers. The traders also employed the services of touring men as carriers. There is reason therefore, to agree with Nwoga, that this method of transportation must have led to the increase in prices of goods,⁴⁸ which in many cases were luxury items.

The two major currencies used were manila, which was used for mainly local transactions and the iron bar, for interregional trade. The Umuahia people also operated the barter system. It may be wrong to say that this system was limited to local transactions alone. An informant Iheanacho, indicated that one of the methods by which they obtained their raw iron for black-smithing, was from their neighboring villages who did not smelt iron but received iron bars when they sold their palm produce to the Aro. The Aro operated as middle men in the area of present day River State. The Umuahia smiths bought their iron bar at the equivalent price in manila.

Trade played important role in the economy of the Umuahia people, particularly, on those items they could not produce locally. It was also a source of capital acquisition as wealthy women traders could afford to purchase plenty of kitchen utensils, farmlands and other domestic items.

However, from the beginning of this century, with the coming of the British, the structure and direction of trade changed. However, it did not seem to have had much adverse effects on the Umuahia because it helps to expand the frontier of the market, and weakened the hold of Aro middle men on the economy.⁴⁹

CRAFTS AND INDUSTRIES

Agriculture and trade were the mainstay of the pre-colonial economy of the Umuahia people. However, these were not the only economic activities they

participated in, for they engaged in other activities such as carving, weaving, blacksmithing and pottery.

According to Nwoga, the art of carving is diffused through Igboland.⁵⁰ in Umuahia wood carvers were found in every village. Chibuzo Mgbemena, a wood worker, believes that the art was aboriginal to Olokoru in Umuahia, and that it was the profession of their family.⁵¹ He believes that nobody thought his father the art, and that he did not acquire the skill from anybody when he opted out of the civil service to practice wood carving. One thing to note about this story is that, although Mgbemena claims to have learnt this art instinctively, he must have inherited the tools for this work from his father. Therefore by implication he learnt the art from his father. From this, it can be inferred that this was a profession of skilled men dominated by some families.

Some of the products of the craft included doors, stools, idols, (religious objects), face masks for masquerades, spoons, (Eku), matchet handle, wooden gong, pestle and mortar. Their locality; outsiders contracted their services too. People from areas as far as the Ibibio, Oloko and Oboro consulted them, for the carving of such objects as “Ikoro”, which was used for Iko traditional ceremonies. Modern implements or tools were not used, yet the wood-carvers were able to produce perfect works that attracted the attention of Basden who described the product of Igbo wood workers thus; “carving is a skilled occupation and is confined to professional men. Their tools are crudeness itself, yet they turn out some nest handwork, by no means lacking in artistic merit”⁵²

Socially this art satisfied the social needs of the people by providing them with their religious and ceremonial requirement. Economically, being self-sufficient in this field, the Umuahia wood carvers made a lot of money by rendering their services to outsiders who needed them. For instance, they used to collect one goat, dog, ram, cock, wrapper (George) and some colanuts, as a guarantee for their security, before a wood worker could leave his house to carve Ikoro⁵³. However, in some circumstances, agreement was reached for the provision of all these, after services had been rendered. Nevertheless, one thing to note is that it was a very good economic engagement for the people, particular the gifted families. The crafts the Umuahia people practiced, did not end in the use of wood alone, they equally used iron to

fashion implements which were of immense use to their agricultural activities. The origin of blacksmithing in Umuahia, is still a subject of argument. Ifeanacho believes that the craft was learnt from a man from Uturu, who was invited by the Olokoru people when they needed farm implements⁵⁴. However, others believe that it began in a particular village, Amuzu, which practiced this craft. It is probable that the craft originated from Amuzu⁵⁵. Amuzu simply means a place for black smiths, and this could support the antiquity of the craft in this place. However, this might not be enough to rule out external influences in the development of blacksmithing in Umuahia Further research into the matter is necessary.

No matter the origin of blacksmithing in Olokoru Umuahia, this craft was able to meet the purpose for which it was instituted. Although the people did not have local raw materials for blacksmithing, they met this requirement by buying from those that had them, for instance, they bought hard stones from Ossah and iron from Ukwa near the present-day River States. Some went as far as buying iron bar from traders in the ship as indicated by Ifanacho.⁵⁶ He maintained that they also got iron from their neighboring villages of Itaja, who exchanged palm oil for iron bars with traders in the present day Rivers state, and then sold the iron to them. Iron smelting was never practiced but iron was fashioned to any implement needed by the people.

The major implements they fashioned included machets, hoe blades, knives, axe, cooking tripod stand, town crier's gong, spear head and hunting dog-going (Ikpo) and efe (for tapping palm wine) These products were in high demand then, which meant that the blacksmith had a lot of Job to do and as such they had limited time for their agricultural activities. Nonetheless, the gains from this trade could sustain them as they tried very much to meet the needs of the market. For examples people from far away clans as Oboro, Ngwa, Oloko, Ibere, came for their products. They took some of their products to Ndorou and Ariam Markets.

Every freeborn of Amuzu was expected to be a blacksmith. An outsider was not allowed to acquire the skill unless his mother hailed from Amuzu. It was believed that whosoever acquired the skill illegally would be attacked by a sickness similar to leprosy. Unfortunately, this craft declined by the end of the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, when competition with importation of iron implements from

Europe drove the indigenous products out of the market. This resulted in the lack of interest in the profession due to the reduced income that accrued to the smiths.

Women participated in economic activities as the men had exclusively reserves in carving and blacksmithing, so also did the women have exclusive reserve in weaving and pottery making. Weaving was not as prominent in Umuahia as other crafts. This does not mean that some people did not practice it. The fact is that they were very few and most of them must have learnt it from the people they lived with outside Umuahia. However, there is reason to believe that the art of weaving must have diffused into Umuahia from Akwete, a town noted for weaving, and which is not very far from Umuahia.⁵⁷

If the above craft was less successful in Umuahia, it was not the same case with pottery. This was another indigenous skill for which the Umuahia communities were particularly famous in the pre-colonial times. Perhaps it was in recognition of the pre-colonial ceramic tradition in Umuahia, that warranted the establishment of the modern ceramic industry in Umuahia.

Pottery making was another reserve for women. Its origin has been traced to Umuahia.⁵⁸ Clay is one of the raw materials used for pottery making. In Afara, this was sourced in Amuzukwu, Okwuta, and Umuwaya Ibeku. There are two types of clay which are important to the potter. These are Uro-ike (hard clay) and Uro apiti (soft clay). It is because of the plasticity and the workability of uro apiti that it has often been put to use as an essential paste.⁵⁹ The Afara potters produced different wares, of different sizes and shapes. They ranged from the small hard-fired and well-burnished resilient pots for rituals to the Oku, Ite for cooking soup. These different shapes of pots served both cultural and domestic uses. Culturally it was used for some dances like Udu Umumu. It is important to note that this craft provided women with the opportunity to contribute to the welfare of their families. Also it sustained the widows, mostly the very old ones. Their products were in high demand as they were bought by people from faraway places.

Socially, pottery industries in Umuahia had invaluable advantages to the people. First, most households use were pottery vessels ranging from drinking cups, saucers, plates, soup bowls to storage devices. The pottery industry provided products

that had immense utility value for the people. Unfortunately, this art has been on the decline since the beginning of the twentieth century. This is as a result of the influence of European wares which the people now find more convenient to acquire, hence reduced market for the local production which mean little inducement for the producers. Furthermore, the advent of western education reduced the available hands to the business since children who were supposed to help their mothers were now sent to school. Above all, the neglect of local crafts in preference to white collar jobs, abetted by the idea that pottery making is a dirty business, led to the total collapse of the industry.⁶⁰

FISHING AND HUNTING

Within this period, Umuahia people were also involved in some other economic activities such as fishing and hunting. However, the number of people involved in it was less compared to other economic activities. This we believe was either because of the specialty and technicality involved in these activities or because the people did not have the enabling environment for them to take place. Fishing was predominantly the activity engaged by the Ekenobizi, Ehume and Umunwanwa who lived near the Imo River. They made use of local tools such as *ngara* and *ari* (a form of basket and hook). According to B.N. Azuka, the people did not produce much for drying as there were no instruments for drying⁶¹. Hence the people relied on outside markets to supplement their demand for fish and other fishery products. Hunting was more of a hobby than a major occupation. It was organized on group basis, mostly age grades and they embarked on this activity on market days. Each village group had a particular day for hunting. Animals killed were shared on seniority basis.

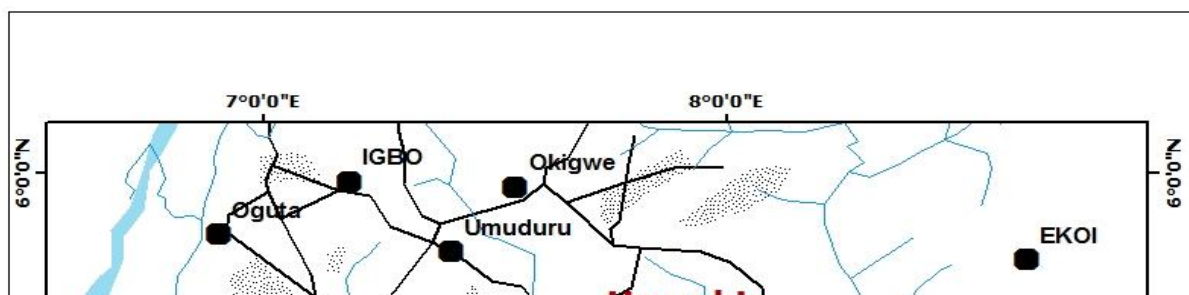
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Umuahia before 1902

Source: The geographical journal, XXXIX March 1912 p. 240

CHAPTER THREE

EARLY CONTACT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF COLONIAL RULE, 1902-1914

The Coming of the British and Native Resistance

Before the nineteenth century, the Europeans only stayed at the coast and bought slaves from the Delta middlemen. With the termination of slave trade and the growing demand in other goods/items, the European trading companies had to engage in cutthroat competitions with each other on the one hand, and with the African coastal traders on the other. This competition was aimed at maximizing profits. In pursuance of this, it was necessary to get at the source of the raw materials. This amounted to the displacement of the Aro middlemen who had monopoly of the hinter land markets and sources of the palm oil. There was also the Berlin west African Conference of 1884 – 85 held by Europeans. One of its important articles stipulated that each European power should establish an effective control over its sphere of influence. Backed, therefore, by the gunboats and the maxim guns, the British began punitive expeditions into the hinterland in order to effectively establish control in the area.¹

However, Bende was already a familiar name to the Europeans at the coast. They knew the slave market at Bende from the information they got from slaves at the coast. If left unchecked, the slave trade and slavery still going on in the hinterland would hinder the free flow of “legitimate trade in palm oil”². Thus, the first European ever to visit Umuahia did so in 1896, when a group passed through parts of Olokoro and Ibeku on a reconnaissance mission to Bende, before the British Military expedition against Arochukwu in 1901-1902.³ They came under two British officers Major A. G. Leonard and F. S. James travelling through Aba. They were not traveling alone, or as travelers who had either lost or missed their way, as might be inferred or implied by the question they were alleged to have asked from the local people at the Market square. Infact, among the many local knowledgeable escorts, and guides travelling with them through Umuahia, were Albert Jaja of Opobo, some Aba Ngwa Chiefs, and also Chief Nwakupuda of old Umuahia who, together with one Ukandu from Ubakala, escorted the British officers up to Bende.⁴ These British officials visited Bende to discuss free trade and the abolition of slave trade with the Aro who constituted an obstacle to the uninterrupted penetration of British trade. The Aro expedition was, therefore, carried out in order to break the Aro commercial hegemony

of the Igbo hinterland. It was during this period that most of the communities within Umuahia were visited by British troops.⁵ Parts of the British troops for the Aro field force were garrisoned at Bende in 1901.⁶

The Aro, like the coastal middlemen, were opposed to any European penetration of the hinterland, being well aware that this would destroy their monopoly of its more lucrative trade, namely, palm oil and European imports such as guns and gun powders and other valuable imports. The Aro also enjoyed the monopoly of the internal slave trade (which the British was determined to abolish) and the exploitation of their oracle, *Ibinukpabi*, known to the British as “long Juju”.⁷ To the oil Rivers traders, whether African or European, the Aro were the people who controlled the hinterland. They had a military squad which they thought would be difficult to penetrate.⁸

Arochukwu sub-group was an organization of traders; it had no use for a military establishment or for the other institutions of centralized state. The raiders whom they made use of, or more appropriately, hired out to other communities to use were young men anxious to prove their fighting qualities. They were recruited from their neighbours like, *Ohafia*, *Abam*, *Edda* (presentday Cross River), and *Umuahia* people were their mercenaries. Aro name spread terror throughout the *Ibibio* area and most of the Northern and Southern Igbo areas. Most of these raids were, as far as the Aro were concerned, business transactions in which an Aro entrepreneur was paid to provide a raid.⁹

By 1901, the British, which till then had only managed to move along the principal waterways, felt strong and confident to move over land and by force if that was necessary. It had already established a station at *Akwete* at the navigable limit of the *Imo* River and a post further inland in Southern *Ngwa*. An *Abam* raid on the neighbouring village of *Obegu* provided the justification for an expedition to subjugate the Aro power that had disorganized them and which was believed to control the Igbo and *Ibibio* heartland. The raid was described as “a most deplorable massacre of some 400 men, women and children”.¹⁰ The Aro had for long threatened to attack the groups friendly to the British and though the people of *Obegu* had been warned to carefully watch, they were caught napping by a conglomerate force of the various sections of the Aro group together with other Igbo people unfriendly to them. The town was destroyed with the slaughter above mentioned.¹¹

To avenge the massacre, a military expedition was mounted against the Arochukwu people. Two military columns left respectively from Akwete and Oguta. They met at Owerri and marched together to Bende, where they were joined by a third column which had moved from Unwana through the cross River. They had met with no organized large scale opposition to their movements, only attempted ambushes and attacks from some but not all the towns on their respective routes. By December 1901, they were ready to advance to Arochukwu. A fourth column operating from Itu attacked it on the 14th December, only to find out that Arochukwu consisted of nineteen dispersed and unfortified villages. Its men folk fought as best as they could to defend their homes but their guns were no match for the rifles, the two maxims and the two field guns of the 26 officers and 1729 African rank and file of the Southern Nigeria regiment.¹²

On March 13th, 1902, the military expeditionary column that was concerned with the Bende area, column No. 3, under major Heneker, left Akwete for Bende and proceeded by diverse routes to Oloko, from where it continued its march on the 14th of march, 1902 to Bende through Ndioru (Ndoro), Nnono, Amaoba and Ibere. After several encounters with these towns, four soldiers were wounded. Villages like Ohafia, Abiriba, Abam, and Isingwu Umuahia offered no resistance. Column 4 of the field forces came from Afikpo, led by Captain Moore, Messrs J. Watt and F. S. James. It passed through the Ohafia villages of Okagwe and Ebem. The later village was burnt down in consequence of the people's "resistance".¹³ They then proceeded to Arochukwu. Idima and Atani Abam villages were visited by this column on its March from Arochukwu to Bende.¹⁴ It was from Bende in 1902 that the troops set out to subdue the remaining communities in the area under study. The troops advanced from Bende to Ndume Ibeku which was established as a base from where Ohuhu, the rest of Ibeku and Olokoro were conquered. An advance was made at Uzuakoli which was taken peacefully.¹⁵ Item and Alayi were all conquered by the Aro field force. It was this column 4 group led by Ralph Moore that came and conquered Umuahia.

Hence, the Aro fell to the British incursion in 1902. The Umuahia communities led by the Olokoro and Ibeku people, collectively resisted the British invaders in a military encounter which ended later in that same year with the British conquest and occupation of the entire Umuahia area.¹⁶ A man called Wakire, at Olokoro, advised

Olokororo people at Ahia Ukwu Olokororo, to fight the British, unfortunately for him, he was caught and killed by the white men. When he was killed, others could not stand the insult, they continued to fight with the British until they became weary and surrendered to them. The expedition against Olokororo was very costly in terms of human casualty. The local people resented the British to the extent that, any body that had sympathy for them were regarded as an enemy of the land. Thus they rebuffed every effort by the British to establish some kind of peaceful relations with them. Immediately after the Aro expedition, the British descended rather heavily (military) on Olokororo, Thanks to their superior weapons. Properties, including livestock farms, barns, and houses were destroyed. Only those who cooperated with the British by acting as their spies were spared and rewarded with warrants.¹⁷

Also the British met a stiff opposition at Ibeku. The British descended on them and their villages were burnt down. The people found themselves confronted by a formidable military power beyond their wildest dreams. One Uwaogu, who later became a warrant chief fled to Umuokpara and was offered refuge at the Ojam House, by some people who had sympathy for him.

Some sons of the soil of Umuokpara met Frank Hives' Patrol team at Nkwosa with a white cloth signifying peace. Some of the informants claimed that Frank Hives was surprised to see them coming to meet him and that a little drama followed at Nkwosa as the Umuokpara delegates were faced with some questions. Frank Hives asked them who they were; they replied, and he asked them why were they not fighting? and they answered that "we are a peace loving people".¹⁸ so for the British, it was a triumphant entry into Umuokpara especially Ogbochukwu and Ezeleke.

The sub-column that remained in the Bende district, patrolled the area on the eastern side of the Imo, occupied by the Ohuhu people.¹⁹ It was not in any sense a political unit, nor was it sub-group of Umuokpara, Umuhu and Okaiuga.²⁰ Each of their towns or large villages had to make its own decision whether to support or oppose the patrol. Most of them seemed to have been undecided. There were no serious military engagements, merely a display of superior military power on the part of the patrol. What was impressive was the speed with which these local communities made their peace with the government forces once they were convinced of the futility of resistance. There is an Igbo proverb best translated as "if you can't beat them, you

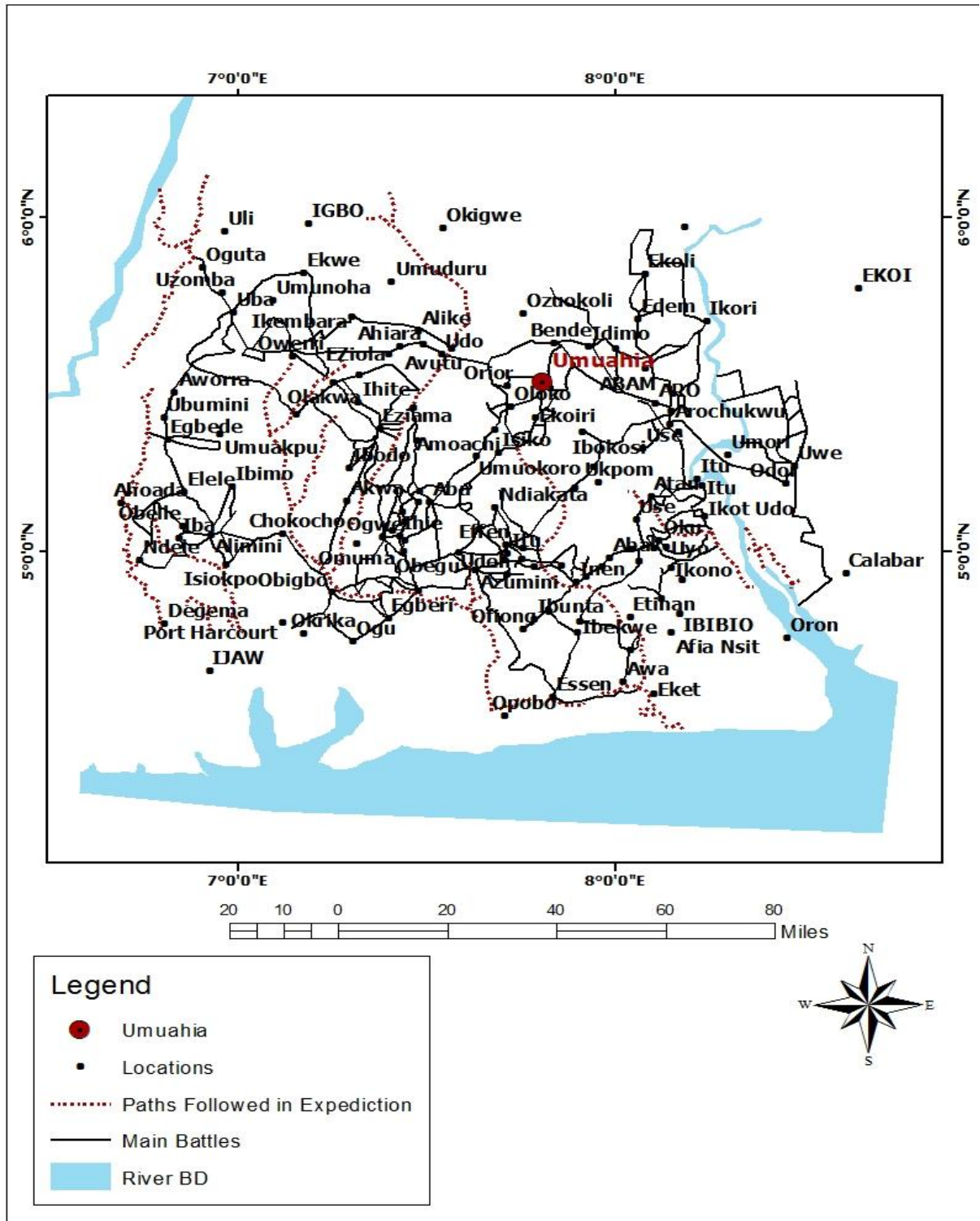
join them.” Thus the advantages that might accrue to a rival group that had the protectorate government on its side made delay inadvisable. Frank Hives who became the commissioner of Bende division, and nicknamed “Ogbajiaka” by the people because of his hairy hand, was placed in charge of military patrol for Umuokpara, Ibeku, Ubakala, Okaiuga and Obowo areas.

From another clan in Ohuhu community Umuegwu, after the defeat of Ibeku at the battle of Ugwumkpabu, the British led by Frank Hieves attacked the community. This was as a result of the fact that one Nwaubani, from Umuegwu Ohuhu, a respected and wealthy man was friendly with the British soldiers who were involved in Aro expedition. Nwaubani married many wives, the father of one of the wives – Ada Omeihe, took her daughter back from Nwaubani and gave her away in another marriage to Nwosu Oyiridi of Umuekwule, another Ohuhu village. This to Nwaubani was an insult, he then asked his British friends to come and fight for him. He lured the British soldiers to avenge for the taking away of his wife by telling the British that, his people Umuegwu have a very powerful deity and shrine similar to Ibini Ukpabi long Juju of Arochukwu called Alaumi Okoroala-Njoku ukwu Umuegwu. This made the British to embark on shooting and destruction of lives and properties of the people in this community.

Furthermore, the belief of the Igbo people in the reality of the invisible world meant that many communities put their main reliance on supernatural modes of defence. Some communities or villages in Umuahia; Isingwu, Ndume, Ngoro, Ibere, Oloko, and Umuigwu did not resist the British at the time of hinterland expedition late 1902. They relied on the agency of dibia.²¹ An early District officer Frank Hive at Bende left an interesting descriptions of a magical or religious attack. At Isingwu, he wrote, he tried to stay in a rest house on which a traditional doctor had placed a curse, before committing suicide. He found a single night’s stay there so terrifying that he burnt the rest house down, during their attack at Isingwu and built a new one on a different site later. He wrote, “I can only say that I am relating exactly what I saw. I attempted no explanation - for to me the thing is unexplainable”²²

The people also used manipulation as a non-military response against the British invaders. This they did through the manipulation of the British against their own enemies or against one another.²³

The fact is that after the first few bitter lessons of direct opposition to the British, the people learnt how to deal with the British. On the approach of military columns, they would assemble in their market place with music and dances, as well as with food and water for the troops. The British troops would enjoy the dancing and singing, pay for the Yams, livestock and water and pass on to the next village convinced that the people in question had learnt their lesson. But as soon as this happened, the latter would return to the same attitude of defiance convinced that their medicine-men had successfully blindfolded the British. This strategy proved eventually more exasperating to the British invaders than that of open defiance. Soon it made no difference whether a village resisted openly or passively. In either case, the elders were manhandled and the houses set ablaze. Through these tactics, the conquest of Umuahia was more or less accomplished by 1914.



1902 British Expedition of Umuahia

Source: 20 years war invasion and resistance in Southeastern Nigeria 1900-1919 by Robert D. Jackson p. 336

ESTABLISHMENT OF COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

British conquest was followed by the establishment of British colonial administration. A new era had dawned, and so things were never to be the same again. The British administrative ideal in Umuahia was the creation of a governmental system that was efficient, impersonal, impartial, hierarchical, and absolute. The chief goals of the system were to dispense justice without regard for the status or wealth of the litigants and to provide an orderly and peaceful method for settling disputes. The administrative system that evolved in the early twentieth century was based primarily on the District Commissioner (called District Officer after 1914) and his assistants. After each military expedition, the area dealt with was divided into districts, headquarters established in each, and an officer designated as overseer. Hence Umuahia was grouped under the jurisdiction of Bende. It is not clear what criteria were used in grouping the conquered territory, it would appear that communities within forty miles from Bende were brought together under its jurisdiction. The above statement is based on the fact that the average distance covered in a day by any British troop was forty miles.²⁴ Thus, it was considered to be easy to maintain law and order when the distance between the headquarters and the adjoining communities was manageable.

Whatever the case, Bende Division was one of the off springs of the 1906 amalgamation in Southern Nigeria. In that year, the choice of Bende may have been because of its reputation as a slave market and consequently an Aro stronghold. Since one of the objectives of the Aro expedition was to stop hegemony of the hinterland markets. It is therefore reasonable that Bende should be under the vigilant eyes of the British. To exercise this vigilance meant the quatering of British officials and their troops there.

With the 1914 administrative arrangement which led to the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, Bende Division came under Owerri province.²⁵ As a district, Bende was first administered from Afikpo but was later transferred to Okigwe.²⁶ But in 1921, Bende became an autonomous division.²⁷ There was no further military activity in Bende District. Bende District remained undisturbed, its annual reports stated with monotonous regularity that the attitude of the natives is “satisfactory” (1907), “generally most friendly” (1908), “friendly” (1910)

and thereafter, cease to refer to it. This was the period that the colonial government planted the structures that later formed the government.

On assumption of full scale administration of Umuahia, 1917, the local British administration at Bende decided to move the establishment at Umuahia Afor- Ibeji, out to the new area now designated as Umuahia Township market.²⁸ The official report by the District officer, J. G. C. Allen is quite clear on this point.

The (Umuahia) township was originally established during the construction of the Nigerian Eastern Railway at mile 67 near the Olokoru village of Umuahia, from which it (the new township) took its name (Umuahia) remained unchanged, a fact which has led to considerable resentment among local (Ibeku) inhabitants who object to the name of an Olokoru village being applied to what is now regarded as an Ibeku (township or land) institution.²⁹

The British also created the five clan units which today collectively answer Umuahia. In the course of the subjugation of the interior, several operating bases were set up some of which eventually became headquarters of administrative districts- Aba, Abakaliki, Awka, Afikpo, Bende, Orlu, Owerri, Okigwe and Udi. Some like Okpoga and Umuduru were later abandoned in favour of other sites.

The establishment of administrative centres was a significant development for trade and marketing. It did not greatly affect the external trade nor the old markets and routes associated with the coastal trade. But it increased the scope for trade in local produce in the interior, particularly food-crops. The garrisons and the administrative personnel constituted a nucleus of a non-rural based population dependent on the country side for food. Traders and persons engaged in other service occupations as well as men who came in originally as conscripted labour, all sealed near the government station.

Also the revolution in transport was another landmark. The railway, constructed between 1913 and 1915, cut through the heart of the Igbo country to the new found coal mines at Enugu (later to become the capital of Eastern Nigeria) and gave this area for the first time direct access to the coast at the Port Harcourt railhead³⁰. Eventually it linked northwards with the grain and meat-producing savannah country of Northern Nigeria. From the point of view of the external trade,

the most important result of railway construction was the establishment along the route of European firms, after the manner of the riverain and coastal stations. Indeed so close was the similarity that the stations were known locally as beaches³¹ (and still are). These dums rapidly attracted markets and trading communities around them and formed the nucleus of new commercial towns. Where, as at Aba, both administrative and commercial centres coincided, the two functions helped each other out and the urban community flourished. Where there was competition between a commercial and an administrative centre, as between Enugu and Udi or between Umuahia and Bendu, the commercial centre prevailed, eventually taking over the political functions of the vanquished town.

Up to the end of the twenties, the waterways and the railway line bore the bulk of the long distance traffic. In 1926 the government was still considering the practicability of building feeder railway lines from Oguta to Aba or Port Harcourt³². By the beginning of the thirties, however, it had become evident that improvement in road transport was necessary to increase production and trade, the bulk of the population being concentrated away from both the waterways and railways. Plans for road development were prepared but had to be shelved during the war. At this time there are three railway stations in Umuahia; they are Amaeke Station, Umuahia-Ibeku Station and Old Umuahia Station. The postwar era saw a huge road building programme, the road mileage more than doubling between 1937 and 1960. At the same time, the number of motor vehicles registered annually increased more than eleven times.

Road development led not only to a greater integration of the region but also to a change in orientation of the interior areas from the waterways and railway to the road system. The motor road network today reflects the weakness of centralizing links in Igboland. The principal nodes are at the Chief urban administrative centres, the nuclei of the system. In addition to these a number of rural crossroads have become important as transportation centres on the more heavily used roads. Most of these are found in the Central Igbo upland areas. There is also a relatively high concentration of road junctions on the Udi plateau between Enugu Ngwo, Oji River, and Ozalla, where the east-west routes on the dip slope cross the north-south plateau routes, but elsewhere road junctions are fewer and more widely spaced. Where the

density of the road networks is low and road junctions few, the location of road junctions usually determined by topographic considerations, the head of a valley, a pass or intersection of ridges tend to develop into a rural centre. But the relationship is not always that a road junction develops into a rural centre. On the other hand Ngwo, Angara and Akeze are examples of centres developing because of the cross-roads.

The political goals of the colonial office were to quell opposition and build anew economic order and a new administrative organ through the Residents District Commissioners with their Assistants and the Native Courts. The aim was to do these while maintaining core indigenous political and cultural structures. As G.I. Jones put it;

What the colonial government did and subsequent governments have always been to leave the internal government of these communities alone but to provide a superstructure which brought them together into larger units and so tied them into the wider administrative organization which it constructed for the country.³³

Within this perspective, the government moved against identifiable cultural norms-human sacrifices, killing of twins, oracles which competed against native courts and slavery. Children rescued from slavery and twin murder were fostered out to missionaries, educational institutions and prominent local chieftains. The government paid upkeep charges ranging from five to nine pounds per child. District officers were ordered to visit the children regularly and to make yearly returns of children in care within their districts.

The government was paranoid about oracles. After the elaborate expedition to wipe out the Aro Ibini Ukpabi (long juju), officials kept a close watch on its possible revival. In 1912, a second expedition was sent against the revivalists but the tradition persisted as was noted in various district officers' reports in 1916, 1917, 1921 and 1922³⁴. In 1916, seven men were convicted in Arochuku district for taking part in rituals of Ibini Ukpabia. Not only was the famous long juju destroyed, the victorious troops were also subsequently dispatched in detachments to different parts of Eastern Nigeria, where they duly impress the indigenous people and their leaders with a show of the might of the new rulers.

CREATION OF THE WARRANT CHIEFS SYSTEM AND THEIR CORRUPT PRACTICES

In Igbo tradition and culture, the Eze is normally an absolute monarch advised by a council of chiefs or elders whom he appoints based on their good standing with the community. A popular saying in Igbo is “Igbo-enwe-eze”, which translates to “the Igbo have no king”. This popular saying does not however, capture the complexity of Igbo societies as portrayed in many centuries of anthropological, sociological and political research. The Igbo people had and still have ruling bodies of royal and political leaders where an individual can be recognized by the entire society as *primus inter pares*, i.e. first among equals.³⁵ This status is usually hereditary and among the male lineage since Igbo culture is patrilineal.

Scholars like Afigbo and Oloko believed that Igbo kingship institutions originated from three sources. The first source is indigenous and ancient priesthood, which traditionally combined clerical and political duties in the village-based republics. This is the case in several places, notably in Ngwa- where Josaiah Ndubuisi Wachukwu was Eze and paramount chief during British colonial times.³⁶ The second source is the colonial imposition on Igbo communities by the neighboring Benin Empire. There is, however, an opposite view wherein the Eze of Nri imposed or influenced the constitution of the Benin Oba’s status.³⁷ While the third source of origin of Igbo kingship is believed to be 19th and 20th century colonial imposition by the British, under an indirect rule policy; warrant chiefs (recognized noblemen who served as tax collectors) were created by the colonial administration. Though native to the communities, the warrant chiefs were usually selected from among those most cooperative with the foreign rulers.

Hence, the British in order to make their administration effective and felt, they sought to incorporate the local people in their administration. This led to the introduction of indirect rule system and subsequently appointment of warrant chiefs who sat in court to try cases and also served as a two way channel of communication between the bravery and as a reward for service, rendered to British civilians and military officials. Some were even appointed because of their physical built. It is

important to note that there were many classes of chiefs in the Umuahia area. For example, those who can be called pioneer chiefs, who were appointed as the British were consolidating their conquest of the area. Also, there were those that can be called first class chiefs who ruled over such large communities like Ohuhu, Olokoru, Ibeku, and Ubakala. These were also, what can be called second-class or minor chiefs, who ruled parts of the communities mentioned above. Most, if not all the first class chiefs were appointed by the British officials, because of the help offered in sorting out some of the initial problems encountered by the British imperialists during their expedition. These first class warrant chiefs in Umuahia includes; Nwanbari Ogogo of Umuajameze Ohuhu, (which then included Umuopara community) and who was nicknamed by colonial officials as 'Igbo'. Others includes; Chief Agomuo of Ossah, Chief Nwosuocha of Umunwanwa, Nwogu of Umuibeji in old Umuahia, and Nwakpuda of also Umuibeji. The appointment of these chiefs took effect in the year 1903. In 1906, another set of chiefs emerged. These could be regarded as second class chiefs and included Okereke Onuoha Oti, Ekechukwu Uche of Umuigwe, and Godwin Ezuma of Oboro.³⁸

The appointment of natives as chiefs was based on a number of qualities and circumstances such as boldness, fitness and physic. Those appointed as native chiefs includes; Chief Okugo of Oloko, Ibegbu of Ubakala, Chief Onuoha of Ubani-Ibeku, Onyeoziri Mgborie of Umuemeze, Okoro Uchegbu of Umuopara, Eze Udumaga of Amaogwugwu, Okezie of Umuagu for Umuda, Iregbu Agbara of Amafor, Onyenze of Umuda, Nwokehuru Onyekwere of Amachara, and Ukewulonu of Umuabali.³⁹ These second set of chiefs were given warrants. They merited it because of their aid to the British officials. It even happens that in some cases, warranted chiefs were asked to rule those who were not their kinsmen. The Ibeji family of Olokoru had supplied guides to two columns of the Aro field force, when they passed through Olokoru on their way to Bende. This was rewarded through granting warrant to three members of their family; Nwakpuda, Nwosu, and Madumere. Some of the warrant chiefs were selected through the village assembly, while some are mean people, for instance, Madumere from Ibeji family committed theft and fled from his village Ubakala, as a result, of murder charge against him. He was among the saboteurs that aided the British official columns on their way to Bende.⁴⁰

Furthermore, the chiefs who were regarded as third class chiefs includes; Obi of Umuagungolo Umuegwu Afugiri, Nwachukwu Nwosu of Umuekwele, Omekara of Umuagu, Ogbudu of Umuagu, Onuobia Chukwuokin of Umuokoroala, Onubia Oriaku of Akpahia-Obiohia, Ibeakanwa, Okeite and Ijeoma of Umuokehi- Obiohia. Nwaubani is rated by tradition as one of the most successful and influential chiefs in the area. He was, according to information, a very successful trader in tobacco and during one of his trading mission; his son was manhandled by Ohambele people. In protest, Nwaubani's wife went to Frank Hives to protest. Frank Hives developed interest in the woman and, according to one of the surviving and well-informed sons of the late chief Nwaubani, Ezenna Nwaubani, Ogbajiaka (Frank Hives) donated some loin cloth to Ogogo (Nwaubani). Also Frank Hives trained one of Nwaubani's children by name Nwakanma.⁴¹ Nwaubani came to be known by many as Nwaubani Ogogo. The British officials were informed by Nwaubani, that the remnant of Aro long Juju had secretly been taken to Umuagu Ngolori in Ohuhu, and that the oracle was still effective and consulted. Chief Ogogo reported the location of the village shrine and the important personalities to the British. Chief Ogogo wanted to punish the people of Umuagu because he had been refused the hand of a girl in marriage from that village.

A detachment was sent from Bende to Umuagu Ngolori via Uzuakoli, and one early morning, the village was stormed with chief Ogogo leading the troops. It was alleged that he went first to the father of the girl he had wanted to marry and pierced a bayonet through his mouth. Due to the villagers were taken unawares, and the entrance to the village were manned by government soldiers, many lives were lost. The shrine itself was set on fire. Also Nwaosuocha had met and was friendly with the British long before the era of the so-called "pacification", so when the British came, he was naturally appointed a warrant chief, because of the long established relationship which could be attributed to trade. Tradition has it that prior to the arrival of the whiteman, Aro agents established some, not very modest relationship with Nwaosuocha's mother, Nwanwa. This woman wielded such an influence over Aro that when the British came, the Nwaosuocha, was taken not as a captive but as one upon whom honour could be bestowed. A direct result of this though a sad one, is the renaming of OZU community as Umunwanwa (the children of Nwanwa). Thus, the appointment of Nwaosuocha as a warrant chief, was not base on any special merit or

talent, but as a reward for his loyalty to the British. It is still fresh in the minds of most people that the native court at Umuahia could not have been built at Nwozu, but for Nwaosuocha's refusal. He had remarked that the people of OZU knew warfare and not the court.

There were many chiefs in the Ohuhu area; these includes chief Madumere of Nkwoegwu, who was very prominent and prosperous before the coming of the British. His election as a warrant chief of his place was unanimous. He was before the election a great farmer. He married many wives and had many children. Chief Udumaga was chosen because he was stubborn even to the whiteman. His people chose him to represent them because he was outspoken. The appointment of Nwakpuda as a warrant chief was due to the fact that he showed hospitality to the British on their way to Bende. This attitude annoyed his people who thought he might have been bought over by the whites whom they thought had no toes. Nwakpuda was a farmer before his appointment, and had a fairly large family. He commanded wealth during and after his reign, and exercised so much authority on his people even to the extent that he asked the British not to build rail-lines across his land. He was arrogant that one day after the rail lines that passed his community was put into use; he commanded that some one should tell the train to stop because Nwakpuda was coming. Unfortunately, for him, nobody commanded the train to stop, so he was crushed while attempting to cross before the moving train.⁴²

In Oloko, Okugo, was appointed because of his boldness. This was because, they were told of the destruction of Arochukwu and Ibiniukpabi by the white man's maxim guns. In spite of this story, Okugo was not afraid of the white people. So when others ran into the bush, he stood firm to talk with them. They asked him questions, which he answered and they found him to be bold and intelligent, and as such, they needed his services hence his appointment as a warrant chief. Before and after his appointment he was a rich farmer because the yardstick for measuring wealth was the quantity of yams a man had, the number of wives he had and how large his compound was. Chief Okugo, is popularly known because he was a major victim of the Aba women's protest. To many, especially women, he was the remote cause of the "protest" of 1929.

He was not the only chief in Oloko, there were others like Ngadi Omuma, and Uba. Ngadi of Ahaba, was given warrant because he claimed to be the leader of his people. His physical built helped very well in his appointment. He was huge, so the British thought that he would carry their message to the grassroots. They looked at him as one of the able-bodied men that will represent them in that locality. Before Ngadi's appointment, he was a slave dealer, and conversant with English language. He used this to an advantage in dealing with the British, often times maneuvering most of the other chiefs. He had many wives and children. He met force with force and as such, his subjects feared him through out his reign.

Chief Uba of Umugo, was appointed because he was a great orator and as such, his people liked him a lot. When the British asked Umugo people to select somebody that will represent them, they nominated Uba because they felt he could represent them very well. Uba was a farmer before he combined his appointment with hunting. In Oboro, chief Ezumah was before his appointment a community leader. He was portrayed as a very honest man⁴³ when Oboro people were requested to present or nominate a person, Ezumah was an obvious and natural choice. He was an open-minded fellow and never took bribe but was always at the service of his people. He had some wives and children, but was a farmer during his reign.

Okereke Oti of Isiala Ibere, was given warrant because of his boldness to stand in front of the British and reply their questions and queries. Hence, he was given a warrant. He was a farmer and a part-time wine-tapper before his appointment. Even though the degree of territorial extent of the warrant chief's authority was alien to the people, their mode and method of operation reflected their determination to endorse government policy and undermine the interests of civil society organisations and the people they represent. It has been observed that because the warrant chiefs were not accountable to their kith and kin, this was proof to the people that the chiefs, like the court messengers, the police, the soldiers, court clerks and the likes, were civil servants.

INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT TAXATION

On assumption of office as the Governor of Nigeria, Sir Grier Thomas plunged into the issue of taxation instead of starting with general reforms⁴⁴. He charged

Buxton with the task of submitting another proposal for taxation. Buxton like Moor has agreed to the extension of taxation to Igboland, but had doubts about the existing native revenue ordinance framed to meet conditions in the Moslem North and organized on feudal lines, being applied to the East. Buxton saw the native court institution as an unsuitable machinery for tax collection. The provincial heads agreed that the court buildings should be used as centre of collection and the role of warrant chiefs in collecting taxes should be limited. The Governor outlined the policy of direct taxation and gave the following reasons:

Indeed, I find it easier to justify the extension of taxation than to defend a system which compels the people of the North and South-West to pay taxes while the people of southeast escape scotfree⁴⁵.

Direct taxation was supposed to strengthen the waning power and influence of the warrant chiefs. Captain Hanitch in 1922 supported Grier's recommendation for the introduction of direct taxation with the argument that the measure would strengthen the power of the chiefs whose positions, he said was sinking lower and lower each year. In essence, it was designed to cure the warrant chiefs system of its:

Besetting weaknesses of lack of big chiefs and by so doing help to evolve it into something resembling the classical pattern of local government in Fulani emirate⁴⁶.

By 1924, the colonial government had finally made up its mind to introduce direct taxation into the portion of southern Nigeria lying east of the Niger and into Warri province for this as have mentioned earlier, was the desire to strengthen the warrant chief system through the establishment of native treasuries after the true Lugardian fashion.⁴⁷ The desire of the colonial government to introduce an alien administrative system in Igboland despite the obvious differences existing in their socio-political and economic organization led to a gross simplification of Igbo traditional society. Lugard saw family organizations as convenient ways of collecting taxes. But unfortunately the machinery for collecting taxes was based on the native courts and not family organizations.

When the Bill came before the legislative council, initially K. Afa Amonu (member for Calabar), I.O. Mba (member for Igbo division), Mark Pepple Jaja

(member for Niger African Trade) spoke against it. They all conceded the fact that taxation was important, but suggested that it be deferred. Obianwu suggested for at least six months. The motion was lost by 20 votes to 6 against the bill⁴⁸. The economic implication of direct taxation was quite clear to all and was one of those considerations which determined people's attitude to the innovation. In June 1927, the president of Calabar reported that "relief from corvee labour", the most attractive concession the government had made to the people, "did not seem to appeal to the peasantry if they were to pay money in lieu of this old form of taxation", nor did the promise to pay 10% rebate to all village heads who lent assistance prove a never-failing bait⁴⁹. Even the argument that the money was for local development had no magic appeal. One Chief Amakiri of New Calabar pointed out that to whomever the money went; the important thing was that it had left the people's pocket⁵⁰.

Other aspects of the measure which disturbed most people equally seriously but which have never been emphasized, dealt with a number of religio-ethnic questions and then with the question of sovereignty. During the government tax campaigns bewildered interpreters who labored to translate 'taxation' into indigenous languages and dialects which had no word for the institution, rendered it in such a way that it came to the people as either 'tax on head' or 'tax on land' which with further amplification meant 'ransom' or 'land rent' respectively. Seen in this light, taxation raised the question of how a free man could be required to pay a ransom on his head or how a stranger could ask for rent on land from the sons of the soil. This was a question which nobody could answer but the conservatives were sure that such a demand as taxation which had these implications was irreligious and unethical. It is said that in many places some old men died of heartbreak rather than of part with their own patrimonies to strangers. The second point which shocked many people was the census of population which accompanied the assessment of taxation. Throughout the four Eastern provinces the counting of human beings, especially of free men, was contrary to custom. In traditional belief and philosophy, according to B.O. Obasi, a man could count that which is his own, for instance, his slaves, livestock, yams and the like. Again the counting of human beings was believed to cause death. Counting, it was believed, reminded evil spirits that a particular kin-group had multiplied beyond a certain point and that the time had come to prune it⁵¹. But the taking of census was part of assessment, for it was necessary to obtain the number of taxable

males in each unit in order to know the net tax to be expected from it. It was this need for an accurate census and all the obscure ruses to which political officers resorted to attain it which made tax all the more obnoxious.

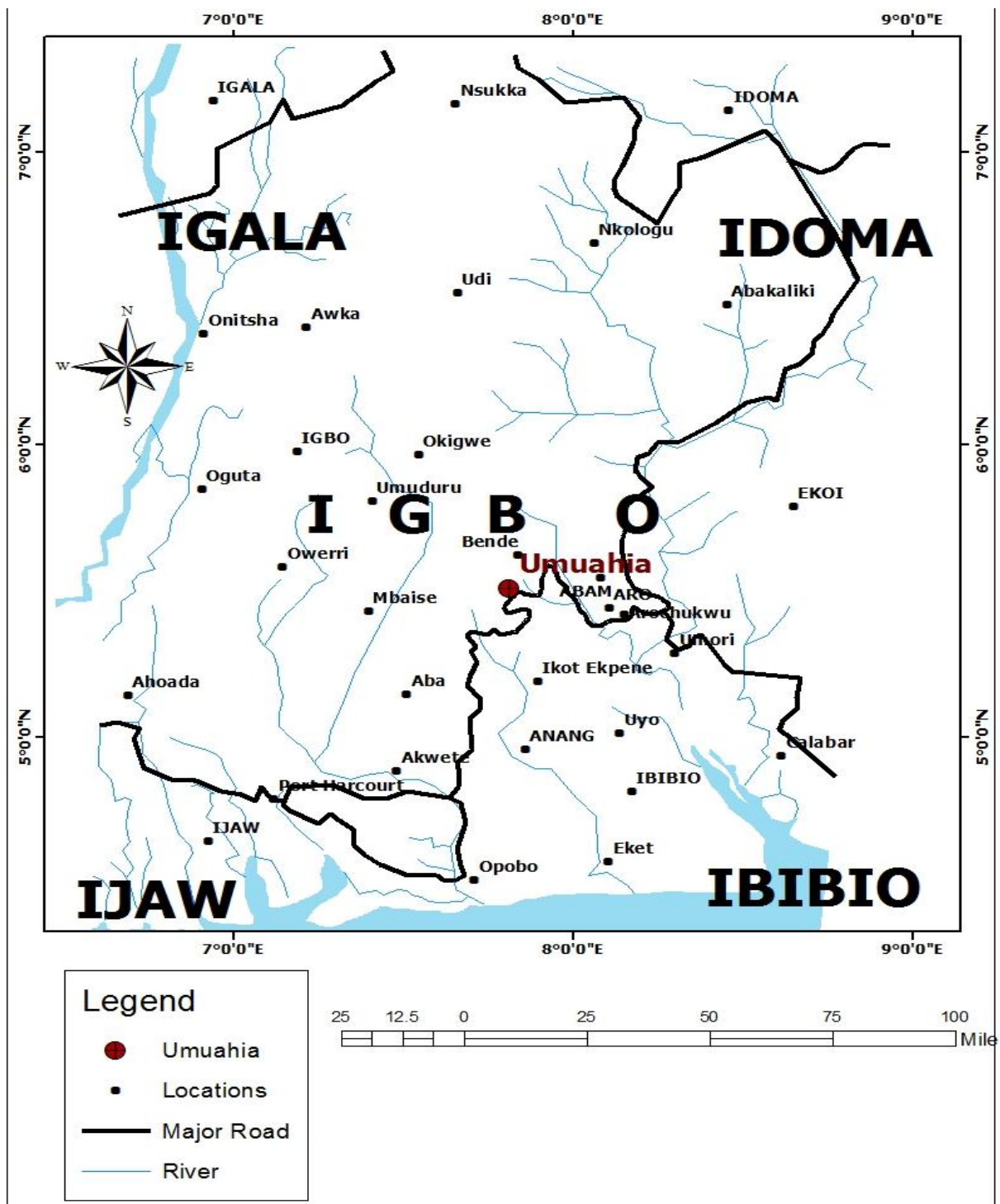
Then there was the consideration that payment of direct taxation implied acceptance of British sovereignty said Eze Isinguzo I of Umuzam⁵². It is difficult to understand in what light the people had hitherto seen British occupation, but one of the nagging questions which taxation raised was the right of the British to impose the measure in the first instance. In spite of all these objections by the people the first collection was effected in 1928 without any grave breach of the peace, thanks to the effective use the administration made of the police, the army and the law courts in dealing with agitators. But the second collection was not so peaceful.

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Igboland by 1914

Source: 20 year war inversion and resistance in southeastern Nigeria 1900-1919 by Robert D. Jackson p. 274

CHAPTER FOUR

CONSOLIDATION OF BRITISH RULE IN UMUAHIA 1914 – 1929.

NATIVE COURTS AND NATIVE COUNCIL

During his visit to Bende after the conquest of Umuahia area, Sir, Ralph Moor, the High Commissioner for the Niger Coast protectorate instructed Mr. Watts, the newly appointed District Commissioner (DC) for Bende to “form Native Courts for the settlement of individual and inter-tribal disputes”¹ Consequently upon this, a Native Court was opened at Bende in 1905 and another at Oloko in Ikwuano area. In 1907, the Ebem Ohafia Native Court was opened by Mr. Bedwell, the Bende District Commissioner. Before 1907, all the communities in Bende Division attended the Bende Native court with the exception of the Isuogu community and some parts of Ohuhu, which attended the Oloko court.² The native courts as was the case in other parts of south-eastern Nigeria constituted a system of local government. Before 1914, British Officers acted as the presidents of the courts.³

The British colonial government made use of the chiefs appointed in the Native courts established by them. The government which gradually brought these areas under control were faced with the problem of having a centralized administration. Hence, the grouping together with Native court areas and by using these Native courts to function as local government⁴. At this time its only the first class chiefs that presides in these courts. Other native courts were erected in different areas; there were courts at Nkwoegwu, Oloko, and Nnono⁵. The Native courts at Oloko served the people around the vicinity, like people from Ibere, Ariam, Oboro, Ntalakwu, Ahaba and some parts of Ngwa land namely, Mbuto and Isiala ngwa. Oloko Native

Court was chosen because it is more central to the communities. There were about four court messengers that serve in that court and warrant chiefs, D. O. Chubo, Solomon, Pipi, Okugo and Uba, others includes; Ngadi, Ezumah and Oti⁶.

Also two classes of Native Courts were established in the area. The minor courts were presided over by a British officer. A minor court has three or more members. The members are appointed and dismissed by the high commissioner. For example, there were minor courts at Nnono-Oboro and Iberenta. The Nkwoegwu court served people from Ohuhu, (Afugiri, Umuawa, Alaocha, Umuawa Alaike); Umuopara, (Amachara, Ogbochukwu, and Ezeleke). Nkwoegwu was more central to people around that area and they could as well trek to the court.

At Olokoro, the court served people from Ubakala and old Umuahia. The court was established in 1905, and Mr. C. Hills presides there. Some of the minor courts considered cases in which both parties were natives or in which a non-native consented in writing to have his or her cases heard by the minor court⁷.

The Native Councils consists of person appointed by the high commissioner and the commissioner of the district, who acted as ex-officio president. In addition to the native assessors, Chiefs and other persons picked by the commissioner were invited as consultants on native laws and custom when required. The native council had civil and criminal jurisdiction over suits involving debt, damage ownership or possession of land and inheritance of property of deceased persons⁸. It had the power to imprison for not more than two years and fine, upon hundred pounds. In addition, the native council exercised general supervision over the minor courts, which gave the impression not only of it being superior to the minor courts, but also of dealing primarily with cases involving foreigners. In summary, the extent to which real power left the hands of the elders, title men, and secret societies for hands of the “new men” associated with the court is illustrated by the fact that many who earned the money with which they would otherwise have bought admission into one or more of the ancient privileges associations, used it in lobbying warrant Chiefs, clerks, court messengers and interpreters to help make them headmen or better still, warrant chiefs⁹. The constitutional revolution wrought by the warrant chief system was as far-reaching as it was unsettling.

Furthermore, the court messengers or KOTIMA were able-bodied men whose primary function was to serve summons and warrants to carry out all errands duties for the court. But like the court clerk whom they owed more allegiance to than chiefs, they became demi-gods in their own way and a law unto themselves. The court messengers, both in and out of the court exploited the ignorance of the masses¹⁰. A man who took out a summon against his adversary was forced, after paying correct fee for the summon, to give the court messenger who was to serve the process, extra two shillings or a cock and provide him with free food for as long as he was in the village or the summons would not be served. People on whom civil summons were to be served, were often arrested, on the ground that what were issued against them were warrants of arrest, but were promptly released if they were able to pay considerable sums of money to court messengers¹¹. Since court messengers were widely known to be agents of the government, they got away with most of what they did, as it was generally believed, that they could visit a village market, buy their needs at their own prices and force anybody to carry these goods home for them.

INTRODUCTION OF COLONIAL ECONOMY

As recorded in the first chapter, the economy of pre-colonial Umuahia people was self-reliant in character. The people practiced the subsistence mode of production. Consumption habits were determined by what was available and could be produced locally. Dependency on external sources for socio-economic development only came with the advent of colonial rule¹². This gave a different orientation to the economy of the people. The colonial economy was programmed to serve the needs of Europe, in the production of raw materials for her industries and the consumption of her manufactured goods. Production of palm oil, palm kernel, and other crops like rubber, which the people of Umuahia did not necessarily need for their survival were encouraged while food stuffs which they needed to survive were discouraged¹³. Consequently, consumption habits changed. Thus, the Umuahia people, were made to consume those food items which they could not manufacture locally.¹⁴ This phenomenon led to a drastic change in the socio-economic features of Umuahia particularly in 1917 when it assumed a third class township status¹⁵. Umuahia in this period witnessed the emergence of European merchant firms such as John Holt, U. A. C. G. B. Olivant, Pz, and S. C. A. O. these European firms engaged in whole sale

trade. They purchased palm oil and kernel in large quantities and transported them by rail to the coast for oversea exportation.¹⁶ The lucrative nature of palm oil trade activities had been latent before the coming of the British.¹⁷

The completion of Umuahia Bende Road in 1925 and other network of roads that linked Umuahia town, with Aba Okigwe Port Harcourt, Uzuakoli and Ekot Ekpene boosted the economic activities in Umuahia. The good roads led to the improvement in the transportation of goods from the interior to the town. As such, expanded trading activities in Umuahia and increased participation of the people in trading activities. One thing to note is that the feeder – roads only linked goods-producing areas with the railway line and with Port Harcourt, which was the major seaport nearest to Umuahia.¹⁸

If the completion of the roads brought about great changes in the economic set-up of Umuahia, it only complemented what the completion of the railway construction in 1917 had begun.¹⁹ It helped in the evaluation of local products such as palm produce and rubber to the coast. It was the construction of the railway that turned Umuahia into big commercial centre and thus gave her the cosmopolitan outlook it still bears. It attracted not only Europeans business trading companies but also African businesses that mostly concentrated on retail trade. One important industry that flourished as a result of this railway was cattle business²⁰. This in turn brought about the establishment of cattle kraal scheme in Umuahia, in recognition of its position in the transportation and distribution of cattle to other parts of Eastern Nigeria. The importance of cattle trade in Umuahia can be appreciated when it is realized that in the early 1940, about 50,000 herds of cattle from North and Southern Cameroon were transaction worth about half a million pounds.²¹ The export of hides and skin to the United Kingdom annually brought in about \$15, 000 to the Colonial government.²² The construction of the railway also enabled the Umuahia people to deal directly with the British in the hinterland and the coast, thereby reducing the domination of trade by the Aro middlemen.

The implication of this economic development was an increase in the population of Umuahia, as people from different areas, Yoruba, Hausa and other parts of Igboland came to Umuahia in search of a better standard of living. This boost in human influx was encouraged by the provision of modern amenities such as

electricity and pipe born water after the end of the Second World War. This resulted in unemployment as many schools leavers who had migrated to the town in search of job and better standard of living, roamed the street. As estimated by Obichere, the immediate post war population of Umuahia was put at 7,000. It increased to 12, 259 in 1952 – 1953. He maintained that it went up to 28,884. Between 1953 to 1960.²³ Furthermore, the Eastern, Railway also served other interest of the colonial government, as it conveyed produce to and imports through the port. Similary, the Eastern Railway was also meant for the shipment of cash crops. The Eastern depot includes. Port-harcourt, Aba Umuahia, Uzuakoli, Enugu, Otukpo and Makurdi.²⁴ These locations quickly became the focal points of trade and new frontier of economic opportunities, attracting traders from the immediate and more distant communities. Hence, Umuahia became famous, known as an agricultural market centre. It is also a railway collecting point for crops such as yams, cassava, corn (maize), rice, taro, citrus fruits, palm oil, cocoa, and palm kernel.²⁵ There are three railway stations in Umuahia. These are Amaeke station, Umuahia Station- Ibeku Station, and Old Umuahia station. It is instructive, in fact, that most urban centres which emerged during colonial times were to be found on the railways, especially rail-road intersections, for instance, Aba, Uzuakoli, Otukpo and Umuahia. However, the provision of modern amenities was also beneficial to the economic development of Umuahia, as cottage industries started sprouting up in the town.²⁶

In other parts of the Division where the Aro were found, the story was different in Iberé Clan, for instance, the Aro population was heavy in that Iberé is connected by the Imo to the Enyong creek. The Iberé villages of Itunta, Nkalaunta and Obioruo, nearest to the Inyang River had the greatest Aro population which outnumbered by the British presence, the Aro gradually responded to the changing times by turning to coca farming. This was extensively grown in the rich low-lying land between Iberenta and Inyila. Water transport through the Inyang river made transportation of the product very cheap and hence legitimate trade became very lucrative.²⁷

THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY AND WESTERN EDUCATION

The conquest of Umuahia had been completed between the end of 1905 and early 1906. Christian missionaries, often invited by the government moved in,

establishing missions, schools and hospitals. The first body to take an advantage of the prevailing rare opportunity to mission Umuahia was the Niger Delta pastorate which arrived in 1911²⁸. Responsible for this move made by the Delta church were traders, non-indigenes of Umuahia who had embraced the Christian faith while trading in and around Abiriba and Ohafia. Elizabeth Isichie disposed that the party which brought the Niger Delta Pastorate (NDP) church to Umuahia was led by two men, Messer H. D. Jaja and Joseph cooker.²⁹ The first convert of NDP at Isingwu Umuopara was Amaefule Ikpo, a traditionalist. Hence, there were clashes between the traditional worshippers and NDP.³⁰ Within a short time, another convert Ogbonna Ilo joined the new faith (NDP) and this caused rivalry between the converts and the traditional worshippers.

In one of such clashes, Chiefs S B Atulomah states that within a short period, the traditional worshippers expressed their distrust of the new religion. By restricting their family member from attending church meetings. In some cases, they disowned family members and even threatened to kill them for accepting the new religion. A good example was one Njoku of Amachara, who disowned his son Ndukwe for attending the Methodist school, for the Ezeleke group³¹ this forced the missions to destroy the ancestral gods including their groves. Consequently, the non-Christian converts attacked the school at Nkwoha, about 1917, and robbed the teacher, Sampson Epelle, a native of Ndoki. The fear of the loss he suffered was said to have forced him to live Umuopara. Thus, bringing to an abrupt close of the school at Nkwoha.

The pastorate which was led entirely by African ministers had perpetual financial and personnel problems which hindered it from embarking on meaningful expansionist programmes. The only achievement that could be credited to it was tilling the ground and manuring it, perhaps sufficiently enough to produce bumper harvest when the seed of the gospel had been sown and that body happened to be primitive Methodist.³²

In 1914, an invitation was extended to the Rev. FW Dodds to establish a church in Umuahia.³³ This was because, the indigenes of Umuahia, while in search of good jobs and more progressive trading partner, discovered that western education was receiving top priority in predominantly Methodist communities, certainly far more

than what the Niger Delta pastorates could offer. The discovery led to a meeting of elders, and the decisions taken was to have a Methodist church established in the town in order to be assured of more qualitative education for the citizens of the town. Greatly attracted by the strategic location of the town and its teeming population. Humble beginnings were made almost immediately for it was considered absolutely necessary to take full advantages of the rare opportunity which had just been offered to the Methodist to extend their influence to Umuahia.³⁴

The missionaries seemed to have known the circumstances behind their entry into the town and took measures to satisfy the yearnings of the people. The first Methodist converts in Umuahia, and environs were drawn from the down trodden, the poor, the needy, mothers of twins, women chased out, of the town following serious accusation of their involvement in witchcraft, men and women rejected by their people for suffering from deadly diseases like leprosy or for developing the upper teeth. First, all considered as abomination and heinous offence against the goddess of the earth.³⁵ Yet there were converts who belonged to the higher social pyramid like wealthy and influential business and men belonging to the ruling families who also went over to Christianity. There were also bigamists and polygamists who incurred hatred and public abuse by driving away all their wives, retaining just one in order to become full church members and qualify for Christian marriage. Still there were others who had taken one traditional title or the other and because of the high social standing they adjudicate in delicate matters as the need arose. The conversions of these men can today be seen as a miracle, considering the trauma they suffered and what they sacrificed in terms of losing their popularity and prestige by becoming Christians.³⁶ Thus the membership of the early Umuahia Methodist Community cut across the various levels of the social structure, and that enabled the church to develop tap roots, early enough, and to win converts from diverse groups. Hence Methodist church was established in 1914 Umuahia as headquarter.³⁷

The Christian missionaries, more especially, the Methodists, were the objects of education and religious instruction, and converting the younger people into Christianity was easier, since the young were believed not to be rooted in the ancestral ideas and practices as their fathers.³⁸ At different times and places, there were face-to-face encounter with Christian and traditionalists, because the early

Christian missionaries behaved like social revolutionaries. They plunged into the condemnation and eradication of traditional religion. For instance the Methodist Church had established stations at Ohuhu and Umule, according to Ogaraku Asiegbu, they, the Methodist, served dual purposes. In addition to their primary evangelical functions, they functioned as schools, particularly on Sundays where children were instructed on religious (Christianly) morals with some emphasis on English language.³⁹ They started establishing schools and colleges. Amongst the early primary school established in Ohuhu include, Afugiri and Orié Amenyi central School. Also Methodist college Uzuakoli, founded in 1923.⁴⁰ Within the first decade of the institution of the school, only lazy, Ohu (domain servants) were sent to these schools, but as these people started acquiring wealth and occupying prominent posts in the public services, like becoming native courts officials, education was then seen as the ladder to the top. Among the early pupils enrolled in the institution within the first decade of its foundation includes late Dr. Michael Iheonukara Okpara and Late Mr. J.O. Ukabiala. The Methodist Church contributed a lot in building Umuahia, this is not to say that other denomination did not contribute their own quota. In 1921, the Methodist Church established Methodist hospital Amachara.⁴¹

On the other hand, the Presbyterian mission sailed forth from Calabar, the Kwa (qua) Ibo Mission (1917) from Ibeno, and the Church Missionary Society from Onitsha joined in the scramble. In this interdenominational scramble, all tactics were used.⁴² Schools and hospitals were freely opened in order to attract the people to Christianity. The people with their intra-village competitiveness exploited this rivalry to the fullest and invited any mission that would open a school or a hospital. In the schools, the Roman Catholics, offered instruction in English languages and science, leaving the C.M.S. to its idealistic programme of useful education- a legacy of “the Bible and the plough” days. The Roman Catholics generously distributed medicines, upsetting the C.M.S. by the use of temporal advantages to win converts.⁴³ The result was that although the C.M.S. by the use of temporal advantages to win converts. The result was that although the C.M.S. was established in Umuahia (1910) before the Roman Catholic came via Onitsha (1916), the Roman Catholics area today as much established in Umuahia as the Anglicans. Other missions that was established in Umuahia includes Faith Tabernacle with strong holds of Afara Ukwu Umuahia and Assemblies of God at Afara.⁴⁴

Also, the early Christian church had conflicts with religions and cultures that do not share same doctrines with it. In late 1929, starting from Nsulu, Ngwa area of Aba Division, there erupted unhealthy disturbances between the faith tabernacle Mission and the Okonko society. The reason for this uprising was revealed to the public. Women in pre-colonial Ohuhu, had nothing to do with Untraditional hence, the Okonko society took offence, fearing that the mission was out to drag the society to the mud, enraged, took to violence, attacking and destroying churches of the faith Tabernacle. This spread to Umuagu Umuhu on 29th December 1929.⁴⁵ William Eje recounts that Chief Okezie fearing that the violence could spread to his domain took members of the Okonko society in Umuagu to Umuahia prisons and locked them up there. This made Umuagu people to revolt and it took years to get them loyal to the native administration.⁴⁶

The Osu cast system was condemned by the Christian missionaries. People were asked to emphasize it through Unions. In precolonial Umuahia (Ohuhu), It would be recalled that the Osu caste were denied ownership of land except those given to them by the Amala or other individuals. They were not allowed to hold public offices, to marry freeborn diala, and they buried themselves with the Christian missionaries. With the advent of the missionaries, Osu started adjusting as they were now being gradually accepted into the society as free born of the land, ie they started taking part in community affairs. In 1956, the Osu caste system was abolished through a bill passed in the eastern Nigeria House of Assembly.⁴⁷ The killing of twins and banishment of their mothers for eight days was stopped by the Christian missionaries.

The introductions or history of Christianity in Umuahia is not just what missionaries did but the responses of Umuahia people are a crucial part of the story. In the pattern of these responses lie the explanations for the rapid spread of the missions. Some may look in the spiritual direction for the single, most important benefit of the missionary enterprise; others will certainly point to education and the charitable institutions. Both factors contributed to the success of the missions in Umuahia.⁴⁸

UMUAHIA IBEKU MARKET SCHEME.

The establishment of administrative centres was a significant development for trade and marketing. It did not greatly affect the external trade nor the old markets and routes associated with the coastal trade. But it increased the scope for trade in local produce in the interior, particularly food crops. The garrisons and the administrative personnel constituted a nucleus of a non-rural based population dependent on the country-side for food. Traders and persons engaged in other service occupations as well as men who came in originally as conscripted labour all settled near the government station. Rev. A. Lodge, an American clergy man who visited this town within this period made the following remarks, “(old) Umuahia is a fast growing town in population. Government is planning it as a provincial Headquarters which means great influx of people, servants, government clerks, with their families and a host of others, trading ventures are planning to build extensions to their already existing stores and this will draw more and more of the people from the surrounding country to trade their produce”⁴⁹.

Besides, as the administration was being expanded and streamlined in order to cope with fledging commercial activities, it became necessary to shift the administrative post to a more spacious site about four kilometers away in a place called Alaocha, Okata or Mkpa, an evil forest used in common by the people of Ibeku, Ubakala, Ohuhu and Old Umuahia. According to the Royal Book of Record WoguKamanu⁵⁰ “performed the traditional rituals that purged the thither to uncultivated ancient forest land area situated within the Ibeku clan... of evil spirit, its deforestation and handed the land over to the government. This land was then made a crown land and developed as a township”⁵¹.

The AforIbeji market was one of the many attractions to immigrant Aro, Abiriba and Ubani (Bonny and Opobo) traders, and other settlers from different directions. As a very popular market, it created the picture of a giant business centre and commercial tree towering above others within the locality and attracting numerous business birds of the air which came regularly in their hundreds to perch or settle on the ‘business tree’, AforIbeji or Old Umuahia market centre. The (Old) Umuahia village or Ndi New AforIbeji market community was remarked for the numerical superiority of its commercially active population.⁵² This population appeared to be ever on the increase at that time, as fresh settlers from various areas constantly came

in to settle⁵³. With its comparatively larger population of 504 adult males in 1935, the Old Umuahia trading community would indeed have looked (especially to the smaller Olokoru villages whose populations then had numbered a mere 88, for Umedere; 73 for AmaNgwa, 74, for Umuobia and Ajonkwu; 52), like a sea of humanity, a beehive of people, a swan of bees or locusts or a chorus of weaver birds⁵⁴.

Along with the colonial reorganization, AforIbeji market was relocated to a more centralized square on Ibeku land at Umuahia. The market day is always on Afor day just from where it derives its name. UmuahiaTownship seems to be more central for administrative purposes. The area of the present market at Umuahia-Ibeku bounded on the North-West by theUmuahia-Ibeku-Uzuakoli road, on the North by playing fields, on the East by the Nigerian Eastern Railway and on the South and West by the Umuahia-Ibeku-Okigwe road. The extent of this market is approximately 16 acres⁵⁵.The area, it is proposed to develop for the General market, meat market and slaughter house consists of two parcels of land of 16 and 10 acres respectively.⁵⁶

A layout was prepared with a view to developing a market worthy of the town and to cater for the needs of the population. As the area is on crown land no acquisition is involved and it is therefore available for immediate development. Also the area proposed for the meat market and slaughter house consists of approximately 10 acres and lies immediately outside the crown land boundary North East of the Native location and approximately 800 yards from the general market. The required land is undeveloped and includes no building structure or farms.⁵⁷

The need for a market and slaughter house is most urgent to safeguard the general health of the public and to develop the local retail meat industry. A small slaughter house capable of accommodating six beasts at a time exists immediately, north of the existing general market and on the fringe of the main Uzuakoli road. It is totally inadequate to cope with the number of beasts slaughtered in Umuahia-Ibeku which, at a conservative estimate average(24) twenty-four head of cattle per day.⁵⁸ It is badly sited and entails animals for slaughter traversingthe town resulting in congestion and fouling of the public highways.⁵⁹The inadequacy and unsuitable location of the slaughter house led to the establishment of a number of bush butcheries fringing the town where slaughter of cattle and sale of meat is carried on under the most revolting and insanitary conditions. These butcheries constitute a

menace to the health of the public and divert considerable potential revenue from the town. Slaughtering in these butcheries has reached 50 cattle per day. The largest of these butcheries is that of Ubani-Ibeku which is located to the North of the Bende Road, 1000 yards distant from Umuahia-Ibeku Railway Station. From a census carried out on 10/6/1947⁶⁰, it was ascertained that 45 head of cattle were slaughtered in the Township Slaughter House and 178 in the Ubani-Ibeku 'Bush' butchery. This latter comprises an area little larger than the Township Slaughter House, is ankle deep in slush during wet weather with no water or drainage facilities, is thick with manure, has no supervision or anything approaching sanitation. Carcasses are actually dressed in thick slush in wet weather and deep dust in dry weather. The elimination of these 'Bush' butcheries to a non-competitive distance from the town is essential for the well-being of the public and to ensure the success of this scheme.⁶¹

A Town plan for Umuahia-Ibeku was drawn up by Mr. Ferguson, Town planner, Public Works Department. The scheme for Umuahia-Ibeku as proposed by the planning authority consists of a general market on the existing site for the sale of goods other than meat. A Slaughter House and Meat market to be sited in the area East of the main railway line and North-East of the Native location.

In the layout of the two market areas, due consideration was given to spaciousness compatible with economy. Buildings have been sited at least 50 feet from the public highways and railway lines. A width of 25 feet has been allowed between each double block of buildings with 50 feet access roads running west to east between blocks. The pattern as drawn up by the Public Works Department consists of blocks of 24 open fronted stalls for the general market whilst for the meat market stallage was modified to permit of enclosed fly-proofed stalls, 24 to a block, with the object of achieving a higher standard of hygiene and a degree of progressiveness consistent with economy. These modifications to blocks include the elimination of the centre wall, enclosing the blocks with outer walls of which 3 feet will be of cement block and the remainder flyproof wire-gauze.⁶² Entrance will be by means of fly-trap doors at each end of the block. The block will consist of 24 stalls, each row of 12 stalls being separated by a cement pathway traversing the centre of the block. Floors of stalls will slope gently to the centre as to facilitate flushing and drainage.

This channel will flow to a lateral drain outside the blocks and link up with the Township Drainage Scheme when inaugurated.

The design of the Slaughter House has been modeled on that existing in the Town but so enlarged as to be capable of dealing with 24 head of cattle at a time. The Slaughter House was sited 100 feet west of the nearest meat market building so as to avoid undue exposure of meat. There was no provision for water supply for the Slaughter House and Meat market this was because, water is being supplied by means of buckets, which is both expensive and labourious. It has been assumed in this development scheme that a comprehensive water supply scheme will be introduced for the whole of Umuahia-Ibeku including the market areas under Part II of the Ten-Year Development Plan 1946 (urban water supplies)⁶³. The question of lighting facilities was not considered.

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CHAPTER FIVE

LOCAL REACTION AND PROBLEMS IN UMUAHIA: 1929-1960.

ABA WOMEN PROTEST OF 1929

The study of women's protest is a revelation of the material condition which was brought by the warrant chief's system in the Eastern provinces. The women's protest was an offspring of the socio-economic problems that became common place in the era of warrant chiefs system. The dictionary has explained that protest is the act of making of disapproval; a demonstration ¹

There is a long history of collective action by women in Nigeria. In the 1910s, women in Agbaja (Mbaise) stayed away from their homes for a month because they thought that men were killing pregnant women.² Their collective absence pushed village elders to take action in 1924, 3000 women in Calabar protested to a market toll that was required by the government. In Southwestern Nigeria, where the

women's war took place, there were other women organisations such as the Lagos market Women's Association, Nigeria Women's Party, and Abeokuta Women's Union.³ There was also an "elaborate system of women's market network".⁴ which the Igbo and Ibibio women used to communicate information to organize the women's war. The two months rebellion broke out when Igbo women from the Bende District Umuahia and other places in eastern Nigeria traveled in their thousands to the town of Oloko to protest against the warrant chiefs and the policies imposed by the British colonial administration in South-eastern Nigeria. The protest actually involved women from six ethnic groups; Ibibio, Ogoni, Bonny, Opobo, Andoni, and Igbo.⁵ It was organized and led by the rural women of Oloko, Owerri, Calabar and Bonny provinces. In the events of the revolts, many warrant chiefs were forced to resign and about sixteen native courts were attacked, most of which were destroyed. Over 50 women lost their lives in the process, as many others were counted among the injured.

Diverse views have been offered to explain the causes of the women's protest. One of such is the imposition of direct taxation, and the economic upheaval of the global depression of the 1920s, which saw a drastic fall in the price of palm produce and a high cost of basic foodstuff and imported items. Thus, the women's protest was precipitated in part, by the global depression. The protests occurred when the income women derived from palm produce dropped, while the costs of the imported goods sold in their local markets rose sharply.⁶ For example, from December 28, 1928, to December 29, 1929 the prices of palm oil and kernel in Aba fell by 17 percent and 21 percent respectively, while duties on imported goods like tobacco, cigarettes and gray baft; a form of cloth used to make dresses, increased 33 percent and 100 percent respectively.⁷ The deteriorating terms of trade led to the impoverishment of women, and once the rumor spread that they would be taxed, the women's protest started.

Another important cause of the protest was rooted in the political transformation resulting from the British indirect rule policy. The women's protest stems from the military occupation of the Igbo area by the British in the early 1900s and the "Warrant Chiefs" they appointed to administer the various communities. The society's traditional authority holders who feared that they would be punished for resisting the invaders, did not come forward to receive the "Certificates" or "Warrant" the British issued to appointed chiefs. As a result, the majority of warrant chiefs were young men who were not the legitimate authority holders in the

indigenous political system. The appointment of warrant chiefs as representatives of the local people was contrary to the political ideology and republican ethos of the Umuahia people.⁸ The appointment of warrant chiefs intensified conflicts in the society, as evidenced by the Native Courts proclamation of 1901, which conferred exclusive judicial functions on the new chiefs in their communities. The village councils were denied their traditional functions, and worse still, cases involving abominations were punished without the ritual propitiations and sacrifices necessary for “Cleansing the earth” and restoring moral equilibrium.⁹ women were particularly upset by the deserialization of laws, and during the protests they called for the restoration of the old order.

On the other hand, the British appointed warrant chiefs also abused their offices to enrich themselves, in part because they were paid meager allowances that could not sustain their newly acquired prestige and lifestyle. Virtually all of them established a private court in their compounds, where they settle disputes. They also used their headman to collect fines and levies, thus alienating members of their community.

Similarly, the executive functions the warrant chiefs performed for the British government, including the recruitment of men for forced labour to build railways, roads, and government guesthouses, heightened their unpopularity. During the protests, women complained about forced labour, claiming that it increased their workload by depriving them of the services they received from their husbands in farming and the production of palm produce. Women were also concerned about the emerging urban centres, which had become hubs for those engaged in prostitution and other vices that the women believed polluted the land⁹.

Chiefly, the ultimate event that birthed the protest was direct taxation. The British colonial administration had taken measures to enforce the Native Revenue Ordinance in April 1929.¹⁰ The then lieutenant governor of Nigeria Lugard, had consigned a colonial residence- W. E. Hunt, to bring an understanding of the objectives and provision of the new ordinance through explanation to the people of the five provinces in the eastern region. This strategy was used to make clear the path for the direct taxation whose date of arrival was April 1928.¹¹

However, in September, 1929, captain J. Cook was delegated to take over duties of the Bende Division temporarily from the serving officer Mr. Weir, until the return

of captain Hill from leave. And within few weeks of control, Captain Cook had deemed the originally stated rolls for taxation insufficient, because they did not include details of a number of wives, children and livestock in each household. He decided to revise the existing roll. And it was this unreasonable and vexatious act of Captain Cook that flamed up the two months fire of the Aba women's protest.

The single road leading to this community that in 1929, produced some heroines of Nigeria's anti-colonial struggle, remains unmotorable¹².

Nchara which shares boundaries with the Ngwa people of Abia state on its North-west and the Anangs of Akwa Ibom state, on its Southern part, occupies a pride of place in almost every history book that chronicles the Nigerian political development, at least between 1914 and 1960.

It was from this community which was described by one of its sons as having a "fair topography but a rich soil".¹³ which produces more than a quarter of the food stuff, especially cassava, consumed by Abians, that a group of women, led by very courageous Ikonna, Nwanyiukwu Enyia, confronted their warrant chief, Okeugo who dared to enforce the Obnoxious law then by the colonial masters, that women should start paying taxes, like their husbands. That confrontation led to what was thereafter referred to in Nigerian history cum political science books, as the Aba Women Protest of 1929.

Though the heroic struggle of madam Ikonna and her compatriots which led to the abrogation of that unfair piece of law, not only in Igbo land but in other parts of colonial Nigeria, was only given a footnote in most books that records it, the efforts of these heroines of the peoples war have never been adequately honoured by the Nigeria state. More painful too, was the fact that historians or chroniclers of that part of our National history have never taken time to correct the several distortions that have been associated with the Nchara/Ahaba Oloko women's confrontation of the dreaded warrant chief and the district Head for instance, that act of valour by Madam Ikonna and her colleagues continues to wear the wrong tag, "Aba Women Riot" when the scene of action was never in Aba.¹⁴ Again, no effort has been made to record for generations unborn, other struggles waged by Nchara/Oloko women under the leadership of Ikonna, nor is there any account of the historical background of the lady warrior and up till now, nothing has been done either by Ikwuano local government

Area, the Abia state or federal governments of Nigeria to honour or immortalize these great women whose patriotic zeal, courage and acts of valour must have inspired and influenced such other female Nationalists as Margaret Ekpo, Chief Mrs. Funmilayo Ransom Kuti, Hajia Gambo Sawaba, among others, who came after her, to join the struggle against socio political and economic oppressors in Nigeria.¹⁵

Madam Ikonna, born in 1877, into the family of Mazi Orji Onwuama Onyeukwu from Oloko village but got married to the family of Enyia, Ndiokpolu Akanu Achara in Oloko clan of the old Bende division of what is now known as Abia State. A very beautiful woman in her youth Ikonna was said to have been so loved by her father that he gave her the name (Ikonna), meaning her father's heart throb, because she had so much resemblance with him. Again, her beauty, strength and fearlessness, became for her, as a young girl, sources of disadvantage going by the believe then that the Whiteman's education was meant for only lazy male children, coupled with the fact that her no nonsense attitude could lead her into trouble that may result in her being sold into slavery, forced her parents to allow her venture into acquiring what she herself was later to tag the "white man's staff" (western education).¹⁶

Be that as it may, Ikonna's educational disadvantage did not prevent her from getting married to Mazi Enyia Mgbudu of Umu Okengogegbe Obewon Amahia, both in Nchara Oloko in Ikwuano Umuahia area of now Abia state. The marriage was blessed with four children, a girl and three boys. As a young woman, Ikonna had both the leadership qualities and militant disposition to organize the women of Nchara, Oloko clan for positive action against societal ills. So in 1929 when Chief Okugo, the warrant chief of Oloko, in obedient to the wishes of the colonial masters broke the sad news that women should start paying tax, Ikonna mobilized the women folk to confront the authorities.

She went beyond her immediate Nchara community to Umugo, Ahaba, Usaka, Eleogu, Azuiyi, Obohia, Amizi and Awomukwu, all neighbouring communities within Oloko clan, to mobilize women for a protest match against the tax law and that protest was said to have taken the women who were in nudity, except the local Akori leaf, they used in covering their womanhood. At chief Okugo's house, Ikonna was said to have personally charged at the man pushing him around and removing his cap.

Also at the District Head's house, Ikonna and her protesting colleagues also had a brush with the guard (Kotima) who they subdued.¹⁷

Record has it that on the morning of 18 November, 1929, a man named Mark Emeruwa who was conducting census (the census was in relation to taxation) on the people living in the village of Oloko, upon the instruction of the warrant chief-Okeugo entered the compound of a widow named Nwanyiukwu and instructed her to "count her livestock and people living with her."¹⁸ Knowing fully well that this means, you will be taxed based on the number of the outcome. Nwanyiukwu became embittered; and in replying, she said, "was your widowed mother counted?". "This simply means that women were not supposed to pay tax in Igbo society. Anger was however, expressed with words, by the two of them. Thus, the widow proceeded to the town square to find other women who were already deliberating on the tax issue and explained to them her sad experience.

Nwanyiukwu account prompted the women to invite other women with the aid of palm leaves from other areas of the Bende district. Approximately ten thousand women gathered, and a protestation insisting on the removal and trial of the warrant chief was staged.

Fearing that the situation might get out of hand, especially as the protests spread to Umuahia, where factories and government offices were located, the British district officer acceded to the women's demands and jailed Okugo for two years. Generally, the protest in Bende Division ended peacefully, and the district officer effectively used the leaders of the women to curtail future protests.

On the other hand, in another development, from Aba Division of Owerri province, the women protest however, took on a more violent form. It was from there that the protest spread to parts of Owerri, Ikot Ekpene, and Abak divisions. The protest began in Owerrinta after the enumerator (census taker) of warrant Chief Njoku Alaribe, knocked down a pregnant woman during a scuffle, leading to the eventual termination of her pregnancy. The news of her assault shocked local women, who on December 9, 1929 protested against what they regarded as an "act of abomination".¹⁹ The masses in Njoku's compound, and during an encounter with armed police, two women were killed and many others were wounded. Their leader was whisked off to the city of Aba, where she was detained in prison.

Owerrinta women then summoned a general assembly of all Ngwa women at Eke Okpara on December 11, 1929, to recount their sad experiences. The meeting attracted thousands of women including those from neighbouring Igbo areas. They resolved to carry their protests to Aba. As the women arrived on Factory Road in Aba, a British medical Officer driving accidentally injured two of the women, who eventually died. The other women, in anger, raided the nearby Barclays Bank and the prison to release their leader. They also destroyed the native court building, European factories and other establishments. No one knows how many women that died in Aba, but according to T. Obinkaram Echewa's compilation of oral accounts of women participating in the protest, about one hundred women were killed by soldiers and policemen.²⁰

The protest then spread to Ikot Ekpene and Abak divisions of Calabar province, taking a violent and deadly turn at Utu-Etim-Ekpo, where government buildings were burned on December 14 and a factory was looted, leaving some eighteen women dead and nineteen wounded. More casualties were recorded at Ikot Abasi near Opobo, also in Calabar province, where on December 16, thirty-one women and one man were reportedly killed and thirty-one others wounded.

In 1957, that is 28 years after the Aba women protest, Ikonna, Nwanyiukwu led yet another women protest against the Eastern Nigerian Government led by late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. This time, it was against the government policy of excessive taxation against the men. Ikonna and her colleagues had reasoned then that self-rule having been achieved by the Eastern region, the indigenous government had no business imposing excessive taxes on the citizens. The government saw reasons with her and relaxed the tax law, but not before warning her not to lead any women unrest again, before she left Dr. Azikiwe's office in Enugu.²¹

Two years later, in 1959, the women were again up in protest. The eastern Nigerian government had shared a certain food formula among school children which claimed the lives of some of them. Ikonna again, led another delegation of women to Enugu, where she demonstrated against the government policy. She was of course arrested and detained for a couple of days but released because the government feared that her continued detention could spark off another women protest.

As a consequence, the British government authorized Civil and Military Officers to suppress the disturbances and district officers were granted the right to impose fines in the disaffected areas as compensation for damages to property and as a deterrent against future protest. On January 2, 1930, the government also appointed a commission of inquiry to investigate the roots of the disturbances in Calabar province.²²

The commission submitted a short report on January 27, 1930, but due to the report's limited scope, the government appointed a second commission on February 7, 1930 to cover Owerri and Calabar provinces.²³ The commission began its work at Aba on March 10, 1930, and submitted its report on July 21. The report convinced the government to carry out many administrative reforms, including the abolition of warrant chief system, the rapid pace of social change, and the fear that they would be taxed. Their solidarity was reinforced by their common religious ideas and values and the moral revulsion they expressed over acts of sacrilege.

Although the government suppressed the protests ruthlessly to avoid future disturbances, Igbo women mounted similar protests during the 1930s and 1940s against the introduction of oil mills and the mechanization of palm production, which undermined their economic interests. A discussion of the Igbo women's protest provides a broad picture of British colonialism in Africa, the difficulties involved in imposing a foreign administration on indigenous peoples and the crucial role women played in a primary resistance movement before the emergence of modern Nigerian nationalism.²⁴

In addition, the positions of women in society were greatly improved as women were appointed to serve as Native court members. The administration for the first time in its history, appointed a few influential leaders of the women's revolt to serve as Native Court members, including Chinwe, the only female member out of the 13 members of the Nguru Mbaise Native Court. Also in Umuakpo Native court area, 3 out of 30 members were women, while one out of 9 members of the Okpuala Native Court was a woman.²⁵

Also realizing how powerful the trio was; the Oloko trio: Ikonna, Nwannedia and Nwugo, the District Officer used them to prevent violence in other areas.²⁶ In Umuahia for example women had massed in the town to begin protest against the

warrant chiefs. As the D. O. feared that the protest might get out of control and endanger European factories and government establishments, he quickly contacted the trio to dissuade the women from embarking on their protest. The trio addressed the women, and to the amazement of the D. O., the protest march did not take place.

Suffice it not to mention Madam Mary Okezie, who clearly emerged as the most famous leader of Ngwa a leading exponent of women's rights calling for better health facilities for women, and their involvement in governance. Her influence towered in 1948, when she founded the Ngwa women's Association to promote the education and welfare of women.²⁷

The women protest is seen as the historical dividing point in British colonial administration in Nigeria, with far reaching implications. The protest was also instrumental in marking the rise of gender ideology, offering women who were not married to the elites, the opportunity to engage in social actions.

Administrative Reorganization in the Post Aba Women protest Era

The situation created by the Aba Women's protest of 1929 demanded urgent political reform throughout Southeastern Nigeria. Since this was not a manifestation of the unsuitability of the economic and local government structure in the area, it then became necessary to devise a new structure that was based as nearly as possible on the traditional system of government and procedure in vogue among the indigenous people prior to the advent of British colonial government.²⁸

The re-organization of the administrative structure in Bende Division, as in other areas of South Eastern Nigeria, was based on the Intelligence Reports compiled by British administrative officers between 1930 and 1937. In Mr. Allen's report on the Ngwa clan, he recommended 'the union of all Ngwa that were in Aba and Bende Division into one Division. Since the Ngwa were in the majority in Aba Division, the few Ngwa towns in Bende Division were allowed to join those in Aba Division. Thus, in April 1934, the Ngwa towns of Ngwa Ukwu, Nsulu, Ntigha, and Nvosi, hitherto in Bende Division were merged with their kith and kin in Aba Division.²⁹ Subsequently, south western boundary of Bende Division now moved in a north eastern direction for about 10.36 kilometres between the villages of Akanu Nchara and Otoro Nchara in Bende Division and Ama Achi, Aro Achara and Ohuhu

in Aba Division.³⁰ In other words, the south-western boundary between the two Division between the villages of Akanu Nchara and Otoro Nchara.

The remaining clans were re-organized into administrative and court divisions. As was the policy in Owerri Province, these Divisions were, wherever possible, based on community divisions.³¹ Thus, the village and the village group councils became the units of administration with each of the seventeen clans in Bende. The village became the lowest political administrative authority in the community. The elders of each “Ezi” or “Onumara” (kindred) were members of the Council. However, in areas like Ohafia. Abiriba. Item, Uzuakoli. Ubakala and Ohuhu where there were recognized village heads, those also became members of the council. The village group council comprised all the villages in the clan. The council was recognized as the Native Authority, and the village council was subordinate to it. The members of the clan council were the same members of the village council.

The Native Courts were equally re-organized. Prior to this re-organization, there were only five Native Courts in Bende Division. These were Bende (1905), Oloko (1905), Ohafia (1907), Alayi (1923) and Ayaba (1923) Native Courts.³² Each of these had a grade ‘B’ Native Court (lower court) jurisdiction status which means that lesser cases can be heard in the court.³³ But with this re-organization, each of the clans had one court with grade ‘D’ status. The exception was Isuogu which had two.³⁴ It is not stated why Isuogu was given two Native Courts. This may be to the dispersed nature of settlement in the area, since the clan covered a large land area. This conclusion is drawn because being immediate neighbours of the Ngwa and Annang in Ikot Ekpene who are known to have dispersed settlement patterns, it then stands that the Isuogu settlement pattern would resemble that of their neighbours. The District Officer Bende, in his 1945-50 annual report testifies to this when he wrote that, “...Ibere, Oboro, Isuogu are of a different character from the rest of the Division, and are similar to their neighbours in Aba and Ikot Ekpene”³⁵

The 1930-38 re-organizations created eighteen native courts in the 'Division. It was the community's council (village group) members who were the bench members of the courts. The court members were now called judges as against the warrant chiefs of the pre-women protest era.³⁶ The financial system was equally reorganized. The introduction of direct taxation in 1928 was followed by the opening of a Divisional treasury at Bende. This meant that all the revenue derived through taxation were kept

at the Divisional treasury. This period witnessed the opening of separate clan treasuries with their own estimates in some areas of the Division. These were at Umuimenyi, Oboro, Item, Ozuitem, Ibeku, Ohafia and Abam.³⁷ The re-organisation exercise had some advantages. In the first place, the courts cited within each clan solved the problem of the court members having to go long distances as hitherto was the practice. Besides, it brought the judicial system nearer to the people so that anyone with grievance could have easy access to the court members who were now found in every family.

However, these advantages should not make one to lose sight of the fact that the arrangement had many flaws. Firstly, because this reorganization was based on the unlimited representation of extended families at village or village group council meeting,³⁸ It rendered such courts or councils unwieldy. It also encouraged family disputes as a result of envy against selected members. Moreover since representation based on one being his family's eldest member, it meant that the younger men, especially those with education were excluded from participating in the affairs of their village in an age when British colonialism had already undermined the Indigenous system it was trying to prop up. There was also the fact that citing of the Native Courts in some areas enhanced the feeling of superiority which some groups had over their neighbours. A case in point was the establishment of the Native Court at the Nkwoegwu market, Okaiuga in the Ohuhu clan.

The Umuopara and Okaiuga village groups of Ohuhu had traditions of mutual jealousies and hostility in the period before colonial rule and even after. The Okaiuga group constantly encroached on Umuopara land which the latter regarded as harassment. The new arrangement meant, therefore, the enhancement of the feeling of superiority which the Okiuga had over their neighbours. The Umuopara, on their part, refused to attend the Nkwoegwu Native Court for some months after its establishment. However, the Umuopara were coerced into attending the court by the appointment of one of their sons. Nwononiwu, as a member of the Nkwoegwu court.³⁹

The corrupt practices in the Native Courts were neither removed nor curtailed by this re-organization. Mayne lamented that, "...corruption of the injurious type is far more prevalent than under the warrant chief system."⁴⁰ To what then do we attribute this increase in corruption in the Native Courts? This might be due to the

fact that the increased number of Native Courts in the Division made, it impossible for the administrative officers to have closer supervision of all the courts. We know that this was even impossible during the period of the Warrant Chief system. Thus, the court members were left more to themselves, the result of which was the ruthless exploitation of the poor masses; A case in point occurred in the Ibere Native Court in 1938. Court clerk, Kalu Ndukwe, of the Ibere Native Court got "fifteen shillings" from one man who wanted to file a case. In (the receipt which he gave to the man. He entered fifteen shillings. But in the counterfoil kept by him, he centered seven shillings and sixpence which was the fee the man was supposed to pay. Unfortunately for the court clerk, the day this man decided to withdraw his case was the day, the District Officer chose to visit the Ibere court. Since the man's money was to be refunded, he was paid back 7/6 pounds by the District Officer. The man protested that he paid 15/1 pounds and brought out his receipt to support his claim. The receipt and the counterfoil read different amounts and Kalu Ndukwe, the court clerk was subsequently charged to court and fined five pounds.⁴¹ The re-organization resulted in a very large number of native authorities and courts which by comparison with others were "untidy" for effective and efficient administrative purposes. This made the administrative and judicial system much more confusing and difficult to manage. There was therefore, an attempt at further re-organization in both systems.

The War Time Re-Organization, 1939-1945

Mr, J.C. Mayne stated that the main objective of the re-organization was "...to obtain a clan council and Native Authority which was limited in size and yet truly representative of the people".⁴² Unlike in the previous reform, in this re-organization exercise, representation in the clan council was limited in size and yet truly representation of the people.⁴³ Unlike in the previous reform, in this re-organisation exercise, representation in the clan council was based on the village instead of the family. The representation depended on the size of the village. Some

clans comprising many villages, especially those consisting of many village groups, were divided into subunits. Some of the clans affected included Ohuhu, Ubakala, Ohafia and Abam. Ohafia for instance, had twenty-five villages. Some of the Ohafia villages such as Akanu, according to C. J. Mayne, had a population of 3588 while Ihenta and Ndi Aniogu had 94 and 44, respectively.⁴⁴

To achieve the aim of the re-organization, the Ohafia villages were grouped into four units, namely, Isiama, Akanu, Ohafo and Ania. Likewise, the Abam clan was subdivided into the Ozuabam group of villages, Idima-Abam group and Ndi-Oji Abam. The same applied to the Ohuhu community which was divided into the Umuopara group, Okaiuga group, and the Umuhu group.⁴⁵ These groupings were based purely on geographical areas. A typical example of the nature of the representation is illustrated with the Ohuhu group. The Ohuhu clan council was limited to 25 representatives from the Umuopara group, 12 from Okaiuga group and 14 from the Umuhu group. In all the groups, the representatives were in office for three months. In other words membership was rotatory.⁴⁶

In response to the changing times, and as a result of the interaction the people had with one another as members of the five Native Courts between 1905 and 1929, there was a desire for closer divisional unity among the council members. This desire crystallized in the formation of the Bende Divisional Union in 1939. The Divisional council met regularly once a month. The council, among other things, made rules for the Division, such as the sanitary rule of 1944,⁴⁷

Finance

In 1942, the Division was divided into four federated treasury areas. Those were the Elu-Elu (North). Owuwa Anyanwu (East). Ala-Ala (South) and Odida Anyanwu (West) Federations. Here again, the grouping was based purely on the geographical location of the clans, Elu-Elu Federation comprised the Item, Umuimenyi. Ozuitem, Ibere, Alayi and Bende communities. The treasury headquarters was at Isiegbu Ozuitem, Ohafia, Abam and Abiriba formed the Owuwa-Anyanwu federation with its headquarters at Iregbu at Nkwebi Ohafia,

Isuogu, Oboro and Ibere made up the Ala-Ala federation with its treasury at (Isi-Ala Oboro), an Oboro village. The Odida Anyanwu comprised the Ubakala, Oloko, Ohuhu and Ibeku and their headquarters was at Umuahia township.⁴⁸

The federations were responsible for collecting taxes in their areas. Each federation prepared its own budget basing it on its expected revenue. This was a great departure from the Warrant Chief system where funds were administered by the District Officer, sometimes in consultation with the Warrant Chiefs but more often without. However, the restricted number of the educated men in the administrative system still made it possible for the District Officer to have an important oversight function in the preparation of the estimates.

Native Courts

In order to check the corruption of “the injurious type” that Mayne wrote about, an appeal court was established in each of the four federated treasury headquarters. Seven persons were nominated to serve as members for the Elu-Elu Native Court of Appeal, while five persons were nominated by their Native Authorities. Each appeal court member received a month salary of four pounds. A fee of fifty pence was charged for the hearing of each appeal. Unlike in other parts of Owerri Province, where the Appeal Court had panels. Bende Division did not have permanent Appeal Court members. Rather, members sat on the bench for six months. The District Officer argued that if a man understood that his re-appointment as a member of the Bench depended on his ability to render justice, he would do his best. Therefore, he argued it was preferable not to limit membership of the appeal court to any class of people.⁴⁹

BENDE DIVISION NATIVE COURTS

Clan Courts	Total Criminal and Civil Cases Actually Hears	Percentage of Total cases actually heard which were modified or annulled on appeal or review.	Percentage of Total original civil processes struck out and not heard.
Alayi	273	2.2	12
Ariam	358	4.5	19
Ubakala	544	4.6	19
Oloko	245	5.3	28

Abam	110	6.4	41
Abiriba	240	6.6	36
Umuienyi	260	7.3	25
Item	282	9.9	29
Oboro	302	10.6	33
Ibeku	169	11.8	37
Ozuiem	65	12.3	22
Itu	266	12.8	19
Ibere	118	13.6	28
Bende	91	16.5	12
Ohafia	278	17.0	41
Igbere	124	17.0	32
Igbo	300	19.3	46
Oloko	98	19.4	25
Total	4123	9.7	28

COURT

Appeal Courts	Total Cases Actually Hear including appeals from Clan Courts	Percentage of Total cases actually heard which were modified or annulled on appeal or review to D.O	Percentage of Total original civil processes struck out and not heard.
Owuwa-Anyanwu	410	4.1	25
Elu-Elu	568	4.2	26
Odida-Anyanwu	596	5.4	32
Ala-Ala	431	9.3	33
Total Appeal Courts	2005	5.6	29
Grand Total All courts	6128	8.4	28

Source: UMDIV 3/1/525, OW 400: Councils Bende Division 1929-1950. NAE paragraph 22

NATIVE COURT FEES

COURTS	October-Dec. 1945	Jan-March 1946	April-June 1946	July-Sept. 1946
	£	£	£	£
Odida-Anyanwu Appeal Court	73	68	86	66
Igbo Clan Court	28	52	46	58
Ibeku Court	21	28	32	35
Oloko Court	9	13	16	15

	£150	£193	£221	£218
Elu-Elu Appeal Court	£33	£46	£38	£29
Alayi Clan Court	24	30	27	38
Bende Clan Court	5	9	13	10
Ibere Clan Court	16	17	17	17
Item Clan Court	16	29	37	25
Ozuiem Clan Court	6	4	3	13
Umuimenyi Clan Court	21	28	38	39
	£121	£163	£173	£166
Owuwa-Anyanwu Appeal Court	28	38	54	57
Abam Clan Court	19	26	13	21
Abriba Appeal Court	39	31	34	23
Ohafia appeal Court	24	34	32	34
	£110	£129	£133	£135
Ala-Ala Appeal Court	43	64	76	58
Ariam Clan Court	22	29	57	56
Ibere Clan Court	11	11	23	18
Oboro Clan Court	21	27	36	38
Olokoru Clan Court	25	27	45	46
	£122	£158	£237	£216
Nkporo	6	2		
Abam	9	2		
Ohafia	17	5		
	39	42		

Source: UMDIV 7/1/21 OW 1231A: Re-organization Bende Division 1929-45 NAE paragraph 17

In this chapter, efforts were made to highlight some of the events that occurred in the area under-study between 1921- 1945. Bende Division was established in 1921 through a re-organization which came with the introduction of direct taxation and the re-discovery of natural rulers. In April 1928. A Divisional treasury was created in Bende. On the other hand, a series of agitation came from all the communities in the Division for the establishment of their own courts away from Bende Native Court. Ngwa was later moved to Aba Division whereas the three Imenyi clans (Akolinta, Nkpa and Amaoji) were transferred to Alayi Native Court.⁵⁰

In 1929 following the Tomlinson recommendation of 1923, the towns of Ahaba, Amaba, Umuasua, Otamupa and Amuta was retransferred from Bendeto Okigwe Division Later in 1934. There was a political restructuring in Bende Division which prompted the Ngwa villages of Ngwa Ukwu, Nsulu Ntigha and Nvosi to merge with their kith and kin in Aba Division. This event was followed by the Aba Women protest of 1929 which also led to political reforms in the Division.

The Native Courts were equally re-organized. The five courts in Bende Division, namely, Isi-ala, Oboro, Oloko, Ohafia. Alayi and Ayama were removed from grade B to D status. The financial system was equally re-organized leading to the opening of Division treasury at Bende in 1928.⁵¹

However, it is necessary to mention that whereas the new courts brought justice system nearer to the people, it was also based on unlimited representations and therefore, rendered such courts or councils unwieldy. There was also an increase in corrupt practices in the Native courts.

Between 1939-45. another re-organization took place representation in the clan council wits based in the villages instead of the family. Ohafia, for instance was grouped into four units namely Isiama, Akanu, Ohafia and Amaegbu. In 1939, came the formation of the Bende Divisional Union which met regularly once a month. The council, among other things, made rules for the Division, such as the sanitary rule of 1944. The four federated treasury areas of Elu- Elu, Owuwa-Anyanwu, Ala-Ala Odida Anyanwu were established in 1942. Each federation prepared its own budget basing it on its expected revenue. An appeal court was also established to check corruption in judiciary system.

Bende Division experienced two prominent problems resulting from the sitting of amenities; between Itumbuzo villages and between the Ohafia in Bende Division and the Biakpan in Ikot Ekpene Division in 1934. Whereas the former was on establishment of government institutions, the latter was more or less on land dispute. This led to the formation of Bende Single Native Authority in April 1948. The move was championed by the indigenous elite who saw the need for their participation in government. The move continued till the local government era which is the focus of the next chapter.

NATIVE AUTHORITIES ORDINANCE

Local Government was the smallest administrative unit introduced by the British that operated in Eastern Nigeria in the period between 1945 and 1960 and the post colonial administration has also inherited this term for administrative purposes. We would like to begin our discussion with a brief review of the law establishing this system of political administration.

In 1949, the Eastern House of Assembly (EHA)⁵² adopted a government memorandum for the establishment in the Eastern Provinces of a new system of government, based on the British model, at sub divisional political-cum-administrative units. The new system was to replace the system of Native Administration (NA) adopted in the region in the early 1930s. The government felt then that the Native Administration system could no longer meet the challenges of local governance, and that the British-type system of local government would be more suitable. The government hoped, among other things, that the proposed system of administration would give greater autonomy to the various units of local government; that it would attract more educated Nigerians to participate in public affairs at the local level; and that, by participating in public affairs at this level, educated Nigerians would gain the experience they need to become leaders of the region and ultimately of a self-governing Nigeria in future.⁵³

Following the adoption of the memorandum, the Governor, Sir John S. McPherson, on May 22, 1950, signed into law "An Ordinance to make provision for local government in the Eastern Provinces and for purposes connected therewith." It was Ordinance No. 16 of 1950. This Ordinance, which was to be officially cited as the "Eastern Region Local, Government Ordinance 1950," established three levels of local government councils: County, Urban District/Rural District, and Local (village). The county council was to be responsible for a large area within which there would be a few district councils. District councils were to be responsible for medium-sized rural areas or urban centres, while local councils were to be responsible for village affairs. That level or council was made autonomous. The local council was not subordinate to the district council, and that was not subordinate to the county council. Each council was to perform its functions independently and report directly to the regional secretariat in Enugu.⁵⁴

The Ordinance gave exclusive powers to county councils to establish native courts and to open and run their own secondary schools. It assigned exclusively to district councils the power to open and run nursery and primary schools, and to collect taxes and rates for the regional government and for the three levels of council were assigned the following responsibilities: markets, conservancy maintenance of law and order, water supply, and public health other functions of local government bodies, like the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, were not assigned exclusively to any level of council⁵⁵

Section 3 of the Ordinance empowered the Regional Authority (the Chief Commissioner) to establish Councils after consulting and ascertaining the wishes of the inhabitants of the area concerned. Councils were to be established by instrument. Each instrument was to define the type of council and its name, describe its seal, define its territorial jurisdiction and contain the constitution (membership) of the Council and the date of its first election. The instrument would also contain provisions on the following: the election or appointment of the council chairman, method of elections, qualifications for election as a councillor, and voting qualification.⁵⁶ The Ordinance further provided that where there was need to alter the boundaries of a Council, to merge or divide a Council, or to create a new (higher-level) council, the Regional Authority "shall cause an inquiry to be held."⁵⁷

It is pertinent to observe that this Ordinance was quite flexible. For example, it did not contain any provision specifying minimum and maximum population or territorial sizes for the creation of councils. The Ordinance did not provide that people of a common language or dialect should belong to one council. These criteria were considered by policy-makers and used in making proposals for the creation of councils. But they were of secondary importance. The criterion that was emphasized in the Ordinance was that the wishes of the inhabitants of any proposed council be taken into account. Thus, because the wishes of the people in different proposed council areas in their region could not be determined at the same time, local government councils could not be established at the same time. In 1951 County, District and local Council were established in only one Division in the region- Ikot Ekpen in Calabar Province. The last in the colonial period were established in 1958.

In the same vein, because the wishes of the inhabitants of the different areas varied, the instruments that established local government councils also varied.⁵⁸

Functions of Native Authority

The Native Authority had duties that covered the whole Division. These included the preparation of estimates, assessment and collection of taxes and the supervision and discipline of the Native Authority staff. The quality of membership of this new authority was a great improvement on any of its predecessors. For instance, it included three headmasters, viz Agwu O. Otisi of Abiriba. Mr. T.N. Igwe of Item, and S. N. Okoro of Abiriba, as well as three teachers and two church ministers, U.U. Madukwe of Ohafia and Amos Ochiuwa of Isuogu. There were also top businessmen among its membership, and of course the old hands such as members of the appeal courts - J.O. Ebere and W.O. Wogu.⁵⁹ The authority was to comprise 47 members drawn from the component units as follows;- Umuimenyi 3, Alayi 3, Itu 3, Ohafia 3, Abam 3, Olokororo 2, Item 3, Igbere 2, Ibeku 2, Bende 2, Oboro 3, Ozuiem 2, Ubakala 3, Uuogu 2, Umuahra Ibeku Township 2, Abiriba 3, Ohuhu (Igbo) 3, and Ibere 3.⁶⁰

Bende Divisional Native Authority - 50 Members

Ala- Ala Federated Native Authority Member county council Members

Ariam	3	6	1
Ibere	4	8	2
Oboro	4	8	2
Oloko	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	
	<u>15 x</u>	<u>30</u>	

Odida – Anyanwu Federated Native Authority.

Ubakala	5	2
Olokororo	3	1
Ibeku	7	3
Igbo	<u>11</u>	5
	<u>26</u>	

Elu- Elu Federated Native Authority

Umuimenyi	8	3
Alayi	8	3
Item	6	2
Ozuiem	3	1
Igbere	4	1
Bende	4	1
Itu	2	1
Umuahia	<u>2</u>	1
	<u>37</u>	

Owuwa- Anyanwu Federated Native Authority

Abiriba	7	2
Nkporo	6	2
Abam	9	2
Ohafia	<u>17</u>	<u>5</u>
	<u>39</u>	<u>47</u>

Since most of the council members were engaged in full time employments, this meant that the council could not meet very regularly. J.S. Smith, Resident Owerri Province, therefore suggested that the council elect an executive committee which could meet as often as was necessary to carry out much of the affairs of the council. As a result of this, a 12-Member Committee was “elected” by the Council they were:

Rev.U.U Maduekwe	Ohafia-Pastor of C.S.M, Ohafia.
Mr. A-O. Oti	Abiriba-Headmaster at Ohafia.
Mr. J.O. Ezereonye	Umuimenyi-leprosy services Uzuakoli.
Mr. M.Nwosu.	Umuimenyi-Schoolmaster.
Mr.G.O Ihekire	Ibeku-Trader and letter-writer.
Mr.T.N Igwe	Item-Headmaster at Item.
Mr.J.O Ebere	Ubakala- Appeal Court Member
Mr. A. Nwoke	Ohafia- Chemist at Aba

Mr. H.O. Alozie	Ibeku-Trader at Port-Harcourt.
Mr.A.K. Uche	Ohaofia-Schoolmaster.
Mr. W.O. Wogu	Olokoru-Appeal Court Member.
Mr.S.N.Okoro	Oboro-Headmaster at Ozuitem.

It is of vital importance to note that the council elected these members from an already prepared list compiled by the District Officer. In other words, while the members were supposed to be the people's choice, this choice was indirectly influenced by the British officer. Anyway, the officer defended his action by saying that he wanted the best qualified people to be the members of the Committee. However sound the argument may be, this action undermined the spirit of democracy. The Executive Committee was further divided into two sub-committees Finance and Administration. The Finance Committee inter-alia was responsible for the preparation of the budget, recommendation of projects and the general assessment and collection of taxes. The subcommittee administration was in charge of legislation that is, recommending the making of rules and regulation as well as considering applications and recommending the granting of scholarships.⁶¹ It should be noted that the recommendations made by any of the subcommittees would be examined by the full committee before submission in the full Division Council.⁶²

A look at the Executive Committee and its duties reveals many points or issues of interest. In the first place, the main council knew little, if any at all, of what it was that was happening in the Division since the main decisions were taken in the committee and its decisions were only communicated to the full house any time it met. This meant that the affairs of the Division were run by the 12 members of the Executive Committee. The remaining 38 members were, therefore, mere messengers carrying the Committee decisions to their people. Even the composition of the Committee was far from satisfactory. The 12 members were drawn from seven communities. For instance, all the three Abiriba members to the Divisional Native Authority were members of the Committee. So also were the two members from Umuimenyi.⁶³ By implication, ten communities were excluded from decisions that concerned them. It is, therefore, not surprising that there was suspicion and discontent among the oil communities that felt neglected (that their needs were not considered). One case in point was Igbere who demanded for the bridging of the Igwu stream on the Igbere-Ozuitem road. This was turned down for no apparent

reason.⁶⁴

In order, therefore, to create in general sense of belonging in the Division, its structural reform of the Native authority was embarked upon in 1951. The reformed Native Authority was sub-divided into three committees, each committee had 12 members. By this structural reform, each community was represented in at least one of the three committees. Moreover, it gave the majority of the members the chance to discuss in details and share in the execution of at least one particular aspect of the Authority's work. It should be noted that the Native Authority was divided into Works, Finance and General Purpose Committees. The Works Committee undertook the construction, maintenance and repairs of roads, bridges, buildings and furniture. The Finance Committee, on its part, was responsible for the preparation of estimate. Whatever it budgeted was subject to the approval of the full house of the Council. It was also responsible for tax collection. The General Purposes Committee exercised.

All exercisable powers conferred on it by the Bende Divisional Native Authority in the engagement, discipline and management of the authority's staff. But it had no powers to fix salaries of workers or grade and promote the authority's staff. The award of scholarship was also within its portfolio.⁶⁵

As much as this administrative arrangement was laudable, it still had some weaknesses. There was rivalry between the councilors for appointment into the Committees especially into the General Purposes Committee. This Committee was the most lucrative from the councilor's point of view because it offered a fast means of accumulating money through bribes for award of scholarships et cetera, because it handled such delicate issues as wards and their parents or guardians.

In 1949, a new Divisional treasury was opened at Bende through the amalgamation of the four federated council treasuries and the Itumbuzo treasury. By 1951, Bende Divisional revenue had increased to £27,900 (N55,800) from £21,013 (N42,016) in 1949.⁶⁶ Despite the huge amount of money derived from taxation, the people's demands for increased government services like construction of roads were not entirely met. In addition, the Council had to battle with the problem of absenteeism. As a result of this, some clans were virtually unrepresented in the

Council. In this connection, the Ibere community was a typical example. Its second member, Richard Mba was on the 26th of November, 1951 convicted for stealing and was sentenced to imprisonment. Its first member, Johnson Ikeogu, a trader resident at Aba attended only 8 out of the 35 meetings held by the Council between April 1948 and January 1952. The Isuogu clan was equally affected by this problem. Another member, Amos Ochiuwa was resident at Isiokpo in present Rivers State. He attended only 5 out of the 35 meetings of the Authority between April 1948 and January 1952.⁶⁷ There were so many cases of absenteeism to the Council's meetings that the District Officer had to cry out that there was "no Native Authority in Bende Division."⁶⁸ To arrest this situation which was partly created by members not residing in the Division, the Native Authority in 1952 decreed that residence within the Division should be one of the criteria for membership of the Native Authority.⁶⁹

It was not until after 1957, that the Aro Igbo County which had been in the (Enyong Division of Calabar Province was transferred to Bende Division. The Aro Igbo included the people of Arochukwu proper, Ihechiowa and Ututu. The inclusion of the Aro Igbo in Bende Division might have been as a result of their long-standing agitation for transfer to join their Igbo kinsmen and women in Bende Division.⁷⁰ It seems more likely that the transfer was effected because of political considerations. The 1951 Macpherson constitution formally regionalized Nigeria. This was followed by the entrenchment of the three major political parties—the Action Group, National Council of Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C) and the Northern People's Congress (N.P.C) in the Western, Eastern and Northern Regions respectively. One, therefore, sees the separation of the Igbo area from the Efik in the Enyong Division of Calabar Province as a measure aimed at making the Divisions in the region as homogeneous as possible in terms of ethnic groupings. Thus, the minority's fears (which the Aro area constituted) would be minimized if not eliminated.

As already pointed out in this chapter. By 1950 Local Government Ordinance, a new local government system based on the British system was introduced in the Eastern Region.⁷¹ On 1 April, 1954, this system was adopted by the British administration in Bende.⁷² This provided for this three tier system in local government administration, namely, the County Council, District Council and the local council. There was no re-grouping of the people into new administrative

units in the Division. Rather, each of the four federated treasury areas known as Elu-Elu, Ala-Ala, OwuwaAnyanwu. And Odida Anyanwu became known as a District Council. The communities became the local councils, while the Division assumed the name of County Council. By this arrangement, the County Council was responsible for providing social welfare services and development schemes. Through such an inclusive local government units, the administrators anticipated that they would probably be able to concentrate power in a few hands and would also be able to centralize and streamline the decision-making process in Igbo villages.⁷³

Instead, this scheme became very unpopular. In response to the people's cry against it. The 1958 and 1960 Local Government reforms provided, among other things, a two tier system of local government administration. These were at two levels: the higher level which was the County Council which in Bende Division still remained the 1942 federated communities of Elu-Elu, Ala-Ala, OwuwaAnyanwu, and Odida Anyanwu. These assumed the status of County Councils. The Aro-Igbo area excised from Enyong Division was included in the Owuwa Anyanwu county council. The functions of the council included the provision of such vital amenities as road-maintenance, provision of dispensaries and maternity homes, and a host of others.⁷⁴ At the lower level was the local council which covered a single village group. Its functions were not closely defined. Its true purpose however, was to act as an agent of community development.⁷⁵ Its major function was to assist such customary bodies as the meeting of elders in executing development projects.

The reasons for the reform included the inefficiency of the existing system and unsuitability for conversion to a Local Government system. The reform desired the re-constitution of the Federated Native Authorities namely, Odida Anyanwu, Owuwa-Anyanwu, Elu-Elu and Ala-Ala as subordinate to the Bende Divisional Native Authority, with a view to their becoming Rural District councils later. The colonial administration later recommended that, because of financial weakness, Ala-Ala should be merged with Odida Anyanwu; local opinion was strongly against it as a result of elite politics among the two groups.

Public Finance

There-organization of the Native Authority was accompanied by a reorganization of the financial structure. The subordinate Native Authorities were appointed tax and rates collection authorities, which meant that they had a responsibility not only to themselves but to the Divisional Native Authority. Rates were, therefore, made not arbitrarily means of raising general revenue but to cover the cost of Divisional and subordinate Native Authority services which could not be financed out of tax and miscellaneous revenue. Aiming to please and to justify its existence, the Divisional Native Authority decided on an expensive system of grants to schools and fairly large building programmes in 1954. The outcome was higher rates, and the figures were as follows;

Tax Figures

No. of persons Assessed	1953 -54	1954 -55
(a) Schedule 11	5,159	11,153
(b) Standard Rate	36,312	27,806
Total	41,471	38,959

Tax yield

No. of persons Assessed	1953 -54	1954 -55
(a) Schedule 11	4721:1:8	7907:5:1
(b) Standard Rate	17887:10:-	13966:10:-
(c) General Rate	5102:17:6	16309:3:10
(d) Education Rate	28671:7:6	16126:10:3

Comparative Figures for Rate 1955/56

Odida – Anyanwu	--	10,115.7.	9
Elu – Elu	--	9,688.-.	–
Owuwa – Anyanwu	--	8,540 -.	–
Ala – Ala	--	6,337.5.	–
Umuahia Ibeku	--	3,320.-.	–

Comparative Figures of the Rate per Head

1954 – 55	£1955-56
Odida – Anyanwu	1.-. 3d 17/-
Elu – Elu	16/- 16/-

Owuwa – Anyanwu	17/9d	17/9d
Ala – Ala	15/-	19/-

Umuahia – Ibeku. 5 percent of annual value 5 percent of annual value.

The Ala-Ala Native Authority decided to raise its rates on an income basis order to put more of the burden on the high income earners. The resistance which arose there were not primarily connected with the method of raising the rates, although a few of the low income earners who were badly slung by this system still paid theirs.⁷⁶ Apart from Ala-Ala where payment was delayed (though they later started the collection of tax and rates), it went smoothly. Each Native Authority worked out a timetable for payment by communities which was adhered to strictly. There were some complaints of over-zealous tax assessment by committee members who wanted to achieve an unrealizable result in a year and the number of tax appeals was likely to be high.⁷⁷ In Nkporo community where the people expected every amenity immediately the demand notes were refused but after a number of delegations from the Native Authority and a few court actions, the trouble died down and nothing was heard from it again. The expected yield of tax and rates in the various Native Authority areas was as follows in 1954:

1954- 55 Tax Collected

Treasury	Tax Schedule 1		Schedule 11		Total No. of person who pay tax	Total Amount of Tax Collected	Tax incidence	
	No. of persons who paid tax	Amount of Tax collected	No of Person who paid Tax	Amount of Tax collected			Per tax payer	Per Head of population
Owuwa	7,655	£ S D 3,827. 10	1,997	£ S D 2,210.11. 8	9,652	£ S D 6,038.1.8	12.6	1.3
Ala-Ala	4,958	2,479.-.-	753	706.8.8	5,711	3,185. 8. 8	11.1	1.10
Elu-Elu	11,128	5,564.-.-	1,238	1,990.13.3	12,366	7,555.13.3	12.2 ¹ / ₂	1.10
<u>Odida</u>	10,309	5,154.-.-	1,726	1,950.13.4	12,035	7,105.3.4	11.10	1.7
<u>Umuahia</u> <u>Ibeku</u>	1,123	561. 10.-.	2,300	2,970.-.11	3,423	3,531.10.11	1.-.8	5.9

Total	35,173	17,586.10.-	8,014	9,828.7.10	43,187	27,424.17.10	12.8	1.8
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1955-56 Expected Tax Yield

District Council Area	Standard Rate			Schedule 11		
Ala- Ala Rural District Council	£	S	D	£	S	D
	2,381.	-	-	1,011	19.	5
Elu- Elu Rural District Council	5,436.	10.	-	2,139.	16.	8
Owuwa-Anyanwu Rural District Council	3,891.	10	-	2,176.	14	6
Odida- Anyanwu Rural District Council	4,972	-	-	2,253.	1.	6
Umuahia – Ibeku Rural District Council	220	-	-	2,675.	0.	-

Further Disturbances

The Ala-Ala disturbances and active disturbance elsewhere were factors that showed (hut changes were taking place. Education grant were more than doubled the next year (1955) because the subsisting system of calculation was retained. This inevitably meant high rates before any capital works or expansion of services were considered.⁷⁸

In 1954, a serious threat to peace occurred in the Ala-Ala area where the taxpayers, dissatisfied with the rates they were asked to pay, stirred up the women and encouraged them to demonstrate forcefully. Very large protest meetings were held in the clans, tax collectors were intimidated and rough-handled, and there was the danger of complete lawlessness. It took, two units of the police force to prevent a full-scale attack on the Native Authority Treasury.⁷⁹

In January, 1955, There was yet another outbreak of lawlessness in The Ala-

Ala area where a month before, the women who had been well briefed and incited by the men against taxation threatening to paralyze revenue, collection and ordinary administration. Effective police action and the punishment of individual offenders did a great deal to make them think twice and no time was lost in following this up with meetings in the villages during the time that Local Government elections were being held.

The opposition fizzled out, and rates and taxes were collected but not without a large number of prosecutions in the court. This sort of agitation which held considerable appeal for the highly assessed people was quick to spring up in other parts of the Division. In Odida-Anyanwu, many women's meetings were reported and tax collectors were rough handled. In Ehu-Elu, whole villages bluntly refused to pay. The opposition was finally broken by the employment of a flying squad of twelve of the toughest court messengers who visited each recalcitrant village and made mass arrests. After a few maximum prison sentences, the payment of tax and rates was preferred to grass cutting in Bende and the trouble quickly died out.⁸⁰

Another of such disturbance in the Division was the rebellion in Umuahia by the Ex-Servicemen between 1950 and 1951 which was caused by the refusal of the British Administration to pay compensation to the indigenous soldiers who fought in World War II. The aggrieved ex-soldiers briefly captured Umuahia and kept the European community and official quarters for the provincial Administration without communication for many days. It took the intervention of the delegates of the supreme council of ex-servicemen from Enugu who went from one house to another to plead with rioting ex-soldiers to stop fighting because the government had agreed to their demands. This later turned out to be false information.

In addition, is the opposition raised by the adherents of the True Faith Tabernacle to the payment of rate. They said that the word "rate" was not in the Bible, and therefore, completely against their sect. Tax was regarded by them as Caesar's just due, while rates were seen as heretical interference. The natural outcome was that many of the people were prosecuted and sentenced to fines or imprisonment. On one occasion at Ubakala Native Court, 40 to 60 of them found themselves bound for Bende with a court messenger as an escort. Having reached Umuahia, the prospect of 14 more miles along the Bende road held little distraction

for them. They therefore raised enough money to hire a lorry to carry them to prison and arrived in Bende singing hymns with all the fervour of martyrs and to the great astonishment of the local town folks who were not used to seeing prisoners arrive in such style and with such obvious enthusiasm.⁸¹

Other disputes worth mentioning are; the discontentment caused by the Aro settlement in Bende community amongst the indigenes and Ibeku people over valuable cocoa lands, the Oloko and their Ikot Ekpene neighbours provincial land dispute and the Uzuakoli villages were persistently trying to extend their farmland at the expense of Ozuitem.

Changes in the Local Government System up to 1960

One of the advantages of the new local government system was that it was able to make use of some of the educated men. In the Owuwa Anyanwu County Council, for example, O. Onyeije of Abiriba. The principal of Enuda College, a university graduate, was chairman for many years. This Council also had K.O.K. Onyioha also a university graduate from Nkporo and D. N. Dike, a headmaster from Ohafia as its members. In the Odida Anyanwu County were such men as Dr. J.O.J. Okezie, Rev F.E Enenama and A. O Chikwendu.⁸² Each County Council was subdivided into three committees, namely, the Works Committee, Finance Committee, and the Education Committee.

At the regional level, the Division was between 1953 and 1959 (when the Eastern House of Assembly was established) represented by three members of the N.C.N.C. It should be noted that this system was not peculiar to Bende Division. It was the system in vogue throughout the Eastern Region. Bende Division was represented in the Assembly by Dr. M.I. Okpara and Mr. O.A. Chikwendu, both from Ohuhu, and Barrister E. Emolo from Abiriba.⁸³ It should also be noted that despite the fact that the Bende local government co-opted educated men as Councilors and in spite of regular salaries to the local government, bribery and corruption continued to flourish in the Division, the supervisory influence of the District Officer notwithstanding.⁸⁴

With the introduction of self-government in the Eastern Region in 1957, Dr. M.I. Okpara effected the transfer of the Bende administrative headquarters from

Bende to Umuahia Township. A number of factors compelled this transfer to Umuahia. Bende was too remote and the central position of Umuahia in relation to the component clans of the Division made it a better choice.⁸⁵ Besides, Umuahia was easily accessible by road and rail, unlike Bende which was not served by a good network of roads. With this transfer, Bende declined. It had nothing to show that it had once been the seat of power besides the old colonial buildings, its dispensary and postal agency. Uzuakoli equally lost its commercial importance to Umuahia, for by 1959 all the commercial companies had moved away, leaving Uzuakoli a shadow of its past glory.⁸⁶ Also with Regional self government in 1957, the new leaders in Bende Division and in the Eastern Region were swift to recognize the value of a developing and good transport system for a growing economy.

ORDERS, RULES AND BYE-LAWS

Orders

Orders provide for rules to be followed with respect to a specific issue. Order is stronger than by-laws but not as strong as law itself. Orders are issued as per the rules read with the relevant clause/article/section of the Act.

The primary distinction between Rules and orders is that while rules may be said to be a separate legislation to a certain extent, orders are not so. Order is a condition where law is adhered to. It is one of the primary objectives of law. It is, therefore, legally speaking, a very subjective concept. In a society where people steal from each other, but the law there does not prohibit stealing, we can safely say (assuming the law, which excludes the prohibition of theft, is non-existent) there is order, and vice versa.

Order is the state of peace and discipline in which citizens interact with each other without any conflicts. Order is relative, but the opposite of order is chaos. Chaos rules in situation like civil war⁸⁷.

Rules

“A rule is a general norm mandating or guiding conduct or action in a given type of situation”⁸⁸. A regulation on the other hand is a rule of order having the force

of law, prescribed by a superior or competent authority, relating to the actions of those under the authority's control. Regulations are issued by various federal government departments and agencies to carry out the intent of legislation enacted by congress"⁸⁹. So going by the wording of these two definitions, a ruler in the context of the first definition, is any "mandatory norm" this can be taken to mean any existing enactment of the legislature of a country or state, while a regulation in the context of the second definition will be taken to mean any "rule of order" made in execution of a law of the legislature. It is clear then that the legislature first enacts a law (a rule), then another competent authority makes supporting laws (orders) to enforce them (regulations). There is therefore minor nuance in definition of both. But they both have the force of law.

Rules are made as per provisions of the Act. Orders are issued as per the rules read with the relevant clause/article/section of the Act. For example, the income tax Act 1961 is an Act passed by the parliament which empowers the bureaucracy set up for implementation of the Act, to draw power directly from the constitution. But there is a set of rules called INCOME-TAX RULES, 1962 (26-3-1962)⁹⁰. These rules are made under the Act. The Act set the principles, and the rules set the modality and nitty-gritties of the processes. The orders are product of the rules read with the Acts.

The main difference between rules and laws is the consequences associated with breaking them. While each is developed to invoke a sense of order, fair play, and safety, the weight of a law is much heavier than the weight of a rule. Laws are like the legal version of rule. When you are a child, a parent sets rules to be followed. When you are in a society, the government sets laws to be followed. When a rule is broken, the consequences tend to be uncomfortable but mild in comparison to the breaking of a law.

Laws are enforced by a higher governmental office, laws are written in specific code so that they can be interpreted as needed. When you break a law there is legal action that follows, provided that you are caught. Rules are more flexible and carry low end consequences. You can set up rules for games, rules for the home, even rules for fighting or being intimate with a partner. Rules are personal in nature and they are often adjusted as the conditions and circumstances of the home change.

Laws must be passed through due process in order to take effect. A law starts off as a bill, and must go through a series of checks, balances, and votes in order to become a law. Rules are merely set and adjusted as the need arises, and should be followed out of respect for those setting the rules.

Rules help us learn to prepare for living in society. As youngsters, we tend to learn that there are rules about hitting, stealing, lying and being wasteful. As young adults, we are held accountable for these rules by becoming law abiding citizens. Laws are not meant to set teaching boundaries but are there to be enforced, and are punishable by imprisonment and even death if they are broken. By the time you are old enough to contend with the law, you have already learned the process by dealing with various sets of rules.

Bye-Laws

By-law or Bye-laws has been defined as a regulation made by a local authority or corporation. A rule made by a company or society to control the actions of its members.⁹¹ A by-law (or bye-laws or bylaw) is a rule or law established by an organization or community to regulate itself, as allowed or provided for by some higher authority. The higher authority, generally a legislature or some other government body establishes the degree of control that the by-laws may exercise. By laws are the most important legal document of any organization whether it is a corporation, association, if is a corporation, association, or partnership. By laws outline in writing the day to day rules for your organization and provide comprehensive guidelines to keep things running smoothly. A corporations by laws can contain provisions relating to the ways is conducts its affairs, the duties of its directors and the responsibilities of its officers and employees. Much like the constitution established the United States Government, articles of incorporation establish a new corporation infect, in most states articles of incorporation are the only document required for approval and recognition of a corporation. However, while the articles form a statement of existence and establish a few basic purposes much like a constitution bylaws elaborate the rules that govern a corporation's operations.

All states require corporations to have bylaws, but few require them to file bylaws with the secretary of state or any other government agency. Instead, bylaws must be kept on file at the corporation's place of business. However, states rarely specify any required content for bylaws and leave it to corporate founder to devise their own method of governance. Oregon's law on corporations for example, state that bylaws "may content any provision for managing the business and regulating the affairs of the corporation that is not inconsistent with law or the articles of incorporation".

In common practice, bylaws outline the working of a corporation. Common bylaw topics include how direction are elected, the role of each director, accounting and finance procedures, dissolution clauses and rules governing transfer of shares and ownership. However, bylaws can be as detailed or as simple as a corporation likes and allow for tremendous flexibility on the part of shareholders and directors, or can devise a detailed system of governance that limits the power of individuals.

Articles of incorporation matter mostly at the beginning of a corporation's existence. However, they do not play much role in the day to day life of a company. Bylaws on the other hand, are all about how a company operates on a daily basis and can be revised as needed to reflect changing realities, expectations and goals properly kept and maintained bylaws can be used in dispute resolution and court cases to show company policy and to sue for misconduct or impropriety by corporation directors, officers or staff.

Attached here with are some extracts of the orders, rules and bye-laws from national archives Enugu.

With all these rules, orders and bylaws, the people of Umuahia kept on resisting to colonial domination, for a long time. Even though the British imperialists swept through the Igboland in three years, between 1900 and 1902, and despite the small scale of the societies, Umuahia people put up protracted resistance. As a result of the mastery of the terrain, the people mounted resistance by using the classical guerrilla tactic of hit and run raids against stationary enemy forces. The resistance was diffuse and piecemeal, and therefore it was difficult to conquer them completely and

declare absolute victory. Long after the British formally colonized Igboland, they had not fully mastered the territory.

On the other hand, a lot of problems arose when a colonial officer Dr. Stewart, who was attached to the military Patrol in Owerri province got missing. Dr. Stewart was going to Bende from Owerri on a bicycle. At Orié-Ahia Eke, near Ahiara, the natives, probably not used to the sight of a Whiteman and a bicycle, killed Dr. Stewart whom they regarded as a dangerous Bogey. The report of the district commissioner H.M. Douglas suggests that Dr. Stewart got missing around Ahiara at about this time. The report reads thus

Dr. Stewart was appointed to the West African Medical Staff (W.A.M) on September 4, 1902, and attached to the Southern Nigeria expeditionary force in 1905 upon arrival in the Southern protectorate, he was instructed to proceed to Owerri, where he arrived on November 13, 1905. From here, he was instructed to proceed to Calabar, because he had a bicycle, he sent his boy and a kit in advance to point twenty miles from Owerri on the Imo River. He left Owerri at about 1pm and no more was heard of him until Sunday, November 19, when the clerk at the waterside sent an urgent message to the district commissioner, Owerri, H.M. Douglas that Dr. Stewart's Carriers had arrived without him.

From available evidence, it appears the death of the Whiteman in question occurred around the Orié-Ahia Eke near Ahiara. As a measure to revenge the death of the colonial officer the British resorted to brutal reprisals leading to the market. Consequently, the British administration in Bende (Umuhia) resorted to the conquest of the areas between Owerri and Bende. Against this background, it is plausible to suggest that the early British incursion into Umuhia came in through two directions one from the Owerri axis and the other from the Bende axis.

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CHAPTER SIX

IMPACT OF COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION IN UMUAHIA

POLITICALLY

Colonial rule was a stunning and crucial experience for the Umuahia people, partly because of its methods both of which occasioned far-reaching changes in Umuahia. Then it argued that though colonial rule transformed Umuahia communities in many respects, it did not destroy the people's identity or cultural soul¹. Umuahia people have remained 'themselves' in their attitude to and style of life; that is while changing, they were able to preserve their ethnic 'essence' because they were astute enough to use in their own way, the new institutions and values introduced by colonialism. Thus, were it possible for an elder who died about 1850 to come back to life today; he would find the institution of the church strange, but he would understand why in many village-groups some sections would have Roman Catholic churches and others protestant churches. Similarly, he would find the Western system of education strange, but he would understand why a man who had successfully put his child through this system "has mouth" in village politics. In other words, it is gross exaggeration to say that Umuahia communities and culture disintegrated or collapsed under colonial rule for, to a greater extent than has so far been recognized, the people have sought to use institution and techniques acquired through the link with the outside world, established by colonial rule to maintain those values and styles of life which are intrinsic to their separate identity.²

The establishment of colonial rule in Umuahia had profound impact on the hitherto existing political arrangement of the people. Before the advent of colonialism, no chief was paramount in Umuahia, and as such, government was not vested in any man alone. Even though the eldest village Ibeku had certain privilege, it did not produce a paramount chief. Consequently, the British created a paramount chief where none had existed before.

Colonial rule interfered with the precolonial way of administering justice in Umuahia³. During the pre-colonial days, there were no courthouses, no warrant chief with exclusive judicial powers, no interfering administrative officer and intermediary functionaries like the clerks, messengers and interpreters (Kotima). Administrative justice then was “within the jurisdiction of every adult male of integrity and tried experience in the community”⁴. The extended family, comprising a number of nuclear families with one ancestral father was the next higher stage of authority. The oldest man in the extended family held the family Ofo (symbol of authority, he prayed and sacrificed to the family deity (or chi), and to the family’s ancestors, on behalf of the whole family; he solicited all kinds of favours from the gods on behalf of himself and the rest of the members of the extended family. One important thing to note about the dispensation of justice during this period was that the council of elders acting as a judicial body, formed a body of mediators rather than prosecutors and judges, which was seen during the British administration in Umuahia.

It is true that in the pre-colonial days, there was bribery and corruption in Umuahia in the dispensation of justice, but it could not be compared to the height it attained during colonial rule. A criminal rarely went unpunished, because the old system did not provide the “loop holes and legal logic”⁵ provided by the new one. Thus the colonial system conversely afforded opportunities for large scale corruption. The warrant chief and his group were under-paid and in order not to die of hunger, they resorted to extortion and blackmailing the people by taking the things that women took to the market for sale by force (goats or yams). In short, the people were disillusioned. Each party to a case must bring some gifts to the member of the tribunal handling their case. The party who brought less stood the chance of losing, or a winner without the benefits of winning. For thirty years, the native courts remained badly organized, ill composed in personnel and corruption.

The colonial rule despite its disruptive effects on the traditional system of justice, had some positive impacts on the political set up of Umuahia. It created political awareness among the people. In pre-colonial times, each Igbo community considered itself a world unto itself. Colonial rule destroyed this delusion hence Umuahia was grouped under five clan units, namely: Ohuhu, Ibeku, Olokoru, Umuopara and Ubakala, this took effect from 1917. Hence, the administrative headquarters moved

from Bende to Umuahia, on a more spacious land situated in an Ibeku land⁶. The people started seeing one another as the same people with one political destiny. It was from this platform that the Igbos entered the political main stream of Nigeria and became a force to contend with.

ECONOMICALLY

As in the political sphere, colonial rule introduced many changes into the economic life of Umuahia people. But it is not generally recognized that many of these changes were the results more of the general conditions imposed by colonial rule than of deliberate economic planning by the British.

Infact, in most of its economic attitudes, the colonial regime could be described as conservative rather than radical, except probably in the matter of currency charges. In the area of transport and communication where the regime again adopted radical and drastic policies, the initial intention was more political and administrative than economic. It is this which explains the fact that the most vital roads in colonial Umuahia originated as links between administrative headquarters (provincial and divisional headquarters) rather than between the leading market and production centres⁷. It was largely through sheer persistence and by the superiority of the facilities they offered, that these roads came in time to be the main arteries of commerce in Umuahia. Still the importance of many of the main centers which they link remains even today artificial and political rather than organic and economic⁸.

The major roads in each division came into being in the first months of the establishment of the division, and were designed firstly to link the division headquarters to the native court centers. Through the need to recruit and supervise mass labour gangs for constructing the roads the European Officers in charge of the division was also offered the opportunity to sport the leaders of the various communities and associate them with his government, as well as to give the people as a whole a first taste of the meaning of pax Britannica.⁹ The administrative character of these roads becomes all the more manifest when it is emphasized that the headquarters which they linked were chosen not from economic considerations, but

for political and health reasons- geographical centrality, availability of good water supply, fresh air and so on.

With the railway, there was another economic impact which became immediately obvious once the line transverse Umuahia. This was the fact that the European commercial companies which hitherto hugged the coast and the river banks, because they wanted, cheap transportation, now penetrated the interior establishing posts and depots at vital points on the railway line. As a result the railway stations and halts became produce buying points of varying degrees of importance. Among such points were Port-Harcourt which in addition was the port of evacuation, Aba, Umuoba, Umuahia, Uzuakoli, Ovim, Afikpo road, Agbani, and Eha Amufu. Each of these became, as it were, a 'port' with the surrounding town and villages as its hinter land.¹⁰ They served as centers for collecting local produce mainly palm oil and palm kernel. They also serve as venue for distributing the new cash currency, stock fish, tobacco, kerosene, cloth, enamel wares, metal gadget, gun power, spirituous drinks and so on.

Still, it must not be thought that the economic transformation occasioned by the transport and communications revolution was immediate, at least not for all portions as a study of the conditions in the 1920s and 1930s will amply demonstrate. In Umuahia the road and rail revolution soon established itself. Here the effect of it on the produce trade was enormous, and the story of the growth which the revolution occasioned is probably best told in the rapid rise and expansion of Aba and Umuahia as important commercial centers. In this region the road and railway systems found no great difficulty in establishing themselves partly because they were not in competition with any long established system of water or river transport and partly because much of the land here is rolling plane.¹¹ With reference to the question of river system, the only important river that washes Southern igbo is the Imo River, which was not navigated to carry any great extent in the past and still is not..

The fact that most of Ikwuano/Umuahia land is rolling plane was of important in this regard as it occasioned a revolution within a revolution the bicycle revolution¹². It is because of the nature of the terrain that the men and women of this zone used the

bicycle in a radically new way, as the main means for moving produce to the rail-heads the products of the remotest parts of their area untouched by motor roads.

Just as the innovations in transport and communication came to be appreciated and exploited only slowly, so it took time for the British coinage to assert itself against indigenous and earlier forms of currency- salts, cowries, brass rods, copper wires, manilas and so on. British coinage was introduced officially into the Niger coast protectorate in 1898 and equivalent rates worked out between it and those other forms of currency so as not to occasion a sudden breakdown in business transactions¹³. Naturally, Umuahia people, like their other Nigerian neighbors, resisted the introduction of the new coinage partly out of habit and partly because it was not seen to have the ritual and other associations which over the centuries had been built up around the old forms of money. But as in other matters, the British forced the charge down our people's throats, using threats and economic arguments to advance their position.

Colonial rule created the desire to acquire land on freehold terms. Before this time, all land had been either family or community land. But under the changed economic situation under colonialism, there came into being as Mr. I. J. Ahaiwe puts it, "a growing class of African capitalist, anxious to acquire and secure tenure of land for planning purposes"¹⁴. Hence the adage "The asked us to close our eyes for prayers and before we opened our eyes our lands are taken away from us"¹⁵.

SOCIO- CULTURALLY

This issue of the transformation of Umuahia under colonialism is one that has interested many students of Igbo society who have debated with great skills the explanation for the relative ease with which the Igbo embraced, or were made to embrace new fashions. Here we shall try and distinguish three important factors which on close analysis can be seen to have influenced the socio-cultural lives of the people more drastically than any others. These are the Christian missions and the school, urbanization and increased travel, and the new economic opportunities created by colonial rule.

Thanks to the researches of professor. J.F.A Ajayi and E.A. Ayandele, of Dr. S. N. Nwabara, F. K. Ekechi and E. A. Udo, we now have a clearer picture of the missionary penetration of Igbo land. In this regard Dr. Ekechi has talked of the “massive Igbo response to Christianity being generated by the social and political disruption that accompanied the establishment of British colonial rule”¹⁶. The Igbos became Christians not so much because they felt they had lost their old identity but because they found themselves in a world in which the old identity was no longer enough and they sought to supplement it by acquiring aspects of the identity of their conquerors.

In this process of changing the fundamental basis of society, the school played important part because it was the instrument for mobilizing support for Christianity and by the same token for withdrawing support from the old social order. This role was all the more crucial because those recruited for Christianity through the school were by and large children, that is the younger generation who had not yet been fully inducted into the culture and love of the nation¹⁷. The result was that they brought to Christianity fewer trappings of the indigenous culture than would have been the case if most of the early converts were elders who had become the embodiment of the traditions of their fathers.

Furthermore, the school dealt severe blows on indigenous Igbo culture not only because it was the instrument through which a large fraction of the younger generation of Igbo men were indoctrinated against the society and its values, but also because it tended to withdraw them physically from participation in those celebrations and social processes by which the values of the people were transmitted from generation to generation.

Second in importance to the missions and the school as instruments of social change were urbanization and increased travel. Urbanization was unknown in pre-colonial Umuahia. The people lived in villages, village-group and clans with the result that respect for religion, law and custom was induced partly by the sanctions of reward and punishment and partly by the influence of the family, elders and near-kinsmen¹⁸. This also made it possible for people's lives to be organized around such gods and institutions as were important to the community. Also in urban environment,

one comes across people who have ideas, styles of life and behavior, techniques to mention but a few, which are quite different from those obtaining in one's village, therefore one stands a chance of learning things new that is both good and bad.

It was by introducing these conditions that urbanization proved such a potent instrument of social change in Umuahia. The urban centers which were important in includes:- Onitsha, Asaba, Agbor, Aba, Port Harcourt, Umuahia and Enugu, others includes, Owerri, Okigwe. To mention but a few, arose more or less from similar circumstances. They grew up around those points which were important under colonial rule either as commercial or political centers or both ¹⁹. Umuahia and Enugu rose first as economically important towns,- Umuahia for produce and Enugu for coal,-before becoming administrative headquarters. This explain the reason why till today, there are many multinational co-operations in Umuhaiia, Multi-national Co-operations like Paterson Zochonis (PZ), G.B. Ollivart, Union Trading Company (UTC), United African Company (UAC), John Holt and company, to mention but a few ²⁰.

In addition, the attempt to supply the economic needs of the population at the divisional capital led to much coming and going between the villages around and the headquarters. In time adventurous spirits from the neighboring villages and beyond came to settle there, more or less permanently to meet these needs on a regular basis. With places like Port Harcourt, Aba, Umuahia and Enugu this migration of population increased with the construction of the railway between 1913 and 1915.²¹ The railway brought many non-Igbo elements who were needed to work the trains and maintain the subsidiary services. The coming of these people created new needs which were met partly, through increase migration from the villages and partly through the old settlers bordering their outlook and expanding their business. It was in these different ways that modern urbanization came into Umuahia.

But it must not be thought that the people simply surrendered themselves to the new and enticing ways of the urban centers. On the contrary, they carried to these towns those aspects of their village or traditional culture which could be accommodated with the demands of the nw environment. Of these the most important was the 'lineage organization'. In the urban center the smallest clan 'lineage' was the

village group and this provided the basis for organizing group activity. This helps to explain why, in the context of urban politics, an Igbo would normally refer to any person from his village-group as a 'brother' or 'sister'. For mutual encouragement, support and control people from the same village-group or even clan (or divisions, for distant urban centers) tended to settle in the same part of the town, or at least to meet frequently on Sundays to discuss common problems and to 'pull the ear' of any member who was bringing shame to their 'town'.²²

The main changes induced by the new economic forces unleashed by colonialism can be easily summarized as they are not radically different from those already mentioned above. The impact of this development on society was quite far-reaching. It vested a new value on raw cash as such, the Igbo came to say 'ego bekee na-ekwu-okwu' (the white man's money talks).

The fact is that hitherto people made money and accumulated wealth in order to marry many wives, raise a large yam barn, buy admission to the revered title and secret societies since it was from these that prestige and status is derived. But with colonial rule money came to have value for its own sake and to convey status even when not invested in the purchase of status in the traditional manner. Through the salaried servant, colonial rule tended to give a new value to raw cash and through that to provide new criteria for assessing social worth.²³

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CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

By 1900, the influence of the Aro on the hinterland areas of South Eastern Nigeria was still a force to reckon with. Consequently, the British undertook an expedition against the Aro from 1901 to 1902 with the hope that the destruction of the Aro influence would open up the hinterland and force them to welcome British rule with open arms. The destruction of Aro did not turn out as the British administrators particularly Sir Ralph Moor, then consul-General of the oil Rivers protectorate, had expected¹. Thus many indigenous people notwithstanding the military superiority of the British resisted the incursion made on their age-long pre-colonial society². From late 1902 – 1906, Umuahia had been established after crushing whatever form of resistance the people could muster³.

The capitulation of Umuahia was immediately followed with the introduction of indirect rule⁴. Indirect rule means, a colonial system of administration based on indigenous authorities⁵. It has been maintained that this system of administration can only succeed in a society where there is visible or effective pivot of authority usually in the person of a chief, Emir; or Oba thus, the British administration having conquered Umuahia appointed some men and gave them warrant as chiefs just like they did in other parts of Igboland. The ignorance of the British administration to understand the fact that there was no institution of chieftaincy in Eastern provinces

contributed to the collapse of this system in the area. Besides the selection of men who had no known claims to some form of traditional authority as warrant chiefs also contributed to sowing the seeds of collapse of this system⁶.

Traditions in Umuahia have not forgotten the days of Okugo, Nwakpuda and Ngadi who were appointed as warrant chiefs. Chief Okeugo was responsible for the women's protest of 1929 at Ahaba Oloko, after which he was sent to prison and dethroned from being a warrant chief. Nwakpuda on his part, was so obstinate and rude to the extent that he denied his people essential amenities all because of his selfishness. When eventually the British build rail line across his community (old Umuahia), he told his subject to go and inform train not to pass because, he, chief Nwakpuda is crossing the rail line but unfortunately for him, he was crushed by the moving train. Chief Ngadi has a better background with big yam barns and large family. The people stressed that these chiefs demanded too much from them. This was as a result of corruption and besides, they receives stipend as salaries⁷.

On the other hand, the missionaries made swift efforts to impose Christianity on the people whom they describes as barbaric, cultureless, animalistic and slow to accept civilization.⁸To Umuahia people, the imposition of foreign institutions and customs was a surprise and as well a shock since they had hitherto relied on the influence of OjamUmuokpara (a deity). However, the preaching of the missionaries came to stay especially with the establishment of two mission schools at Nkwoha (1910) and Nkwozu (1911). The activities of these schools helped to disrupt the traditional society to its foundations. The products of these schools saw themselves as special and exclusive group and in most instance outdid their mentors in denouncing traditional rules such as observing traditional religion, culture and polygamy.

In conclusion, the establishment of colonial administration in Umuahia had both negative and positive impacts on the political, economic and socio-cultural life of the people. In the first place, the new regime was imposed with high-headedness and a reckless disregard of the people's cultural achievements and religious susceptibilities which those affected saw as unparalleled in their history. Villages which offered any resistance to the advance of the British were, when captured, burnt to the ground. Village heads who were usually the ritual heads of their communities and who in

consequence occupied quasi sacred status, when invited to peace parleys were perfidiously seized and subjected to humiliating treatment. They were released only after their ransom was made either by the payment of cash fine or by the supply of food to the military, or by the making of new roads often through a stretch of bush, the entering or traversing of which tradition clearly forbade. Shrines were taken and destroyed as though they were not the inhabitations of gods whose presence in the indigenous community the people regarded as a sine qua non for the existence of a balanced society. This type of wanton ‘sacrilege’ touched its Zenith during the Aro Expedition of 1901-1902, when colonel Montanaro captured Arochukwu and proceeded to blow it up with modern explosive⁹. The famous Aro long Juju or Ibini-Ukpabi’ which for centuries had occupied a place of central importance in the religious and judicial life of the people.

While the people were still dazed by this blow, the British proceeded to introduce the warrant chief system, an institution which until its collapse in 1929, dominated the peoples life in a way no other single measure in this period did. These “chiefs” were given “warrants” or “certificates of recognition”¹⁰ which made them the sole executives heads of their local communities and entitled them to be called upon from time to time to participate in the trial of cases in the “Native courts” which were established under the system. In a number of places, the men who were appointed warrant chiefs were the traditional ritual heads of their villages, but in the overwhelming majority of cases, they were either scoundrels or just ordinary young men of no special standing in indigenous society who had been pushed forward for the specific purpose of parleing with the white man¹¹.

It will be evident from the foregoing that the colonial conquest of Igbo land was accomplished at great cost, both in human lives and in property. The many deaths, the looted farms and livestock, the houses razed, the trees cut down, are adequately documented even in British records, and are remembered with poignant emphasis in the traditions of the Igbo community concerned. The people of Ameke in item still annually observe the day, in 1916, of conflict with the British- the blackest time in item when one of the four principal villages was turned into a desert¹².

All these campaigns were waged in the dry season, in the early years of colonial rule, the effectiveness of British authority depended on the weather¹³. But the late dry season was also the planting season. One can only surmise what affect the looting, the wars, the uncertainty and disorder, had upon agricultural production. The price of food sky-rocketed. Contemporaries attributed it to the inflationary effect of the purchases of cash- paid groups such as the soldiers. It may well have reflected also the cost of war.

The building of roads obviously facilitated both the preservation of British authority-for the movement of troops became easier and the extraction of the country's products, which was, of course, the reason for instituting that rule in the first place. The building of roads brought many benefits to Igbo land, but they were constructed by forced unpaid labour, which was bitterly resented by those concerned

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APPENDIX I

ORAL INTERVIEW

	NAME	AGE	OCCUOATION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE
1	Adindu, U.C	76	Educationist	Amangwu	24 TH December 2013
2	Amaechi. J.N	73	Retired business man	Ekenobizi	15 th August 2014
3	Agwu, E. U.	70	Farmer	Afara ukwu ibeku	14 th August 2017
4	Ananaba, B.N	64	Business man	Clifford road Aba	12 th March 2016
5	Azuka, B.N.	70	Farmer	Uwalaka street Umuahia	16 th August, 2014
6	Azubuike, T.N	80	Retired soldier	Umuahia	19 th March 2014
7	Ahaiwe, I.T	58	Business man	Afara ukwu ibeku	18 th April 2016
8	Egwu, D	84	Trader	umuopara	7 th August, 2014
9	Ehiogu, S.O	79	Trade	Amachara Umuahia	12 th August, 2014
10	Eluwa, N.	92	Farmer	Umuahia	12 th December 2013
11	Ekwuruke, N.	About 100	Retired teacher	Umuwaya Ibeku	3 rd January, 2016.
12	Emenike	80	Retired teacher	Mbom ibeku	4 th April, 2016

13	Eze, B.C	83	Retired tailor	Eziama Ubakala	5 th January 2016
14	Enyinnaya, I	80	Retied trader	Nsirimo	5 th January 2016
15	Ezeike, O.	77	Farmer	Dikenta Ekenobizi	13 th Nov. 2017
16	Ihuwaeze, E.	69	Retired civil servant	Umuohoko Umuhute Ndumeibeku	30 th December, 2015
17	Ihuwa E A	80	Retired police	Umunwanwa	15 th August, 2014.
18	Ijioma, E.	73	Wood carver	Olokoru	17 th March, 2017
19	Iroegbu, N.O	70	Lawyer	Amuzu Ubakala	20 th December 2017
20	Isinguzo, I. U	60	Business man	Azuiyi Umuobia	24 th December
21	Kanu O.U	68	Ex-soldier	Ngodo Ehume	5 th January 2016
22	Kalu, O.	73	Community Leader	Umuzam Ekenobizi	5 th January 2016
23	Lucky, O.	68	Business man	Umuodo Ogbodinibe	15 th Nov. 2017
24	Madika, A	87	Farmer	Old umuahia	29 th December
25	Mbakwe, M.I	69	Mechanic	Uzzi-ossah Umuahia	3 rd January 2016
26	Mgbemena, U.C	80	Retired journalist	Clifford Road Aba	3 rd January 2017
27	Mba kwe, U	74	Business man	Ndume ibeku	6 th Novemrber 2016
28	Madu, O.C	72	Retired teacher	Umuagu Ohuhu	16 th November 2016.
29	Ndudim G	71	Farmer	Umueke umuezeala ndume ibeku	30 th December 2015
30	Ndubuisi, M.	83	Trader	Umuajata Olokoru	15 th March, 2017
31	Njemanze. I	79	Business man.	Umuagu Isingwu	17 th Novemrber 2016
32	Nlebedim, B	81	Retired farmer	Ugbuebila oboro.	20th December 2014.
33	Nnorom, P C	76	Farmer	Mbom ibeku	4 th Januray 2016.
34	Nwabekee, B.U.	90	Retired civil servant	Amaogwugwu Ohuhu	17 th novemrber, 2016
35	Nwankwo, C.O	79	Trader	Ibeku Umuahia	17 th March, 2014
36	Nwosu, O.	82	Retired tailor	Ogbodi Ukwu	20th December 2014
37	Nwosu, R	94	Retired catechist	Umuajiyi isieke ibeky	28 th December 2015
38	Nzekwe, U.O	66	Business man	Dikeukwu	14 th Novemrber 2016
39	Obasi, B O	78	Retired civil servant	Umuahia	18 th April 2014
40	Obioma C A	48	Farmer	Umuokpara Ngodo	24 th December, 2013
41	Ogbulafo O C	81	Retired trader	Ndyme ibeku	19 th March 2014
42	Ogbonna J.	60	transporter	Amankwo Umuokpara	24 th December 2013
43	Odigbo C A	90	Trader	Ekenobizi	22 nd December 2014
44	Oji O.	97	Retired trader	Agata okwulage Afara ukwu	29 th December 2015
45	Ogazi, O	101	Retired farmer	Obizi Amakama	31 st December 2015.
46	Okoro, I E	66	teacher	Umuahia	20 th December 2017
47	Onyekwere T N.N.	68	Business man	Umuopara	16 th August 2014
48	Onwukwe A I	76	farmer	Umuobia Azuiyi	7 th January 2016
49	Onyebuchi, U.C.	73	Business man	Amakama olokoru	31th December 2015

50	Onuoha, S. I	70	Ogurube of ibeku	Ibeku	28 th December, 2015
51	Otuije, P O	64	Business man	Umuahia	18 th November 2016.
52	Oteuri, N.	80	Farmer	Umuawoli Umunwanwa	23 rd December, 2016
53	Sunday L I	59	Politician	Ubani Ibeku	28 th November 2016
54	Sunday, N	70	Trader	Umuihi Umuokpara	24 th December, 2017
55	Sopuruchukwu, A P	79	Retired business man	151 clifford Road Aba	12 th March, 2016
56	UCHEGBU, M	70	Business man	Eziama Ubakala	3 rd January 2016.
57	Uka, B.C	77	Farmer	Nkwoegwu	5 th January, 2016
58	Uka, C O	81	trader	Afara ukwu	30 th December 2015.
59	Ukatta, A. C	74	Trader member Ezes cabinet	Emede Ibeku	21 st December 2017.
60	Ukaegbu, B. N.	69	Business man	Ehi Road Aba	21 st December 2017.
61	Uko, V.O	72	Traditionalist	Umuosu	29 th December 2015.
62	Ukomadu, C.N	91	Farmer	Umuda Ohuhu	7 th January 2016.

APPENDIX II